Fafo

Anne Hatløy and Ingunn Bjørkhaug (eds.)

Zimbabwean Children on the Move

Faforeport 2024:29

Photo: Colourbox

Zimbabwean Children on the Move

Children traveling alone are often exposed to varying degrees of vulnerability on the road. In this report commissioned by UNICEF Zimbabwe, we explore why children leave their place of origin and move internally within Zimbabwe or across borders. We also seek to understand the coping mechanisms they employ. While authorities have laws in place to protect these children, they face challenges in effectively safeguarding them at different stages of their journey.

The research foundation for this report based on primary data collection through qualitative methods involving Zimbabwean children who have left their place of origin and were encountered either in Zimbabwe or South Africa, in addition to an overview of stakeholders providing services to these children, a literature review and an examination of the policy framework for this group in both Zimbabwe and South Africa.

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Content

List of abbreviations

ACERWC	The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AU	African Union
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
BID/BIP	Best interest determination/procedures
CBD	Central business district (Johannesburg)
CHR	Centre for Rural Health
COM	Children on the move
COPAZ	Community Organisation for Poverty Alleviation in Zimbabwe
CPS	Child Protections Society, Zimbabwe
CRC	The Convention on the Rights of the Child
CYCC	Child and youth care centres
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early childhood development
FDCY	Forcibly displaced children and youth
FGD	Focus group discussion
GNP	Gross national budget
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICESCR	The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDI	In-depth interview
IDP	Internally displaced people
IDTR	Identification, family tracing and reunification
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
LHR	Lawyers for Human Rights
MoPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
MoPSLSW	Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare
MVC	Most vulnerable children
NCMS	National Case Management System
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NNSSF	National Norms and Standard for School Funding Policy
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Official development assistance
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PEPFAR	U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS relief
PSC	Provincial Steering Committee
PSS	Psychosocial support
PVO	Private voluntary organisation
RMRP	Refugee and Migrant Rights Programme

RSC	Research support centre
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACO	The Southern Africa Coordination Office
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCSA	Save the Children South Africa
SOP	Standard operating procedures
TdH	Terre des Hommes
UMC	Unaccompanied migrant children
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USMC	Unaccompanied and separated migrant children
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
ZEP	Zimbabwe exemption permits

Preface

Children traveling alone often face significant vulnerabilities on the road. This report, commissioned by UNICEF Zimbabwe, delves into the reasons behind why children leave their homes and migrate either within Zimbabwe or across its borders. Additionally, we examine the ways the children find to cope within their circumstances. Despite existing laws intended to protect unaccompanied migrants, authorities encounter substantial challenges in ensuring their safety throughout the different stages of their journey.

The research foundation for this report based on primary data collection through qualitative methods involving Zimbabwean children who have left their place of origin and were encountered either in Zimbabwe or South Africa, in addition to an overview of stakeholders providing services to these children, a literature review and an examination of the policy framework for this group in both Zimbabwe and South Africa.

This project has been led by Fafo in collaboration with the University of Zimbabwe and the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Fafo extends its gratitude to all participants involved in this study. Special thanks go to the principal investigators: Clara Haruzivishe in Zimbabwe, along with her team members Tanatswa Silvanus Chineka and Virginia Dube, and Christiane Horwood in South Africa, with her team members Lyn Haskins, Sphindile Mapumulo, and Silondile Pinkie Luthuli, as well as their fieldworkers Bridget Joyce Machaka and Lisa Wadzani Kashiri.

We also express our appreciation to the UNICEF team for initiating the process of working with this group of children, who are vulnerable yet also demonstrate ways to manage many of the challenges they face on route. Special thanks go to Pierre Ferry, Yongshan He, and Jeremiah Chinodya. Fafo acknowledges the stakeholder group that has provided valuable feedback and input through both physical and digital meetings.

In the final stages of preparing this report, Mina Fosse Kristoffersen assisted with the final edits. Tone Sommerfelt served as an external reviewer, and her comments and insights were highly valued. Language editing was performed by Viv O'Neill, who also provided useful comments to ensure consistency in the text. The final lay-out of the report has been conducted by Sofie Steensnæs Engedal at the information office in Fafo.

Most importantly, we extend our gratitude to the children who participated as respondents in this study. Their experiences and insights have greatly enhanced our understanding of their living conditions and how they navigate the challenging circumstances they face.

It is crucial to note that any errors, ambiguities, or misunderstandings in this report are the sole responsibility of Fafo.

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Anne Hatløy and Ingunn Bjørkhaug

Author Affiliations

Fafo

Anne Hatløy (Principal Investigator – PI)

Ingunn Bjørkhaug

Mina Kristoffersen

Centre for Rural Health, University of KwaZulu Natal

Christiane Horwood (PI, South Africa)

Lyn Haskins

Silondile Pinkie Luthuli

Sphindile Mapumulo

Bridget Machaka

Faculty of Medicine and Health Science, University of Zimbabwe

Clara Haruzivishe (PI, Zimbabwe)

Tanatswa Silvanus Chineka

Virgininia Mawerewere

Summary

The study aims to comprehensively explore the dynamics of children on the move in Zimbabwe, including both internal migration within the country and trans-border migration, particularly focusing on South Africa. It focuses on push and pull factors and vulnerability, as well as resilience and coping mechanisms. Methodologically, it encompasses a study with unaccompanied migrant children, a desk study of scientific literature on children on the move, a review of stakeholders working with these children, and a policy analysis.

A key objective of this study is to understand the diverse migration routes, exploring the reasons behind the children's movement decisions, the challenges they face, and their coping mechanisms. The study examines the roles of family, friends, and organisations in these migration journeys. It assesses how children perceive their experiences in terms of success or failure, and their perceptions about returning to their place of origin, or their willingness to remain either on the street, in transit, or to find new ways of living in South Africa.

This study analyses the children's ability to make choices and exercise agency. By doing so, it sheds light on the complexities of child migration, addressing the myriad challenges these children face, and underlining the need for comprehensive protection mechanisms. The aim of this study is not only to inform stakeholders but also to build upon and enrich the existing institutional knowledge base. This will facilitate discussions on the effectiveness of current and future interventions and programmes, leading to more targeted strategies reflecting the diversity of the needs among the unaccompanied migrating children.

Key findings from the survey of unaccompanied migrant children

The study on unaccompanied child migrants from Zimbabwe to South Africa, involving 61 children aged 12-19 years, offers comprehensive insight into their experiences and challenges. These children, who were often not living with their biological parents, guardians or significant adults describe living lives that are often marked by harsh realities, including street living or exploitative work. Their migration is driven by various factors: family dysfunction (evidenced by parental death, abandonment, or substance abuse), severe poverty, hunger, and lack of access to appropriate educational opportunities. These push factors, combined with hopes for better life prospects, educational and work opportunities, and the desire to reunite with family or friends, motivated their journey to South Africa.

Economic hardship and educational barriers critically influenced children’s decision to migrate. In Zimbabwe, many children lived without necessities or means to pay school fees, driving them to seek opportunities elsewhere. Additionally, escaping various forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, and neglect, was significant. For some, these pull factors included elements of adventure and a desire to see new places. However, not all children migrated to or across the South African border. Some moved from rural to urban areas within Zimbabwe, aiming for a better future. Among the urban migrants

some lacked migration aspirations, knowledge, or funds to continue elsewhere. Those who embarked on the migration journey prepared differently, with some planning thoroughly and others making spontaneous decisions in response to immediate crises. Economic support was often needed to start the journey, and many children required additional income en route.

Experiences of the journey included financial constraints, complex travel logistics, and risky border crossings. Despite these challenges, which often placed the children in vulnerable situations, they demonstrated the ability to find solutions to their immediate challenges. Those who reached South Africa described varied experiences: while some find supportive environments and shelter along the way, others struggled with abuse, exploitation, and poor living conditions. However, these hardships did not automatically render the idea of returning home as the preferable option. Narratives of some of the children articulate that, as long as conditions at home remain poor, the possibility of potentially improving future prospects in South Africa was more appealing than returning to a hopeless situation.

The study identifies three distinct groups of migrant children in the context of Zimbabwe:

- The first group consists of children who migrate from rural areas to urban centers such as Harare or Bulawayo in search of improved economic and social conditions. Many of these children end up living on the streets and develop a range of strategies for survival.
- The second group includes children who establish their more or less permanent residence in the borderlands between Zimbabwe and South Africa. They engage in frequent movements back and forth across the border, demonstrating resilience and adaptability through informal business activities.
- The third group comprises children who embark on the perilous journey across national borders into South Africa, facing various risks and uncertainties in search of a better future.

Two countries with different legal and policy frameworks

Zimbabwe and South Africa have comprehensive legal frameworks for children's rights, including unaccompanied or foreign children. However, these frameworks are not sufficient to meet the specific needs nor adequately address the complex realities of unaccompanied children on the move, leading to limited access to education, healthcare, and social services, and potentially increased vulnerability to unsafe conditions.

Both countries face the challenge of child labour due to poverty. Education is a recognised right in both countries, but unaccompanied children face barriers like school fees in Zimbabwe and documentation issues in South Africa. Health service access is also limited for these children due to documentation problems in South Africa and unclear healthcare policies in Zimbabwe. Social services exist but are not fully accessible to unaccompanied children, especially in South Africa, where they are mostly limited to citizens and asylum seekers, with children requiring involvement of a parent to access services.

Thus, while South Africa and Zimbabwe have laws to protect children, they face challenges in implementing these protections to effectively address the unique challenges faced by unaccompanied children on the move, especially in areas of social protection, education, healthcare, and safe migration.

Diverse needs and recommendations

Being children on the move entails several experiences and needs, shaped by factors like their age, place of origin, and the reasons why they migrated. Younger children might need more nurturing and guidance, while teenagers often look for educational and skill-building opportunities. The backgrounds and lived experiences reported by children influenced how they find ways to adapt to the journey and what they need. For example, children escaping violence and abuse may have different emotional and psychological needs compared to the children migrating for economic reasons. This diversity highlights the importance of understanding and responding to the children based on the circumstances they face. It is also worth noting that children's ability to devise solutions is shaped by a constrained scope for action. Consequently, children often make decisions within a limited timeframe, focusing on resolving their immediate situation. As a result, long-term planning is frequently beyond their capability in such environments.

There is no easy one-size-fits-all solution for the unaccompanied migrating children, and the approach is challenged by different legal frameworks across the borders. For stakeholders working with child migrants, adopting a universal approach to assistance might therefore not be effective. What might be needed are adapted interventions that consider the individual backgrounds and experiences of each child. These plans could encompass educational support tailored to different learning levels and languages, legal assistance to help navigate immigration processes, and psychosocial support to address any trauma or stress experienced; for others, it can be to facilitate work-related experiences and part- or full-time work. The aim is to meet the immediate needs of the child migrants while also supporting their long-term development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the migration of unaccompanied children within and from Zimbabwe to South Africa is a complex phenomenon. Addressing this intricate issue is neither simple nor straightforward. It involves children who come from dire circumstances and necessitates both their protection and empowerment for a better future. Their lives are often influenced by economic disparities, family situations, and limited opportunities at the place of origin. However, the study underscores the children’s ability to adapt to their given circumstances, but also how this needs vary for different children, thus emphasising the need for coordinated policies and interventions to secure their well-being. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of improving legal and policy frameworks in both countries to better protect the rights of undocumented children on the move.

1 INTRODUCTION

Anne Hatløy, Ingunn Bjørkhaug, Christiane Horwood

Over the last two decades, Zimbabwe has experienced a severe economic and social breakdown, leading to a significant increase in child migration (Crush, Chikanda, & Tawodzera, 2015). This report, commissioned by UNICEF and conducted by a research team from Norway, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, explores this complex issue. Many children in Zimbabwe have embarked on journeys, often unaccompanied, within and across borders, in pursuit of a better life. This phenomenon, influenced by a mix of socioeconomic, political, and personal factors, is the focus of our study. We aim to dissect the various mechanisms driving child migration, examining both the push and pull factors and their implications for the well-being and protection of unaccompanied minors.

A prominent theme in this report is the duality of the lived experiences for unaccompanied child migrants in and from Zimbabwe. It reflects not only the challenges these children face, but also their resilience and agency. Driven by factors such as economic disparities, fragile family structures, and lack of economic opportunities, children move from rural to urban areas within Zimbabwe and across borders, particularly to South Africa. South Africa, perceived as a land of better prospects due to its developed infrastructure and economic opportunities, is a common destination. However, this migration journey exposes children to various vulnerabilities, including trafficking, exploitation, and increased poverty. Nonetheless, it also represents an attempt to escape from a life that the children perceive as having no hope in their place of origin.

The report focuses on unaccompanied migrant children aged 12–17 years who travel within Zimbabwe or across the border to South Africa. UNICEF emphasises the vulnerability of these children and their need for international protection. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, unaccompanied children are those separated from both parents and other relatives and not cared for by a responsible adult (IDAC, 2023). This study includes children below the age of 18 years who have migrated internally or crossed the border, without a parent or legal guardian. We refer to them as ‘unaccompanied migrant children’ or ‘unaccompanied children on the move’, without distinguishing between the two terms.

Zimbabwe and South Africa have legal frameworks to protect children, but they exhibit gaps in addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by unaccompanied children or those on the move. Zimbabwe’s policies lack comprehensive coverage for these children, especially in the areas of unsafe migration, education, healthcare, and social protection. South Africa, while acknowledging children’s rights in its constitution and various legal acts, still faces challenges in the practical implementation and coordination of these laws, particularly regarding unaccompanied children’s access to education, healthcare, and social services.

Our primary objective was to investigate the factors influencing child migration within and across Zimbabwe's borders. This study was not intended to challenge the extensive local knowledge of stakeholders working with this population, but to complement and expand upon it. We offer an overview of stakeholders working in this area and present the services they provide to the children. This report does not provide definitive answers, as each child's migration experience is unique, with distinct challenges and needs. However, we aim to strengthen the dialogue and rethink some approaches to enhance the work being done to improve the lives and prospects of these young children. Our empirical data, gathered through qualitative methodology and in-depth interviews with child migrants, provides a platform for these children to share their lived experiences, ensuring their voices are heard in the development of policies and interventions.

To contextualise this study within the current debate, and to provide an overview of the current knowledge base, we conducted a literature review. The review investigates existing interventions, broader socio-political dynamics shaping children's migration patterns, and experiences they face on their journey across borders, as well as the opportunities and challenges at their destinations. This report challenges the space between viewing children as either independent agents or as vulnerable victims, proposing a grey zone between the two perspectives. Our findings indicate that unaccompanied children who migrate inhabit a complex space characterised by a combination of vulnerability and agency; migrating children experience both challenges linked to their vulnerability and active decision-making abilities inherent to agency and ability to cope, even under severe circumstances.

The empirical findings of this research confirm that many children in Zimbabwe leave their place of origin due to precarious conditions. They flee dysfunctional families, poverty, and abuse. In contrast to having to pay school fees in Zimbabwe, education in South Africa is free, a significant pull factor for many children. The aspiration for education and work was a key reason reported by children for their journey to South Africa. Thus, their migration was driven not only by dire need and poverty, but also by the dream of something better beyond the borders. This report shows that some children have connections in South Africa who informed their choice to travel and who sponsored their journey. During their journey, many migrating children received help in various forms, such as money, food, or practical assistance.

Upon entering South Africa, some children succeeded, while others found themselves in challenging circumstances, facing hunger and living on the streets or in shelters. However, some children managed to reach some of their aims to improve their life situation. Migrating children get involved in various types of work, including selling food, working at taxi or bus ranks, loading suitcases, or taking up construction work. Girls, in some cases, resorted to the sex trade to support themselves. The migration stories differ from one individual. Improved conditions in their home setting seem to be a trigger for wishes to return.

The recommendations to stakeholders in this report focus on the welfare of migrant children in Zimbabwe and South Africa. They underscore the importance of understanding the particularly challenging situation of unaccompanied children, who find

themselves doubly marginalised: excluded from the immigration system due to their unaccompanied status and from social services owing to their lack of legal status. Interventions to support this population involve creating care arrangements sensitive to the real-life experiences of these children. One suggestion is to facilitate part-time work opportunities for older children, to enable their self-sufficiency and integration into society, either in transit or at their destination.

Furthermore, this report emphasises the need to strengthen services and improve access to justice for minors who are victims of sexual or gender-based violence. This is a critical area where immediate action can significantly impact these vulnerable children's lives. Additionally, we argue for implementing mechanisms to identify and pursue long-term solutions, including creating more avenues for these children to secure legal status. Such measures are essential for ensuring the safety and well-being of the children, addressing their specific needs, and fostering an environment where they can grow and thrive. In cases where returning the children to their place of origin is considered a viable option, this should be done in communication with the children, ensuring they have the right to influence decisions concerning their own lives. Moreover, such interventions must align with core principles of international human rights that prohibit states from returning individuals to places where they may be at risk of irreparable harm. Children who have fled abuse and poverty may be re-exposed to such harmful conditions if repatriated back to the same household or family settings they once left.

1.1 Report outline

The report is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the methodology used. Chapter 3 is a literature review that explores what has been written in the academic literature about children migrating on their own in Zimbabwe and across the border to South Africa. Chapter 4 presents the empirical data collected in this study. Here the stories of the children are presented from when they start preparing for leaving, their experiences along the journey, and their lives at the destination. Chapter 5 gives an overview of the different stakeholders working with children on the move in Zimbabwe and South Africa, and the different services they offer. Chapter 6 presents the legal frameworks and policies related to unaccompanied migrant children in the two countries. Chapter 7 summarises the findings from the different chapters and gives recommendations for the work forward.

2 METHODS

Anne Hatløy, Christiane Horwood, Clara Haruzivishe, Ingunn Bjørkhaug, Lyn Haskins, Sphindile Mapumulo, Tanatswa Silvanus Chineka, Virgininia Mawerewere

This study aims to give an in depth understanding of Zimbabwean children who migrate unaccompanied. It is based on in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with the target study population and with parents of these children. In addition, we have done a literature review and a stakeholder mapping; we have also investigated the legal and policy framework concerning children on the move. A Steering Committee, set up by UNICEF Zimbabwe, was established in Harare, on 22 February 2023, to create a forum for all organisations working with children on the move, especially as the Zimbabwe exemption permits (ZEP) allowing Zimbabwe migrants rights in South Africa were about to expire.

In this chapter, we will describe the methodology used in accessing these sources of data.

2.1 Literature review

The review followed the framework for conducting scoping reviews as outlined by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), which is structured around five key steps. To enhance the quality of the review, the research team implemented modifications to these established steps.

Step 1: Developing the research questions for the literature review

The following questions were formulated after the research team spent time reading selected literature on unaccompanied children.

The research questions guiding the literature review were:

1. What are the experiences and challenges faced by unaccompanied children who migrate internally within Zimbabwe and externally across its borders?
2. Which factors play a role in influencing the migration of unaccompanied children within and across Zimbabwe's borders?
3. What are the discernible migration routes used by unaccompanied children within and across Zimbabwe's borders?

Step 2: Identifying relevant studies

Relevant studies were identified by searching electronic academic databases: Ebscohost, Web of Science, Francis & Taylor, Scopus, and Google Scholar. During the search, the research team used the following search terms: "children migration" OR "children on the move" OR "undocumented children" OR "adolescent migration" OR "refugee minors" AND "Zimbabwe" OR "South Africa".

Step 3: Study selection

All the papers obtained from the search were imported to the web application called Rayyan to begin the process of title screening. As a first step, duplicates and papers that did not have one of the search terms in the title were excluded. After title screening, a reference list was sent to the research team to review and add other references they deemed important to include in the literature review. As a third step, the research team conducted abstract screening according to a series of inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria: Studies that met the following criteria were included:

- Studies written in English,
- Studies that focus on the migration of unaccompanied children,
- Studies that focus on unaccompanied children from the ages of 12–17 years,
- Studies published between January 2008 and March 2023; this criterion aimed to ensure a broad overview of how child migration has evolved over time,
- Studies that report on the experiences of migrating unaccompanied children within and across the borders of Zimbabwe.

Step 4: Charting the data

The research team developed a spreadsheet, according to key information about the migration journey(s), to chart data from reviewed papers. Each member of the research team conducted full-text screening of research papers and recorded findings into the spreadsheet.

Step 5: Collating, summarising, and reporting results

The research team used information recorded in the spreadsheet to summarise and report on key characteristics of the migration journey for unaccompanied children. The spreadsheet was also used as resource to develop themes in the early phase of the literature review writing process.

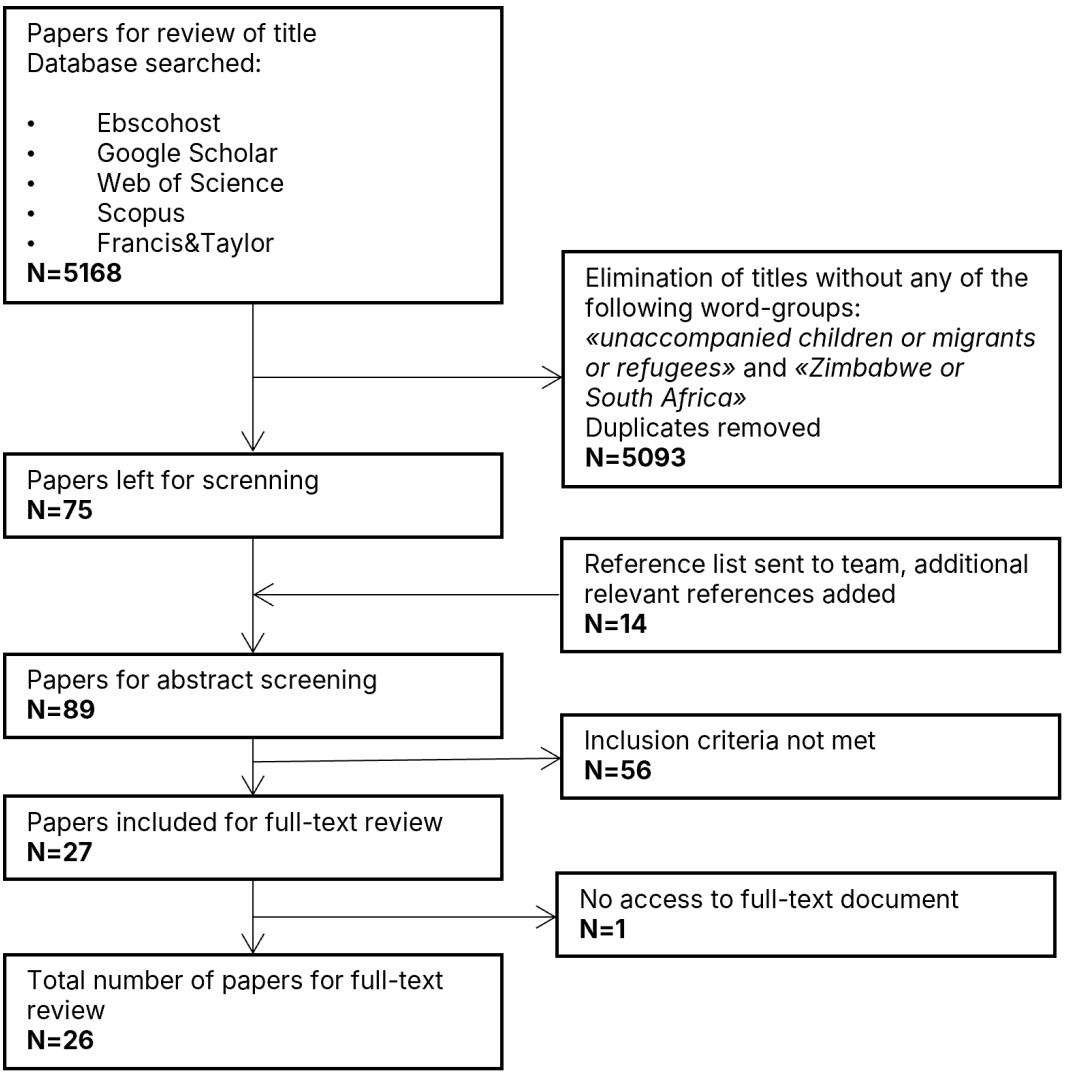
Expanded literature search rationale

In the initial phase of our research, a scoping review was conducted to identify relevant articles that specifically addressed unaccompanied migrant children within the contexts of Zimbabwe and South Africa. However, the number of studies discussing children's agency in the context of migrating children in Zimbabwe was limited, as is discussed in Chapter 3. Thus, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the shifting dynamics of being vulnerable and having agency, it became essential to broaden the theoretical framework of our study by expanding the scope of our literature search.

Recognising the complex nature of the concept of child agency, this study has adopted a more inclusive approach in its literature review. We have extended our search beyond the initial geographical focus on Zimbabwe and South Africa. This broader approach is driven by the need to capture a diverse range of perspectives that were not sufficiently explored in the context of these two countries. Therefore, by drawing on a wide range of literature, including but not limited to studies from Zimbabwe and South Africa, we aimed to explore from a broader perspective the debate about children's ability to make choices within a vulnerable life situation. This expanded search allowed us to

incorporate insights from various global contexts, thereby enriching our understanding and interpretation of child agency.

Figure 1 Flow diagram literature review



Through this expanded literature search, we aimed to uncover a more comprehensive understanding of child agency. This approach not only provides a broader theoretical base but also offers comparative insights that can be crucial in understanding how and why children in Zimbabwean contexts migrate. Ultimately, this approach can enhance the quality of our research findings and provide new insights into child agency among migrating children in Zimbabwe and South Africa, and thereby contribute to the academic discourse in this field.

The literature review (Chapter 3) starts with an examination of studies discussing agency and vulnerability among children on the move. This investigation will incorporate literature on, and extending beyond, the specific contexts of Zimbabwe and South Africa, as described above. Subsequently, the review delves into the various push and pull factors that drive children to migrate from rural areas to urban centres within Zimbabwe or across borders into South Africa. The final part of the review focuses on studies

related to the migration journey, encompassing aspects such as border delays, associated risks, and potential opportunities that arise in South Africa.

2.2 Qualitative data collection

This study focussed on the lived experiences of the children with migration experience themselves. In the study, we conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with children who have moved unaccompanied within Zimbabwe or have crossed the border to South Africa. In Zimbabwe, we have also conducted interviews with some parents whose children had migrated.

This study explored migration patterns of children mainly by collecting and analysing narratives on children's own migration experiences, and by identifying and exploring the variety of migration routes, the motivations and reasons behind movement decisions, the challenges encountered by children during their journeys and ways to overcome them, and the role of family, friends, and organisations, etc. We have asked questions about whether children perceive their own journey as a "success" or "failure", about returning to Zimbabwe, and why some children chose to return to their place of origin. We have analysed children's options and choices, their agency, and how they act under given circumstances, to understand their life choices and better understand how children from different backgrounds navigate within this terrain.

Target population

In line with Goncalves (2020), we broadly define migrant children as those "in search of survival, security, improved standards of living, education, economic opportunities, protection from exploitation, family reunification or a combination of these factors" (Goncalves 2020). We worked at different locations (see Map 1) to include both children on the move internally in Zimbabwe and those who had crossed international borders, and both children currently living away from their place of origin and those who had returned home. Data collection included:

- in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with children aged 12 to 17 at different locations,
- in-depth interviews with parents of adolescents who had left and/or had returned,
- interviews with stakeholders (social services, NGOs, and governmental organisations working with child migrants – see Chapter 5).

Fieldwork procedures

The fieldwork in Zimbabwe was organised by the University of Zimbabwe. The research team consisted of three researchers: one was fluent in both Shona and Ndebele, one fluent in Shona, and an administrative assistant organised all the recordings, appointments, and arranged tokens for participants. The team was trained and supervised by researchers from the Research Support Centre (RSC). The team conducted in-depth interviews with individual children as well as organising focus groups. In South Africa, the fieldwork was organised by Centre for Rural Health (CRH) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The research team consisted of two researchers who spoke both Ndebele and Shona, and who were recruited for this mission and trained and closely supervised by researchers from CRH.

Ethics

The study has been approved in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Norway by the following:

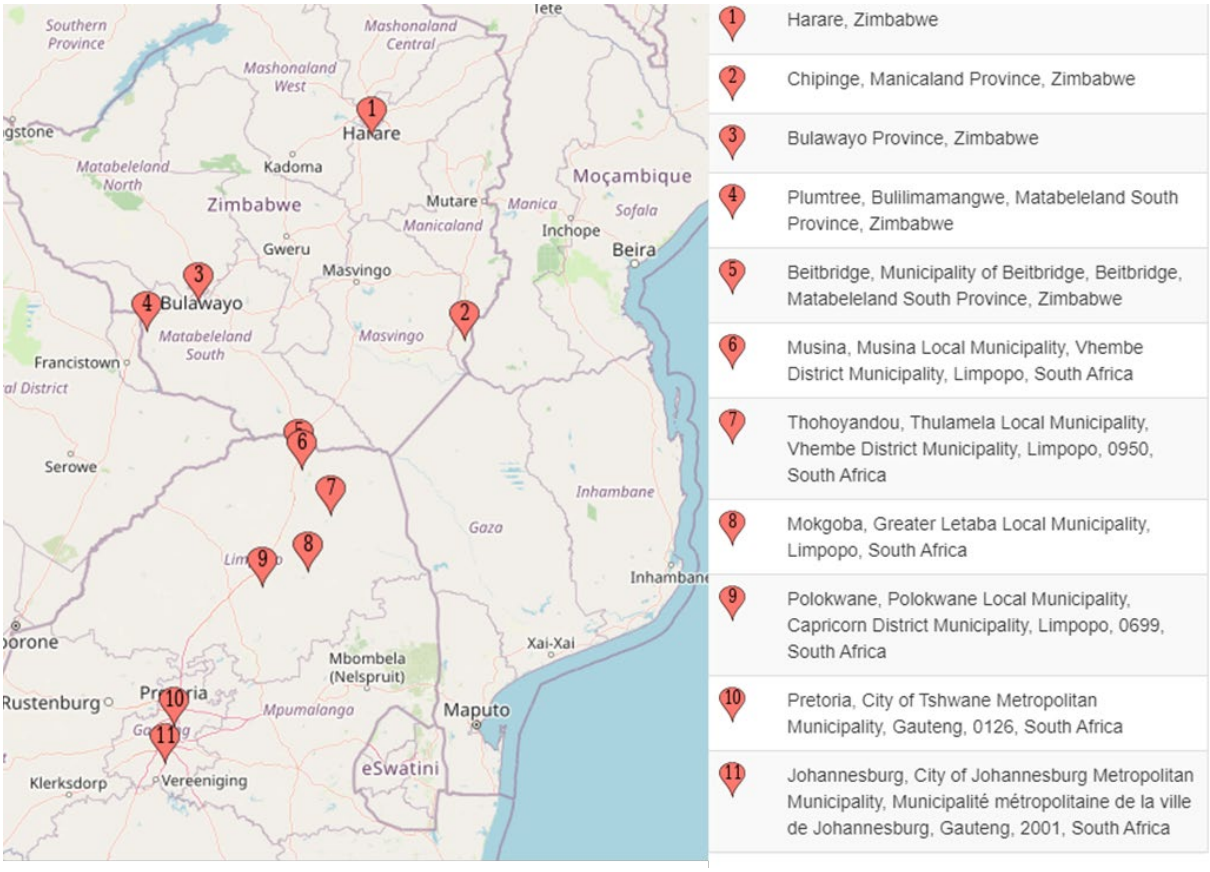
- Zimbabwe Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare 14.02.2023, LRFP ZIM 2022 9177252 (*Appendix 1a*),
- Zimbabwe Medical Research Council and Research Council of Zimbabwe 05.05.2023 MRCZ/A/2997 (*Appendix 1b and c*),
- University of KwaZulu-Natal 13.03.2023 HSSREC/00005203/2023 (*Appendix 1d*),
- SIKT, Norway 26.04.23 DPIA 138271 (*Appendix 1e*).

Most children provided written informed consent themselves – as approved by the ethics committees. A few children interviewed talked about their past experience and lived currently with a responsible adult. In such cases, the responsible adult provided written informed consent, and the child assented. All the interviews with children were conducted in accordance with approvals from national ethical committees. In-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted according to the interview and focus group discussion guides provided. Participatory techniques were used to encourage children to talk freely about their experiences without the formality of an interview. In particular, we used two participatory drawing techniques where children drew either a "day in their life" or a timeline of "my migration journey", which was followed by a discussion of the drawing. See Appendix 2 for interview guides, consent, and assent forms used in the study.

Study sites

Five data sites in Zimbabwe and two sites in South Africa were selected to collect data. In Zimbabwe, the sites selected were the three border towns of Chipinge, Plumtree, and Beitbridge, and the two main cities of Bulawayo and Harare. These sites were picked because most children on the move travel towards large cities and border towns if they intend to cross the borders. In South Africa, four locations in Limpopo and two locations in Gauteng were selected (see Map 1). Limpopo is the border area to Zimbabwe, with Musina as the main border town. In addition, Johannesburg and Pretoria in Gauteng were selected as main city areas.

Map 1 Study sites [1]



Study population

The study population was unaccompanied children who had left home between the ages of 12–17 years and were identified at the target sites or en route to their destinations. Children were accessed using a combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling, to identify participants with different experiences of migration, including those living in shelters, on the streets, and those who had returned and were living with their families. The five focus groups were organised with groups of children in the cities and from the border posts. See Table 1 for details.

[1] Map created from https://www.mapcustomizer.com/

Table 1 Study population

	In-depth interviews children	In-depth interviews parents	Focus group discussions
ZIMBABWE			
Beitbridge	8	4	
Bulawayo	8		
Chipinge	5		
Harare	4		1 (10 participants)
Plumtree	3		1 (3 participants)
Total Zimbabwe	***28***	***4***	***2***
SOUTH AFRICA			
Musina (Limpopo)	17		2 (4 + 4 participants)
Mokgoba (Tzaneen, (Limpopo)	3		
Moagetshi (Polokwane, (Limpopo)	1		1 (3 participants)
Thohoyandou (Limpopo)	1		
Johannesburg (Gauteng)	9		
Pretoria (Gauteng)	2		
Total South Africa	***33***		***3***
Total	61	4	5

Data collection procedures

In Zimbabwe government, through DSD and the office of the District Development Coordinator primarily provided guidance and assistance to locate the children. NGOs came in when they had a better working relationship with the children. In South Africa the data were collected with the assistance of local NGOs, shelters, and individuals working with children on the move. These organisations were identified by the Children on the Move Steering Committee, in the first instance, and additional local organisations were identified during data collection. Representatives from these organisations were contacted before the start of data collection and informed about the study; they were requested to provide support with identifying eligible participants. On arrival in the data collection sites, researchers approached relevant staff members from these organisations who put them in touch with eligible children, advised them about other people who could assist locally, and directed them to areas where unaccompanied migrant children were staying. Researchers approached children in these settings and screened them for eligibility and consent was requested to participate in an interview from all eligible children identified. Both eligible and non-eligible children were asked to identify other children who could be contacted and approached, as well as other places where

unaccompanied migrant children could be found, thereby using snowball sampling techniques. In addition, researchers directly approached children in the street or bus stations or garages, where children were commonly found.

Interviews were conducted at places and times that were convenient to participants; this included in hostels, in the research vehicle, or on the streets. To make the interviews more participatory, participants who preferred to express themselves through drawing rather than talking were provided with paper, pens, and crayons during the in-depth interviews. For FGDs, a variety of participatory techniques were used, including "my migration journey", a drawing voice (similar to photovoice using children's drawing to express themselves), and "a day in the life" of the child.

Challenges with recruitment and data collection

In Zimbabwe, the majority of the study participants were interviewed at the Bulawayo and Beitbridge areas. Among the 12 children interviewed in Bulawayo, there were four girls who were very difficult to contact to be interviewed. The researchers only managed to interview them at the fourth attempt. It was also difficult to get information on where the girls lived, since they were unwilling to divulge much about themselves. The three children who were interviewed in Plumtree had travelled from Zimbabwe into Botswana; one was en route to South Africa. They were, however, all detained for various periods in Botswana and eventually repatriated to a centre at Plumtree border. They were eventually sent back to their families at Maninji village in Plumtree.

The data collectors from Zimbabwe thought there were significant gendered disparities in the migration of boys and girls in Zimbabwe. Identifying and accessing girls on the move was markedly more difficult than boys. A tour of all the study sites in Zimbabwe (Chipinge, Harare, Bulawayo, and Plumtree) revealed that boys were quite visible, but girls less so. This led to some stakeholders (such as in Chipinge) arguing that there were no girls on the move who were unaccompanied. In contrast, Harare and Bulawayo stakeholders were aware of unaccompanied girls, but the dynamics surrounding their migration experience were quite complex, making these girls difficult to identify and access.

In discussion with stakeholders and some boys on the move regarding the welfare of unaccompanied girls on the move, interesting dynamics that compound the vulnerabilities of girl migrants were reported. It appeared that girls on the move are considered a form of asset, through which men and boys on the move assert dominance to increase their financial means. Boys on the move in Bulawayo told the Zimbabwe data collectors that girls usually spend their time during the day bathing and resting in preparation for their "night shifts". These same older migrant boys, and some men, said they then go to get these girls towards evening, to escort them to various bars and hotspots to find clients for sex. Further, it was asserted that the boys and men would not only help the girls find clients but would have a right to part of the proceeds. In turn, these girls would get some protection from these men and boys.

It appears the apparent invisibility of girls on the move is in part a survival strategy allowing them to navigate the complex socioeconomic dynamics they face daily. They

require protection from vices such as violence, and as such, these transactional relationships provided a layer of protection. It was, however, apparent that these survival partnerships are not void of abuse, as the boys and men refer to these girls as "belonging" to them, an expression which indicates underlying oppression and a lack of freedom on the part of the girls. The Zimbabwe data collectors had to navigate these "gatekeepers" to get information on the whereabouts of the unaccompanied girls. Success in reaching and interviewing girls on the move in Bulawayo was only realised after protracted efforts by stakeholders on behalf of the research team. Only in Beitbridge did the research team have fewer challenges recruiting participants through the assistance of local stakeholder. This was in part due to the location of Beitbridge; this made it easy for girls on the move to pursue other income-generating activities such as vending, which were not of a sexual nature.

In South Africa, 33 in-depth interviews were conducted with unaccompanied migrant children from 12–17 years of age (18 males and 15 females). There were five participants who were 18 years or older at the time of the interview but who were nevertheless eligible to participate because they had crossed the border when they were below 18 years of age. In addition, three focus group discussions were undertaken with a total of 11 participants. All participants were Zimbabwean.

Recruiting unaccompanied children in South Africa was very challenging. The study targeted children who lived in shelters, communities (from word-of-mouth referrals), and on streets in cities and towns that were identified as study sites. Several challenges were experienced during this exercise. These included a lack of trust between researchers and participants, as well as safety concerns for both fieldworkers and participants. Time was also an issue, and it was difficult to access shelters that accommodated vulnerable and unaccompanied children.

Children displayed a lack of trust when approached by researchers. Children thought researchers were government officials who had come deport or arrest them; therefore, they would lie about their nationality, claiming that they are from SA. Children who migrated from Zimbabwe to Limpopo, particularly in Musina which is close to the border, can speak and understand both Shona and Venda languages. These are common languages in the Musina population; this made it difficult for researchers to make the distinction between locals and foreigners, and made it was easy for children to deny their Zimbabwean nationality. In addition, lack of trust was displayed by children who consented to participate in the study. Some children were not open in sharing information, and some were not comfortable to be recorded. One participant was happy to share her story but asked not to be recorded.

> We also had an appointment with a lady whom we met at Powerhouse bus rank and had informed us about a 13-year-old girl whom she knew; she directed us to Fourways robots where the child sells stuff at the traffic lights; we met her, we screened her, she was eligible, and she was with her a friend who is also a minor. She signed the consent form and agreed to take part in the study, but as we took out the recordings she refused to be recorded; she said she could only tell us her story without being recorded. She was only comfortable telling us her story off the recording and despite us assuring her about confidentiality and

> anonymity, she refused. So, we couldn't proceed with the interviews without recordings. (Fieldworker's daily report, 19 July 2023)

People from the street and in communities displayed distrust when researchers enquired about migrant children who were not living with their families. Community members were not comfortable to share information with 'outsiders' who are roaming around asking for children, particularly Zimbabwean minors who came to SA alone and illegally; this raised suspicions and concerns for children's safety.

> We went to the bus station in Johannesburg to look for participants. We walked around asking street vendors from Zimbabwe, some of whom knew these children from their community but were afraid, given Johannesburg's high rate of human trafficking, one of whom said, 'How do we know you are working for the Centre for Rural Health?'. (Fieldworker's daily report, 14 July 2023)

Safety of participants and fieldworkers was a concern during field work. The street environment, particularly in big cities such as Johannesburg, is not a safe place, thus fieldworkers needed to be very alert. Participants were given food parcels or toiletries after the interview, which at times resulted in other people on the scene wanting some and led to the development of threatening situations for the fieldworkers.

Time was the most important thing for unaccompanied children who are making a living in the street. Therefore, it was challenging to do interviews because participants were not generous with their time since they were also busy making money ("hustling"). Making appointments with participants was not beneficial because they are mostly mobile, and some did not arrive on the day of the appointment.

> We then began going into different Somalian shops around Park Station, where the majority of Zimbabweans work. We came across one girl who is 16 years old. I verbally screened her, and she is eligible for the study, but we couldn't interview her because she was working; she said she knocks off late so we couldn't wait for her to knock off. Therefore, we set an appointment with her for Sunday; she said that's when she will be free. (Fieldworker's daily report, 14 July 2023)

> We called the 16-year-old girl whom we had set an appointment with, and we agreed to meet at Park Station. When we got to the Park Station, we called the girl, but she was not reachable. We waited for about four hours; we then decided to go back. When we got to the room, she then returned our call informing us that her phone was off and she was already home; she promised to meet us Monday after 16:00 hours. (Fieldworker's daily report, 16 July 2023)

Fieldworkers spent most of their time driving and walking around study sites looking for participants, who were frequently unavailable. As a result, data collection took longer than anticipated, which affected the study timeline.

> We then drove to Pretoria to look for children in the streets and at the bus ranks. We got to Bosman Rank in Pretoria; we moved around till we saw one boy whom we talked to and, in our conversations, we realised that he is eligible for our study. We explained to him what the study is about, and he agreed to be interviewed but he was busy working, so we couldn't interview him. He told us that we could come back today around 11–12; that's when he will be less busy for us

> to conduct the interviews. Bridget's friend took us to Marabastat where there was one boy he knew. We verbally screened him; he was also at work and couldn't do the interview at that time. So, he said we should come back today during lunch time. (Fieldworker's daily report, 26 July 2023)

Johannesburg was the most challenging study site to recruit children. Unlike in Limpopo where fieldworkers (FWs) were assisted by local stakeholders to identify children and some were recruited in shelters where they were staying, Johannesburg shelters were not forthcoming in assisting FWs to access children who were in their care. They frequently denied that there were eligible children in the hostel and they did not give us opportunity to come and screen children ourselves. Hence, we did not conduct any interviews with children from shelters in Johannesburg. Eleven interviews were conducted in Gauteng compared to 23 interviews and three focus group discussions conducted in Limpopo. We were unable to do focus group discussions in Gauteng due to unavailability of participants.

Finding girls was challenging in both sites; however, we managed to recruit several girls in Limpopo but none in Gauteng. It was discovered that, generally, girls who migrate to SA find a place to stay or work in communities or go to big cities such as Johannesburg. Girls mostly work as domestic workers, shop assistants, or sex workers, and these are difficult places to access. Most of the time, FWs were helped by male participants to find female participants and girls were comfortable to speak with FWs when brought by someone they know.

Data analysis

All interviews were audio-recorded, translated into English, and transcribed. Researchers read the transcripts and familiarised themselves with the content; a coding framework was developed inductively. For improved and easy management in analysis, the transcripts were transferred into the qualitative analysis software, NVivo 12 (Dollah, Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2017; Sanusi, 2019), using the coding framework. The transcripts from the individual interviews were coded separately to identify themes and subthemes. Further thematic analysis was used to identify, describe, and interpret key patterns within the data (Braun and Clark, 2006).

2.3 Stakeholder mapping

One of the objectives of this study was to get an overview of stakeholders working with migrating children in Zimbabwe and South Africa. The aim was to identify the stakeholders and map their main activities. The methodology employed to identify and select the relevant stakeholders for the study (i.e. institutions, organisations, and persons working with or having high interest in children on the move) largely revolved around the Steering Committee on Children on the Move.

Using the attendance register from the inaugural meeting, all organisations attending the launch were approached via email, and asked to complete a structured questionnaire to provide details of their own organisation and contact details of other relevant stakeholders working in this arena. In addition, we approached individual organisations and authors from a literature review and requested them to provide details of

organisations or stakeholders they identified while conducting their own studies in this field. Also, when working in the study areas, project staff became aware of organisations working locally, which were then requested to complete a questionnaire.

The questionnaire had two main objectives. Firstly, it was used to describe the organisation and it's role in working with children on the move, and secondly, it was used as a modified snowball technique to ask for assistance to identify other stakeholders, organisations, and institutions which work in this field, both in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

In addition to information gathered from the completed questionnaire, we reviewed organisations' websites and their reports (e.g. annual reports, project documents, partner profiles, and discussion documents, etc.) to provide background information about their role with children on the move. When necessary, local stakeholder organisations were approached telephonically to provide additional background information about the origins of the organisation and how they support children on the move. The presentation of the organisations is not an evaluation of their work, but a mapping of their presence and activities.

2.4 Legal and policy framework in Zimbabwe and South Africa

The policy analysis was carried out using qualitative content analysis of selected statutes and policy instruments. This is in line with Wagener's conceptualisation of qualitative policy analysis techniques, namely, interpretation and intention (Wagenaar, 2017). To this end, an interpretative approach to policy analysis, which focuses on the meanings of policies and statutes, was taken. The authors thus examined the meanings, beliefs, values, and the process by which those meanings are communicated to and read by various audiences. Practical insights to the policy analysis were drawn from the qualitative interviews with children on the move and various stakeholders.

This work was done by one researcher from Zimbabwe and one from South Africa. These researchers worked individually to draft the policy framework for each country. Literature review was used as the means of data collection. Researchers used the Google search engine to review policy documents, guidelines, and the constitutions relevant to children's rights and protection. Some information was acquired through visiting the United Nations and UNICEF websites and other databases such as Google Scholar. The Zimbabwe and SA drafts were then combined into one document and overlapping information was merged. The research team then reviewed the document, which was then given to a Master of Law graduate as a legal expert to further work on the document. The law expert adopted a research approach to review the policy framework, which involved analysing and interpreting various sources such as international instruments, constitutions, legislations, journals and articles, and literature extracted from Google Scholar, Saflii, Lexis Nexis, Lens.org, Heinonline, and Juta. Through this exercise, the law expert identified inconsistencies, gaps, or areas where policies are not fully implemented or complied with.

3 A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ABOUT CHILDREN ON THE MOVE IN ZIMBABWE

Ingunn Bjørkhaug, Silondile Pinkie Luthuli, Christiane Horwood, Lyn Haskins, Anne Hatløy

The migration of unaccompanied children both within Zimbabwe and from Zimbabwe to neighbouring countries, particularly South Africa, represents a significant and complex phenomenon. The problem of migration of unaccompanied children is increasing globally, although reliable data is not available in any region (Maioli et al., 2021). This literature review aims to set the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the challenges, experiences, and implications associated with the migration of unaccompanied children in this context. Children's migration is driven by a myriad of factors, including economic disparities, challenges in the political environment, armed conflicts, and limited access to education and healthcare (Gwenzi, Mhlanga, & Chikanya, 2016; Zimunya, 2018). Within Zimbabwe, such children often move from rural to urban areas in search of better opportunities (Scoones, Mavedzenge, & Murimbarimba, 2019). Moreover, South Africa, with its perceived advantages and comparatively developed infrastructure, has become a destination for many unaccompanied children from neighbouring countries, with Zimbabwe being one of the primary places of origin. Economic migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa and Botswana has a long history. However, with increasing economic hardships and unemployment in Zimbabwe, the number of migrants has increased steadily and it was estimated that over 800 000 Zimbabweans were living in South Africa in 2018 (Zhou, 2018).

There has also been an influx of unaccompanied children in recent years, with young children seeking educational and employment opportunities, often fleeing poverty and abuse (Magqibelo et al., 2016). Existing interventions are often developed using a child protection lens and are centred around repatriating unaccompanied children back to Zimbabwe, limiting their employment prospects, and imposing controls on their activities (Ackermann, 2017). To comprehensively address the scholarly literature, this review aims to delve deeply into the experiences and circumstances surrounding unaccompanied child migrants in Zimbabwe and South Africa. The literature review will begin by exploring the agency-vulnerability dichotomy, using literature that extends beyond the specific contexts of Zimbabwe and South Africa to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the current debate about child agency. It will then move on to address the push and pull factors influencing why children migrate from rural to urban sites in Zimbabwe or cross the borders to South Africa. Finally, it will explore research on the migration journey, including border delays, risks, and opportunities in South Africa.

3.1 Exploring the dynamics of child migration: Agents or vulnerable victims?

International law endorses that any decisions made regarding children must be guided by the best interests of the child. Migration of unaccompanied children poses complex challenges for various stakeholders including government bodies, local communities, and families both in Zimbabwe and South Africa (Asha & Nkwana, 2021; 2018; Nkwana, 2021). While the issue of vulnerable children in Africa without parental care can provoke dichotomous reactions of either romanticisation or victimisation (Ungruhe, 2019), since the mid-1990s the academic literature has increasingly focussed on perspectives of child agency to explain how children get involved in several types of migration patterns (Huijsmans, 2011).[2] Thus, different ways in which children demonstrate their agency have been explored and described by scholars as children's ability to overcome hardship and demonstrate resilience even under difficult circumstances (Bordonaro & Payne, 2012; Clacherty, 2021; Punch, 2016). Madziva, Mahiya, and Nyoni (2022), in a study on child migrants from Zimbabwe to South Africa, discuss how child agency can be contextual because societies have differing perceptions about how to view and treat children and childhood. They argue that the perspectives are important in determining how children in different societies make choices and handle their experiences of moving to a new place.

Perceptions of vulnerability

Mizen and Ofosu-Kusi's (2013) findings about children moving to the streets, from a study in Accra, Ghana, frame the children's departures as acts of individual choice and self-determination, demonstrating a significant level of agency and capacity for action. However, a more in-depth examination of their testimonies reveals an awareness of their own vulnerability. This dual perspective highlights both their assertiveness in making autonomous decisions and their understanding of the inherent risks and challenges they face.

The narrative of the vulnerable migrant emphasises the challenges that unaccompanied migrants below 18 years of age may face, including their exposure to risks, exploitation, and various forms of harm. A perspective on young migrants through a victimhood lens often focuses on external factors, such as economic inequalities, political instability, and human rights violations, that force individuals to leave their home countries (Pruitt, 2021). Unaccompanied child migrants seen as victims have been portrayed as having limited control over their situations and lacking the resources to fully address the challenges they encounter during their journey or in the destination country (Pruitt, 2021). Policymakers working from a rights-based perspective often frame migrating children as vulnerable dependent victims in need of protection; however, the academic literature has frequently challenged stereotypical notions of vulnerable youths and argues that there is a risk of underestimating children's resilience and capacities to overcome

[2] Note: The concept of children's agency should not be conflated with their ability to 'choose to do things', but rather be understood as "children's sophisticated and perceptive appreciation of their social worlds, and their capacity to act upon these circumstances" (Mizen & Ofosu-Kusi, 2013, p. 364).

challenges (Ackermann, 2017; Adefehinti & Arts, 2019; Nyuke, 2021; Opfermann, 2020; Pruitt, 2021).

Hansen's (2022) study of community case workers highlights a significant concern: When government institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) primarily hold the power to define who they find vulnerable for their programme implementations, there is a risk that they might miss or underemphasise some factors that play a significant role in making children vulnerable or make children more vulnerable than they already are. This can lead to a lack of recognition of local challenges and specific vulnerabilities that migrating children face, particularly those that do not fit into the predefined criteria of vulnerability set by these organisations. Consequently, this mismatch can result in interventions that fail to fully address the complex and diverse needs of vulnerable populations.

Young, unaccompanied migrants are vulnerable as they embark on migration journeys without their parents or guardians to flee conditions like war, persecution, gang violence, and severe poverty in their home countries. During these journeys, they face the risk of violence and abuse from smugglers, yet they demonstrate remarkable bravery and resilience in their pursuit of a better life in South Africa (Anderson, Apland, & Yarrow, 2017). A study by Mahati (2012b) in South Africa reveals that young male migrant children are also subjected to sexual exploitation. It highlights instances where adult women pay them for sexual activities, frequently insisting on not using condoms. Orgocka (2012) discusses how the relationship between vulnerability and agency in unaccompanied children is complex, portraying the children as both vulnerable and capable of making significant decisions. This duality underscores the importance of examining the social structures surrounding these young unaccompanied minors.

In a study about unaccompanied children migrating from Zimbabwe to South Africa, Magqibelo et al. (2016) describe the multiple vulnerabilities faced by these children. The authors describe how some stranded migrating girls find themselves compelled to engage in sex work as a means of survival. In addition, findings indicate how many public institutions fail to recognise the validity of refugee permits, while the lack of access to necessities such as adequate food, clean water, and shelter further exacerbates the challenges faced by these children. This dire situation exposes the children to risks of harassment, robbery, extortion, and various forms of exploitation, including sexual harassment, as well as the possibility of becoming stranded and destitute. These children strive for a better life in the place of destination; however, language barriers, insecurity, inadequate housing, and integration challenges in schools often hinder their progress. Being denied access to social services and legal documentation deepens their isolation. In addition, adapting to their new environment is demanding, as it challenges the dismissal of some cultural customs in favour of assimilating new ones. This transition often leads to psychological problems, as children grapple with uncertainty regarding their asylum or refugee status. Verbal abuse, based on attributes like skin colour and ethnicity, compounds their emotional turmoil. Some children have spent nearly two years on the streets before finding refuge in shelters, but they still encounter discrimination from peers and staff (Magqibelo et al., 2016).

Studies on child migration often focus more on boys, possibly because they represent a larger proportion of this group (Torrado Martín-Palomino, 2015). Consequently, the limited data on young female migrants and girls may imply they are a minority. Avignone, Pacheco-Alises, and Jiménez (2023) discuss how the scarcity of studies on female undocumented children raises concerns about the overlooked needs of girls, due to research and interventions primarily targeting migrant boys. This invisibility is not solely due to their irregular migrant status or gender alone, but also stems from the challenges in applying traditional migration study methods to this specific population. Thus, specific details regarding the gender perspectives on unaccompanied minor girls from Zimbabwe to South Africa, and the unique challenges they face, is fairly limited in the academic literature.[3] Estimates of female undocumented migrants are not accessable, and the assumption rests on these girls being engaged in domestic or sex work (Magqibelo et al., 2016). Researchers found female unaccompanied migrant children elusive or unwilling to participate in a study (Chisale, 2014). The aspect of gendered differences remains an area where more targeted research would be beneficial to understand the specific needs and vulnerabilities of female undocumented migrants. The following section will delve into what existing literature reveals about the concept of child agency and migration.

Agency

Agency is commonly understood as humans' capacity to choose, act, and influence matters in their everyday lives (Sirkko, Kyrönlampi, & Puroila, 2019). Further, Pugh (2014, p. 72) argues for children's ability to have agency by addressing how "children are active social agents (not passive), knowing actors strategizing within their constraints (not innocent), with their capacities and challenges shaped by their contexts (not universally the same)". Alcinda Honwana (2019), in her work with child soldiers in Mozambique and Angola, discusses the question of whether child soldiers should be considered victims or perpetrators. She introduces the distinction between children's agency and victimisation by utilising the concept of 'tactical agency'. This term is used to describe an individual who has limited available choices, so that although the child acts from a position of weakness, they can still initiate (tactical) strategies to handle the immediate situation and create opportunities for survival, even within constraints (Honwana, 2011, 2019).

Scholars emphasise that it is critical to understand *the context of why and how* children migrate (Gardner, 2012; Hashim & Thorsen, 2011; Huijsmans, 2011). When the literature recognises child migrants as individuals capable of making decisions and taking action on their own behalf, there is increased attention to their capacity to make decisions, overcome difficulties, and proactively pursue opportunities. This perspective recognises that child migrants in African settings are not passive victims, but can make

[3] There are more studies of youth, above the age of 18 years old. A study of young female migrants, aged 18-35, identified that young female migrants arriving in South Africa in search of better opportunities encounter numerous challenges and adversities in their daily lives. A significant factor contributing to their struggles is their nationality and legal status. These young women are often victims of exploitation and mistreatment by both local citizens and government officials, including police officers and healthcare professionals. The absence of proper legal documentation makes them particularly vulnerable to various forms of abuse and social exclusion by South Africans. This vulnerability not only undermines their well-being, but also hampers their ability to adapt and integrate successfully into the host country and its communities (Khutso et al. 2021).

strategic decisions based on their goals and aspirations (Capaldi & Altamura, 2023; Garcia & Birman, 2022; Mazikana, 2019; Nyuke, 2013; Thorsen, 2007). In particular, unaccompanied child migrants in the Zimbabwe-South Africa border areas have been shown to have the ability to shape their own migration experiences, showing resilience, adaptability, and resourcefulness (Levy, 2022). Child agency means that children can make decisions, take actions, and have control over their lives, actively participating in decisions that affect them (Opfermann, 2020). Recognising child agency is crucial for respecting children's autonomy and promoting their well-being (Deng et al., 2022). Children who are migrating can exercise their agency by engaging in everyday negotiations, restoring their sense of self, and making strategic decisions that empower them to build their identity and take control of their experiences (Torok & Ball, 2021).

In a systematic review of child migration globally, Deng et al. (2022) look into existing research on children's agency, to explore how children demonstrate their agency within families in the context of migration. The article explores the connection between children's agency in migration – a significant pull factor – and their level of involvement in the decision-making process. Notably, children who autonomously make migration decisions exhibit higher levels of agency, while those who are not engaged in the decision-making process demonstrate lower levels of agency. Gender differences are also highlighted in unaccompanied child migration. A study by Kwankye (2012) revealed that, among 451 independent child migrants [child moving without a parent] in Ghana, a substantial majority of female migrants made their own migration decisions, whereas a significant proportion of male migrants had decisions made for them by others. The review of the literature establishes that children's agency can range across limited, moderate, and higher levels concerning migration-related decisions. Furthermore, children's agency manifests in diverse facets of daily life as they navigate the challenges and opportunities posed by migration (Deng et al., 2022).

Adefehinti and Arts (2019) conducted in-depth interviews with eighteen unaccompanied Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, to study the children's coping strategies and test theoretical perceptions about vulnerability. They advised against forming uncritical and predefined opinions about the agency and capabilities of these children. The prevailing perception often portrays children as vulnerable; however, this perspective fails to recognise the inherent agency that children exhibit in the face of adversities like conflicts and environmental catastrophes. Children frequently exhibit resilience and the capacity for action, even amidst challenges. The decision of many children to leave Zimbabwe was strategic, driven by unfavourable circumstances. Their aim was to secure better opportunities and a brighter future, often with the aspiration of receiving an education and supporting their families through earned income. Despite being unaccompanied, a significant number of these children also maintained contact with their families. Some even visited or returned home when conditions permitted. While a considerable number of unaccompanied children were orphans, others were accompanied to the border by a parent. Notably, the motivation behind most of these children's migration was the desire to contribute financially to their families. Forming intricate social networks, the unaccompanied children established supportive bonds among themselves, aiding each other in navigating the challenges of their migration journey. While Adefehinti and Arts's

(2019) study may not be generalised to all situations, it provided insights to the discussions about the agency, vulnerability, and resilience of migrating children.

Shifting vulnerabilities of unaccompanied minors

In many situations, migrating unaccompanied children exist within a complex space characterised by a combination of vulnerability and agency. Scholars have presented a nuanced realm where migrating children experience both the challenges linked to their vulnerability, owing to their young age and separation from guardians, and the active decision-making abilities inherent to agency, as described in several studies conducted among unaccompanied migrant children in South Africa and Zimbabwe (Adefehinti & Arts, 2019; Opfermann, 2020; Pruitt, 2021). Unaccompanied children's migration journeys are shaped by a combination of their vulnerabilities and their tactical capacity to make choices, highlighting the intricate interplay between these aspects. In essence, the literature acknowledges that unaccompanied children's migration experiences often defy easy categorisation into either vulnerability or agency, instead residing in a space where these factors coexist and intertwine (Deng et al., 2022; Pruitt, 2021; Ungruhe, 2019). Thompson et al. (2019) suggest a non-binary approach which acknowledges how agency is an ongoing journey, encompassing the rights and vulnerabilities of children and young people. It respects their strengths, capabilities, aspirations, and determination, while also recognising their capacity to overcome challenges and adversity. To capture the complex balance between the migrating children's agency and their vulnerability, Nyuke (2021) introduces the concept of 'shifting vulnerabilities' from her work with migrant children in Johannesburg, South Africa. She suggests that the vulnerability of the child migrant is shifting and being shifted. She describes how the children are involved in social relationships as they migrate to Johannesburg and how they meet different challenges where the odds could be against them. Nevertheless, the findings demonstrate how children adeptly navigate strategies to resist and reshape the prevailing structures, whether through daily negotiations or collective efforts to organise against potential threats (Nyuke, 2021).

In essence, the complex interplay between vulnerability and agency underscores the shifting experiences of unaccompanied child migrants. These young individuals navigate a challenging journey which demands a comprehensive approach – one that addresses their diverse needs while ensuring their protection and well-being. The next section will investigate existing literature about unaccompanied migrant children moving within Zimbabwe or across the border to South Africa

3.2 Why children migrate within Zimbabwe or to South Africa

In this section, we explore how scholarly literature explains the reasons why unaccompanied children from Zimbabwe decide to move within the country or to South Africa. These can be factors that either attract the children to new destinations or push them away from their current locations. Understanding these factors is crucial to understanding the dynamics of young children's migration choices in the Zimbabwean context. We investigate this by scrutinising the push and pull factors of the children in Zimbabwe. Push factors encompass circumstances, conditions, or events that motivate individuals to leave their current location and seek opportunities or refuge elsewhere. Typically,

these factors shed light on the negative aspects of the origin location, making it less appealing for them to remain. Conversely, pull factors are elements present in a potential destination that draw migrants and motivate them to relocate. These factors emphasise the positive attributes of the destination, making it appealing for those in search of a better life (Krishnakumar & Indumathi, 2014).

In general, the concept of push and pull factors in migration studies refers to structural factors that influence migration decisions (Garelli & Tazzioli, 2021; Van Hear, Bakewell, & Long, 2020). These factors help explain why individuals or groups of people choose to migrate from one place to another. However, it is important to note that, while push and pull factors are indeed structural, they can also be influenced by individual motivations and decisions, as well as people's ability to migrate (Carling, 2002). Thus, in the case of this literature review, the individual's motivation to migrate for work is a response to the structural discrepancies in economic conditions between Zimbabwe and South Africa. While the overall concept of push and pull factors focusses on structural factors, it is important to recognise that individual motivations often arise because of these structural disparities. Both structural factors and individual motivations play a role in shaping migration patterns. De Haas (2021, p. 1) conceptualises migration as a function of people's capabilities and aspirations to migrate within given sets of perceived geographical opportunity structures.

Push factors – why do children migrate unaccompanied by adults, within and from Zimbabwe?

Economic constraints. The key socio-demographic elements influencing child migration are gender, education level, employment status, income levels, and geographic location. Furthermore, other driving factors behind child migration included hunger and poverty (Chiguvare, 2013), as well as the dire economic circumstances in Zimbabwe, characterised by factors such as soaring inflation and scarcities of food due to high cost of living (De Jager & Musuva, 2016). The ongoing economic challenges, in conjunction with the repercussions of HIV/AIDS, have fuelled the migration of children towards Mozambique, subsequently extending to South Africa (Gwenzi et al., 2016; Masilo et al., 2021).

Unaccompanied children frequently migrate from rural to urban areas within Zimbabwe for similar economic reasons, often fleeing from poverty. Many of these children end up living on the street, and find opportunities in activities such as street vending, car washing, managing street parking, engaging in waste recycling, and working as luggage carriers (Gunhidzirai, 2023). Other reasons for rural to urban migration in Zimbabwe are the challenges posed by unpredictable climatic conditions and inappropriate farming methods, as these can force members of rural communities to seek opportunities in urban areas. However, once in the cities, these child migrants often find that their needs and expectations cannot be adequately met. This situation leads to frustration and poverty, and ultimately contributes to the emergence of street children in urban areas (Ndlovu & Tigere, 2022). The migration from rural to urban areas happens in a declining formal and informal labour market, which again can cause an increase in urban youth unemployment.

Family circumstances. Poor living standards and abuse at home push children to migrate (Adefehinti & Arts, 2019; Asha, 2021; Gwenzi et al., 2016; Ndlovu, 2015; Netshidongololwe, 2016). Madziva et al. (2022) highlight the fundamental importance of family relations in shaping migration decisions of Zimbabwean children. Their findings show that living in a household characterised by a fragile social and familial structure encourages the children towards the choice to migrate, despite the risks involved. Push factors among children leaving Zimbabwe can be caused by the death of family members, divorce, parents remarrying, or changes in family life, which can make children migrate in search of a safer and more stable life (Hungwe, 2013; Marangoet al., 2020). The migration of children from Zimbabwe can also be a part of the family livelihood strategy, with families experiencing poverty encouraging children to seek work in urban areas or in South Africa, even if this could involve potential risk for the children who migrate (Mahati & Palmary, 2017). Unaccompanied children migrating internally within Zimbabwe do so for similar social reasons, including family discord, parental abuse, neglect, and abandonment, and they often seek better opportunities in urban areas. Many children born in poverty are at risk of abuse and may leave home in search of opportunities on the street (Gunhidzirai & Tanga, 2020). Mabvurira, Koketso, and Tuelo's (2020) study of unaccompanied child migrants in Zimbabwe's Beitbridge district identified various forms of mistreatment, including child labour and exploitation, as key factors compelling children to flee their homes without parental approval. It was found that gender-based violence within familial settings acted as a significant driving force behind child migration. Additionally, the study highlighted that family violence and emotional abuse were primary motivators for children's decisions to depart from their family environments.

Challenges facing children in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has experienced human rights issues and governance challenges, which can contribute to an environment that is challenging and uncertain for children (Magqibelo et al., 2016). The hardships of the children are compounded by the absence of fundamental services, as educators and medical professionals exit the country, leading to a scarcity of teachers and doctors, and leaving Zimbabwe with impoverished institutions (Chiguvare, 2013; Chimbala-Kalenga & Meda, 2016). Children on the move, particularly those in regions plagued by conflict and violence, often face a multitude of distressing challenges including experiences of torture and detention, which can inflict enduring psychological and physical scars. Separation from crucial support systems, such as family and community, can compound their vulnerability. In the wake of political unrest and limited educational opportunities, children are driven by their aspiration for a better future (Magqibelo et al., 2016).

Poor education system. The declining state of the Zimbabwean school system serves as a push factor encouraging children to move. The decline of the school system is characterised by disruptions, including frequent teacher strikes, which interrupt the continuity of education (Adefehinti & Arts, 2019). Moreover, the shortage of essential educational materials compounds the challenges faced by students and educators. These push factors contribute to a situation where children and families consider migration as a potential solution in order to access better educational opportunities and a

more stable environment for learning and growth (Ackermann, 2017; Crush & Tawodzera, 2014; Mathe, 2018).

Pufall et al. (2015) studied the relationship between internal child migration and education in Eastern Zimbabwe during the HIV/AIDS pandemic. They found various reasons why children migrated to a different household: the death or illness of their mother or caregiver (21%), getting married as an adolescent (8%), changing schools (8%), their caregiver recovering after an illness (4%), mistreatment by their caregiver (4%), their mother relocating to a new area (2%), leaving school due to insufficient funds for fees (2%), failing exams and leaving school (2%), completing their education or passing exams (2%), and other reasons (47%). A study by Mhizha and Muromo (2013) discusses the challenges of school attendance among street children in Harare, Zimbabwe. They identified several factors that lead to street children disengaging from schools, including their motivation for migrating, poor academic performance, substance abuse, pregnancy, early and active engagement in sexual activities, and the absence of birth certificates. Consequently, it appears that street children have become disconnected from vital social institutions, especially schools, and recommendations involved increased vocational training to enable them to make a living.

Pull factors – why children migrate from Zimbabwe

Better life opportunities: Countries with stronger economies and job markets can attract Zimbabwean children and their families looking for better employment prospects and financial stability (Netshidongololwe, 2016). Access to better healthcare facilities and services in destination countries can be a significant pull factor. Countries that offer stronger legal protections for migrants, including unaccompanied children, might be appealing to children seeking a safer and more secure environment (Chiguvare, 2013; Chimbala-Kalenga & Meda, 2016; Masilo et al., 2021)

Work and education Countries with better education systems, including South Africa, may offer improved educational opportunities and access to higher-quality schools for unaccompanied migrant children (Ackermann, 2017; Adefehinti & Arts, 2019; Mathe, 2018). Children migrate in pursuit of improved livelihoods, encouraged by the promise of better job opportunities, enhanced education, care, and protection. The prospect of perceived better economic opportunities, heightened safety and protection, stronger currencies, increased work opportunities, and the potential for education draws them. Children's journey to South Africa is fuelled by the aspiration to uplift not only their own circumstances, but also by the kinship aspect of migration through sending money home and therefore contributing positively to the well-being of their families back in their home countries (Magqibelo et al., 2016).

Family and social networks. Existing family members, friends, or community members who have already migrated to South Africa might serve as a pull factor, as they can provide support and a sense of belonging in the new country (Levy, 2022). Another factor is the closeness to South Africa and Mozambique, along with the intergenerational connections among the residents in Zimbabwe and those living across the border in these neighbouring countries (Gwenzi et al., 2016). Maombera (2018) examined the experiences of Zimbabwean migrant parents in South Africa's Gauteng Province, focusing on

their enduring ties to Zimbabwe, the impact of policy changes on their lives, and their adaptation to semi-permanent or permanent migration. This study highlights the challenges these parents face in maintaining contact with their children due to legal and employment constraints, leading them to rely on informal networks and cross-border transporters for their children's travel. Despite the risks and costs, these parents navigate South Africa's porous borders and corruption at border posts to ensure continued family connections, often using unsafe methods like crossing the Limpopo River.

3.3 Migration journey from Zimbabwe to South Africa

In this section, we review the literature on migration journeys undertaken by unaccompanied children migrating from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Our focus extends beyond the borders, delving into both cross-border migration and internal migration experiences. The aim is to understand the multifaceted dynamics involved in the migration process, from the initial departure point to the destination. These journeys present challenges, yet they also highlight resilience and adaptability, offering insights into the routes children traverse from their place of origin to their intended or sometimes compelled destination.

Transit experiences and challenges

Unaccompanied child migrants encounter numerous hardships, both in crossing the border and in their subsequent survival within the country. The journey across the Zimbabwe-South Africa border is filled with danger for anyone, but unaccompanied children face particular risks. While some children migrate via train or minibus, a significant number of children undertake at least part of their journey on foot. The threat posed by wild animals and harsh environmental conditions is a serious concern, but an even greater danger lies in the risk of exploitation. To avoid detection by authorities, many unaccompanied children resort to using irregular and less monitored channels for crossing the border. This approach, however, increases their vulnerability to various forms of abuse, including physical and sexual violence, as well as theft and muggings. These dangers are compounded by the lack of adult protection and guidance, making their journey and subsequent life in South Africa dangerous and challenging (Fritsch, Johnson, & Juska, 2009; Morreira, 2015; Moyo, 2020).

The journeys to destination countries can be traumatic for unaccompanied migrant children, particularly for the youngest unaccompanied children, and these experiences may be even more distressing than the vulnerable situations they left behind in Zimbabwe (Mathe, 2018). Studies have reported that numerous unaccompanied children undertake journeys to destination countries without possessing any documents, such as passports or birth certificates (Thomas, 2021). This lack of official identification significantly affects the strategies they can employ when crossing borders and establishing themselves in new countries. Many unaccompanied children from Zimbabwe to South Africa travel alone, while others seek support by affiliating with groups they encounter along the way. Throughout their transit, child migrants encounter a multitude of challenges, including violence and abuse from transporters and individuals who assist them during their journey, financial constraints for the trip, and precarious living conditions. These circumstances underscore not only the significant risks and perils associated with child

migration, but also the dangers these individuals face while trying to cross borders (Clacherty, 2021); for example, young girls can be sexually abused by truck drivers who force them to have sex as form of payment for helping them cross the border (Mathe, 2018).

However, unaccompanied children demonstrate resilience in strategizing their crossings of the border from South Africa to Zimbabwe. These children manage to overcome various challenges by bribing immigration officials, using tactics to discreetly pass through the border, and seeking concealment in trucks and buses (Meda, Sookrajh, & Maharaj, 2012; UNICEF, 2016). These strategies to pass through the borders without identification pose significant risks of deportation. When the unaccompanied migrating children are apprehended by soldiers or police while in transit, they often endure physical abuse or mistreatment at the hands of the authorities (Mabvurira, Matlakala, & Masilo, 2020; Magqibelo et al., 2016; Meda et al., 2012). Subsequently, they are typically sent to refugee campsites in Musina on the South African side of the Zimbabwe border. However, this is not the end of their journey; it marks a temporary interruption. After a stay in these camps, many children continue on their transit journey. This cycle of detention, mistreatment, and resuming their journey underscores the determination of these young migrants, who persist in the face of adversity and hardships in migration journey (Meda, 2017b). Overcrowded refugee camps grapple with a range of challenges, including limited access to essential resources such as food and supplies, along with pressing health-related concerns (Meda, 2017a, 2017b).

Other strategies that undocumented migrant children employ to cross the border include journeying across the crocodile-infested Limpopo River, jumping over fences, and walking through forests (Meda, 2017b; Meda et al., 2012; Ndlovu, 2015; UNICEF, 2016). Crossing the border through the Limpopo River and walking through the forest presented several challenging experiences for the unaccompanied children. One of the challenges is how they are harassed by gangsters (*magumagumas*) along the river and forest. According to the IOM (2009), the *magumagumas* are a group of men who reside in the bush, mainly targeting the routes that are used by illegal immigrants to South Africa. This group of men take advantage of the children's circumstances and abuse children who are desperate and vulnerable. Further, Mathe (2018) and Meda (2017b) define *magumagumas* as thieves who pose as people trying to help migrants cross the crocodile-infested Limpopo River, jump the fence, and guide migrants through the forest leading to nearest town, Musina. These helpers present as someone helping the unaccompanied migrants, but this also involves demanding money, valuables, bribes, and clothes from all illegal immigrants, as payment for helping them cross the border illegally. Young girls were the most vulnerable during transition; reports show that girls were susceptible to being sexually abused by the gangsters during transit (Meda, 2017b).

Walking through the forest is also viewed as perilous and fraught with danger, as soldiers conducted checks within the wooded areas. This can lead to fatal outcomes at the hands of soldiers, if children are discovered wandering in the forest (Meda, 2017b; Netshidongololwe, 2016). The children walk long hours in the forest before getting to Musina town or a refugee campsite. It is the hopes of a better future in South Africa and

knowing the poverty that they are leaving behind in Zimbabwe that encourages the children to persevere through challenges like robbery, rape, injury, and assault encountered during the journey (Netshidongololwe, 2016). Musina is perceived as a temporary resting place for many children as they explore various means to earn money for their onward journey to destination towns, primarily Polokwane, Pretoria, and Johannesburg (Chiguvare, 2013). Alternatively, some children opt to remain in Musina town because it is the nearest urban area to Zimbabwe, allowing them to stay relatively close to their place of origin. In addition, they find a sense of community among fellow Zimbabweans in Musina (Netshidongololwe, 2016).

Borderland delays: navigating limbo and uncertainty

As suggested above, unaccompanied children migrating to South Africa often experience stops along the way, particularly in Musina town. The primary cause of stops is a lack of funds to continue their journey to their intended destination. As a result, children end up staying in Musina for an extended period while seeking various ways to earn money (Levy, 2022; Mathe, 2018; Meda, 2017b). The children demonstrate initiative and resourcefulness by engaging in various entrepreneurial activities to generate income; this includes selling a range of goods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, cigarettes, and a variety of snacks (Meda, 2017a; Netshidongololwe, 2016). Other initiatives include working for locals in Musina and in farms and restaurants (Meda, 2017a). It is not uncommon for unaccompanied migrant children to be exploited and experience ill-treatment and abuse from employers. These employers often threaten to report the children to immigration authorities or the police if they refuse to cooperate or complain about their treatment or payment (Meda, 2017b; Netshidongololwe, 2016). Other coping strategies involved income through gambling, begging, sex work, and pickpocketing. Some unaccompanied children walk long distances over several weeks to get to their destination town or travel from town to town, working to make money for transportation to their final destination (Madziva et al., 2022; Meda, 2017a; Netshidongololwe, 2016).

Accommodation in Musina included the refugee campsite, shelters, and living on the streets. The refugee campsite was reported to often be overcrowded, with no food, and children's health was often compromised due to cholera cases in the camp (Meda, 2017a). Accommodation choices were made in accordance with the children's desire for independence and autonomy in shaping their lives. For most of the children, the primary focus is on earning money and securing food, prioritising their immediate needs. In some cases, their motivation for coming to South Africa was specifically to earn money and send it back to their families in Zimbabwe (Meda, 2017a). However, the rules associated with living in shelters, for example, curfew and attending school, prevented children from getting a job and making money, and were perceived as hindering their autonomy (Meda, 2017a, 2017b). Living in a shelter, particularly for unaccompanied children located at refugee campsites, often involved navigating the legal system through the Department of Social Development (DSD) in South Africa. For many of these children, engaging with the legal system and the DSD is perceived as a double-edged sword. On one hand, it is a necessary step for obtaining legal status, protection, and access to services. On the other hand, there is a prevalent fear among these minors that

this interaction could lead to their identification and subsequent repatriation to Zimbabwe (Masilo et al., 2021).

Children of the streets in Harare, Zimbabwe face negative public attitudes and accusations of crime and prostitution, and these children, driven from home for various reasons, often respond with distrust and hostility to the general public. This creates a cycle of blame and vulnerability. Despite efforts by the government and others, forcing the children back home has been an ineffective solution, with many children returning to the streets after being placed in homes, as the street is the place they find a livelihood (Ndlovu & Tigere, 2022).

The undocumented migrant children suffer multiple challenges which might have a lasting impact on their psychological well-being (Mathe, 2018). However, what seems to be unknown as yet is the level of impact these painful experiences have on their psychological well-being and development, and how these impact their success in settling and thriving in South Africa.

3.4 Into South Africa – risks and opportunities

The Constitution of South Africa guarantees every child the right to adequate care and protection (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). However, practical challenges emerge, impeding certain groups of children from accessing these entitlements. Among these groups, foreign children residing in the country without their biological parents encounter difficulties. Referred to as 'unaccompanied and separated children', this category faces an issue rooted in the legal framework, obstructing them from attaining recognised immigration status. This predicament arises due to a legislative provision that confines the documentation of unaccompanied children solely to the asylum system. Outside this asylum avenue, the immigration status of children hinges on their parents' legal standing. Consequently, foreign children who do not qualify for refugee status and are present in the country without their parents find themselves in a state of uncertainty, unable to regularise their residency (Sloth-Nielsen & Ackermann, 2016). The following sections will elaborate the current challenges migrant children face in South Africa. A report written by Palmary (2009) for UNICEF addresses how:

> [T]here is a lack of capacity for intervention with child migrants in South Africa. Many of the migrant rights organisations that exist do not specifically address the rights of children and many children's organisations lack the knowledge on migrant children's rights to intervene effectively. Access to rights is almost entirely facilitated by NGOs in South Africa with migrant children having very limited direct access to government departments and services. (p. 3)

Experiences among unaccompanied migrant children in South Africa

In South Africa, a diverse group of unaccompanied migrant children confront an array of formidable challenges that significantly impact their well-being and prospects for the future. These challenges are deeply ingrained within the socio-political landscape of the country, stemming from a multitude of factors that include limited resources, entrenched xenophobia, and the intricacies of a complex legal and social system (Adefehinti & Arts, 2019).

Children at risk

Vulnerability to exploitation. The journey to South Africa is often driven by hopes of improved opportunities, but the lack of legal documentation and meagre social support render many child migrants susceptible to exploitation (Madziva et al., 2022). Often stranded in an unfamiliar land far from home, some are forced into survival strategies such as engaging in sex work or exploitative labour (Magqibelo et al., 2016). People who hire undocumented migrants exploit them by paying them inadequately and subjecting them to poor treatment (Masilo et al., 2021).

Xenophobia and discrimination. The safety and security of unaccompanied migrants is often threatened in the communities where they live. Threats include xenophobic attacks, language barriers which lead to ill-treatment and exploitation in communities, as well as lack of access to basic resources like primary healthcare. Migrants are often blamed for all the ills and wrongs happening in the communities, which could at times be the spark for xenophobic attacks (Crush et al., 2017). Migrants are sometimes resented by locals who perceive them as competitors for jobs or are blamed for broader societal issues such as disease outbreaks. Discrimination against migrant children infiltrates the education system, where language barriers and cultural disparities make integration an uphill battle. Name-calling, harassment, and instances of violence can further deepen their sense of isolation (Crush & Tawodzera, 2014; Mathe, 2018). Verbal abuse, such as being told, "You are too dark" or being referred to as "Shangaans" (a member of the Tsonga people of southern Africa), is a painful experience. At times, life on the streets seems preferable due to the discrimination they face from both fellow residents and staff members at the shelter. In many instances, children are brought into shelters without any legal court orders; they are often taken off the streets by community members or individuals from the media. Furthermore, children placed in care outside of formal legal procedures typically receive no financial support. There is also a limited capacity among social workers (Magqibelo et al., 2016).

Precarious legal status. A precarious legal status intensifies the challenges many unaccompanied migrating children face. Without proper documentation or official refugee recognition, they live in constant fear of detention and deportation (Mathe, 2018). In turn, their uncertain legal status renders them vulnerable to various forms of abuse and exploitation. Laws on combating child trafficking in South Africa, which came into effect in June 2015, require unaccompanied children to provide a Parental Consent Affidavit from both parents (or a guardian) and a letter containing the address and relevant details of the receiving adult in South Africa (Madziva et al., 2022). Unaccompanied children are meant to be entrusted to the care of the State but, due to a lack of coordination, capacity, and expertise among the relevant stakeholders, these children often slip through the cracks, depriving them of the protection to which they are entitled (Lawers for Human Rights, 2023).

Struggles for education. Education holds immense potential for integration and future success. However, young migrants face significant challenges when trying to access schools. The lack of necessary documentation, combined with uncertainty about their legal status, creates barriers that deprive them of educational opportunities (Crush & Tawodzera, 2014; Meda et al., 2012). Evidence suggests that Zimbabwean children

enrolled in South African schools often face discrimination and isolation in the classroom, both from teachers and their peers due to their foreign status. The occurrence of South African students taunting and verbally abusing their foreign classmates indicates a troubling trend where xenophobic attitudes prevalent among adults have filtered down to the younger generation in schools. Many of the child migrants had difficulties registering in government schools and ended up registering at a refugee school in order to continue with their education (Crush & Tawodzera, 2013).

Agency, vulnerabilities, and resilience in South Africa

South Africa has a reputation for being one of the most hostile destinations in the world for African migrants (Claassen, 2017). Unaccompanied migrant children represent a challenge for South African authorities as they are excluded from the immigration system because they are unaccompanied children and also excluded from social services because they lack legal status (Opfermann, 2020). Anderson et al. (2017) examined how the unaccompanied children are impacted by legal frameworks and government policies. They recommend establishing care arrangements that accommodate children's lived experiences, such as permitting part-time work opportunities for older children. They argue that such efforts aim to strengthen services and improve access to justice for minors who are victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Further, they recommend implementing mechanisms for identifying and pursuing durable solutions, including establishing additional pathways for securing legal status. They argue that such mechanisms would ensure the safety and well-being of children, catering to their unique needs and fostering a supportive environment for them to grow and thrive in South Africa (Anderson et al., 2017).

Many unaccompanied migrant children have endured abuse, violence, and exploitation, as described above. However, despite these adversities, unaccompanied children in South Africa demonstrate resilience as they adapt to street life, form supportive communities, and devise strategies to confront their challenges. They adjust to their surroundings and acquire new skills, transforming them from being labelled as helpless victims into individuals who can adapt to their environment, even in challenging circumstances (Nyuke, 2021). Although the literature still highlights the many vulnerabilities of unaccompanied children (Anderson et al., 2017; Chimbala-Kalenga & Meda, 2016), there is also an increased focus on children as active agents in their lives (Pruitt, 2021). Focusing exclusively on child vulnerability may obscure our understanding of the children's capacity to adapt and thrive; however, vulnerability and resilience do not necessary exclude one another (Adefehinti & Arts, 2019).

Mahati (2012a) highlights the dynamics involving unaccompanied migrant children working in Musina, South Africa, observing that these children frequently resorted to seeking assistance from gangs in situations where employers either failed to provide payment or remunerated them much less than the agreed amount. These gangs are self-formed, a strategic initiative by the migrant children to organise themselves and avoid exploitation. They shared names of people who exploited children. However, this approach has led to discrimination from humanitarian organisations, which have labelled the children as criminals. This situation demonstrates the importance of providing legal support for these children. However, despite this negative labelling, their collective

action can be seen as a demonstration of resistance and self-agency against exploitation. Examining children's capacity to discover companionship and, consequently, grow stronger together provides insights into their resilience as individuals (Mahati, 2012a; Mahati, 2012b; Mahati & Palmary, 2017; Nyuke, 2013, 2021). Netshidongololwe (2016) discusses how unaccompanied children make choices about coming to South Africa, especially in places like Musina, because it is closer to Zimbabwe and there are many other Zimbabweans there, making it feel like a familiar and welcoming place. Most children prefer to stay on the streets rather than in shelters because they feel freer and in control of their lives. The same study argues that addressing this issue is difficult because, even though unaccompanied children share similarities, each child is unique with specific needs that require individual attention. However, deporting these children back to Zimbabwe is not a solution, as it would return them to the same environment and conditions they were trying to escape, which is why returned migrants often end up returning to South Africa (Netshidongololwe, 2016).

Levy (2022) argues that gradual participation in local socioeconomic dynamics can mitigate the initial hostility among host populations towards mutually beneficial relationships. Her study investigates the experiences of young, unaccompanied children in the capital of Zimbabwe, Harare, and in Musina, in the Zimbabwean-South African borderland, and Beitbridge, Zimbabwe. She investigated how xenophobia shifted towards reciprocal dynamics with the host population over time. The children participating in the study had been living in the borderland area for nearly a decade, even though their initial intention was to move to larger cities in South Africa, having heard stories of children who had found success in Cape Town, Johannesburg, and other cities. Stranded in the borderland between Zimbabwe and South Africa, the unaccompanied children were vulnerable in their new surroundings, exposed to violence and exploitation, and at risk of being arrested and deported. However, through accumulating knowledge, developing skills, and seizing opportunities to engage with the local communities, these children were able to transform the initially negative dynamics and create space for conviviality (Levy, 2022, p. 186). Further, Levy (2022) illustrates two distinct areas of conviviality, firstly, by demonstrating a shift in power relations in which unaccompanied migrants with illegal status become protectors of the space and the people who assisted them. Secondly, the study illustrates how children and youth who migrated from Zimbabwe can be a benefit for local communities, despite being unaccompanied and foreign.

Among undocumented migrants in Cape Town, South Africa, the concept of 'performative agency' was used to describe the intersectionality between challenges and coping (Opfermann, 2020). One way of forming new connections in South Africa was through integration into existing family networks. However, these arrangements could be fragile and challenging. Many children had ambiguous relationships with new caregivers, but their new embeddedness in extended family networks catered to their basic needs, such as housing and food. Thus, 'being like them' was one way of coping in this new environment. This could take the form of learning English, dressing like the locals, or being 'strategically invisible' by ensuring they remained unseen and unknown to the police when they perceived the risk of being caught without documents.

3.5 Key insights

This review of the literature highlights theoretical perspectives of agency and unaccompanied minors, as well as addressing the complex interplay of factors influencing the migration of unaccompanied children from Zimbabwe to South Africa. It underscores their resilience and ability to adapt to the significant challenges they face, without undermining the vulnerable situations they encounter both during the migration journey and at their destination. However, as these children have varying degrees of vulnerability and different abilities to face challenges, the literature review emphasises the need for a multifaceted and nuanced approach in policy and intervention to address the diverse needs of unaccompanied migrant children. It underscores the necessity for comprehensive approaches ensuring their protection and well-being in both Zimbabwe and South Africa. There is a gap in the academic literature regarding the gender differences between male and female unaccompanied child migrants from Zimbabwe to South Africa, and often the gender perspectives are not discussed in scholarly work. In addition, the review of the literature calls for a more nuanced understanding and interventions that respect the children's autonomy and promote their well-being. In conclusion, this review brings to light four critical insights about the migration of unaccompanied children from Zimbabwe:

(1) Complex migration phenomenon: The migration of unaccompanied children within Zimbabwe and from Zimbabwe to South Africa is a significant phenomenon, primarily driven by economic disparities, difficult family situations, the political environment, conflicts, and limited access to education and healthcare. The review identifies key push factors for migration, including economic constraints, family circumstances, and security issues. It also discusses pull factors such as better life opportunities and the search for work and education in South Africa.

(2) *Agency and vulnerability:* The literature discusses the complex interplay between vulnerability and agency among unaccompanied child migrants, emphasising their resilience and adaptability in the face of significant challenges during their migration journey. These experiences challenge conventional dichotomies of victimhood and agency by illustrating how these children, while vulnerable, also exhibit significant decision-making abilities and resilience. The conclusion is therefore the need to balance the recognition of their risks and exploitation with an acknowledgment of their agency and coping strategies in the context of migration.

(3) *Migration journey and challenges:* The review delves into the transit experiences and challenges faced by unaccompanied child migrants, including border crossings and strategies to overcome obstacles, highlighting the risks of violence, abuse, and exploitation during their journey. Thus, the children's journey is not only risky and challenging, but also a testament to their pursuit of a better future.

(4) *Living conditions in South Africa:* Once in South Africa, these children face numerous challenges such as xenophobia, discrimination, precarious legal status, and struggles to access education and basic services. Despite these hardships, the review emphasises the children's resilience and their ability to adapt to challenging circumstances.

Zimbabwe's key social and child protection strategies and interventions

Zimbabwe has a long history of social protection policy and programme support. The National Development Strategy (NDS) 1 (2022-2025) places social protection as one of the integral cross-cutting pillars for reducing poverty and vulnerability. As such, Zimbabwe aims to increase the reach of its social protection interventions to cover 85% of the population by 2025.

The country's social protection programmes include social assistance, social insurance, and labour-market. The interventions aim to reduce poverty, protect the vulnerable families and children against risks and shocks, and to reduce the economic and social vulnerabilities of the poor populations. These factors are the core drivers of migration decisions of children and families in both rural and urban settings.

Zimbabwe's main non-contributory social protection programmes implemented by the Government are:

1. Harmonised Social Cash Transfer (HSCT);
2. Food Deficit Mitigation (FDM);
3. Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) – fee waiver for education
4. Assisted Medical Treatment Orders (AMTOs) – fee waiver for health care
5. Public Assistance Programme (PA)

The HSCT is the primary social assistance programme and seeks to support upliftment of poor and vulnerable households out of poverty and promoting positive development outcomes for children including improving school attendance and dietary diversity.

The Government is making provisions for the procurement of sanitary wear for girls in schools, a development that speaks to gender inclusion, with a total of US$6.2 million for procurement of sanitary wear allocated in the 2022 National Budget. This initiative goes a long way in improving school attendance of female learners as lack of sanitary wear has previously been cited as one of the reasons for non-attendance to classes for girls.

As complementary initiatives, several other social protection interventions are supported and implemented by development partners and NGOs. For example, UNICEF supports the Emergency Social Cash Transfer programme (ESCT) to assist vulnerable households in urban areas, whose socio-economic situation was exacerbated by COVID-19. The secondary aim of the ESCT is to act as a shock responsive instrument that is linked to the Government's Harmonised Social Cash Transfer Programme (HSCT) and enables the expansion of Government's reach.

Children on the move might encounter protection risks which include exploitation and abuse, deprivation and discrimination on their journeys, at destination or upon return. At the core of Zimbabwe's Child Protection System is the National Case Management System (NCMS) for the care, protection and welfare of children. The system is a child

protection and welfare case referral and management system. It serves as a collaborative framework between formal Social Workers, Community Childcare Workers and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) who provide specialized child protection and welfare services.

The new National Action Plan (NAP) for Children (2024-2028) promotes and supports children's access to inclusive basic social services, child protection and safeguarding, family and community capacity building, initiatives to eliminate child labour and institutional capacity strengthening of the child protection system.

As part of measures to support interventions that address protection and welfare needs of unaccompanied and separated minors in border towns, Zimbabwe's social welfare system integrates Reception and Support Centres at Beitbridge and Plumtree borders with South Africa and Botswana. The Centres are manned by professional social workers and provide identification, documentation, family tracing and reunification services to children. In addition, the Centres provide referral services for further social care and support.

4 CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES IN ZIMBABWE AND SOUTH AFRICA

Christiane Horwood, Clara Haruzivishe, Sphindile Mapumulo, Virgininia Mawerewere, Tanatswa Silvanus Chineka, Lyn Haskins

4.1 Experiences of unaccompanied child migrants in Zimbabwe and South Africa

In this chapter, we present the results from in-depth interviews conducted with 61 Zimbabwean children who had left their home in Zimbabwe unaccompanied by an adult. Interviews were conducted in South Africa and Zimbabwe (33 interviews in South Africa and 28 interviews in Zimbabwe). In addition, two focus group discussions were undertaken with unaccompanied migrant children in Zimbabwe and three in South Africa. In Zimbabwe, in-depth interviews were conducted with four parents/adults whose children had migrated in the past, to explore the experiences and perceptions of adults whose children had left home. Although these parents, two males and two females, had children who had migrated, their children were not participants in the study. Three adult participants were biological parents, and one was the grandfather of children who had migrated.

Table 2 Demographic characteristics of the participating child migrants

Characteristics	Zimbabwe (n=28)	South Africa (n=33)
Age at interview		
Range	11–18 years	12–19 years
Average age	15 years	15 years
Gender		
Male	17	18
Female	11	15
Place of interview		
Street	10	14
Drop-in centre	20	-
Shelter	-	11
Village community centre	3	-
Community	-	8
Place where participants were living at time of interview		
With family member	9	6
With non-family member	2	4
With friends in an abandoned building	1	-
Renting a room	6	8
On the street	8	1
Shelter	-	12
Lives alone (grandmother's house)	1	-
Unknown	1	2
Currently attending school		
Yes	3	7
No	25	26
Attending school in Zimbabwe prior to crossing the border		
Yes	unavailable	9
No		18
Unclear		6

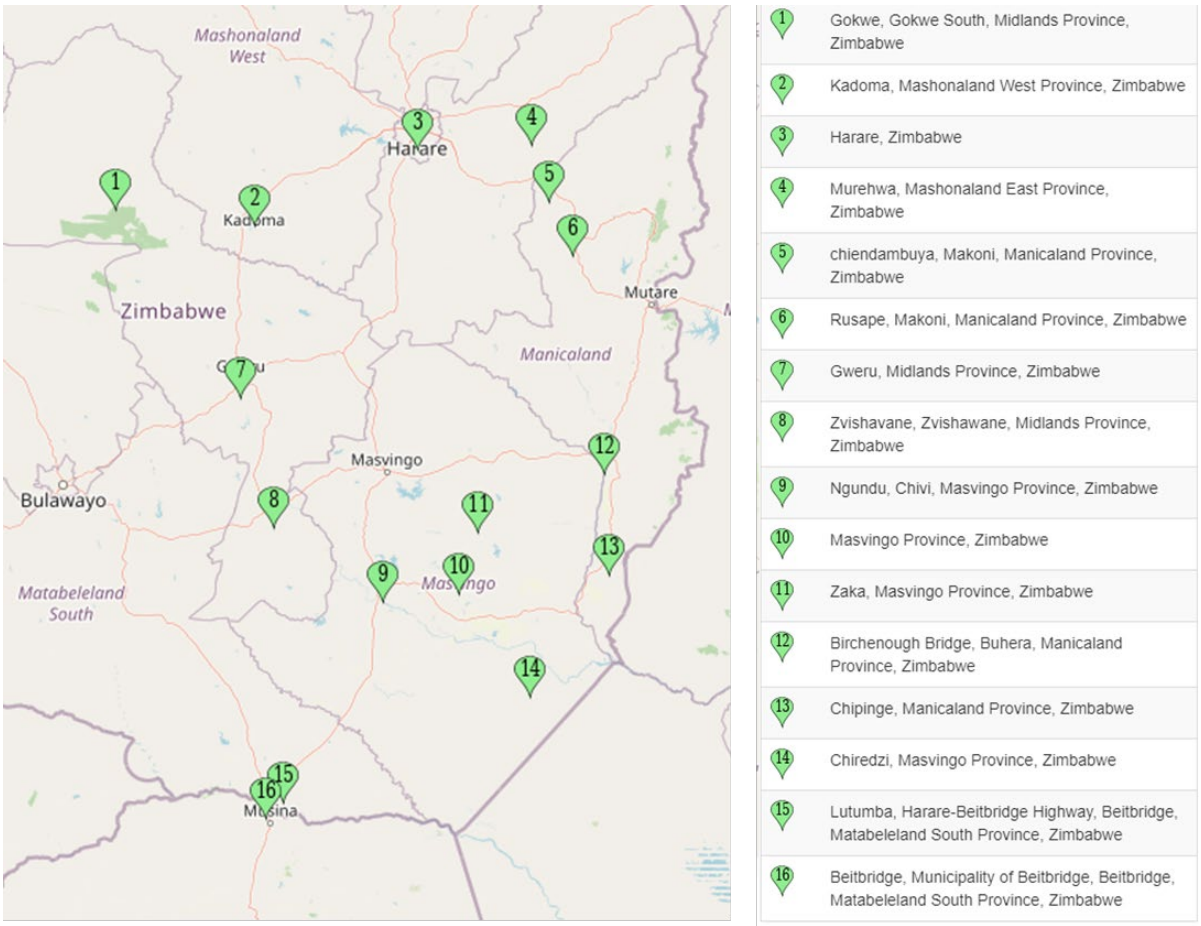
4.2 Demographic characteristics of child participants

In total, 61 in-depth interviews were conducted with children from 12–17 years of age in Zimbabwe and South Africa between May and July 2023. In Zimbabwe, there was one participant who was 18 years at the time of the interview and one who was not sure of their age, while in South Africa, there were five participants who were 18 years or older at the time of the interview. These children were nevertheless eligible to participate because they had left home alone and/or crossed the border when they were below 18 years of age. Many of the children interviewed in Zimbabwe were living in the streets or living with their employer; most of the children interviewed in South Africa were living in shelters or had private living arrangements (family, non-family, or private rent) (Table 2).

4.3 Place of origin of unaccompanied children who moved to South Africa

Participants who had crossed the border into South Africa (33) came from different places in Zimbabwe. The three main areas where the study participants were from was the Masvingo area, Chiredzi, and Gokwe. Map 2 shows the places of origin reported by the participants.

Map 2 Places of origin for the children included in the South African sample[4]



[4] https://www.mapcustomizer.com/map/Place%20of%20origin%20CoM

4.4 Why did children choose to leave home?

The reasons reported by unaccompanied children for moving from their home to a new destination were complex and multifactorial and can be broadly categorised into push and pull factors. Push factors are characteristics or conditions in the place of origin which tend to push the children away from that situation, for example, poverty or abuse at home. In contrast, pull factors are characteristics of the destination, which tend to attract the children towards that destination, for example, improved opportunities for education or work.

Many push and pull factors are closely linked to each other, and at times push and pull factors are so similar that they appear like two sides of the same coin, for example, poor education opportunities at home could be a push factor while opportunities for education at the destination could be a pull factor. Children may choose to move internally within the country of origin (Zimbabwe) or move across borders to another country (for example, South Africa), or in some cases move back and forth across the border regularly. We describe the push and pull factors that children reported when they were asked why they decided to move away from their home in Zimbabwe, either internally or across the border to South Africa.

Push factors

There were a variety of push factors, including family dysfunction, poverty and hunger, lack of educational and work opportunities in Zimbabwe, as well as some children who were leaving to escape an abusive situation at home. The children interviewed in Zimbabwe were living on the streets in Zimbabwean cities or were living and working in border towns. In contrast, the children interviewed in South Africa were most often living in shelters or with family. However, the reasons given for leaving home were very similar for children in both settings.

Family dysfunction

A negative family situation was the most common and most important reason for leaving home that participants mentioned. Among 33 participants in South Africa, only one child was living with both parents prior to moving to South Africa, 11 children were living with one parent, and 22 children were not living with either of their biological parents. Among the 22 children living without either parent, 11 were living with their grandmother.

Family dysfunction comprised a variety of negative situations at home, including the death of one or both parents, abandonment by parents who had left the family home, parent's remarriage and establishment of a new family, and deaths of other carers, most commonly the grandmother. Another cause for family dysfunction was when parents or other family members were abusing alcohol or drugs. In addition, there were several instances when a child's parents travelled to South Africa in search of work, leaving the child with a grandparent or other family member in Zimbabwe, and the parents then lost touch with the child. Family dysfunction was closely linked to other negative factors like neglect and abuse, lack of education opportunities, and poverty.

Several of the child migrants reported that one or both of their parents in Zimbabwe had died. Children were then looked after by other relatives, often the grandmother. At

times, siblings in the same family were split up to live with different relatives. In a few cases, the death of the grandmother left the child completely alone and precipitated the move to South Africa.

> Well, my mother died first, then I was left living with my father. Then he married another woman, who later left him, and I was left living with my father. My father was the last to die, my mother died first … My mother died in February, and my father died in July … My siblings were taken by my grandmother, my sister got married, and I was sent to my aunt. (South Africa: IDI 10, girl 16 years, Musina)

> Eh, my parents passed away and I started to stay with my grandmother and life was difficult. Eventually my grandmother passed away; since that time, no one was able to pay for my school fees. Life become more difficult, then a friend of mine mentioned that they may help me find work in South Africa. (South Africa: IDI 25, girl 16 years, Johannesburg)

> There was no problem. It's only that my father passed away when I was young and my mother died when I was a bit older. So, I was hoping my mother's sister would send me to school. She started saying she didn't have the money to send me to school. Instead, she said I should go and find work. (Zimbabwe: IDI 2, boy 14 years, Beitbridge)

Eleven of the children interviewed in South Africa and seven children interviewed in Zimbabwe reported that they were living with their grandmother prior to travelling to South Africa. Living with grandmothers had particular challenges and a number of children reported that grandmothers were not able to provide the basic necessities such as food and, in some cases, the grandmother herself was unwell. This influenced the decision to move away from home.

> What brought me here was that I was living with my grandmother. So, we were always staying in hunger; the issue of starvation was the problem. So, I came to here so I could get some relief. (South Africa: IDI 7, boy 15 years, Thohoyandou)

> The grandmother used to sit all day and said that she was suffering from diseases that I do not know. (South Africa: IDI 12, boy 15 years, Polokwane)

Some children reported that they had been abandoned by their parents. This was often because one or both parents had migrated to South Africa, some not returning for many years. A few children had completely lost contact with their migrated parents, only knowing they had gone to South Africa.

> My parents just left. They have been gone for seven years now, not even a word from them. There was a conflict with the people they were living around with, so they just decided to leave. (South Africa: IDI 7, boy 15 years, Thohoyandou)

Overall, family dynamics played a role in where children lived and who cared for them in the home environment. In some cases, children were cared for by step-parents, usually a stepmother, and this played a role in children wanting to move.

> … my father had taken another wife. Our stepmother ended up being abusive towards us, the children. As children, she did not take care of us; we were not being bought anything. I myself did not even have clothes to wear; we were not given food at times. With all this suffering, as a male child, I decided to move. (South Africa: IDI 32, boy 17 years, Johannesburg)

> I lived at home with my father, stepmother, and stepmother's children. My biological mother passed away when I was three years old; I do not really know her. My stepmother treated her children better and they don't treat them the same, so I just ran away and came here alone. (South Africa: FGD 3, Talent, boy, Musina)

> [I was living with] my father's brother. So, the problem started when my father's brother married a second wife. We were then sent to stay with our father. The problem is that my father is that type of person who does odd jobs … My father is that type of person who cannot stay with anyone. (Zimbabwe: IDI Harare 1, boy 17 years, Harare)

Poverty and hunger

Poverty and hunger at home were mentioned by many unaccompanied children, which influenced them to leave home. Lack of money to buy food, lack of financial support from absent parents, and lack of job opportunities all contributed to poverty and hunger. Children reported that, in Zimbabwe, they were not given food at school but had to take food with them. A few children talked about going for days without food, while some talked about going to bed hungry. In a few cases, children reported that withholding food was part of an abusive situation at home, where some children in the household were fed while others were denied food. Several children reported that they left home so they could earn money to buy food.

> I was staying with another 'mother', who was taking care of me, but had not given me food and I said, 'Why are you living with me when are you denying me food', and she said, 'How can I give you food; are you my child'? I said, 'But why are you saying why? When you said it yourself that you would take care of me'. For those three days, I did not have any food. After three days, I got into the road on the fourth day. On the night of the fourth day, on the fourth day. (South Africa: IDI 3, boy 15 years, Musina)

> I was coming here wanting to find a job so that we could get food to eat at home. Daddy was not sending us anything anymore. (South Africa: IDI 21, girl 13 years, Musina)

> My father was unemployed and did not send money here; my grandmother was sick, and I would sleep hungry. (South Africa: IDI 12, boy 15 years, Polokwane)

> When I was there in Zimbabwe, I stayed for three days after my, after my grandmother passed away; my mother, my mother's mother died. I went for three days without eating. (South Africa: IDI 3, boy 15 years, Musina)

Lack of educational opportunities

Lack of educational opportunities in Zimbabwe was also a consideration for many children when deciding to leave home. All 33 children interviewed in South Africa were under 18 years of age at the time of crossing the border and therefore should have been attending school, but most were not in school prior to leaving home. Similarly, most migrant children interviewed in Zimbabwe were not attending school (see Table 2). Lack of money to pay school fees was the main reason for this, since school fees in Zimbabwe were unaffordable for many children and families. This was a particular problem when circumstances changed, for example, following the death of a parent or grandmother. Lack of education opportunities played a major role in children's decision to leave home and/or move to South Africa, where children reported knowing that school was free.

> The way we stayed, there was no money in the home because I should have been in school right now. … We were eleven [in our household]. (Zimbabwe: IDI 17, boy 15 years, Chipinge)

> Life just became difficult; money was hard to come by. All along I had been going to school but, when my mother got hurt, it became difficult for school fees to be paid. (Zimbabwe: IDI 4, girl 15 years, Beitbridge)

> What caused me to come here to South Africa was when my father died, my brother and I couldn't get enough money to pay school fees; so we persuaded each other that if we could come to Joburg, we would be able to earn money, live, and get money for food. That's when we left the place and school as well to come here. (South Africa: IDI 27, boy 19 years, Johannesburg)

> I wanted to go to school, in Zimbabwe the schools were paid for and the fees kept increasing. (South Africa: IDI 1, girl 13 years, Musina Shelter)

Escape from abuse

A few children reported they were being abused at home and this contributed to their decision to leave Zimbabwe. A number of children mentioned abuse in general terms:

> They abused me, they did not treat me well. (South Africa: IDI 14, girl 16 years, Mokgoba)

> I used to live with my mother's sister, but she used to abuse us, so my mother then said I should go to South Africa. (Zimbabwe: IDI 9, girl 17 years, Bulawayo)

> I was living with my uncle [mother's brother], then my mother went to South Africa and my uncle started harassing me, so I left home. (Zimbabwe: IDI 10, boy 16 years, Bulawayo)

However, there were two children who described the abuse in more detail. Abusive behaviours included withholding food, using demeaning and abusive language to the child, and making the child do menial tasks that other children in the family were not required to do.

> Participant: … When I leave [left] school, she would say that you are not eating now, you will only wait for dinner, and would then assign me work to do.
> Interviewer: What kind of work did you do?
> Participant: Of washing dishes and going to herd the cows.
> Interviewer: Did the others also do work like you? Didn't you say the 11 of you were staying together?
> Participant: The rest of them were not allowed to do household tasks.
> Interviewer: How old were they?
> Participant: The minimum age was 11 years old and others were 12 years old, and she was saying they are still too young. I only had 13 years and the rest were being treated as babies.
> (South Africa: IDI 4, girl 13 years, Musina Shelter)

> Interviewer: Okay. What made you leave home?
> Participant: I was being harassed.
> Interviewer: Harassed?
> Participant: Yes.
> Interviewer: Who was harassing you?

Participant: My uncle.
Interviewer: In what ways was he harassing you?
Participant: Ah! I used to go without food and sleep in the bush.
Interviewer: How come you would go without food and sleep in the bush?
Participant: Just like that, he would beat me.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 11, boy 13 years, Bulawayo)

Box 1: Child leaving to escape abusive behaviour

Interviewer: So, if you were told to go back to Zimbabwe, would you like to?
Participant: I can't go back because the people I lived with treated me like I wasn't human. So, there was a time when I even thought about killing myself, but then I realised that, if I killed myself, there was nothing I have benefited, so I said let me just run away to my mother and father.
Interviewer: Why did you want to kill yourself?
Participant: People I was staying with, they used to torture me, and I was treated like a nobody in front of them. They used to call me and push me around.
Interviewer: Who was torturing you?
Participant My uncle who I used to do the gold-panning for.
Interviewer: Who else was persecuting you in Zimbabwe?
Participant: There were some women who used to throw stones at me saying, 'Hey, why don't you want to go to school, why are you stupid?', just making me feel pain. They said, 'Your mother is in Jozi'. And also other children would eat at the school; I was the only one who didn't eat because I would stay at home and herd cattle.

(South Africa: IDI 12, boy 15 years, Mokgoba)

Pull factors

The main pull factors for children wanting to leave home and move to the city or to South Africa were to seek better life opportunities and, for those children interviewed in South Africa, a strong motivation was to join family and friends in South Africa. Similar views were expressed by migrant children interviewed in South Africa and in Zimbabwe. South Africa was perceived by most participants as providing a better life when compared to the hardship children experienced in Zimbabwe. This impression was spread through word of mouth from friends, neighbours, and other family members in Zimbabwe.

> I was so excited that now I am going to a better place, because I had always heard that South Africa is a good place to be. You know, when people say something, you create an imagination which can be at times different from the reality. (South Africa: IDI 8, boy 15 years, Musina)

> I just knew that if you went to Joni [local term for South Africa], you would get something good; so I came here. (South Africa: IDI 20, boy 18 years, Musina Shelter)

> The people where we lived used to say that they were going to Joni … They said, if you go to Joni, you can benefit and your life can be better. (South Africa: IDI 23, girl 13 years, Polokwane)

When asked about their hopes for the future, all the children voiced dreams for the future based on the opportunities that they believed were available to them in South Africa.

> Right now, what I want is to improve my life [and] for my child as well. At least if I go back to study a course to teach me manicure and pedicure, then see if I can go back to school; I can start at Form 2 then proceed. (South Africa: IDI 29, girl 17 years, Pretoria)

> I would like to get a nice paying job because the way I am suffering, it's not good. So, if I get a good job, I can buy a car like what others are doing. (South Africa: IDI 32, boy 17 years, Johannesburg)

Box 2: Push and pull factors

Participant: My mother died when I was in Grade 7, and when she passed away, I was left to live with my grandmother. My father is still alive, but he is saying, 'You are not my child', yes.

Interviewer: Your mom passed away in 2000 and, eeeh, were you in Grade 7? [uuuuum 2015], 2015? [yes] but growing up, you never lived with your father? Did you used to go to him, did he used to come to see you?

Participant: I went there and he kicked me out.

Interviewer: So, when was this … you said you went to school and finished Grade 7?

Participant: When my mother passed away, I was in Grade 7, so I continued with my grandmother and got to Form 1, then grandmother passed away; so, she was the person who took care of me. So, when she died, I don't know my grandmother's village any more.

Interviewer: So, when … when your grandmother died, who did you then stay with?

Participant: Aaaah, when my grandmother died, I was left to live with another mother who helped me because my sisters had refused [to care for me] saying my father said I am not his child. I was left to live with that other mother from the village.

Interviewer: So how did you decide to come to South Africa?

Participant: I came to South Africa [because] this mother, she was abusing me so much, treating me wrongly, she could beat me. When I woke up, I could be asked to do morning chores and I would be late for school. Even if I was late for school, no one would ever understand the situation, the teacher would just beat me. So, that is why I then said let me come to [South Africa]. Plus, aaah, she had poisoned me, and I was only saved from death at the hospital; yes, that mother from the village whom I was staying with.

I heard others saying, and I heard my friends saying, in South Africa, there are some job opportunities. They are the ones who directed me here … They said, 'Why don't you migrate to South Africa'; I said I have no relatives in South Africa. They said, 'Aaah, you just go, you just go, since you have done Grade 7 and you know English, you will find white people who will give you jobs that will help you'.

(South Africa: IDI 3, girl 15 years, Musina)

Seeking educational opportunities

In contrast to having to pay for school fees in Zimbabwe, education in South Africa is free for impoverished students. Several children were aware of this and said that this influenced their decision to come to South Africa. A good education was perceived as the gateway to decent employment and a bright future. Many children expressed dreams of having a good job and a better future.

> I just heard that there is a school that does not charge school fees in South Africa. There is a woman whom I call my auntie just because she used to like me. She told me that I can just go with her and go to a school where education is for free, and then I came here. (South Africa: IDI 11, girl 14 years, Musina)

> We then raised money to come to South Africa. The things I liked to do were to go to school so that I could get a job for my future. (South Africa: IDI 13, girl 15 years, Polokwane)

> Participant: When I grow up, I want to pass school and become a doctor, then go to university, and work to become a doctor. I want to be a doctor when I grow up.
> Interviewer: Why do you want to be a doctor?
> Participant: I want to help other people.
> Interviewer: What do you think you can do to achieve your dreams of becoming a doctor?
> Participant: Going to school and studying hard.
> (South Africa: IDI 34, boy 18, Pretoria)

> I wish to become an educated person with a good job so that I can take care of people who I lived with where I came from, even though they didn't treat me well. (South Africa: FGD 3, Marshford)

Seeking work opportunities

Life was very difficult for participants and their families in Zimbabwe, where poverty, hunger, and lack of opportunities were reported to be a daily occurrence. Seeking employment and earning money to get a better life for themselves was a strong motivating factor for many children: *"I came looking for work like other people"* (South Africa: IDI 31, boy 17 years, Johannesburg).

Another important motivating factor reported by a number of participants for leaving home was to provide financial support to their family back home. Because of the conditions in which their families were living, they wanted to earn money in the city or in South Africa so that they could support their family back home to alleviate some of the hardships.

> I came here to South Africa last year, 2022. I came here because, at home, money issues were a problem. I have a younger sister; so, I have a younger sister and my mother who is on a wheelchair. So, financial issues were bothering us, so I decided to come here to find money to at least support my family. (South Africa: IDI 16, girl 16 years, Musina)

> I wanted to work so that I can take care of my grandmother. (Zimbabwe: IDI 8, girl 17 years, Beitbridge)

In addition, some children reported that the job was not only to provide food and living expenses, but they were also ambitious and wanted to improve their station in life and get qualifications so they could get better employment in the future. Some children envisaged working in South Africa and returning to Zimbabwe when they were needed in Zimbabwe.

> I hope that, if I manage to earn money, I will go home and get my licence and passport. If I get my licence and passport, I will be able to come back here and work, or even work in Zimbabwe. I will then be able to find a job, then work and be able to provide for my siblings and my grandmother. (South Africa: IDI 26, boy 17 years, Johannesburg)

> Okay, I came here with the intention to work … As for me, what I wanted was just to come here and work and take care of others at home, working here while returning home here and there. (South Africa: IDI 5, girl 17 years, Musina Shelter)

Reuniting with family or friends

Many children who migrated from Zimbabwe to South Africa reported that they had one parent or both parents or other family members living in South Africa. While some children had been in contact with their parent or family member, some children had lost contact with them. Having a family member living in South Africa, regardless of whether children were in contact with them or not, was a strong motivating factor influencing children's decisions to move to South Africa.

> In South Africa, I'll be going to … There are people from my family there. That's where I'll be going to stay. (Zimbabwe: IDI 1, girl 16 years, Beitbridge)

> My mother is here [in South Africa]. I came here with an intention to look for my mother, because she was said to be here. … She left me very long [ago] … When I see her, I still have some memories, but aaaah, I don't really know her anymore. (South Africa: IDI 4, girl 13 years, Musina)

> My father and mother came here to Joni a long time ago, but now I don't know where they are. I always live there with my aunt. … We had planned to come here to look for our parents, but when we arrived, we realised that we couldn't find them, and we were told by our aunt that, 'Oh, we haven't seen your mother for a while, so come and stay here with me'. (South Africa: IDI 13, girl 15 years, Polokwane).

> My mother accommodated me in South Africa. I got there and just stayed at home; I wasn't working. (Zimbabwe: IDI 9, girl 17 years, Bulawayo)

One child told his father that he was coming to South Africa and the father tried to dissuade the child from coming.

> I thought of [travelling] myself. My father did not want me to come, so I was like … 'I will see what will happen when I go'. [But] when I came, he welcomed me. (South Africa: IDI 33, boy 17 years, Pretoria)

Family influence

Among the child migrants interviewed in Zimbabwe, the influence of family was a big motivation. Some children were influenced by their parents to move to look for work and were told of an exciting life away from home. Some currently unaccompanied migrants left home with their parent or parents to look for a better life, but they ended up living on

their own because either the parent had moved back home or had died, leaving them to fend for themselves. None of the children interviewed in South Africa reported that their parents supported them to leave home.

> It's my father's brother … He had heard that there was someone who wanted someone to work for him. (Zimbabwe: IDI 1, girl 17 years, Beitbridge)

Some participants in Zimbabwe reported that they came to the city with their family and ended up alone living on the streets.

> Others come with their parents into town, being used for begging purposes. Then they get excited by the streets. (Zimbabwe: Harare FGD 1)

> Participant: My mother had brought us for a visit.
> Interviewer: You had come for a visit?
> Participant: Yes, to town.
> Interviewer: And then you ended up staying here?
> Participant: Yes, then we, I, stayed here.
> (Zimbabwe: IDI 13, boy 13 years, Bulawayo)

> Participant: He [my brother] just told me that let's go together. He wanted to look for a job for himself.
> Interviewer: So, did he want to also look for a job for you?
> Participant: Uh, no. With me, the person who was selling here at the market said they were looking for a person to sell and they were thinking of me. So, I volunteered my service.
> (Zimbabwe: IDI 3, boy 15 years, Beitbridge)

Taking a chance/influence of friends

A number of children described situations where they made the decision to move to South Africa quite casually and quickly, based on the opportunity arising, when a friend or friends suggested going to South Africa.

> My grandmother said she no longer has money for school fees for me anymore [eeeh], I immediately told my friend and she said, 'Aaah, friend, if you don't go to school anymore, let's go to work' and then we came here. (South Africa: IDI 5, girl 17 years, Musina)

> I was given the bus fare by someone who was working here in Pretoria already. He just invited me to come to work here, saying, 'You are a good boy, try to work at Venda Thohoyandou, you will change your life', but it is the same, the money is not enough. (South Africa: IDI 7, boy 15 years, Thohoyandou)

The influence of peers was a strong theme among participating children in Zimbabwe. Among these children there was also a motivation to migrate and live on their own because they were told by their peers of an exciting life without the guardianship or supervision of a parent. Some unaccompanied children were influenced by their peers to leave home for the city or to go to South Africa or Botswana. They felt pressured to join their friends or acquaintances who had already made the journey in search of a better life. For the younger children between the ages of 12–14 years, they migrated to live on their own for 'nice' food.

> … Um, I just got called by my friend; he told me that the streets were very exciting … my friend had told me that there's a lot of nice food to be had here … He also told me that there's also money to be found here. (Zimbabwe: Harare IDI 20, boy 17 years, Harare)

> I was called by my friend, saying to me, 'Let's go and work', because I was just sitting at home doing nothing. (Zimbabwe: IDI 2, boy 14 years, Beitbridge)

Several children among Zimbabwean participants had left home as a form of exploration, seeking new experiences and opportunities in destination cities and countries. They were curious about what life is like outside of their home country and wanted to see what South Africa and Botswana have to offer; this was seen as taking a gamble on the hope of finding a better life. Children believed that the potential rewards outweigh the risks involved in making the journey.

> Just to visit … yes, and live and see the place. They say it fun over there … I often hear people say it's fun, so I also want to go there. (Zimbabwe: IDI 14, girl 16 years, Bulawayo)

In the example below, the child explains how an opportunity came up and he left with his friend the next day, without telling his family and without any clothes or money, because his friend said they would get those things when they arrived in South Africa.

> So, while we were herding the cows, we had enough time to talk together and discussing about life. So, he [older friend] said, 'What do you think about our lives? Look it's not changing in any way; should we just grow up herding the cows every day like this, or should we change the plan?'. But I suggested to that uncle [older friend] that we should go to school and all, but he said there is no money for us to go to school. He said, 'It's good that you go to school but look at the sacrifice that must be done for you to be sent to school'. … I said, 'Anyway, now that you have said it, I can understand you. What should we do? He said, 'Look, I have a brother in South Africa, we may talk to him so that we can migrate and get something better to do there and be able to live well'. I said, 'Are you really for sure?'. He assured me, because, I personally had no idea how the situation was like in South Africa. I was even given the assurance that, in South Africa, things are just good; once you go, you will change your life for the better. I said, 'Okay, if you say so'. Then I asked whether my mother would agree to that, and he said, 'Why should we tell her that you are going there? We just silently do as per our discussion. As soon as you agree, let's do it like that'. I said that's alright …. Then he said, 'Well, it's all good, I have already planned with the people in South Africa, and they have agreed that we should come'. I said, 'That's okay; if they agree that we should come, let us just leave'. [yeah] Then we got on the bus. (South Africa: IDI 8, boy 15 years, Musina)

4.5 Preparing for the journey

Having decided to leave home and travel to the city or to South Africa alone without an adult, children make plans and prepare to leave. Children told us that they had to plan how they would travel, whether to tell their family or caregivers, and how to obtain money for the trip.

Informing family or caregivers about leaving

Children considered whether or not to inform their family about their decision to leave and move away from their home. Most children decided not to inform their family, but a

minority did choose to inform the family before they left. Children related a variety of different stories of how they left without telling their family. There were children who made the decision to move on the spur of the moment.

> When we got angry with my grandmother after our misunderstanding, I just woke up and said that I am leaving, going to where. My mother was [passed away], so I left. (South Africa: FGD 3, Marshford, Musina)

For other children, they thought about the move and considered whether to tell their family or caregivers about their intention to move; they then made a definite decision not to tell their family. Instead, they hatched a plan to slip out unnoticed and therefore avoid confrontation with their family members. While this plan indicated intention among the children planning to move, it also had some disadvantages in terms of what they could take with them. Nevertheless, many children decided to try to slip away unnoticed.

> It was around 2pm when we bathed, as if we were just going somewhere close by, because we didn't want people to know that we were leaving to South Africa. I then asked him [my friend] about clothes, and he said, 'Well, in terms of clothes, we will see when we get there'. (South Africa: IDI 8, boy 15 years, Musina)

> When I left home, I left without telling them. (Zimbabwe: IDI 11, boy 13 years, Bulawayo)

Another way of avoiding the confrontation of telling their immediate family or caregiver they were leaving, was communicating by letter.

> I left and wrote a letter and then I told them that I went to South Africa. (South Africa: FGD 3, Takaenda, Musina)

There were several children who decided to inform their family or caregivers that they were leaving. On hearing about the children's plans to leave, responses from the family varied. Some families supported the move without much thought: *"She just said it's okay"* (IDI 18, girl 16 years, Musina). For other families, although they were not happy that the child was moving, they could understand the child's desire to leave and the opportunities this would present for the child.

> It was not easy for them to accept but they thought it was worth the try for a better life. (South Africa: IDI 34, boy 18 years, Pretoria)

Other family members had serious concerns about safety for the child moving to South Africa, especially if the child was a girl.

> They weren't happy about it; they didn't want me to come here ... They were saying, I'm a girl, what if I end up getting raped? (South Africa: IDI 22, girl 14 years, Musina)

However, despite the concerns voiced by family members and caregivers, all the children in this study continued with their planned move. In all cases, participants described the family as being either discouraging or neutral in their response to the news that they were leaving. There were no children in the South African interviews and groups who stated that their family initiated, suggested, or encouraged the move. This contrasts with the children interviewed in Zimbabwe, who had migrated internally,

where several children were told by their parents and family members to go to the city and earn money.

Participant: I had a discussion with my grandmother, and we agreed that I should leave.
Interviewer: You were 15 years old, and your grandmother agreed?
Participant: [laughs] She agreed.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 8, girl 17 years, Beitbridge)

Getting money for the trip

While some children left on the spur of the moment and were unable to prepare for the trip, most children planned and prepared for the trip in different ways. They usually knew how they would travel and had some idea of the cost of the trip. Thus, the main preparation was how to get the money to pay for the trip, which included bus or taxi fares, paying bribes to cross the border, as well as food and accommodation during the journey. Planning for the trip by raising money for the journey suggests that, despite their age, children made difficult decisions and concrete plans to obtain resources they would need on the trip. Many of the children were very resourceful in how they obtained the money they needed.

Children described getting money from a number of different sources. Many children obtained the money by working and saving up the money or asking for and receiving money from family members and friends. However, there were a small number of children who obtained the money for the trip through stealing from family members or friends. In one case, the child sold his grandmother's cattle without her consent to get the money he needed. Box 3 Shows some examples of the ways children described getting the money for the trip.

Box 3 How children obtained money for the journey

Working for the money

– I used to work in people's gardens; sometimes I would wash clothes or do cleaning in people's houses. (South Africa: IDI 25, girl 16 years, Johannesburg)
– For me to get the money, I grew vegetables, different kinds of vegetables; that is how I raised money to come here. (South Africa: IDI 34, boy 18 years, Pretoria)
– I had to work for people so that I could earn money for me to be able to come this side. I did piece jobs for people, like herding their cattle. When I got paid, I decided to use the money to come to seek better opportunities in Jo'burg; that is how I ended up here. (South Africa: IDI 32, boy 17 years, Johannesburg)
– The money to travel from home to Beitbridge I got it when I worked there. When they paid me, I took the money and used it to come. (South Africa: IDI 18, Girl 16 years, Musina)
– The money we used to beg from people, and money from the piece jobs the man was doing, helped me a lot. (South Africa: IDI 16, girl 16 years, Musina)
– Before I came here, I made sure that I saved enough money through clubbing [working in night-clubs]; I saved enough money for transport. (South Africa: IDI 29, girl 18 years, Pretoria)
– I hitchhiked. I did odd jobs in Mozambique. (Zimbabwe: IDI 19, boy 17 years, Chipinga)

Money from family or friends

– I asked for money for transport from [my] brother-in-law, bus fare to come join mother in South Africa. (South Africa: IDI 30, girl 13 years, Johannesburg)
– My friend gave me the money to come here. (South Africa: IDI 26, boy 17 years, Johannesburg)
– I was given [money for the trip] by my uncles. (South Africa: IDI 31, boy 17 years, Johannesburg)
– I was given the bus fare by someone who was working here in Pretoria already. He just invited me to come to work here. (South Africa: IDI 7, boy 17 years, Thohoyandou)

Using the money meant for school fees for the trip

– It was about $100; it's the money I wanted to pay Form 4 school fees with. When I heard about the jobs here in South Africa, then my brother suggested that we should use the money for our bus fare to come here. (South Africa: IDI 28, boy 18 years, Johannesburg)

Stealing money for the journey

– From where I lived, they asked me, 'Why you don't follow your mother?'. When I told them that I don't have money, they said, 'Why don't you steal from your grandmother so you can go and live with your mother?' … I stole 1500 rand. (South Africa: IDI 14, girl 16 years, Polokwane)
– I was in Zimbabwe, I was not going to school, I was herding cattle. So, they treated me badly, so I stole money from them and then I ran away when I came here. (South Africa: IDI 14, girl 16 years, Polokwane)
– My mother had $2 with her. And I had $1. And I just took her $2. And that's how I managed. I just took it. Because, as a person without money, if I had asked, then she would have asked what I needed it for. (Zimbabwe: IDI 4, girl 15 years, Beitbridge)

Selling grandmother's cattle to get money for the trip

– I sold my grandmother's two cows. They were small, but she didn't know that I had sold them. I think they realised that I had sold them when I had already left because I just wanted to follow my mother and father here in South Africa. (South Africa: IDI 12, boy 15 years, Polokwane)

4.6 Migration journey to South Africa

Each child experienced the journey from their home of origin to the place where they settled in South Africa differently. The journey itself was described in three stages: journey from home to the border; journey across the border; and the journey from the border to their destination. The journey was characterised by the mode of transport chosen by the children and the people they met along the way, some of whom were helpful, while some were threatening or abusive. It was common for children to be given help, including money and a place to stay, by casual acquaintances they met along the way, but children also made strong enduring relationships with people whom they met. It was also common for children to stop during the journey and stay for a time to get money or to work out the next steps.

Box 4 Experiences of the migration journey as told by a boy of 16 years

Interviewer: So, explain to me how you came from Chiredzi to get here in the Musina area; how did you travel, who did you travel with, which road did you come through?

Participant: When I left Chiredzi, I got on a bus and got off in Beitbridge. I arrived in Beitbridge in the evening, and I even met some gangsters who took my money. Then I stayed in Beitbridge for a while doing some part-time jobs like lifting up sacks. I then met a guy who was on his way to Polo kwane, and he asked that we should go together. We then came and shortly stayed at Sithole's place. That is where I was taken by people from the Red Cross, and they put me here [shelter].

Interviewer: Okay, so when you were robbed, eeeh, what was taken from you in Beitbridge? So, how much was it, that was taken from you?

Participant: It was 20 dollars US.

Interviewer: Alright, okay. So this person you met, how did you meet him, and how did he bring you here in Musina area?

Participant: Aaaah, he said he was coming from Chivi; he had arrived in Beitbridge without a plan. I even helped him, I even helped him and told him that things are going like so.

Interviewer: What did he need help with?

Participant: He had just arrived in the area, so he was not much aware about the area and how to earn money [alright]. Then I showed him that, hey, the situation here is just like, you just carry people's bags to Musina and back.

Interviewer: Oh, so when you stayed in Beitbridge, how long did you stay there?

Participant: I stayed for two weeks.

Interviewer: Two weeks? [Yes.] Doing the work of carrying bags? [Yes.] Alright, and then you said that in Zimbabwe you herded cattle to earn money; how much did you earn, how long did you work?

Participant: I worked for one month.

Interviewer: How much money were you given?

Participant: 30 dollars.

Interviewer: Alright, when you finally meet the person you crossed the border with, how did you go about crossing the border to come here?

Participant: At the border, I had already crossed the border with Zalawe trucks [With what?]; with people who transport people from Zimbabwe to this place. They are now being known by soldiers and are now just crossing the border as they so wish, so I was crossing with them.

Interviewer: Alright, okay, so you never had any challenges when crossing the border? [No, no.] Did you just give them money?

Participant: Aaaah, we never even gave them money; it was a matter of people getting to know one another. They just pass by every day, so we used to cross here from the other side to come here to Musina and go back to Zimbabwe.

Interviewer: So, when you crossed, where did you go? [When I crossed?] Yes.

Participant: We arrived at the church for adults, where adults live.

Interviewer: Which church? Women, Christian women, church? [Yes.] Alright, and what then happened?

Participant: Yeah, I have been there. The days I got sick, one lady from the Red Cross took me to the hospital, and when we left the hospital, they said take your bag of clothes and let us go, and we came here.
Interviewer: Why were you sick? [With bile.] With bile! Were you admitted in the hospital?
Participant: No, no, aaaah, I only stayed for one day, but then I recovered when I got here, after about one week.
Interviewer: Okay, but were you treated at the hospital? [Yes.] Okay, so when you came here, what was your plan, when you thought of saving money to come here?
Participant: Haaaaah, I wanted to look for a job here.
Interviewer: What would you say, eeeeeh, pushed you to leave Zimbabwe?
Participant: In Zimbabwe, in Zimbabwe, haaa, jobs, clothes, were really difficult to get. Plus, you know, we are boys who would need money for basics; so that was a problem in Zimbabwe.
Interviewer: Money like this and that [laughing]? Like how?
Participant: Buying things like phones, clothes, what, what [laughing].
Interviewer: So, what have you been doing since you left school in Grade four until last year?
Participant: Well, I was just herding the cows and I just wanted to… [Okay.]
Interviewer: So, if you weren't herding cattle, what else were you doing?
Participant: Aaaaah [laughing], I once sold again. [Okay, what were you selling?] I was once a shopkeeper, in a tuck shop, and I went around again selling corn, and the snacks and some more items. I could move around selling drinks as well.
(South Africa: IDI 2: boy 16 years; Musina)

Journey to the border

Most children travelled from their home or place of origin to the South African border by bus, car, or taxi, particularly those children who had prepared for the trip and obtained money. Children who had not prepared for the trip found the journey from home to the border very difficult; several children reported walking for many miles to reach the border towns. A number of children received help along the way, either through begging for money or by asking for lifts. The children were resourceful and were usually able to come up with a way to overcome the challenges, which did not deter them from continuing on their journey to South Africa.

Participant: We were just begging for lifts until we arrived here.
Interviewer: You were begging all the way? [Yes] Were they all agreeing?
Participant: Some would refuse; some would eventually agree.
Interviewer: How many days did it take you to get from Chipinge to Beitbridge?
Participant: Two days.
Interviewer: Where were you sleeping?
Participant: We slept on the road.
Interviewer: What about food?
Participant: We didn't eat.
(South Africa: IDI 23, girl 13 years, Polokwane)

Interviewer: [You] spent three days to walk from Masvingo?
Participant: Yes, and on my way, I was asking for a place to sleep from villagers and then I arrived in Beitbridge.
(South Africa: IDI 3, boy 15 years Musina)

Until we reached the place where malayitsha [person who carries goods and people across the border] was buying petrol. We left him and got on a bus which dropped us further … He was following behind. When we got off the bus, we went into the car. Those other malayitsha we walked with then [they] left us. They went on further. (Zimbabwe: IDI 26, girl 13 years, Plumtree)

Arriving at the border

Arriving in the border towns concluded the first part of the journey. Many children decided to stop over in Beitbridge or other border towns of Chipinge and Plumtree, where they bought food and were able to rest, even if this was in the streets, and plan their next move. A few children reported being robbed by gangsters while they were in Beitbridge.

While in Beitbridge or other border towns, children then enquired about the different options or strategies for crossing the border. They made contact with other people who were also planning to cross the border; these people provided information, support, and assistance, so that the children often travelled across the border with people they met while waiting to cross. The children also came into contact with people who assist migrants to cross the border without documentation. The people working to assist people across the border were well known in the community, were easily accessible, and often approached the children directly offering to assist. The criminal cross-border couriers are known as '*magumaguma*'.

What happened was, we walked around inquiring. Then we were told that the people that helped people cross the border are around. Then we were told that it was 250 rands per person; we paid 30 US … we crossed through the border. We entered through the fence … we entered through the border. Then we climbed down, and then we crossed the fence. (Zimbabwe: IDI 4, girl 15 years, Beitbridge)

Alternately, some children approached strangers to find information and advice about how to cross the border. However, crossing the border without documentation usually meant that the children had to pay someone for the assistance. As many children were unable to pay large amounts of money, several children decided to find work in Beitbridge so that they could earn money to pay for assistance to cross the border.

I got on the bus and was dropped off at Beitbridge. I said I want to cross the border; I was told by others that it's difficult to cross, so I said let me look for money first. When I started selling 'vetkoek' in Beitbridge. And oranges, I sold them for two weeks. (South Africa: IDI 17, boy 18 years, Musina Shelter)

Crossing the border

There were three main routes that migrant children used to cross the border from Beitbridge to South Africa. Table 3 shows the routes used by participants interviewed in South Africa.

Table 3 How children crossed the border from Zimbabwe to South Africa (SA participants)

	In-depth interviews (IDI)	Focus group discussions (FGD)
Through the river	14	5
Walked through forest/bridge/railway line	9	2
Vehicle/truck/bus/taxi	10	3

Each of these methods of crossing the border provided a different experience, with different challenges and dangers as described below. The journey itself was often described as filled with distress and fear for these children, as they navigated uncertainty and unfamiliar environments, and faced threats of exploitation and harm. However, children also demonstrated autonomy and resilience in addressing the challenges they faced.

Crossing the border by crossing the river. Crossing the border via the river was particularly dangerous, but although the children knew about the dangers, this was the most commonly used route to get over the border to South Africa. There were several children who reported that they crossed the river when the water level was very low or the river was dry, but other children reported they had to walk through the water holding onto the hands of the people in front of and behind them, stepping on the stones and trying not to fall. A number of children were fearful not only of drowning in the river, but also of the fact there was crocodiles in the river.

> I go through … I go through the river. I cross by myself or I cross where there's no water. But if it's the rainy season, I go through an [inaudible]." (Zimbabwe: IDI 1, girl 16 years, Beitbridge)

> … as I was waiting at the border, some man at the border wanted me to go through the river. I saw a crocodile and I got scared and got out [of the river]. A man pushed me inside; he told me to just go inside the river. (South Africa: IDI 12, boy 15 years, Polokwane Community)

Crossing through the river usually meant that children paid people to assist them, which placed children in a vulnerable situation where they were at risk of abuse or theft from these people. Girls were particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse at the time of crossing the river and two participants reported that they were raped during the crossing. The border is patrolled by police and soldiers, and a few children related stories that the people assisting them to cross the border had to negotiate with the police and soldiers, so they were able to pass. In addition, the area is patrolled by criminals called *magumaguma* or others who were smuggling goods across the border, who were a danger to child migrants during the journey.

> It's a trap that they set. They actually open the holes and then they wait there. Then, when you see that there's no police monitoring, you enter there and then you're robbed. … Then there's others who actually make a living from opening those holes. They actually live there by the hole and collect fares for entry through the holes that they made. … Yes. There are even others who are just about my age, maybe

slightly older, who are of muscular build and use it to threaten others to say, 'You must pay' and you just find yourself paying. (Zimbabwe: IDI 5, boy 17 years, Beitbridge)

Police and soldiers patrolling the border area were inconsistent in how they dealt with migrant children, as some children reported they were allowed to cross the border and other child migrants said they were arrested and held in custody. Children reported a variety of experiences while crossing the river as described in Box 5; many children experienced threats, violence, and abuse, but some children were able to cross without negative experiences.

Box 5 Experiences crossing the river

We didn't have papers. We got to the border and we got to the river and they wanted to be paid [hand-over-pocket payment]. We didn't have the money to pay them, so we asked them for a favour to be crossed for free of charge. (South Africa: IDI 23, girl 13 years, Polokwane)

Well, we randomly met those people and were just discussing. We just talked exactly as I am doing right now, describing how we left home, and all, and highlighting our intention to cross the border and the possible difficulties [Alright]. When they said we are going to cross the river now, because they had a car, we were also asked to go with them through the river since they had understood our situation and felt it will be difficult for us to cross through the border post. We proceeded to cross the river and met the soldiers, and there were a lot of us at that time. I was walking far behind and just heard them talking but didn't hear exactly what was being said; we just heard it being said and happening at the front. They were just three soldiers, and they were suspecting something fishy among us, and then started asking us questions in an intimidating way, but they were mainly talking to the drivers. (South Africa: IDI 8, boy 15 years, Musina)

Aaaah, that person who was leading was the one who only talked to the policemen we met along the way, paying them to let us cross. (South Africa: IDI 10, 16 years, Musina)

I sold a small phone that I had, and then I walked until I arrived in Beitbridge on foot. I spent three days to walk from Masvingo [On foot?]. Yes, and on my way, I was asking for a place to sleep from villagers and then I arrived in Beitbridge and crossed the river. I was just alone and there was no water in the river. (South Africa: IDI 3, boy 15 years, Musina Shelter)

When we were crossing the border, my brother was caught by the soldiers. He had to remain under their custody until around 4 am in the morning. At the first gate, as soon as we entered the wire, that is when he was caught by the soldiers. (South Africa: IDI 28, boy 18 years, Johannesburg)

Participant: He started frightening us, saying, 'Do you know what I do for a living?'. He then descended from the tree, because all along he was in the tree. He hit my uncle [older friend] who was with me, he slapped him, when he slapped him then. As I was still a child, I was just watching it happening. When I saw how he was slapped, I thought I should run away and then realised it will not make any difference; then I just remained seated.

Interviewer: So how did you get out of there?

Participant: He asked what we had. When we started to [say we had nothing], he saw us as if we were lying, then he started hitting that one. He looked around [at] me and confirmed that I really didn't have anything. When he hit my uncle, he was sure that he could get what he wanted, then he [my uncle] said that I don't have anything, but I can give you this phone. It was just a small sliding Nokia phone. Then the man said, 'You are moving around with a non-functional phone'. He grabbed the phone and started laughing while looking at that phone again and then he threw it onto the ground and the phone broke into pieces. (South Africa: IDI 08, boy 15 years, Musina)

We were walking with these people who were crossing us. When we got to the river, they just grabbed me and then slept with me; when they finished, they said get in the car and go. (South Africa: IDI 13, girl 15 years, Polokwane)

Crossing the border in a vehicle. Migrant children explained how they crossed the border using different vehicles which included a bus, car, truck, or taxi. A number of migrant children crossed the border by bus. These children usually had money to pay for the fare, and children reported that this was considered a relatively safe route. Bus drivers were paid in advance by relatives or friends, and migrant children using busses to cross the border reported they did not face any challenges, but there was always the fear of being stopped at the border and asked for passports. For one child migrant, this created great anxiety.

> Since I was on the bus without immigration papers, I was afraid, because I normally see what the police do to people who don't have legal papers when we were begging for money. I would hide whenever we approached the police as they were searching for passports, I would just hide. I even urinated on myself because of fear. This other time when we got to the South African side, I was so scared, because the policemen there had dogs. Then they entered the bus and asked for each one's passport. So, I was told to be quiet, so as not to be heard because I didn't have any legal documents, eeeeeh. But however, we managed to cross. (South Africa: IDI 16, girl 16 years, Musina)

A few migrant children took advantage of trucks moving between the border towns of Beitbridge and Musina. Children recounted two ways of crossing the border by truck: either they got onto the truck without the driver's knowledge or they arranged to get on the truck with the driver's assistance, acting as a helper unloading the contents. Other children described travelling across the border by road in a car and in a *malayitsha's* Quantum (minibus taxi) and being able to cross without going through the border post.

Walking across the border. Children described walking across the border to South Africa via the railway line bridge where there are no checkpoints or walking through the bush or forest. While the railway line was scary because of the poor infrastructure, it was a fairly safe route. Walking through the forest or bush always posed the risk of being met by criminals or authorities. Children devised special plans to keep their money and valuables safe during the crossing.

> Aaaah, when we came, we just came through the forest and then we met some strange fierce people in the forest called 'magumaguma', and then they searched people; we were also searched. We didn't have anything, but they showed that they wanted to beat

> people, and then they left us. We had given the money to the leader to hide it. (South Africa: IDI 10, girl 16 years, Musina)

> I started entering the Zimbabwean border walking, walking without being asked while walking. Then the police said, 'Where are you going?'. The boy had advised me that I should say that my mum is selling, [she is] in the front selling. Then I said that my mum is selling at the front where she told me to come and that is where I am going. After passing by, we asked someone for a lift and we were brought here. (South Africa: IDI 6, boy 15years, Musina)

Acquaintances and friends along the way

During the journey to South Africa migrating children were helped by many different people in a variety of ways. Strangers assisted migrant children with money or taxi fares or reduced rates to cross the border; some were given food, many were given assistance to cross the border, and several were given a place to stay, or taken to a shelter.

> I was coming here wanting to find a job so that we could get food to eat at home. Daddy was not sending us anything anymore, then I just met someone who my daddy used to send our things with and then I came here. He then left me in at the Bridge and then I met this other woman, she asked me 'Where are you going?' and I told her that I am coming here. Then she crossed with me and arrived here with me. She then said, 'Do you have a place to go, do you have a place to stay?' and I said no; that's when she brought me here and I started selling on her market. (South Africa: IDI 21, girl 13 years, Musina)

> I met her when I wanted to cross; I saw her selling stuff there. I asked, then asked her saying, 'I'm asking for your help to cross the border, do you assist people to cross?' and then she said 'Yes, I'll help you cross' and said, 'Do you have money?'; I said, 'I don't have any'. She further asked me if I have a place to stay, I said no; that's when she brought me to her house. (South Africa: IDI 01, girl 13 years, Musina Shelter)

In some cases, children were helped by police, social workers, or organisations such as Save the Children and Red Cross. They identified children looking lost or begging and assisted by taking them to shelters in South Africa.

Abuse, intimidation, and violence along the way

As well as positive experiences of assistance, children were also exposed to violence, threats, and criminal behaviour on crossing the border.

> Ya, when we travelled, when we got to Beitbridge, we were beaten by soldiers and police along the way. Crossing the river was difficult; at times, we would be taken back and they would chase us, tell us to return to our country. It was a painful experience. (South Africa: IDI 32, boy 17 years, Johannesburg)

The story below describes the journey of one girl leaving home because of abuse and then experiencing abuse along the way.

Box 6 Migration experience

Participant: They abused me [at home], they did not treat me well, so I said let me go to my mother. That's when I stole money from her [the grandmother] and came.
Interviewer: Ok, did she [your mother] know you were coming and did you use to communicate?
Participant: No, she didn't know that I was coming.
Interviewer: Did you use to talk to her?
Participant: On the phone. Yes, I used to talk to them.
Interviewer: Where are they [your mother]? What are they doing?
Participant: They [my mother] used to say that, 'If I work, I will send money', but they never send. They never came.
Interviewer: When was the last time you saw them?
Participant: They came here in South Africa in 2010; they only came home once in 2015 and they did not come again.
Interviewer: Uhmm, can you explain to me who gave you the idea to come here and did you inform your brother that you have made a decision to come here?
Participant: It was friends who gave me the idea of coming.
Interviewer: Who are these friends?
Participant: From where I lived. They asked me why you don't follow your mother. When I told them that I don't have money, they said, 'Why don't you steal from your grandmother so you can go and live with your mother?' That's when I stole the money.
Interviewer: Could you please explain to me [what happened on] the day you de cided to leave to go, and how much you stole?
Participant: I stole 1500.
Interviewer: What is 1500 [was it] rands?
Participant: Yes, so when I came here to the river, I met Dama and he brought me here, saying he knows where my mother lives.
Interviewer: Uhmm.
Participant: While we were in the river, we walked there for two days and stayed at Mike's. We would meet with the police, running away from them; that's when I came here.
Interviewer: What are some of the problems you encountered at the border crossing?
Participant: We once met criminals and we were raped; we stayed there for two days and then came here.
Interviewer: Who was the person you met who brought you to your mother, what happened for you to meet him, how did you meet?
Participant: I just met them in the river there and he asked me, 'Where are you from?'. I said 'I'm leaving the village'; he said, 'Where are you going?', I said 'I'm going to my [mother, my] mother's name is Etina'; then he said, 'Oh I know her, so let me take you to your mother'.
Participant: That's when they brought me here and brought me to Mom.
Interviewer: How old was the person whom you met who accompanied you?
Participant: Oh, he is an older man, I don't know how old he is.
Interviewer: When you crossed the border, how did you travel till here?
Participant: When I got here, they were the ones who walked with me from the river to here.
(South Africa: IDI 14: girl 16 years; Musina)

The reports of each child's personal migration journey in this section have shown that, despite their age, the children we interviewed were able to navigate the challenges of leaving home, travelling to the South Africa-Zimbabwe border, negotiate crossing the border, and find their way to their destinations. For a number of children, this meant hardships, fears, and in some cases abuse and exploitation, but they continued on their journey.

Deportation from Botswana

Three interviewed Zimbabwean participants reported they were deported from Botswana. Two participants were stopped at the border and were detained while waiting for deportation. One participant was able to cross the border, work in Botswana for a period of time, and then presented herself to the police with a complaint against her employer as a way of being able to return home.

Two Zimbabwean participants interviewed in Plumtree (a border town in Zimbabwe to Botswana) reported they were unable successfully to cross the border from Zimbabwe to Botswana. Both participants were female, aged 13 and 15 years of age. Both participants indicated they were on their way to South Africa and had not planned to stay in Botswana. These participants were stopped at the border and spent time in a prison in Botswana, despite their young age. Both participants were interviewed after they had been repatriated to Zimbabwe.

We describe the experiences of these two participants. Their reasons for migrating were similar to the many migrant children who had managed to cross the border: both were going to join their families in South Africa. Their families had arranged for them to travel with the *malayitsha*. Both children were stopped at the border by the police and taken to a prison.

The first of these children was a 13-year-old girl who reported she was stopped at the border where she was unable to produce her birth certificate which resulted in her being detained (see Box 7). She was taken to Seruwe prison, then moved to a place which she was unable to identify. After the authorities contacted her mother to sign her out (into her mother's care), she was repatriated to Zimbabwe. This young child did not talk about or imply any discomfort or abuse during her stay in prison, and although not specifically asked, seemed unscathed by the experience and very willing to talk about it. She is now back at home and has resumed going to school, with the ambition of being a doctor.

Box 7 Unsuccessful border crossing of young girls

Participant: We got in and drove away.
Interviewer: How far did you go?
Participant: We got to the road. There was a small office. I had left my birth [certificate] at home.
Interviewer: Oh, you had left your birth [certificate] at home? Alright.
Participant: Mgh. So, they …
Interviewer: So, they did what?
Participant: They took us to jail.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 26, girl 13 years, Plumtree)

The second participant who reported she was unable to cross the border successfully was a 15-year-old girl who was very apprehensive and insecure about leaving home, even though her mother in South Africa had sent for her and made all the arrangements for her travel to South Africa via Botswana.

> Going away and leaving the elders is not right. You are weighed down by thoughts … I had fears of accidents happening when the elders are not close by. (Zimbabwe: IDI 27, girl 15 years, Plumtree)

Just after leaving the border crossing, as they entered Botswana, the group she was with were stopped by the Botswana police. They were taken to the police station where they were separated into two groups: below 18 years and adults. This participant spent ten months in an SOS village in Botswana and was repatriated to the border where she spent three days in a safe house prior to eventually arriving at home to be with her family. This participant has been unable to go back to school and her desire is to gain a skill that will result in finding work.

> Participant: I wish I could find something that I could do. … Learning to do some jobs
>
> Interviewer: Like what?
>
> Participant: Handiwork like sewing, braiding, and things like that.
>
> (Zimbabwe: IDI 27, girl 15 years, Plumtree)

As a result of her unsuccessful journey and her experience of being detained in the SOS village in Botswana for a prolonged period, this participant says she will not attempt another border crossing again, as she is fearful of going through this again.

Deportation as a way of returning home. One participant interviewed in Plumtree, Zimbabwe described a successful journey through the border to Botswana, but experienced challenges at her place of employment in Botswana which led to her reporting her employer to the police who set in motion her deportation from Botswana (see Box 8). At the time of the interview, this participant was living with her family outside Plumtree.

Box 8: Deportation as a way of returning home

Reason for leaving

This participant explained that her mother was approached by a woman to ask if she knew someone who would go to Botswana to work as a child caregiver. Her mother gave permission for her to go, even though she was only 13 years old at that time. The woman made all the transport arrangements and also organised accommodation en route. They crossed from Zimbabwe through a fence and, once in Botswana, they were met by a car which transported them to their final destination.

> There was a lady in Botswana who wanted a caretaker for her child. And then, they, I don't know if it's her aunt or what, she came to my mommy and then she told my mommy that there's someone who's looking for a caretaker for her child. And then my mother just, she said they can go because I was already finished

> grocery and I didn't have money to go for more. So, my mother allowed [me] and then I went.

Living and working in Botswana

The work duties of the participant were to clean the house, wash the baby's clothes, bath the baby, and cook. Initially, she was paid 350 Pula per month, but then this was reduced to 300 Pula. This amount angered the participant because her mother was told she would be paid 400-450 Pula per month. In addition, the participant's work duties were increased, and she was told she had to wash both the husband and wife's clothes as well.

During her six-month stay with the employer, the participant felt her employers were exploiting her, and she started to think about going home, but she did not know how to arrange this, or what direction to go. In addition, the husband had started making sexual advances to her by touching her breasts when the wife was not around, even though the participant tried to protect herself.

> The man, whenever he touched, the husband, whenever his wife was not there, he was touching my breast.

With the help of a friend (also a child migrant working as a child carer), the participant decided to approach the Gaborone (Botswana) police to report her employer, which started the process of placing the participant in a shelter pending deportation.

Life in the shelter

According to the participant, life in the shelter was good without any responsibilities: 'We were just waking up in the morning and then we were not even cleaning the houses'. In the shelter she was able to enjoy herself: 'Waking up and partying and going to the kitchen for 15 minutes'. However, there was no school at the shelter. After six months in the shelter, social workers informed the participant to get ready for repatriation to Zimbabwe.

Reunited with family

Her family were very pleased to see her. However, the experience has influenced her personally as she has yet to tell her family what happened. Despite all she had been through, the participant has got involved with the Dreams programme (World Vision) and is now playing on a volleyball team. Currently, she is studying with a view to becoming a pilot.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 28, girl 16 years, Maninji)

Crossing the border regularly for work

Among the participants interviewed in Zimbabwe, three participants living and working in Beitbridge crossed the border regularly, moving between Zimbabwe and South Africa. All three participants were very familiar with how to cross the border without any problems. They all crossed the border informally without documentation. Once they had

a route for crossing and people to help, it was not a problem to move back and forth between Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Two participants indicated they sold bottles in South Africa. For one of these two participants, the need to cross the border frequently started as a second job; his first job was to sell 'vetkoek' (deep-fried dough balls) for his employer. When he was finished with his first job, he collected bottles which he took to South Africa to sell for a second income.

> Interviewer: Alright. So, when you go to South Africa, what is it that you want to do when you go over there?
> Participant: I will be doing a job where I collect bottles.
> Interviewer: Will you be working for this woman, or would you have stopped?
> Participant: Uh, when she says she has stopped cooking for the time, that is when I go.
> Interviewer: Oh, so when you collect bottles, then what do you do?
> Participant: I sell them.
> Interviewer: Alright. In South Africa?
> Participant: Yes.
> Interviewer: When you have collected your bottles, how do you travel from here for you to find your way to South Africa?
> Participant: Sometimes you cross by the river.
> Interviewer: You cross by the river?
> Participant: Yes.
> Interviewer: Alright. Whereabouts is that?
> Participant: By Limpopo.
> (Zimbabwe: IDI 3, boy 15 years, Beitbridge)

This participant had a planned route through the river where stones had been laid across which helped them to cross safely. He usually crossed to South Africa and back to Zimbabwe with a friend who, although his friend sold ice creams as his initial job, also collected bottles to be sold in South Africa.

> There's a place where you can cross, where there will be some rocks which are arranged on the river for you to be able to cross. The water will be flowing swiftly where you could possibly drown, but the rocks are quite big, so you will be able to walk over them, and you'll be able to cross over to the other side. Sometimes, they construct a bridge over that area, but it gets dragged. (Zimbabwe: IDI 3, boy 15 years, Beitbridge)

The other participant who was selling bottles in South Africa had started moving across the South Africa/Zimbabwean border with his mother from a very young age. They lived in Beitbridge, where the mother found small jobs to earn a living. When she was unable to find work in Beitbridge, she would move over the border with her son to work there. Over time, his mother became ill, and the participant started selling bottles on his own. When his mother died, he continued moving to and from South Africa. Currently, this participant lives in an informal dwelling on council land on the outskirts of Beitbridge; he pays rent and continues to sell his bottles in South Africa, moving backwards and forwards.

> After a while, that's when we came back here, and we stayed for a long time. Because that other side [South Africa], we never used to stay for too long. We would stay, not even for a month. ... [We] would stay for a few days and then would come back. ... Yeah, over that side [South Africa], she'll be looking for piece jobs. Just one-day engagements. Things that would give her money right there and then. (Zimbabwe: IDI 5, boy 17 years, Beitbridge)

Yet, another participant who crosses the South African/Zimbabwean border frequently lives alone in her grandmother's house in Beitbridge, attends school in Beitbridge, and sells vegetables after school. This participant explains that she regularly visits her relatives in South Africa during holidays. She has been crossing the river on her own and could spend between one and three months in South Africa before returning to go back to school.

> Sometimes I can go for up to three months while I go to school. (Zimbabwe: IDI 1, girl 16 years, Beitbridge).

4.7 Living conditions at the place of destination

In this section, data from children living in South Africa is presented separately from the data from the children living in Zimbabwe; this is because the children's experiences are different between the two countries. Most children in South Africa were living in a hostel or in private accommodation with friends or family, whereas most children in Zimbabwe were living on the streets or were working in border towns waiting to cross to South Africa. We present migrant children's experiences of life and work at the place where they were living, in South Africa or Zimbabwe, at the time of data collection.

Living conditions in South Africa

After arriving in South Africa, children had to decide where they were going to settle to start their new life. Most children were unable to plan; they usually just responded to the situations where they found themselves. Some children were assisted by people they met along the way, or they met with family members and were able to immediately find somewhere to stay. However, many children were vulnerable in their first few days or weeks in South Africa, until they had found a place to stay and work or a way of earning money. Some children were assisted by having contacts, like friends or family, in South Africa whom they tried to contact; however, they were not always successful. Several children were taken to shelters or hostels, where they were assisted and given food or shelter.

Joining family and friends in South Africa

In a few cases, children were hoping to join members of their family, friends, or people they knew who were in South Africa. A small number of children were able to contact family members on arrival, making the transition to life in South Africa much easier.

> I arrived past 8; he [father] came to welcome me since he is the one who had taken my bag from the first failed trip. So, he welcomed me when I came the third time, then I went to his place with him. (South Africa: IDI 33, boy 17 years, Johannesburg)

> Yes, I had a place to stay, at my aunt's. That is where I stay, and she is the one who told me to come. (South Africa: IDI 29, girl 18 years, Pretoria)

Although some children had planned to join family or friends, they often did not know where to find them and were faced with the challenge of searching for that person, often with very little information. In this situation, children demonstrated resilience and resourcefulness in making an alternative plan.

> Someone [friend] called us for work, and then he couldn't pick up the phone. When we got here, he was waiting for me and my brother, because my brother was the one talking to the person. When we got here, he couldn't pick up the phone, and then we started another plan. (South Africa: IDI 28, boy 18 years, Johannesburg)

Decisions made at this point of the journey influenced where the migrant children settled and their prospects going forward.

Finding a place to stay

Life in South Africa for some children was not as easy as they expected, particularly for those children who had not made any plans for where to stay in South Africa. In the first few weeks after arriving, children reported sleeping in shop entrances or at the taxi ranks in the cold, with only cardboard to cover themselves. Other children said they found themselves sleeping in spaces with lots of other people they did not know or being kicked out of friends' spaces and having to make their own sleeping arrangements. Two children reported their travel companions had let them down by becoming involved in illegal activities such as sex work or using drugs, making it difficult to stay together. These challenges meant children were extremely vulnerable and at risk on arrival in South Africa.

Living in a shelter/hostel. A number of children were living in shelters or hostels specifically designated for vulnerable children. Children reported they did not approach the shelters on their own, usually getting into the shelter after being taken there by someone. Members of the community knew about the shelters and when they identified vulnerable children on the streets, would take them to the shelter. When the police identified children on the streets alone, they questioned them and if they were considered vulnerable, they offered the child a placement in a shelter. Save the Children and Red Cross also recognised children on the streets and placed them in shelters.

Living in the shelter meant that migrant children had a place to live, a bed to sleep in, food on a regular basis, adult supervision, and people to talk to about their problems. In addition, children in shelters were encouraged to go to school and school placement was arranged for them.

Box 9 Arrival to the shelter

Identified by the police, or organisations	Identified by the community
While I was here, these people met me and called me; they called me and asked who had left me here and how I had gotten here? I told them how I came and they said, 'We have somewhere we want to take you; would you want to?'; I said yes. When I got there, I stayed at the shelter for a few days. (South Africa: IDI 06, boy 13 years, Musina Shelter)	We crossed the river, and came here; we went to Matswale, that's where she [aunt] was renting. She could go to Polokwane leaving me alone. I was given food by the tenants I was staying with. I wonder what they did later. I just got picked up, I then started staying here. (South Africa: IDI 1, girl 13 years, Musina Shelter)
He [social worker] saw me begging for money and then he started asking me 'Where do you live, what do you do and why did you come here?'. And when I explained to him like this, he took me and took me to the shelter for the children. (South Africa: IDI 19, boy 17 years, Musina Shelter)	Ee, arrived in Musina to Nancefield, we asked where the town was; we were shown and we went to the town. We slept for two days in the town and then we met this other woman. That woman said, 'Who do you live with?' and I said I live here in the town and others. The woman lived at women's shelter there; they took me and took me in a taxi and told the drivr to leave me here at the boys' shelter, so I came and started staying here. When I was told that you should go back to school, I didn't want to go to school at that time, but when I finally decided to go to school, I started going to school until now. (South Africa: IDI 17, boy 18 years, Musina shelter)

Most migrant children living in the shelters spoke positively about their experiences. They expressed happiness and were grateful for all things that made life better for them, particularly the food, clothing, and recreation that was provided. Life was structured and children were required to comply with the rules of the shelter and to contribute to keeping the environment clean and tidy. Many children in the shelters were attending school and they described camaraderie among children in the shelters, where they made friends and supported each other. Shelter staff could arrange for a place in the local school for migrant children, whereas in other places, it was difficult for children to attend school without relevant documentation.

However, some migrant children described bad experiences living in the shelters; this was mainly from the boys living in one of the boys' shelters. Negative experiences included running out of food, as well as bullying, abuse, violence, and theft from other boys. The boys also talked about a lack of supervision at night and being locked into the shelter. In addition, for a few boys the controlled lifestyle at the shelter was not what they wanted and they chose to leave the shelter to find accommodation in the community, where they had more freedom and particularly more opportunity to find work.

Box 10 Experiences at the shelter

Positive experiences living in the shelter	Negative experiences living in the shelter
I have been received with incredible joy by people. They were even asking me to stay in their room; each person wanted me to share a room with them. This made me think that perhaps this is now my family that I have found, a beautiful family. (South Africa: IDI 11, girl 14 years, Musina Shelter)	When food was being served, he would ask that I get my food through the window. The other boys would then take it from me and start beating me as well. It has once happened that after they stole each other's phone, they would accuse me of theft saying that this new guy is the one who have stolen the phone. (South Africa: IDI 6, boy, 13 years, Musina, Street)
What makes me happy is that here I live well and am treated well. I play well with others; I go to school and come back. I get help sometimes to write my homework. I go to school, we are learning, we talk well with others; here we don't fight each other. (South Africa: IDI 1, girl 13 years, Musina Shelter)	As for some of us, after school we go to work, but others just remain here. If you then leave your money, you will not find it, it gets stolen; so it is almost the same because you will be going back in life. I then left. I just realised that it's the same, let me look for my place where I'm staying. (South Africa: IDI 8, boy 15 years, Musina Community)
So, as I am staying here, eeeeh, I can see that there is an opportunity for me to get food for survival. But, in Zimbabwe, I was not even getting food; here I get food, I can stay free, but if it's free even without education. (South Africa: IDI 3, boy 15 years, Musina Shelter)	Yes, we are given food, but sometimes they can run out of food. There is no complaint, just, we just accept. (South Africa: IDI 19, boy 17 years, Musina Shelter)
They give us food here, about toiletries but sometimes we don't get enough. Like now I have a problem with school shoes. I don't have any school shoes and to buy them is a process; they can't buy them for one person. (South Africa: IDI 20, boy 18 years, Musina Shelter)	Well, what made me leave here is the fact that there are older boys around you. So, if there are abusers there, you can find something that doesn't affect you. So, I just told myself that it is better to be able to do these things on my own and move away from them, since I was able to make another plan for myself. That's how I left. (South Africa: FGD 3 Takaenda, Musina)
What's interesting to me here is that I'm free; I can study, there's nothing to worry about. We have time to do activities like sports, playing football. (South Africa: IDI 19, boy 17 years, Musina Shelter)	

Living in the community. Children living in the community were often living with family or friends. Several migrant children chose to rent rooms themselves or share rooms with friends, which gave them more independence in choosing how to spend their time. A few children had first lived in the shelters but, because of negative experiences described above, they left the shelter to live with friends in the community. Children renting accommodation in the community faced the ongoing difficulty of making enough money for rent and food, particularly if they were still attending school. Despite these difficulties, children showed resilience. Several children in Musina attended school in the morning and worked in the afternoon to afford the rent; if they did not have enough money for rent, they negotiated with the landlord.

> If we can't get the rent money, we talk to the landlord. We just tell him that, as you know we are going to school, so we will give your money in the middle of the month. (South Africa: IDI 8, boy 15 years, Musina)

> Outside it's better because no one bothers you; if you want to sleep, you can sleep when you want, if you want to study, no one will disturb you. But it's difficult when it's month ends, when it's time to pay rent. We get money, but we don't get it every time.

> So even if it's school days, we'll have to miss a week or so to find money to pay rent and buy something for the house. (South Africa: FGD 2 Musina)

Living on the street. Although several migrant children had indicated they slept on the streets when they arrived in South Africa, there was only one boy (aged 13 years) who admitted he was currently living on the street. All other study participants were either living or renting in the community with their family or friends or were living in one of the shelters. This boy had lived in a shelter previously but had run away because of the abuse at the shelter. The boy has joined a group of other street children who sleep at "the garage" at night after a day of begging.

> Interviewer: So, you actually ran away?
> Participant: Yes.
> Interviewer: So, what did the people at the shelter say?
> Participant: They don't live there [eeeh]; the people of the shelter go to their houses in the evening.
> Interviewer: Okay, alright.
> Participant: The kids are the only ones who are left inside, and the security guard [eeeh]. The security guard would not say anything, as he will be afraid of being beaten.
> Interviewer: Okay, so now where do you get the money to get food?
> Participant: I ask for people.
> Interviewer: Did you get somewhere to sleep, now?
> Participant: No, I don't, I just sleep in the garage there.
> Interviewer: Where is the garage?
> Participant: Legend garage.
> Interviewer: Here in Musina?
> Participant: Yes.
> Interviewer: Alright. Aren't you afraid during the night?
> Participant: I sleep with others there, in the light
> (South Africa: IDI 6, boy 13 years, Musina)

Going to school in South Africa

One important pull factor for moving to South Africa reported by children was that schooling was potentially free. Seven children were attending school at the time of the interview. Most of these children were living in shelters and were therefore provided with everything needed to attend school by the shelter. Only two children were attending school and living in the community, but this was after leaving the hostel. There were five children who were preparing to finish their schooling and several children were able to work in the afternoons.

> I go to school, but in life you have to find a balance when you go to school, you see, so there are piece jobs that I do on weekends and holidays. (South Africa: FGD 3, Mashford, Musina)

> I failed once and I repeated because I used to hustle at the taxi rank and go to school. So, I failed to balance the two and I said, you know that you don't go to the next grade without passing. I used to be a hustler. I'm matriculating, so there's no need to play anymore; I want to finish school and see what happens if I continue. (South Africa: FGD3, Grade 11 Talent, Musina)

Most children were not attending school, including three children living in the shelter, and they gave a number of reasons for this. These included that they were unable to afford the resources, like books, uniforms, and shoes required to attend school, or that they had arrived in the middle of the school year and could not catch up, or that they needed to work to buy food or pay rent.

When attending school, a few children faced challenges of bullying from other school children, particularly if they were unable to speak the language. One child described a teacher insulting her because of her inability to speak any South African languages. Learning the local language was not only important for being in school, but it also helped communication at the shelter.

> When you didn't know the language, they used to insult you and say, 'Because you are a foreigner, you are incompetent. Why do you come to the school? You shouldn't even come to school'. That's what some used to say, but they ended up stopping bothering us eventually. (South Africa: IDI 11, girl 14 years, Musina)

This same child also talked about other teachers who helped her and would pay for school trips: 'I used to be assisted by a teacher who liked me and they would say to me they will teach me after I dismiss from school' (IDI 11; girl 14 years; Musina). However, most school-going children reported positive experiences.

> Interviewer: What challenges do you face at Mussina High as an outsider?
> Participant: None, because I am friendly with many and play with many other learners.
> (South Africa: IDI 11, girl 14 years, Musina)

> Interviewer: What are your interests here?
> Participant: Going to school, because I am a person who used to live on the street, so I never imagined that I would end up living there like I am doing.
> (South Africa: IDI 20, boy 18 years, Musina Shelter)

Earning money in South Africa – work experiences

Many children spoke of wanting to come to South Africa so they could work, earn money, and be able to live a better life with the possibility of sending money home to their relatives. Being able to find work was extremely important for most migrant children, as their survival depended on it. The children described how they were always looking for ways to make money, some taking on more than one job. A few children worked as well as attending school.

> I just come from my school, and I go to change the clothes and leave things and go to work. When I go to work, I must wait until I get there, because I come home at around 7 pm. Then I budget my time because I must cook and do everything. Then as soon as I finish, I make a plan that I should read, because reading is critical as well. I am in Grade 9, so if I can't read while focusing on other things, it will be unreasonable. I start to read everything, and I go to bed at 11 pm every day and wake up in the morning and go to school. After school, sometimes we finish school at 2 pm, so [I leave at] at 20 minutes to 2, then 20 minutes are for travelling to town. I arrive at 2 pm and start to work. That time is useful; I can sometimes get R400 from 2 pm. (South Africa: IDI 08, boy 15 years, Musina, Community)

Migrant children got involved in many different types of work to earn money, demonstrating a high degree of resilience and resourcefulness. Jobs that children were doing included selling foods such as boiled eggs, fruit, and vegetables (litchees, bananas, mangoes, *sadza*), and snacks (popcorn, nuts, sugar cane), as well as selling used clothes. Some children also undertook more heavy work, working at taxi or bus ranks loading and unloading suitcases and bags, or wrapping bags with plastic before they are put onto the busses. Children were also involved in construction work and moulding bricks. The manual work was mostly undertaken by boys. Employment doing farm work, herding cattle, gardening, and peeling timber was also undertaken by the migrant children. Girls were more often working in shops doing the sweeping and cleaning, or working as cleaners or domestic workers in households. Two girls were involved in the sex trade, either in clubs or working from home.

> Interviewer: You said earlier that you were doing sex work; please tell us how you felt when you started sex work?
> Participant: Ah, at first it was really weighing on me. It hurt since it is something that I was not used to do and it's something I never thought I would do in this lifetime. But I had no choice at the moment; I had to do it for survival.
> (South Africa: IDI 25, girl 16 years, Johannesburg)

It was particularly difficult for the children if there were no customers during the day or if employers paid late. Children reported that employers were aware they were migrants and undocumented, and children were afraid that if they complained, they would lose their job or be reported to authorities. Lack of work at times meant money for food and rent was scarce, leaving migrant children in situations which led to some children begging, some going to bed hungry, or having to negotiate with friends for help and landlords to pay the rent late. This left children vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

> At times you could go the whole day without getting any clients. When that happened, I would get help from the people that stayed around where I stay; some of the people who would assist were men. Some of the men that would assist would later request that I sleep with them in exchange of money or food. (South Africa: IDI 25, girl 16 years, Johannesburg)

Due to the lack of documents, migrant children were obliged to participate in the informal economy which in itself is characterised by low pay and lack of opportunities for the future. Children reported receiving very low wages and working long hours. Despite this, one girl migrant was able to save the money she earned as a housemaid until she had enough to start her own business selling mangoes, demonstrating great resilience and agency.

Participant: Ah, I am selling this here. Can't you see that's my shop over there, just after that woman's. That is my shop and I am selling fruits. I'm selling fruits that are out of season; can't you see those big mangoes.
Interviewer: Where did you get the start-up money for the order?
Participant: When I was working there for that family, they paid me money every week; they paid me money every week and I saved. So, I did save money, and the money I saved was business start-up money.
(South Africa: IDI 16, Girl 16 years, Musina)

Even though children had left Zimbabwe because of poverty and lack of food, living in South Africa did not always change that aspect of their daily life. A number of children described their experiences of going to bed hungry at night. Most of these stories were from the interviews conducted in Gauteng, portraying just how challenging their life in South Africa had become.

> In some situations, I would sleep on an empty stomach, if no one was willing to help. I slept on an empty stomach for many days. (South Africa: IDI 25, girl 16 years, Johannesburg)

> Yes, so many times we go home without even eating and not collecting any money. (South Africa: IDI 28, boy 18 years, Johannesburg)

> At times I sleep on an empty stomach; the people tell me that this is the Jo'burg life you chose, fend for yourself. At times when they want, they give me R10, but you can see that I am suffering. (South Africa: IDI 32, boy 17 years, Johannesburg)

> I am still here today; since 2019 I have not returned to Zimbabwe, I am just here, and life is so bad, sister. Sometimes I even go to bed hungry when I don't have money. (South Africa: IDI 27, boy 19 years, Johannesburg)

> The hardest thing for me is not going to school, and sometimes we don't have enough food and go to bed hungry. (South Africa: IDI 22, girl 14, Musina)

Living and working conditions at the destination in Zimbabwe

The experiences of living and working conditions described by the children interviewed in Zimbabwe are presented below. These include children who are living in large cities in Zimbabwe (for example, Bulawayo and Harare); these children may be planning to stay where they are or to move on to cross the border in the future. Other children were living in border towns (Beitbridge, Chipinge, or Plumtree) and were planning to cross the border to South Africa, Mozambique, or Botswana. These included those children who crossed the border regularly for work purposes, as well as those who had been deported back to Zimbabwe after trying to cross the border. A number of children interviewed in Zimbabwe were living on the streets, whilst others were able to find rooms or shacks to rent, abandoned buildings to sleep in, or were living with family or people who employed them. In this section we will describe the living and working conditions of children living on the streets of Harare and Bulawayo as well as the living conditions of children living in border towns

Living and working conditions of street children in Zimbabwe

Eight children who were living on the streets of Harare and Bulawayo participated in the study. All these children were boys between the ages of 13 and 17 years. When they started living (and sleeping) on the street, they met other children who also stayed on the street and developed friendships. Children who had already been staying on the street assisted new children to adapt to the street life. Although children left their homes hoping for a better life, street life proved not to be what they had anticipated. However, that did not make them return home, because they viewed living on the street as better than the life they were living at home. For example, one of the participants stated that he felt sick when he first stayed on the street, but only went home when the situation got worse and then came back to the street when he was well.

> Interviewer: When you eventually got into the street, what was it like?
> Participant: At first it was very exciting.
> Interviewer: What was exciting?
> Participant: We were playing with others, taking drugs, and a lot of other things.
> (Zimbabwe: IDI 22, boy 17 years, Harare)

> Interviewer: When you started to stay in the street, how did you feel?
> Participant: When I started staying in the street, I was sick all the time.
> Interviewer: So what did you do?
> Participant: When I felt more sick I would go back home.
> Interviewer: What is the situation like now?
> Participant: I'm getting used to the environment.
> (Zimbabwe: IDI 23, boy 13 years, Harare)

Children living on the street knew they were responsible for their own wellbeing, thus they had to find ways to meet their primary needs. Daytime on the street was mostly spent by hustling for money and food by begging or making money through piece jobs or selling products. None of these participating children were attending school; they all left school when they left their home. Children maintained personal hygiene by visiting shelters where they could access ablution facilities; they were also able to wash their clothes in these shelters. Some children spent their time in these shelters playing with other children or watching TV. In the evening, the street children would go to their established places to sleep, such as store corners, Chicken Inn [restaurant] corner, street pavement, or in avenues. Sleeping in groups was common and children used cardboard to lie on and some blankets.

> Interviewer: Ok. Tell me about what your typical day looks like from morning to sunset.
> Participant: I wake up and try to hustle around. Then, when I feel that my plans for the day are not panning out as expected, that's when I come to the feeding shelter.
> (Zimbabwe: IDI 22, boy 17 years, Harare)

Interviewer: What does your day look like from morning to sunset? What do you do?
Participant: I come to Streets Ahead5 [shelter], eat, bath, and leave to go to town to look for money.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 24, boy 13 years, Harare)

Interviewer: When you want to find a place to sleep, how do you go about it?
Participant: We sleep at Chicken Inn corners [restaurant].
Interviewer: Which one?
Participant: The one in Rezende street.
Interviewer: How do you look for such a place?
Participant: At first we were sleeping somewhere, then we left and started sleeping there because it is warm.
Interviewer: Why did you leave the place you had identified first?
Participant: Nothing.
Interviewer: During the night when you are sleeping, which problems do you face?
Participant: Those of us who are older can just come while you are sleeping and start searching your pockets. If you ask them why, they pull out a knife and threaten you. You then give them what you have.
Interviewer: Who are you referring to as the older boys?
Participant: They also stay in the streets with us but are older.
Interviewer: When it is raining, what do you do?
Participant: As for us, you see there is a shed, right? Then there is also a drain; that's where we put our things.
Interviewer: Let's say it's raining, you have put your things in the drain, how then do you sleep?
Participant: We find another place.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 22, boy 13 years, Harare)

On rainy nights, children on the street would wake up to find an alternative space to sleep or they stand under roofed store pavements until it stops raining. Some children reported that they had never been affected by rainy nights. Children living on the street stated that they are exposed to abuse by other children in the streets. Older and more experienced children living on the street were reported to have dominance over younger and new children. Older children often bully other children and rob them of money and clothes, particularly at night. One of the boys narrated a story where he witnessed someone being killed by an older boy who was demanding money. Another young boy stated that he and his friends sleep in avenues, because they are running away from being bullied and robbed by older street children. One participant reported that he pays for protection.

Interviewer: If you buy new clothes, are they not stolen?
Participant: Of course, they are. If the older boys see that the things you bought are nice, they demand it and you should quickly give them.
Interviewer: Why?

[5] **Streets Ahead** is the name of a deregistered organisation that used to provide services to children on the streets, hence the name having common usage among children referring to other organisations. The child here is referring to **House of Smiles** (see page 108 for more information)

Participant: Because you can die for nothing. There was a boy who they murdered recently.
Interviewer: When?
Participant: It's like the boy found 100 USD around the flyover area and bought clothes. He remained with some change and bought us food. They demanded the money and stabbed him.
Interviewer: Were they arrested for that?
Participant: No, people just ignored it.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 22, boy 17 years, Harare)

Interviewer: As of now, where do you stay?
Participant: I stay around Joina City area.
Interviewer: Where exactly?
Participant: But for sleeping, we sleep in the avenues.
Interviewer: Is there a place to sleep?
Participant: We can sleep anywhere. Even outside the gate of some premises, we can just sleep.
Interviewer: Who do you stay with?
Participant: I stay with my friend.
Interviewer: How old is he?
Participant: He is 13 years old.
Interviewer: Why did you choose to stay in the avenues [rather] than staying in the central business district?
Participant: The chances of having our things stolen is less than that in town.
Interviewer: OK. So in town, who steals your things?
Participant: If the old boys who abuse stronger drugs see that you have money, they take it from you.
Interviewer: Who are they?
Participant: It's.....[person's name] and.....[person's name].
Interviewer: Do you mean to say they don't know your hideout?
Participant: They don't.
Interviewer: When you left the Joina City area to the avenues, how did you find the place?
Participant: We are just found the place.
Interviewer: What are the challenges that you face during the night besides the big boys problem?
Participant: Nothing.
Interviewer: When it is raining, what do you do?
Participant: We look for an alternative place like on pavements.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 23, boy 13 years, Harare)

Interviewer: Okay. I heard some kids elsewhere say they get robbed of their money by older boys. Is it the same this side?
Participant: They also rob us.
Interviewer: So, what do you do to protect yourself?
Participant: There is someone that we give our money to for safe-keeping.
Interviewer: Where?
Participant: There where we stay.
Interviewer: Where do you sleep?
Participant: In front of Chicken Inn there.
Interviewer: Is there a safe place there? What kind of place is it?

Participant: I sleep by the veranda. Isn't you know by the security guards?
Interviewer: At Chicken Inn?
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: So you give the security there?
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: Oh, he's friendly to you?
Participant: Yes, he is the one who safeguards for us.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 11, boy 13 years, Bulawayo)

Some children at times resorted to drug use. Using drugs appeared to be a personal choice; none of the children reported that they were forced to take drugs. Children commonly use a shoe repair glue as a drug. There were some participants who never used drugs; however, they knew that glue is the most common drug on the street. Some children were able to quit doing drugs and were disciplined to stay sober. One participant reported that he was using glue, but he stopped. Those children who are using glue usually use it in the evening, as it also helps to sleep. Although glue was the most reported drug, participants stated that older children use 'heavy' drugs. As a result, they robbed other children in the street to buy drugs.

Interviewer: What kind of sleep would that be? Would you have taken some drugs?
Participant: No, we don't smoke. None of us smoke.
Interviewer: There's no one [here] who smokes?
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: Those others who do smoke, what kind of drugs do they smoke here in Bulawayo?
Participant: They smoke glue.
Interviewer: They smoke glue; what other drugs?
Participant: I don't know about drugs.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 11, boy 13 years, Bulawayo)

Interviewer: Besides ordering Freezits, do you by any chance buy drugs with that money?
Participant: I buy [drugs].
Interviewer: Who do you buy them from?
Participant: Over there on the flyover when you are going towards Mbare.
Interviewer: Which drugs do you normally buy?
Participant: I normally buy glue.
Interviewer: How does it help you?
Participant: Aah, as for me, it helps me to forget that which made me leave home.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 23, boy 13 years, Harare)

Interviewer: So on the issue of abusing drugs, what is the situation like?
Participant: I used to smoke glue but I have since stopped.
Interviewer: How did it make you feel?
Participant: Just getting intoxicated and sleepy was enjoyable. You also stop thinking about home.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 24, boy 13 years, Harare)

Work

Children living on the street in this study reported that they commonly make money through begging, working piece jobs such as washing cars, trimming, and watering plants in suburban houses, or by selling things. The colloquial term for doing anything to make money is 'hustling'.

Interviewer: How do you hustle?
Participant: I usually hustle around Joina City area.
Interviewer: What exactly will you be doing?
Participant: I will be begging.
Interviewer: How much do you make per day?
Participant: About 5 USD.
Interviewer: What do you do with that money?
Participant: I buy food and clothes.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 22, boy 17 years, Harare)

Interviewer: Ok if I were to ask, what's your day like … [person's name], from morning till evening, what would you say you do from the time you wake up?
Participant: We'll be looking for money.
Interviewer: From morning?
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: Okay, so where do you first go to when you wake up?
Participant: Ah.
Interviewer: What do you do?
Participant: We'll be washing cars.
Interviewer: Okay, you wake up to wash cars; what else do you do besides washing cars?
Participant: Nothing.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 11, boy 13 years, Bulawayo)

Some children reported that making money in the street is not easy; hence, they resort to buy things to sell so that they cannot always rely on begging and finding piece jobs. Participating children living in Harare were selling 'Freezits', which is an affordable cooldrink ice block to sell on the street. These children reported to have developed a good working relationship with the supplier, who always ensures that the children get very hard frozen Freezits, which will not melt easily, so that they can sustain their business throughout the day.

Interviewer: Ok, so this place closes on weekends? How then do you get food?
Participant: At times, random people give us food or we beg for food.
Interviewer: What do you do with the money that you beg, since you already get food from Streets Ahead5 and from [name]? How do you use it?
Interviewer: How else do you make money besides selling Freezits?
Participant: We beg and get a dollar or so. Recently I bought discs.
Interviewer: What are those?
Participant: The movie discs that we bring here and watch at Streets Ahead5.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 22, boy 17 years, Harare)

Interviewer: What do you do with the money that you beg, since you already get food from Streets Ahead5 [shelter] and from [person's name]? How

do you use it?
Participant: At times I keep it so that I will order Freezits for resale, but if I feel hungry, I can just use it. There is a guy in town called [person's name] who sells Freezits for resale to us.
Interviewer: How then do you keep your Freezits frozen in the streets?
Participant: We tell those who sell to us that, if their Freezits are not properly done, we will return them. So, they give us really good stuff that doesn't defreeze easily.
Interviewer: Besides ordering Freezits, do you by any chance buy drugs with that money?
Participant: I buy [drugs].
(Zimbabwe, IDI 23, boy 13 years, Harare)

Children on the street make between 1 USD and 10 USD a day, depending on the job they do or how lucky they are with begging. This money is spent mostly on primary needs such as food and clothes. They also use money to buy drugs and some children save their money by giving it to an older person whom they trust, who could be a street vendor or someone working in shops.

Interviewer: So, who makes sure that you eat your meals in the morning and afternoon and to bath? Who helps you?
Participant: Ah, isn't here we are looking for money. There is someone who I give my money for safe keeping at Chicken Inn. For instance, I give him $5 and I remain with $1 for breakfast.
(Zimbabwe, IDI 10, boy 16 years, Bulawayo)

Support

Children on the street had various support systems, including local organisations, church, local people, and other street children. Local organisations such as House of Smiles in Harare and Scripture Union in Bulawayo provide temporary shelter to stay in during the day, where children would bath, eat food, wash their clothes, and watch television. When House of Smiles is closed on weekends, children from Harare receive food from an organisation called Street Kitchen, which operates on weekend only. There is also a doctor working at House of Smile who provides medical services to these children; children from Bulawayo reported that, when they are sick, they receive a letter from Scripture Union to take to hospital for medical attention. Some children in Harare stated that there is a place called [name of person] where they acquire education by doing activities such as drawing and colouring, reading and writing, and computer skills. There were local people who developed relationships with some of the children in the street and provided support. These were generally older people, men and women, who spend their time working in the street as vendors or working locally. These people protect, feed and clothe children.

Interviewer: On a daily basis, who usually assists you?
Participant: There is a woman called… [name]. That is one person who helps me.
Interviewer: How does she help you?
Participant: She is just my to-go-to person whenever I feel I really need help.
Interviewer: Is she a vendor?
Participant: No. She works in a shop.
Interviewer: So besides that lady and Streets Ahead5, where else do you get help?

Participant: At Vicky's place behind that building.
Interviewer: What does Vicky's place offer?
Participant: He is a white guy. I don't know what the organisation is called but we were directed by others that he teaches those computer skills I told about. He also teaches how to read and write.
Interviewer: Is there any other help that you get elsewhere?
Participant: There is a street kitchen which gives food on weekends when Streets Ahead is closed.
Interviewer: So, in other words you get help from Streets Ahead5, Vicky's place, street kitchens, and from that lady?
Participant: Yeah.
Interviewer: When you are sick or get injured, where do you get help?
Participant: Brother [name] treats us here [at Streets Ahead5].
Interviewer: What does he do?
Participant: He is a doctor.
Interviewer: How do you get hold of him?
Participant: You come here [at Streets Ahead5].
(Zimbabwe: IDI 22, boy 17 years, Harare)

Interviewer: Ok. So, at Streets Ahead5 you can spend the whole day there?
Participant: Aah, like now we have eaten breakfast, then they prepare lunch as well. After that you can go, if you want to go. If you want to remain watching TV, it's up to you.
Interviewer: What other help is available for people who are in your situation?
Participant: When I am sick, there is an old lady who helps me. She sells newspapers. She can even buy medication for me.
Interviewer: Where do you know her from?
Participant: I know her from the streets.
Interviewer: How about people from Streets Ahead5, don't they help with that?
Participant: They do, especially when you are really sick.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 23, boy 13 years, Harare)

Interviewer: So how many times do you come to eat here [shelter]?
Participant: Here we come Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.
Interviewer: You eat every day?
Participant: Yes; other times we will be coming to do laundry.
Interviewer: You will be coming to do laundry?
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: How about bathing?
Participant: Bathing too.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 10, boy 16 years, Bulawayo)

Child migrants living and working in border towns in Zimbabwe

There were a number of child participants living in the border towns of Beitbridge on the border with South Africa, Plumtree on the border with Botswana, and Chipinge on the border of Mozambique. All the children interviewed on the Zimbabwe side of the border were looking for work opportunities in the border towns. Most of the children were not planning to go across the border in the short term, although some planned to do so in the future. There were three children who crossed the border regularly for work or visiting family but returned to live in the border towns.

Living situation of children in border towns in Zimbabwe

Children lived in a variety of accommodation in the Zimbabwean border towns. Two of the children recruited for interviews were living in accommodation provided by their employer and several children lived alone or with friends in rental accommodation. One child was living alone in a house belonging to her grandmother. Others were living with family members, including three children from Plumtree who had been deported from Botswana and had returned from home to live with family.

Box 11. Living arrangements of children living in border towns in Zimbabwe

Interviewer: Is this woman you work with, is she your relative?
Participant: No, we're not related. She's just someone I started recently working for.
Interviewer: Oh, so she's your boss. Does she feel overbearing, or do you even have the freedom to decide on what you want to do for yourself?
Participant: Ah, she's not overbearing. As soon as our orders are fixed and we've sold everything, I can even go home and do other things like, for instance, watching TV, if electricity is there.
Interviewer: Oh, so you'll be able to do what you want to do.
Participant: Yes, I can.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 2, boy 14 years, Beitbridge)

Interviewer: What about where you are staying with this woman [employer]? Where exactly is it that you are staying?
Participant: She has a bedroom and a kitchen. She tells us to sleep in the kitchen.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 31, boy 15 years, Beitbridge)

Interviewer: So as for now, where are you staying? The place you talked about just now. What is it like?
Participant: Here there's a huge fence. There's a huge field where they just cleared it of trees and then they put a fence. Then they said whoever wants to stay can stay here.
Interviewer: Who said this?
Participant: It's the council. The council for this place. But you have to pay R10 per three days.
Interviewer: Ten Rand. Who is given that money?
Participant: It's given to the council. It's the council's money.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 5, boy 17 years, Beitbridge)

Interviewer: Who do you stay with?
Participant: I stay with my friends.
Interviewer: So, with your friends. Where will you be staying?
Participant: It's like an abandoned building which is still under construction, so we don't pay rent. We just stay there.
Interviewer: So how did you feel when you started staying with your friends? How were you staying?
Participant: We just stay normally.
Interviewer: How old are your friends?
Participant: The other one is 17 and the other one is 19 years old.

Interviewer: Describe the place in which you sleep.
Participant: Aah, that place, when people pass by they don't even know that there are people who stay there.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 7, boy 14 years, Beitbridge)

Interviewer: What about where you stay? Do you pay rent?
Participant: That's my grandmother's house.
Interviewer: It's your grandmother's house. But will your grandmother be there?
Participant: Uh-uh [no]. She lives a bit further down.
Interviewer: Oh, there's no one there. So, who do you stay with at that house?
Participant: The place where I stay at grandma's house, there will be no one. But there is home where my parents stay with their kids.
Interviewer: Oh, that's where you visit?
Participant: Yes.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 1, girl 16 years, Beitbridge)

Participant: I arrived at the rank/bus terminus and went to my employer's place.
Interviewer: How much does he pay you per month?
Participant: R500 per month.
Interviewer: Who do you stay with?
Participant: I stay alone.
Interviewer: Where? What type of accommodation do you use?
Participant: My employer accomodated me for a few days and [then] I had to find my own place to stay. Now I stay at Mangava.
Interviewer: What type of place is Mangava?
Participant: It's a normal place. I rent a room.
Interviewer: Do you share it with your friends or age mates?
Participant: I stay alone. The people who are my age mates are the children of my landlord.
(IDI 6, Beitbridge, boy 17 years, Beitbridge)

Children living in the Zimbabwean border towns appeared to have more contact with their families than children living in South Africa, and several had returned home to live with family after having crossed the border and returned to Zimbabwe. One child describes going to work as a house girl in Musina but returning home when she did not like the job.

> Personally, it was my first time working such a job. So, a lot of things were new to me. My employer would insult me, saying this and that. Sometimes, they would threaten to not give me food if I did not do the job, telling me that some spots in the house were not clean. As for me, I know how to wash clothes. So, when I was told that it was not sufficiently clean, I ended up phoning my mother and telling her that I did not want the job anymore. And she said it's okay, come back home. That's how I came back home.
> (Zimbabwe: IDI 4, girl 15 years, Beitbridge)

For some children, the distance from their family home to town was not far. This made it easier to stay in contact: *"Yes, I communicate with them* [family]. *At times, I just bump into them here in town"* (Zimbabwe, IDI 17, boy 17 years, Chipinge). Another child

describes how he would like to return home to his grandmother but does not have money to do so.

Interviewer: So you want to go back home?
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: How different will your life be when you go back to your grandmother?
Participant: At least at home there is accommodation and food is there. Her other children can help me if I have a problem.
Interviewer: Why don't you talk to them [family at home] so that they can send you the money to go back home?
Participant: They will not give me money because they already failed to pay for my school fees.
Interviewer: How else do you get money besides getting from your employer? … How do you think children in your situation can be helped?
Participant: They should be sent back to school or be reconnected with their families.
Interviewer: What specific help would you need as an individual?
Participant: I just want to [go] home to my grandmother.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 7, boy 14 years, Beitbridge)

Working in the border towns

Most of the children were working selling goods, commonly vetkoek (deep fried dough balls), usually for an employer who would supply them with goods and pay them regularly, daily, or weekly. However, some children were working for themselves and were obtaining the goods themselves to sell. Other goods included vegetables, torches, and cell phone chargers, as well as goods from the Chinese shops. As described previously, there were several children who crossed the border regularly for the purposes of work, most commonly to sell bottles that they had collected in Zimbabwe.

Many of the children described taking different jobs or having more than one job at a time, and they were always looking for something to do to earn money and were willing to take on any type of work. Most of the participants looked for informal jobs to earn a living. Several children reported receiving a good salary. There were a few children who also begged for money, or received money from organisations that support vulnerable children.

> Well, I just seek temporary day work. Some people will be looking for people to sweep. Others look for people to fetch water. Then on days when I can't find work, I cross over [the border to South Africa] and start collecting bottles.
> (Zimbabwe: IDI 5, boy 17 years, Beitbridge)

Box 12: Earning a living in the border towns in Zimbabwe

Interviewer: What do you sell for your employer?
Participant: I sell Russian sausages
Interviewer: How much do you get per day?
Participant: I get R300 to R500
Interviewer: Besides working for this person, how else do you get money?

Participant: I sell sweets after work.
Interviewer: How much do you get per day?
Participant: About R200 or R150.
Interviewer: So each day, how do you get food?
Participant: I usually buy from the food stalls
Interviewer: How much is it?
Participant: It's R20.
Interviewer: Tell me about your typical day from morning till sunset.
Participant: I wake up in the morning and start by selling Russian sausages. In the afternoon I sell my own things like sweets.
Interviewer: Are you given a target to reach by your employer?
Participant: No. I dismiss at 12 noon and I start selling my stuff.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 6, boy 17 years, Beitbridge)

Interviewer: So, when you arrived here, what did you start off doing?
Participant: I started off by selling at the marketplace. Then I started selling these things.
Interviewer: That marketplace, who owned that marketplace?
Participant: It was that person's marketplace.
Interviewer: Which person?
Participant: The person that I sell these things for.
Interviewer: Oh, the person you were selling these things for. So, who showed you this person that you sell these things for?
Participant: I was introduced by that friend of mine.
Interviewer: For that friend of yours, or you both sell for the same person?
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: So, when this person gives you things to sell, how do you get paid? Does he pay you, or where do you get your money?
Participant: He pays us weekly.
Interviewer: Oh alright. How much does he pay you?
Participant: He pays us 300.
Interviewer: 300 Rand.
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: On a weekly basis.
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: So this money is what you use to buy foodstuff, or do you get your food by other means?
Participant: Food, that money takes care of everything that I would want to take care of.
Interviewer: But where you work, do you get food from there?
Participant: Yes, we get some food.
Interviewer: Okay, that's fine. So besides selling your wares here, what else do you like doing in this place?
Participant: Ever since I've come here, I haven't stopped working. I haven't really looked at other things.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 2, boy 14 years, Beitbridge)

Interviewer: Is it that you can sell your things here and make your own money?
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: How much money do you make per day? Generally, when you're selling your vegetables.

Participant: When I'm selling my vegetables, it depends on how much I would have ordered them for.
Interviewer: At other times, how much do you make? Is it enough for food for yourself to sustain yourself?
Participant: If I sell today, then I'll manage to buy food for myself and I'll manage to buy some more to sell tomorrow.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 1, girl 16 years, Beitbridge)

Interviewer: Oh so she's also the one who cooks the vetkoeks?
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: And then she gives you a portion to go sell?
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: So, when do you come back?
Participant: Around twelve o'clock I would have returned.
Interviewer: Would you have finished your consignment or would there be still some vetkoeks left?
Participant: Sometimes there will be some few left.
Interviewer: So when you do finish what you will be selling, how much do you usually make?
Participant: Sometimes the consignment takes 170, sometimes 180, sometimes the consignment will make 150.
Interviewer: Oh, 150, 170 or 180?
Participant: Yes.
Interviewer: Oh alright. Then where do you get food to eat?
Participant: She would have given me money to buy food.
Interviewer: Oh she would have given you money to buy food?
Participant: Yes.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 3, boy 15 years, Beitbridge)

Most of the children reported that they spent their money on food and on clothes.

> If I sell today, then I'll manage to buy food for myself and I'll manage to buy some more to sell tomorrow. (Zimbabwe: IDI 1, girl 16 years, Beitbridge)

Interviewer: How much are you paid per month?
Participant: R250 per week.
Interviewer: How do you spend that money?
Participant: I buy food. We rotate buying food with my friends
(Zimbabwe: IDI 7, boy 14 years, Beitbridge)

One child reported that there were many girls who were making a living with prostitution, and it was difficult to be strong and avoid this.

Participant: There is a place where we stay with others who are hired like me. You learn to control yourself.
Interviewer: What do those who can't control themselves do?
Participant: They end up going to bars for prostitution.
Interviewer: What motivated you to shun prostitution and do the selling?
Participant: [laughs] I am not ready to die of AIDS; I want to take care of my grandmother.
(Zimbabwe: IDI 6, girl 17 years, Beitbridge)

4.8 Contact with family in Zimbabwe and choices about returning home

Although children made the decision to leave home and, in some cases to live in South Africa without their family members' knowledge or agreement, many children remained in telephone contact with parents, grandparents, or siblings at home. Children who had the most contact with their Zimbabwe families were children who owned a cell phone. Children who were not in contact with family in Zimbabwe were most often those living with family in South Africa.

> We are a family of three children. And yes! I do call when I get money but it's not frequent. (South Africa: IDI 24, boy 17 years, Johannesburg)

> Yes, I communicate with them. At times I just bump into them here in town … nothing really. At times, they just ask why I don't want to return home. (Zimbabwe: IDI 20, Boy 15 years, Chipinge)

> I am not … I think there is no point; they don't love me. (Zimbabwe: IDI 22, boy 17 years, Harare)

> I kept thinking about my grandmother. I was wondering how she was coping without me…I kept phoning her until I got used to be away from her… (Zimbabwe: IDI 3, boy 15 years, Beitbridge)

Three children living in South Africa said they had returned home to Zimbabwe since they had moved to South Africa but came back after their visit.

> I went there [Zimbabwe] maybe last year; I am focusing on school. If I do not get money this year, I will go end of next year. But I would like to go to see people – I miss them. (South Africa: FGD 3, Talent, Musina)

When asked if they would return to Zimbabwe, almost half of all children living in South Africa said they would not go back to Zimbabwe at all, while a large number of children said they would go back only if circumstances in Zimbabwe changed. Circumstances under which children would return included their ability to get work and well-paying jobs, ability to go to school or university, as well as being able to get a driver's licence or passport. Those who said they would not return included those who no longer had contact with family or had no family left in Zimbabwe. Reasons for wanting to go back for a visit included to see family, especially the grandmothers who were now old, or siblings. Four children said they wanted to go back to Zimbabwe for a visit but would come back to South Africa afterwards.

> If I am given a chance to go to Zimbabwe, I don't know what it is anymore, I don't know. Why, because I was young. I don't know that even if I go [back], I don't have any relatives that I can reach and find, because I don't know where my sisters now live. (South Africa: IDI 3, boy 15 years, Musina Shelter)

> Interviewer: If you are given a chance to go back to Zimbabwe, would you take it?
> Participant: I will not return to Zimbabwe without money.
> Interviewer: You will go if you make money?
> Participant: If I get a good-paying job, I will go back.
> (South Africa: IDI 17, boy 18 years, Johannesburg)

Interviewer: If you were given the opportunity to go back to Zimbabwe, would you like to go back?
Participant: I would agree to go see my mother and then I [will] come back. I will just see how my mother is; I don't know if she is sick or not. Just to see if she is fine, then I will come back to work.
(South Africa: FGD 2, Ruka)

4.9 Planning for the future – dreams and ambitions

All children were asked about their dreams for the future. The dreams the children spoke about ranged from ambitions which could be very achievable for children with little education up to complex occupations which required excellent academic achievements. Many children expressed the wish to complete their schooling to help them fulfil their ambitions. A few children's desires were altruistic, to be educated so they could find well-paying jobs in order to provide assistance to family members in Zimbabwe, or people who had assisted them when they were in need.

> I want to go back to school, then I'll be able to take care of my mother. When I finish school, I want to be an accountant. (Zimbabwe: IDI 4, girl 15 years, Beitbridge)

> I want to learn a trade. I will first buy my mother a phone, then send her money to buy food, then send some more to do what she needs to. (Zimbabwe: IDI 14, girl 16 years, Bulawayo)

There were a number of children who mentioned occupations which required learning a skill but did not need any special education standard to achieve their dream, including occupations such as tailoring or sewing, selling things (e.g. flowers, clothes, etc.), becoming a service provider (e.g. a beautician), and being self-employed. The most common desire in this range of occupations was the desire to learn to drive so they could be employed as truck drivers; six of the children said they wanted to be truck drivers that cross the Zimbabwe-South African borders.

Dream occupations children mentioned which require a person to have completed the basic school education included becoming a policeman, a nurse, a teacher, or a soldier.

Dream occupations children mentioned requiring a university education included becoming a doctor; eight of the children aspired to becoming a doctor. Others dreamed of being a pilot, software engineer, or becoming involved in electronics. Children who mentioned these occupations said that they were aware that they could not achieve these occupations with their level of education, while others stated they were working towards achieving their dreams by choosing subjects needed to apply for university places. Amongst all the dreams of children there was a sharp contrast/juxtaposition between children who dreamed very big and one who was not able to articulate any dream at all (see Box 13).

Box 13 Examples of dreams expressed by participants

Participant: Well, I just want to finish Grade 12 and pass. I would like to find someone who can take me to the university because I am sure that I will pass.
Interviewer: What are you doing at school, what subjects are you doing?
Participant: Maths and science.
Interviewer: What do you want to do, what do you want to go to university for?
Participant: Errr, I also want to do medicine. (South Africa: IDI 17, boy 18 years, Musina Shelter)

Participant: The problem is the career which I wish for can be only possible if I can get people who can assist me.
Interviewer: What was your dream career?
Participant: [I] want to become a software engineer.
Participant: I'm good at maths and science, so I understand it too much, yes, I like it.
(South Africa: IDI 20, boy 18, Musina Shelter)

Participant: I used to want to become a doctor, but I didn't finish Grade 2. There is no doctor who is needed without finishing Grade 2.
Interviewer: If you are given the opportunity, or someone wants to send you to school, what would you like to do?
Participant: I would like to continue to be a doctor, because if I become a doctor, I will be able to help my mother and father in their lives, so that they can do what other people do.
(South Africa: IDI 12, boy 15 years, Polokwane Community)

Participant: I want to go is America; that's where I want to go.
Interviewer: Why do you want to go there?
Participant: I want to work there; you just know that Zimbabweans [are] everywhere. Even in China, Zimbabweans are there doing things everywhere.
(South Africa: FGD 3; Talent, Musina)

Interviewer: What do you want to do in your life?
Participant: Growing up.
Interviewer: Growing up, only growing up [laughing]; tell me what else you want to do?
Participant: Nothing.
Interviewer: No, don't you have any wishes that you want to ……?
Participant: I want to go to church.
Interviewer: To church, why do you want to go to church? Tell be something that you wish for, as you are sitting here in the taxi rank watching others moving about, what is it that strikes your heart, that you wish to do?
Participant: Nothing.
(South Africa: IDI 9, boy 12 years, Musina)

4.10 Interviews with parents

Four parents whose grand/children had migrated unaccompanied were interviewed and provided valuable insights about their perceptions of why the child had migrated, what had influenced the decision to migrate, their knowledge of the migration journey and arrival in South Africa, fears for their grand/child, and any advice they would give other

parents facing children who are thinking of migrating. All four children were girls aged from 13–16 years of age. Parents interviewed consisted of two mothers, a father, and a grandfather.

Parents' perceptions of reasons why their children left and circumstances surrounding the event

Parents' perceptions of the reasons why their children left home to migrate to South Africa were similar to the stories told by the child participants and included reuniting with family and work opportunities. While three of the parents had talked to their child either directly or indirectly about going to South Africa, one parent was caught completely unaware when the daughter disappeared.

> Participant: When she was in Form 3, ehe, we realised that she did not return home.
> Interviewer: How old was she?
> Participant: She was about 14 years.
> Interviewer: Alright.
> Participant: So, she was a missing person, while in our care. We searched for her and wondered where the child had gone. After some time, we heard that the child had crossed over to South Africa.
> (Parent 1: female child 14 years)

> It must have been envy. She [child] envied the stories she heard about others' life. Just like us mothers, when we hear someone saying they always go to Nando's [restaurant] on payday, we envy [them]. I may not say it out [loud] that I envy that, but I will also try to attain it, one way or another. So, the child considered that our family is less privileged, without much luxuries which are available. (Parent 2: female child 13 years)

> Participant: She went to South [Africa] because of our way of life, I think. There are no jobs, so she planned to do dabulap [cross illegally].
> Interviewer: But she was still young, almost 16. Shouldn't she have been at school; why would she want to do dabulap?
> Participant: She should have been at, been at school, but aagh, it's just that when children want to go, you cannot restrain them.
> (Parent 3: female child 16 years)

> She [her sister] requested that, 'Father, since my young sister has completed her education and is not occupied with anything now, it [is] better she come and help me with child minding while I am at work'. (Parent 4: female child 16 years)

Journey to South Africa

Parents of two children reported they did not provide any financial support for the child for transport or accommodation once the child reached South Africa. One parent described how her daughter had stolen a radio to sell so that she had funds to go to South Africa:

> She took a radio, a very big radio, and sold it. I cried out in alarm, thinking we had been burgled. The neighbours then said, 'Not so, we saw a certain car which drove here written GP. In that car, there was your child [name] was inside, [name] was in the car. There were some other people inside, some elderly people. So, we thought the

> radio was being taken elsewhere, or that the malayitsha had bought the radio, since we have seen people pay malayitsha with cattle in the rural areas, to take their children out of the country. You would hear someone saying "I will pay with a beast", so we thought it was your plan to use the radio as payment for her to emigrate'. (Parent 2: female child 13 years)

Accommodation in South Africa

Parents of two children were aware of accommodation that their daughters were heading to, whilst the other two did not know where their daughters would stay. One parent whose daughter had stolen a radio to go to South Africa reported that she knew her daughter would find accommodation with an aunt. However, when her daughter arrived at her aunt's home, she found the accommodation was unsatisfactory and so the daughter ran away again.

> I hear that things are not rosy in South Africa, [with] aunty. The child discovered that aunty lived in a shack which aunty shared with six others … sharing with other people. Aunt would wake up to go to work. So, the child went to live with aunty. … So, when the child saw the shack, she was shocked because she had expected aunty was calling her for an easy life with luxuries. She discovered that life there was tough. (Parent 2: female child 13 years)

How child migration affected parents

Child migration affected parents in many different ways. Three of the interviewed parents described the anxiety and distress caused by their child's decision to leave home. When the child left, parents were worried about the child and one mother had to defend herself against her husband who accused her of influencing the child's decision to leave. Parents also missed having the child at home.

> Her departure stressed both my wife and I because there is no difference between a child and a grandchild, you are still the parent. … So, it really stressed us. (Parent 1: female child 14 years)

> It was a tough week, with sleepless nights, and my husband blaming me saying, 'You influenced the child, otherwise why would she leave school?!' (Parent 2: female child 13 years)

> It bothered me, it bothered me a lot; even up to now, I still feel the pain when I think about it. My tears still fall when I think about it. It wasn't easy when the child left home. (Parent 3: female child 16 years)

Parents' major concern was the safety and welfare of the migrant child, given their ages and the stories they had heard about the dangers of young children who are unsupervised and unprotected in a foreign country.

> Being in a foreign land, there are many elements you will be exposed to like boys who take drugs, drink alcohol, eeh, the lifestyle; eventually one ends up involved in wrong things due to [peer] pressure. So, life in a foreign country, aaah, for that age group, it's not advisable. (Parent 1: female child 14 years)

Communication with family

All four parents reported their children had contacted them intermittently via cell phone when the children or parents had access to cell phone data. Two parents reported their children had not returned home since leaving, two parents had children who visited for a holiday but returned to South Africa.

While two of the parents were sending money to their child in South Africa so their child could buy food, the other migrant children had sent either money or commodities such as soap or sugar to their parent, despite living in South Africa, which some parents described as difficult. The parent interviews highlighted parents' different attitudes towards either parents supporting children or parents receiving the support, as shown in the two examples below.

> Interviewer: Okay. How long has she been gone, by the way?
> Participant: She has been there for four years.
> Interviewer: So, after all this time, she hasn't found any meaningful employment?
> Participant: She has sent [money], but not much, just about 500 Rand.
> Interviewer: Alright. So, you feel it's too little [laughing]?
> Participant: [chuckling] It's too little for Zimbabwe …
> Interviewer: Aah, how much would you desire that she sends?
> Participant: Ah around 1000 [Rand], mmh.
> Interviewer: Ah 1000! Eh, okay, so you feel 500 is too little?
> Participant: It's too little, 500; it's too little.
> (Parent 3, female child 16 years)

> We have occasionally sent money to her for her upkeep in case she is not making ends meet. We don't expect her to send anything [to us] because she is living in a foreign country where she did not grow up. We have told her to use money for her upkeep and if we get something this side, then we will always support her. (Parent 1: female child 14 years)

Advice from parents to others if their child wanted to migrate

Parents acknowledged that migration from Zimbabwe is happening, but they offered some advice for both the parents of prospective migrants and the migrant children to consider before they leave.

> While still here, you apply for a job; that you can do while continuing with your education. So, I advocate that you complete your education here at home in Zimbabwe, have your certificate and your passport, and cross the border legally with your passport being stamped at the border, and have a confirmed destination. … Do not be stranded in a foreign land, without any accommodation. It is good to have a close relative to accommodate you, one whose status you are aware of, not someone who will abandon you. (Parent 1: female child 14 years)

> If I were to meet with a parent with a child who wants to go out of the country, one, that child may be that person with no papers, maybe school was a challenge. These days it is mandatory that each child gets an ID at 16 years, with all documents and it's known where exactly he is going when he leaves home and communication is kept open. As soon as the child leaves home and says, 'Goodbye mum', as a parent I should

> communicate with the people the child is going to and stay in touch through the whole journey until the child arrives. (Parent 2: Child 13 years, Female)

> I would advise them not to agree to separate from their children because it's very painful. Not knowing what your child is up to; maybe prostitution; maybe going to bed hungry; maybe without adequate clothing and having to beg for clothes; being unemployed. So, I think it is better for one to stay with your child and suffer together. (Parent 3: female child 16 years)

> The advice I would give is, what would be the goal in going out [to another country], what do they want to achieve? What is their reason for going out [to another country]? Others emigrate for education, other may have secured employment. It is alright if they have secured employment, or if they are going for education, it is good … We will be hoping that, if they go to be educated, they will return here and uplift our country. (Parent 4: female child 16 years)

All the parents interviewed were affected by their child's migration. They remained anxious about the well-being of their child and about their child's ability to cope in a foreign country, as well as the challenges the child faces daily, including being able to earn enough money for food and rent.

5 STAKEHOLDERS, INSTITUTIONS, AND ORGANISATIONS

Lyn Haskins, Sphindile Mapumulo, Christiane Horwood, Anne Hatløy

This chapter presents information about the stakeholders identified as being involved in working with adolescent children (aged 12–17 years) who moved internally (within the borders of Zimbabwe) or to South Africa (crossing the Zimbabwean border) during the study period. We describe how and why the stakeholders were included in this chapter, their working definition of children on the move (if they provided one), the services which organisations provide to children on the move, and the geographic sites where services are provided.

It should be noted that this chapter does not represent all stakeholders working with children on the move in Zimbabwe and South Africa, but rather it provides a snapshot of stakeholders whom researchers in both countries found along the journey of this study.

Organisations were categorised into: 1) international organisations; 2) governmental agencies, and 3) non-governmental organisations.

Map 3 Map indicating the locations where the stakeholders have activities[6]

[6] An interactive map is found here: https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1284IBYBjtu-KhYZEOw3tz_qnJ1DAkEcc&usp=sharing

5.1 Definition of children on the move

An important starting point with all stakeholders was to explore the definition used by the organisation when referring to children on the move. Stakeholders were asked to provide a definition of children on the move from the perspective of their organisation. Below are examples of definitions of children on the move provided by stakeholders.

Box 14 Definition of children on the move

"Children moving for a variety of reasons, voluntarily or involuntarily, within or between countries, with or without their parents or other primary caregivers, and whose movement, while it may open up opportunities, might also place them at risk (or at an increased risk) of economic or sexual exploitation, abuse, neglect and violence". **Save the Children – Zimbabwe and South Africa.**

Save the Children South Africa elaborates by saying, "This includes all categories of children as may be found affected by mixed migration (refugees, asylum seekers, trafficked children, children migrating with parents, as well as unaccompanied and separated migrant children; children born to migrants in transit and destination countries – children born to migrants and citizens in countries of destination/transit". **Save the Children – South Africa.**

Children (people below the age of 18) who are moving for any reason, willingly or unwillingly, in and out of the country, accompanied or unaccompanied by a parent or guardian. **World Vision.**

Children moving for a variety of reasons, voluntary or not, within a single country or between countries, alone, with parents, or with caregivers. Children on the move may then be further categorised into the relevant legally distinct categories: asylum seeker, refugee, internally displaced person, trafficked person, or migrant (regular or irregular). **Terre des Hommes – Italy.**

CPS uses the definition used by the Global Conference of Children on the Move, Berlin, which states that 'children on the move' is an umbrella definition which brings together the multitude of categories in which children who move have been, often unhelpfully, divided. This definition therefore includes: children who have been trafficked; children who migrate (e.g. to pursue better life opportunities, look for work or education or to escape exploitative or abusive situations at home); and children displaced by conflict and natural disasters. **Child Protection Society, Zimbabwe.**

Children on the move refers to any child aged 0–18 years who has travelled locally or internationally with or without the company of an adult person, who is either a parent, guardian, or unrelated person. **Future Families, South Africa.**

In this study, we define children on the move by:

- Aged 12–17 years,
- Travelling unaccompanied,
    - An unaccompanied child migrating internally or across a border, without a parent or legal guardian. With or without a relative under the age of 18 years, or a non-relative,
- Country of origin: Zimbabwe.

5.2 International organisations

In this section, we will present the activities performed by the United Nations (UN) organisations and international humanitarian organisations. The UN organisations are intergovernmental organisations established to maintain international peace and security, protection of human rights, provide humanitarian aid, support sustainable development and climate action, and promote international cooperation. While most UN organisations do not interact or deliver services directly to individual children, they provide an overarching role through advocacy, communication, legislation, etc.

In this stakeholder chapter, we have included UN organisations which play a pivotal role in migration (both in general and in particular with child migration), labour issues (in general, as well as how this affects children), and most importantly, in the health and welfare of all children.

International Organisation for Migration

IOM is an international organisation for migration which is part of the United Nations system promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It comprises 175 member states and has a presence in over 100 countries, with over 180 country offices and sub-offices worldwide. IOM plays a key role to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through different areas of intervention that connect both humanitarian assistance and sustainable development. (https://www.iom.int International Organization for Migration | IOM, UN Migration)

Activities linked to children on the move: According to IOM Southern Africa, IOM does not currently have any projects specifically focusing on children on the move but, during their work with stranded and vulnerable groups including victims of trafficking, they come across cases of unaccompanied minors who come to South Africa. Some of the unaccompanied minor children they find are trafficked for sexual or labour exploitation. Such cases have been referred to IOM South Africa by the SA Department of Social Development (DSD), who will submit a report for assistance.

When addressing cases of unaccompanied minors, IOM South Africa performs risk assessments, undertakes family tracing of the child, provides assisted voluntary return, and arranges an escort to accompany the child back to his/her home. IOM also facilitates the reintegration of children back into their communities by providing different services to the child and their family. Another role that IOM South Africa plays is in integrating services by working in collaboration with the Department of Social

Development, South African Police Services, Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, and with civil society organisations.

As IOM has a country host cooperation agreement with the Government of South Africa, this enables IOM South Africa to implement their programme activities across the whole country. To our knowledge, IOM Zimbabwe does not have any specific activities linked directly to children on the move.

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is a United Nations agency which brings together governments, employers, and workers of 187 member states, including both South Africa and Zimbabwe, to set labour standards, develop policies, and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men. ILO provides guidance about different aspects such as hours of work, unemployment, maternity protection, night work for women and young persons, and the minimum age for employment. (https://www.iol.org/global About the ILO)

Activities linked to children on the move: Although the ILO does not deal directly with children on the move, some of the children on the move may end up in child and/or forced labour for which the IOL has specific conventions and protocols to combat child labour. These include:

- Worst Forms of child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182),
- The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138),
- The Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), including the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105).

The ILO also works across all spheres with workers and employers in combatting child labour. They also host conferences, and in particular the 2022 5th Global Conference "Durban Call to Action on Elimination of Child Labour" at which children themselves had a chance to be heard. The ILO is active throughout their member states, including Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Plan International

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. Working together with children, young people, supporters, and partners, Plan International strives for a just world. They are committed to making a lasting impact on the lives of the most vulnerable and excluded children, while supporting children's rights and gender equality. To do this, they work in education, protection from violence, youth empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and rights, early childhood development, skills and work opportunities, and emergencies. (https://plan-intrnational.org)

Activities linked to children on the move: According to Plan International Zimbabwe, their Child Protection in Emergencies (CPiE) work identifies children on the move as a key target group. The CpiE programming prioritises work on child labour in emergencies, and sexual and gender-based violence in emergencies, with a focus on harmful

practices, targeting specifically adolescents in emergencies and children on the move. Plan International Zimbabwe currently does not have specific programmes and budgets that are allocated directly to children on the move.

The Red Cross

The South African Red Cross Society forms part of the largest humanitarian movement in the world, supporting people affected by natural disaster and conflict. Guided by the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality, the Red Cross provides support based on need.

The SA Red Cross works through different programmes covering a wide variety of fields such as health, training and education, disaster preparedness and response, and social issues such as restoring family links. The SA Red Cross has a head office in Randburg but also has satellite offices in many other cities and towns. (https://redcross.org.za)

Activities linked to children on the move: The SA Red Cross office in Musina, South Africa, is currently providing services directly to approximately 40 children moving between Zimbabwe and South Africa. These services are part of their national peer education project and include the provision of food/meals, education activities, support in many different areas (social, psychological, financial, healthcare, mental health), and support for applying for permits. The geographical area served by the SA Red Cross in the children on the move study is Musina.

Save the Children

Save the children is grounded on the belief of Egalantyne Jebb (1919) that all children have the right to a healthy, happy, and fulfilling life. Through the work of Jebb, the world's response to children in need changed, leading to the first Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and many other charters and declarations worldwide to realise the improvement of children's lives and rights. (https://savethechildren.org.za)

Save the Children Zimbabwe began operations in 1983 in Zimbabwe, supporting the government and communities to make the country a better place for children. The provision of child rights programmes and emergency response to drought, food insecurity, and diseases such as cholera and latterly the Covid-19 epidemic have all been supported by Save the Children Zimbabwe. Save the Children Zimbabwe also acts as an umbrella organisation, with programmes being implemented by partners, local authorities, and government ministries in Zimbabwe.

Activities linked to children on the move: Currently, Save the Children Zimbabwe has a programme directly aimed at protecting the rights of children involved in **unsafe migration** internally in Zimbabwe and externally as children cross borders into surrounding countries. The programme activities include:

- Supporting the government with the identification, family tracing, and reunification of unaccompanied migrant children,
- Capacity building of frontline officials about cross-border case management,

- Supporting cross-border coordination,
- Training transporters about the identification and protection of children on the move,
- Engaging with traditional leaders about children on the move,
- Providing parenting-without-violence training for caregivers, guardians, and children,
- Continuing education about the migration cycle and child-led advocacy on policies that affect children on the move.

Geographical area: **Save the Children Zimbabwe** works mostly in the remote and hard-to-reach districts, although some programmes have a national focus. The country office is located in the capital city Harare. They have field offices or hubs located in Binga, Nyaminyami, Matobo, Beitbridge, Chipinge, and Chimanimani. Occasionally, they also open offices in other areas such as Mbire and Hurungwe for easier implementation of short-term projects. Save the Children Zimbabwe also has programmes that are being implemented by partner organisations, local authorities, and government ministries in other districts of Zimbabwe. (https://zimbabwe.savethechildren.net)

Save the Children South Africa (SCSA) plays mainly a coordinating role. SCSA coordinates multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms in the management of children on the move (COM) through coordination of Provincial Steering Committee (PSC) forums in Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Gauteng, and Free State, and they are currently supporting the Department of Social Development to set up PSCs in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces. These are platforms to coordinate access to services for children on the move, as well as case management, including cross-border case management. SCSA provides support for other multi-sectoral mechanisms such as:

- Secretariat of the National Steering committee on Unaccompanied and Separated Migrant Children (USMC),
- Technical support and coordination of cross-border working groups in South Africa and Zimbabwe; South Africa, Mozambique and Eswatini; and South Africa and Lesotho, providing monitoring and evaluation of the forums,
- Chair of the national inter-agency working group on USMC,
- Capacity building for social service professions and other frontline officials on the care and protection of unaccompanied and separated children in South Africa,
- Technical support in case management/best interests determination committees for durable solutions,
- Support voluntary repatriation processes for migrant children, when indicated,
- Community-based case management and child protection systems to ensure that USMC are protected in South Africa through outreach,
- Advocacy work – research to support evidence-based advocacy,
- Ensuring access to mental health and psychosocial support by USMC and other vulnerable children,
- Access to livelihoods and income-generating activities by migrant children and adolescents,
- Parenting skills to promote positive relationships between caregivers and children while on the move; ensuring that migrant children's voices are promoted and migrant children participate in matters that affect their lives; and provision of life skills for successful transitioning for migrant and other vulnerable children.

Save the Children South Africa are working directly with children on the move through several projects such as:

- ***Children involved in unsafe migration*** – the goal of the project is to strengthen the realisation of migrant and displaced children's rights in South Africa. The project has three specific outcomes: a) strengthened legal and policy frameworks and coordination mechanisms at national and regional level for child protection systems, to provide migrant and displaced children with protection services; b) improved capacity of formal and informal service providers to deliver comprehensive, quality, and gender-sensitive child protection services; and c) enhanced knowledge and skills for migrant and displaced children, along with their families/caregivers and host communities, to prevent/respond to protection risks.
- ***Girls on the move*** – the overall goal is for girls affected by migration and displacement to enjoy improved growth, well-being, and development, to reach their full potential. The specific objectives are: a) provide improved access to services for vulnerable migrant and displaced girls in Mpumalanga, South Africa; b) assist adolescent migrant girls in the positive transition into adulthood and employment in Mpumalanga, South Africa; and c) increase the decision-making power of girls on the move and reduce their dependency on exploitative relationships; this objective is sought through improving their economic empowerment.

Geographical area: **Save the Children South Africa** works in several provinces. In Limpopo Province, they have activities in Vembe District – Makhado, Musina, Elim, Malamulele, Mhinga, and in Capricorn, Polokwane; they do also cover Waterberg through coordination mechanisms. In Gauteng Province, they work in the city of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, and ad hoc in the Winterveldt area including Tembisa/Ivory Park, Daveyton, Katlehong, Rosettenville, Bez Valley, Berea, Hillbrow, Johannesburg CBD, Windsor East/Randburg. In Free State Province, their main activities are in Bloemfontein; however, they do ad hoc work in Lesotho. In Mpumalanga Province, their activities are in Nkomazi, in Ehlanzeni District, and Mbombela.

Terre des Hommes

Terre des Hommes is an international federation with a network of European organisations (Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, and Switzerland), which work to ensure child rights are practised, to protect children from harm (even in the most difficult circumstance), and to influence agendas and strategies that affect children and youth at all levels. Their main endeavour is to try to give children access to a childhood they are entitled to, to empower children and youth so they can actively shape their own societies, structures, and mindsets, and to achieve sustainable system change for all children. They also network with partners, expertise, and resources in creating environments in which children thrive and build capacity for the protection of children and the implementation of their rights. Two of these partners, Terre des Homme – Italy and Terre des Hommes – Germany, are present in Zimbabwe. (https://www.terredeshommes.org)

Terre des Hommes – Italy

Activities linked to children on the move: TdH-Italy is a child-focused international non-governmental organisation assisting with back-to-school and stationery support, fees payment, reintegration support, tracing and family reunification for internal children on the move, as well as psychosocial support, mental health support, and child protection. TdH-Italy in Zimbabwe works directly with children, mainly through relevant government ministries; these are the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MoPSLSW) and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE). Through these projects, they are currently supporting children on the move in Zimbabwe. These projects include:

- Educational support in Tongogara Refugee Camp and the host communities,
- Psychosocial support in child violation cases,
- Offering recreational support to children in the camp,
- Peer education support for children and adolescents,
- Support for children and youth in youth centres in the mental health centre,
- Support in establishing child protection committees in schools,
- Supporting selected schools with home-grown school feeding programmes.

TdH-Italy is currently active in Zimbabwe particularly in Harare (Waterfalls Transit Centre), Mashonaland Central (Mazowe and Bindura Districts), Mashonaland East (Goromonzi District), Manicaland (Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts), and Masvingo Province (Masvingo rural, Chiredzi and Mwenezi Districts).

Terre des Hommes – Germany

TdH-Germany is a registered not-for-profit association committed to empowering children, ensuring survival, supporting children in times of need, protecting children from exploitation, and actively promoting children's agency and participation. TdH-Germany programmes in Africa, Latin America, and Asia are coordinated and monitored through regional and country offices. The Southern Africa Coordination Office (SACO) is based in Johannesburg, with country branches situated in Maputo and Harare. Currently, more than 40 organizations and initiatives are funded in four countries: Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. (https://www.tdh.de)

Activities/services linked to children on the move: TdH-Germany is working in both South Africa and Zimbabwe supporting projects working with forcibly displaced children and youth (FDCY), providing psychosocial support (PSS), access to education, legal services, and livelihoods opportunities. In addition, TdH-Germany also collaborates with organisations in South Africa in the National Inter-Agency Working Group on Separated and Unaccompanied Minors chaired by Save The Children South Africa. Although TdH-Germany does not work with individual children, it supports a number of local NGOs and projects which work directly with migrant children. These include:

- *Sophiatown Community Psychological Services*, which provides psychosocial support for forcibly displaced migrants and youth in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- *Three2Six Education Project*, which is an education-bridging programme for FDCY between 3 pm and 6 pm. The programme is targeted at FDYC who have challenges getting into public education. The intervention has resulted in the integration of the children from the Three2Six programme into mainstream schooling.

- *Lawyers for Human Rights*, which is an organisation providing a legal clinic for FDCY and migrant populations to access free legal services and advice.
- *REPSSI* (Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative), which has supported the development of training manuals for social workers to provide quality psychosocial services to children on the move.
- *Outreach Foundation*, which provides psychosocial services and livelihoods training to FDCYs in Johannesburg.
- *ZIMZAM Project*, where Terre des Hommes – Germany supports a multi-country multi-partner project in Tongogara Refugee Camp (Zimbabwe) and Mantapala Refugee Camp (Zambia), providing psychosocial services and livelihoods to FDCYs. The project partners include Childline Zimbabwe and COPAZ in Zimbabwe and Lifeline/Childline and Caritas in Zambia. TdH-Italy has also collaborated in providing technical support to the implementing partners of TdH-Germany within Tongogara Refugee Camp.
- Thuthuka project, situated in Bulawayo, with children living and working on the streets, many of whom have migrated internally and some cross the border to South Africa. Thuthuka provides case management, family tracing for reunification, a place of safety, vocational skills training, and counselling and support services in close collaboration with the Department of Social Development.

TdH-Germany is currently working in Zimbabwe, particularly in Bulawayo through Scripture Union Zimbabwe (Thuthuka), and in the Tongogara Refugee Camp through Childline Zimbabwe and Community Organisation for Poverty Alleviation in Zimbabwe (COPAZ). In addition, TdH-Germany supports the work in Johannesburg, South Africa, through the Outreach Foundation, the Three2six Education Programme, and the Sophiatown Counselling Centre. In addition, Terre des Hommes supports the work of Lawyers for Human Rights, who have offices in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Musina, and Durban.

USAID

USAID is funded by the United States government and is a catalytic actor driving development results. USAID works across a variety of different fields such as agriculture and food security; democracy, human rights, and governance; environment, energy, and infrastructure; humanitarian assistance; water and sanitation; anti-corruption; economic growth and trade; gender equality and women's empowerment; innovation technology and research; conflict prevention and stabilisation; education; and global health and nutrition. (http://www.usaid.gov)

Activities linked to children on the move: USAID does not work directly with children on the move. They work at an advocacy level on the steering committee with UNICEF and other NGOs on child protection programming in Zimbabwe.

Geographical area: Working with UNICEF and other NGOs on child protection programming in Zimbabwe, USAID are active in the geographical areas of Mount Darwin, Rushinga, Mudzi, Hwange, Zvishavane, Mbare, Hopley, Stoneridge, Tsholotsho, Matobo, Mbire, Muzarabani, and Chimanimani.

World Vision

World Vision has been committed to protecting and caring for children and those in need for more than 70 years, going to places where it is hardest to be a child. Their philosophy is Christian based. World Vision is involved in child protection, disaster management, economic development, education, faith and development, food assistance, health and nutrition, peace-building, and provision of safe water. (https://www.wvi.org)

Activities linked to children on the move: According to World Vision Zimbabwe, they play a role with those at risk of unsafe migration though support with resilience-building (adolescent programming through life skills), support with setting up savings groups (youth savings groups) to learn financial literacy and economic independence, and they support families with positive parenting (celebrating families) interventions. World Vision is implementing child programming which supports the most vulnerable children (MVC). Their intervention works towards reducing key drivers of unsafe migration through education, livelihood, water, sanitation, and hydration (WASH), and health interventions. They also provide linkages to care. They are part of the National Case Management System (NCMS) and support DSD in some areas with funding for training or refreshing child-case care workers, case conferencing, and providing support, for example, in the form of transport, when needed. World Vision Zimbabwe are actively involved in the geographical areas of Chipinge (Tongogara Refugee Camp), Matibe at Beitbridge, and Tshitshi Madabe in Plumtree.

5.3 Governmental organisations

Zimbabwe Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Department of Social Development (DSD)

The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare is a government ministry responsible for labour relations and welfare in Zimbabwe. The Ministry's statutory responsibility is for the protection of vulnerable populations in Zimbabwe. It has three main public facing departments: 1) the Department of Labour; 2) the Department of Social Services; and 3) the Department of Disabled Persons Affairs. (https://www.developmentaid.org/donors/view/207617)

Activities linked to children on the move: In the Chipinge area, according to the Social Development Officer, their activities are focused on contact tracing and reunification of children on the move. They also raise awareness of the dangers of migration, especially among children. All children on the move, identified in the Chipinge area, are formally assessed and a case management plan is initiated. They provide social workers and social support; psychological support; financial support; support for obtaining permits; and linkages to care. In the Chipinge area, the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and Department of Social Development work both in the urban and rural areas of Chipinge.

Zimbabwe Ministry of Local Government and Public Works

The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works is a government ministry responsible for promoting sound local governance and for undertaking and coordinating rural and urban development. (https://devex.com/organisations/ministry-of-local-government-public-works-and-national-housing-zimbabwe)

Activities linked to children on the move: The particular role this ministry plays in children on the move is the registration of organisations that work with children on the move in the districts. Although the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works does not work directly with the migrating children, they work with stakeholder groups, coordinating development meetings and activities, and providing office and related space for such organisations. In some areas, they also provide sensitisation about children on the move with local leaders, such as chiefs and village heads. They work in Chipinge and Mangwe Districts.

South African National Department of Social Development

The Department of Social Development is a government organisation.

With a vision of a caring and self-reliant society and a mandate to provide social protection services, the Department of Social Development (DSD) leads the South African government efforts to forge partnerships through which vulnerable individuals, groups and communities become capable and self-reliant participants in their own development. (https://portal.dsd.gov.za/)

The South African DSD has offices in nine provinces including in the two provinces where the Children on the Move study was being undertaken, namely Limpopo and Gauteng. They also have smaller satellite offices in the districts and sub-districts.

According to the Director of DSD Limpopo, the social and psychological support services, which DSD provides directly to children on the move through social workers, are accommodated in Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCC) and drop-in centres.

5.4 Non-governmental organisations in Zimbabwe

CESVI – House of Smiles Zimbabwe

CESVI is a secular independent international organisation guided by values of social justice and solidarity through humanitarian aid and development. (https://www.cesvi.eu/who-we-are/mission/)

In many countries, their focus is on vulnerable children, including children living on the streets, many of whom are children who have moved to the city centres alone or unaccompanied. In Zimbabwe, CESVI set up the House of Smiles as a safe place where abandoned, orphaned, or children living on the streets (for whatever reason) can get food, medical care, sanitation, and schooling, giving them a chance of salvation and redemption. At the House of Smiles, education is promoted as the children's way to freedom.

Activities linked to children on the move: CESVI provide several services which includes identification of vulnerable children through outreach work in the streets and places these children are likely to congregate and sleep. This is followed by profiling and documenting the identified children. Assistance and support are provided in tracing families and reunification with families through DSD. Post reunification, support through payment of school fees and related school consumables is provided. In addition, CESVI also provides support with skills training through linking the children to training colleges and meeting the costs of such training. They also assist with the acquisition of identity documents and replacement of lost IDs for children, as well as support with medical care through linking children to healthcare facilities and meeting the related medical costs. Moreover, they provide material and psychological support through provision of hot meals, laundry and bathing facilities, and counselling for vulnerable children. An addition, at the House of Smiles, they play an important role in sensitising children about the risks and prevention of HIV, drug and alcohol abuse, violence, and their fundamental rights as children, through music, poetry, theatre, and painting and drawing workshops.

The House of Smiles is a Harare-based drop-in centre, but reunification work is carried out in all areas of Zimbabwe through family tracing and assessments.

Child Protection Society

The Child Protection Society is a not-for-profit non-governmental organisation registered as a welfare organisation in Zimbabwe since the early 1950s. It is a child rights organisation which has been involved in emergency responses to disease and disasters, as well as assisting unaccompanied and separated children. The Child Protection Society's role has been to strengthen communities to identify and respond to cases of children identified as children on the move, support the Department of Social Development in identification, family tracing, and reunification (IDTR), as well as support of children whilst in alternative care and providing services that promote sustainable solutions for children on the move. (https://cps.org.zw)

Activities linked to children on the move: Their current involvement is to strengthen communities to identify children on the move. These children are 'case managed' and provided with family tracing and reunification services. They also help adolescents who have been given community apprenticeship through a programme which supports attaining skills which they can use to make a better living; this was piloted in Rushinga in 2022. In addition, children in reception centres have been provided with dry meals and recreational material. They also offer girls clubs for reunified adolescent girls. In addition, they do capacity building with law enforcement and border officials and support district child protection committees in the border districts.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, reception centres were supported with social workers as placements to establish child protection and safeguarding structures for unaccompanied children in care with standard operating procedures for child protection. Children on the move also benefitted from recreational and early childhood development kits provided by the Child Protection Society.

The Child Protection Society works across large geographical areas in Zimbabwe which include Bulawayo (Tredgold, Fort Street), Harare (Epworth, Hopley, Highfield), Mashonaland Central (Mbire, Shamva, Mount Darwin, Rushinga), Mashonaland East (Chikomba, Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe, Marondera), Mashonaland West (Makonde, Sanyati, Zvimba), Matabeleland North (Binga), Matabeleland South (Bulilima, Mangwe, Beitbridge), Masvingo (Chiredzi, Chivi), Manicaland (Buhera, Chimanimani, Mutasa), Midlands (Kwekwe, Zvishavane). The Child Protection Society are currently still active in Chipinge, Beitbridge, and Plumtree.

Scripture Union

Scripture Union is an international Christian NGO working in Zimbabwe among children living on the streets. They are currently providing services through an initiative known as Thuthuka, which was launched in 2016, in both Bulawayo and Chiedza (in Masvingo Province). Testimonies of thankfulness to God have been expressed by many children who have been helped through these interventions. (http://su-international.org/movements.zimbabwe)

Activities linked to children on the move: Scripture Union is involved in identification, tracing, reunification, and placement of children on the streets. They also provide access to basic services through the contact drop-in centre. While the drop-in centre does not provide accommodation for children on the move, they provide bathroom/washing facilities, food/meals, education services, social workers or social services, psychosocial support, health services including mental health services, and linkages to other care providers such as when children need support for identification documents or other legal services. Scripture Union also provides spiritual support.

Projects currently being undertaken by Scripture Union in Bulawayo include rehabilitation, vocational skills training, psychosocial support, and reintegration in families. They carry out their activities in Bulawayo and Chiedza in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe.

Simukai Child Protection Program

Simukai Child Protection Programme is a Zimbabwean-registered private voluntary organisation (PVO) established in 2000 as a community response to the plight of orphans and vulnerable children. The organisation operates in all seven districts in Manicaland Province, with their headquarters in Mutare District. They also have three satellite outreach offices in Chipinge, Rusape, and Nyanga.

Simukai seeks to develop children to their full potential and facilitate their development into productive and responsible members of society. They achieve this through positive engagement with children, their families, the wider community, and other relevant stakeholders. (www.simukaicpp.org.zw)

Activities linked to children on the move: Although Simukai's mandate is aimed at the plight of all vulnerable children, youth, and households, they play an essential role with children on the move. This role includes raising awareness in communities and schools about the dangers associated with unaccompanied child migration. Village, traditional, and school leaders are involved in awareness raising against unsafe child migration. They also identify children at risk who could potentially migrate unaccompanied to other

countries and link them to support services such as education, psychosocial support, and livelihoods; this also involves working with their families. In addition, they provide temporary halfway shelter to child returnees whilst family tracing and assessments are being done and they facilitate the reintegration of child returnees into communities. This involves working with community support structures and families of involved children.

Projects which Simukai are currently involved in are:

- Awareness about the dangers associated with unsafe child migration in all 30 wards of Chipinge District in Zimbabwe. In every ward, Simukai has established child-led groups that comprise child returnees, children at risk of unsafe migration, and children who have no migration experience. These groups use music, dance, poetry, and drama to raise awareness against unsafe migration. The children have become agents of their own change, as they influence other children and adults in their communities to speak and act against unsafe child migration.
- Simukai Child Protection Programme operates places of safety in Chipinge, Mutare, and Makoni Districts of Manicaland Province in Zimbabwe. Besides providing temporary safe shelter to survivors of various forms of abuse, the places of safety have also acted as halfway houses for child returnees. Other development partners, the police, the Department of Immigration, and IOM refer identified child returnees to these places of safety whilst they work towards reunifying such children with their families. After child returnees are reunified with their families, Simukai Child Protection Programme will work with existing community structures to ensure that these children have reintegrated well into their communities. Places of safety in Chipinge and Mutare are hosting an increasing number of child returnees.

5.5 Non-governmental organisations in South Africa

Boledi Drop-in Centre

Boledi is a small drop-in centre working in the Polokwane area of South Africa

Activities linked to children on the move: Boledi Drop-in Centre provides mainly food/meals and clothing for approximately 30 children who are on the move between Zimbabwe and South Africa. In addition, they also provide some education activities. The geographical area they service is a small zone in Shesego, Polokwane.

Catholic Women's Shelter

The Roman Catholic Shelter for Women and Children was started in 2008 as a response to the influx of refugees and migrants from neighbouring Zimbabwe, because of serious political instability and economic insecurity in Zimbabwe. As Musina is situated 18 kilometres from the Zimbabwean border, there was a great influx of people to Musina. Initially, everyone (men, women, and children) was accommodated at the local show grounds but it soon became apparent that there were serious problems. All local stakeholders got together to create plans to address the problems. The local Catholic priest, Fr. McHugh, offered the use of the old Catholic Church in Nancefield as a shelter for women and their children, and hundreds of women flocked to the church for shelter. Although this was a temporary arrangement until the situation in Zimbabwe stabilised,

migrant women have continued to come to the shelter with their children. The shelter does not receive any funding from the government, but has two main funders, one from overseas and one from South Africa. The premises belong to the Catholic Church, but all municipal bills, repairs, and salaries have to be paid through the funders.

Activities linked to children on the move: The Catholic Women's shelter currently provides services for 120 migrant women and children from Zimbabwe (90 women) and DRC (30 women). Currently, they only have one unaccompanied migrant child at the shelter.

With a small staff (project manager, social worker, housemother, general assistant, and ECD helper), the shelter provides a wide variety of services, including accommodation and bathroom facilities, hygiene materials, food and meals, clothing, education activities (a small ECD centre), counselling and social support, health services, and when necessary, they link the migrant mothers and children to other organisations and care services. The residents themselves are expected to do the cooking and are responsible for cleaning the premises. They are located in Nancefield, Musina, Limpopo Province.

Christian Women's Ministry

This is a local organisation which responded to the many cases of migrants in the Musina area. Although children had migrated with their parents, the adults were housed at the Musina show grounds and women at the Lutheran church, which meant that unaccompanied children had no real place to go to. The United Reformed Church of South Africa in Musina started feeding the children who were hanging around the streets and sleeping on the streets and under bridges. Women from the church started to house them in the church garage. What started with two or three children soon grew to over 100 children at times. The church then sought assistance from other organisations such as the Red Cross, IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF, who provided support for this work. They approached the Department of Social Development, as well as the Department of Education, to ensure these children are able to attend school. The Christian Women's Ministry was registered as an organisation in 2009.

The organisation started with a boys' shelter, as boys were more visible in the area, but the organisation soon became aware there were also girls who need assistance. While the girls often found employment as house helpers, some of these girls faced unfavourable work circumstances and needed shelter. They then expanded to provide a girls' shelter.

Activities linked to children on the move: This organisation provides a wide range of services that children on the move need. They have both a boys' and girls' shelter with accommodation and bathroom facilities. They provide meals for the children who are in the shelter as well as a drop-in centre for children not living in the shelter. In addition, the have social workers who provide social support, psychological support, financial support, healthcare services, mental health services, support with obtaining permits, legal advice and service, and linkages to care. All activities take place in Musina, Limpopo Province.

Future Families

Future Families is a non-profit organisation providing quality services to orphans and vulnerable children and people infected with HIV/AIDS in South Africa. What started as an HIV/AIDS project with Tshwane Child Welfare in the mid-1990s has grown into a large multi-million-rand NGO with supporting partners such as PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief), USAID, UNHCR, NACOSA (Networking HIV and AIDS Community of Southern Africa) through the Global Fund, SABCOHA (South African Business Coalition on Health and AIDS), and Soul City. (https://futurefamilies.co.za)

Future Families' vision is to empower families to create their own future. This is achieved through a number of interventions broadly categorised into healthcare, economic empowerment, gender-based violence, environment/agriculture, and social assistance for refugees and asylum seekers.

Activities linked to children on the move: According to the Future Families main office, their projects involving children on the move are *EU Global Promotion of Best Practices for Children in Migration*, funded by UNICEF, and *Migrants Project* funded by ELMA. Specific activities undertaken in this project are:

- Identification of children on the move,
- Assessment for vulnerability including best interest procedures (BIP),
- Placement of children in alternative care,
- Advocate for access to basic services (e.g. education and healthcare),
- Provision of psychosocial support services through individual sessions or group work.

Future Families have offices premises throughout South Africa. These are predominantly in Gauteng and Limpopo Provinces, with outreach activities in other provinces. The main children on the move interventions are based in Vhembe District Municipality (Limpopo Province), including Musina, Collins Chabane, Thulamela, and Makhado Local Municipalities.

Home of Faith Drop-in Centre

The Home of Faith Drop-in Centre is an organisation established in 2008 by a concerned individual (Roseline Thupi) and 18 volunteers in response to a crisis within the community related to children affected by HIV/AIDS, conflict, poverty, orphans, and child-headed households. Their vision is to empower orphans and vulnerable children and youth to change their own future through appropriate skills. From humble beginnings, this organisation has grown and is now registered as an NGO but still relies on donations to fund their activities.

Activities linked to children on the move: The drop-in centre is open to provide services from Monday to Friday for eight hours a day. They are currently providing services for 103 local vulnerable children and ten foreign children. The services they provide include provision of cooked meals, psychosocial support, income-generating projects, and linkages to other relevant services. This local NGO serves the Seshego area of Zone 5.

Johannesburg Child Welfare Society

Johannesburg Child Welfare Society (also known as Jo'burg Child Welfare) is an NGO which has provided services for over 100 years to children who are abused, abandoned, neglected, orphaned, or vulnerable in any way. They strive to create settings in which children are safe and happy, and where parents and caregivers can provide the best possible environment where children are not exposed to suffering. (http://jhb-childwelfare.org.za)

Activities linked to children on the move: According to a child and family unit manager at Johannesburg Child Welfare, their role with children on the move is one where any child in need of care and protection is removed and placement is found for the child in a place of safety (according to the Children's Act 38 of 2005); in addition, the child's family is contacted so they can be returned to their country of origin. Children who are identified as needing care are accommodated in a place of safety where meals and food are supplied and where they have access to social workers and social services. Jo'burg Child Welfare also provides linkages to other forms of care if necessary. They operate in the greater Johannesburg area.

Kids Haven

Kids Haven is a registered public benefit organisation whose mission is to reach children in need, especially those without parental care, by providing shelter, protection, education, training, and therapy. Although Kids Haven is a registered child and youth care centre and receives a grant from the Department of Social Development, it also relies on donor funding to meet the costs of caring for children. (http://kidshaven.co.za)

Activities linked to children on the move: The specific roles Kids Haven has with children on the move include advocacy, therapeutic services, health services, education, and documentation of children. They attend cross-border meetings in Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Mozambique to discuss and deliberate issues pertaining to children on the move. In the early 2010s, Kids Haven housed many Zimbabwean children in their residential homes, but these numbers have dwindled and they currently only have three Zimbabwean children.

Kids Haven provides the wide range of services for children on the move. This includes accommodation; bathroom/washing facilities; food/meals; education activities; social workers and social support; psychological support; financial support; health services; mental health services; support for obtaining permits; legal services; and linkages to care. They are active in the East Rand and Benoni area of Gauteng.

Lalela Project Trust

Lalela Project Trust is a national registered non-profit organisation working in South Africa and Zimbabwe which provides innovative arts education in safe spaces for at-risk youth during the vulnerable after-school hours and holiday periods, whilst also teaching critical life skills during this time (https://Lalela.org). According to the Centre Manager, they are currently working with approximately 360 children (not necessary children on the

move), as well as funding approximately 20 children for the duration of the years' worth of school fees.

Activities linked to children on the move: Activities Lalela provide specifically for children on the move include food and meals, education activities, and financial support. Lalela is working in New Doornfontein, serving children from the city centre of Johannesburg and Hillbrow.

Lawyers for Human Rights

Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) is a non-profit, non-governmental human rights organisation started by a group of activist lawyers in 1997. Using a holistic approach to social justice and human rights enforcement, LHR works in six areas of human rights law, including strategic litigation, advocacy, law reform, human rights education, and community mobilisation, and support. (www.lhr.org.za)

LHR established the Refugee and Migrant Rights Programme (RMRP) in 1996. Walk-in law clinics provide legal advice and representation, to ensure due process for asylum seekers and refugees. The programme also builds networks and is part of the social justice movement to combat xenophobia through engagement and education at community level. LHR advocate for the prevention of xenophobia and work to promote access to protection for asylum seekers and refugees.

Activities linked to children on the move: According to the LHR Johannesburg office, they assist children on the move in realising their rights through access to documentation and services in South Africa. They also monitor and advocate on issues of migration-related detention of children. Beyond direct legal services, they also pursue advocacy on a national and international level. Working through their Refugee and Migrant Rights law clinics in Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Durban, they directly and indirectly assist migrant children with access to documentation, social services, medical care, and education. The LHR Statelessness Unit assists children on the move who are at risk of being stateless, while their Detention Monitoring Unit assists migrant children who are unlawfully detained. This LHR programme is the largest legal service provider to refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa. The Refugee and Migrant Rights walk-in clinics can be found in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, and Musina.

Lutheran Community Outreach Foundation

The Lutheran Community Outreach Foundation was founded in 1998 by the then pastor of the Lutheran church in Hillbrow. The vision of the organisation was one of striving towards a sustainable Africa, with a mission to become a critical partner in the lives of marginalised people eager to improve their livelihoods through sustainable essential programmes. The organisation was registered as a non-profit organisation the 25th of June 2019. The organisation currently has three branches, with the main office in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, with the others in Pretoria and Musina. Although the Musina branch only started operating full time in February 2022, this office has been offering services in Musina since 2020 with a staff complement of seven: three social workers, two intern

social workers, one skills facilitator, and one intern who is also a skills facilitator. The Musina office is funded by the Lutheran Community and *Brot fur die Welt*. (http://outreachfoundation.co.za)

Activities linked to children on the move: The Musina Lutheran Community Outreach Foundation social workers assist with shelter and school placements for children, homework assistance, protection of children, campaigns concerning social issues (e.g. teenage pregnancy, bullying, substance abuse, gender-based violence, etc.), behavioural change programmes, and education groups. They are the voice for children, rendering psychosocial support, family preservation, workshops, and advocating at various departments such as Health and Home Affairs. They currently work with 60 children on the move and approximately 100 South African youths, either in groups or one-to-one, explaining their rights, providing meals/food, education activities, social services, psychological support, health services, mental health services, support for obtaining permits, and linking children into other organisations and services.

The Musina office operates within the geographical area of Musina town, Musina remote areas, and Musina farms, such as Maroi Boerdery farms. At the farms and remote areas, they offer psychosocial services, migrant support, and workshops.

Nosa Early Learning Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Centre

The Nosa Early Learning Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Centre is a non-profit organisation based in the Winterveld area in Pretoria. According to the Director their service is grounded on a child's right to be protected, as enshrined in the SA Constitution, and founded on their belief that every child deserves a future. Nosa gives every child a healthy 'kickstart' and an opportunity to learn; their goal is for every child to have a sense of belonging.

Activities linked to children on the move: Nosa are currently undertaking a number of different programmes (Power Girls programme; boys programme; gardening; skills development, and bridging classes) and within these programmes, they have 15 Zimbabwean beneficiaries. They also provide drop-in services, food and meals, education activities, social, psychological and healthcare services, support for obtaining permits, and linkages to care. These are provided for all orphans and vulnerable children, not only for children on the move. Nosa works in the Tshwane West Region.

5.6 Specific services provided by organisations in Zimbabwe and South Africa

According to the questionnaires completed by the various organisations, many services were provided directly to children on the move. However, there were several organisations which indicated that they did not work directly to provide services to children on the move. These include IOM, ILO, USAID, and Terre de Hommes-Germany. Appendix 3 show services directly provided to children on the move. Organisations not providing direct services to children on the move are excluded from these overviews.

Services provided directly to children on the move included: accommodation, washing or bathroom facilities, a drop-in centre which children could access, food or meals,

education activities, social worker services, psychological services, financial support, healthcare, mental health services, support for permit applications, legal services, and linkages to care.

Among stakeholders in this study, there was only one organisation which provided accommodation for children on the move in Zimbabwe, namely, Simukai in the Chapinga area (Appendix 3). In South Africa, the provision of accommodation was more widespread, with accommodation being provided in Polokwane, Musina, and the East Rand. Religious organisations and NGOs were foremost in the provision of accommodation for children on the move. It was common that organisations which provided accommodation also provided most other services, with the exception of financial support, support for permit application, and legal services.

The most common service by both international and local organisations was the provision of different types of food (food parcels or dry foods) and cooked meals. Access to psychological support was common among all stakeholders, whilst access to social workers or social support was common mainly among local NGOs. All local and some international NGOs indicated they were able to link children on the move to other stakeholders or organisations.

Access to legal services and support for applying for permits was limited to Lawyers for Human Rights, Kids Haven, and the Christian Women's Ministry, which refer children in need of these services to Lawyers for Human Rights.

The questionnaire was constructed not only to allow the organisation space to freely state the depth of their work with children on the move, but there was also a specific question asking organisations to indicate if there were any other services they provided which was not specified on the questionnaire. The most common service mentioned in the completed questionnaires was the provision of child protection activities (12 organisations), followed by services aimed at reunification of children on the move with their families (five organisations). Other services provided include provision of clothing, spiritual support, arts education and life skills training for children on the move, school placements, and training of case workers.

6 THE POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

Tanatswa Silvanus Chineka, Sphindile Mapumulo, Bridget Machaka

Children's migration is not new; however, attention to it is relatively new within both the policy and the academic literature (UNICEF, n.d.). This is because, traditionally, women and children were often perceived as trailing behind the 'primary' male migrant, leading to the limited acknowledgment of migrant women's and children's viewpoints (Hashim & Thorsen, 2011). The largest group of children on the move in Zimbabwe are those migrating to neighbouring countries such as South Africa (SA). Since the economic and social breakdown in Zimbabwe, hundreds of thousands of people have fled the country to different neighbouring countries and amongst these are unaccompanied migrant children (UMC) (Fritsch et al., 2010). The current research focus is on Zimbabwean UMC; these are categorised differently. The first group are the Zimbabwean UMC who moved to South Africa for various reasons. The second group are internally displaced children (IDPs) within Zimbabwe. Internal displacement is a tenacious social ill that has gripped many communities in many sub-Saharan African countries. Contrary to popular sentiment, internal displacement, as one form of forced migration within a country's borders, is more prevalent in Zimbabwe (Naidu & Benhura, 2015).

In Zimbabwe, it is the responsibility of the national authorities to assist and protect internally displaced children and youth; however, the mobility and migration of IDPs are invisible in Zimbabwe, which essentially means their basic human rights are ignored (Human Rights Watch, 2005). In a nutshell, all these children will be referred to as children on the move, which encompasses both children in Zimbabwe and those in South Africa, with a specific focus on unaccompanied children.

The Constitutions of Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe, 2013) and South Africa (RSA, 1996a) recognise children as a population category that requires additional measures of protection. Children are dependent and vulnerable; they need to be supported by adults so that they can thrive physically, psychologically, and socially. Although all children are vulnerable and need to be protected, unaccompanied children on the move face significantly greater dangers to their safety and well-being than children who are not on the move or accompanied children (UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, 2016). Unaccompanied children are amongst the most vulnerable migrants and need special protection suitable for their situation, irrespective of their reasons for migrating or the means through which they reach South Africa (Naidu & Benhura, 2015). There are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, and such children need special consideration.

Both Zimbabwe and South Africa have a relatively well-developed legal and policy framework for protecting the rights of children, including protecting unaccompanied or separated foreign children. In both countries, the protection of unaccompanied children is prescribed by both international, regional, and domestic law. An unaccompanied child is defined as "any person under 18 years of age who is separated from both parents

and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so" (UNHCR, 1997). Unaccompanied children on the move have specific needs and rights. Zimbabwe and South Africa have signed and ratified many international treaties relating to child protection. Below is a brief review of key legislative and policy frameworks applicable in protecting the rights of unaccompanied children on the move.

6.1 Definitions/key words

Children on the move: 'Children on the move' refers to children moving for a variety of reasons, voluntarily or involuntarily, within or between countries, with or without their parents or other primary caregivers (UNHCHR, 2016).

Child: A child means every human being below the age of 18 years.

Refugee: A person, who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted by reason of his or her race, tribe, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his or her former habitual residence, is unable, or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it (United Nations, 1951).

Internally displaced person: A person or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of, armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights, or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised national border (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2004).

Unaccompanied children: Unaccompanied children, are children who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so (Inter-American Court of Human Rights, 2014; UNHCR, 1993; UNHCR, 1997).

6.2 International and regional framework

The relevance and role of international law

By ratifying international instruments, Zimbabwe and South Africa are under an obligation to protect the rights of all children in their jurisdiction, including children on the move. Generally understood, international law is the "normative body of rules and principles which are binding upon states in their relations with one another" (Dugard et al., 2018). International conventions, which states have ratified, are binding not only because of their substantive content, but also because of the *pacta sunt servanda* principle, which says that states are bound by treaties that they ratified to the extent that they have not made any reservations concerning those treaties (Kunz, 1945; Wehberg, 1959). The Constitutions of Zimbabwe and South Africa recognise international law as a source of law in Section 12(1)(b) and Section 39(1)(b), respectively. This policy framework will examine international laws safeguarding the rights of children on the move because it is imperative to ensure the respect, protection, promotion, and fulfilment of their rights.

OHCHR: Recommended principles to guide actions concerning children on the move and other children affected by migration (2016)

First and foremost, it should be noted that there are specific principles which have been put in place by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to guide the actions concerning children on the move and other children affected by migration. The principles are intended to influence policymakers and other stakeholders responsible for implementing measures that affect the rights and needs of these children. They take note of the recommendations set out in the Committee on the Rights of the Child's 2012 Day of General Discussion Report on the rights of all children in the context of international migration. These principles, by being coherent, clear, and widely known, are intended to improve the quality of protection afforded to all children on the move and other children affected by migration, and to enhance programming, accountability, advocacy, and communication. Many of the principles are binding obligations already widely ratified by states (UNHCHR, 2016).

The recommended principles are as follows:

1. **Children on the move and other children affected by migration shall be considered children first and foremost and their best interests shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning them.**
   Children affected by migration should be ensured the same rights as all other children, including birth registration, proof of identity, a nationality, and access to education, healthcare, housing, and social protection. Those responsible shall not assume that standard solutions work for all children; rather, they are required to conduct individual and family assessments prior to making a durable decision about each child. Children at the border shall not be refused entry without an adequate and individualised analysis of their request and due guarantees consistent with a best interests determination (UNHCHR, 2016).
2. **All children have the right to life, survival, and development.**
   All children have a right to a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, educational, and social development. States have a duty to anticipate and prevent harm, including with respect to the triggers of child migration and to invest in robust search and rescue operations to avert harmful migration outcomes. Sustained investment in material and social assistance, and in livelihood opportunities, is a critical prerequisite to prevent life-threatening journeys and enabling the child to develop (UNHCHR, 2016).
3. **Children have the right to liberty of movement within their State, and to leave their State and any other.**
   Children have the right to migrate in search of family life, safety, or opportunity. In particular, they have a right to flee violence and danger (UNHCHR, 2016).
4. **The detention of children because of their or their parents' migration status constitutes a child rights violation and always contravenes the principle of the best interests of the child.**
   States should expeditiously and completely cease detention of migration-affected children and allow children to remain with family and/or guardians in non-custodial, community-based contexts while their immigration status is being resolved (UNHCHR, 2016).

5. **Children during all phases of migration shall not be separated from their parents or primary caregivers (unless this is in their best interests).**
   States shall not separate children from their families, for example, by instituting onerous and protracted family reunification procedures, denying the portability of accrued social security benefits, detaining irregular migrants accompanied by children, deporting parents of minor citizens, or refusing to allow children to accompany migrant worker parents. Conversely, forced expulsion of a child should never be considered an acceptable means of family reunification or assumed automatically to be in the best interests of the child. Any expulsion of a child must be safe and in the child's best interests. Where the expulsion concerns a child separated from family, the child shall be accompanied and monitored (UNHCHR, 2016).
6. **No child is Illegal – children should be protected against all forms of discrimination.**
   The criminalisation and stigmatisation of children on the move and other children affected by migration violate this principle. States and other actors should use non-discriminatory terminology when referring to migrants and their children (UNHCHR, 2016).
7. **Child protection systems shall protect all children, including children on the move and children affected by migration. In their design and implementation, national child protection systems shall take into account the distinctive needs and views of children on the move and other children affected by migration.**
   States shall protect children against exploitation, violence, abuse, and other crimes, and against resorting to crime or sexual exploitation to meet their basic needs. States and regional organisations have a responsibility to ensure a continuum of protection between local government authorities and States through which children travel, and to promote harmonised protection practices, developed by local communities where appropriate (UNHCHR, 2016).
8. **Migration management measures shall not adversely affect children's human rights.**
   States shall respect the rights of children guaranteed by international human rights, refugee, and humanitarian law, including the principle of non-refoulement, and any child-specific protection measures. States have a duty to ensure accurate identification of children, to evaluate the impact of laws and policies on children on the move and other children affected by migration and to avoid adverse impacts. Deliberately making transport unsafe to deter migrants from travelling can never be justified. Children require security and stability for healthy development. States that only consider the best interests of the child or grant children authorisation to remain on their territory until age 18 have an adverse impact on children's rights (UNHCHR, 2016).
9. **Children have a right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them and to have their views taken into consideration in accordance with their age, maturity, and understanding of the options available.**
   States shall ensure that children affected by migration, whether or not in their State of origin, have effective access at all stages of migration to quality information and free-of-charge legal representation, interpretation, and, if they are unaccompanied or separated, to guardianship (UNHCHR, 2016).

Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) entered into force in 1990 (UNICEF, 1989). It is the most comprehensive international human rights treaty on the rights of children (Doek, 2009). Zimbabwe and South Africa ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, thereby committing themselves to protect the rights of all children in their territory, including children on the move, without discrimination. Steinbock argues that the CRC constitutes "the normative frame of reference for actions concerning children" (Steinbock, 1996). The standards set by the CRC are comprehensive as they cover most aspects of the lives of children (Steinbock, 1996). As provided by the CRC, all children are entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status (UNICEF, 1989).

Article 22 of the CRC set standards that are of special significance to children. It requires all States to take appropriate actions to ensure that a child who seeks refugee status or who is considered a refugee, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receives appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance. It also requires States to co-operate in any efforts to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child, in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be rendered the same protection as any other child in that country (UNICEF, 1989).

The Convention stipulates that governments, institutions, citizens, and families have a responsibility to ensure that the rights of the child are respected, and all actions are directed toward achieving the best interest of the child. It also provides a framework for the protection of children on the move. The CRC recognise every child's right to education, a healthy environment, and enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of health, as well as the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development. It further urges states to recognise the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development (UNICEF, 1989).

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990)

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (hereinafter, Convention on the Rights of Migrants) is highly significant for unaccompanied children on the move, as it establishes a comprehensive framework that promotes their rights, safeguards their well-being, and provides legal protections in the context of migration UNHCHR, 1990). The Convention on the Rights of Migrants grants broad rights to all migrant workers and their families. It says that all the rights provided in other international instruments are applicable to migrants (UNHCHR, 1990). It also includes a number of rights that are meant to provide specific protection and secure the needs of migrants. It does so by providing additional guarantees considering the vulnerability of migrant workers and members of their families, such as

children (UNHCHR, 1990). This convention emphasises the importance of protecting the rights and well-being of entire migrant families, including children.

While the convention primarily focuses on the rights of migrant workers and their families, it includes specific provisions that address the situation of children who are migrating or living in a foreign country. Some of the rights that apply to children are the right to education as provided for in article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of Migrants, stipulating that the children of migrant workers are entitled to all rights to access basic education, like their citizen counterparts (UNHCHR, 1990). It extends this right to children in irregular situations, such as those children who might not be in possession of valid documentation, by recognising that:

> Access to public preschool educational institutions or schools shall not be refused or limited by reason of the irregular situation with respect to staying or employment of either parent or by reason of the irregularity of the child's stay in the State of employment (UNHCHR, 1990).

Furthermore, article 30 states that migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to receive any medical care that is urgently required for the preservation of their life or the avoidance of irreparable harm to their health on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned (UNHCHR, 1990). Such emergency medical care shall not be refused them by reason of any irregularity with regard to stay or employment.

Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)

This convention defines who qualifies as a refugee, outlines their rights and obligations, and establishes the legal framework for the protection and assistance of refugees. The convention defines a refugee as a person who:

> owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his [sic] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself [sic] of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his [sic] former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (United Nations, 1951)

The convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees urges government to take the necessary measures for the protection of the refugee's family, especially with a view to protecting refugees who are minors, in particular unaccompanied children and girls, with special reference to guardianship and adoption (UNHCR, 1967; United Nations, 1951). The refugees have a duty, as well, to the abide by the laws and regulations of the country they find themselves in (United Nations, 1951).

International Labour Organisation

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is a United Nations agency devoted to the advance of social and economic justice by setting international labour standards (ILO, n.d. a). The ILO has four strategic objectives namely:

1. To promote and realise standards and fundamental principles and rights at work.

2. To create greater opportunities for women and men for decent employment and income.
3. To enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all.
4. To strengthen tripartism and social dialogue between employers, employees, and the State (ILO, n.d. b).

Since 1919, the ILO has brought together governments, employers, and workers of 187 member states, including South African and Zimbabwe, to set out labour standards, policies, and programmes. Every year, the ILO meets in Geneva for the International Labour Conference to establish the policies of the ILO, including conventions and recommendations (ILO, n.d. b). Below are ILO conventions on child labour which aim to protect children and their rights with regard to employment or work. Zimbabwe and South Africa have adopted legislation that prohibits or places restrictions on the employment and work of children. The conventions specifically address the issue of child labour and exploitation. Unaccompanied migrant children are often at risk of exploitation, and this treaty provides safeguards to protect them from harmful labour practices.

Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
In June 1973, the governing body of the International Labour Office met for its 58th session in Geneva and the discussion with regard to minimum age for admission to employment was on the agenda. The discussion noted the terms of the minimum age for different employment industries, including sea, agriculture, trimmers and stockers, non-industrial employment, fishermen, and underground work. We will highlight the few relevant articles provided in this convention (ILO, 1973).

Article 1 states that each country which ratifies this convention must take on national policy designed to ensure the effective eradication of child labour and to raise progressively the minimum age for admission to employment or work to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons. Article 2 states that each country which ratifies this convention must specify a minimum age for admission to employment. The minimum age shall not be less than the age for school completion and shall not be less than 15 years. Nevertheless, Sub-section 4 states that in a country where there is poor economic and educational development, the minimum age shall be 14 years, and this should apply after consultation with the organisations of employers and workers concerned (ILO, 1973).

Article 3 of this convention stresses that children aged less than 18 years must not be exposed to employment or work that is likely to jeopardise the health, safety, or morals of young persons. However, article 7 make exceptions for children between 13 and 15 years to do light work which is not harmful to their health or development, may not cause children to withdraw from attending school, as well as their participation in vocational orientation or training programmes approved by the competent authority. The competent authorities have a mandate to determine the number of hours during which, and the conditions in which, these children can work (ILO, 1973). This is to ensure that these children will not be overworked or be given work which is detrimental to their well-being and health.

Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

The governing body of the International Labour Office assembled for 87 sessions in June 1999 and considered the need to adopt new instruments for the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as the main priority for national and international action, this to complement the convention and the recommendation concerning minimum age for admission to employment, 1973, which remain fundamental instruments on child labour. Elimination of the worst forms of labour required immediate and comprehensive action, considering the importance of free basic education and the need to remove the children concerned from all such work and to provide for their rehabilitation and social integration while addressing the needs of their families (ILO, 1999).

Article 1 of the policy states that a country which ratifies this agreement must take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency. Article 3 identifies the worst forms of child labour as including:

a) Slavery or other practices similar to slavery such as sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.
b) The use, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances.
c) The use, procuring, or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs, as defined in the relevant international treaties.
d) Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children (ILO, 1999).

In addressing the worst forms of child labour, article 6 states that each country must design and implement programmes of action that will assist in eradicating child labour and that the design and implementation of programmes must be done in consultation with relevant government institutions, employers', and workers' organisations (ILO, 1999). Actions should also consider the views of other concerned groups, as appropriate. Article 7(2) highlights the importance of education in eliminating child labour and states that each country shall take effective and time-bound measures to:

a) Prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour.
b) Provide the necessary and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration.
c) Ensure access to free basic education, and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour.
d) Identify and reach out to children at special risk.
e) Take account of the special situation of girls (ILO, 1999).

While there have been so many efforts in addressing this issue of child labour, developing countries are still experiencing child labour on a massive scale, particularly those who are faced with awful conditions.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 1966. Due to the need to stimulate better standards of life, kindle social progress, and promote human rights, the ICESCR was adopted to establish such commitments in binding law (UN, 1966). The ICESCR creates legally binding international obligations for States such as Zimbabwe and South Africa, which both ratified the treaty (UN, 1966). The ICESCR reflects global consensus on universal human rights on economic, social, and cultural issues (UN, 1966). The preamble of the ICESCR recognises that economic, social, and cultural rights derive from the "inherent dignity of the human person" (UN, 1966). For instance, for the right to education, which is recognised as an economic, social, and cultural right, article 13 of the ICESCR is the most crucial formulation of the right to education in any international instrument. The importance of this particular provision in this policy framework emanates from the fact that education/lack thereof, is seen as one of the driving factors for children on the move. Moreover, the pull and push factors are related to the economic, social, and cultural rights of the children; these include, for example, family dysfunction (social rights), poverty (economic rights), seeking better life opportunities (economic rights, social or cultural rights), lack of education (economic, social, and cultural right). Regardless of the jurisdiction they are in, children should be ensured availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability of all social, economic, and cultural rights.

General Comment 6 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin (2019)

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is the body of 18 independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by its State parties. The obligations of State parties regarding foreign children are discussed in full in General Comment No. 6 by the Committee of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which examines the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children who find themselves in States other than their country of origin. The objective of this General Comment is to address the specific vulnerable situation of foreign children and to propose solutions on how they can be afforded access and enjoyment of their rights under the CRC (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005). The issuing of this General Comment was motivated by the Committee's observance of an increasing number of children in such situations. There are varied and numerous reasons for a child being unaccompanied or separated, including persecution of the child or trafficking in various contexts and forms, and the search for better life opportunities.

The primary aim of the General Comment is to bring attention to the vulnerable circumstances experienced by unaccompanied and separated children in a foreign land; it seeks to outline the complex challenges faced by States and other stakeholders in ensuring that these children can exercise their rights effectively. Additionally, the General Comment provides guidance on the protection, care, and appropriate treatment of unaccompanied and separated children. Most importantly, it emphasises the principles of non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, and the child's right to freely express their views (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005).

Firstly, the Committee notes and emphasises that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all actions concerning the child. It further obliges States to ensure access to all socioeconomic and cultural amenities to every unaccompanied or separated child, irrespective of migration status. The Committee further encourages States to look for assistance from international organisations to make sure that the needs of unaccompanied children are met. Unavailable or limited resources should not be a good enough reason for failure to meet the needs of these children. The Committee further stipulates that in affording proper treatment of unaccompanied or separated children, States must fully respect non-refoulement obligations: States shall not return a child to a country where there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of irreparable harm to the child (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005).

The General Comment applies to all such children irrespective of their residence status and reasons for being abroad, and whether they are unaccompanied or separated. However, it does not apply to children who have not crossed an international border, even though the Committee acknowledges the many similar challenges related to internally displaced unaccompanied and separated children, recognises that much of the guidance offered is also valuable in relation to such children, and strongly encourages States to adopt relevant aspects of this General Comment in relation to the protection, care, and treatment of unaccompanied and separated children who are displaced within their own country (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005).

African Charter on The Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which legally became African Union (AU) in 2001, adopted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (hereinafter, African Charter) in July 1990 (AU Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child [ACERWC], n.d.). Similar to UNCRC, the African Children's Charter is a comprehensive tool that sets out the rights and defines universal principles and norms for the status and protection of children. The African Charter is a regional human rights instrument aiming to secure the rights of children in the international context. Article 23 of the African Charter provides safeguards for refugee children that all State parties of AU shall adopt. Article 23 (1) sets out that State parties must take appropriate measures in ensuring that refugee children receive proper protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of the rights set out in the Charter and other international human right and humanitarian instruments to which the States are parties (African Union, 1990). In pursuit of protecting refugee children, article 23 (2) of the African Charter states that all State parties must undertake collaboration with other existing international organisations which aim to protect and assist unaccompanied refugee children to trace the parents or other family members in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with the family. Article 23 (3) further states that, in cases where there are no parents, and legal guardians or close relatives cannot be found, the child must receive the same protection as any other child within the country. In addition, article 25 (1) and (2) elaborate what State parties should do to protect and assist children who are separated from their parents. States parties should provide alternative family care for these children and this should be in the best interests of the child and considerate of the child's upbringing and ethnic, religious, or linguistic background (African Union, 1990).

Concluding observations and recommendations of the ACERWC to the Government of the Republic of South Africa on its First Periodic Report on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (2019)

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) is tasked with the duty of monitoring the implementation processes of the African Charter on the African continent. The ACERWC is mandated to monitor and report on the fulfilment of child rights in Africa, deriving its mandate from articles 32 to 46 of the African Charter. With regard to the treatment of migrant children, the Committee noted with great concern that there is no dedicated mechanism to regularise the status of unaccompanied migrant children who are not refugees in South Africa (ACERWC, 2019). Therefore, the Committee recommends to the government of South Africa to:

a) Identify unaccompanied migrant children as a category of persons requiring special consideration in terms of Section 31(2) (b) of the Immigration Act, to allow unaccompanied children who meet the definition to apply for and be granted permanent residence in South Africa.
b) Waive all fees applicable to applications for immigration permits for unaccompanied children, so that these children benefit from provision of Section 31(2) (b) of the Immigration Act.
c) Fast track applications of unaccompanied children and, in the meantime, allow children to go to school while they await the outcome of their application.
d) Make accessible refugee reception offices in all provinces so that unaccompanied children can apply for grant/renewal of asylum and refugee permits in the province where they live.
e) Ensure that a social worker is always assigned to assist unaccompanied children by amending Section 32 of the Refugees Act which makes it discretionary for a Children's Court to order a social worker to assist such a child to make an application for asylum (African Union, 1990).

These observations hold importance within this policy framework as they provide insights into whether States are meeting their legal obligations to protect unaccompanied children. Moreover, they help identify the existing gaps that need to be addressed, considering the experiences uncovered during the research fieldwork. The Committee notes with great concern that migrant children and children of foreign parents in South Africa are discriminated against and face xenophobia from their peers and teachers and are sometimes barred from accessing schools and other basic services because of reported illegal entry or stay in the country. The Committee has learned that, at the beginning of each school year, a number of groups of children, including undocumented migrant children, documented refugee, and asylum-seeker children, are denied admission to school. The Committee also notes with concern that the barriers and/or denial of service to these children are not limited to education and include healthcare, child protection services, and birth registration services. Therefore, the Committee reiterates its previous recommendation and calls upon the South African government to eliminate all forms of discrimination against these groups of children by avoiding de facto and de jure barriers hindering them from accessing basic services such as education, healthcare, birth registration, child protection services, etc. In particular, the Committee

urges the government of South Africa to take legislative and other necessary measures to ensure that asylum seekers, and migrant, refugee, and stateless children access basic services without the requirement of presenting documents (African Union, 1990).

The Committee notes with concern the difficulties that asylum-seeking and refugee children face when trying to access social services. The Committee especially notes the difficulty they face in the application for documentation and the added barriers which will come as a result of the Refugee Amendment Bill, should it be passed. The Committee would recommend that the government create more refugee centres, in all nine provinces, remove all legal and non-legal barriers which refugee children face in accessing social services such as education, and that processes of documenting refugee children are tailored to be more efficient, expedient, and child friendly (African Union, 1990).

African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981) (Banjul Charter)

Considered together with the African Charter, the Banjul Charter stipulates that "freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples" (African Union, 1981). This is understood in this paper to extend in application to children on the move.

Article 1 calls for member States to undertake to adopt legislative or other measures to give effect to the rights, duties, and freedoms enshrined in the Charter (African Union, 1981). The establishment and financing of policies and laws that facilitate the protection and enjoyment of rights by children on the move is thus recognised as a primary responsibility of the State. Article 2 states that every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognised and guaranteed in the Banjul Charter, without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth, or other status (African Union, 1981). The status of children on the move should therefore not be a cause for their denial of protection and enjoyment of their rights. Further, article 3 (2) enshrines that every individual shall be entitled to equal protection of the law (African Union, 1981). Thus, the laws and policies in Zimbabwe and South Africa should provide equal protection to children on the move. Attention should be drawn to article 12, which provides for freedom of movement and residence within one's own country, and protection in a foreign country. To this end, the unsafe migration of children, in whatever context, should not be criminalised.

Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care (1993)

In order to improve and enhance the protection and care of refugee children, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) adopted a policy on refugee children, endorsed by the UNHCR Executive Committee in October 1993, and provided guidelines which define goals and objectives, as well as the principles and practical measures for the protection and assistance of refugee children. The guidelines mainly focus on the children's developmental needs, their gender and cultural framework, the special requirements of unaccompanied minors, and the particular problems which arise in the context of repatriation and reintegration. These guidelines were primarily intended as directives for UNHCR staff; however, other organisations and government

institutions can adopt these guidelines when developing programmes and activities which are responsive to the rights and psychological and material needs of refugee children. The UNHCR declares that these are tools for reaching policy objectives and are based on human rights law, since they were created based on the UNCRC and notion of human rights (UNHCR, 1993). Therefore, the UNHCR states that there is an obligation under human rights law that these guidelines be followed.

The Abuja Declaration on funding national health budgets (2001)

In April 2001, heads of State of African Union countries met and pledged to set a target of allocating at least 15% of their annual budget to improve the health sector, and to have less than 20% of the total health expenditure coming from out-of-pocket spending. At the same time, they urged donor countries to "fulfil the yet-to-be-met target of 0.7% of their GNP as official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries". This drew attention to the shortage of the resources needed to improve health in low-income settings. This captures the importance of funding healthcare as a developmental priority. The Abuja Declaration of 2001 can be taken in a similar vein to the 2006 Addis-Ababa Declaration on community health in the African Region and the 2008 Ouagadougou Declaration on primary healthcare and health systems in Africa (SAIIA, 2021). The prioritisation of healthcare spending for unaccompanied children should be conceptualised in a similar context.

6.3 Domestic legal and policy frameworks in Zimbabwe

Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment No. 20), 2013

The Constitution of Zimbabwe is the supreme law of the land and therefore is instructive in assessing the architectural and conceptual design of any law or policy in Zimbabwe. The rights of children are recognised in Section 19 and further elaborated in Section 81. The provisions of the Constitution are noble in as much as they strive to comprehensively outline the various rights of children.

> **Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps:** The enjoyment of rights and protection by children on the move is limited, as the Constitution does not recognise unsafe migration as a context of precarity for unaccompanied children, who are often found in contexts where such rights are difficult to enforce, regulate, and provide for. In pursuing the principle of the "best interest of the child", it is instructive that any policy or law endeavouring to provide for the welfare and protection of children recognises the precarious circumstances that often define children on the move.

Children's Amendment Act, 2023

The importance of the Children's Amendment Act, as the primary law for children, cannot be overemphasised. It is therefore understood that the architecture and conceptual frame of the Act should be instructive as to the welfare and protection of children on the move.

> **Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps:** The Act provides improvement in harmonising the definition of a child with the Constitution, and specifically identifying unaccompanied children as children in need of care. Further, the other dimensions

capturing the definition of a child in care do capture some of the circumstances that generally define the realities of children on the move.

Labour Act, Chapter 28:01 (updated to 2019)

Section 11 addresses the employment of young persons. It prohibits the employment of young persons below the age of 16 years and provides for the employment of young persons below the age of 18 years but no younger than 16 years, through the assistance of the guardian.

Child labour is prohibited under the Act. The extent to which this statutory provision finds space and practical expression, within the context of poverty and the need for each member of the family to supplement family income, remains in doubt. Child labour is therefore happening on an alarming scale, with children, particularly boys, migrating to South Africa and Botswana in search of gainful employment. Child exploitation and abuse therefore become endemic, with children commonly employed as farm labourers and at times being forced to work as drug peddlers.

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: Children on the move who are below the age of 18 but no younger than 16 years, outside the care of any guardian, are therefore effectively excluded from the Act. Issues of child poverty in particular, and family poverty in general, remain key drivers fostering child labour. The extent to which government social protection programmes help combat child labour remains blurred, with such programmes giving out meagre, intermittent, erratic, and unreliable safety nets, much to the detriment of families in need. The present economic environment has exacerbated the situation, with budgetary allocations towards social protection being rather erratic and donor dependent.

Disabled Persons Act, Chapter 17:01 (as amended by September 2016)

It should be recognised that the inherent limitations of the Act, which are widely established, apply in this contract. These include the failure to adequately define people with disabilities, differentiate between disability and impairment, and a lack of subscription to the doctrine of Universal Design, in line with international standards. It is, however, unhelpful to go into detail about such limitations in this paper, as they are extensively covered in literature.

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: It is worth noting that the Act does not make any reference to children with disabilities even though having a disability presents differential effects across age and sex, with children being the most affected. This is due to prevailing institutional, environmental, as well as attitudinal effects emanating from an ableist society. Similarly, children with disabilities, though not covered under this parent statute, remain largely out of school and they are usually not covered under several child protection programmes offered by both government and non-governmental partners. Lack of skills and capacity remain the key stumbling block that militates against the quest for children with disabilities getting help. Unfortunately, this skills gap has never been acknowledged by all child protection players, making it difficult for appropriate intervention to take shape.

Education Amendment Act, 2020

The Zimbabwean government amended the Education Act with a view to harmonising it with the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Education is a recognised basic right for every child. The Education Act in Zimbabwe sets the tone for the provision of this pertinent right; this is affirmed in Section 4.

It is acknowledged and commended that the Amendment Act provides that the State has the duty to provide learners with resources and facilities for learning; however, there is a condition. The right is subject to the availability of State resources. Essentially and technically, the government could delay the realisation of the right based on not having the required funds. In Section 4, the Act makes it clear that attending State-funded education is not optional, but compulsory. It is an offence for any parent or guardian to deprive a child of education paid for by the State. The law also underscores that schools may not expel learners for failing to pay fees. This also applies to privately owned schools that are not State funded.

> **Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps:** The right of children on the move to non-discrimination can be understood to relate to their economic and social status in the context of this provision. Inscribed within this provision is the issue of 'residency'. Given that children on the move include children of no fixed abode and/or who are unaccompanied, their access to education can be hampered. Section 13 deals with the prescribing of fees related to instruction at government schools. This condition of fees payable for instruction has been a general basis for excluding children coming from disadvantaged backgrounds whose families cannot afford the fees, a situation expectedly dire for children on the move.

Immigration Act, Chapter 4:02 (1979; amendments to 2001)

This Act seeks to regulate the entry of persons into and the departure of persons from Zimbabwe; to prohibit the entry into and to provide for the removal from Zimbabwe of certain persons; to provide for the control of aliens; and to provide for matters incidental to or connected with the foregoing. Section 3 provides that the absence of children who have accompanied a person whose absence is justified as provided for in Sub-section (4) shall not be considered in determining their domicile in Zimbabwe. Section 7 deals with the powers of search and inquiry of immigration officers, and Sub-section (2) provides additional guidance for the protection of women.

> **Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps:** It is concerning that the special needs and circumstances of women in such a context are taken into consideration, yet those relating to children are not addressed. In a similar fashion, Sections 8 and 9, dealing with prohibited persons and detention, do not provide regulatory guidance in how children in similar contexts are to be dealt with. Generally, the Act lacks clarity on how children on the move are to be dealt with; it is not clear regarding whether the differentiation in referring to children under 16 years, and those under 18 but no younger than 16 years, relates to capacity to consent or any other protection concern.

Public Health Act, Chapter 15:17, 2018

This Act generally does not make any specific reference to children on the move or related migration contexts.

> **Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps:** It is not specified how children on the move, who are unlikely to have guardianship, are to be dealt with. In practice, Social Development Officers can act in loco parentis and, as such, the national case management systems address this gap. Further, Section 42 provides for compulsory immunisation of children. However, there are no additional provisions that provide guidance as to the inclusion of unaccompanied children. In a similar manner, Section 47 provides for the notification of infectious diseases anchored on certain institutions such as residential care facilities and schools. Unaccompanied children outside the stated institutions are not covered.

Refugees Act, Chapter 4:03, 1983 (amended 2001)

This Act provides regulatory guidance regarding children on the move whose migratory destination is Zimbabwe and who seek refugee status. It is therefore the case that it does not apply to bona fide Zimbabwean children.

> **Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps:** The interpretation of children is in the context of a family as stated in Section 2, effectively excluding unaccompanied children. The protection of children on the move under refugee status is provided in Section 2. Section 5 addresses the establishment and composition of the Zimbabwe Refugee Committee. The given membership of the committee is at the discretion of the minister but appears to have a bias towards the security sector, as 5(1)(b) specifies membership for: i) foreign affairs ministry; (ii) police services; and (iii) state security. A more rehabilitative and developmental agenda is therefore not apparent in the composition of the committee.

Social Welfare Assistance Act, Chapter 17:06 (as at 31 December 2016)

The duty of member states in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to provide adequate social security is clearly stated in the Code on Social Security in SADC. Social protection is considered a human and socioeconomic right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). The rights to social welfare and social care are also enshrined in Section 30 of the Constitution. In a similar vein, the Social Welfare Assistance Act seeks to provide for the granting of social welfare assistance to persons in need and their dependants. Unaccompanied children can be understood as persons in need.

> **Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps:** Children are primarily interpreted in Section 2 as dependants of beneficiaries. The context of children on the move can be understood in the Act as that relating to vulnerability and deprivation. Accessing social assistance is primarily through an application process as set forth in Section 3. The condition for application is arguably not adequate to promote participation among children on the move, as they face barriers such as stigma and discrimination, that undermine their capacity to actively take up such opportunities. Thus, it would

be beneficial for children on the move to be targeted for social assistance through the instigation of social assistance interventions rather than expecting them to tender an application. Section 5 outlines the range of social assistance provided for in the Act which encompasses the following: rehabilitation, institutional nursing, boarding or foster home care; counselling services; the provision of orthopedic and orthoptic appliances; occupational training; pauper burials; the supply of food or clothing; any other assistance necessary to relieve destitution. It is given that children on the move will generally qualify for social welfare assistance, as set forth in Section 6.

Trafficking in Persons Act, Chapter 9:25, 2014

It is recognised that the intersection of migration and human trafficking is heightened in contexts defined by acute deprivation, such as experienced by children on the move in Zimbabwe. Thus, the Trafficking in Persons Act becomes a vital tool to address human trafficking in the context of unaccompanied children.

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: Child trafficking is underscored as aggravating circumstances in Section 3. The care and maintenance of children in the context of trafficking are provided for under Section 8.

Standard Operating Procedures for Cross-Border Case Management

The Guidelines on Unaccompanied and Separated Foreign Children Found in South Africa were drafted by the Government of South Africa through the Department of Social Development (DSD, 2009), while the Standard Operating Procedures for cross-border case management were drafted by the government of South Africa through the Department of Social Development and the government of Zimbabwe through the Department of Social Welfare.

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: These SOPs offer a functional description of unaccompanied children on the move. This is in line with the issue of family links. The document delineates operational procedures for the care and safeguarding of unaccompanied children in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. The Guidelines and the Standard Operating Procedures play a crucial role in the process of identifying, tracking, and reuniting unaccompanied minors. Additionally, the Guideline and the Standard Operating Procedures are aligned section 9 and 10 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, which emphasise the preservation of families and the responsibility of State Parties to ensure that children can maintain contact with their families unless it is determined to be against their best interests. Regrettably, in many instances, the principle of non-refoulement is overlooked when implementing these principles.

6.4 Domestic legal and policy frameworks in South Africa

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996

The Constitution of South Africa holds the highest authority in the country, serving as a guiding framework for evaluating the structure and underlying principles of any law or policy within South Africa. Section 28 of the Constitution sets out the rights of all

children. In South Africa, like many other countries, a person under the age of 18 years is considered to be a child and the following rights should be respected.

- Section 28 (1) (a) to (c) state that every child in South Africa has a right to name and nationality, to be under family care or a protective alternative environment, with a right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic healthcare services and social services (RSA, 1996a).
- Section 28 (1) (d) to (g) further provide that children must be protected from abuse or neglect, premature or exploitative labour, unnecessary imprisonment and – if detention is unavoidable – be treated in a manner and be kept in conditions that are cognisant of the child's age (RSA, 1996a).

Among the plethora of children's rights set out in Section 28 of the Constitution, children may not be detained except as a measure of last resort. The Constitution's provisions are commendable, as they aim to thoroughly delineate the diverse rights of children.

> **Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps:** The Constitution lacks explicit provisions addressing the unique vulnerabilities and rights of unaccompanied children on the move. This absence can lead to inconsistencies in how these children are treated under the law, potentially resulting in inadequate protection and support systems. Additionally, there might be gaps in coordination between different government agencies and departments, leading to challenges in implementing comprehensive policies and programmes specifically tailored to the needs of unaccompanied children on the move. Children on the move face constraints in their ability to enjoy rights and receive protection because the Constitution does not acknowledge unsafe migration as a condition of vulnerability for unaccompanied children. These children are frequently found in situations where it is challenging to enforce, regulate, or ensure their rights. When striving to adhere to the principle of best interests of the child, it is crucial that any policy or law aimed at safeguarding and caring for children considers the unstable circumstances that often characterise the lives of children on the move.

Children's Act 38 of 2005

The Children's Act (RSA, 2005) provides a legislative spine for the wider strategy of improving children's lives (RSA, 2005). It reinforces Section 28 of the Constitution, which says that the best interests of the child are of paramount importance in all matters concerning them. The Children's Act was enacted to increase protection and make sure children's rights are respected, including rights to universal services to which every child is entitled to have access. It also provides targeted services for children with additional needs. Sections 6(2)(a) and 8(1) of this Act acknowledge that all proceedings, actions, or decisions in any matter concerning a child must respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the child's rights, as set out in the Bill of Rights. It sets distinct objectives pertaining to the care and protection of children; some of its objectives include the preservation and enhancement of family units, the realisation of children's constitutional rights, and compliance with international obligations binding on South Africa. It includes the establishment of resources to promote and monitor children's well-being, safeguarding children from discrimination, exploitation, and all forms of harm or risks, and providing care

and protection for children in need (RSA, 2005). Unaccompanied children are regarded as children in need of care and protection (Colgan, n.d.).

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: The Act offers a noteworthy enhancement by aligning its definition of a child with the Constitution, explicitly recognising unaccompanied children as requiring care. However, while the Act includes various aspects encompassing the definition of a child in need of care, it does not contain a dedicated clause addressing the particular vulnerabilities of children on the move. The Act lacks a clear and specific definition of unaccompanied children on the move. Without a precise definition, these children might not be identified and protected appropriately. Unaccompanied children on the move might face barriers in accessing essential services such as healthcare and education. The Act does not specify mechanisms to ensure their unhindered access to these services, leading to gaps in their well-being. The Act does not provide adequate safeguards against the deportation or detention of unaccompanied children on the move. These children might be at risk of deportation to unsafe environments or unnecessary detention, which can have severe consequences on their well-being.

Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997

Section 43 of this Act addresses the employment of children. It prohibits the employment of young persons below the age of 15, while Section 44 provides for the employment of children who are at least 15 years of age and no longer subject to compulsory schooling in terms of any law.

In addition, the Constitution emphasises in Section 28(1) that every child has: (e) to be protected from exploitative labour practices; (f) not to be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that are: (i) inappropriate for a person of that child's age; or (ii) place at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health, or spiritual, moral or social development.

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: While the Act expressly forbids child labour, the practical implementation of this legal provision remains uncertain, especially within the context of poverty and the necessity for each family member to contribute to the household income. Consequently, child labour persists on a significant scale. Notably, many children, primarily boys, migrate to South Africa in search of employment opportunities. This results in widespread child exploitation and abuse, with children often engaged in farm labour or, in some cases, coerced into becoming drug couriers. Some children often work longer hours than allowed by international labour standards. Child labour persists primarily due to the prevalence of child poverty and, more broadly, family poverty. The effectiveness of government social protection programmes in addressing child labour remains unclear, as these programmes often offer insufficient, irregular, unpredictable, and unreliable support, which significantly disadvantages needy families. The current economic climate has exacerbated this issue, with inconsistent budget allocations for social protection, often reliant on external donors.

Furthermore, the Act lacks provisions specifying the maximum working hours for children, which is contrary to international legal standards. This is especially concerning given the substantial influx of unaccompanied children on the move seeking employment opportunities. The Act just outlines general working hours applicable to adults; however, it is not reasonable to expect children to work the same number of hours as adults.

Guidelines on Unaccompanied and Separated Foreign Children found in South Africa, 2009

The Guidelines (DSD, 2009) were drafted in reference to other policy frameworks including the CRC, the Constitution, and the Children's Act. These are guidelines for unaccompanied and separated children and steps that need to be considered to ensure that the rights of these children are protected (Davel & Skelton, 2007; DSD, 2009; DSD, 2019; RSA, 2005). The obligation of the State is to safeguard the rights of these children.

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: It is a cause for concern that, despite the existence of clear guidelines outlining the correct procedures to be followed, many children continue to flee when faced with unlawful arrests by the police. A significant number of children are so fearful of police officers that they refrain from reporting instances of abuse, even when mistreated. Some police officers exhibit hostility and fail to adhere to the prescribed procedures, opting to detain children without exhausting other options first. Regrettably, this deficiency in skills and awareness has not been recognised by all stakeholders in child protection, thereby hindering the development of effective interventions.

South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

Education is a recognised basic right for every child in South Africa according to Section 29(1) (a) of the Constitution. The implication of this section is that this right is immediately realisable, and it has no internal qualifiers like other socioeconomic rights. The State is under an obligation to provide this right to everyone without any excuse. It is not attached to any condition of availability of resources. It is an absolute right. The Schools Act provides for compulsory and free education. The Act makes it clear that attending state-funded education is not optional, but compulsory. The law also underscores that schools may not expel learners for failing to pay fees. This also applies to privately owned schools that are not state funded.

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: It is noteworthy that, in South Africa, there are National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) and not all schools are entirely free. Schools in South Africa are classified into quintiles. Lower quintiles (1 to 3) are no-fee schools, meaning these schools do not charge fees at all. Quintiles 4 to 5 receive a small amount of funding from the government and are allowed to charge school fees. Unaccompanied pupils are more prominent in the underdeveloped areas and most of them are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Most of the learners within this group fall within the no-fee schools or the fee-exemption schools. However, challenges arise when nationality or immigration status disqualifies them from accessing such schools and funding. There are some documents

which are complex and hard to acquire, especially for unaccompanied children on the move. Acquiring an affidavit poses challenges for the unaccompanied child on the move, which is worse if the child is an undocumented child; this is not because it is unattainable, but due to the apprehension of encountering the South African Police Service and potential deportation. It is mostly the fear of deportation that hinders these children from attaining services available to them, demonstrating the conflict within the laws, as illustrated below.

The Admission Policy for Public Ordinary Schools

The Admission Policy for Public Ordinary Schools applies uniformly to all provincial departments of education and all ordinary public schools. It sets procedures that govern the administration of admissions; documents required for admission; admission of non-citizens; admission of undocumented learners; learners with special education needs; age requirements for the admission of learners to an ordinary public school; repetition of grades by learners; school zoning; registration of admissions; and rights and obligations of parents, including the right of appeal.

It also requires parents applying for admission of learners to ordinary public schools to provide official birth certificates to school principals, which may be a hindrance for undocumented immigrant children. The Admission Policy explicitly provides for conditions of admission of non-citizens. It states that:

- The South African Schools Act, 1996 and this policy apply equally to learners who are not citizens of the Republic of South Africa and whose parents are in possession of a permit for temporary or permanent residence issued by the Department of Home Affairs.
- A learner who entered the country on a study permit must present the study permit on admission to the public school.

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: Already, there are limitations regarding the scope of application for the Admission Policy. Firstly, it excludes children who are unaccompanied or separated from their parents. Additionally, it conditionally applies to children whose parents hold valid permits. To gain admission to schools, learners are required to possess a valid permit. The Schools Act mandates compulsory education, whereas the Admission Policy introduces a condition or restriction on accessing this compulsory education. This creates a conflict between the two laws. Furthermore, some children are bullied at school, as these discriminatory disparities are not addressed by either the Children's Act, Schools Act, or the Immigration Act, leaving children on the move vulnerable to abusive school environments without adequate protection. These are underlying factors contributing to xenophobic behaviour in schools that the existing laws avoid directly confronting. Consequently, this represents another gap in the policy and legal frameworks.

It is important to observe that policy documents related to immigration and education were crafted with differing viewpoints. For instance, the Constitution was developed with a focus on human rights principles. In contrast, the Immigration Act was shaped from a nationalist standpoint regarding migration. The South African Schools Act,

once again, was structured with a human rights perspective. Lastly, the Admissions Policy was formulated with a securitisation or nationalist viewpoint in mind. Such conflict within the policy and legal framework does more harm than good.

Immigration Act 13 of 2002

The Immigration Act was promulgated in 2002 to provide for the purposes of controlling who comes into South Africa, for what purposes, for how long, and how they will depart. Its purpose is the "regulation of admission of persons to, their residence in, and their departure from the Republic". This statute is crucial to this framework because it specifically regulates issues concerning migrants into South Africa (children on the move), which is one of the foci of this research. Its objectives also include educating communities and civil society on the rights of foreigners, illegal immigrants, and refugees so as to prevent xenophobia (RSA, 2002). The Immigration Act covers sections which cover the objectives and structure of immigration control, admission and departure, temporary residence, permanent residence, exclusion and exemptions, enforcement and monitoring, immigration courts, duties and obligations, miscellaneous, offences, and transitional provision.

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: The Immigration Act is a legal framework designed to address the unique requirements and safeguards for immigrants in South Africa. It is disconcerting that the Act acknowledges the specific needs and situations of adults in the immigration process but does not adequately address those related to children. Similarly, sections dealing with prohibited individuals and detention do not offer clear regulatory guidance on how children in similar situations should be handled. In essence, the Act lacks clarity regarding the appropriate procedures and provisions for dealing with Children on the Move.

The inclusion of Section 39 is primarily driven by the fact that some of the children on the move are in the country without legal authorisation. Although our focus is on unaccompanied children on the move, some of the children are undocumented/lack the legal right to stay in the country. The Immigration Act automatically disqualifies children on the move without documentation from accessing educational services. This underscores the existing contradiction between laws and highlights the need for rectification.

The Immigration Act places the responsibility on schools to ensure that they do not admit learners whose legal status in South Africa is uncertain or illegal. However, both the Constitution and the Schools Act uphold the principles of providing basic education to everyone and mandating compulsory education, respectively. Nevertheless, the Admission Policy introduces conditions into the admission process, and the Immigration Act outright prohibits the admission of certain children. This inconsistency also runs counter to international legal standards, which stipulate that children should receive services regardless of their immigration status. The provisions causing these concerns should be thoroughly examined and, where necessary, amended.

While the Immigration Act discusses employment matters, it does not explicitly tackle the important issue of child employment. This is significant because some children on the move are subjected to exploitative working conditions and child labour. It is concerning that the Immigration Act, which is intended to address matters concerning migrants/children on the move, does not touch upon child employment in any way.

Furthermore, the Act addresses concerns related to schools and educational institutions but neglects important aspects such as healthcare services. Some children may be reluctant to seek healthcare facilities because they lack passports or appropriate documentation. Unfortunately, the Immigration Act does not sufficiently address the specific needs of children on the move.

National Health Act 61 of 2003

One of the objectives of the National Health Act is the provision of the "best possible health services that available resources can afford", in an equitable manner, to those in South Africa. Unaccompanied children on the move, asylum seekers, and refugees are entitled to same basic health services as South African citizens. Limitations only exist regarding organ transplantations; the National Health Act stipulates in Section 61 that organ transplants are exclusively available to South African citizens or permanent residents, subject to approval of the Minister of Health.

To add to the right to health, Section 27 of the Constitution entitles "everyone" to the right to healthcare services and explicitly states that no one may be denied emergency treatment. Section 28 of the Constitution, which relates specifically to the rights of children, states that children have the right to basic healthcare. Whereas certain constitutional provisions do in fact restrict rights to citizens of South Africa, Section 27 of the Constitution, refers to "everyone" and its silence with respect to restricting its application to non-citizens can only lead to the purposive interpretation that the provision grants rights to all, citizens or not. This is justified further by Section 7 of the Constitution, stating that the Bill of Rights "enshrines the rights of all people in our country".

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: In theory, children on the move are encompassed within the State's commitment to realising the right to health. However, in practice, an individual's ability to access healthcare services is contingent upon their documentation status, while the associated fees are determined by a sliding scale used to assess eligibility for subsidised care. Some children are unable to visit hospitals because they lack passports or assume that their undocumented status would result in service denial. This acts as a barrier to healthcare access, even though the Constitution dictates otherwise. While the Act guarantees the right to access healthcare services, there might be practical challenges for unaccompanied children on the move. These children might lack proper documentation, making it difficult for them to access healthcare services, especially non-emergency or specialised care. Unaccompanied children might not have a legal guardian present. The Act does not specify clear guidelines on how medical decisions should be made for unaccompanied children on the move, leading to uncertainties about consent procedures and

guardianship, especially for complex medical procedures. The Act, as a rule, does not make any explicit mention of the needs of children on the move.

Refugee Act 130 of 1998

The Refugee Act provides the refugee laws and regulations aimed at controlling and governing the admission of refugees coming into the country (RSA, 2002). South Africa has ratified essential international and regional standards of operation aimed at regulating relevant aspects of refugee affairs. This includes the 1951 Refugee Convention and the OAU Convention of 1969. Therefore, the Refugee Act aimed:

> to give effect within the Republic of South Africa to the relevant international legal instruments, principles and standards relating to refugees; to provide for the reception into South Africa of asylum seekers; to regulate applications for and recognition of refugee status; to provide for the rights and obligations flow ing from such status; and to provide for matters connected therewith (RSA, 1998).

Section 32 (1) and (2) state the following: Any child who appears to qualify for refugee status in terms of Section 3, and who is found under circumstances which clearly indicate that he or she is a child in need of care as contemplated in the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act No. 74 of 1983), must forthwith be brought before the Children's Court for the district in which he or she was found. The Children's Court may order that a child contemplated in Sub-section (1) be assisted in applying for asylum in terms of this Act.

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: The law should ensure that a social worker is always assigned to assist unaccompanied children; this can be done by amending Section 32 of the Refugees Act, which makes it discretionary for a Children's Court to order a social worker to assist such a child to make an application for asylum. The disadvantage of courts having discretion is that discretionary rulings might lead to inconsistent outcomes. Different judges may interpret cases differently, resulting in unequal treatment for children seeking asylum. Social workers might face challenges in understanding when and how to assist children, leading to delays and confusion in the asylum application process. Depending on the discretion of the court, some children might not receive the support they require, which could affect the quality and completeness of their asylum applications.

Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004

Social protection is considered a human and socioeconomic right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) to which South Africa is a State party. Section 27 (1) (c) of the Constitution provides that everyone has the right to have access to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance. Section 28 (c) the children's clause further provides that every child has a right to social services.

In a similar vein, the Social Assistance Act (RSA, 2004) seeks to provide for the granting of social welfare assistance to persons in need and their dependants. Unaccompanied children on the move can be understood as people in need. However, Section 5 (1) (c)

of the Social Assistance Act provides that a person is entitled to the appropriate social assistance if he or she is a South African citizen. Furthermore, the Regulations Relating to the Application for and Payment of Social Assistance state the person is eligible for a child support grant if he or she is a South African citizen, and a permanent resident or a refugee residing in the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 2022). To be eligible for a grant, an individual must possess resident status, a requirement that many children on the move do not meet.

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: In Section 2 of the Act, children are primarily defined as dependants of beneficiaries. The Act, when viewed in the context of children on the move, can be seen as addressing issues related to vulnerability and deprivation. Unfortunately, the Act primarily limits access to social assistance to South African citizens, automatically disqualifying unaccompanied children on the move. By excluding unaccompanied children on the move from the social security scheme, the legislation restricts their rights in a manner that significantly impacts their dignity and equality. Although the courts have addressed the constitutional validity of these provisions, the wording of this provision remains unchanged. This creates a barrier to accessing social security assistance for these children, representing a gap in the legal and policy framework.

These are the guidelines that even organisations willing to assist these children must adhere to, but the law constrains their efforts. The legal framework acts as an obstacle between unaccompanied children on the move and service providers, be they institutions or organisations. Sections 6–10 outline the various forms of social assistance provided for in the Act, including child support grants, care dependency grants, foster child grants, disability grants, and older persons' grants, none of which unaccompanied children on the move are eligible for.

Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act, 7 of 2013

Section 4 (1) of this Act notes that

> any person who delivers, recruits, transports, transfers, harbours, sells, exchanges, leases, or receives another person within or across the borders of the Republic by means of a threat of harm; the threat or use of force or other coercion; the abuse of vulnerability; fraud; deception; kidnapping; the abuse of power; the direct or indirect giving or receiving of payments or benefits to obtain the consent of a person having control or authority over another person; or the direct or indirect giving or receiving of payments, compensation, rewards, bene fits or any other advantage aimed at either the person or an immediate family member of that person or any other person in close relationship to that person, for the purpose of any form or manner of exploitation, is guilty of the offence of trafficking in persons (RSA, 2013).

The Act further states in Section 4 (2) that "any person who adopts a child, facilitated or secured through legal or illegal means; or concludes a forced marriage with another person, within or across the borders of the Republic for the purpose of the exploitation of that child or other person in any form or manner, is guilty of an offence" (RSA, 2013).

Discourse/implementation/efficacy gaps: It is acknowledged that the convergence of migration and human trafficking is particularly pronounced in settings marked by severe deprivation, as is the case with the circumstances faced by children on the move in South Africa. Therefore, the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act becomes an essential instrument for addressing human trafficking in the context of unaccompanied children. This really is crucial, especially when we look at the migration journey of these children, as well as the routes and pathways, corridors used, and people who assisted these children, most of which/whom are in violation of the law.

7 THE WAY FORWARD

Ingunn Bjørkhaug, Anne Hatløy, Clara Haruzivishe, Christiane Horwood, Tanatswa S. Chineka, Sphindile Mapumulo and Mina Kristoffersen

This study has concentrated on the factors influencing the migration of unaccompanied Zimbabwean children both within their country and across the border to South Africa. These children, migrate independently from parents or adult guardians, often against the backdrop of broken family relations, inadequate educational opportunities, and limited future prospects. Our findings align with previous studies, highlighting that these children are pushed to escape harsh conditions marked by poverty, family dysfunction, and a lack of opportunities. Furthermore, the unaccompanied children 'on the move' are pulled by the hope of better life prospects in urban areas of Zimbabwe or in neighbouring countries like South Africa.

7.1 Three groups of migrant children

Our research identifies three groups of children 'on the move' from or within Zimbabwe, who are in different areas. The first group includes children migrating from rural to urban centres, such as Harare or Bulawayo, often to escape economic and social hardship. Many of these children end up living on the streets, developing various survival strategies. The second group consists of children who initially aimed to cross borders but who have, to a greater or lesser degree, made the borderlands a longer-term home. Their lives are characterised by continuous back-and-forth movements across the Zimbabwe-South Africa border, demonstrating remarkable resilience and adaptability in their informal business activities, The third group encompasses children who undertake the risky journey across national borders into South Africa, and they often face hazards and uncertainties, in search of a better future. Once in South Africa, they employ diverse strategies, some innovative and others born of necessity, to carve out a new life in a foreign land.

In the context of unaccompanied migrating children, the first group of children described above emerges as the most vulnerable. These young street children in Zimbabwe encounter a variety of social injustices and unstable living conditions in urban setting; thus, the opportunities they find in the city may be better than life back home, but often this is not by much. For many of the children, it is a life of bare minimum, with little or no support from the family they left at home. Notably, female children face greater risk, remaining less visible among this group, often turning to harmful survival strategies such as transactional sex or other exploitative forms of livelihood pursuits.

Based on data from interviews with children in this study, it is evident that the street children, despite the adversities they face, exercise a degree of agency in their daily lives, even within a severely challenging context. However, while they demonstrate some ability to navigate day-to-day challenges through, the persistent hardship remains. Moreover, many of the children report turning to drug use to find temporary solace and “fit in”.

As reported by the children who took part in the study, their survival is enabled by informal networks and social connections that facilitate access to, among other things, shelters and opportunities for work. Such social capital is characterised by mutual trust, peer-to-peer support and extends to trusted adults. If necessary, their proximity to their original homes provides some children with a potential, albeit complex, opportunity to return this may mean facing the abuse they initially fled. This underscores the profound dilemma faced by these children, who often find themselves caught' between a rock and a hard place'. A recurring issue for the street children is the constant threat of theft, particularly from older street children. Their strategies to mitigate this risk include seeking protection or ingeniously concealing their few possessions. Nonetheless, safeguarding personal items remains a challenge.

The second group of unaccompanied child migrants faces daunting journeys characterised by border crossings and encounters with violence, abuse, and exploitation. Despite the discrimination and conflicts they face in new communities, they demonstrate an ability to forge connections, build camaraderie, and establish economic ties. Their frequent navigation across borders underscores their ability for tactical strategic resourcefulness. Their room to manoeuvre, and to take actions that can improve their lives, is broader than the first group, as many of the children have the skills to navigate the opportunities provided by the borders, and as they remain in the area over time, they create contacts which can improve some of their life conditions. In particular, cases children report making useful connections with state personnel, such as soldiers patrolling the border, a reflection of ingenuity and agency in crafting useful networks. Not all children succeed, but the ability for some type of social mobility exists.

In South Africa, the third group consists of children who manage to cross the border. Although they are confronted with bullying of children in schools, discrimination, and a precarious legal status, as well as significant barriers to accessing education and essential services, many of these children do not return home. As submitted by these children, it is better for them to be in a place with leeway to achieve something, although the conditions are tough, rather than returning home to nothing, or having achieved nothing. The strength of these children is evident through their capacity to adapt to challenging circumstances. Their hesitation about returning to Zimbabwe, predicated on the unchanged conditions they originally fled, further highlights the complexity of their situation. Comparable experiences were shared by children who were successfully repatriated through the International Social Services system, a case in point between Botswana and Zimbabwe. Having faced difficult circumstances, these children managed to reach out to state services in the host country, having determined that returning home has better prospects than remaining.

Each group of these children, whether they are street children in the city or small-scale business entrepreneurs on the border, reflects a spectrum of socio-economic challenges and survival strategies. The presence of numerous unaccompanied minors on the move within Zimbabwe or across the border in South Africa, adds complexity to these challenges. However, amidst these difficulties, many children display an extraordinary ability to adapt to life's immediate challenges and to make choices, even within the constraints of their limited leeway. Supporting our findings, existing literature sheds

light on the intricate dynamics influencing the migration of these unaccompanied children. It underscores their resilience and capacity to navigate significant obstacles, while also acknowledging their vulnerability throughout the migration process and upon reaching their destination.

7.2 Vulnerability and adaptability

Given the varying levels of vulnerability and coping abilities among these children, the existing literature and our study emphasise the necessity of a holistic approach in policymaking and interventions. We argue that the complex nature of children's agency, coupled with the varying degrees of vulnerability they encounter, necessitates an approach that recognises the inadequacy of a one-size-fits-all solution in protecting children. It is imperative to acknowledge and address the diverse and complex needs specific to each unaccompanied migrant child's situation, ensuring that interventions are tailored to their needs in both Zimbabwe and South Africa, to effectively ensure their protection and safeguard their well-being.

The migration of unaccompanied children, within Zimbabwe and from Zimbabwe to South Africa is a substantial phenomenon. Key factors compelling this migration include economic disparities, challenging family circumstances, conflicts, and limited access to education and healthcare. The literature identifies these factors and explores the attractions of migration, such as the promise of better opportunities. Thus, if the conditions at home remain unchanged, interventions intended to target the children to return home, might be counterproductive and thus should be a subject for discussion.

Children make decisions relating to their moves, work, and living arrangements, and in this sense they demonstrate agency; however at the same time, they are vulnerable to exploitation and health hazards. Children's experiences thus challenge conventional distinctions between victimhood and agency. This study corroborates existing research but adds nuanced insights into the lives of unaccompanied migrant children. It underscores the need for comprehensive, culturally sensitive policies and interventions that address the complex realities of these children's lives, ensuring their safety, well-being, and successful integration into their new environment.

7.3 Legal and policy frameworks in the two countries

A comparatively well-developed legal and policy framework for protecting children's rights – including those of unaccompanied or foreign children – exists in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. In both countries, domestic, regional, and international laws anchor the protection of unaccompanied children. Still, the frameworks within these two countries remain inadequate to explicitly attend to the precarious situations of unaccompanied children on the move, which leads to de facto limited access to various rights, such as access to education, healthcare, and social services. Consequently, the children's vulnerability to unsafe living conditions remains pronounced.

Both South Africa and Zimbabwe have laws prohibiting child labour, but child labour still exists due to factors such as child and family poverty. As such, in Zimbabwe and South Africa, unaccompanied children are not efficiently protected from child labour and policy scoping on the matter remains limited. A case in point is that South Africa's

legislative and policy fabric lacks a provision specifying maximum working hours for children. In terms of educational rights, both Zimbabwe and South Africa recognise education as a fundamental right; attending state-funded schooling is compulsory. However, in Zimbabwe, the right to education is hampered by school fees and unaccompanied children's lack of a fixed residence. In South Africa, these children face challenges such as insufficient documentation or legal status, which limit their access to education. Lack of proper documentation is also a reason for unaccompanied children's lack of access to health services in South Africa. In Zimbabwe, these children face difficulty accessing health services due to a lack of specificity for how they should be dealt with in the health care system. Both countries provide social services, but in Zimbabwe, the implementation of these rights may not adequately cater to unaccompanied children on the move. In South Africa, access to social welfare is limited primarily to South African citizens, ultimately excluding many unaccompanied children 'on the move'.

In summary, both South Africa and Zimbabwe have legislative systems to safeguard children. However, they fall short of meeting the unique requirements and difficulties that unaccompanied children on the move face. These children are not adequately covered by Zimbabwe's policies, particularly when it comes to social protection, education, healthcare, and unsafe migration. Meanwhile, South Africa still has difficulties putting its laws for protecting children into practice and coordinating their enforcement in relation other legal frameworks. This hampers unaccompanied children's access to social services, healthcare, and education.

7.4 Education as a push and pull factor

Considering the findings from this study regarding the migration of unaccompanied Zimbabwean children to South Africa, a crucial aspect of the way forward involves addressing the educational pull factors that contribute to the migration trend of undocumented children. Even though the Zimbabwean government has made a great stride in revising the Children's Act, which now inter alia recognizes children on the move as children in need of care, the appeal of free education in South Africa has emerged as a significant draw for children seeking better opportunities away from the hardships faced in Zimbabwe. While the provision of free education is a commendable step towards fulfilling the educational rights of all children within South Africa, it inadvertently acts as a pull factor, attracting an increasing number of unaccompanied minors from neighbouring countries.

We recommend a dual approach. Firstly, it is necessary to strengthen the educational rights and opportunities for children within Zimbabwe, aiming to mitigate the push factors compelling children to leave their homes. Enhancing the quality, accessibility, and affordability of education in Zimbabwe could help to reduce the number of children seeking education abroad, thereby addressing one of the root causes of child migration. Collaborative efforts between governmental and non-governmental organisations, supported by international partnerships, are essential in strengthening Zimbabwe's education sector. Secondly, enhancing educational support should be accompanied by broader socio-economic development initiatives and targeted interventions aimed at addressing the underlying causes of migration, such as poverty, instability, and family breakdown. By addressing these root issues, interventions can prevent some children

from feeling that migrating is the only solution to their quest to achieve education, thus providing opportunities for social and economic mobilization within their own communities.

In rethinking policies and practices, the way forward needs to consider the complex interplay of factors influencing unaccompanied child migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa. By addressing both the pull factors in South Africa and the push factors in Zimbabwe, developing holistic strategies could offer a more comprehensive solution to the challenges that lead to migration among unaccompanied children.

7.5 Revisiting existing interventions

To address a discussion of how to support unaccompanied migrating children based on current observations and research, one entry point is to focus on enhancing existing support systems, improving accessibility to social protection, and optimising coordination among service providers. We propose three strategies aimed at leveraging potential opportunities for more effective support.

(1) **Establishing Community-Based Support Systems**: In many communities at the place of origin, the presence of a community health worker is a step towards addressing local health issues. Similarly, the introduction of added personnel in the form of a community social worker role could significantly benefit children living under vulnerable conditions; this person would be responsible for closely following up with children and vulnerable families, focussing on preventive measures and early intervention. Such a system would not only provide immediate support but also work towards mitigating long-term vulnerabilities.

(2) **Bridging the Gap Between Vulnerable Children and Social Protection Systems**: Despite the existence of robust laws and policies designed to protect children on the move in Zimbabwe and South Africa, there remains a distance between these children and the available social protection systems. Many of the most vulnerable children experience a fear of contacting officials, in apprehension of being reprimanded or repatriated, thus creating a barrier to accessing the help they need. An innovative solution could involve leveraging peer groups, which our study identified as a common point of contact among children on the move. By training some of the more robust children on the move to assist their peers, there could be a bridge between the children and the social protection system, which could establish increased trust, thus employing a resource that is currently underutilized.

(3) **Coordinating Stakeholder Efforts for Optimal Service Distribution**: Our research highlights the presence of numerous stakeholders offering various services for the well-being of the children. However, there could be a more efficient coordination among these entities, to avoid potential overlaps in service provision and gaps in geographical coverage. A coordinated approach could ensure that resources are distributed in a sustainable and efficient way, both geographically and in terms of service variety. One way to optimise such a coordination scheme could entail a comprehensive mapping and analysis of stakeholders' activities, followed by the development of a collaborative framework for service delivery. Collaboration of NGOs will result to optimum use of

funds and resources and may allow organisations to expand their services; this could lead to the introduction of other services that will be beneficial to children on the move.

7.6 Recommendations

This section presents and discusses recommendations and policy options preferred based on the findings of the study and informed by feedback from stakeholders during a validation workshop.

Protecting migrant children from violence and exploitation requires a comprehensive approach that addresses their vulnerabilities from their place of origin, during their transit, and at their destination. Thus, preventive actions should be bolstered across these stages, ensuring that interventions are child-friendly; in addition, representatives from within the various organizations as key resources for identifying and engaging with these children. It is crucial to disseminate clear and understandable messages about the risks and dangers of unaccompanied child migration, thus providing clear information on resources available to those who decide to migrate, as well as options for staying behind. Tailoring case management to individual circumstances, and to strengthening the ability and agency to make choices, would enhance the effectiveness of these interventions.

Along their journey, migrant children face numerous risks. Expanding the reach of easily accessible services, such as drop-in centres and places of safety, is essential for providing primary access to necessary support. A collaborative ethos must be fostered to overcome policy and programmatic fragmentation, advocating for a cohesive approach that integrates the needs of migrant children. Promoting whole-government and sectoral approaches, anchored on evidence-driven policy, can significantly improve the protection mechanisms in place for these children.

Legal assistance plays a central role in safeguarding the rights of migrant children. Service providers, including the police, must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond appropriately to the unique circumstances of each child. Practices that perpetuate stigma and discrimination must be actively shunned to ensure a protective environment for all children.

Considering the agency of each child in the Best Interest Determination (BID) process is critical. Service providers should exhibit reflexivity, challenging dominant narratives that stereotype unaccompanied children as problems, victims, or criminals. Principles of acceptance, non-judgmentalism, informed consent, and non-refoulement should underpin all actions, giving due weight to the voice of the child and acknowledging their evolving capacities.

Engaging the participation of Children on the Move in programming involves harnessing peer-to-peer networks to foster active participation, learning, and support. Addressing barriers such as language, stigma, and discrimination is crucial to encouraging service uptake.

Reunification and reintegration efforts for unaccompanied children must be individualised, considering each child’s willingness to return and their commitment to available

services. Employing the International Social Services (ISS) system and ensuring a continuum of services on a case-by-case basis are vital steps towards holistic interventions that address root causes of migration.

Strengthening laws and policies is vital for the protection of Children on the Move. Initiatives may include revitalising the 'Children on the Move' taskforce, integrating it into the child protection and welfare council, and reviewing key policy instruments to reflect the unique needs of these children. The National Case Management System should be enhanced to respond effectively to the circumstances of migrant children, and efforts should be made to facilitate their registration through legislative revisions.

Community child protection systems play a crucial role in preventing unsafe and exploitative migration. Resuscitating orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) village registers, decentralising social services, and strengthening alternative care arrangements are essential measures. Emphasising family and parent strengthening initiatives, harmonising financing for social protection, and improving access to documentation for children on the move are all critical steps towards creating a safer environment for migrant children.

7.7 Charting a strategic intervention framework – and the way forward

The following sums up the main findings of this study, with a view to underscore what an intervention framework should be anchored on, as informed by these findings. It is well understood that the framework does not advance a one-approach-fits-all for unaccompanied children on the move. It is imperative to acknowledge that these children are not a homogeneous group and thus cannot be treated as such in policy and intervention design. The diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs of these children call for a tailored approach to support and protection. Recognizing this diversity is the first step towards developing interventions that are sensitive to the specific circumstances of different groups within the population of unaccompanied children. This should also be an underlying understanding as we have identified three main groups of children impacted by migration:

a) **Urban migration:** The first group, children moving from rural to urban areas within Zimbabwe, often end up living on the streets, developing survival strategies in cities like Harare and Bulawayo.
b) **Borderland dynamics:** The second group, living in the borderlands and constantly oscillating across the Zimbabwe-South Africa border, are vulnerable but also display resilience and adaptability in informal business activities.
c) **Cross-border migration:** The third group, those undertaking the journey to South Africa, risk crossing national borders, facing hazards and uncertainties in search of better opportunities.

Within these three groups, there are several differences among and between the children. However, this report has shed light on some of the overall findings:

- *Ability to survive and adapt to the given circumstances:* Highlights the children's remarkable ability to adapt to the hardship of life, employing various strategies to cope with challenging circumstances.

- *Complexity of return:* Discusses the reluctance of children to return to Zimbabwe due to unchanged conditions, underscoring the complexity of their situations.
- *Spectrum of challenges and strategies:* Presents a range of socioeconomic challenges faced by these children, along with their diverse survival strategies.
- *Policy and intervention recommendations:* Advocates for a coherent and holistic approach in policymaking and interventions, recognising the diverse and complex needs of each child's situation.

Grounded in the Global Programme Framework on Children on the Move's six key policy areas, outlined by UNICEF in 2017, this report emphasises the rights of children, particularly in the contexts of migration and displacement. The six policy areas are: 1) safeguarding child refugees and migrants from exploitation and abuse; 2) ending child detention; 3) maintaining family unity and legal status; 4) ensuring continued education and access to services; 5) addressing the root causes of migration; and 6) combating xenophobia and discrimination. The recommendations in this chapter align with these policy areas by advocating for comprehensive safety nets, legal assistance, simplified documentation processes, uninterrupted access to essential services, socioeconomic support to address root causes, and inclusive policies to combat discrimination, reflecting a holistic and rights-based approach to addressing the challenges faced by children on the move. To discuss the way forward for a coordinated approach among stakeholders, we summarise the findings of the study and the discussion with stakeholders according to the six key policy areas of the Global Programme Framework on Children on the Move concerning migration and displacement:

1. **Protection of child refugees and migrants: This involves safeguarding unaccompanied children from exploitation and violence.**

This policy focuses on safeguarding children from exploitation and abuse, both during their journey and upon reaching their destination. During the journey, the report points to the need to ensure safe travel routes for children, minimising the risks associated with migration. It also involves facilitating border controls with a priority on the safety and well-being of young travellers, to protect them from potential dangers and exploitation. Upon arrival at the destination, the policy includes measures to proactively identify children who are at risk of engaging in illegal activities such as drug trafficking, sex work, or theft, and those vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour. It also emphasises significantly improving working conditions for employed children, ensuring these conditions are fair and safe, and do not hinder their development or education. Additionally, the policy prioritises guaranteeing the availability of safe housing options, providing children with secure and stable living environments. Overall, this policy aims to create a comprehensive safety net for children at every stage of their journey, addressing the unique challenges they face and offering them the protection and support they need to thrive.

2. **Ending child detention: This policy advocates for the cessation of detaining children who seek refugee status or are migrating.**

While the initial discussion in this study does not directly address child detention, the overarching goal of improving the welfare of migrant children inherently supports

efforts to find alternatives to detention, which is a violation of children's rights. By advocating for part-time work opportunities and integrating unaccompanied minors into society, the recommendations indirectly contribute to ending practices that may isolate or detain child migrants in unfavourable conditions.

3. **Family unity and legal status: Keeping families together is emphasised as the optimal way to protect children, along with providing them with legal status.**

The findings in this report emphasise the critical need to protect children who cannot remain with their families, highlighting the vital role of international protection and tailored care arrangements. It advocates for legal and practical measures to ensure the well-being and integration of these vulnerable children, recognising the importance of both family unity and individual support for those unable to be with their families.

4. **Education and access to services: Ensuring that all refugee and migrant children continue their education and have access to health and other quality services.**

Education emerges as a significant pull factor, as discussed above, with the free schooling in South Africa drawing many children across the border. Enhancing access to education and health services for children in Zimbabwe directly responds to this policy ask. The report suggests the development and strengthening of programmes that not only facilitate access to education but also address the broader needs for health and social services among children who are challenged in their place of origin. Additionally, the policy should also include a discussion on the impact of this approach on children who are undocumented yet still entitled to protection.

5. **Addressing root causes: This involves pressing for action on the underlying causes of large-scale movements of refugees and migrants.**

The socioeconomic and familial challenges driving children to migrate are at the core of the discussion in this report. The advocacy for interventions that go beyond immediate needs to address root causes such as poverty, educational access, and family support systems reflects the UNICEF policy to address the underlying causes of migration. This comprehensive approach aims at creating conditions that reduce the necessity for children to leave their homes in search of better opportunities. Thus, to prevent children from leaving, efforts should focus on fighting poverty, enhancing opportunities for children from broken families, and ensuring all children have access to education. Additionally, given the severe challenges at their place of origin, a comprehensive discussion is necessary regarding the potential consequences for a child's well-being should they return there.

6. **Combating xenophobia and discrimination: Promoting measures to fight xenophobia, discrimination, and marginalisation in transit and destination countries and areas.**

The empirical data and recommendations highlight the complex dynamics migrant children navigate, including facing vulnerabilities and seeking opportunities for a better life. By emphasising the need for interventions sensitive to the real-life experiences of migrant children and advocating for their rights and well-being, the recommendations indirectly support efforts to combat xenophobia and discrimination. Promoting

understanding, acceptance, and integration of migrant children can contribute to reducing stigma and ensuring their protection and development.

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Appendix 1 Approvals

Appendix 1a: Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Zimbabwe

Official communications
Should not be addressed to individuals

Telephone: Harare 790871-6

ZIMBABWE

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE
Kaguvi Building
Cnr 4th Street/Central Avenue
P.O. Box CY 7707
Causeway
Zimbabwe

14 February 2023

Clara Haruzivishe PHD
Associate Professor, Unit of Nursing
Departments of Primary Health Care Services/
Health Proffesions Education
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
University of Zimbabwe

RE: STUDY ON CHILDREN ON THE MOVE IN ZIMBABWE: UNICEF ZIMBABWE LRFP ZIM-2022-9177252

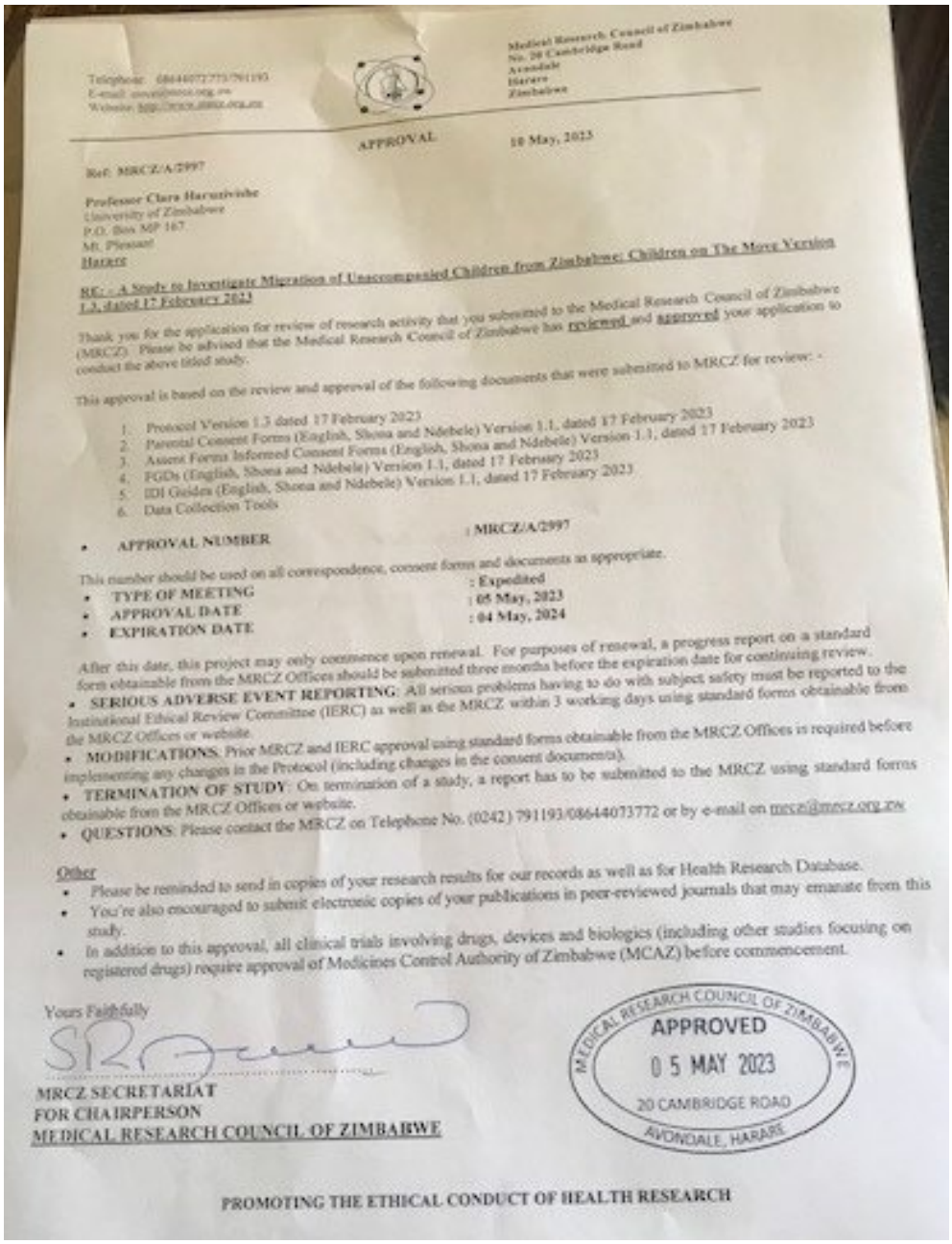
The Ministry acknowledges receipt of your correspondence dated 10 January 2023 seeking approval to conduct a study on Children on the Move.

Following the discussions and deliberations made at length concerning the research on children on the move in Zimbabwe ,the Ministry is pleased to let you know that the research has been approved. May all ethical considerations and Social Work principles raised in discussions be adhered to throughout the course of the research. May you also be advised of the need to share the findings of the research before publishing.

Please be so advised.

S. Masanga
Secretary
Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

Appendix 1b: Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe



Telephone: 08644072773/791193
E-mail: mrcz@mrcz.org.zw
Website: http://www.mrcz.org.zw

Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe
No. 20 Cambridge Road
Avondale
Harare
Zimbabwe

APPROVAL

10 May, 2023

Ref: MRCZ/A/2997

Professor Clara Haruzivishe
University of Zimbabwe
P.O. Box MP 167
Mt. Pleasant
Harare

RE: - A Study to Investigate Migration of Unaccompanied Children from Zimbabwe: Children on The Move Version 1.3, dated 17 February 2023

Thank you for the application for review of research activity that you submitted to the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe (MRCZ). Please be advised that the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe has reviewed and approved your application to conduct the above titled study.

This approval is based on the review and approval of the following documents that were submitted to MRCZ for review: -

1. Protocol Version 1.3 dated 17 February 2023
2. Parental Consent Forms (English, Shona and Ndebele) Version 1.1, dated 17 February 2023
3. Assent Forms Informed Consent Forms (English, Shona and Ndebele) Version 1.1, dated 17 February 2023
4. FGDs (English, Shona and Ndebele) Version 1.1, dated 17 February 2023
5. IDI Guides (English, Shona and Ndebele) Version 1.1, dated 17 February 2023
6. Data Collection Tools

- **APPROVAL NUMBER** : **MRCZ/A/2997**

This number should be used on all correspondence, consent forms and documents as appropriate.

- **TYPE OF MEETING** : **Expedited**
- **APPROVAL DATE** : **05 May, 2023**
- **EXPIRATION DATE** : **04 May, 2024**

After this date, this project may only commence upon renewal. For purposes of renewal, a progress report on a standard form obtainable from the MRCZ Offices should be submitted three months before the expiration date for continuing review.

- **SERIOUS ADVERSE EVENT REPORTING**: All serious problems having to do with subject safety must be reported to the Institutional Ethical Review Committee (IERC) as well as the MRCZ within 3 working days using standard forms obtainable from the MRCZ Offices or website.
- **MODIFICATIONS**: Prior MRCZ and IERC approval using standard forms obtainable from the MRCZ Offices is required before implementing any changes in the Protocol (including changes in the consent documents).
- **TERMINATION OF STUDY**: On termination of a study, a report has to be submitted to the MRCZ using standard forms obtainable from the MRCZ Offices or website.
- **QUESTIONS**: Please contact the MRCZ on Telephone No. (0242) 791193/08644073772 or by e-mail on mrcz@mrcz.org.zw

Other

- Please be reminded to send in copies of your research results for our records as well as for Health Research Database.
- You're also encouraged to submit electronic copies of your publications in peer-reviewed journals that may emanate from this study.
- In addition to this approval, all clinical trials involving drugs, devices and biologics (including other studies focusing on registered drugs) require approval of Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe (MCAZ) before commencement.

Yours Faithfully

MRCZ SECRETARIAT
FOR CHAIRPERSON
MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF ZIMBABWE

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF ZIMBABWE
APPROVED
05 MAY 2023
20 CAMBRIDGE ROAD
AVONDALE, HARARE

PROMOTING THE ETHICAL CONDUCT OF HEALTH RESEARCH

Appendix 1c: Research Council of Zimbabwe

G.P.& S. 42614/V.

Research Act, Section 26A.

FORM RA3

№ 04827

RESEARCH ACT, 1986
RESEARCH COUNCIL OF ZIMBABWE
CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

Name: PROF. CLARA HARUZIVISHE

Nationality: ZIMBABWEAN Passport No.: EN366898

Institution of Affiliation in Zimbabwe: UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE
630 CHURCHILL AVENUE, MT PLEASANT
HARARE

Residential Address in Zimbabwe: 25 FAIRWAY, MT PLEASANT
HARARE

The bearer has been registered to conduct research in the field of
NURSING SCIENCE
in terms of section 26A of the Research Act, 1986.

Expiry date: 5 MAY 2024

Signature of Bearer

Issuing Officer
Research Council of Zimbabwe

Date: 05 MAY 2023

RESEARCH COUNCIL OF ZIMBABWE
CABINET OFFICE
TECHNICAL OFFICE
P.O. BOX CY 294
CAUSEWAY, HARARE

This receipt is not valid unless it is stamped

LE: STUDY ON CHILDREN ON THE MOVE IN ZIMBABWE: MRCZ/A/2997

Appendix 1d: University of KwaZulu Natal

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

13 March 2023

Prof Clara Haruzivishe (T20230002)
Christiane Marianne Horwood (630002)
Anne Hatløy (T20230001)
University of Zimbabwe

Dear Researchers,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005203/2023
Project title: A study to investigate migration of unaccompanied children from Zimbabwe: Children on the move. Non-Degree

Approval Notification – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

This letter serves to notify you that your response received on 13 January 2023 to our letter of 16 February 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid for one year until 13 March 2024
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours faithfully

.....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587
Website: http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix 1e: SIKT Norway Data Protection Impact Assessment

Our ref.: 138271

Adviser: ALLN

Date: 02.05.2023

Version: 1

Data Protection Impact Assessment

Project title: Children on the move in Zimbabwe

Data controller: FAFO Institutt for arbeidsliv- og velferdsforskning AS

Project leader: Anne Hatløy

Project number: 138271

The full DPIA can be required on request to the author of this report.

Appendix 2: Interview guides, assent, and consent forms

Appendix 2a: Interview guide in-depth interviews all children

TITLE: A study to investigate migration of unaccompanied children from Zimbabwe: Children on the move

In-depth interview – all children

Who to interview: In-depth interview will be undertaken with all unaccompanied minor children who are migrating internally (within Zimbabwe) or migrating externally (across borders). Informed consent must be obtained prior to any in-depth interviews. Consent may be: 1) minor child consents for themself; 2) consent is obtained from a responsible adult/parental substitute/caregiver; and 3) minor child give assent for the study.

Instructions to facilitators

- Always use two audio-recorders.
- Before you start the interview speak into the recorder and provide the following information:
    - Date
    - IDI number
    - Interviewer's name.

N.B.: Paper and pen will be provided to children to draw if they want to better express themselves.

Questions

1. Can you tell us a bit about yourself?
    Probe: What are the things you like/enjoy doing?
    Probe: Age, country/place of origin.
2. Tell us about your family and family life.
    Probe: Are you still in contact with family members?
3. What are the things that made you decide to move to South Africa/Botswana? What were the main reasons?
    Probe: Who helped you make the decision?
    Probe: what was the most difficult part about leaving?
4. Please can you describe your journey from the time you left home to where you are now? Can you tell me about some of the things that happened when you were going to South Africa/Botswana?

Probe: Who helped you with moving?

Probe: How did you get into South Africa?

Probe: How was it like when you first arrived?

5. Please describe for me your living situation now.

   Probe: Can you tell me about what happens in your life on a daily basis? Do you go to school? Who helps you on a daily basis? (family/friends/NGOs)

   Probe: Where are you living? Do you live with other people or alone? How do you go about finding a place to sleep?

   Probe: What things do you worry about during the night? And if it's raining, where do you find shelter or sleep?

   Probe: What do you do to make money?

   Probe: How do you go about finding food on a daily basis? Are there organisations available to help with getting food?

6. Can you tell me about the people who helped you along the way?

   Probe: What type of help is available for people in similar situation as you? (i.e. people or organisations)

   Probe: What type of help have you personally used and why?

   Probe: What help is available if you get sick or injured? How would you access this help?

7. What are the most difficult things about your living situation?
8. What are your goals and aspirations for the future?

   Probe: Would you go back home? Why?

For children who have migrated back to Zimbabwe: Why did you move back to Zimbabwe? What made you come back?

Appendix 2b: Interview guides focus group discussions

TITLE: A study to investigate migration of unaccompanied children from Zimbabwe: Children on the move

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION OR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW – DAY IN MY LIFE – DRAWING ACTIVITY

Who to interview: This **focus group discussion** will be undertaken with unaccompanied minor children between the ages of 12-14 years. This interview guide can also be used for individual in-depth interviews.

Informed consent must be obtained prior to any participation. Consent may be: 1) minor child consents for themself; 2) consent is obtained from a responsible adult/parental substitute/caregiver and minor child gives assent for the study.

Instructions to facilitators

- Always use two audio-recorders.
- Before you start the focus group discussion speak into the recorder and provide the following information:
    - Date
    - IDI number
    - Interviewer's name
    - Number of participants in the room.

Material:

- Flip chart paper (or A4 paper)
- Markers
- Press stick
- Sticky notes (different colours)

Exercise:

Step 1:

Draw two pictures that you would like to share with the group that show something about how you spend your days. Choose something that is important to you that is happening now and perhaps something that you hope will be important in the future. Be prepared to talk about the pictures you have drawn.

Give participants 10-15 minutes to complete the task.

Step 2:

Each participant presents their chart to the group (5-10 minutes). Other participants are then invited to comment and discuss the pictures.

Questions that can be used to encourage the group discussion as points arise from different participants drawings. These questions should be posed to the whole group.

If this activity is being used for an in-depth interview the child should be asked to describe the drawing and these questions can be addressed to the participant.

1. Why did you choose to draw this picture?
   Probe: What in this picture makes you feel happy?
   Probe: what in this picture makes you feel sad?
   Probe: Who are the people in this picture and why did you include them?
2. What are the things that you do for fun?
   Probe: what are some of the things that you do that make you happy?
3. While in this country, are you able to go to school?
   Probe: How do you feel about that?
4. How do you cope when bad things happen in your life? Who helps you deal when bad things happen?
   Probe: Do you have a person you can talk when things happen in your life?
5. What are some of the activities that you do to get money?
6. How do you go about finding food on a daily basis?
   Probe: Are there organisations that help you with getting food?
7. If you were to get injured or sick, how would you go about getting help?
   Probe: would you go to the clinic or hospital?
8. What are you hoping to achieve in the future?
   Probe: What do you think may help your dreams come true?
9. If given a chance, would you go back home? Why?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION OR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW – MY MIGRATION JOURNEY – OLDER CHILDREN

Who to interview: Focus group discussions will be undertaken with unaccompanied minor children between the ages of 15-17 years who are migrating internally (within Zimbabwe) or migrating externally (across borders). This interview guide can also be used for individual in-depth interviews.

Informed consent must be obtained prior to any in-depth interviews. Consent may be: 1) minor child consents for themself; 2) consent is obtained from a responsible adult/parental substitute/caregiver and minor child give assent for the study.

Instructions to facilitators

- Always use two audio-recorders.
- Before you start the focus group discussion, speak into the recorder and provide the following information:
    - Date
    - FGD number
    - Interviewer's name
    - Number of participants in the room.

My migration journey exercise

Material:

- Flip chart paper
- Permanent markers
- Press stick

The exercise:

Preamble – Who has been in a taxi or bus? Does it go straight to one place or does it stop along the way? Our lives are like a taxi/bus ride; we start in one place and stop along the way.

On the piece of paper in front of you, please draw a map of your journey of moving from where you started (home) to get where you are now (streets). Show me the different modes of transportation you took, the places you stayed in, and the people you met along the way.

Give 15-20 minutes for everyone to do the exercise.

Presentation:

Each person will stand up and present their work to the group (5-10 minutes for each person). Other participants are then invited to comment and discuss the pictures.

Questions that can be used to encourage the group discussion as points arise from different participants drawings. These questions should be posed to the whole group.

1. What caused you to move away from home?
   Probes: What did your family say about your decision to leave? What role did your family play in the decision? How did you choose the country to go to?
2. How did you go about leaving your country and crossing over to another country?
   Probes: Who did you come with? Did anyone go ahead of you? What was the journey to the new country like? What mode of transport did you use to travel to another country? How did you pay for transport? What were the challenges you experienced while traveling?
3. When you were crossing over to the other country, did you have to fill in any papers or permits?
4. When you arrived in this country, how did you go about finding a place to stay?
   Probes: Who was most helpful in getting you settled?
5. How do you think your family is doing after you moved to another country?
6. How do you think coming to South Africa has changed you?
7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living away from home?
   Probe: What have been your biggest challenges? What have been your greatest sources of joy?
8. What are you hoping to accomplish in the future?
9. If given a chance, would you go back home? Why?

Appendix 2c Interview guide parents

TITLE: A study to investigate migration of unaccompanied children from Zimbabwe: Children on the move

In-depth interview – Parents of returning migrant children

Who to interview: Interview parents of returning migrant children after informed consent.

Instructions to facilitators

- Always use two audio-recorders.
- Before you start the interview, speak into the recorder and provide the following information:
    - Date
    - IDI number
    - Interviewer's name.

Questions

1. Please tell me briefly about (name) your son/daughter?

2. Can you tell me what motivated (name) to leave home and move to another country?
   – What was family's living situation before (name) migrated to another country?
   – How was the decision made to move to another country?
   – Who was involved in the decision for (name) to move to another country?
   – Did you assist (name) to move? If yes, what were your inputs in moving of (name)?
   – What other forms of help did you get to move (name)?

3. Migration can be hard for both you and your child. Can you describe some of your experiences of being away from your child?
   – What has been your biggest challenges about your child being away from you?
   – How did you and your child cope when you were away from each other?
   – How was the communication with (name) when he/she was away?
   – What kind of support did you give (name) when he was away?
   – How did (name) support himself/herself why away from home?
   – How did (name) support the family while away from home?

4. Now that you child is back home, can you please tell me why he/she came back?
   – How long did (name) stay in the other country?
   – What challenges did (name) encounter in the other country?

5. Can you please describe your experiences of having your child back home?
   - How long has (name) been back home?
   - What is (name) doing now that he/she is back home?
   - How has the return of (name) affected you and your family life?
   - Has your child changed in any way as a result of being away? If yes, how has he/she changed?

6. Please tell me what you think or feel about moving children to other countries?
   - What are the advantages and disadvantages of child migration?

7. If someone you knew had children who were planning to migrate, what advice would you give them?

Appendix 2d Consent and assents forms

For this study several assent and consent form were developed:

- Minor child consent form for in-depth interviews
- Minor child consent form for focus group discussions
- Child assent form for in-depth interviews
- Child assent forms for focus group discussions
- Parent consent form for in-depth interviews
- Responsible adult consent forms for in-depth interview

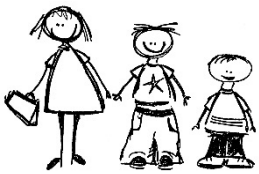
All different consent assents forms are accessible from this web-page: www.fafo.no

An example of one consent form is give here:

Minor child consent in-depth interviews

MINOR CHILD CONSENT – this consent should be completed for a child between 12 and 17 years who is not accompanied by and responsible adult/parental substitute/care-giver. The minor child is able to consent on their own.

Study Title: Children on the Move in Zimbabwe.



Greeting: Good day.

My name is ..... from ..... (name). I am here on behalf of a group of researchers who are Anne Hatloy from Fafo in Norway, Clara Haruzivishe from the University of Zimbabwe and Christiane Horwood from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. I would like to talk to you today about research that we are doing with children aged 12-17 years who are moving in and around Zimbabwe and also crossing the Zimbabwean borders to get to another country without their parents. The study is being paid for by UNICEF (United Nations Children Fund) in Zimbabwe.

Before I tell you about the study I want to explain about this form. This form is called a consent or permission form. The purpose of this permission form is to give you all the information you need to know to decide whether you wish to be part of the study or not. It is your decision if you want to take part in the study (it is voluntary). You are free to stop participating at any time. This includes refusing straight away, or at any stage

during the interview if you no longer want to take part. If you decide not to take part in the research, nothing bad will happen to you. You may ask any questions about the reasons why we are doing the research, what happens if you take part, if there are any risks (possible bad things that could happen because of the research/study) and benefits (good things that can happen as part of the research/study), your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research/study or this form that is not clear. When we have answered all your questions, you can then decide if you want to take part in the study or not. This process is called 'informed consent'. This process is to make sure you only agree to participate in the study after you have all the information you need to decide to take part or not. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You will be given a copy of this form.

Now I am going to tell you about the research. The reason we are doing this research is to find out new things about what is happening when children leave home by themselves in Zimbabwe. We want to understand the ways children move from place to place in Zimbabwe and also how children move around when they cross the borders into neighboring countries and back into Zimbabwe. We are doing this research to understand what makes children want to move, how this happens and the problems or challenges children face. We are doing this research so that we can develop guidelines for organisations and people working to help children and protect the rights of all children that are moving around, both inside and outside of Zimbabwe.

We are planning to do interviews with about 25 children who have moved around in Zimbabwe (Harare and Bulawayo) and 25 children from Zimbabwe who have crossed borders to South Africa (Messina and Pretoria) or back to Zimbabwe (Beitbridge and Plumbtree). The interviews will last between 30-45 minutes each. Some children may also be asked to take part in a group discussion. **For now, we are inviting you to take part in a discussion on your own with me.**

You will not have to pay anything to take part in the study and **you will not be paid to take part** in the study. However, you will be given a small (stipend) to the value of R100 to cover the time that you have spent with us during the interview.

There are no risks to you if you take part in the study but some of the questions we ask may make you feel uncomfortable or sad. If there are questions that make you feel uncomfortable or sad, you may tell to me that you don't want to answer the question and we will move onto the next question. If you become very sad or feel you need any help please let me know so that I can arrange for you to get help to deal with your any problem you have. We will not do this unless you request it or unless you agree to do this.

If you agree to take part in the study, we will ask you to give us a "made-up" name and throughout the interview, this will be the only name that will be used in all our study papers and documents so that we can prevent anyone knowing who you are. This is called being anonymous. We will also be asking if we can record the interview on a special recorder. The recorder will only have the "made-up" name on it. Everything you tell us using your real name will remain confidential, that means it will only be known by the two of us. If there is anything that needs to be told to any other person, I will only do that with your permission.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by a number of committees including the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC/00005203/2023).

Do you have any questions you would like to ask me about the study and your participating in it?

If you have any further problems or concerns/questions about how we are undertaking the study you may contact the researcher Dr Christiane Horwood on the South African number 031 2604630 or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT (Edit as required)

If you wish to participate in this study, please tick that you are agreeing to the following and sign below.

	Yes	No
I have been informed about the study called: Children on the Move in Zimbabwe	😊	☹
I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.	😊	☹
I have been **given an opportunity to ask questions** about the study and they have been answered properly.	😊	☹
I understand that my participation in this study is **voluntary,** and that I may withdraw at any time without any negative consequence.	😊	☹
I have **received the telephone number of a person** to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this study.	😊	☹
I understand that this **consent form will not be linked** to my responses, and that my answers will **remain confidential**.	😊	☹
I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.	😊	☹

If you wish to participate in this study, you should sign below.

I UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE AGREED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Participant's name and signature

…… ……

Date (*dd/mm/yyyy*) Name (Print)

3rd party (compulsory if participant illiterate)

Witness Name _____

Signature.....*Date*.....

STUDY STAFF

…… ……

Date (*dd/mm/yyyy*) Name (Print)

CONSENT TO AUDIO-RECORD IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

I also consent to have the in-depth interviews audio-recorded so that data can be accurately captured. I understand that my real name will be not be captured on the audio-recording and that only my made-up name will appear on the audio-recording and any other research documents. Additionally, I understand that the digital audio-recordings will be stored in a password protected computer for a period of five years after the study is completed. Only the researchers will have access to these recordings.

I UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE AGREED TO THE AUDIO-RECORDING IN THIS STUDY.

Participant's name and signature

…… ……

Date (*dd/mm/yyyy*) Name (Print)

Signature _____

3rd party (compulsory if participant illiterate)

Witness Name _____

Signature……Date……

STUDY STAFF

…… ……

Date (*dd/mm/yyyy*) Name (Print)

……
Signature

Appendix 3 Stakeholder mapping

Number of services offered to children on the move in different location

	Region/ Province	District	Organisation name	Linkages to care	Psychological support	Food	Education	Social workers	Healthcare	Financial support	Accommodation	Drop in centre	Mental health sevices	Support for permits	Bathroom	Legal services
Zimbabwe	Manica-land	Buhera	Save the Children Zimbabwe, Simukai, Child Protection Society	1	1	2	1	1		1	1	1			1	
		Chimanimani	Child Protection Society	1		1										
		Mutasa	Child Protection Society	1		1										
		Chipinge	Min of Public Service, Labour and Soc welfare, Plan International, World Vision, Child Protection Society	3	3	1	2	2	1	1				1		
	Mashona-land	Harare	Save the Children, Terre de Hommes - Italy, CESVI, Child Protection Society	3	2	3	2	2	2	2		1	1		1	
		Central	Child Protection Society	3		3										
		East	Child Protection Society	3		3										
		West	Child Protection Society	3		3										
	Masvingo	Chirdezi	Plan International, Social Protection Society	2		1										
		Chivi	Social Protection Society	1		1										
		Mwenezi	World Vision	1	1		1		1							
	Midlands	Kwekwe	Social Protection Society	2		2										
		Zvishavane	Social Protection Society	2		2										
	Matabele-land	Beitbridge	Save the Children, Terre de Hommes - Italy, Child Protection Society	1	1	3		2	2	1						
		Binga	Child Protection Society	1		1										
		Bulawayo	CESVI House of smiles, Scripture Union, Child Protection Society	3	2	3	2	3	2	1		2	2		2	
		Bulilima	Save the Children, Child Protection Society	1		2		1		1						
		Mangwe	Save the Children, Child Protection Society	1		2				1						
		Plumtree	World Vision, Child Protection Society, Child Protection Society	2	2	2	1	1	1							
		Tsholotsho	Plan International	1												
South Africa	Gauteng	Johannesburg	JO'berg Child welfare, Kids Haven, Lalela Project Trust, Lawyers for Human Rights	2	1	3	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
		Pretoria	Lawyers for Human Rights, Nosa Early Learning Orphans and Vulnerable Childrens Center	2	1	1	1	1	1			1		2		1
	Limpopo	Collins Chabane	Future Families	1		1					1					
		Ka-Mhinga	Save the Children	1	1		1									
		Musina	The Red Cross, Save the Children, Catholic Womans Shelter, Christians Womens Ministry, Future Families, Lawyers for Human Rights, Lutheran Community Outreach Foundation	5	5	5	6	5	4	4	3	1	4	4	2	1
		Polokwane	Limpopo National Department of Social Development, Boledi Drop in Center, Hope of Faith Drop-in Centre	1	2	2	2	2	1		1	2				
		Vhembe	Save the Children, Future Families	5	5	2	2	3			2		1	1		
		Waterberg	Save the Children	1	1		1									
	Western Cape	Agulhas Plain	Save the Children	1	1		1									

Overview of activities by organisation and geographic location

Zimbabwe	Region	Geo Area	Linkages to care	Food	Psychological support	Education	Social workers	Healthcare	Financial support	Accommodation/hostel	Drop in centre	Mental health sevices	Support for permits	Bathroom/washing	Legal services
CESVI	Mashonaland	Harare	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
CESVI House of smiles	Matabeleland	Bulawayo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Child Protection Society	Mashonaland	Harare; Central: Mt Darwin, Rushinga, Shamva; *East* : Chikomba, Marondera, Uzumba Muramba Pfungwe; *West* : Makonde, Sanyati, Zvimba	✓	✓											
	Manicaland	Buhera, Chimanimani, Chipinge, Mutasa	✓	✓	✓	✓									
	Masvingo	Chiredzi, Chivi	✓	✓											
	Matabeland	Fort Street, Tredgold, Binga, Beitbridge, Bulilima, Mangwe, Plumtree	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
	Midlands	Kwekwe, Zvishavane	✓	✓											
Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social welfare	Manicaland	Chipinga	✓		✓		✓		✓				✓		
Plan International	Manicaland	Chipinge	✓		✓	✓									
	Masvingo	Chiredzi	✓												
	Matabeleland	Tsholotsho districts	✓												
Save the Children Zimbabwe	Manicaland	Chapinga		✓				✓	✓						
	Matabeleland	Beitbridge, Bulilima, Mangwe		✓				✓	✓						
Scripture Union	Matabeleland	Bulawayo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Simukai Child Protection Prog	Manicaland	Chapinga	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	
Terre de Hommes - Italy	Mashonaland	Harare	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
	Matabeleland	Beitbridge	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓							
World Vision	Manicaland	Chipinga	✓		✓	✓		✓							
	Masvingo	Matibe	✓		✓	✓		✓							
	Matabeleland	Plumtree	✓		✓	✓		✓							
South Africa															
Boledi Drop in Center	Limpopo	Polokwane		✓		✓									
Catholic Womans Shelter	Limpopo	Nancefield Musina	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Christians Womens Ministry	Limpopo	Musina	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Future Families	Limpopo	Collins Chabane, Makhado, Musina, Thulamela, Vhembe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Hope of Faith Drop-in	Limpopo	Seshego Zone 5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				
JO'berg Child welfare	Gauteng	New Dornfontein	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				
Kids Haven	Gauteng	East Rand	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lalela Project Trust	Gauteng	New Dornfontein		✓		✓			✓						
Lawyers for Human Rights	Gauteng	Johannesburg, Pretoria	✓										✓		✓
Limpopo National Department of Social	Limpopo	Polokwane			✓		✓			✓	✓				
Lutheran Community Outreach Foundation	Limpopo	Musina	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Nosa Early Learning Orphans and Vulnerable Childrens Center	Gauteng	Region 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		
Save the Children SA	Limpopo	Makhado, Malamulele, Mhinga, Musina, Waterberg	✓		✓	✓									
	Western Cape	Elim	✓		✓	✓									
The Red Cross	Limpopo	Musina		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		

Fafo
Institute for Labour and Social Research

Borggata 2B, Oslo
P.O. Box 2947 Tøyen, NO-0608 Oslo
Telephone: +47 22 08 86 00
E-mail: fafo@fafo.no

fafo.no