

**ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY COMMUNITY CHILDCARE WORKERS  
IN CHILD PROTECTION IN BINDURA URBAN.**

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**: 14 JUNE 2024**

## APPROVAL FORM

I certify that I supervised B1852423 in carrying out this research titled: **Child Protection: Issues and Challenges in Bindura Urban** in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science , Honours Degree in Social Work and recommend that it proceeds for examination.

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### *Chairperson of the Department of Board of Examiners*

The departmental board of examiners is satisfied that this dissertation report meets the examination requirements and therefore I recommend to the Bindura University of Science Education to accept this research project by Kudzai Wayne Muringweni titled: **Child Protection: Issues and Challenges in Bindura Urban** in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science, Honours Degree in Social Work.

### *Chairperson*

Name.....Signature.....Date.....

# **DECLARATION FORM**

I, MURINGWENI KUDZAI WAYNE, studying for the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work, cognizant of the facts that plagiarism is a serious offence and that falsifying information is a breach of ethics of Social Work research, truthfully declare that:

This dissertation report titled: Child Protection: Issues and Challenges in Bindura Urban is a result of my own work and has not been plagiarized, I have followed research ethics required in pursuit of Social Work research and I grant permission to the University to use this report for educational purposes.

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## **Abstract**

*The Child Protection: Issues and challenges in Bindura Urban study was precipitated by the fact that ideally Community Childcare Workers are supposed to provide child protection services to children but face a number of challenges in doing so. The study had the following objectives: to explore child protection issues handled by CCWs, to examine the challenges faced by CCWs in child protection and to ascertain strategies that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by CCWs. The study made use of a qualitative research design making use of focus group discussions and key informants interviews as data collection methods. The study found out that child abuse in the form of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, was a major theme of child protection issues handled by community childcare workers (CCWs) in Bindura. The research noted that CCWs in child protection face monetary challenges in the form of funds for child protection projects. They also lack well-trained child protection officers. The research also reported that there is need for programming rights-based approaches to strengthen the work done by CCWs in child protection. The study then concluded that CCWs handle different child protection issues however, they face challenges in carrying out their work hence the need to explore strategies that can be incorporated to strengthen the work they do. The study recommends that there is need for provision of legal protection for example ensuring that children's rights are protected. There is also need for child welfare services to the vulnerable children. There is also need for well-trained protection officers to avoid brain drain.*

## **Dedication**

Dedicated this study to my beloved ones, my daughter and my parents. This is a bar which my daughter will surpass in her generation.

## **Acknowledgements**

To my family, friends and colleagues, I know that you are proud of this achievement because no matter how difficult it was, you did not stop believing in me. You consistently cheered me on and provided the encouragement and tenacity of hope when I felt like throwing in the towel. I just want to say thank you to all the participants who took part in this study. Without you, this study would not have been possible. I specifically want to acknowledge my parents who have been the support system throughout the whole journey. I also appreciate them for the financial support through the payment of tuition fees since the beginning of the journey at Bindura University of Science Education. Special acknowledgement goes to all my lecturers at Bindura University of Science Education as well as my research supervisor Dr L. Zinyemba for the patience, guidance and knowledge throughout the research journey.

## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

<b>ACRWC</b>	: African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
<b>CCW</b>	: Community Childcare Workers
<b>CHI</b>	: Child Helpline International
<b>COVID-19</b>	: Coronavirus Disease (SARS-CoV-2 virus)
<b>GBV</b>	: Gender Based Violence
<b>MWA</b>	: Ministry of Women Affairs
<b>UNICEF</b>	: United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
<b>UNCRC</b>	: United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child
<b>UNPFA</b>	: United Nations Population Fund Agency
<b>UN</b>	: United Nations
<b>VFU</b>	: Victim Friendly Unit
<b>WHO</b>	: World Health Organisation
<b>ZYC</b>	: Zimbabwe Youth Council
<b>ZRP</b>	: Zimbabwe Republic Police

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This part provides as an introduction to the study's investigation of the issues and challenges of child protection in Bindura Urban. The study's basis is to be highlighted in his chapter, which is the introduction. The problem statement, research objectives, and research questions will also be highlighted. This chapter will also explore limitations and delimitations to the study. The project outline, which was divided into chapters was also highlighted in this chapter.

### **1.2 Background of the Study**

Child protection is a global problem, and child welfare oversight is now more widely acknowledged as a crucial administrative component in employee retention (Landsman & D' Aunno, 2019). The government of many nations throughout the world is very concerned about the issue of child abuse because they believe it has a negative impact on society. Child protection is also referred to as the prevention and reaction to abuse, assault, or exploitation of children (UNICEF, 2021). Between 0.5 and 1.5 billion children and teenagers worldwide endure physical abuse each year, while 150 million girls and 73 million boys are thought to have had unwanted sexual contact (Save the Children 2020). Ages 15 to 19 teenage girls have experienced sexual assaults on an additional 15 million occasions (UNICEF, 2019). In South Asia (9.7 million females), Africa (42%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (29%), 48% of young women aged 15 to 24 were married before turning 18 (UNICEF, 2019). In order to safeguard the young girls from concerns that impact or affect the girls, such as being forced into marriage at a young age and other hurtful practices, dropping outs, child protection must go above and beyond. Since failing to safeguard children has negative impacts that last into adulthood and also impedes a nation's progress, protecting children offers an early corrective.

Zimbabwe has ratified many international and regional agreements that support children's rights generally and the right to protection specifically. These include, among others, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), which are part of the larger Human Rights Framework. In Zimbabwe, the Children's Protection Adoption Act, the Guardianship of Minors Act, the Maintenance Act, the Education Act, the Tertiary Instrument 72 of 1997, Labour Relations,

Employment of Children, and the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act all place a strong emphasis on protecting children. Despite the presence of these frameworks, it is clear from the fact that children's rights are consistently violated. It is known that people in the family, school, community, and society at large are responsible for the abuse, neglect, and other social problems that affect children. It would seem that the possibility of abuse against children increases as their level of vulnerability increases.

The most vulnerable demographics include young girls, those who work or live on the streets, those who are mobile, and those who have special needs. To safeguard such youngsters, special steps could be required. One of the African countries dealing with the issue of child abuse is Zimbabwe. An examination of the ZRP VFU report from 2019 shows that 2300 incidences of child abuse were reported (MWAFGCD, 2019). A farming and mining town, Bindura has a high rate of early child marriages and child maltreatment, according to the Ministry of Women Affairs, (2019). Unreported incidents of child abuse, including sexual, physical, psychological neglect, and emotional abuse, have increased. When they should be in school, youngsters in Bindura are engaged in prostitution, street peddling, and gold panning. The mining and farming village of Bindura serves as a haven for child molestation. In Bindura urban, it has also been reported that the number of kids who are not in school and living on the streets is rising. As a result, child protection is hindered by factors such as inflation, corruption, and natural catastrophes, among others. This led the researcher to look into the challenges of child protection issues in Bindura. The aim of the research was to ascertain the challenges of child protection issues in Bindura.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Ideally Community Childcare Workers are supposed to provide child protection services to children. These services are provided through the following roles; provision of resources, counselling, and acting as mediators. For these roles to be accomplished there is need for funding child protection projects for the identification and implementation of child protection programs. There is need for well-trained child protection officers and address issues of brain drain. The issues that come out of child protection will also be explored. However CCWs are facing a number of challenges for them to implement their services. These challenges are impeding on the progress of the better implementation of child protection services. It is under

this investigation that this study seeks to investigate the challenges being faced by CCWs in their endeavour to offer child protection services.

#### **1.4 Aim of the study**

The study aims to investigate issues and challenges faced by CCWs in Child Protection in Bindura Urban.

#### **1.5 Research Objectives**

- To explore child protection issues handled by CCWs.
- To examine issues and challenges faced by CCWs in child protection in Bindura Urban.
- To ascertain strategies that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by CCWs.

#### **1.6 Research Questions**

- What are the child protection issues handled by CCWs?
- What are the challenges faced by CCWs in child protection?
- What are the strategies that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by CCWs?

#### **1.7 Justification of the Study**

The researcher, as a social worker, will be an eye opener to the challenges of CCWs in her local community. The study will probably play a significant role in improving the CCWs' ability to safeguard children, which will significantly improve community-level child protection. This study is anticipated to improve the CCWs efficiency in handling child protection cases. The study is anticipated to be significant in helping colleges gain a better knowledge of the efficacy of national progressive initiatives, and this notion may assist tertiary institutions in putting together committed and successful developmental companies. The study will be an eye opener to theoretical and conceptual grasp of the efficacy of child protection laws and systems thus policies.

#### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

The study's elements that made it difficult or impacted how the research's findings were interpreted are considered the study's limitations (Rahi 2020). The researcher's capacity to carry out the study was limited by a number of issues. The researcher used local areas to carry out the investigation and also made some expensive trips to other locations. The ability to make significant progress was constrained by the expense of travel and the researcher had to use personal money for transportation. Time to conduct the research was also a challenge and the researcher had to work extra hard to have positive results. The researcher had challenges in getting to other study-relevant places.

### **1.9 Delimitations of the Study**

Delimitations are the parameters that the study delivers so that the objectives may be accomplished with ease (Rahi, 2019). This study was carried out in Bindura. Since Bindura is where the researcher is situated, it was simpler and easier for the researcher to do the research there. The researcher decided to focus on the farming and mining town of Bindura because, according to the Ministry of Women Affairs (2019), it has the highest rate of early child marriages and child maltreatment. The investigation was done on both male and female respondents to balance the study's findings.

### **1.10 Definition of Key Terms**

**Child protection:** Protection of children is the method of determining, ensuring, and defending the wellbeing of the young generation, according to Mukaro (2020). UNICEF claims that the prevention and treatment of child abuse, violence, and exploitation, each of which is described as follows, is known as child protection.

**Child abuse or maltreatment:** With reference to duties, dignity, or force, a malicious maltreatment is defined as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity." (World Health Organization, 2022).

**Abuse:** A malicious act of mistreatment that might affect a child's safety, wellbeing, dignity, or development or is likely to do so (World Health Organization, 2020). Any unpleasant treatment that is physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional is considered abuse.

**Violence:** All sorts of mistreatment or exploitation with reference to sexual abuse, as well as harm and abuse that are either physical or mental.

**Exploitation:** To benefit at the expense of exploitation of children, enjoyment, or profile, which mostly results in the kid being handled in an unfair, harsh, or painful manner. These acts affect the child's education, moral development, physical or mental health, and social and emotional growth. This includes mistreatment, abuse, victimization, misuse, oppression, and manipulation.

**Neglect:** Failure to safeguard a child from danger or to satisfy a child's basic requirements or needs when parents or caregivers have the resources, expertise, and opportunity to help in doing so (UN, 2020).

### **1.11 Project Outline**

Five chapters made up this research's chapter-based structure. The first chapter served as the study's introduction and provided briefly the main points. The foundation of the research, the problem statement, the study aims and questions, justification for the investigation, the study delimitations, and its limits were addressed in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2, the evaluation of related literature from diverse scholars on the subject under inquiry was detailed. The researcher's chosen research design, sample techniques, data collection techniques, data examination techniques, and ethical issues that were important when obtaining data were all discussed in Chapter 3. The presentation of the information acquired in Chapter 3 and its analysis were both detailed in Chapter 4. The study findings and recommendations were provided in the last chapter, chapter five. All of the study's essential components were covered in this chapter.

### **1.12 Chapter Summary**

Key facets of the research were described in this chapter. By presenting important details about the subject, this chapter provided the foundation for the research. The problem statement that served as the basis for this inquiry was defined in this chapter. This chapter also included a rough description of the study's major elements, the study's rationale, and its aims and research questions. This chapter also covered the boundaries of the study, focusing on its scope and setting. The limits and conclusion of the study were also covered.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter offers an analysis of the content that was relevant to the study and a review of the current data collection on the subject matter. This section's goal was to examine issues and challenges associated with child protection as presented by various researchers and to examine previous efforts to address the issue. This section includes gaps in the research that this study was to fill as well as the evaluated literature that informed it. This chapter also provided the theoretical framework, which summarized the theory that shaped the investigation.

### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study was influenced by the Systems theory in the quest to address questions of the study. Anderson et al. (2021), argued that system theory is a method for describing and comprehending increasingly complex systems in a variety of fields. It focuses on how individuals fit into systems, how they blend with psychological components of practice. In order to intervene and show how issues are perpetuated in a scenario, systems theory aids in focusing attention on current interpersonal interactions. Systems theory emphasizes the standards for how actions should be taken to reduce the possibility of unforeseen and undesirable occurrences (Harney, 2019). Because of the system and environment they must operate in, social workers can have restricted options when it comes to particular instances. The efficiency of CCWs in child protection will be better understood with the use of systems theory.

The focus of social systems theory is on human needs and social systems rather than questions that are just relevant to the individual. Gil (2022) identified five fundamental human needs: a sense of security, self-actualization, meaningful social relationships, regular access to commodities and services that maintain and enrich life. Abuse can be caused by factors in the local social, structural, and cultural context, including socio-economic position, values, pressures, social isolation, and a lack of community support. The social systems theory may be applied to several forms of violence, all of which are brought on by unfair processes and structures of diverse social systems. This hypothesis fits this study's findings well since child abuse takes place inside the society, which is a system. There are many facets of society where children are harmed. They are both the perpetrators and the victims of child abuse in the system.

Cases of child abuse can occur in the home, at school, or in the community. According to UNICEF (2021), the most vulnerable children continued to be denied access to a crucial setting that provides them with safety, stability, and a feeling of normalcy. In 2021, millions of children were still affected by school closures. These children needed the help and protection of experts, such as school employees, because living at home exposed them to hazards including assault, child marriage, or child labour. The ability of families to survive and prosper is severely hampered by the economic crisis, which is pushing the most vulnerable into harmful coping methods including child labour, child marriage, and trafficking in children. The number of children living in countries experiencing complex situations increased from 2019 to 2021, to almost 1.2 billion (UN 2021).

### **2.3 Child Protection Issues handled by Community Childcare Workers**

Due to the harsh truths and reality of life for vulnerable children have sadly become all too common, childhood violence and neglect are important problems that are usually disregarded. Around the world, 300 million children between the ages of 2 and 4 are routinely subjected to harsh punishment from caregivers (UNICEF, 2020). Ages 15 to 19 teenage girls have experienced sexual assaults on an additional 15 million occasions (UNICEF, 2020). Working across nations, the number of children who experienced violence and received health, social, or justice services throughout the course of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, in particular in the South Asia and the East and Central Asia areas, has grown enormously. In 2021, UNICEF supported programs reached 4.4 million children who had been the victims of violence in 129 countries. In order to speed progress, UNICEF has led efforts to incorporate good parenting into basic violence prevention strategies. This has helped to spread a common interagency vision for parenting support for all children.

In developing countries such as South Africa, the figures on child abuse are as shocking and highlight the urgent need for action on the part of the government, non-profits, higher education institutions, and particularly the child protection system. One in four kids suffers from maltreatment (physical, sexual, emotional, or neglect) throughout their formative years, according to the respected Optimus Study (Artz, et al 2019). Alarming, the study finds that before the age of 18 one in three children encounters some form of sexual assault (Artz et al., 2019). According to Matthews, et al (2021), South Africa has a child murder rate of 5.5 per 100,000 child fatalities, which is twice as high as the global estimate (UNICEF, 2019). Nearly half of these homicides entailed prior maltreatment. While high rates of violence against



children are seen as "a daily reality" in South Africa (UNICEF, 2019), attempts to reduce violence in our homes, schools, and communities need critical analysis and quick responses. The nation's capacity to keep its commitment to children's rights and to guarantee sound socioeconomic growth inside the nation is hindered by child abuse. The emphasis of South Africa's child protection legislation and policy is a welfare typology that targets poverty and seeks to right the wrongs caused by the punitive welfare system that affected the majority during the apartheid era (Taylor & Triegaardt, 2020).

In Zimbabwe, according to the Zimbabwe Youth Council (2019), detrimental social and cultural practices, as well as concerns including child sexual abuse, are some of the challenges that are present. An examination of the ZRP VFU report from 2019 shows that 2300 incidences of child abuse were reported (MWAFGCD, 2019). In their research, they came to the conclusion that the CPCs' inactivity and failure to hold meetings to promote children's needs was the major reason why the goal of child protection had fallen short. A thorough analysis of the difficulties in scaling up integrated community case management identified four key barriers to CCWs' efficacy. These included: 1) maintaining dependable supply chains 2) removing demand-side barriers to utilization 3) having weak monitoring and evaluation systems 4) the requirement for supportive government policies and engagement to achieve sustainable progress (UNICEF, 2012). These four limitations may precisely apply to the scenario in Zimbabwe and may have a similar impact on the CCWs' efficacy.

## **2.4 Challenges faced by Community Childcare Workers in child protection**

The ability of families to survive and prosper is severely hampered by the economic crisis, which is pushing the most vulnerable into harmful coping methods including child labour, child marriage, and trafficking in children, hence more work but few resources for community childcare workers. Around 1.2 billion kids, a figure that has risen since 2019, resided in nations with complicated problems in 2021 (UN 2021). Millions more children and their communities are on the verge of collapse due to escalating wars like those in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Myanmar. Armed forces and armed organizations deliberately target children with brutality throughout war zones. Children make up 42% of the 82 million individuals who have been forcefully relocated globally, with climatically linked disasters being one of the main causes and challenges (UN 2021). The floods in South Sudan and storms like Cyclone Yaas, which hit Bangladesh and India, are only two examples of how these have increased in the past 30

years, and 2021 was no exception. This will put millions of children at danger of abuse, exploitation, and violence, particularly those who are traveling alone or apart from their parents. More girls are now at danger due to rising economic uncertainty and inequality, which are major contributors to harmful practices.

Global debt is cited by Lachman et al. (2020) as a significant problem in many less developed nations that has contributed to the poverty that the majority of people in Africa experience, negating any chance for the development of effective child protection programs. According to the Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF, poverty and ignorance are mutually reinforcing in a vicious cycle that leads to poor health, vulnerability, and voicelessness. While social exclusion and political marginalization exacerbate the synergistic interconnections between poverty, ignorance, poor health, malnutrition, and mortality, this may have significance for the child protection situation in Africa, where high levels of illiteracy are still evident, poverty is still the norm, and social exclusion and political marginalization continue. (UNICEF, 2020). If CCWs are incapacitated, this vice of child abuse will continue. This was brought on by their lack of funds and committee incentive programs. Additionally, because CCWs serve on a volunteer basis, their performance of their duties may be impacted by a lack of compensation or financial incentives.

According to the Zimbabwe Youth Council (2019), detrimental social and cultural practices, as well as concerns including child sexual abuse, are some of the challenges that are present. In their research, they came to the conclusion that the CPCs' inactivity and failure to hold meetings to promote children's needs was the major reason why the goal of child protection had fallen short. Even the cooperation between the government agencies in charge of offering various services to children, such as the police and the court, was insufficient to deal with the cases of abused children on a timely basis (Flint, 2019). As a result, children whose cases were in court endured great hardship before receiving justice. In addition to this, when abuse of children happens, the community did not actively report the occurrences; instead, they attempted to resolve the matter amicably. Due to these realities, justice was delayed in many children's instances. Also keeping in mind the fact that Community Childcare Workers do voluntary work, lack of funding incentives could have an impact on their implementation of their work (Zimbabwe Youth Council 2019). However, the study also realized that in case of exceptional committed volunteers who commit and prioritize their work they lack social support from the agencies and in some instances they end up being harmed by the law breakers or criminals whom have not been punished.

## **2.5 Strategies that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by Community Childcare Workers.**

In order to safeguard all children throughout the humanitarian development peace nexus, it is necessary to complement issue-based programming, which focuses on certain themes and groups or categories of children, with a more holistic and complete systems approach. A human rights-based approach to programming must be implemented, and the measuring framework is essential for doing so (Sida, 2021). It enables country offices to assess how well the system is enhancing the capabilities of duty-bearers and rights-holders. In this stage, multi-sector coordination mechanisms are set up, thorough SOPs and protocols that adhere to international standards are provided, as well as a normative framework or law establishing the national child protection systems (UNICEF, 2019). A strategy for universal progressive home visiting (encompassing childcare, parental well-being, child protection from abuse and neglect, children with diverse abilities, gender dynamics in the family, and cross-sector collaboration) was taught to 165 health professionals in Albania by UNICEF hence strengthening access to safe, ethical and quality response services.

There is need for a justice sector to strengthen response services for survivors of violence. For example in late 2020, developing countries like Botswana with the help of UNICEF built the nation's first ever child-friendly police station; in 2021, there were over 200 VAC instances reported. Police personnel from 78 police stations were trained as focal points for child-related matters, including specialist skills to support GBV cases, in order to scale up the quality of service delivery (UNICEF 2021). In order to improve the quality of services in Chile by 2021, it was prioritized to institutionalize the availability of filmed interviews for survivors. In Nigeria, UNICEF assisted in the establishment of a Coordination Forum on Justice for Children in order to facilitate a more efficient examination of cases involving sexual assault. This includes locating processing bottlenecks and turning on the court system's fast-tracking for cases. The establishment of forces will help the state to respond quickly to survivors. Moreover, improving access to cost-free child helplines is a strategy that can be useful in developing countries like Zimbabwe. The importance of these tele-services inside national child protection systems is being acknowledged more and more. For example, for many people during the COVID-19 lockdowns that lasted until 2021, they served as a lifeline. According to a survey conducted by Child Helpline International (CHI), (2021), children use helplines primarily because of violence and mental health issues hence the need to have cost-free child helplines in developing countries.

Additionally, reforming legislation to fully prohibit all forms of violence is a strategy that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by CCWs in child protection. Among other legislative reform initiatives, UNICEF supported the adoption of the Child Justice Bill and the Children's Amendment Bill in Zimbabwe. With referral to other nations, the implementation of a decree defining standard operating procedures for child safety in Angola was made possible through lobbying activities. While legal laws in Thailand focused on child online safety concerns, particularly online Child SEA, legislative reform in Bulgaria led to modifications to the Child safety Act and the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act 2005. Supportive parenting programmes works as a strategy that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by CCWs in child protection. . Parenting programs sponsored by UNICEF were expanded globally in 2021, reaching 3 million mothers, dads, and carers in 94 countries. Noting that evidence-based parent and caregiver support programs can reduce parental stress, enhance parent-child connection, and prevent child maltreatment in a scalable and affordable manner (UNICEF, 2021). In order to reduce difficulties in child abuse situations, it is crucial to undertake these efforts in all sorts of national contexts, including incorporating parental assistance into national service delivery mechanisms where appropriate. A case in point is Papua New Guinea, where the Parenting for Child Development Programme was scaled up and implemented in collaboration with the government and the Catholic Church. This resulted in a 70% increase in reach from 2020 (UNICEF 2021).

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

The studied literature was highlighted in this part, and it also provided an analysis of numerous materials that were relevant to the study and set the course for this study. This chapter revealed a logical hypothetical paradigm that examined a range of sources to form the thesis' assumption. The theoretical framework was successfully highlighted in this chapter, securing a theory for this investigation. This chapter served as the pillar for the subsequent chapter 3.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter offered an analysis on the basic research plan. The researcher made use of a qualitative research design as it focused on gaining much data from a relatively small sample size. This part also presented the target population, sampling procedure, data collection methods and instruments used in the study. Ethical considerations were also observed such as the right to consent and securing of confidentiality.

### **3.2 Description of the Study Area**

The study was carried out in Bindura. Bindura is a town in the province of Mashonaland Central, Zimbabwe. It is located in the Mazowe Valley approximately 88km north-east of Harare (Helliker & Bhatasara, 2018). Bindura is one of the seven districts in the Mashonaland Central province.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The researcher made use of qualitative research design. The advantage of a qualitative research design was it produced the thick, detailed description of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences; and interpreted the meanings of their actions (Yin, 2018). It focused on gaining as much data as possible from a relatively small sample size (Bhandari, 2022). It captured changing attitudes within a target group or population (McCombes, 2021).

### **3.4 Target Population**

The study targeted CCWs in Bindura. There are 154 Community Childcare Workers in Bindura as per Department of Social Development Bindura (2023). The study also targeted key informants from Child Line, Ministry of Women Affairs and ZRP VFU. A target population was defined by Creswell, (2019) as the subset of people for whom the program is designed, that one will actively recruit and retrain, and for whom you will hold yourself accountable for achieving outcomes. Saunders et al, (2019) also defined target population as the total considerable number of elements, components which are pertinent to the study which meet the specific element that are at the centre of the study.

### **3.5 Sampling Procedure**

Convenience sampling technique was used to identify respondents for focus group discussions. A group of 6-12 CCWs was conveniently sampled from the CCWs to ease group discussions. A total of 6 focus group discussions was conducted. Purposive sampling techniques was used to identify 5 key informants. A sample is defined by Creswell, (2019) as a small group with the features of a vast number of people. This group is easier to control or manage than a larger group.

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods**

Focus group discussions and key informant interview were used as data collection methods. The advantage of using focus group discussions was that it allowed a room for various opinions as people are airing out their perspectives and helped one to form a broader and clear view as one would be observing the interviewees agreeing and colliding with shared sediments (Saunders, 2019). The advantage of using key informant interviews was that it gave information that was unique as compared to other ways, thus it provided with secretive data which could not be obtained by settings (USAID, 2019).

### **3.7 Data Collection Instruments**

Interview guides were used to collect data. The advantage of using interview guides was that they provided all applications with the same candidate experience hence created a structured process (Bird, 2019). It therefore made it easier to access every candidate in the same way, hence reduced the risk of bias in the interview process.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Zikmund et al. (2020), argued that ethical issues pertain to the suitability of a researcher's actions concerning the rights of participants. During this study, the researcher followed the ethical principles established by Martelli and Greener (2018). After adhering to university regulations, the researcher was granted authorization to carry out the study. The participants were adequately informed about the study.

#### **3.8.1 Informed consent**

A statement outlining the objectives of the inquiry, each person's role in the investigation, and the intended use of the data they submitted was given to each participant. To maintain beneficence, no interviews were conducted with those who declined to take part or were unable

to provide consent. In order to provide the respondents confidence in their ability to participate in the study, the researcher was able to fully reveal all relevant information about the investigation and its objectives.

### **3.8.2 Confidentiality**

The identity and opinions of the respondents were kept confidential. By not asking for names or addresses or any other information that may be used to identify the respondents, the researcher was able to guarantee secrecy.

### **3.8.3 Privacy**

Through adherence to ethical guidelines and providing comprehensive explanations of respondents' rights, the researcher ensured that respondents' privacy and rights would be safeguarded during the study.

### **3.8.4 Right to withdrawal**

The respondents were given the freedom to leave the research whenever they wanted to. Additionally, the researcher emphasized that the respondents were allowed to provide their information without coercion.

## **3.9 Data Collection Procedure**

The study's data collection method was the use of interview guides. Through the use of pilot studies, the researcher was able to create interview guides and questions. A pilot project was carried out at Bindura Urban. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the suitability of the research questions for the study's participants and their potential to produce the desired outcomes. Its preparation was based on the principal topics that were covered in the interviews. The purpose of the interview guide was to assist the candidate in preparing for the key questions that would be asked during the interview. In keeping with the goals of the study, the researcher created interview guiding questions. The interviews were done with CCWs and key informants. At least 20 (twenty) minutes were allocated for the interviews. The researcher also created consent forms to be signed by the respondents and key informants before the interview process. It also required the researcher to record the respondents' replies and ask open-ended questions aloud. This was all done face-to-face. Before the interviews began, the interviewees were informed that recordings would be made and transcriptions would be done. Utilizing an

interview guide offered a number of benefits. The open-ended nature of the replies made it possible to obtain substantial data.

### **3.9.1 Data analysis**

After data collection, the appropriate statistical instrument must be used for processing and analysis (Saunders et al., 2019). As part of the data processing process, data is edited, coded, classed, and tabulated prior to data analysis (Saunders et al., 2019). Since the research was qualitative, the researcher employed data-displayed tables and thematic analysis for data presentation and interpretation. Prior to manually coding the transcribed data, the researcher reviewed the notes. The key topics were then developed by the researcher by emphasizing pertinent facts. After the key topics were assigned codes, the most important terms that emerged from them were defined and arranged into categories. Thematic analysis was performed as the study was contextual in nature. The identification, interpretation, and synthesis of patterns and themes required the use of thematic analysis. One benefit of qualitative research is that it eschews bias and makes every effort to portray people from their point of view, allowing the researcher to perceive things from their perspective. In order to fulfil the research goal, qualitative research was also employed to obtain additional perspectives from CCWs who deal closely with children as well as community people.

### **3.10 Chapter Summary**

Basic research plan was presented in this chapter. The researcher made use of qualitative research design and this was highlighted in this chapter. This chapter also included the targeted population, the sampling procedure as well as the data collection methods and instruments. Ethical considerations were also observed



## **CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The research findings and data analysis are covered in this section. It also highlights the critical discussion of findings. This section highlights the study findings in light of the research discussion.

### **4.2 Child Protection Issues handled by Community Childcare Workers**

The majority of the respondents defined child protection as partaking necessary methods to avoid and offer responsive services to the abuse of children and violence negatively affecting children. They also responded to protection of children as avoiding and action taking to malicious acts like neglect, exploitation, and violence. They even went further to define child protection as shielding children from danger. They also responded and gave a limited definition of the phrase by claiming that it refers to safeguarding kids from any bodily damage. Some respondents defined child protection's objective as to promote, protect, and realize children's rights. One respondent remarked;

*“Violence, mistreatment, exploitation, and neglect are all examples of harm to children and their protection needs a holistic approach”*

A vast number of the respondents indicated that child labor in the form of gold mining as a child protection issue prevalent in Bindura Urban since it is mining area. The respondents also reported that commercial sexual exploitation or prostitution serves as a child protection issue prevalent in Bindura Urban. Early child marriages were also reported as a child protection issues present as Bindura is a mining town. Harmful cultural or traditional practices were also indicated by some of the respondents as a child protection issue prevalent in Bindura. The key informants also reported that child abuse in the form of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect as well as psychological abuse as child protection issues prevalent in Bindura Urban. The key informants also went further to report that child trafficking with reference to

school children in the early child development stage serves as a child protection issue observed in Bindura. This can be illustrated by the statement below from one respondent;

*"Parents frequently believe that their children need to be physically punished or disciplined. They can also believe that what they are doing is in the child's best interests. "*

A significant number of respondents indicated that child abuse; physical abuse, emotional and psychological harm, is a child protection issue handled by community childcare workers in Bindura. The research revealed that child labor for example gold mining is a child protection issue handled by CCWs in Bindura. Commercial sexual exploitation was another child protection issue that was indicated by the respondents. Some respondents even went further to locate Chipadze Township as a town with high rate of prostitution. The key informants also reported child marriages as a child protection issue handled by CCWs in Bindura. The key informants also went further to note religion (Johane Marange) as a driving force of child marriages. One respondent highlighted the following;

*"Pure physical abuse can be carried out in a variety of ways, such as by shaking, beating, punching, smothering, or causing injury that raises medical concerns."*

The majority of the respondents indicated that child protection encompasses the issues of child abuse. Child welfare services was another key point that was reported by the respondents under the study. Some respondents also noted that education and awareness key issue which child protection encompasses. The key informants also reported that legal protection is what child protection encompasses. They also provided that child protection encompasses the issue of international cooperation. It was also indicated by the key informants that child protection encompasses the area of child participation. One key informant noted the following;

*"Create dedicated child protection divisions in law enforcement organizations, manned by personnel educated in trauma-informed and kid-sensitive methodologies."*

### **4.3 Challenges faced by Community Childcare Workers in child protection**

The majority of the respondents reported that CCWs in child protection face monetary challenges in the form of funds for child protection projects for example in Zimbabwe. Poverty was also reported as a challenge faced by community childcare workers in child protection. Some respondents also reported that natural disasters (climatically linked disasters) is a challenge faced by CCWs in child protection. Wars were also reported by respondents as a challenge being faced by CCWs in child protection. Respondents also went further to report that CCWs face ignorance challenges from the community. The key informants also reported that systematic flaws is another challenge faced by CCWs in child protection. They also reported that lack of well-trained protection officers is a challenge faced by CCWs in child protection. Burnouts and heavy caseloads was also noted as a challenge faced by CCWs. Some key informants also indicated customs and beliefs as a challenge faced by CCWs in child protection. One key informant noted the following;

*"In 2019, the Zimbabwean government allocated only 0.2% of the national budget to the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, which is responsible for child welfare services, which is little to work with,"*

A vast number of respondents reported that limited access to basic needs is evident that poverty exacerbates child protection issues. The respondents indicated that poverty can exacerbate child protection issues by increased risk of exploitation. The respondents also provided that inadequate education shows that poverty can hinder a child's access to education. Some respondents also noted that poverty can exacerbate child protection issues by limited social support. The key informants also reported that poverty can exacerbate child protection issues by inadequate child protection services. They also indicated that housing (homelessness) proves that poverty can hinder child protection issues. This can be noted by the statement below made by one respondent;

*"Some parents are failing to offer sufficient schooling, such as meeting special education requirements and allowing for a lot of absences. This is abusing children, as the constitution demands that they have the right to education."*

A significant number of respondents said that poverty is a social issue that affect child protection. Respondents also reported that wars and violence is a social issue affecting child protection for example in Afghanistan. The study also found out that the family system serves an important role in child protection. Natural disasters for example floods, drought and cyclones were also reported by the respondents as social issues that affect child protection. Some respondents also noted that social exclusion affects child protection. The key informants also reported that corruption also affects child protection socially. They also indicated that media can lead to trafficking hence affecting child protection system. The key informants also went further to note the aspect of globalisation and migration as key factors that affect child protection socially. One respondent reported;

*"There is often a stigma attached to seeking help from child welfare services in Zimbabwe, as some communities view this as a sign of failure or weakness in the family."*

Most respondents indicated female genital mutilation as a cultural issue that affect child protection for example many communities in Zimbabwe still follow customs and beliefs that run counter to contemporary approaches to child welfare. The respondents reported that forced marriages in the name of religion also affects child protection. They also reported that the debt bondage practice due to poverty is another cultural issue that can lead to early child marriages hence affecting child protection. The respondents also reported that traditional male circumcision is another cultural issue that affect child protection. Femininity and modesty were also reported as cultural issues that affect child protection. Some respondents also indicated that language and dressing in different cultures also affect child protection. They also reported that witchcraft is another cultural issue that affect child protection. One respondent echoed these sentiments as he mentioned that;

*"The lack of cultural understanding and sensitivity among some child welfare workers can further exacerbate the tensions and make it difficult to build rapport and trust with the families they serve."*

#### **4.4 Strategies that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by Community Childcare Workers.**

The majority of the respondents indicated that the policies make sure that children go to school. Respondents also noted the need for safe shelters. The key informants also indicated the Trafficking in Persons Act in addressing child protection issues. The basic education assistance module (BEAM) is a child protection program that is currently in place in Bindura Urban. The key informants also reported that the child supplementary feeding schemes is a child protection program currently in place in Bindura Urban. The key informants also indicated guardianship (Sara pavana) as a child protection program currently in place. One key informant highlighted;

*“The share of social assistance budget allocated to fee waiver initiatives-dominated by BEAM- has steadily increased since 2020 and accounted for 22% of the 2022 budget”*

Most respondents reported that the policies strengthen the legal framework hence reducing child protection issues like child abuse. Respondents also indicated that these policies declares all types of maltreatment and imposes suitable punishments for the perpetrators. The programs are effective in addressing the challenge of poverty affecting children's access to education. The respondents also reported that for children to be given food is effective as it addresses the issue of poverty as a child protection challenge. The key informants indicated that guardianship is effective because it provides children with a family support system hence addressing the aspect of family disintegration. One key informant mirrored these thoughts when he stated that:

*"Align with international human rights standards by harmonizing the various pieces of legislation to ensure that they provide a coherent and comprehensive legal framework for addressing child abuse and exploitation."*

The research found out that provision of legal protection is the role of the government and relevant institutions in addressing child protection issues. The key informants also reported that provision of counselling services is the role of government and relevant institutions in addressing child protection issues. The key informants also reported that advocating for children's rights is another role of the government and relevant institutions in child protection. Strengthening child protection systems is the role of the government and relevant institutions. The key informants also reported that carrying out public extensive awareness campaigns serves as the role of the government and relevant institutions in addressing child protection issues. Linking vulnerable children with resources was also reported by the key informants as a role of the government and relevant institutions in child protection. The key informants also indicated that relevant institutions also implement child protection and rights education initiatives. This can be noted by sentiments from one key informant;

*"The use of variety of media channels, such as television, radio, social media, and community outreach events, to reach diverse audiences with the child protection messaging is very vital in child protection"*

The key informants indicated that the human rights based approach is a strategy that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by CCWs in child protection. The key informants also reported that having access to cost-free child helplines is another strategy that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by CCWs. Access to high quality services was reported as a strategy. Strengthening response services in the justice sector is another strategy incorporated to strengthen the work done by CCWs. Complementing issue-based programming was another strategy that was reported by the key informants. The key informants also reported that reforming legislation (prohibiting all forms of violence) is another strategy that can be incorporated to strengthen the work the work done by CCWs. They also indicated that formation of supportive parenting programs acts as a strategy in strengthening the work by CCWs. Enhancing multidisciplinary collaboration was also reported by the key informants as another strategy in strengthening the work done by CCWs. This is supported by the following statement made by one key informant;

*"Make certain that all pertinent parties are actively involved in these cooperative efforts, such as social workers, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and legal experts."*

The key informants indicated that strengthening awareness and prevention is a crucial strategy that should be prioritized by the government in child protection to reduce child abuse issues in Zimbabwe. To expand the legitimacy and audience of these efforts, include well-known religious leaders, traditional leaders, and community leaders was also reported. The key informants also reported that reporting and referral procedures to be set up in schools so that kids may securely share any concerns or experiences with abuse. Strengthening the legal framework is another crucial strategy should be prioritized by the government. The key informants also said that certain families and children who experience abuse have access to legal counsel at no cost or at a little cost, as well as other necessary services such as victim support, legal assistance, and witness protection initiatives. The key informants indicated that government should provide child protection services with sufficient funding and staffing so they can hire and retain professionals, keep up with necessary infrastructure, and offer a wide range of interventions. Determine and remove any logistical, cultural, or economical obstacles that can keep kids and families from getting child protection services, such as stigma, cost issues, and difficult transportation. One key informant reported;

*"Train educators and other school personnel to recognize and react to indicators of child abuse so they can assist and refer students who are in need."*

#### **4.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter highlighted on the research findings as well as data analysis. This chapter also reported the critical discussions of the study. The study findings will be presented in the upcoming chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is to give a relevant summary of the study. This section also provided a conclusion which is based on the findings of the study. Recommendations are also explored in this chapter.

### **5.2 Summary**

The study consisted of five chapters, of which chapter 1 was the introductory chapter which had the problem statement and the objectives of the study which led out on how the study was going to be carried out. The following chapter was chapter 2 which was a literature review chapter. This chapter reviewed literature on other findings that were in relation to the objectives of the study. The literature was also used to develop tools of the study. The third chapter was a methodological chapter which used focus group discussion and key informant interview as data collection tools. The fourth chapter presented the findings of the study and a discussion of the findings of the study. Finally, the fifth chapter is a conclusion chapter which also includes recommendations that were drawn from the findings of the study.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study therefore concluded that community childcare workers handle child protection issues such as child abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, psychological, neglect, violence), child marriages, child labour, commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking and harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation. However, they face challenges in implementing their work such as funds for child protection projects, poverty, and ignorance from the community, wars, natural disasters, and lack of well-trained protection officers. The study further concludes that there were strategies that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by community childcare workers in child protection such as access to cost-free child helplines, strengthening the justice sector and programing of rights-based approaches.



## **5.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made:

- The government should ensure that a budget is set aside for child protection projects.
- There is need for awareness campaigns for example the use of social media in order to educate the public about child protection issues and the challenges associated with it.
- There is need for provision of legal protection for example ensuring that children's rights are protected.
- There is need for provision of child welfare services to the vulnerable children in the form of foster care, adoption services, and rehabilitation programs.
- There is need for well-trained protection officers to avoid the issue of brain drain.
- There is need for facilitation of international cooperation and collaboration to address transnational child protection issues such as child trafficking.

## **5.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided with the summary of the study hence providing with key facets from the introductory chapter to chapter 5. The conclusion was also drawn in this chapter hence exploring on the challenges faced by CCWs in child protection as well as the strategies that can be incorporated. This chapter also provided recommendations thus, highlighting solutions to the discussion of findings.

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## CONSENT FORM

My name is Kudzai Wayne Muringweni, a part 4 student at Bindura University of Science Education studying towards a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work. I am carrying out a study entitled “Child Protection: Issues and Challenges in Bindura Urban”

You have been selected to voluntarily participate in the research. Participation is voluntary and if by any way you feel uncomfortable you can withdraw from the interview. Hence, be assured that there shall be no harm inflicted on the participant. The following ethics will also be observed through-out the study right to consent, confidentiality, and right to withdrawal. At least 20 (twenty) minutes of your time will be taken for the interview/discussion.

Your signing in this consent form is an indication that you have understood and agreed to participate in the study.

Participant’s Signature ..... Date .....

Enumerators’’ Signature ..... Date .....

## **KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **Section 1: Understanding of Child Protection Issues**

1. In your own words, how would one define child protection?
2. What child protection issues are prevalent in Bindura Urban?
3. What are the child protection issues that are handled by CCWs in Bindura?
4. What does child protection encompass?

### **Section 2: Factors Contributing to Child Protection Challenges**

1. What are the challenges faced by CCWs in child protection?
2. How does poverty exacerbate child protection issues?
3. What social issues affect child protection?
4. What cultural issues affect child protection?

### **Section 3: Existing Child Protection Mechanisms**

1. What child protection policies or programs are currently in place in Bindura Urban?
2. How effective are the policies or programs in addressing child protection challenges in Bindura Urban?
3. What are the strategies that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by CCWs?
4. How would one assess the role of the government and relevant institutions in addressing child protection issues in Bindura Urban?
5. What measures or strategies should the government and relevant institutions prioritize to enhance child protection?

## **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

### **Section 1: Understanding of Child Protection Issues**

1. In your own words, how would one define child protection?
2. What child protection issues do you believe are prevalent in Bindura Urban?
3. What are the child protection issues handled by CCWs in Bindura?
4. What does child protection encompass?

### **Section 2: Factors Contributing to Child Protection Challenges**

1. What are the challenges faced by CCWs in implementing child protection in Bindura?
2. How does poverty exacerbate child protection issues?
3. What social issues affect child protection?
4. What cultural issues affect child protection?

### **Section 3: Existing Child Protection Mechanisms**

1. What child protection policies or programs are currently in place in Bindura Urban?
2. How effective do we perceive policies or programs in addressing child protection challenges in Bindura Urban?
3. What are the strategies that can be incorporated to strengthen the work done by CCWs?
4. How would one assess the role of the government and relevant institutions in addressing child protection issues in Bindura Urban?
5. What measures or strategies should the government and relevant institutions prioritize to enhance child protection?

