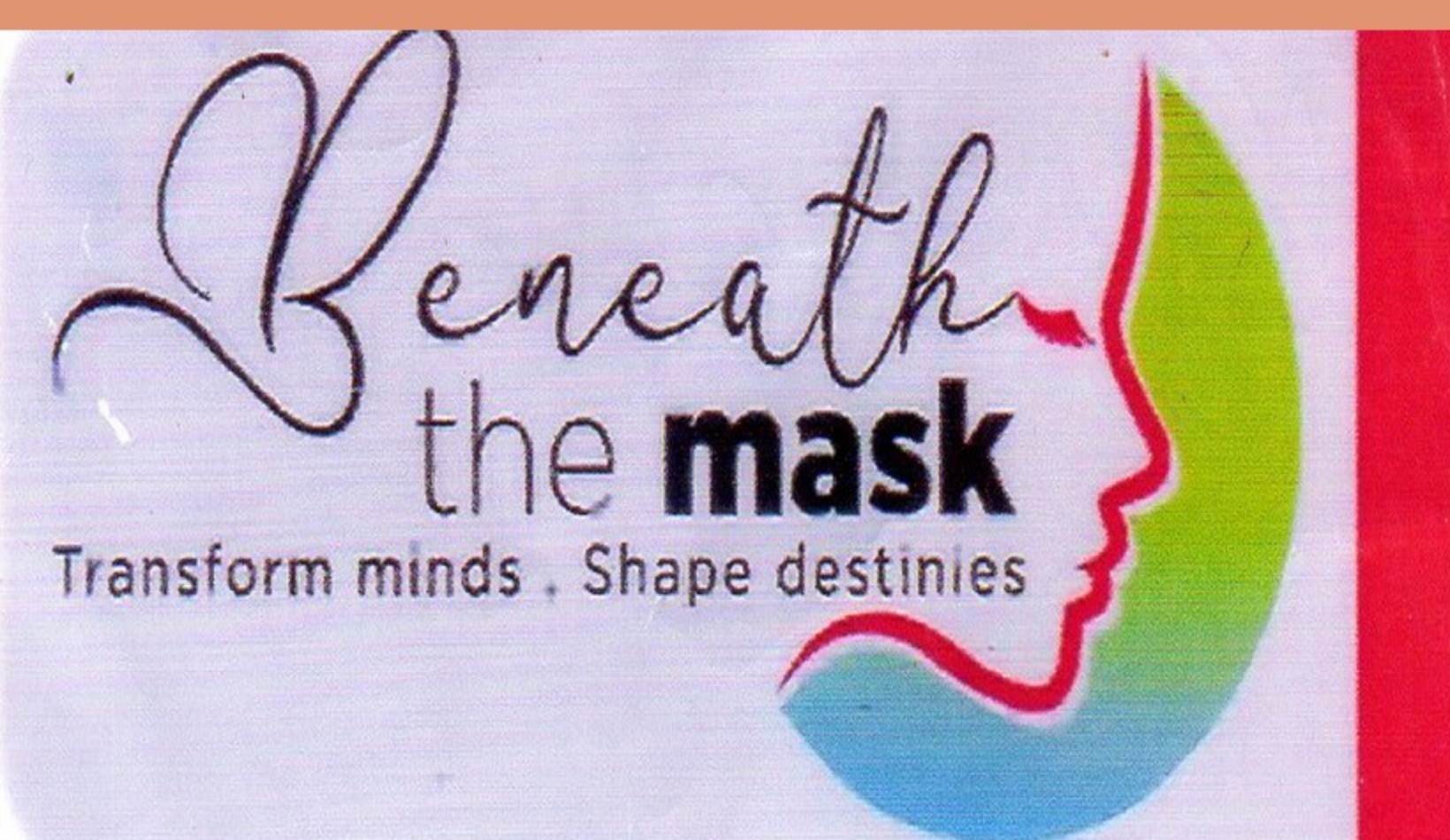




Slum primary school dropout in relation to Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Abuse (ADSA): a case of Murogi slums in Nakuru, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

* Alcohol, drug and substance abuse (ADSA) is prevalent among vulnerable slum communities. Not only does this behaviour expose the users to personal threat, it also exposes their progeny to risk, life threats & a poor quality of life. Recent work by Mugisha (2006), pointed that not all children in the urban population benefit from urban lifestyles. Children in the slum areas were cited as more likely to suffer school dropout than children in the rural areas due to factors like disease and vulnerability to sexual activity.

* A research by the University of Nairobi observed that "drugs and substance abuse is a problem that has raised concern all over the world especially among the youth in and out of school. It impacts negatively on the academic, social psychological and physical development among the abusers."

* Progeny's of slum dwellers are at risk of dropping out of school due to these environmental factors revolving around Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Abuse (ADSA)

INTRODUCTION

* My personal observation is that the largest billboards in Kenyan towns are liquor billboards. It was a concern for me to see two alcohol billboards inside one of our university grounds. A recent report on brand performances by branddirectory.com.kenya put Tusker beer on top of the list with 97.1% profits explaining somewhat the rising consumption of alcohol in Kenya.

* An estimated 800 families according to local authorities live in a small slum Kwa Murogi slum in Nakuru County. These families grapple with poverty, poor drainage systems and infrastructure and an increase in exposure to alcohol, drugs and substance use and abuse. Parents raising children in this slum are often intoxicated mostly to suppress the pain of poverty. The community models ADSA to the children in this closed community from a very early age. Some of the children are born of intoxicated parents which may predispose them to drug use and addiction. "According to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), a person's genetic make up accounts for roughly half of their risk for developing an Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). However, environmental influences (including how those exposures interact with a person's genes) also play a significant role.

* Other increasing risks include continued Primary School Dropout (PSD) which is compounded by other factors that accompany ADSA.

* This research sought to investigate the impact of ADSA on PSD.

METHODOLOGY

* The research used inductive thematic analysis and analyzed the data using atlas.ti tool.

* The research used conveniently sampled groups and used interviews and open-ended surveys to collect data.

* The research conveniently sampled a total of 130 respondents. Six groups were interviewed: 70 learners in different grades and 12 teachers from one of two public schools in the neighbourhood through surveys.

* 40 parents, 3 social workers, and 2 county officers were interviewed during an annual one week prayer/street walk around the slum in partnership with my local church.

RESULTS

Figure 1: Interview with parents.

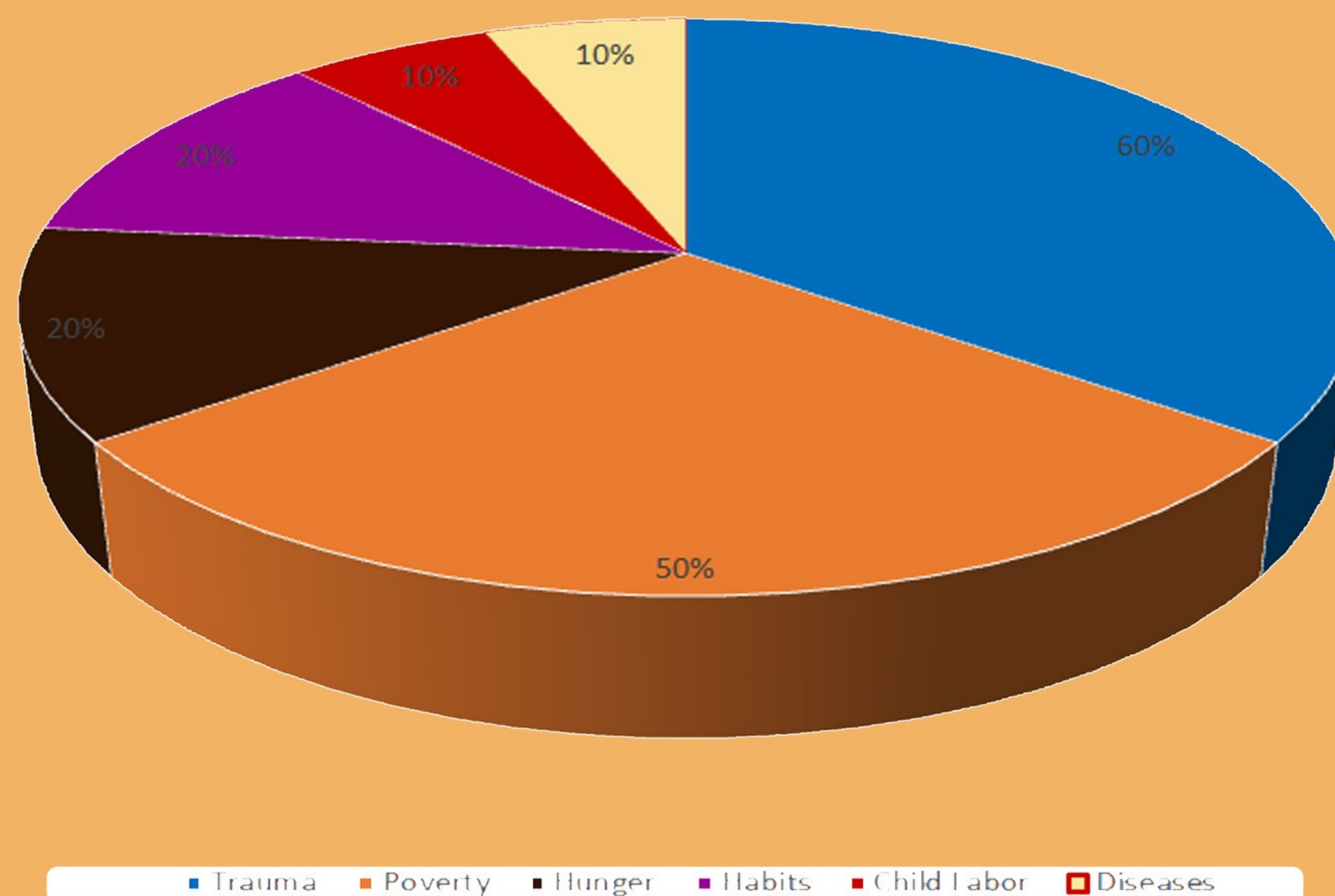


Figure 2: Interview with teacher and learners

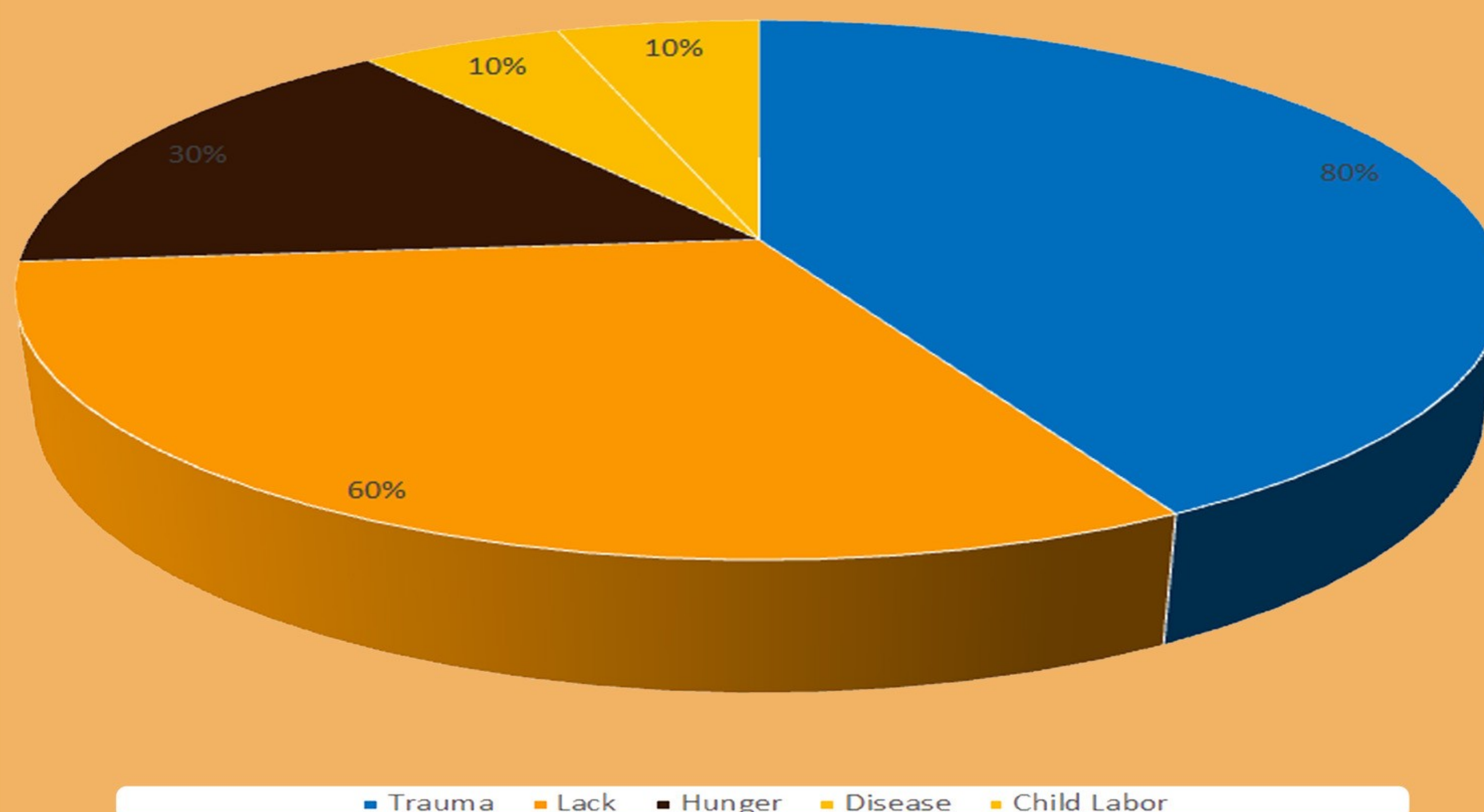


Figure 3: Interview with county officers and social workers.

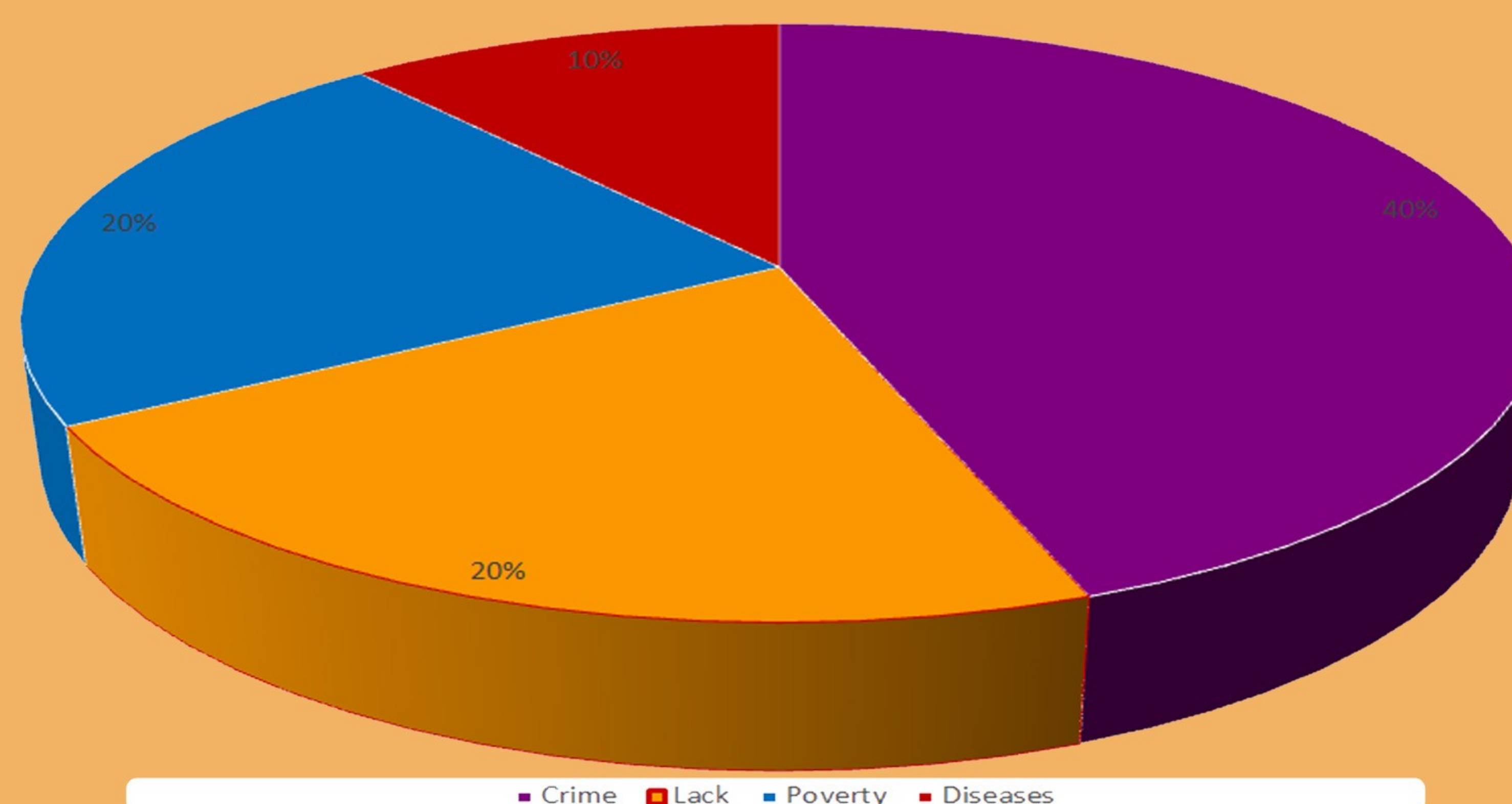


Figure 4: Environmental factors associated and linked to PSD.

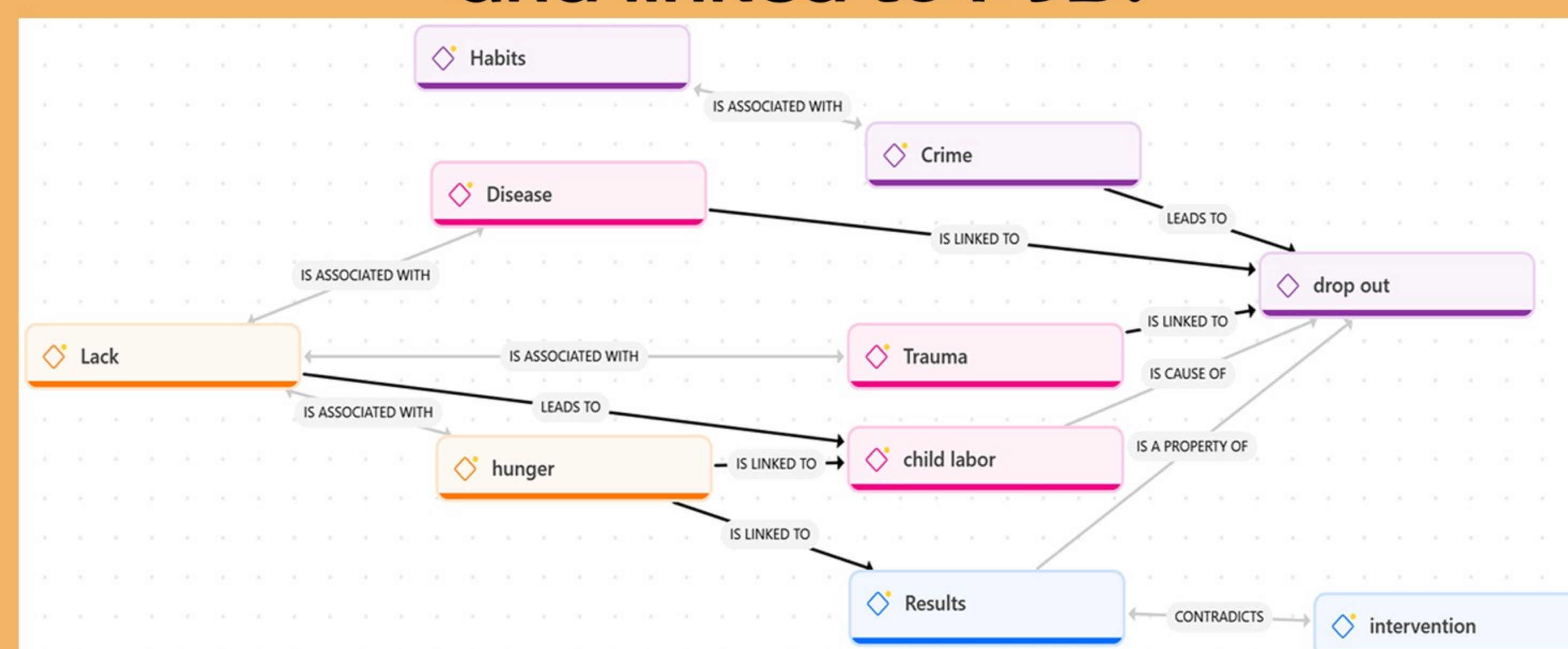
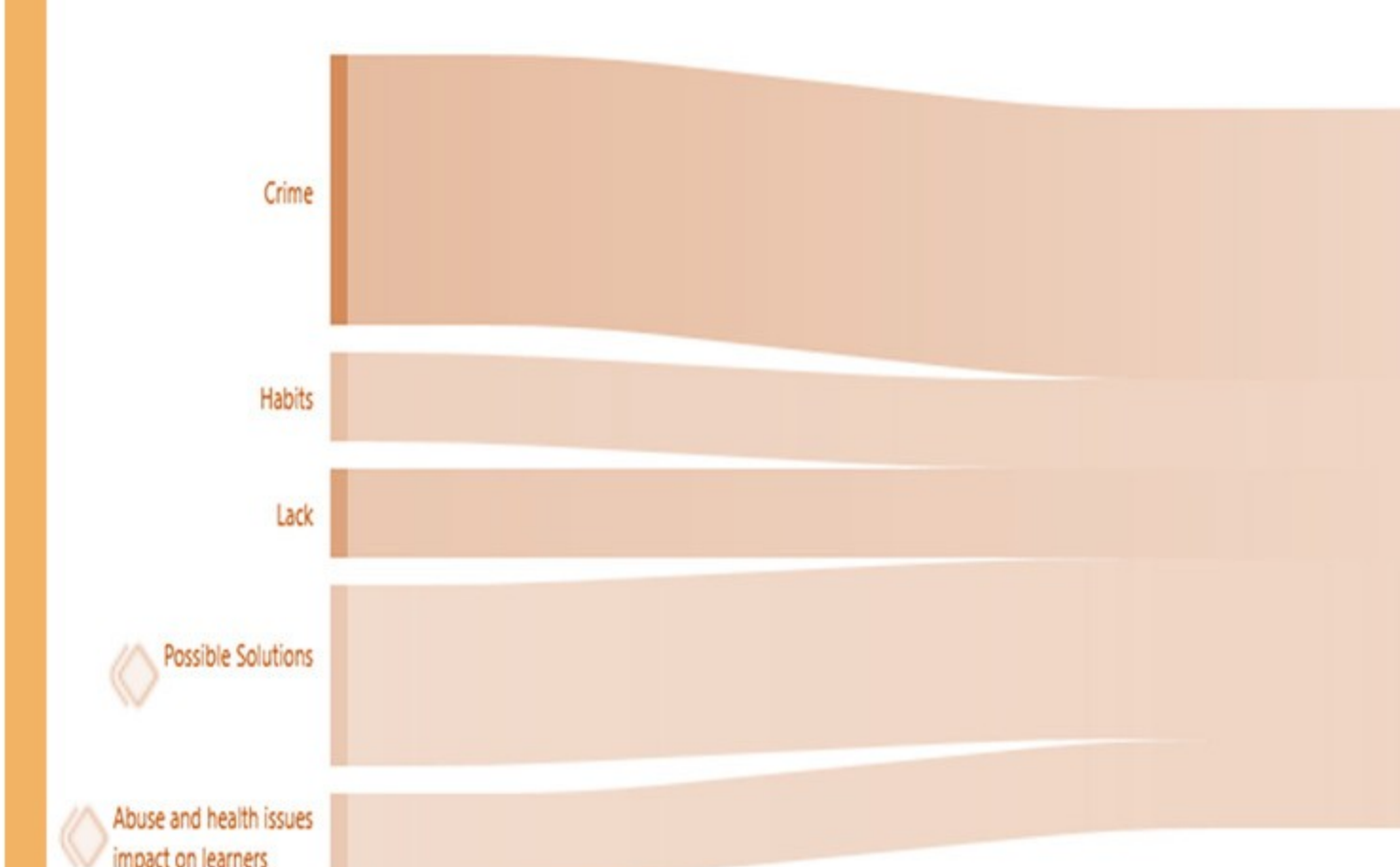


Figure 5: Government and intervention.



DISCUSSION

* Large population of youths in informal settlements in Kenya are involved in a number of social vices... A study carried out in Mathare slums in Nairobi by Kibet Florence indicated that "the abuse of substances leads to addiction, which increases healthcare costs, reduces productivity, contributing to crime, and causes social and familial disruptions.

* This research targeted those who are already in use of substances in Kwa - Murogi slums.

* The research intended to investigate if ADSA has any impact on slum primary drop out.

* Whereas the main focus was ADSA direct impact on school dropout it is clear that numerous other environmental factors actually influence primary school attendance and dropout.

* Research findings figure 4 shows other contributing factors that are linked and associated to ADSA which in turn leads and causes Primary School Dropouts (PSD) in the slum.

* There is hope that this situation would be changed. Figure 5 shows the government intervention on the environmental factors related to ADSA and PSD.

CONCLUSION

* Primary School Dropout (PSD) is directly and indirectly linked to ADSA and other influencing factors connected to ADSA.

* Trauma and poverty were top drivers to ADSA which causes increased school drop out.

RECOMENDATIONS

* **Increased government participation:** The government should increase participation in diminishing the indirect causes linked to ADSA and PSD.

* **Availing professional counsellors:** It should be mandatory for any public school serving in a vulnerable community to have a professional school counsellor.

* **Partnerships :** The government should partner with other stakeholders to restore the dignity of the vulnerable victims of addiction through rehabilitation.

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