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**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS MASTER OF ARTS IN DIPLOMACY AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

CAPSTONE PROJECT

**Lack of University Education among Youth Deprived of
Parental Care**

MADIA 2022: Elnaz Valiyeva, Nigar Gurbanli, Sakina Mehraliyeva

Contact email: evaliyeva2020@ada.edu.az, ngurbanli2020@ada.edu.az,
smehraliyeva2020@ada.edu.az

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PROGRAM: MADIA

STUDENTS' NAMES:

Elnaz Valiyeva

Nigar Gurbanli

Sakina Mehraliyeva

APPROVED:

Faculty Supervisor: Lala Jumayeva

Organization Supervisor: Gulsum Mammadova

Dean of the School: Anar Valiyev

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I have read ADA's policy on plagiarism and certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the content of this paper, entitled *Lack of University Education among Youth Deprived of Parental Care* is all my own work and does not contain any unacknowledged work.

Signed: Elnaz Valiyeva

Signed: Nigar Gurbanli

Signed: Sakina Mehraliyeva



Capstone Topic Approval Form

Students' Names/Surnames: Elnaz Valiyeva, Nigar Gurbanli, Sakina Mehraliyeva

Program: Master of Arts in Diplomacy and International Affairs

Capstone Project Topic: Lack of University Education among Youth Deprived of Parental Care

Professional Supervisor: Gulsum Mammadova
Name/Surname

Professional Supervisor's contact details

Email: gulsum.mammadova@sos-az.org
Phone number: +994 55 2274729

Approved by

Academic
Supervisor: Lala Jumayeva
Name/Surname

Signature

Date: _____
DD/MM/YY

Abstract

This capstone project reflects the problem of lack of university education among youth deprived of parental care. The project discusses the main causes which prevent those youth getting university education. Moreover, the study indicated that the main problems are related to the existence of financial difficulties, as well as psychological problems and traumas that the children face. Furthermore, it has revealed that lack of early childhood education and lack of skills and expertise in Orphanages, State Institutions and other Childcare Organizations is also among main problems. Subsequently, this paper suggests various policy options and provides evaluation of those solutions based on certain criteria such as efficiency, effectiveness, equity, feasibility and flexibility. Considering those criteria, the paper suggests that provision of special training programs for the development of skills and knowledge of teachers, caregivers and coordinators is one of the best options which will result further progress in children's psychological and academic development. This project also proposed final recommendations based on the evaluation of problems and policy options.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a way of receiving or giving knowledge primarily at a school or university. It is fundamental for everyone simply because each individual play a role in forming a safe, healthy, and intelligent society. The true definition of education lies upon the idea that every person no matter who they are, what situation or circumstance they might fall into, and what their social status is shall receive the same high-quality education. Nevertheless, as UNESCO estimates, 263 million children and youth are out of school (2021). Children are not having a school or university education due to several reasons such as poverty, parental sickness, dearth or neglect, early child labour, being located in the war zones, and others. Despite the fact that education is critical to the person as well as a society as a whole, the orphans often face challenges in receiving a proper education. According to UNICEF (2021) currently, there are 153 million children that are orphans from all over the world and most of them do not receive higher education, in other words, university education. According to Monasch and Boerma (2004) who conducted an analysis of surveys based on a national level from 40 countries, it has been estimated that orphans are approximately 13% less likely to attend school in comparison with non-orphans. This statistical data lets us suggest that young people deprived of parental care, including orphans, do, in fact, have different levels of pursuit education, both basic and high education.

As a result of discussions between the UN Committee on Rights of the Child, governments, UNICEF, experts, and academics as well as representatives of various non-governmental organizations UN General assembly has adopted Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in 2009 (SOS Children Villages International, 2021). Paragraph 29 of the UN guidelines for the alternative care of children states that a child deprived of parental care is the one who does not have overnight care of at least one of their parents, for whatever reason and under whatever circumstances (United Nations General Assembly, 2009). The definition of children without parental care includes cases such as those children who live in residential care, including in child-only households, children living with extended or foster families, children who are in juvenile detention, those who live on the streets or with employers

(United Nations General Assembly, 2009). There are several different scenarios that describe for what reason a child is deprived of his or her parental care. For example, the child is lacking parents because he or she is either abandoned by both parents, separated from his or her parents and/or legal guardians; or because the child's parents are prevented from exercising parental responsibilities due to abuse or neglect. The deprivation of parental care threatens children's rights outlined in the UNCRC to survive, to be free from violence, abuse, and exploitation, and to grow up in a supportive family environment and others. To clarify, the size of the impact for children losing parental care directly depends on different factors including age, gender, level of disability, race, and others (United Nations General Assembly, 2009).

It is important to note that there are cases when parental care deprivation has a positive outcome on children's lives. For instance, it can give opportunities to leave abusive relationships behind to be able to receive loving and supportive care as an alternative. In other words, separation from parents in some fortunate cases can provide opportunities for children to stop neglectful and abusive relationship with parents and in the end escape domestic violence at home. From another perspective, children who get separated from their birth parents may get a new chance to receive loving and supportive environment or even a new family via adoption or kinship care. There are also cases when ending up without parental care can ensure better access to basic services and resources, such as access to food, health and education in an institutional care or orphanages. However, in most cases losing parental care leads to children facing malnutrition, health problems, rape, and poverty, they are less likely to attend school not to mention university, and they are more likely to die at a young age.

As the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic has stated in the article 17, it is considered to be a duty of parents to take care of children and their upbringing and the State will supervise its implementation (The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2021). It is also stated in the same article that children who do not have parents or guardians or who are deprived of parental care are under the protection of the State. For every child it is better to stay and grow with the family unless it is not in child's best

interest. When parents or guardians cannot take care of a child, the state becomes the responsible actor to protect all the child's rights listed in the Constitution (The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2021). Currently, there are 45 state orphanages all over Azerbaijan, 21 of them are located in and near the capital city Baku, and 4 orphanages managed by non-governmental organizations, such as "Ümid Yeri" and "SOS Uşaq Kəndləri-Azərbaycan" (The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2021).

SOS Children's Village is an organization that primarily focuses on the problem of children who are growing up without the care, protection, and guidance they need. This institution is working with the local communities and states to ensure that children of that particular area receive quality care, meaning they are provided with a safe and caring environment where they can reach their full potential, including receiving education in whatever field a child wishes. Apart from having a centralized entity that has its general assembly, senate, managing council, and general secretariat, the institution has 118 national SOS Children's Villages associations as well, which take their role and goals on a local level (SOS Children's Villages International, 2021). SOS Children's Villages operating in Azerbaijan since 1999 work in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The organization has 3 main objectives such as making sure that children deprived of parental care and orphans live in a safe environment, building lasting relationships with children within the family, where they can reach their potential, and, lastly, making sure that there are conditions that children acquire education and training skills they need to become a worthy member of the society in the future. SOS Children's Villages in Azerbaijan has two locations, which are Baku and Ganja, and over 200 children live there as a result of parental deprivation (SOS Children's Villages International, 2021). SOS Children's Villages has been caring for children deprived of parental care for 17 years and being transparent about it at the same time. Moreover, it is important to stress the fact that the organization has various children coming from different backgrounds and situations. To put it in other words, SOS Children's Villages not only take care of children without parental care, but also orphans, single parent children, children with families

coming from poor economic conditions and etc. Bearing all mentioned in mind, no matter how good the support and overall condition this organization provides to children in need, there are, unfortunately, still gaps in receiving a quality education, particularly university education among those who are deprived of parental care. Therefore, this paper's policy problem is a lack of university education among children without parental care and by addressing this problem it studies possible ways of tackling it.

As State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan provided in their recent report (2021) supported by the Ministry of Health Care and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, the total number of orphans and children deprived of parental care studying in boarding schools in 2021 are 771 and 449 out of them are precisely those who are deprived of parental care. In addition, State Statistical Committee published a report of Millennium Development Goals in 2015 where one of the statistical tables was dedicated to the ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans, which is 0.1 in total between 10- and 14-years old children (The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2021). So, the aim of this capstone project is to find out the main obstacles that lead to children who are deprived of parental care not receiving university education, thus proposing the policy solutions to tackle this problem or at least diminish the number of cases facing this unfortunate outcome. SOS Children's Villages, particularly the Baku branch, throughout the years had less than ten children per year in total, who got admitted into the either university, vocational school or technical college. Precisely, 7 children got into either of those institutions in 2017, but the number of children got diminished year by year to the point when in 2021 only 3 children in total pursued higher education, 2 of them got into vocational school and 1 into the technical college (Report provided by the SOS Children's Villages based in Baku, 2022). According to the statistics provided by the Ganja branch of the SOS Children's Villages for 4 years 9 children in total got into the technical college, 9 into vocational school, and only 3 got into university (Report provided by the SOS Children's Villages based in Ganja, 2022).

1.1. Methodology

To study the problem of children without parental care facing obstacles in receiving university degree, we have decided to contact people who has some expertise in the field. Therefore, we conducted several online meetings with the Baku and Ganja coordinators of SOS Children's Villages that serve as the primary source of this study. To better understand the current situation of youth who are deprived of parental care and as a consequence face various barriers to getting into university, we analysed reports provided by the representatives of the SOS Children's Villages. Furthermore, as a secondary source of our study, from the very beginning of this study, the precedent cases, as well as research done by scholars from particular parts of the world, were examined and used to better understand the problem of the paper. Moreover, we conducted interviews with Sabuhi Mammadli and Arzu Guluyeva, a members of SOS Children's Villages based in Azerbaijan. On 8 April 2022 we had online zoom meeting with Sabuhi Mammadli, who is a social worker of the Baku branch of SOS Children's Villages, whereas on 20 April 2022 an online zoom interview was held with Arzu Guluyeva, who works as a Coordinator at Ganja branch of SOS Children's Villages. The questions asked during the interview are following:

What are the reasons for not getting University Education among Youth Deprived of parental care?

Which of these reasons are more important?

Do Children Face financial constraints?

What kind of weaknesses the childcare organisations have?

What kind of bullying children face at Schools?

What is your recommendation for caregivers and teachers?

1.2. Limitations

In addition, there were various limitations encountered while working on the capstone project. First and foremost, it is a lack of time and mobilization to conduct in-person interviews both in Baku and travelling to Ganja. To end up with an in-depth interview process, unfortunately, we faced time collapses due to the reason that children of SOS children's villages, especially in Ganja has a non-flexible schedule of activities, including their classes. Therefore, we refrained from interviewing the children and focused on interviews with the social workers who are in contact with those children. Moreover, there was no previous research on the topic containing cases from Azerbaijan as well as lack of statistical data on the total children deprived of parental care in our country.

This capstone project has five chapters. Chapter 1 covers the general introduction, theoretical background of the topic, statistical data, the primary goal of the project and methodology with its study limitations. Chapter 2 focused on the problem description and in-depth analysis of the causes of the problem. Next chapter provided policy alternatives to each cause in order to tackle the problem in general. Chapter 4 analyses the proposed policy alternatives based on 5 criteria to find out which of them is the best possible solution. Finally, the last chapter is the concluding one, where all the presented data and results will be demonstrated and explained, as well as the policy recommendations for diminishing the problem is offered.

CHAPTER 2. PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

There are several causes behind this problem. Although there are some sub causes, the main ones are financial difficulties, lack of mental, psychological health-Traumas and Stigma and Marginalisation. Moreover, as a root cause early childhood education also has considerable impacts. Weaknesses of organisations such as lack of skills and knowledge on certain issues regarding the childcare is also among possible causes.

2.1. Lack of financial support

One of the major causes of lack of university education among those youth is financial difficulty. Even though it is believed that the death of a parent may not be a reliable indicator of educational disadvantage. According to the report by the Education Policy and Data Centre (2012), although orphans have systematically inferior educational results than non-orphans, when controlling for socioeconomic position, the significance of the link tends to be small. A child's access to basic essentials such as home, food, clothes, health, and education is severely harmed when they lose their parents. However, as it is mentioned above, the main reason is related to financial difficulty. Many orphans discover that they must contribute financially to the household, leading them to work, beg, or seek food on the streets. Moreover, although many youths deprived of parental care are provided with their basic needs by the government or communities, there is still a lack of financial resources to continue their academic life in the future. Similar patterns have been examined in countries around the world by SOS Children's Villages: young people who have grown up lacking care of families tend to leave the care system ill-equipped to be able to compete in the labour market or earn a living with dignity, and are often trapped in a cycle of poverty. Thus, these financial related factors make it difficult for young people to attend school, complete their studies, and continue their education. They will surely lack the reading, numeracy, and life skills necessary to survive. (SOS Children Villages International, 2013)

Having financial difficulties affect their academic life through different perspectives. One of them is related to lack of money to buy certain resources such as books, tests, clothes, for their school and later university preparation. Because of lack of resources even some of them drop out of school and cannot continue their education. Respectively, it prevents them from getting a university education in the future. Moreover, although many of them are provided with basic education and resources for studying and clothes, they cannot fully concentrate on learning because of their financial concerns. For example,

in Baku at SOS Village Centres most of the children are provided with enough resources to continue their educational life. However, due to those future financial constraints some groups of those children are thinking about their future living conditions, thus, they desire to earn money rather than enter university and continue their education. Moreover, in order to cover their certain costs, some of them both work and go to school at the same time. However, working prevents them from attending school regularly and spending time on learning. Spending less time on learning creates difficulties to prepare for university entrance exams and accordingly, to be accepted to university and continue their studies. (from personal communication with an expert from SOS Children's Villages, April 8, 2022)

Another case related to financial difficulty is paying fees for universities. As it is known, universities have limited places for scholarships and those who got higher scores take these places. However, due to financial constraints, these children cannot enter the university even if they pass the required score for the entrance. In order to continue their education these youth need a certain amount of money to pay for their education.

Moreover, while studying at University, they face other financial challenges related to food, reading materials, clothes and other resources. Thus, in order to provide their basic needs they think it is a waste of time to study at University and the best way for them is to learn some jobs and earn money. Additionally, the findings show that orphans' attitudes about learning are impacted by their personal and societal circumstances. Their unfulfilled needs, in particular, have an impact on their willingness to learn. They have a strong inclination, for example, to link their educational ambitions to unfulfilled necessities like money and housing. (Nausheen, 2017). Some of those youth have siblings or poor single parents, thus, they think about future circumstances and instead of spending time at University, they prefer to learn some jobs at an early age and earn money. Therefore, all these cases prevent them from entering University or continuing their academic life.

2.2. Experiencing Mental, Psychological Health-Traumas

Many prior studies have found that, in addition to the financial ramifications of adult deaths and the implications of a loss of parental participation, children who become orphans may experience trauma, which can influence their academic results and school retention. (International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding, 2019). Through the loss of parents and lack of parental love children can be psychologically impacted and it can create a state of hopelessness. "...orphan hood creates a state of hopelessness among students who are orphaned, especially when they realise that little quality would be realised in their educational endeavours" (International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding, 2019) stick to one citation style. Moreover, socio-economic challenges such as lack of support in development stages, challenges they may encounter during the attempts to receive services due to lack of financial resources create some kind of emotional stress in those children and this situation makes it difficult to concentrate on learning and getting further education. Moreover, as they lack parental love and support, it can create low self-esteem in them. "Low self-esteem among orphan and vulnerable children was found to be a contributing factor to poor performance in education" (Mwoma, 2016). Furthermore, the report by EveryChild Movement (2009), also emphasised that losing parental care has a terrible effect on a child's physical, psychological, social development, as well as their sense of self. For many children who are not cared for by their parents, the inability to create loving bonds has very negative consequences for their development. "In institutions, a lack of attachment and of adequate stimulation has been shown to hinder the development of social skills, motor skills and intellectual capacity" (EveryChild 2005). Accordingly, this can also prevent these children to focus on academic learning and respectively to get university education as well. Moreover, according to the interview with the social worker of SOS Villages in Baku, (from personal communication with an expert, April 8, 2022), the real family support, care from family members has a special impact on these children's learning. It gives more hope and positivity

towards their future life. Several studies have also found that family support has an important role in school integration and psychological well-being.

In other words, the youth deprived of parental care need emotional and psychological support as an individual. It helps them to set certain goals for their future and career life. Although these youth are provided with certain services and support by different organisations, lack of adult care has a big impact on their academic performance. It is believed that the family support, love and care can create high motivation for further development of the child. Through the motivation, those youth are more focused on learning and their dreams and try to continue their university education without thinking about external problems. For example, those youth sometimes compare themselves with other ones in terms of differences in their clothes, resources and family support. Children often feel helpless and hopeless in cases when they lack parental or adult guidance, especially if they haven't received any psychiatric treatment to help them cope with the death of parents or caregivers (Pillay, 2018). Most of the time they see themselves disadvantaged in life because of lack of family care, love and attachment. Thus, they feel hopelessness in terms of being successful in their future life. Respectively, these kinds of situations create some psychological traumas on them and lead to lack of concentration on their educational life, goals and further development. Additionally, according to the research by Journal of Pedagogical Research (2020), the findings demonstrate that orphan children face a variety of psychological issues that might have a significant effect on their education and overall well-being.

Furthermore, the lack of psychological support by teachers, mentors has also been observed. It is believed that in addition to career direction and assistance, teaching or mentoring also includes personal, psychological support, and social factors. According to the study from Sciendo Journal (2020), a mentor's mission is to provide interchange of support, learning, or direction for a child to reach personal, career, and life development. However, it is believed that there is still lack of psychological support or lack of expertise to provide psychological support for youth deprived parental

care. “ .. as elsewhere in the world, the communities as well as governments are quick to mobilise necessities, such as food, shelter and amenities in the wake of the major orphan crisis. However, most orphans are exposed to psychological distress that in the long term, will affect their functioning in the society” (Caserta 2017). Sometimes it can be difficult for a limited number of mentors to assist numbers of youth in terms of personal development and psychological support. It is believed that to motivate and direct each child individually is not possible every time. Moreover, according to research by UNICEF (2004), children in institutions have fewer possibilities to attain their full potential than other children because they do not have the benefit of a continuous caring, emotional, and physical bond with their primary caregiver. Such care cannot be offered in institutions where life is governed by standards and caregivers are required to split their time between multiple children. Thus, lack of emotional support, individual advising and less motivation also impacts their academic life. Respectively it can lead to a lack of motivation to get a university education.

2.3. Existence of Stigma and Marginalisation towards Youth Deprived Parental Care

One of the main causes of lack of university education among those youth can also be related to stigma or discrimination towards them. Generally, children who grow up in disadvantaged communities are more likely to have worse academic achievement and general well-being than children who grow up in advantaged settings. While previous points emphasised the impacts of financial and psychological/motivational elements, the impact of stigmatisation can be regarded as one of the main elements as it influences their first impressions of the social world and how they interact with it. From the school years many children deprived of parental care face stigma, bullying and it can lead to the exclusion of themselves from different activities at school and generally in different spheres of the social world. Additionally, according to the researchers Bradshaw and Stevenson (2015), there are many reminders of their stigmatised identity for children growing up in marginal communities. Children's aspirations and expectations in marginalised communities are shaped by cultural

conditioning, which can lead to them excluding themselves from activities judged unsuitable or dangerous according to preconceived views. In order to escape bad evaluations, young people in underprivileged communities may prefer to withdraw from the community. Therefore, being marginalised or stigmatised by society prevents these children from focusing on their education, future life and creates some kind of hopelessness for the future.

Additionally, according to the interview with (from personal communication with an expert, April 8, 2022), SOS Village Worker in Baku, children mostly face bullying and stigmatisation at schools due to their identity. The fact that they are deprived of family care and come from special care centres is always emphasised in schools and they are discriminated against because of these differences. A National Centre for Educational Statistics (NCES) study that was conducted in 2010 indicated that, “32% of students aged 12 to 18 reported that they had been bullied at school during the school year”. Thus, they think that they are not accepted or loved by society and do not want to go to school. They face these cases continuously, and as a result school becomes an undesirable place for them. Accordingly, it affects their learning and future perspectives regarding education because they think they will face discrimination in every stage of their life, as well as at university.

2.4. Lack of Early Childhood Education

Learning abilities are built mostly throughout childhood, and this is the most effective time to improve the lives of those disadvantaged children. According to studies, children's development into adults is significantly influenced by the education and care they receive in their childhood years. This lays the groundwork for their further academic success and, as a result, their readiness for the future life. “...early childhood development “refers to a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to nine years of age with the active participation of their parents and caregivers”. (Pillay, 2018). However, there are numerous children who did not get early childhood education due to several reasons such as family loss, poor family conditions and others. Moreover, according to the

report by UNICEF & World Health Organization (2012), the growth of children is impacted by a variety of biological and environmental factors, that can either safeguard and enhance their development, or jeopardize it. When they enter the care centres it becomes difficult to adapt to higher educational conditions and study if they have gaps in their early childhood education. It has been observed that in comparison to their peers, these youngsters struggled in school, and when they become adults, they are less likely to thrive in both schooling and the labour market. Furthermore, according to the interview with the members of “SOS” Village, (from personal communication with experts, April 8 and April 22, 2022) they face many children who lack early education, thus, they spend time working on their early development to reach the required level. Respectively, it takes time for these children to focus on higher education and being successful in the future academic life.

Additionally, during the interview it has been mentioned that besides early education some of those children have problems in their behaviours as well. They have observed a lack of cognitive and social-emotional development patterns in those young. According to the interview with the coordinator from SOS Children’s Village in Ganja, (from personal communication with an expert, April 22, 2022), not having cognitive skills are the base for not being successful at school and later for not getting university education. It is because of early traumas, unhealthy family conditions and some genetic problems. Thus, the both SOS Village members emphasised that before the preparation for school life and getting education, they firstly work on behaviours of those children. It is believed that these developments are important to adapt to society and increase their life standards of living in the future. Furthermore, according to the Researcher from South African Research Chair, Jace Pillay (2018), in order to guarantee the best outcomes for higher living standards and quality education for those vulnerable children, it is critical to investigate their psycho-educational and social experiences. Therefore, working on these developmental delays prevents them from fully concentrating on learning at school and delays their future university education.

2.5. Lack of Expertise and Knowledge in Orphanages and State Institutions and Organizations Dealing with Childcare.

When entering the special child protection system, children often have major health issues, have limited education, have no or only sad memories of their family, and engage in risky behaviours. All of these elements are crucial to comprehending the child's past. Child organisations play an important role in the life of children deprived from parental care. Several problems will be highlighted in terms of the weaknesses of child care organisations which lead to the future problems in the education life of children. “Many children arrive in the child protection system when they are under the age of 3. These are the children, particularly those who entered before the age of 1, who face a serious risk of becoming the “system's children.” (Romania: Children in Public Care 2014) The brief time that these youngsters spent with their parents was insufficient to establish a strong bond, which would compel the parent to want to retrieve the child. The absence of help or treatment for these parents, many of whom quit speaking with their children, exacerbates the problem. Unfortunately, a children’s chances to be reintegrated back to his or her family are diminishing with each passing day. As estimated, their opportunities to escape the child support system declines drastically after three years of separation. In case of absence of adoption after six or seven years of separation, their prospects of departing the system dwindle even further, and their odds of being reintegrated into their own family are practically non-existent. For aforementioned reasons, this group of potential "system's children" must be recognized as such and treated as such. Adoption efforts should be stepped up and legislation on adoption should be amended to improve their prospects of finding a permanent solution. If a safe, stable, and secure parenting relationship cannot be achieved by the time they reach the age of ten, potential "system's children" should be allowed to enter an "institutional road" to independent living to assist them in integrating into society when are eighteen years old.

Many countries' child protection systems do not work in an integrated and complete manner. According to the study by the International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding,

there is a significant difference between orphaned and non- orphaned children in primary schools. Furthermore, study showed that orphaned children not going to school on a regular basis and wearing unclean clothes to school which affect their educational life.

Additionally, it was estimated that some orphan children take care of their ailing parents or guardians. However, such children lack support from child protection organisations, orphanages in terms of learning how to care for sick people at home, meaning that the youngsters are most of the time struggling by themselves. This may have an indirect impact on their educational involvement because they may not attend school on a regular basis or complete their homework. (Mwoma & Pillay, 2015) Orphan children's behavioural issues, along with a lack of well-established counselling mechanisms, may have a severe impact on their academic performance. Living in an orphanage has catastrophic repercussions. Over 80 years of study from throughout the world has revealed the substantial harm that institutions cause to children – and the critical importance of family in their lives. An orphanage's provision of care and protection is insufficient. Individualised care and attention is required for children, which cannot be provided in an institutional setting. According to specialists, the fundamental issue is not being raised in an orphanage, but rather that youngsters who grow up in these institutions are completely unprepared for real life. From the moment they enter an orphanage, they go through a transition. The institution's beliefs include giving children a sense of belonging, being committed to them, and restoring their dignity, all of which require them to continue caring for these children until they have completed their education, which is of utmost significance to them.

Furthermore, child care organisations and orphanages most of the time lack trainee educational psychologists in the schools. It was also noted that some of these youngsters required social problem counselling, while others required academic assistance in the form of reading remediation and study skills. As a result, unless they receive proper educational support, their educational objectives, hopes, and aspirations may not be realised. Orphans require well-designed educational opportunities because

they provide an outlet for youngsters to interact and socialise with mature caretakers while also boosting their academic potential. According to the interview with the Coordinator of SOS Children's Village, (from personal communication with an expert, April 22, 2022), there is a problem in the approach of the trainers, teachers and psychologists of the orphanages towards those vulnerable children. They lack expertise and skills to coordinate and teach children academically and they do not have appropriate or effective types of methodology to nurture those children. Moreover, the Coordinator mentioned that in some child care organisations, the background or education of the coordinators or social workers do not match their jobs. They have a lack of knowledge and skills on how to work with vulnerable and orphans and how to coordinate and teach them. Thus, this issue is still a case and weak side of some child care organisations.

During the Covid19 pandemic, the situation became worse for orphan children. According to the Sophie Gorman (2020), "The pandemic undermined the education of hundreds of millions of children, and the loss of school days exposed girls, boys and adolescents to the risk of child labour, early marriage and pregnancy, and permanently dropping out of school." "Save the Children" during the pandemic urged organisations and governments from all over the world to pay immediate attention to this issue of orphaned children who have lost their parents or carers, and to guarantee that they are properly cared for. Without the caregivers, children who lost their parents are especially vulnerable and they need support from organisations. The crisis has revealed huge gaps in countries' emergency planning, internet access for children, and learning materials availability. Many children will experience limited or no schooling as a result of the COVID-19 issue, or will fall further behind their peers. Children who have experienced school closures lack the sense of security and routine that schools provide. (Human Rights Watch, 2020) During the pandemic, children living in orphanages, child organisations lack access to the study materials, such as gadgets, computers which highly affected their educational life.

Additionally, as it was mentioned, children from vulnerable groups who lost their parents sometimes face bullying as well. However, there is still no improvement in tackling the issue of bullying in schools. Having to put up with bullying can have serious repercussions, including poor mental health. Sometimes children miss a lot of school because they are bullied or have emotional issues that make it difficult for them to go. However, there is still a lack of awareness about the impacts of bullying in the schools. The responsible organisations and care centres lack the strategies to deal with this issue. During the interviews with the members from a child organisation called “SOS”, there is a need for special organisations to raise awareness and sensitivity towards bullying. Moreover, it has been mentioned that the creation of special organisations and their collaboration with schools would be a great initiative to tackle bullying. Orphanages, child organisations and schools are not able to provide effective psychological support or help regarding bullying. Thus, there is still a need for special expertise to overcome this issue. Bullying was historically considered common behaviour among children and was rarely taken seriously. Teasing and bullying, on the other hand, are now recognized as significant issues that can cause psychological harm to individuals who are subjected to them. Although there is small progress on this issue, the lack of methods to tackle bullying still is observed in organisations and schools.

Briefly, it should be emphasized that the financial difficulties and psychological issues can be considered one of the main causes behind the lack of education, in other words, lack of university education among youth deprived parental care. Bullying is one of the triggering factor while talking about psychological traumas and marginalisation. Moreover, as a core reason, lack of early childhood education, hinders and prevents getting school and university education in the further life stage of the child. Additionally, lack of expertise and knowledge in different childcare organisations leads to the lack of right strategies for the development of youth in their social and academic life.

CHAPTER 3. POLICY OPTIONS

Problem	Anticipated Policy Option	Possible Outcome
<i>Lack of financial support</i>	<i>Special Funding for University Education of Youth Deprived of Parental Care</i>	<i>Youth will focus on education rather than earning money for their basic needs and education.</i>
<i>Stigma and Marginalization</i>	<i>Reducing Stigma and Marginalization and Dealing with Bullying through Raising Awareness and Establishment of Special Organizations</i>	<i>Supportive environment for youth deprived of parental care and it will motivate them to attend schools and focus on their studies and future academic life.</i>
<i>Experiencing Mental-Psychological Health and traumas</i>	<i>Special training programs for Caregivers, Teachers and Coordinators</i>	<i>It will help to improve emotional and psychological well-being of children there.</i>
<i>Lack of Expertise and Knowledge in Orphanages and State Institutions and</i>	<i>Special training programs for Caregivers, Teachers and Coordinators</i>	<i>Development of child care organizations and their workers.</i>

<i>Organizations Dealing with Childcare</i>		
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Considering the main causes of lack of university education among youth deprived of parental care, this section of the research will focus on the possible policy options for above mentioned problems. The following below paragraphs will address the solution of each problem with the help of conducted research through available library sources and interviews.

3.1. Creating Special Funding for University Education of Youth Deprived of Parental Care

In order to deal with financial difficulties it is important to have special funding systems for children who lack parental care. These funding systems should clearly have special mechanisms for allocation of resources, effective planning for use of funding for these children to focus on education and continue their academic life. Finance policies, especially school and university funding policies are critical for achieving the goals of quality, equity, and efficiency in education. While countries aim to improve the performance of all students at the same time offering more fair learning opportunities for various groups, the attention had been put upon ensuring that resources are directed to areas where improvements are needed (OECD, 2017). There should be strong supervision of allocation of resources and analysis of financial needs of those youth. Especially, the children who have good performance at schools and good standing in exams and educational activities, should be provided with a certain separate amount of financial aid by the government or organisations for their university education. For example, International Academic Journal of Information Sciences and Project Management (2019) the studies in Kenya found that In Kenya's Tharaka-Nithi County, financing has a significant impact on the performance of orphans and vulnerable children programs. Furthermore, the study found that the consistency of funding, in other words, regular financial allocation or financial availability have a significant impact on the success of orphans and children without parental care.

The participation of the government and donors in this issue plays an important role in implementing this policy. The government should organise special programs to bring donors and organisations together who are willing to make financial aid for youth deprived of parental care and there should be special professionals who have expertise in data collection and analysis of financial difficulties of these groups of children. As mentioned before, the effective planning and allocation of financial resources is also important to create these special funding systems and provide financial aid.

Through the help of funding systems the financial concerns and constraints of those children will reduce and it will play an important role in focusing education rather than earning money for their basic needs and education.

3.2. Raising Awareness on Stigma, Marginalisation and Bullying through Establishment of Special Organisations

As mentioned before, children's well-being is influenced by their environmental experiences and opportunities to reach their full potential. Stigma and discrimination based on social status, might affect a child's development outcomes and pathways. Thus, it is very crucial to deal with issue. One of them is about raising awareness and developing intervention strategies to reduce stigma towards these groups of children. The intervention strategies include counselling and support and contact with group of children who faced stigma and discrimination. Through the help of close contact with professionals on this issue and support by them, the children who are deprived of parental care will be able to overcome the effects of stigma towards them. Moreover, it is important to conduct intervention activities such as awareness campaigns through training sessions at schools, interactive learning, support groups, community meetings, media channels, and the provision of printed materials with specialised information are all examples of what might be done. "...the more activities a respondent reports exposure to, the larger the increase in awareness of stigma, and decrease in fear and social judgement" (Journal of Health Communication, 2014). Thus, establishment of a specific organisations

is important to tackle the stigma and marginalisation and increase awareness at schools. Additionally, as it was mentioned above, there is special need for the organisations to fight against bullying at schools towards youth deprived of parental care. These organisations should create special awareness programs among educators and children at school. These programs should definitely include “restorative practice” in order to increase awareness about the impact of bullying and create empathy among the children. Restorative practice includes a meeting between the identified offender and the victim. The offenders are obligated to consider the harm they have caused, feel remorse, and take corrective action, such as apologising. For example, the research conducted by Ken Rigby, researcher from University of Australia (2008), showed that restorative practice is one of the most effective methods for bullying interventions at schools. These kinds of methods by organisations will be able to create a better and supportive environment for youth deprived of parental care and it will motivate them to attend schools and focus on their studies and future academic life.

3.3. Increasing Level of Support-Investment by Government for Early Childhood Education in Orphanages and other Childcare Organisations.

The lack of early childhood education and care lays the groundwork the things that will occur later in the child's life such as failure at school and later academic life, demonstrating socially unacceptable behaviour and lack of cognitive skills. Thus, firstly, it is governments’ responsibility to make investment on creating special programs on early development which focuses on the instruction of cognitive, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills. The activities should include different spheres such as determining the density and richness of vocabulary, as well as the ability to use complex terms, focus on small talks and play sessions, or on talk during everyday household tasks. Moreover, literacy practices such as reading books and analysing them should be among these programs. Additionally, bringing special trainers to improve these children’s social skills such as helping those children to heal deficiencies in their social behaviour and improving their ability to understand and perform key social behaviours in the public and schools. Thus, the government should make investment on these programs

in order to bring different professionals from different spheres to implement this project. Although there are special trainers and educators in child organisations, they have a lack of expertise on these issues. According to the interview with SOS Children Villages Coordinator (personal communication with an expert, April 22, 2022), she faced this problem through her experiences in different childcare organisations. Thus, the government should pay special attention to investing in programs for the development of early childhood education in orphanages and child care organisations. For example, child care organisations in Azerbaijan can benefit from the experiences of different foreign organisations and bring experts from them. For instance, The Centre on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (CSEFEL), provides extensive training modules for programs that work with children who exhibit challenging behaviour or developmental weaknesses (USAID, 2011).

3.4. Special training programs for Caregivers, Teachers and Coordinators

Childcare organisations play an important role in the life of children without parental care. Children's safety, health, and happiness are core foundations that determine the quality care and education in every setting. Administrators, teachers, and caregivers who work with young children on a daily basis are among those that are considered to be the most important actors, who provides high-quality early childhood care and education. The main source of the education for vulnerable children is inside organisations, orphanages. Thus solutions for the improvement of education should start from there. For instance, educators, caregivers should have training regarding how to improve and impact the education life of the children. Especially, Ministry of Education should especially be able to provide such training for teachers and caregivers. According to the program provided by “Bravehearts” (2017), “Brave Hearts education project supports orphan and vulnerable children to stay in school and succeed by covering their school fees, providing them with school bags, uniforms and materials. The project also delivers quality education by providing the children additional tutorial lessons after school.” Thus, the Ministry of Education can also provide such programs in order to help children with their

educational background and support them. With the help of such programs, child care organisations will be able to provide educational support for children. Another training program was initiated by “Livada Orphan Care”. According to the “Livada Orphan Care” (2022), “Caregiver training is offered by our professional, clinical staff to help foster parents, adoptive parents, and group home/orphanage caregivers to know how to better parent kids that come from difficult places. Our goal is that every caregiver would become competent in understanding the *Complex Developmental Trauma* that most of these kids have gone through and are going through and that they would learn a better way of parenting these kids, long term, to see them thrive.” Childcare organisations in Azerbaijan should also implement such programs and invite foreign trainers in order to educate and train caregivers. Caregivers have a vital role in establishing a social and temporal environment that promotes early development. Training is vital for caregivers who are especially working with the children with the experienced trauma. Childcare quality has been found to have a significant impact on children's development and psychological adjustment, especially for orphans who have experienced maltreatment and trauma. Moreover, there are special centres and programs which can assist coordinators, teachers and caregivers to support these children psychologically and motivate them through different strategies. For instance, The Centre for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (CECMHC), provides a variety of training options. It provides practical tactics that can be utilized in Head Start programs that are critical for children's emotional development. Self-assessment tools and digital best-practice lectures are among the tactics used to improve the skills and ability of mental health consultants and program administrators. Therefore, benefitting from these kind of programs and experiences plays crucial role in the development of child care organisations and their workers. Accordingly, it will help to improve emotional and psychological well-being of children there.

Generally, in addition to special training programs and instructions, the approaches by teachers, coordinators and caregivers towards these vulnerable children should be changed. They should not see this responsibility as a job but also should create empathy, should try to provide emotional support as

their close friend or family member. During the interview with the SOS Children's Villages Coordinators (personal communication with experts, April 2022) it has also been emphasised that special attention and approach by caregivers and teachers should be the first step to be taken.

CHAPTER 4. EVALUATION OF POLICY OPTIONS

The paper addresses the problem of lack of university degrees among children who do not have parental care by proposing 6 policy options. These options are evaluated based on 5 criteria, which are effectiveness, efficiency, equity, feasibility, and last but not least, flexibility.

4.1. Creating Special Funding for University Education of Youth Deprived of Parental Care

The first policy option for the problem of lack of university degrees among youth without parental care is the creation of funding aimed to support solely the university education of those youth who lack parental care. This policy alternative is a direct response to the first cause mentioned in the paper which is a lack of financial support. Considering the fact that the main concern of this policy option is not just the provision of funding, but rather the correct allocation of resources allocated specifically for children deprived of parental care. To ensure the right flow of funding there should be experts responsible for the whole procedure as well as analysts who will examine the effect of funding on the children's educational success. This alone, makes it effective as a policy solution to have it implement, however since it requires particular funding either by government or organizations and donors it is not efficient. Another point is the fact that the financial support is suggested to be provided to those children who excel at their school performance to a certain level thus controlling the finances in a way that there will be enough financial assistance provided and motivating students to study well and be supported because of it. Looking through the equity criteria this policy option is not positive, since it targets who gets the financial support and who does not, of course, those children who choose not to study at a university because of their personal preferences will not be supported financially. Since this

policy option is possible to implement and this makes it feasible. Additionally, considering that the amount of financial support is not set and the fact that it has several ways to be delivered makes it flexible.

4.2. Raising Awareness on Stigma, Marginalisation and Bullying through Establishment of Special Organisations

Raising awareness is always an effective and very much feasible policy alternative. In the above-mentioned description of this policy option, there are various ways to distribute the stigma and marginalization issue among those who are affected, those who cause the stigma, and those who don't fall into either of those categories but may indirectly cause stigma in future. The more possible ways to spread awareness about the stigma the better the outcome of it, therefore in the end this policy option is, in fact, effective if implemented correctly. Due to the fact that it concerns all the actors, who are affected, affecting, and those in between and the fact that it will be distributed to all of them makes it right in terms of equity. On the other hand, the establishment of special organizations makes it less flexible and feasible in terms of hiring experts and allocating special finances for running it. In general, this policy option is positive on all the criteria mentioned. So, raising awareness via various methods, including establishing special organizations targeted on children without parental care is very promising and successful.

4.3. Increasing Level of Support-Investment by Government to for Early Childhood Education in Orphanages and other Childcare Organisations.

This policy option is about creating a separate, updated, and expert-approved program generated by investments of the government. The program, which includes the instruction of cognitive, pre-literacy, and pre-numeracy skills, is effective in the long term, as well as feasible to implement. Because the programs cover all the children deprived of parental care it is strong in terms of equity. The methods and techniques that should be taken in order to create a professional targeted programs are not narrow

and fixed, for example, the programs can include specialists from international childcare organizations, or it may be generated without their participation but somehow still be reviewed by experts before executing it. So, this fact makes it flexible to implement. Considering that it may require certain financial resources, we suggest that it is not that much of an issue since it will not be costly, making it an efficient policy option.

4.4. Special training programs for Caregivers, Teachers, and Coordinators

It always comes down to education. The more educated caregivers, teachers, and coordinators are the more open-minded, intellectual, and mature children will be raised. The ripple effect of professional individuals who are qualified enough to be in contact with the children will lead to children thriving in many spheres of life, including academic performance. Bearing this in mind, it is highly important to invest in training programs for caregivers, and teachers so that they can be competent enough to support children not only educationally, but also psychologically. Training teachers and caregivers are the beginning of the chain reaction, so it is the long-term solution that is effective and feasible. We also consider this policy option to be efficient because it is way more cost-friendly to enhance the skills of existing teachers and caregivers than hiring totally new professionals from abroad. Looking through the equity lens, this policy option covers teachers and caregivers working with the children deprived of parental care, which includes various orphanages and boarding schools' staff it is positive since all of them are expected to take this training program. After the training program is prepared and approved by experts it should be mandatory for all the teachers and caregivers to take it. Therefore, it may cause inflexibility to some extent without destroying the whole idea of implementing this policy alternative.

Outcome Matrix: Options for reducing the lack of university degree among children

Evaluation Criteria	Policy Options			
	<i>Creating Special Funding for University Education of Youth Deprived of Parental Care</i>	<i>Reducing Stigma and Marginalization and Dealing with Bullying through Raising Awareness and Establishment of Special Organizations</i>	<i>Increasing Level of Support-Investment by Government to Tackle Lack of Early Childhood Education</i>	<i>Special training programs for Caregivers, Teachers and Coordinators</i>
Effectiveness	+	+	+	+
Efficiency	-	+/-	-	+
Equity	+	+	+	+
Feasibility	+	+/-	+	+
Flexibility	+	+	+	+

To conclude, to the evaluation of all the presented policy options, special training programs for caregivers, teachers can be considered one of the best policy options. There are two reasons why this policy alternative stand out: first, it fits best to the policy evaluation criteria, secondly, if implemented correctly, these policy alternative in long term will affect all the other causes of this problem, thus, diminishing considerably the number of children without parental care who do not have a university degree.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

Despite the fact that education is critical to the person as well as a society as a whole, the orphans often face challenges in receiving a proper education. Various factors contribute to this issue. Although there are other sub-causes, the most significant are financial challenges, a lack of mental and psychological health—traumas, stigma, and marginalization. Furthermore, early childhood education has a significant impact as a fundamental cause. Organizational flaws and related various difficulties are also probable reasons.

This capstone project aimed to find out the possible causes of the abovementioned problem and provide efficient solutions to the problem.

As mentioned before, financial difficulties are one of the key reasons for those young people's lack of university education. Many youth deprived parental care learn that they must contribute financially to the family, prompting them to work, beg, or scavenge for food on the streets. Furthermore, while the government or communities provide for many youngsters who are without parental care, there is still a lack of financial resources to continue their academic lives in the future. Secondly, orphaned children or children without care may endure trauma, which can affect their academic performance and school retention. In other words, adolescents who have been abandoned by their parents require special emotional and psychological help. It enables students to create specific goals for their future and professional lives. Thirdly, one of the key reasons for those young people's lack of university education is the stigma or discrimination which leads to the bullying. Fourthly, lack of early childhood education also affect the education life of children. Many children may not receive early childhood education for a variety of reasons, including family loss, poor family circumstances, and these cases lead to several challenges in getting education and being successful in their academic life. Fifthly, children's

organizations play a significant role in the lives of children who have been abandoned by their parents. The child protection systems in many nations are not integrated and comprehensive.

In order to deal with these problems, several possible solutions have been suggested. As mentioned above, to tackle the financial constraints, creation of special funding systems for youth who demonstrates high performance during their school life is one of the effective solutions and can motivate those youth to focus on their future academic life. Moreover, special training programs and benefitting the experiences of highly professional organizations would help both to increase the level of child care organizations and through the skilled coordinators and teachers those youth can overcome some effects of traumas and their psychological problems. Raising awareness about the effects of stigma-marginalization and bullying and implementation of certain methods at schools through the help of organizations are one of the most efficient and effective solutions. Through this policy the youth deprived of parental care will have more motivation to attend schools and focus on their education and future academic life rather than losing self-confidence and losing motivation on going to schools and universities. Moreover, as mentioned above, one of the root causes of the problem is directly related to early childhood education as well. Thus, investment by government on certain programs and professionals will help to tackle with behavioral problems of children on time and through effective strategies. It is important to tackle these issues firstly as it affects future performances of those children at schools and in society. Accordingly, it will help further developments in further stages of their life as well as their future academic life.

To conclude, we all should always listen to the voices of children, especially the vulnerable ones such as orphans and those without parental care. As a society we all should try to do our best to provide adequate care and protection for their development and well-being because children are our precious resource and our future.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the evaluation of problems and suggested solutions below recommendations should be implemented:

1. Establishment of Funding Programs – in order to create effective program, there should be joint actions of groups of government members and donors from private, public organizations and companies.
2. Establishment of well skilled social organizations to raise awareness on stigma, marginalization and bullying in schools and orphanages- there should be special programs and sessions about the impacts of stigma and bullying and certain actions such as right punishment strategies should be implemented when facing and reporting bullying cases at schools.
3. Investment on Early Childhood Education by Government- government should bring different expertized organization members and support local childcare organizations to benefit from effective world training models for early development of children
4. Providing special training programs for the workers of Orphanages and other Childcare Organizations- Ministry of Education can provide those programs through the help of local and foreign organizations who can help teachers, caregivers and coordinators to learn about different strategies for the psychological and academic development of children.

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