

# **ADVOCACY COMMUNICATION AND THE CHILD TRAFFICKING SITUATION IN KENYA: THE CASE OF MATHARE CONSTITUENCY PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Child trafficking is one of the leading crimes in Kenya. The purpose of this study therefore was to look at the efficacy of advocacy communication when it comes to addressing the complications of child trafficking in society. The study focus was Mathare constituency in Nairobi County. This is because there are many child trafficking cases from Mathare constituency that have been reported over the years causing a number of humanitarian organizations, who work with schools and community groups, to step in and address the issue. A purposive sample of 240 teacher respondents and 16 facilitators was selected as per Yamane's formula while convergent parallel mixed methods design was used for data collection and analysis. The study established that videos and pictorials were the most popular advocacy methods used, with a 100 percent respondent rate while 98 percent observed that through advocacy, humanitarian organizations were making a difference in countering child trafficking. The study established also that all (100%) of the facilitators agreed that the stakeholders directly involved with children did contribute to the fight against child trafficking. The study concluded that integrated communication was adopted by facilitators and that the advocacy communication methods used were effective. The study recommends involvement of key stakeholders' right from the planning stage for effectiveness. A recommendation of the study is that further investigations be done from the viewpoints of the children, parents and the local administration.*

**Key words:** child trafficking, advocacy communication, facilitators, countering

## **1. Introduction**

Child trafficking, an offence to human dignity, typically involves violations of several fundamental child rights. Trafficked children face a series of threats to their health, development, welfare and in some extreme cases, their lives (Beyrer, 2004). A further observation is that child trafficking is morally wrong and inhumane and therefore should not come as a surprise that it has generated outrage and the need for advocacy. Such involves the need for creating awareness by multiple sectors who seek to advocate for human rights. As argued by Gardner (2015), conservation of human dignity and eradication of social injustice has always been achieved through campaigns and advocacy initiatives that seek to be the voice of the voiceless hence enabling advocacy to play a critical role in the fight against vices in society. Even

though those advocating for the rights of those considered lesser or vulnerable in a society has been laced with confrontational tendencies, Breitrose (2012) argues that advocacy does not have to be confrontational especially if proper planning that will prompt tactical skills so as to avoid conflict are adopted. Advocacy is a process that depends on many approaches ranging from campaigns, lobbying, awareness- raising, and mass mobilization to sharing and providing information thus provoking action. This involves working well with other people with an aim of addressing a particular issue (Onyango, 2014).

Additionally, for effective advocacy work, there is a need for effective communication to take place so that the intended message for the target group can be passed. In advocacy work, communicating effectively can include doing entertainment education (edutainment), coming up with messages that address the need to fight for the course believed in (among others). This is because as argued by Coulby (2010), advocacy is all about impelling and urging individuals as well as institutions in order to bring about social justice and in this case, to the children most vulnerable to trafficking. This cannot be achieved unless one is able to communicate his or her ideas and bids effectively.

According to a Save the Children (2016) report, sub-Saharan African children are commonly trafficked for domestic and farm labour as well as profitable sexual exploitation like prostitution, pornography and underage sex tourism trade in pedophile rings. This shows that there is a desperate need to report and address the vice meticulously. For instance, in Nigeria, one of the advocating acts that was witnessed in December 2017 is where all the nuns of the Africa Faith and Justice Network (a faith based organization doing advocacy works across the country) took to the streets in the cities and villages of Nigeria as they were convinced that human dignity especially for children was being violated and abused through child trafficking. Reportedly, Nigeria experiences more than 10,000 indigenous people getting trafficked (Africa Faith & Justice Network, 2018).

Despite many efforts by different humanitarian organizations to end child trafficking, Kenya still remains a major source, transit and destination in the Central and Eastern Africa region (National Crime Research Centre, 2015). In their view, Kenya is accommodating over 350,000 refugees especially from South Central Somalia and as a result, has been recognized as the focal point for human trafficking with many of these refugees becoming vulnerable to various forms of exploitations and abuse.

Some of the efforts made in Kenya to fight child trafficking are as demonstrated by Trace Kenya, a national counter trafficking in persons Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) based in Mtwapa, on the outskirts of Mombasa, Kilifi County. The organization specifically works with refugee children, the internally displaced and street children. They endeavor to create awareness among the youth, women, children and personnel with infirmities who are the most vulnerable populations in Kenya due to the risk of being trafficked for the purposes of forced labour, street begging and in extreme cases, sexual exploitation (Trace Kenya, 2018). There is also Movement Against Child Trafficking (MACT), a community based non-profit organization that works in collaboration with the relevant government departments and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with the aim of averting and shielding children from trafficking and sexual

exploitation. In order to achieve results, advocacy communication especially in schools has become an effective tool of reaching out to vulnerable children.

## **2. Literature review and theoretical Underpinnings**

According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), it should be obvious that understanding one's audience is dire when choosing the appropriate route and that it is also very vital to understand the audience when creating an elaborated argument. In other words, one must consider how the audience will likely react to the quality and arrangement of the arguments that are being presented (Dainton & Zelley, 2005).

Elaborated arguments can be measured as either strong, neutral or weak where strong arguments create a positive rational response in the minds of receivers while also positively bringing into line the receivers' opinions with those views of the persuader (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Strong arguments create long-term attitude change that easily lead to predictable behavior. As argued by Dainton and Zelley (2005), repetition is thought to boost the persuasive effect of strong arguments while interruptions weaken their effectiveness. That is why it is very important to consider how advocacy communication messages on child trafficking are presented to the children, for instance through simplification so that understanding can be easy. Repetition ensures that the intended message sinks in and comprehension is at a much deeper level.

### **2.1 Child Trafficking in Kenya**

Child trafficking is a development issue because it is an exploitation that has hostile effects on efficiency and equity. Economic theory as exemplified by Koettl (2009) defines exploitation of labour, be it consensual or nonconsensual, as situations where wages are below the fringe value product of labour due to a dominant power of employers. Moreover, the ultimate result for this is an economic inadequacy due to an unproductive resource provision in production of goods and services and underutilization of labour when compared to the social prime (Koettl, 2009). What this means is that wages and employment levels for unskilled labour are ineffectually low thus resulting in high levels of poverty. This is ultimately a major reason for child trafficking. Child trafficking provides cheap labour and due to high poverty levels, the traffickers take advantage of some of these children's parents and guardians promising them a better future for their children. More often than not, this is usually not the case and so sensitizing children through advocacy, would contribute to eradication of the vice.

A report by Humanium (2011), an organization that fights for the rights of children that are victims of trafficking reveal that the business of trafficking particularly for women and children has a profit that reaches up to 10 billion U.S dollars per year. The victims are usually silenced through being subjected to immoral activities brainwashing, physical and psychological violence as well as conditioning so that they obey their traffickers (UNICEF, 2003). Language barrier and geographical isolation more often than not strengthens the power and control that traffickers have on their victims who are unable to escape (Humanium, 2011). Various reasons have been reported by many humanitarian organizations to be the cause of the continuously thriving child trafficking business.

According to UNICEF (2003), reasons for this situation include: poverty, humanitarian crises and ignorance. Reportedly, poor families abandon their children in search of greener pastures, leaving them vulnerable to traffickers. Ignorance is also blamed for the huge escalation in the number of street children and orphans, a situation that leaves them vulnerable and fend for themselves. Due to this, they become ultimate victims for traffickers who are quick to promise these unsuspecting children better living and working conditions. Similarly, Humanium (2011) observes that child trafficking is very conspicuous in areas struck by natural disasters as well as where there is lack of information. In such circumstances, these vulnerable groups are not even aware of their rights and therefore do not even realize when these rights are violated. The situation is compounded by an absence of birth registration amongst most of these children as observed by Save the Children (2016). Thus, international adoptions which lead to children being solicited more by dishonest adoption agencies that do not have a hard time finding potential clients such as desperate couples in need of a child and traffickers (UNICEF, 2006).

A number of organizations advocating for eradication of the vice of Child trafficking operate in Mathare Constituency in Kenya. This area as noted by Terres des hommes (2014), is highly vulnerable to trafficking cases due to high levels of poverty and ignorance. Many of these advocacy initiatives in this area work very hard as attempts to counter the vice. Such organizations include: Childline- Kenya, Awareness Against Human Trafficking- Kenya (HAART- KENYA), African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Movement Against Child Trafficking (MACT) and Save the Children organization. They work closely with schools and community initiatives in their effort to create awareness among children and society members.

## **2.2 Role of Advocacy**

Works in advocacy can be divided into two broad types depending on the size of the group being advocated for (Coulby, 2010). These types are case advocacy and systematic advocacy otherwise known as structured advocacy. According to Dalrymore (2004), case advocacy deals with small groups such as a family unit while systematic or structured advocacy deals with organizations or even larger groups with the goal of exerting pressure on authorities so as to influence policy. Other types include professional advocacy which basically involves informing policy makers, governments and the public on specific development issues in the professional's area of specialization. Citizen advocacy involves defending and standing up for the rights of people that are considered vulnerable in a society such as those living with disability (Martin, 2004). Media advocacy on the other hand involves the media defending and confronting injustices found in the society by using the platforms provided by media.

Sharma (2012) describes advocacy as a tool for putting a problem as part of the main agenda, providing solution to that problem and providing a platform meant to act on both the problem and the solution. Sharma expounds in her argument that even though most times advocacy is defined as speaking on behalf of others, its main goal among many, must be to raise public's consciousness about a particular issue. She also says that advocacy is a phenomenon that encompasses social change as the main process that affects attitudes, social relationships and power relations thus strengthening civil society and opening up democratic spaces

(Sharma, 2012). Additionally, for it to be able to fulfil its aspirations, advocacy requires efforts coordination, communication, outreach, mobilization, strategic information among others.

Given the reason that has been defined broadly, advocacy is one concept that has continued to be surrounded by several myths and misconceptions. Among these is that advocacy is only for professional lobbyists, advocacy is walking down the streets rioting in a demonstration, advocacy is the same as fundraising and has nothing to do with initiating social change, advocacy consumes a lot of time, advocacy is all about politics meant to achieve politics gain. While actually, as argued by Quarry and Ramirez (2009), advocacy offers voice to the marginalized and disregarded populations thus promoting an active participation in certain issues that affect their lives. Advocacy also provides platforms where different individuals and groups contest interpretations of various problems and proposed solutions (Ciztek, 2017).

One important lesson learnt in trying to combat child trafficking in the recent years is that it is not only what organizations and individuals do to combat trafficking of children that matters, but also how they do it. This is where the concept of advocacy comes in because in the context of trying to counter child trafficking, advocacy is a means of helping individuals and groups know what they need to do exactly in order to contribute much effectively to the anti-trafficking efforts (ILO, 2009). In this context as noted by ILO (2009), such efforts may range from helping a child know what he or she can do when it comes to self-protection, to helping relevant government bodies appreciate how best to allocate resources in order to ensure that a budget allocation has maximum impact in countering child trafficking.

Just like any other phenomenon aimed at influencing both attitude and behaviour change, advocacy also has to be planned. ILO (2009) suggests the following questions as a guide in this process:

Who? That is, whom you want to influence.

What? Be clear on what the who (s) need to be prompted to do.

How? Spelling out the best way through which the who(s) can be reached in order to prompt change in the long run.

When? Be clear on the timelines. That is, when things should be done and objectives achieved.

The message? The message intended to reach the target audience is very important as this is what will determine the channels that will be used in order to make this possible.

Given that advocacy entails influencing people towards behaviour and attitude change in different context, one needs to consider what will influence the target audience in order to make the right choices with regards to what they do (ILO, 2005). This will thus be a key element of one's advocacy message in identifying the form of action one wants his or her advocacy initiative to follow. That is, will it be a public campaign, a media event, a publication or a one on one meeting with the target audience whom the message targets?

According to Salamon, Hems and Chinnock (2000), advocacy is one approach that international organizations, non-governmental organizations and individuals that share a common concern for social justice often use so as to encourage social change and increase accessibility of resource. For example,

when dealing with victims of violence, advocates and organizations trained to provide trauma-informed services are very essential because they are better equipped to provide culturally- sensitive services. They are also in a better position to empower those survivors so that they reach their own personal goals (Briere & Jordan, 2004; Sullivan & Bybee, 1999). Research shows that when women who have undergone various forms of exploitation are aided by community-based advocacy interventions, they tend to gain greater access to community resources, consistent social support and overtime heal faster than women who have not received any advocacy services (Sullivan & Bybee, 1999). As argued by Houston, Odahl-Ruan and Shattell (2015), advocates assist survivors in steering the complex systems they come across in the process of seeking help or pursuing justice. Therefore, advocates are chiefly important in helping survivors of child trafficking through attaining access to resources, navigating the complex social provision systems usually put in place and by raising awareness about the issue to service providers and the general public (Houston, Odahl-Ruan & Shattell, 2015). This in a way will ensure that the relevant assistance for those survivors will be geared towards them. Relevant resources directed towards assisting them will also be allocated in budgets so as to ensure that they are never in lack.

### **3. Methodology**

Data was collected in Mathare constituency of Nairobi County. This is one of the largest informal settlements in the county. The constituency is divided into 6 administrative units referred to as wards. A sample of 240 teachers out of a total target population of 597 were selected for the study using Yamane's (1967) formula. Likewise, the formula enabled a selection of a random sample of 17 facilitators, from different CSOs that carry out advocacy activities in the primary schools in Mathare. The study used the convergent parallel mixed methods approach which required that the researcher collects both the qualitative and quantitative data, analyze them independently, then compare the results to find out if they approve or disapprove one another.

The researcher used questionnaires to collect data. This was administered to the respondents through the help of a research assistant who was familiar with the terrain of the region. The procedure of data analysis was guided by the objectives of the study while the data collected was both qualitatively and quantitatively coded and analyzed. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the analysis of the quantitative data while thematic analysis technique informed analysis of qualitative data. Thematic technique provides essential skills for steering a qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

### **4. Results and Discussion**

The findings of the study and the discussion of these results are discussed in this section. The main focus being advocacy communication and how it is employed in schools with a view of countering child trafficking.

According to UNICEF (2003), children are usually smuggled across international borders or trafficked internally within their home countries (mostly from rural areas to urban areas) where they are sold like



commodities and suffer brutality on their dignity and safety hence the need for advocacy. Victims of child trafficking are usually taken away from their families and forced to do unspeakable things that undermine their dignity and rights as children. It is one of the fastest growing criminal industries (U.S Department of state, 2016) costing an average of \$ 80,000 to purchase a child. Many children from Africa and the less developed states where poverty is a real problem, become victims of trafficking easily as they are enticed by the promise of education and a more thriving life that is better compared to the life they lead in their homes.

#### **4.1 Advocacy Communication in schools**

Most of the advocacy methods adopted by schools as established from findings of the research involve communication methods that are interesting and captivating enough to capture the attention of students. These advocacy methods range from use of videos and images to use of games with the ultimate goal of passing across the intended message (Christian, 2014). Advocacy in schools also comprises of involving the teachers and parents who are the major stakeholders in this community. Involving these two parties ensures that they play a role in attitude and behaviour of the children who are the main beneficiaries of this message. This is due to the fact that teachers and parents spend a lot of time with children and thus can work towards ensuring that the message of security and protection when it comes to child trafficking has been considered.

Encouraging students to openly address the issue of child trafficking by reporting cases they come across to either their teachers or caregivers so that the necessary precaution of reporting these cases to the authorities with the aim to arresting the perpetrators can be taken. Some of the illustrations on how advocacy is done in schools as gotten from the respondents in this research and study include:

“Posters addressing the issue, forwarding reported cases to the relevant authorities, talking about this issue even with parents, and having the topic being addresses in clubs like the debate club” (*Respondent 116*).

“Taking part in advocating against this vice during school events, allowing and inviting organizations addressing child trafficking to teach our children on the topic, reporting cases, rescuing children susceptible of being victims, and doing follow ups with the children to ensure that each is comfortable at home” (*Respondent 178*).

“Allowing organizations fighting this vice to create awareness in our school, working in partnership with these organizations in order to address this issue, and reporting and following up cases forwarded to us by the children” (*Respondent 137*).

#### **4.2 Role of advocacy in countering child trafficking**

Advocacy promotes social reforms (Sharma, 2012). This is because it empowers and encourages citizen participation where the citizen themselves act like watchdogs of government programs. It gives the underprivileged citizens a chance of being involved directly in the decision making processes. Thus with advocacy, behaviour and attitude change among the children with the aim of ensuring they protect themselves more by avoiding strangers and always reporting, can be achieved.

Advocacy helps in enhancing the success of government programmes. That is, it aids in enlightening public representatives such as senators about what will work at the local level and what will not. As Sharma (2012) explains, advocacy places persistent pressure for unrelenting support and funding since support and funding for successful programmes that are well documented is not assured if advocacy is not practiced. In this case, unrelenting support into ensuring that the issue of child trafficking has been addressed accordingly and awareness creation against it done relentlessly.

Advocacy contributes to democracy by having an influence on government policies (Sharma, 2012). That is, helps the government develop good public policies while at the same time guaranteeing that the nation is accountable to its citizens. It helps mobilize citizens so as to participate in nation building ordinarily perceived as a key to developing a democratic culture.

Advocacy helps in representing people's interests given the fact that sometimes public representatives are not sufficient to fully represent their local residents. The main aim at this point as Sharma (2012) argues is to ensure people's needs are put at the forefront. For this to happen, relentless advocacy work is required. In this case, the needs and rights of children are put at the forefront so as to fight child trafficking.

At the end of the day, advocacy plays a huge role in attitude change among recipients of a particular message. It helps in addressing the problem at hand head on and search for solutions so as to make effective and relevant decisions. This is as backed up by the responses some of the respondents who helped inform this study gave.

“Taking part in advocating against this vice during school events, allowing and inviting organizations addressing child trafficking to teach our children on the topic, reporting cases, rescuing children susceptible of being victims, and doing follow ups with the children to ensure that each is comfortable at home” (*Respondent 178*).

“Forwarding reported cases to the relevant authorities, allowing institutions or organization addressing this issue into our school, continuing to teach the children about child trafficking and urging them to take the necessary precautions, talking to their parents during parents' meetings so that they too can take care of their children” (*Respondent 122*).

#### **4.3 Efficacy of the Various Advocacy Communication Methods Used in Countering Child Trafficking**

This refers to the various dimensions of advocacy communication efficacy such as stakeholder participation in the countering of child trafficking, their satisfaction with the advocacy work by various organizations, their appreciation of the need for education on the subject of child trafficking, facilitator's ability to communicate with children and the ability of the children to understand communication messages, the perceived difference humanitarian organizations are making to address child trafficking and stakeholder ownership of the combat against child trafficking.



### 4.3.1 Stakeholder Participation in the Combat against Child Trafficking

In Kenya, various stakeholders have taken part in addressing child trafficking and ensuring that relevant laws pertaining to child trafficking have been laid across so that perpetrators can be arrested and face the law accordingly. One such government body that addresses issues of trafficking is the National Crime Research Centre. This body seeks to create awareness against child and adult trafficking and even educate law enforcers on what these phenomena are all about so as to deal with it accordingly. Additionally, there are various national and international organizations based in Kenya who also address the issue of child trafficking and even help a lot in reporting cases they come across. Such organizations include: Awareness Against Human Trafficking (HAART-KENYA), Movement against Child Trafficking (MACT), Save the Child, the UN under the anti-terrorism branch and among many others.

Moreover, facilitators, a target population for this study were asked whether stakeholders directly involved with children contributed to the fight against child trafficking. Figure 1 below presents the results.

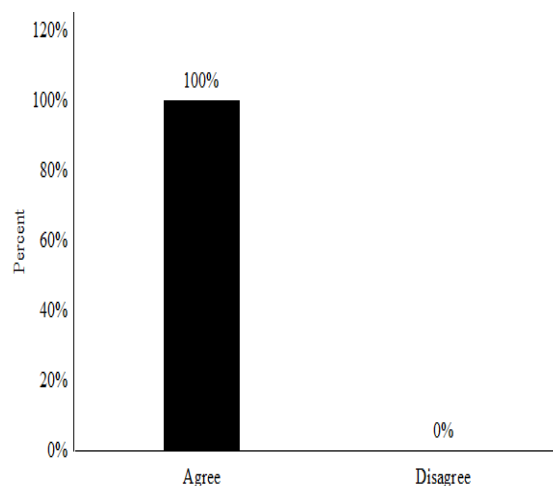


Figure 1: Stakeholders contribution to the addressing of child trafficking

The figure shows that all (100 percent) of the facilitators agreed that the stakeholders directly involved with children did contribute to the fight against child trafficking. This implies that there was stakeholder participation and ownership of the fight against child trafficking which (HAART, 2015) argues is one effective way of addressing trafficking of children.

Another important aspect is the stakeholder Satisfaction with the Advocacy Work by Various Organizations whose findings are captured in the figure below.

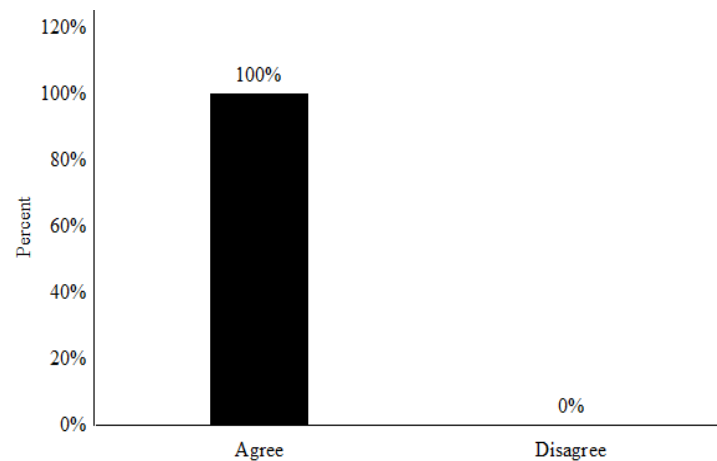


Figure 2: Stakeholders appreciate advocacy communication work

The views of facilitators were sought as to whether the school community appreciated the work being done by organizations that create awareness against child trafficking and even recommend more of awareness initiatives to be conducted. Results are presented in Figure 2 above. The figure shows that all (100 percent) of the facilitators agreed that the school community was grateful for the advocacy communication programmes and recommended even more awareness creation. This means that members of the school community embraced the campaign and took ownership of the processes of advocating against child trafficking campaign. This is in line with Gardner's (2015) argument that eradication of social prejudices and inequalities in any given community can be achieved through advocacy campaigns.

#### 4.3.2 Stakeholder Appreciation of the Need for Education on the Subject of Child Trafficking

The study sought to establish the views of the teachers on whether the aspect of educating children on issues relating to child trafficking was necessary in the region. Figure 3 below presents the findings.

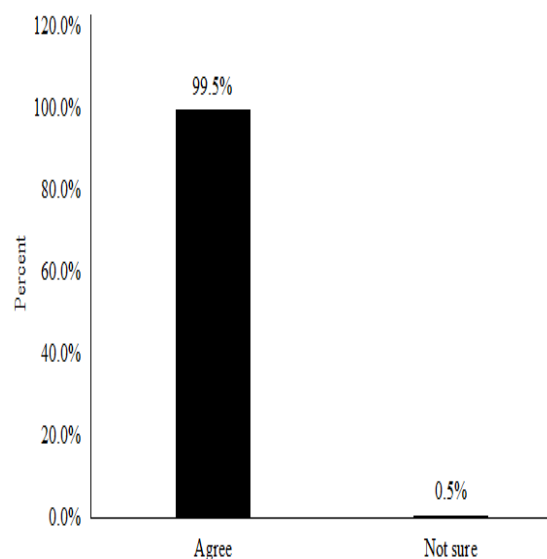


Figure 3: Educating children on issues relating to child trafficking is necessary

The findings indicate that 99.5 percent of the respondents agreed that it was necessary to educate children on issues related to child trafficking whereas some 0.5 percent of the respondents were not sure. This means that respondents recognized the importance of children as stakeholders in advocacy communication against child trafficking (Christie, A., Nott, T., Capezzuoli, S., Smith, J., Wedden, P.V & Jaenicke, H. (2014).

#### 4.3.3 Facilitator's Ability to Communicate with Children

The teachers were asked to evaluate whether the facilitators were able to communicate with the children. Figure 4.4 below shows the findings.

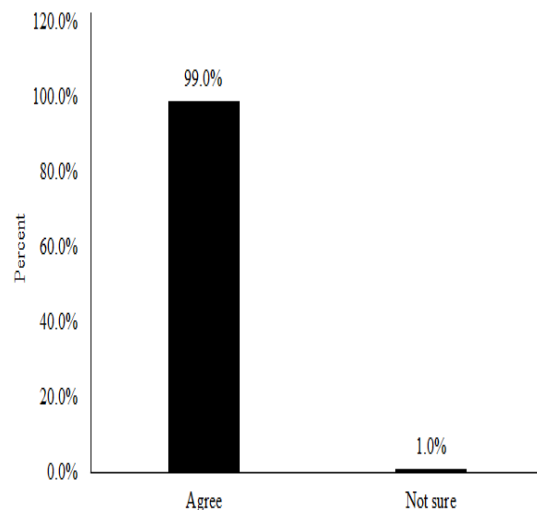


Figure 4: Facilitators ability to communicate with the children

As per the finding in figure 4.4 above, 99 percent of the respondents agreed that facilitators were able to communicate with the children and only 1 percent were not sure. This finding implies that advocacy communication to children in addressing child trafficking was effective because as argued by (Sharma, 2012), the ability and effectiveness of a communicator communicating with his or her audience lies on the communication channels used which is what this finding found out.

#### Ability of the Children to Understand Communication Messages

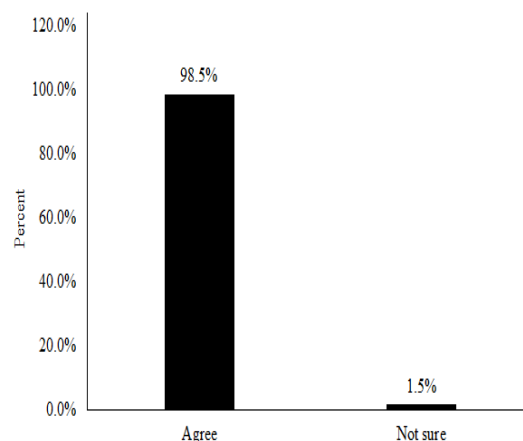


Figure 5: Children ability to understand messages on child trafficking

The teachers were asked whether the children have the ability to understand the message on child trafficking. Figure 4.5 shows that 98.5 percent of the respondents agreed and 1.5 percent of the respondents were not sure. The results suggest that in the evaluation of teachers, the children were able to make sense of advocacy communication messages. This potentially enhanced the effectiveness of the methods and tools used to advocate against child trafficking in the study area.

Concerning how respondents were able to tell that children have understood the message of child trafficking whenever explained to them, five themes were recurrent. These were: the children's increased ability to voice their rights, detect and report cases of child trafficking, engage in discussions on the subject of child trafficking, being more inquisitive about child trafficking so as to have a depth of understanding and take precautions to protect themselves against becoming victims. As argued by (UNICEF 2003), self-protection is necessary and can be achieved when one understands the content and context of achieving that. This is evident in the following verbatim samples;

“Asking questions for clarification with regards to the topic, avoiding contact with strangers and reporting cases they have heard or come across” (*Respondent 30*).

“Lively discussion relating to the topic they have after every training, precautions they start taking after the trainings towards protecting themselves from perpetrators who mean them harm, reporting cases they come across either at home or school and asking questions in relation to the topic so as to have a better understanding of the phenomenon” (*Respondent 34*).

“They are able to know the difference between a trafficker and a victim of CT thus offer the needed help if they ever come across one” (*Respondent 64*).

“They do not accept gifts and offers from strangers e.g. car lifts, they do not walk alone especially late hours in the evening e.g. when going back home after school, and they openly present funny behaviors they do not understand with people they know or don't know to parents and teachers for clarification” (*Respondent 71*).

“They repeat what they have heard and saw during different trainings, they start taking more precautions meant to ensure their safety, you find them discussing some of the topics covered among their peers and they ask questions where they need clarification and were a bit hesitant to ask during training” (*Respondent 122*).

#### **4.3.4 Perceived difference Humanitarian Organizations are making to address Child Trafficking**

The views of teachers were sought concerning whether facilitators from different humanitarian organizations addressing child trafficking in schools in the area were making a difference in the children's understanding of the concept.

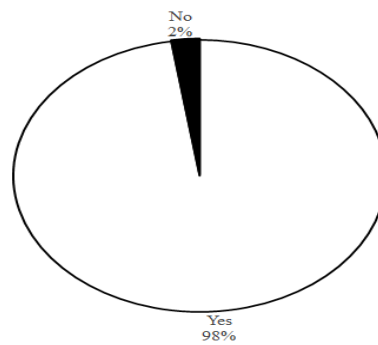


Figure 6: Humanitarian organizations making a difference in the fight against child trafficking

Figure 6 above shows that 98 percent of the respondents said ‘yes’ and 2 percent of the respondents said ‘no’. The themes of heightened levels of awareness and vigilance on the part of the children, as well as increased reporting of suspected cases of child trafficking were outstanding from the views expressed by majority of the respondents. The following are some of the verbatim examples;

“The children have been able to adopt the attitude of ‘better safe than sorry’ which means that they are quick to report and be on the lookout” (*Respondent 1*)

“Yes, they help create awareness which in turn has opened the eyes of both children and parents in this area thus the need to tighten security and being more careful” (*Respondent 4*).

“Yes, they have helped the children really understand this concept at a deeper level thus being more cautious and careful towards their security” (*Respondent 7*).

“Yes, even the community at large has become more aware that Child Trafficking is a problem and are taking part in addressing it” (*Respondent 13*)

“Yes, have helped in awareness creation in this area such that children even know who to contact if they ever fall as victims” (*Respondent 16*)

Yes, because after every facilitation, children can be able to cite incidents of having come across the vice. They also point out some other children’s homes that should be investigated because they think the children in that home are being exploited (*Respondent 20*).

Yes, they help them realize how grave CT is and how costly it can be to their lives. Also help them realize their rights and therefore when these rights are violated they know where and who to report to (*Respondent 23*).

From these verbatim examples, it can be inferred that most of the respondents associated increased vigilance and measures children took to protect themselves against child trafficking with the advocacy communication undertaken by the facilitators and the organizations that they represented. This agrees with UNICEF’s (2003) argument that indeed one way to vigilantly address any social injustice is by first offering protection to the victims and vulnerable groups identified.

#### 4.3.5 Role of the education system in curbing child trafficking

As per the findings of this study, it is very clear that the education system has a role to play in ensuring that cases of child trafficking subside and children get to be safe from the perpetrators. This is because a

large portion of these children's lives is spent in school and therefore their protection and ensuring they understand what the phenomenon is all about so that they can be cautious, is key.

As seen from the responses given by the targeted respondents, schools play a huge role in addressing child trafficking and creating awareness against it with the aim of protecting their students. Below is the finding gotten with regards to this.

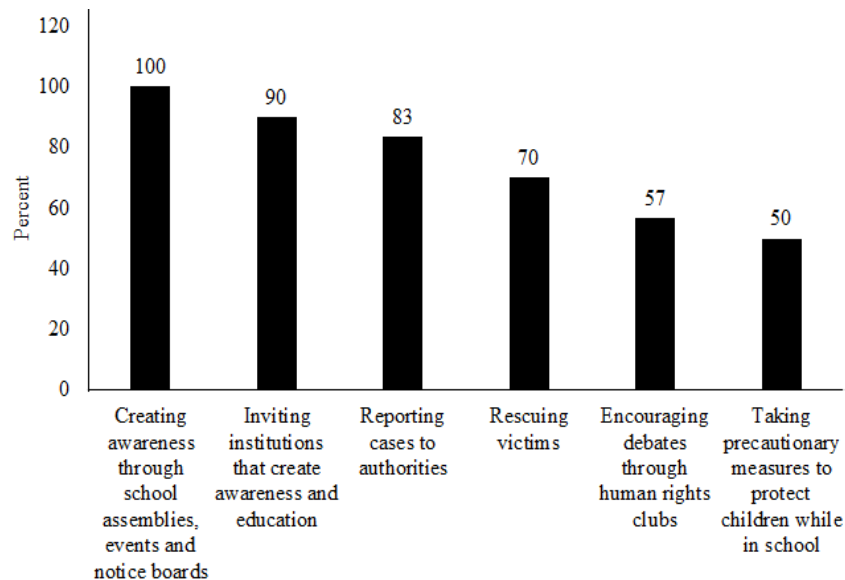


Figure 7: Ways in which respondents' institution addresses the issue of child trafficking

As a measure of effectiveness of child trafficking advocacy communication, the teachers were asked to list ways in which their institution has addressed the issue of child trafficking. The responses obtained revealed that most schools took multiple steps to address the issue of child trafficking as shown in Figure 7 above. The figure presents the distribution of responses by the respective ways from the most frequently mentioned. Additionally, the above mentioned methods are in agreement with what Christian (2014) identifies as effective advocacy methods and channels that come in handy in combating some of the social ills like child trafficking.

The findings in Figure 7 above show that awareness creation was practiced by all (100 percent) of the institutions, followed by inviting institutions that create awareness and education (90 percent), reporting cases to authorities (83 percent), rescuing victims (70 percent), encouraging debates through human rights clubs (57 percent) and taking precautionary measures to protect children while in school (50 percent). These results are reflected in the following verbatim comments;

“Taking part in awareness creation by having posters addressing the issue, talking to other stakeholders on the same among others, inviting institutions addressing the same to our school, and forwarding reported cases” (*Respondent 99*).

“Posters addressing the issue, forwarding reported cases to the relevant authorities, talking about this issue even with parents, and having the topic being addresses in clubs like the debate club” (*Respondent 116*).



“Forwarding reported cases to the relevant authorities, allowing institutions or organization addressing this issue into our school, continuing to teach the children about child trafficking and urging them to take the necessary precautions, talking to their parents during parents’ meetings so that they too can take care of their children” (*Respondent 122*).

“Allowing organizations fighting this vice to create awareness in our school, working in partnership with these organizations in order to address this issue, and reporting and following up cases forwarded to us by the children” (*Respondent 137*).

“Taking part in advocating against this vice during school events, allowing and inviting organizations addressing child trafficking to teach our children on the topic, reporting cases, rescuing children susceptible of being victims, and doing follow ups with the children to ensure that each is comfortable at home” (*Respondent 178*).

From the prior findings, it can be inferred that most of the schools in Mathare Constituency took part in advocacy communication programmes specifically addressing child trafficking, implying that they embraced the advocacy work geared towards countering child trafficking. On the basis of the above findings, this paper argues that all (100 percent) of the facilitators agreed that the stakeholders directly involved with children did contribute to the fight against child trafficking. This agrees with the observation made by Quarry and Ramirez (2009) that advocacy usually give voice to the marginalized population thus promoting an active participation in certain issues that affect their lives. The implication of this finding is that the children get more aware and knowledgeable on matters to do with child trafficking, which forearms them with the information about how to respond when under threat. This was further reflected in the subsequent finding which showed that 99.5 percent of the responding teachers agreed that it was necessary to educate children on issues related to child trafficking, which means that they recognized the important role that the children themselves would play in combating child trafficking in society.

It was also found that nearly all (99 percent) of the respondents agreed that facilitators were able to communicate with the children, which means that their advocacy communication techniques were effective. In the same vein, the results showed that majority (98.5 percent) of the responding teachers agreed that the children have the ability to understand the message on child trafficking, implying that they were able to make sense of advocacy communication messages relayed by the facilitators. This is line with ILO (2009) who see advocacy as a means of helping individuals and groups know what they need to do exactly in order to contribute much effectively to the anti-trafficking efforts.

Nearly all (98.5 percent) of the teachers agreed that they were usually present when the different humanitarian organizations conduct trainings addressing child trafficking in their school. This is an indication of high stakeholder participation and ownership of the move geared towards addressing child trafficking which is a measure of effective advocacy communication against child trafficking. This is potentially because they embraced the advocacy communication campaign against child trafficking as a

societal responsibility. This is resonant to the argument put forth by Feshbach and Feshbach (1978) that advocacy communication should involve the community for it to be effective as this will create a forum for community dialogue in an open and freer atmosphere. In this study, the notion of community participation was reflected in the results which showed that awareness creation was practiced by all (100 percent) of the institutions, invitation of facilitators and organizations involved in advocacy against child trafficking was practiced by 90 percent. Further evidence of high community participation was reflected in the findings which showed that 83 percent of the institutions reported cases to authorities, 70 percent rescued victims, 57 percent encouraging debates through human rights clubs and 50 percent took precautionary measures to protect children while in school.

Related findings revealed that all of the responding facilitators agreed that the school community appreciated the work being done by organizations that create awareness against child trafficking and even recommend more of awareness initiatives to be conducted. This means that advocacy communication programs implemented earned dividends in terms of community buy in, which is arguably a very important aspect of winning the war against child trafficking. This was reflected in the children's increased ability to voice their rights, detect and report cases of child trafficking, engage in discussions on the subject of child trafficking, being more inquisitive about child trafficking so as to have an in-depth understanding and take precautions to protect themselves against falling victims. These explain why almost all (98 percent) of the respondents believed that there was a positive difference that humanitarian organizations undertaking advocacy communication against child trafficking in Mathare Constituency.

These findings therefore concur with Petty and Cacioppo (1986) who advocate the importance of understanding one's audience when choosing communication methods and elaborated messages and how the audience members are likely to react to arrangement of arguments being presented. This will determine the efficacy of the methods put in place as they will have been selected carefully and deliberately.

## **5. Conclusion**

The use of appropriate advocacy communication methods in countering child trafficking can be effective. This in the study was indicated by a high level of community ownership, involvement and participation. As a result, members of the school community contributed to the combating of child trafficking in various ways. They embraced the advocacy campaigns, participated in awareness creation and recommended even more. They also reported cases of child trafficking to the authorities, encouraged debates through human rights clubs and took precautionary measures to protect children under their care. However, the prevalence of child trafficking in the constituency remains high meaning that there is still room for improvement. The study argues that the war against child trafficking can be won through use of advocacy communication strategies.

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