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Reflections on human rights education from the orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) sector in Mozambique

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Abstract: Human Rights Education (HRE) often forms the cornerstone of addressing human rights issues at the local level where nongovernmental bodies in partnership with human rights agencies deliver various initiatives. Such agencies mostly operate from a neo-colonial framework as addressing structural and political power struggles limits addressing structural transformation for most vulnerable populations. There is a gap in the existing literature about the sense-making of such roles and responsibilities related to a local agency that speaks to active citizenship and youth as agents of change. This paper examines the effects of HRE associated with Freire's emancipatory education on youth in the impoverished community of Trevo in Mozambique. Within this impoverished community, orphans and vulnerable youth makes up one of the lowest socio-economic strata that was targeted as the research population for this study. The research question addresses how such vulnerable youth make sense of HRE and how do they apply the learnings in an authentic and realistic way. A local nongovernment organisation (NGO) implemented the *Bons Vizinhos* (Good Neighbours) programme where children and youth

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Human Rights Education (HRE) has become a cornerstone intervention for multiple UN agencies that collaborate with local partners to bring about positive social change. Many of such interventions are focused on youth empowerment, yet seeking authenticity to influence real change. In sub-Saharan Africa nongovernment organizations (NGOs) often fulfil the role of brokering such change and draw on the reciprocal learnings of how youth make sense of HRE information and in local contexts. In this paper, the authenticity of HRE within an impoverished community in Mozambique provides key insights and demonstrate how youth under a highly authoritative political regime internalize learnings from HRE in reflecting on issues around child labour, parental responsibilities and acceptable social norms. Bringing about sustainable and structural change lies at a higher level of resistance and influence, whilst local people mostly respond in offering charity, support and echo the notion of self-reliance in terms of what they can do to improve parental care and pro-social youth behaviour.

received human rights' training. Three executive members, two implementers and six youth took part in semi-structured interviews (primary data), whilst 21 posters from youth as part of a photo-voice activity were re-interpreted and thematically categorised (secondary data). Vulnerable populations socially construct their understandings of what they consider "safe" and "unsafe" spaces. HRE practitioners need to draw on these insights to make learning meaningful.

Subjects: Development Policy; Rural Development; Education Studies

Keywords: civil society; human rights education; poverty; Mozambique; youth; photo-voice

1. Introduction

In spearheading the human rights agenda as a development discourse, United Nations agencies have engaged with multiple stakeholders through global treaties, policy frameworks and a shared vision captured by the current Sustainable Development Goals. Multiple human rights declarations since 1948 gave birth to multistakeholder responses and declarational approaches in human rights education (HRE) initiatives based on the assumption of universal acceptance of what those rights should entail (Činčera et al., 2018). At country level, HRE is often aligned with citizenship education in a personalised human rights approach that features cultural embeddedness (Arnot et al., 2018) without the critical dimension of counter activism that would address the need for structural change (S. Higgins, 2018). Since 1960's nongovernmental agencies (NGOs) mostly take the lead in HRE curricular design and implementation by engaging with vulnerable populations to elicit action beyond merely mobilising volunteers or charitable deeds (Zembylas, 2018).

Since the mid-1990s, discontent with Global Northern stakeholders addressing inequalities in the Global South, relates to the neo-colonial underpinnings of development actions (Makuwira, 2018). International NGOs forged strategic partnerships with the government sector and a myriad of implementing agencies across the development spectrum (Miller, 2017). Initial protests against mainstreaming and lack of local voices were often drowned by the evangelist zeal of local NGOs depending on donor funding and diplomatic relationships with government agencies. However, meaningful civic action is vested in complex power relations of multiple actors with educational initiatives and pedagogy feeding into ethical, moral and critical dialogues that may or may not lead to effective human right activism (Barton, 2020; Snauwaert, 2019) or even local-oriented empathy (Zembylas, 2018). Human rights "talk" as an issue where NGOs may be well-positioned for mobilising communities to safeguard the rights of the most marginalised populations and assist in bringing critical and affective engagement with real issues. The dimension of the micro-political level of power relations and sense-making and how an educational approach to human rights at the local level generates new insights, is still relatively under-researched.

This paper addresses local knowledge production and cross-examines child rights within the framing of safe spaces. Firstly, it discusses relevant literature relating to human rights approaches, framing and education. Secondly, the paper reflects on international-local policy coherence and partnership dynamics, as implementing agencies in the Global South to deal with complex realities. Thirdly, it provides contextual insights and reports on the co-creation of knowledge based on photovoice methodology and notions of youth empowerment in relation to agency.

2. Framing human rights for praxis

At the core of human rights agency is the theoretical underpinnings of Colonial thought in articulation with the global understandings and practices of development. Makuwira (2018, p. 424) is critical of the "metamorphosis of the idea of development [that] that has also morphed into a theory that propagates the belief that good development practice is one where ordinary people set the agenda for what they consider relevant in achieving sustainable well-being". The vertical alignment of policy and practice finds global and national articulation with International

NGOs as donors that prioritise pre-conceived social change. International stakeholders often speak the same "development language" of national governments whose policy frameworks stem from similar global human rights and treaties. Emerging insights based on "principles of participation, empowerment, and bottom-up decision-making processes" constitute "the hybridisation of knowledge" and "ongoing struggles" of local communities are largely ignored (Makuwira, 2018, p. 424).

Post-colonial theorists, such as Frantz Fanon and Edward Said, as well as protagonists of southern theory development, such as Raewyn Connell, questions the dominant (Northern and Eurocentric) ideas of progress and silence about the perpetuated dominance of neo-Colonial thought (Connell, 2007). The interplay of power finds expression in the universal packaging of human rights and capital flows to drive socio-political change. A radical re-imagination of international aid and interventionist perspectives is required in responsible interventions (Brehm & Silova, 2010). Such a re-imagination is equally relevant to deconstruct national political agendas that have absorbed the liberal model and external (global) policy agendas where socialist worldviews continue to undermine the global script of civic society rights and democracy (Kleibl & Munck, 2017).

A call for radical (educational) reform and rethink is required to address inherent power inequalities in donor-recipient arrangements and drive "democratic citizenship and human rights for marginalised" populations – especially women and children to impact on "broader social processes of social change" (Chalabi, 2014, p. 79). With the focus on youth empowerment and protecting the rights of children, similar re-evaluation and decentralised critical realist approaches would aid meaningful and informed co-creation of knowledge (Crawford, 2010; Llewellyn-Fowler & Overton, 2010). For instance, it requires new theorisation of related children's rights issues, such as safeguarding and understanding of safe spaces (Djohari et al., 2018) or understanding and addressing the multiple root causes of child labour (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018). Situated knowledge speaks to the intersectionality (e.g., gender, age and class) and to different dimensions of a socio-political issue. In the case of studying children's rights to safety, the physiological, personal and place dimensions provide a framework for theory-practice integration (Adams et al., 2017).

Such new understandings contribute to "constructions of childhood" and provide valuable insights and strategic knowledge for coordinated and cross-sectional actions (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018). The recent rejection of rights-based approaches by the NGO-sector is based on a strategic drive for less institutionalised and more flexible rights talk as a frame for the associated agency (Miller, 2017). Understanding the complexity of child well-being finds resonance in integrated approaches and interventions, such as economic strengthening initiatives and reciprocal effects of formative assessment (for programme design) and feedback loops for policy and practice adaptations (Rutherford & Bachay, 2017).

For many local stakeholders, opportunities for real empowerment of vulnerable populations are limited and focused on human rights education (HRE). Questioning the political rhetoric relating to youth empowerment (Greene et al., 2018) requires a critical stance towards factors influencing enabling praxis. In this regard, educational practices are premised on the Freire's emancipatory insights and enlightened thinking to find ways in which marginalised populations (the oppressed) can engage in their own liberation (M. Higgins, 2016).

Capturing the voices of vulnerable children necessitates participatory and empowering methodology to allow for reciprocal sense-making and strategic effect. Mixed methods and particularly qualitative methodology, including photovoice as a paradigm enabling Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), provide a framework for co-knowledge creation and action (Greene et al., 2018; Morojele & Muthkrishna, 2013). For all stakeholders, such insights are key to develop meaningful and effective actions that would have the potential of a ripple effect of change where bottom-up and top-down approaches meet. The creation of feedback-loops from knowledge and insights to

action and power-sharing within the many confines and challenges posed by contextual influences and power elites determines possible and shape social change.

3. Context, agencies and programme

3.1. Human rights and civic society in Mozambique

The political history of Mozambique bears evidence of a Colonial and conflict-riddled past, even after having gained independence from Portugal in 1975. A civil war between Marxist FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, currently the majority political party in Mozambique) and RENAMO (Resistência Nacional de Moçambique, the national opposition) lasted for 16 years. Recently (2015), they signed a second ceasefire agreement to stabilise the government (Macamo, 2017). The revolutionary movements and power elites (Frelimo and Renamo) continue on a path of "eschatological nationalism" (struggle politics) within an authoritarian political culture that minimises the effect of civil society to access their constitutionally enshrined (human) rights (Macamo, 2017, p. 199). Democratic practices are not possible as the government champion nation-building and maintain centralised dispensation and power.

The constitutional reforms of the early 1990s reinforce fundamental rights and freedoms and despite subscribing to the UN-driven global development agenda and human rights policies, the country ranks 184 out of 187 countries on the United National Human Development Index with more than 50% of the youth (between the ages of 15 and 19 years) being out of school (Reisman & Lalá, 2012, p. 7). The 2004 constitution and legislation protecting the rights of children (Law no 7 of 2008) "builds on the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child and on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child" (Reisman & Lalá, 2012, p. 11). Such a legislation articulates with The National Plan of Action for the Child to amongst other rights, assure the civil rights, safety and protection of the child, whereas The Plan of Action for Orphan and Vulnerable Children defines the guiding principles of priority actions to ensure access to basic services (Reisman & Lalá, 2012, p. 13).

The lack of implementation of a well-developed legal and policy framework by the government sector draws on the NGO-sector to assist within the following four thematic organisational clusters for i) women victimisation, 2) children victimisation, 3) governance, human rights and community development and 4) peace, security and conflict prevention (Reisman & Lalá, 2012). It is within this sector, that international NGOs such as Terre des hommes positions their strategic partnership with a local NGO in acting on the needs of orphans and vulnerable youth in the impoverished community of Trevo situated in Machava Village within the municipality of Matola Province.

3.2. The programme

As a global organisation, Terre des hommes contributed to the establishment and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and has since 2013 addressed the North-South polarization and unequal power balance in favour of shared ownership for sustainable and mean-ingful change in target communities. A total of 21 articles (out of 42, 50%—excluding implemen-tation measures) of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and 24 articles (out of 31; 77.4%) of the African Charter on the Rights of Welfare of the Child was directly or indirectly collectively addressed by various in-country programmes and TDH-NGO partnerships.

The in-country partner of Mozambique features a high level of policy coherence and strategic alignment to deliver on the four strategic goals of the NGO, namely: (1) [optimal and inclusive] participation by youth and children; (2) [creating] spaces free from violence and exploitation; (3) ecological child rights; and (4) (promoting) child rights in international policies. The NGO-partner in Mozambique was well established and had a track record of the successful delivery of child and youth-centred programmes. It provides safe houses and offers outreach programmes as a response to gender-based violence and severe child neglect, such as in the case of protecting children from exploitation and abuse. Many rural girls are lurked into domestic labour and kept as

sex slaves or children are abandoned to live on the streets, whilst fragmented and underfunded government programmes are ineffective.

Local academics in the field of psychology established the programme (Protecção da Criança or Friendly Neighbours) in 2004 in Machava Village with donor funding from the Netherlands Embassy, international church organisations, and the created close collaboration with various local government agencies in social and health service provision. Main activities included the recruitment and training of "friendly neighbours" (safe house representatives), manage referrals, offer rights-based education, equip implementers with legal tools and basic psychotherapy knowledge, facilitate access to public services, work towards family integration (re-unites street children with their families), provide safe community spaces for discussions and advocate for children's rights. It drives a youth-empowerment model where the latter is facilitated and supported to take responsibility and initiative for their own rights. Most activities are offered after structuring children and youth clubs, where local social workers and government actors are increasingly engaged in education and awareness campaigns and programmes.

4. The research

Terre des hommes came on board as a funder in 2009 and contracted researchers for an independent review and impact assessment to be completed by June 2017. The research has focussed on impact assessment and evaluation of their in-country partnership and programme effects relating to their second strategic development goal (creating safe spaces). Research methods include document analysis of all progress reports for 2 years prior to the fieldwork, policy documents and data gathered by the local organisation (including 21 photovoice posters compiled by vulnerable youth from the local community). Each participant received a camera and took pictures in the community reflective of their understanding of children's rights and safe spaces. Each participant had to compile a poster displaying self-selected pictures and text stating how the picture links to a child's right (or transgression thereof) and how it could be addressed (recommendation). Permission to utilise the raw data in terms of the original posters were obtained from the local organisation.

4.1. Methodology

The Participatory Action Research (PAR) framework where interviewees took part in multiple rounds of discussions about emerging themes provides a special voice for the research participants (De Vos et al., 2011). In the complex realities, the voices of the participants and how they make sense of the experiences and learnings offered by TDH (Terre Des Hommes organisation) implementing partners features prominently in all phases of the research process. The qualitative data set was based on in-depth interviews with key role players including two executive members from TDH, three in-country NGO members, four implementing agents (Friendly Neighbours) and six children as programme recipients.

The interview schedule for all research participant cohorts includes questions about the personal/organisational meaning of the programme (philosophy), history of participation/engagement, benefits (personal, household and community levels), challenges, recommendations and critical reflections on child rights and local realities.

Two senior researchers, accompanied by a professional translator, collected the interview data from a purposive sample of research participants identified by the local NGO executive, whilst adhering to strict ethical conduct as per proposal guidelines presented to the TDH international board.

The qualitative data analysis followed the coding procedures, comparative member checking and theme generation as prescribed by Creswell (2009, p. 185) and include processes to validate the accuracy of the information. The trustworthiness, validity and reliability of the study was further enhanced through the triangulation of data (different sets), multiple researchers, different methods (e.g., interviews, document analysis and photovoice data) and different theoretical perspectives for data interpretation (Kimchi et al., 1991).

In the photovoice activity conducted by local academics prior to the research visit, each participant received a camera and took pictures in the community reflective of their understanding of children's rights and safe spaces. Each participant had to compile a poster displaying self-selected pictures and text stating how the picture links to a child's right (or transgression thereof) and how it could be addressed (recommendation). They followed the scientific process as described by M. Higgins (2016, p. 671) and by Adams et al. (2017, p. 8). For this paper, the end product in terms of the 21 posters (with pictures and narratives) were used for document analysis in synthesis with interview questions where managers, implementers and children explained the activity and content.

5. Results and discussion

5.1. TDH-NGO partnership
The partnership carries a positive association with the Friendly Neighbour Programme and contributes to forging meaningful collaboration with local stakeholders, including local government agencies. Such an arrangement and consequent configuration of stakeholders focusing on human and child rights issues, did not disrupt the status quo of donor domination, as argued by Makuwira (2018). The focus on human rights education and rights-based approach to development work-limited programme effects to actionable initiatives without actively addressing structural challenges. There is thus a threshold for social change possible as driven by the NGO with a bottom-up approach.

Such stakeholder collaboration provided opportunities in small but significant ways to address systemic challenges and the facilitation of access to resources for OVCs within the NGO's implementing programme. By sponsoring the photovoice initiative, TDH became known in the community and facilitated positive experiences for participants (OVC population), whilst finding different ways of spreading awareness of children rights. On a small scale, media stories of child protection (and rescue children from dire circumstances) brought public recognition of the programme and partnership. The current CEO had weekly discussions on the local radio station that contributed to the success of creating awareness of children's rights issues. The focus and type of advocacy fell outside a call for activism and mobilisation in addressing the rights and responsibilities of rights holders and accountability of duty bearers (Llewellyn-Fowler & Overton, 2010).

It represents a nonconfrontational or soft approach by mainstreaming activities within a human rights education (HRE) framework, evidenced in direct stakeholder engagement (Bajaj, 2012). This approach ensured the creation of some community-based feedback loops for an integrated approach as proposed by Rutherford and Bachay (2017). The recruitment of social workers and other government officials as Friendly Neighbours represented a strategy to ensure that such feedback loops were effective. It also afforded such implementers to have their eyes and ears on the ground and be in a position to influence action within their own domains of operation. It presented a natural partnership fit at the local level of operation and in this sense augmented the work sphere of government officials.

5.2. Programme effects relating to human rights
The provision in the basic human needs for existence is entrenched in the Child and Human Rights agenda propagated by TDH and partners. It follows a neo-liberal and individualist agenda for self-preservation as expressed by a TDH representative:

> "The children must drive their own agenda and take responsibility. We need to give children a platform, like having an event. For instance, talent shows give children a platform. It is also entertainment and they can debate different issues. When they have gone through the programmes, they see things differently."

From a young age, children have learnt that having such rights are meaningless under conditions of extreme poverty. This resonates with what Llewellyn-Fowler and Overton (2010) describe as "bread and butter" human rights. The provision of food, provision of school uniforms and access to casual work brought relief from anxiety and assisted individuals to overcome devastating circumstances.

Volunteers support each other and are often of similar personality types being highly altruistic and self-sacrificing. Most found a new identity and social recognition from some sectors of the community that are particularly status-conferring. The intensity and significance of services rendered by volunteers represent that space where a volunteer acts as a substitute parent as per identification and reliance on them by vulnerable children in the community. The following narratives explain this deepening of role-identification and fulfilment.

> "I help the community with different services. I feel proud when the community respects me and how much the community knows about my good will. They call me godmother." (Volunteer, Friendly Neighbour programme)

> "When we get some cases reported to us, you find yourself going out at night to remove a child from a home in cases of abuse. The young girls of about 14 are being recruited from the rural areas and when they become domestic workers, the promises from their employer is not kept. Some do not get any money, no clothes and only little food. We would remove them and try to reunite them with their families. There were several such cases." (Volunteer, Friendly Neighbour programme)

From these narratives, it was clear that the volunteers need to work in close collaboration with local social workers and often have to handle traumatic cases that require timely interventions. In some cases, it may entail life and death decisions, such as in cases of extreme abuse or neglect. In one such case, a volunteer was called out where three young children survived 3 days without food when both parents were found dead in their shack.

Childhood is infringed by adult responsibilities and the conditioning to endure life-threatening and devastating situations that have become part and parcel of some children's socialisation. It presents a normal way of existing beyond what is captured in child rights' treaties or national policies.

During interviews, several programme participants expressed their willingness and demonstrated confidence to bring about positive change in a community. See the following narratives.

> "We are proud to be part of the community and to make a difference. My dream is to help children get out of the streets and get an education." (Child taking part in the -voice initiative)

> "It felt good to have taken the picture and talk about it. Children should not be playing in the dumps or eat contaminated food. Then the rubbish was gone, I do not know who took it away." (Child taking part in the photovoice initiative)

Survival is about relationships and being given a voice through the mediation of gatekeepers that are adults or in this case, NGO representatives via a volunteer system. In such circumstances, children develop a collective and social consciousness where they learn and acquire trusting relationships. Such a reality brings with it a different understanding of what Greene et al. (2018) describe as the development of citizenship that finds expression in the pursuit of socially just practices. There is a clear threshold of what agency or actions are possible, where youth are the key drivers.

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Table 1. Positive reflection on safe spaces			
Theme and description	**Explanation**	**Evaluation**	**Solution/Action**
Homes are safe for living and being protected (n = 3)			
A nice home	Safety and security	A home keeps all safe	Homes keep you safe
Safe at home—child sleeping under net	Safe	Cannot be bitten by mosquitoes	Safe—responsible behaviour
Child play with cat inside the house	Safe and fun	Inside home it is safe	Children should stay safe
A nice home	Safety and security	A home keeps all safe	Homes keep you safe
Take care of property (n = 1)			
Keep bicycle safe in yard	Person take care of his property	Right place not in street (keep property)	All should be doing this (keep property clean)
People producing food for household and sell produce (n = 1)			
See people ploughing the field	Growing food- feed themselves and to sell	Survival	Take to other people to start doing the same
Cleaning up the environment (n = 6)			
People cleaning up	Keep streets clean	Positive	Should also help
Clean up litter	Should not litter	Clean streets will not have disease	We should not litter
People are sweeping the street	Community clean up	It is good.	We should all engage in the sweeping
Lady loading garbage in truck	Garbage removal	We should get rid of the garbage	We should keep streets clean and also sweep
Children cleaning school grounds	School grounds clean up	Sweeping—good	It is good
Six ladies and one teenager clean up street	Person chosen at meeting to lead clean up	Cleaning up is positive	All should participate in it
Exemplary behaviour of children (n = 4)			
Two "smart" clean teenagers walking	Good hygiene	People should "bath" twice per day	All should be clean
Young boys hanging out	No drugs or alcohol	Good leisure	Children should behave like that
Children play with marbles	Say no to drugs and alcohol	Play is necessary	Responsible behaviour act out right to play
Behaviour—man walk on sidewalk	Safe not to walk in the street "where cars travel"	Safe—good behaviour	Should all do this

The data from the 21 posters produced by children and youth who took part in the photovoice initiative generated new insights regarding safe spaces. From the visual and content analysis, 20 positive messages and six themes emerged. Table 1 illustrates the themes and includes the explanations and recommendations by the participants (see Table 1).

The discussion is based on the teachings and local understanding of the rights of children by local youth in the programme. The first dimension relates to adequate infrastructure associated with human well-being and dignity. It entails perceptions of being sheltered (housing and clothing) and protected from harm and exploitation (child labour and public danger).

The second dimension has bearing on perceptions of public spaces where children can play freely and feel protected (fenced, clean and/or under adult supervision). At the community level, the cleanliness, play areas and adequate housing contribute to a safe and healthy community where people can live safely, facilitated by an enabling environment. The sub-themes of healthy

Table 2. Negative reflection on unsafe spaces			
Theme and description	**Explanation**	**Evaluation**	**Solution/Action**
Adequate shelter and a right to a clean and safe home (n = 3)			
Inadequate shelter	Poverty	Inadequate	Community to "pitch in"
Orphans, carts & shacks	Poverty	No money; neglect children	We should help
Old lady in shack	Poverty	Not suitable for old person	It should not be so
Environmental hazards—clean and safe public spaces (n = 10)			
Electric board—no cover	Negligence—public	Unsafe for children playing in vicinity	Community meeting to solve this
Generator—open wires	Negligence—public	Unsafe for children	Talk to company
At school—leaking tap and garbage	Tap broken and garbage	Tap broken and even teachers drink water	Put in new tap
Leaking pipe in community	Pipe broken	Cause disease—not clean	People should mend leaks
Stagnant water, litter and mosquitoes	Unclean environment	Can get malaria	Cover with sand
Road—nothing going on	Just a road	Should be swept	We should sweep
Garbage outside house on Saturday	Garbage truck does not come regularly so garbage remain outside homes	Can cause a fight between neighbours	People should take their garbage in and then return it outside when the truck arrives
Garbage dump in community	Will attract flies	Spread disease	Meeting of town council—put out garbage container & remove garbage
Road full of garbage—dump	People pass by and dump garbage	Bad behaviour	We should talk to these people so they don't dump their garbage here
Garbage dumped at bus stop	Just a road	Should be swept	We should sweep
Ducks walk around	Owner careless with ducks	Not clean or safe for animals	Put ducks in pen
Child neglect and unsafe environment (n = 9)			
Children play without shirt or shoes in cold	Neglect by mother	Poverty, mother should care for children	We need to help one another—if we have money, give to them
Naked child—no shoes	Neglect by adults	Need to be taken care of	We must talk to adults
Children walk in water and dirt—no shoes	Lack of hygiene	Can get disease—cholera and HIV	Help—pile sand on
Children in streets—cold without shoes	Neglect by parents	Need to be taken care of	When I find money, I will buy slippers
I see children playing in the dumps breaking bottles	Could cut themselves and become sick	Unsafe—neglect	We should help them
Garbage—children play in garbage	Community not clean and safe play areas for children	Children should not stay in the garbage	We should clean the streets so they become shinier
Children dirty and playing in the road	Neglected by parents	Poor parents	We should talk to the parents
Child sitting next to litter	No garbage collection	Can cause disease	We need to collect litter, sweep & dispose of it
Kids play in boxes	Some are suffering	Poverty	We should help them

(Continued)

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Table 2. *(Continued)*			
Theme and description	**Explanation**	**Evaluation**	**Solution/Action**
Adequate shelter and a right to a clean and safe home (n = 3)			
Child labour (n = 6)			
Child carrying baby on back (adult duty)	Parent diseased (orphans)	Not good	Should help them
Three kids in street—one is carrying a baby	Parents neglect—not task for child	Mother neglect—her task	Meeting—tell mother adult should accompany children
Child selling in street	Poverty—grownups should be selling	Unsafe	Grownups to work/sell
Behaviour—boys playing cards ("cheats")	Risky behaviour	Illegal activity—can go to jail	Should be against that
Three girls drinking in shack	Illegal under-age drinking	No adult supervision	We need to advise them not to drink
Child goes out at 9pm and comes back at 3am —sleeps hungry on carpet	Father in RSA and mother does not care	No discipline or care (neglect)	We should speak to the mother
Kids selling bare feet— poor	Selling but should be in school	Poverty	Get community involved —mobilise
Children selling green mangoes in dirty place	Sick—not mango season and dirt	Sick—not mango season and dirt	We need to help one another
Children sell in streets— things on floor	Get sick—dangerous	Unsafe and poor hygiene	We should help them
Anti-social behaviour (n = 3)			

living and carefree play transcends from the collective awareness of community living and children's reliance on public spaces to meet and engage with their peers.

The third dimension of safe spaces presents some shift from a rights-based approach to responsibilities as expressed in observed pro-social and normative behaviours. Playing and walking in safe areas and taking care of personal hygiene and animals articulate with the overall actions across all the themes. These dimensions fall within the tripartite organising framework of Adams et al. (2017), with the identification of a person, psychological and place dimensions with the exception that children in this study did not identify their favourite spaces and linked it to the binary identification of being safe or unsafe.

In all positive responses, educational perspectives dominate regarding the moral evaluation of right and wrong or what is normative within daily living within impoverished circumstances. Taking responsibility for yourself and others (self-reliance) provides a threat from the analysis of the reported narratives from interviews where role-modelling intersects with being a responsible and responsive citizen. This entails the (self) avoidance of anti-social behaviours, such as drinking and drug abuse that are preventative behaviours and the responsibility of parents with "poverty" as root (but inevitable) cause. In the social construction of safety and child's rights to protection and healthy living, self-perseverance, caring relationships and normative knowledge dominates the sense-making of children. Morojele and Muthkrishna (2013) report similar findings of how children, in rural Lesotho, from a young age negotiate risks, whilst being dependent on the care and guidance of adults to live above the threshold of human survival.

In Table 2, unsafe spaces are associated with negative or anti-social or irresponsible behaviours of parents, youth or children and community members at large. There are eight subthemes that

could be further clustered to display similar but more nuanced dimensions of safe spaces, as the conceptualisation of transgression illuminates the understanding of human rights and, as it is, through the eyes of children, most related directly and indirectly to the perceived rights of children.

The eight themes can be semantically clustered as it articulates with their interrelatedness with human or child right transgressions, with some exception to not having access to adequate housing. This is a novel finding as the right to shelter is paramount in all legislation and treaties, but for children that right is outside their frame of reference. Within the realm of self-reliance and taking individual or collective action, their solution is to contribute funding to assist poor households to upgrade their living conditions. Other dimensions of unsafe living relates to self-care (personal hygiene) and taking care of others (including animals and acceptable practices of child work). There is a strong realisation of their contribution to the household income, but child labour (young children selling in unclean public spaces) and taking care of younger siblings are the duties of parents. Parental neglect is mostly blamed as solutions speak to parental responsibilities and has bearing on what M. Higgins (2016) refers to as the humanising or praxis, but lacks the critical stance for affording youth a voice for change.

International conventions and human rights guidelines differentiate between child work (often domestic chores) and child labour with age and type of work being key factors (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018). In this study, the community dimension speaks to a formation of a collective consciousness and obedient citizenship by placing accountability for redress at the door of nondelivery (a company or local government). Actions offered to mobilise the community represents a soft approach and include assistance from community members.

Perceived transgressions of child and human rights dovetails with the positive images and messages in terms of physical (direct and indirect) public spaces and associations with health risks, as well as anti-social behaviours. These insights of programme effects as mediated through the photovoice data show fault lines in what Greene et al. (2018) discusses as a meaningful conceptual framework for youth empowerment. It the latter framework, it is advocated that youth should participate and engage meaningfully in community and inter-personal matters, including addressing equitable power-sharing with adults, engage in socio-political activism and identify structural inequality within the development of a sense of agency.

6. Conclusion

This paper draws on the data of an impact assessment for a major international donor and local NGO as implementing partner in the field of Human Rights Education (HRE) in the context of Sub-Saharan poverty. The re-interpretation of data and critical reflection takes cognisance of current discourses in the field of development work, the framing of child rights' policy synergies (from the global to the local) and local effects of sense-making and social constructions. The voices of volunteers and children are captured in all its complexity of daily life survival and sense-making. Such perceptions are influenced by insights of children's rights obtained from an educational programme and group discussion in children and youth clubs facilitated by NGO implementers (Friendly Neighbours). These insights of implementers and participants demonstrate the dominance of neo-liberal thinking where most solutions offered relate to educating people to take care of their own safety and for adults to take care of children with some insight of shared responsibility from others (e.g., local municipality or company responsible for service delivery to the community). Youth empowerment thus rings hollow for marginalised populations, such as orphans and vulnerable children who are highly dependent on other agencies and adults to negotiate access to safe spaces that equates to the right for survival and care.

The inequality of power that counts for programme effect not only limits interventions to soft options of facilitation (as opposed to protest and advocacy) but finds ideological inroads into socialisation practices and cultural norms that sustain a hegemony of poverty. There are limited options open to youth and volunteers and they have to find diplomatic ways to request rather than

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demand accountability from duty bearers. The positive impact of Friendly Neighbours lies at the provision of emergency assistance, whilst many volunteers are equally powerless and dependent on the NGOs relationship with government officials, to assist vulnerable children and households.

The educational focus applies the belief that people have to take personal responsibility for their own health and safety, whilst putting the blame of child rights transgressions on the lack of parental care. Issues of child labour find special meaning in the local context, but find age to be a definitive category of vulnerability. Entrenched beliefs and norms are difficult to uproot and education does not necessarily translate into claims to accountable actions. Self-reliance and an ethic of care dominates perceivable actions making the oppressed part of their own oppression. The challenge is to find ways where youth could have successful role models, who could demonstrate new and innovative ways of improving living conditions, improve the quality of life at the individual, household and community levels.

Education and action alone may not uproot the complex and interwoven manifestations of poverty and the NGO's leadership in implementing multiple strategies addressing parental care and poor service delivery of local government but may be more meaningful than reverting to self-care and propagating that change lies with an individual's decision-making and actions.

Feedback loops from policy to practice are essential for chiselling away at systemic inequalities, which lie outside the sphere of implementing agencies. The development of multistakeholder ownership and shared responsibilities towards children's rights from the onset of an intervention should address more structural issues, whereas an educational approach may deliver on an in-depth understanding of related issues and aligned agency. The channelling and mediation of local voices to the information policy and influence stakeholder's practices at different levels is a shared obligation within the human rights domain.

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