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Child-headed Households in Rural Zimbabwe: Perceptions of Shona Orphaned Children

Eucharia Gomba

University of the Incarnate Word, gombasrp@gmail.com

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CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL ZIMBABWE:
PERCEPTIONS OF SHONA ORPHANED CHILDREN

by

Sr. EUCHARIA GOMBA SJI

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the University of the Incarnate Word
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD

May 2018

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Firstly, I would like to thank God, The Almighty who made it possible for me to get it this far. My special thanks are in order to Dr. Judith Beauford, PhD, my dissertation chair, for her time and directing me with patience and expertise. My gratitude goes to Dr. Sharon Herbers, PhD, and Dr. Maria-Felix Ortiz, PhD. for accepting to be on my dissertation committee and their invaluable comments. I would also like to express my appreciation to everyone who has helped me with this work. This includes all those who taught me in the Dreeben School of Education at the University of the Incarnate Word, the Library Staff and all those who cheered me up and encouraged me during my academic journey. This work would not have been possible without my nephew Clifford Gomba who inspired me to write on orphaned children and for his sound suggestions, technical and moral support during my dissertation journey. I thank the Sisters of the Infant Jesus (SJI), my religious community for allowing me this precious time to study. My gratitude goes to Bishop Dr. Martin Munyanyi and my sister Angela Matavire, both in Zimbabwe for their telephone conversations, ideas, their valued friendship, and encouragement during the writing of this work. Mary Bockrath, from Dayton Ohio, Felistas Makusha and – Dominic Mhosva from Australia, distance did not hinder you from helping me realize this feat. Thank you family, relatives, and friends for believing in me and always reaching out with advice and suggestions during this dissertation journey. Thank you all.

DEDICATION

To the following deceased members of my family

- My mother (Anna Maria Machina Gomba Matavire)
- My father (Cosmas Gomba Matavire)
- My sister (Tecla Cosmas Mhandire)
- My aunt (Consilia Machina Gondo)

CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL ZIMBABWE:
PERCEPTIONS OF SHONA ORPHANED CHILDREN

Sr. Eucharika Gomba, PhD

University of the Incarnate Word, 2017

This qualitative ethnographic case study explored the phenomenon of Child- Headed Households (CHHs) in rural Zimbabwe from the perspectives of a Shona community. My intention was to gain an understanding on how these children access necessities like food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, and cope on a daily basis without parental care, or adult supervision. The perceptions of both the orphaned children and the adults in their community were investigated through the integrative lens of the Shona philosophy of *unhu*, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and Bronfenbrenner's ideas of systems. The findings of this study show that children from child-headed households among the Shona people in Zimbabwe struggle to make ends meet without the traditional family structure and adult supervision, and that they experience social, educational, psychological, and social development problems. Although the orphaned children in this study showed resilience, bravery, and sense of responsibility as they cared for their siblings, they struggle to make ends meet as they fail to access basic needs. The systemic issues affecting Zimbabwe as a country enhance the plight of these children thereby making their stories vital and necessary to understand.

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The Problem of Shona Orphaned Children

The African saying, “it takes a village to raise a child” encapsulates the wisdom embedded in African societies in raising their children. This wisdom espouses and embraces all children as communal responsibilities thereby leaving no room for a social orphan. The old adage has now been replaced by “it takes a child to raise a family” as the whole continent of Africa faces a new phenomenon of children heading households.

Traditionally, the members of the extended family (Foster, Makufa, Drew, & Kralovec, 1997) absorbed orphans. In most African communities, the concept of “adoption” does not exist in the western sense. Children are fostered in a culturally sanctioned procedure whereby biological parents allow their children to be reared by adults other than the natal parents. In almost every country in the sub-Saharan region, extended families have assumed responsibility for more than 90 % of orphaned children. However, this traditional support system is under severe pressure. The responsibility of caring for orphaned children is pushing many extended families beyond their ability to cope. With the number of children that require protection and support soaring and an increased number of adults falling sick, many extended family networks have been simply overwhelmed. UNICEF (2013) reported that more than 56 million children under the age of 15 years in Sub-Saharan Africa had lost at least one parent to HIV/AIDS and were living without parental or extended family care and supervision. As the rising number of orphans weakens the traditional extended family safety nets, many children are left to fend for themselves (Awino, 2010; Foster, 2000; Sloth-Nielsen, 2004) and thereby are ending up in vulnerable situations such as child labor, street-kids, early child marriages, human trafficking, prostitution, and child-headed households (CHHS).

A child-headed household is a family in which a minor child or adolescent has become the head of the household. This situation is due to illness or death of the parents. Foster (2000) reported that some households are headed by children as young as 10 to 12 years. Young children are caring for entire households and spending sleepless nights in an effort to make ends meet and to ensure family security in a world full of uncertainties (Tsegaye, 2007). Today, this crisis has deepened as children bear the responsibility of providing for the material and emotional support for their siblings throughout the continent of Africa. Some scholars claim that in a child-headed household, all members of the household are children (Meintjes, Hall, Marera, & Boule, 2010), but there are cases of children who carry the extra burden of caring for their sick parents.

Phillips (2011) defines a child-headed household as a situation where a child has taken parental responsibilities especially in caring for the younger siblings and making decisions in daily matters. Phillips (2011) explains that a CHH “is a household consisting of one or more members in which the role of principal caregiver has by necessity been taken over by a child under the age of 18” (p. 163). This situation causes concern about the vulnerability of young people caring for themselves, about the costs to their safety, education, health, and social development.

Scholars describe childhood as a period in which children learn, develop character, acquire necessary social and technical skills, and finally mature into adulthood (Kaime, 2009; Muronda, 2009; Phillips, 2011). The emergence of child-headed families has affected the lives and destiny of children thereby raising a number of problems especially in regards to children assuming the roles of parents and thereby taking the responsibility of raising siblings while they need training themselves both in formal education and informal socialization.

Background

Zimbabwe is one of the 40 sub-Saharan countries. This landlocked country, which borders with Mozambique in the east, Botswana in the west, Zambia in the north, and South Africa in the south, holds a population of 13 million people.



Figure 1. Map of Zimbabwe [map]. Scale 1: 60,000. “Where is Zimbabwe?” Retrieved from <http://newngrguardiannews.com.c.presscdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/zimbabwe-map.jpg/>.

Zimbabwe is a former British colony and a young country having gained political-independence through a war of liberation in 1980. The country has made significant efforts to expand her education system thereby acquiring the highest literacy rate in the region. However, for the past fifteen years Zimbabwe has been struggling with political, economic, and social instability. The insurmountable economic problems have resulted in a hyperinflation that reached

its peak between 2007 and 2009. According to Hanke (2008), the Zimbabwean dollar lost more than 99.9% its value in less than a decade. This resulted in the abandonment of the country's official currency and the adoption of the United States dollar in the northern part of the country, and other currencies elsewhere like the South African rand, and the Botswana pula. This socio-political crisis became a great threat to the lives of all Zimbabweans and especially of children as they face the plight of poverty in addition to being orphaned.

Poverty remains a key constraint for most individuals, households, and communities in Zimbabwe. The Poverty, Income and Expenditure Survey of 2013 concluded that poverty is far worse in rural areas than in urban areas of Zimbabwe (ZimStat, 2013). It further concluded that 62.6% of Zimbabwean households are deemed poor while 16.2% of the households are in extreme poverty. The survey outlined the ruralized nature of poverty in Zimbabwe with 76% of rural households being classified as poor compared to 38.2% of urban households with the same classification.

Typically, households classified as poor can afford only one meal per day, suffer from chronic hunger and malnutrition and cannot meet their basic needs. The distinction between moderate poverty (households which are absolutely poor but not ultra-poor) and ultra-poverty is important. People living in ultra-poor households suffer from severe hunger for most of the year, become physically weak, tend to sell or consume their productive assets (e.g., livestock, tools, seed), cannot invest in their future (e.g., by sending children to school), and die from infections that most other people survive (UNICEF, 2011).

Poverty has profound negative impacts on the condition of children. The Ministry of Labor and Social Services (2015) reported that over two-thirds of all children in Zimbabwe live below the food poverty line and are unable to access basic services such as health and education.

These conditions are attributed to macro-economic instability, rising unemployment, and the loss of family financial assets during hyper-inflation and dollarization. Poverty affects social and financial circumstances that can affect people's mental or emotional state. On the other hand, people's mental and emotional state can also affect their ability to deal with poverty (Clay, 2015). A negative psychosocial effect of poverty can be manifested at a mental level when people internalize an identity of poverty, reflect acceptance or belief in poverty as a permanent or 'natural' endless state of life and behave in ways that express learned helplessness (Murove, 2013).

The Shona Community

The Shona people are from several ethnic groups across Zimbabwe that share similar languages. They are descendants of people who have lived in the region of Zimbabwe for around 2000 years (Mawere, 2010). The Shona tribe is the largest indigenous group in Zimbabwe, representing over 80% of the population. The language is also called Shona though it has five dialects namely; Karanga, Zezuru, Manyika, Ndau, and Kokore. These ethnic groups share common cultural traditions and beliefs, as well as life philosophies (Mawere, 2010).

The Shona people are a fragmented horde of tribes with tenuous bonds of unity between them. Most Shona people identify with a particular clan rather than with the Shona group as a whole, and Shona communities contain a mixture of clans. A clan is a group of people who descended from the same ancestor. The Shona people identify themselves with a totem usually synonymous with an animal hence we have the *vaera Shumba* (Lion clan), *vaera Shoko* (Monkey clan), *vaera Zhou/Nzou* (Elephant clan), *vaera Ngara/Nungu* (Porcupine clan), and so on. Shona is patrilineal, so the person takes both the last name and the *mutupo* (totem) from the father's

side. The Shona also believe that if two people share the same totem, they are related and therefore cannot marry each other.

Traditionally, Shona people lived in isolated settlements, usually consisting of one or more elder men and their extended families. Most decisions were made within the family although organized political states were recognized as a source of centralized power. In the traditional Shona community, human relations were of greater value than gold and silver. The whole village was just like one family. The community defined the way of life for its members and gave the individual a sense of belonging to an extended family, tribe, or clan. The maxim with others in a community and in turn other people in that community recognize the individual's humanity (Nyaumwe & Mkabela, 2007). This maxim and the Shona saying *munhumunhu nevamwe*, literally translated, as "a person is only a person through others," emphasize the importance of unhu to people within a given community through the spirit of mutual support and the principle of caring for each other. For example, in the event of the death of a husband among the Shona, one of the surviving younger brothers has the obligation to inherit the widow and the children of the deceased (Nyamukapa et al., 2008).

A good Shona person is one who cherishes values of community life. Everything revolves around and outside the community is mere emptiness. The Shona community always uphold the practice of good manners and living in harmony. A number of African scholars like Achebe 1990, Mbiti (1990), and Mawere (2010) share the view that the African philosophy of life defines personhood in reference to other members of the same community, both the living and the dead. Human nature among the Shona is defined through virtue and empathy such as 'love' and not merely through biological constitution. The statement "I am because we are and

since we are therefore I am” (Mbiti, 1990 p. 270) sums up the African philosophy of life, hence of the Shona community.

According to Chingombe and Mandova (2013), *unhu* is a Shona word which means behavior patterns acceptable to Shona people of Zimbabwe. The concept of *unhu* is a social philosophy which embodies virtues that celebrate the mutual social responsibility, mutual assistance, trust, sharing, unselfishness, self-reliance, caring and respect for others among other ethical values. This means ethos and attitudes which influence the way people participate in various departments of their lives. Their ethos refers to their conception of what is right and wrong, beautiful and ugly. The ethos is the parameter used to qualify a Shona person as *munhu* and not just a human being

In the Shona, worldview human beings are looked at as different from, and as more dignified, than other animals. In order to be referred to as *munhu*, a person has to meet certain obligations regarded as good, according to the Shona culture. In the social and moral sense of the term, person-hood or humanness known as *unhu* was limited to the Shona people. *Unhu* is perceived as the school of Shona life that generates ethos that proceeds to inform, govern, and direct Shona people’s institutions, namely the social, economic, political and religious (Chingombe & Mandova, 2013). It, therefore, regulates, informs, and directs the action and approaches to life and its challenges.

Unhu sets a premium on human behavior and relations. *Unhu* is a product of the Shona cultural experiences and derive from cultural heritage. Those who did not display *unhu* were considered deviants and risked alienation since they posed a threat to the stability and peace of the territory. The goal of morality was to improve *munhu* informed by *unhu*. Practically, *munhu ane unhu*, a well-cultured person, was perceived as endowed with a disposition to act virtuously.

Unhu is not simply a philosophical issue of good and bad, it is unique in the sense that it fosters a person's respect for himself, others, and the environment. It is doing and saying something correctly and properly as determined by not only the Shona, but by the whole Zimbabwean society. The Shona metaphysical views were informally inculcated to the young through storytelling, idioms, proverbs, and taboos. Childhood is the time when communal social values are taught. Children were socialized along the lines of unhu so that the values would be carried forward.

Shona virtues considered fundamental for the community life can be put into six broad categories: '*kunzwanana*' (mutual understanding), '*kugarisana*' (peaceful co-existence), '*kuwadzana*' (fellowship), '*ushamwari*' (friendship), '*kudyidzana*' (this word captures the idea of mutual hospitality but is not reducible to it), and '*mushandirapamwe*' (co-operation). These concepts express major values which can be broken down into minor values whose function were to facilitate right conduct in the Shona community.

Life is not about the individual, it is about everyone you, them, and me. It is about the family name, the individual and societal image, the collective dignity, everything (Muropa, Kusure, Makwerere, Kasowe, & Muropa, 2013). Unhu is a way of life that positively contributes to the sustenance of the wellbeing of a people, community, and society. It is a process that promotes the common good of a people or society. Unhu generates a social love story rooted in brotherhood. It is an invisible unifying force. We all need to live together. In Zimbabwe, community is an essential component of social action and brings people together and imprints individuals with their social and cultural identity.

Zimbabwe needs recourse to the wisdom encapsulated in the ethos of unhu in order to experience, harmony, serenity, balance, and peace. To be human is to affirm one's humanity by

recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with others. A person with unhu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Makuvaza, 2014). If we are informed by this philosophy, we are compelled to value human life and the mere fact of being human. The philosophy of unhu further appeals to the Shona because it cherishes values and attitudes that are already cherished by other cultures and are described as virtues. Such virtues include hospitality, fraternity, courtesy, self-sacrifice for the benefit of family and community, kindness, humility, consideration, gentleness, fairness, responsibility, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, hard work, integrity, and above all tolerance. These are regarded as fundamental to being human. Thus to opt for unhu is to opt for the preservation of life and a respected identity.

It is usually assumed that a household is comprised of one adult male, one adult female members, and that children become part of the household. Children help with household chores while attending school, but are not usually responsible for the greater part of the household work. This assumption has changed drastically with the emergence of households headed by children. I am talking of children who are 17 years of age and younger. Some of them become orphans below the age of 10 years and become head of households at 8 years of age. Children heading households and taking care of children (siblings) are engaged in very “un-childlike” behavior, even though ‘normal’ childhood in Zimbabwe is characterized by some work and responsibility (Francis-Chizororo, 2008). CHHs challenge notions of the ideal home, family, and normal childhood and undermine international attempts to institute children’s rights.

It is with this background that I form the questions of this study. What has happened to the fundamental principle of interdependence and mutuality in the Shona community now that children are seen to head households? Where is the extended family? Is this a sign of erosion of the whole philosophy of unhu?

Statement of the Problem

According to UNICEF (2011), about 1.3 million children have been orphaned since the first case of HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe was recorded in 1985. Life expectancy in Zimbabwe is 55 years, and is among the lowest in the world (CIA World Fact Book, 2015). Of the 13 million people in Zimbabwe, 46% are under 18. Of these 1.6 million or 12.3% are orphans who have lost parents to HIV/AIDS or the cholera epidemic. The growing number of orphans in Zimbabwe is putting huge economic and social strain on a society whose demographic profile showed children and youth constituting 50% of the population in 2012 (UNICEF Zimbabwe & Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2015). One of the most distressing consequences of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has been the development of child-headed households (CHHs).

All across Zimbabwe, a generation of children is being raised by the extended family or is living in child-headed households. The growing number of vulnerable children threatens the achievement of Education for All (EFA) which is one of the United Nations Millennium Development goals to which Zimbabwe is a signatory. In a country that once had a literacy rate of around 80%, its children now face a very different reality. The number of children attending school in Zimbabwe dropped from 85% in 2007 to below 20% in 2009, a decline mostly attributed to unaffordable school fees and a shortage of teachers. One group that is particularly impacted by the collapse of the economic and education systems is the vulnerable children from child-headed households. Child-headed households in Zimbabwe are a new phenomenon

resulting from both the economic meltdown and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Families are losing their breadwinners and at the same time the resources to care for the sick and orphaned children. The extended family tries to absorb the majority of orphans, but this family security now seems to be saturated. According to the director of Save the Children Zimbabwe, the story of children raising other children is replicated across the country; there are 100,000 child-headed households in Zimbabwe (Walker, 2003). These children have no voice. They need to be heard.

Early researchers such as Foster et al. (1997) had assumed that there was no such thing as children heading households in Africa. This assumption was based on the fact that in the African culture orphaned children were naturally looked after within households of their extended families (Ganga & Chinyoka, 2010). Concurring with this view about the African culture in general, the concept of a social orphan did not exist in Zimbabwean societies in particular. The traditional Shona community of Zimbabwe was characterized by brotherhood, a sense of belonging to a larger family and by groups rather than individuals (Foster et al., 1997). The core notion of *hunhuism* or *unhu* as understood by the Shona suggests that we are only human in relationship with other people (Chiwara, Shoko, & Chitando, 2013). As such, biologically orphaned children were cared for by members of their extended families especially by aunts and uncles who took on the care-giving functions of parents (Foster et al., 1997). The extended family was the traditional social security system and its members were responsible for the protection of the vulnerable and the transmission of traditional societal values and education.

Today there has been a paradigm shift due to westernization, colonization, the AIDS pandemic, economic meltdown, and globalization. When economies fall apart, women and children suffer. The Shona people are operating within a blended cultural environment, and therefore some of the traditional values have been modified whilst others have almost

disappeared. The roles and responsibilities of both the extended family and the community are some of the affected traditions resulting in the emergence of households headed by children among the Zimbabwean community and the whole of Africa.

In the 2011 documentary, Zimbabwe's Forgotten Children, nine-year-old Esther must care for her baby sister Tino, and their mother who is dying of HIV/AIDS. Grace, aged 12, rummages through rubbish dumps in Harare to find bones to sell for school fees. Obert, aged 13, pans for gold to make enough money to buy food for himself and his grandmother, while dreaming of somehow getting the education he craves (Sithole, 2011). These are the stories of the children growing up in today's Zimbabwe. This development raises practical questions about how the children will cope without parental guidance during their childhood, how this experience will affect their adulthood, and how it will affect social change more broadly. At their tender age, these children have not mastered the concept of *unhu* to teach it to their younger siblings thereby creating a void in some aspects of social norms and culture.

According to Maqoko (2006), these children are undergoing traumatic experiences that threaten their lives. When parents die, the children suffer neglect and discrimination by adults in whose care they have been left. They lose inheritance as they are often cheated out of property and money that are rightfully theirs. They live in fear and isolation as they are forced out of their homes to unfamiliar and even hostile places, such as camps for the displaced or the streets. These children face every kind of abuse and risk, including becoming infected with HIV/AIDS themselves. They face economic hardships as they are forced to take on the adult role of supporting the family.

On a psychological level, children are traumatized by the illness and eventual loss of their parents. When the parents became ill, the children have to care for parents and siblings. The

mutual relationship between parent and child is described by Erik Erikson in 1956, as cited by Kroger (2007) as crucial to the development of a child is missing. In addition to losing parents, the children have the added pressure of becoming the heads of households, and caring for siblings. This extreme pressure on young children has resulted in adolescents leaving school in order to care for their siblings. The pressure to abandon schooling intensifies when one or both parents die. They lack both the guidance and influence of parents and the education, which could be had from schooling. The foundations on which to build their lives are severely damaged if not totally destroyed. The world needs to know that a whole generation of children out there is burdened by the adult responsibilities of raising and supporting families.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the phenomenon of Child-Headed Households (CHHs) in rural Zimbabwe and to understand the phenomenon among the Shona community of Zimbabwe from the perspectives of relatives, neighbors, and the children themselves. In this case study, I will explore and understand the perspectives of relatives and neighbors of children living in child-headed households. I wish to understand how these children are perceived by adults who live in the same community with them and how these children cope on daily basis without parental care, guidance, and, supervision. As a researcher, I want to examine and analyze the challenges encountered by these unaccompanied children in their efforts to survive and access education.

For this study, a child heading a household is defined as a person who is 17 years and younger with full responsibility for the rest of the household. This includes both boys and girls.

Research Questions

In an effort to understand the phenomenon of children heading households and the role of the Shona community in addressing the issue, the following questions ensue.

How do children living in child-headed households cope on daily basis without parental guidance, care, and supervision? How do they access basic necessities like food, clothing, education, health care, and general protection from abuse? How are children living in child-headed households perceived by their neighbors and relatives?

Overview of the Methodology

A qualitative case study design will be used for this study to gain understanding of child-headed households (CHHs) among the Shona community of Zimbabwe from the perspectives of relatives, neighbors, and the children themselves. The qualitative method was ideal for this study because of the need to gain the perspectives of relatives and neighbors of the children living in households headed by children. To understand better any phenomenon about which little is known, it is advisable to use qualitative methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Qualitative methods can also be used on things already known so as to gain new perspectives or to gain more in-depth information (Hoepfl, 1997). Qualitative research is inductive in nature and used as a method of exploring and gaining better understandings of human behavior. Based on the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The qualitative method emphasizes rich descriptions of natural or social events where the researcher tries to develop understanding concerning a social situation, role, group, or interaction. One child-

headed household from a village of the Shona people in Chirumhanzu district of Zimbabwe will be used as a case study.

Theoretical Framework of this Study

A theory according to Kwaramba (2000) is a set of rules, guidelines or law-like rules that help understand phenomena. Amgoud and Prade (2008) defines a theory as a basis of arguments and decision making. A theory is a guide to procedure, assessments, analysis and notation during documentation. A theory helps in reaching to some optimal conclusions rather than mere descriptions or through trial and error. Swanson (2013) surmised that a theoretical framework consists of concepts, their definitions, relevant scholarly literature, and existing theory that are used for a particular study. The concepts should be relevant to the topic and relate to the broader areas of knowledge being considered (Labaree, 2013). The framework is a conceptual model that establishes a sense of structure that guides a research (Lani, 2014). It is a collection of interrelated concepts that guides research, determining the things I will measure and the relationships I seek to understand (Borgatt, 1999; Lani, 2014).

A preliminary review of the literature is conducted in order to build a theoretical framework, select a methodology, and determine the lens through which the data will be viewed. The role of researcher is important since qualitative inquiry uses text or recorded words as a primary source of data. The investigator must analyze, interpret, and then articulate often-subtle irregularities within the data.

This study employs an integrative lens namely the Shona philosophy of *Unhu*, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. By using an integrative lens, the researcher will get a better perspective and deeper understanding of

relatives and neighbors regarding child-headed households among the Shona people of Zimbabwe.

Donald, Lazarus, and Lolwana (2006) assert that the promotion of wellness of every child is dependent on, among other factors, the ecological system of relations that comprise the micro, meso, exo, macro, and chrono systems. Two Zimbabwean scholars, Musiyiwa and Muzembe (2011) renamed Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as bio- ecological theory. The importance of using bio-ecological theory in this study is that the theory places special emphasis on the impact of various aspects of the environment on child development (Musiyiwa & Muzembe, 2011). Bronfenbrenner views the development of the child as a process that unfolds within a complex of relationships occurring in multiple environments (Patterson, 2000). Systems in this theory imply various social and political institutions in the environment. The institutions directly or indirectly influence the development of the child. The systems present opportunities and challenges to the child that promote or impinge on child's survival and development (Patterson, 2000). Bronfenbrenner (1979) cited in Musiyiwa and Muzembe (2011) suggests that the microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystems, macro systems and chronosystems affect children's development in different ways. The theory focuses on the mutual accommodation between the developing individual and the environment. The interaction between the environment and the child is an active and reciprocal one.

The initial and immediate system is the microsystem. This system is comprised of institutions in which the child is directly involved and participates actively. These include children's homes, schools, churches, and other organizations. The child has daily interactions with family members, peers, and teachers (Santrock, 2011). How these groups or organizations interact with the child have an effect on how the child grows and performs. According to

Santrock (2011), the more encouraging and nurturing these relationships and places are, the better the child will be able to grow physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Each child's temperament also affects how others treat them (Musiyiwa & Muzembe, 2011). If the relationship in the immediate microsystem breaks down, the child might not have tools to explore other parts of his or her environment.

The mesosystem describes how different systems of the child's microsystem interact for the sake of the child. For example, the relationship between the child's home and school is a mesosystem (Musiyiwa & Muzembe, 2011). If a child's home caregivers take an active role in supporting school activities, such as teacher-parent meetings and school open days, this ensures a child's overall growth. In contrast, if the child's two caregivers give conflicting lessons, for example on the importance of sports, this confuses the child and hinders growth. Santrock (2011) states that, if neglected by home caregivers, the child may have few chances of developing positive attitudes towards teachers; thus performance declines and the child may resort to withdrawal from classmates. The relationship between parents/guardians and teachers usually influences child's performance. Parental involvement in the education of children stimulates enthusiasm, enhances motivation, and projects a renewed sense of responsibility in children, especially in matters that concern education. Hence, it is important that parents be fully involved in their children's education in order for them to perform well.

Family members can be mediators in the intellectual wellness of children. Chronosystem describes how families and other systems which influence the development of children continuously change and develop themselves. These changes all interact with the child's progressive stages of development (Donald et al., 2006). Bronfenbrenner's perspectives help an individual to see how partnership and interlink ages of objects or things are important in the

promotion and development of any system. According to the ecological system, if the relationship in the immediate micro system breaks down, the child will not have the tools to explore other parts of his or her environment (Addison, 1992). In my view, parental absence constitutes a breakdown in the ecological system that is likely to impact negatively on learners' academic performance and social development.

The ecosystem includes people and places that influence individual development but in which the individual does not directly participate (Musiyiwa & Muzembe, 2011). Children interact with the extended family and neighbors. The ecosystem includes the parents' workplace, the formal, informal, social, and political institutions that make decisions that affect the child's life. For example, if a child's parents are laid off from work that may have negative effects on the child when parents cannot pay rent, pay fees, or buy groceries. In contrast, if promoted, the parents will be able to provide the child's physical needs (Santrock, 2011). Due to current economic hardships, extended family heads are facing many financial constraints, impinging on their provision of quality care to orphans. Orphaned learners may suffer from malnutrition and disease which can cause absenteeism and other problems. The child may not pay attention in class due to hunger. The child becomes passive in school activities resulting in poor performance.

The macro system consists of factors such as social class and ethnic and cultural customs. It also includes governmental laws and policies that frame the activities of children and their families (Mohanty, 2004). The macro system exerts significant influence on the child's development. For example, 49 children perished of measles at the Johane Marange gathering in July 2010 because parents did not believe in medication (Sachiti, 2010). This catastrophe could have been easily reversed if health services have been sought in time. Bronfenbrenner (1979) as

cited in Musiyiwa and Muzembe (2011) recognizes that at any one time, the circumstances around the child's life are constantly, directly or indirectly influencing the child's development positively or negatively. The orphaned children in Zimbabwe who come from child-headed families look upon to their elder siblings who overwork due to doubling up of responsibilities. As a result, older orphaned children fail to cope with their own schoolwork as well as failing to assist young siblings. Older orphaned children might come to school late because they first perform household chores. Thus the younger siblings also come to school late hence affecting their performance. Policies in the macro systems should allow positive functioning of other systems. Berk (1998) points out that the ecological theory identifies the importance of other interactions on the development of the orphaned child.

The Chrono-system is of great interest for this study. It describes the changes made by the changing environment and life-altering events that affect the individual. Social factors such as death of parent(s) or someone very close to them, changes in the family structure, or beloved teacher's mid-year transfer or retirement (Santrock, 2011) all interact with the child's progressive stages of development (Musiyiwa & Muzembe, 2011). Although most orphaned children try to remain resilient, they suffer negativity and uncertainties about their future that militates against effective assimilation and accommodation within their ecological environment. It is from the above mentioned insights provided by the theory that inspires the researcher to study the perceptions of relatives and neighbors regarding child-headed households among the Shona community in rural Zimbabwe.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bio-ecological systems theory and Maslow's (1990) hierarchy of needs will be used as lenses to interrogate the intersection between family background and intellectual wellness of these children. I will look at Maslow's (1990) hierarchy of needs by

closely observing whether the children's physiological, social, and emotional needs are satisfied with the care, they are getting from their relatives and neighbors. In using the three theories, I will also focus on how the relatives and neighbors perceive children in child-headed households among the Zimbabwean Shona Society. In this study, the researcher will observe how interactional patterns influence the wellness of orphans.

Significance of the Study

The study may raise awareness and understanding of the phenomenon of child-headed households among the Shona community of Zimbabwe. Children are the future of the nation and therefore an important part of the community. The affected children will get some publicity. The whole village can benefit since according to the Shona traditional, cultural values, and practices, children constitute the focal point of life ensuring the replacement and growth of society. In some countries, it is illegal for children under 18 to live by themselves; this study is going to expose the plight of children among the Shona community. The study is going to raise awareness among the Shona community so that they can plan for other supporting services when extended families cannot cope.

Decision makers from the education, economics, and the legal sectors may be informed by this study as they develop articles and policies, which respect and recognize children's rights. The study should influence policy makers to include children from child-headed households among the vulnerable and disadvantaged children especially in the programs which support orphans materially, educationally, and psychologically. These children can also advance the global understanding of children and childhood by showing that they are resourceful, competent and knowledgeable. Like adults, they manage to cope not only in extreme conditions of material poverty, but also without parental guidance.

I hope that these stories of children from child-headed households will prompt the responses of not only relatives and neighbors but also humanitarian organizations and churches in Zimbabwe, Africa, and the whole world to play pivotal roles in supporting these vulnerable children. They should be cared for, allowed to be children, and afforded normal socialization. They need security. The humanitarian organizations should feel compelled to help with the welfare of these children to afford them dignity.

This study contributes to research; there are so many issues emerging out of the study of children raising other children, which researchers can pursue. In addition to this case study, one could do a quantitative study that looks at the incidence of hunger, lack of education, or perhaps mortality rates in child headed-households.

Assumptions

The study is based on the assumption that there are orphaned children who head households among the Shona community of Zimbabwe. It is also assumed that the selected participants will understand the interview questions, cooperate in their responses by offering genuine data.

Limitations

The fact that focus will be on one CCH might limit the results. Though comprehensively done, sampling is too limited for generalization. The characteristics this one household may display may not be the characteristics of all CCHs among the Shona people of Zimbabwe.

My multifaceted identity might be a challenge and a blessing to both the participants and the study. It is my hope that participants would view my intended identity of a researcher seeking to understand and gain some knowledge about the actuality of the children who live that reality. I am going to do research among the Shona people of Zimbabwe. Although it is a different district,

I was born and raised among the rural community of the Shona people. Some of the participants might just receive me as a daughter, sister, an aunt, and a friend. Some might just see a catholic nun who is on pastoral work. Yet others could also see a trusted, respected nun, who somehow has been uprooted from the reality of her people. I am aware that I am going to these children, their relatives, and neighbors as a privileged educated woman; the very opposite of the people I am going to learn from. I am also returning to my people as a person exposed to western education and the American culture that has influenced my thinking and perceptions, which could also influence the way the rural people would perceive me among them. In an effort to minimize potential negative impact on the study, I should pay attention to these complex identities.

Summary

This chapter focused on the problem and its settings. The background to the study, its purpose, and statement of the problem were discussed. Research questions and objectives were stated. The theory that informs the study was highlighted. Also discussed were assumptions held by the researcher and the limitations of the study. Chapter two will focus on literature review.

Review of Related Literature

Scholars have noted that a good review of literature helps the researcher to focus precisely on the topic, to determine the relationship of the topic to past, current, and future studies, and to develop a conceptual or theoretical framework to guide the study (Creswell, 2014; Roberts & Crossley, 2004). In this chapter, I will examine, explore, and review the related literature in order to understand the phenomena of child-headed households and the community response to it.

In identifying literature for this study I searched articles that focused on child-headed households. This mainly included studies carried out in countries like Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. The general trend was that intervention programs targeting orphans in Sub-Saharan Africa seem to be more concerned about the provision of material needs to orphans at institutional levels like orphanages while paying little attention to those children raising their siblings while living in their deceased parents' homes. This study places a focus on how orphans survive on daily basis while they remain in their biological household. A thematic approach ensued in the analysis of the reviewed literature to cover the topics of childhood, cultural values, psychosocial challenges of orphans, blended cultures, support services, and child-headed households.

Childhood

In the African sense, the definition of a child is a social construct and thus value laden. It is calculated by what role a child plays in society at any given stage. The definition of the child thus becomes situational. The definition of a child in Zimbabwe varies depending on whether it is based on legal, formal, educational, customary, or cultural understanding. According to customary practices in Zimbabwe a person is a child as long as he or she remains under parental

authority rather than being defined by chronological age. According to the official documents of Zimbabwe, each Ministry defines a child differently, thus a child may concurrently be a pupil in educational terms, a delinquent in the field of juvenile justice, and a victim or object of concern in welfare circles. The Children's Protection and Adoption Act, Chapter 33 defines a child as any person under the age of 16 years. This includes an infant. This definition, while in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, conflicts with the Zimbabwean cultural and traditional definitions of a child.

The terms used to refer to persons under the age of 18 differ, as do the expectations of the corresponding activities, duties, and responsibilities. In Zimbabwe a young person is viewed as a child until he/she participates in the social and economic roles enjoyed by adults, not according to the law. Foster, et al. (1997) reported that some households are headed by children as young as 10 to 12 years. This raises a number of problems especially regarding to children assuming the roles of parents and thereby taking the responsibility of raising siblings while they need training themselves in both formal education and informal socialization. The definition of a child in this study is any person below the age of 18 years. Orphans are those children whose parents have died; vulnerable children are children with unfulfilled rights. This definition is in accordance with the Zimbabwe National Orphan Care Policy of 2011, which defines orphans as those aged birth to 18 whose parents have died (Meda, 2013).

Cultural Values

In traditional African value systems children constitute the focal point of life, ensuring the replacement and growth of society. It is therefore almost impossible to define a child without making reference to the cultural value system. Chiwara et al. (2013) purport that the Shona have rich social cultural values that include ethics and morals through the concept of "Hunhuism"

which demonstrates good personality and peaceful co-existence. Among the Shona unhu (personhood) derives from vanhu (people or the community) who define what it is to be munhu (a person). According to Chidester (2014), a human being is human because of other human beings. The Shona expression, munhu munhu navanhu – a person is a person through other persons, is important. In an African cultural perspective, personhood is expressed through the practice of giving realized through ancestral rituals, kinship, and inclusive acts of hospitality. One is entitled to the right to life, security, and liberty in relation to one's communal set of social, economic and political ethics, all secured by belonging to the community of the living and the living dead.

The Shona believe in corporate relationships rather than individualized ones. The issue of identity is critical especially as it pertains to children. Children are the future of the nation, and therefore an important part of the community. Traditionally, the Shona children do not belong exclusively to their parents, but also to the community and the broader group of kin, a fact that is recognized in Article 31 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children. A child has obligations first to the community and kinsmen and then, after these, to parents. By the same token the community has considerable authority over parents, meaning in principle that the wider society is able to protect children against abuse, neglect, and exploitation by parents. This idea of children needing protection implies a need for parental and communal guidance, thereby being subject to adult authority and generally being objects of concern. The protection to which children are subject takes away the rights to participation. This brings in the assumption that a child should be seen but not heard.

Laws and regulations pertaining to protection and welfare of the child are important but the rights of the child are fundamentally sustained in the quality of the relationship between the

child and the closest care givers in the household, be it nuclear or extended. The enhancement of that quality is therefore a primary right issue (Jareg, 1992). According to Auret (1995), in Zimbabwe there is a culture of collective responsibility for children. As a result, the term *child-parent relationship* does not always mean a child's relationship with his/her biological parents but may also encompass children's relationship with the extended family, adults looking after the children, and the community at large. Children in the traditional Shona society of Zimbabwe do not belong exclusively to their parents. They have obligations to the wider society, which likewise has the responsibility for their proper socialization. The concept of parent is wider than the man and woman who are biological parents and the idea of family assumes an extended group of kin.

These factors are crucial to the interpretations of both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Convention: United Nations Human Rights, 2015) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Charter World Health Organization, 2015). Both instruments work based on a core idea that states who can best secure the rights of children. However, underlying assumptions about family are different in the Convention, where a nuclear family is implied, and the Charter that assumes extended families and a broader group of adults takes on parental responsibilities.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "all children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same protection" (United Nations Article 25:2, 2015). Long before that was passed, the Shona community had its own customs which served as checks and balances to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Mushishi (2010) spells out specific Shona practices of *zunde ramambo* (chief's storehouse as a food security program), *chiredzwa* (child caring appreciation) and, *sara pavana* (traditional inheritance of a deceased man's family)

which promote children's rights in the sense that they protect, sustain, and perpetuate human life, dignity, and integrity (United Nations, Article 25:3, 2015).

Chiredzwa in the Shona culture is a token of appreciation given to the person who raises a child who is not their own. This token is normally paid by the father of the child or by the child himself or herself when he or she becomes economically independent. The token is usually a cow or money. The *chiredzwa* covers all aspects of childcare from infancy to adulthood. This includes the provision of social security and food, as well as shelter, integrity, respect, dignity, and health care. It is interesting to note that the payment of *chiredzwa* is not compulsory and is neither a right. However, according to the African Traditional Religion (ATR), there is a belief that if *chiredzwa* is not paid the person who has been cared for will not have good life.

“Nonpayment of *chiredzwa* is associated with bad omen. The person may never find employment, may never marry, or may get married but will not have children” (Mushishi, 2010, p.132). On the same note, *chiredzwa* gives a child a new sense of ancestral protection and therefore helps the child psychologically to feel a new sense of spiritual identity. This notion gives the child a sense of belonging and social identity, which in turn reduces emotional stress. The custom provides the child with a positive sense of self-esteem, which is critical in leading a successful life. The concept of *chiredzwa* signifies an active sense of human responsibility over children among the Shona.

Sara pavana, which literally means (remain behind with the children), is a cultural concept that requires the family of a deceased man to name a successor as titular head of family. The words contain an instruction to the named individual to take care of the children whose father is dead. The implied moral responsibility is childcare. The word child here refers to offspring, son or daughter even if they are adults, and not necessarily an infant. The appointed

person provides emotional, moral, and spiritual support to the family left behind by the deceased. The *sara pa vana* is a cultural family care concept. It is a traditional human and childcare support system. Children sustain the traditional lineage and for this reason, a *Sara pavana* must be named to take care of this heritage (Mushishi 2010). The *Sara pavana* is a double-edged sword. As part of the extended family network that ensures the safety, security, and wellness of orphaned children, it might ensure that children are not deprived of their cultural heritage and inheritance, but it can also violate children's rights, as they cannot make decisions about their future. Unfortunately, some people instead of being compelled by unhu to take care of orphans, the existence of inheritance is driving them to accept the care of the orphans who they neglect after squandering their parents' estate. This explains why despite the cultural practices of the Shona which seem to offer care, protection, and security to orphaned children; we have children bearing the burden of adult responsibility by heading their households when parents die.

Child-Headed Households

It makes sense then that early researchers such as Foster, et al. (1997) assumed that there was no such thing as children heading households or families in Africa. This assumption was because in the African culture orphaned children were naturally looked after within households of their extended families (Ganga & Chinyoka, 2010). Concurring with this view about the African culture in general, the concept of a social orphan did not exist in Zimbabwean societies. The traditional Shona community of Zimbabwe was characterized by brotherhood, a sense of belonging to a larger family and by groups rather than individuals (Foster et al., 1997). The core notion of Hunhuism or unhu as understood by the Shona suggests that we are only human in relationship with other people (Chiwara, et al., 2013). As such, biologically orphaned children were cared for by members of their extended families, especially by aunts and uncles who took

on the care-giving functions of parents (Foster et al; 1997). The extended family was the traditional social security system; and its members were responsible for the protection of the vulnerable and the transmission of traditional societal values and education.

Due to a number of factors such as westernization and the impact of colonization, the AIDS pandemic, economic meltdown, and globalization, today there has been a paradigm shift. The Shona people are operating in a complex environment and therefore some of the traditional values have been modified whilst others have almost disappeared. The roles and responsibilities of both the extended family and the community are some of the affected values resulting in the emergence of households headed by children (CHH) among the Zimbabwean community and the whole of Africa. Child-headed households are a concrete evidence of the loss of *unhu* among the Shona people of Zimbabwe.

Current researchers agree that the appearance of CHHs in African societies is a recent phenomenon with early cases noted in the 1980's in Rakai District of Uganda (WHO, 1990) and Kagera region of Tanzania (Mukoyogo & Williams, 1991). In 1991 child-headed households were observed in Lusaka Zambia (Ham, 1992) and Manicaland in Zimbabwe (Foster, Makufa, & Drew, 1997).

Foster et al. (1997) defined a household as one or more people who share cooking and eating arrangements. Van Breda (2010) adds that a child-headed household is typically defined as a family, living under the same roof, which is headed by a person under the age of 18. The household head is the person primarily responsible for the day-to-day running of the household, including child care, breadwinning and household supervision. Phillips (2011) defines a child-headed household as a home where a child has taken parental responsibilities especially in caring for the younger siblings and makes decisions in daily matters. She proposes that a CHH is “a

household consisting of one or more members in which the role of principal caregiver has by necessity been taken over by a child under the age of 18” (p. 163). A child-headed family or household is a family in which a minor child or adolescent has become the head of the household. This situation may be necessitated by illness or death of the parents. In a child-headed household, all members of the household are children (Meintjes et al., 2010). This situation causes concern about the vulnerability of young people caring for themselves, about the costs to their safety, education, health, and social development.

Policy Framework

The government of Zimbabwe has enacted a policy in favor of the orphaned child. The policy stresses that a child whose parents are both dead or cannot be traced and who has no legal guardian is considered by the state as a child in need of care (The Child Protection and Adoption Act Chapter 5, 06 1996 Section 2b). The government of Zimbabwe has also implemented the National Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) in 2005 to 2010 after approval by the cabinet in 2004. The second phase from 2011 to 2015, in line with the national strategic plan’s overall goal, is to promote an enabling environment, preserve, nurture, and restore the psychosocial well-being of children so that they can live in hope and dignity in safe and caring environments. It is from such policies that all support systems including the Department of Social Welfare and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) engage in many endeavors to address the plight of orphans. Services include provision of shelter, food and clothes handouts and in some cases resources for income generating projects. Child friendly courts are open for especially abused children, thus protecting the rights of all children.

Psychosocial Challenges of Orphan hood

Psychosocial development is concerned with one's social relationships and management of one's emotional life (Thompson, 2000). It is the close connection between psychological aspects of experience (thoughts and emotions) and the wider social experience (relationships, practices, traditions, and culture), both of which interact to form the human experience. It also takes into account spiritual value systems, beliefs and physical aspects of the individual. Several challenges that impede smooth development are noted.

The sense of loss and bereavement. Wahab, Odunsi, & Ajiboye, (2012) views loss as a result of being deprived of something significant and valued in one's life. The death of parents is quite traumatic to children as the absence of a father deprives them of male authority. On the other hand, the death of a mother robs them of crucial emotional and mental security (Case et al., 2003). In a study in Maputo, Mozambique, Garbarino, Konstenlmy, and Dubrow (1991) found that among traumatic experiences children suffered during war were loss of homes and violent death of parents or family members. Orphans thus knew how fragile the world is even at a very tender age. The experience of loss can lead to great anxiety where children learn that nothing in the future can be considered stable and secure.

Stigmatization and child abuse. HIV and AIDS orphans face stigma and discrimination. The situation is worsened when such orphans feel rejected by relatives and neighbors. Such response distorts and magnifies the effect of loss of parents, deepening the sense of isolation and alienation while creating a context for physical, sexual, and emotional abuse (UNICEF, 2003). Bronfenbrenner (1977) further argues that emotional and sexual abuse can result in social withdrawal and the harboring of insecurities that could lead to violence, mistrust, and permanent fear.

Responsiveness of Intervention Programs for Orphans in Zimbabwe

Schorr and Schorr (1989) posits that effective intervention programs provide a wide spectrum of services including socio-emotional support as well as concrete services like food, shelter, and employment. Examples are given below.

Institutionalization. Initially, the idea of orphanages offered relief for many countries faced with orphan crises. In Mozambique, the idea was popular after the war in the 1970s (Bowlby, 2012). A similar situation occurred in Nicaragua where more than 15,000 orphans whose parents had been killed in armed conflicts were exposed and needed care in orphanages (Garbarino et al., 1991). In Zimbabwe, institutionalization has recently become unsustainable given the size of the AIDS orphans problem. Thus, a more permanent and accommodating solution is necessary to meet the psychosocial needs of orphans. The argument presented is that child care institutions should expand beyond the provision of food, clothes, and shelter into such areas as skills development and empowerment.

The school and psychosocial support for orphans. Bronfenbrenner (1997) and de Lorne (1986) cited in Young minds of Africa (2017) concur that children grow up in a system of social networks with the family and school closely influencing the child's socio-emotional development. However, Gatsi (2014) posits that schools have limited skills in providing relevant socio-emotional cushioning for traumatized children resulting in poor assessment of critical needs. Schools need to be proactive in empowering children with skills to manage stress. Although it is important to note that some of these cases might require medical counselling which is above the educational capacity.

Psycho-social Needs of Orphans

The Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), a non-profit organization operating in 13 countries: Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, defines psycho-social support as a continuum of love, care, and support that addresses the social, emotional, spiritual, and psychological wellbeing of a person and influences both the individual and the social environment in which people live. This kind of support strengthens social and cultural connectedness. Effective psychosocial support enhances individual, family, and community wellbeing and positively influences both the individual and the social environment in which people live. Most organizations and even government ministries of education, health, social welfare and development recognize that mere provision of material needs is not adequate unless emotional support is considered.

Sensitive support systems. Orphans need support systems that are sensitive to their loss of parents. The need for affection is greater than daily material needs (Flemming & Adolph, 1986). This means that a support system working with orphans need big eyes to see, big ears to listen to children's problems, a mouth to speak words of comfort and wisdom, a heart to feel for and understand the child's plight, and time to visit and share with such victims of circumstances (Tassoni, Beith, Eldridge, & Gough, 2002).

Counseling services. The need for counseling in the life of traumatized individuals is critical. Nelson-Jones (1997) stresses that bereaved children should be given appropriate information including straightforward facts about death. Counseling allows orphans to cope with their situation in a more positive way. People forming their support systems should find creative, loving, and long lasting ways to send the right messages to these children.

Coping mechanisms. Children react to stress in different ways. In many cases, children in difficult circumstances have feelings, which they do not know how to handle; hence, they stuff them into their pockets and pretend to ignore them (Peterson & Nisenholz, 1995). Bowlby (2012) asserts that many find it difficult to talk about their worries. Emotional processing is, thus, key to resolving psycho-social problems. Children need to be helped to actively cope with stress rather than just react to it (Gatsi, 2014).

Summary

Traditional family and community life has changed drastically in Sub-Saharan Africa, due to demographic and social transformations such as rapid urbanization, modernization, and globalization. This is particularly the case in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Many communities are very poor, and may not have the resources or skills necessary for an effective community response in dealing with HIV/AIDS-affected households (Maqoko, 2006). HIV prevalence already causes an enormous strain on communities. Before the HIV epidemic, people used to say that there was “no such thing as an orphan in Africa” (Foster et al., 1997, p. 157), as extended family members cared for orphaned children and treated them as their own. However, it is argued that since the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the extended family networks have weakened in many African countries (Foster, 2004; Sloth-Nielsen, 2002, p. 5).

Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology of my study. It explains the research design. The design of the study will include the research design, setting of the study, and selection of participants. The chapter shall address the data collection instruments that include participant observation, interviews, focus groups, and discussion forums.

Research Design

A research design is a plan of procedures for data collection and analysis that will be undertaken to evaluate a particular theoretical perspective. It is a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place, a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between the research question and the implementation of the research (Creswell, 2014; Durrheim, 2006; Goronga & Moyo, 2013; Thorndike & Thorndike, 2010). Therefore, a research design involves the process of planning what and how data will be collected. In other words, the research design is the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. Creswell, Enbersohn and Eloff (2010) assert that research designs fall under two main perspectives: qualitative and quantitative. This study follows the qualitative method of collecting data.

Qualitative research is a broad collection of approaches using data collection processes such as interviews, observation of behavior and case study. Qualitative research seeks to understand a social phenomenon within its cultural, social, and situational context. It focuses on the construction of social reality. Merriam (2002) contends that meaning is socially constructed by the individual's interaction with their own world and the constructions change constantly. The qualitative approach is used as a descriptive study of things that cannot be instrumentally measured, such as feelings, behavior speech, thoughts, and culture. It has no one objective 'reality' which can be observed and neutrally quantified, hence it uses subjective information and

is not limited to rigidly definable variables nor does it attempt to isolate specific variables or to answer specific questions. Data collected are often the words and expressions of the research participants themselves (Lemon, cited in Du Plooy, 2013; Mathews and Ross, 2010; Relmler & Van Ryzin, 2011). Qualitative approaches are therefore concerned with stories and accounts including subjective understandings, feelings opinions and beliefs of the research participants. Kombo and Tromp, (2011) suggest that a qualitative approach be used to examine complex questions. By using a qualitative approach, the researcher hopes to gain a complete picture of a complex situation.

The current study used the qualitative approach of collecting data in its exploration of the Shona community perceptions regarding orphans in general, and child-headed households in particular. For this study, using a qualitative approach gave me, as the researcher, the opportunity to understand how the children interpret the daily events of their world and create meaning in their natural settings (Neuman, 2012). When I asked specific questions they were open-ended. This allowed the participants to tell their stories and the researcher to learn a great deal from few examples of the orphaned children under study. A qualitative case study is defined as an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015; Stake, 2005). Yin (2014) defined a case study in terms of the research process. “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) within its real- life context, especially when phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 16).

Swanborn (2010) defines case study as the study of a social phenomenon, carried out within the boundaries of one social system (the case) or within the boundaries of a few social systems (the cases). These include people, organizations, groups, individuals or local

communities in which the phenomenon to be studied enrolls in the case's natural context.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010) a case study is a type of a qualitative research in which in-depth data are gathered relative to a single individual, program, or event. The purpose is to learn more about an unknown or poorly understood situation. In view of the above definitions, a case study can be defined as the study of a few of its manifestations, in its natural surroundings during a certain period. The participants in the studied case are engaged in a process of confrontation with the explanations, views, behaviors of other participants and with the preliminary results of the researcher. Thus qualitative case studies share with other forms of qualitative research the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, an inductive investigative strategy, and the product being richly descriptive. Six children from multiple child-headed households served as the case while their relatives and neighbors from the same village were the key informants.

Merriam (1998) defined a qualitative case study as an “intensive, holistic, description, and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (p.27). Case studies provide researchers with an understanding of complex social phenomenon while preserving the holistic and meaningful characteristics of everyday events (Yin, 2014). Case studies are a valuable tool for understanding human behavior in depth (Stake, 1995). Swanborn, (2010) asserts that, data collected using a case study is richer and of greater depth than data found through experimental designs. Since it is the unit of analysis, a bounded system that defines the case, other types of studies can be combined with the case study, and hence in this case an ethnographic case study since a particular social group was studied.

This study was guided by an ethnographic case study design. Drawing on Creswell (2013), Patton (2015), Wolcott (2008) and Yin, (2014), I chose to conduct an ethnographic case

study to observe how children living in households headed by children cope on a daily basis without parental guidance and supervision. I specifically focused on the orphaned Shona children from a particular area. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) purport that a factor that unites all forms of ethnography is its focus on human society and culture. According to them, although culture has been variously defined, it essentially refers to the beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behavior patterns of a specific group of people. Although in my study I did not specifically focus on the children's Shona culture, the elements of ethnography in this case study were obvious from studying the different life styles these children lead on daily basis and the system associated with that behavior and my immersion on site as a participant observer to collect data. I spent three months in the area observing, participating in daily events and happenings of the children trying to gain insights through formal and informal interviews. This led me to understand the children's world views and ways of life from the 'inside,' in the context of their everyday, lived experiences. These became the defining characteristics of an ethnographic inquiry.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), *thick description* – a term made popular by Geertz (1973) is at the heart of an ethnography. Geertz wrote, “culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly-that is thickly described” (p. 14). It is this element of the end product being richly descriptive that made me combine the two investigative strategies of case study and ethnography, thereby ending with an ethnographic case study. A qualitative ethnographic case study research design provided a holistic and deeper understanding of experiences of children living in child-headed households. It was chosen because it was the best fit for the study as it is descriptive, exploratory, and contextual in nature. This study is

descriptive since it attempted to accurately describe and explore the experiences of those who live in child-headed households and the adults in their environment. The ethnographic case study exposed the researcher to the participants' real-life situations, thereby engaging with children as subjects and not objects of research. Engaging orphaned children as subjects resulted in child-centered initiatives. This research approach allowed the children to speak for themselves. However, working with poor orphaned children who are marginalized, traumatized, and emotionally affected by the death of their parents was a challenge.

Ethical consideration. This study involves human subjects and requires ethical consideration to ensure the protection and safety of the participants. Voluntary consent and confidentiality are ethical issues considered in this study. According to Babbie (2016) consent is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study, so they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate, Bernard (2008) notes that, private and confidential maintenance of privacy during the data collection process should always be observed by the researcher in order to protect sensitive information revealed by the research participants. This study involves minors, therefore out of respect for the children as developing persons; children were asked whether they were willing to participate in the research. Most researchers undertaking research with children deal with situations where children live with an adult who occupy positions of authority in the domestic sphere. These adults often act as gatekeepers to the children.

Due to the legal age of majority requirements, an assent procedure in which children were not pressured or forced to participate was followed. Assent means a minor's affirmative agreement to participate in research. This was gained by talking to the child and supporting that talk with a written assent document appropriate to the child's age and comprehension level. In

the assent process, I also considered the age, maturity, and the psychological state of the child. After carefully explaining the background and purpose of the study, to both the children and to the key informants, I personally sought the children's consent to participate in the study. I also emphasized that the study was for research purposes only and had no direct material benefits and the possibility of minor risks involved. Informed consent was obtained from the participants at the time of the interview. I gave the participants the consent forms and explained to them what it means. The signing of the consent forms was treated as an ongoing process that gave participants the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any moment without giving reasons and neither would they be punished or scolded if they opted out. All participants were given the option to give their consent verbally following a thorough explanation of the research aims. The option of a verbal informed consent was necessary especially in dealing with the Shona community of Zimbabwe due to fears associated with signing a legal document. As part of the ethical considerations, I also ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

Data collection. For the data collection process, I incorporated the following techniques or strategies; participant observation, informal conversations, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and key informant interviews. Observation as a method of research involves learning through involvement, looking at, and attentively watching what is going on in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants. It is also a tool that involves planned watching, recording and analyzing observed behavior as it occurs in a natural setting (Ailwood, 2003; Swamborn, 2010). Thus, observation is a process of judging the quality of a subject as it performs an action and thus it entails careful planning of what the researcher wants to observe.

In particular, to this research, I spent time with the children, lived with them as their guest, observing, and where possible doing what they were doing on daily basis and how they

did it. This gave me the opportunity to approach the participants in their own environment and I learned what life is like for them as “insiders” while I remained an “outsider”. Participant observation was useful for I gained a holistic understanding of the physical, social, cultural, and economic contexts in which study participants live, the relationships among and between people of the village, and their behaviors and activities; what they do, how frequently, and with whom. Observing and participating are integral to understanding the breath and complexities of the human experience.

As a researcher this enabled me to develop a familiarity with the cultural milieu of the whole village that proved invaluable throughout the study. I gained a nuanced understanding of context that could only come from personal experience. I spent the days mostly with Masarira and the nights at Musiyiwa and Crossborder’s house since they had space for me to sleep at their house. I learned the children’s routine, discovered who they were, their ages, gender, and experienced how they interacted among themselves and with their neighbors. Who does the cooking, gardening, cleaning? Do the children go to school? Do they have formal or informal work outside the home? Where does their food come from? What is the rhythm of daily life for the child head and the other siblings? What resources do they need? What resources do they wish they had?

The observations were recorded as field notes, and when necessary audio-recorded. Photographs captured the children’s environmental context and the settings. The photos were limited to the physical surroundings like their homes, where they fetch water, or performing a household chore like slaughtering a hen for dinner. Although the children were very enthusiastic to have their photos taken, I did not do that for ethical reasons. Eventually the observations became invaluable in the data collection process because although I could have been getting

truthful answers to the questions I asked, I may not always have asked the right questions, thus what I learned from participant observation helped me not only to understand the data collected through other methods such as interviews, focus groups, and discussion forums, but also to design questions for those methods that would give me the best understanding of the phenomenon.

Focus group discussions were also employed to gather the views of the participants especially from the community in which children living in child-headed households reside. A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a concept, idea or service (Henderson, 2009; Patton, 2015). A focus group interview is an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic. For this study, groups of six to nine people from the Shona community were asked to participate in the interview for one-half to two hours on their perceptions about child-headed households. Focus group discussions offer thick insights of descriptions from the participants. Other researchers argue that “the hallmark of a focus group is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data insights that would be less accessible without interaction found in the group” (Morgan, 1988, p. 12). It is through group interaction that thick descriptions are captured. This was more pronounced especially among teachers as they shared their views regarding the orphaned children in their classes.

I also interviewed participants individually to allow each participant to freely express themselves outside the group set-up. An interview, according to Myers and DeWall (2015) is a conversation between two or more people, where questions are asked by the interviewer to elicit facts or statements from the interviewee. Singleton and Straits (2010) suggest that an interview is a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee with a specific purpose of obtaining

relevant information for the research. Thus an interview is a direct method of collecting or obtaining data in the face-to-face situation allowing the interviewer to clarify the premise and meaning of questions, and to modify one's line of inquiry. I developed semi structured interview sessions made up of open-ended questions which allowed me to modify the questions during the conversation. Creswell (2013) viewed a semi-structured interview as a flexible and adaptable way of collecting data that encourages the informants to talk. According to Singleton and Straits (2010) the interview has the ability of allowing the interviewer to clarify questions. Face-to-face interviews offer the possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry, with the precise meaning of questions being clarified during each interview.

Before beginning the interview, I asked for permission to audio record the interviews and explained why it was important for me to record. The focus group and the interviews all took place in the participants' language Shona. They all felt comfortable expressing themselves in their mother tongue. During the process of interviewing, I was also taking short notes to stay attuned to the interview process. This proved very difficult for me since I had to facilitate the meeting, pay attention to the participants' contributions and at the same time attend to the recording devices. A fieldwork journal was used to record various activities and behaviors which took place during the data collection process. The interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed in their original language, and only translated from Shona to English as needed.

Trustworthiness and credibility. Credibility is the study's truthfulness depicted in its transparency, consistency, coherence, and communicability (Maxwell, 2013). Trustworthiness in qualitative research pertains to the use of checks for the accuracy of the findings from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant or the readers (Creswell, 2014). Various aspects of trustworthiness, such as credibility, dependability and transferability have been used in

qualitative research (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). To achieve trustworthiness for this study, I used triangulation (using different sources of data). In this respect, I collected data through observation, informal conversations, interviews and focus groups. The mixture of methods allowed data triangulation and corroboration allowing a more in-depth understanding of the research questions.

Before I started the actual data collection, I made repeated visits to the children's homes. Some of these visits were announced and others were not. Initially I did not want to announce my visits because I was avoiding a situation where the children would prepare for my visit and thereby altering their normal life. Later on I started to announce my visits because I had on two occasions walked a long distance to the children's homes only to find the doors locked and I had no idea when they would come back.

I also used a field journal to document my experiences, thoughts and personal reflections during data collection process. This journaling was a mixture of English and Shona in alignment to the actual conversations. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), field notes are a powerful tool and can be a supplement to data collection methods. Graneheim and Lundman (2004) argued, "Trustworthiness will increase if the findings are presented in a way that allows the reader to look for alternative interpretations" (p. 110). Consistency in qualitative research maybe achieved through documentation of the steps of the research procedures (Creswell, 2014). One procedure of ensuring consistency I will use in this study is to check transcripts that they are void of mistakes done during the transcription process. I will also make sure that I maintain the definition of codes throughout the process.

Data analysis. The original data was analyzed qualitatively and translated by the researcher from Shona to English as needed to write the report. Analysis of data began in the

field with recording, listening and reflection on the data. I did not assign anyone to do the transcription. Hammersley (2010) suggests that transcription is not simply a matter of writing down what was said, but it is a process of construction. He further states that the first stage of data analysis is transcription. The researcher considers the interpretation of the content during transcription and, through repeated listening, will have a detailed knowledge of the content of the interviews (Wellard & McKenna, 2001).

Data collected through focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews was analyzed through thematic content analysis. The thematic content analysis proceeded through breaking the information collected into themes emerging from the data. I identified trends and patterns emerging from the data. These trends and patterns were coded and classified into different categories and then used to make inferences based on the context of the children's daily activities and the perceptions of relatives and neighbors of child headed households among the Shona people of Zimbabwe.

The findings of the study were presented descriptively with particular descriptions consisting of the exact quotes of the participants translated into English. The confidential information shared during interviews was strictly maintained. The publication of the photos would be limited to academic publications, and not to reports offered to the community in which the data were collected.

Setting of the Study

To help the reader understand the plight of the orphaned children in this study, it is important to discuss the setting in terms of geography, time, religious beliefs, school system, economy, politics, culture and the social setting of the Shona people as a whole.

There are 11 provinces in Zimbabwe. Each province is headed by a provincial governor, appointed by the president. The provincial government is run by a provincial administrator, appointed by the Public Service Commission. The provinces are subdivided into districts. Each district is headed by a district administrator, appointed by the Public Service Commission. There is also a Rural District Council, which appoints a chief executive officer. The Rural District Council comprises elected ward councilors, the district administrator and one representative of the chiefs (traditional leaders appointed under customary law) in the district. Each district is divided into political and administrative units called Wards which on the average comprise 500 households. At ward level there is a ward development committee, comprising the elected ward councilor, the *kraal-heads* (traditional leaders subordinate to chiefs) and representatives of village development committees. Wards are subdivided into villages, each of which has an elected Village Development Committee and a Headman (traditional leader subordinate to the kraal-head). Each village has an average of 100 to 250 households. This study focused on orphaned children among the Shona people and was conducted in a small rural village in the Chaka area of Chirumhanzu District (Figure 2), in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe.

Chirumhanzu District (circled on Figure 2) lies between Mvuma and Masvingo and administratively falls under the Midlands province, though geographically Chaka is only about 47 miles north of Masvingo Province and 60 miles from Gweru the Midlands Province capital city. Chirumhanzu is known as the heartland of Catholicism. The Roman Catholics on a civilizing mission settled in Chirumhanzu at a place known back then as Guta, and contributed greatly towards what is known today as Gweru Diocese. The work of the missionaries beyond evangelization is self-evident in the number of both primary and secondary schools, hospitals and clinics in the district today.



Figure 2. Zimbabwe [map]. 2012. Scale not drawn to scale. "Zimbabwe Political Map."
Retrieved from <https://www.bizbilla.com/country-maps/zimbabwe.html/>.

Politically, there is an administrative structure at every level within the province. The political structure within the district, starts from the Provincial Administrator down to the Village Headman. The political organizational structure is illustrated on Figure 3. The lower administrative structures report to the nearest superiors up to the province.

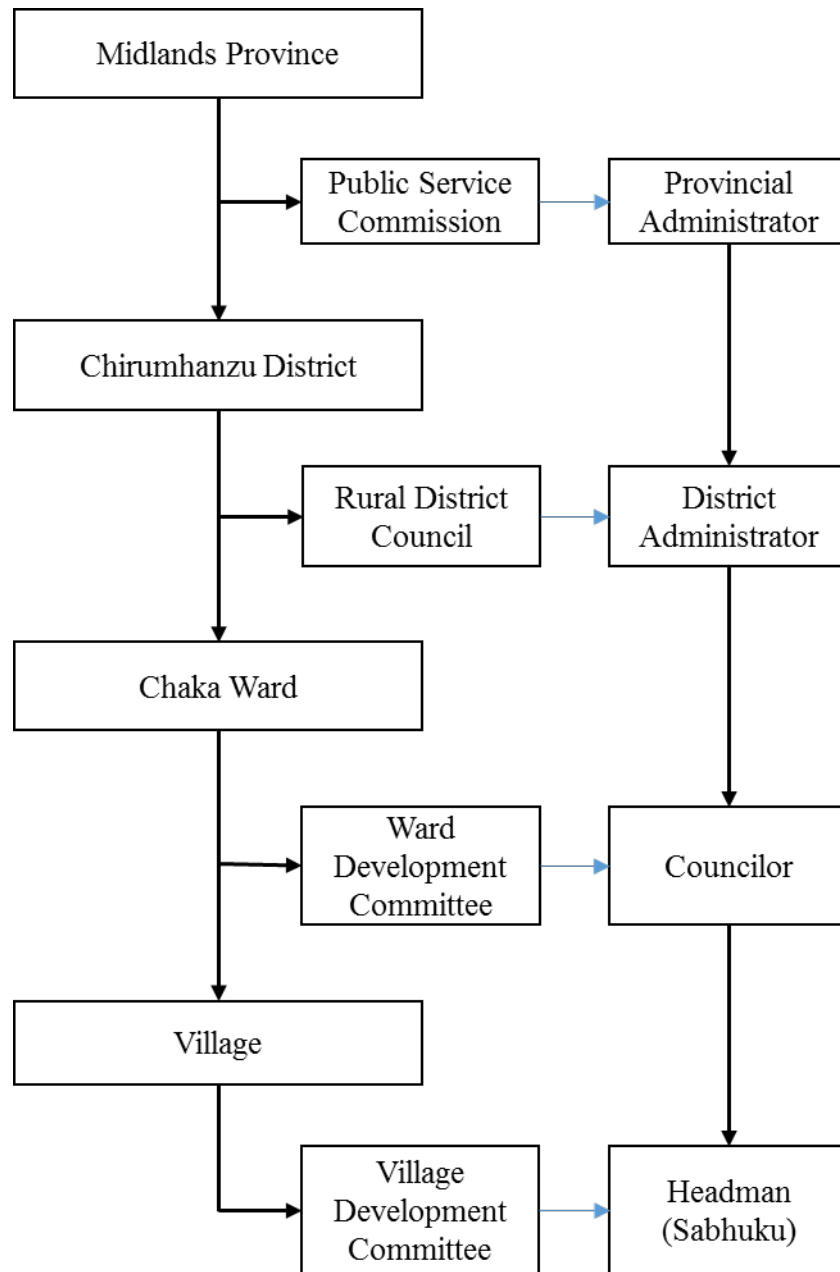


Figure 3. Provincial political structure.

Religion plays an important role in Shona culture of Zimbabwe. The religious influence goes beyond what can be termed religious in a narrow (or Western) sense: it is seen to be evident in cultures, the literature, politics, and medicine. According to Owomoyela (2002), African traditional religions have a strong foothold in contemporary Zimbabwe as an integral part of the everyday lives of many Zimbabweans. Religion, in this view, constitutes an element within

culture, as religion is seen as a way of life. Everything in the Shona culture is connected in some way. A common expression used during times of crisis by the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe is “*Mwari oga ndiye anoziva*” “only God knows our plight”. Life would be unthinkable without this dependence on God. The Shona people consider, Mwari, the Great Spirit, and the Supreme Being, as being interested not in the affairs of individuals but of communities. Human beings can communicate with him through intermediaries. Priests and nuns are considered as intermediaries between God and the community. The community defines the way of life for its members and gives the individual a sense of belonging to an extended family, tribe, or clan. This understanding of community does not divide reality into “secular” and “religious”, it is all one community. God is the source of life, and the community draws its existence from God (Bakare, 1997). The Shona people are very religious and spiritual people and as such hold the clergy and religious personnel with high regard.

Christianity was introduced in Zimbabwe by the Portuguese way back in 1561 and reintroduced by the other Europeans in 1859. Cecil John Rhodes and his British South African Company raised a force known as the Pioneer Column in 1890 and invaded the country. A Dominican sister popularly known as Mother Patrick accompanied the Pioneer Column as a nursing sister in 1890. She and 3 other sisters started the first hospital and the first school in Salisbury now known as Harare. In 2012, the estimate of the religious identity of Zimbabwe put Christianity at 85%, about 10.2 million out of the total population of 12 million people (Religion in Zimbabwe). A Lutheran writer Moyo (1991) noted that even today the community is grateful to the Catholic Church for the efforts the sisters put in providing for health, education, and the advancement of youth among the Shona.

Driefontein Mission (Guta). The place officially known today as Driefontein was originally known as Guta raNherera. Guta simply means city while coincidentally nherera means orphan. With Shashe River in the West and Gonawapotera pool where thieves and witches were drowned, Guta was well-known for its rich dark fertile soil, mushroom, and wild fruits. Until recently (2000), Guta was surrounded by commercial farms owned by the whites. The name Driefontein is Afrikaans meaning *Three Fountains*. The first missionaries who were welcomed by Nherera in his city of the valley in 1898 named it. The missionaries named it after three fountains that were between the present day Hunguru Train Station and Muwonde Hospital. The first missionaries were of the Jesuit Order, but later Bethlehem Fathers (SMB) from Switzerland and nuns from Germany took over. The present-day mission station was established in 1908 and is still in its initial condition. The year of establishment is written in brickwork. The founding Catholic mission Driefontein which serves as the headquarters of Gweru Diocese gave birth to mission stations in the likes of Holy Cross, St. Joseph's Hama, Serima, Mapiravana, Chinyuni, Moyo Musande, and Chaka Parish.

Along with its rich history, Driefontein is remembered for seven main things. The first was the school built in 1934 that attracted students from all over the country. Numerous prominent citizens of Zimbabwe including President Mugabe are products of Driefontein Primary School. Now they have added a high school. Subsequently, numerous artisans have been trained in the field of plumbing, metalwork, tailoring, home economics, agriculture, motor mechanics and carpentry. The Mission also boasts of two major hospitals, namely Driefontein Sanatorium, which specializes in the treatment of tuberculosis, and Muonde General Hospital that now trains nurses from around the country. The initial two-roomed house that served as a dispensary and eventually clinic became the first orphanage in the country. Some of the

prominent Zimbabweans who lost their parents, especially mothers at infancy became who they are because of Driefontein orphanage. The present day Muonde used to be a reformatory for young offenders before being turned into a hospital. Fourthly, Driefontein Regional House for Bethlehem Fathers from Switzerland is where all foreign-born priests who came into Zimbabwe would learn the Shona language before being deployed to their workstations. This was true of priests coming to other dioceses in Zimbabwe from abroad. Today, the Regional House has become the retirement home of these Catholic priests and brothers from abroad who have served the people of Zimbabwe. Driefontein is home to the Sisters of the Child Jesus. This is where their motherhouse is. Young women age 18 and above who want to join the Convent after successful applications go through their formation stages of Candidateship, Postulancy and Novitiate at Driefontein. All functions for these religious women from their first vows, final vows, jubilee celebrations, and funerals take place at Driefontein. All religious personnel belonging to Gweru Diocese begin and end at Driefontein. To date, most of Gweru Diocese heroes whose contribution to the struggle for civilization among the Shona People of Chirumhanzu cannot be adequately recounted in words are buried at Driefontein cemetery. Prominent among them are four bishops, two Mother Generals, several educationists, quite a number of priests, brothers and sisters lie restfully under the pine trees of Driefontein. Driefontein is more than a mission place in a rural area. It is more of a historical showpiece of civilization closely associated with the catholic diocese of Gweru. The diocese also boasts of Mambo Press, the only Catholic institution in the country that is well-known for publishing books and other literary works.

Chaka area. Chaka is a rural area 20 miles west of Driefontein Mission off the Harare - Masvingo highway which links Zimbabwe to South Africa. This major road is significant for the

area's economy as people use it as a trade route. Local people are seen by the roadside selling wares which include agricultural products, mushroom, wild fruits, vegetables, handmade art, and crafts. Chaka residents from the following villages, Chitunya, Hutire, Chigara, Bangure, Mundure, Kamanda, Machekano, Chiweshe, Chakabveyo, Matura, Chimbindi, Ndaruza, Madhibha, Mhere, Makanya, Mashoko, Chakastead and Makombo-Felixburg, just like the rest of Chirumhanzu district, are Shona communities who live on small scale subsistence farming. People eat what they plant, from vegetables to grain. *Sadza*, a Shona word for the Zimbabwean carbohydrate staple food is a stiff grain porridge made of very finely ground corn called maize in Africa. Before maize was introduced into Africa the dish was made from other grains, principally types of millet. The idea of depending on agricultural products alone brings myriads of challenges as everything depends on the rainfall according to a particular season. Drought means more than not enough water to drink. If it does not rain, it means no crops grown, no water for gardens and animals, and therefore no food and no means of livelihood.

Some of the villages within Chaka area like Makanya Farm, Makombo-Felixburg, Chakastead I and II used to be commercial farm lands owned by white people. They are now called resettlement areas. The resettlement program is a post liberation strategy of the planned and organized movement of the poor peasantry onto state-acquired former commercial land previously reserved for white farmers. Its main focus was the problems of rural poor where thousands of families in the communal areas were landless. Many more had land too small or ecologically unsuitable to produce enough to survive and others because of impoverishment, war or shortage of grazing, lack adequate cattle draft power. Neither do they have enough manure to fertilize their arable plots. Historically large tracts of land were alienated by colonial governments to white farmers or private companies running estates and plantations (Geza, 1986).

Zimbabwe is a young country, which attained independence in 1980. The problem of inequitable distribution of land in Zimbabwe dates back to the early days of the colonial era as spelled out in the British South African Company Royal Charter of 1889. The legal consequence of the order in Council was entrenched in the sovereign and property rights in the British Queen thus nullifying the former Zimbabwean traditional leadership. Large stretches of land became alienated and the indigenous people settled in small pockets of marginal and fragile communal areas. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930, which set aside 51% of land for a few white settlers prohibited the local people from owning and occupying lands in white commercial farming areas. The African Purchase Areas were created between the indigenous reserve areas and the commercial white settlers' areas. The indigenous reserves became known as Tribal Trust Lands following the gazetting of the Communal Land Act in 1965 whose title was later changed to communal area in terms of the Communal Lands Act of 1981. This situation therefore witnessed the creation of three separate categories of land classification in Zimbabwe namely the Communal Areas, Small Scale Commercial, and Large Scale Commercial Areas.

At the attainment of independence in 1980, Zimbabwe inherited a racially skewed agricultural land ownership pattern where white large-scale commercial farmers consisting of less than 1% of the population occupied 45% of agricultural land (Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement). The Land Reform Program started in 1980 with the objective of addressing the imbalances in land access ownership and use before independence. At independence therefore resettlement became the instrument for land redistribution in favor of the landless and displaced rural poor. This particular land reform was seen as a compelling argument for structural changes in agrarian relations. Agrarian reform in Zimbabwe revolves around land reform where systematic dispossession and alienation of land from the black indigenous people during the

period of colonial rule are adequately addressed. Conceptually, therefore, resettlement aimed at redistributing land in order to restructure Zimbabwe's inherited economy of unequal distribution of wealth, land, and income, other opportunities and resources. The resettlement program involved a package deal composed of various inputs that are amenable to controlled management like a classroom and a teacher house per 20 families, establishment grant per 0.5 hectares per family, one borehole per 20 families, and 5 hectares net arable per family (Gaza, 1986). This did not materialize due to the collapse of the country's economy. The department of rural development has deemed the settler human resources as key to the eradication of underdevelopment in these areas. They viewed positive and progressive changes in settler values, attitudes, changing perceptions, consciousness, and social relations as a prerogative to the fulfilment of the socio-economic objectives of the resettlement program.

The radical transformation of land and livelihoods has resulted in a new composition of people in Chaka rural area with diverse backgrounds and livelihoods strategies. Most of the settlers were farm workers who had never owned a piece of land, some used to work in urban areas, others are inter-provincial migrants from other communal areas, while some are foreign migrant workers from neighboring countries like Mozambique, Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, and South Africa, now married to Zimbabwean women. With such a diversity of backgrounds and experience it becomes challenging to establish cohesive and progressive communities in this rural area. Tendencies of the dependency syndrome are quite apparent. Some of the villagers see themselves as passive objects of development waiting to receive handouts from the government and school fees for their children from Bethlehem Missionaries at Driefontein.

While this kind of self-pity exists, in general Zimbabwe's economy is in a meltdown due to drought, corruption, and political instability. Twenty sixteen was an exceptionally difficult

year for Zimbabwe as a country due to lack of rain after an El-Nino induced drought season. There has been a massive drought and local fauna has been consumed nearly to extinction. People have been reduced to eating cactus to stay alive, but few in the wider world know about this humanitarian disaster. The conditions were dire in an area like Chaka where the only source of livelihood is subsistence farming. The community lost control over its physical and socio-economic power to overcome poverty, dependency and underdevelopment. In such a situation, even adults find it difficult to invest in their future, how do children survive on their own? Where do they find the cattle, tools, and other farming implements? If there is no rain, where do they find fruit and mushrooms to sell for survival?

The School System

Due to the legacy left by the British, education is highly regarded in Zimbabwe. It plays fundamental and foundational roles as far as knowledge, the provision of skills, and leadership roles, among other valuable arrays concerned. The schools in Zimbabwe are owned by the government, private companies and churches. Some of the best schools in the country are owned by the Catholic Church and Church of Christ. Some are boarding schools while others are day schools. Despite the church and some private companies being the responsible authorities, the government pays the teachers' salaries in all schools and so therefore has a strong voice in the running of schools and implementation of policies. The general responsibility for education in Zimbabwe lies under two ministries, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, responsible for early childhood development (ECD), primary, and secondary education, and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, responsible for tertiary education and training. Both ministries give priority to eliminating all educational inequalities that once characterized the Zimbabwean educational system. Major decisions are taken by the Head Office, and although

there has been a movement towards decentralization, regional directors who are in charge of the nine provincial education offices have limited autonomous power. Provinces are subdivided into education districts headed by an Education Officer. As a result of the decentralization process, the promotion of certain grades of employees is done at the regional level and the recruitment of teachers is done by heads of schools, and school supervision has been facilitated.

The school year in Zimbabwe is divided into three terms, each consisting of twelve to thirteen weeks (on average, 186 working days). The terms are three months each and they are all broken up by one-month holidays. The students take their national examinations during the third term in November.

Structure and organization of the education system. The school system in Zimbabwe consists of seven years of primary school and six years of secondary school. Primary school is the first seven years of the 13-year education. All primary education is compulsory in Zimbabwe. The education system has a 2-7-4-2-3+ structure. In other words: 2 years of early childhood development (ECD), officially known as Zero grade, 7 years of primary school, 4 years of secondary school, 2 years of high school, and at least 3 years of higher education.

ECD caters for children aged 3-6 years, and is the responsibilities of local communities. Some centers give certificates of attendance during the last year of ECD. Then there is 7 years of primary school. Children usually enroll in primary school to start grade one at the age of 7 years. The seven-year cycle is divided into infant grades (1 and 2), junior grades (3 to 7). While Shona or Ndebele are the major languages spoken at home, all lessons are conducted in English. During the seventh year students take examinations in: mathematics, English, Shona or Ndebele, and content, which is a combination of sciences and social sciences. At the end of the primary stage, successful students are awarded the grade seven certificate.

The secondary education is based on the British education system and is divided into secondary school, forms 1 to 4 officially known as Ordinary or simply O level, and high school, forms 5 and 6 officially known as Advanced or simply A' level. Secondary school is for pupils between 14 and 17 years of age, while high school is for pupils between 18 and 19. When students enter secondary school they compete for places in private and mission schools depending on how well they did on their seventh grade exams. There are certain curriculum for each form and level. At Ordinary Level, students can currently choose from 30 subjects in which they wish to sit for national examinations. Forms IV and VI conclude with the national examinations for the Zimbabwe General Certificate of Education at Ordinary and Advanced Levels. To sit for these examinations, candidates must register for each subject. The registration fee is \$15 for each O level subject and \$26 per each A Level subject. The Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) is the examining body for these examinations. To obtain the certificate, students must achieve a pass in at least 5 subjects, including English. Due to the limited number of schools offering advanced level, access for A levels is fiercely competitive. Only those students with very high marks manage to get into A level courses. Selection is made based on the results achieved *at Ordinary Level*. The majority of Ordinary Level students enter the labor market or proceed to vocational technical school, teachers' college, or nursing.

After obtaining the Zimbabwe General Certificate of Education at Ordinary Level, pupils may continue to the 2-year high school, concluding with the examinations for the Zimbabwe General Certificate of Education at Advanced Level. To be eligible for this certificate, pupils must obtain a passing grade in at least 2 subjects. Pupils at the Advanced Level can currently

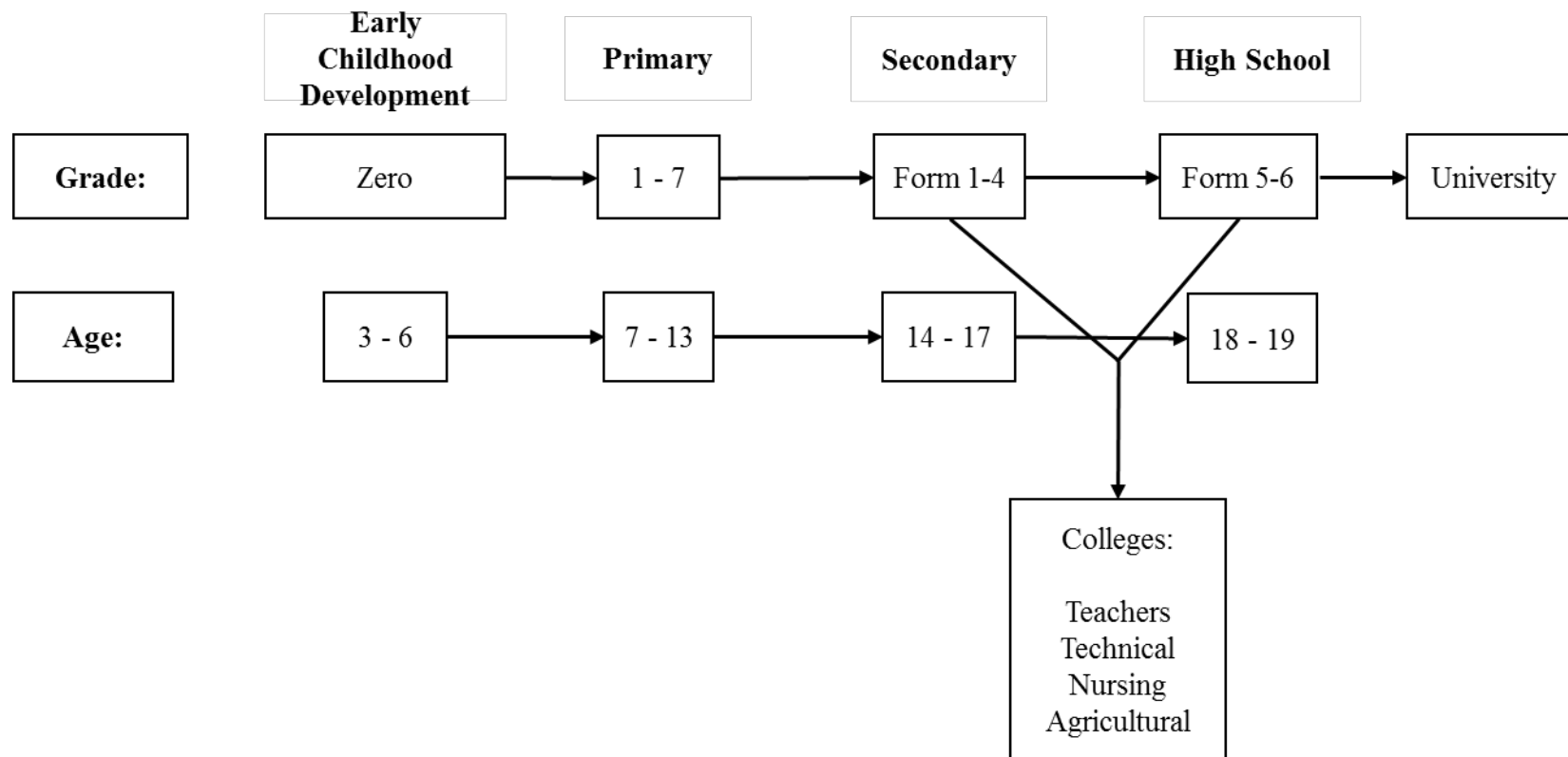


Figure 4. Structure of the education system in Zimbabwe.

The secondary education is based on the British education system and is divided into secondary school, forms 1 to 4 officially known as Ordinary or simply O level, and high school, forms 5 and 6 officially known as Advanced or simply A' level. Secondary school is for pupils between 14 and 17 years of age, while high school is for pupils between 18 and 19. When students enter secondary school they compete for places in private and mission schools depending on how well they did on their seventh grade exams. There are certain curriculum for each form and level. At Ordinary Level, students can currently choose from 30 subjects in which they wish to sit for national examinations. Forms IV and VI conclude with the national examinations for the Zimbabwe General Certificate of Education at Ordinary and Advanced Levels. To sit for these examinations, candidates must register for each subject. The registration fee is \$15 for each O level subject and \$26 per each A Level subject. The Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) is the examining body for these examinations. To obtain the certificate, students must achieve a pass in at least 5 subjects, including English. Due to the limited number of schools offering advanced level, access for A levels is fiercely competitive. Only those students with very high marks manage to get into A level courses. Selection is made based on the results achieved *at Ordinary Level*. The majority of Ordinary Level students enter the labor market or proceed to vocational technical school, teachers' college, or nursing.

After obtaining the Zimbabwe General Certificate of Education at Ordinary Level, pupils may continue to the 2-year high school, concluding with the examinations for the Zimbabwe General Certificate of Education at Advanced Level. To be eligible for this certificate, pupils must obtain a passing grade in at least 2 subjects. Pupils at the Advanced Level can currently choose from a range of 24 subjects in which they can sit for examinations. Passing these examinations will determine if pupils can proceed to the university or go to colleges.

The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education (formerly the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology), established in 1988, administers tertiary education and training. The National Manpower Advisory Council (NAMACO) provides advisory services in the field. The mission of the Zimbabwe Council for Higher education established in 2006 is to promote and coordinate education provided by institutions of higher education and to act as a regulator in the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examinations, academic qualifications and research in institutions of higher education.

Inclusive education. At independence, the government adopted a socialist principle: “Growth with equity to redress the inequalities in access to education. Among the promises of the liberation war was free primary education and affordable secondary education for all Zimbabweans. The immediate goal of the new government was to open up educational opportunities for all students irrespective of race, color, religion, or ethnic background. It can be said with certainty that this goal has been achieved despite the current economic, social and political challenges encountered in Zimbabwe today. According to Mumbengegwi, (1995), there were 2401 primary schools in the country in 1979, but a decade later in 1991, they had almost doubled to 4549. This is a clear sign of growth in enrolment and the country reached 92% literacy rate thereby breaking a record in the whole of Africa (Zimbabwean Independent, June 30, 2016).

Zimbabwe has managed to sustain relatively high levels of education and literacy despite the socio-economic challenges in the last decades. The right to education is recognized under international human rights law. In compliance with the global egalitarian foundations of education laid down in such conventions as Education for All (1990) and UNESCO (1994), Zimbabwe is signatory to international agreements on the right to education; it endorsed the

Education for All goals and signed the Declaration in 2000; launched a National Action Plan of Zimbabwe in 2006, Education for All Towards 2015, and a 2004 review of the country's legislation concluded that the provisions of the Education Act are in accordance with the basic requirements of Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Zimbabwean Education Act (1987, 1996, and 2004) institutionalized the right of every Zimbabwean child to academic education at the nearest school. Section 4 of the Education Act states that "every child in Zimbabwe shall have the right to school education," (Zimbabwean Education Act 2004 Chapter 25:04). There was no basis for non-exclusion in the 2004 amendment. The emphasis was on universalizing access and promoting equity for disadvantaged groups with special attention on removing educational disparities. The slogan "No child left behind," became the song of the day at all political levels. However, I contend that today, 13 years later, the gloss picture contained in the written educational policy of Zimbabwe is far from the actual reality; as evidenced by thousands of Zimbabwean children excluded from schools due to poverty. Successful inclusive education in Zimbabwe is yet to be a reality. The challenge is on the agreed understanding of inclusive by all the stakeholders.

Scholars hold different views on the understanding of inclusive and so therefore put the emphasis based on their understanding. Engelbrecht and Green (2009) say that in inclusive education, the emphasis is on provision within the mainstream school environment of the conditions and support that will enable diverse individuals to achieve certain specified educational outcomes, which may or may not be understood to be the same for all learners. Their understanding is founded on the premise of medical deficits and so therefore inclusive education would mean teaching disabled and non-disabled children within the same class. Hodkinson (2005) observes a broader understanding of inclusion based on a diversity perspective which

relates not only to disability but also to other barriers to learning such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture, and socio-economic background. Chakuchichi, Chimedza, and Chiinze (2003) view inclusion as fostering an even learning environment for all children in their beliefs, values, and norms. Thus inclusion may be viewed as a tool for cultivating cultural and social values in all children of school age. In Zimbabwe, there are significant differences in the quality of inclusive education between urban and rural areas. Urban centers tend to have better developed education infrastructure and are likely to have planned for inclusive education.

Orphans and vulnerable children are disadvantaged by a chronically underfunded school system. Schools often lack basic supplies such as textbooks, chalk, notebooks, and furniture. Teachers are sorely underpaid which encourages absenteeism and strikes. Furthermore, schools have enforced levies, which are mandatory fees for children to attend school. The levies are the school system's effort to cover the cost for areas not funded by the government. Education is not free since, contrary to the law, pupils are required to pay tuition as well as development levies. Parents have to pay for their children's books, required uniforms, tuition, levies, and examination fees. While tuition fees in government schools have been generally very low, development levies at times have proved to be impediments to the provision of free education. High costs of books and uniforms have led high dropouts in rural areas (Biti, 2010). The slogan "No child left behind!" sung upon the attainment of independence by the Republic of Zimbabwe has now turned into "More children left behind!" as thousands of children of school age cannot afford to go to school. Although the Zimbabwean Legislation Act 2004 Chapter 25:04, specifically says that no child is to be turned away from school for non-payment of fees, the reality is that most families lack money to pay, and their children are often turned away from school. This speaks of all CHHs for what child can earn enough to feed their siblings as well as pay the school fees? A

fact supported by Tendai Chikowore, the Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (ZIMTA) president who pointed out that Zimbabwe could not achieve one of the aims of the Dakar Declaration, Education for All by 2015 to which Zimbabwe was a signatory.

Financing of education. Although in 1991, the Zimbabwean Education Act abolished tuition fees and made primary education compulsory, this free and compulsory education was short lived due to financial constraints. The government's financial resources had been stretched to the limit. As noted by Kanyongo (2005:71), "the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) required the government to cut expenditure in social services sectors including education. Education is not free in Zimbabwe." Families have been struggling to cope with the necessity to meet the daily needs of food, shelter, and transportation, tuition, fees, books, uniforms, and levies, resulting in the majority of parents not being able to send their children to school. Those who decide on school finances-- the charging of fees and levies, budgeting, and other ways of raising funds (fundraising)--also determine those excluded. Two sections of the Education Act (Government of Zimbabwe, 1996a) guide schools in charging fees and levies. Section six of the Act refers to the need for schools to charge minimum fees:

It is the objective that tuition in schools in Zimbabwe be provided for the lowest possible fees consistent with the maintenance of high standards of education, and the Minister shall encourage the attainment of this objective by every appropriate means, including the making of grants and other subsidies to schools.

Section 21 stipulates that the Secretary, (the head of the Ministry), shall prescribe maximum amounts of fees and levies. No responsible authority shall increase any fee or levy by more than the prescribed amount or percentage in any period of twelve months unless the Secretary has approved it. An authority wishing the approval of such a fee or levy increase may submit a written application to the Secretary setting out the full details of the proposed increase and the rationale for it. The government's challenges in funding the education sector led to the

formation of School Development Committees (SDCs) in non-governmental schools, and School Development Associations (SDAs) in government schools. The government introduced these committees as a cost sharing measure, as they were meant to augment government efforts in developing schools. SDAs and SDCs paved the way for the involvement of parents in the financial matters of schools. Schools are empowered to find other ways of generating funds (Government of Zimbabwe, *Statutory Instrument* 87, item 5(c)). There is no doubt then that parents are the key role players in all matters relating to school finances. Due to their age, children from CHHS cannot be voted into either SDAs or SDCs, neither can they be represented, so who is going to make their needs known to the decision makers and policy implementers?

The quest for education continues to manifest and to bear tangible fruits among those who benefited from the once vibrant education system in Zimbabwe. Compulsory primary education for every child in the age group 6-12 remains a long term objective. The (amended) Education Act of 2004 stipulates that every child shall have the right to education. Article 5 states that it is the objective in Zimbabwe that primary education for every child of school-going age shall be compulsory and to this end it shall be the duty of the parents of any such child to ensure that such child attends primary school. Of all parts, this article hurts the orphaned children the most since they do not have parents and or guardians to finance their education or raise the concerns on their behalf.

Recruitment of Participants

Purposive, judgmental, or information-oriented sampling strategy was adopted for this study. I chose purposive sampling considered by Welman and Kruger (2000) as the most important kind of non-probability sampling to identify the primary participants. Purposive sampling ensures that a small number of people participate in a study. In qualitative research,

sample size is seldom determined in advance, since the phenomenon dictates the method including even the type of participants (Groenewald, 2004). Usually little is known about the wider group from which the sample is drawn. It was best to select participants from which the most could be learned because qualitative research focuses on the richness of data where a relatively small sample or even a single case is selected (Durrheim, 2006; Patton, 2015).

Judgmental sampling as defined by Black (2010) is a non-probability sampling method where the researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in the study. In judgmental sampling, only a limited number of people can serve as primary data sources, in this case only six orphaned children and a few people who interact with them.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2017), when selecting a case for case study, researchers often use information-oriented sampling as opposed to random sampling. Information-oriented sampling is used in selecting subjects that offer interesting, unusual or particular revealing set of circumstances. Children from child headed households were selected because they could offer these insights especially ways of coping as minors without adult supervision. In this study information-oriented sampling was also used because of the researcher's rich knowledge of the setting and the cultural circumstances.

I selected Chirumhanzu District and Ward 8 for several reasons. From the 200 households in Chaka area of Chirumhanzu Rural District Council, it is estimated that children head at least 15 of the households. Chaka is a rural community that has high poverty levels and this has implications for the survival of orphaned children in child-headed households (CHHs). There has not been enough work on orphans in rural areas as most have studied orphaned children from urban areas or street children. The only two studies in Zimbabwe on CHHs (Foster

et al., 1997; Germann, 2005) focused on Mutare and Bulawayo respectively, both of which are urban areas. The only known study of orphaned children in a rural community is that of (Chizororo, 2008) conducted in Mhondoro North District of Mashonaland West Province. This is in the High-Veld areas of Zimbabwe with high rainfall and potential for agricultural production is high. Unlike the Middle-Veld or Low-Veld with low rainfalls and the agricultural yields, tend to be lower. This distinction is critical especially for the wellbeing of the CHHs since they depend on agricultural produce.

Other factors that influenced the choice of this rural community is the ethnographic elements in the study. Chaka is about 31 miles from St. Joseph's Mission Hama, the place where I was born and raised, and within 10 miles radius of where my mother was born, and so I know the area, language, and the culture well. Chaka Parish is considered an out station of Driefontein Mission and during my years of formation to religious life, I used to be posted there for short periods to teach Catechism to children who had been baptized as babies and now wanted to receive the sacraments of Eucharist and confirmation. That added my knowledge of Chaka area and its residents while opening my eyes to the poverty in the area. I knew that I had only the summer months (June to August) to collect data for this study, so it was necessary to choose an area with whose culture I was familiar.

After permission to conduct the study entitled *Child Headed Households in Rural Zimbabwe: Perceptions of a Shona Community* was granted by the University of the Incarnate Word full board review in compliance with the federal regulations and university policy on May 26, 2016 and issued the approval number of 16-05-010, I travelled to Zimbabwe for data collection. I had originally intended to get permission to conduct the study from both the political and traditional structures of the Shona community. This would mean getting clearance from

ZANU PF leaders, the chief, councilor, the village head, school heads, health and other key community members. This changed after I arrived in the area and realized the power dynamics were very different from what I used to know. There is a lot of tension between the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) whose stronghold is in the rural areas and the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) on the other hand who have control in all cities. The communities had been warned against talking to strangers especially if they came from the city. If one was not known in a particular area, they would need to be politically cleared to gain entry into that community. Some of the Non-Governmental Organizations had been denied entry, forced to scale down or close as they were accused of funding and supporting the opposition party during their program operations.

In addition to the prevailing political situation, the socio-economic conditions, which have loomed the country for more than a decade, Zimbabwe was suffering from an El-Nino induced drought season, and as such people's attitudes had drastically changed. The social aspects of community life among the Shona are now very different from what I used to know. The spirit of oneness, goodwill, and sisterhood among the villagers is now a thing of the past. The spirit of hospitality that seemed to come naturally among the villagers was taken over by suspicion and potential threat to one's safety. It is now survival of the fittest as people scramble and fight for basics. Under these circumstances, I realized that going through both the political and traditional protocol would lead to the research being politicized.

Since I have been living in the United States for 15 years and only visit Zimbabwe periodically, my access to the study area and research participants was facilitated by the Sisters of the Child Jesus (SJI). The SJI sisters is a congregation of Zimbabwean catholic nuns whose mission and ministry focus on raising the status of women and children. Members of this

congregation to which I belong, work in different sectors that include; social justice issues, healthcare, education, social, and pastoral work. The sisters work mainly in and around Gweru Diocese and the location of my study is in the same geographical area. At Chaka Parish, there are three SJI sisters. One teaches at the Primary School while the other two are pastoral workers.

I reviewed the relevant regulations and guidelines governing human subjects' research in Zimbabwe and found out that The Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe guidelines are for health related projects. Despite the fact that the Council receives funding from the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, I did not need their permission or approval for my research. Research Ethics pertaining the rights of research participants are the same, which meant that the IRB approved by the University of the Incarnate Word was also acceptable in Zimbabwe. I did not need their approval. In addition, when I did other research in education and social sciences in Zimbabwe before, all I needed was a letter from the institution introducing me as their student who is doing a project. In this case, the approval letter from UIW was sufficient. I gained entry into the community through the church and the school. The church community, everyone in the area since Chaka residents are predominantly Catholics just saw me in my religious habit and accepted me as one of the nuns working in their parish. The school heads (Principals) viewed me, as responsible authority since the Diocese of Gweru owns both Chaka Primary and Gonawapotera High schools and the Education Secretary is one of the SJI sisters. My multifaceted identities as researcher, African Zimbabwean woman born and raised in the rural areas, and a privileged educated religious woman who has been exposed to western culture, became advantageous and helpful to the study.

It was my intention to recruit participants from one child headed household, and the relatives, and neighbors of this household from one village of the Shona community in rural

Zimbabwe, as well as government personnel and other service providers in the geographical area of the intended study. These include those who work in healthcare, education, social services, pastoral, and spiritual care of the children under study. After I was introduced in church on a Sunday morning, I was asked to say a few words just to encourage the community of believers. I took this opportunity to announce the purpose of my visit, which was to study how orphaned children who live without any adults in the household survive on a daily basis. This was around 10:30am and from that time until 7pm one portion of the church became my temporary office. Before I knew exactly what was happening, people lined up with individual questions for me. Their questions ranged from food handouts, school fees, or help with those who are disabled and mentally challenged. From their questions, it was clear that all they saw in me was hope for some help with their problems. The parish chairperson had introduced me as one working in the United States. For Zimbabweans who have never left the country anybody who lives outside their country, or the Diaspora as they commonly say is rich and the expectation is to help those back home. So for the most part, I spent those 7 to 8 hours explaining that I was out to do research as part of my studies and I did not have any financial help.

The first challenge I encountered had to do with reading, writing, and especially signing of legal documents. Anything to do with paperwork or registration is foreign to them. Traditionally, the Shona people did not read or write. Their contracts were verbal. There is a general fear among the Shona people of signing a legal document. These fears are rooted in a political wrangle dating back as far as the Rudd concession of 1870 to 1918, in which Lobengula was tricked into signing a document by putting an X since he could not read and write. Although with that X, Lobengula thought he was only giving the three white men (Charles Rudd, Francis Thompson, and Rochfort Maguire) permission to hunt, he was duped when the written document

was used by the British colonial powers as justification for taking over his entire domain. This resulted in a huge conflict between the Ndebele and the Shona people who accused Lobengula of having sold the country with an X, the incidence which Keppel-Jones (2014) described as “spoken words versus written legalese”.

This fear of signing a written legal document was revived by the controversial 2013 Zimbabwean elections after which reports alleged vote rigging. According to the Denis Hurley Peace Institute (DHPI) report, “the voting was free, fair, and peaceful, but there were serious flaws on registration and the voters’ roll was rigged” (August 17, 2013). Now people are afraid the rival political parties may use their names. It is because of this that the people of Zimbabwe are afraid of putting their name or signature to any document. Considering the unstable political situation in the country, and also to avoid suspicion, and ensure the safety of my study participants, I found it crucial to use a verbal informed consent procedure instead of requesting for signatures. The option of a verbal informed consent was necessary especially in dealing with the Shona community of Zimbabwe due to fears associated with signing a legal document. Therefore, to protect the community from the fears associated with signing a legal document, I provided the option of a verbal consent, which took a more conversational style than the written consent form.

Once the adults understood exactly what I was looking for, they started to bring up names of orphaned children who lived without adults in the household. Although all those people I met with that Sunday were adults and no children, the names of two of my prospective participants came up. Christ the King Parish is associated with two schools. Chaka Primary is only 200 feet south of the church while Gonawapotera High School is about a thousand feet north of the church. In my effort to recruit the target group of research participants, I spent some time at both

schools. The schools especially teachers were involved in the selection process and identified the CHHs. Some names from the schools tallied with those I had from the church. Most of the children's names that came up however did not meet my criterion since despite the fact that they lived in dire poverty, they still have a grandmother as a *shadow*. I could not agree less with Meintjes and Giese (2006) in their statement that some orphans with guardians could be worse off than my actual target population. However, as Chizororo (2008) claims, I had to be faithful to the conceptual definition of my intended study participants in my effort to raise awareness on the plight of children living without adult supervision, an area which is under researched.

In this study, I hoped to conduct a thorough, holistic, and in-depth exploration of a typical ethnographic case of a child headed household from a particular village among the Shona people through the perspectives of the children, relatives, neighbours, adult community members and service providers such as teachers, nurses and pastoral workers who were involved with orphaned children. Only households constituting double orphans, and contained no adults were chosen. My goal was to understand, rather than to confirm.

The snowball sampling strategy was also employed to recruit the participant for this study. Wasserman, Pattison and Steinley (2005) defined snowball-sampling technique as one individual (the "source", also referred as the "seed") who has the desired characteristics and uses the person's social networks to recruit similar participants in the process. After the initial source helps to recruit respondents, the respondents then recruit others themselves, starting a process analogous to a snowball rolling down a hill. Adults at both the church and the schools were self-directed in the chain-referral recruitment process. The children also directed me to other children who they deemed in the same or worse situation than theirs. I found snowball as a strategy quite efficient and beneficial since the personal aspects that are inherent in this technique shortened the

time in gathering the participants. The other advantage of snowball sampling was its cultural competence and the inherent trust it engenders among potential participants. This helped to increase the chances of the identified person to agree to talk with me as the researcher and to participate in the study.

Findings

The purpose of this qualitative ethnographic case study was to explore the phenomenon of Child-Headed Households (CHHs) in rural Zimbabwe from the perspectives of a Shona community. My intention was to gain an understanding on how these children access necessities like food, clothing, education, health care, and cope on a daily basis without parental guidance, care, and supervision. I was also interested in finding out how these children are perceived by adults who live in the same community. In this chapter, I seek to present my findings of the study. I describe my field experience and how I solved some of the challenges and ethical dilemmas I encountered during data collection. I will tell the particular children's stories, showing pictures of their living environments where possible, present a descriptive analysis of emerging themes supported by participant based evidence through direct quotes, and explain perceptions from both the children and the adults as they interact with in their Shona community. The reported findings are a construction of the participants' experiences and the meaning they attach to them. This will allow readers to view the subjective life, world, experiences, and challenges of participants through their eyes.

Participant Demographics

With the help of the sisters working at a local parish, some parishioners, two school heads, and their teachers, I identified 250-orphaned children in the Chaka area of Chirumhanzu Rural District in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. From the 20 villages who send their children to Chaka Primary and Gonawapotera (Christ the King) High Schools, I managed to get in contact with 30 children from 12 villages. Table 1 shows the names, age, gender, status in school, and the village where the contacted children reside.

I selected six orphaned children to participate in the study. Those selected met the study requirements of being orphaned, under the age of 18, and living in a household without an adult. Those children who lived with an aunt, grandmother, grandfather, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, or any adult as head of the household did not meet the requirements for the study. Although some met the study criteria, they lived too far away from Chaka convent where I stayed. I had no means of transportation to their homes. All six were willing to participate in the study. It was very difficult at first because all the children wanted to participate. My assumption is that their eagerness and willingness to participate was perhaps influenced by what they perceived as potential benefits from the research process since they had heard that I was coming from the United States. This is despite my repeated emphasis that the study had no immediate direct benefits to the participants. This assumption was confirmed by whispers from the villagers as I often heard comments like; "finally something good is going to happen, people do not just research for nothing, at least it's a nun, she will not steal the money from the donors" (villagers talking to each other). Usually such comments were not directed at me, but were uttered in such a way that I was within hearing distance.

Six children, one girl and five boys, under the age of 18 years participated in this study. Table 1 below shows the participant's name, gender, age in years, whether or not they are attending school and in what grade if they are, and how many live in the same home. Four of them were attending school while the other two had dropped out of school for different reasons.

Table 1

Selected Participants' Pseudonyms

| Name | Gender | Age in Years | Grade in School | No. in Home |
|----------|--------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Masarira | Male | 17 | Dropped out | 2 |
| Lastborn | Male | 11 | 6 | 2 |
| Musiyiwa | Male | 16 | Form 4 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|-------------|--------|----|-------------|---|
| Crossborder | Male | 13 | Form One | 5 |
| Marufu | Male | 15 | Dropped out | 1 |
| Revai | Female | 14 | Form Two | 8 |

Five of the selected participants were male from the same village and the only one female participant was from another village. The boys met the requirements of the study, which included being an orphan below the age of 18 years with no adult heading the household. The female participant lived in a household headed by two adults who were not related to her. I included her because her situation was a crucial element to the study in that her case challenges the view by earlier scholars that there is no social orphan in the Shona community.

To select the six participants, I used convenience sampling guided by feasibility, accessibility, and proximity. Thus, the small sample size of participants was not meant to be statistically representative of the orphans' situation in Zimbabwe as in a quantitative approach, but as an illustrative case within a qualitative methodology (Valentine, 2001). Nine adults who included sisters, villagers, and teachers who connected in one way or another with the orphaned children as informants and as members of the focus group discussions. I did not worry much about the number of informants; instead, my concern was on the quality, depth, clarity, and richness of the data. I got permission to conduct interviews from the participants themselves.

None of the participants wanted me to use pseudonyms. According to them, using pseudonyms would block their only chance of entering the United States. Against my participants' wishes, I had to use pseudonyms. This was an ethical dilemma for me. I knew that out of respect for my participants, I needed to honor their wishes, but I had also made a commitment for anonymity and confidentiality to protect them in my IRB protocol and I had to be faithful to that commitment. I felt compelled to safeguard and protect the participants especially given their tender ages. My decision was influenced by the fact that the children are

young and would not know what endangers them. The names I chose are significant especially to me as the researcher. I chose the names based on the participants' circumstances and what the children expressed during the data collection process.

English names like Admire, Brilliant, Courage, Desire, Dignity, Diploma, Energy, Graduate, Gift, Freedom, Knowledge, Liberty, Lovemore, Marvelous, Obvious, Pretty, Pride, Privilege, Progress, Promise, Psychology, Talent, Strive, and Success are now very common among the Shona people. These names signify the person's trade, occupation, hobby, accomplishments, successes or failures. Some of the names are also symbolic of the historical events, which happened around the time the person was born like Independence. Two of my participants' ascribed names, Crossborder and Lastborn exemplify this trend. Crossborder's parents were both in the cross border business when he was born, and Lastborn denotes his position in the family. The Shona names I assigned to three of my participants; Masarira, Musiyiwa, and Marufu all have something to do with death. Masarira literally means left for a purpose and responsibility when those in that position died. Musiyiwa means left especially when the mother dies at childbirth. Marufu is actually a plural for the word death signifying that there has been many deaths in one family within a short space of time. Death is a theme, which cuts across this study because all participants are orphans who have encountered their parents' deaths.

Initially, I had planned to live with Masarira Kuona and his brother Lastborn Msipa, but since they had only one bedroom, they would have slept in the kitchen while they offered me their bedroom. I did not think this was proper, and so I ended up spending the day with them and the nights at Musiyiwa and Crossborder's household. This worked out well since during the day, the later would be at school anyway. The arrangement also gave me the opportunity to actually

live in two households and therefore study them simultaneously given the time I had.

Participants' Profiles

Revai Panashe. Revai Panashe is a girl aged 14 and is doing Form 2. Revai knows that she is one of five children, but has no idea as to where her siblings are; neither does she remember anything about her parents other than that she was informed that both her parents died when she was little. Revai verbalized her anger about the fact that nobody wants to say anything to her about her siblings and their whereabouts. She lives with a couple who are in their early sixties, and was made to believe that she is somehow related to the woman. Revai herself doubts that there is any relationship based on the treatment from the guardian (she call Grandmother). Among the Shona people, it is very common that young people address adults as Mother/Father or Grandmother/Grandfather depending on their age difference. This is done as a way of respecting the adults. It is because of this custom that I could not ascertain the truth about Revai's relationship with her guardians even after talking to her supposed grandfather. It is also very possible that there is no relationship between Revai and her acclaimed grandparents since they are some of the new settlers in the area who reside at Makombo, which means "new lands." They have only been in the area for less than 10 years. They migrated from Gutu looking for more farming land and grazing area for their animals. They were fortunate to be allocated a farm near Nyamatikiti River, but the problem is that there are no schools nearby. Children walk 12 miles to and from school on a daily basis, five days a week and sometimes six days if they have sporting activities on Saturdays. Because of the distance, all my meetings with Revai were held at the school in the Senior Woman's office, the same office I had used for my meetings with all the children from the high school during the recruitment process.

According to the senior woman at the school, Revai is a well-behaved girl who now tends to withdraw due to social problems at home. Teachers feared that the situation at home might affect Revai's performance at school since she does not have books and most of the times she does not do her homework. Revai's torn and worn out uniform also confirmed the poverty. According to her, if the grandmother was in a good mood they ate a full meal, but more often they just ate butternut squash grown on the farm. Sometimes the grandfather gave them R5 each, which is equivalent to 50 cents, to buy things like, maputi "popcorn" or mazepe "a popular snack for young children in Zimbabwe." This would be their lunch, since the school does not provide food. In her own words, Revai hopes to become a medical doctor if she does well in school and there is a change in her home environment.

After Revai informed the grandfather about the study and the meetings I had with her, he volunteered to participate in the study as key informant. All my meetings with Revai's grandfather were held at the sisters' convent parlor. He shared that he had invited his wife to come with him to the study since he believed that she would get help especially with the treatment she gave to the two of the girls in the home. The grandfather told me that Revai was a granddaughter of his wife's older sister. However, he was also taken aback by the way his wife mistreated Revai and one of their biological daughters.

Sister, I really think there is bad blood between this girl and my wife. She also does that with our own girl who is 16 years old. I honestly cannot say these girls are bad, but my wife is always complaining about them. She makes them work like donkeys and does not give them time to do their schoolwork. Revai is not the first orphan we have raised, but I have not witnessed my wife treat them as badly as she does with Revai and our youngest daughter. Right now, we are looking after 6 children, but I have not heard complaints about the other 4, it's only these two. Whenever I travel for meetings or funerals I really dread coming home to be confronted with reports about "Revai this, Revai that". When I am home, I have not seen the two girls misbehaving, neither have I received bad reports from the school. They walk long distance to and from school, and they come home to my wife's persecution. I do not know what to do with the situation, maybe you can help me?

Revai's story matched with that of her grandfather who confirmed his wife's cruelty to the girls. He expressed that this worried him greatly, but he could not find an easy solution since he had to make a choice between his wife and the girls. He also added that although they were resettled farmers, they could not afford much because for the past two years they had not received enough rainfall and thereby were suffering from a persistent drought. Although he very much wanted me to meet his wife and talk to her, this did not happen because of the distance. There was no way I could walk 24 miles in one day but planning to spend the night there would have been a risk on my part since I did not know them. Most of the resettlers have the spirit of “*jambanja*”, warlike spirit where people grab by force what actually does not belong to them. Some of these resettlers had taken pieces of land by force.

Marufu. Marufu is a boy of about 14 or 15 years of age judging by his physical appearance and based on what he says. He does not have any paperwork like birth or baptism certificate or other type of identification. Marufu said his father died when he was three years old and his mother passed on when he was only five years old. He did not really remember either of his parents. He went by what he was told by his grandmother. His paternal grandmother took care of him and an older brother until she also passed on in 2013. The brother left him in 2015. Marufu hears from rumors that the runaway brother is in Masvingo town where he has a good job with a construction company doing tile work, but since he left, the village there has not been any communication between the two. This leads Marufu to suspect that maybe he is just a relative and not his sibling. It could also be that they are not related at all and the *Mukoma* (Shona term for older brother) was somebody hired by the extended family to look after the young Marufu. It was difficult to verify since according to Shona custom there is no cousin, all are brothers and sisters. Even hired domestic workers are addressed as “Mukoma,” “Sisi,” or

“Bhudhi” as if they were siblings. After several meetings at the Sisters' convent and visits to his friend, Masariri's homestead, Masarira convinced me to visit Marufu's homestead. Masarira accompanied me on the first visit.

What is conspicuous as one approaches Marufu's homestead from the west are seven graves of the deceased family members. These graves were in front of the homestead and could be seen from both the kitchen and the living room. Normally, graves would have a concrete cross at the head or at least a cement slab at the top. However, none of the graves is properly cared for and they all just look like mounds of dirt unless you are told. Only one or two have a stone or a stick that is upright to show where the position of the deceased's head is. See the picture of two of the seven graves below.



Figure 5. The graves at Marufu's home.

The homestead consists of a round hut, which he uses as the kitchen, and a separate three bedroomed house with a spacious living room where Marufu welcomed us. The house looks old

and needs some refurbishment on the outside. Inside it looks clean, especially the shiny dark cement floor. One would think there was an adult who maintains the house.

The furniture includes a table with four chairs, two of which are broken, and a very old and tattered sofa. Out of respect for the guest, the boys offered me the sofa and they took the squeaking chairs. There is a small cupboard and two shelves of what used to be a kitchen display, but now all the glass is gone. There was a bundle of fresh green vegetables in the basket. Out of curiosity, I asked if he had a garden of his own where he grew his own vegetables.



Figure 6. Marufu and his friend Masarira in front of Marufu's house.

In response, Marufu shared that the bundle of vegetables was worth R5 and that was all a woman from Makombo had given him in compensation for the wheelbarrow of firewood he had cut for her. With his friend, Masarira nodding in agreement, Marufu blurted out:

This is how much they exploit us sister. They take advantage of us just because we are orphans and they know we have nowhere to report. You think if my parents were here, they would treat me like this. All they want from us is that we work for them for nothing. You should come during rainy season. They plead for us to weed their long fields, with weed like this; (showing by his stretched hand the height of about two feet). They are fake. They promise to pay us for the job but in the end, all they give us is food for that day. They are clever. They feed us just to make sure we have energy to work in their fields. His eyes becoming red and swelling with tears, he looked down.

Masarira took over and supported his friend saying:

“Sister, what he is saying is the truth. People from the fertile area take advantage of us. A wheelbarrow of firewood costs \$3 to \$3.50, but someone decides to pay you R5, which is less than fifty cents, what can one buy with R5? We need money to take the corn to the grinding mill, to buy cooking oil, salt, sugar, but they make us work for nothing. Nobody talks on our behalf. Last year one man from Felix-burg asked me to head cattle for 3 days. We agreed on \$2.50 per day, so I was expecting \$7.50 total. It was raining the whole time, I asked him for a raincoat and he gave me an old plastic bag from which he had removed fertilizers. I covered my head, but it was choking from the smell of fertilizers. I got a flu, and I was sick for a week. Nobody cared and my little brother got scared to death thinking I was going to die like mother and leave him alone. Up to now, I never got the money. The last time I went to ask for my money, he threatened me and said he was going to call the police and claim I was trespassing on his private property. They take advantage of us. If I were older, I would take him to court, but now if I do, they will say, “these kids lie”.

We talked about different issues affecting the boys in their lives. We also talked about soccer which they both like and were both fortunate enough to be drafted into the school team despite not being students. When they compete with other schools nobody asks if they are enrolled in school or not. After almost some 3 hours with the boys, I stood up to leave, promising Marufu that I would come back for another visit and maybe interview him if he was willing. As the three of us left, a woman selling tomatoes stopped by. She had a baby strapped on her back and looked really tired and hungry. The tomatoes were worth a lot more but she begged for a dollar. I bought the tomatoes for both boys to share and especially for Marufu because I had seen a bundle of greens, which he was going to prepare for that day’s meal. From that day on, I saw

Marufu almost every day at a friend's house or at the soccer field next to the sisters' convent where schoolchildren gather daily to socialize.

Behind the kitchen in the east, is a deep hole covered by a few logs and a frame of what used to be a spring bed. Marufu explained to me that he was tired of going far to fetch brown water and was therefore in the process of digging his own water well. He was very hopeful that if it rained enough he would reach the water before digging too deep. The idea dawned on him after digging wells for other households who paid him peanuts.



Figure 7. Marufu's well covered with logs and an old bedframe.

Marufu lives by himself at his grandmother's homestead. He dropped out of school because he could not raise the examination fees. It was announced in church that the Swiss priest who was helping a number of children in the area with tuition will not pay Ordinary Level examination fees. Marufu wishes to go back to school if only someone would support him with

payment of school fees and examination fees. His eyes were red and swelling with tears as he told me his wish.

The big question was where Marufu got food. His grandmother was on social welfare, so Marufu could continue to get help from them but because of his age he cannot collect his allocation. The village head “*Sabhuku*” who is responsible for registering the needy in his village to social services collects on his behalf, but by the time the food reaches Marufu it was only half of the regular allocation for one person. Plan International and Social services gave 50 pounds of grain and \$6 per head per month to each family, but Marufu would only get half the grain and no money. Where would he get the money to have the grain milled?



Figure 8. Villagers receiving food aid from Social Welfare Plan International and Social. Retrieved from <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/10/12/zim-appeals-for-86m-food-aid/>.

Musiwiwa and Crossborder. These two boys are siblings who live by themselves; the mother lives in South Africa. Musiwiwa aged 16 is in high school Form 4 while his young brother Crossborder aged 13 is in Form 1. The boys' parents went to South Africa to look for

survival work and left the boys at home. The father who was originally from the neighboring country Mozambique fell sick in South Africa and while the wife was trying to bring him back to their home in Zimbabwe, he died in Masvingo. It took her two months to find his relatives by telephone in Mozambique. His body was in the mortuary in Masvingo until his family arrived. He was then buried at the family's home in Chaka area of Chirumhanzu District. The mother believes that when she is away in South Africa, the boys are not alone since they have their father's grave at the homestead. Other people from the village are also aware that the boys live alone, so the young people frequent their home to play. One adult, in particular, would come and check on them maybe once a week. This man was a close friend of the boys' father.

The boys told me how worried they were about her since they had heard from other Cross Borders that their mother was sick. Cross Borders is the name associated with Zimbabweans who travel to the neighboring countries buying and selling whatever is needed there and also bringing back to Zimbabwe what is needed and cash. Their wares range from groceries, clothes, different accessories like car parts, to building materials. Sometimes these Cross Borders spent three to six months or even a year without going back home. Both boys were afraid that their mother might die in South Africa and they would not be able to bring her body home.

While it is true that most Zimbabweans in the diaspora have strong social ties and connections with family members as evidenced by the sending of regular monetary remittances, not everyone can afford to send money on a regular basis. The boys shared that their mother occasionally send \$2 or R10 (Rand is a South African currency) by other cross-borders. This was not on a regular basis, and the amount does not cover their daily needs. Musiyiwa and Crossborder are both in high school. Day high schools do not feed their pupils. Children get one-hour lunch break and some of them go home for lunch. Those who come from far bring

something for lunch or money to buy something from the shops. The two boys have no reason to walk back home. Neither do they bring anything with them. At most, they ate one meal a day that was in the evening after school.



Figure 9. Musiyiwa and Crossborder's house where I slept for one week.

It is unfortunate that the boys are labelled as rich since their surviving parent lives in the diaspora. *Chinoziva ivhu kuti mwana wembeva unogwara*- literally translated "only the soil knows about the mouse child's illness." It is a misconception by many Zimbabweans that those who live and work outside the country are rich and lead luxurious lives. Those who live abroad know their own plight best. Mai Musiyiwa, the boys' mother, is one of those who live in the diaspora hoping against hope that she will be able to support her children. During my first and second visit, the boys' mother was not there. She eventually came during my stay in the village and I had the opportunity to interview her as well. She is not a professional person and earns her living by doing menial labor. Like many others, she does household chores like cleaning people's houses and doing their laundry. She does not get much because she is not permanently

employed. Her illness could easily have been from malnutrition. She shared that life in South Africa is tough especially the living conditions. Sometimes eight people squeeze in one room so they can share rent, but this is not healthy. One never knows when they will get a full meal.

One of my child participants begged me to go and visit the boys' mother who had since arrived and was very sick. Masarira urged me to convince her to go to the hospital. I tried, but she would not go because of two reasons: (1) fear that she might be HIV positive and she was going to leave her boys alone, and (2) although raised Catholic, she had just joined *Madzibaba* a nickname given to the *Johane Masowe weChishanu* sect of the apostolic faith. The church denomination does not believe in hospitalization, they believe prayer and holy water will heal all diseases. My interview with her does not cover this part because it is too sensitive and when I tried, she became almost aggressive and angry and I did not want to lose her.

The boys have a sister slightly older than Musiyiwa who is a single mother of a three-year-old girl. The sister works as a housemaid for one of the nurses at Driefontein Hospital, which is about 15 miles away. When I visited Mai Musiyiwa the first time, the three-year-old girl was not there. However, at the time of the interview she was there. I could not easily ascertain where she normally lives; probably with the paternal grandmother since her mother cannot take her to work.

Masarira Kuona and Lastborn Msipa. It is at the homestead of these two boys that I spent most of my days during my research interviews. They live about half a mile from Musiyiwa and Crossborder where I spent the nights for one week. The three boys were friends while Lastborn had different friends of his own age. Aged 17, Masarira Kuona is the second born of his late mother, in the role of head of his household. Masarira was the sole caretaker of his mother when she became ill and so he had to stop going to school. He was in high school Form 3

when he dropped out of school. Almost two years later, his mother died in September of 2015 after a prolonged illness.

Masarira is currently looking after his sibling, Lastborn Msipa, a boy aged 11 years in Grade Six at a local school. Lastborn does not remember anything about his father. Now that the mother is no more, Masarira has to fend for his and Lastborn's survival. Masarira's mother was married three times, twice to Shona men and once to a Ndebele man. Her first husband Dube, died after they had just one child, Masarira's half-sister now married to a soldier. This girl got married at the age of 15 and is living with her husband and their two children in Kwekwe. The second husband was Masarira's father Mhofu, who died when Masarira was only three years old. He does not remember anything about his biological father. The mother went on to get married for the third time to Msipa, father of Lastborn. Masarira remembers his stepfather as harsh and very quick tempered. However, he did not live very long either. Mr. Msipa was Ndebele and not Shona. Masarira attributes his young brother's misbehavior to the fact that their roots are different.

After each of her husbands' deaths, Mai Masarira moved back to her own people, which was a little easier with one child, and then two, but three made it more difficult. According to Masarira, his mother constantly had conflicts with her brothers and their spouses. This led her to look for her own place which now Lastborn and Masarira call home. The place has two round huts, which serve as a kitchen and bedroom. The bedroom is well furnished with a bed, heavy decorated blankets, carpet, a table, and four chairs. They also have a little radio, a small solar panel, and many plates. Most of these items were acquired when Mai Masarira was in the cross-border business.



Figure 10. Masarira and Lastborn's two huts.



Figure 11. Picture showing inside Masarira and Lastborn's kitchen.



Figure 12. Lastborn cutting the greens for the evening meal.



Figure 13. A picture of Masarira and his young brother, Lastborn.

Mai Masarira was in the process of building a modern four bedroomed house when she got sick. Masarira took me to the grave (see Figure 9). Next to the mother's grave, there was a pile of bricks. He told me that the bricks were meant to build a four bedroomed house. One bedroom for the mother, one for each of the boys, and one for the guests. He explained that some of the bricks were used inside his mother's grave to build the space where the coffin was placed. Some of the bricks was stolen. He suspected who had taken them but was scared to approach them. He explained that whenever he looked at that pile of bricks he was reminded of the woman of courage and vision lying beside those bricks. He misses his mother. With a mixture of chuckling, giggling, and tears trickling down his cheeks, Masarira sighed deeply and exclaimed almost talking to himself; "*Tichazvigonavo isu vana ... will we be able to build anything*"?



Figure 14. Masarira and Lastborn's mother's grave. She died in September 2015.

Masarira invited me to go to see the boundaries of his yard and field. As we walked down he told me that the field is the reason why he and *Sabhuku* do not get along;

Sabhuku and I do not see eye to eye. We do not get along at all. My mother died in September. Just a month before the rain season. When it rained, I saw someone coming to plow my field. At first I thought they were helping us since we do not have any cattle. But then I was surprised when they went on to sow their seed. Yes, we did not have cows to plow but my sister who is married to the soldier had left us fifty kilos of maize seed at mother's funeral. She was going to send some money for *maricho* to have someone plow for us. After the third day of their plowing, I gathered courage to go and thank them and that is when they told me that they had bought the field from *Sabhuku*. I was shocked. I did not know what to do. Finally, I went to one of our neighbors, three houses down the village. He is a kind man who even today allows us to fetch clean water from his home. I told him the whole story. Mr. Batsirai confronted *Sabhuku* who confessed that just because we are young he thought we did not know the boundaries. Mr. Batsirai is related to the councilor, so *Sabhuku* is afraid of him.

We proceeded to the creek where they fetch water for laundry and other household use except for drinking, which they got from Mr. Batsirai's tap for free. That is if his third wife was not there.

She is not a kind person and did not allow them to get the water sometimes.



Figure 15. Picture showing where the children fetch water for household use.

According to his teacher, Lastborn is reserved but very intelligent. He gets good grades and is always first position among all sixth graders at the school. However, Lastborn has financial problems since he is a complete orphan. Because of his good grades, the school has

tried to keep him in school by asking for assistance on his behalf from the government program known as Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM). Lastborn also works at the school Tuck-shop that sells, (*frezits*) freezes, and *maputi* (popcorn). He also eats a full meal at school. During the time of my research, Lastborn's school was serving *sadza* twice a day; one at 10am for Early Childhood Development (ECD) up to Grade Two, and the other at 1 pm for the whole school. This was because at the time they had two donors funding children's lunch namely Caritas and the Government of Zimbabwe. The meal served at 10 in the morning came from the government. The government provided grain only and the school had to organize parents to contribute money for milling, and to buy vegetables, cooking oil, and salt.

On the other hand, an International Catholic Charitable Organization, Caritas Gweru was running a feeding program in seven schools in the diocese. Caritas provided cornmeal, beans, cooking oil, and salt in the school for everybody including the teachers. The school head also organized parents to take turns in cooking and providing firewood and cooking utensils. They were taking these turns as villages. The school head was very excited about the feeding program and he expressed his sentiments by saying;

When we feed the children, everyone is happy. After a few weeks, you notice a change in the children the teachers say. Children are assured of a full meal and that means the attendance is always very high. They look physically better, they play and they get involved in class. We can have afternoon lessons and sporting activities. This also brought unity among parents as they work together.

This became a test case for the community since they would not know how to handle Lastborn's brother. Should they treat him as an adult and include him in the cooking roster? Alternatively, as a child and exclude him? Most of the times, they would send him to relay messages to people and that sufficed for his contributions in the cooking roster.

Masarira wished is to go back to school, but where would he get the money to pay for schooling? If he did not work what would they eat? What type of work could he get in a village in the rural area?



Figure 16. Zimbabwe In-School Feeding Program: Why over 17,000 children are fed every day, 2017, Canada: Author. Copyright by Emergency Relief & Development Overseas. Retrieved from <https://www.erdo.ca/programs/zimbabwe/17000/>.

Participant Observation

All the participants in their homes warmly welcomed me. The children felt a sense of security by my physical presence in their homes. I was surprised by their hospitality despite their few resources. Two of the participants displayed anger while the rest seemed to have come to terms with the realities of their situation. There were moments of mixed feelings as we discussed challenges. I could observe from red eyes swelling with tears, actual tears running down, followed by a smile, chuckle or giggle, and a verbalized, "I do not know why I am crying yet I should be happy that you are here, and care about us" (Masarira).



Figure 17. Pupils line up by class, bowl in hand, to get what could be their one meal of the day. London, England: Wyke. Copyright by Daily Mail. Retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3433714/Robert-Mugabe-declares-state-disaster-Zimbabwe-drought-leaves-quarter-population-urgent-need-food-aid.html/>.

It was also my observation that the children were in need of help. Some of them were wearing tattered clothes and looked hungry. Inside the participants' homes, I found the socio-economic conditions quite appalling and not conducive to any pleasant livelihood. The furniture and other household implements were old. Some of the children did not have any bedding or wardrobes. They slept on reed mats without enough blankets. Their plight of being orphaned was also complicated by the larger economic plight faced by the whole country. Zimbabwe as a whole has been affected by the El-Nino weather system that led to unusual weather patterns resulting in half the population in need of food aid. Severe economic instability, inflation, poverty, and unemployment complicate the pathways needed to reach the children.

All my six children participants live from hand to mouth. They depend on menial labor of the older siblings and the generosity of the community. None of the children have cows or goats, which are commonly owned by other peasant farmers in the area. Only two of the participants have a few chickens and a dog. They do not have a vegetable garden either because water is problematic. Although I was touched, humbled, and moved by how the children struggled to survive daily, I was also inspired and encouraged by their DEPTH (determination, enthusiasm, perseverance, toil, and hard work). I was especially impressed by how some of them hold on to their parents' belongings. Mostly the homestead and some land to grow their own food. I felt a sense of helplessness, as I was unable to assist the participants immediately.

Pictures of community events. During my stay, I also participated in some of the community activities like praying with the villagers and just giving them hope by sharing with them about life, and what it is like for me to be living far away from home.



Figure 18. People lining up to receive help at CARITAS organization's Gweru offices. Retrieved from http://www.caritas.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/1_600_zim_jacquedinan7.jpg/.



Figure 19. A picture of Sr. Gomba addressing the children in the rural area.



Figure 20. A picture of Sr. Gomba leading a prayer session in the village.

Themes

After spending some time with orphaned children in child-headed households, participating in some of their activities and listening to their stories and their responses to the questions I asked in my interviews, I could not fathom the plight of how these children survive on a daily basis. I interpreted the large amount of data I collected and reduced it to patterns and themes using a process called data reduction. I read the transcripts to get sense of the whole. Ideas that came to mind were written down. I listened to the recordings and re-read the transcripts several times to find the coping mechanisms adopted and employed by the orphaned children among the Shona. Thoughts were written down. Once this procedure had been followed with all the information, a list of topics was made. Similar topics were clustered together and arranged in major topics. In analyzing the children's stories, I began to decipher common words and phrases that displayed perceptions of both the children and adults in the Shona community. Some of the common phrases that emerged from this analysis are, "*Maricho*," "means of survival," "*vana*," "If only," "death," "marginalization," "responsibility," "lack of care," "*Nhamo*," "they need help, corruption," *nherera dzinonetsa* – orphans are problematic/troublesome," school," and "food for work." These children tell stories of loss of parents and guardians, assumed responsibility, family legacy, poverty means of survival, emotional turmoil, and distress. They narrated how they felt rejected, lack of identity, and experienced marginalization especially when it comes to the support systems that are present in the community. Some of these children could not access the basic human rights, like education and nutrition, due to lack of financial support.

In table 2 I have identified the following major themes: loss of parents and guardians, assumed responsibility, poverty, means of survival, emotional distress, children's talents, identity in the community, and support systems.

Loss of parents and guardians. The effects of losing parents affect most children negatively. The loss leaves children shattered and emotionally affected. The memories of their deceased parents do not just fade away. All the children wished their parents were still alive. Some of the participants experience these psychological effects for longer periods than others. Some claim to be coping with the situation especially those who were a bit older when the parents died. They sometimes long for their deceased parents but they focus on other things like building their future. Asked how he felt about being the head of his household Masarira said;

You grow up in one day. It is a good thing that my mother left us a home where we can live. At the same time, it is very painful that our parents are dead and they are not here to fend for our survival. I wanted to finish school and be a better person in the future but all that changed when my mother got sick. I dropped out of school to take care of her. Sister if you saw her when she was sick, you would have prayed for her death. I was happy that God took her when He did because she was suffering. Lastborn was affected more by mother's death because he is young. In addition, he did not care for her. I learned to be clean because I had to wash the blankets if she pooped in bed, which was often. I even forgot that I was male. Anyway, that is now past. My focus is on my young brother. He was fortunate to get assistance from BEAM. The government pays his tuition and fees, but do we know for how long? He is only in grade 6 and I worry that the program would be discontinued before my brother finishes school.

When I asked him what he meant by he grew up in one day, Masarira responded that one becomes more responsible. Even though they were treated like children in every other way, when their parents died, they were expected to respond in very adult ways. Masarira said:

One of my mother's friends said, "You have to stop crying and act like a man, we need to plan." I grew up to their expectation as everyone consulted me on where Mama's things were, who of her relatives should be notified and so forth. You become strong because there is no one else to arrange things for you. You give yourself strength.

Table 2

Participant Theme Quotes

| Theme | Indicative | Participant Quotes |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Loss of parents and guardians | All six participants expressed loss of parents and guardians through death or travel to the diaspora | "I am an orphan; I do not have parents. My parents died when I was little. I do not remember exactly.... I must have been 5 years. My father died first, I was 3 years old and when my mother died, I was 5. My paternal grandmother took care of me....God took her in 2013 when I was 13 years old and doing Form One" (Marufu). |
| Assumed responsibility | Three of the participants assumed adult duties and increased responsibility by performing the role of breadwinner | "It is my responsibility to see that there is food on the table, order in the home, deciding what to do and when, my brother has a clean uniform, wakes up on time to go to school. If Lastborn misbehaves at school, they call me. If one of us gets sick, I have to see what to do" (Masarira). |
| Poverty | All six participants experienced the material poverty and also the poverty of being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, and forgotten by everybody. | Lack of food, clothing, blankets, and furniture. No cows to till their own land. Inability to obtain adequate financial means. Lack of essential services like education, health care. Revai's tattered school uniform. Masarira being soaked in the rain while herding cattle for 3 days which he never got paid for. Musiyiwa and Crossborder getting \$2 occasionally from the mother in the diaspora. |
| <i>Maricho</i> as means of survival | All participants mentioned <i>maricho</i> as their means of survival. | " <i>Maricho</i> can be anything sister. Whatever people want us to do for them; weeding in their fields, digging wells for them, reaping corn, cutting firewood, herding cattle, forming bricks, anything hard which people need to be done. Some people are sympathetic, they pay us well, but the majority take advantage of us. They pay us only \$2 for two days' work- you herd cattle for 3 days and they pay you \$2. You spend the whole day weeding their field and they feed you for the day and pay you nothing!" (Marufu and Masarira). |
| Emotional Distress | All six participants experience and suffer some kind of emotional turmoil and distress because of constant worrying. | There is a mixture of anger, fear, and frustration as they long for the deceased parents. There is a sense of helplessness and hopelessness due to vague and lack of information details about family. They are haunted by not being able to fulfill the late parents' wishes, by stigmatization and marginalization. |
| Identity Crisis | All of them are confused about who they actually are their true identity. | "We are different, you feel torn apart, you want to play with other children, I love soccer. Others play every day between 5 and 6pm. I sometimes go, but I cannot stay long. At the back of my mind is my little brother, he needs to eat. I do not know when to act like an adult. When there is a funeral in the village, I just go, but it is difficult" (Masarira). |
| Support Systems | There were both formal and informal support systems sporadically available for the whole community. | Ancestral belief systems- "our father's grave is our security. He is watching over us, we are not alone" (Musiyiwa and Crossborder). Helpful individuals from the community. Feeding programs in schools. Muonde Orphan Care. BEAM-government The government through Social Welfare teamed up with Plan International. |

The loss of parents produces intense feelings of vulnerability, loneliness, emptiness, and a desire for fulfilling life. They feel life could have been much different had their parents been still alive. Those hard hit with loss of parents are the ones who have no memories at all. Revai blurted in anger and frustration that, “it is one thing to actually know that your parents died and maybe saw them ill, than just being told they died when you were a baby and no one gives further information or explanation. Speaking about his deceased parents Marufu said;

When you lose a parent as a child, you do not have any memories of them. You can only imagine. Losing a parent when you are a child means you learn your loss as you go along. You learn to live without parents and what it means to live without them. I often wonder why such things happened to me so early in life. I miss my parents. I do not remember anything. Even memories of them saying goodbye. When I lost my grandmother, I could only hope that there's a person alive who would love me enough to make the loss feel a little less tragic. I don't remember anything about my parents' funerals, but I remember everything about my grandmother's funeral. I was 13 years old and those promises still linger in my heart. They were never fulfilled.

Overtaken by curiosity I asked him what promises; He went on to say;

Relatives and friends of my grandmother. Maybe my relatives too. They all said they would keep in touch, and to let them know whenever I am in need. The words spilled from the mouths of many who looked at me with pity. It was not long before I was completely on my own, and I never saw the majority of those people again. People say many things they do not actually mean when they feel sorry for you. All they wanted was grandmother's clothes. They took everything including plates, pots, and pans. They left me two little pots, one for vegetables and one for *sadza*. The only person who came back was Aunt Stella. At first I thought she cared, but she had an agenda. She and her family moved to a resettlement area near Shurugwi. There are no schools close by, so she wanted her son to stay here while going to school. He was a bad boy so they expelled him from school.

He went on to share how it pained him to see children of his age wasting the chance of getting an education, an opportunity which he cannot afford. He narrated how disturbed he felt when he saw other children going to and coming back from school while he watched and those are times he missed his parents most. If only they were alive he would be going to school like

other children his age. It would also put him at ease to see how his parents would toil in an effort to send him to school.

Expressing loss of parents Masarira compared his feelings to a reader who starts reading a book with the first chapter torn out. One loses the story line. It becomes a leap in the dark. There is no light at the end of the tunnel. In all of one's friendships and relationships, it feels as though some part is missing.

Assumed responsibility. The death of parents forces young children to take increased adult responsibility, which they are not ready for. The responsibilities range from being income provider, physical daily care, emotional support, to providing discipline and structure within the home. Orphaned children become heads of households leading their siblings. The children indicated that the adjustment carried many challenges. These child heads are expected to fulfil the role of the breadwinners and thereby provide income for the family. The participants all wanted to go to school and they should really be in school. However, not only could they not afford schooling financially, but they were also looking for jobs. Most child heads of families were keen to find jobs so that they could take care of their siblings. Masarira indicated that he had to work so that he would be able to buy food and clothes for his brother. His brother needed school fees, uniforms, and money for school trips. "I do not want him to feel like an orphan, or different from other children." He also said in case of illness he would have to find enough money to send his brother to the clinic.

Children heading households provide for the physical care of their siblings. They must cook, wash, iron, clean the home and help with homework. They must make sure that their siblings wake up on time and eat before they go to school. They never did these chores when their parents were alive.

Child heads often experience serious challenges of providing emotional support to their siblings who experience the loss of deceased parents. The younger siblings do not fully understand that the parents had passed on. They think maybe, one day they will show up. Sometimes taking them to the parent's grave helped.

When parents die, household structures collapse. There is no order. The older child assumes the role of providing discipline and structure within the home. They try their best to instill discipline to the younger siblings. Masarira shared that his brother Lastborn does not listen to him sometimes.

He is quiet but naughty. I would cook for him and leave his food by the fireplace. He would bring five of his friends and they eat everything. Then we hardly have enough for the month. When I confronted him about his friends, now he goes to his friends. I sometimes worry because I do not know where he is. He goes away for 3 days without letting me know and I fear for his safety. One day I really wanted to beat him up.

However, his counterpart Musiyiwa shared a very different story saying that he was very fortunate because his young brother Crossborder was very disciplined. "We are the best of friends. He will never do anything or go anywhere without letting me know."

Taking control of the decision-making process in the child-headed household can be quite challenging. The child heads are often faced with the situation where they have to make decisions on behalf of their siblings. This poses a serious challenge especially where they have to deal with a conflict between the siblings. Lastborn wanted to go and live with their married sister. Masarira had to make a decision considering the following;

Yes, Lastborn's going to my sister would have been a great relief for me, but I did not want him to go. This is our home. My mother left us boys this home and we will remain here. I do not want us to be divided. I wish we had everything we need. Sometimes my sister does not think straight. If Lastborn goes to Kwekwe, he loses the opportunity for his fees to be paid for by BEAM. Here he is already in the system. He only has one and half years before starting his secondary education and we have to think ahead.

Considering all things, this was a good decision. Although the government is unpredictable, at least for the time being the young brother is in the system and is almost assured of financial assistance for his education. Children heading households have assumed responsibility to provide for their siblings financially, bring order in the home, and take control of the decision making process.

Poverty. “We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for is the greatest poverty” (Mother Teresa). All the participants experienced the material poverty and also the poverty of being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, and forgotten by everybody. All my participants were already struggling financially before their parents passed. This situation worsened when their parents passed. Priority needs from the point of view of orphaned children are basics such as food, clothing, blankets and furniture. These children experience the poverty of being hungry and feel neglected. They lack decent clothing. They do not own animals like chickens, goats or cows to help till the land. They do have fields, but no implements like ploughs, harrows, and manure. This increased the children’s inability to access livelihood and essential services like education and health care. Food is their most immediate basic need. One participant said;

We are suffering a lot. Most of the time we do not have food to eat. Sometimes there is nothing to cook or to eat. We just sleep. At least my young brother eats at school. There is a feeding scheme at school. That helps.

The poor living conditions of the orphaned children were a major concern of the community. Those villagers and teachers who were members of the focus group tended to identify orphans as needy, dirty children who came late to school, without school uniforms, and in tattered clothes. They also described them as school drop outs, always borrowing, working hard to survive, and not having enough to eat. Villagers who showed greater concern for the

plight of orphaned children displayed a sense of obligation to provide support to the children. Those deemed well-behaved tended to receive sympathy and support from the community. Statements such as “He is a child who respects and listens to elders” were common about Marufu. Similarly, villagers liked Masarira for not abandoning the rural home and taking care of his young brother Lastborn who everybody labelled as quiet but stubborn. To show their support for the children, some of the villagers would bring them grain from the distribution point, while others offered them clean water from their own homes. Villagers offered the children opportunities to do chores in exchange for food, clothes, or school fees. Masarira expressed much appreciation for the adult villagers acknowledging that they registered them first while he was absent.

They care for us. When the food for work program started in this area, I was away herding cattle for one of the commercial famers. The villagers put my name and that of my friend on the top of the list of those who needed help. We get 50kgs per month. Other people work before they get that allocation, but we do not work because of age. They said we were too young to work, but we get the food just like those who work. The type of work they do mostly is to improve our environment like fixing the road or cleaning the grounds. Sometimes they form and carry bricks like when they were building the clinic.

Food for work programs were introduced by the local government as survival strategies among the disadvantaged groups of the rural society. This is a practical way to poverty alleviation. In these programs, people - mainly women and children – carry out community development works and are paid with food. Their work includes construction and maintenance of infrastructure such as roads, irrigation schemes and dams. The children in this study were exempted from working since they were considered young and of school going age. That included the two who had dropped out of school prematurely so as to fend for their households.

One of the challenges the children faced was the inaccessibility and lack of healthcare services. During my third day with the children, I started coughing and sneezing I suffered a

heavy cold and flu which needed medical attention. The boys told me that walking all the way to the clinic which was 8 kilometers one way would be a waste of time and also it would just drain more strength out of my already fatigued body. They informed me that there was no medication at the clinic for over 3 years and suggested that it was better for me to be treated at home.

One of my child participants showed his expertise by curing my flu. For my cough, he boiled a mixture of guava and gumtree leaves and asked me to drink the water from that concoction. For the flu, he took just an ordinary stone and put it in the fire until it was crimson red. He took the red-hot stone, put it in a dish of water, and covered me with a blanket while I inhaled the steam from the stone. I repeated the procedure for two days and I was completely cured. I was very grateful for his expertise and he was thrilled that I took his advice. He felt very useful and appreciated.

Maricho as means of survival. In most cases, households were impoverished beyond recovery. All participants mentioned *maricho* as their means of survival. Orphaned children engaged in various activities that gives them livelihood. These sources of livelihoods include joining food for work programs and other menial jobs. Masarira explained to me in the following words.

Maricho can be anything sister. Whatever people want us to do for them; weeding in their fields, digging wells for them, reaping corn, cutting firewood, herding cattle, forming bricks, anything hard which people need done. Some people are sympathetic, they pay us well, but the majority take advantage of us. They pay us only \$2 for two days' work- you herd cattle for 3 days and they pay you \$2. You spend the whole day weeding their field and they feed you for the day and pay you nothing!"

Mostly the children relied on the goodwill of their neighbors to survive. However, in most cases this was not free. Some of the participants indicated that the community was helpful by providing menial jobs like clearing people's yards or harvesting corn. Children made themselves available to run errands for sympathetic neighbors for payment in kind. Such

payment was mainly in the form of food. These foodstuffs included the basics like mealie-meal, salt, sugar, cooking oil, and vegetables. The problem would be the payment that in some cases would not be done at all or the amount reduced from the previously agreed yet the work had been completed. The children felt taken advantage of because there was no adult to represent them or simply because they were orphans.

For those going to school it was not easy to find time for maricho as this would not balance with their schoolwork. One of the participants was fortunate to find maricho within the school system. Lastborn, although in grade six, was running the school tuck-shop during break times in exchange for tuition.

Although maricho played a pivotal role as a positive coping strategy in the survival of the orphaned children, the children felt that these jobs were short term and seasonal and therefore could not be relied upon. If nobody hired you then there is no job.

Emotional and social distress. All six participants experienced some kind of emotional turmoil and distress. A lot of it had to do with constant worry. All these children suffered the traumatic experience of losing their parents. The most painful thing for four of the respondents was that they were stigmatized and marginalized. The people in the community just assumed that their parents died of HIV and AIDs. Nobody bothered to think of other causes. Some adults would even utter very painful comments like, “*chakauraya mai nababa chapindawo mauri.* - What killed your parents will also kill you!” This places a social stigma on the children and instills fear in them that they are going to die.

The orphaned children I studied experienced problems that seemed insurmountable. The problems faced included poverty, hunger, disruption of normal childhood, dropping out of school, child labor, lack of care and supervision. There was a mixture of anger, fear, and

frustration as they longed for the deceased parents. The children were afraid of the future. They feared losing their homes to relatives and thereby living in poverty and difficult conditions for the rest of their lives.

Those of the children with siblings were afraid of being separated. They were frustrated when they failed to take care of their siblings. The older children sacrificed their education and playtime in order to fend for their younger siblings. They also experienced frustration at losing important documents like birth certificates, baptism certificates, clinic cards, and other identity documents. There was a sense of helplessness and hopelessness due to vague and lack of information details about their families. Revai and Marufu expressed that they wanted to know more about their parents but nobody told them.

Some were haunted by not being able to fulfil their late parents' wishes. Musiyiwa felt guilty that he may never make it to Mozambique to visit his father's birthplace. It was his father's wish to take his two boys back to his motherland. This did not happen before he died but Musiyiwa's father made a point to tell the boys' mother of his wish before passing on.

Talents: what children can do? I found out that orphaned children are highly talented in many aspects. These talents range from intellectual to survival skills. In school, the teachers reported that Lastborn held first position in all academic disciplines among all the sixth graders. The school has 4 streams of each of the grades and each class had an average of fifty pupils. At the high school Revai, Musiyiwa, and Crossborder were among the top ten academically and Musiyiwa was the school's soccer star.

The children exhibited leadership skills, as they had to adjust to new roles following the deaths of their parents. The children notably undertook housekeeping, decision-making, economic provision, and conflict management. They lost their childhood and assumed adult

responsibility and obligation to take the place of the deceased parents. They grappled with economic hardship, uncertainty about personal safety, family disintegration, and discipline. Sometimes the children would fight, but it did not take long before they reconciled amicably. The children were responsible for supplying their households with material and emotional support despite the fact that they were both physically and mentally immature and not adequately equipped for those roles. Masarira showed his survival skills and expertise by curing my ailment using natural and inexpensive things like guava and gumtree leaves. These are things within their reach.

Support systems. There were both formal and informal support systems sporadically available for the whole community. These included government programs, church groups, and non-governmental organizations. The government through social welfare teamed up with Plan International and were giving out grain on a monthly basis to the whole community. Some of the orphaned children benefited from this program although there were problems of transparency. Four of the participants were registered to receive the grain but nobody ever informed them of when the distribution would be and therefore depended on the goodness of the neighbors who brought them their shares. I witnessed the July distribution and could just see it was not a place for children to be. Even adults fought over who came first and who should get what based on the number of people in the family. It was survival of the fittest. The process was also based on political divisions.

Another government-initiated program was the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM). This was supposed to assist with payment of fees for orphans and vulnerable children. Only one participant in my study benefited from BEAM. The children knew of the program but

were not familiar with the application process. The one participant was fortunate enough to have one of the teachers do the application for him.

The feeding programs in schools sponsored by CARITAS Gweru was a great support for the orphaned children as they were assured of at least one full meal per day. This was a Gweru Diocese project aimed at alleviating hunger in rural schools during the drought stricken 2016. Although those participants who were in school benefited from the meals at school, they still felt bad for their siblings who had dropped out of school and could not enjoy the full meal at school. There was uncertainty as to how long the resources would last.

Muonde Orphan Care was another church run organization that helped provide shelter, school fees to specifically HIV, and AIDS orphans whose parents had died at Driefontein Muonde Hospital. None of my participants were beneficiaries of this organization because they did not meet the requirements. None of the children knew exactly what killed their parents.

The cultural aspect of Shona ancestral belief system also served as support for the children. Musiyiwa and his young brother Crossborder who live alone at home because their mother lives in the diaspora shared that, their father's grave was their security. "He is watching over us, we are not alone". Their mother must have drilled this in them because when she eventually visited during my data collection and I had the opportunity to interview her, she reiterated that the boys were not alone since their father was watching over them.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented six orphaned children who shared their daily personal lives with me. I have shared the seven themes that emerged from listening to these orphaned children who live without parental care and supervision. The children presented themselves as struggling to cope with life following the deaths of their parents. They narrated how they miss

their parents especially when confronted with difficult decisions. The children also shared how they could not access necessities like food, clothes, and other essentials like education and health care services. They were eager to share their stories in hope and trust. Those who had dropped out of school due to lack of financial support were hoping that someone out there might come to their aid if the children's plight was heard. The Shona community valued formal education and saw it as an investment in the future. Following this presentation of the major findings, in the following chapter I will discuss the perceptions drawn from these findings.

Systemic Issues Affecting the Shona Orphaned Children

The world is not big enough to record human miseries. If all mountains were books, if all the lakes were ink, and if all trees were pens, still they would not suffice to depict all the misery in the world (Jacob Boehner).

In the last chapter, I presented the major findings that emerged from the lives of orphaned children who live in households headed by other children without parental guidance or adult supervision. In this chapter, I will discuss perceptions and major issues drawn from the findings about child headed households in the Shona community. The discussion is going to be in three parts, namely; my reaction to the children's experiences, surprises, and concerns; systemic issues in a Shona village/community; and those who need to be aware of ways to help. The final section of the chapter provides my conclusions and recommendations of the study and future research.

The Researcher's Multiple Identities

My multiple identities might have influenced my role as a researcher and added impetus to the study. I was born, raised, educated, became a member of a religious order, and worked among the Shona people of Zimbabwe. I then migrated to the United States where I worked and continued with my education. Although I went back to rural Zimbabwe as a daughter, a sister, an aunt, and a friend, I also went back as a privileged, educated American citizen researcher; the very opposite of the children I was going to study. My multiple identities as an African, Zimbabwean, Shona religious woman, now Americanized, who goes back to her people as a person exposed to the western education and cultures that had influenced my thinking and perceptions might have influenced the way my participants viewed me. My personal passion to eradicate human misery might have enhanced my biases as a researcher.

Discussion

The objective at the beginning of the study was to explore the phenomenon of child headed households in rural Zimbabwe from the perspectives of the Shona community. The aim was to investigate how these children cope on a daily basis without adult guidance and supervision. The intention was also to find out and establish ways to assist these orphans in coping with the effects of their situation. It is my hope that the stories and plight of these orphaned children will stimulate sensitivity and harness some help from the government and other players from both the local and international community, thereby making a positive contribution to the lives of the children. An integrative lens of the Shona philosophy of *Unhu*, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems was used as a framework to guide this study.

The main question of this study was to find out how children from child headed households cope on a daily basis without adult guidance and supervision. The sub questions were:

1. How do these children access necessities for their livelihood?
2. How do adults who live in the same community with these children perceive them?

The findings of this study show that the research questions were answered in a comprehensive manner.

Based on the data from participants in this study, orphaned children who live in child headed households among the Shona community of Zimbabwe struggle to survive. The children narrated their plight, which ranged from lack of physical needs to loss of parents. Some of these children are forced by their situation to drop out of school. All child heads in this study engage in *Maricho*- part time menial jobs to support their siblings. In addition to poverty, hunger, poor

housing, disruption of normal childhood and lack of supervision and care, these children also experience the frustration of misplacement or loss of important personal documents like birth certificates, baptismal certificates, clinic cards and identity documents. Some of them sacrificed their own education and time to play and enjoy life like other children in order to take care of their siblings. Their roles changed as they took increased responsibilities. They took up roles of parents with little or no experience of the adult world. They dropped out of school due to lack of funds for school fees, uniforms, books, and a variety of other school necessities.

The findings show that even the very basic of Maslow's hierarchy of needs like biological and physiological are not met since children do not have enough food, clothing, shelter, and protection. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory states that people have a pyramid hierarchy of needs that they will satisfy from bottom to top. The pyramid of needs is divided into two categories: deficiency needs (physiological and safety), and growth needs (belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization). Starting from mere physiological subsistence, Maslow's hierarchy of needs covers belonging to a social circle to pursuing one's talent through self-actualization. Important to this study is the view that Maslow felt that unfulfilled needs lower on the ladder would inhibit the person from climbing to the next step. If the deficiency needs are not satisfied, the person will feel the deficit, and this will stifle his or her development. Most orphaned children lack basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter, and therefore struggle to make it to the third level.

Systemic Interventions

A systemic intervention tries to have an impact on the *whole system* through influencing one or more parts of the system. An understanding of interrelationships, a commitment to multiple perspectives, and an awareness of boundaries are the common ideas in systems theory

(Williams and Hummelbrunner, 2010). Interrelationships are essentially about how things are connected and with what consequence. When people observe the results of interrelationships, they will see, interpret, and make sense of those interrelationships in different ways.

Thinking systemically about perspectives help us make sense of individual, diverse, and unintended behaviors. In studying the orphaned children's situation in a systemic way, I understood that different groups may not share the same perspectives, and most importantly, any one group could hold several different perspectives, not all of which would be compatible with each with each other.

The third feature of the concept of thinking systemically is based on the realization that we cannot think about everything. Thus, setting boundaries around our thinking is not optional. We make situations manageable by setting boundaries. Thinking systemically has to include a process of making this boundary setting conscious. A boundary determines what is deemed relevant and irrelevant, what is important and what is unimportant, what is worthwhile and what is not, who gets what kind of resources for what purpose and whose interests are marginalized, who benefits and who is disadvantaged. Boundaries are sites where values are enacted and disagreements are highlighted. Power issues are often revealed at boundaries. Boundaries also determine how we approach a situation, what we expect from it, and what methods we might use to manage it (Williams and Hummelbrunner, 2010).

In analyzing the data, I first looked at the children's stories through the lens of *unhu*, then Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and finally Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems. The ecological systems model views individuals as being embedded in five types of nested environmental systems, with bi-directional influences within and between the systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Each system has norms, roles, and rules that shape development. As discussed in Chapter Two of

this work, the systems are microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, and there are interactions that occur within and between the overlapping ecosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). How a system interacts around the child affects how the child grows, and how the child acts, or reacts to the system. This will in turn affect how the community reacts to the child. In his later conceptualization of his bio-ecological model, Bronfenbrenner explains that development takes place through processes of progressively more complex interaction between an active child and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner 2004). He points out that a child's development is determined by what he or she experiences in the settings where time is spent and for the interactions to be effective, they should take place regularly over extended periods of time (Bronfenbrenner 1979).

The ecological systems model focuses on the changing relations between individuals and the environments in which they live to influence policy and program development. There is need to see within, beyond, and across how several systems interact, for example family, school, community, and economy (Bronfenbrenner 2004). This model also assumes that when a person or group is connected and engaged within a supportive environment then the function improves. He adds that to find out the best fit for an individual we have to look at the difference between the amount of social support needed by the person and the amount of social support available in the existing environment (Bronfenbrenner 2004). For this study, I looked at the kind of support available to children in child headed households and what they need.

The ecological model can be used to help develop policies and programs that can benefit children and more particularly in this study are those children in CHHs. According to Bronfenbrenner (2004), child rearing requires public policies that provide opportunity, status,

resources, encouragement, example, stability, and above all parenthood, primarily by parents, but also by significant other adults in the child's environment both within and outside the home

None of my participants had parents living in their homes. Their microsystem, which is the immediate and closed environment, is comprised of peers, neighbors, and the school. Each component influenced the participants in different ways. In many cases, the family is reduced to just a sibling like in the case of Masarira and Lastborn, or a fictive kinship relationship like that of Revai. Therefore, the family microsystem is not a reliable source of support for these orphans. The school microsystem however can provide some support that is not available through the family microsystem. Lastborn, who is only a sixth grader, and goes to an elementary school where they get lunch prepared through government assistance and the community labors, and has a reliable duty working in the school tuck-shop, will develop very differently from his older sibling Masarira, who dropped out of school initially to care for their sick mother, and eventually to do *maricho* to provide for the family survival. Masarira is constantly on the move in their own village and the surrounding ones looking for piece jobs. He has no choice other than to take what is available and offered to him. These neighbors and the school microsystems outside the family, play an important part in shaping the orphaned child's abilities, motives and behavior.

Mesosystem interactions are how the different microsystems work together for the sake of the child. For example, orphaned children in child headed households with no close adult relations at home may have difficulties developing positive relations with teachers because they lack the link that parents provide in the network of interactions. The breakdown of a child's microsystem leaves a child with no tools to explore other parts of its environment. Without proper adult supervision and love, children look for attention in inappropriate places that may

give rise to dangerous and maladaptive behaviors. For example, engage in drug abuse, prostitution and other crimes, thereby making them more prone to exploitation and abuse.

Exosystemic interactions are links between distant social settings in which the individual does not have an active role and microsystems, which involve the child. Although distant, these social settings can indirectly have a strong impact on the individual's development (Bronfenbrenner 1979). These include structures such as the community health services, social and governmental support processes (formal and social) that provide material resources, values and context within which adult relationships operate and which indirectly influence the child. In this study, no child benefited from governmental aid because little was available, except only some minor food rations that were diverted away from orphaned children by other villagers. These orphaned children growing in a weak or broken exosystem with no one to advocate for them do manage to survive but they do not thrive. Availability of resources and a functional welfare system within the individual child's community will determine how well he or she can access the support needed to experience positive development. The orphaned children of this study do not have money for food, school, clothes, or other necessities. Unlike children in some other societies, they do manage to maintain a homestead or find shelter through inheritance, indentured service to a family, or based on the potential of future economic benefit e.g. Lobola or bride price in the case of females.

The economic pressures and political decisions originating in the macro system further affected my children participants' mesosystems. The political leadership in Zimbabwe has since been linked to a long chain of human rights abuses, economic mismanagement and virulent homophobia. This has led to an economic meltdown, which has persisted in the country since 2007. It has now been 10 years since Zimbabwe lost its own currency due to hyperinflation,

corruption and other economic mismanagement issues. In 2014, Zimbabwe a country of more than 14 million people had had a GDP of 27.13 billion, ranking 132nd among world economies. Unemployment figures to date are in excess of 80%. For those with a job, the average salary is \$253 a month; even teachers and other professionals struggle to survive on their wages. Despite an abundance of natural resources, the country is heavily reliant on expensive, imported goods, everything from food to clothing, which further prevents people from rising out of poverty. The social media is awash with satirical comments about the current crisis in Zimbabwe. One hears about the “proudly Zimbabwean”; using American dollars to buy Chinese clothes, Mozambican rice, Zambian sneakers and jeans, Indian cosmetics, Brazilian hair products, and Nigerian fabric! During leisure time, they watch English soccer and South African channels. On the wall, hangs a degree from South Africa and a Japanese car is parked outside. So what is there to be “proudly Zimbabwean” about?

Macrosystem also describes the culture in which individuals live. Cultural contexts include developing and industrialized countries socioeconomic status, poverty, and ethnicity. For instance, orphaned children living on their own in a developing country with weak welfare system are bound to experience strain and challenges in their development than those in developed countries with functional social welfare systems. Macrosystem influence the what, how, when, and where we carry out our relations (Bronfenbrenner 2004). Many of the Zimbabweans are languishing in poverty and this trickle down to individual family’s capacity to provide for their members. Cash shortages hit Zimbabwe after the government threatened to grab all foreign companies operating in the country under the Indigenization and Empowerment Law. Banks in Zimbabwe were compelled to reduce withdrawal limits for customers as low as \$20 per

day per individual. This has led to hundreds of ordinary Zimbabweans sleeping outside banks daily to get much needed cash.

Due to cash shortages, some 13,000 pupils countrywide dropped out of school in 2016 due to unpaid fees in 2016. According to ministry data, this led the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Dr. Lazarus Dokora to urge school authorities to be flexible and accept livestock and labor from parents in exchange of school fees, a policy seen by some groups as archaic and taking the Zimbabwean society back to the Stone Age where barter trade was used. While this might work in rural areas, it does not work in cities where the poor may not even have goods or animals to barter. In any case, it is impossible for schools to develop based on goats and labor barter. This policy was implemented after the Movable Property Security Interests bill allowing livestock and household appliances to be acceptable as collateral was passed the Central Bank. My participants did not have either parents to work for fees or goats to exchange. Not only in Zimbabwe, but also in Sub-Saharan Africa thousands of children die of hunger, malnutrition and preventable diseases every year.

The last level chronosystem is concerned with the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the life course, as well as socio-historical circumstances. Although in this study chronosystem level of socio-ecological system model is beyond the scope of the study since it would involve looking at the changes and events over the children's life courses, which require a longer period, I strongly suggest that the policy prohibiting the enrollment of children into support systems should be relaxed. Children who are heading households and taking care of their siblings must be allowed to register and enroll into support systems despite being below the age of 18 years. They also need advocacy to help them know what is available and how to access it.

Female orphans. There are more male participants in this study than females due to two reasons. Female orphans are more likely to be taken in a family because they are good housekeepers. These girls are also an added advantage when they get married. Whoever raises them gets their Lobola (Bride price) when they get married. In the Shona community, the groom pays Lobola with the help of his family. This then gives an extra burden to those who might wish to adopt a male orphan. Instead of benefitting from the marriage like in the case of female orphans. Male orphans usually are neglected for this reason and hence they struggle to make ends meet.

The female participant in this study endured very different problems from those of her male counterparts due to the biological differences. The government policy of empowering the girl child though, noble is very difficult to realize in the rural areas because girls spend many days away from lessons. The majority of girls in rural areas end up missing a total of 15 days per school term when they are on menstruation because they cannot manage the biological cycle. Boys laugh at the girls when they discover that they are menstruating because the boys themselves do not understand it. This causes embarrassment and the girls would stay out of school for the duration of the cycle to preserve their dignity. The majority of parents in the rural areas cannot afford to buy sanitary pads, which cost up to \$3 per menstrual cycle. Revai's purported grandparents as discussed in chapter 4 cannot afford 50cents for their grinding mill, let alone the luxury of sanitary pads. As a result, she has to find old pieces of cloths to use as pads. Even the rags are hard to come by so she is forced to use one repeatedly. At school, she is forced to wrap the used cloth in a plastic paper and place it in her satchel together with books and food. A piece of cloth is not only difficult to use, but also unhygienic. Without any proper guidance, re- using the cloths without washing and ironing them, properly naturally breeds bacteria. The

use of unhygienic cloths results in rash in the girls' genitals and this can develop into sores. Eventually the practice may result in cancer. Menstruation is a health and education concern.

Community support. Although there are some support systems through helpful individuals in the community, feeding programs in schools, and assistance from the government through Social Welfare and Plan International, the children feel dejected, rejected and uncared for. Most of these programs bypass the orphaned children since they are minors and cannot register themselves. They depend on the mercy of some adults to register them. They are considered as children and nobody pays attention to them. Because of their age, they do not exist in the larger community; they have no voice, so nobody knows their plight. Contrary to how they are perceived as mere children, the children participants shared that even though they were treated like children in every other way, when they were informed about the deaths of their parents, they were expected to respond in adult ways to the dreadful news and to show adult attributes when reacting to the death of their parents. Lastborn was only eight years old when his mother died. His mother's friends expected him to be strong, calm and not to cry: typical adult attributes.

The formal and informal support systems present within the rural community of Chaka are experienced as supportive, but inadequate and with limitations. Several Non-Governmental Organizations like Care International in Zimbabwe, Christian Care, Catholic Development Commission (CADEC) and Plan International have tried to promote empowerment and sustainable development in the area, but could not alleviate the poverty. In 2016, the situation in the whole country was also worsened by a shift in El Nino weather patterns that caused a drought so devastating that according to Eddie Rowe, the country director of the World Food Program (WFP) in Zimbabwe, in an interview with the Daily News, the aid agency fed more than 78, 000

schoolchildren. Severe economic instability, inflation, poverty, and unemployment in Zimbabwe complicate the pathways needed to reach the children. “Donors have been coming here for many years but we are still poor and hungry,” declared one of the focus group members. “The donor is not feeding the poor,” she continued. This is a loaded statement. Despite my living in the diaspora now, I learned that the community is not one homogeneous group. There are power dynamics in each group and hidden conflicts abound. An outsider would not see some of the issues that stifle development inside a village community.

The Councilor, *Sabhuku* the village head and other elders are the respected influential traditional leaders. When the donor or food handouts are coming, the Councilor informs *Sabhuku* who then tells *Siyawamwaya*, the village crier or loudspeaker to shout messages to the people. His nickname emerged from talking too much and now it is shortened to *Siyazi*/Sears. At dawn, Sears is heard shouting, his voice goes far. He will give the villagers information on anything, from going to register their names for food handouts, to communal social, and political meetings, and farming workshops. His most common announcements especially in the dry season were about beer to be served at the forthcoming village ceremonies. Children wake up late, they do not hear the messenger s’ cries, and even if they hear him, they just think it is a call for the adults since they are the decision makers in the village. One day Sears told everyone to go and register for food handouts. They did. Each *Sabhuku* was told by the Councilor to identify 10 most vulnerable and poor households in his village before listing everyone else. Nevertheless, how does “*Sabhuku*” know the poorest in a community where everyone is poor and vulnerable? The list of course will fill up with names of his own wife, children, and his mother-in-law’s family.

Community Perceptions

Based on the informal interviews with the villagers and key informants, the Shona community's perceptions pertaining to child headed households seem to be a mixture of negative and positive attitudes. On the negative side, when adult interviewees were asked to characterize orphans, people tended to identify them in the following ways: “*nherera dzinonetsa*-orphans are problematic, they are dirty, come late to school, and in torn uniforms, or no uniforms at all”. Although some key informants associated orphans with wild behavior, they also blamed relatives for neglecting orphaned children and thereby acting contrary to the Shona culture of *unhu*. Traditionally, the members of the extended family (Foster et al., 1997) absorbed orphans. Twenty years later, there are clear signs of the Shona philosophy of *unhu* slowly disappearing as the extended family members do not seem obligated to provide for the orphaned children. The spirit of sharing with everyone in the village among the Shona community seem to be the thing of the past. Marufu's case is the best example. He is related to the village head who happens to be his uncle and as such should support him, but although the village head did a good thing by registering Marufu to get food handouts from social welfare, there were reports that he goes on to steal from Marufu's portion. The poor orphan would only get a portion or nothing. When the welfare used to give \$6 for milling the grain, Marufu never got any money, which was pocketed by the uncle. The uncle acted without *unhu*. By stealing from the child he should have been caring for, he did not act virtuously as expected of *munhu ane unhu*- a well-cultured person. This definitely signals a change in tradition and show the eradication of *unhu* among the Shona community.

Such desperate situations of some orphaned children like Marufu may affect them negatively and cause the children to engage in crime. Contrary to the findings by both Chizororo (2010) and Masondo (2013) who reported that some of the orphaned children resorted to

criminal activities like stealing from neighbors or growing marijuana for sale out of desperation, I did not find any evidence of such behaviors in any of my participants.

On a positive note, the plight of orphaned children often causes strangers to volunteer to take care of orphans. Fostering non-relatives has not been a common feature of the Shona culture due to the totem system as explained in chapter one. According to the Shona culture, if people share the same totem, they are automatically related and therefore part of the family. And the opposite would be true, if one were not of the same totem, then they would not be part of the village family. Traditionally, Shona people lived in isolated settlements, usually consisting of one or more elder men and their extended families. Most decisions were made within the family. The whole village was just like one family. In the traditional Shona community, human relations were highly valued. The idea of fostering non-relatives shows how the Western culture has infiltrated the Shona culture.

The community was concerned about the orphaned children's plight especially the poor living conditions. The villagers who showed greater concern for the plight of the orphaned children displayed a sense of obligation to provide support to the orphans. Well-behaved orphaned children tended to receive sympathy and support from the community. Statements such as "He is a child who respects and listens to elders were common to Masarira from other villagers. Not only do the villagers sympathize with children with good behavior and come from a good family, but they also sympathize with those that were neglected by relatives after their parents died or experienced ill-treatment from the extended family. There are stories of children like Marufu who showed bravery and courage in difficult circumstances by holding on to the legacy of the family. Unlike his older brother who I did not meet, and despite his hardships in

trying to survive, Marufu did not abandon their rural home in search of fulltime employment at the nearby farms or towns. This earned him a lot of respect from the villagers.

Conclusions

Contrary to the popular view that the concept of a social orphan did not exist among the Shona community of Zimbabwe due to the philosophy of *unhu*, this study purports that there has been a paradigm shift resulting in the emergence of child-headed households (CHHs). The roles and responsibilities of both the family and the Shona community have been affected and as a result, there is a whole generation of children raising themselves without adult guidance. As the rising number of orphans weakens the traditional extended family safety nets, many children are left to fend for themselves (Awino, 2010; Foster, 2000; Sloth-Nielsen, 2002). Some of the Shona cultural values like *unhu* are disappearing as evidenced by the lack of support for orphans from the extended family as before. This study has shown that this breakdown of social networks exposes orphaned children to the vagrants of the harsh socio-economic and political environment. These orphaned children experience social, educational, psychological, and social development problems. They find it hard to cope with their situation. They struggle to make ends meet as they fail to access basic needs.

The orphaned children in this study showed resilience, bravery, and sense of responsibility as they cared for their siblings. Although he loves soccer, Masarira would know when it was time to go and cook dinner for his brother Lastborn. It was evident from the participants that they miss their deceased parents, but their plight does not emerge from lack of adult guidance and supervision. During my participant observations, there was enough evidence that these children who lived alone were well organized and assumed adult responsibility despite their young age. They also proved to be hard working as they engaged in *Maricho* to support

themselves, but they can't cope with the country's environment. Some of the orphans drop out of school because of lack of financial support to meet the demands of the schools.

The children's plight is aggravated by the situation in the country as a whole. The economic meltdown that has affected the country since 2007 as discussed in the first chapter of this study has forced many Zimbabweans out of the country. As a result, I also learned that some of these children like Musiyiwa and Crossborder live alone, not because their parents are deceased, but because they left for the Diaspora to look for greener pastures and better ways to support their families. They could not take the children with them because even the parents were going into the unknown. It was just a leap in the dark.

Zimbabwe as a country is in a state of crisis as the nation experiences food and cash shortages. The Zimbabwean Vulnerability Assessment Committee reported in their 2015/16 agricultural season that an estimated 4.1 million Zimbabweans were food insecure between January and March 2017. The gravity of the food shortages affected school children as some of them dropped out of school because of hunger. Although there has been some intervention from humanitarian assistance like the World Food Program, the government accused of politicizing food aid. According to the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, those who were deemed actively involved in opposition political parties were denied food aid. In addition to excluding members of the opposition political parties, Traditional leaders practiced nepotism when asked to register those from their village who needed food.

The western government structures that require people to register for anything, including food aid disadvantaged orphaned children in this study because they were under age to register themselves. The legal age of majority is 18 years and the children in my study were 17 and below. The study also found out that if the children found a Good Samaritan who was willing to

register them, ironically the same person would steal from them. The government should create an enabling environment for the affected children. Below 18 years of age, these children have limited capacity to act on their own and therefore are at a legal disadvantage. They cannot enter into contracts and would need an adult to consent on their behalf in case of medical treatment, and certain exemptions. They cannot attend village and school meetings resulting on the lack of knowledge of what goes on in their environment. They cannot apply for school fees assistance and or exemptions. Government needs to minimize its bureaucratic systems particularly for orphans and vulnerable children so that they can easily access social welfare services. Orphans in child-headed households are already taking adult responsibilities. Therefore, legislation pertaining to such children should accommodate them despite their age, so that they can register themselves, enter into agreements to freely access social services like health care and other welfare services like food aid and educational assistance.

Recommendations

This study has revealed that orphaned children who are raising themselves face a number of challenges in the process. The basic and higher order needs of these children are not being met in Zimbabwe. As a result, the orphaned children experience educational, psychological, and social setbacks. Given the plight of these children, one cannot help but raise the following questions: Is there any hope for the children's future? Who needs to be made aware of ways to help? With what resources? How should it be done? What are the recommendations? What further research needs to be done?

It is my hope that this study may raise awareness and understanding of the phenomenon of child-headed households among the Shona community of Zimbabwe. Children are the future of the nation and therefore an important part of the community. This study exposes the plight of

children among the Shona community. The whole village can benefit since according to the Shona traditional, cultural values, and practices, children constitute the focal point of life ensuring the replacement and growth of society. The study is going to raise awareness among the Shona community so that they can plan for other supporting services since the extended families cannot cope. The affected children may get some beneficial publicity.

The government of Zimbabwe needs both technical and ideological support to establish its own feeding scheme in schools so that the children are assured of at least one full meal a day. Decision makers from the education, economics, and the legal sectors may be informed by this study as they develop articles and policies which respect and recognize children's rights. The study should influence policy makers to include children from child-headed households among the vulnerable and disadvantaged children especially in the programs which support orphans materially, educationally, and psychologically. These children can also advance the global understanding of children and childhood by showing that they are resourceful, competent and knowledgeable. Like adults, they manage to cope not only in extreme conditions of material poverty, but also without parental guidance.

I hope that these stories of children from child-headed households will prompt the responses of not only relatives and neighbors but also humanitarian organizations and churches in Zimbabwe, Africa, and the whole world to play pivotal roles in supporting these vulnerable children. They should be cared for, allowed to be children, and afforded normal socialization. They need security. The humanitarian organizations should feel compelled to help with the welfare of these children to afford them dignity.

Hope for the Children's Future

The only way to end generational poverty among children being raised in child headed households is through education and health. These children strongly expressed their wish to return to school. Most have been unable to start school or continue their education because of lack of support. They do not have money for their most basic needs let alone school fees. As one who witnessed the plight of these children in person during my participant observation, I am compelled to take off my researcher jacket and begin to campaign for positive change in the lives of these children. To that effect I intend to appeal and advocate for these children through different organizations starting with;

- Zimbabwean Catholics in North America
- Zimbabwean Katorike Canada
- ZIMVANA, SJI INC.

I chose to start with these organizations of Zimbabwean Catholics in the Diaspora because they are familiar with the crisis in Zimbabwe, which affects the orphaned children negatively. As interventions for the girl child in the rural areas, a national campaign in cities and to those in the Diaspora to mobilize a drive for sanitary pads could help. Zimbabweans in the Diaspora could individually or as families adopt a child, family or a school to support starting with sanitary pads for the needy girls.

In an effort to redress the orphaned children's cry for education, especially those who participated in this study, I already launched ZIMVANA, SJI INC. that is a public charity for orphans in Zimbabwe. Its mission is twofold: first, to support the children with basic life needs, such as food, clothing, education, and medical care, and secondly to support the Sisters of the Infant Jesus working in the same area in a way that facilitates their ability to succeed in helping the children. At the first Zim. Katorike Canada held in Hamilton, Toronto, Ontario on the

weekend of September 1st to the 3rd, 2017 in addition to my official presentation on *Lectio Divina*, I was given the opportunity to talk about my research and how other people could help. My short address that left many with tears yielded fruit as now I am getting calls from places like Atlanta, Georgia, Alberta, Calgary, Hampton, Virginia, just to mention a few people who are eager and willing to help. Therefore, there is hope for these children.

Further Recommendations

As a researcher, I recommend that this study can be replicated over a wider population using a bigger sample. This study contributes to research; there are so many issues emerging out of the study of children raising other children, which researchers can pursue. In addition to this ethnographic case study, one could do a quantitative study that looks at the incidence of hunger, disease, effects of lack of education, or perhaps mortality rates in child headed households. Other qualitative studies emerging from this study could focus on enculturation of the Shona values and those which are western, pastoral issues affecting these children, the role of the Church in Zimbabwe in militating issues affecting orphans, ways to expose and curb corruption in political leaders, comparing the plight of complete orphans and those who live alone because their parents live in diaspora and many others.

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Appendix

IRB Application



5/26/2016

Sr. Eucharist Gomba

Dear Sr. Gomba:

Your request to conduct the study titled *Child Headed Households in Rural Zimbabwe: Perceptions of a Shona Community* was approved by full board review on 5/26/2016. Your IRB approval number is 16-05-010. Any written communication with potential subjects or subjects must be approved and include the IRB approval number.

Please keep in mind these additional IRB requirements:

- This approval is for one year from the date of the IRB approval.
- Request for continuing review must be completed for projects extending past one year. Use the **IRB Continuation/Completion form**.
- Changes in protocol procedures must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Use the **Protocol Revision and Amendment form**.
- Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others must be reported immediately.

Approved protocols are filed by their number. Please refer to this number when communicating about this protocol.

Approval may be suspended or terminated if there is evidence of a) noncompliance with federal regulations or university policy or b) any aberration from the current, approved protocol.

Congratulations and best wishes for successful completion of your research. If you need any assistance, please contact the UIW IRB representative for your college/school or the Office of Research Development.

Sincerely,

Ana Wandless-Hagendorf, PhD, CPRA

Ana Wandless-Hagendorf, PhD, CPRA
Research Officer
University of the Incarnate Word IRB

UIW Application for IRB Approval Part I: Application Form

This application is to be used for initial application for IRB review only. Sufficient time must be allowed for review. Incomplete applications will be returned without review. For a list of application components, see the [IRB Manual](#).

Submit this completed form as part of the application to the Office of Research Development electronically for IRB review. **Do not submit applications directly to the IRB representative**, as this form will be electronically routed to them for review after it has been checked for completion and logged into the IRB database. Signatures will be applied electronically once the application is approved.

| Principal Investigator | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| A Principal Investigator (PI) must be designated for any human subjects research. The PI is responsible for ensuring university and federal regulatory compliance for all research activities and research personnel associated with this protocol. For the responsibilities of the PI, refer to the UIW IRB Manual. | | | |
| Name: EUCHARIA GOMBA | Phone #: 210 430 4153 | E-mail: gomba@uiwtx.edu | Mailing Address: Click here to enter text. |
| College/School or Department: DREEBEN SCHOOL OF EDUCATION | CITI Training Date: 09/09/2013 | PIDM (UIW ID): 887112 | |
| Is the PI a student? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If, YES, a faculty supervisor must be designated for this research protocol. Include a signed copy of the Faculty Supervisor Agreement with this application. | | | |
| Faculty Supervisor | | | |
| Name: Dr. JUDITH BEAUFORD | Phone #: 210 380 3171 | E-mail: beauford@uiwtx.edu | CPO: Click here to enter text. |
| College/School or Department: DREEBEN SCHOOL OF EDUCATION | CITI Training Date: 03/21/2016 | PIDM (UIW ID): 167359 | |

| Other Project Personnel | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| List all other project personnel, including co-investigators, research associates, and student researchers who will be recruiting, consenting, collecting data, or working with data collected from human subjects. Use "enter"/"return" key to list personnel on separate lines. | | | | |
| Name: N/A | Role in Research: N/A | CITI Training Date: N/A | Email: N/A | PIDM (if student): N/A |

| Research Information | | |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Title of Study: CHILD HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL ZIMBABWE: PERCEPTIONS OF A SHONA COMMUNITY | | |
| Research Category: <input type="checkbox"/> Exempt <input type="checkbox"/> Expedited <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Board | | |
| This research will be conducted: <input type="checkbox"/> On the UIW campus or UIW facilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Off campus (list all locations where research will be conducted): CHAKA AREA, CHIRUMHANZU DISTRICT, MIDLANDS PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE | | |
| Number of Subjects: Approximately 5 children & 15 adults | Number of Controls: N/A | Total Duration of Study Activities: ONE YEAR |
| This research will involve the following (check all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Inmates of penal institutions <input type="checkbox"/> Institutionalized intellectually handicapped <input type="checkbox"/> Institutionalized mentally disabled <input type="checkbox"/> Committed patients <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectually handicapped outpatient <input type="checkbox"/> Mentally disabled outpatient <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant women <input type="checkbox"/> Fetus in utero <input type="checkbox"/> Viable fetus <input type="checkbox"/> Nonviable fetus | | |

DocuSign Envelope ID: F811658D-3A95-459D-BF88-CD902CA523F7

- ☐ Dead fetus
☐ In Vitro fertilization
☒ Minors (under 18)

Funding Disclosures

Funding source(s): ☐ Internal ☐ External ☐ Pending ☐ None

List all funding sources (pending and awarded):

UIW OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The funding provides for (select all that apply):

- ☐ Investigator release time or compensation
☐ Research materials
☐ Graduate assistants, student workers, or other project employees
☒ Travel
☐ Other:
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Financial Conflict of Interest

Does any member of the project team hold financial interest in the funding organization or any similar organization (stocks, board membership, etc)?

- ☒ NO
☐ If YES, describe below:
[Click here to enter text.](#)

This Section for Office of Research Development Use Only
Signatures will be applied electronically upon approval

Investigator Signature(s) & Assurances

I certify that the information above is accurate and complete. I will request prior IRB approval for any changes to the approved protocol and/or informed consent forms, and will not implement those changes until I receive IRB approval. I will report any adverse effects to the IRB immediately. I agree to comply fully with the ethical principles and regulations regarding the protection of human subjects in research.

Principal Investigator:

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Name: Eucharía Gomba | Signature: <small>DocuSigned by:</small> <i>Eucharía Gomba</i> | Date: 5/25/2016 |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|

Faculty Supervisor (if Principal Investigator is a student):

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Name: Judith Beauford | Signature: <small>DocuSigned by:</small> <i>Judith Beauford</i> | Date: 5/25/2016 |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------|

Approval Signature(s)

IRB Representative/Reviewer:

| | | |
|-------|------------|-------|
| Name: | Signature: | Date: |
|-------|------------|-------|

IRB Chair (or Chair's Designee):

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Name: Helen E. Smith | Signature: <small>DocuSigned by:</small> <i>Helen E. Smith</i> | Date: 5/25/2016 |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|

UIW Application for IRB Approval Faculty Supervisor Agreement

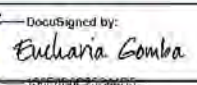
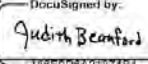
Please read this information and complete the requested fields. **Print, sign, and scan** to submit electronically or **submit in hard copy** to CPO 1216. **A signed copy of the Student Researcher Agreement is required for any research protocol with a student PI.** Incomplete applications will be returned without review.

| Application Information | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|---|
| Title of Study: CHILD HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL ZIMBABWE: PERCEPTIONS OF A SHONA COMMUNITY | | | |
| Student PI Information | | | |
| Name: EUCHARIA GOMBA | Phone #: 210 430 4153 | E-mail: gomba@uiwtx.edu | PIDM (UIW ID): 887112 |
| College/School or Department: DREEBEN SCHOOL OF EDUCATION | | Program of Study: ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP | |
| Faculty Supervisor Information | | | |
| Name: Dr. JUDITH BEAUFORD | Phone #: 210 380 3171 | E-mail: beauford@uiwtx.edu | CPO: Click here to enter text. |
| College/School or Department: DREEBEN SCHOOL OF EDUCATION | | | |

I certify that the student named above is knowledgeable of the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this study as described in the proposed protocol.

I furthermore certify the following:

- I have reviewed this application;
- I will maintain knowledge of the direction and completion of the project;
- I will assure the student investigator remains in compliance with UIW and federal human subjects protection policies;
- I assure the student investigator will promptly file for revision, amendment, annual continuing review, or completion of the supervised protocol and will provide assistance to them as needed;
- I assure both the student investigator and I will promptly report any significant or untoward adverse effects to the UIW IRB;
- If this protocol is to be conducted as part of a course, I will ensure the student investigator is informed of the requirement to file appropriate documents at the end of the course; and
- If at any time I am unable to proceed as Faculty Supervisor (e.g., end of the course during which research was planned, sabbatical leave, or exit from the University), I will assist the student in designating an alternate Faculty Supervisor for the remainder of the study.

| Student Investigator and Faculty Supervisor Signatures | | |
|--|--|--------------------|
| Student Principal Investigator: | | |
| Name: EUCHARIA GOMBA | Signature:  <small>DocuSigned by: Eucharia Gomba</small> | Date: 5/25/2016 |
| Faculty Supervisor: | | |
| Name: Dr. JUDITH BEAUFORD | Signature:  <small>DocuSigned by: Judith Beauford</small> | Date: 5/25/2016 |

UIW Application for IRB Approval

Part II: Research Protocol

Provide the requested information and develop your research protocol in accordance with requirements specified in the UIW IRB Manual. Submitted protocols must be in the following format: single-spaced, 11-12 pt. sans-serif (e.g., Arial, Calibri, Helvetica) font. For explanations on each section, see [IRB Protocol Help](#).

Submit this completed form as part of the application to the Office of Research Development electronically for IRB review. **Do not submit applications directly to the IRB representative**, as this form will be electronically routed to them for review after it has been checked for completion and logged into the IRB database.

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of Child-Headed Households (CHHs) in rural Zimbabwe from the perspectives of a Shona community. I wish to gain an understanding on how these children access basic necessities like food, clothing, education, health care, and general protection from abuse. How are these children perceived by adults who live in the same community with them and how do they cope on daily basis without parental care, guidance, and, supervision.

Section 2: Background and Significance

UNICEF (2013) reported that more than 56 million children under the age of 15 years in Sub-Saharan Africa had lost at least one parent to HIV/AIDS and were living without parental or extended family care and supervision. Life expectancy in Zimbabwe is 55 years, and among the lowest in the world (CIA World Fact Book, 2015). Of the 13 million people in Zimbabwe, 46% is under 18. Of these 1.6 million or 12.3% are orphans who have lost parents to wars, abandonment for economic reasons, HIV/AIDS, and the cholera epidemic. Families are losing their breadwinners and at the same time the resources to care for the sick and orphaned children. The growing number of orphans in Zimbabwe is putting huge economic and social strain on a society whose demographic profile showed children and youth constituting 50% of the population in 2012 (UNICEF Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2015). The most distressing consequences of the loss of parents have been the development of child-headed households (CHHs). Current researchers agree that the appearance of CHHs in African societies is a fairly recent phenomenon with early cases noted in the 1980's in Rakai District of Uganda and Kagera region of Tanzania, and in 1991 child headed households were observed in Lusaka Zambia (WHO, 1990; Mukoyogo & Williams, 1991). Child headed households is also a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe (Chizororo, 2010; Kurebwa & Kurebwa, 2014; Mavise, 2011; Maushe & Mugumbate, 2015).

Early researchers such as Foster, Makufa, Drew, & Karlovac (1997) had assumed that there was no such thing as children heading households in Africa mainly because of the tradition that the extended family took care of the orphaned children. The traditional Shona community of Zimbabwe was characterized by brotherhood, a sense of belonging to a larger family, and by groups rather than individuals (Foster et al., 1997). The concept of a social orphan did not exist in Zimbabwean societies in particular due to the philosophy of *unhu*. *Unhu* is a Shona word which means behavior patterns acceptable to Shona people of Zimbabwe. This social philosophy embodies virtues that celebrate the mutual social responsibility, mutual assistance, trust, sharing, unselfishness, self-reliance, caring, and respect for others among other ethical values. This means ethos and attitudes which influence the way people participate in various areas of their lives. As such, relatives and neighbors used to provide safety nets for the vulnerable groups by providing care and transmitting traditional values. It was generally assumed that orphaned children would naturally be looked after within their extended family structures (Ganga & Chinyoka, 2010).

Today there has been a paradigm shift due to westernization, colonization, the AIDS pandemic, economic meltdown, and globalization. The roles and responsibilities of both the family and the

community among the Shona people of Zimbabwe have been affected resulting in the emergence of child-headed households (CHHS). As the traditional extended family safety nets are weakened by the rising number of orphans, many children are left to fend for themselves (Awino, 2010; Foster, 2004; Sloth-Nielsen, 2002). This breakdown of social networks expose orphaned children to the vagrants of the harsh socio-economic and political environment, thereby leading them to vulnerable situations such as child labor, early child marriages, prostitution, and human trafficking.

Scant research has been carried out into the causes, extent, nature and circumstances of child headed households (Meintjes, 2010). When information is available, it is based on small-scale research projects and on anecdotal evidence (Kurebwa & Kurebwa, 2014). This study is significant in that it may raise awareness and understanding of the phenomenon of child-headed households among the Shona community of Zimbabwe. Children are the future of the nation and therefore an important part of the community. The affected children will get some publicity. The whole village can benefit since according to the Shona traditional, cultural values, and practices, children constitute the focal point of life ensuring the replacement and growth of society. This study is going to expose the plight of children among the Shona community. The study is going to raise awareness among the Shona community so that they can plan for other supporting services when extended families cannot cope.

Decision makers from the education, economics, and the legal sectors may be informed by this study as they develop articles and policies which respect and recognize children's rights. The study may influence policy makers to include children from child-headed households among those listed as vulnerable and disadvantaged children especially in the programs which support orphans materially, educationally, and psychologically.

I hope that the stories of children from child-headed households will prompt the responses of not only relatives and neighbors but also humanitarian organizations and churches in Zimbabwe, Africa, and, the whole world to play pivotal roles in supporting these vulnerable children.

This study contributes to research; there are many issues emerging out of the study of children raising other children which researchers can pursue. In addition to this case study, one could do a quantitative study that looks at the incidence of hunger, lack of education, or perhaps mortality rates in child headed households.

Research Questions

1. How do children living in child headed households cope on a daily basis without parental guidance, care, and supervision?
2. How do they access basic necessities like food, clothing, education, health care, and general protection from abuse?
3. What are the perceptions of the adult community members regarding children living in child headed households?

Section 3: Location, Facility and Equipment to Be Used

The location of this research project will be a village in Chaka area of Chirumhanzu Rural District of the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe. Facilities to be used include, the home of a child headed household, village community meeting area, schools, clinics, convents, and churches. I have reviewed the relevant regulations and guidelines governing human subjects' research in Zimbabwe found on <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/international>. The Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe guidelines are for health related projects. Even though the Council receives funding from the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, I do not need their permission or approval for my research. Research Ethics pertaining the rights of research participants are the same which means the IRB approved by UIW will be acceptable in Zimbabwe. I do not need their approval. When I did other research in education and social sciences in Zimbabwe before, all I needed was a letter from the institution introducing me as their

student who is doing a project. In this case, a letter from my chair introducing me to my prospective participants would suffice.

The following equipment will be used; notebook, recording device, and a camera. A digital camera will be used to take photographs on the environment, living conditions, home and other artifacts during data collection to enhance the verbal and written data. The photographs will be used to help me to write better descriptions and support my notes in data presentations.

Section 4: Subjects and Informed Consent

The PI will travel to Zimbabwe to do the study and reach out to potential participants through the Sisters of the Infant Jesus (SIJ) who provide spiritual and pastoral care in the area. Participants will be drawn from members of one child headed household who are 17 years and below from a village in Chaka area of Chirumhanzu Rural District of the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe, the Headman, adult members of the same village where the children reside, teachers, health personnel, pastoral workers and other service providers from the government, private sector, and non-governmental organizations. From the 200 households in Chaka area of Chirumhanzu Rural District, it is estimated that at least 15 are headed by children. To select the one specific household from the 15 in the area I am going to use convenience sampling. Subject selection will be guided by feasibility, accessibility, and proximity. In consultation with local community leaders, the sisters (nuns) of my order working in the area, and other service providers, a household headed by a child who is 17 years and under whose members are willing to participate in the study will be selected.

This study involves minors, therefore out of respect for the children as developing persons, children will be asked whether or not they wish to participate in the research. An assent procedure will be followed. Although children cannot legally give valid informed consent to participate in research (IRB Guidebook), research ethics suggest that we obtain their assent as well as their guardian's consent before we involve minor children in research. Even if a legal guardian has signed a consent form, the child may not understand what is asked of them or not want to participate in the study. Children will not be pressured or forced to participate. Assent means a minor's affirmative agreement to participate in research. This may be gained by talking with a child and supporting that talk with a written assent document appropriate to the child's age and comprehension level. The assent process will take into account the age, maturity, and psychological state of the child and be adapted accordingly. Minor participants who are able to read and understand the Informed Consent Release (Guardian's permission form) may provide assent on that form with a separate signature line. For those participants who are too young or intellectually immature to read and understand the guardian's permission form, an opportunity will be provided for the assent form. I will use the language that is appropriate for the age level and mental capacity of the participant and take time to explain what is going on in the proposed study, why the study is being done, and that if they object they will not be punished or scolded.

Informed consent will be obtained from the participants at the time of the interview. The PI will request either written consent or verbal consent from the participants. Both scripts of written informed consent forms and verbal informed consent will be made available to the prospective participants. The option of a verbal informed consent is necessary especially in dealing with the Shona community of Zimbabwe due to fears associated with signing a legal document. The verbal informed consent procedure will involve a number of people starting with the entry point of the Sisters of the Child Jesus working in the area. The sisters will introduce the PI to the Headman who by virtue of being the village head would welcome and give the PI permission to reside in the village. It will then be the Headman's task to introduce the PI to the blood relatives (legal guardians) of the orphaned children who in turn will issue verbal consent to allow me to stay in a child-headed household. The subjects will still be given sufficient time and the opportunity to answer questions. The Shona people are very community oriented, so by the time I am in the village, I will have more than one witness, although I plan on having

one of the sisters as a witness to the verbal consent, I also allow the villagers to pick a witness amongst themselves to gain their trust. My prospective participants have never been to the United States, and so they might even plead with me to take photographs of them so that at least their faces may make it to the US. To address this I will get their informed consent for any publication of their image either verbally or on the consent form. I will refrain from photographing the children, but if they insist on having their photos taken, I will black out their eyes or blur their faces to make it impossible to identify the child. Participants will be given adequate time before the interview begins to discuss and review the consent documents and ask questions.

Section 5: Subject Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this study. The PI is going to spend one week living in the home of these orphaned children. As expected of all guests according to the Shona culture, I will bring gifts in the form of food and candles both of which we will all share together as a family during my stay. It is also customary that according to the Shona people that a guest is fed by the whole village, so I will not be a burden to the children.

Section 6: Duration

The total duration of the study will be at most one year. Participant recruitment will take place after the IRB approval is granted. Data collection will take place between June and August of 2016. I was born and raised in the area, so I am familiar with the culture, language, customs, and traditions, so for the purposes of experiencing how the children cope on daily basis without adult supervision, one week is enough. I could have said 3 or 4 days, but what happens Monday to Friday might be different from what happens over the weekend. So I want to experience the cycle of one week in the life of this family. The one week is specifically spent with the child headed household, but for the whole process of data collection I will spend 3 months. The one week is the minimum amount of time I will spend with the children, and if more time is needed, I could spend another week to make a maximum of two weeks. Although I will be flexible with my time, I also do not want to be a burden to the family by overstaying their hospitality but I will be in the area from June to August and therefore still accessible to the family if need be. From June to August I will be in the area for the interviews and therefore still accessible. This will allow for additional contact with the family if needed. Transcribing interviews and analysis of data will continue until the completion of the project.

Section 7: Research Design (Description of the Experiment, Data Collection and Analysis)

This study is guided by a qualitative research paradigm in which a case study design is adopted. Swanborn (2010) defines case study as the study of a social phenomenon, carried out within the boundaries of one social system (the case) or within the boundaries of a few social systems (the cases). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), a case study is a type of a qualitative research in which in-depth data are gathered relative to a single individual, program, or event. Case studies provide researchers with an understanding of complex social phenomenon while preserving the holistic and meaningful characteristics of everyday events in their natural context (Yin, 1994). Case studies are a valuable tool for understanding human behavior in depth (Stake, 1995). The purpose is to learn more about an unknown or poorly understood situation. In view of the above definitions, the researcher chose to observe the case of one household headed by a child to learn how these children cope on daily basis without parental guidance and supervision. One child headed household will serve as the case while their relatives and neighbors from the same village will act as the key informants. Swanborn (2010) asserts that data collected using a case study is richer and of greater depth than data found through

experimental designs. Thus a case study is important to use in this study because it is expected to expose me to the participants' real life situation which otherwise would be difficult.

Purposive, judgmental, and information-oriented sampling strategies will be adopted for the recruitment of participants. Purposive sampling, also referred to as judgment, selective or subjective sampling is a non-probability sampling method that is characterized by a deliberate effort to gain representative samples by including groups or typical areas in a sample. The researcher relies on his/her own judgment to select sample group members. Purposive sampling is mainly popular in qualitative studies. I chose purposive sampling considered by Welman and Kruger (2000) as the most important kind of non-probability sampling to identify the primary participants. Purposive sampling ensures that a small number of people participate in a study. In qualitative research, sample size is seldom determined in advance, since the phenomenon dictates the method including even the type of participants (Groenewald, 2004). Usually little is known about the wider group from which the sample is drawn. It is best to select participants from which the most can be learned because qualitative research focuses on the richness of data where a relatively small sample or a single case is selected (Durrheim, 2006; Patton, 2015).

Judgmental sampling as defined by Black (2010) is a non-probability sampling method where the researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study. In judgmental sampling, only a limited number of people can serve as primary data sources, in this case the members of one child-headed household, and a few people who interact with them. This will save time and resources needed in selecting prospective sampling group members.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), when selecting a case for case study, researchers often use information-oriented sampling as opposed to random sampling. Information-oriented sampling is used in selecting subjects that offer an interesting, unusual or particular revealing set of circumstances. Children from a child-headed household will be selected because they can offer these insights especially ways of coping as minors without adult supervision. In this study information-oriented sampling is also used because of the researcher's rich knowledge of setting and circumstances.

In this study, I hope to conduct a thorough, holistic, and in-depth exploration of a typical case of a child headed household from a particular village through the perspectives of the children, relatives, neighbours, adult community members, and service providers such as teachers, nurses, and pastoral workers. The household chosen will consist of orphans with no adults living with them. My goal is to understand rather than to confirm.

For the data collection process, I hope to incorporate the following techniques or strategies: participant observation, informal conversations, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Observation as a method of research involves learning through involvement in the day to day or routine activities of participants. It is a tool that involves planned watching, recording and analyzing observed behavior as it occurs in a natural setting (Ailwood, 2003; Swamborn, 2010). Thus observation entails careful planning. I will live with them as their guest. This will give me the opportunity to approach the participants in their own environment and learn what life is like for them as "insiders" while I remain an "outsider". I will gain a holistic understanding of the physical, social, cultural, and economic contexts in which study participants live, the relationships among and between people of the village, and their behaviors and activities; what they do, how frequently, and with whom. I will strive to gain a nuanced understanding of context that can only come from personal experience. During the week of living with the children, I will experience and learn their routine, discover who they are; their ages, gender, interactions among themselves and with neighbors. Who does the cooking, shopping, mending, gardening, cleaning? Do some go to school? Do some have formal or informal work outside the home? Where does their food come from? What is the rhythm of daily life for the child head and the other siblings? What resources do they have? What resources do they need? What resources do they wish they had? As a researcher this will enable me to develop a familiarity with the cultural milieu of the whole village that may prove invaluable throughout the study. The observations will be recorded in

fields notes, a reflection journal and when necessary audio-recorded, or use a camera to capture the physical artifacts and living conditions. I will be conducting interviews with community members and the children and I will document the conditions within which they live using photographs to show the extent of their poverty, and I will take field notes to describe the photographs. The photos might also help me to capture the environmental context and the settings used by the children, for example where they fetch drinking water, performing a household chore like slaughtering a hen for dinner etc. I will refrain from photographing the children, but if they insist on having their photos taken, I will black out their eyes or blur their faces to make it impossible to identify the child. Although somewhat stigmatizing, the condition of the orphans is common and the publication of photos would be limited to academic publications, and not to reports offered to the community in which the data were collected.

Focus group discussions will also be employed to gather the views of the participants especially from the community in which children living in child headed household reside. A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, and beliefs, attitudes towards a concept, idea, or service (Henderson, 2009; Patton, 1987). A focus group interview is an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic, in which case groups of six to eight people from the Shona village will be asked to participate in the interview for one-half to two hours on their perceptions about child headed households. A similar interview will take place with service providers as focus group members.

I will also interview participants individually to allow each participant to freely express themselves outside the group setting. An interview, according to Palin (2008), is a conversation between two or more people where questions are asked by the interviewer to elicit facts or statements from the interviewee. Singleton and Straits (2004) suggest that an interview is a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee with a specific purpose of obtaining relevant information for the research. Thus an interview is a direct method of collecting or obtaining data in the face-to-face situation allowing the interviewer to clarify the precise meaning of questions, modify one's line of inquiry. I will use open-ended questions which allow me to modify the questions during the conversation. Creswell (2013) viewed a semi-structured interview as a flexible and adoptable way of collecting data that encourages the informants to talk.

Before beginning the interview, I will ask for permission to audio record the interviews and focus groups and explain why it is important for me to record their responses. The focus group and the interviews will take place in the participants' language Shona so that they feel comfortable when expressing themselves. During the process of interviewing, I will also be taking short notes so that I stay attuned to the interview process. A fieldwork journal will be used to record various activities and behaviors taking place during the data collection process. The interviews will be audio-taped, transcribed, and translated from Shona to English when necessary. I will transcribe and translate the interviews myself.

The original data will be analyzed qualitatively and the translated by the researcher from Shona to English as needed to write the report. Analysis of data will begin in the field with recording, listening, and reflecting on the data. Hammersley (2010) suggests that transcription is not simply a matter of writing down what was said, but it is a process of construction. He further states that the first stage of data analysis is transcription. As the researcher transcribes, he or she is involved in the interpretation of the content and, through repeated listening, will have detailed knowledge of the content of the interviews (Wellard & McKenna, 2001). Data collected through focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews will be analyzed by thematic content analysis. The thematic content analysis will proceed through breaking the information collected into themes emerging from the data. I will identify trends and patterns emerging in the data. These trends and patterns will be coded and classified into categories and then used to make inferences based on the context of the children's daily activities and the perceptions of relatives and neighbors. The findings of the study will be presented descriptively with selected descriptions consisting of the quotes of the participants translated into English. The publication

of photos would be limited to academic publications, and not to reports offered to the community in which the data were collected.

A qualitative case study research design is expected to provide a holistic and deep understanding of the experiences of children living in child-headed households. It was chosen because it is the best fit for the study as it is descriptive, exploratory, and contextual in nature.

Section 8: Risk Analysis.

Due to the fact that this study includes minors who are vulnerable, the risk associated is described as greater than minimal. The following risks will be anticipated; Data will be collected through face to face interviews. Participants will have a choice to use their real name or pseudonyms. For those who choose to remain confidential, there is potential risk that they may be identified based on what they say in the interviews. The orphaned children may experience minimal risk due to emotional discomfort as they are reminded of the deaths of their parents. However, the religious identity of the researcher which will be obvious is going to be a factor in minimizing that risk. The Shona people are very religious people and as such hold the clergy and religious personnel with high regard. The researcher's presence in their home would be viewed as a great honor and a source of comfort and security for the minors.

- i. Risk of re-traumatization. The orphaned children may experience trauma due to emotional discomfort as they are reminded of the deaths of their parents. However, the religious identity of the researcher which will be obvious is going to be a factor in minimizing that risk. While the sisters working in the area will also be available to provide pastoral or counseling support, the PI herself has been in ministry for 37 years as a religious sister and has worked in different capacities which include but not limited to pastoral work, educational, health, publishing and editorial work. After training at Hillside Teachers' College, I founded and headed the Guidance and Counselling department at Regina Mundi High School in Gweru Zimbabwe where 3 quarters of our enrollment of +700 hundred students were from broken families. These are children aged between 11 and 18 years and I worked with them from 1993 to 2000. Here in the US I have worked as a Pastoral Counselor at a Parish of 1500 families in West Virginia from 2002 to 2011. Although I am a student here at UIW, because of my strong visibility in the community, I am still providing pastoral counselling to both the students and the members of the community as a volunteer. All these qualifications and skills acquired through training and experience in pastoral counselling by the researcher are going to be instrumental in mitigating the risk of re-traumatization with the orphaned children.
- ii. Discomfort in hosting the researcher. A crucial factor in minimizing the fear and discomfort of hosting the researcher in their home is that the Shona people are very religious and spiritual people and as such hold the clergy and religious personnel with high regard. The researcher's presence in their home would be viewed as a great honor and a source of comfort and security for the minors. According to Owomoyela (2002), African traditional religions have a strong foothold in contemporary Zimbabwe as an integral part of the everyday lives of many Zimbabweans. Religion, in this view, constitutes an element within culture, as religion is seen as a way of life. The religious influence goes beyond what can be termed religious in a narrow (or Western) sense: it is seen to be evident in cultures, the literature, politics, and medicine and so on. A common expression used during times of crisis by the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe is "*Mwari oga ndiye anoziva*" "only God knows our plight". Life would be unthinkable without this dependence on God. The Shona people consider, Mwari, the Great Spirit, and the Supreme Being, as being interested not in the affairs of individuals but of communities. Human beings can communicate with him through intermediaries. Priests and nuns are considered as intermediaries between God and the community. The community defines the way of life for its members and gives the individual a sense of belonging to an extended family, tribe, or clan. This

understanding of community does not divide reality into “secular” and “religious”, it is all one community. God is the source of life, and the community draws its existence from God (Bakare 1997). There are already sisters working in the same area, and the children are familiar with them, and these sisters will also be available to provide pastoral or counseling support. In 2012 the estimate of the religious identity of Zimbabwe put Christianity at 85%, about 10.2 million out of the total population of 12 million people (Religion in Zimbabwe). Christianity was introduced in Zimbabwe by the Portuguese as way back as 1561 and reintroduced by the Europeans in 1859. A Dominican sister popularly known as Mother Patrick accompanied the Pioneer Column as a nursing sister in 1890. She and 3 other sisters started the first hospital and the first school in Salisbury now known as Harare. Moyo (1988) noted that even today the community is grateful to the Catholic Church for the efforts the sisters put in providing for health and education and advancement of youth among the Shona. Religion plays an important role in Zimbabwean culture. Everything in the Shona religion is connected in some way.

- iii. The perceived risks associated with signing legal documents. Given the unstable political situation in the country, and to avoid suspicion, and ensure the safety of the study participants, it would be crucial to use a verbal informed consent procedure instead of requesting for signatures. The option of a verbal informed consent is necessary especially in dealing with the Shona community of Zimbabwe due to fears associated with signing a legal document. These fears are rooted in a political wrangle dating back as far as the Rudd concession of 1870 to 1918, in which Lobengula was tricked into signing a document by putting an X since he could not read and write. Although with that X Lobengula thought he was only giving the 3 white men (Charles Rudd, Francis Thompson, and Rochfort Maguire) permission to hunt, he felt duped when the written document was used by the British colonial powers as justification for taking over his entire domain, and so therefore the Shona people accused him of having sold the country with an X. The incidence which Keppel-Jones (2014) describes as “spoken words versus written legalese”. This fear of signing a written legal document was revived by the controversial 2013 Zimbabwean elections after which reports alleged vote rigging. According to the Denis Hurley Peace Institute (DHPI) report, “the voting was free, fair, and peaceful, but there were serious flaws on registration and the voters’ roll was rigged.” Now people are afraid their names may be used by the rival political parties. It is because of this that the people of Zimbabwe are afraid of putting their name or signature to any document. So to protect the community from the fears associated with signing a legal document, the PI will provide the option of a verbal consent which will take a more conversational style than the written consent form.

Section 9: Confidentiality

Orphaned children participating in this study will have the option for their story to be retold. Confidentiality of data and participants will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms throughout the research process and in the final document. Recorded audio files will be password protected on the researcher’s personal computer and USB drives. Any documents and data obtained from the field will be protected in a locked drawer at the researcher’s place of residence for five years.

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Consent Documents

Verbal Consent

Title of Research Study: Child-Headed Households in Rural Zimbabwe: Perceptions of a Shona Community

Investigator: Sr. Eucharía Gomba SJI

Introduction & Request: My name is Sr. Eucharía Gomba, a doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Judith Beauford in the Dreeben School of Education at the University of the Incarnate Word, in San Antonio, Texas, United States of America. I am doing a study on perceptions of a Shona community regarding child headed households. I am interested in finding out how these orphaned children cope on a daily basis without parental guidance and supervision. To complete this study, I plan to stay in their home for at least a week. I therefore request your permission to allow me to stay in your village and be the children's guest.

Here is why you are being asked to take part in this research

In this research I am also interested in finding out how the orphaned children access basic necessities like food, clothing, education, health care, and general protection from abuse. Therefore, I am inviting you to participate in this study because;

- You are head of this village where there are some orphaned children under the age of 17 who live by themselves with one of their siblings as the head of the household.
- You reside in this village where the children live.
- You are related or connected with child headed households.
- You provide services like pastoral care, educational and or health care to these children

This is what you should know about being in a research study.

- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part. You can also agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Here is who you can talk to

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints related to the research, you can talk to me: Sr. Eucharía Gomba at (+210) 430-4153 gomba@uiwtx.edu, or Dr. Judith Beauford (+210) 380 - 3171 beauford@uiwtx.edu, and/or Dr. Osman Ozturgut, UIW Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, (+210) 805-5885 ozturgut@uiwtx.edu.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of the Incarnate Word, Office of Research and Development. You may also contact the IRB at (+210) 805-3036 if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the researcher.
- You cannot reach the researcher.
- You want to talk to someone besides the researcher and her supervisor.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

This is why the research is being done

The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of Child-Headed Households (CHHs) in rural Zimbabwe from the perspectives of a Shona community. I wish to gain an understanding on how these children access basic necessities like food, clothing, education, health care, and general protection from abuse. How are these children perceived by adults who live in the same community with them and how do they cope on daily basis without parental care, guidance, and, supervision.

If you say “Yes, you want to be in this research,” here is what you will do

If you agree to take part in this study, you will make an option to participate either in a one-on-one interview of 45 to 60 minutes, or a group (6-8 people) interview of one and half to two hours. I will ask you about your involvement and perceptions about the orphaned children who live by themselves. A request to record the interview and write notes is also made to you. The interviews will also involve observation and analysis of your non-verbal cues by the researcher. Audio-recording is required to best document the results of this study. If you do not agree to be audio-recorded, then we will seek an alternate participant who will allow audio-recording..

If you say that you do not want to be in this research, this is what will happen

You can decide not to participate in this research and it will not be held against you.

You can say “Yes,” but change your mind later

You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you. We can end the interview at any time. Just let me know if you want to do this. If this happens, I will ask you if any data collected up until that point may be used in the research.

Here is how being in this research could be bad for you

There are perceived risks of re-traumatization as you are reminded of the death of your loved once, emotional discomfort in discussing sensitive questions and hosting the researcher. You can skip any questions you do not feel comfortable or wish to answer or ask to end the interview at any point.

This is what will happen to the information collected for this research

We will not disclose any of your personal information which would make you identifiable in any presentation of the study data and will make every effort to preclude any other agency from divulging personal information.

CONSENT:

Do you wish to participate? Record participant’s response: **Yes** **No**

| Names of person obtaining consent & Witness | Signature | Date |
|---|-----------|------|
| Researcher: Sr. Eucharika Gomba | | |
| Witness: | | |

LETTER TO THE GUARDIAN**REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO INTERVIEW ORPHANS IN CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**

Dear Guardian,

I am a doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Judith Beauford in the Dreeben School of Education at the University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas in the United States of America. My research focus on the perceptions of a Shona community regarding child headed households. I am interested in finding out how these orphaned children cope on a daily basis without parental guidance and supervision. I plan to stay in their home for at least a week. I request your permission to give a written consent for children under your guardianship to participate in the study since they are not legally competent to consent.

The research will involve observation, informal conversation, and one-on-one interviews with the children. Some of the conversations with the children may be audio taped. A debriefing session will also be held with the children if required. Data will be transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. As a researcher I undertake to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the participants. In order to protect their rights, the following safeguards will be employed:

- Informed written consent from the guardian and assent from the children is required.
- Both the guardian and the children will be informed of the objectives of the study, data collection devices and activities.
- Participation is voluntary and the children have the right to withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences.
- The children's identity will not be divulged by the researcher as pseudonyms will be used
- Audiotapes will be stored in a locked cupboard and unauthorized access to these will be prohibited. All records will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study.

It is important to note that it could be emotionally distressing to the children as they relive the trauma caused by their parents' deaths but the researcher will make sure to minimize any distress by comforting and telling the children about something which gives them hope. Following the interview, the children may opt for a session to work through their experiences.

The findings of this study may be used to formulate guidelines and recommendations for the programs which support orphaned children among the Shona community. They may also inform decision makers as they develop articles and policies with respect to the vulnerable and disadvantaged children. The feedback of the results of the study will be provided to the children upon request.

If there are any additional questions related to the research, or complaints that need to be addressed, you can contact: Sr. Eucharía Gomba at (+210) 430-4153 gomba@uiwtx.edu, or Dr. Judith Beauford (+210) 380-3171 beauford@uiwtx.edu. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of the Incarnate Word, Office of Research and Development at (+210) 805-3036.

Please indicate your response to authorize the minors to participate in the study by completing the form below:

GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

I (Name in full) _____ have read and fully understand the request letter for minors under my guardianship to participate in the research on the perceptions of the Shona community pertaining to child headed households in rural Zimbabwe. I also had the opportunity to ask questions and therefore, by my signature below accept to give my consent on behalf of the minor to participate in the study.

| Name | Signature | Date |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Researcher: Sr. Eucharía Gomba | | |
| Participant (Minor): Tanaka Nhamo | | |
| Guardian: Rukudzo Zvinonzwa | | |

Tsamba KuvaMiririri veVana

Kuzadzika zvidzidzo zvangu paYunivhesiti yeIncarnate Word iri muSan Antonio Texas muUnited States of America, ini sisita. Eucharía Gomba ndichibatsirwa naChiremba Judith Beauford ndirikuita tsvakurudzo yenherera. Tsvakurudzo yangu yakanangana nepfungwa dzavaShona maererano evana nherera dzinogara dzoga. Ndineshungu dzokuda kuziva kuti vana ava vanorarama sei zuva nezva vasina nhungamiro yavabereki. Ndirikukoka nherera dzinogara dzoga dzichitungamirirwa navamwe vana. Ndinokumbira mvumo yenyu kuti mumiririrevo vana vasati vasvika zero rekodzero yoruzhinji nokuvasainira kuti vakwanise kubatsira mutsvakurudzo iyi.

Mukuita tsvakurudzo iyi, ndichada kugara navana vemhuri imwechete vasina vabereki ndichiongorora magariro avo ezuva nezuva, ndichakurukura navo nukubvunza zvandinenge ndichida kunzwisisa pamagariro avo. Ndichapa mukana kumwana umwe noumwe anogara mumhuri kuti atsure ari oga pasina vamwe nhunha dzake uye zvino mufadza kana kumushungurudza. Ndichange ndichinyora misoro yenyu kuti ndisakangamwa zvinokosha. Nhaurwa dzose dzichatapiwa nechitapamanzwi. Manzwi aya ndichazomanyora nokupindurira muchirungu apo ndinenge ndopepeta ndonyora zvandinenge ndawana mutsvakurudzo. Somuongorori ndinofanigwa kuremekedza kodzero dzavose vanondibatsira mutsvakurudzo iyi. Kudzivirira kodzero dzavandichabvunza ndichaita zvinotevera;

- Kupiwa mvumo yakanyorwa nomumiririri anokodzera
- Imi somumiririri nomwana mucharondedzerwa zvizere maererano nezvinangwa zvetsvakurudzo iyi, uye nematsvakirwo eumboo
- Tsvakurudzo iyi inopindwa neanoda, pasina manikidzo, uye munhu wose ane kodzero yokuramba kupinda mutsvakurudzo iyi kana kusiyira panzira pasina chibingaidzo
- Munhu wose anopiwa zita ramadunhurirwa, saka hapana anozoziva kuti akataura izvi ndiyani
- Zvitotamanzwi zose zvichakiyirwa neni somuongorori, pasinazve anobvumidzwa kuzvishandisa kusvika kwapera makore mashanu mushure mukupera kwetsvakurudzo apo ndinozozvidzima.

Zvinokoshawo kuti muzive kuti vana vangangoshungurudzwa zvisihoma apo vanoyeuchidzwa kufa kwavabereki vavo, asi ndichatora matanho ose kuti vasanyanyakutambudzika nezvazvo nokuti vafunge zvinoita kuti vaende mberi noupenyu.

Zvichawanikwa mutsvakurudzo iyi zvingangobatsira kupa mazano mukuchengeta nherera. Kutimuneimwe mivhunzo maererano netsvakurudzo iyi, kana zvimwe zvinenge zvisina kukufadza munokwanisa kutaura naSr. Eucharía Gomba panhamba dzinotevera: (+210) 430-4153 gomba@uiwtx.edu, kana Dr. Judith Beauford (+210) 380-3171 beauford@uiwtx.edu. Munokwanisawo zvakare kutaura neveIRB, bato rinomirira kodzero dzevanhu paYunivhesiti yeIncarnate Word, hofisi yetsvagurudzo nebudiriro panhamba dzinoti (+210) 805 – 3036.

Kana magutsikana zadzisai fomu rinotevera;

Ini _____ ndaverenga nokunzwisisa zvinodiwa kuti vana vasati vasvitsa zero vabvunzwe nezvomugariro wenherera munharaunda ino. Ndapiwawo mukana wakazara wokuvhunza mivhunzo, saka ndinobvuma kuti vana vandakamiririra vabvunzwe.

| Zita | Siginicha | Dheti |
|---------------------|-----------|-------|
| Sr. Eucharía Gomba | | |
| Mwana: Tanaka Nhamo | | |
| Mumiriri: | | |

Kugamuchira fomu iri zvinoreva kuti tataurirana tikanzwisisana, mivhunzo yenyu ikapindurwa, mukapa mvumo yokuti mwana ataurwe naye nezvoupennyu hwakwe senherera izvo zviri kutsvaka nomudzidzi.

CHILDREN ASSENT FORM

DO YOU WANT TO BE ASKED ABOUT ORPHANHOOD?

I am doing a research study to find out how orphaned children get basic needs and live on a daily basis without parental guidance and supervision. I want to know how they get food and clothing, whether they go to school or not, and what they do when they are sick. I am asking you to take part in this study because you are an orphan who live with your siblings only.

If you want to be in my study, I will live with you and your siblings in your home for at least a week to see how life is for you. We will talk about your life in general and I will ask you some questions. There is no right or wrong answer since this is not a test. Some of our conversations will be recorded if you allow me to. You and I will find a nickname for you so that nobody except me will know what you tell me. However, since you are the subject of study, your situation might come up in the discussions I will have with the adults in the village.

You can ask me any questions about this study whenever you like. If you decide you don't want to finish, you can ask to stop and you will not be punished. Being in the study is up to you. No one will be angry with you if you change your mind later and nothing bad will happen to you.

From the list below, choose what you are willing to do, then sign this paper to show that you want to be in the study.

- ☐ I am willing to participate in informal conversations only
- ☐ I am willing to participate in one-on-one interviews only
- ☐ I am willing to participate in both one-on-one interviews and informal conversations
- ☐ I want the interviews to be recorded/ audiotaped
- ☐ I do not want the interviews to be recorded/ audiotaped.

| Name | Signature | Date |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Researcher: Sr. Eucharía Gomba | | |
| Person obtaining assent: | | |

UPENYU HWENHERERA

Ndirikuita tsvakurudzo yezvenherera. Ungada here kuvhunwza mivhunzo maererano nemuraramiro wenhera zuva nezuva. Ndinoda kuziva kuti vanodyei, vanophekeyi, vanoenda kuchikoro here, uye kana varwara vanoita sei?

Kana uchinditendera, ndichauya kumba kwenyu, ndogara nemi kwesvondo rese ndichiona mugariro wenyu. Tichataurirana ndivhunzawo mivhunzo. Hapana minduro inokosha kudarika imwe zvinongobva newe. Haumanikidzwi kundibatsira. Unogona kuramba kupindura mivhunzo chero nguva, uye hapana chinokuwana kana ukaramba kuvhunzwa. Iwe neni tichatsvaka zita ramadunhurirwa kuti pasawana anoziva kuti ndiwe uye zvawanditaurira hapana wandinoudza. Kana wabvuma, sarudza zvinotevera wondisainirawo bepa rino.

- ☐ Ndinoda kungokurukura nemi chete
- ☐ Ndoda kuvhunziwa chete
- ☐ Ndoda zvose kutaurirana nemi nokuvhunziwa
- ☐ Ndingafara kana nhaurwa dzedu dzikatapiwa
- ☐ Handidi kuti zvatinotaura zvitapiwe

| Name | Signature | Date |
|------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Mudzidzi: Sr. Eucharía Gomba | | |
| Muvhunzwi: | | |

LETTER TO ADULT PARTICIPANTS**Child-Headed Households in Rural Zimbabwe: Perceptions of a Shona Community**

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Sr. Eucharika Gomba, a doctoral student in the Dreeben School of Education at the University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas, United States of America, under the supervision of Dr. Judith Beauford. The purpose of this study is to gain understanding of your perspectives about orphaned children living in child headed households in your community. You are invited to participate in this study because of your connection with orphaned children living by themselves in your area. We need to know how these children live without parental supervision or guidance, so that we can understand their needs and aspirations in order to serve them. I hereby request your participation in this research.

Although personal information will be required on this form, please be assured that your anonymity during the study will be maintained by the use of pseudonymous unless you chose to allow your name and identity information to be used. The research will involve in-depth audiotaped interviews and focus group meetings. If you agree to take part in this study, you will make an option to participate either in a one-on-one interview of 45 to 60 minutes, or a group (6-8 people) interview of one and half to two hours. A request to record the interview and write notes is also made to you. The interviews will also involve observation and analysis of your non-verbal cues by the researcher. Data will be transcribed and analyzed by the researcher.

I undertake to respect your rights, needs, values, and desires as the participant. In order to protect your rights, the following safeguards will be employed:

- Informed written consent is required.
- You will be informed of the objectives of the study, data collection devices and activities.
- You will be provided with feedback of the results of the study upon request.
- Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences.
- Audiotapes will be stored in a locked cupboard and unauthorized access to these will be prohibited. All records will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study.

It is important to note that it could be emotionally distressing to relive your trauma as we speak of the deaths of your friends and neighbors, but the researcher will use her pastoral counselling skills to limit any distress that you may experience. Following the interview, you will have the option of a session to work through your experiences.

The findings of this study may be used to formulate guidelines and recommendations for the programs which support orphaned children among the Shona community. They may also inform decision makers as they develop articles and policies with respect to the vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

If there are any additional questions related to the research, or complaints that need to be addressed, you can contact: Sr. Eucharika Gomba at (+210) 430-4153 gomba@uiwtx.edu, or Dr. Judith Beauford (+210) 380-3171 beauford@uiwtx.edu. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of the Incarnate Word, Office of Research and Development at (+210) 805-3036.

Please complete the consent form below to show your willingness to participate in the study.

**CONSENT FORM
TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

I (Name in full) _____ have read and fully understand the request letter to participate in the research on the perceptions of the Shona community pertaining to child headed households in Rural Zimbabwe. I have also been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this study and have marked the appropriate options.

Please mark the appropriate options below:

DocuSign Envelope ID: F811658D-3A95-459D-BF88-CD902CA523F7

- ☐ I accept and give my consent to participate in the study
- ☐ I am willing to participate in one-on-one interviews only
- ☐ I am willing to participate in focus group interviews only
- ☐ I am willing to participate in both one-on-one and focus group interviews
- ☐ I accept and give my consent to allow the interview to be audiotaped.
- ☐ I do not give my consent or the interviews to be audiotaped.
- ☐ I choose to allow my name and identifying information to be used for this study and any presentations or publications resulting from the study.

| Name | Signature | Date |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Researcher: Sr. Eucharía Gomba | | |
| Participant : | | |
| Witness: | | |

A copy of this consent form will be given to you. Accepting a copy of this information and consent form means that we have discussed the research project, your questions about it have been answered, and that you have given permission to be interviewed.

Tsamba KuVaVhonzwi

Ndinokumbirawo kukuvhunzayi mivhunzo maererano nenherera dzinogara dzoga munzvimbo ino. Ini sisita Eucharía Gomba ndichibatsirwa naChiremba Judith Beauford ndirikuita tsvakurudzo iyi kuzadzikisa zvidzidzo zvangu paYunivhesiti yeIncarnate Word iri muSan Antonio Texas kuUnited States of America. Tsvakurudzo yangu yakanangana nepfungwa dzavaShona maererano nevana nherera dzinogara dzoga. Ndineshungu dzokuda kuziva kuti vana ava vanorarama sei zuva nezuva vasina nhungamiro yavabereki. Vanodyei? Vanopfekeyi? Kana varwara vanoita sei?

Ndichavhunza vanhu muzvipoka, uye umwe noumwe ari oga. Kana mabvuma kundibatsira patsvakurudzo iyi, muchasarudza kuti munoda kuvhunziwa muchipoka here kana kuti muri moga. Nhaurwa dzose dzichatapiwa nechitapamanzwi. Manzwi aya ndichazomanyora nokupindurira muchirungu apo ndinenge ndopepeta ndonyora zvandinenge ndawana mutsvakurudzo. Somuongorori ndinofanigwa kuremekedza kodzero dzavose vanondibatsira mutsvakurudzo iyi. Kudzivirira kodzero dzavandichabvunza ndichaíta zvinotevera;

- Muchandipa mvumo yenyu yakanyorwa
- Mucharondedzerwa zvizere zvinangwa zvetsvakurudzo iyi uye namatsvakirwo eumboo
- Munhu wose anopiwa zita ramadunhurirwa, saka hapana anozoziva kuti akataura izvi ndiyani
- Makasununguka kupinda kana kubuda munyaya iyi pamadiro, uye musingapi chikonzero kana kuwana chibingaidzo
- Zvitotamanzwi zvose zvichakiyirwa mumba mangu somuongorori, pasinazve anobvumidzwa kuzvishandisa. Ndichazovirasa mushure mamakore mashanu kubva kupepa kwetsvakurudzo.

Zvinokoshawo kuti muzive kuti mungangoshungurudzwa zvishoma apo tinotaura nezvekufa kwavabereki vevana ava, vaivewo hama dzenyu. Ini somuongorori ndichashandisawo ruzivo rwangu rwokunyarardza vanhu somupikiri kuti musanyanye kuzvidya moyo.

Zvichawanikwa mutsvakurudzo iyi zvingangobatsirawo mukuchengetwa nherera. Kutí muneimwe mivhunzo maererano netsvakurudzo iyi, kana zvimwe zvinenge zvisina kukufadzai, taurayi naSr. Eucharía Gomba panhamba dzinotevera (+210) 430-4153 gomba@uiwtx.edu, kana Dr. Judith Beauford (+210) 380-3171 beauford@uiwtx.edu. Munokwanisawo zvakare kutaura neveIRB, bato

rinomirira kodzero dzevanhu paYunivhesiti yeIncarnate Word, hofisi yetsvagurudzo nebudiriro panhamba dzinoti (+210) 805 – 3036.
Kana magutsikana zadzisai fomu rinotevera;

Ini _____ ndaverenga nokuzwisisa zvinodiwa netsamba iyi mukuongorora mafungiro avaShona maererano nenherera dzinogara dzoga mudunhu rino. Ndatsanangurirwa zvizere nezvetsvakurudzo iyi uye ndakapiwa mukana wokuvhunza mivhunzo nokuzwisisa zvinodiwa. Ndinobvuma nokusarudza zvinotevera;

- ☐ Ndinoda kupinda mutsvakurudzo iyi
- ☐ Ndinoda kuvhunzwa ndiri ndoga chete
- ☐ Ndinoda kuvhunzwa muboka chete
- ☐ Ndinoda kuvhunzwa zvole muboka, uye ndiri ndoga
- ☐ Ndinobvuma kuti zvitaurova zvitaurove
- ☐ Handide kuti zvitaurova zvitaurove
- ☐ Ndingafara kana zita rangu rikaburitswa mutsvakurudzo iyi

| Zita | Signicha | Dheti |
|---------------------|----------|-------|
| Sr. Eucharika Gomba | | |
| Muvhunzwi: | | |

Kugamuchira fomu iri zvinoreva kuti tataurirana tikanzwisana, mivhunzo yenyu ikapindurwa, mukapa mvumo yokuti muvhunziwe maererano etsvakurudzo yenherera muno mudunhu izvo zviri kutsvakwa nomudzidzi.

Instruments Used for Data Collection

Interview Protocol: Potential Questions for Participants

Headman (One on One)

1. What services does the community get in terms of social welfare of the children in general? Educational? Health care? Pastoral care?
2. Are equivalent services provided for orphaned children?
3. What is the extent of the orphan problem in the area? Is it increasing or decreasing?
4. What has contributed to the orphan problem in this area?
5. What problems do you have with orphans in your village?

Focus Group with Community

1. How would you describe orphaned children living in child headed households? Are they a blessing or a challenge? In what way?
2. Please tell me why you think these children are living by themselves? In your view, what keeps these households together?

3. How does your community regard/perceive these children? As adults? Children? Or both?
4. When you hold village or community meetings are members of child headed households invited?
5. What are the main problems affecting orphaned children especially those who live in child headed households in your community?
6. What contributions do these children bring to your community?
7. What can the community do to assist the child headed households in terms of guidance, care, and general protection?

Other Service providers (Teachers, Sisters, Health Personnel, etc.)

1. Is there anything you think I need to know about children living in child headed households?
2. How would you describe children living in child headed households in relation to other children? What do other children do that they do not do or vice versa?
3. What do you see as the major strengths of the orphaned children?
4. What forms of social support do you feel have been most helpful to children living in child headed households?
5. What are some of your expectations from the government? The Church? And other Non-governmental organizations?

Children from Child headed Households

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? –Family background, interests, dislikes, number of siblings, circumstances which led you to live alone as children, relatives living nearby, anything that you want me to know about you.
2. In this household, who makes the decisions on what is to be done, when, and how it is done? How does this differ from when your parents were there?
3. How would you describe the roles and responsibilities of each of the household members (in terms of household chores)? Do these roles differ and in what way?
4. How do you get food, clothing, fees, and other basic needs?
5. How do you deal with crisis like misbehavior, illness, or problems that you cannot solve on your own?
6. How would you describe the siblings' attitude towards you? In what way do you think your siblings like you or do not like you?
7. How do your family members' (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins) feel about you, and how do you all get along?
8. How do members of your village/neighborhood, community feel about you and your siblings?
9. If you were to change something about your situation, what would that be? How do you feel about your future?
10. Is there anything you think I should know about you and your siblings?

MIVHUNZO YETSVAKURUDZO NEZVENHERERA

Sabhuku voga

1. Muno mumusha menyu zviiko zvinoitwa kubatsira vana paDzido? Utano? NezvoMweya?
2. Nhererera dzinowanawo zvakafanana here?
3. Dambudziko renherera munoriona sei mumusha muno? Ririkukwira here kana kuderera?
4. Sokuona kwenyu dambudziko iri rinokonzerwa nei?
5. Ndaapi matambudziko amunowana nokuda kwenherera muno mumusha?

Boka Romumusha

1. Pane zvamungada kunditsanangurirawo here maererano navana vanogara voga pasina vabereki. Mungati vana ava, zvikomborero here kana zvigumbu pakati penyu?
2. Mukuona kwenyu, seiko vana ava vachigara voga?
3. Vana ava vanotorwa Seiko mumusha muno? Savana here? Savakuru here? Kana zvole?
4. Pamunoita misangano yemusha vana vanogara voga vanokokiwavo here?
5. Ndaapi amunoona samatambudziko makuru anowira vana vanogara voga?
6. Ndezvipiko zvinogonekwa navana ava zvanopawo mumusha menyu?
7. Ndezvipiko zvezvatingaite somusha kubatsira vana ava mukurama kwavo?

Boka Ravanochokuita NeNherera (VaDzidzisi, VaRapi, neVanobatsira paMweya)

1. Pane zvamunofunga kuti ndinofanira kuziva here maererano nenherera mudunhu rino?
2. Vana vanogara voga munovaona sei muchifanidza navamwe vana? Zviiko zvinoitwa kana kuwanikwa navamwe vana zvisingaitwi nenherera kana kuwnikwa?
3. Ndezvipi zvamunona zvakanakira nokuipira uterera?
4. Ndaapi mapato amunoona seanopa rubatsiro kunherera?
5. Munotarisa zvipi kubva kuhurumende? Kereke? Nemamwe mabazi akazvimirira oga?

Nherera Dzinogara Dzoga

1. Unganditaurirawo nezveupenyu hwako? Zvinofadza, zvinorwadza, zvaunoshuvira, vana vama vako, hama neshamwari dzako, chero chaunongoda kuti ndizive.
2. Ndiyani anotonga mumba muno? Anoronga kuti nhasi kunobikweyi, kana kuti tinoiteyi?
3. Mose vakomana navasikana munoita mabasa akafanana here? Ndizvo here zvaingoitika vabereki varipo?
4. Ko chokudya, zvokupfeka, mari yechikoro, nezvimwe zvole zvamunoshaya munozviwana sei?
5. Kana umwe akagwara kana kuita misikanzwa munoita sei?
6. Imi pachenyu munowirirana here? Ko nehama dzenyu dzokwababa nedzokwamai zvakanamira sei?
7. Ko vanhu vomusha vanokubatayi sei? Makasununguka here muno mumusha?
8. Chiiko chaungada kusandura pamararamiro ako? Chii chaida kuita muupenyu?
9. Pane chimwe here chaunofunga kuti ndingafanira kuziva nezvemhuri yenyu?