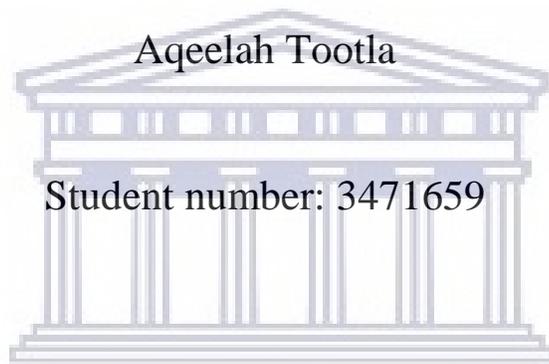


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Social Work services available to vulnerable children: Lessons and best practices for South Africa from selected countries.



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A mini thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
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August 16, 2021

DECLARATION

I, the above declare that “Social Work services available to vulnerable children: Lessons and best practices for South Africa from selected countries” is my own work and has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university before. Any references used has been appropriately ascribed to its original author. I understand that if this assessment contains any form of plagiarism that I may be subject to appropriate corrective action.

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ABSTRACT

Currently, in South Africa, more than half of its children find themselves living in households and communities without adequate child welfare facilities. These conditions render them vulnerable as they have no control over their life circumstances. This has emerged as a growing concern, and a problem. This thesis attempts to enhance our understanding of some important interventions and support structures available to these children, families and communities. The study is vital as post-1996 the South African government has made strides in ensuring that through the 1996 Constitution, the Child Act of 2005 and the White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997 and other progressive social policies there is the gradual improvement of child welfare in the country. These legislations are a social policy to address the needs of children post-1996 to ensure social justice and equity in the country. Despite these efforts, implementation challenges are rife. Though child welfare is a public challenge and both the legislative framework and implementation tools are driven by public officials to ensure the realization of these improved conditions for child welfare there is challenge with implementing. Therefore, the study is placed within the realm of social policy which is a subset of public policy in the field of public administration. Within the South African public service implementation has emerged as a recurring challenge and social policy and specifically child welfare is no exception, despite the huge resources that the state is availing. These challenges range from institutional capacity, capacity building and corruption amongst many others. This study is suggesting that the country can learn from some successful case studies from the African continent with even lower budgets and per capita incomes like Ghana, Kenya and Botswana. To gather these insights the study employed an exploratory research approach and content analysis method from 3 developing countries, namely; Botswana, Ghana and Kenya. To achieve this goal the study had to analysis the emerging themes. This led to the formation of common themes that were presented. The data were synthesized and interpreted following these themes. From these insights, the study found that in terms of successful implementation of child welfare programs the country can learn some important lessons from these countries.

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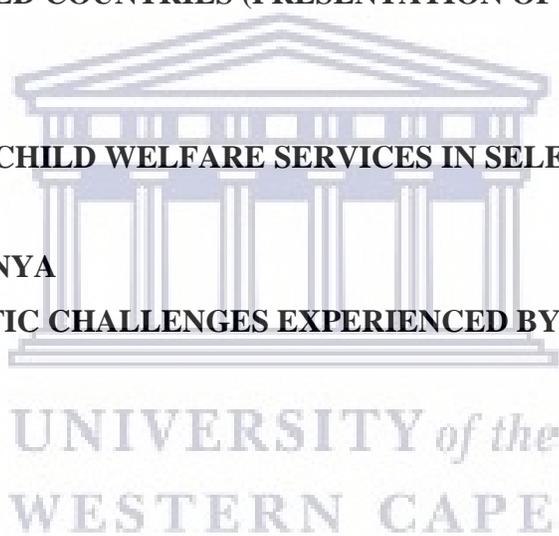
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CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Given the history of South Africa, the apartheid regime, and the violence experienced by children under the system, the newly elected African National Congress (ANC) government of 1994 made promises to rectify the past violations of children's rights (Berry and Guthrie, 2003). To match words with action, the new government introduced the 1996 Constitution and in terms of Section 28 it enshrined children's rights and their needs. These were to ensure a social policy which would usher social justice and equity in the country post-1996.

Furthermore, there is also secondary legislation or policy such as, The Children's Act 38 of 2005 which gives effect to the rights of children, The Sexual Offences Act 32 of 2007 which includes protection from a wide range of sexual offences for children who have been exposed. The Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 provides a separate justice system for children who may be in conflict with the law and the Social Assistance Amendment Act 2004 was to assist in providing access to social grants for children under the age of 18.

This legislative framework was to ensure that children in the country are protected and the implementation tools were placed under the auspices of civil servants or public administrators. Public officials then emerged as custodians of child welfare to safeguard them and to ensure that they benefit from this social policy. The study explores how the implementation of social policy post-1996 to address the challenges vulnerable children are facing.

The National Plan of Action for Children of South Africa (2012:19) agrees that "despite the significant progress that has been made in addressing the rights and needs of children, including the progressive legislative frameworks and programs that have been put in place, many children are still faced with formidable challenges." Banks and Hulme (2012:3) state that "across the developing world, states with limited finances are riddled by poor governance and corruption have failed to lead to development for all of their citizens. Therefore, these children find themselves vulnerable and at risk given the current socio-economic circumstances of the country and the harsh realities of individuals, families, and children living in poorer communities.

There are many indications of a vulnerable child or children which are visible by the displays of a child, like their physical and psychological well-being, poor physical appearances, poor hygiene, illness and absenteeism from school (Skinner, 2004). There are various factors that have contributed to children becoming vulnerable. Berry and Guthrie (2003) provide that poverty is one of the contributors affecting children, allowing them to become vulnerable to all forms of abuse in communities and in the country.

It has been provided that there has been an increase in crimes against children these includes parental neglect, child abuse and sexual exploitation through child trafficking. With the growing crime rates and poverty-stricken environments children currently have to live in (Berry and Guthrie, 2003), appropriate and sustainable responses are to be put in place to ensure that children have a better future. With this, it is the responsibility of the state and relevant stakeholders to ensure that vulnerable children are protected. Hence, revealing why the state opted for a social policy to address the needs of these vulnerable children in the country and to ensure that they access their rights.

As intimated earlier, social policy is able to meet the needs of the children; however, the challenge is implementation. An example of this is through the provision of children's rights. Children have the right to be protected from maltreatment and abuse; but Berry and Guthrie (2003:5) note that "The number of crimes reported against children in South Africa has reached alarming proportions." A report by News24 (2019) provides that in 2018/2019, 1014 children were murdered, which provided a 2.8% increase from the previous year's murders which were at 985.

In South Africa, the government's main provision of intervention is through the use of social assistance to poor families and children (Berry and Guthrie, 2003). The service providers are social workers employed in social services and welfare organisations. But this is insufficient.

For social services to be beneficial to vulnerable children, the state and social workers need to do more to address this. Spitzer, Twikirize and Wairire (2014) provides that due to insufficient resources, challenges regarding service delivery and implementation for vulnerable children is

promoted. The Department of Social Development has come to realise that Social Workers face pressures regarding the effectiveness of services and programs implemented to assist vulnerable children in the country (Gray and Lombard, 2008) .

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Considering that the country is a middle-income country, a large number of its children are currently living in households experiencing poverty (Hall and Wright, 2010) . Due to this children are denied access to their rights and needs like education, health care and adequate social services (Martin, Richter, Aber, Mathambo and Godfrey, 2015). Vargas-Hernández, Noruzi and Ali (2011) define social policy as the strategies and interventions for the changing, maintenance or creation of living conditions that are favorable to human welfare. They add that these policies are education, health, housing, employment and food for all citizens. Social policy often deals with issues that Rittel & Webber (1973) refer to as wicked problems. Social Policy is also distinct as it focuses on the systematic evaluation of societies' responses to social issues like vulnerable children.

The concept of vulnerable or vulnerability can be referred to as a state of being weak or weakly defended, perhaps in an instance of neglect, deprivation, or abuse (Arora, Shah, Chaturvedi, and Gupta, 2015). According to Martin et al (2015:3), “Children who are deprived or likely to be deprived or harmed as a result of their physical condition or social, cultural, economic, political circumstances, and environment, and require external support because their immediate care and support system can no longer cope.” This has become a concern in families and communities and it is important to have interventions and support available to these vulnerable children.

Providing services to vulnerable children and considering the struggles faced in the country shows the importance to shield and help them develop to the best of their ability despite where they may come from as they cannot be held responsible for their circumstances. There is a need for guidance to grow and develop and with prevention and intervention services that are sustainable. This can be made possible. It is vital to understand the nature of factors influencing and affecting the lives of these vulnerable children and assist them. The reality is that many are unable to access the basic services and receive follow-up care services. It is also important to be

aware of the extent of the services provided and if they are effective, sufficient and in line with the child's needs and best interest.

The above provides the context of the research problem as it explores practices from other countries as well as considering useful lessons that can be learned. Social work services available to vulnerable children may differ from country to country, therefore, considering alternative practices and interventions could be useful in learning from and strengthening the current services that are available. The study considers the practices from 3 developing countries, namely Botswana, Ghana, and Kenya. As a developing country, South Africa could benefit from the lessons and practices of these countries.

1.3 RESEARCH AIMS/ OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this study is as follows:

- Explore lessons and best practices of social work services made available to vulnerable children in the selected countries.

Secondary objectives have been derived and are as follows:

- Identify and explain the services available and rendered to vulnerable children by Social workers in the selected countries.
- Investigate the relevance of services provided to vulnerable children.
- Explore the challenges and opportunities experienced in providing services to vulnerable children.
- Provide recommendations to the Social services profession in South Africa.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTION

Central Research Question:

The central research question this thesis seeks to explore is “ What are the lessons and best practices of Social Work services rendered to vulnerable children.

Sub- questions:

- What are the Social Work interventions available and rendered to vulnerable children?
- How do Social Work services benefit vulnerable children?

- What are some of the challenges and opportunities faced by Social Workers providing services to vulnerable children?
- How the Social Work services in South Africa differ from those of selected countries?
- What recommendations can be made to the developmental welfare sector in South Africa?

1.5 RESEARCH RATIONALE

This investigation is vital in that post-1994 the South African government embarked on improving child welfare and the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable children to ensure that they are not vulnerable and able to access their rights. Yet these challenges persist as many children are still vulnerable. It is this continuous persistence that has triggered this research to understand better the interventions in these African countries.

As intimated earlier, that in South Africa, the Government's main provision of intervention is through the use of social assistance to poor families and children (Berry and Guthrie, 2003). The service providers of such interventions are often social workers employed in social services and welfare organisations. However, for social services to be beneficial to vulnerable children the state and social workers need to do more to address their plight. The study of Ntebe (1994) provides that a lot is expected from social workers and that the profession is scrutinized, but, the profession faces challenges in terms of resource allocation to provide efficient services to vulnerable children in need. The limitations of both studies are that they employed a approach, but this current study embraced an exploratory approach using content analysis to enhance our understanding on how vulnerable children are assisted in these selected countries.

Besides, there were conceptual limitations. These conceptual and methodological limitations triggered the need for new research methods to enhance our understanding of social services provided to vulnerable children in these countries. This study employed an exploratory research approach which incorporated new concepts to ensure that lessons learned in other African countries can be emulated by South Africa. The study will also add another layer of scholarship on the contribution of social workers in addressing the plight of children in the country.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology employed to meet the objectives of the study, which are to explore lessons and best practices of social work services made available to vulnerable children in the selected countries. The section details the research paradigm, its design, research approach, qualitative research, exploratory research, sample selection, case study method, data collection methods, data analysis, using secondary data, data verification/trustworthiness, limitations of the study and clarification of key concepts of the study.

1.6.1 Qualitative Research Approach

This study adopted the qualitative research approach. De Vos, Delpont, Fouche and Strydom (2011) define qualitative research approach as understanding a phenomena aimed at participants' thoughts and perceptions. Qualitative research is a systematic collection of data or material which is organized and interpreted (Grossoehme, 2014). A principal quality of this approach is to ensure that the experiences and perceptions of the research participants are correctly interpreted, presented, and analysed in relation to the context of the topic.

Furthermore, qualitative research methods allow for comparisons of perspectives that provide true reflections of social groups. Qualitative research mainly looks at the works of written texts to understand the meaning of experiences (Grossoehme, 2014). The qualitative approach is suited for this study as its main objective looks at exploring the lessons learned and best practices of social work services available to children from the selected African countries.

1.6.2 Research Design

Research design refers to the strategies which will be chosen and utilised when conducting research or a study. It enables the researcher with guidance based on the interpretations which will be concluded at the end of the study (Creswell and Clark, 2018). To use this approach, the selected research design for this study was a descriptive research design that facilitated the qualitative research. Provided that the nature of the study is to explore and describe the social work services provided to vulnerable children in Botswana, Ghana, and Kenya, the descriptive design was applied in this regard. According to Lambert and Lambert (2012:255), "the goal of

qualitative descriptive studies is a comprehensive summarization, in everyday terms, of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals.”

As stated by Magilvy and Thomas (2009) qualitative research is often exploratory in nature, therefore, the use of the descriptive design allowed for exploring social work practices in the selected countries. Descriptive research can be done through three methods, namely; observation, case study or surveys. This study considered the findings from three countries, the appropriate descriptive research method that were employed in the case study method.

Past studies using the case study method allow the researcher to explore and understand complex issues. According to Simon (2009:21), “Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a ‘real life.’” The case study method is recognized as a research tool in studies conducted within a social science field and is often used to explore issues such as unemployment, poverty, and community-based problems (Zainal, 2007). Case studies have become popular as it is considered useful when doing exploratory research. Case studies are used in context to provide answers to how and why questions (Kohlbacher, 2006).

This method has become widely utilised as it offers an opportunity for insights that may not be offered when using an alternate approach. Because they are useful in exploratory research it can make use of various sources for collecting data and evidence such as observations, interviews, and documents (Rowley, 2002). Kohlbacher (2006) provides that case studies are unique in the sense that it can accommodate a variety of evidence sources. Case studies are not limited to a specific type of evidence and can be used for both qualitative and quantitative research studies.

When selecting the case study, the researcher needs to do a case selection. The researcher can either decide on making use of a single case or multiple cases. The most evident difference between single and multiple case study is that a single case study will focus on only one case that may perhaps be considered special or extreme (Rowley, 2002). One of the most common criticisms of the case study method is that by focusing on a single study it can become challenging to reach a generalised conclusion (Zainal, 2007). Utilising multiple studies are often

preferred in research as it will allow for reaching a more generalised conclusion and allows for reaching research outcomes (Rowley, 2002).

Case selection can be determined and influenced by the research question, research objectives, and the main aim and purposes of the research study (Rowley, 2002). It is important to consider what some of the limitations are and be mindful of them when conducting research and collecting data. The researcher should be mindful of the challenges that can arise during the case selection and should therefore consider factors such as accessibility, available resources as well as time constraints for conducting research (Rowley, 2002).

Since the objective of this study is to explore lessons and best practices from selected cases, therefore, multiple cases were used as opposed to a single case study. These selected countries are considered developing African countries. With this, it could be useful to learn from countries within the same margin. By using the findings from three different countries, comparisons can be made as well as identifying possible similarities.

The desired outcome of using multiple cases is to explore the services available to vulnerable children, identify the comparisons, and similarities and then understand how what has been found can be presented as recommendations. Using multiple cases will allow the researcher to understand how each country differs and how these differences can represent uniqueness, how they can be compared, and how these can provide insight that can be useful in a South African context.

With any research approach and design, it is important to be aware of its advantages and disadvantages. The case study method has its strengths and its weaknesses. For instance, case studies are commended for allowing and enabling the development of various and new realities.

It allows researchers an opportunity to improve professional development through the steps that need to be taken when conducting research (Starman, 2013). According to Starman (2013:31), “case studies highlight a developmental factor, which means that the cases are generated and evolve often as a series of specific and interrelated events that occur in ‘that particular time and that particular place.’” According to Rowley (2002: 16), “Case studies as a research method or

strategy have traditionally been viewed as lacking rigour and objectivity when compared with other social research methods.”

The case study method is criticised for not being scientifically rigorous as it does not allow for generalisation. However, it has been mentioned that generalisation can be possible when using multiple case studies as opposed to one case study (Starman, 2013). In this study the aim and purpose are not to reach generalisation, but to explore social work services available to vulnerable children in the selected countries. Through this, the researcher would present findings that would be used in providing insights and knowledge.

1.6.3 The Exploratory Research

The research study integrates a qualitative research approach through utilizing the explorative research design. Rubin and Babbie (2016) states that exploratory research is an approach that explores new knowledge, topics and ideas that intends to gather information and concepts regarding the phenomenon. It also caters exploring the phenomenon and topics to be reviewed such as existing literature, in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups to gather further information needed (Rubin and Babbie, 2016). This design was utilized in the study to gather new insights around the research topic of: Lessons and best practices for South Africa from selected countries on vulnerable children.

I deemed the exploratory research, apt for this study as it seeks to enhance the knowledge of social services available to vulnerable children in the country. Also, exploratory research does not enable definite conclusions, but addresses the what, how, and why of social services available to vulnerable children. It adds value to this study as it is flexible and allows the researcher to access a variety of secondary data which lays the foundation for future studies.

Therefore, this study enables the researcher to provide insights into the study of social services available to vulnerable children and how it is practiced in selected countries, and what lessons can be learned from these countries. The information provided in this study provides many opportunities for furthering research through replication and re-analysis of the existing research and provide other researchers with an opportunity to test new ideas, theories and the practice

thereof. As a result of the vulnerable children in South Africa: there is the need to learn these lessons and best practices from these African countries to enhance services for children.

1.6.4 Sample Selection

When conducting research, it is often not advisable or convenient to examine an entire population as it may pose difficulties in having to examine each member therefore, it is best to recruit a sample of people. A sample is a smaller group of participants that are selected for a study from a larger population (Noy, 2008). The qualitative research sampling is described as purposive as its aim is to select appropriate sources of information to explore the meaning, theory and processes to explore new and upcoming ideas to build onto data analysis progress (Kothari, 2004).

According to Polkinghorne (2005: 140), “the purposive selection of data sources involves choosing people or documents from which the researcher can substantially learn about the experience.” When using the purposive sampling technique, the researcher makes a deliberate choice of the participant or group based on the specific quality of interests the participants or group provides “it is a non-random sampling technique that does not need underlying theories or a set of numbers of participants” (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016:3). To simply understand, purposive sampling allows the researcher to identify where information needs to be collected from and thereafter setting out to collect the data. Purposive sampling is often used in qualitative research as it allows for presenting information-rich cases (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016).

1.6.5 Data Collection Methods

In qualitative research, the purpose of collecting data is to provide evidence of the experiences of the participants regarding the topic being explored (Polkinghorne, 2005). Since the study is based on secondary research data can be collected from sources such as published and reliable books, journals, newspaper articles, and online websites. According to Yin (2003:83) “there are six possible sources of evidence for case studies: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts.”

Lambert and Lambert (2012) provide that in descriptive studies the data collection process involves minimal techniques like interviews or focus groups and may instead rely on observations, exploring records, published reports, and documents. For this research data was collected from sources that have previously been gathered and published regarding the social work practices in Botswana, Ghana, and Kenya. As data has been published, it allows for the researcher to access and utilise it easily.

1.6.6 Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis refers to a “process of reviewing, synthesizing and interpreting data to describe and explain the phenomena or social worlds being studied” (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, and Davidson, 2002:728). When the data collection process is completed the researcher moves onto analysing it and that requires, specific procedures and steps to be taken to ensure that findings are trustworthy (Given, 2008). According to Lambert and Lambert (2012:255), “the presentation of data from a qualitative descriptive study involves a straightforward descriptive summary of the informational contents of the data that is organized in a logical manner.” In collecting and then analysing data from available sources the applicable means to analyse data will be through the use of content analysis. Content analysis is a research method which is concerned with analysing text data. A goal of this method is to explore and provide insight and understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Data collected was analysed and interpreted into appropriate themes and patterns and presented in a logical manner.

Through the use of content analysis the researcher aims to gather a condensed and comprehensive understanding of what is being studied and analysed which is then presented through suitable categories found regarding the phenomenon. Content analysis can be described in three phases namely the preparation phase, the organizing phase and the reporting phase (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). There are no systematic rules when using content analysis, however the main aim is to ensure that large amount of findings are simplified and categorised into much smaller categories or themes. With the phases mentioned, instructions and tips are provided in accordance with the phases making the process easier to understand. The instructions are

provided in relation to the relevant phases as follows (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008; Erlingsson and Brysiewicz, 2017):

- The preparation phase: *becoming familiar with the data*- within this phase the researcher selects the data that will be analysed. The selection of data will be relevant to the study, thus considering a specific medium, criteria for inclusion as well as considering the parameters in selecting data to be analysed. With relevance to this study the researcher has selected articles, official reports, news reports and websites availing data regarding the selected countries.
- The organizing phase: *dividing up the text*- after the researcher has become familiar with the text, it is expected that texts be categories or divided into meaning units. Within this phase the researcher can consider for example the frequency occurrence of specific words phrases or characteristics which has been presented in the text and begin creating meaning units. For the research study the researcher will be considering the frequency of themes and phrases that are presented from data of the selected countries.
- *formulating codes*- from meaning units or the frequent occurrence of words, phrases or characteristics the researcher should be able to condense the meaning units into codes. This will allow for categories to be formulated and then allowing for the representation of themes.
- The reporting phase: *development and presentation of themes and subthemes*- after coding data the presentation of the key finding are presented. The researcher is able to make inferences regarding the data that has been selected and organised. The researcher is able to discuss findings in relation its relevance based on the frequent occurrence and highlight its importance in relation to the study (Erlingsson and Brysiewicz, 2017).

1.7 USING SECONDARY DATA

The use of secondary data has become popular due to how practical it has become to utilize existing data. The use of secondary data has provided for research in the sense that it provides various benefits to aid in saving time and cost as it allows the researcher to collect data from data that has already been collected by others (Smith, 2008). Secondary data can allow for the collection of large data sets that have been published through funded studies, allowing researchers to build onto their study (Johnston, 2017).

Within this study, the researcher made use of published journals, books, e-books, government gazettes, documents as well as news reports. These will be accessible for the researcher and will allow for saving on time and costs involved in the processes as opposed to that of collecting primary data. As Johnston (2017) notes that the goal of all research is to contribute to knowledge through doing research and offering different perspectives. The only difference between using secondary data and research is that it depends on utilising already collected and published data.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As with all research and data collection processes, there are advantages and disadvantages that may present within the study or the process thereof. With secondary research and data collection, the following limitations may present. These provisions of how it can be managed will be provided.

- Inaccurate data: all data sources available may not represent accurate data. The researcher must ensure that all data collected and presented are from reputable and reliable sources.
- Quality and out of date: not all collected data could be useful as it may not be relevant in terms of when it was published as well as its quality. The researcher intends to make use of valuable data and in line with the study objectives.
- Representativeness: not all data sources may represent the objectives or be relevant to the study. The researcher is responsible to ensure that data used are applied to the study.
- Information bias: some sources may favour certain findings and results. The researcher will ensure that the data presented will be substantiated.

1.9 DATA VERIFICATION / TRUSTWORTHINESS

With any study, it is important to ensure that findings are trustworthy. When conducting research there are certain elements to consider that are useful and can enhance the trustworthiness of the findings and the processes thereof. Concepts like validity and reliability are often discussed in quantitative research. In qualitative research, these concepts need to be considered: credibility, dependability, and transferability, which are commonly used to describe the aspects of trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004). These concepts will be described and discussed as to how the researcher implemented them when conducting the research.

1.9.1 Credibility

Credibility has to do with how the researcher provides truthful data (Statistic solutions, 2017). This has much to do with the selection of context in terms of the selection of material or data which is used for data gathering. It is also of importance to select an appropriate method for data collection as this impacts establishing credibility (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). As previously mentioned the researcher used published data on the three selected countries on social work services that are available to children in those countries.

1.9.2 Transferability

This is also known in quantitative and qualitative research as external validity (Shenton, 2004). Drost (2011) provides that validity forms an important part of the research process specifically in fields regarding social sciences. Validity translates into understanding the meaningfulness of findings and how it is presented. It is concerned with ensuring that findings reflect the data accurately and truthfully (Noble and Smith, 2015). Shenton (2004) and Given (2008) refer to transferability as being the extent to which the findings of the research can be transferred to other contexts. The context in this case can mean similarities in the cases. Transferability is how the qualitative researcher demonstrates that the findings are applicable to other contexts.

For researchers, dependability is also traditionally referred to as reliability (Shenton, 2004). The main idea behind ensuring dependability is based around the notion that if the same research were to be conducted by another researcher with the same participants or materials, similar findings should emerge (Shenton, 2004). Some researchers find that dependability and credibility

are closely linked in terms, and it is being ensured in the research process, and that methods in achieving both is overlapped (Statistic solutions, 2017). The researcher used data available to the public and without any pre-determined outcomes, analysed it and present findings, according to appropriate steps and practices within the research methodology.

1.10 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

- **Vulnerable children:** All children are considered vulnerable, however, there are certain circumstances and influences that put others at risk of being more vulnerable than the rest (Martin et al, 2015).
- **Social work:** Social work is a profession and it is involved in many transactions between individuals and their environments. It looks at helping and enabling individuals to develop and better their futures and prevent dysfunction (Nicholas et al, 2010)

1.11 CHAPTERS OUTLINE

Chapter one provided the research background, the problem statement, the objective of the study and the central research question and also the rationale. It also provided the research methodology, its limitations, data verification and trustworthiness and clarifying key concepts.

Chapter two dwells with the literature review and theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter three explores the legislative framework of the study which outlines and discusses the applicable legislative frameworks relevant to the study as well as a South African context.

Chapter four examines the Social Work services available to vulnerable children in Botswana, Ghana, and Kenya. This chapter discusses the field of social work and its services that are available and rendered to vulnerable children in the selected countries. It will look at the types of services provided and the extent of the services.

Chapter five presents the conclusion, limitations and recommendations.

1.12 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the background to the research problem, the problem, the research aims/objective, the central research question, the research methodology, research approach, research design, exploratory research, sample selection, data collection methods, data analysis, using secondary data, limitation of the study, data verification/trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and clarification of key terms such as vulnerable children and social workers. The study would now transit to chapter two to explore the literature review of the study, which includes the conceptual clarifications and the theoretical groundings of the study.



CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter provided a background to the thesis, the research problem and the aims and objectives. This chapter explores the literature review of the study. This was done to guide the study and to illustrate that the researcher had explored and become familiarised with the available literature. This chapter explores and discusses aspects most relevant to the research study. These include identifying and selecting the theoretical framework or grounding of the study, which will serve as a backdrop guiding the study. Each section will be discussed under the relevant headings within the literature review.

2.2 DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review can be described as a specialized form of synthesis that uses qualitative procedures to combine the results and findings of various studies (Rocco and Hatcher, 2011). This process requires the researcher to consult the literature on prescribed and relevant aspects of the research topic and thereafter present the findings in an orderly format. A literature review consists of processes that involves a series of carefully executed and time-consuming steps (Neely and Magit, 2010).

Doing a literature review serves as a practical and comprehensive guide to researching, preparing and writing, which forms the basis in research assignments or dissertations (Hart, 2000). The aim of a literature review is to help the reader understand the whole body of available research, which allows for the researcher to identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the literature (Ellen and Rhoades, 2011).

A good literature review facilitates understanding a body of available research. Ellen and Rhoades (2011), provide that a literature review is executed correctly when the researcher has organized the literature, presented it systematically and then provided the readers with an understanding of what has been researched and found and how it is useful. When doing a literature review one of the first steps is defining the specific objectives or research question.

Having a good research question provides a guide and focused structure for the process of writing and putting together the review (Aveyard, 2010).

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework can be described as a structure that helps to guide research processes by using the principles and components of the chosen theoretical context. A theoretical framework acts as a foundation for research as it supports the problem statement. It helps in defining an approach in the research process.

A suitable theoretical framework should be selected when planning to do research as it will aid in being able to ask and answer questions (Grant and Osanloo, 2014). Given the nature of the study and the proposed research question, a suitable theoretical framework needs to be included as a means of exploring services and best practices and how these practices could be useful in a South African context.

2.3.1 Organisational Learning Theory

The world continues to expand globally impacting economies with continuous upcoming developments, innovations, and technological advances. Given the changes around the world, there is an almost urgent need for organisations to ensure that there is an on-going process of learning and development taking place within organisations and workplaces, this considering both public and private sectors (Egan, Yang, and Bartlett, 2004). Continuous learning and development are important for factors such as productivity and success of all work environments.

It is thus important for hierarchical structures to ensure that there is a constant requirement for learning and transferring of learning and knowledge in the work environment (Egan, Yang and Bartlett, 2004). Within the literature review, it is evident that there is a need for improving and bettering service delivery of which could be coupled with learning new efficient and sustainable means to service delivery. This provided, Organizational Learning Theory (OLT) will serve as the theoretical framework for this study, considering how lessons and best practices of the selected countries can provide valuable recommendations for improvements and alternate learning practices in South Africa.

Organisational Learning (OL) and Organisational Learning Theory (OLT) have been explored and discussed by various (OL) theorists in literature for many years (Tam and Gray, 2016). In essence, OL theorists have defined OL as the process of knowledge acquired and created and utilised within an organisation. The learning processes within the organisation looks at how information is gathered and processed into tasks and activities that help the organisation set and focus on its goals, strategies, and rules (Sullivan and Nonaka, 1986).

Besides, Levit and March (1988) explain that OL follows routine processes, depends on history (old practices) and is a target-orientated. OL explores factors such as learning experiences from direct practices, experiences from other organisations and how these experiences are conceptualised into frameworks for new practices. Tam and Gray (2016) view OL as a process that allows for focusing on best practices in a workplace, which can aid the strategy of change and enhance creative solutions and practices.

Considering that theorists have studied and explored OL there have been various learning approaches and processes provided. These previous approaches and processes are considered the forerunners of the process of learning currently. OL studies consider OL as a four-stage process make up, namely: “information acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation and organizational memory” (Inocencia and Olmedo-Cifuentes, 600: 2011). Within in stage there are learning processes that take place.

The learning processes that take place across the four stages are tabulated and presented as follows from the work of Jackson, Baker, Cragin, Parachini and Chalk, (2005).

Table 1: Processes Involved In Learning Across The Four Components

Acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vicarious learning • Cooperation with other organisations • Outside human resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congenital learning • Direct experiences • Internal knowledge development
Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current activities 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible future activities 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old activities 	
Distribution		
Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language, rituals and symbols 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational structure 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written and unwritten operating guidelines 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External repositories 	

These processes provided by (Jackson et al, 2005; Inocencia and Olmedo-Cifuentes, 2011) are summarised as follows:

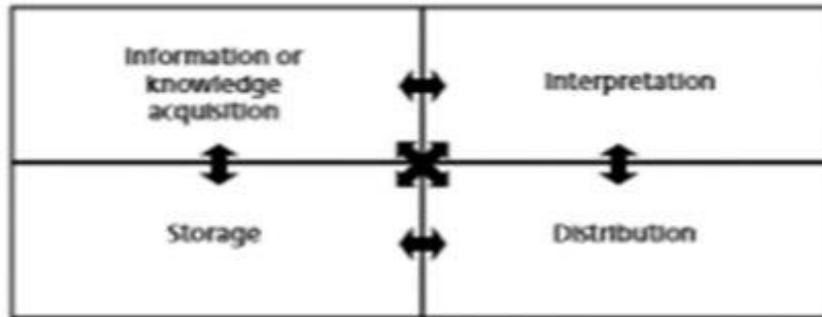
- Information acquisition – this is the process whereby new information is acquired and considering the mediums through which are acquired. Resources can be obtained from both internal and external sources and can be generated throughout an organisation. External sources would refer to the information which is collected outside the organisation or work environment.
 - External sources can take place in the form of vicarious experiences by which occurs by learning through observation. Another form of learning from external sources can be through co-operating with other organisations whereby there are direct learning and interactions where information is shared between different organisations.

- Internal sources refer to information collected within the organisation and work environment. Forms of learning from internal sources can be through congenital learning, the process whereby information has been gathered and learned from those who developed particular skills or training. Another form related to the internal sources can be done through direct experiences, which simply translates to learning by doing. The last form of learning from the internal source is an internal knowledge development which refers to developing new information and skillsets within the organisation. Both the external and internal sources can be extremely beneficial for OL.
- Information distribution- this is the process that information gets spread socially. Acquired information gets shared within and amongst organisations and work environments. Information can be shared formally or informally. The information promotes learning and an environment for creating new knowledge which allows for broader understandings of what is shared and learned.
- Shared interpretation- this is the process whereby the information distributed is now conceptualised and understood. This process includes knowledge creation and should allow for clarity on any misunderstood or misinterpreted information. For information to be shared and interpreted effectively the individual, group, or organisation needs to be able to judge if the following 3 areas involving the types of activities are beneficial and if there are opportunities for learning and growing.
 - Current activities allow for evaluating whether what is currently being shared is useful and if there are ways of improving and becoming better.
 - Possible future activities allow for looking into how learning opportunities can be bettered and used in the future. Is the individual, group, or organisation able to make sense of the information currently or how it can be used in the future.
 - Older procedures, refer to reviewing what has previously been shared and identifying if it is still relevant and useful or if there is a need to develop new understandings and skill-sets.

- Organisational memory- this refers to how acquired information, both past and present can be used in the future to benefit the organisation. It consists of sharing knowledge but also using and reusing past and present information. Organisational memory can be useful as a means of learning from failures and using these lessons to improve in the future. The way information is stored and remembered may differ from context to context, but the following aspects can influence the organisational memory.
 - Language, rituals and symbols- the way an organisation or group functions in terms of its culture and trends will determine how information is shared and stored as time passes and new members are introduced to an organisation and its way of operating.
 - Organisational structure- the organisational structure can contribute to its memory, in the sense of how the organisation is managed and how activities are distributed and shared. Management defines the roles of an organisation and allocates tasks and responsibilities which allows for learning.
 - Written and unwritten operating guidelines- workplaces often provide policy and guidelines for practice. Also, training is held to upskill staff.
 - External repositories- organisations are able to store information outside of their organisation. An example of this is through websites whereby information is stored and can be accessed easily.

It should be noted that the learning processes do not have to occur in a sequential manner. The stages are to be considered as interrelated and can take place in a different order which is dependent on the individual, group or organisation. This is demonstrated through the figure below:

Figure 1 : Component Processes of an Organizational Learning Framework



Source: (Jackson et al, 2005; 182)

Organisational learning serves as the theoretical framework for the study in the sense that it aims to look at the lessons and best practices of selected countries in relation to their services to vulnerable children. In reviewing the services available to vulnerable children from selected countries and identifying lessons and best practices it can serve as the process of learning applicable in the South African context. The main objective of the study is to explore lessons and best practices of social work services available to vulnerable children in the selected countries with hopes of providing recommendations to service providers in South Africa, OL can be beneficial as it provides the necessary stages of learning and the components thereof which demonstrate how individuals, groups and organisations can develop and grow. In putting together the research paper, similarly, the stages and components of OL are employed.

2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of literature will be provided to provide insight and context to the study.

2.4.1 OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

As stated by Sossou and Yogtiba (2008:15) “Childhood is a period of evolving capabilities, which should lead to the nurturing of bio-psychosocial, emotional and mental development of children and should not become a period of abuse, neglect and exploitation.” Children and their well-being are considered and studied globally. Most of the world realises the importance of promoting children and their well-being.

Over the past 10 years, an increase in the attention and priority given to children around the world has been noted, as many have realised that children are easily open to becoming vulnerable as a result of socio-economic circumstances beyond their control in different parts of the country (Republic of South Africa, 2012).

Furthermore, the well-being of children depends on all relevant role players, including family members, internal and external communities as well as government. For children to grow and develop they need to be provided with a conducive environment that promotes security, nurturing and participation in all aspects of their lives (Republic of South Africa, 2012).

Despite the hopes and expectations, one may have regarding how children should be treated and cared for, it is important to be cognisant in understanding the true reality of children, their well-being and how they are cared for. In many parts of the world, children are faced with issues of poverty, social ills, child abuse and neglect. Sossou and Yogtiba (2008) findings based on the World Health Organisation (WHO), reveals that globally around 53 000 children fall victim to murder each year while around 40 million fall victim of child abuse and neglect.

These children are exposed to many forms of abusive behaviour in various settings (Richter and Dawes, 2008) which all expose them to lifelong negative effects impacting their growth and development. Pierce and Bozalek (2004:819) state that “in South Africa, there is a new awareness that child abuse and neglect is a serious and escalating problem for all children.” Violence against children should come as no surprise as it has been an on-goings problem for years, however, the extent and seriousness of this problem indicate that there is a dire need for an immediate response and professional intervention (Sossou and Yogtiba, 2008).

2.4.2 UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN

In most cases, children of South Africa find themselves vulnerable and at risk, given the current socio-economic circumstances of the country and the socioeconomic circumstances of individuals, families and children living in poorer communities. This brings us to look at children and particularly vulnerable children. A child is defined by age, but this definition may differ

from one country to another. In South Africa, a child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years (The Constitution of South Africa, 1996; The Children's Act, 2005).

Skinner (2004) notes that a vulnerable child is one with limited access to his/her basic rights, is identified by deprived rights like their right to education, family support and care, protection from physical, emotional, verbal and sexual abuse, health care, shelter and security. To name a few, there are many indications of a vulnerable child or children which is visible by the displays of a child such as their physical and psychological well-being, poor physical appearances, poor hygiene, absenteeism from school and illness (Skinner, 2004).

Some factors contribute to children becoming vulnerable and Berry and Guthrie (2003) explain that poverty, aids as one of the biggest factors affecting children, allowing them to become vulnerable to all forms of abuse. Besides, it provides that there has been an increase in crimes against children this including parental neglect, child abuse and sexual exploitation through child trafficking. With the growing crime rates and poverty-stricken environments children currently have to live in, appropriate and sustainable responses need to be put in place to ensure that children have a better future.

2.4.3 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL POLICY IN ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN

This study can be understood within the lens of a social policy. For Vargas-Hernández et al (2011) social policy primarily refer to guidelines and interventions for the changing, maintenance or creation of living conditions that are conducive to human welfare. Social policy are education, health, housing, employment and food for all people. Thus, social policy is that part of public policy that has to do with social issues in a country. The Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy at Harvard University reads it as "public policy and practice in the areas of health care, human services, criminal justice, inequality, education, and labour" (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Social policy often deals with issues that Rittel & Webber (1973) refer to as wicked problems. This is vital as post-1996 the new government set out to address some wicked problems that were created by the apartheid state and one of these was the neglect of children of

colour and blacks. Another step was the roll-out of the Reconstruction and Development Program of 1996 to deliver housing, water, electricity and sanitation to all.

According to Platt (2021) of the London School of Economics and Political Sciences, social policy is concerned with how societies across the world meet human needs for security, education, work, health and wellbeing in this study is vulnerable children. She notes that social policy addresses how states and societies respond to the challenges of social, demographic and economic change, and of poverty, migration and globalisation. These services and support include child and family support, schooling and education, housing and neighbourhood renewal, income maintenance and poverty reduction, unemployment support and training, pensions, health and social care. Social policy aims to identify and find ways of reducing inequalities in access to services and support between social groups defined by socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, migration status, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age, and between countries

2.4.4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CHILD VULNERABILITY

Various factors can contribute to and can make children vulnerable. These may differ from country to country, socio-economic circumstances, family composition and living environment. As previously noted child abuse and neglect are considered a major factor that leads to children being vulnerable. To further understand the range of factors that may affect child vulnerability a few contributing factors will be explored and discussed. This will provide context into how factors may overlap each other indicating how multiple factors contribute to child vulnerability. Insight into these factors will include poverty, neglect, abuse, disability and orphan-hood.

a. Poverty

Poverty is a phenomenon experienced globally. While poverty may not directly be the cause of child abuse, it does, however, contribute to risk factors that may aid abuse (Lachman, Poblete, Ebigbo, Nyandiyi-Bundy, Bundy, Killian and Doek, 2002). Children exposed to impoverished conditions have indicated as a factor that may place them at risk of being subjected to abusive behaviour (Berry and Guthrie, 2003). Although various socio-economic conditions may place children at risk of being abused, it has been found that often poverty accompanies contributing factors (Richter and Dawes, 2008).

In South Africa, there has been an increase in poverty rates. Children who live in poverty often experience poor access to their basic rights like shelter and care which result in them being exposed to unsafe environments and poor living conditions (Berry and Guthrie, 2003). Morgan (2013:1) adds that “poverty in South Africa is often accompanied by poor housing, unemployment, lack of clean water, air pollution, noise, crowding, chronic safety fears, malnutrition, HIV and TB, exposure to environmental toxins, physical hazards, poor , poor education and lack of adequate child care” which in turn put children at risk of “domestic violence, neighbourhood violence, crime, family dysfunction, substance abuse, child abuse and poor support networks” that all affect the development of children.

One of the features of poverty that increases the risk of child abuse is unemployment (Richter and Dawes, 2008). Due to unemployment parents are unable to provide and care for their children. This added pressure on parents can cause an increase in stress, which could result in abusive behaviour. According to Ward and Bray (2015:69), “poverty increases the stress that parents experience when trying to provide for and protect their children, and makes emotionally distant, harsh and inconsistent parenting more likely.” Children living in poverty are raised by parents in poverty who assumed to be poorly educated resulting in the inability to substantially educate their children, which then poses the risk of a continuous cycle of poverty and living in these conditions. It is evident that poverty, leads to parenting and caring for children being a difficult task which makes children vulnerable to the extended and lifelong outcomes of several influencing factors (Ward and Bray, 2015). As stated by Morgan (2013: 1) “poverty impacts a wide range of child development outcomes.”

b. Neglect

Pierce and Bozalek (2004) add that the issue of child abuse and neglect has been considered as a huge problem for all children in South Africa. Child neglect is considered in two parts, one being an occurrence whereby parents can provide for their children but choose not to do so and the other as an occurrence whereby families who live in poverty are unable to provide and care for their children who are classified as neglectful (Burton, Ward, Artz and Leoschut, 2015). They add that families living in poverty are unable to adequately care for their children as they should.

A good example is in South Africa, where more than 10 million children who are living in poverty and subjected to neglectful supervision (Burton, Ward, Artz and Leoschut, 2015).

There are various types of neglect, where many children may only be faced with one and in many cases all. Physical neglect in essence constitutes inadequate physical care, leaving children unsupervised and not caring for them as they should be by ensuring they are clothed, fed and provided with shelter. Educational neglect occurs when children are deprived of academic opportunities. In many cases, parents do not or may not be able to afford and put children through school. Medical neglect occurs when children are not provided with or have access to health care when ill.

Another form of neglect that children are subjected to is emotional neglect, whereby caregivers do not provide sufficient love and support (Hilyard and Wolfe, 2002). Children living in poverty experience neglect from an early age which can have detrimental developmental effects on them. There are various risk factors associated with children who experience neglect. Hilyard and Wolfe (2002:680) suggest that “chronic poverty, serious caregiving deficits, parental psychopathology, substance abuse, homelessness, family breakup, and poor prenatal and postnatal care are all associated with neglect” and that all affect children and open them up to further vulnerability.

Also, neglect in early childhood poses the risk of children experiencing negative long term outcomes in their adult lives (Hilyard and Wolfe, 2002). With abuse cases, children may also experience lifelong effects. Hilyard and Wolfe, 2002:690) state that “neglected children are distinguishable from their physically abused counterparts in terms of more severe cognitive and academic deficits, social withdrawal and limited peer acceptance, and internalizing (as opposed to externalizing) problems.” With this, it is evident that various risk factors put children at risk of becoming vulnerable and exposed to abuse.

c. Abuse

Children experience violent behaviours and actions worldwide, physical abuse and beatings taking place every day (Seedat, Van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla and Ratele 2009). There are various forms of abuse that children experience, which is an occurrence whereby adults place children in harm's way by subjecting them to inappropriate mental, emotional, physical and sexual actions and behaviours (Chitereka, 2009). Abuse of children, infringes on both their human and children's rights and is considered an extensive social injustice that is not limited to culture, status and socio-economic backgrounds (Sossou and Yogtiba, 2008).

In South Africa, the extent of abuse and violence against children demonstrate that children have a low status. Children's main point of protection is supposed to be from their parents or caregivers, however, with issues such as poverty, unemployment and neglect many children are not allowed to be raised by their parents. This makes children vulnerable to one or more forms of abuse (Seedat et al, 2009).

Research suggests that males experience beatings and physical abuse more often and severely than females and the latter are more prone to being exposed to sexual abuse, like inappropriate touching, rape and exploitation by older males (Seedat et al, 2009). The effects of this are damaging and long-lasting in children. Often abusive cycles are continued whereby children who were exposed to abuse become an abuser or perpetrator of abuse (Berry and Guthrie, 2003).

Seedat et al., (2009:5) provide that "exposure to violence can also enhance the likelihood of development of psychopathological disorders, including those that might be manifested initially in teenage delinquent peer associations such as gangs, which often provide the context for early antisocial behaviour and acts of violence." With females, it has been found that those who have been exposed to sexual abuse are more likely to experience inter-partner violence in adulthood. Males who have been sexually abused in their childhood are likely to become offenders of sexual abuse in their adult lives (Seedat et al, 2009). Also, all forms of abuse expose children to vulnerabilities when growing up and will affect their adult life and how they move through life. This highlights the need for services to vulnerable children and the needs for assistance and care.

d. Disability

Saloojee, Phohole, Saloojee and IJsselmuiden (2007:1) provide that “childhood disability in South Africa has failed to receive adequate attention from government agencies, such as the health, education and social welfare departments, despite there being more than 1 million disabled children in the country.” South Africa can be commended for its good policies and legislative frameworks that outline the rights of children with disabilities; however, the implementation is considered inadequate and insufficient (Republic of South Africa, 2012).

A report on government-funded programs known for providing services to vulnerable children found that there is a lack of services and support to children with disabilities, particularly identifying that services were problematic as there was a lack of adequate reachable facilities such as special need schools as well as trained staff at facilities (Republic of South Africa, 2012). Besides, being faced with issues of accessibility to services and resources children with disabilities are exposed to many other challenges. Children with disabilities are found to be at a greater risk of being vulnerable to maltreatment, neglect and abuse (Republic of South Africa, 2012). It has been suggested that disabled children fall victim to neglect and abuse due to the stigma it carries, causing families to be ashamed or embarrassed. In some cultures, there is a belief that a disabled child is a punishment for the sins of his or her parents, which is also considered a risk factor making disabled children susceptible to neglect and many forms of abuse from their caregivers or parents (Republic of South Africa, 2012).

Research provides that mentally disabled children who experience abusive behaviour being of a physical or sexual nature are in many cases unable to testify and receive the correct justice as they are considered unreliable witnesses due to their disability and inability to provide accurate testimony. They are unable to answer complex questions, become easily confused and are susceptible to suggestions (Hershkowitz and Horowitz, 2007).

Physically disabled children are isolated and socially excluded from everyday life activities for caregivers or parents who are ashamed (Sossou and Yogtiba, 2008). This as a result can deprive them of receiving educational opportunities. Those who can access schooling are found to drop due to the challenges they face within the school setting. Also in these settings disabled children often fall victim to verbal, emotional and physical bullying (Sullivan, 2009). All these risk

factors impact the child psychologically, thus, affecting progress and socialisation into adulthood. Sullivan (2009) adds that children, despite their disabilities need to be considered in cases of crime victims, abuse, health and mental health databases.

e. Orphanhood

An orphan in many cases is described and perceived as a child who has lost his/her parents through death (Skinner, Tsheko, Mtero-Munyati, Segwabe, Chibatamoto, Mfecane, Chandiwana, Nkomo, Tlou, and Chitiyo, 2006). It can also be described as a categorization that has been used to describe whether a child is cared for by his/her parents (Abebe, 2009). It has been noted that becoming an orphan may easily open a child or children up to vulnerability and circumstances beyond their control (Abebe, 2009).

In South Africa, the Department of Social Development (DSD) has provided that 3.6 million children are single and or doubled orphans, in this instance, single meaning having lost one parent and double meaning the loss of both parents. The number of orphans is expected to grow to about 5 million by the year 2020, this noting that the AIDS pandemic has acted as one of the driving forces leaving children as orphans (Republic of South Africa, 2012). Being orphaned causes varying degrees of trauma to children (Beegle, Weerd and Dercon, 2006). There is a need for accessible resources and professional intervention for children who are orphaned and in need of care. Martin (2010) provides that South African child protection is however not adequately equipped to manage the high demand for care for orphans.

Becoming an orphan can mean the loss of parents or the inability to be cared for by one's parents due to factors like poverty and unemployment puts children at risk of physical and psychological challenges. When children are orphaned they have either lost a parent, have been abandoned, or have been removed as a result of being uncared for. Within these kinds of cases, children face emotional challenges. Often when children become orphans they are placed in alternative care, which in many instances are relatives first (Sengendo and Nambi, 1997). Children may also be fostered or adopted. In cases like this the child may be placed in environments where the family is unable to care for them due to economic constraints.

This may then be a differing environment from what the child was used to. Findings suggest that in cases of children becoming orphans there are risk factors that will influence their physical, emotional and mental outcomes (Beegle et al, 2006). It has been found that children who are fostered are at risk of being subjected to worse conditions than that of which they originally may have experienced (Sengendo and Nambi, 1997). In cases where children are not placed in alternate care or fostered or refuse to be placed elsewhere, results in child headed-households. Children take on the responsibility of earning a living to survive. This may pose serious harmful situations for children, like child labour and exploitation (Sengendo and Nambi, 1997). Children who grow up without parents or caregivers to care for them are open to one or more factors making them vulnerable and placing them at risk.

2.4.4 VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND THEIR ACCESS TO RIGHTS.

Children, like adults, have rights and it should be fulfilled and made accessible to all. There has been an increase in the awareness of the need to protect children, their well-being and their rights. There has been an increase in the work of civil society organisations in protecting and advocating for children's rights. This awareness comes not only from state actors, but non-state actors as well (Richter and Dawes, 2008).

South Africa is described as a society faced with severe inequalities, but as stated by Richter and Dawes (2008: 79) the country "is regarded as having an exemplary child rights environment." Since the demise of the apartheid regime, there have been various commitments made to protecting children and their well-being and ensuring that they have access to their rights (Richter and Dawes, 2008). The Constitution of South Africa (1996) provides that all South Africans have rights and should have access to these rights these include both adults and children. The Children's Act of 2005 provides a list of rights that should be accessible to all children in South Africa. This could be questioned considering the high rates of child abuse and maltreatment that is often broadcasted on both national and international news networks.

Interestingly, the South African government does not fall short of providing legislation for citizens, however, fall short in implementing them. Children have the right to be protected from maltreatment and abuse, however, according to Berry and Guthrie (2003:5) "The number of

crimes reported against children in South Africa has reached alarming proportions.” A report by News24 (2019) provides that in 2018/2019, 1014 children were murdered, which provided a 2.8% increase from the previous year’s murders which were at 985.

Despite the intended protection children are meant to receive from legislation considering the rights of children there are still violations against them in the country daily (Richter and Dawes, 2008). Although the legislation provides that children have rights there is a disconnect between what is promised and what is practiced as many do not have access to their rights which in turn opens them up to becoming vulnerable.

2.4.5 AN OVERVIEW OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Flowing from the above, this section will explore some of the service providers for vulnerable children. As explained earlier, children can be exposed to various forms of abuse that may open them up to becoming vulnerable. The degree of vulnerability depends upon what the child is exposed to and the severity of it. But they have rights.

These rights include being protected from harm and environments that may not be conducive to their well-being and development. With this, it is useful to gain insights into the service providers for children in ensuring they access their rights. In this section, the study identified service providers that are considered. It will look at the role of the Government, The Department of Social Development, Welfare organisations and Social Workers.

a. Government

Generally we understand the role of government to govern a state or lead its people with its operations aimed at improving the lives and value of its people, its role in service provision is mostly seen in terms of formulating laws, policy, strategies and budgetary allocations. Further along, services are implemented through the distribution of roles and responsibilities among government departments as well as outsourcing organisations. This is indicative of the role of public administrators in realising this dream of ensuring child welfare services.

It is useful to explore South Africa’s development and understand its effects of history. South Africa’s unforgotten history has shaped the present experiences of many, particularly along

racial lines. In South Africa, during apartheid people of colour were disadvantaged in terms of access to land, resources and education and were forced to find alternate ways of coping which in today's time have forced many into living in societies that are poverty stricken with circumstances that have been passed on from generation to generation (Aliber, 2001). This has not only affected adults but children as well; inequalities, discrimination and violence were experienced by all people of colour under white supremacy. With the first democratic election in 1994, people of colour were provided with the hope, of promises made by the newly elected Government. These promises would serve to provide opportunities, fairness and equality for those who were denied.

There have been significant commitments made to children's rights since 1994 (Berry and Guthrie, 2003) with numerous legislative pieces introduced highlighting the importance of child welfare (Schmid and Patel, 2016). The post-apartheid government prioritised the rights and well-being of children as stated in the Constitution (1996) whereby the rights of children have been enshrined (September and Dinbabo, 2008). These commitments have also been demonstrated through South Africa's formulation and ratification of national and international treaties, declarations and policies such as the UN convention on the rights of the child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child Berry and Guthrie, 2003; September, 2006; September and Dinababo, 2008; The Republic of South Africa, 2012).

The South African government should ensure that its domestic legislation is in line with international laws and commitments. "South Africa has a rich legislative and policy environment and many national laws were developed since 1994 that give effect to the country's constitutional obligations in the promotion, protection and fulfilment of child rights" (The Republic of South Africa, 2012: 16). With South Africa having ratified the CRC, therein lays the obligation and responsibility to develop a plan of action for the country's children.

In 2012 South Africa developed its National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC). It is considered as an overarching comprehensive plan aimed at emphasising the obligation that the government has towards realising the importance of the rights of children in South Africa (The Republic of South Africa, 2012). The development of the NPAC 2012-2017 was done through

collaboration between various government departments to ensure that all role players who made commitments within existing programs and priorities would be a part of the NPAC. Consultations took place within various provinces and departments whereby non-governmental organisations and children were considered and a part of the process (The Republic of South Africa, 2012).

Martin (2010) adds that for effective and comprehensive child protection services to be provided, there is a requirement for key government departments such as the Department of Social Development, the South African Police services (SAPS), the Department of Justice and the Education to work together to ensure this. These only highlight a few, but many others acts as role players as well. Without the effective collaboration between these departments service provision to children is impacted. In that which is mentioned, the government's role as a service provider is through the formulation and development of legislation, policies, frameworks and planning. There is an expectation that if the above-mentioned are implemented by the relevant departments and organisations then vulnerable children would benefit and access their rights.

Despite promises made the country still faces challenges in ensuring that children can access their basic needs, thus allowing children to remain vulnerable and in need. The Republic of South Africa (2012:19) states that “despite the significant progress that has been made in addressing the rights and needs of children, including the progressive legislative frameworks and programs that have been put in place, children are still faced with formidable challenges.” In South Africa, the government's main provision of intervention is through the use of social assistance to poor families and children (Berry and Guthrie, 2003).

With the government unable to fulfil their long made promises, social welfare organisations such as Non-Government Organisations (NGO's), Non-Profit Organisation (NPO's) and Faith-Based Organisations (FBO's) have fallen in line to correct this (Banks and Hulme, 2012). According to the Republic of South Africa (2012: 3) within the National Plan of Action for Children in South Africa, it is stated that “children are often thought of as the concern only of the welfare, education and/or health sector.” This is to ensure that children have access to their basic needs and rights. It requires the collaboration of various government departments. Given the above

mentioned, research provides that services are slow and lacking in terms of capacity for service delivery which causes children's rights to be denied (Berry and Guthrie, 2003).

b. The Department Of Social Development (DSD)

The Department of Social Development (DSD) in South Africa is a government department that is assigned with the responsibility of ensuring that those who are vulnerable and in need of social services or social assistance are assisted accordingly (National Government of South Africa, 2012). As provided within the White Paper for Social Development (1997:98) "The ultimate objective of social development is to bring about sustained improvement in the well-being of the individual, family, community and society at large. The reduction or eradication of mass poverty, inequality and conditions of underdevelopment are widely accepted indicators of social progress."

The DSD is one of the key service providers of children related services. The DSD renders services through social assistance in the form of grants and other services in line with child protection (Berry and Guthrie, 2003). While the national DSD focuses on policy formation and coordination in line with the Children's Act, provincial and local departments ensure the implementation and service delivery as per draft regulations and national strategies (Budlender and Proudlock, 2011). Provided that the Children's act (2005) specifies within clauses the service delivery strategies of providers, it places the legislative responsibilities of national and provincial ministers. "The Children's Act shifts the country to an approach which recognizes that children have a constitutional right to social services and that the State bears the primary duty to ensure that these services are delivered" (Jamieson and Proudlock, 2010:32).

Although the DSD is considered a key government department in service delivery, child protection and social services are considered and viewed as charity work that is often done and implemented by Non-Government Organisation's (NGOs), Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). This then entails that the state is not obligated to provide all services themselves, but however do need to ensure that services are made accessible and are provided to children in need (Jamieson and Proudlock, 2010).

In this regard, these organisations are funded by DSD to implement and provide services to vulnerable children, which are stipulated and in line with provisions within the Children's act of 2005 of which will be discussed further within the chapter that follows.

c. Welfare Organisations

Social welfare and more specifically child welfare in South Africa have been described as a crisis with a highlighting feature of poor human resources and a lack of trained and qualified personnel (Schmid, 2012). Social welfare organizations are commonly described as a tax-exempted organisation providing services to serve the common good for the general welfare of the people. Such welfare organisations are often classified as Non-profit organisations (Anheier, 2005).

Therefore, the bulk of child welfare services in South Africa is delivered by both government and non-government organisations which have seen the social work profession at the core of service delivery (September and Dinbabo, 2008). Lombard (2008) provides that government plays a big role in providing social welfare services which can be done by themselves but often outsource NGO's as service providers. Also, the developmental, social welfare policy relies on NGOs and NPOs for service delivery of welfare services to those who are vulnerable and at risk. Social Welfare organisation such as NGOs, NPOs and FBOs in South Africa are in many instances state-funded organisations which are funded by the DSD. Funding from the department often comes with requirements regarding the types of services that need to be rendered.

In South Africa, various social welfare organisations provide numerous services to all those in need and who require social assistance. There are many welfare organisations providing services to communities, families and individual depending on the type of organisation as well as its core area of business and service rendering. The types of services rendered by social welfare organisations range from social assistance in the form of grants (child care grants, disability grants), interventions aimed at advocating for better health, education, human rights and community development (Lewis and Kanji 2009). Berry and Guthrie (2003) provide that the NGO sector in South Africa provides many services to children and families in need, and are mainly responsible for providing the essential services for children in need.

Added to this, it is acknowledged that the state may be in charge of developing the necessary laws and policy, however, it is in many cases that implementation of these policies are fulfilled by the social welfare sector. Services in line with the requirements of the Department of Social development are categorised into different types and levels of interventions by the Children's Act 38 of 2005 as well as the Integrated Service Delivery model for social welfare services (Martin, Richter, Aber, Mathambo and Godfrey, 2015). Given the responsibility to fulfil state policy and legislations, concerns have been raised regarding the sustainability of services provided by NGO's due to the nature of funding for services often being short- and medium-term type programs (Banks and Hulme, 2012).

Further concerns include inadequate funding from the relevant departments as well as no tools in place for monitoring services and their effectiveness. Besides, NGOs are faced with the challenges of not being well resourced and under-staffed, which pose challenges for effective service delivery (Berry and Guthrie, 2003). Programs and interventions implemented by NGOs are hard enough to provide services to all and, therefore, require the collaboration of stakeholders and state departments, yet this remains a challenge (Volpi, 2002). The National Plan of Action attempts at having all state departments involved in ensuring children are provided with their basic needs and rights yet these seem to be fragmented due to poor collaboration and co-ordination (The Republic of South Africa, 2012)

d. The Social Work Profession

According to Hare (2004:409) "The social work profession promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing". The social work profession is involved in many transactions between individuals and their environments. It looks at helping and enabling individuals to develop and better their futures and prevent dysfunction (Nicholas, Rautenbach and Maistry, 2010). As stated by Sossou and Yogtiba (2008:10) "Social workers are mandated by the profession's code of ethics to promote principles of social justice, human rights and social change to empower and liberate people to enhance their well-being." It is noted that the social work profession has always had a big role in service delivery in government and non-government departments (Lombard, 2008).

Various policy documents guide the profession of social work, thus, providing the roles and responsibilities of social workers in practice. The Integrated Service Delivery Model and White Paper for Social Welfare provides that the profession of social work must focus on prevention and early intervention, prevention being first, thereafter early intervention and lastly statutory services (Gray and Lombard, 2008). This means that social workers must focus on providing preventative services instead of restorative services which can assist in the transformation of South Africa's welfare system (Strydom, 2010). According to Martin et al. (2015:21) "this is regarded as the most important aspect of developmental social service delivery. These services are aimed at strengthening and building the capacity and self-reliance of the client."

For example, the Children's Act of 2005 speaks into the importance of prevention and early intervention services for children and families, where prevention looks at strengthening their capacity to work through what may occur and only if required, thereafter early intervention services are to be provided. Early intervention services are provided to individuals/children who are identified as being at risk. These services are provided to avoid statutory interventions (Martin et al, 2015). However, considering the state of the country, it is vital to consider if these roles and responsibilities are fulfilled appropriately.

Ntebe (1994) provides that a lot is expected from Social Workers and that the profession is scrutinised, but it faces challenges in terms of resource allocation to provide services to those in need. Lombard (2008) acknowledges that social workers are constantly working under pressure, but those working within the NGO setting have intense experiences. The DSD has come to realise that the profession of Social Work faces pressures regarding the effectiveness of services and programs implemented (Gray and Lombard, 2008). Factors that contribute to work pressures are lower salaries when compared to other government employees, a lack of resources and capacity, poorly developed strategies and increasing social problems (Lombard, 2008).

2.4.6 Challenges Faced By Social Workers

While there is evident that all service providers for vulnerable children may face various challenges, more insights into the challenges faced by social workers will be explored as the

profession is considered as a forerunner for service provision to help those in need. As mentioned earlier, the field of social work is described and understood as a profession of helping people. The profession assist and works to ensure participation and the achievement of social justice and human rights of all those who are vulnerable and at-risk (Schiller, 2017), interestingly the profession in itself faces various challenges which are worth highlighting.

Many social workers face different challenges depending on their work environment and their designated roles and responsibilities. Chitereka (2009) provides insight into some of these challenges. They are summarised and provided as follows (Chitereka, 2009):

- Disregard of the profession- the social work profession often goes unrecognized for its hard work due to the misinterpretation of what the profession entails and how much hard work goes into it.
- Underfunded- many social workers are underpaid, especially in the NGO setting, where the government does not increase or subsidise salaries in accordance with those employed at government departments.
- High caseloads- as a result of many organisations being understaffed, the few trained and qualified staff has to carry the burden and high numbers. One social worker is required to carry the load of many social workers.
- Lack of resources-organisations with a lack of resources is unable to meet the expectations and demands from funders, putting strain and pressure on social workers. Resources in this regard can be cars for traveling purposes or even professional training to aid in professional development and growth. Social workers are expected to render a variety of services for which they are not trained.
- Dangerous environments- within statutory organisations, social workers often find themselves in unconducive dangerous environments, whereby they are exposed to assault and various forms of abuse. An example of this can be described in instances whereby social workers need to remove children from abusive and harmful environments whereby they are often confronted by abusers and perpetrators.

Social workers play a vital role in providing prevention and intervention services; however, it is evident that there is a requirement for an approach whereby all role players are involved. Social work therefore has become a shared responsibility of family, helpful communities, local

organisations and current social structures that can work towards improvements (Linsk, Mabeyo, Omari, Petras, Lubin, Abate, Steinitz, Kaijage and Mason, 2010). All involved can work together to ensure that effective and sustainable services are provided to those who are most vulnerable and at-risk (Chitereka, 2009).

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the theoretical framework of the study, which is organisational learning theory. It also explored the concept of vulnerable children and also the factors contributing to child vulnerability. The chapter further examined vulnerable children and their access to their rights and their service providers. The study will now proceed to chapter three to examine the legislative framework supporting the protection of vulnerable children in South Africa.



CHAPTER THREE: LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter examined the literature review of the study, which comprised of the conceptual clarifications and the theoretical framework. This chapter will explore the legislative framework of the study and unpack the law and policies that will serve as the basis for the study. The legislative framework will be discussed on the social work services available to vulnerable children. Although there are many laws and policies in the field of social work, the study will discuss those that are relevant to this thesis on vulnerable children. This chapter covers the laws and policies that will serve as the basis for formulating an understanding into the study of vulnerable children in the country.

3.2 THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Significant attention has been given to children and their rights. Reynaert, Bouverne-de-Bie and Vandevelde (2009) provide that this is as a result of the adoption of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, which came into force in September 1990. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which is abbreviated as the CRC or UNCRC is described as a human's right treaty which sets out Children's Rights considering their civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights. "The UN CRC is an international convention, monitored by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, that sets out rights for the survival, development, protection, and participation of children" (Pais and Bissell, 2006: 689). The treaty is made up of 54 articles in which the rights of children are provided along with the roles and responsibilities of the government in ensuring that these rights are accessible to children (Abrahams and Mathews, 2011).

As provided by Lansdown, Waterston, and Baum (1996) the UNCRC has been ratified by 187 countries. When a country ratifies it the convention becomes legally binding to ensure that they are compliant with its principles and standards. Also, when countries ratify the convention, it is required that the government provides progress reports to the UN committee of the CRC regarding the implementation of that which is provided within the CRC in that specific country (Abrahams and Mathews, 2011). The UNCRC has introduced principles of which one provides

that children are to be listened to and taken seriously regarding matters that concern them (Pais and Bissell, 2006). The core principles of the UNCRC in respect to children's rights are as follows (Abrahams and Mathews, 2011):

- Non-discrimination;
- Devotion to the best interests of the child;
- The right to life, survival and development;
- And respect for the views of the child.

According to Loyd (2002:13), "The CRC is the most widely ratified international convention and is deemed to have become customary international law to which all states, whether they have ratified the CRC or not, will be required to adhere to by the international community." The CRC has become the first legally binding international convention supporting the human rights of children. South Africa ratified it in June of 1995 as its first international treaty post-apartheid (Abrahams and Mathews, 2011). There have been significant commitments made to children's rights since then (Berry and Guthrie, 2003). There were numerous pieces of legislation introduced in realising the importance of child welfare (Schmid and Patel, 2016). To name a few, and demonstrate progress made since 1994 and the commitment to children's well-being South Africa has passed the following laws to support the aims of the UNCRC (Abrahams and Mathews, 2011):

- Section 28 of the South African Constitution, highlights children's rights, and their need thereof.
- The Children's Act 38 of 2005 gives effect to the rights of children
- The Sexual Offences Act No. 32 of 2007 includes protection from a wide range of sexual offences for children who have been exposed.
- The Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 provides a separate justice system for children who may be in conflict with the law.
- Social Assistance Amendment Act 2004 aids in providing access to social grants for children under the age of 18.

3.3 THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ACRWCR)

Soon after the CRC came the African Charter on the Rights of the Child (ACRWC) (Loyd, 2002). According to Mezmur (2006:549) “The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Children’s Charter) is the first comprehensive regional children’s rights treaty specifically dedicated to the protection of children in Africa” the African Children’s Charter was first adopted in 1990 and was entered into force in 1999. It is made up of 46 articles all pertaining to the well-being and rights of African children.

Loyd (2002) explains that the African Children Charter was borne as a result of feelings of African state members who felt that the CRC did not consider or may have missed the socio-cultural and economic realities of the experience of African children. That provided both the CRC and African Children’s Charter are two complementary pieces of legislation which are aimed at children’s rights and well-being. Similarly, to the CRC, the Charter is grounded in four principles as a means of allowing for an interpretation of it and assist in guiding the implementation of programs. The similarities between the principles of the CRC and the African Children’s Charter can be identified as follows:

- Non-discrimination (can be located in the 2nd article on the CRC and 3rd of the Charter)
- Devotion to the best interests of the child (can be located in the 3rd article of the CRC and 4th of the Charter)
- The right to life, survival, and development (can be located in the 6th article of the CRC and the 5th of the Charter)
- And respect for the views of the child (can be located in the 12th article in the CRC and 5th article within the 2nd chapter of the Charter).

This demonstrates how similar these are in terms of their overall aim towards children’s rights and their well-being; however, there are differences as well. The African Children’s Charter aims at putting the rights of children into perspective, both legally and culturally (Loyd, 2002). The Charter stresses the importance to include the cultural values and experiences of issues affecting African children (Loyd, 2002). South Africa ratified the charter 7th of January 2000. Considering

South Africa's history of inequalities and discrimination against people of colour, ratifying this charter demonstrates a commitment to fulfil promises that were made.

3.4 SOUTH AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

In South Africa, social work practice, the type, and field of the profession are guided by various legislations and frameworks which are dependent on the organisation or workplace. Given the nature of the research question and the intended study to be conducted a few identifiable legislations and policy frameworks can be mentioned. In child protection, all service providers are guided by various acts and frameworks which depends on the scope of work and services offered. To name a few, social welfare organisations providing services to children would make considerations to the South African Council for Social Service Professions; The Social Assistance Act No 13 Of 2004; The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa no. 108 of 1996; The Children's Act no 38 of 2005 and The White Paper for Social Welfare. These legislations will be discussed in detail.

3.4.1 The Constitution of the Republic Of South Africa

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996 is a basis on which people are provided with their rights and responsibilities. It includes the bill of rights that makes provision in forbidding discrimination against individuals based on their gender, race, sex, age, cultural beliefs and religion (South African History Online, 2014).

The main aim was to ensure that all citizens have access to their rights and that there is equity and social justice for all. With social workers advocating for the rights of all people in the country this demonstrates a drastic shift from the past. For this study, the Constitution forms as a guiding document which social welfare service providers and social workers regard when providing services.

These services are offered to uphold this and to ensure that people have access to their rights and are not deprived thereof. The constitution also provides a section which considers the child protection and children rights regarding it as an important document which guides the practice

and implementation of services to children. To highlight a few as provided within the Constitution of South Africa (1996: 11) every child has the right to

- to a name and a nationality from birth;
- to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment;
- to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services;
- to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation; to be protected from exploitative labour practices

3.4.2 The Children's Act 38 Of 2005

The Children's Act 38 of 2005 is an official act of parliament that provides all matters pertaining to children, child protection and children's rights. The aim of the act is to ensure the safety of children and child-related matters whereby the best interest of the child is always considered first. Within the second chapter, the general principles set the tone of understanding the rights of children. As explained earlier chapter two of the Children's Act (2005: 32) provides that all proceedings, actions and decisions in respect of a child must:

- respect, protect, promote and fulfil the child's rights set out in the Bill of Rights, the best interests of the child standard set out in section 7 and the rights and principles set out in this Act, subject to any lawful limitation;
- respect the child's inherent dignity;
- treat the child fairly and equitably;
- protect the child from unfair discrimination on any ground, including on the grounds of the health status or disability of the child or a family member of the child;
- recognise a child's need for development and to engage in play and other recreational activities appropriate to the child's age;
- recognise a child's disability and create an enabling environment to respond to the special needs that the child has.

Considering that the study is interested in analysing the services provided to vulnerable children by Social workers this act would need to be adhered to when providing services in line with their best interests. Social workers providing services to children need to be aware of the Children's

Act and its considerations in terms of child protection, children's rights and responsibilities. The Children's act (2005) provides insights into the roles and responsibilities of service providers of services to be rendered in respect of child care and protection. Within the act, various chapters highlight the type of services that are provided. To name a few services provided within the children's act, an outline of the various chapters and their core area of services is as follows:

- Chapters 5 and 6: Partial care and Early Childhood Development (ECD) - there need to be provisions of registered crèches, after-school care and supervision for children, ECD centres and program provision
- Chapter 7: Protection services- provisions of services (by Social Worker) such as reporting and investigating cases of child abuse, following up on court cases, removing and placing children who are at risk, identifying and reporting matters regarding children who are at risk.
- Chapter 8: Prevention and Early Intervention services- provisions for services such as counselling (in line with required and requested needs), family preservation, parenting programs, rehabilitation and therapeutic programs for abuse victims and diversion programs for youth in conflict with the law.
- Chapter 12: Foster care and cluster foster care- services provided need to look at recruiting and training eligible foster parents, placing children in foster care, ensuring that applications for foster care are processed through correct children court processes.
- Chapter 13: Child and Youth Care Centres- service provision through ensuring that there are places of safety, such as shelters, children's homes, care centres and residential care available and accessible to children in need.

The above mentioned provides insights into the services that are available to children in need of care and protection. However, aware of issues of accessibility, human resources and capacity for effective and sustainable implementation it is vital to implement these legislations.

3.4.3 The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997)

In terms of policy framework, the social work field considers The White Paper for Social Welfare as an important policy framework for practice and services provided (Nicholas,

Rautenbach and Maistry, 2010). The White Paper for Social Welfare provides that services rendered to families and children should be in line with its principles which states that all interventions should first prioritize prevention and then added required services (Department of Welfare, 1997). The Integrated Service Delivery Model for Developmental Social Services has also been implemented within child protection organisations and organisations providing Prevention and Early Interventions services (PEI) (Strydom, 2010). The White Paper (1997:51-54) identifies children who are considered vulnerable and require social welfare services as follows:

- Children from birth to 36 months;
- Preschool children in the age group 3 to 6 years who, because of poverty and/or other factors, have insufficient access to early childhood development services;
- Children requiring out-of-home care;
- Children with disabilities;
- Children with chronic diseases, including HIV/Aids;
- Children who are abused and neglected;
- Street children;
- Children engaged in labour that decreases their well-being;
- Children abusing substances;
- Children of divorcing parents; and
- Children suffering from insufficient nutrition

With this, the White Paper for social welfare also offers some guidelines for the service delivery of social welfare services to children who have been listed above. These guidelines are as follows, provided by (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997; Streak and Poggenpoel, 2005) to protect children's rights;

- To address the fundamental cause of family disintegration;
- Families who are more vulnerable should be prioritised in terms of resource allocation.
- Families should be provided with opportunities that will aid development and allow for equal access to resources.

- A National Program of Action will be developed for families and children of South Africa, which will ensure the implementation of policy, legislation and programs.
- A greater effort should be put into ensuring that children and families are able to equally access welfare services that will promote all across various stages of the life cycle.
- to concentrate interventions on doing preventative work before statutory work such as removals;
- to deliver services in an integrated, comprehensive way in keeping with the developmental approach;
- to make provision for the needs of families and children according to their different stages of family development; and
- to strive for the meaningful participation of all family members in activities aimed at promoting their well-being.

3.4.4 The Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004

One way in which the provision of social services is ensured is through the means of social assistance. Social assistance in this regard comes in the form of social grants in monetary value. As provided within the literature text the DSD provides services through the distribution of grants. Therefore the social assistance act 13 of 2004 is considered as part of the legislative framework in the field of social work. This is, however dependant on designation of the organisation and its core area of business.

Chapter 2 of the Act makes provision for the types of grants that are available and the criteria for eligibility. With a specific interest to that which is provided in respects for the well-being of children the following grants along with the criteria thereof is provided as follows (the social assistance act, 2004: 8-13):

- a child support grant- if the person making the application is the primary caregiver and qualifies according to the means test.
- a care dependency grant- a child is eligible if s/he requires permanent care and support due to illness then the primary caregiver may apply for
- a foster child grant- this is granted when a foster child is in need of care.

- The organisation or person processing grant applications is required to ensure that all requirements are met and in line with that which is stipulated within the Social Assistance act 2004 before processing and approving the grant.

3.4.5 The South African Council for Social Service Professions

All social workers are required to register with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) to be able to practice and work within the field (Nicholas, Rautenbach and Maistry, 2010). The SACSSP makes up a statutory board and professional council that work towards social justice by enhancing and promoting developmental social welfare. The SACSSP was established through the amended Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 which was first known as the Social Work Act 110 of 1978. The establishment of the SACSSP gave authority to the council to lay down the ethical rules and guidelines for the social work profession. All social workers are guided by the ethical rules and regulations of practice by the SACSSP. The SACSSP has the authority to de-register social workers from practice if found guilty of unprofessional behaviour and misconduct (Nicholas et al, 2010)

The policy frameworks are considered important guiding document in the field of social work as it provides guidelines, structure of services and the services to be provided. Nicholas et al. (2010) explain that the DSD takes the responsibilities of ensuring the effective implementation of the policies for social workers. It is also mentioned that this responsibility is shared among DSD and provincial welfare departments with acquired competencies on legislative procedures.

According to Nicholas et al. (2010:65), “National government is responsible for policy and legislation that sets national norms and standards, while the provinces are responsible for their implementation. Local authorities have limited welfare functions; however, provinces may delegate developmental welfare functions of local authorities.” While responsibilities are evident it is, however, not happening as implementation is a challenge. The National Plan of Action for Children, the Republic of South Africa (2012:19) states that “despite the significant progress that has been made in addressing the rights and needs of children, including the progressive legislative frameworks and programmes that have been put in place, South African children are

still faced with formidable challenges.” Although the acts discussed provide insights into the provisions that are available for the well-being of children, many still face challenges.

This chapter has provided insights into the legislative framework for the study. It has examined international treaties and their influence in South Africa’s legislative framework in terms of laws passed to uphold the obligation accompanied by ratifying the CRC and African Children’s Charter. The study will now transit to chapter four to examine some of the best practices of vulnerable children in some selected African countries.



CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL WORK SERVICES AVAILABLE TO VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SELECTED COUNTRIES (PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided the legislative framework which comprised of the law and policies guiding child welfare in the study. This chapter will explore insights into the social work services available to vulnerable children in Kenya, Ghana and Botswana and interpret findings and present them. This is to provide insights regarding the available services, areas like the country's background will be explored in order to provide context for the study. Also, specific country challenges faced by children will be examined to determine their needs. It would provide insights into how the needs of children are addressed; in terms of the main agencies and departments providing services to them. Thereafter the roles and social work services of these institutions will be explored, and the challenges facing them in executing their duties in these countries are highlighted. The chapter concludes by examining lessons and best practices learned from these countries. This would be followed by the presentation of findings and main themes.

4.2 THE PRACTICE OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

This section of the study discusses how Child welfare policies driven by the social policy have been practically implemented in the public service and administration in Ghana, Kenya and Botswana. As explained earlier, child welfare in South Africa and these countries is a social policy which Vargas-Hernández et al (2011), explains is the guidelines and interventions for the changing, maintenance, or creation of living conditions that are conducive to human welfare and child welfare. The provision of child welfare is placed under state officials and the implementation of child welfare policy is under Social Development Departments.

4.3. CASE STUDY 1: KENYA

In Kenya, many, children, women and communities are subjected to various challenges relating to, but not limited to issues of poverty, abuse, forms of violence, poor treatment and labour practices that are exploitative (Wilkins, 2018). In 2017 Kenya's population was estimated at around of 49.6 million people of which a large amount make up children under the age of 18

(UNICEF, 2018a). This may have changed over the years. The government has realised the importance of addressing social issues affecting its children. The country became the 20th member to ratify the UNCRC which was later followed up by the ratification of the ACRWC (Bryant, 2009). To demonstrate their commitment to the rights of children there was the enactment of the Children's Act of 2001 (UNICEF, 2015). The Act serves to integrate the principles and provisions as stated in both the CRC and ACRWC, but they face challenges (National Council for Children's Services, 2015).

4.3.1. COUNTRY SPECIFIC CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY CHILDREN

In Kenya's, the 2008-2012 National Plan of Action and various legislative pieces has been put in place to strengthen the child protection framework to address issues of trafficking, neglect, violence against children and sexual exploitation. Despite this, children end up being vulnerable due to implementation challenges. These challenges are: street children, child poverty, child exploitation, female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriages and orphaned (Akuma, 2014).

a. Street Children

In Kenya, Street children is a phenomenon that dates back to the 1960s during the war of independence. Today, many children are living and working on the streets. This is due to the failure of its social policy and there is no exact number of these children (Sorre and Oino, 2013) but estimates are between 50 000 to 200 000 (Humanium, 2020a). This is due to; poverty, unwanted pregnancies, children becoming orphans, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS. While on the street, they become sick, exploited and exposed to various forms of abuse, trafficking and child labour and they cannot access their rights (Ayaya and Esamai, 2001).

b. Child Poverty

Kenya has made progress in reaching its developmental goals, which is evident in noting that it has been able to shift from a low-income to a lower middle-income country. Despite this, children continue to be poor and vulnerable. In Kenya, it has been found that 41.5 percent makes up children who are living below the poverty line (Humanium, 2020a). These children are exploited through child labour due to the need to survive and earn an income. Also, they are vulnerable to instances of parental neglect and various forms of child abuse.

c. Child Exploitation

A study conducted in 2015 by the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect provided that in Kenya, children are exploited sexually through commercial trade with tourists and Kenyan nationals. These children are exposed to sexual abuse and exploitation through child labour practices and trafficking (National Council for Children's Services, 2015). Often children find themselves in situations that they are unable to control or even be removed from. Those who are victims of sexual exploitation find it difficult and in some cases impossible to receive help and support services (Humanium, 2020a).

d. Orphanhood

In Kenya, 3.6 million children are orphans and are considered vulnerable. In many Kenyan communities, it is traditional for community members to care for children who have lost their parents. While this may help many other children are not afforded this opportunity due to socio-economic circumstances relating to poverty (Ferguson and Heidemann, 2009). The loss of the primary caregiver like a mother results in orphan-hood placing children at risk (UNICEF, 2018a).

4.3.2 SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR CHILDREN

The government in Kenya comprises of various spheres and departments, all of which are assigned to specific tasks and responsibilities to address social policy in the country. The Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Development (MoGCSD) is assigned the responsibility of ensuring the functioning and well-being in the lives of children. While the MoGCSD consists of several departments, of whom each provides different services, the Department of Children Services works to help and serve children in need. Efforts in doing so have looked at increasing and broadening the skill set to enhance the Social Welfare Workforce (SWW) of the country. In realising the rights of children awareness has been created across Government Ministries, Agencies and the general public.

This awareness has led to an increase in programs developed to service children (UNICEF, 2018a). Also, there is a requirement for expertise in working with the various welfare issues

affecting children. Expertise in this regard refers to trained and educated professionals well aware of how to address social welfare concerns, which relate to some form of tertiary education. However, the MoGCSD funds are limited and this hinders the process of employing equipped personnel which in turn hinders the process of helping and servicing children in need. Thus, there is still a dire need for more to be done (Lopez, Guyer, and Mutie, 2013.). The MoGCSD has provided that the SWW workforce consists of 406 trained staff members who are employed and providing services to over the 47 counties within the country, with 557 vacancies that are still to be filled. This provides an indication not only of the workload of those employed but also the amount of progress that could be made by the employment of skilled officials. The recognition of the SWW has led to progress and the provision of services to children. Thus, staff providing these services needs to be skilled (Lopez et al, 2013.).

4.3.3 SOCIAL WORK SERVICES AVAILABLE

In the pre-colonial era, any form of social support in Kenya had been traditionally provided by cultural practices across communities. Community members were assigned responsibilities in providing support. Many village elders played the roles social workers play today. With social issues growing larger and more complex in the country, the government then realised the need for specialised agencies and professionals to assist with issues experienced. This is how a more formal welfare sector developed within the social work and child welfare system.

In Kenya, Social Work is still a growing profession, as institutions fall short in numbers hindering the ability to meet the country's need for trained social workers. (Lombard and Wairire, 2010; Spitzer, Twikirize and Wairire, 2014). Social work students attending institutions outside of Kenya seldom return to practice due to poor remunerations and career opportunities. In Kenya, the scope of work for professional social workers has changed due to globalisation and the country's needs. Those who have stayed and developed their careers find themselves in various sectors like child welfare services, probation services, hospitals, schools and community development organisations.

Social workers' services cover rural and urban areas, depending on the employment agency, its designation and beneficiaries. Because social work is still a growing profession within the

country, it should be noted that its context is considered as widely generic where social work related jobs and functions are undertaken by individuals who may not even be trained as social workers (Lombard and Waririre, 2010). While services may not be provided by trained professionals, the core function of the profession is represented through the services of maintenance, prevention and social change. Spitzer et al, (2014:97) notes that within the Kenyan context “Social workers are employed in the civil service, namely: government departments in the county and national levels; in international organisations such as United Nations and Compassion International; in local NGOs, faith-based organisations and community-based organisations.” The scope of practice within the above-mentioned covers community development, child welfare services, correctional social work; and medical social work (Spitzer et al, 2014).

As explained earlier, the MoGCSD is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the functioning and well-being of children with the Department of Children working towards improving the SWW. Child welfare services will be explored as a responsibility of the MoGCSD and Ministry of Home Affairs, which also plays a role in service provision for children. In doing so the roles of professionals employed in providing these services will be provided as a means of understanding the social work professions. In an analysis of the social work profession in Kenya, it was revealed “that social work roles have not been limited to social workers alone. In the civil service, probation officers, children’s welfare officers in the Children’s Department of Gender, Women and Children, and district development officers execute social work tasks in different parts of Kenya” (Lombard and Wairire, 2010:106).

Child welfare services have a primary focus on child protection which requires skills and expertise. The reason for this is due to the nature of the situation’s sensitivity whereby if not addressed correctly could place children at risk, leaving them open to vulnerabilities. Considering the various departments within the MoGCSD and Home Affairs social workers play various roles depending on the type of service that is required. While they may be termed differently, ultimately at a professional level they are trained and qualified social workers performing and taking on the roles of probation officers, child officers, child care assistants and social welfare workers. Child welfare services that are rendered include the following;

- Provision of counselling and support to children and families, including cash transfers as well as court preparations for children;
- Facilitating processes included in but not limited to adoption, foster care, and guardianship of children;
- Supervising, inspecting and ensuring the facilitation of institutions and programs for children to maintain the safeguarding and welfare of children;
- Providing education and skills training to children in institutions.
- Supervision and management of children's rehabilitation schools, remand homes and rescue institutions (Lopez et al, 2013).

To provide a context in understanding the various roles of a social worker in the Kenyan context an illustration is provided.



Table 2: Roles and Responsibilities of Social Workers And Social Welfare Workforce In Kenya

Service Provider	Qualification	Ministry	Department	Responsibilities
Children Officers (CO's)	4 Year BA Degree (In Social Work Or Social Sciences)	MoGCSD	Department of Child Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Establish, promote, co-ordinate and supervise children services in Kenya” ((Lopez, Guyer, and Mutie, 2013:5), through a range of interventions and processes.
Volunteer Children Officers (VCO's)	No Requirements	MoGCSD		
Childcare Assistant (CA's)	4 Year BA Degree (In Social Work Or Social Sciences)	MoGCSD		
Probation Officer (PO's)	4 Year BA Degree (In Social Work Or Social Sciences)	Home Affairs	Department of Probation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probation Service ensures that court, probation and community sentences are handled and supervised correctly in relation to the sentence given.
Volunteer Probation Officer (VPO's)	No Requirements	Home Affairs		
Social Welfare Officer (SWO's)	4 Year BA Degree (In Social Work Or Social Sciences)	Home Affairs	Department of Prisons Rehabilitation and Welfare Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children born in prisons with their mothers are provided with support and education services up until the age of 4, thereafter offering a primary school setting within the institution.

Source (Lopez et al, 2013)

The table explains that services are being provided to children, but there are still challenges that require work and attention. One of the biggest challenges is the shortage of trained social workers in the field rendering services in line with the needs of children. The SWW suffers due to the lack of skilled personnel to address the needs, thus allowing unskilled individuals to provide services. As a consequence thereof concerns and issues may not be addressed with the care and sensitivity required, thus not upholding the responsibilities as assigned to various ministries and departments (Lopez et al, 2013.)

4.3.4 CHALLENGES FACED BY SOCIAL WORKERS

As explained in the table, the functions of the social workers are practiced, but the field thereof is not recognised. This can lead to employees feeling misunderstood and undervalued. The challenges related to the social work profession begin as early as becoming a social work student, thereafter job placement and job satisfaction. Social workers often choose an alternative career path due to poor recognition and acknowledgment. A summary by (Lombard and Wairire, 2010; Spitzer et al, 2014) of the challenges faced by social workers may be, yet not limited to the following:

- Social workers in Kenya are not able to effectively sway and fight for legislative mandates that could give the profession the recognition it deserves thus allowing it to grow in the country.
- With the social work profession being undervalued, its voice and functions are, so to say rendered powerless, leaving the profession unable to utilise its skills to make a difference in the country.
- Social workers in Kenya often find themselves working in environments where there are no professional opportunities for growth and development through training to aid their experience in the field and to follow trends in meeting the demands of the country.
- Many are unable to attend local or international conferences as a result of poor funding and resources, thus denying them opportunities of becoming familiar with social work practices in and around the country. With the profession being, so to say poorly remunerated, social workers are unable to source and afford training.

- In Kenya, the roles of social workers are not just limited to those who studied and completed the course but rather to any person trained in the field of social sciences.
- This demonstrates how poorly the profession is recognised and why many may quit the profession. This highlights the need for legislative processes to be put in place.

Spitzer et al. (2014) provide the findings presented in the table below based on interviews conducted with Social Workers in the country:

Figure 2: Challenges as stated by Social Workers

Challenges as stated by social workers	Frequency
Inadequate resources to support social workers	128
Inadequate number of professional social workers	57
Poor policy planning and implementation	26
Lack of a professional body to regulate social work practice	25
Lack of government support in social work projects	11
Lack of knowledge on MDGs	9
Lack of appreciation of social work profession	8
Corruption by stakeholders	7
Cultural conflicts with agency programmes	5
Lack of adequate training materials	4
Lack of community participation in development issues	4
Lack of harmonised curriculum in both public and private institutions	4
Harsh environmental conditions for social workers	3
Cumulative Total	291

Source: (Spitzer et al, 2014: 104)

From the table provided, it is evident that social workers and the social work profession in the country face several challenges. By considering the challenges with the highest frequency, it is evident that a lot needs to be done, perhaps starting with the recognition of the profession through a necessary legislative mandate. Herein could lie the future of the profession, in its development starting with the budgetary allocation ensuring that the profession is well resourced, understood and valued.

4.4 CASE STUDY 2: GHANA

Ghana has been recognised as one of the top-performing African countries in terms of providing child welfare services. This has been demonstrated through the country's economic growth

resulting in the country receiving its middle-income status in 2010 (Frimpong-Manso, 2016). This has enabled the country to work towards its economic stability resulting in reducing poverty within the country.. While noting these successes, it should be highlighted that the country still faces several issues, of which many affect the lives and well-being of children. An approximation of Ghana's population reveals that out of 27 million people, half make-up children who are below the age of 18. Ghana has taken strides in improving the child welfare and protection system in the country to demonstrate the commitment to ratifying the CRC. Thus the economic success in the country has led to a social policy which ensures that the vulnerable children are assisted however implementation remains an issue. These efforts are good strides, however, a lot more can be done to improve the lives of the country's children (Frimpong-Manso and Mawudoku, 2016).

4.4.1 COUNTRY SPECIFIC CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY CHILDREN

With commitments made to uphold and assure provisions within the CRC, a significant awareness has been created in realising the rights of children as well as the importance of ensuring their well-being (Government of Ghana, 2009). The country has taken steps through the enactment of laws regarding children in developing NPA's to ensure that children are provided with services. However, children in the country are faced with challenges. Research provides some of the country-specific challenges faced by children, which are as follows; street children, child labour, violence and abuse as well as orphanhood.

a. Street Children

A survey conducted in 2001 in Ghana revealed that the number of children living on the streets was relatively high, with about 80% being between the ages of 5 and 14. At this young age, the children are forced to find work to sustain themselves and their family members. In cases like these, it is evident how the issue of child labour becomes prevalent. While there may be several causes leading up to children living on the streets, poverty and poor economic circumstances serves as the driving forces. Children living on the streets find themselves at risk of exploitation in regards to child labour, trafficking, violence and various forms of abuse (Orme and Seipel, 2007). Street children find themselves unable to access services and their rights thus denying them opportunities of support and child protection (Frimpong-Manso and Mawudoku, 2016).

b. Child labour

Child labour is quite prevalent affecting children, defined as an economic activity in which children are often forced to engage in, which is dangerous to their health and overall well-being (Government of Ghana, 2009). Findings by Hamenoo, Dwomoh and Dako-Gyeke (2018) suggest that a percentage of 21.8 make up children between the ages of 5 and 17 who are involved in child labour. Also, 14.2% find themselves in extremely dangerous situations. Children engaging in child labour are often stripped from educational opportunities and development due to their circumstances. This in the long run negatively affects their futures (Hamenoo et al, 2018). Work environments that children find themselves in may differ between girls and boys. These environments may not be at the leisure of the child, but instead, that which they are forced to do. Boys find themselves in mining, fishing and agricultural work, whereas girls find themselves vulnerable to exploitative sexual practices as well as domestic work. Another issue which children face which is could be directly linked to child labour is child trafficking (Frimpong-Manso and Mawudoku, 2016). Children are not limited to experiencing one issue at a time and are often faced with several, placing them in dire need of child protection.

c. Violence and Abuse

Ghana has made efforts in enacting laws aimed at ensuring the protection of children against violence and abuse. These institutions have been tasked with responsibilities in ensuring that children are provided with services to support and protect them. Despite the efforts made to safeguard children in the country the number of children exposed to abuse, violence and other risk factors remains high (Government of Ghana, 2009). It has been found that abuse often takes place within children's homes as well as within school settings whereby teachers cane children (UNICEF, 2020). Children have also fallen victim to sexual abuse within school settings. Sexual abuse remains a big issue for both girls and boys, despite laws in place. Often children do not report cases of sexual abuse due to fear of what may happen to them. Violence against children in the country takes various forms and the enactment of laws is not enough to protect children, and therefore the government should work towards improving services (Humanium, 2020b).

d. Orphanhood

Research provides that the number of orphans in Ghana has reached about 1.1 million, with a large number of them orphaned due to HIV/AIDS (Diraditsile and Mmeanyana, 2019). This number is expected to increase. Traditional practices in Ghana regarding orphans and fostering orphans have been through kinship fostering. In an event where a child had no one to care for them, the community would do so, and ensure that there was someone who would provide care. Considering the large number of orphans today, this traditional practice cannot be considered effective, therefore, alternate care arrangements and placements should be available (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). There are 148 child intuitions (children's homes; orphanages) in Ghana of which only 5 are registered. This reveals that there is not enough children's home to service the number of orphans. This is a factor placing children at risk of living on the streets and being exploited (Colburn, 2010).

4.4.2 HOW ARE CHILDREN'S NEEDS ADDRESSED IN GHANA

Legislations like the Constitution and Children's Act in the country, both realises and highlight the importance of children's rights and their well-being (Government of Ghana, 2009). The children's act assigns responsibilities to various districts and ministries in line with the welfare of children. While responsibilities may be assigned, limited insights into the process of providing services is available as no policy framework providing guidelines is available for the delivery of services and the type of services like prevention and early intervention and also supports services to children and families (Casey, 2011).

In mentioning that the Children's Act assigns responsibilities to the districts and ministries, the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare serves as one of the main agencies responsible for child welfare services. The Department of Social Welfare (DSW) under this ministry works with child welfare matters ensuring that services are implemented. Their main provision of services is through advocacy, formulating policy, ensuring that services provided are quality assured and as well as licensing organisations in the child welfare sector (Laird, 2008). The DSW workforce is spread across national, regional, district and community levels (Laird, 2008; Frimpong-Manso, 2014).

While DSW is considered one of the main agencies providing child welfare services, other agencies, departments and NGO's play a role in service provision (UNICEF, 2018b). The table below provides insights into the various departments rendering services to children:

Table 3: Services Available To Children

Department/ Designation	Function/Services
Social welfare	<p>The DSW is limited in capacity with trained personal to provide on-going support services therefor NGOs and other organisations are included in service provisions under social welfare. Services available include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance • Counselling and psychosocial support (by DOVVSU, DSW and NGO's) • Children's home, residential care and places of safety operational by the DWS. • NGO's offering shelters and temporary placement and outreach services for street children. • Private orphanages • Rehabilitation programs for victims of trafficking. <p>It should be noted that several organisations and NGOs are funded and supported by International donors such as UNICEF.</p>
Justice	<p>Services include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court preparations child victims who have to testify. This service is not provided by Social workers. • Court proceedings take place in only one criminal court concerning child victims. • Free legal aid services are provided by NGO's such as the ARK Foundation.

<p>Health</p>	<p>The provisions of services within the health departments are limited and can be considered inaccessible to those in need. The services provided include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised services for child victims are provided in child abuse units at two hospitals in the Accra area. A specific forensic medical form has been put together for officials to complete in cases of rape. • Free medical services are available to victims if covered by the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). <p>These available services demonstrate the poor accessibility to those in need. Also, it should be mentioned that in court cases, there is a requirement for medical certificates of child victims. Victims are expected to pay for medical certificates which in many cases are beyond their means, which in turn could compromise the proceedings of their cases and receiving the necessary justice.</p>
<p>Education</p>	<p>Services provided include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OVC are provided with school grants, scholarships and training aiding skills for employment.
<p>Alternative care</p>	<p>Services provided by NGO's and the state to orphans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster care placements. • Adoption placements • Placement within children's homes, shelters or specialised institutions. <p>The DSW is working towards facilitating a system whereby children's homes are supervised and inspected to ensure that children are safe. Furthermore, they are working towards expanding on registration of foster parents to care for children in need.</p>

Source : (Casey, 2011:43)

As mentioned, with no policy framework available services provided tends to be issue related, with no continuum support and preventative services which is necessary to ensure the strengthening and functioning of welfare services. Casey (2011: 7) explains that “The child protection system is guided largely by a series of issue-specific national plans of actions, which

are overlapping and duplicative both in terms of the target groups covered and the types of activities that are to be undertaken.”

Although significant progress has been made by various organisations and stakeholders in educating and raising awareness of issues affecting children, there tends to be no collaboration between role players. This results in the repetition of services directed at specific issues, whereas through collaborative partnerships a larger understanding of all issues affecting children could be covered. While awareness-raising and education only contribute to a portion of the issues faced, several persist and require support and intervention (Frimpong-Manso, 2014). However, the country faces several service delivery-related issues in their plight to ensure the well-being of children. Issues relating to service delivery include:

- Human resources: While a large number of individuals in the child protection field are trained professionals, equal distribution remains a challenge due to staff being based in urban areas and district offices and not in the areas that require attention. Due to agencies lacking resources staff are unable to fulfil company mandates. Inadequate financial resources available to organisations and staff in child protection to deliver services effectively.
- Professional training: trainings provided are issue specific limiting those trained to intervene in other issues due to their lack of expertise and skill set.

4.4.3 SOCIAL WORK SERVICES AVAILABLE IN GHANA

Ghana like many other developing countries Africa finds itself riddled with social policy issues that need to be addressed by professionals trained and knowledgeable of how to tackle them. The social work profession is recognised in several countries due to its nature in working on ensuring human rights and the well-being of people. That being said, in a Ghanaian context the social work profession is still in the process of developing and is challenged with practicing skills acquired or allowing problems to be solved in a traditional manner (Avendal, 2011).

In African countries before a formal social work practice had been introduced, community members and leaders would deal with social issues; however, with the world evolving, so has the magnitude of social issues thus requiring a profession integrated approach of providing services and support. As intimated earlier, the DSW is one of the main agencies alongside other government departments and NGOs in rendering services. These services are delivered by various professionals, which includes social workers or in some instances, paraprofessionals in the place and role of social workers (Ministry Of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2020). Social workers in Ghana are commonly found in organisations and agencies in the field of child welfare and protection (Baffoe and Dako-Gyeke, 2013).

Employed personnel at DSW totals to about 1219 people which is spread across its 216 offices. With not all personal being social workers, in most instances, only one social worker is available at each office. This means that one social worker is tasked with servicing people falling under that specific district. Frimpong-Manso et al (2016) mention that with only one social worker at an office it would mean 1 social worker for over 30,000 people. This demonstrates the unrealistic expectations of social workers and highlights the consequences due to the lack of social workers.

The unequal distribution would entail rendering of services that are only short term and ineffective. In some instances, services may not even be provided due to the shortage of social workers. As a means of tackling the dire need for services volunteers provide support services to children in need of care. It has been found that formal child protection services rendered by social workers are rather limited in the types of services as well as accessibility to these services (Laird, 2008). This is a result of poor infrastructure, adequate staff capacity and appropriate skill sets. In addition, it should be noted that service delivery points is often located in urban areas where those who need it most are unable to access it (Laird, 2008).

Child welfare programs suggested by Jones and Doh (2009), initiated to service the needs of children include the following:

- Supplementary feeding- provision of foods for pregnant women and children.
- DSW Services: maintenance and custody issues, child care grants, care and alternate care arrangements and child protection programs

- Violence and exploitation of children: programs are designed and aimed at creating and raising awareness; psychosocial support, counselling services, provision of health care.

These programs have been implemented by the government or public officials through co-ordination with stakeholders and role-players involved in child protection. Though being commended for designation programs to service direct needs, large parts of the countries children still suffer due to the limited coverage (Jones and Doh, 2009).

4.4.4 CHALLENGES FACED BY SOCIAL WORKERS IN GHANA

Although social workers are limited in numbers and doing as much as they can for those in need, several challenges hinder their success in reaching children in need of care and protection in the country. These challenges do not just hinder service delivery but also demotivates social workers and desires to bring about change and make a difference.

In the Ghanaian context some of the main challenges that social workers are faced with are summarised in line with the findings of (Laird, 2008; Baffoe and Dako-Gyeke, 2013; Frimpong-Manso, 2014; Frimpong-Manso and Mawudoku, 2016) and are presented as follows:

- There is an increase in people doing work in the social work profession who are not trained or qualified in the profession.
- Poor recognition of the profession by communities due to traditional practices and ways of solving issues experienced.
- There is a lack of collaboration between government and stakeholders in service delivery.
- Child welfare services and programs are poorly funded and therefore services are limited in accessibility.
- Organization providing support services to those in desperate need are not qualified.
- The profession in itself is poorly remunerated.
- There is an unequal distribution of social workers across districts resulting in higher caseloads, being overworked and underpaid.

The above mentioned only highlight some of the common challenges experienced. Challenges may differ from person to person as well as be dependent on the work environment.

4.5 CASE STUDY 3: BOTSWANA

Botswana's economy has seen growth, however, is riddled with high numbers of unemployment, poverty and inequalities. A 2011, census revealed a population of approximately 2 million people. This is considered a relatively small as opposed to other countries. Of the population, children below the ages of 15 and 5 respectively make up a big amount (Lucas and Jongman, 2017). With the country being riddled with the issues just provided and the large amount of the population consisting of children, inference of issues experienced by children can be made.

The country has demonstrated an awareness of the issues experienced using the enactment of legislation and the development of programs to serve and protect children. Other than demonstrating awareness, the enactment of legislation serves to make provisions as required after the enactment of the CRC. Botswana has taken the necessary steps to fully domesticate the CRC (Maundeni, 2009). It has taken steps to provide some sort of child protection mandate through various laws and policy frameworks. Like the countries previously discussed there are challenges that remain.

4.5.1 COUNTRY SPECIFIC CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY CHILDREN IN BOTSWANA

Children in Botswana have been exposed to vulnerabilities and factors that place them at risk due to poverty, high unemployment rates and inequality in the country (Maundeni and Levers, 2005). The consequences of these issues affect children when families are unable to care and protect them. A few country specific- challenges faced by children in Botswana include the following and will be explored; child-sensitive social protection, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, street children and exploitation and orphanhood (Maundeni and Levers, 2005; Ntshwarang and Malinga-Musamba, 2016).

a. Child-Sensitive Social Protection

Children in the country require child-sensitive services to address the various issues that they face. This seems to be lacking in the country, thus denying children access to support. With a lack of appropriate child-sensitive practices, children are unable to overcome other issues they face, which could, in turn, open them up to further vulnerabilities (Humanium, 2020c).

b. Children with HIV-AIDS

Botswana finds itself as the third highest country overcome by HIV/AIDS. This has been considered a challenging pandemic in the country. In realizing the seriousness of this the country has taken strides in the right direction in lowering rates. Mother- to- child -transmissions has seen a decline, although there are still children infected. Children who are affected by HIV/AIDS can find themselves at risk of other health issues in Botswana. These issues may be because accessing services in struggling communities is a challenge and inaccessible. This may be a health issue and not necessarily a social policy issue relating to child welfare but the services are still required (Emmanuel, Letshwiti-Macheng and Maundeni, 2010; Ntshwarang and Malinga-Musamba, 2016).

c. Street Children and Child Exploitation

The phenomenon of street children has been seen in countries previously discussed. Street children in Botswana are often seen begging for food, money and shelter. Unfortunately, children living on the street find themselves vulnerable and susceptible to violence, exploitation and abuse (Humanium, 2020c). Often street children are trafficked and forced to work, this can include sexual exploitation through prostitution in girls, whereas boys find themselves joining gangs and becoming involved in illegal activities. Furthermore, children living on the streets are forced into child labour desperate to earn an income to survive. Street children are denied rights as they are discriminated against. With this, they are unable to access health services, education, or even child protective services (Humanium, 2020c).

d. Orphanhood

Findings from UNICEF have identified orphanhood (children becoming orphans) as one of the main issues concerning children in need of care in Botswana (Maundeni, 2009). In the country, approximately 160000 children are orphans of which a large portion is due to HIV/AIDS. Research provides that when children become orphans they become exposed to several vulnerabilities, starting at the point of losing one or both caregivers. When a child loses a parent, it affects their emotional and psychological well-being if not dealt with sensitively. Also, in many instances when losing a parent the child loses the person who provided them with care and protection. Therefore, there is a need for interventions for orphans. Interventions should be

aimed at psychosocial support as well as suitable placement for the child to ensure that their well-being are considered (Maundeni, 2009; Ntshwarang and Malinga-Musamba, 2016).

4.5.2 HOW ARE THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN ADDRESSED?

In Botswana, the Constitution and the Children’s Act of 2009 serve as the two main legislative pieces in protecting all children and their rights (Ntshwarang and Malinga-Musamba, 2016). Protection in context within these legislative pieces looks at ensuring that children’s rights are protected respected and promoted accordingly. With this, the roles and responsibilities of service providers are allocated in line with the provisions stipulated (Maundeni, 2009). Furthermore, this allows for program formulation and the development of formal child protection strategies. In Botswana two types of strategies are considered, the one being formal and the other informal (Emmanuel et al, 2010).

Formal strategies include interventions being implemented by a specific service provider that seek to enhance the well-being of the child. These service providers range from but are not limited to, social workers, police officials, counsellors and teachers. There are several NGOs in Botswana working in the field of child protection, providing an array of services such as counselling, awareness and educational campaigns, child court and legal proceedings, AIDS intervention strategies as well as shelter and refuge for affected children.

The table below provides insight into a few organisations in the field of child protection alongside there area of service delivery to children in need:

Table 4: Organisations Addressing Children’s Needs

Organisation	Services provided
Ditshwanelo	Services are aligned with protecting and promoting all human rights. This is done through program formulation and implementation looking to serve all, including women, children and communities in need (Eldis, 2019).
Lifeline	Services are offered are available to all of Botswana through free confidential counselling suited to the individual’s needs.

Childline	Services offered to children includes: face to face counselling for trauma, sexual abuse as well as court support; prevention and awareness campaigns and workshops; reporting and ensuring investigations in cases of child abuse; parenting skills and workshops (Childline Botswana, 2020).
Kagisano Society Women's shelter	Services include accommodation and medical assistance to women and children who have been victims of gender-based violence; counselling and legal services (UN Women, 2016).
Botswana Christian AIDS intervention program	Services provided include, but are not limited to HIV/AIDS care; care to orphans and vulnerable children (BOCAIP, 2018).

While it is evident that Botswana realises the importance of protecting children and this demonstrated through legislation and service available there is however no clear indication of the success related to services provided. In a study conducted in Botswana by Emmanuel et al. (2010), exploring children and their well-being, interviews with service providers highlighted that services to children focus on quantity instead of quality this relating to material assistance and not adequate psycho-social support.

Furthermore, often service providers are unsure of whether their services were effective, as no follow-ups were done. There is no place for monitoring and evaluation processes take place (Diraditsile, 2016). Besides, monitoring of service is never done as a result of a lack of resources, this being of monetary value as well as trained personnel. Respondents, interviewed for the study suggested the following as obstacles standing in the way of effective service delivery:

- Not enough attention is given to preventative child protection program;
- a lack of coordinated service arrangements;
- a limited capacity for places of safety for children at risk;
- the inclusion of children in research and formulating child protection programs is limited;
- group work approaches are not used enough;
- Ignorance regarding children's rights (Emmanuel et al, 2010).

Informal child protection strategies are mainly related to family responsibility and how the family is meant to care and protect children, however, reports thereof suggest that informal child protection is not effective because often children are vulnerable at the hands of those who are meant to care for them (Emmanuel et al, 2010).

This highlights that there are challenges experienced in both formal and informal child protection strategies. This is not to say that no efforts have been made, however, that there is a need for collaborative partnerships, budgetary reviews and resource allocation.

4.5.3 SOCIAL WORK SERVICES AVAILABLE IN BOTSWANA

Although social work is still a growing profession (Osei-Hwedie, Ntseane and Jacques, 2006; Maundeni, 2000) it has received recognition and the importance of it is acknowledged which is evident within the Children's Act of 2009. Within the Act, social workers are assigned an array of roles and responsibilities (Lucas and Jongman, 2018). Social work is considered an integral part of the delivery of child justice in Botswana (Lucas and Jongman, 2017). While some of the roles are clearly stated it should be noted that the profession performs several other roles that may not be clearly defined in the act. The roles of social workers as stipulated in the act includes as stated by Lucas and Jongman (2017; 2) "educating communities about children issues; working as friends of the Children's court; investigating cases involving children; reporting cases involving children to the police; writing social enquiry reports; application and implementation of child protection orders; working with protected children; arranging alternative care for children; facilitating foster care; working with children in conflict with the law; visitation and inspection of premises placing children." The role of the social worker in child protection is one that should be adequately resourced to ensure that the needs of children are met.

In Botswana social work is practiced in hospitals, schools, children's homes (foster care) and within statutory organisations. Social workers may also be employed as directors, in management positions, as administrators, lecturers and researchers who can contribute to research findings and trends in child welfare matters (Maundeni, 2009). There are many organisations and departments that work in assisting to protect children's rights but it should be noted that the largest employer of social workers are the local authority in Botswana. Only a small number of social workers are employed in hospitals, within the government and at NGOs.

Emmanuel et al. (2011) reveal that a total of 420 social workers had been employed within local government.

Social workers employed at local government level services are considered generic, in the sense that services are provided are not in line with the needs of the child and not confined to a specialised service. That is not to say that social workers in other organisations are not assigned to specific tasks and responsibilities. These are mostly civil servants who work directly under the state. Therefore, child welfare in Botswana is a public service and falls under public administration. These may differ from one organisation to another. Services provided by local authority social work employees look at the following:

- Screening and registering orphans in need of welfare support.
- Screening orphans in need of special care (disabilities)
- Collection and distribution of food, clothing and shelter to children in need.
- Counselling services (unspecified)
- Assessing and referring orphans with special needs to relevant institutions.
- Workshops and trainings for children and parents caring for orphans.

In most cases, services by local authorities cover material support and lack provisions of psychosocial support. One reason noted was due to the skill set and training of social workers within local government. Social workers working at other organisations may not meet the specific needs of children. In hospital settings social workers provide counselling services to victims of abuse, in addition, they may also assist local authorities in some cases of screening and assessing for material assistance (Maundeni, 2009).

Social workers employed at NGOs also provide several services to children, some of which may be specified in the organisations designation. For example, Childline Botswana is a designated child protection organisation (NGO) providing specialised services. Services look at prevention and early intervention services, awareness-raising campaigns, specialised training, court support and counselling services to abused children. Also, it has been provided that Childline social workers, when providing services to children make use of various skills and tools to ensure that the child's needs are met (Childline Botswana, 2020).

The social work profession plays a big role in ensuring the well-being of children in the country; however, there are still several challenges that persist in service delivery across all employment agencies. To briefly mention, although the local authority employs what is said to be the largest the number of social workers, the work done and people reached is however not adequate or effective, this is as a result of social worker caseloads. The expectations to be fulfilled by social workers are alarming, whereby one social worker is meant to cover more than one village highlighting that there is a shortage of staff in the field. Employers and funders need to be cognisant regarding the magnitude of child protection issues and the number of children affected before forming expectations.

4.5.4 CHALLENGES FACED BY SOCIAL WORKERS IN BOTSWANA

With the children's act highlighting and assigning social workers with their various roles and responsibilities unrealistic expectations are developed. The social work profession is riddled with several challenges. To be more specific it is useful to start by mentioning that the challenges faced are directly linked to the implementation of the laws and policies in the country. These challenges began with resource constraints in fully implementing the laws. This would in turn affect how social workers put into practice their roles and expected responsibilities. Challenges regarding the implementation of that which is stipulated in the children's act are as follows as summarised by findings of Ntseane and Solo (2007); Lucas and Jongman (2017); Lucas and Jongman (2018):

- Social workers require specialised training to ensure that they are competent in providing services in line with their responsibilities, however many social workers have not been effectively trained therefore lack the skill set and knowledge to confidently mobilize their skills and understanding of the children's act.
- To deliver services within child protection social workers need to be competent in demonstrating their understanding of their roles and the roles of other professionals in providing a service to children. Many social workers and other professionals are not always aware of the roles and responsibilities of those involved, which may cause confusion and could delay service delivery to children and cause tension between service providers.

- The children's act set-out several new assigned roles and responsibilities, however, these have not been matched with the necessary resources to take on and fulfil roles and responsibilities. Social workers before the enactment of the new children's act were riddled with challenges of having extensive workloads thus expecting that the enactment would bring about resources to aid social worker in providing better services, however this was not the case, instead, and more strain has been added.
- Within the children's act reference is made for services which should be provided regarding alternate such as homes, schools and institutions, however, these facilities are said to be underdeveloped which in turn means that placement of orphan's and vulnerable children will be problematic (Lucas and Jongman, 2017; Lucas and Jongman, 2018).

The above causes challenges to be directly experienced by social workers, which include extensive caseloads, time constraints, lack of resources (space, transport, and professional training), poor remuneration and burnout (Ferguson-Brown, 1996; Jones and Doh, 2009).

4.6 EMERGING INSIGHTS FROM SELECTED COUNTRIES

Upon reflecting on the findings from selected countries, lessons and best practices will be drawn across the three countries. The lessons and best practices that have emerged from the selected countries will be considered under three of the main areas discussed within each case study (country) namely; country specific child challenges, how are the needs of children addressed and the social work services available to children.

- Country specific child challenges- findings presented have highlighted that across the selected countries it is evident that each are facing specific issues such as street children, child labour, violence and abuse and orphanhood. What can be highlighted is the response to these issues, specifically the issue of orphanhood. Within the selected countries the response to managing the issue of orphanhood is dealt with and managed in a traditional manner whereby orphans or children are cared for through kinship fostering or by being taken care by their communities and those closest to them. Community members have stepped in and offered a home or place of safety for children in need. This is not to say that the issue of orphanhood is being dealt with completely and all children are provided with a place to stay, but could however be useful and beneficial to children's

needs at community level. This could provide an opportunity for community engagement and participation. Through such opportunities community members could be trained and mentored to manage issues other than orphanhood. With the necessary skills and expertise this could result in a decline in cases of orphanhood. With the involvement of communities, children can be provided an opportunity at developing within their familiar surrounds instead of being uprooted and/or placed in foster care, being left to fend for themselves and placed in dangerous situations. The opportunity of upskilling community members could potentially be beneficial in assisting with many other issues faced by children.

- How are children's needs addressed- findings across selected countries provide that each have taken strides in demonstrating their awareness and willingness to better the lives and needs of children through introducing several legislative frameworks, policies and strategies. A key lesson that can be drawn from these findings is that although legislative frameworks have been introduced to better and service children's needs, the implementation thereof seems to be lacking. This has come as a result of poor coordination and planning of service provision, poor stakeholder engagement, poor policy guidelines, highlighting how services should be implemented. What seems to be lacking is also linked to understanding the needs of children and executing services in line with these needs. Due to poor understanding, coordination and stakeholder engagement services are duplicated and not aligning with what children need. For implementation to be successful clear guidelines need to be stipulated. It is necessary to understand the needs of children, considering the magnitude of the problem, then thereafter working on providing the services which are stipulated within the legislative frameworks, policies and strategies.
- Social work services available: across the three countries, it is evident that there are services that are being provided to children and those in need. However, findings suggest that the services that are available are not in line with the country specific child challenges. As previously mentioned, it is necessary to understand the needs of children and the magnitude thereof before providing a service. It is useful to stay updated and aware of trending and pressing issues. This way the new awareness can highlight the services that need to be implemented. This way services are relevant and in line with

children's needs. As previously mentioned community involvement could serve as beneficial to children. Another way of using community engagement can be to identify the services that are needed as well as those that are available and perhaps not useful. With this, resources can be reallocated and utilised more efficiently.

As previously mentioned each of the countries have taken strides towards improving services to children. However, in discussions provided under sections exploring services available to children and the challenges experienced by public service providers (social workers) the lessons drawn are related to issues such as poor policy implementation, a lack of sufficient policy frameworks which contributes to unequal distribution of resources, availability of services in line with the needs of children, poor collaboration between stakeholders and a lack of qualified social workers within the public service. Although there are services available, it is evident that these are limited, inaccessible and not in line with the needs of children allowing the magnitude of child specific issues to grow. There is an opportunity to improve on service delivery. This can be done through working on strengthening and reviewing what is in place, redirecting resources, working on collaborative partnerships and understanding the needs of children.

4.7 PRESENTATION OF THEMES AND FINDINGS

This section examines the themes that emerged within the body of findings provided. The findings presented in themes will cover and look at the countries processes of improving children's rights and services available to vulnerable children, specifically highlighting the roles and services of social workers as well as the challenges faced in the country.

Table 5: The Enactment Of Laws To Enhance Child Protection And Children's Rights

Kenya	The country has enacted the children's act of 2001 as the main legislated mandate considering children's rights. The act assigns the roles and responsibilities of service providers, of which social workers form part of at lower levels through the decentralisation process.
Ghana	Similarly, to Kenya, Ghana too has enacted laws, namely the children act of 1998, of which enforcement challenges persist thus hindering children's rights. The issues are related to the lack of guidelines and frameworks for service providers.

Botswana	Botswana’s children’s act of 2009 highlights the importance of services to be provided by children, specifically highlighting the role and responsibilities that social workers are expected to play.
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The governments are expected to ensure that children are protected. This reveals that child protection is a social issue. This happens through various processes like enacting laws and policies. While this may often happen, several countries face issues of ensuring that these policies are implemented. To ensure their successful formulation of law and policies must include social justice and equity in distribution of necessary resources (Prilleltensky and Nelson, 2000). If these processes are effective, then service delivery can reach all the vulnerable children. But implementation is a challenge due to several underlying factors..

Table 6: Persisting Child Challenges

Kenya	A large number of children in the country have been affected by orphan hood leaving them vulnerable living on the street and exposing them to exploitation and abuse
Ghana	Children in Ghana are faced with issues of orphan-hood, exploitation and becoming street children.
Botswana	Similarly, children in Botswana find themselves as street children, orphans which results in exploitation and other risk factors.

Actually, the three countries with regards to issues affecting children all provide similar outcomes. This highlights the need for programs to be focused on these areas, considering not just the issue at hand but contributing factors to these issues.

Table 7: Service Delivery Related Issues

Kenya	In Kenya, service delivery issues come as a result of having limited staff who are trained and qualified.
Ghana	In Ghana issues of service delivery, have risen due to the lack of policy frameworks to guide service delivery.
Botswana	Issues with service delivery in Botswana can be related to various factors, one that include a lack of coordinated services arrangements.

The selected countries have made several attempts in providing services to children in need however are faced with many issues that hinder their service delivery. Each country has their issues affecting service delivery. In reflecting on previous discussion service delivery -related issues present as quite similarly perhaps highlighting that service delivery planning needs to consider various factors before implementing. Van de Walle (2016) provides that public services may fail or remain ineffective due to possible factors such as ignorance, rigidity, fail intervention, neglect, design, or association. In mentioning this, service planning should be based on knowledge and complex understanding of the issue at hand.

Table 8: Recognition Of The Social Work Profession For Child Welfare

Kenya	In Kenya, the profession is still growing, as a result of the poor recognition of the profession.
Ghana	While the profession is recognized, limited social workers are tasked with providing services.
Botswana	Recognition of the profession is highlighted within the children's act, however, guidelines for service planning and implementation is limited.

Social work is practiced in many countries, assisting in the protection of human rights. Many may not realise the impact that the profession can have on the lives of children. Within the 3 countries, it would seem that practices of social work are taking place but they are not recognised. This could be a result of various factors influencing social work professionals. With the profession being considered an emerging profession in the three countries there is a need for it to be understood, recognised and acknowledged as this affects service delivery. Chitereka (2009) provides that generally in African countries, there persists a lack of recognition of the social work profession mainly due to people not understanding it. Healy and Meagher (2004) have provided that services by social workers continue to be deprofessionalised, which, if not stopped will threaten the profession as well as the delivery of effective services.

Table 9: Services Provided By Social Workers

Kenya	Insights into the social work profession has highlighted that services to children are not only limited to, social workers and professionally trained in a similar field may take up services. Where social workers do provide services the recognition of the profession is not related to that of a social worker. Furthermore, services provided include cash transfers, counselling, family support services, court preparation, probation services, and supervision of children’s homes, foster care placement and provision of alternate care.
Ghana	In Ghana, a limited number of social workers are expected to provide a range of services. Formal child protection services by social workers are described as limited due to influencing factors. Services available for social workers to children in need look at feeding schemes, child protection programs, foster care and alternate care arrangements, support services and counselling.
Botswana	Services in Botswana are dependent on the organisation and its designation. For example a hospital social worker can provide services to children admitted which can range from counselling to assist with screening processes for grant allocations. The statutory organisation provides services related to removals and foster placements or arrangements of alternate care.

As explained earlier, in this chapter the roles of social workers differ depending on the designated role and organisations expectations. Social workers can provide a range of services despite a designation. The training of social work students enables qualified social workers to equip themselves with many skills and roles. Within the context of these countries social workers differ regarding the extent and the quality of services. Chitereka (2009:153) states that while the profession in African countries is considered relatively new, it has been “integrated into most government departments of social welfare, hospitals, correctional services, police and defense forces where the casework method is mainly dominant.”

Table 10: Challenges Faced By Social Workers

Kenya	Challenges social workers experience include, poor recognition of the profession, lack of resources, low wages, extensive work expectations.
Ghana	Challenges include poor recognition by communities, poorly funded programs, lack of

	resources, unequal distribution of social workers, poor collaborative relationships between stakeholders and being overworked.
Botswana	In Botswana social workers face challenges that includes, lack of training opportunities, being poorly resourced, inadequate skill set to provide services in line with the needs of children, assigning roles without a guiding framework as well as poor funding structures.

Social workers in African countries are faced with several challenges, which, if not addressed with urgency will lead to failure of service delivery to recipients. Chitereka (2009: 153) states that the challenges experienced “include lack of resources- both material and financial, low wages and salaries for social work professionals coupled with poor conditions of service as well as lack of proper professional recognition of social workers in Africa.” These challenges affect the quality of services provided to children and the number of children who benefit.

The presentation of the themes indicates that there are several similarities between the findings of the three countries. By presenting these themes the researcher has not only focused on the social work services but instead considered the role players in facilitating social work services. This is highlighted through looking at the legislation that assigns responsibilities to service providers. These themes focus on the broader context of influences then working towards highlighting challenges with children that need to be addressed, the social work profession, service provision, factors hindering service delivery and the challenges faced by social workers. These factors starts at policy level. From the themes, many similarities in terms of the challenges experienced in these countries can be seen and are similar in nature. Thus, the governments need to address these issues. Makinde (2005) provides that policy implementation acts as a challenge for developing countries.

4.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the social workers’ services available to vulnerable children within the selected countries. In exploring the services available critical insights emerged as the provision of these services are social policies within public policy. These included looking at steps taken by the country to improve the well- being of children. An overview of country-specific child related challenges were explored to provide the context of the services needed. The study explored broader services available and those for the social work services available. This is

followed by the challenges experienced by them. The study also examined emerging best practices and lessons learned are explored and tabulated, considering all aspects mentioned in the study. The main findings and themes are presented and discussed. From these themes similarities were drawn and this reveals several areas to improve services for vulnerable children, which needs to start at a policy level. The study will now turn to chapter five to draw conclusions.



CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored the lessons and best practices learned from other African states. The themes that were identified came from the similar aspects shared across the selected countries. This chapter will make use of what has been explored in chapters one and two highlighting the findings. It will also allow for the formulation of recommendations based on the key findings and how they can be applied to a South African context. This chapter will summarise the findings, and indicate whether the research objectives have been met, the limitations involved in the study, formulation of recommendations and conclusions to sum up the study.

5.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the study was to explore lessons and best practices of social work services available to vulnerable children in the selected countries. The researcher believed that this was achieved to an extent by the following secondary objectives:

Objective 1: Identify and explain the services available and rendered to vulnerable children by Social workers in the selected countries.

Through the process of collecting and analysing data on the selected countries, the study was able to identify and provide insights into the services available to vulnerable children. It should be noted that in being able to identify these services, social work could not be explored in isolation. The research collected and analysed data that provided an overview of the main service providers and then looked at the role of social workers within the organisations or agencies which were identified. The research was in some instances able to identify the service providers and to highlight the types of services available and some instances could not fully unpack this due to the limited body of literature available.

Objective 2: Analysing the relevance of services provided to vulnerable children.

Within the context of the country being discussed the research was able to highlight the needs of children in a specific country and thereafter look at the main agencies and departments assigned

the roles of protecting them. After that the study looked at how the social work profession provides services in line with children's needs. The broader research findings suggest that while services are being provided they are however not in line with the needs of the country specific challenges. This could provide an opportunity for future research to be conducted covering and providing a more in-depth understanding. In addition, the study was able to mention some of the weaknesses as a result of poor service provision and how this did not benefit children in need.

Objective 3: Describe the challenges and opportunities experienced in providing services to vulnerable children.

The study highlights and discusses many challenges faced by social workers from the selected countries. This objective had been achieved and expressed through the presentation of themes. The researcher was able to bring out the challenges in the selected countries and the similarities thereof as an experience by most social workers.

Objective 4: Provide recommendations to the Social services profession in South Africa.

Based on the findings, which have been presented from the collected data, the researcher can make recommendations applicable to the South African context and for future research.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the first chapter of the study limitations were provided. Possible limitations that have been provided include the following: Inaccurate data; quality and out of date; representativeness and information bias.

The researcher found that the limitations that were presented during the data collection and analyses phases were linked to the limitations of quality and out of date resources. In reflecting on the data collection and analysing processes the researcher grew aware that published literature providing insights into the types of social work services being provided to vulnerable children were limited. This highlighted to the researcher that the social work profession and its services could not be isolated, but needed to be explored with a wider aspect. The researcher explored literature which included all service providers and agencies to vulnerable children and through this process the roles and services of social workers had surfaced. While still limited the

researcher was able to provide insights into the various roles of social workers, the various fields of practice and the various services they provide.

5.4 KEY FINDINGS

Through this study the following key findings have been identified:

5.4.1 The Literature Review

- The rights of children are enshrined in several legislative mandates and policies; however, many these rights are violated leaving them vulnerable and unprotected.
- Many children do not have access to their rights and therefore are left vulnerable.
- Factors that make children vulnerable include poverty, neglect, abuse, disability and orphan hood. A child may experience one or all of these at the same time.
- Government, the private and public sector share the responsibility of ensuring that children's rights are protected and that they are accessible but this is not happening in some settings.
- The government is obligated to ensure that legislative mandates are fulfilled and child policies implemented however they are unable to meet these obligations.
- Organisations assigned with the responsibility of child welfare are challenged with issues of service delivery and implementation of policies.
- The social work profession plays a big role in providing services to vulnerable children, especially those within the NGO setting, however, due to poor funding and lack of resources, service delivery remains a challenge.

5.4.2 Social Work Services Available In Selected Countries

- Children and their rights are widely stipulated, however poorly enforced and implemented.
- The social work profession is poorly recognised which has in turn affected service delivery of trained professionals.
- Professionals trained in respective fields are providing services to children.
- The number of social workers employed in relation to the amount of work expected to be completed is extensive and unrealistic.

- There are not enough trained and qualified personnel in assigned departments and agencies to deliver services to vulnerable children.
- The social work profession is undervalued and misunderstood, resulting in social workers leaving the profession entirely and moving to a different field of work.
- There is a belief that social problems can be resolved through traditional ways by community members, however, individuals are not equipped to deal with the magnitude of issues experienced by children.
- In Botswana, where the profession is recognised through its designated roles within legislation, poor implementation as a result of appropriate policy framework hampers service delivery.
- Social work services are not accessible to all, wherein some countries access points are only found in urban areas where those in rural areas are not by the means to access them.
- The social work profession is poorly resourced in terms of materials, office space, and transport and also funding to ensure services are implemented.
- Social workers are poorly remunerated thus resulting in individuals leaving the profession to find something more sustaining.

5.5 RESEARCHERS CONTRIBUTIONS

The researcher has been able to present findings on the selected countries, specifically considering issues faced by children, how their needs are addressed in these countries, the scope of the services provided, challenges in providing these services, the role of the social worker in addressing children's needs and the challenges that social workers are faced with, which in turn seems to negatively impact their work ethic and quality of work.

This study can be used by others who may wish to expand on research in this field, providing some insights and context on the selected countries in comparison to South Africa. Through the process of collecting and analysing the data, the researcher has been afforded the opportunity of developing a greater understanding of the social work profession and what it may entail to those in the selected countries. With this the researcher has been able to share the findings and raise awareness on some of the social work service delivery related issues and an understanding of the work of the profession and challenges experienced in these selected countries.

The findings of the study can contribute to the literature in South Africa, for researchers, social workers and child protection organisations as there has been previously been no published literature on this subject matter.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.6.1 General recommendations

- At a national level all government entities or public administrators or policy implementers should work towards strengthening legislative and policy frameworks ensuring that strategies are in line with the needs of the countries children to ensure that this social policy is implemented.
- Governments or state bureaucrats and policy implementers' can work on improving and advancing current child protection systems in the country. This could be done through giving due considerations to suitable frameworks, adequate support structures, collaboration between role players and stakeholders, the needs of beneficiaries, effective planning and implementation and monitoring services provided.
- There should be relative (context specific) policy frameworks and guidelines at child protection and child welfare structures ensuring that service delivery is in line with stipulated procedures and guidelines.
- Budget allocations for child protection and welfare services should be sufficiently resourced and accounted for, to allow for services to reach all children in need.

5.6.2 Recommendations for South Africa

In light of the key findings and the themes that have been presented, the researcher's recommendations are as follows:

- Government and its departments need to assign responsibilities of ensuring that child protection and welfare need to work together to develop well-coordinated approaches to meet the needs of children in the country.
- There needs to be an understanding between stakeholders regarding their roles and responsibilities and how they can work collaboratively to ensure better service delivery.
- Policy frameworks and guidelines should consistently be reviewed and developed as social problems and the needs of children develop.

- The government can also develop programs in communities whereby reliable and trustworthy members can be trained and up-skilled to assist in reporting and referral processes of children in need. This would ensure that children needs do not go unnoticed at community level. This could work well for abuse, neglect, or exploitation to be reported early and not dismissed.
- Child protection stakeholders/service providers need to be provided with a framework for service delivery, highlighting vital procedures, protocols and consequences if not adhered to.
- There is the need for strengthening child protection, welfare and child servicing organisations like schools, police stations, NGOs, CBOs and FBOs through training and development opportunities highlighting trends and approaches to meet children's needs.
- Government needs to ensure that budgetary allocations for child protection are sufficient. Without the proper resources, service delivery is hindered.
- Government needs to ensure that children are not just protected with provisions in legislation but that legislative mandates are enforced and implemented.
- Approaches to service delivery need to consider the larger context of the child and not only the issues in isolation, through holistic approaches several issues can be dealt with.
- There is a dire need for the equal distribution of trained social workers to ensure that realistic expectations are attainable and that social workers are not overworked and overcome with instances of burnouts.
- Government and its departments need to work on better remunerating the social worker.

5.6.3 Recommendation for Future Research

If further research into the study is to be conducted these areas may useful to consider:

- Considering the roles of other service providers in the child protection field.
- Reviewing literature from the UN in monitoring countries progress since ratifying the CRC.
- Researching into mappings of child protection or child centered organisation and how they contribute to the needs of children.
- Research into the trends of child issues and how these are changing and why to understand why service delivery may not meet all their needs.

5.7 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The study reveals that many children in developing and developed countries are faced with challenges beyond their control. This highlights the importance of the governments' role at a National, Provincial and Local level in ensuring effective implementation of the child welfare policies. This in many ways reveals that it is a social policy issue which demands the attention of social workers in ensuring that children are protected and their living conditions are improved.

This study reveals the role of social policy implementation in ensuring that children can access services and rights which are enshrined in the constitution. There is a need for children to access services; however, this requires various skillsets, of which one is the skilled social worker. The thesis has revealed that there are efforts made by the government to protect them; however, these services are limited to legislation and policy and not just implementation. In the cases of implementation, several issues arise causing barriers in reaching children in need.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done this should include issues around policy implementation to strengthen the systems in place. Through this process planning and developing of relevant context specific programs and guidelines can be developed. If planning is done correctly on all levels policy implementations should be better suited and effective to children in need. All role players in the public service from national with the DSD and the provincial departments and the local levels and stakeholders will work in collaboration, understating their roles and responsibility as public officials working towards a common goal, that of protecting vulnerable children from factors and situations that place them at risk.

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