Education for street children in Kenya: the role of the Undugu Society
Education for street children in Kenya: the role of the Undugu Society

by

Wangenge G. Ouma

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At the World Education Forum, held in Dakar in April 2000, the international community reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring universal access to basic education of high quality by the year 2015. Efforts have led to noteworthy increases in school enrolment. In spite of progress achieved, however, a high proportion of children still do not have access to education, while others drop out of school. It is clear that merely increasing resources and augmenting the capacity of school systems is inadequate to deal effectively with the problem.

In its research project on quality basic education for all, the IIEP looks at different innovations aiming to improve the provision and functioning of basic education so that it becomes more flexible and more open to the varying needs of children and adolescents who are out-of-school or in difficult circumstances. Such innovations include:

- all programmes that aim at increasing the ‘educability’ of children before or while they are attending schools, through health and nutrition programmes;
- non-traditional teaching experiments carried out in every part of the world that use alternative forms of organizing education and training, different teaching/learning methods and assist children and adolescents to struggle against exclusion;
- different management methods that allow communities to have a better say in the conduct and organization of education of their children.

It is hoped that these innovations will expand and influence the way the traditional education system is organized and managed.

Gudmund Hernes
Director, IIEP
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ANPPCAN</td>
<td>African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODESRIA</td>
<td>Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPE</td>
<td>Complementary Opportunities for Primary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOK</td>
<td>Government of Kenya</td>
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<td>GOU</td>
<td>Government of Uganda</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICDC</td>
<td>International Child Development Centre <em>(aka Innocenti)</em></td>
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<td>IIEP</td>
<td>International Institute for Educational Planning</td>
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<td>KANU</td>
<td>Kenya African National Union</td>
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<td>KIE</td>
<td>Kenya Institute of Education</td>
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<td>NFE</td>
<td>Non-formal education</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>SAPs</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSC</td>
<td>Teachers’ Service Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBEF</td>
<td>Undugu Basic Education Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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Executive summary

The street children phenomenon is a major human development problem that is experienced all over the developing world. A major cause of this phenomenon in Kenya is the lack of access to basic education, and drop-out due to poverty and the harsh effects of structural adjustment programmes. To bridge the existing access gap in Kenya, a variety of non-formal education (NFE) programmes have been started. The Undugu Society of Kenya (USK), established by Arnold Grol in 1973, is arguably the most well-established institution that endeavours to address the plight of street children through education (non-formal) and training. However, it has not had a very noticeable impact on the magnitude of the problem. Potential for such an impact seems to lie in the domain of collaboration with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and education providers. This study evaluated the role of USK in providing education to street children, with a view to highlighting lessons for replication by other groups wishing to establish similar projects, allowing them to benefit from Undugu’s experiences, strengths and weaknesses.

The descriptive survey design was used in the study. The sample comprised all four of the Undugu Basic Education Programme (UBEP) schools, the USK education and training co-ordinator, all of the 30 teachers in the schools and 200 of their learners. The study employed the purposive sampling technique in selecting the sample. Data to answer the research questions were collected mainly through questionnaires and interviews.

Some of the findings made in this study include the fact that one of Undugu’s major achievements is that it provides an alternative form of basic education to children who are not able to take part in the formal system. Taken as a whole, Undugu has accommodated a total of about 5,152 learners.
since the inception of the Basic Education Programme, of whom 2,270 (44.1 per cent) were girls and 2,882 (55.9 per cent) boys. All these learners were either school drop-outs/push-outs or had never enrolled in school at all.

To attain their mission, Undugu employed 30 teachers, 29 of whom are trained. The Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC) deployed 10 of these teachers. To further improve the quality of the education offered, Undugu provides quite a number of teaching-learning resources – for instance once a learner has been admitted, he or she is provided with 11 exercise books, a geometry set, a ruler and a bag.

The UBEP schools are situated within the slums so that the children can be easily reached before they become ‘of the street’. The learners do not wear uniform and are provided with free food. Although the learners are provided with free food, the critical importance of education is not lost on them, as 85.5 per cent of them registered having a desire to receive education.

Another major finding is that USK does not have a follow-up programme for its former learners; therefore it cannot effectively assess how the learners perform in life after leaving Undugu. This, coupled with the fact that Undugu does not help its learners find employment, is likely to make Undugu’s achievements vulnerable and unstable since the learners are prone to relapsing back to street life.

Like any other educational enterprise, UBEP is faced with quite a number of problems, including low morale on the part of teachers, inadequate teaching-learning resources, insecurity for both the teachers and the learners, and a general dissatisfaction of the teachers with regard to the management of the programme.
In view of the findings of the study, it is recommended that more research should be done in the area of street children pedagogy, NFE curricula, competencies of teachers of street children, and management of NFE programmes. It would also be interesting to find out why learners have continued streaming into Undugu’s learning centres even after the Kenyan Government declared free primary education for all.
Chapter 1
Introduction

Background to the study

One of the most conspicuous symbols of poverty is the growing presence of children on the streets: children making a living by scavenging, hawking and soliciting while their peers are in school. They constitute that category of humanity which has become a feature of urban life all over the developing world (Munyakho, 1992). According to Casa Alianza (2000), an estimated 100 million children live and work on the streets of the developing world. Most street children (75 per cent) have some family links but spend most of their lives on the streets begging, selling trinkets, shining shoes or washing cars to supplement their family’s income. Most never go beyond a fourth-grade education. The rest (the remaining 25 per cent) live on the streets, often in groups of other children. They sleep in abandoned buildings, under bridges, in doorways or in public parks (Casa Alianza, 2000).

Life for street children is a painful experience. They often “get into fights. They stab each other. They get run over by cars. They get beaten up. They get burned. They get shot by the police while they are committing crimes. It’s gruesome” (The Big Issue, 2002: 4-5).

During a workshop organized by the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) on 4 and 5 November 1994 in Nairobi, it was said that the genesis of the phenomenon of street children in Kenya goes back to the early 1950s when the colonial
government broke up families by imprisoning men and women, or by taking them away to concentration camps. The children were then left helpless and they wandered off into the streets of Nairobi in the hope of finding some means of survival (ANPPCAN, 1995: 17).

In 1975, there were approximately 115 street children in Kenya. This number increased to 17,000 in 1990, and subsequently to over 150,000 in 1997. In Nairobi, the number increased from 3,600 in 1989 to 40,000 in 1995 and 60,000 in 1997. By 1999, the number in Mombasa had reached 5,000; in Kisumu, 4,000; in Malindi and Kilifi, 2,500 each; and in Kitale and Nakuru, 2,000 each (Shorter and Onyancha, 1999). From the above statistics, one gathers that street children can be found in all major towns in Kenya.

Street children are disadvantaged: They have no access to formal education, basic services or family affection and support. They are disfavoured children with poor chances of having a decent future, condemned to live by deceit, stealing, prostitution or violence (Lusk, 1989; Young, 1995; Bennani, 1996). Some of them are homeless. Many who attend school initially are forced to leave and consequently relapse into illiteracy. These are multiple characteristics that restrain the opportunities available to them. While they may triumph over one or two such disadvantages, the convergence of such effects can create a nearly absolute barrier to personal success in education or economic life. It should be borne in mind that no one chooses ignorance, disease, poverty, irresponsibility and incompetence as a way of life (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 1999).

Street children’s lack of access to education is considered a violation of a fundamental human right: the right to education proclaimed in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1999). When Kenya gained independence in 1963, the Kenyan Government undertook measures to eradicate poverty, disease, ignorance and illiteracy. Its commitment to the provision of education is

Even with the above declarations and commitments, many children in Kenya are still out of school (Nzomo, Yildiz, Manyange and Thompson, 2000). Prior to the declaration of free primary education in 2002 (this study was conducted before the free primary education declaration), the rate of enrolment had been declining gradually and completion rates remained dismal, as can be seen in Tables 1.1 and 1.2.

**Table 1.1 Primary education gross enrolment rate (GER) per year between 1990 and 1999**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>101.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>91.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>87.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>88.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>86.8</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>86.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>87.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Nzomo, 1999.*
The Kenyan Government recognizes that access to education has been affected by the policies of cost sharing introduced in Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1986 on economic management for renewed growth, and Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 on education and manpower training for the next decade and beyond (Nzomo et al., 2000). Cost sharing has rendered access to formal education more difficult for the poor and for vulnerable members of the Kenyan society (Nzomo et al., 2000).

The provision of basic education and literacy to all is among the most important contributions that can be made to the development of the world’s children (World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, 1998). The Kenya National Development Plan, 1997-2001, stated that one of the government’s guiding philosophies for education is the concern that every Kenyan has the inalienable right, regardless of his or her socio-economic status, to basic education. It is therefore reasonable to assert that the obligation to ensure both children’s right to education and education for all lies with national governments.

As a strategy to ensure education for all, Nzomo (1999), Nzomo et al. (2000), and the Government of Kenya (2002) advised that the Kenyan Government explore alternative approaches to education in the NFE system that are affordable, flexible, suitable for the communities concerned, and that...
respond to the inadequacies of the formal system in terms of declining enrolment, retention and completion rates. It is estimated that over 50 per cent of children who enrol in standard one drop out before they complete standard eight (Aduda, 2002).

Although the government is obligated to provide education to all, many actors play vital roles in delivering it: from international agencies to local communities, NGOs and religious groups. All over the world, NGOs have initiated education programmes for street children: In Kenya, there are about 250 NGOs offering education to street children. Such organizations include USK, Tunza Dada, the Kwetu Home of Peace, the Good Samaritan Home and Imani (Shorter and Onyancha, 1999; Young, 1995).

**The Undugu Society of Kenya (USK)**

Realizing the importance of education and the fact that street children have their own personal gifts and potential, which, if well developed, will add to both the value and stock of human capital, many NGOs have developed an alternative education opportunity for out-of-school children. USK, arguably the most well-established provider of services to street children in Kenya (Munyakho, 1992), initiated a project aimed at street children aged 6-15 years. It was established in 1973 by Arnold Grol in response to the plight of parking boys, whose conditions on the streets of Nairobi was a call for humanitarian action (Black, 1993; USK, n.d.). USK regards children in the streets as children who have, by definition, been denied their basic right to education—a disadvantage in life which Undugu tries to rectify (Black, 1993).

Besides feeding, sheltering and educating disadvantaged children, USK looks into employment creation, small enterprise development, the pursuit of affordable shelter, community nutrition and health. Its objectives are to rehabilitate, educate and train these children within the framework of a wide range of community-development services, and to improve the conditions and
prospects of all local children whose futures appear uncertain. Although USK is serving a large number of children, many are still in need of help, hence the need for many other organizations to establish programmes for street children.

Statement of the problem

A persistent shortcoming in the planning of education in Kenya, as in other economically developing countries, is that plans invariably do not cater for everyone in society. Many marginalized groups are left uncatered for and end up becoming a burden on NGOs. Among those who are not covered by most of these plans are street children; a group that constitutes a major loss of human capital as they are potential criminals; people who, as a matter of fact, will live a life of dependency. When they reach adulthood, they will constitute a major social destabilization factor and a definite cause of political instability (ANPPCAN, 1995). Their presence certainly indicates a decline in primary school enrolment and an increase in drop-out rates. Investing in the poor (street children) is vital to ensure that they can become productive members of society; to this end, education is key. For this reason a variety of NFE programmes have emerged to complement formal schooling, thus helping to bridge the existing gap in access to education – a task which is not easy to accomplish. USK is the pioneer provider of education to street children and therefore has the broadest experience with this group of society. However, it has not had a noticeable impact on the magnitude of the problem in Kenya (Easton et al., 1994). The potential for such impact seems to lie in the domain of collaboration with, and involvement of, other NGOs. Also, USK has made it clear that it does not wish to expand nation-wide by creating other programmes in other cities in Kenya, but that it prefers rather to encourage other organizations to start their own programmes (Easton et al., 1994.). It is against this background that the role played by USK in providing education to street children has been examined in this study, with a view to articulating the lessons of Undugu’s experience. This may enable other NGOs to build on
these lessons and benefit from them in order to optimize a collective response to the problem of street children. As was aptly observed by UNESCO-IIEP (1997), it is important to learn lessons from such mitigating approaches and to trigger a capitalization process as a necessary condition for intervention on a larger scale.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the role of USK in the provision of education to street children in order to establish its strengths and weaknesses, its successes and pitfalls, to serve as lessons for other providers of education to street children.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were:

1. To establish the enrolment trends at Undugu since its inception.
2. To examine the kind of education offered by Undugu.
3. To examine the constraints of the Undugu street children education programme and suggest possible solutions.
4. To establish involvement and participation of various actors and groups in UBEP.
5. To determine how the Undugu society uses demographic data on the children for educational purposes.

Research questions

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the enrolment trends at Undugu?
2. What factors influence enrolment in the Undugu street children education programmes?
3. What are the criteria used for selection into these programmes?
4. Do the education programmes have demographic data on the children regarding their origin, age and level of education reached before joining Undugu? If so, how is this information used?
5. What constraints does USK encounter in the provision of education to street children?
6. Does USK have linkages with other groups and institutions?

Significance of the study

It is hoped that this study will set the stage for effective provision of basic education, including functional literacy and numeracy and life skills, which will enable street children to lead a healthy and productive life. On the basis of the present situation and forecasts of the future needs of street and other disadvantaged children, it is hoped that decisions will be taken so that educational opportunities for those who have not received schooling or have dropped out from school are improved and made responsive to their plight. The findings of this study are expected to help guide educational policy-thinking and practice as far as education for street children and other disadvantaged groups is concerned, and to prompt more research to be done in the area of educating street and other out-of-school children.

Assumptions of the study

1. All the children receiving education at USK are former street children.
2. USK is the most successful provider of education (non-formal) to street children.
3. UBEP is replicable.
4. Provision of education to marginalized groups is not the responsibility of government only, but of the entire society.

Scope of the study

The research was carried out in Nairobi in USK basic education schools. It only covered Undugu’s education programme for street children and involved the pupils (street children), their teachers and the co-ordinator of the basic education programme.

Limitations of the study

It is acknowledged that the scope of the study did not include all those involved in the provision of education to street children. In this regard, there are chances that the study left out some information that could have been gathered had all those involved in the provision of education to street children been included in the study; i.e. including the parents of the street children. Also, the research was conducted in Undugu street children education centres based in Nairobi only, whereas USK has other education centres in Katangi-Machakos, Kitengela and Kisumu which were not included in this study. Equally, the study did not evaluate Undugu’s financial base due to limited access to relevant documents and records. As such, it may not be possible to judge the programme’s sustainability.

Definition of significant terms

- **Access.** The opportunity available for street children to enter and participate in education, to use educational facilities of the right quality,
and to acquire and retain knowledge, skills and attitudes without discrimination.

- **Drop-outs.** Children or pupils who have left school before finishing the full primary cycle of education.
- **Gross enrolment ratio (GER).** The number of children enrolled in primary schools, regardless of age, divided by the population of the age group which officially corresponds to the primary level.
- **Net enrolment ratio (NER).** The number of children enrolled in primary schools which fall into the age group that officially corresponds to that level, as a percentage of the total number of children in the official primary school age group.
- **Non-formal education (NFE).** Any organized systematic learning activity outside the framework of the formal system which is aimed at particular subgroups in the population.
- **Poverty.** The inability to attain a certain pre-determined minimum level of consumption at which basic needs are assumed to be met.
- **Street children.** Any child of school age who is out of school, lacks basic necessities such as shelter, food, clothing, health-care services and the love and protection given by a parent or guardian.
- **Pupils.** Former street children enrolled in USK’s basic education schools.

**Research methods**

This research was a case study in which the descriptive survey design was utilized. All four of the UBEP schools were used in the study: Kibera, Ngomongo, Pumwani and Mathare. The study included the management, the teachers and the learners. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, informal discussions and document analysis (see Appendix I for details).
Chapter 2
Review of related literature

In this chapter, four categories of literature are reviewed: street children, education programmes for street children, issues in the education of street children, and NFE.

Characterization of street children

Street children can be differentiated into two categories: ‘children on the street’ and ‘children of the street’ (Ennew, 1994; Lusk, 1989). The former are those who work on the street by day and return to a home base at night, while the latter are those who live full time on the street and sleep there at night. Accordingly, street children include those who live and work on the street full time with little or no contact with their parents, as well as those who live and work on the street by day and return to their homes and families at night.

Genuine street children, or children of the street, are either orphans or children who have been turned out or abandoned by their parents. Some have run away from home. The street is not just their workplace; it is their home (Lusk, 1989).

The most pressing problems faced by street children are police violence, malnutrition, drugs, prostitution and rape (Hlatshwayo, 1997; Smith, 1997; Shorter and Onyancha, 1999, ANPPCAN, 1995; Lusk, 1989).
In his review of various studies done in India on street children, Bose (1992: 48-52) made the following observations on the characteristics of street children:

1. Most street children are over the age of 6, the majority are 8 years old. Initiation into active street life begins early, and the younger children are more likely to be in the company of an older sibling, a relative or a parent.

2. Most street children are boys, mainly because of the socio-cultural factors limiting young girls’ mobility.

3. Most street children have never attended school, and a majority of those who do drop out before completing school.

4. Most street children have close ties with their families and return to them after the day’s activities. They usually work with the full knowledge and support of their parents or guardians, especially since their earnings often bring the family income to subsistence levels. Children who do not have families often get attached to an adult or a peer’s family.

5. Parents of street children mainly hold low-paid, unskilled jobs or are self-employed.

6. Most street children work for a living, although this is more the case for boys than for girls.

7. Street children work exclusively in the informal sector in jobs which do not require special skills, training or a sizeable capital investment. Picking rags and scrap, carrying loads, vending (usually of inexpensive goods), shining shoes and cleaning vehicles are among the jobs they typically undertake.

8. The nutrition and health status of street children is not at satisfactory levels. Food intake is both quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate. Street children have infrequent medical care; they lack bathing and toilet facilities, and they are exposed to various health hazards, unsanitary surroundings and climatic variations. Occupational hazards include car accidents for street vendors, and cuts and infections for rag-pickers.
9. Street children are exposed to physical abuse and extortion and, although most are law-abiding, the need to survive forces some of them to engage in illegal activities.

10. Street children are engaged in daily survival scenarios and develop resourcefulness, self-reliance, independence, and other survival skills for life in a hostile environment. Alienated from the mainstream of life, street children hardly have a social status in the larger society, where their existence is tolerated but not trusted as their background is not known. Because their contact with society is mainly casual, street children rarely develop any stable or protective relationships with non-street people. Consequently, street children have been forced to cope with the realities of adulthood and poverty at a young age, which results not only in their being deprived of a childhood, but also in their having very limited prospects for a better future.

Street children have adopted unique values which make it hard for them to enrol and remain in school: they value the jobs they do to earn a living more than they value getting an education. Attending lessons in a normal primary school is difficult because they have to create time for work. They also value their independence and would rather be free to walk and work in the streets than be confined to a school (Government of Kenya/UNICEF, 1995). Bose (1992) and the World Bank (1996) reported that when education is made available to all children in slums and in poor neighbourhoods (i.e. the poor), an important milestone in human resource development will have been reached. Outlays on education are considered an investment in human capital as they help build the human resources that are so vital for generating and sustaining economic growth and development and for reducing poverty.

It is important to mention that the street children phenomenon is not solely a result of inefficiencies in the formal school system, but of a variety of factors including the “... failure of the state in most ... countries to deliver political stability, economic development and sustainable livelihoods ... reduce
poverty and extreme deprivation ... and in general provide an environment of general well-being and access to the benefits of modern human civilization for the majority of the citizens” (Aina, 1997: 50).

Education programmes for street children

Lusk (1989) observed that nothing contributes more to a loss of human development potential than a childhood and a youth spent outside the framework of a family and school in the usually hostile environment of the street. Education has become a lifelong process, with people learning at any age and at any place as needs and opportunities arise. Some learning opportunities are relatively unstructured and non-formal, but nevertheless provide meaningful educational experiences. Bennani (1996), Smith (1997) and Interpress Service (1997) have pointed out that although the best solution to the street children phenomenon would be to reunite them with their families, some children do not have homes or families to return to.

Most of the programmes that cater for street children have endeavoured to respond to their special needs (ANPPCAN, 1995), which include food, clothing, education, love and support.

The main purpose of street children education should not be limited to imparting information which is relevant for examinations, but rather to seek to provide education that is relevant to the children’s impoverished circumstances and to the need they have to earn a living (Shorter and Onyancha, 1999; ANPPCAN, 1995).

Currently there are more programmes for boys than there are for girls. The kind of training provided for these children is varied. Boys, for example, have a choice of the following vocations: carpentry, masonry, mechanical engineering, motor vehicle mechanics, tailoring, driving, welding and plumbing
(ANPPCAN, 1995; Black, 1993). Education programmes for street children need to be supported with additional resources like health workers and counsellors (ANPPCAN, 1995).

During a workshop entitled ‘Hearing on Street Children in Kenya’ organized by ANPPCAN and held in Nairobi on 4 and 5 November 1994 (ANPPCAN, 1995), the following recommendations were made:

1. Any education programme for street children must be flexible. It must serve to rehabilitate and provide adequately for street children’s physical, psychological and sociological needs. There has to be room for highly individualized programmes that enable a given child to start at his or her own level of competence (determined by expert assessment).
2. In order to contain the street children phenomenon, adequate provisions should be made for children from poor families. Basic education should be made compulsory and free, and alternative education programmes should be designed for street children (The Children’s Charter of South Africa, 1992).
3. The essential elements of street children education should include literacy and vocational training, with a strong dose of life-skills training that will help the child to develop into a self-reliant, productive and responsible citizen.
4. Schools should see themselves much more in terms of their community function: they must make greater efforts to retain children.

The 1992 Children’s Charter of South Africa recognizes the urgency to improve the lives of children and to protect their rights in every region, in particular those regions which are subject to violence, political unrest and poverty. The charter further recognizes that:

1. All children have a right to free and equal compulsory education within one department, as education is a right, not a privilege.
2. All children have a right to education, which is – be it formal or informal education – in their interest and which allows them to develop their talents.
3. All children have the right to adequate educational facilities, and those facilities should be made accessible to children in difficult or violent situations.

The charter further states that:

1. No child should be forced to live on the streets.
2. Street children have a right to receive special attention.

Kenya boasts of a number of programmes that address the plight of street children. Ngau (1996) discusses a number of these programmes, which include the following:

**Rescue Dada**

Rescue Dada was started in 1991 as a rescue centre for the rehabilitation of young street girls from the Nairobi city centre. The aims of the project are to offer homeless girls a break in the cycle of poverty, despair and dependence, to give them a chance to re-integrate their families by making the necessary contact and interventions, and to provide them with an education that will result in their becoming responsible and self-supporting adults by training them in home crafts, while at the same time seeking places for them with other organizations. By 1996, Rescue Dada was providing informal schooling for about 60 girls and boys.

**Mukuru Promotion Centre**

The Mukuru Promotion Centre was started in 1985 as an informal school for children in the slums around Nairobi’s industrial area. At its inception, it was established that the pupils’ main aim was to sit for the Kenya Certificate
of Primary Education examinations, and then to move on to secondary education.

In 1996, the programme had no less than 4,000 children in the informal primary schools run by the project. The philosophy of the Mukuru project is based on a very strong belief that unless children are able to go to school all efforts to eliminate the street children phenomenon will be futile. Working around this vision, the project engages in an integrated approach that includes working with individual households (families) to find the most effective way to help themselves (empowerment) so that they can send their children to school and help them to stay in the education system until completion. The Mukuru project feeds all the children in the five informal schools.

**Shangilia Mtoto Wa Africa**

*Shangilia mtoto wa Africa* is Swahili for ‘Praise the African child’. The current home for Shangilia Mtoto Wa Africa children was established in 1995. One of the main goals of the organization is to provide basic human necessities, such as food, shelter, clothing, health, education, security and – most importantly – love to these children. The programme also aims to discover the talents of the children, to help them re-discover themselves, to articulate their aspirations, and to identify constraints that may inhibit attainment of their goals and how such constraints can be minimized with their full participation in the process.

The organization provides informal education to young children in classes that range from nursery to standard five. In addition, they have been able to network with neighbouring formal primary schools that have admitted their children into different classes. A few of the older children have been admitted to youth polytechnics. The children who have been placed in other institutions (for example boarding schools) return home during the holidays (that is, if they have families or homes to go to). Shangilia is seen as the home for those who have no other options.
Issues in the education of street children

Access to education and flexibility of education programmes

Among the known causes of the street children phenomenon is lack of access to, or drop out from, school. The conventional education systems in many countries are too rigid to reach the children who, because of gender, ethnicity or poverty, don’t have access to school (UNICEF, 1999; Government of Kenya, 1998). The challenge for schools is to be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of disadvantaged children while offering education of sufficient quality to retain all children once they are in (UNICEF, 1999; Government of Kenya/UNICEF, 1995, 1999).

Double shifting has been employed by education providers to improve access. Multigrade teaching – in which children of two or more age groups are taught by the same teacher in the same classroom –, the mobile teaching approach, and distance education (often involving radio programmes) are other strategies that would enhance access to education. The hallmark of all these approaches is flexibility, by which the approaches are adapted to the local conditions in order to meet the educational needs of all the children (UNICEF, 1999).

After the historic 2002 elections, in which the ruling party (KANU) lost, the new government declared free primary education for all. Even though this has improved access, the overarching problem of street children still persists and NFE centres continue to receive learners.

Quality of education

Attending school and yet still being ill-equipped for work and life in general on leaving school is a terrible waste. Learning in the twenty-first century requires equipping children with a basic education in literacy and
Review of related literature

Numeracy, as well as in the more advanced skills for living that can serve as a foundation for life, enabling children to adapt and change according to life circumstances (Ennew, 1994). Good quality education is a must, especially for programmes that are interventionist, such as those designed for street children.

It is not enough simply to ensure that children attend school. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is clear: every child has the right to quality education that is relevant to his or her individual life and personal development.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child’s perspective on quality education encompasses not only children’s cognitive needs, but also their physical, social, moral, emotional and spiritual development (UNICEF, 1999; ANPPCAN, 1995; The Children’s Charter of South Africa, 1992). Education thus conceived unfolds from the child’s perspective and addresses each child’s unique capacities and needs. This is even more important for street children, whose diversity of experiences requires well-focused attention on their unique needs and abilities.

The situation of street children requires that they be allowed to express their views, thoughts and ideas: they need to be given opportunities to feel joy and to play; they need to be comfortable with themselves and with others; and they should be treated with respect. In this kind of environment, children develop self-esteem which, when combined with basic knowledge, skills and values, stands them in good stead, enabling them to make informed decisions throughout life (UNICEF, 1999; Ennew, 1994).

Without educational content that is relevant to current needs, without preparation in skills and knowledge for the future, and without efforts to improve learning achievements, access may neither serve the purposes intended nor provide the benefits expected (UNESCO, 1996).
Non-formal education (NFE)

NFE is any organized systematic learning activity outside the framework of the formal education system. It may take place both within and outside educational institutions and may cater for persons of all ages (Government of Kenya/UNICEF, 1995; UNESCO, 1998). Most education programmes for street children like that of Undugu are NFE ventures. They are usually rehabilitative, compensatory and, above all, interventionist.

NFE programmes are often context specific and concentrate on the participants’ true needs. This type of education can be delivered in church halls, front rooms, garages, or under porches or shady trees; it does not have to occur in school buildings. The characteristics of NFE include: (a) open access; (b) it is mainly provided by the community; (c) it is part time; (d) it involves voluntary participation; (e) it can accommodate mixed age groups; (f) it is of short duration; (g) teaching is delivered by para-professionals and volunteers; and (h) it focuses on the less-fortunate and marginalized groups (Thomson, 2000).

Pareek and Rao (1981) have offered guidelines that would ensure that NFE institutions attain the desired objectives. These include: (a) constant review and diagnosis of the institutions in order to determine if weaknesses and problems exist; (b) mobilization of public participation in the institutions’ management; (c) liaison with agencies in other departments outside the institutions in co-ordinating related activities and (d) training of personnel in their roles in educational development.

These guidelines become even more crucial when the NFE programme is targeted at street children. Interventionist programmes are certainly expensive, and ignoring these guidelines could easily turn such programmes into painful misadventures. These guidelines will ensure both efficiency and effectiveness.
As we have noted in this discussion, education for street children is emerging as a critical and urgent issue. Helping street children develop into self-fulfilling and effective citizens in the face of the grossly adverse street environment is a challenge that is complex.

Many organizations have initiated community-based education programmes with the primary objective of enabling street children and other marginalized groups to access education. Even with the presence of these organizations all over the world, the problem of street children still persists, hence the need for a collaborative effort to stamp it out altogether. Although information exists about organizations that deal with street children, much of what these organizations do to help street children educationally which could be used by others wishing to establish similar programmes is only obtainable from systematic research, which is scarce. This is the major void that this study helps to fill.
In this chapter data are presented, analyzed and discussed according to the information obtained from questionnaires, observations, informal discussions, interviews and document analysis. This is done under five sections in the context of the five research objectives that guided the study. These are: (a) to establish what have been the trends in enrolment in Undugu since its inception; (b) to examine the kind of education offered by Undugu; (c) to examine the constraints of Undugu’s education programme for street children and suggest possible solutions; (d) to establish involvement and participation of various actors and groups in UBEP; and (e) to determine how Undugu uses demographic data on its learners for educational purposes.

Research findings and discussions

*Enrolment trends at UBEP since its inception*

The four UBEP schools were established in different years: Ngomongo (formerly Grogan) in 1978, Mathare in 1979, Pumwani in 1979 and Kibera in 1981. Since the establishment of these centres, they have recorded fluctuating enrolment rates, as can be seen in *Appendices VI-IX*. However, it could well be said that there has been a general gradual increase in enrolment rates over the years.

Although the number of girls is generally lower than that of boys, their presence clearly indicates that the street children phenomenon concerns both sexes, even though for quite some time the presence of street girls has been
overshadowed by the overwhelming and imposing presence of street boys. The obscurity of street girls has sent false signals about their presence; for instance, in her study on factors that led to the influx of street children in urban areas (Kakamega town), Wakhu (1997) reported that no street girls were identified. Recognition of the presence of street girls has significant implications for programmes for children in especially difficult circumstances. Undugu recognized the presence of street girls quite early. As evidenced in Appendices VI-IX, girls have been enrolling in the programme since its inception. Looking at Tables 3.1 and 3.2, girls have constituted a significant number: Since inception, Kibera has enrolled 510 girls (45.7 per cent), Ngomongo 596 (45.3 per cent), Pumwani 578 (44.1 per cent) and Mathare 586 (41.6 per cent). Boys still constitute the largest number of enrollees, however, with Mathare having the largest percentage (58.4 per cent).

Fluctuations in enrolment have been explained in different ways. For instance according to UBEP teachers at Mathare, the dismal enrolments registered in 1983 and 1984 (Appendix IX) were the result of the taking over of Undugu’s village polytechnic by government. It is said that the local area politicians orchestrated this action, which did not augur well for the community around. Poor management by head teachers was also blamed for the low enrolment rates in some centres. For example in one centre, the head teacher blamed low enrolments in the years preceding his posting there on his predecessor’s arrogance when dealing with parents and the community around. Another reason was financial insufficiency; the available resources only allowed a limited number of children to be enrolled.

The school-feeding programme, introduced for the first time from 1979 until 1983, and then from 1995 to date, has had significant effects on enrolments. Looking through Appendices VI-IX, the year 1995 marks the beginning of a steady increase in enrolments up until 2001. The low enrolments indicated in the years 1993 through 2001 were blamed on poor record-keeping. Food is a basic human requirement that most children in especially difficult
circumstances lack or do not get enough of. In fact, as reported by Ngau (1996), street children will often miss school to go begging for food. Provision of food increases participation. In his compilation of a participatory research on poor urban children at risk in Dar-Es-Salaam, Mdoe (1997) reported that among the major problems faced by [poor] children in school is lack of food. Food provision is certainly a major ingredient in programmes targeted at children in especially difficult circumstances. Provision of food must not, however, obscure the critical educational role of the programmes. Over and above, no one single reason can be blamed for dismal enrolment, or vice versa. A variety of different factors are responsible, and recognition of these factors is important to the success of education programmes for street children.

### Table 3.1 Pupil enrolment at the Ngomongo UBEP by age group and previous school attendance, 1978-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male-female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School attendance before joining UBEP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not attend</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-16</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;16</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Undugu enrolment records.*
Of the four UBEP schools, Ngomongo is the oldest and, as information obtained from the available records and which is presented in Table 3.1 shows, it had enrolled a total of 1,316 pupils by 2001. Like in the other UBEP schools, boys constitute a greater percentage (54.7 per cent) than girls. Of all the enrollees, only 8.9 per cent of them had not previously attended school when they joined the Ngomongo UBEP.

Table 3.2  Pupil enrolment at the Pumwani UBEP by age group and previous school attendance, 1979-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>732 55.9</td>
<td>578 44.1</td>
<td>1310 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School attendance before joining UBEP</td>
<td>546 41.7</td>
<td>444 33.9</td>
<td>990 75.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not attend</td>
<td>39 3</td>
<td>37 2.8</td>
<td>76 5.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>147 11.2</td>
<td>97 7.4</td>
<td>244 18.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Undugu enrolment records.

Since its inception in 1979, Pumwani (see Table 3.2) has had a total enrolment of 1,310 pupils, most of whom (60.3 per cent) were aged between 13 and 16 years. All the learners at this school, just as in the other schools, were either school drop-outs/push-outs or had never previously been enrolled in school; most (75.6 per cent), however, were school drop-outs/push-outs.

The Mathare UBEP (see Table 3.3) has had, since its inception, the highest enrolment of pupils (1,410), but has also received the lowest percentage
of girls (41.6 per cent) and the highest percentage of pupils above the age of 16 years (8.2 per cent). Equally, Mathare has had the highest percentage (9.5 per cent) of learners who had not previously enrolled in formal primary school.

Of all four of the UBEP schools, Kibera (see Table 3.4) was the last to be established. However, it has accommodated the largest percentage (45.7 per cent) of girls. This school has also had the lowest percentage (4.3 per cent) of learners above the age of 16 years. Taken as a whole, Undugu has had a total of 5,152 learners since the inception of its UBEP, 2,270 (44.1 per cent) of whom have been girls and 2,882 (55.9 per cent) boys.

Table 3.3   Pupil enrolment at the Mathare UBEP by age group and previous school attendance, 1979-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male-female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before joining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBEP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not attend</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-16</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;16</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Undugu enrolment records.
Table 3.4  Pupil enrolment at the Kibera UBEP by age group and previous school attendance, 1981-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male-female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not attend</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-16</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;16</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Undugu enrolment records.

The effect of educational background on children’s enrolment

As indicated in Tables 3.1-3.4, all the children attending UBEP are either drop-outs/push-outs of formal school or have never enrolled in a formal school at all. This exclusion from education is, according to UNESCO (2000), a manifestation of a tragic violation of human rights; a violation that Undugu tries to mitigate. Most of the enrolees are drop-outs/push-outs of the formal school system: 81.7 per cent in Ngomongo; 75.6 per cent in Pumwani; 69.6 per cent in Mathare; and 63.6 per cent in Kibera. This also points to a chronic wastage in primary school education which, as noted by Black (1999) and UNESCO (2000), has profound consequences, including a severe waste of human resources, an intergenerational perpetuation of poverty and underemployment, and an increased possibility of crime, violence and social unrest. Table 3.5 is a corroboration of the fact that all the learners manifest primary school wastage; 90 per cent of the respondents had dropped out of
school. Although it is Undugu’s policy not to admit children who have previously reached standard eight, 2 per cent of the respondents had dropped out at that level of education. Standards three through six show the highest degrees of attrition (14.5 per cent, 16 per cent, 25 per cent and 15 per cent respectively). Considering that many (90 per cent) of the children are drop-outs, attention should be focused on measures that will prevent learners from dropping out of school. In education, Caillods (1998: 10) considers the disadvantaged as all those who either have no access to education, or those who, after a few years of schooling, drop out without having acquired the minimum level of skills to manage adult life in their specific local and national context. In this vein, all the children attending a UBEP school could well be described as disadvantaged. It is unlikely that these children, by the time they are pushed out or drop out, will have attained meaningful literacy, numeracy and life survival skills.

Table 3.5  Class of schooling at which pupils dropped/were pushed out before joining UBEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of drop-out/push-out</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M &amp; F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never attended school</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field data.*
Children’s enrolment by their age groups

Tables 3.1-3.4 also indicate children’s enrolment according to their age group. In all four schools, the enrollees’ ages have been classified from 9 to 16 years and over. In all four schools, the age group 13-16 has the highest number of learners: 65.3 per cent in Ngomongo; 60.3 per cent in Pumwani; 62.3 per cent in Mathare; and 60.3 per cent in Kibera. By the age of 13 one is expected to have finished primary education and to have already started secondary school. Accordingly, this makes it hard for them to catch up with their peers who normally successfully finish primary education by the age of 13. Because of the fact that Undugu manages to enrol these formal school drop-outs/push-outs, its interventional role in providing education is accentuated, for the children are empowered with skills that enhance their chances of survival in their typically hostile milieu. The children joining Undugu would otherwise either be among the 130 million worldwide who enter adolescence without having enrolled in primary school, or among the further 150 million who drop out prematurely from primary school (Black, 1999).
**On whose decision do learners enrol in UBEP?**

**Figure 3.1 Percentage of learners enrolling in UBEP on their mother’s/father’s/guardian’s/own decision**

Source: Field data.

As is clearly shown in *Figure 3.1*, most children (61 per cent) joined UBEP on their mothers’ initiative. This can be explained by the fact that, according to Blanc (1994), most slum families are headed by women. Equally, as noted by Caillods (1998), women who are educated are more likely to encourage their children to go to school and, as these results indicate, women in general seem to show more of an interest in the education of their children. Therefore women play an important role in influencing enrolments. This observation has implications for the provision of education to these children; for instance in order to develop a closer relationship with the community, women’s groups could be targeted. However, more interest in children’s education by the entire community would post better results.
Children’s backgrounds

**Family size**

**Table 3.6 Repartition of learners according to family size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of siblings</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;6</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field data.*

From *Table 3.6* it is evident that street children generally come from big families of between 4 and 6 siblings and above (68 per cent) and, as confirmed by *Table 3.7*, most of the siblings in these families are neither at school nor working. From discussions with the children, it was discovered that siblings who were attending school were doing so at UBEP. When families are so big it becomes difficult for parents to provide adequately for their children, hence the high incidence of non-enrolment in, and drop-out from, formal schools. This observation makes it incumbent upon providers of education to street children to target entire families if meaningful results are to be obtained, in which case a multi-pronged approach, such as that adopted by Undugu, is more appropriate. This would help repress the vicious circle of poverty that is chiefly responsible for the high population of street children.
Table 3.7  Activity of learners’ siblings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schooling</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not schooling*</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* ‘Not schooling’ as a category includes siblings who have finished primary school and who stay at home, those who are jobless, and also those who are married (and also jobless).

Source: Field data.

Area of residence

All four UBEP centres are strategically located in the slums where most of the street children live and work. Table 3.8 shows where the children enrolled in each school live. These are either poor neighbourhoods or poor enclaves within well-to-do neighbourhoods – a symptom of their vulnerable and disadvantaged status. Programmes for children in especially difficult circumstances have to contend with an otherwise disabling convergence of disadvantages that characterize the children’s lives in the slums. The placing of these programmes close to the children’s homes is helpful in reaching out to them. The advantages of locating intervention programmes in urban neighbourhoods are acknowledged by Blanc (1994), who stated that by being anchored in urban neighbourhoods these programmes are more able to reach drop-outs, truants and children who are generally ‘turned off’ by the formal system. Easton et al. (1994), in their report on studies on disadvantaged youth, recognized that the location of schools close to the children’s homes allows easy access, a sense of security and a close community feeling. This should be a major trait of all proactive programmes for disadvantaged youth in the sense that the children will be reached and helped before they become ‘of the street’.
Table 3.8 Areas of residence of the learners in each UBEP school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UBEP school</th>
<th>Areas in which the pupils live</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngomongo</td>
<td>Highridge, Kariobangi, Baba Dogo, Kasabuni, Gitathuru, Grogan, Korogocho, Ngomongo, Dandora, Maili Saba and Huruma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumwani</td>
<td>Mathare, Biafra, Pumwani, Kitui, Mlango Kubwa, Kinyago, Majengo and Huruma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathare</td>
<td>Mathare, Huruma Corner, Korogocho, Eastleigh, Kiambio and Kosovo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kibera</td>
<td>Silanga, Soweto, Gatwekera, Lindi, Laini Saba, Kibera and Karanja</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data.

At Pumwani, discussions with the teachers revealed that the school had very few learners from the immediate neighbourhood of Majengo. The very small number of children from this neighbouring sprawling slum was curious, but was explained by the fact that most residents of Majengo are Muslims who prefer to send their children to Madrassas (Muslim NFE classes). This clearly points to the need for intervention programmes to consider the various cultures and practices that exist in the target communities: this would make the programmes better suited and more responsive to the needs and cultures of the target groups.

In general, locating schools for disadvantaged youth in the areas where they live would be expected to have a positive influence on enrolments, since – among other things – the limiting effects of distance would no longer be problematic. Easton et al. (1994) observed that the location of schools close to the children’s homes allows easy access, a sense of security and a close community feeling.

Learners’ reasons for joining UBEP

The immense importance of education is not lost on street children. Although Undugu offers food and does not charge fees to its learners, the
children registered an overwhelming desire to receive education (85.5 per cent) (Figure 3.2). This observation is particularly important for up-coming programmes for street children. Whereas food would be an important ingredient of a multi-pronged approach addressing the needs of street children, the ultimate objective of providing alternative education should not be overshadowed. In a study carried out by UNICEF-ICDC (1989), 15 out of 17 groups of street children stressed the importance of the educational opportunities they received and they appreciated the fact that they were now able to go to school. A Government of Kenya/UNICEF (1995) study on NFE in Kenya also indicated that the majority of out-of-school children wanted to go to school to continue their education in order to have a better future.

Figure 3.2 Reasons given by learners for joining UBEP

Source: Field data.
‘Poverty’ and ‘play’, although attracting a small percentage (with 11 and 2.5 per cent joining for these reasons respectively), give an insight into the multiple roles played by UBEP. These include providing an opportunity to break free from the stranglehold of poverty, and giving the children a chance to play. Play is an important element of childhood and is crucial to children’s development: It is through play that children develop a sense of togetherness with regard to other individuals and groups.

Identification of needy cases and the admission procedure

Before children are admitted into UBEP, the needy cases are first identified as follows: (a) the needy children who come unaccompanied and by their own will to seek admission; (b) through outreach activities by social workers; (c) through relatives, guardians and parents; (d) through teachers, especially those living among the children in the slums; and (e) through community leaders.

Before admission is granted, the children must meet the following conditions: (a) they must be out of school; (b) they must be between 12 and 16 years of age; (c) they must be living in the neighbouring slums; (d) they should not have already reached standard eight; and (e) they must be living with a parent, relative or guardian.

The admission procedure to UBEP is conducted towards the end of the school year (September-October) for the following school year. Although the needy children are identified through the criteria and steps enumerated above, it was established through discussions with the teachers that the most popular method was to announce at the chiefs’ barazas (meetings) the dates on which all those wishing to enrol in the programme can present themselves. It is then that the children, together with their parent(s) or guardian(s), are interviewed and their case histories noted, and those who meet the required
criteria are selected. Initially, needy cases were identified mainly by social workers who worked in the streets and slums.

An analysis of the current admission procedure reveals a number of shortcomings, which are listed below:

1. There appears to be more interest in enrolling learners than in reaching out to the needy cases.
2. The teachers feel that this is not their job: “Our job is to teach”, one teacher said.
3. The approach lacks the flexibility which NFE should have. The rigid admission dates obviate other genuinely needy cases from joining midstream: By the time the admission procedure for the following year’s enrollees is conducted, some cases may be worse off.
4. A number of not-very-needy cases manage to ‘sneak in’.
5. Little authentication is done of the learners’ needs, their parents or guardians. Discussions with the teachers revealed that some children are registered as orphans when they have parents, some as being ‘of the street’ when they actually have homes. In some cases, parents collude with ‘good Samaritans’ who claim to have taken the children in from the streets. In other cases, parents themselves masquerade as guardians or well-wishers. This was confirmed by one of the learners who said:

My father told me that he would transfer me to a school near home. I was excited since the school I was attending was a bit far from home. One morning towards the end of the year, my father asked me to accompany our neighbour for an interview that would culminate into my getting admission into the new school. Up to this point I did not know what the school was. During the interview, our neighbour reported that he was my father. It was after the interview that I realized the school was Undugu. I was surprised since I knew Undugu as a school for chokora (street children). I consoled myself with the thought that this school was like the other formal schools. This was not to be ...
In her study, Ngau (1996: 57) advised that children should not be taken to any programme: “let them willingly decide that that is what they want ... yours [role] should be to facilitate”.

Another category of learners in UBEP is the ‘transitory’ one, i.e. those who join when their parents are experiencing economic down-turns and cannot afford the fees of formal primary school. Once their parents recover economically, these children transfer back to formal primary school. As such, Undugu serves as a safety net for these children who would otherwise permanently drop out of school, thus occasioning more wastage.

Blanc (1994) advised that better ways of making contact with children at risk should be developed. According to discussions with teachers, village elders and other community leaders, together with other groups dealing with street children, could be of great help in identifying needy cases. When this was discussed with the children, they indicated that they themselves are the best placed to identify needy cases since as one learner put it: “We play with them, live together and they are our friends.”

Another shortcoming of the admission process is that the children’s profiles are not well documented. In this case, the information sought includes the learner’s name, gender, date of birth (no certificates are presented), educational background (i.e. whether or not the child has previously attended formal school (if so, which one), and when he or she dropped out), the parent’s or guardian’s name, where they live, and some brief history of the learner, e.g. “his parents died and therefore he needs some help”, or “they are many in their family, her siblings do not attend school and the parents are jobless”.

For intervention programmes to fully attain their goal of helping the most disadvantaged, the enrolment process must be done in such a way that only deserving cases are taken in. Easton et al. (1994) stated that a detailed and well-documented life history of the learners is crucial to the success of
interventions, since programmes would be carefully adapted to the specific characteristics of street and working children and to the diverse contexts in which they live and work.

Other than the shortcomings of the enrolment process, admission criteria 3 and 5 above, i.e. that the learner must be a resident in one of the neighbouring slums or areas and must live with a parent, guardian or relative – seem to go against Undugu’s initial goal of reaching out to children ‘of the street’, described by Leonardos (1995) as being the original hallmark of Undugu. These two criteria only favour children described as ‘for the street’, i.e. those children who roam and work in the street by day and return home in the evening.

Type of education offered

For purposes of analysis, the education offered by Undugu could be defined in three categories: (a) basic education; (b) basic skills; and (c) informal skills.

Basic education

Provision of basic literacy and numeracy skills is one of the most significant achievements of USK. This constitutes basic education, the mainstay of UBEP.

Basic education was formally started in 1978 when classes were set up for parking boys and school drop-outs. All these children were too old to easily fit back into regular primary school (Kairi and Mulyungi, 1986). Together with the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), Undugu established the following objectives: (a) to design, develop and implement a suitable curriculum for the learners, to prepare them to acquire skills that will enable
them to enter the Undugu vocational training centres and other such organizations where technical and practical skills are taught; (b) to instil in learners values and attitudes necessary for adjustment to desirable living in society, and (c) to design a training and in-service programme for teachers at the schools.

The basic education programme is of three years’ duration and runs parallel to ordinary primary schools. The learners are served lunch at the school and are not required to wear uniform. Uniform as a requirement for school attendance has been held responsible for non-participation and drop-out of poor children. At UBEP, the teachers consider uniform irrelevant to learning: In the words of Arnold Grol (founder of Undugu): “Two plus two with uniform is four. Two plus two without uniform is four”.

**Basic education curriculum**

The UBEP curriculum, prepared by KIE, condenses the regular primary syllabus into 3 years of basic learning. The programme comprises three phases of basic education designed to teach the children basic literacy, numeracy and survival skills, and give them a heightened sense of their own self worth (Easton et al., 1994). As seen in Tables 3.1-3.4, most children enter UBEP between 13 and 16 years of age.

Phase one of the curriculum compresses together work that would be covered in the first, second and third years of formal primary school. Phase two covers the work of the fourth, fifth and sixth years, while Phase Three covers the work of the seventh and eighth years. Although teachers administer continuous assessment tests, no terminal examinations are taken at the end of phase three. Across the three phases, learners progress at their own pace: some take four years, others five, depending on how quickly they grasp the content taught. Occasionally learners go straight into the basic skills class without having to complete all three phases; this is particularly popular with
learners who are low achievers and who need encouragement, since failure to complete the basic education phase is in no way related to one’s ability to undertake the basic skills class, which is entirely practical. Another group of learners who undertake the basic skills class without completing basic education are older girls. This is usually necessitated by the girls’ secondary physical changes that may make it difficult for them to sit comfortably in the basic education classes. Teachers reported that if this practice were not permitted, many of these girls would end up dropping out.

In terms of the subjects taught, the basic education curriculum consists of all the subjects that were taught in formal primary school prior to the 2001 reforms of the formal primary school curriculum, where the number of subjects was reduced to five. These subjects (taught in Undugu) include English, Kiswahili, mathematics, business education, social studies, science, agriculture, Christian religious education (CRE), music, arts and crafts, home science, geography, history and civics (GHC), and physical education. Only selected topics from these subjects are taught in all three phases.

Learners considered some subjects more useful than others, as is shown in Table 3.9. Examining this table, two subjects are considered the most important by the great majority of the learners: English (31 per cent) and mathematics (26.5 per cent). As indicated by the learners themselves, effective communication and knowledge of measurement are crucial for them in their circumstances.

In terms of the number of subjects taught, the basic education curriculum is quite expansive. As indicated earlier, this curriculum was a replica of the formal primary school curriculum as it was before the 2001 reforms. Although all the reasons given by the learners for preferring the respective subjects are valid, their overwhelming preference for English and mathematics could be a pointer to the need for curriculum reform. Curricula for education programmes for street children should be context sensitive.
Table 3.9  Subjects considered the most useful by learners, and reasons why

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Communication and expanded interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>Measurement and numeracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home science</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Personal hygiene, upkeep and home management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business education</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Micro-investment and self reliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian religious education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Knowledge of God, and of good and evil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Entertainment and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Agriculture</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Environmental consciousness and food production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and craft</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Making crafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography, history and civics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Patriotism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data.

Examinations

During discussions with the teachers, it was noted that the children did not like examinations. Assessment periods are marked by significant absenteeism, most of which is on account of feigned illness. Others report late after the assessments have been done. This behaviour was said to be prominent among children who are low achievers. Although other underlying
causes of such behaviour were not given, the teachers indicated that examinations were among the factors that caused children to drop out of formal school. On account of being poor in class, one teacher painted a particularly gloomy picture: “Some of them cannot even read what they have written.” At the Ngomongo UBEP, low achievers are occasionally given individualized remedial teaching.

The incidence of very poor cases and, consequently, the fear of examinations was blamed partly on the manner in which learners were placed into various phases; if an error is made, this can result in the content being too difficult for the learner to grasp. To help avoid placement errors, a thorough diagnostic pre-admission assessment of learners is advisable.

From the teachers’ questionnaire it was noted that in some cases the learners could not fit into any phase straight away. This, according to the teachers, necessitates the establishment of a pre-phase one class that would serve to make up for any remarkable deficiencies that would obviate learners from directly fitting into phase one. Mukuru Promotion Centre also experienced the problem of the placement of learners at the time of its inception in 1985 when all the learners were placed in three classes. The result was that the abilities and previous educational exposure of learners in these classes ranged from none at all to those who were ready to sit the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examinations (Ngau, 1996).

A lack of examinations would generally imply that no certificate is given and that learners, upon graduation, may not be able to join any institution for further training that demands credentials prior to admission. The issue of certification in NFE is rather complex, especially when considering the insertion of NFE graduates into other learning institutions or when they wish to find formal employment.
Teaching and learning materials

True to the spirit of NFE, quite a number of teaching and learning materials are found on the school premises. This is well illustrated by the head teacher of the Ngomongo UBEP: “Nothing is a waste to us.” Empty matchboxes, bottle tops, empty chalk boxes and bottles are all utilized for teaching and learning. The learners bring most of these teaching and learning resources to the class, helping the learner to become an active participant in the teaching-learning process.

Other than the locally available resources, the centres also have textbooks and other resources that are equally used in formal primary schools, such as maps, a globe and geometry sets, among other things. Although having textbooks that are meant for formal primary schools is encouraging, a few shortcomings are evident:

1. Time consumption (wasting). Teachers have to rummage through a number of books trying to gather relevant content to teach. For example if a teacher were to teach English at phase one, he or she would have to continually review all the English books for classes one to three.
2. Consumption of space. Since these books are many, some extra space has to be set aside to store them.
3. Economic inefficiency. A lot of money has to be spent on books. In point 1 above, one book which encompasses the entire English content of phase one would do just as well and would reduce costs. For instance if the three books were to cost 1,000 Kenyan shillings (Ksh.) – the equivalent of about US$14 – it is highly unlikely that one book encompassing all the relevant content would cost this much. It would also be easier for learners to buy one book rather than to buy several for one single subject given their grinding poverty status.
4. Irrelevance. At one point, Undugu purchased books that were totally irrelevant to their learners’ needs. These books are still lying unused in Undugu’s stores. Also, much of the content of individual formal primary school textbooks is irrelevant to UBEP learners.
The above scenario makes it incumbent upon Undugu to develop teaching resources that are responsive to their circumstance. Having one book for each subject per phase would not only be cost effective but would also improve both the internal and external efficiency of the programmes.

_Machuma schools_

_Machuma_ is a Swahili word for scrap metal. These schools were started in 1987 for children who earned their living collecting scrap. Classes ran for half the day to allow time for their scrap-collecting jobs. The focus of the curriculum was mainly on numeracy to enable the children to avoid exploitation by scrap dealers (Black, 1993), and literacy skills to prepare them for entry into UBEP or a formal school (USK, n.d.).

With effect from January 2001, Undugu’s Machuma learning centres were incorporated into UBEP. It was established through this study that the move was triggered by evidence that the centres were no longer meeting the goals for which they were established and that they were duplicating the phase one work of UBEP.

_The Flash_ (USK, 2000), a quarterly newsletter of USK, reported in December 2000 that the dissolution of the Machuma learning centres was in line with the society’s efforts to streamline and consolidate its NFE and training intervention to ensure that they continue to be effective and responsive to the needs of the people they serve. However, the dissolution of the Machuma schools may have had a number of implications; these are listed below:

- Learners have had to forego their scrap-selling businesses, since UBEP allows no time for this kind of activity.
- Some learners may choose not to attend UBEP and instead continue with their businesses. The little income they earned must have been important for their survival. Recognizing the need learners have to continue working is important to the success of intervention programmes
for street and working children. This aspect is underlined by Easton et al. (1994) who contend that programme strategies must pay attention to the needs of many, if not all, street and working children to continue generating an income in some manner.

- This action is also likely to have severed relations between the children and their parents. Some children work at the behest of their parents, as was discovered by Wakhu (1997). Also, Ngau (1996) indicated that the majority of these children have parents who in fact were responsible for getting them onto the streets to secure additional financial support for the family. She reported a case in which mothers protested against the fact that a child was rescued from working on the streets because the income from that child’s work was contributing to the survival of the family.

*Teachers*

For any educational enterprise to be successful, the quality and quantity of teachers is paramount. *Table 3.10* shows the training and teaching experience of UBEP teachers, and by whom they are employed.

As shown in the table, Undugu has a total of 30 teachers, 10 of whom are on secondment from the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and 20 are employed by USK. The TSC-deployed teachers have taught for the longest duration, and all of them hold at least the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education. Only one of the teachers was a volunteer and a foreigner. NFE programmes, like UBEP, would be expected to attract volunteer teachers from the neighbouring or host communities. Volunteer teachers are considered a major characteristic of NFE programmes. In fact, according to Oudenhoven (1989) and Easton et al. (1994), education programmes for street and working children are fuelled largely by volunteer teachers.
Table 3.10 The training, teaching experience and employers of the UBEP teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Level of education obtained</th>
<th>Teaching experience (in years)</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Employer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngomongo</td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>TSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>TSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>USK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>USK</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>USK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-level</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>USK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kibera</td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>TSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>TSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>TSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>USK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
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<td>YES</td>
<td>USK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>USK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>USK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>USK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University*</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>O-level</td>
<td>23</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
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<td>TSC</td>
</tr>
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<td>O-level</td>
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<td>YES</td>
<td>USK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>USK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumwani</td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>TSC</td>
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<tr>
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<td>O-level</td>
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<td>YES</td>
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<td>USK</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
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<td>USK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>USK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This particular teacher was a volunteer from the Netherlands and has since left.

Key: O-level = Ordinary level; A-level = Advanced level

Source: Field data.
All the teachers but one (the volunteer) were trained. It was established during the study that none of the teachers were hired without having had any training. The Government of Kenya/UNICEF report (1995) indicated that NFE teachers preferred in-service to pre-service training. All the trained teachers at Undugu underwent training under the auspices of the Undugu staff development programme. In-service training was found to be more appropriate, since the teachers already had hands-on experience with street children.

According to the teachers, the training they undergo is not sufficient to handle street children; the course is tailored for teaching in regular schools. Some content areas in which the teachers indicated a need for more training included pedagogy of children in especially difficult circumstances, multigrade teaching techniques and child psychology (with reference to children living in difficult circumstances). The need for training in these areas is equally emphasized in the Government of Kenya/UNICEF (1995) report. Although this is the case, the Undugu management does not seem to appreciate this fact, as is evidenced by the following quotation from one of the management staff: “What you do in college is not tailor-made to solve your problems directly. What the teachers need is adaptation and innovation, not really extra training.”

Although college courses are not tailor-made to solve problems directly as was correctly pointed out by the member of staff quoted above, adaptation and innovation would become easier with more training. An impact assessment of programmes for street children in Metro Manila by UNICEF-ICDC (1989) emphasized more staff training as a critical component of programme improvement. ANPPCAN (1995) also recommended that more specialized training and additional resources be given to street children educators.

Another problem that was found facing the teaching force was staff overruns. Although not on a large scale, a number of teachers do leave their jobs after a few experiences with the children who they find are too difficult
to cope with. To contain such staff overruns, the experiences of the Alternative Primary Education Programme of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee may come in handy. Here, once the teachers are hired, they participate in a twelve-day pre-service training, which includes five days’ training on basic teaching concepts and theory, and seven days’ instruction in preparing lesson plans and practising teaching. After the teachers are placed, they also attend monthly in-service workshops with the programme organizer and teachers from the neighbouring villages. At the end of the year all teachers must attend a six-day refresher course where they focus on deepening their learning concepts and on improving their teaching techniques (Easton et al., 1994). In Undugu’s case, such training should stress the understanding and appreciation of learners.

**Basic skills**

The basic skills programme could also be considered as phase four of the basic education programme. It constitutes a year of exposure to three skills: tailoring, carpentry and sheet-metal work. Other than empowering learners with vocational skills, it also serves to introduce them to the world of work. Learners develop a positive appreciation of work and are made to understand the intrinsic relationship between work and good living.

There are only three teachers in UBEP who are able to teach the basic skills class (one teacher per school except for Ngomongo, where the basic skills class is not offered due to theft of the necessary equipment, such as planes, saws and tailoring machines. Learners from Ngomongo thus usually enrol at Mathare for their basic skills course). For this reason, the three vocational skills are taught on a term basis. The basic skills class, however, is not compulsory and is not a pre-requisite for joining the informal skills programme and, true to this, only has a very small number of learners compared to the basic education classes.
Looking at the basic skills programme of UBEP, a fundamental question asked by McLaughlin (1990) and cited in Leonardos (1999: 32) should be considered: “How relevant are the skills to the conditions in real work places and how can individuals actually use the skills they have acquired in economically productive ways?”. Leonardos adds that success in NFE vocational training means, to a great extent, matching programme services to market demands. Successful programmes can, in turn, be considered to be those which are internally efficient (i.e. which are structured to impart useful skills) and those which are externally efficient (i.e. following which learners manage to make a living out of the skills acquired).

If training responds to the trainees’ needs and interests as well as to market opportunities, besides being delivered in a ‘hands-on’ learning environment, which might include a production aspect, non-formal vocational training intervention will be successful in inserting young people into the world of work.

In the case of Undugu, the trainees’ needs overwhelm the courses offered. Discussions with teachers and data from questionnaires indicated that the three courses offered were limiting and that, as some teachers pointed out, sheet-metal work was out of touch with the current market demands. According to the teachers, the market today is more favourable to plastic products as opposed to sheet metal. As such, teachers concurred with learners on the need to introduce more courses such as cookery, driving, wiring, electronics repair, shoe-making, weaving, plumbing and wood carving.

**Informal skills training programme**

The informal skills programme assists youth from both the streets and the slums of Nairobi, Machakos and Kisumu. At the time of this study, the programme catered for 275 learners: 150 in Nairobi; 50 in Machakos; and 75 in Kisumu. This particular programme could be considered the point of transition to employment and adult economic roles.
As equally noted by Leonardos (1995), upon completion of the four phases of basic education and skills, and after having developed a trade preference, youngsters are encouraged and assisted to choose an artisan from the informal sector with whom they may apprentice for a year in order to gain further experience and training. Undugu, as a partner to this negotiation, developed criteria for the selection of ‘host’ artisans, as well as a procedure for periodic inspection of the working conditions at their facilities (Leonardos, 1995).

After their apprenticeship, many youngsters take and pass government trade tests, following which they are ready for employment. Initially, credit facilities are offered to the youngsters who want to establish their own businesses. The youngsters are grouped together, equipment is bought for them, and the rent for the premises they occupy is paid for them. Trainees are expected to start repaying the loans once they are settled in their businesses. The research established that most trainees defaulted and that the initial objective of establishing a revolving fund could not be sustained. The credit programme has since been discontinued.

The apprenticeship programme serves a task which is twofold: it functions both as an arrangement for the transfer of technical knowledge and as a means by which positive attitudes are developed in youngsters who lack them (Leonardos, 1999).

To make the programme more effective and efficient, discussions with teachers revealed that former trainees already established in the trade would be better ‘masters’. The teachers suggested that former trainees would understand their ‘colleagues’ better and would help shape positive attitudes and values and a greater appreciation of work. The fees paid would also enable them to expand their enterprises. The use of peers in interventions has been emphasized by Blanc (1994) who considers that peers would influence their colleagues; first as role models, second by attracting them to
programmes, and third through group analysis of problems. Peers would also help forestall the current problem of non-attendance. In Undugu, it was reported that they were paying for some ‘ghost’ trainees, which teachers blamed on the lack of a well-developed follow-up programme and laxity on the part of the management. One head teacher said:

When the trainers told me that our trainee had stopped reporting to work, I informed the management and asked them not to pay fees until we established where he was and if he was still willing to continue with the training. The management ignored my advice and went ahead and paid. Now they are again asking me to look for the young man ...

All over the world, apprenticeship programmes are common elements of intervention strategies. In Brazil, for instance, ‘Cruzada do Menor’, ‘Pastorol do Menor’ and ‘Roda Viva’ (Levenstein, 1996) are all programmes that train children in areas in which there is most demand for labour so that they need not be unemployed when they complete their apprenticeship. In some cases, the trainees are helped to find employment. Data from the teachers’ questionnaire showed that Undugu does not help the trainees to find employment after completion of their apprenticeship, whereas in Brazil this is a key ingredient of many programmes for street children. For instance ‘Cruzada do Menor’ has an agreement with several state and local companies to employ some of the adolescents. The Centro de Referencia do Trabalho of ‘Pastorol do Menor’ works like a labour exchange, offering jobs to children who attend apprenticeship courses. The centre maintains contact with different segments of society which could provide jobs for the children. The ‘Pastoral’ tries to train the children in areas in which there is most demand for labour so that they are not unemployed when they complete their apprenticeship (Levenstein, 1996).

In India, Bose (1992) reported that some intervention programmes for street children organize income-generating opportunities for street children
and their families: they provide credit and marketing facilities for goods produced or sold by street children and their families, and provide information on jobs and income-generating projects.

Ngau (1996) equally contends that street children should be helped to attain their aspirations, for there is no point taking the children from the streets, introducing them to a different lifestyle, and then letting them down by not helping them achieve their life-time dreams.

**Partnership in Undugu’s education programmes**

A major characteristic of intervention programmes for disadvantaged youth is the involvement of, and partnership with, other groups. In Brazil, for example, the ‘Projeto Rio Criança Cidade’ involves religious groups (‘Pastoral do Menor’), the military, the Ministry of Education, and the municipal secretariats for social development, health and education (Levenstein, 1996). In Namibia, the street children’s programme involves the ministries of health and social services, youth and sports, basic education, and culture and justice, as well as vocational training institutions, the Municipality of Windhoek, various sports associations, the National Commission for UNESCO and the University of Windhoek (UNICEF, 1999).

Undugu has quite a number of groups involved in its education programme, as is indicated in *Table 3.11*. 
Table 3.11 Participants in Undugu’s education programme and their role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Teachers’ Service Commission</td>
<td>Provision and payment of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi City Council</td>
<td>Providing land and halls for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kenya Institute of Education</td>
<td>Curriculum development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training colleges</td>
<td>Training of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindernothilfe (of Germany)</td>
<td>Providing financial assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Friends’ Circle (of Holland)</td>
<td>Providing financial assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Department for International Development (DFID)</td>
<td>Providing financial and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Development Assistance</td>
<td>Providing training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Children in Need Network</td>
<td>Advocacy, lobbying, providing financial assistance and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children</td>
<td>Advocacy and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The community</td>
<td>Acceptance of the programme, provision of and care for children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data.

For purposes of analysis, Undugu’s partners could be divided into three groups: (a) the Government of Kenya; (b) the community; and (c) non-governmental organizations.

**The Government of Kenya**

The Kenyan Government acknowledges that education is a basic human right and that it is responsible for the provision of the latter. Allowing Undugu to run education programmes was an obvious recognition of the need for concerted efforts to be made in the provision of education to all. The Kenyan
Government’s involvement in Undugu’s education programmes has manifested itself through its various agencies’ dealings with Undugu. These agencies, as indicated in Table 3.11, include Nairobi City Council, the Teachers’ Service Commission, the Kenya Institute of Education and teacher training colleges.

**Nairobi City Council**

All four of the UBEP schools are located in slums in Nairobi. There are two major ways in which the local authority body has assisted Undugu: First, the land on which the schools are built belongs to the city council; and second, the council has provided a hall for the society to be used as a school, which is occupied by the Pumwani UBEP.

Although Undugu occupies the hall and the land, the society does not have title deeds for these properties. The lack of title deeds, especially for land, has occasioned two major problems for Undugu. First, some of this land has been allocated to private developers. For instance in Mathare, the school’s former playground has been allocated to a private developer who has set up a beer distribution depot. The second problem is encroachment on school land by the local community. This problem is especially present in Ngomongo, where there is no small space left for expansion; neighbouring houses are right on the school fence, and some of their roofs are actually in the school compound. The compound itself is too small; the children have no playground and classrooms and spaces are overcrowded.

But, as some teachers observed, the management is partly to blame for this state of affairs. During discussions, teachers lamented that little effort had been made by the management to acquire title deeds. One head teacher said: “They thought that since this was a community development project, title deeds were not required.”
Other than land and the hall, there are more areas of partnership with the local authorities that have not been exploited: for instance the city council owns all the public primary schools within Nairobi. With proper understanding and arrangements, it would be possible to develop a school re-insertion programme, whereby bright UBEP learners could be inserted into the city council’s primary schools. Other areas could be the use of the council’s primary schools’ workshops for basic skills training, direct financial assistance, and waste disposal in and around the schools.

The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE)

Undugu’s partnership with KIE culminated in the development of an NFE curriculum for Undugu. One area in which the teachers indicated a need for greater involvement of the Institute was in the development of teaching-learning materials. As noted earlier, all the books used at UBEP are formal school material.

The Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC)

As shown in Table 3.10, 10 of Undugu’s teachers are employees of TSC. The deployment of more teachers to Undugu by the commission would not only ease Undugu’s financial burden, but would also improve the quality of the education offered.

One area that the teachers thought should be addressed was the recognition of the UBEP head teachers by the commission. Although three of the UBEP head teachers are trained, deployed by the TSC, and all of them have a teaching experience of at least 20 years, none of them are recognized by the commission as head teachers. This, according to the teachers, defeats the purpose of government recognition of UBEP as an alternative education delivery programme. The teachers also find this de-motivating since their upward mobility seems curtailed.
**Teacher training colleges**

None of the trained teachers at Undugu were employed before having received training. Partnership with teacher training institutes enabled them to attend in-service training. Through the staff-development programme, Undugu sponsors a number of teachers to receive training in various teacher training colleges. Given the competitive nature of admission to these teacher training colleges, the Undugu management considers giving opportunities to its teachers to be an encouraging gesture.

**The community**

The participation of communities, at which intervention programmes for disadvantaged youth are targeted, is key to the programmes’ success. This particular aspect is well acknowledged by Undugu, as is noted by one member of the management staff: “Having a project is one thing, having it accepted by the community is another thing. Having the project accepted by the community is key to its success.”

Interviews with the management staff indicated two ways in which the community participated: (a) by sending the children to Undugu’s education programmes – to Undugu’s management, this testifies to the communities’ acceptance and appreciation of its education programmes; (b) by taking care of the children – after lessons, children go back to their homes where they are fed, sleep and rest in preparation for the next day’s work.

At Ngomongo the children’s parents also contribute a nominal amount of money to buy soap for washing plates. Another way through which the community involves itself is by attending school meetings to discuss problems affecting the children and the school in general.

Looking at the communities’ participation, it is apparent that their involvement is not exhaustive. For instance there are no volunteer teachers
from the communities; the only volunteer teacher was in Kibera and was Dutch. The other area is financial contribution. Although it is understandable that these communities are poor, it does not follow that they cannot offer any financial assistance. From interviews with head teachers and teachers it became evident that Undugu has not done enough to attract financial input from the surrounding communities. One teacher’s statement supports this belief: “These people are very poor and that is why Undugu exists – to help them. We cannot ask for money from them, otherwise why should we be there!”

Another area in which more partnership is needed is that of the security of school property. As already noted, the Ngomongo UBEP has no basic skills facilities due to theft. The taps have also been vandalized. The head teacher noted:

“The security situation in this area is wanting. Any time they [thieves] see a visitor or a vehicle coming in, they break in thinking that he has brought money or property. We cannot employ a watchman either, since this will send a wrong signal to these people. They will think that we have valuables here and they will break in. They might even kill the watchman!”

Teachers also admitted to feeling that not enough had been done to involve political leaders. A lack of proper understanding and appreciation of Undugu’s education programmes by local area politicians occasioned the taking over by government of the Undugu village polytechnic at Mathare in 1983. As one teacher indicated:

“Political leaders never understood what Undugu was doing. We had many white people coming and the politicians thought they were bringing money. So the politicians thought that by taking over they would get the money.”
It is important that the community be actively involved in the affairs of organizations such as Undugu. Chatterjee (1992) warned that unless those which the programmes are designed to help are fully involved (in their planning and execution), the results are bound to be disappointing.

**Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**

Key partners of Undugu in the provision of education to street children are NGOs. These include: Kindernothilfe of Germany, which is the key financier; the Friends’ Circle of Holland, which also provides finances; the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, which provides both financial and technical assistance; Action Aid and other community-based organizations like St John’s Community Centre, which is active in Pumwani; and the Jirani Children Rehabilitation Centre, which is active in Ngomongo.

Currently Undugu depends heavily on external donor assistance – a situation the teachers in this study considered not good for sustainability. For instance Undugu is at present restructuring its financial obligations following diminishing financial assistance from donors. It was also noted that should the donors pull out, the society might be forced to fold up; for instance Undugu’s workshops in the industrial area still remain moribund after the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD) suspended its activities in Kenya in 1987.

The teachers also felt that the management had not done enough to encourage local organizations to take part in its activities. For example in one school, a group of pharmacists who had wanted to donate drugs to the school was not allowed to do so. The head teacher noted:

“I informed the head office about the intentions of this group. I was then told that they would write to the group and also tell me about their position on the matter. The group had given us a month to consider their
offer and then inform them about our position. The month is now over. The head office never communicated anything to the group. I am still waiting to hear from them [head office].”

Another example is a case where exercise books offered by the provincial administration had not been collected several months after the offer was made. Also, the sustenance of local partnerships was considered poor, and for this reason partnerships have died out; for example the partnership between Undugu and the Basic Education Resource Centre at Kenyatta University no longer exists. Similarly, the involvement of KIE is minimal.

Other partners with whom Undugu could engage are indicated in Table 3.12.

Looking at the kind of involvement the various partners have in Undugu’s activities, one picture emerges: that of external participation as opposed to an active involvement in the day-to-day running of the programmes, i.e. the planning, management and evaluation of the programmes. Shaeffer (1991: 6) offers several specific degrees of participation various actors could have in programmes geared at children in especially difficult circumstances. These include: (a) participation merely as users of the service provided; (b) participation through the contribution of resources, materials and labour; (c) participation through attendance, for example, in parents’ meetings; (d) participation through consultation on a particular issue; (e) involvement in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors; (f) participation as implementers of delegated powers; and (g) participation in real decision-making at every stage, identification of problems, examining feasibility, planning, implementation and evaluation.
Table 3.12 Other possible partners of Undugu and their possible roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provincial administration</td>
<td>Provide food and security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jua Kali Association of Kenya</td>
<td>Help secure trainees’ employment, provide equipment and learners’ apprenticeships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>Research, training staff and producing teaching-learning materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church organizations</td>
<td>Provide guidance, counselling and food for learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s organizations</td>
<td>Reaching out to the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local businesses and organizations,</td>
<td>Providing employment and financial assistance to trainees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Nairobi Central Business District Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>Providing medical attention to trainees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-based organizations</td>
<td>Volunteers and identification of needy cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other international organizations, e.g. the World Food Programme</td>
<td>Provide financial and technical assistance, food and volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturers, through the Association of Kenya Manufacturers</td>
<td>Provide teaching-learning equipment, secure trainees’ apprenticeships and employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data.

Problems faced by teachers

Discussions and interviews with teachers revealed that they were experiencing quite a number of problems which are listed below:

- *Dealing with single mothers.* This was put by one head teacher in the following words: “I was born and grew up in a rural area where single
motherhood is not common. Here I am confronted by single mothers, and I have to re-orient my perception of them. It is difficult.” Single motherhood is a common phenomenon in the slums. The difficulty is not in dealing with single mothers as individuals, but rather in dealing with the particular problems they have and the insinuations that are made because of the stigmas that are associated with these problems. For instance in Pumwani, the neighbourhood is renowned for commercial sex work. It is likely that a stereotypical perception of single mothers around this region as commercial sex workers would negatively affect interaction with them.

• **Lack of relevant books and inadequate teaching and learning resources.** As already mentioned, teachers are forced to search through a number of books to gather enough content to teach. This is coupled with a lack of adequate teaching and learning resources – especially for the basic skills class. The teachers equally complained that it took a long time to have equipment repaired or replaced.

• **Teaching learners with diverse abilities.** Considering this problem, one teacher said: “You know, these learners are not like the ones in the formal schools. Here we have learners of different ages; some have gone to school and some have not. Some of them have been to ‘bush schools’ and they are as good as not having been to any school. Some are already experiencing adolescence. All these are put in the same class and you have to teach them.” The research established that, due to the above problems, some newly hired teachers leave after a short while. Other than the learners’ diverse abilities, teachers complained about the learners’ low levels of understanding, poor concentration in class, truancy, lateness, and lack of support and co-operation from parents. The teachers accused parents of abdicating their duties, such as disciplining their children and showing an interest in their children’s schoolwork. To illustrate this, one teacher said: “These parents don’t care about their children. They want Undugu to do everything for them. Others never even know where their children are. In one particular
case, a female student went missing for about a week. When we contacted the parent to enquire about her whereabouts, she admitted that she did not know where her daughter was. It was through other learners that we discovered that she had eloped with a man. We were forced to get her back ourselves, for the mother never seemed to care.”

- **Insecurity.** In this respect, Ngomongo and Pumwani are the most affected. In July 2001, fighting among the Ngomongo slum-dwellers occasioned the closure of the UBEP school for quite some time. The Pumwani UBEP is located near the historic Kamukunji grounds – a popular venue for political rallies, licensed or not, which are usually dispersed violently by the police. Other than in these extreme cases, general insecurity is created by the slum-dwellers themselves. Cases of UBEP teachers and other Undugu staff being robbed were reported. Frequent police swoops in these areas were also reported. The security of school property has not been spared either. As already reported, the Ngomongo UBEP does not offer basic skills training because of theft of equipment.

- **Inaccessibility, especially during rainy seasons.** The problem of inaccessibility mostly affects the Kibera and Ngomongo UBEPs. These two schools are located deep in the slums where the road networks are poor. This problem becomes more pronounced during rainy seasons, when run-off and mud make it hard to access the schools. Equally, the schools are located on undulating terrain which, coupled with narrow paths and roads, makes driving to these places difficult.

- **Foul smell.** The Ngomongo and Kibera UBEPs are the most affected due to the open sewers located around the schools. The Kibera UBEP is located next to the Nairobi Dam, on whose shores refuse is dumped and human excrement is a common feature. The waters of the dam are filthy and usually emit a foul smell. In all the schools, pit latrines are situated very close to the classrooms, usually releasing an offensive odour that distracts learning.
• **Noise.** The schools are affected by noise from two main sources: passing vehicles and people. The problem of noise is more acute in the Pumwani UBEP as it is the only school located next to a busy road; about five metres away to be more precise. For this reason, the teachers are forced to contend with noise from passing vehicles and road construction machines (at the time of the study, the road was being re-surfaced). Pumwani is also situated next to the busy Gikomba market, where traders are known for shouting and singing to attract customers. Other sources of noise at Pumwani are people passing by the school, food vendors and their customers, and people waiting at the bus stop directly opposite the school.

• **Dust.** All four schools are located on dusty compounds. The loose soil gets easily blown by wind, causing discomfort. The problem of dust is aggravated when the children are playing, especially in Ngomongo where the children play within the small school compound. In Pumwani, the problem of dust is worsened by passing vehicles.

The other problems indicated by the teachers were concerned with management and are listed below:

• **Communication.** Teachers are not consulted and there is poor communication between the central office at Delta House and the teachers in the schools. The teachers felt that the management exercised an overly centralized and personalized leadership style. This problem was also noted by Easton et al. (1994). One head teacher put it as follows: “Here no discussions are held. We receive orders and we are expected to carry them out. Now we are hearing that they intend to start examinations for all UBEPs. This is not possible ...”

• **Low motivation and morale.** The teachers attributed this to what they described as a “callous approach” adopted by the management. The research established that during the violence that shook the Ngomongo area occasioning the closure of the UBEP school, the management
never visited the school to establish what had happened, whether the teachers and the learners were safe, or even to encourage them. In such instances the teachers felt deserted.

- **Threats and intimidations.** The teachers complained that this is how the management exercised its control. One teacher commented: “Here if you open your mouth you receive a letter. At times, even complaining to the management about something wrong is met with a warning letter. You see, we have families to look after, so we prefer staying quiet and keeping our jobs. For some of us it’s only that we love these children otherwise we would long have transferred to the regular schools.”

- **A disabling bureaucracy.** For instance it was noted that it takes too long to buy tools and other necessary equipment such as desks. In one particular instance the teachers pointed out that desks made for UBEP learners in the Undugu workshops could not be released because UBEP had not paid.

- **Favouritism.** The teachers deployed by TSC felt that Undugu-employed teachers were being given more incentives than they were. On the other hand, Undugu-employed teachers felt that teachers from TSC were being favoured when it came to further training; i.e. workshops and seminars. On the whole, there appeared to be some rivalry between the Undugu-employed teachers and the TSC-deployed teachers.

- **Meetings.** The head teachers complained that head teachers’ meetings to plan for term activities and appraisal meetings at the end of the term had been done away with, resulting in the head teachers feeling nominally involved in the management of Undugu’s educational enterprise. Equally, the head teachers felt that the Ksh.1,200 (about US$16) given per month as petty cash was not sufficient.

- **Interference.** The head teachers also detested what they called interference in their work. One head teacher noted: “At one point the head office sent to us a new teacher, and even prescribed duties to her without consulting me. This was not proper since another teacher was already handling these duties. The new teacher later left, and no teacher
was willing to take over her duties.” The teachers said that such offers are likely to isolate the newcomer, since he or she is likely to be viewed as an unnecessary imposition.

Another problem that teachers experienced was sexual advances from female learners. One teacher explained thus: “These girls know too much for their ages. You must be strong enough to withstand their advances ... Some, when they bring their assignments, brush their breasts against your shoulder or even lean on you. In fact a young man like you [referring to the researcher] cannot escape... ” Teachers blamed this behaviour on the absence of a father figure in the children’s families and the care-free sexual behaviour in the slums. It was even said that some of the children came from families where the parents are commercial sex workers, hence their sexual advances on teachers are considered a function of their familial backgrounds. There were, however, no cases of sexual advances from male learners towards their female teachers. Considering that most of Undugu’s learners are adolescents, and some are already making sexual advances towards their teachers, it is not unlikely that there are sexual associations among the learners. This should be an area of concern for both the teachers and the Undugu management, since inter-learner sexual associations may easily negate Undugu’s efforts through unwanted pregnancies, contraction of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, and eventually drop-out. Some teachers averred that sexual advances from learners depended, to a great extent, on the teacher’s disposition. It was reported that if a male teacher appropriately played his role as a parent substitute and behaved as a responsible adult, sexual advances from learners would not be forthcoming.

To assuage some of the above problems, the teachers suggested a number of solutions, which are: (a) an exhaustive involvement and consultation of teachers in the management of UBEP; (b) frequent meetings, seminars and workshops for the Undugu staff to chart out the running of the programme; (c) Undugu should establish a pre-phase one programme in UBEP to deal
Data presentations, analysis and discussions

specifically with those who cannot read or write; (d) preparation of pedagogical resources that are specific to Undugu’s programmes; (e) revision of the curriculum; (f) frequent guidance and counselling for the learners; (g) more incentives for teachers, for example a hardship allowance and a substantive transport allowance; (h) openness on the part of Undugu’s management; (i) more involvement of Undugu in issues affecting its host communities, for instance by visiting and consoling victims of clashes and helping to reconstruct houses; and (j) frequent meetings with the guardians and parents of the children.

Problems faced by learners

As with their teachers, Undugu learners also mentioned quite a number of problems which they face. Some of the problems are the same as those faced by the teachers, including foul smell, noise and dust, although most of the problems suffered by the learners have to do with the learning environment. According to Black (1999: 19), the essential characteristics of an environment conducive to learning include: (a) it should be physically attractive and comfortable; (b) there should be space for recreation, play, leisure and expression; (c) the environment should be free from violence (including corporal punishment), intimidation and emotional abuse; (d) students should be safe from sexual harassment and exploitation; (e) students should be safe from environmental hazards and have access to clean water. Waste should be properly disposed of; and (f) counselling should be available to address the children’s social, emotional and psychological needs.

The situation in the four UBEP schools is largely an antithesis of the above characteristics. For instance when considering building conditions and comfort, Pumwani and Ngomongo UBEP learners are the most affected; the roofs are rusty and some of them leak. The space available is also small and overcrowded. Learners in Ngomongo and Kibera have to contend with poor
lighting, for there is no electricity to provide light to supplement sunlight, which is equally insufficient owing to the manner in which the classrooms have been constructed. The situation is normally aggravated when it rains. As observed by Brink (1997), good lighting conditions in learning environments are required for users to see properly and to feel comfortable. She (Brink) adds that continuous straining of the eyes because of dimly lit rooms can eventually cause permanent damage to the eyes. Creating an environment where learners feel physically comfortable is important to their educational attainment.

Pertaining to space for recreation and play, all the schools but Kibera are affected. As noted earlier in this chapter, a developer who set up a beer distribution depot ‘grabbed’ Mathare’s former playground. In Ngomongo the slum has encroached on the school grounds, such that there is neither space for children to play nor room for expansion. Pumwani is more affected for it has no compound of its own. Although Kibera has a playground, the learners complained that the grounds are too dusty and full of gravel, making it unsuitable terrain for play. None of the schools’ compounds have a grassy area.

Violence, intimidation and emotional abuse were the other problems mentioned by the learners. The worst form of violence could be said to emanate from the communities around the schools. During the violence that shook Ngomongo in July 2001 the children were engulfed in fear, which affected their learning. The school had to be closed for some time to let the tension ease. Beating of younger learners by older and bigger ones was also reported. Another form of violence encountered by learners in all the schools was corporal punishment exercised by the teachers: During visits to the schools, events were witnessed such as learners being caned and others being made to kneel on the ground for the entire duration of the lesson. In view of the fact that most of the children come from families and live in environments in which violence is regularly meted out to them, violence in schools is likely to
cause learners to experience an approach-avoidance conflict. Schools are supposed to be safe places. Insults towards learners from other students and teachers were also witnessed: During one of the visits to the schools, a learner burst into the head teacher’s office and reported: “Teacher, Njoki [not her real name] has insulted me. She says that my mother has a growth on her breasts, an indication that she has AIDS, and my father a good for nothing drunkard ...”

Most of the insults the learners exchange are foul. This behaviour, the teachers confirmed, is commonplace. There is every risk that learners may pick up violent and other inappropriate social behaviour as a way of life. This, if not checked, could easily counteract Undugu’s interventionist role.

Another problem faced by learners is sexual harassment, which in these schools manifests itself in its very worst form: rape. In one school it was said that a cartel of rapists called on the help of bigger girls, who were paid to lure their unsuspecting colleagues into rape traps. Most rape victims eventually stop going to school for they were usually raped on the way to or from school.

Safety from environmental hazards is key to the well-being of learners. In this respect, the problems experienced by learners include inadequate pit latrines and water shortages. The Kibera UBEP flanks the Nairobi Dam, which is full of sewage and hyacinth. Adjacent to the dam (in the school compound) is a heap of waste. Around this area, human waste is scattered. These conditions are conducive to outbreaks of diseases such as cholera and typhoid.

The schools have attempted to address the learners’ emotional and psychological problems by way of mounting guidance and counselling programmes. Although the teachers usually do this, the schools also invite professional counsellors.
Not only are the problems experienced by learners related to the learning environment: other problems could be said to emanate from the learners’ psycho-social dispositions of their schools. Such problems include lack of a school fence, no school gate, no flag, no school uniform, and the fact that the learners do not sit the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examinations. All these, on the contrary, are found in formal primary schools. The fact that these missing elements cause problems is a clear indication that learners do not understand the non-formal nature of their school. Neither do some of the learners’ parents understand Undugu’s education programme: The management reported that during a meeting with parents at the Kibera UBEP, parents demanded that learners be provided with a uniform.

To solve the above problems, the guidelines offered by Black (1999) may come in handy. Helping the learners and their parents to develop a clear understanding and appreciation of their kind of school could help cure their inhibitions vis-à-vis the differences between formal and non-formal schools.
Chapter 4
Summary, conclusions and recommendations

This study evaluated the role of USK in the provision of education to street children with a view to drawing lessons for replication. The study was carried out in Ngomongo, Pumwani, Mathare and Kibera UBEP schools. This chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Summary of the findings

Against the backdrop of the prevailing global efforts to attain education for all, one of Undugu’s major achievements is that it provides an alternative form of basic education to children who are not able to take part in the formal system. Taken as a whole, Undugu has accommodated a total of 5,152 learners since inception of UBEP, of whom 2,270 (44.1 per cent) were girls and 2,882 (55.9 per cent) boys. All these learners were either school drop-outs/push-outs or had never enrolled in school at all. As such, Undugu plays an interventionist role by mitigating the circumstances of the least served members of its society: street children.

To fulfil its mission, Undugu employed 30 teachers, amongst which all but one are trained. Ten of these teachers were deployed by TSC. To further improve the quality of the education offered, Undugu provides quite a number of teaching-learning resources; for instance once a learner has been admitted he/she is provided with 11 exercise books, a geometry set, a ruler and a bag.

As a proactive education programme, the UBEP schools are situated within the slums so that the children are easily reached before they become
‘of the street’. The learners do not wear uniform and are provided with free food. Although the learners are provided with free food, the critical importance of education is not lost on them as 85.5 per cent of them registered having a desire to receive education.

One other major finding is that most children (61 per cent) joined UBEP on the decision of their mothers, and that a majority of them (68 per cent) come from big families of four to six siblings or more; 51 per cent of the learners’ siblings do not attend school, and those who attend do so at UBEP.

The teaching and learning resources used in UBEP are the same as those used in formal primary schools, especially the textbooks. The UBEP curriculum compresses the entire formal primary school curriculum, and therefore the teachers use the same texts as those used in formal primary schools. The problem is that these books are underutilized, since the teachers only pick out what they consider to be relevant. It is also expensive to buy all the books, just as it is time consuming for the teachers to go through several books in order to pick out the desired content to teach a given subject in a given phase. The curriculum is also too broad for an NFE programme. The subjects preferred by learners include English (31 per cent), mathematics (26.5 per cent), home science (9.5 per cent) and business education (7.5 per cent) because they enhance communication and interaction, measurement and accounting skills, personal hygiene and home management, and develop self-reliance.

The process of identifying and admitting the learners has loopholes that allow not-so-needy cases to be admitted. Even so, Undugu serves as a safety net for children whose parents do not have a steady income. At times when these children’s parents are out of employment and the children face the threatening prospect of dropping out, the children join UBEP and return to formal school when their parents’ financial situation has improved.
To achieve its goals, Undugu has quite a number of partnerships. The Kindernothilfe group is Undugu’s key partner, especially in the area of finance. Undugu has not, however, managed to develop many partnerships locally. This situation is premised on the false assumption that local groups are not willing to collaborate.

Both the learners and the teachers face quite a number of problems that range from management malpractice to insecurity. There appears to be some rivalry between the TSC-deployed teachers and the Undugu-employed teachers. The learners’ major concern is that Undugu does not help them find employment once they have finished their apprenticeship.

Conclusions

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Street children have unique basic needs and, consequently, different learning needs, as well as different ways of meeting such needs. As such, curriculum content and pedagogy should be constantly reviewed and updated.
2. Undugu plays a major role in providing education to street children, including imparting to them skills that will enable them to become self-reliant. Equally, Undugu has managed to develop in the learners a positive appreciation of work.
3. While Undugu provides a cheap alternative to primary education, a lack of sufficient facilities and resources, coupled with the teachers’ insufficient mastery of pedagogy for street children, is likely to result in the education offered being of low quality.
4. Involvement and participation of parents, the local community and the learners in the education programme is minimal. The fact that parents and the surrounding communities are needy should not militate against
their participation in the programme. As far as the education programme is concerned, the prevailing attitude is one of philanthropy.

5. Lack of financial security puts a question mark over the sustainability of UBEP. The programme is almost overly dependent on donors. Income accruing from Undugu’s income-generating activities is insufficient.

6. The problems that both the learners and the teachers face are so overwhelming that, if not responded to urgently, they may negate Undugu’s efforts.

Recommendations

This study proffers the following recommendations:

1. USK alone is incapable of providing education to all the street children in Kenya. Measures should therefore be taken to encourage other organizations to initiate education programmes for street children.

2. Government should provide financial assistance to organizations that provide education to children in especially difficult circumstances. Although replicating Undugu-like programmes for street children would help in the short term, attacking poverty in all its manifestations would offer a lasting solution to the phenomenon.

3. USK curriculum is overloaded and needs to be reformed. Since it is not mandatory that learners further pursue any of the skills learnt in the basic skills phase in the informal sector programme, the basic skills phase should be discontinued so that learners go straight into the informal skills programme; this would help save both time and money.

4. A better way of admitting learners should be developed so that only needy cases are admitted. The process of identifying needy cases should be continuous and thorough. This should be done by social workers, with teachers performing a complementary role. Learners’ profiles should
be more exhaustive to enable the programmes to be tailored in such a way that the learners’ needs are adequately addressed.

5. USK management should get title deeds for the land on which the schools are built. This would help forestall any encroachment or grabbing as has occurred at the Mathare UBEP.

6. Training programmes that would address the peculiarities of street children should be established. Such programmes should address areas such as the psychology, sociology and pedagogy of street children, and could be started in educational institutions that already offer special education such as Kenyatta University and the Kenya Institute of Special Education. USK should also keep updating the teachers’ skills by continually mounting training programmes through workshops and seminars.

7. The management should adopt an all-inclusive and open management approach that would invite, recognize and appreciate the input and potential of all its members. The head teachers should be accorded some degree of autonomy.

8. More research should be carried out in the area of pedagogy for street children, their psychology and sociology. Studies should also be done in the area of curricula and teaching and learning resources for street children. It would also be interesting to find out why Undugu and other NFE programmes continue receiving learners even after the Kenyan Government has declared free primary education.
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Appendices
Appendix I
Research methods

Research design

This research was a case study in which the descriptive survey design was utilized.

Locale

The study was conducted in Nairobi at the four Undugu Basic Education Programme (UBEP) schools. These schools are located in the slums of Kibera, Ngomongo, Pumwani and Mathare.

Population for the study

The population for the study consisted of all the pupils at UBEP schools, all the teachers (including the head teachers) and the co-ordinator of education and training.

Sampling procedures

Research sites

All four of the UBEP schools were used in the study. These are Kibera, Ngomongo, Pumwani and Mathare.
Respondents

In this study, all 30 teachers, one management staff in charge of education, and 200 pupils were selected. The 200 pupils represented 27 per cent of the pupil population. They were selected using the purposive sampling technique: 50 from each of the four UBEP schools. The purposive sampling technique was used following results of the pilot study which showed that most of the learners had extremely low literacy levels to adequately fill in the questionnaires. Since the teachers had considerable knowledge of the learners, the researcher sought their help in obtaining the research samples.

Research instruments

Data were collected using questionnaires as the main instrument. Interviews and informal discussions were also conducted.

Questionnaires

Three questionnaires were prepared: one for the management staff, one for the teachers, and one for the pupils. The questionnaires helped collect data on the impact of the Undugu street children education programmes, the constraints of these programmes, and how Undugu uses demographic data on the children for educational purposes.

Interview schedule

There was one interview schedule for the Undugu Society’s management staff. The management staff included all the UBEP schools’ head teachers and the co-ordinator of education and training. The interview sought data on partnership and collaboration, Undugu’s successes and failures, and the pupil selection and admission procedures. Consent was sought to make audio tape
recordings of the interviews. Some of the subjects did not give their consent, therefore detailed notes were made during and after the interviews.

**Document analysis**

The researcher examined data from both published and unpublished sources. From the Undugu Society of Kenya (USK), the following documents were important to the study: (a) statistical records showing trends in the number of pupils since USK’s inception by gender, age and educational level before joining the Undugu education programme; and (b) records indicating the qualifications of staff (both teaching and non-teaching) and their positions.

**Piloting of instruments**

Instruments were piloted in one of the UBEP schools, which helped determine the validity and reliability of the research instruments. Since the instruments demanded mostly short-answer responses and, in some cases, short essays, the scorer (rater) reliability approach was used to determine the instruments’ reliability. The instruments were found to be reliable. Important suggestions, omissions and corrections from the piloting exercise were incorporated into the instruments. For example, the questionnaire for pupils was translated from English to Kiswahili.

**Administration of instruments**

Whereas the researcher personally administered the interviews and conducted the document analysis, the UBEP teachers and one research assistant helped in administering the questionnaires. The teachers helped collect the completed questionnaires. All of the 200 questionnaires were returned registering a response rate of 100 per cent.
Methods of data analysis and presentation

**Quantitative data**

Quantitative data were tabulated and analyzed using simple frequencies and percentages.

**Qualitative data**

Coding categories were developed as a way of organizing the qualitative data collected according to particular research questions. This involved: (a) going through the data and numbering them sequentially; (b) carefully searching through the data for regularities and patterns related to the research questions which the study intended to answer; and (c) writing down words and phrases to represent regularities and patterns. The words and phrases were the coding categories and were used as a means of sorting out the descriptive data so that material bearing on a given research question could be physically separated from the other data. The evidence that is given to support observations is in the form of statements and illustrative descriptions.
Appendix II
Interview schedule for the management staff of the USK Street Children Education Programme

Mission and organization of the Undugu street children education programmes and partnerships

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of USK in the provision of education to street children. Your participation in this interview is greatly appreciated.

1. Why was USK established?
   - To find out what Undugu’s mission and objectives are.
   - To establish Undugu’s target clientele and beneficiaries.

2. Why were the education programmes for street children started?

   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................

3. What criteria do you use to select children into your programmes?
   - Investigate what factors determine the placement of children; i.e. whether they are integrated with the community or institutionalized at programme hostels.
Establish how pupils are selected into the education programmes and placed in classes.

4. How do you raise funds for programmes? Are they adequate?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

5. What do the communities contribute to the programme?

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6. What is the government’s role in these programmes?

........................................................................................................................................
(a) Is it effective? Yes ☐ No ☐

How can it be improved? .................................................................................................

7. Which other organizations do you co-operate with?

........................................................................................................................................
(a) What do they do, and how? ..................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

(b) In what areas do you collaborate the most? .........................................................
........................................................................................................................................

(c) What factors hinder or encourage partnership? .....................................................
........................................................................................................................................
(d) Who is responsible for these factors? ...........................................

8. What are the major problems the programmes have encountered?
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9. What are your successes?
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   What factors have contributed to your successes? .........................
..............................................................................................................

10. What are your failures? .................................................................

   What factors have contributed to your failures? ............................
..............................................................................................................
Appendix III
Questionnaire for pupils

Pupils’ demographic data

1. What is your gender? Male ☐ Female ☐

2. How old are you? ..............................................................................................

3. Where do you live here in Nairobi? ..............................................................

4. (a) How many brothers and sisters do you have? .................................
    (b) Do all of them go to school? Yes ☐ No ☐
    (c) If they do not go to school, where are they and what do they do?
        ..............................................................................................................
        ..............................................................................................................

5. Why did you enrol in this learning centre?
   .....................................................................................................................
   .....................................................................................................................
6. Who decided that you would enrol at this learning centre?

7. (a) Have you ever enrolled in a formal school? Yes ☐ No ☐
(b) If yes, at what class did you drop out?

8. How long have you been learning at this centre?

9. (a) Which subjects do you consider more important?
(b) Why do you consider these subjects important?

10. What more would you like to learn that is not offered here?

11. What problems do you face at this learning centre?

12. In your view, how could more children be enrolled in this learning centre?
Appendix IV
Questionnaire for management staff

Administration of the USK education programmes

Thank you for accepting to answer these questions. This questionnaire will help us to examine the role of USK in the provision of education to street children.

1. How do you identify needy cases among street children? (Please state where you find them and who it is who identifies them.)

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2. How, and by whom, are the programmes’ activities planned and approved?

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........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................

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3. (a) To what extent are planned activities actually implemented?

- Fully □
- Partially □
- Haphazardly □

(b) Briefly explain your answer to Question 3 above

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..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................

4. Kindly report on any recent research projects aiming at promoting the information/knowledge level of given problems or aspects of your education programmes.

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..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................

5. Do you ever sensitize the public to the plight of street children?

- Yes □
- No □

(a) If ‘Yes’, how do you do it?

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..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................
(b) If ‘No’, explain why?
............................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................
6. Do you help the children to find employment once they have finished their training?
  Yes ☐ No ☐

(a) If ‘Yes’, how do you do it? ........................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................
If ‘No’, explain why? ................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................
7. Is there any umbrella organization that co-ordinates activities of organizations dealing with street children?
  Yes ☐ No ☐

If ‘Yes’, which organization is it? .................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................................
Do you belong to it? Yes ☐ No ☐

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If no organization exists, do you think there is a need to have one?

Yes ☐  No ☐

Explain your answer to the previous question ..............................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

8. Do you develop any human resources to work with street children?

Yes ☐  No ☐

Explain your answer to Question 8 ..................................................................................
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........................................................................................................................................
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Appendices
Appendix V
Questionnaire for teachers

Teacher participation in the USK street children education programmes

Thank you for accepting to answer these questions. This questionnaire will help us examine the role of the Undugu Society of Kenya in the provision of education to street children. Please answer all the questions.

1. What is your level of education? ..........................................................

2. How long have you taught in this programme? .................................

3. Are you a trained teacher? ..............................................................

4. Are you employed by the Teachers Service Commission or by Undugu?

5. (a) Do you establish which literacy and numeracy skills the children posses before they are admitted?

   Yes □ No □

(b) If yes, how is this information used?

   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................
6. What criteria do you use when placing the children in a course such as carpentry, tailoring, motor mechanics, etc.?

..............................................................................................................................

..............................................................................................................................

7. How do you rate the training given?

Adequate ☐    Inadequate ☐

Somewhat adequate ☐

8. What problems do you encounter in your teaching?

(a) In your opinion what are the causes of the problems you have stated above?

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..............................................................................................................................

(b) What solutions would you suggest to the above-mentioned problems?

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## Appendix VI

Ngomongo UBEP enrolment data since its inception

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>School attendance before joining UBEP</th>
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<td>M  F  T</td>
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**Key:** M = males; F = females; T = total males and females

**Source:** Undugu enrolment records.
# Appendix VII

Pumwani UBEP enrolment data since its inception

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Parent/ guardian</th>
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**Key:** M = males; F = females; T= total males and females

* Some records for these years are missing.

**Source:** Undugu enrolment records.
# Appendix VIII

Kibera UBEP enrolment data since its inception

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<th>Age group (in years)</th>
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**Key:** M = males; F = females; T = total males and females

**Source:** Undugu enrolment records.
## Appendix IX

Mathare UBEP enrolment data since its inception

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Parent/guardian</th>
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</table>

**Key:** M = males; F = females; T = total males and females

**Source:** Undeguru enrolment records.
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