

JAMES MBAIMBA

**QUALITY OF SERVICE PROVISION IN CHILD PROTECTION:
COMPARISON BETWEEN FINLAND AND SIERRA LEONE.**

MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME IN REHABILITATION
2023

Author: Mbaimba, James	Type of Publication: Master's Thesis	Date: March 2023
	Number of Pages: 43	Language of Publication: English
Title of Publication: QUALITY OF SERVICE PROVISION IN CHILD PROTECTION: COMPARISON BETWEEN FINLAND AND SIERRA LEONE		
Degree Programme: Master's Degree in Rehabilitation		
Abstract: <p>The wellbeing and protection of children from violence, abuse, sexual abuse, discrimination, child labor and exploitation are a global concern which needs concerted efforts from Governments, international organization, United Nations, and policy makers to put in place laws and legislation that will tackle some of the shortcomings in providing quality services for children. Even though the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has been signed and ratified by member states, there are still problems in their implementation as stated in this thesis. In relation to the topic in question in this thesis is about quality of services provision in child protection in Sierra Leone and Finland. The aim is to compares the legislation and policies dealing with children in the respective countries. Also comparing the strength and weaknesses in child protection based on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p>Data collection criteria for this thesis searched for articles and policies papers published 2015-2022 to capture the current trends in child protection. Documents found were on UN reports on current situation on children, reviewed articles, national recommendations, and national child strategy. After rigorous evaluation process, six articles met all the inclusion criteria and were used for analysis. Four themes were gathered for Analysis for this thesis namely, risks of children's wellbeing and health in Sierra Leone and Finland, implementation of child protection in Finland and Sierra Leone, the role of the community in child protection, and funding of child protection in Sierra Leone and Finland.</p> <p>The results show significant development and gaps in the provision of services for children in Sierra Leone and Finland. Recommendations in this review includes strengthening of legal system and the development of policies towards the health system that specifically relates to children. More funding and training of child mental health professionals and the provision of adequate services at the time of need. Further research is necessary to explore some of the loopholes in providing quality services for children.</p>		
Key words: Rehabilitation, child protection, child abuse, child welfare, child neglect, Sierra Leone, Finland.		

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	4
2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION	6
2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	6
2.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	9
3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION.....	10
3.1 INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW	10
3.2. SEACRH SERVICES USED.....	10
3.3 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA.....	12
4. RESULTS	14
4.1 DATA COLLECTION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES	14
4.2 EXTRACTIONS OF THE DATA AND ANALYSIS.....	15
4.3 RISK OF CHILDREN’S WELLBEING AND HEALTH IN SIERRA LEONE AND FINLAND.	16
4.3.1 Risk of Children’s Wellbeing and Health in Sierra Leone	16
4.3.2 Risks of Children’s Wellbeing and Health in Finland:.....	19
4.3.3 Comparison Between Finland and Sierra Leone	23
4.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD PROTECTION	25
4.4.1 Implementation in Finland.....	26
4.4.2 Implementation in Sierra Leone.....	30
4.4.3 THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN CHILD PROTECTION	32
4.5 FUNDING OF CHILD PROTECTION IN SIERRA LEONE AND FINLAND	33
5 DISCUSSIONS	34
5.1 DISCUSSION OF THE CONTENT.....	34
5.2 REFLECTION ON THE RESULT.....	38
5.3 FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	39
5.4 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	40
6 CONCLUSIONS.....	41
REFERENCE.....	43

1 INTRODUCTION

Providing rehabilitative services for children facing exploitation, abuse, child labour, and violence is a global problem which needs collective efforts from world leaders, policy makers, UN bodies, and international organizations in tackling some of the problems faced in protecting children. Reason for choosing this topic is because I lived in Finland from war-torn country (Sierra Leone), and undertaken master's degree in rehabilitation gives me the opportunity to compare and explore areas dealing with child protection in these countries.

Despite the universal ratification of the convention on the rights of the child, institutions dealing with child welfare are still weak, especially in developing countries and need reforms. In addition, most approaches in rehabilitation tend to be curative rather than preventive in nature, only addressing the symptoms than the root cause in the system that failed to protect children. Most importantly, rehabilitation responses in child protection tend to adopt the informal than formal approach especially in developing countries (Landgren, 2005). This is due to traditional practices and others ranging from a lack of national capacity and the absence of the rule of law in many countries. According to Landgren (2005), protection should focus on cooperation, development agencies, and human rights actors should develop strategies to address these gaps in general measures of implementation.

In 2000, the United Nations set out the millennium Development goals which over the years have helped to reduce child mortality rate, better maternal health, and other medical improvements. Based on their recommendation, the United Nations released a report (The road to Dignity by 2030), which includes ending poverty, transforming all Lives, and protecting the Planet, and most importantly the agenda for formulation sustainable development goals through the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies (Fegert, J.M., Stötzel, M., 2016). One of the priorities in this agenda is to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children.

Another report came out by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) called "A post-2015 World Fit for Children" with the aim to end violence against children. According to Fegert et al (2016), almost one billion children under 15 suffer regular physical punishment. Most importantly, nearly a quarter of all girls between 15 and 19 report experiencing some form of physical violence and this affects every country and every community. They further went on to elaborate on the fact that violence against children is often invisible but its impact on individual children and their societies is profound and far-reaching, undermining developmental gains made in other areas. Fegert et al (2016) are also of the opinion that because violence against children is a universal problem, investing in protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse must be a global priority. Human Rights Watch and communities should raise awareness of violence and encourage people to speak out when they see or suspect violence against children. This strengthens social welfare systems and services that protect children from harm and provide support to those who are already victims of violence (Fegert et al, 2016).

The World Health Organization (WHO 2013) also addresses violence against children, issuing regional reports on the prevention of child maltreatment. In their report, they proposed that all European countries develop national policies based on multi-disciplinary efforts, and that they define priorities for research. In addition, they urged improvement in data collection for purposes of monitoring and evaluation since such knowledge is of utmost importance in strengthening the ability of health systems to implement strategies for prevention and treatment. Moreover, the WHO produced a Toolkit for mapping the responses by legal, healthcare, social services to child maltreatment. Based on that (WHO), they came up with a strategy to sponsor a project called CAN-MDS (Coordinated Response to Child Abuse and Neglect via a Minimum Data Set) aimed at coordinating and monitoring of routine data in child protection systems in Europe.

Nevertheless, comparison of national data sets in Europe remains difficult because many studies use different definitions. That led to (WHO 2013) to release a publication named "Investing in children: The European child maltreatment prevention action plan "2015-2020" stated that the global prevalence rates for child maltreatment are

16.3% for physical neglect and 18.4% for emotional neglect. Applying these figures to the population of children in Europe suggests that 18 million children suffer from sexual abuse, 44 million from physical abuse and 55 million from mental abuse. It is further stated that child maltreatment is a cause of social and health inequality within and between countries. There is also strong evidence for the development of mental and physical disorders. In this regard, capacity building in child and adolescents' psychiatry and mental health services for children and adolescent is very important.

In this work, the main objectives are to explore the legislations and policies regarding child protection in Finland and Sierra Leone based on United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child. Most importantly, compare strengths and weaknesses in child protection in these countries.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in almost any population because of their physical and emotional dependence on adults and social status. Their vulnerability is greater in many developing countries because of the higher incidence of poverty and social protection mechanisms (Gabel 2014). This will be further explored in detail below.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Child development and child well-being must be a global concern, and this has been a subject of discussions at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as well as the European Union (EU) and the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These concerns have led to a search for policies affecting child and family well-being designed to reduce or alleviate child poverty, deprivation, vulnerability, and the risk factors that can trigger a lifelong cycle of disadvantage (Gabel & Kamerman 2012). Due to lack of systematic and comparative data on policies affecting

children in developing countries and related outcome measures has repeatedly been noted as an obstacle in the further development of policies to promote child well-being (UNICEF, 2008, Kamerman, S.B., Gabel, S.G., 2007; Save the Children UK, 2008).

Violence against children is another serious and prevalent issue globally. Let's take for instant Sierra Leone as a developing country which is a major point of discussion in this report. Sierra Leone is a post-conflict country where levels of violence towards women and children, including sexual violence, have continued to be high since the end of the war in 2002. When considering the need for child protection mechanisms to be implemented in Sierra Leone, we should consider the full extent of violence perpetrated against children globally, and how the global statistics are reflected in the reality of children's lived experiences in the country (Child welfare Committee operational guideline, Sierra Leone 2009).

It is estimated that 150 million girls and 73 million boys worldwide are raped or subjected to other forms of sexual violence. Since 1990, an estimated 90% of those killed in conflicts around the world have been civilians, and 80% of those are women and children (Fluke, J.D et al, 2012). In at least 13 countries, children are being recruited into armed forces and groups. It is estimated that between 100 and 140 million girls and women in the world have undergone some form of female genital mutilation. Among young women aged 15-24, 48% were married before the age of 18 in south Asia (9.7 million girls), 42% in Africa, and 29% in Latin America and the Caribbean (Haer, R., 2019). Some 17,700 asylum applications were lodged by unaccompanied or separated children in 69 countries in 2011, mostly by Afghan and Somali children.

Moreover, it is also estimated that over 145 million children have lost one or both parents. Over 8 million children without appropriate care around the world live in residential care facilities. Around the world, there are 115 million children – 74 million boys and 41 million girls are involved in the worst forms of child labor. Three out of four children experience violent discipline at home. 16.6 million Children have lost one or both parents due to HIV/AIDS and have important care needs: 90% of those children live in sub-Sahara Africa (Save the Children 2013).

As in the case of Finland, was chosen as a case representing developed countries in this thesis, it has been reported in the news (yle.fi) that there are high number of children in foster care, in sufficient supervision of alternative care facilities, inadequate training of social workers over the years, local and international bodies have been observing numerous shortcomings in Finland's child protection and foster care system. One critic says the system is broken partly because of a whistle blower culture, unfettered power given to social workers and huge amount paid out for children placed in care.

According to Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) report released in December 2018, nearly 18,000 children nationwide had been placed in alternative care in 2014, while 90,000 were clients of the system in open care. Moreover in 2014 citizens had made more than 63,000 child protection reports with the authorities. Organizations like the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and UN Human Rights Committee have expressed concern over the high number of children placed in care. The Committee is concerned that the number of children placed in institutions, including successive placements is growing, that the number of foster family care placement is insufficient and that there are no unified nationwide standard criteria for placements in alternative care, care planning and regular review of placement decisions, and that there is insufficient supervision and monitoring of alternative care facilities.

These issues have also raised concerns at the political level (Finnish parliament) about the short coming in the system. These include for example inadequate education of social workers, insufficient supervision of foster care, and lack of resources. Many organizations working with children such as UNICEF, global non-governmental organizations, national governments, and private donors are shifting from specific programming for children and youth in low and middle countries to strengthening child protection systems (Fluke, J.D. et al, 2012).

In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Child Welfare Act 417/2007) is with the aim to quarantine children's rights to safe growth environment, balance and diverse development and special protection. This includes preventive child welfare and early support which play a crucial role in the fulfillment of this purpose.

2.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Rehabilitation in child protection or child welfare from abuse, exploitation, violence, and child labor is a global concern. Therefore, institutions or organizations working in areas of rehabilitation with children should be given adequate resources and training in given quality services and must be in accordance with the law. According to (Landgren, K., 2005), such violations limit chances of surviving, growing, developing, and pursuing their dreams.

The objective in this thesis is to evaluate the quality-of-service provision in child protection in Finland and Sierra Leone. The specific objectives include:

1. To compare child protection services in Finland and Sierra Leone.
2. To explore legislations and policies regarding child protection in these countries.

The following research questions are envisaged in this research.

1. What are the legislations and policies regarding child protection, at political or international level and national level?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses in child protection in these countries?

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

According to (Howell,2013), methodology could be described as the general research strategy that outlines the way in which a research project is to be taken and among other things identifies the method to be used in it. It is a set of systematic techniques used in research. Moreover, methodology is simply a guide to research and how it is conducted. It describes and analyzes methods, throws more light on their limitations, and resources, clarifies their pre-suppositions and consequences, relating their potentialities to the twilight zone at the frontiers of knowledge.

3.1 INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

An integrative literature review was adopted as a method of collecting data in this report. According to Torracco (2016), an integrative literature review is a distinctive way of research that develops new knowledge about the topic reviewed. This also includes critiques, synthesizes multiple literature on the topic in an integrative way that leads to new framework and perspectives on topic are generated.

A good integrative literature review consist of a methodology that clearly states (a) where the literature was found (data bases and search engines), (b) when was the search conducted (data base contents change always), (c) who conducted the search, (d) how was the literature found (keywords combinations), (e) what number of articles appear from each combination of keywords and the final count of included articles (data set), (f) why some articles were chosen for inclusion over others (selection criteria) (Callahan, 2010). These will be further breakdown and visually presented in tables 1.

3.2. SEACRH SERVICES USED

The search criteria for this research comprises of two search engines namely Samk Finna and google scholar/ google as instructed by Samk librarian. These search engines give you result of international e-materials from various databases for example

Academic Search Premier, Sage Open Access Journals, Taylor & Francis Open Access, BioMed central Open Access, ResearchGate, Science Direct, and Journal on Human Rights.

The integrated review includes peer reviewed articles published in English between the year 2015 to 2022 relating specifically to child protection, internal and international legislations in Finland and Sierra Leone respectively.

For clarity and justification, below is table 1 which shows the search terms and key concepts in this research.

Table 1: Search terms and key concepts

Key concepts	Child protection	Rehabilitation	Sierra Leone	Finland
Alternative Keywords for the key concepts	Child welfare, child protective services, child neglect, child abuse (child, children)	Legislation, policy, law, services	Sierra Leonean	Finnish

To achieve a desirable outcome of the search for this report, different kinds of searches were implemented to find out which works best for this thesis. Most importantly, combine “synonyms” with OR and key concepts with AND. This includes quotation marks around phrases or brackets for a desirable outcome from the searches. Below you will find the search queries for this research:

- child protection AND rehabilitation AND finland.
- (“child protection” OR “child welfare” OR “child neglect” OR “child protective” OR “child abuse”) AND rehabilitation AND (finland OR finnish)
- (“child protection” OR “child welfare” OR “child neglect” OR “child protective” OR “child abuse”) AND (finland OR finnish)

- (“child protection” OR “child welfare” OR “child neglect” OR “child protective” OR “child abuse”) AND rehabilitation AND (finland OR finnish) AND (legislation OR law)
- Child protection AND rehabilitation AND sierra leone
- (“child protection” OR “child welfare” OR “child neglect” OR “child protective” OR “Child abuse”) AND rehabilitation AND ("sierra leone" OR "sierra leonean")
- (“child protection” OR “child welfare” OR “child neglect” OR “child protective” OR “Child abuse”) AND ("sierra leone" OR "sierra leonean")
- (“child protection” OR “child welfare” OR “child neglect” OR “child protective” OR “Child abuse”) AND rehabilitation AND ("sierra leone" OR "sierra leonean") AND (legislation OR law)

3.3 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

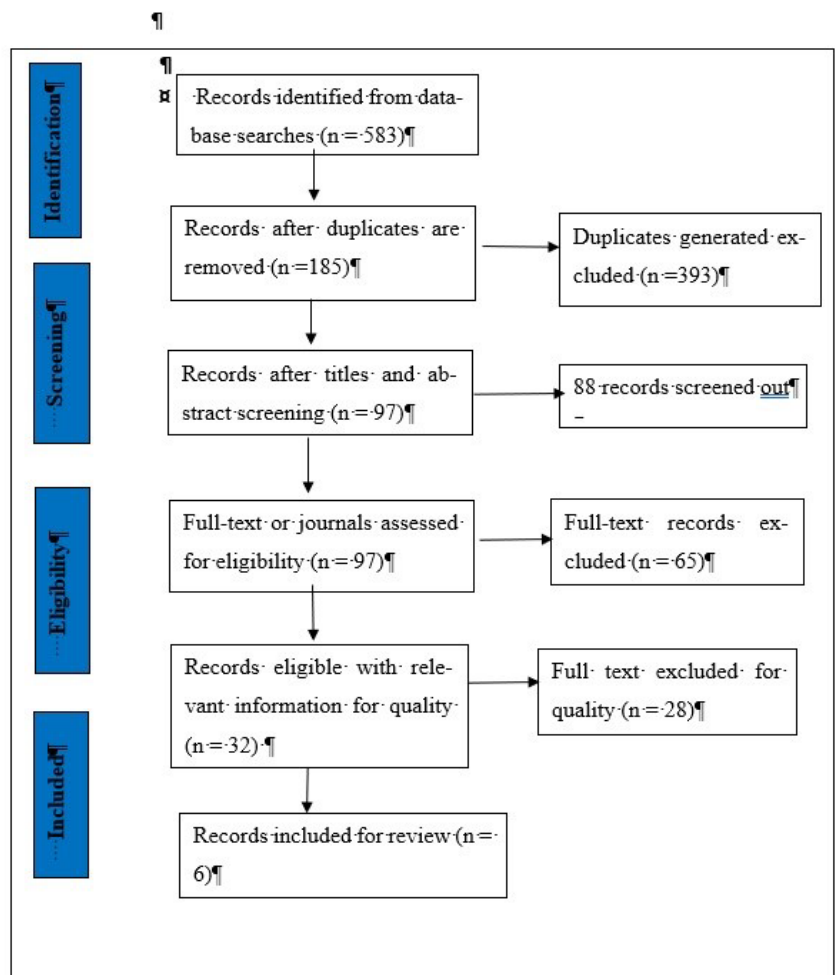
The inclusion and exclusion criteria comprise of the following which makes this research authentic, worthy, and reliable. One of the fundamental criteria adopted in this research is that it specifically contains reviewed articles, government publications, and UN reports that relates to child protection or child welfare, rehabilitation, and legislation in the two respective countries namely Finland and Sierra Leone. For clarity, the articles or journals used in this research consist of publication from 2015 to 2022. Reasons for limitation of years of published articles in this thesis was because there has been changes in the legislation and it would be important to site current trend in recent years.

This also comprises of full text reviewed, peer-reviewed articles, and journals with abstracts. Language of publication of selected articles for this research is English. Moreover, materials that are relevant to answer research questions were legible for selection.

For exclusion, non/English studies or materials in other languages were not considered for this research. This includes articles that were published before the year 2015 and articles or materials that were not full-text, and without abstract or titles. Articles that are not related to child protection and legislation in the respective countries under research are also excluded.

For reliability and clarity, presentation of search engines, databases, and results which comprises key concepts and alternative keywords will be illustrated in this research shown in table 1 above. This is followed by a flow diagram adapted by PRISMA which clearly shows the result of the search, screening, and selection processes involved for the identification of studies for inclusion in this research. See figure 1.

Figure 1: PRISMA flow chart illustrating search strategies for eligibility.



4. RESULT

The result consists of data collection and selection procedures, and the extraction of data and analysis,

4.1 DATA COLLECTION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

The collection of data and procedure for selection was conducted based on the criteria for exclusion and inclusion stated in the previous chapter. A total of 583 articles or records were generated through database searches.

After removal of duplicates, 185 titles and abstracts were screened for potential relevance which resulted in 97 full text or journals assessed for eligibility. Sixty-five records were removed or excluded, and 32 records remain for relevant information for quality. Further screening led to 28 records being removed.

Prisma (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) flow chart was adopted in this integrated review which illustrates the different stages in data collection and processes, stating the total number of records identified through data search, those records that are excluded and included for this review. (See Figure 1)

Reasons for exclusion of the articles were based on the following: studies not specifically focus on child protection in Finland and Sierra Leone, articles that doesn't contain legislation, policies, and conventions about the rights of the child in these countries. Most importantly, studies that don't show clear picture of the results.

Based on this, a total of six articles met the criteria for inclusion (detailed information about the articles, see Table 3 in appendix). The articles comprise of UN report on current situation on children, two peers reviewed articles, national recommendations, and national child strategy documents.

4.2 EXTRACTIONS OF THE DATA AND ANALYSIS

After gathering reliable data from different databases using appropriate methods, one of the key steps to follow is to extract useful information from that data for further interpretation. To achieve that, certain processes and evaluation must be performed to extract relevant information from the data. The process of going about that is data analysis and it may take several steps to reach certain conclusions (Ibrahim 2015). Analysis may involve summarizing and organizing the collected data in a manner that will answer the research questions.

In other words, the central task of any review studies is to analyze the results of multiple scientific studies to describe the state of knowledge about a particular phenomenon or topic and draw conclusions (Popenoe et al 2021.)

To achieve a desired outcome, content analysis was the method selected for synthesizing articles or studies for this review, based on the research questions. Content analysis usually starts when the researcher divides the data into smaller units or codes. This involves how themes and categories are defined and named. The process is more analytical which allows the units or codes to be phrases, sentences, and this allows the researcher to later use the open codes to define and name sub-categories, categories, and main categories (kyngäs et al 2020.). This analytical process developed guide researchers to conduct an interpretation of the analysis with the aim of reducing initially identified categories into more concrete categories.

For content analysis in these selected articles for the review, the following topics will be addressed using theory driven approach. Most importantly, looking at the similarities and differences in these topics in-between the two countries (Finland and Sierra Leone) as listed below:

- Risks for children's wellbeing and health in (Sierra Leone and Finland).
- Implementation of child protection in (Finland and Sierra Leone with emphasis on the best interest of the child).
- The role of the community in child protection

- Funding (state, municipalities versus international organization's project-based funding).

4.3 RISK OF CHILDREN'S WELLBEING AND HEALTH IN SIERRA LEONE AND FINLAND.

The wellbeing and health of children has gained international recognition and recent years has seen significant awareness of the impact of child mental health problems as a global concern. This is most evident in low-income countries and children in these settings are often affected by risk factors such as violence, poverty, malnutrition, and ill-health. Children exposed to such risk may have a lasting effect on their developmental growth and wellbeing. (Yoder et al, 2016).

On the other hand, the wellbeing of children in the developed countries is contradictory and there is a wide gap between children from wealthy families and that of middle-income families. These inequalities may affect children who are mostly vulnerable in society and that may have a negative impact on their wellbeing. Further explanation of these issues will be outlined in the coming sections. (Finnish National Child Strategy, 2022).

4.3.1 Risk of Children's Wellbeing and Health in Sierra Leone

According to Yoder et al (2016) for this review, formal mental health care services are extremely limited in Sierra Leone with an estimate treatment gap of over 99.8%. Local explanation of child mental health is commonly viewed as spiritual or supernatural in nature and associated with help seeking from traditional healers or religious institutions. There is also a considerable amount of stigma related to mental health problems which affects children, caregivers, and service providers and that may lead to discrimination and abuse.

In addition, as described by Yoder et al (2016), there were limited amount of Mental Health Care providers in Sierra Leone. Most of the mental health care providers use counselling which they provided in housing training. Most importantly, interviews and patient records show that most of the MHC providers serves the adult and 84% of the children were registered with NGO providing group and individual counselling in the eastern province of Sierra Leone. Some of the MHC providers stated that lack of resources is a key factor which indicated that coverage for mental health care services and that services for children remain a challenge.

Based on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) adult report of Sierra Leone (2021), expressed concerns about the safety and welfare of children that are exposed to harmful traditional practices including female genital mutilation (FGM) considering the social and health implications for girls. Female genital mutilation, early and force marriages in Sierra Leone has expose thousands of children to violence and abuse and is a gross violation of their human rights. In Sierra Leone nine out of 10 girls have undergone FGM. The prevalence of FGM in women aged 15-49 years is almost 90 percent and in about 40% of the cases women were mutilated between 10 to 15 years of age. (UNCRC-SL, 2021).

Another important point mentioned in UNCRC report is that some children are subjected to child abuse and neglected in toxic family home where parental mental health, domestic violence, substance, or drug abuse is the norm. These factors have been found to increase the risk of harm to children thereby leading to disfunction in the family. Furthermore, the report suggests that most children experience harm or abuse in the care of their parents and care givers who are supposed to provide with basic care, emotional, warm, stability, stimulation, and guidance and boundaries. This has great impact on the health and development of children.

In UNCRC report also stated that violence against children in Sierra Leone remain common and widespread and corporal punishment is still considered one of the best ways to correct children at school and homes. Public institutions that provide services lack safety measures for children and young people and their personnel abuse children in different ways such as sexual abuse, intimidation, discrimination, and display of poor attitudes with impunity UNCRC-SL (2021). Another important point mentioned

is that Covid-19 regulations and response package do not take into consideration child welfare needs. The report stressed that children has limited access to pipe-born water during the lockdown and that initial humanitarian supplies to families quarantined lack baby food and sanitary pads for girls. (UNCRC-SL, 2021).

Discrimination against children in most vulnerable situation is another issue expressed in UNCRC report. These groups include particularly girls, children with disabilities, street children, orphans, and children in rural communities. Discrimination is still normal practices in these settings that is not monitored by the government of Sierra Leone. These alternative care facilities such as remand homes, orphanages and foster care facilities are limited in Sierra Leone and cannot meet the growing demands of under-privileged children. Conditions in these homes are horrible with very poor sanitation and hygiene services. Also, safe place for victims of abuse is limited and inadequate as described in the studies by the coalition UNCRC-SL (2021).

Child mortality rate in (2019) was 109.2 death per 1000 live birth and this suggest one of the highest in world. Research suggested that children under 5 years of age are at the highest risk of malaria as they are prone to infection, illness, and death from malaria in Sierra Leone. In addition, it is estimated that 25% of child mortality in Sierra Leone is caused by malaria and this cause for a concern. (UNCRC-SL,2021).

Another alarming concern stated by the UNCRC-SL (2021) report is child labor and child trafficking. The report expressed that despite the ratification of various international labor organization conventions and criminalization of child labor as stated in in the Child Rights Act (2007) in Sierra Leone, the country remains among the highest rate of child labor in the sub-Sahara Africa. Due to high rate of child labor and commercial sexual exploitation of children in the country, child trafficking remains to be the highest form of child abuse and exploitation which expose children to higher risk.

There is a growing number of street children in Sierra Leone; it is estimated that 50,000 vulnerable children living and working on the street of Sierra Leone in a very deplorable condition. About 25 thousand live and work on the street of the capital Freetown Sierra Leone, making up almost 50% of all children counted compared to the total of over 25 thousand which is about over 50% in all other towns. This creates concern for

the coalition about the safety of these vulnerable children as no successful governments or partners interventions have implemented any ways to get these children off the street considering the abuse, neglect, and psychological trauma they encounter every day. (UNCRC 2021).

The UNCRC-SL (2021) report also elaborated that there is also growing evidence that Sierra Leone records one of the highest rates of sexual violence in the sub-region despite the amendment of sexual violence Offences Act of 2012 by the government of Sierra Leone. After the introduction of the tool line for reporting child abuse cases, the coalition revealed that 39,000 calls were made between April and October 2020 on the 116 Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) helpline. Moreover, 329 of those calls were related to sexual offences of which 212 were related to sexual penetration. 17 of the calls reported rape, and 97 related to domestic violence reported by the Ministry of Gender and Children affairs Report 2020 according to the coalition. The alarming part of it all as described UNCRC-SL (2021) is that 6 out of 10 cases of sexual violence and abuse against girls in schools are caused by their teachers while boys project sexual abuse towards girls in the form of abusive languages, inappropriate touching, and sexual harassment as claimed.

4.3.2 Risks of Children's Wellbeing and Health in Finland:

National Child Strategy (2022), it shows that children's wellbeing in Finland is polarized and while most children are doing well, some are not. This polarization of wellbeing starts in crises and emergency conditions and adverse effects tell on those that are most vulnerable. Another significant point noted in this publication is that poverty affects children's opportunities for equal and non-discriminating inclusion in society. Based on this factor, inequality or poverty experienced in childhood can affect a person into adulthood, and the effects in families with children are also a cause for concern in Finland.

Discrimination may also affect children for various reasons such as origin, skin color, language, religion, disability or illness, gender, or sexual orientation. Despite many of these issues are addressed in the legislation, this publication states that much remains

to be done to prevent discrimination and improve equality in children's daily lives. Another significant is that despite most children do well is not enough to fulfil Finland's human rights obligations. (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

Most importantly, despite attitude towards violence against children have become stronger as indicated in the National Child Strategy Report (2022), there remain many children who still face violence, harassment, exploitation, or abuse in their day to day lives. Children also faced violence outside the family circle such as schools, hobbies or in digital environment and impact of children experiences is always recognized. Early intervention and effective assistance are not readily available to children who experience violence and helping to curb violent behavior among children or violence used by children are not effective enough.

The Parliamentary National Child Strategy (2022) stated that the fact that violence and abuse in a child's family and peer relationships is too often invisible remains a challenge in Finland. As a matter of fact, the service system is not always capable of responding to support needs efficiently enough. Therefore, physical, mental, or sexual violence experienced as a child is a significant risk factor for wellbeing later in life and not only being a victim of violence but also witnessing it in close relationships can have a negative impact in children's lives.

The (Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022) mentioned the social welfare and health services for children and families with the aim to secure good life for children with the support of well-functioning services. The system is currently fragmented and siloed most often children and their families who need many different services are left out without assistance and support.

Example illustrated in (National Child Strategy, 2022) report are the problems in coordination of services that have been identified between primary and special level services on one hand, and mental and other social and health services on the other. As stated in this publication, coordination of services provided for children with disabilities are inadequate, which makes supporting children's growth very challenging. The challenges in the service system are also evident in child welfare.

Good mental health laid the foundation in childhood and services that support mental health, and its disorders play a significant role in children's wellbeing. Now, mental health services are not delivered to the same standard as other social and health services and this is a major public health challenge (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy Report, 2022.).

Moreover, Finland's strength in early childhood education and care and education, well educated work force, highly trained teachers, and excellent education system has produces high standard of knowledge and skills and promotes child holistic wellbeing. Studies have found out that participation in high-quality early childhood education and care is important for later learning. Despite the importance of early childhood education and care for the holistic development of a child in the long term, the participation rate is low in Finland compared to many other countries. (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

The family income is another important factor in children's well-being mentioned in National Child Strategy, (2022). It's stressed that the public authorities should support families and others caring for children and enabled them to safeguard children's wellbeing and individual development. It is a well-known fact that a family's low-income level and a low unemployment rate disintegrate children's position in so many ways, and this risk has also been identified in Finland, particularly in single-parent families.

Relationships with family, friends, and peer group are very important for children as well as adults. Studies have shown that most children enjoy good relationship with their parents and close friends, and this has improved in recent years. Nevertheless, not all children have these warm relationships with their families, friends, and peer group that enhance their wellbeing as indicated in this publication. Many faces loneliness, abuse, violence, or difficult family situations and this has a profound impact on their wellbeing that may continue far into the future. (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

The impact of loneliness accumulates on children that are already in a disadvantage group for example children living in foster care and outside their homes for some reasons may have little contact with their family members, and family financial difficulties may exacerbate the risk of loneliness and exclusion experience by children. At the time, the child's viewpoints maybe overlooked of promoting close relationships in matters of divorce. (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

Cyber bully is another important issue for children as outlined in this publication. Communication for children with close friends and peer group often takes place through online and remote connections. The digital environment also emphasizes new ways of intervening in in bullying, harassment, and other forms of violence as it offers new channels for harmful behaviors towards children. (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

The socio-economic status of the family is one of the major factors that influence children's choices of hobbies in Finland. Despite the availability, having hobbies depends solely on factors such as where the child lives, how wealthy their family is and who their friends are, and not all children have access to safe hobbies and leisure. This has resulted in wellbeing and health gaps that will continue into adulthood. Nevertheless, not all hobbies are expensive in Finland, but the family's low income tends to limit the child's possibilities of choosing hobbies that match their interest and maintaining peer relationships in leisure activities. (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

The parliamentary National Child Strategy (2022) further elaborated that the realization of children's rights will remain haphazard and fragmented if the impacts on children's legislation, political decision-making and resource allocation are not accessed. Now, the scope of impact assessment depends on how directly the decision or activity targets children. In practice, the child impact assessment remains lukewarm even if the decision or the action might have significant impacts on the status of children.

Based on the strong local government autonomy In Finland means that the status of children depends solely on the municipalities where they live. Regardless of the introduction of good practices in many municipalities in terms of impact assessment and promoting children's wellbeing concerning decision making, more tools are needed to

coordinate such good practices across the country. (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

Children's participation and the right to be heard is a fundamental and human right obligation. The participation rights, democracy rights, and human rights education play a significant role in children's development and growth into active citizenship and full members of society. The right to be heard, informed, and become an active member of society must always be safeguarded. Nevertheless, children's participation and opportunities for being heard are fragmented and not implemented in all decision-making concerning children as stated in The Parliamentary National Child Strategy (2022).

According to the publications of Eriksson et al (2020) on child welfare survey of municipalities by association of Finnish local and regional authorities 2017 compared to 2012, it was revealed that availability of services has deteriorated in the past five years, apart from home services for families with children and daycare child welfare support in open care. The availability of services has deteriorated in respect of all health care services. Most important of all is the severe deterioration of the availability of mental health services for children, which 5 years ago could be arranged with reasonable effort and delay or no delay at all in 63% of the municipalities survey in this publication. As revealed in this publication, only 37% of the municipalities and joint municipal authorities responded to the survey. The publication revealed severe shortcoming and delays in the availability of examinations in the health care to investigate suspected cases of child abuses and sexual abuse of children.

4.3.3 Comparison Between Finland and Sierra Leone

One of the similarities spotted in these studies relating to services for children in Sierra Leone Finland is mental health. Yoder et al (2016) expressed in their studies that mental health services are extremely limited in Sierra Leone with a treatment gap of 99.8%. There is limited amount of mental health care (MHC) providers and lack resources in Sierra Leone. Similar sentiment is viewed by Eriksson et al (2020) that the availability of services has deteriorated in respect of all health care services, and most significantly

is the severe deterioration of the availability of mental health care services for children which five years ago could be organized without delay. The Parliamentary National Strategy Committee report (2022) also stressed on the fact that currently, mental health services are not delivered on the same standards as other social and health services, and this is a major health challenge in Finland.

Another important point raised by UNCRC-SL (2021) report is that there are considerable number of children who are subjected to child abuse neglected in toxic families where parental mental health, domestic violence, and substance abuse are the usual occurrence. There is a high risk of harm to children living in such disfunction families. Moreover, despite attitude towards violence against children in Finland is stronger, there remain children who still face violence, harassment, exploitation, or abuse in their day to day lives. (National Child Strategy Report, 2022).

In addition, crucial issue factor raised by the UNCRC-SL (2021) is poverty been the leading cause of child abuse and neglect in Sierra Leone. It is estimated that 70% of the population live below the poverty line and this financial difficulties on the families triggers child abuse within the family, leading to high-rate of sexual abuse, child labor, and neglect, domestic abuse which subject thousands of children and young people to emotional and psychological abuse. Similarly, as noted in the Parliamentary National Child Strategy (2022), poverty is another grave concern for children's wellbeing in Finland. The wellbeing of children is contradictory and even though some children are doing well, some are not. These inequalities and poverty experienced in childhood can lead into adulthood and the multi-generational effects of poverty on families with children is a concern in Finland.

Nonetheless, there are also significant differences in wellbeing and health of children in Sierra Leone and Finland. According to UNCRC-SL (2021), child mortality rate is one of the highest in the world and in 2019 was 109.2 death per 1000 live birth. Research also suggested that children under 5 are at the highest risk of malaria infection and 25% of child mortality in Sierra Leone is caused by Malaria. None of these issues are found in the studies concerning Finland.

Another huge difference is the harmful traditional practices of female genital mutilation in Sierra Leone which is not the case in Finland or mentioned in any of the studies in this review concerning Finland. Corporal punishment is still practice in schools and homes in Sierra Leone as a way of correcting a child which is not practice in Finland stated in those studies.

The UNCRC-SL (2021) also expressed in their report that child labor, trafficking, and commercial sexual, and sexual violence of children in Sierra Leone remain one of the highest in the world which is the worst form of child abuse. The worst-case scenario is that some of their abusers are their teachers as stated in this report. It is also estimated that 50,000 vulnerable children living and working on the street of Sierra Leone in deplorable conditions. Contrary to Finland, none of these issues are mentioned in the studies concerning Finland in this review.

4.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD PROTECTION

One of the key principles of child policy in Finland is to create a child and family friendly Finland where the rights of children are respected. This involves strategy that we ensure the goal oriented and consistent fulfilment of Finland's fundamental and human rights obligations concerning children as set out in UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Key strategies entail creating a genuine child and family friendly mentioned from the beginning. Children's rights and status will be mainstreamed and ensure that they are taken into consideration in all policies and activities alongside other members of society and that they are informed of their rights. Also, the status of children in vulnerable situations will be secured and their needs considered seriously. (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

Similarly, The United Nations Convention on the Rights (2021) adult report of Sierra Leone which covers a detail evaluation of how the government of Sierra Leone is implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) through its actions, policies, and national legislation. The report covers the views of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and NGOs about children in Sierra Leone.

4.4.1 Implementation in Finland

According on Tolonen et al (2019), the best interest of the child is both international and nationally accepted as the significant and updated concept in nowadays legislation on childhood as well as the judiciary system in matters related to children and their legal status in Finland. There have also been profound changes in the content and dimensions of the best interests of the child, perhaps more so than is visible at the level of terminology. The concept of the best interests of the child is mixed and distinct today than in the past and international human rights instruments and their interpretations have played a significant role in this development. As stated in these studies the domestic constitutional provisions have not yet followed the concept and are less visible in the discussion. Nevertheless, the constitutional dimensions of the concept are echoed or mentioned in recent case law, where children's constitutional rights have been discussed in the context of decision-making in their best interest. Attention has also been focused not only to the international human rights treaties, for example the Convention on Rights of Children (CRC) but also to the constitution.

Tolonen et al (2019) further expressed the role of the international human rights obligations as pivoted in the interpretation of the best interests of the child, and that CRC and its implementation in Finnish legislation are significant in principle, and references to the convention and the committee's general comments are becoming commonplace. However, there may also be a risk that the interpretation of the CRC obligations is fragmented among different fields of law and that the convention provisions do not always inform the interpretation of national legislation on the grassroots level.

In connection, the European Convention of Human Rights who act as the complaint mechanisms and especially in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) may assist national courts engage fully with the convention obligations in practice. This interpretation of the best interest of the child will continue to be influenced by the ECtHR case law, that presents a model for considering the role of CRC in the context of legal matters. (Tolonen et al, 2019).

One of the most significant changes in the best interests of the child is a shift towards protecting close relationships of the child and the importance of preserving them. According to human rights provisions, children's best interests must be determined in this context. This way, the umbrella of the best interests can be seen to include family relations. Based on case law of ECtHR, the best interests of the children are often discussed in the light of protecting the family life (article 8). In contrast, the protection of the family is a twofold relation with that of the concept of best interests. Preserving children's family relations is viewed to be in accordance with their best interest even though individual child's best interest may require that the family relation restricted as stated in these studies. (Tolonen et al, 2019).

More weight has been placed on children's individual status and their input in determining the content of their best interests, which are both acknowledged in the constitution. This has gained grounds in recent legislation and strengthening by the constitutional provision by treating children as individuals. Most importantly, risk factors affecting child welfare have also gained attention along with the importance of non-discrimination and the needs of the marginalized and at-risk group. However, one can draw some comparison between these lines of discussion, but conflicts remain. (Tolonen et al, 2019).

Based on Malja et al (2020), when assessing the need for child welfare and in its provision, first and foremost is the best interests of the child that must be taken into consideration (Child Welfare Act, section 4). When assessing the interests of the child, due consideration should be taken in which alternative measures and solutions to safeguard the following for the child. These are balanced development and wellbeing, close and continuous human relationships. The opportunity to be given understanding and affection, as well as supervision and care that accord with the child's age and level of development. An education that is consistent with the child's abilities and wishes.

One of the basic principles of child welfare work is to act as much sensitivity as possible and assistance in the open care should be given precedence unless the interest of the child requires otherwise. In the event of substitute care, it must be arranged without delay. When providing substitute care, the aim of re-uniting the family must be considered with the child's best interests in place. (Malja et al, 2020).

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is a human rights convention which applies to children under the age of 18. By Finland's ratifying the convention means that Finland is obligated to amend its legislation and review its policies to comply with the convention. The convention is obliged on the central and local governments, child's parents, and other adults alike. (Malja et al, 2020).

In compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Child, and the implementation of children's rights are overseeing by the UN committee on the Rights of the Child. State parties report to the committee after every five years on progress made in the implementation of children's rights. According to the Convention, parents or legal custodians of the child are responsible for the child's upbringing and care, and they should act in the best interests of the child with the assistance of the Government. (Malja et al, 2020).

Some of the principles enshrined in the Convention is that all children are equal and have the right to a decent life and comprehensive wellbeing. Adults must find out about children's views and opinions and let them have influence over their daily life. In decision-making relating to children, the best interest of the child should be the precedent.

According to Malja et al (2020), the quality recommendation is intended to safeguard child welfare work concerning families, children and to support its organization. The past recommendation has been supplemented with quality criteria for substitute care and monitoring, and multi-professional cooperation in child welfare work is now emphasized more nowadays. The recommendation supports multi-sectoral team structures.

Moreover, it is stated that the obligation to protect children is best met when there is cooperation and trust between the children and young people concerned and those around them and the employees. A multi-professional team together support measures into coherent service package that meet the needs of the children and their parents. (Malja et al, 2020).

The recommendation further describes the principles guiding child welfare work into groups such as inclusion, service system, professional and work communities in child welfare work, assessment of the need for services, and quality criteria for substitute care and its monitoring. (Malja et al, 2020).

Based on the Parliamentary National Child Strategy Committee report (2022), it is stated that the National Child Strategy should create a child and family-friendly Finland that respects the rights of the child. Its implementation should be linked to a broader strategic forecast and choices concerning the future of the society, and involvement of different stakeholders must be ensured. The committee stressed in its work to uphold the rights of the child from the perspective of the birth rate. In the committee's view, child strategies must be implemented, monitored systematically and effectively over each government tenure.

The implementation of the strategy also must ensure that the rights of all children are realized as fully as possible and must support the inclusion of all children and their rights to a future. The committee considers National Child Strategy to be implemented systematically in a way that brings together various branches of government and sectors of the society and become an integral part of the central government's strategic planning and decision-making in central, regional, and local government to implement the strategy effectively. (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

The committee stressed that permanent structures and close link between strategy work and strategic planning and decision-making in central, regional, and local government should be established to support the implementation of the strategy effectively. In the first stage of the implementation, it is necessary to ensure that the strategy work. Most importantly, the preparation, execution, and monitoring of each strategy must be linked to carefully selected indicators used to monitor the effectiveness of the policies laid down in the strategy and the measures implemented in each government term. The progress of the strategy implemented must be monitored regularly and report made on its effectiveness during each government term. (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

The Parliamentary National Child Strategy (2022) committee elaborated that implementation of the strategy must be based on sufficient evidence and goal-oriented efforts to promote the rights of the child in changing circumstances. The UN Committee has stressed the importance of data collection, child impact assessment and child budgeting which involves coordination of action plans concerning the rights of the child. Methods should be adopted by which child strategy can properly support the fulfillment of Finland's obligations under international treaties relating to the periodic reporting on the rights of the child.

Effective implementation of the strategy may require enough resources and expertise and should be implemented in cross-administrative collaboration. This includes a wide range of stakeholders in the society, the civil society as well as the children and adults of different ages and representing different groups of population. Developing effective structure requires the mandate of other stakeholders tasked to promote the rights of the child, together with the Ombudsman for children and the parliamentary Ombudsman, must be considered. Most significantly, the practical precondition of implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the child entail centralize, coherent, and permanent coordination and monitoring of the child strategy as well as adequate powers. (The parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

4.4.2 Implementation in Sierra Leone

The report of children's rights in Sierra Leone (2021) mentioned a comprehensive evaluation of how the government of Sierra Leone should implement the CRC through its actions, policies, and national legislation. The reporting process includes desk review, national consultation, and validation exercises. This covers the views of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) about children's rights in Sierra Leone, and that of NGOs working on child rights issues that are member of the Child Rights Coalition Sierra Leone (CRC-SL) in the preparation of the report.

Among some of the issues discussed in this report are Sierra Leone signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1991 which is now legally binding and enacted into law through the National Child Rights Act 2007.

Sierra Leone has also ratified the international and human rights instruments concerning the protection of children, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the rights of the Child on the Sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. (UNCRC-SL, 2021).

Some of their recommendations mentioned government's commitment to ensure that the application of General Principles of Child Rights becomes a culture for all Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Local Councils and there is a monitoring mechanism in place to ensure consistent compliance. Government and partners to support the full implementation of the ruling of ECOWAS court on the case of ban on pregnant girls from attending mainstream school, to reduce discrimination and stigma affecting pregnant girls in schools and communities. Government to remove all barriers that discriminate against children in most vulnerable conditions including children with disabilities, children in rural areas, girls, street children, orphans, and other vulnerable children. Government should raise awareness targeting communities and other stakeholders to have a better understanding of the meaning of "In the best interest of the child" to promote harmony among partners seeking the safety and welfare of the child. (UNCRC-SL,2021).

4.4.3 The Role of the Community in Child Protection

According to Wessells et al (2017), high level of community ownership in child protection proved to be successful in some part of Sierra Leone. Many people volunteer their time and work, without any material compensation and regularly referred to the intervention as ‘ours’, stating that NGO's and the government support them but do not lead the intervention.

The intervention process significantly improved community’s collaboration and relationship with the local health posts. Compared to the previously low turnout of the health post, many teenagers and their parents visited the health post regularly for contraceptives and advice. Villagers frequently invited nurses and other health staff to visit to educate the villagers about puberty, sex and preventing teenage pregnancy. (Wessells et al, 2017).

The district medical officer fulfilled their promise to supply the contraceptives and train the health staff. In comparison, teenagers in the intervention communities reported increased willingness to use condoms regularly and to ask their partners to use condoms. This led to a wider change in behavior and social norms related to sex. (Wessells et al, 2017).

Teenager girls reported that due to the intervention, they said ‘No’ to unprotected sex. Both boys and girls said that they learned how to discuss and debate with their partners about sex, and how to plan sexual activities considering the wider life goals. Moreover, boys said openly that they had a responsibility to prevent teenage pregnancies, which contrasted sharply with the boy’s previous behavior. (Wessells et al, 2017).

Participant observations and interviews with health post staff, teenagers and adults show a remarkable decrease in teenage pregnancies. According to the intervention communities in both districts, participants reported that in an average school year before the intervention, there were five to six teenage pregnancies per village. Contrary to the intervention in 2013/14 school year, half of the communities reported no new teenage pregnancies, and half reported only one new teenage pregnancy. (Wessells et al, 2017).

Dropouts in schools drastically reduced and some villages consistently began discussing the problems of early marriage. Having been thought about the effect of teenage pregnancy, the villagers began to question the appropriateness of any teenage pregnancy and early marriages. (Wessells et al, 2017).

4.5 FUNDING OF CHILD PROTECTION IN SIERRA LEONE AND FINLAND

In the report concerning children's rights in Sierra Leone (UNCRC-SL, 2021), it was observed that there is limited amount of budget allocation from the government to the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs to support child welfare, safeguarding and gender empowerment programs to build the capacity of departments and agencies including the National Commission for Social Actions.

Yoder et al (2015) stated that at the end of the war, many services were provided by International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) most of which left the country after their project ended. Wessells et al (2017) gave supporting evidence by saying that when funding dried up, the Child Welfare Committees (CWC) languished and collapsed.

According to Finnish National Child Strategy (2022), despite impact assessment has been developed in decision-making and action, the impact on children is not evaluated systematically and comprehensively. In addition, the budget allocated to children are not monitored and despite effort made in Finland to develop indicators of child's well-being, the knowledge base has shortcomings with reference to equality. The gap data collection on children's well-being and shortcomings in multidisciplinary and recent data undermines the success and suitability of decision-making concerning children.

5 DISCUSSIONS

Factors addressed in this review about quality-of-service provision in child protection in Sierra Leone and Finland covers four main themes namely, risk of children's well-being and health, implementation of child protection, the role of the community in child protection, and funding of child protection.

Sierra Leone and Finland has signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which is legally binding and has been enacted into law through their national child rights acts, policy, or legislation (UNCRC-SL, 2021; Maija et al, 2020; The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022; Tolonen et al, 2019)

5.1 DISCUSSION OF THE CONTENT

Despite the ratification of the UN Convention on the rights of the child in Finland and Sierra Leone, and greater development has taken place in recent years in providing services for children, there are still gaps remaining in their implementation according to the findings. Comparing both countries in this review, one of the key findings is poverty. Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the World and the general population lives on less than 2 dollar per day with 70% of the population living below poverty line. This could be a major obstacle in implementing child's rights as the country rely heavily on international support in most cases (UNCRC-SL, 2021; Yoder et al, 2017).

Even though the magnitude of poverty is not as high as that of Sierra Leone, there is still a concern that some children are left behind in Finland based on this review. This review revealed that poverty and inequality in childhood could lead into adulthood, and this is more prevalent in families with children or single parents (National Child Strategy, 2022). Funding in Finland for child welfare directly comes from the State even though not mentioned clearly in the review. However, the Finnish National Child Strategy (2022) stated that budget allocation to children is not monitored despite effort made to develop indicators of child's wellbeing.

Another key finding in this review is that health care and mental health services are extremely limited and underfunded in Sierra Leone. Most importantly is that fact that mental health in Sierra Leone is mostly viewed as spiritual and witchcrafts with help from Church and traditional healer. There is also greater amount of stigma associated with mental health which affect children, caregivers, and service providers and this may lead to discrimination (Yoder et al, 2016).

According to Finnish National Child Strategy (2022) report, mental health services are not delivered at the same standard as other social and health services and this cause for a concern. In addition, the quality of mental health services in Finland has deteriorated compared to 6 years ago.

Another worst violation of children's rights mention in this review is Female Genital Mutilation and early childhood marriages of girls in Sierra Leone which is a common practice in most African countries. This has a greater health and social consequences for girls and a gross violation of their human rights (UNCRC-SL, 2021).

The UNCRC-SL (2021) report also reveals that child trafficking, child labor, street children, violence against children, and Sexual Gender Base Violence (SGBV) in Sierra Leone is one of the highest in the World and this needs urgent attention from the government, international partner, NGOs working with children to take a collaborative approach in tackling some of these issues. Corporal punishment is still the norm in most families and schools as a way of correcting children. Another significant point that should be noted in this finding is that child mortality in Sierra Leone is one of the highest in the World. Research suggest that the most vulnerable group are children under 5 years and the cause of infection and death are due to Malaria in most cases (UNCRC-SL, 2021).

Unlike Finland, early childhood marriages, FGM and child mortality rate was not mentioned in any of the articles. In addition, child trafficking, child labor and street children were not mentioned as a concern according to the findings in this review. However, there was great concern about violence against children in Finland. The Parliamentary National Child Strategy (2022) report states that many children faced violence, harassment, exploitation, and abuse in their day to day lives. This also takes

place within families, schools, hobbies, digital environment, and this has adverse effects on their lives.

However, significant development has taken place in recent years concerning the rights of a child in Sierra Leone and Finland based on this review. One of this major development is the establishment of the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) in Sierra Leone whereby children are registered from birth and that promotes their civil rights. Freedom of expression is more felt among children compared to the previous UN report about Sierra Leone, where there is increasing awareness through the media and the press about children's rights following the implementation of Child Acts 2007 (UNCRC-SL, 2021).

Other major changes in Sierra Leone are child participation which is acknowledged nowadays at government events, NGOs, and UN agencies working with children. However, this participation can only be achieved through the implementation of policies and practices at decision-making level such as budgeting, policy formation, good infrastructure and other developmental interventions as suggested by (UNCRC-SL, 2021).

According to findings in this review is the introduction of Free Quality Education (FQSE) scheme in Sierra Leone from Nursery to senior secondary school. This has benefitted many children and increase the number of enrolments in schools thereby reducing the financial burden on families. Nevertheless, there are concern about the quality of delivery in reaching rural communities as there is lack of trained and qualified teachers (UNCRC-SL, 2021).

Findings also revealed a significant improvement using inter-agency action research in Sierra Leone in addressing teenage pregnancy through highly collaborative community driven approach. The findings helped to shape new Child and Family Welfare Policy that featured the role of families and communities instead of the formal structure, thereby having national impact (Wessells et al, 2017).

There have been profound changes taken place in the content and dimensions of the concept of the best interests of the child in Finland. The concept of the best interests

is more varied today than in the past and international human rights instruments and their interpretation has played significant role in this development. Even though not much discussion has been heard about the concept in domestic constitutional provision, the constitutional dimensions of the concepts are reflected in the recent case law, where children's constitutional rights have been discussed in the context of decision-making on their best interests. In addition, more attention has been paid not only to the international human rights instruments such as Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) but also the constitution (Tolonen et al, 2019, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2015).

Most importantly, the role of international human rights obligation has gained recognition in the interpretation of the best interest of the child. The CRC and its implementation in Finnish legislation are significant in principle, and references to the convention and to the committees' general comments are becoming a common place in Finland. However, Tolonen et al (2019) noted that there may be a risk that the implementation of the CRC obligations is fragmented among different fields of law and that the convention provision does not always inform the interpretation of national legislation on the grassroots level.

One of the most significant changes in Finland in the implementation of children's rights is a shift towards protecting close relationships of the child and the importance of preserving them. Based on human rights provision, the best interests of the child can be seen by including family relations. Nevertheless, these best interests could require that the family relations be restricted (Tolonen et al 2019, The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022).

More specifically is the fact that a clear focus has been placed on children's individual identity and input in determining their best interests, which are acknowledged in the Finnish constitution. This concept has gained recognition in recent legislation and supported by the constitutional provision on treating children as individuals. Risk factors affecting child welfare has also gained increasing attention along with the importance of non-discrimination and the need of the marginalized and at-risk groups (Tolonen et al 2019, Maija et al 2020).

5.2 REFLECTION ON THE RESULT

Discussing about mental health of children in Sierra Leone, it is a fact that mental health services are in a deplorable state or non-existence which needs rehabilitation programs or service to combat the growing number of child mental health problem in the country. Yoder et al (2016) suggested that building a sustainable and accessible child and adolescent mental health system in Sierra Leone requires considering the diverse views on mental health problems and solutions. The role of religious leaders and traditional healers suggest the need for research into the cost effectiveness of traditional healing in child and adolescent mental health. Further research should pay attention to specific context such as the long-term impact of war and trauma, the effect of severe malaria, Ebola and other communicable diseases on cognitive function and the issue of substance abuse (Yoder et al, 2016, UNCRC-SL,2021).

Mental health of children in Finland is also a great concern and requires a robust rehabilitative intervention for achieving quality services for children. Finnish National Child Strategy (2022) suggested that to treat mental health disorders and strengthen good mental health, effective services, and multidisciplinary measures to prevent social exclusion should be necessary. This requires working with skillful and consistent, highly trained, and competent workforce with good knowledge of wellbeing at work can help to safeguard the rights and welfare of the child. Achieving good mental health for children also includes a safe growth environment, work methods and practices.

Female genital mutilation of girls in Sierra Leone is a violation of their human rights and this should be eradicated from all levels of the society. UNCRC-SL (2021) report recommended the prohibition of female genital mutilation and early marriages for anyone under the age of 18 and government to review the child rights act 2007. This should include parliament passing into law that prohibits FMG and an act punishable under the law. Government of Sierra Leone should review and harmonize all international treaties, human rights mechanisms, Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and UNCRC Committee that involves violence against children and adopt holistic and comprehensive approach to address them through inter-ministerial and departmental coordination (UNCRC-SL, 2021).

5.3 FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Allocation of sufficient funds and resources to children's institution and to strengthen the capacity of public institutions that provides services for children including educational institutions, health care services, security, and other social service providers, adopt safeguarding policies and codes of conduct for their personal should be encouraged. Addressing poverty demands government to provide social safety net for fragile families and support family-based care. Reducing child mortality rate in Sierra Leone also is by improving the health infrastructure that can meet the health needs of children (UNCRC-SL, 2021). The Finnish National Child Strategy (2022) is also of the view that providing stronger safety net for families in Finland as a precondition for realizing the rights of the child, so that the strain experienced by families and poverty of families with children will no longer be hindrance to children's wellbeing.

Further recommendations for the rights of children in Sierra Leone includes the greater involvement of government and partners to implement positive parenting programs and activities for families and maintain family planning services. Implementing Radical Inclusion Policy (RIP) should ensure that children with disabilities are the priority target and sufficient funding should be allocated to National Commission for Person with Disability (NCPD) and ensure that children with disabilities are adequately supported to acquire education and other services. Upgrade and review the educational system that meet the aspiration of FQSE program is required. Recruiting and training of qualified teachers will be essential for achieving the goals of free quality education (UNCRC-SL,2021).

Addressing the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor 2021-2024 is one way of reducing child labor in Sierra Leone. This includes the implementation of international Labor Organization Domestic Workers Convention and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security to enforced local labor laws in the best interest of the child. Most importantly, review the Child Rights Act 2007 that includes more provisions that address child labor to minimum of 15 years old (UNCRC-SL, 2021).

Combating discrimination and inequality is one of the fundamental principles of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. One of the strategic policies recommended by The Finnish Parliamentary National Child Strategy (2022) is to promote children's equality through systematic measures, data base on wellbeing gap and their causes collected and utilized, and measures that are as effective as possible and respect the rights of the child will be taken to close the gaps. Equal and non-discriminatory access to all form of services, support, and channels of participation will be adopted for all children. Accessibility and different form forms of information society practices will be ensured with a child-centered approach and taken diversity of children into consideration.

Another key suggestion in addressing the vulnerability of children is through rehabilitative work, preventive work, correctives measures and services, and legal protection systems. Stepping up preventive work will ensure early support and intervention (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022). Violence among children in growing Finland and appropriate measures should be taken by the authorities to tackle the rise in violence. One of the ways to combat violence against child is to improve parenting skills and support for parenting will be strengthened to find alternatives that respects the rights of the child and special status methods of upbringing that harm the child. Work methods for prevention and early intervention in violence and harassment should be adopted. Moreover, special attention should be paid to violence and harassment in the digital environment and the spreading of violence materials. Methods for recognizing violence and abuse should be developed as early as possible to ensures that the child can access support services as the need arises (The Parliamentary National Child Strategy, 2022, Tolonen et al, 2019).

5.4 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The reliability and trustworthiness of this review relies strongly on the methodological processes and the publications that lead to achieving the desired results. One of the strengths of this review is an exhaustive search of different databases which yielded incremental number of data to be screened and analyzed. Six articles were selected and

covers four themes that relates to the quality-of-service provision in child protection in the respective countries, and that of the research questions. In addition, following the rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria and search terms or keyword, literature search with the help of the school librarian resulted in the best outcome for this review. The use of PRISMA flow chart and table of selected articles for this review shows the procedures for eligibility and the transparency that lead to the best outcome of the review. The analysis in this review was based on the content in the selected articles using four themes. Based on all the strict criteria and methodological processes involved in this review illustrated the strength of this work.

However, there are limitations that must be highlighted in this review. One key point is lack of scientific research in some of the articles. Doing this work alone could be exhausting and is time consuming as this is the first time using this methodology. However, doing a review has increased my professional competence and knowledge in the topics discussed in this review relating to children.

Based on the fact this review was mainly based on literature review, ethical issues were not of great concern as no one was to be interviewed or questionnaires administered. Nevertheless, honesty, respecting other people's work and not harming anyone was taken into ethical, meticulous analyses and reporting. This work follows the ethical guideline and every procedure involved in the review stated the reference in the literature used. There was no pre-conceived notion of bias in the collection of materials for this review.

6 CONCLUSIONS

By comparison, it is evident in this review that despite significant development over the years in the implementation of the rights of the child in Sierra Leone and Finland, there are still gray areas that needs to be address. The magnitude of poverty in Sierra Leone is a great concern in providing services for children even though similar sentiments are expressed in Finland concerning single parents. Health care systems are not

functioning well due to underfunding and lack of proper infrastructures which has affected millions of children in Sierra Leone. Mental health in both countries shows deteriorating conditions for children which needs to be updated and requires more resources and training. Female genital mutilation and early marriages is a health concern for girls in Sierra Leone which is not the practice in Finland. Strick policies and laws should be put in place to tackle child labor, trafficking, sexual violence in Sierra Leone. Most importantly, the role of traditional healers in mental health in Sierra Leone should be access and evaluated. Violence also against children in Finland should be address and effort made by authorities in providing resources for victim of violence and abuse. More funding should be allocated to institutions working with children. More training is needed for employees working with children in both the health sector and the institutions. More research is needed in areas where there are loopholes in providing services for children. There should be data collection on the progress in service provision and where need improvement. Collaboration with different ministries and sharing information about children's wellbeing and practices should be encouraged.

REFERENCE

Callahan J.I. (2010) PP 300-304. Constructing a Manuscript: Distinguishing Integrative Literature Reviews and Conceptual and Theory Articles. *Human Resource Development Review*. Sage.

Child Welfare Act (2007). Elimination of child labor, protection of children and young persons. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Finland.

Child Act Steering committee (2009). Child Welfare committee Operational Guideline, Save the Children and War Holland for the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender & Children's Affairs Sierra Leone.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and Council Of Europe (2015). Handbook of European Law Relating to the Rights of the Child. FRA website at fra.europa.eu, the Council of Europe website at <http://www.coe.int> (en/web/commissioner/thematic-work/children-rights, and the European Court of Human Rights website under case-law menu at echr.coe.int

World Health Organization (2013). European report on preventing child maltreatment. <http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/european-report-on-preventing-child-maltreatment-2013>

Fegert, J.M., Stötzel, M. (2016). Child protection: a universal concern and a permanent challenge in the field of child and adolescent mental health. *Child Adolescent Psychiatry Mental Health* 10, 18.
<http://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-016-0106-7>

Fluke, J.D., Goldman, P.S., Shriberg, J., Hillis, S.D, Young, K., Allison, S., Light, E. (2012). *Child abuse and Neglect: Systems, strategies, and interventions for sustainable long-term care and protection of children with history of living outside the family care*. 2012 Elsevier Ltd.

Gabel S.G. (2014). Social protection and children's rights in developing countries: *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*.

Gabel S.G., & Kamerman, S.B. (2012). *Assessing Child Wellbeing in Developing Countries*.

Haer, R. (2019). *Children and armed conflict: Looking for the future and learning from the past*.

Ibrahim, M. (2015). The Art of Data Analysis. Journal of Allied Health Sciences Pakistan 1(1), 98-104

Kyngäs et al (2020). The Application of Content Analysis in Nursing Science Research. Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2020

King. M. (1999). Moral Agenda for Children's Welfare. Abingdon: Routledge

Landgren, K. (2005; 27: 214-248). The Protective Environment: Development Support for Child Protection. Human Rights Quarterly: The Johns Hopkins University Press.mso

Save the Children (2013). Child Protection Initiatives.

Maija et al (2020). Quality Recommendation for Child Welfare. Publication of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland.

National Child Strategy Report (2022). The Parliamentary National Child Strategy Committee, Finnish Government.

Popenoe et al (2021). A practical guide to data analysis in general literature reviews. Nordic Journal of Nursing Research 2021, Vol. 41(4) 175-186 Sage

Torraco R.J. (2016). Writing Integrative Literature Reviews: Using the Past and Present to Explore the Future. Human Resource Development Review, Vol. 15 (4) pp 404-428. Sage.

UNICEF (2010). Progress for Children No 8. pp.7-17
Progress_for_Children-No.8_EN_081309.pdf (unicef.org)

Tolonen et al (2019). Best Interests of the Child in Finnish Legislation and Doctrine: What Has Changed and What Remains the Same?

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (2021). (CSO Report-List of Issues) For Sierra Leone. Child Rights Coalition- Sierra Leone (CRC-SL)

UNICEF (2006). Child Protection Information Sheets. pp.7-26
Child_Protection_Information_Sheets.pdf (unicef.org)

Wessells et al (2017). How Collaboration, Early Engagement and Collective Ownership Increase Research Impact: Strengthening Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms in Sierra Leone.

World Health Organization (2013). European Report on the Prevention of Child Maltreatment. pp.83
European Report on Preventing Child Maltreatment (who.int)

Yoder et al (2016). Child Mental Health in Sierra Leone. A survey and exploratory qualitative study. International Journal of Mental Health Systems. BioMed Central Ltd. Nederland.

APPENDIX

Table 2: Description of search engines, databases, results which comprises of key concepts and alternative keywords.

Search engines	Countries	Key concept/alternative keywords	results	Databases
Samk finna	Finland	("child protection" OR "child welfare" OR "child neglect" OR "child protective" OR "child abuse") AND ("finland" OR "finnish")	260	Academic Search Premier, Doaj Directory of Open Access Journals, Wiley Online Library All Journals, Cinahl Complete, Sage Comple A-Z list, Sage Journals Premier 2022 (prem 2022), Abi/Inform Global, Springer Nature Oa/Free Journals, Biomedcentral Open Access, Swepub Freely Available Online, Taylor & Francis Open Access, Wiley-Blackwell Open Access Titles, Sage Open Access Journals, Business Source Premier, Emerald Ejournal

				<p>Premier, Nora – Norwegian Open Access Research Archives, Scielo, Highwire Press (Free Journals), Bmj Open Access Journals, Public Library Of Science (Plos)</p>
<p>Google/google scholar</p>	<p>Finland</p>	<p>(“child protection” OR “child welfare” OR “child neglect” OR “child protective” OR “child abuse”) AND rehabilitation AND (finland OR finnish) AND (legislation OR law)</p>	<p>180</p>	<p>Scienedirect.com, Researchgate.net, Academia.edu, oopen.org, diva-portal.org, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Finland, Human Rights journals, Convention on the Rights of a Child.</p>

Samk finna	Sierra Leone	("child protection" OR "child welfare" OR "child neglect" OR "child protective" OR "child abuse") AND rehabilitation AND ("sierra leone OR sierra Leonean")	83	Academic Search Premier, Doaj Directory Of Open Access Journals, Wiley Online Library All Journals, Springer Nature Oa/Free Journals, Sage Journals Premier 2022 (Prem2022), Bio-medcentral Open Access, Sage Complete A-Z list, Taylor & Francis Open Access, Business Source Premier, Abi/Inform Global, Canahl Complete, Public Library Of Science (Plos), Narcis: Open Access, Scielo, Wiley-Blackwell Open Access Titles, Bmj Open Access Journals, Ebook Central Perpetual And Dda, Ebook Central – Academic Complete International, Sage Open access Journals, Ebooks On Ebscohost.
------------	--------------	---	----	--

Google/google scholar	Sierra Leone	(“child protection” OR “child welfare” OR “child neglect” OR “child protective” OR “child abuse”) AND rehabilitation AND (Sierra Leone OR Sierra Leonean) AND (legislation OR law)	60	Scielo.org.za. odi.org, openrepository.com, biomedcentral.com, ResearchGate
-----------------------	--------------	--	----	---

Table 3: Selected articles for integrated review

Author/Bibliography	Source	Title	Subject /participants	Aim of the study	Results of the study
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 2021 Sierra Leone	Civil Society organization (CSO) report	Lists of issues for Sierra Leone	Children	A comprehensive evaluative of the government implementation of the CRC through	Measures government need to take in fulfillment of its obligation to uphold children’s rights

				it ac- tions, policies, and na- tional legisla- tion	
Yoder et al 2016 Sierra Leone	International journal of mental health systems vol 10 (1) pp 1- 13	Child mental health in Sierra Leone.	Child and adolescent mental health	The psy- choso- cial im- pact of war on children by ex- amining the local percep- tions of child mental health, formal and in- formal care sys- tems help seeking behavior and stigma	Formal mental health services are ex- tremely limited in Sierra Leone with an estimated treatment gap of over 99.8%

<p>Wessells et al 2017</p> <p>Sierra Leone</p>	<p>Community child protection exchange</p>	<p>How collaboration, early engagement and collective ownership increase research impact: Strengthening community-based child protection in mechanisms in Sierra Leone.</p>	<p>Child protection policies</p>	<p>To strengthening community-based child protection mechanisms in Sierra Leone</p>	<p>A different approach to child protection which is the involvement of high level of community participation leads to success.</p>
<p>Malja et al 2020</p> <p>Finland</p>	<p>Ministry of Social Affairs and Health</p>	<p>Quality recommendation for childcare</p>	<p>Child welfare and quality</p>	<p>To guide child welfare work concerning families and children and support its</p>	<p>Multi professional team combines service package, work communities,</p>

				organi- zation	monitor- ing and quality criteria that meets the need of the chil- dren and their families.
Tolonen et al 2019 Finland	Helda, Uni- versity of Helsinki	Best in- terest of the child in the Finnish legisla- tion and doctrine	Child & children	To dis- cuss how to promote best in- terest of the child in the Finnish legisla- tion in 20 th century and changes that has taken place since 1980s	Dramatic changes have taken place in the con- cept of the best interest of the child through interna- tional hu- man rights and con- ventions that has led to signifi-

					cant de-velop-ment
The parlia-mentary na-tional child strategy committee 2022 Finland	Finnish gov-ernment	Pro-posal/re-port for national child strategy	Child strategy	To cre-ate a child friendly Finland where the child rights is re-spected	To create a sustain-able, co-herent and long-term ba-sis for child and family policy