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THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR CONGOLESE UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE CHILDREN LIVING IN JOHANNESBURG.

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS BY COURSE WORK AND RESEARCH REPORT (FORCED MIGRATION STUDIES).

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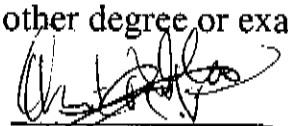
ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study was to assess the psycho-educational support available for Congolese unaccompanied refugee children living in Johannesburg. The study also sought to identify the psycho-educational needs of Congolese unaccompanied adolescent refugees living in Johannesburg. Data was collected from a sample of 20 unaccompanied refugee children from The Democratic Republic of Congo and living in Johannesburg, using interviews covering the following issues: the children's experiences at school, the counselling and social support provided to them, and their needs. The main findings of the study indicated that children's attitudes towards school were generally positive. In fact, they seemed to have good relationships with their teachers and peers, and the majority of them seemed to have had good relationships with their South African peers. All the respondents in this study indicated that they sought help from their teachers and classmates when they were experiencing difficulties with their school work, and they never sought help for their school work from their guardians. It was also found that, all the children had an opportunity to talk about their experiences to a professional upon arrival in South Africa, and that was very beneficial since it helped them to forget about the experiences that were still affecting them.. Moreover, from the responses received, the majority of children found the people they were living with supportive, since they have been given a place to stay and were treated like the guardians' own children. Finally, the research findings indicated that the needs for education, professional help and family reunification were the most pressing needs among unaccompanied refugee children.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for master's degree in Forced Migration at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Full acknowledgement to the sources that I have used has been given. It has not been submitted before any other degree or examination in any other university.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Since 1990, a political crisis over the establishment of democracy characterized the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire). A transitional period which should have ended in 1992 by the organization of presidential elections was always prolonged by President Mobutu. In 1997, a rebellion known as AFDL (Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Congo) started to operate from the East of Congo. The UN reported that during 1996-1997 war, Kabila's troops backed by Rwanda and Uganda committed serious abuses on hundreds of thousands people by slaughtering, killing, and raping them. Child soldiers were recruited, since there was no appropriate measure to protect civilians from hostilities (Scottish News, 2003). In 1998, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) once again plunged into war. The humanitarian catastrophe intensified by belligerents caused severe atrocities to civilian populations. They were victims to the air raids most of the time made by government forces (Scottish News, 2003). According to Scottish News Report 2003, since 1998 more than 3 millions people have been killed; this is the most important massacre since the end of World War 2. Hirondelle News Agency (2002) reported that the Congolese war which involved different rebel groups, the government and certain African states had caused millions internal displaced and refugees; many of them fled to Tanzania. Some went to seek asylum principally in Burundi, Angola, Zimbabwe and

South Africa (Hirondelle News Agency, 2002). According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) (2003), in 2002 refugees from DRC were estimated to 7,240 in South Africa among which 38 percent were children under 18 (UNHCR , 2003).

The circumstances around the time of flight render separation of family members a common occurrence (Ahearn, Loughry, & Ager, 1994). In general, children who flee from their home as refugees face a broad range of challenges that have an impact on their development and, indeed, their survival. Unaccompanied children represent a particular category of the refugee children population and often suffer from a number of forms of abuse in the context of wars and gross human rights violations. They may have lost their families to conflicts, human rights abuses, or the chaos of displacement, and sometimes their families may have sent them away to escape the prevailing violence. They are likely to lack the most basic means of survival and to have their rights violated. They are most likely to be killed, tortured, raped, robbed and recruited as child soldiers. In this respect, unaccompanied children are in a particularly vulnerable position by being at risk not only as refugees but also children, separated from their families and significant others. Their experience of flight frequently adds to their hardships and emotional trauma; flight leaves children susceptible to violence, to disruption of community and social structures, and to a shortage of basic resources, all of which affect their physical, cognitive, emotional and social development (Amnesty International, 2002).

There are many reasons why children are forced to flee from home either alone or with siblings. Some of them are helped by friends to leave the country after their parents are dead, gone missing or imprisoned, some of

them are sent away by their own parents for safety reasons. Some of them flee from child specific persecution such as forced labour, trafficking for prostitution; female genital mutilation and many of them flee from war (Refugee Women's Association, 2001).

On arrival, some children are totally alone, while others may be living with extended family members or other adults. As such, some may appear to be 'accompanied' but the accompanying adults are not necessarily able or suitable to assume responsibility for their care. This concept recognizes that children suffer physically, socially and psychologically as a result of being without the care and protection of their parents or previous primary caregivers (UNHCR, 2003).

Fredericksen (1957) indicates that, if a child is taken away from his own home and from a culture with which he is familiar, he finds he must think as the foster-parents think, feel as they feel, respect what they respect. He may find their attitudes, values, and knowledge acceptable when compared with what he has known. He may become so confused, overawed, and frustrated he will retreat into his own thoughts, or he may display violent reactions. As The Refugee Women's Association, further, puts it, still on arrival, many unaccompanied children are suffering from enormous loss, grief, fear and disorientation. They have been separated from their family, friends, country and culture and find themselves alone without knowledge of how to survive in a strange country. All unaccompanied children need special attention and care after all the trauma and the pain they experience (Refugee Women's Association, 2001).

National efforts to protect refugees and refugee children have been expressed in the South African Bill of Rights. The Bill guarantees equal treatment of all children within the country without any discrimination to race, gender, nationality or religion (Timngum, 2002). Section 28 of the Bill of Rights ostensibly ensures that refugee children and other national and non-national children have rights to a nationality, family care, health care, education, fair labour practice and no detention except as a measure of last resort (Timngum, 2002).

Dealing with family separation is a complex issue and this requires a sound legislation and commitment by States and non-State humanitarian service providers (Timngum, 2002). To attempt a solution to resolve existing family separation issues in asylum states some national governments have signed international and regional refugees laws as well as instituted national legislations to look at specific problems confronting refugee children especially in the area of family separation(Timngum, 2002).

1.2 **RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), children without the guidance and protection of their primary caregivers are often more vulnerable and at risk of becoming victims of violence, exploitation, trafficking, discrimination or other abuses(UNICEF, 2002).

On the other hand, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), further adds that, unaccompanied and separated children require immediate protection and assistance as they face increased risks, notably, those of military recruitment; sexual exploitation, abuse and violence; forced

labour; irregular adoption; discrimination, both within temporary care arrangements and in the community; and lack of access to education and recreational activities (UNHCR, 2003).

Children have very few chances of surviving a war without some damage (Kahnerk, Pitt, & Taipal, 1983). According to Dawes and Donald (1994) growing up under conditions of political instability and violence produces a particular set of risks and challenges for children. In this respect, unaccompanied children are in a particularly vulnerable position by being at risk not only as refugees but also children, separated from their families and significant others.

Loughry and Ager (2001) highlight the importance of adequate education in the refugee children's situation. They assert that education serves to protect children and adolescents who are refugees or who have been internally displaced. It helps to meet the psychosocial needs of displaced and traumatized children as well as being a tool to assist their future development.

According to the UNHCR children have an absolute right to education. Even if they are asylum-seekers or in a transit camp, no government can deny children within its borders this right (in Loughry and Ager, 2001). Education of refugee children within the African context is fundamental to promoting and developing the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities so as to foster African unity and solidarity. Thus education may be considered to be a human rights value and needs to be respected in a child's situation to ensure that they acquire primary and secondary education (Timngum, 2002).

However, to live up to international and regional standards, access to educational institutions for refugee children in South Africa is protected under the South African constitution and the children's charter of South Africa. The Bill of Rights of the South African constitution (RSA, 1996; RSA, 1998) states that access to education is a basic human right for nationals and non-nationals and refugee and asylum seeking children have the right to study in government schools in South Africa and they cannot be sent away from schools because they cannot pay fees (Timngum, 2002). Article 8 of the children's charter of South Africa states that:

- All children have the right to free equal, non-racial, non-sexist and compulsory education within one department as education is a right not a privilege.
- All children have a right to education, which is in the interest of the child and to develop their talents through education, both formal and informal.
- All teachers should be qualified and should treat children with patience, respect and dignity. All teachers should be evaluated and monitored to ensure that they are protecting the rights of the child.Parents have the duty to become involved in their children's education at school and at home.
- All children have the right to play and to free and adequate sports and recreational facilities so that children can be children.
- All children have the right to participate in the evaluation and upgrading of curriculum, which respects all the traditions, cultures and values of children in South Africa.
- All children have the right to education on issues such as sexuality, AIDS, human rights, history and background of South Africa and family life

- All children have the right to adequate educational facilities and the transportation to such facilities should be provided to children in difficult or violent situations (RSA, 1996: 156; RSA, 1998: 168).

Education has a direct protection function in monitoring the development and progress of children who may have been traumatized by their experience, or who are within the care programme of a particular agency. Monitoring is equally important for children at risk, for example, of military recruitment, and for unaccompanied minors placed in foster care. If these children are in school or are taking part in organized, structured activities where their attendance or absence is noted, they are less likely to be vulnerable to abuse (Loughry & Ager, 2001).

Education programmes provide children and adolescents with options that they may not otherwise have had. In terms of their immediate situation, this may provide them with structured activities that could reduce the likelihood of them being drawn into military recruitment or other undesirable activities. A basic education could also give them options for deciding and dealing with situations in the future.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

- What are the psycho-educational needs of Congolese unaccompanied refugee children living in Johannesburg?

- What are the psycho-educational interventions available for Congolese unaccompanied refugee children?
- How should the psycho-educational needs of Congolese unaccompanied refugee children be addressed?
- What is the role of service providers in addressing the psycho-educational needs of Congolese unaccompanied refugee children?

1.4 THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of this research is to investigate the psycho-educational support available for Congolese unaccompanied refugee children living in Johannesburg.

Specifically the study aims to:

- Identify the psycho-educational needs of Congolese unaccompanied adolescent refugees living in Johannesburg.
- Establish the perceptions of the Congolese unaccompanied refugee children on how their psycho-educational needs could be addressed.
- On the basis of the research findings, formulate a set of recommendations on appropriate psycho-educational interventions to address the needs of the Congolese unaccompanied refugee children.

1.5 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

According to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees, the term "refugee" shall apply to any person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a

particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Hathaway , 1990; cited in Klaaren, 2001).

The 1969 Organization of African Union (OAU) Convention adopts the above definition and adds that the term "refugee" also applies to every person who is compelled to leave his or her place of habitual residence by external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality (Goodwin, 1996; cited in Klaaren, 2001).

Unaccompanied children: are those who are separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible to do so (UNICEF, 2002).

According to UNHCR, an "unaccompanied child or young person is someone under the age of 18, who is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so" (UNHCR, 2003: 64).

1.6 LAYOUT OF THE REPORT OF THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical foundation for the study.
Chapter 3 reviews some of the pertinent literature in this field of study.

Chapter 4 deals with the methodology employed in the collection and analysis of data.

In Chapter 5 the results obtained in the present study are presented.

Chapter 6 discusses the results obtained in the present study.

Lastly, Chapter 7 presents a summary of the study, the conclusions, and the recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews some of the literature pertaining to many salient issues around the psychological state of an unaccompanied refugee child who fled from the war to another country which is not his own. These issues are: traumatic experiences of unaccompanied refugee children, manifestation of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in children and adolescents; the syndrome of chronic trauma, the emotional impact of political violence; protective factors and coping. This chapter ends with a discussion of the role of social support in addressing the traumatic experiences of unaccompanied refugee children.

2.1.2 Traumatic Experiences of Unaccompanied Refugee Children

There are many reasons why children are forced to flee either alone or with siblings. In general, all the children are driven to leave home due to political upheaval and conflict. They all experience traumatic events such as seeing members of their families being killed, arrested and being permanently separated from their families while running away from the fighting directly or

faced with the prospect of being conscripted to the army. According to Refugee Women's association (2001), some of the children are helped by friends to leave the country after their parents are dead, gone missing or imprisoned. Some of them flee from child specific persecution such as forced labour, trafficking for prostitution; female genital mutilation and many of them flee from war (Refugee Women's Association, 2001).

Prior to the journey, the children go through harrowing experiences which traumatize them. They may leave abruptly because: parents and other family members had been killed; their homes had been destroyed and their lives were endangered. While on the journey, children may be traumatized as well. As they have no documents, they have to travel for long distances often through dangerous and hostile terrain, and go without food or water for days.

On arrival in the country of asylum, many unaccompanied children are suffering from enormous loss, grief, fear and disorientation. They have been separated from their family, friends, country and culture and find themselves alone without knowledge of how to survive in a strange country.

According to the lawyers of Human Rights (LHR), unaccompanied minors arriving in South Africa are arrested and detained as undocumented migrants despite clear legislative guidelines. These youngsters are kept in custody with the other inmates (in UNHCR, 2003).

2.1.3 Manifestation of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in children and adolescents

Insomnia, nightmares, substance abuse, anxiety, anger, depression, and the ever-present fear that the horror will return are common to those who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Matsakis, 1994). Children who have survived severe trauma often have emotional, psychosomatic and behavioural problems (Hlophe, 2001).

According to Yule (1992; cited in Hlophe, 2001), immediately following a very frightening experience, children are likely to be very distressed, tearful, frightened and shocked. They need to be reunited with their families as soon as possible. Children are also troubled by repetitive thoughts about the incident, particularly when the child is quiet, or as they try to sleep. At other times, the thoughts and vivid recollections are triggered by reminders in their environment. According to Hlophe (2001) sleep disturbances are very common: fear of the dark and bad dreams, nightmares and waking during the night are widespread and often manifest outside the developmental age range in which they normally occur. She further reveals that, separation difficulties are frequent, even among teenagers. For the first few days, children can be very clingy and could also have separation anxiety. They can also become more irritable and angry than usual with their parents and peers.

Although child survivors experience a need to talk about their experiences, paradoxically they find it very difficult to talk to their peers (Hlophe, 2001). Often they do not want to upset the adults, so the parents may not be aware of the full extent of their children's suffering. Peers may hold back from asking what happened, in case they upset the child further, and the survivor may experience this as rejection.

Many children experience difficulty in concentrating, especially on their school work. Others report memory problems, both in mastering new material

and remembering old skills. They become very alert to danger in their environment, being adversely affected by reports of other disasters. Many develop fears associated with specific aspects of their experiences. They avoid situations they associate with the disaster. Many experience survivor guilt. They feel guilty for surviving when others died, or think they could have done more to help others, or feel bad about what they did themselves to survive (Hlophe, 2001). Some child survivors report significantly high rates of depression, some become clinically depressed. Child survivors of severe trauma have learned that life is fragile. This can lead to a loss of faith in the future or a sense of foreshortened future. Their priorities change-their 'assumptive world' has been challenged. Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death (Herman, 1992).

Friedman & Jaranson, (1984) (cited in Muhwezi & Sam, 2004) are of the opinion that, the difficult pre-acculturation situations such as deprivation, torture, anxiety, fear, rape, starvation and humiliation (at individual level) and war, famine, massive exclusion, domination and uncertainty (at the group level) that refugees tend to experience, may collectively constitute a set of catastrophic stressors that may give rise to the so-called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As they further add, this disorder involves recollections of stressful events, persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and persistent symptoms of increased arousal.

According to Herman (1992), symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder fall into three main categories, namely, "hyperarousal," "intrusion," and

"constriction." Hyperarousal reflects the persistent expectation of danger; intrusion reflects the indelible imprint of the traumatic moment; constriction reflects the numbing response of surrender.

❖ *Hyperarousal*

After a traumatic experience, the human system of self-preservation seems to go onto permanent alert, as if the danger might return at any moment. Physiological arousal continues unabated. In this state of hyperarousal, which is the first cardinal symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder, the traumatized person startles easily, reacts irritably to small provocations, and sleeps poorly.

❖ *Intrusion*

Long after the danger is past, traumatized people relive the event as though it were continually recurring in the present. They cannot resume the normal course of their lives, for the trauma repeatedly interrupts. It is as if time stops at the moment of trauma. The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep. Small, seemingly insignificant reminders can also evoke these memories, which often return with all the vividness and emotional force of the original event. Thus, even normally safe environments may come to feel dangerous, for the survivor can never be assured that she will not encounter some reminder of the trauma.

❖ *Constriction*

When a person is completely powerless, and any form of resistance is futile, she may go into a state of surrender. The system of self-defense shuts down entirely. The helpless person escapes from her situation not by action in the real world but rather by altering her state of consciousness. Analogous states are observed in animals, which sometimes "freeze" when they are attacked. These are the responses of captured prey to predator or of a defeated contestant in battle. These alterations of consciousness are at the heart of constriction or numbing, the third cardinal symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder.

2.1.4 The Syndrome of Chronic Trauma

Herman (1992) is of the opinion that people subjected to prolonged, repeated trauma develop an insidious, progressive form of post-traumatic stress disorder that invades and erodes the personality. While a victim of a single acute trauma may feel after the event that she is "not herself," the victim of chronic trauma may feel herself to be changed irrevocably, or she may lose the sense that she has any self at all. The worst fear of any traumatized person is that the moment of horror will recur, and this fear is realized in victims of chronic abuse. Nor surprisingly, the repetition of trauma amplifies all the hyperarousal symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Chronically traumatized people are continually hypervigilant, anxious, and agitated. Chronically traumatized people no longer have any baseline state of physical calm or comfort. Over time, they perceive their bodies as having turned against them. They begin to complain, not only of insomnia and agitation, but also of numerous types of somatic symptoms. Tension headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances, and abdominal, back, or pelvic pain are

extremely common. Survivors may complain of tremors, chocking sensations, or rapid heartbeat.

The intrusive symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder also persist in survivors of prolonged, repeated trauma. But unlike the intrusive symptoms after a single acute trauma, which tend to abate in weeks or months, these symptoms may persist with little change for many years.

2.1.5 The Emotional Impact of Political Violence, Protective Factors and Coping

According to Dawes and Donald (1994) the availability of a close individual who can provide emotional support for the child and interpret what is occurring in a sensitive manner reduces risk. Also, the availability of a person who can allow the child to express his or her reaction in culturally appropriate ways is helpful and containing-particularly for young children. From this point of view, a supportive social context gives the child a sense of being contained by the social objects in the outer world and serves to facilitate the child's mastery over inner terror and turmoil.

- *Sensitising and steeling Effects*

An experience of violence during childhood may have 'sensitising effects' in that the child remains sensitive to future stress and as a result is rendered more vulnerable (Dawes & Donald, 1994). Alternatively, 'steeling effects' may result, in that the child may be rendered more resilient (but not invulnerable) in the face of future struggles. An associated concept is that of the 'sleeper' effect. Some children have been observed to cope well following a crisis and are apparently not overly sensitized in the short-to-medium term,

but then they show the effects of their ordeal in adulthood. A central hypothesis regarding steeling is that the presence of early positive family relationships and good early caretaker-child bonding, together with a positive rhythmic temperament under conditions of manageable levels of adversity, will all predict positive coping.

- *Delayed Effects*

These refer to effects such as emotional disturbances that appear after a long period during which the individual has apparently coped well.

- *The Active and the Passive Child*

The outcome for the child is not just a function of the severity of the stressors and the availability of social protective factors, but the individual's coping style is also important. If the child is passive, the outcome is worse than if he/she is active, and certain environments encourage passivity in victims while others do not. Thus it is true that older children who have a temperament and an active coping style have been known to obtain resilience from their ability to care for a vulnerable parent (Dawes & Donald, 1994).

- *Transitory or Transitive Events*

Goodyer (1990; cited in Dawes & Donald, 1994) refers to the 'transitive' quality of some stressful events. These have irrevocable features, such as the death of a parent, and are likely to have more serious effects than events which do not have such a definite effect on life structure. It is difficult to construct large-scale comparative studies of these features of the child's

experience. But there is clear evidence that, transitory events such as episodic bombing have far less serious consequences than chronic violence. Straker and her colleagues (1987; cited in Dawes & Donald, 1994) coined the phrase 'continuous traumatic stress' to denote such conditions in their studies of township youth who were on the run from the police. However, even this chronic stress is usually time-bound. It is not the same as a situation of loss such as the death of a close person, which, not surprisingly, is much more difficult for children to cope with.

According to Wilson and Cairns (1992; cited in Dawes & Donald, 1994), while many adults and children are highly distressed in the immediate aftermath of a trauma such as political violence, and may suffer distressing memories and hardships for some time, the majority do not develop serious forms of psychopathology. Those most at risk for more serious problems are those who have minimal support during and following the violence, those who have lost a parent in early childhood and do not have the possibility of supportive relatives to take care of them, and those who have experienced multiple or continuous trauma and loss.

2.1.6 The Role of School

Many of the problem facing immigrant children are the result of their exposure to competing sets of norms, those of the mother country on the one hand and those of the receiving country on the other hand (Cropley, 1983).

According to Cropley (1983) schools have the task of preparing children for life in the society in which they will live. This means that children should acquire in school an accurate picture of the "real" world (Jeffcoate, 1979;

cited in Cropley, 1983). Nowadays, however, most writers go beyond the point of seeing school merely as a place for transmitting knowledge about *status quo*. They emphasize that, in addition, schools have great potential for communicating to pupils an image of what the world *could* be like. Although the danger of reducing school to an instrument for the dispensing of propaganda must be borne in mind, even writers who stress this danger usually accept that, in addition to their "conservative" role, schools can contribute to "transforming" society (Cropley, 1983).

The conservative role involves transmitting the particular society's view of what is right, and legitimizing this view, for instance by emphasizing that it works, is time-hallowed, is self-evidently correct, stems from divine revelation, or follows the precepts of some sage whose wisdom cannot be questioned. The transforming role involves examining the origins of accepted givens, drawing attention to alternatives, and evaluating the consequences of the status.

According to Richman (1998), a school policy is powerful tool for helping children feel safe and normal again, and begin to learn and promote the child's confidence. Furthermore, in England many schools are developing a variety of creative approaches, which aim to support refugee children's learning and promote their self-esteem (Richman, 1998). Amongst other things, they encourage use of the mother tongue, encourage talking, including talking about home, looking at loss, death and change in a safe way; effective English teaching, involving all departments and; after school clubs; an anti-racists and anti-bullying policy; regular monitoring progress; teaching about human rights and refugee issues in class; staff training and links with communities (Wagner & Lodge, 1995, cited in Richman, 1998).

Good communication is also a key to establish trust, explaining how the school works and obtaining basic information about the child and family (Richman, 1998). This process is easier if there is a helping professional that can liaise with the family, or a teacher who speaks the family's language or sometimes parents/guardians who can help directly (Richman, 1998). Good communication is also important to assess, monitor the needs and progress of the refugee children.

If there has been a well-established pattern of communication it is possible to encourage parents/guardians to become involved in school life and their children's learning. It is important to work with parents/guardians from the beginning of child's enrolment in the school even if there is a need for interpreters; it is important to have meetings parents/guardians in the first term as this is a crucial time for developing trust, for seeing whether the child is settling in and learning, and laying the foundation for the parents/guardians participation (Richman, 1998). Under this participation, it is important to have the parents/guardians' help. The school develops, with the help of parents/guardians, mutual written material in their language, such as books that children used, as well as work with children in their language and taking part in cultural activities. Also, schools organized English classes for the parents/guardians. Mothers are often isolated and so it is important to know the kinds of support available around that can be informed to them e.g. health care clinics and other services (Richman, 1998).

Furthermore, the schools can make sure that initial contact with parents/guardians is made, that parents/guardians are introduced to the school, the school's system and identifying contact person in school for child and parent/guardian (Richman, 1998). Also, a basic social assessment of the

family's condition: who the child lives with, details of whereabouts of the rest of the family, asylum status, housing conditions, vaccinations and health problems. Simultaneously, an educational assessment can be conducted about language spoken in the country of origin, child's previous education, achievements, child's current abilities with English and the amount of educational support likely to be available at home (Richman, 1998).

It is acknowledged that refugee children often come from oppressive and violent situations and find it very painful when they are confronted with racism and bullying. It is important that schools set up policies that are protective of children and their rights, as well as promote peer counseling as a way of supporting children at risk of being bullied at school (Richman, 1998).

Further studies indicate that, children need more than satisfaction of their physical needs; for their security they need affection, approval, and a sense of belonging (Fredericksen, 1957). According to Goodwin (1997), children in American, and in many other societies, have always been subjected to a wide range of physical and nonphysical abuse by parents and other caretakers, including teachers and child care personnel, and indirectly by society as a whole.

Fredericksen & Mulligan (1972) indicate that childhood is generally described as the happy, carefree time of life. Every child would be protected from exploitation in premature and harmful labor. If he had special needs, he would have special services and social safeguards ready to help him.

Ahearn et al, 1999; (in Loughry & Ager, 2001) are of the opinion that children and adolescents have age-and stage-related developmental needs,

vulnerabilities, and capacities, that must be addressed in order to minimize risks and prevent further harm, while reinforcing protective factors that enhance healthy development. They further argue that, the provision of structured educational activities, for example, appropriate to the needs and capacities of displaced children and adolescents, is not a requirement, but a fundamental right.

2.1.7 The Role of Social Support

According to Herman (1992) traumatic events could destroy bonds between an individual and the community. Those who have survived learn that their sense of self, of worth, of humanity, depends upon a feeling of connection to others. The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair, and the strongest antidote to traumatic experience. Trauma isolates; the group re-creates a sense of belonging. Trauma shames and stigmatizes; the group bears witness and affirms. Trauma degrades the victim; the group exalts her. Trauma dehumanizes the victim; the group restores her humanity.

Because traumatic life events invariably cause damage to relationships, a supportive response from other people may mitigate the impact of the event, while a hostile or negative response may compound the damage and aggravate the traumatic syndrome. In the aftermath of traumatic life events, survivors are highly vulnerable. And their sense of self could be shattered.

The emotional support that traumatized people seek from family, lovers, and close friends takes many forms, and it changes during the course of resolution of the trauma. As Herman (1992) puts it, in the immediate aftermath of the trauma, rebuilding of some minimal form of trust is the primary task as well

as the assurance of safety and protection is of the greatest importance. The survivor who is often in terror of being left alone craves the simple presence of a sympathetic person. Having once experienced the sense of total isolation, the survivor is intensely aware of the fragility of all human connections in the face of danger. She needs clear and explicit assurances that she will not be abandoned once again. Thus, if the survivor is lucky enough to have supportive family, lovers, or friends, their care and protection can have a strong healing influence.

According to Hlophe (2001) for children who have experienced the stress of organized violence and war, the most beneficial therapeutic process is one which enables them to become part of the community in which they live. This means finding a school where they have the right to learn, to make friends and to play.

2.2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY

2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the theoretical foundation upon which the study is built. This part includes also the relevant theories and models for the study. Special attention, however, will be given to the development of tasks of adolescence and Erikson's theory of psycho-social development with emphasis on the understanding of the young adolescent.

2.2.2 DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS OF ADOLESCENCE

Children, as we know, usually go through a number of developmental tasks before they make their transition into adulthood. According to Havighurst (cited in Ede & Louw, 1998), the following developmental tasks are important for the non-adult. In fact they help him as a rite of passage to adult phase of life, phase of maturity. These developmental tasks are described briefly below:

2.2.2.1 Acceptance of a changed physical appearance

As a child grows she/he manifests extensive physical growth and sexual maturity. These are the main characteristics of adolescence which are also known as the growth spurt or accelerated growth. This phase usually begins from 12 and 13 years of age for boys and 10 and 11 for girls. It is naturally initiated by the secretion of male and female hormones notably: androgen (female) and estrogen (male); which are also responsible for the termination of the growth phase at the end of adolescence (Ede & Louw, 1998). Following the same authors, adolescents are said to be extremely aware of these physical changes and hardly accept them. Girls often become embarrassed by their sudden weight increase or of the development of breasts. For boys such embarrassment is often noticed by the lowering of their voices which brings with it unexpected squeaks and crackles. To repeat Ede and Louw's words, this phase is even further complicated by the norms and pressures that exist in different cultures (Ede & Louw, 1998). They argue that, in the Western cultures it is not uncommon for adolescents to develop eating disorders as a result of wanting to 'fit in' with the slender norm whereas, the opposite is possible in Zulu culture where there is nothing wrong with

fattening-up according to their norms (Ede & Louw, 1998). However, if the adolescent rejects his/her body this may cause a difficulty in the development and satisfaction of the life task of love and sex (Manaster, 1977). That is why adolescents need to be taught to learn how to accept these changes in their bodies.

2.2.2.2 Development of masculine or feminine gender-role identity

Traditionally during this period of change, adolescents were required to develop what is referred to as 'a workable notion of his/her sex role'. This sex-role had to be workable so as to fit-in with sex-roles adapted by others (Manaster, 1977). Manaster observes, however, that, with inceasant transformations in this modern society, in some cultures there no longer exists such rigid sex roles (Manaster, 1977). It is left to the individual to decide for him/her self whether to adopt a conception of oneself as a man or woman. This so called 'freedom of choice' can be a difficult task in itself for the young adolescent during this transitional period. In addition, it is said that the decisions one makes in this developmental task can also influence the nature of other tasks to come (Manaster, 1977). In the same way, as adolescents are under the authority of these decisions which can determine their future, they should be helped not to decide uncontrollably.

2.2.2.3 Development of cognitive skills and the acquisition of knowledge

The above development tasks differ from the development task of physical changes. This is so because the physical and mental are different. Unlike the physical, the cognitive changes as Ede and Louw observe result in the

adolescent's ability to comprehend more and analyze and reason logically on matters that are concrete as well as abstract (Ede & Louw, 1998). This task is of key importance because it helps the adolescent to distinguish fantasy from real. It can be said to be the beginning of an analytical mind.

2.2.2.4 Development of an own identity

By identity we mean that the person is able to know who s/he is: whether he is a man or she is a woman, black or white. The development of one's identity occurs as early as the infancy but more, especially during the phase of adolescence.

2.2.2.5 Development of independence from parents and other adults

One of the task complex in its nature is the development of independence from parents or others. According to Manaster (1977), parents are afraid of the difficulties and pitfalls their adolescent child encounters. Parents always think that the young person cannot cope on his own without assistance from the adults. They are often afraid of the unknown pitfalls and wonders whether the young one can make it alone or not. In contrast, the adolescent may act in rebellion to what the parents assume is the best for him/her, which the young adolescent in search of his independence does not accept. But equilibrium is, as Manaster remarks, found when there is 'give-and-take' between the parents and the adolescent and both parties are satisfied (Manaster, 1977).

2.2.2.6 Selection and preparation for a career

As long as there has been career there has been always preparation for it and this is achieved during schooling. The adolescent goes to school and chooses subjects which will determine his future career. As Manaster points out, all the adolescents' experiences in school including their habits, attitudes, and successes contribute to their progress into the adult world (Manaster, 1977). Thus, selecting a career involves not only an extensive preparation but also the feeling that the choice one has made was based on what was good or have the abilities to make the best come out of it. However, research shows that parents can often influence their children into career paths often making the choice for them (Thom, 1988 as cited in Ede & Louw, 1998). But this is possible only if there is mutual understanding and closeness between the parent and the adolescent (Thom, 1988 as cited in Ede & Louw, 1998). It can happen in this way because, as stated earlier on, parents always want to control then children's lives and ensure their destiny as they think they are incapable of doing this by themselves.

2.2.2.7 Development of socially responsible behaviour

As Baumrind (1971; cited in Ede & Louw, 1998) points out, this development task is influenced largely by parents. That is to say by the way parents set up norms and values that govern the family. Each family has its own set of rules that govern it. In some families parents lead with a fist of iron while others are very tolerant with their children.

Baumrind (1971 as cited in Ede & Louw, 1998) found that if parents use more positive measures to achieve good social behaviour from adolescents as

opposed to punitive measures or authoritarian measures adolescents respond more favorably. The authoritarian parenting style can however, force adolescents to behave according to the rules set by the parents but this style often does not allow for verbal reasoning and seldom provides explanations for rules. This type of parenting style is said to be associated with incompetent behaviour, i.e. inability to show initiative in social activities and poor communication skills in adolescents (Baumrind, 1971, as cited in Ede & Louw, 1988). Permissive parenting, i.e. when the parent has no control over the adolescent's behaviour is, on the other hand, associated with socially incompetent behaviour and limited self-control (Baumrind, 1971, as cited in Ede & Louw, 1998). Rather than favouring one of these, the key issue that can be understood here is that, parents' responsibility on children determines to what extent their children will become responsible too.

2.2.2.8 Acceptance of and adjustment to certain groups

A peer group has an important function in the psychosocial development of an adolescent. It provides the adolescent with important information, opportunities for socialization, and also contributes toward the emotional needs of the adolescent (Ede & Louw, 1998). Peer groups are, thus, said to be of a culture of their own. The feeling of not being accepted in a group makes the adolescent very miserable.

2.2.2.9 Establishment of heterosexual relationships

Romantic relationships form part of the most important social development during adolescence (Ede & Louw, 1998). The relationships fall into these following categories:

a) Group activities (i.e. going out with boys and girls but with little contact with one another);
b) Group dating (i.e. going out with boys and girls spending some time in couples and as part of the group);
c) Informal dating (i.e. in the form of couples); and
d) Serious involvement (i.e. with a specific member of the opposite sex).

It follows that any of these romantic relationships carry with them benefit, which can contribute to the development of the adolescent (Ede & Louw, 1998). These benefits involve the following:

a) The development of independence and identity formation;
b) Opportunities for companionship;
c) Acquiring communication skills;
d) Acquiring international and social skills (Ede & Louw, 1998).

It must be noted, however, that nothing is said about other sexual orientations (homosexuals and lesbians) for better or worse.
Although these romantic relationships embody the above benefit, they also carry disadvantages. Thus, for example, an adolescent engaged in serious romantic relationships i.e. in sexual intercourse at an early age this can lead her to unplanned pregnancies, early marriage. This can even hinder her

physical growth. Not to mention HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

2.2.2.10 Development of a strong emotional bond with another person

A strong emotional bond with another person could be described as an attachment between an adolescent and his/her friend, a romantic partner, a parent or any other family member. Such bond may serve as a field of practice whereby the adolescent can learn to develop his/her emotional attachment with other people.

2.2.2.11 Preparation for marriage and other family responsibilities

It is said that the developmental task of marriage and other family responsibilities is difficult to achieve in life if the other two developmental tasks mentioned above (i.e. 2.2.9/2.2.10) have not been successfully achieved.

2.2.2.12 Achievement of financial independence

The adolescent has to learn and understand the responsibilities involved in becoming financially independent. This however does not happen over-night. There are steps to follow for one's initiation. For example, doing part time jobs over the weekends after school or during holidays. All this provides the adolescent with the experience of managing his/her own finances, thus, learning how to become financially independent in life.

2.2.2.13 Development of moral concepts and values that could serve as guidelines for behaviour

This present task involves adopting moral concepts and values that one can draw from as guidelines for his/her behaviour. Can contribute to the adolescent's morality are: parents' values, peer and community values, and values of the ethical system of the religious organization that one belongs to. It is worth noting that when the pubescent chooses values and moral concepts that are more characteristic of his/her friends than they reflect the parental ones, then there is potential for conflict in other life task areas. This is so because as they experiment different ideologies, they confront conflicts between their behaviour and what is expected of them from others in terms of life tasks (Manaster, 1977).

2.2.3 ERIKSON'S THEORY OF PSYCHO-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

As shown by Erikson, adolescents have always problems in their development. During this period, they experience some sort of crisis. In Erikson's words, it is a temporary period of confusion during which he/she engages in extensive exploration and experimentation of his/her existing values and also other roles so as to form his/her own set of values and goals (Erikson, 1968, as cited in Ede & Louw, 1998). This in turn leads to the formation of his/her own philosophy of life.

It is worth mentioning that this process is not simple. It makes them to become indecisive and become unable to make decisions regarding various

roles and value systems which in turn cause feelings of anxiety and also that of apathy of hostility toward roles or values (Erikson, 1968, as cited in Ede & Louw, 1998). So, adolescents are said to be given a certain mount of freedom by society that allows them to find their identity. This freedom is often referred to as 'tolerance' or 'psychosocial moratorium' in Erikson's terms.

In short, the danger of this stage is role confusion. Doubt as to one's sexual identity, delinquency, etc. are psychotic episodes which are common for this period.

2.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed pertinent issues in this field of research. These areas include that of traumatic experiences of unaccompanied refugee children; manifestation of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in children and adolescents; the syndrome of chronic trauma; the emotional impact of political violence, protective factors and coping; the role of school; and the role of social support.

Further more, this chapter has covered the theoretical foundation for the study. It has explained and showed the relevance of various theories and models for the present study including that of the developmental tasks of adolescence and Erikson's theory of psycho-social development relating to the understanding the young adolescent.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the methodology used in the collection and analysis of data. It thus includes information pertaining to the sample which consists of 20 unaccompanied refugee children from Democratic Republic of Congo. The research design is exploratory in nature and attempts to combine both qualitative and quantitative data. In terms of the research instrument, a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions is used as a data-gathering tool. The pilot study consists of 2 children from the refugee population. The analysis of data involves qualitative analytical techniques. Finally, information pertaining to the ethical considerations is also dealt with.

3.2 SAMPLE

The sample was made up of 20 Congolese unaccompanied children (N=20) between the ages of sixteen and eighteen and who have been in South Africa for more than six months but not more than 2 years. 50% of respondents were in the eighteen year old age group, while 15% were in the sixteen year old age group (Mean age of 17.35).

The respondents were all (100%) at some stage referred to the Group of Refugees Without Voice (GRWV) for help where they got assistance for

accommodation and arrangement for a guardian. Table 1 presents the distribution of the sample by age and gender.

Table 1: ***Distribution of the sample by age and gender***

Age	Female	Male	Frequency	%
16	2	1	3	**15%**
17	1	6	7	**35%**
18	5	5	10	**50%**
Total	**8**	**12**	**20**	**100%**

The distribution of the sample by gender shows that, there were more males (60%) than females (40%), and this could have resulted from the ability of men to leave their country of origin without difficulty as compared to women.

The participants in this research study were all (100%) from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Kiswahili and French, therefore, were the most common languages amongst the respondents. The language distribution among the participants is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: ***Language background of participants***

Language	**Frequency**	**%**
French	11	55%
Lingala	7	35%
Kiswahili	12	60%
Tshiluba	3	15%

The participants' stay in South Africa ranged from eight to twenty four months. Only 7 respondents (35%) have been in the country for a period of nine to twelve months. Table 3 shows the distribution of the sample by period of stay of the respondents in the country. It is important to note that 3 participants (15%) have been in the country the longest (nineteen to twenty four months), and 6 respondents (30%) have been in the country for a period of thirteen to eighteen months, whereas 4 of them (20%) have only been in the country for not more than eight months.

Table 3: ***Distribution of the sample*** **by** ***period of stay in South Africa***

Period of stay	**frequency**	**%**
8 months	4	20%
9 - 12 months	7	35%
13 - 18 months	6	30%
19 - 24 months	3	15%
Total	20	100%

The majority of respondents (80%) were living in institutional settings. Of the 80%, 56.25% were under the care of the church (pastors), whereas seven of them (43.75%) were living in shelters. Moreover, two respondents (12.5%) were under the care of volunteers who were living in Soweto with their families. Two other participants (12.5%) were living either with an uncle or a family friend who acted as guardians. They were all (100%) currently at school attending grades 7 to 10.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Grinnell (1988), a research design is the plan which includes every aspect of a proposed research study from the conceptualisation of the problems right through to the dissemination of the findings.

The research design used for this study is exploratory in nature since the study only sought to describe and assess the needs and concerns of unaccompanied refugee children from the perspective of unaccompanied refugee children

themselves. In addition, this research has attempted to combine both qualitative and quantitative data as a means to provide greater insight into the needs and concerns of unaccompanied refugee children as a means of distinguishing the importance of one variable over another by numerical terms (Newman, 1999). The use of qualitative data has been recommended by many researchers in the field as a method of gaining a more in-depth understanding of the perceptions of respondents (Banister et al, 1934). In this respect, the qualitative design enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the psycho-educational needs as well as the support available to Congolese unaccompanied refugee children. It also involved the researcher's active engagement with participants and acknowledged that understanding is constructed and that multiple realities exist (Banister et al, 1934).

3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

According to Bailey (1987) sampling can be highly accurate if done with care. In addition, the savings in time and money should be obvious. He further argues that, surveying an entire population would take much longer than a sample study, and time is often very important. If a total population is to be surveyed, it is difficult to conduct the interviews in a short period of time without using an enormous number of interviewers. And using a large number of interviewers, as Babbie (1995) notes, may actually decrease the accuracy of the data because one may be obliged to employ marginal interviewers rather than selecting the most competent.

Twenty participants were sampled using snowball-sampling procedure. This technique is the best used in constructing frames to sample rare population (Kalsbeek, 2000). This advantage made it the most suitable sampling

technique for the present study. Sampling started with two children who were known to meet the given criteria (Being Congolese refugee child aged between sixteen and eighteen, having been in South Africa for more than six months but not more than 2 years, and being unaccompanied). They were interviewed and asked to facilitate introductions to other children whom they knew and also fulfilled the same criteria. In this respect, a written permission to conduct the research, from the Group of Refugees Without Voice (GRWV) was presented to the guardian. The later was also asked to sign a consent form in order to give her/his permission for the interview to be conducted with the children under her/his care. The children, accordingly, signed an assent form to confirm their free participation in the study.

3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

A semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was used as a data-gathering tool by the researcher. According to Grinnell (1988), an interview schedule allows the researcher to ask questions from a prepared face-to-face interview schedule and record the answers. This gives the interviewer an opportunity to use probes as well as ask for clarity.

Though the semi-structured interview has a number of open-ended questions, it gives latitude to the interviewer to explore other important issues. The data was collected over a period of two months. The interview took approximately 60 minutes.

Most of the interviews were conducted in French and Lingala. However, in some cases interviews were conducted in Swahili and Tshiluba. To assist the researcher, the interview sessions were recorded on an audiotape, which were transcripted later.

The interview schedule was set up in three sections (See Appendix A). Section A of the interview schedule required demographic information pertaining to the gender, the age, the country of origin, the period of stay in South Africa, and the living arrangements.

Section B of the interview schedule required information pertaining to the educational level of the children, their attitude towards school, their common feeling about school, their relationships with their teachers and their classmates, and their academic performance.

Section C of the interview schedule required information pertaining to the views of children about the help of a professional, the experiences the children think are appropriate to be discussed with the people they are living with, their perceptions of main needs of unaccompanied refugee children, and their perceptions on how they think an unaccompanied refugee child should be assisted with these needs.

3.6 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted in order to test the validity of the instrument and also to test if the kind of questions to be used in the study would have any impact on the children's level of trauma. In this respect, a small number of respondents (2 children) from the refugee population was used, and the findings indicated that the questions to be used in the study showed no impact on the children's level of observed trauma.

3.7 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The analysis of data involved qualitative analytical techniques. In qualitative research the researcher captures and discovers the meaning of the data collected once he/she becomes immersed in the data. In addition, qualitative research analysis proceeds by extracting themes or constructs from evidence, and organising data to present a coherent, consistent picture.

Content analysis is a technique that was used in this research for analysing the content of the texts. The text is anything written, visual or spoken that serves as a medium for communication (Newman, 1999). The content refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated by the respondents as they describe their experiences.

According to Anonymous (2003) content analysis is defined as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding

By means of a content analysis the data collected from interviews was analysed and an assessment was made of the needs of Congolese unaccompanied refugee children living in Johannesburg from the perspective of unaccompanied refugee children themselves. It is important to highlight also that descriptive statistic like percentage and frequencies were used.

Researchers in the field have said that it is useful to look at thematic analysis as a logical way of organizing data (in relation to the research question), into thematic headings that do justice to the research question and the interest of

the interviewees (Anonymous, 2003). In this respect, the information gathered during the analysis of data was organized into various thematic headings.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethic's clearance was obtained from the Human Research Ethic's Committee (Non-medical) at the University of the Witwatersrand. Permission was sought from the Coordinator of the Group of Refugees Without Voice for interviews to be conducted with the participants.

The researcher informed the research participants about the aims of the study before obtaining their consent to be involved in the research study. This was aimed at helping them to make informed decisions about their involvement in the research study. The researcher had to get written consent from the guardians as well. The participants were informed that participation was completely voluntary and could be terminated at any time without penalty. They were also assured that their names would be kept confidential and anonymous, and that all audio tapes and transcripts would be destroyed once the results had been written in a form of a report. The researcher informed the research participants that the findings would be written down as a report and that a copy of it would be handed to the agency that is working with them with its recommendations.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the methodology used in the collection and analysis of data. Specifically, it discussed information pertaining to the research design, the sampling procedure, the research instrument, the pilot

study, the analysis of data, and the ethical considerations. The research design used in this study is exploratory in nature and attempts to combine both qualitative and quantitative data. In terms of the sampling procedure, snowball-sampling procedure will be used in this study. The research instrument will consist of a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions which will be considered as a data-gathering tool. The pilot study will consist of two children from the refugee population. The analysis of data will involve qualitative analytical techniques. Finally, information pertaining to the ethical considerations will be also dealt with in the course of this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of the study was to assess the psycho-educational support available for Congolese unaccompanied refugee children living in Johannesburg. It specifically aimed to identify their psycho-educational needs, and to establish their perceptions on how their psycho-educational needs could be addressed. In this respect, specific issues to be covered in this chapter include information pertaining to the participants' experiences at school, the social support provided to them, as well as their needs.

4.2 EXPERIENCES AT SCHOOL

4.2.1 Attitude towards school

The participants for the study seemed to have similar likes and dislikes about the school. Information obtained in this study is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: ***Attitude towards school***

Variables	LIKE / Do not like	
	Frequency (n=20)	Frequency (n=20)
Bullying	2	16
Sports	12	-
Teachers	16	4
Marking	18	5
Principal	20	-
Children	15	10
Stealing at school	-	20
Littering	-	18
Swearing	4	16
Teaching methods	15	-
French course	8	-

Fifteen of the respondents felt that their schools were well organized and that the teaching methods were very good. As the table shows, they seemed to have good relationship with their teachers and peers. Most of the respondents expressed that they liked their teachers and their objective marking style which was seen to be effective. Twelve other children said that they liked the school because of the many sporting activities which were taking place there. Eight respondents said that they liked their school because they were given

the opportunity to study a French course. All of the children said that they liked their school principals because they organized their exemption from paying school fees:

"I like my school because the sporting activities which are taking place there make me feel happy."

"I like my school principals because they organized my exemption from paying school fees. This makes me feel to be treated in the same way as my South African peers."

On the other hand, as table 4 illustrates, there seems to be certain things that children did not like about their schools. Most of children, at least 16 of the respondents, said that they did not like the way some of their classmates behaved in class by stealing at school, lettering, swearing, and the amount of bullying that was practiced at school. Seven of them complained about the use of local languages during lessons.

"I am not always happy when trying to explain a difficult part of a lesson, some of my teachers make the use of Zulu."

"One day, one of my classmates stole all my pens."

*4.2.2 **Relationship with teachers***

Thirteen respondents reported that they had good relationship with their teachers and that they were able to talk to their teachers about their school-related problems. All thirteen participants felt that the teachers treated them in the same manner as their classmates. They mentioned that the teachers

discipline the whole class in the same manner. Since corporal punishment was abolished, teachers enforce discipline by either shouting or chasing the naughty children out of the class.

Table 5 shows that the remaining 7 respondents reported to be having bad relationships with their teachers. They mentioned that they were constantly reminded that they were old for their grades. Three of them commented that their teacher once told them that they will remain in grade 10 until they die.

Table 5: ***Relationship with teachers***

Relationships	**Frequency (n=20)**
Good	13
Not good	7
Total	**20**

4.2.3 Relationship with classmates

Half of respondents reported having good relationships with their classmates. Their situation of being refugees did not affect their relationships with their classmates. They felt that their classmates respected them.

The other half indicated that they did not have a good relationship with their classmates and felt that their classmates did not respect them. They indicated that when they had a quarrel with their classmates, especially South African, they insulted them by saying that they are too old to be in the same class with

them, they are "makwerekwere" (foreigners), and they are not intelligent because they cannot speak proper English.
"One of my classmates told me that I am too old to be in grade eight, and I will remain in the same grade until I die."

It was mentioned that they felt angry when their classmates showed disrespect towards and sometimes responded with violence against them without provocation:
"One of my classmates slapped me one day just because I was trying to ask for help from him."

Seven respondents said that it was the bullying and the teasing that stopped them from playing with South African children.
"When the teacher is not in class my younger classmates draw me because I have developed some pimples."

Table 6 presents different kinds of questions asked by local children.

Table 6: ***Questions asked by local children***

Questions	Frequency (n=20)
Where are you from?	20
What made you to leave your country?	20
Tell us about the war in Congo?	20
How do people manage to escape from the war?	20
Where are your parents?	20
What happened to your family?	20
How did you arrive in South Africa?	20
How are you coping in South Africa?	20

When asked whether they easily talk about these experiences, most of the respondents hesitated in providing a response. Nevertheless, they all said that they always feel like crying when asked to talk about home. Some of them said that they are very angry at life for all those experiences. They further said that the pain of having to live with the memory of seeing their families gunned down is too much for them to begin to express.

Below are some of the responses of Congolese unaccompanied refugee children in relation with the experiences they are asked to talk about:

"My brother fetched me from school and I ran in my school uniform with my school bag."

"I did not know what to do I just started running and was never to return."
"The war destroyed every thing. It killed my mother and father and brother and sister."

"Somebody chased us away from our place, shooting us with a gun."
"I was very scared when I was told that we were going to cross through a river that was infested with crocodiles. I was so afraid of dying that I do not know how we made it through."

"As we were crossing the bush, I could see bodies people killed by wild animals strewn all over and I was so afraid of dying as I thought that I could be next."

"I have spent days in the bush without food, I was smelling what with the sweating and not washing. I was a terrible sight. Getting clothes was difficult as the people who helped me were much older and nothing could fit me."

"It is even difficult for us to get basic toiletries like sanitary towels and lotion. Like now, I just use toilet paper when my period comes."

4.2.4 Academic performance

The participants were asked whether they experienced difficulties with their school work, and all said that they did. Five of the respondents said that they had problems with Afrikaans; five other respondents said that they had problems with Mathematics and English, three of the children did not cope with the curriculum in general, and seven children did not specify with which subject they experienced difficulties.

Along with the question of whether or not Congolese unaccompanied children experience academic problems, the researcher asked the participants who helps them when they have academic problems. Table 7 shows the types of responses obtained in this study.

Table 7: *Source of help with school work*

Source of help	Frequency (n=20)
Teacher	14
Friends	10
Guardian	0

Table 7 shows that the majority of the sample received assistance from their teachers with their school works. Ten respondents said that they received help from their classmates and four respondents said that they never got help from anyone. It is interesting to note that, none of the respondents mentioned seeking help with school work from their guardians.

All participants mentioned that their experiences at school were different from what they experienced in their home country. Twelve of the respondents said that they had no language problem in their home country. Sixteen of the children said that, in their home country they could not talk about the effects of war conflicts with their classmates. Most of the respondents said that they would go to their parents for help with their school work in their home country, whereas this is not the case in South Africa where they found it difficult to ask for assistance with school work from their guardians. They further said that, their parents could pay the school fees for them and they could attend the parents' meeting at school, but this is not the case in South Africa where it is difficult to be without parents and are, at times compelled to beg for their school fees. They all said that they felt dehumanized and belittled when they need things and cannot get them.

Some of the responses from the respondents are shown below:
"I only have one pair of trousers, I had to ask from people for clothes. I have never had to do this at home, I had what I needed."

"Life here is so difficult, I feel dehumanized and belittled. When I need things and I cannot get them, I start thinking of home and it is difficult."

"When there is a parents' meeting at school, I am always reminded of what happened to my parents and this saddens me."

"It is when I do something wrong at school and I am told to bring my parents that I think of all that has happened to me."

4.3 COUNSELLING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

All of the respondents reported getting some kind of professional advice upon arrival in South Africa. Just over half considered the help of a professional to have been very beneficial since it helped them to deal with the traumatic experiences. Three of the respondents said that, before the help of a professional they could not erase the memories and experiences of the time when they were still soldiers. However, with the counseling and support from a professional they have been able to deal with the memories. Ten other respondents said that, before counselling, they always thought about their experiences and would cry when they were thinking about home.
One respondent said that:

"When we ran away I saw many people killed along the road. We spent many days on foot with no water. Sometimes I dreamed about it. At night when I was sleeping I used to see the pictures. I heard fighting and heavy shootings. Only at night. With the help of a professional I have erased all these memories."

Another respondent recalled this experience:

"As we were crossing the bush, I could see bodies of people killed by wild animals strewn all over and I was afraid of dying as I was thinking that I could be next, but with the help of a professional I have erased all these memories".

Most of the respondents reported that they were able to talk about their experiences with the people they were living with. Moreover, when asked in

what way did they find the people they were staying with supportive or not supportive, twelve respondents said that they were supportive, two participants indicated that the people they were staying with were not supportive. Twelve said that they were happy that they have been given a place to stay, and the remaining eight said that the people they are living with are supportive because they were not discriminated against.

4.4 NEEDS OF UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE CHILDREN

These unaccompanied refugee children need education (20), clothes (8), shelter (10), adequate food (4), jobs (10), family reunification (20), sporting facilities (2) and professional help like counseling and trauma debriefing after being exposed to brutal deaths of their parents and friends, abuse and other traumatic events. Table 8 shows different needs of unaccompanied refugee children.

Table 8: ***Needs of unaccompanied refugee children***

Needs	**Frequency (n=20)**
Education	20
Clothes	8
Shelter	10
Food	4
Jobs	10
Family Reunification	20
Sporting Facilities	2
Professional help	20

The respondents were then asked their views as to what they thought should be done to address the concerns and needs of an adolescent unaccompanied refugee. Upper most on the list was the provision of education, shelter, adequate food, clothing and professional help.

Four of the respondents suggested that a safe house be established where children can be kept until further arrangements can be made to reduce the suffering they experience of on arrival.

Twelve respondents felt strongly that the issue of guardianship should be re-visited as there is a lot of conflict between the children and the guardians. The guardians seem to expect the children to bring food from the Group of Refugee Without Voice (GRWV) and if they bring nothing – problems arise.

Ten respondents said that schools need to be taught about refugees as they do not understand what refugees have to go through.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the results obtained in the present study. In particular it focused on some of the main issues pertaining to the experiences of Congolese unaccompanied refugee children at school, the social support provided to them and their psycho-educational needs. In terms of the experiences at school, children's attitudes towards school were generally positive, and they all felt that their schools were well organized and that the teaching methods were very good. The social support was effective, since the majority of children found the people they were living with supportive. Finally, the research findings indicated that the needs for education, professional help and family reunification were the most pressing needs among unaccompanied refugee children.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the results obtained in the present study. Specific issues to be covered include: the role of the school in helping children feel safe and recover the normalcy; the counselling and social support they are provided with; and their main needs.

5.2 THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

5.2.1 Attitude towards school

Results of the study showed that, in general, the attitude of the Congolese unaccompanied refugee children towards school was positive. As 15 of them expressed it, their schools were well organized and they seemed to have good relationship with their teachers and peers. This is important because, as highlighted by Kinder (1995), independent of the experiences associated with their flight, the reasons which forced them to flee and the way in which their flight was achieved, refugee children need a phase of peace and stability. He further states that, school can create a new continuity in their lives in that it offers the children a partially familiar ritual and a stable environment which structures their life temporally and removes them-for at least part of the day-

from the overcrowded and demeaning conditions of the accommodation which refugees must occupy when they first arrive in the country of asylum.

Although the children's general attitude towards school was positive, some of them have however mentioned that they were uncomfortable with the way children, sometimes, behaved in class and the amount of bullying and teasing there was at school. This is in accordance with the saying that: "refugee children often come from oppressive and violent situations and find it very painful when they are confronted with racism and bullying." The importance of this finding was further highlighted by Richman (1998) when he points out that, it is important that schools set up policies that are protective of children and their rights, as well as promote peer counselling as a way of supporting children at risk of being bullied at school.

5.2.2 Relationships with teachers and classmates

A large number of participants in this study reported having good relationships with their teachers and classmates. This is encouraging, since, as Berger et al (1996) assert, if there are no social obstacles, within the school environment, children can develop well academically. Hlophe (2001) further adds that for children who have experienced the stress of organized violence and war, the most beneficial therapeutic process is one which enables them to become part of the community in which they live. This means finding a school where they have the right to learn, to make friends and to play.

As the findings in this study indicated, some children did not have good relationships with their teachers and classmates. This resulted in their classmates insulting them by saying that they were too old to be in the same

class with them, they were "makwerekwere" (foreigners), and they were not intelligent because they cannot speak proper English. This result confirms the finding of Kinder (1995) that, refugee adolescents are most at risk because they do not have sufficient time to learn the new language or to understand and integrate themselves into the new educational system before making decisions regarding schooling and career-work orientation that may have a long lasting life impact. They must try to adapt and adjust in their stage of transition towards young adulthood in an alienating environment. It is at the initial stage of school entrance that refugee students are at tremendous risk of being misunderstood, misinterpreted, misperceived, mislabelled, misassessed, misdiagnosed, or misplaced. They are also at risk of being streamed into low academic level programs and of becoming drop-outs.

As we can see, in considering refugee children, many aspects of their experiences need to be taken into account if one is to attempt a fair evaluation of their behavioural/emotional and academic difficulties. This has been confirmed by Kinder (1995) when he argues that, a fair evaluation is one which serves the best academic interest of the child, rather than one that addresses the local needs and policies of the educational system at the broadest level and of the school-class-room and teacher at the particular level.

5.2.3 Academic performance

Results from this study indicated that all the children were experiencing difficulties with their school work, especially in Afrikaans and English. This was an important finding because, as highlighted by Richman (1998), refugee children often have difficulties learning English because they did not practice at home as parents often could not speak English. He further contends that,

effective English teaching, after school homework clubs are other strategies that may help children at school.

Responses from the participants in this study revealed also that, all of them were not seeking help with their school work from their guardians. As one can see, this situation is explained by the fact that, the guardians do not have much time since they spend their entire time to secure the livelihood. This way of behaving from the guardians appears to be contrary to Machel's (2001) view when he notes that, when children have supportive families and feel secure in their communities, they have a greater capacity to overcome the negative effects of armed conflicts. Garbarino et al (1992) further consolidate this by stating that children separated from their families are placed at greater psychological risk. However, "when separation is followed immediately by an attachment with another supportive adult in a stable environment, the immediate symptoms – such as enuresis, anxiety, and fear – do not necessarily evolve into long-term psychological disturbances" (Garbarino et al,1992).

5.3 THE ROLE OF COUNSELLING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

From the children's experiences, one can deduce that they were traumatized. They experienced great feelings of loss and others displayed symptoms such as hyper vigilance and startle responses. Machel (2001) concurs with this statement as he notes that children who survive armed conflict suffer deep emotional distress because of death or separation of family members and the loss of friends.

In this respect, all the participants in this study reported that they got a professional advice upon arrival in South Africa, and this was very beneficial since it helped them to deal with the traumatic experiences. This finding is very important because, as highlighted by Herman (1992), traumatic events could destroy bonds between an individual and the community. Kinder (1995) further comments that, those children who can be supported by a therapeutic environment to think about the secret, unspeakable, unthinkable events in their lives and the secret deceptions that they were forced to believe in order to survive, alongside the secret truths about power, authority, helplessness and struggle in society (in addition to the limitations of personal and political power) – these children have a better chance of psychological survival and emotional health in a new society. This can only be done in situations where children feel secure and are guaranteed continuity of care.

The majority of participants in this study indicated that they found the people they were staying with supportive. This is very encouraging since, as highlighted by Herman (1992), those who have survived learn that their sense of self, of worth, of humanity, depends upon a feeling of connection to others. He further adds that, because traumatic life events invariably cause damage to relationships, a supportive response from other people may alleviate the impact of the event, while a hostile or negative response may compound the damage and aggravate the traumatic syndrome. The importance of this finding was also highlighted by Moore (1988; cited in Muhwezi & Sam, 2004), who conducted a study on refugees in South Africa and found that among refugees exiled in South Africa, perceived social support from the community was found to be a very important contributor to their quality of life and psychological well-being.

A small number of participants (2) in this study indicated that the people they were staying with were not supportive. This finding appears to be contrary to Kinder's (1995) findings when he argues that, refugee children need a benign environment in exile, peopled with adults who understand their history and culture and who can act as strong role models to care for them. Herman (1992) further comments that, in the immediate aftermath of the trauma, rebuilding of some minimal form of trust is the primary task as well as the assurance of safety and protection is of the greatest importance. The survivor who is often in terror of being left alone craves the simple presence of a sympathetic person.

5.4 NEEDS OF UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE CHILDREN

This section discusses some of the information gathered pertaining to the main needs of unaccompanied refugee children living in Johannesburg from the perspective of unaccompanied refugee children themselves.

5.4.1 Education

Results from this study indicated that education was found to be a major concern for all the participants. This finding is important since, as highlighted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, being uprooted does not negate a child's right to education nor a State's responsibility to provide it. This has been commented by Ahearn et al, 1999; (in Loughry & Ager, 2001) when they state that education helps to meet the psychosocial need of displaced and traumatized children as well as being a tool to assist their future development. They further put that, education can play a vital part in enabling children to discuss experiences of violence, danger, displacement, etc., and in so doing

develop both individual and shared understanding of the meaning of these events.

According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), children have an absolute right to education; (referred to in Loughry & Ager, 2001). Frederickse & Mulligan (1972), reveal that the school is the strategic center of child welfare work. Kastell (1962), further states that, formal teaching is very important to children because in acquiring new knowledge and skills at school they are acquiring new resources for coping with life, and a greater self-appreciation of their standing towards other people.

Education is considered a key factor for bringing stability and security to children affected by armed conflict and forced displacement. In refugee and internal displacement settings during emergencies, education not only promotes healing and rehabilitation, but is also a compelling force for continuity and normalcy (Kastell, 1962). Education is also regarded as the most effective initial means of ensuring protection for refugee children in general, and for unaccompanied and separated children in particular, by shielding them from exploitation and abuse. According to Timngum (2003), education may be considered to be human rights value and needs to be respected in child's situation to ensure that they acquire primary and secondary education. Education of refugee children within the African context is fundamental to promoting and developing child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities so as to foster African unity and solidarity.

5.4.2 Family reunification

Results from this study indicated that all the participants have highlighted the family reunification as a major concern for unaccompanied refugee children. This finding is of value since, as highlighted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, restoring normalcy for unaccompanied children requires that tracing for parents begin immediately. This has been consolidated by UNICEF's executive Committee, when they point out that family reunion should be the first priority for the child, since, most unaccompanied minors are not orphans, and what they need is therefore reunification with their parents, not adoption. Consequently, tracing must be done even when an unaccompanied child reports that the parents are dead.

5.4.3 Sporting activities

Issue relating to sporting activities was also found to be important for many participants in this study. This finding is worth of consideration since, as highlighted by Frederickse & Mulligan (1972), recreation, thought of as a leisure-time activity, is widely recognized as an essential factor in the physical, mental and spiritual growth of an individual or a group. The Convention on the Rights of the Child further consolidates this when it highlights that, play is vital to the healthy development of a child. It is a child's way of coping with what has happened, of relaxing and relieving tensions and of assimilating what (s) he has experienced and learned.

5.4.4 Shelter, Food and Clothes

Shelter, food and clothes were highlighted by the participants in this study as perceived issues of concern for unaccompanied refugee children living in Johannesburg. This finding is supported by the South African Children's Charter in its article 6 when it states that, all children have the right to clothing, housing and a healthy diet (RSA, 1996). The Convention on the Rights of the Child further consolidates this when it highlights that, the ultimate determinants of a child's health status are factors involving food, water, environmental sanitation and shelter. As it further comments, where the food ration is inadequate, clean water scarce, defecation indiscriminate and shelter against the elements inadequate, refugee children will suffer extremely high rate of morbidity and mortality.

5.4.5 Professional help

Results from this study showed that all the participants highlighted professional help like counselling and trauma debriefing as a major concern. This finding is important given that, as highlighted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the uprooting, disruption and insecurity inherent in refugee situations can harm children's physical, intellectual, psychological, cultural and social development. As it further puts it, these factors are severely compounded when, in addition, children suffer or witness the torture or murder of family members or other forms of abuse or violence. This is consolidated by Mupedziswa, (1993) when he states that, psychologically, unaccompanied refugee children are often traumatized by the experience of flight and exile: the abrupt uprooting from home; the flight, often preceded or

accompanied by violence; the thrust into a new, unfamiliar environment; the uncertainty of exile and readjustment.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the results obtained in the present study. In particular it focused on some of the main issues pertaining to the role of school in helping unaccompanied refugee children; the role of the counselling and social support provided to them; and the main needs of unaccompanied refugee children living in Johannesburg from their own perspective.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as a conclusion of the study. It presents a summary of the results, the limitations of the study, some recommendations and conclusions.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The sample of the present study consisted of twenty unaccompanied refugee children from The Democratic Republic of Congo and living in Johannesburg. The main aim of the study was to assess the psycho-educational support available for Congolese unaccompanied refugee children living in Johannesburg. The study also sought to identify the psycho-educational needs of Congolese unaccompanied adolescent refugees living in Johannesburg.

The interview method was the main method of data collection and therefore produced qualitative data. By means of a thematic content analysis the data obtained from the study was analyzed.

According to the findings, children's attitudes towards school were generally positive. In fact, they all felt that their schools were well organized and that the teaching methods were very good. They also seemed to have good relationships with their teachers and peers. In this respect, most children

expressed that they liked their teachers and the way they were marking honestly the school works. According to some of them, this made them feel to be treated in the same way as their South African peers. Nevertheless, most children (16) expressed their unhappiness about bullying and aggressiveness at school.

Half of respondents seemed to have good relationship with their classmates. For them their situation of being refugees does not affect their relationships with their classmates. They felt that their classmates respect them. The other half did not have good relationships with their classmates. They all felt that their classmates did not respect them.

Here it is important to note that the majority of the respondents seemed to have had good relationships with their South African peers. At least ten respondents spent much of their time with South African children and have South African friends. One of the respondent's best friends is South African. This, then, shows that there are no major problems in terms of the relationship between refugee and South African children. Sixteen of the respondents said that not all South African children were bullies at school and that they did not call the unaccompanied refugee children by derogative names.

All the respondents indicated that they sought for help from their teachers and classmates when they were experiencing difficulties with their school work. However, it is interesting to note that, children never sought help for their school work from their guardians. As one can see, this situation is explained by the fact that, the guardians did not have much time since they spent their entire time to secure the livelihood.

It was found that, all the children had an opportunity to talk about their experiences to a professional upon arrival in South Africa, and that was very beneficial since it helped them to forget about the experiences that were still affecting them. Here it is important to note that, for example, before the help of a professional, some of the children could not erase the memories and experiences of the time when they were still soldiers, but with the advices of a professional they have erased those memories.

From the responses received, the majority of children found the people they were living with supportive, since they have been given a place to stay and were treated like the guardians' own children.

The research findings indicated that the needs for education, professional help and family reunification were the most pressing needs among unaccompanied refugee children. Ten respondents indicated that a place to stay is another important need. Sports facilities, adequate food and clothes were some of the needs which were also mentioned by some of the respondents.

Moreover, the findings indicated that unaccompanied refugee children's views or suggested solutions included providing them with education Professional help(20), family reunification (20), safe accommodations (10), clothes (8), adequate food (4) and sporting facilities (2).

This means that the South African Government, NGOs, and all organizations that work with unaccompanied refugee children need to provide them mostly with education, professional help, and family reunification, in order to solve an important part of their problems.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Various methodological limitations have to be taken into consideration when analyzing this study. Firstly, the sample used was limited by the fact that it reflects the views and opinions of the participants involved and thus cannot be generalized to all unaccompanied refugee children.

Moreover, subjects were included in the study on a voluntary basis meaning that they were not obligated to participate in the study. This could also contribute to one of the limitations of the study as volunteers often provide information that is socially desirable and do not always provide answers of accurate description (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1991).

Despite these limitations, however, it must be added that this study produced valuable data pertaining to the psycho-educational support available for Congolese unaccompanied refugee children living in Johannesburg.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings and conclusions reached in this study, it is recommended that:
There is a desperate need for specialized psychological intervention in this field. This can be done through individual work where specialized psychologists can provide individual counseling to the children.

As refugees and refugee children especially unaccompanied children are vulnerable, awareness programmes have to be taken into account in order to

help educate the South African community about refugees and their plight. This will change the xenophobic attitude of South Africans.

There is a need for the Group of Refugees Without Voice (GRWV) to monitor and evaluate its services to the children where follow up visits must be done. This highlights a need for special psychological intervention.

The placement of the children should be revisited where proper screening of potential guardians is done in order to avoid bad placements.

Dialogue between the children and service providers should take place for them to hear what the needs of the children are and not act on assumptions.

Psychological intervention on arrival is important as it will cut down the secondary traumatisation that the child might go through.

Finally, it is suggested that further research be undertaken which will develop further questions and thereafter a large-scale research around the psycho-educational support available for Congolese unaccompanied refugee children living in Johannesburg and in South Africa. Research should also aim at developing strategies for training of teachers, guardians and local children about the issues that pertain to unaccompanied refugee children in South Africa.

6.5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data obtained in the present study, several conclusions were reached:

Although some of the Congolese unaccompanied refugee children did not have a good relationship with their teachers and classmates, the results showed that there were support systems in what regards academic work in the schools of the respondents that said that they received help from their teachers and classmates.

There was a limited understanding in school about unaccompanied refugee children and issues pertaining to unaccompanied refugee children in South Africa, hence the teachers' and classmates' lack of knowledge about their psychological state and basic needs.

Psychological help was not adequately offered to the children to help them deal with their trauma. It is clear that much remains unresolved for them especially loss. There is clear evidence of traumatisation and symptoms of traumatic stress.

The study concluded that the focus of unaccompanied refugee children service providers has not been oriented in the long-term. This means that the focus has been on providing immediate relief and not long-term solutions such as education, psychological help and family reunification. As we can see, a long-term solution such as education is very important in that it ensures that unaccompanied refugee children become self-reliant. This self-reliance is according to Mupedziswa (1993) a function of empowerment and capacity building.

The study also concluded that little was known about unaccompanied refugee children in the South African community. In the same vein of thought, the study has remarkably shown that the children's rights are violated as their basic needs were not adequately met. The Group of Refugees Without Voice (GRWV) as the main service provider for the children was abdicating its responsibility midstream. No follow up visits were made to the children once they have been placed. It goes therefore without saying that some placements need to be re-visited as they are not enhancing the well-being of the children. In short, these concluding remarks indicate clearly that there is a need of special interventions from specialized psychologists to address the needs of the children.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule

Section A.

1. Gender
   Male/Female

2. How old are you?

3. Where are you originally from?

4. How long have you been in South Africa?

5. Where are you staying?

6. Who are you staying with?

7. How did you come to live there?

Section B.

8. Are you currently at school?

9. If no, state why?

10. If yes, what is the grade you are currently in?

11. What is the last standard you completed in your home country?

12. Is there anything you like about your school? If yes, please describe.

13. Is there anything you don't like about the school? If yes, please describe.

14. Tell me about your relationship with your teachers?

15. Are you able to talk to the teachers about any problems you might face at school?

16. How do teachers deal with these problems?

17. Do you have friends at school?

18. If yes, what kind of experiences do you talk about?

19. Do you have South African friends at school?

20. If so, what kind of experiences do you talk about?

21. Do you ever have problems with your schoolwork?

22. If so, is there anyone you can ask to help you? Who?

23. Do you ever have problems or difficulties with the other children at school?

24. If yes, what difficulties or problems do you have?

25. Are your experiences at school different from what you were experiencing in your home country? Please explain your answer.

Section C.

26. On arrival in South Africa, did you have an opportunity to talk about your experiences to a professional?

27. If so, did you find that beneficial? Please explain your answer.

28. Do you talk about your experiences with the people you are living with?

29. In what way do you find the people you are staying with supportive or not supportive?

30. What do you think are the main concerns and needs of unaccompanied refugee children?

31. How should an adolescent unaccompanied refugee be assisted with addressing the concerns and needs mentioned in question 30

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the study.

APPENDIX B

SUBJECT INFORMATION SHEET (CHILDREN)

Hello,

My name is Georges Kamuleta Kalala. I am a Research Masters student in Forced Migration at the University of the Witwatersrand. As a part of my degree I am required to conduct a research report.

The main aim of my study is to evaluate the psycho-educational support available for Congolese unaccompanied refugee children.

I wish to invite you to participate in my study. Please note that your participation is voluntary and that non-participation will have no negative consequences. Should you decide to participate in the study you will need to answer a few questions in the form of an interview that will take approximately 60 minutes. If it is okay with you, I would like to tape the interview so that I can collect all the information during the interview. The tapes will be destroyed after the study is complete.

Please note that you can withdraw from the study at any time, should you feel that you do not want to continue. If you feel that some of the questions are too personal or if you are uncomfortable answering them, you have the right to refuse to answer should you wish to do so. All information that I obtain in this study will be treated as private and confidential. Under no circumstances will any of your responses be shown to anyone other than my research supervisor and myself. No identifying information will be included in the final report.

The results of the study will be sent to the Group of Refugee Without Voice (G.R.W.V), to be made available to you at your request.

Yours sincerely

Georges Kamuleta (Researcher)

Telephone: 073 112 0443

Professor T.V.Mayekiso (Research supervisor)

Telephone: 011 717 4525

APPENDIX C

SUBJECT INFORMATION SHEET (GUARDIANS)

To whom it may concern

My name is Georges Kamuleta Kalala. I am a Research Masters student in Forced Migration at the University of the Witwatersrand. As a part of my degree I am required to conduct a research report.

The main aim of my study is to evaluate the psycho-educational support available for Congolese unaccompanied refugee children.

I would like to ask for your permission to have your child as one of the people I can talk to for this study. Your child is not forced to be part of this study. Please note that your child's participation is voluntary and that non-participation will have no negative consequences. Should she/he decide to participate in the study she/he will need to answer a few questions in the form of an interview that will take approximately 60 minutes. If it is okay with her/him, I would like to tape the interview so that I can collect all the information during the interview. The tapes will be destroyed after the study is complete.

Please note that your child can withdraw from the study at any time, should she/he feel that she/he does not want to continue. All information that I obtain in this study will be treated as private and confidential. Under no circumstances will any of their responses be shown to anyone other than my research supervisor and myself. No identifying information will be included in the final report.

The results of the study will be sent to the Group of Refugee Without Voice (G.R.W.V), to be made available to them at their request.

Yours sincerely

Georges Kamuleta (Researcher)

Telephone: 073 112 0443

Professor T.V.Mayekiso (Research supervisor)

Telephone: 011 717 4525

APPENDIX D

INFORMED ASSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT

I have read the information about the study listed in the information sheet. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time.

I hereby agree to take part in the study, by participating in the interview.

Signature:_____Date: _____
(Participant)

RESEARCHER

I have explained the aims and procedures of the study to the participant. I have assured the participant that participation is voluntary and I have explained the research to the best of my ability.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Georges Kamuleta (Researcher)

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

GUARDIAN

I have read the information about the study listed in the information sheet, and I agree to give permission for _____ who is in my custody to be part of your study. I understand that her/his participation is voluntary and that she/he can withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature:_____Date: _____
(Guardian)

APPENDIX F

PERMISSION TO TAPE THE INTERVIEW

PARTICIPANT

I have read the information listed on the information sheet. I understand that I am not obligated to give consent for the interview to be taped.
I hereby give permission for the interview to be taped.

Signature:_____Date: _____
(Participant)

APPENDIX G

A LETTER FOR A PERMISSION TO DO A STUDY

Graduate School for
The Humanities and
Social Sciences
Private Bag x3
Wits
2050

Coordinator of Group of Refugee
Without Voice (G.R.W.V)
FHA HOUSE, suite 405b, 4th floor
158, Market Street
Private Bag 15898
Doornfontein
Johannesburg 2028

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH STUDY

I am Georges Kamuleta, Masters student in Forced Migration at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my degree, I am expected to undertake a research. Therefore, I have decided to do the research in the Group of Refugee Without Voice (G.R.W.V). So, I hereby request permission to do a research in your NGO.

The title of the research is "the assessment of the psycho-educational support available for Congolese unaccompanied refugee children". The study is to be carried-out between September and December 2004. It is hoped that the findings of the study will highlight common psycho-educational needs of unaccompanied refugee children and formulate a set of recommendations on appropriate psycho-educational interventions to address their needs.

I will be grateful should my request be given a positive response.

Yours faithfully

Georges Kamuleta Kalala

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND JOHANNESBURG

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1. Name (in full): Georges KAMULETA KALALA
2. Student Number: 0411396F
3. Present mailing address: PO Box 93596 Jeoville

   Postal code: 2143 Fax: _____

   E-mail: mgkkamuleta@telkom.co.za Cell: 073 7785 362

   Home tel: _____ Work tel: _____
4. If you are likely to move in the next 6 – 12 months please provide the mailing address and effective date of a change in address

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   _____ Effective date: _____

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8. Title of submitted dissertation/research report/thesis:

THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR CONGOLESE UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE CHILDREN LIVING IN JOHANNESBURG.

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☐ No

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14. Name of supervisor: PROF T.V. MAJEKODUNMI

Discipline PSYCHOLOGY

School HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Signature _____

Name of supervisor (if more than one): _____

Discipline _____

School _____

Signature _____

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

FROM: PROF T.V. MAYEKISO

DISCIPLINE: HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This serves to confirm that GEORGE KAMULEYA ILALA

has completed his/~~her~~ corrections to my satisfaction.

SIGNED: .....

DATE: 14/11/2005

Wits Univ. JHB

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