



FROM COLLABORATIVE INTENTIONS TO EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN STREET SITUATIONS IN KAMPALA DISTRICT, UGANDA: EVIDENCE OF SCHOOL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Annah Atuhaire^{1,2},

John Mugun Boit³,

Sammy Chumba⁴ⁱ

¹Department of Education Management and Policy Studies,
Moi University,
P.O. Box 3900 – 30100, Eldoret,
Kenya

orcid.org/0009-0004-8032-0879

²Directorate of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovations,
Bishop Stuart University,
P.O Box 09,
Uganda

orcid.org/0009-0004-8032-0879

³Department of Education Management and Policy Studies,
Moi University
P.O. Box 3900 – 30100, Eldoret,
Kenya

orcid.org/0009-0001-1620-8231

⁴Department of Education Management and Policy Studies,
Moi University,
P.O. Box 3900 – 30100, Eldoret,
Kenya

orcid.org/0000-0003-3175-8167

Abstract:

Although global commitments under SDG 4.5 continue to emphasize inclusive education for all learners, children in street situations remain among the least likely to enroll, participate and complete formal education. This study examined the contribution of stakeholder collaboration and support systems to the educational inclusion of children in street situations in Kampala, Uganda. Guided by Collaborative Leadership Theory, the study employed a survey design. Participants comprised 9 government officials, ten NGO representatives, 220 teachers and head teachers, and 33 caregivers, selected through proportionate random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using hierarchical multiple regression. Findings revealed significant

ⁱ Correspondence: email aatuhaire@bsu.ac.ug, jmugunboit@gmail.com, kipsachu08@mu.ac.ke

positive effects of stakeholder collaboration on support system were found: Stakeholder Collaboration in Planning → School Support System ($B = 0.479$, $t = 10.01$, $p < .05$), Stakeholder Collaboration in Implementation → School Support System ($B = 0.694$, $t = 14.71$, $p < .05$), Stakeholder Collaboration in Planning → Family Support System ($B = 0.495$, $t = 10.67$, $p < .05$), Stakeholder Collaboration Implementation → Family Support System ($B = 0.646$, $t = 13.22$, $p < .05$), Stakeholder Collaboration Planning → Community Support System ($B = 0.489$, $t = 10.10$, $p < .05$), and Stakeholder Collaboration Implementation → Community Support System ($B = 0.659$, $t = 13.09$, $p < .05$). This study concludes that both stakeholder collaboration models that is planning and implementation positively and significantly influence school, family and community support systems for educational inclusion for children in street situations. This study recommends to the government of Uganda through her ministries and development partners to move education policies beyond emphasizing stakeholder collaboration as an end in itself and instead institutionalize collaborative support systems that operate at the school, family, and community levels and establish measurable standards for collaborative practices ensuring that partnerships are translated into coordinated interventions through coordinated systems capable of improving access, participation, retention, and successful educational outcomes for children in street situations.

Keywords: stakeholder collaboration, educational inclusion, support systems

1. Introduction

Socially, children in street situations engage with various actors such as their parents/caregivers, social services, law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations offering assistance, the shelter setting, and peers who encompass not only children but also adults (Kertati & Cristiani, 2022). Children in street situations refer to boys or girls under 18 years whom the street have become their habitual abode, source of livelihood and social environment. They either live full time on the street, work during the day and return home at night or spend occasionally some days on the street (UNICEF, 2020). They often feel socially alienated and are associated with deviant behaviors such as crime, juvenile delinquency, and substance abuse, which further marginalizes them and makes it difficult for them to alter their living situations. They are exposed to violence from both their peers and adults, which makes their environment unsafe and further complicates their ability to learn and thrive (UNICEF, 2020).

Children in street situations continue to experience profound educational exclusion despite national and international commitments to inclusive education and the increasing involvement of governments, schools, families, civil society organizations, and local communities in addressing their needs (Atuhaire *et al.*, 2024). Existing interventions have minimally focused on expanding access to education through policy reforms, rescue and rehabilitation programmes, and social protection initiatives, yet educational

participation and retention among these children remain persistently low (Atuhaire *et al.*, 2024). Across many low- and middle-income countries, governments have increasingly promoted stakeholder collaboration as a strategy for addressing this exclusion. However, despite widespread policy endorsement, evidence regarding how collaborative arrangements translate into actual educational inclusion remains fragmented. Existing research largely demonstrates that collaboration matters (Masfufah & Agustina, 2024; ;Lagat, 2024; Bhattraai, 2024; Changra, 2025; Donatille *et al.*, 2025; Sakia & Devi, 2025; LYDIA *et al.*, 2025), yet provides limited understanding of the institutional mechanisms through which collaborative efforts become meaningful educational opportunities for vulnerable children, especially children in street situations.

One explanation for the above disconnect is that the presence of multiple stakeholders does not necessarily translate into coordinated support systems capable of addressing the complex educational, social, emotional, and economic barriers faced by children in street situations. While stakeholder collaboration is widely recognized as an important principle in inclusive education, empirical evidence on how collaborative efforts shape distinct support mechanisms within schools, families, and communities remains limited, particularly in low-resource contexts like Kampala, Uganda. Most existing studies examine stakeholder participation as a general concept or evaluate educational outcomes directly, offering little understanding of whether collaboration strengthens the institutional and social support structures that underpin educational inclusion. This knowledge gap limits the ability of policymakers, practitioners, and development partners to identify the collaborative arrangements that most effectively foster supportive educational environments for children in street situations. Addressing this gap is therefore essential for generating evidence on how stakeholder collaboration contributes to the development of school, family, and community support systems' capacity that collectively create conditions for meaningful educational inclusion.

2. Main Objective

To examine the influence of stakeholder collaboration on support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations in Kampala, Uganda.

2.1 Specific Objectives

- 1) To test the effect of stakeholder collaboration on school support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations in Kampala district, Uganda.
- 2) To determine the effect of stakeholder collaboration on family support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations in Kampala district, Uganda.
- 3) To assess the effect of stakeholder collaboration on community support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations in Kampala district, Uganda.

2.2 Hypotheses of the Study

H₀₁: Stakeholder collaboration has no significant effect on school support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations

H₀₂: Stakeholder collaboration has no significant effect on family support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations

H₀₃: Stakeholder collaboration has no significant effect on community support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations

2.3 Literature Review

2.3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored in Collaborative Leadership Theory, originally advanced by Chrislip and Larson, (1994) and further developed by (Crosby & Bryson, 2018), which posits that complex public problems cannot be effectively addressed through the efforts of a single institution but require shared leadership, collective responsibility, and coordinated action among multiple stakeholders. Unlike traditional leadership models that concentrate authority within individual organizations, collaborative leadership emphasizes the development of shared goals, mutual trust, distributed decision-making, joint resource mobilization, and continuous communication among actors with diverse expertise and responsibilities (Crosby & Bryson, 2018; Seo *et al.*, 2023; Agbodzakey, 2024). The theory is particularly relevant to educational inclusion because exclusion of children in street situations is a multidimensional problem involving educational, social, economic, legal, and child protection challenges that exceed the capacity of schools alone. Educational inclusion therefore depends on the ability of governments, schools, families, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, and development partners to establish collaborative structures through which complementary responsibilities are coordinated towards a common objective. Within the context of this study, stakeholder collaboration provides the governance and coordination mechanisms through which support systems are developed and implemented across school, family, and community settings. The theory therefore explains why collaboration should enhance educational inclusion by improving coordination, strengthening accountability, facilitating resource sharing, and promoting joint ownership of inclusive education initiatives. However, Collaborative Leadership Theory pays relatively little attention to the institutional mechanisms through which collaborative relationships produce measurable educational outcomes. While it effectively explains the processes of collaboration, it provides limited guidance regarding the specific support systems that operationalize collaborative decisions within children's everyday learning environments. By demonstrating the differential contribution of school, family, and community support systems to educational inclusion, the present study extends the explanatory scope of Collaborative Leadership Theory beyond collaborative governance to identify the practical support mechanisms through which collaborative leadership is translated into improved educational opportunities for children in street situations.

2.3.2 Stakeholder Collaboration and School Support

Collaboration within an educational institution pertains to the collective efforts of educators belonging to a learning community, aimed at enhancing student outcomes and academic performance, which encompasses activities such as co-developing lesson plans, formulating comprehensive schemes of work, in addition to engaging in team-based instruction. As articulated by (UNESCO, 2021), collaboration is defined as the intentional cultivation of interpersonal relationships and the pursuit of constructive interdependence, which manifests when educators are at ease in both providing and receiving support whilst maintaining individual accountability. However, Chimowa *et al.* (2024)'s study identifies a significant concern regarding the limited support teachers receive from stakeholders in promoting inclusive practices, which is crucial for the success of inclusive education. It reveals that collaboration between mainstream teachers and other stakeholders is limited, conditional, erratic, and often unplanned, which affects the achievement of inclusive education goals. This further makes collaboration conceptually important but practically dormant, especially in solving systemic challenges like educational exclusion of children in street situations.

Friend and Cook (2007), as cited by Chimowa *et al.* (2024) elucidated several fundamental concepts that significantly influence the efficacy of teacher-parent collaboration. These concepts encompass the understanding that collaboration ought to be undertaken voluntarily, the necessity of resource sharing, the obligation to engage in responsible decision-making directed towards a mutual objective, the recognition of each party's roles, the capacity to collaboratively devise a structured programmatic approach, and ultimately, the establishment of trust and mutual respect. Furthermore, educators who embody collaborative practices within educational institutions foster constructive relationships not solely within the confines of the school but also across multiple educational establishments, among educators, and throughout the broader community (Chimowa *et al.*, 2024). Collaboration in various dimensions remains insufficient, particularly with respect to teacher engagement with pertinent specialists, cooperation with resource centers, and the execution of collaborative learning activities among educators. In contrast, certain facets have begun to show promising development, notably in the realm of teacher collaboration with parents and the interaction between teachers and special education guidance professionals in inclusive educational settings; however, these relationships have yet to reach their full potential. It is anticipated that the optimal outcomes derived from these collaborations serve as a valuable reference for fostering effective partnerships between educators and relevant stakeholders, thereby enhancing the efficacy of learning within the framework of inclusive education (Jaya *et al.*, 2023).

Accordingly, Schools are in the best position to act as a hub for collaborative efforts directed towards improving educational outcomes for children in street situations. Schools are encouraged to offer extensive psychosocial assistance to students, families, and peers within the educational setting. This encompasses the provision of counseling

and specialized educational support, when necessary, along with initiatives aimed at preventing and addressing mental and emotional challenges. Additionally, schools should implement programs like anti-bullying campaigns, peer support groups, and mentoring opportunities (Al-Hroub *et al.*, 2021). Psychosocial interventions for children in street situations encompass a variety of systems designed to address their mental, emotional and social difficulties. A research study in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi, Kenya emphasized the significance of enhancing mental health in order to decrease substance abuse among children in street situations, utilizing services such as counseling, mental healthcare clinics, and awareness initiatives (O'gallo, 2022). Christmas *et al.* (2023) assert that providing access to education is another critical implication. The establishment of facilities like halfway houses is recommended to offer educational opportunities and other essential services to children in street situations, helping them reintegrate into society and improve their future prospects.

Higher education institutions play a significant role in consistently providing support and life skills training to children in street situations, helping them develop their entrepreneurial potential and expand their product marketing networks through online media (Zulkarnain *et al.*, 2020). Besides developing entrepreneurial ability, schools can engage children on the street as part of community engagement to revive the lives of children on the street; for example, the Sabilul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School uses a gentle Islamic approach to guide children in street situations, including activities like reciting and memorizing the Yasin chapter, which helps calm their minds and gradually move them away from street life (Zulkarnain *et al.*, 2020). Further evidence from the literature shows that school administrators with boarding sections emphasize the importance of empowerment programs that offer entrepreneurship training tailored to children's current needs, helping them learn patience and explore business opportunities (Zulkarnain *et al.*, 2020). This would be an effective strategy if offered in a school setting to tailor children's minds in an educational context, not necessarily selling them to the business world.

Emerging evidence suggests that collaboration alone is insufficient to improve educational outcomes unless it is translated into practical support systems that directly respond to children's academic, psychosocial, economic, and protection needs (Ainscow, 2020; Masten, 2021). Support systems therefore represent the operational dimension of collaboration by transforming shared commitments into concrete actions within the environments where children live and learn. School support systems provide structured learning environments, inclusive leadership, psychosocial support, mentorship, feeding programmes, and learner-centered practices that enhance participation and retention (Florian, 2019).

2.3.3 Stakeholder Collaboration and Family Support

Stakeholder collaboration has increasingly been recognized as a critical strategy for addressing the complex challenges faced by children in street situations. At the global

level, evidence demonstrates that stakeholder collaboration plays a significant role in strengthening parental involvement and improving outcomes for children in street situations. In India, UNICEF (2021) found that coordinated efforts among community leaders, social workers, educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, and child welfare organizations improved support mechanisms for children living and working on the streets. The study further observed that linking parents and caregivers to livelihood opportunities, social protection programmes and skills development initiatives strengthened their capacity to care for their children. Consequently, stakeholder collaboration was found to contribute not only to children's welfare but also to enhanced parental participation in child care and development processes.

Within Africa, similar findings have been reported. In Sierra Leone, Kargbo (2025) examined stakeholder engagement in rehabilitation programmes for street children and found that effective communication, resource sharing, and trust-building among stakeholders significantly improved programme outcomes. The study revealed that collaboration among government agencies, community organizations, and families strengthened support systems for children and promoted greater parental participation in rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. The authors concluded that long-term partnerships among stakeholders are essential for sustaining family involvement and child welfare interventions.

Evidence from East Africa further supports the importance of stakeholder collaboration in promoting parental involvement. In Kenya, Chepchirchir & Nyang'au (2022) investigated stakeholder involvement in street children rehabilitation projects in Nairobi City County and found that stakeholder participation significantly improved project performance and service delivery. The study argued that collaboration among government agencies, NGOs, community leaders, and families enhanced programme sustainability and created opportunities for greater family engagement in children's rehabilitation processes. Although parental involvement was not directly measured, the findings suggest that coordinated interventions can strengthen family participation in child support initiatives.

Similarly, Goodman *et al.* (2023) evaluated the Flourishing Community Model among street-involved children and youth in Kenya and found that family participation was a key determinant of successful reintegration. Approximately half of the children who participated in family-centred interventions were successfully reintegrated into their families and returned to school. The study demonstrated that stakeholder collaboration that deliberately incorporates parents and caregivers can improve family functioning, parental engagement, and reintegration outcomes for children in street situations.

In Tanzania, Nyangi (2021) reported that inadequate stakeholder cooperation was one of the major challenges affecting successful family reintegration of street children. The study found that weak coordination among government institutions, NGOs, communities, and families undermined parental support and contributed to continued

child vulnerability. The author therefore recommended strengthening collaboration among stakeholders to improve family support mechanisms, parental care, and sustainable reintegration processes.

In Uganda, stakeholder collaboration has increasingly attracted attention as a mechanism for improving outcomes among children in street situations. Atuhaire *et al.* (2024) found that weak coordination among stakeholders remains a significant challenge in interventions targeting children in street situations. The study revealed that government agencies, NGOs, schools, and communities often implement programmes independently, resulting in fragmented service delivery and limited parental participation. The authors noted that parents are frequently excluded from planning and implementation processes despite their critical role in children's development and reintegration. Consequently, the study recommended strengthening partnerships among stakeholders to enhance family involvement and programme effectiveness.

Further evidence from Uganda is provided by the Family Reintegration, Alternative Care and Primary Prevention Support (FRAPS) programme evaluation conducted by (Hope for Justice & Retrak, 2022). The evaluation found that collaboration among local governments, NGOs, schools, community leaders, and families facilitated the successful reintegration of many children into family environments. Through coordinated interventions such as positive parenting programmes, caregiver training, savings groups, and child protection committees, parents became more actively involved in caring for their children and supporting their educational participation. The study concluded that stakeholder collaboration strengthens family capacities and promotes parental responsibility, although the lack of baseline data limited definitive attribution of outcomes.

Accordingly, the reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that stakeholder collaboration positively contributes to parental involvement through improved service coordination, family reintegration programmes, positive parenting interventions, economic empowerment initiatives, and strengthened child protection systems. However, while existing studies have examined educational inclusion, rehabilitation outcomes, programme performance, and family reintegration, relatively few studies have directly assessed parental involvement as a distinct outcome variable. Furthermore, empirical evidence specifically examining the relationship between stakeholder collaboration and parental involvement among children in street situations in Uganda remains limited. This knowledge gap necessitates the current study to establish how stakeholder collaboration influences parental involvement among children in street situations in Uganda.

2.3.4 Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Support

Kabue *et al.* (2022) emphasizes the critical role of involving various stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Health, local leaders, community members, and parents, in the planning and implementation of interventions to achieve meaningful engagement and support.

Goodman *et al.* (2023) also reinforce the idea that among the key factors that improve the likelihood of successful reintegration of street-involved children and youth is family participation in community-oriented programs. The authors propose a Dual-Program Intervention Model, an intervention that combines two coordinated programs: one aimed at rescuing, rehabilitating, reintegrating, and re-socializing SICY and the other focused on empowering families and communities to better care for reintegrating children and youth, highlighting a comprehensive approach to addressing the issue of children in street situations.

The Incheon Declaration articulates that *“civil society organizations (CSOs), encompassing representative, broad-based coalitions and networks, fulfill indispensable functions. Their engagement and involvement are imperative at all phases, ranging from planning to monitoring and evaluation, with their participation being institutionalized and assured.”* They possess the capacity to *“foster social mobilization and enhance public awareness, thereby amplifying the voices of citizens (especially those who experience discrimination) within the realm of policy development.”* Kisirkoi and Mse (2016) posit that every street child ought to undergo an interview process aimed at delineating their distinct requirements, state of health, familial connections, and the extent of psychological and social trauma they have encountered, with the objective of providing customized care for each individual case. Fehmi *et al.* (2024) highlights the significant challenges children in street situations face in accessing formal education, emphasizing the need for a diversified strategy that includes informal education, outreach initiatives, skill development, and community engagement to improve their educational opportunities.

Ceralli (2021) mentions that it is indeed a fact that the extensive duration dedicated to the implementation of pilot initiatives in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education has significantly contributed to the enhancement of competencies among those responsible for overseeing inclusive education in West Africa. Designated focal points have been appointed, and these individuals have disseminated their knowledge and expertise. Several of these individuals have exerted considerable effort to actualize inclusive education and ensure that the requirements of all marginalized groups are adequately addressed. They aspire to avoid being perceived merely as targets of advocacy efforts from stakeholders who may occasionally possess less experience or lower technical proficiency.

Nonetheless, institutional partners ought to recognize that their involvement is anticipated in terms of contributing systems, plans, and financial resources. Regarding civil society representatives, their advocacy should not extend to technical issues (such as the specifics of teacher training), but rather focus on securing robust political commitments. *“What remains unplanned is devoid of funding,”* asserts the ANCEFA coordinator (Ceralli, 2021). Fehmi *et al.* (2024) underscores the importance of government measures and NGO programs in addressing the issue, suggesting that these efforts can significantly enhance the lives of children in street situations through education

As a contribution to psychosocial support, many artists and psychologists believe that art is a powerful tool for expressing emotions and transforming both the inner and outer worlds, helping individuals to process and communicate their feelings in a unique way. The educational practice of integrating art is not just about recognizing talent but also about encouraging each student's ability to experiment and try new things, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment (Santos & Varandas, 2016).

The above study found that integrating graffiti art into the educational process had a positive impact on students with challenging behaviors, helping them to develop better social skills and improve their interactions with teachers and peers. According to (Santos & Varandas, 2016), the intervention through graffiti art allowed students to express their emotions and thoughts, which they were not used to doing, leading to an emotional release and increased confidence in participating in class activities. The project demonstrated that when students were given a safe space to share their ideas without fear of judgment, it created a more relaxed and open classroom environment, which contributed to their personal and academic growth.

Dhakad (2024) underscores the importance of community involvement in addressing the challenges faced by children in street situations. Social workers are encouraged to engage with community members to build awareness and support systems that can aid in the protection and development of these children; however, he suggests adopting a holistic approach to social work with children in street situations. This means considering the various dimensions of their lives, including their physical, emotional, and social needs, to provide comprehensive support and interventions. There is a call for community engagement and cultural shifts to support children in street situations. This involves creating an inclusive environment that reduces discrimination and supports the integration of children in street situations into society (Christmas *et al.*, 2023).

Chimowa *et al.* (2024)'s model highlights the importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and community members, in the process of promoting inclusive education. This engagement is crucial for creating a supportive environment for students with special educational needs. The proposed framework encourages teamwork and the sharing of ideas among stakeholders. By working together, stakeholders can achieve the intended goals of inclusive education more effectively than through individual efforts (Chimowa *et al.*, 2024). For instance, developing peer-based interventions involves engaging peers in the creation of prevention, intervention, anti-bullying, and harm reduction programs for children in street situations (Al-Hroub *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, designing community engagement curricula that include community members as facilitators can enhance the effectiveness of health promotion and educational systems, ensuring that learners can demonstrate the principles of community engagement in collaboration with community members to promote well-being.

Although substantial literature acknowledges the importance of school, family, and community support, relatively few studies have examined their comparative contribution to educational inclusion within a single empirical model. Existing research shows evidence of parental involvement, school climate, or community participation examined independently, making it difficult to determine which support systems have the greatest influence on educational inclusion or how these systems collectively shape outcomes for children experiencing extreme vulnerability, like children in street situations (Ainscow, 2020; OECD, 2022). Moreover, most studies have focused on children with special needs, with limited attention to children in street situations whose educational needs are more complex because of prolonged social exclusion, disrupted family relationships, and exposure to multiple risks. Much of the literature demonstrates that collaboration is beneficial but provides relatively little explanation of the institutional processes through which collaborative intentions become sustained educational outcomes, particularly for children in street situations whose needs extend well beyond classroom instruction. Against this background, the present study examined the influence of stakeholder collaboration on school, family and community support systems for the educational inclusion of children in street situations in Kampala, Uganda.

3. Materials and Methods

The study adopted a quantitative approach and a survey research design to examine how collaborative structures influence the school, family and community systems' capacity to contribute to the educational inclusion of children in street situations in Ugandan public primary schools in Kampala district. Representatives from the government, specifically education officers, supervisors and probation officers, representatives from NGOs, caregivers, head teachers and teachers participated in this study. There were 220 teachers and head teachers of public primary schools in Kampala District, 9 government officials, 10 NGO representatives, and 33 caregivers, all selected using proportionate random sampling. The total sample size was 272 from a target population of 930 estimated using Kothari's formula (2004). Data were collected from April to July 2025 through a structured questionnaire which comprised closed-ended questions covering demographics, stakeholder collaboration, and support systems' aspects for educational inclusion of children in street situations. Validity and reliability were ensured through expert review and statistical analysis, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of above 0.7 recorded, confirming that the questionnaire tool was valid and reliable. Data were analyzed using hierarchical multiple regression. For ethical observation, the study obtained ethical clearance and was also registered with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology. More so, participants were taken through the informed consent process for voluntary participation in the study.

4. Results and Discussion

Data were coded and entered in SPSS Version 29 for further analytical purposes. It was then cleaned to remove missing values and outliers, and out of 272 participants' responses recorded, only 254 were maintained. Three null hypotheses were tested, controlling for covariates, that is, age, gender, position and level of education. Below are the results;

4.1 Testing Hypothesis for Effects of Stakeholder Collaboration on Support Systems

This section presents findings for the effects of stakeholder collaboration on support systems (school, family and community support systems). These effects were tested to confirm whether stakeholder collaboration constructs (planning and implementation) as independent variables (X's) directly and significantly influence School, Family and community support systems at a .05 significant level (i.e. $p < .05$). The following null hypotheses were tested while controlling for stakeholders' gender, age, position, and level of education as covariates.

H₀₁: Stakeholder collaboration has no significant effect on school support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations

H₀₂: Stakeholder collaboration has no significant effect on family support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations

H₀₃: Stakeholder collaboration has no significant effect on community support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations

The analysis focused on whether each stakeholder collaboration construct (planning and implementation) significantly predicted each of the support systems (school, family and community). The unstandardized coefficients and p-values were examined to assess significance, and R^2 values were used to determine the percentage of variance explained by each construct. Unstandardized coefficients were reported because they reflect the actual change in the outcome variable for each unit change in the predictor, based on the original scale of the data (Hayes, 2022).

4.2 Effect of Covariates on School Support Systems

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether stakeholders' gender, age, position, and level of education significantly influenced the School Support Systems (SSS) for children in street situations. The results in Table 4.20 showed that the overall regression model was not statistically significant, $F(4, 249) = 0.47$, $p = .05$, indicating that the set of demographic covariates did not account for a meaningful proportion of variance in school support systems for children in street situations. The model explained only 0.8% of the variance ($R^2 = .0083$), and the adjusted R^2 value ($-.008$) suggested that, after adjusting for the number of predictors, the model explained virtually no variance.

Table 4.1: Effect of Covariates on School Support Systems

Covariate	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F (4, 249)	Sig.
Constant	4.371	0.186	—	23.53	<.001	0.087	0.008	-0.008	0.47	0.756
Gender	-0.011	0.067	-0.011	-0.17	0.868					
Age	-0.018	0.034	-0.034	-0.52	0.605					
Position	-0.009	0.043	-0.015	-0.22	0.828					
Level of Education	-0.029	0.025	-0.078	-1.17	0.244					
Note: N = 254										

An examination of the individual covariates further revealed that none of the demographic variables significantly predicted school support systems (all p values > .05). Level of education had the largest standardized coefficient ($\beta = -0.078$), but it was not statistically significant ($p > .05$). The remaining predictors (gender, age, and position) had near-zero standardized coefficients, indicating negligible relationships with the outcome variable. These findings suggest that, within this sample, school support systems were not meaningfully influenced by the respondents' gender, age, professional position, or level of education. Although the effects were not statistically significant, these variables were retained in the subsequent hierarchical models as control variables to account for potential confounding influences identified in prior literature. These variables had no theoretical interest in the present study and are not interpreted further. Hence, controlling for these covariates allowed for a more accurate estimation of the effects of stakeholder collaboration in planning and implementation on school support systems for children in street situations.

4.3 Effect of Covariates on Family Support Systems

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether stakeholders' gender, age, position, and level of education significantly influenced Family Support Systems (FSS) for children in street situations. The results in Table 4.21 showed that the overall regression model was not statistically significant, $F(4, 249) = 0.60$, $p > .05$, indicating that the set of demographic covariates did not account for a meaningful proportion of variance in family support systems. The model explained only 1.0% of the variance ($R^2 = .010$), and the adjusted R^2 value (-.006) suggested that, after adjusting for the number of predictors, the model explained virtually no variance.

Table 2: Effect of Covariates on School Support Systems

Covariate	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F (4, 249)	Sig.
Constant	4.513	0.184	-	24.57	<.001	0.098	0.01	-0.006	0.60	0.661
Gender	-0.029	0.066	-0.028	-0.44	0.66					
Age	-0.033	0.034	-0.065	-0.98	0.326					
Position	-0.026	0.043	-0.043	-0.62	0.535					
Level of Education	-0.022	0.025	-0.058	-0.88	0.38					
Note: N = 254										

An examination of the individual covariates further revealed that none of the demographic variables significantly predicted family support systems (all p values $> .05$). Age had the largest standardized coefficient ($\beta = -0.065$), but this effect was small and not statistically significant. The remaining predictors (gender, position, and level of education) also showed near-zero standardized coefficients, indicating negligible relationships with the outcome variable.

These findings suggest that, within this sample, family support systems were not meaningfully influenced by the respondents' gender, age, professional position, or level of education. Although the effects were not statistically significant, these covariates were retained in the subsequent hierarchical models as control variables to account for potential confounding influences identified in prior literature. These variables were not of theoretical interest in the present study and are not interpreted further. Controlling for them allowed for a clearer estimation of the effects of stakeholder collaboration in planning and implementation on family support systems for children in street situations.

4.4 Effect of Covariates on Community Support Systems

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether stakeholders' gender, age, position, and level of education significantly influenced Community Support Systems (CSS) for children in street situations. The results in Table 4.22 showed that the overall regression model was not statistically significant, $F(4, 249) = 0.35$, $p > .05$, indicating that the set of demographic covariates did not explain a meaningful proportion of variance in community support systems. The model accounted for only 0.6% of the variance ($R^2 = .006$), and the adjusted R^2 value ($-.010$) suggested that, after adjusting for the number of predictors, the model explained virtually no variance in CSS.

Table 4.2: Effect of Covariates on School Support Systems

Covariate	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R^2	Adj. R^2	F (4, 249)	Sig.
Constant	4.12	0.189	-	21.85	<.001	0.074	0.006	-0.010	0.35	0.847
Gender	0.034	0.068	0.032	0.5	0.617					
Age	0.02	0.035	0.038	0.57	0.569					
Position	0.021	0.044	0.033	0.48	0.635					
Level of Education	-0.022	0.025	-0.058	-0.87	0.386					
Note: N = 254										

An examination of the individual covariates revealed that none of the demographic variables significantly predicted community support systems (all p values $> .05$). Level of education had the largest standardized coefficient in magnitude ($\beta = -0.058$), but it was not statistically significant ($p = .386$). The remaining predictors, gender ($\beta = 0.032$), age ($\beta = 0.038$), and position ($\beta = 0.033$), had near-zero standardized coefficients, indicating negligible relationships with the outcome variable.

These findings suggest that, within this sample, community support systems were not meaningfully influenced by stakeholders' gender, age, professional position, or level

of education. Although the effects were not statistically significant, these covariates were retained in the subsequent hierarchical models as control variables to account for potential confounding influences identified in prior literature. They were not of direct theoretical interest in this study and are not interpreted further. Controlling for these variables allowed for a more accurate estimation of the effects of stakeholder collaboration on community support systems for children in street situations.

4.5 Effect of Stakeholders' Collaboration on School Support Systems

This section aimed to present findings to test hypothesis H_{01} , which stated that:

H_{01} : Stakeholder collaboration has no significant direct influence on school support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations.

To test this hypothesis, each stakeholder collaboration construct (planning and implementation) was entered in a hierarchical multiple regression analysis as a second block after the covariates in separate models. The analysis specifically examined whether the effect of each stakeholder collaboration construct on School Support Systems was significant at the .05 level ($p < .05$), while controlling for stakeholders' gender, age, position, and level of education.

The results summarized in Table 4.3 show that the covariates alone explained only 0.8 percent of the variance in School Support Systems ($R^2 = .008$), which was not statistically significant, $F(4, 249) = 0.472$, $p > .05$. Adding stakeholder collaboration in planning increased the explained variance to 29.3 percent ($R^2 = .293$), representing a change of 28.6 percent (R^2 change = .286, F -change = 100.23, $p < .05$). In a separate model, adding stakeholder collaboration in implementation after the covariates increased the explained variance to 47.0 percent ($R^2 = .470$), representing a change of 46.3 percent (R^2 change = .463, F -change = 216.45, $p < .05$).

Examining the contribution of each predictor, the findings showed that stakeholder collaboration in planning independently explained 28.6 percent of the variance in school support systems, while stakeholder collaboration in implementation explained a larger 46.3 percent. This indicates that collaboration in both phases matters, but collaboration in implementation was the stronger unique predictor when tested independently.

After controlling for covariates, the regression coefficients and p -values confirmed significant effects. Stakeholder collaboration in planning had a positive effect on school support systems ($B = 0.479$, $t = 10.01$, $p < .05$), while stakeholder collaboration in implementation had an even stronger effect ($B = 0.694$, $t = 14.71$, $p < .05$). None of the covariates were significant in any of the models. Since $p < 0.05$, we reject the proposed null hypothesis (H_{01}), we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that stakeholder collaboration, whether in planning or in implementation, directly and significantly influences school support systems for children in street situations, with implementation showing the stronger contribution.

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Table 4.1: Effect of Stakeholders' Collaboration on School Support Systems

Model	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R ²	ΔR^2	F change	Sig. F change
Model for Covariates							0.087	0.008	-	0.472	.756
	Gender	-0.011	0.067	-0.011	-0.166	0.868					
	Age	-0.018	0.034	-0.034	-0.517	0.605					
	Position	-0.009	0.043	-0.015	-0.217	0.828					
	Level of Education	-0.029	0.025	-0.078	-1.169	0.244					
Model for SCP							0.541	0.293	0.286	100.23	.000
	Gender	0.011	0.057	0.011	0.2	0.839					
	Age	-0.022	0.029	-0.043	-0.77	0.444					
	Position	-0.014	0.036	-0.022	-0.37	0.711					
	Level of Education	-0.013	0.021	-0.035	-0.620	0.533					
	Stakeholder Collaboration in Planning	0.479	0.048	0.536	10.01	0.000					
Model for SCI							0.686	0.47	0.463	216.45	.000
	Gender	0.029	0.049	0.028	0.600	0.55					
	Age	0.001	0.025	0.003	0.060	0.953					
	Position	-0.050	0.032	-0.080	-1.570	0.119					
	Level of Education	-0.001	0.018	-0.003	-0.060	0.952					
	Stakeholder Collaboration in Implementation	0.694	0.047	0.688	14.71	0.000					
Notes: SCP = Stakeholder Collaboration in Planning, SCI = Stakeholder Collaboration in Implementation, Dependent Variable = School Support Systems											

4.6 Effect of Stakeholders' Collaboration on Family Support Systems

This section aimed to present findings to test hypothesis H₀₂, which stated that;

H₀₂: Stakeholder collaboration in inclusive education has no statistically significant direct influence on family support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations.

To test this hypothesis, each stakeholder collaboration construct (planning and implementation) was entered in a hierarchical multiple regression analysis as a second block after the covariates in separate models. The analysis specifically examined whether the effect of each stakeholder collaboration construct on family support systems was significant at the .05 level ($p < .05$), while controlling for stakeholders' gender, age, position, and level of education.

The results summarized in Table 4.4 show that the covariates alone explained only 1.0 percent of the variance in family support systems ($R^2 = .010$), which was not statistically significant, $F(4, 249) = 0.602$, $p > .05$. Adding stakeholder collaboration in planning increased the explained variance to 32.1 percent ($R^2 = .321$), representing a change of 31.2% (R^2 change = .312, F-change = 113.92, $p < .05$).

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In a separate model, adding stakeholder collaboration in implementation after the covariates increased the explained variance to 41.9 percent ($R^2 = .419$), representing a change of 40.9 percent (R^2 change = .409, F -change = 174.77, $p < .05$).

Examining the predictive contribution of each construct, the findings showed that stakeholder collaboration in planning independently explained 31.2% of the variance in family support systems, while stakeholder collaboration in implementation explained a larger 40.9%. This suggests that collaboration in both phases is important, but collaboration in implementation was the stronger predictor when tested independently. After controlling for covariates, the regression coefficients and p -values confirmed significant effects. Stakeholder collaboration in planning had a positive effect on family support systems ($B = 0.495$, $t = 10.67$, $p < .05$), while stakeholder collaboration in implementation also had a strong positive effect ($B = 0.646$, $t = 13.22$, $p < .05$). None of the covariates were significant in either model. Since $p < 0.05$, we reject the proposed null hypothesis (H_{02}), we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that stakeholder collaboration, whether in planning or in implementation, directly and significantly influences family support systems for children in street situations, with implementation showing the stronger contribution.

Table 4.2: Effect of Stakeholders' Collaboration on Family Support Systems

Model	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F change	Sig. F change
Model for Covariates							0.098	0.01	—	0.602	.661
	Gender	-0.029	0.066	-0.028	-0.44	0.660					
	Age	-0.033	0.034	-0.065	-0.98	0.326					
	Position	-0.026	0.043	-0.043	-0.62	0.535					
	Level of Education	-0.022	0.025	-0.058	-0.88	0.380					
Model for SCP							0.567	0.321	0.312	113.92	.000
	Gender	-0.006	0.055	-0.006	-0.11	0.917					
	Age	-0.038	0.028	-0.074	-1.35	0.178					
	Position	-0.031	0.035	-0.05	-0.87	0.385					
	Level of Education	-0.005	0.02	-0.014	-0.25	0.8					
	Stakeholder Collaboration in Planning	0.495	0.046	0.56	10.67	0					
Model for SCI							0.647	0.419	0.409	174.77	.000
	Gender	0.009	0.051	0.008	0.17	0.867					
	Age	-0.015	0.026	-0.03	-0.59	0.553					
	Position	-0.064	0.033	-0.104	-1.95	0.053					
	Level of Education	0.004	0.019	0.012	0.23	0.817					
	Stakeholder Collaboration in Implementation	0.646	0.049	0.647	13.22	0.000					

Notes: SCP = Stakeholder Collaboration in Planning, SCI = Stakeholder Collaboration in Implementation, Dependent Variable = Family Support Systems

4.7 Effect of Stakeholders' Collaboration on Community Support Systems

This section aimed to present findings to test hypothesis H03, which stated that:

H03: Stakeholder collaboration in inclusive education has no significant direct influence on community support systems for educational inclusion of children in street situations.

To test this hypothesis, each stakeholder collaboration construct (planning and implementation) was entered in a hierarchical multiple regression analysis as a second block after the covariates in separate models. The analysis examined whether the effect of each stakeholder collaboration construct on community support systems was significant at the .05 level ($p < .05$), while controlling for stakeholders' gender, age, position, and level of education.

The results summarized in Table 4.5 show that the covariates alone explained only 0.6 percent of the variance in community support systems ($R^2 = .006$), which was not statistically significant, $F(4, 249) = 0.346$, $p > .05$. Adding Stakeholder Collaboration in Planning increased the explained variance to 29.5% ($R^2 = .295$), representing a change of 29.0% (R^2 change = .290, F -change = 101.93, $p < .05$). In a separate model, adding stakeholder collaboration in implementation after the covariates increased the explained variance to 41.2 ($R^2 = .412$), representing a change of 40.6% (R^2 change = .406, F -change = 171.32, $p < .05$).

Examining predictive power, the findings showed that stakeholder collaboration in planning independently explained 29.0% of the variance in community support systems, while stakeholder collaboration in implementation explained 40.6%. This indicates that collaboration at both planning and implementation stages plays an important role in strengthening community support for children in street situations, with implementation showing the stronger effect when tested independently.

After controlling for the covariates, the regression coefficients confirmed significant and positive effects. Stakeholder collaboration in planning predicted community support systems ($B = 0.489$, $t = 10.10$, $p < .05$). Stakeholder collaboration in implementation was also strongly significant ($B = 0.659$, $t = 13.09$, $p < .05$). None of the covariates reached significance in either model. Since $p < .05$, we reject the proposed null hypothesis (**H03**), we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that stakeholder collaboration, whether in planning or in implementation, directly and significantly enhances community support systems for children in street situations, with implementation showing the stronger contribution.

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Table 4.3: Effect of Stakeholders' Collaboration on Community Support Systems

Model	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R ²	ΔR^2	F change	Sig. F change
Model for Covariates							0.074	0.006	—	0.346	.847
	Gender	0.034	0.068	0.032	0.501	0.617					
	Age	0.020	0.035	0.038	0.570	0.569					
	Position	0.021	0.044	0.033	0.475	0.635					
	Level of Education	-0.022	0.025	-0.058	-0.869	0.386					
Model for SCP							0.543	0.295	0.29	101.93	.000
	Gender	0.057	0.057	0.053	0.996	0.320					
	Age	0.015	0.029	0.029	0.52	0.604					
	Position	0.017	0.037	0.026	0.448	0.655					
	Level of Education	-0.006	0.021	-0.015	-0.266	0.790					
	Stakeholder Collaboration in Planning	0.489	0.048	0.54	10.10	0.00					
Model for SCI							0.642	0.412	0.406	171.32	.000
	Gender	0.072	0.052	0.068	1.38	0.168					
	Age	0.038	0.027	0.072	1.42	0.157					
	Position	-0.017	0.034	-0.028	-0.52	0.606					
	Level of Education	0.005	0.02	0.012	0.24	0.812					
	Stakeholder Collaboration in Implementation	0.659	0.05	0.645	13.09	0					
Notes: SCP = Stakeholder Collaboration in Planning, SCI = Stakeholder Collaboration in Implementation, Dependent Variable = Community Support Systems											

4.8 Discussion of Findings

4.8.1 Effect of Stakeholder Collaboration on Support Systems for Educational Inclusion of Children in Street Situations

According to R^2 values, the findings showed that stakeholder collaboration in planning independently explained 28.6 percent of the variance in school support systems, while stakeholder collaboration in implementation explained a larger 46.3 percent. Furthermore, the regression coefficient showed that stakeholder collaboration in planning had a positive effect on school support systems ($B = 0.479$, $t = 10.01$, $p < .05$), while stakeholder collaboration in implementation had an even stronger effect ($B = 0.694$, $t = 14.71$, $p < .05$). Considering the unstandardized coefficients, p -values and R^2 values, hypothesis H_{01} was rejected. It was concluded that stakeholder collaboration, whether in planning or in implementation, has a significant direct influence on strengthening school support systems for children in street situations, with implementation showing the larger effect. These findings imply that fostering collaboration at both the planning and implementation stages enhances the design, delivery, and sustainability of school support systems. Early collaboration during planning creates a strong foundation, while ongoing collaboration during implementation ensures systems remain effective and responsive to the needs of children in street situations.

A broader view of the above findings shows that collaboration can influence and inform the design of school-based interventions necessary for educational inclusion of children in street situations. But also, this is largely influenced by the school leadership. School leadership plays a vital role in establishing values and shaping wraparound supports and partnership collaboration within school-community models. Accordingly, school leaders should adopt procedures that facilitate partnership contact and communication, such as direct referral processes, and ensure the inclusion of diverse school-community partners in collaborative spaces (Nurhayati *et al.*, 2025). Literature also reveals that effective collaboration starts with establishing open communication between educators and parents to ensure mutual understanding of a child's needs and aspirations. As such, regular parent-teacher meetings, workshops, and feedback sessions facilitate meaningful dialogue (Sakia & Devi, 2025). Ideally, such interactions and dialogues among stakeholders is necessary for initiating and advancing efforts for including children in street situations in education.

In contexts with limited resources, participatory school governance, such as through School Management Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations, has been shown to improve educational performance; for example, supplementary teaching models, community-led tutoring, and volunteerism also contribute to significant learner gains (Nurhayati *et al.*, 2025). Additionally, establishing participatory structures within schools, such as school-level committees with formal terms of reference, is crucial for inclusive, grassroots governance (Donatille *et al.*, 2025). Mhizha (2024) posits that schools and social services should also collaborate to provide mental health support, counseling, and trauma-informed care for children who have experienced adverse events.

Addressing these psychological impacts can prevent truancy and disengagement from education. More so, implementing early warning systems for truancy and developing tailored interventions, such as mentorship programs, academic support, and family engagement initiatives, can help keep children in school (Mhizha, 2024).

Conclusively, School support systems provide structured learning environments, inclusive leadership, psychosocial support, mentorship, feeding programmes, and learner-centred practices that enhance participation and retention (Florian, 2019). Therefore, a school is a main institution or system through which collaborative intentions become sustained educational outcomes, particularly for children in street situations, especially at the implementation phase of the collaboration.

4.8.2 Effect of Stakeholder on Family Support Systems for Educational Inclusion of Children in Street Situations

According to R^2 values, the findings showed that stakeholder collaboration in planning independently explained 31.2 percent of the variance in family support systems, while stakeholder collaboration in implementation explained a larger 40.9 percent of the variance in family support systems. Furthermore, the regression coefficient showed stakeholder collaboration in planning had a positive effect on family support systems ($B = 0.495$, $t = 10.67$, $p < .05$), while stakeholder collaboration in implementation also had a strong positive effect ($B = 0.646$, $t = 13.22$, $p < .05$). Considering the unstandardized coefficients, p-values and R^2 values, H_{02} was rejected. It was concluded that stakeholder collaboration, whether in planning or in implementation, has a significant direct influence on strengthening family support systems for children in street situations, with implementation showing the stronger effect. These findings imply that fostering collaboration at both the planning and implementation stages enhances the development and sustainability of family support systems.

According to the findings of this study, early collaboration during planning establishes a solid foundation, while ongoing collaboration during implementation ensures these systems remain effective and responsive to the educational needs of children in street situations. Therefore, programs and policies should prioritize early-stage stakeholder collaboration in planning, while ensuring continued cooperation during implementation, to maximize family-level supports for the education of children in street situations. Considering the above findings, efforts to enhance primary education access should significantly invest in strengthening PTAs, encouraging active parental involvement in school decision-making, and fostering collaboration between parents and teachers. Practical steps could also include regular, well-publicized PTA meetings, parental sensitization and mindset change, training for PTA leadership, and clear communication channels.

Roselien *et al.* (2024) confirm the above findings, stressing the importance of collaboration between parents and educational institutions to foster an environment conducive to children's development, implying a need for structured mechanisms for

communication and cooperation between alternative schools and the families of street children. More so, their study recommends developing joint programs or initiatives where parents are actively informed about their children's progress and can contribute to the school's efforts, even if their involvement is primarily non-physical. This could involve regular meetings, parent-teacher associations, or community outreach programs (Roselien *et al.*, 2024), which confirms this study's findings.

However, literature reveals how weak family structures contribute to the exclusion of children from education, demonstrating how poverty, dysfunctional family systems, and migrating families are main drivers for child involvement in street living (Naresh & Bheenaveni, 2025). From the researcher's view, weak family structures and poverty do not only exclude children from school but can also be a barrier to a successful collaboration for such children to be reintegrated in education. In light of this, Hailu, (2024), suggests that collaborative initiatives should focus on reducing poverty and strengthening family support systems, which is essential to ensure children have stable home environments and to prevent children from ending up on the streets.

4.8.3 Effect of Stakeholder Collaboration on Community Support Systems for Educational Inclusion of Children in Street Situations

According to R^2 values, the findings showed that stakeholder collaboration in planning independently explained 29.0 percent of the variance in community support systems, while stakeholder collaboration in implementation explained a larger 40.6 percent of the variance in community support systems. Furthermore, the regression coefficient showed stakeholder collaboration in planning predicted community support systems ($B = 0.489$, $t = 10.10$, $p < .05$), whereas stakeholder collaboration in implementation was also strongly significant ($B = 0.659$, $t = 13.09$, $p < .05$). Considering the unstandardized coefficients and p-values and R^2 values, hypothesis H_{03} was rejected. It was concluded that stakeholder collaboration, whether in planning or in implementation, directly and significantly enhances community support systems for children in street situations, with implementation showing the stronger contribution.

The above findings imply that stakeholder collaboration at both stages is critical for the design, coordination, and sustainability of community-based supports. Early collaboration during planning provides a framework for mobilizing resources, while continued collaboration during implementation ensures that supports remain active, adaptive, and responsive to the educational needs of children in street situations. According to findings of this study, stakeholders, including local leaders, religious leaders, and the business sector among others, are vital conduits for mobilizing community support, advocating for education, and addressing local barriers; therefore, engaging them formally in school governance, decision-making processes, and community outreach campaigns can yield positive educational outcomes for children in street situations.

The above findings align well with existing literature. For instance, Ojok *et al.* (2022) emphasized the importance of mobilizing local communities to embrace the systems employed by Faith-Based Organizations, as it is crucial for guaranteeing the welfare of street children in Uganda. In a study conducted in Uganda, specifically in Lira city, which is among the origins of children in street situations on Kampala city streets, revealed that the systems employed by FBOs, which include outreach, rehabilitation and collaborative systems that they had a significant effect on the welfare of the street children (Ojok *et al.*, 2022). This is also in line with (Rashid *et al.*, 2024), who reveals that CBOs use non-formal education programs to engage learners in vulnerable circumstances such as advocacy, social mobilizations, and partnerships with schools and policymakers.

A study done by Changra demonstrates that community-driven approaches to inclusive education exhibit better cultural alignment and sustainability compared to top-down institutional models. This suggests that local involvement fosters more effective and lasting solutions (Changra, 2025). Considering the current study's findings, stakeholder collaboration can invite community efforts to the attention of educational inclusion of children in street situations, and these efforts are culturally and contextually relevant as well as sustainable, rather than top-down models, which are more likely to remain stagnant. Community involvement is vital for raising awareness about societal challenges, advocating for inclusive policies, and mobilizing resources for schools as programs involving local organizations and community leaders help reduce stigma and build a culture of acceptance and belonging for children with diverse needs (Sakia & Devi, 2025)

Wango *et al.* (2025) brings in an interesting contribution about the power of local leaders. They assert that robust community mobilization and strategic involvement of local leaders (e.g., village elders, faith representatives) are foundational to increasing parent buy-in and sustained engagement (Wango *et al.*, 2025). Furthermore, community leadership, inclusive governance, and culturally responsive engagement significantly enhanced both children's learning and family agency, particularly in addressing barriers like gender bias and time-poverty.

Meaningful stakeholder engagement contributes to community empowerment, allowing local voices to shape initiatives that directly affect them (Esther & Irechukwu, 2025). For instance, (Kapil, 2025) highlights that without comprehensive social support and grassroots outreach, initiatives fall short; therefore, engaging stakeholders fosters positive relationships and community involvement, which are crucial for addressing the challenges faced by children in vulnerable circumstances and promoting sustainable learning outcomes (Chidakwa *et al.*, 2024).

5. Conclusions

This study examined the contribution of stakeholder collaboration and support systems to the educational inclusion of children in street situations in Kampala, Uganda. The

findings demonstrate that stakeholder collaboration is a critical foundation for strengthening school, family, and community support systems, all of which significantly enhance educational inclusion. These results suggest that collaboration alone is insufficient unless it is translated into practical support mechanisms that directly address the educational, psychosocial, economic, and protection needs of vulnerable children. The significant influence of school support systems emphasizes the central role of schools as inclusive environments that provide not only learning opportunities but also leadership, safety, psychosocial care, and coordinated support services. The significant contribution of family support systems reaffirms the importance of caregivers in promoting children's educational participation through emotional support, provision of basic needs, and sustained engagement with schooling. Equally, the significance of community support systems demonstrates that educational inclusion extends beyond the school and family to encompass broader community structures that facilitate child protection, advocacy, resource mobilization, and social reintegration.

In relation to the collaborative leadership theory, the above findings reflect the role of collaborative leadership in bridging the gap between collaboration and action. Collaboration generates ideas, resources, and shared commitments, but leadership determines whether these inputs are effectively transformed into systems. This reinforces the argument that collaboration without leadership risks remaining symbolic rather than functional (Harris & Jones, 2025). Additionally, collaborative leadership enhances the availability and accessibility of protective resources, thereby strengthening children's capacity to cope with adversity and remain engaged in education. By addressing education-related risk factors and providing mental health and financial support, stakeholders can enhance the resilience of these children. The relationship between collaboration and support systems is vital, as coordinated efforts can facilitate reunification with families and promote the well-being and safety of at-risk children (Mhizha, 2024).

Collectively, the findings reinforce the argument that educational inclusion for children in street situations is best achieved through integrated support systems built upon effective stakeholder collaboration. The study therefore contributes to inclusive education scholarship by demonstrating that collaborative efforts become meaningful when they are institutionalized through coordinated school, family, and community support systems that respond to the multiple realities of children in street situations.

6. Recommendations

This paper recommends to the government of Uganda through her Ministries, specifically the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, school leaders, civil society organizations, and development partners to institutionalize collaborative support systems that operate at the school, family, and community levels. Schools should be strengthened as collaborative hubs by

establishing inclusion teams comprising teachers, school leaders, social workers, caregivers, local government representatives, and community-based organizations to coordinate learner identification, psychosocial support, reintegration, and retention initiatives. At the family level, governments and development partners should invest in parenting education, family counseling, social protection programmes, and livelihood improvement initiatives that strengthen caregivers' capacity to support children's education. Community support should be institutionalized through child protection committees, community education advocates, faith-based organizations, cultural leaders, and local councils that promote awareness of inclusive education, identify vulnerable children, mobilize local resources, and strengthen social accountability for children's schooling. Finally, education policies should move beyond emphasizing stakeholder collaboration as an end in itself and instead establish measurable standards for collaborative support systems, ensuring that partnerships are translated into coordinated interventions capable of improving access, participation, retention, and successful educational outcomes for children in street situations.

7. Limitations

The study was cross-sectional in nature, which allowed for identification of significant relationships but did not establish causal effects over time. Future research could adopt a longitudinal design to provide greater insight into how collaborative support systems evolve and whether their impact on educational inclusion remains sustainable. Additionally, because the research focuses exclusively on Kampala District, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings to other regions with different social, economic, or institutional conditions. However, future research comparing multiple regions or countries could strengthen the external validity of the proposed framework and identify context-specific factors influencing collaboration.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal interests that could influence the findings in this paper.

About the Author(s)

Annah Atuhaire is a PhD student offering Education Research and Evaluation at the Department of Educational Management and Policy Studies, School of Education, Moi University, Kenya, under the East and South African-German Centre for Excellence for Education Research Methodologies and Management (CERM-ESA) scholarship. She holds a Bachelor of Arts with Education (Economics and Geography) from Bishop Stuart University and a Master's Degree in Educational Research from Moi University, Kenya, and a postgraduate diploma in monitoring and evaluation from Uganda Management Institute. Her research interests include educational research methodologies with a focus on inclusive education for children in vulnerable circumstances, aimed at advancing evidence-based educational practices and policy development. She is currently a lecturer at Bishop Stuart University, Western Uganda, under the Department of Economics, Statistics, Tourism and Management, teaching research methodologies and management-related courses both at undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

ORCID: orcid.org/0009-0004-8032-0879

John Mugun Boit is a Professor of Higher Education Policy and Economics of Education at Moi University, Kenya. He holds a PhD and M.Ed. from the University of Bristol (UK) and a B.Ed. from the University of Nairobi. His research interests include educational financing, institutional access, gender equity, and education policy in developing countries. He has published peer-reviewed work and authored textbooks in educational management and research methods. Prof. Boit serves on the University Senate at Moi University and contributes to doctoral training in quantitative research methodologies.

ORCID: orcid.org/0009-0001-1620-8231

Sammy Chumba is an Associate Professor and holds PhD in Educational Management. He taught Chemistry and Mathematics and served as High School Principal in various schools before joining Moi University in the year 2008. Since then, he has taught Educational Management and Research courses both at undergraduate and post graduate level inclined towards quantitative methods. Currently he is The Associate Dean in the school of Postgraduate studies, Research and Innovation.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3175-8167>

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