



**Baseline formative research and documentation
on the endogenous practices promotive of
Violence against Children and Sexual Gender
Based Violence Prevention in UMP and Shamva**

2022

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction and project context

Child marriage and child sexual abuse is a risk factor for intimate partner violence against girls and women, death in childbirth and non-fatal pregnancy-related complications,¹ infant mortality and low birth-weight.² According to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 33.7% of girls are married, that is one in three girls under 18, whilst in comparison, 2 % of boys get married before turning 18.³ Other reports show that 39 per cent of the currently married women in rural Zimbabwe (between the ages of 20-49 years) were married before they reached the age of 18 and in urban areas it amounts to about 21.

Child marriage disproportionately affects young girls, who are much more likely to be married as children than young boys,⁴ hence they are exposed to teen pregnancies. A UNICEF findings and strategic planning document⁵ revealed that girls would be married as children because they are perceived as a burden on their family, (i.e. a girl child will eventually leave and get married anyway); a girl's primary role is to bear children and raise a family; girls have low self-esteem; and certain forms of disobedience would result in being married off. These disobediences included arriving home late, being seen walking with a boy and losing one's virginity even in the absence of a pregnancy.⁶

Parents construct girls as easily distracted from their studies by boys who will lure them into sexual relationships. In fact, another study had found that anxious parents pre-emptively took their girl-

¹ Nove A, Matthews Z, Neal S, Camacho AV. Maternal mortality in adolescents compared with women of other ages: evidence from 144 countries. *Lancet Global Health*. 2014;2(3): e155-64.

² World Health Organization; 2008 (WHO Fact Sheet WHO/MPS/08.14).

³ Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency 'Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey' 2019 Survey Findings Report (2019)

⁴ Early marriage: a harmful traditional practice: a statistical exploration. New York: UNICEF; 2005.

⁵ D Fry *et al* 'Addressing social norms that underpin violence against children in Zimbabwe: Findings and strategic planning document. Harare: Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare (2016).

⁶ Some facts about Marriage in Zimbabwe' <http://baobabtales.wordpress.com/2010/03/06/some-facts-about-marriage-in-zimbabwe> (accessed on 18 October 2022)

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children out of school in order to prevent them from getting pregnant. This emanates from the socio-cultural and traditional beliefs in the context of Zimbabwean rural communities.

Zimbabwe has identified cultural norms and traditional appeasing spirits for wrongs done by a family member (*ngozi*) or as a replacement for a dead sister (*sara pavana*) as a driver for child marriage, despite no pregnancy involved. There are also religious teachings espousing the importance of childbearing ('be fruitful and multiply'). Baseline surveys existing in Shamva have also recognised specific religious groups that may explicitly condone child marriage, such as the apostolic sect. According to INSPIRE Strategies, changing attitudes and norms in society is an important part of preventing violence against children.⁷ Doing so often requires modifying deeply ingrained social and cultural norms and behaviors in particular, the idea that some forms of violence are not only normal, but sometimes justifiable. Examples include girls forced to have sex because of the sexual entitlement felt by boys and men; accepting child marriage or wife beating as normal.

According to the UNICEF Strategic planning document,⁸ positive social norms prevent violence by changing social beliefs and expectations that condone violence. Types of norms particularly relevant to preventing violence against children include: gender norms that define appropriate behaviours and how males and females should be referred to and valued in society and through cultural practices; norms on the status of children; and norms about parenting disciplinary practices.⁹

Gender norms in relation to decision-making on sexual matters show that gender norms are the reason why boys and girls do not use contraceptives. For boys, gender norms dictating masculinity, in which a real man does not use protection, influenced contraceptive use and peers reinforced this norm. For girls, the gender norm that girls lack agency in making sexual decisions influence contraception use. Research shows that a fear of rejection by boys (relating to gender norms, in

⁷ INSPIRE Framework (WHO et al. 2016). Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children.

⁸ D Fry *et al* 'Addressing social norms that underpin violence against children in Zimbabwe: Findings and strategic planning document. Harare: Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare (2016).

⁹ (Mercy et al. 2015; WHO 2010; Fry 2016).

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that boys dictate what happens) may lead to girls accepting having sex without a condom, which heightens the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections significantly.

Traditional practices can be used to end child marriages, through turning traditional ceremonies into awareness platforms. To mark their rite of passage into adulthood, children in the rural areas of Zumba undergo initiation ceremony camps, chinamwali. On top of training children on their cultural norms and vices, respect and how to be useful citizens, sexual reproductive health and anti-child marriage talks could also be tendered at such gatherings. Communities have to be made aware of the evils of child marriages. Real life examples of people who have been through child marriages should be given platforms to lecture their respective communities on evils of child marriages. Such a hidden human resource is in abundance throughout our townships and villages. Instead of rebuking their choices or situation, we could use them to prevent another catastrophe.¹⁰

Understanding socio-cultural norms that contribute towards child marriages is important as it helps in analysing and mapping out how best these norms can be transformed to a positive shift in norms and attitudes on children's rights, protection, inclusion, and gender equality.

1.2 RMT Project: Reinforcing positive societal attitudes on the prevention of violence and harmful practices against girls in Shamva and Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe (UMP)

Rozaria Memorial Trust is implementing a project titled 'Reinforcing positive societal attitudes on the prevention of violence and harmful practices against girls in Shamva and Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe (UMP) with support from UNICEF. RMT has already been implementing work in Shamva and also Murewa, with some research studies done to understand issues of gender, SRHR and child marriage. that have been done to see the cultural canvas in Shamva.

The project is underpinned by following Theory of Change: If there is greater commitment , knowledge and skills by duty bearers (traditional leaders, parents/guardians, CCWs and VHWs) and a positive shift in norms and attitudes on children's rights, protection, inclusion, and gender equality; If all girls are empowered to be self-confident, assertive, assume a positive and proactive role in preventing Sexual Gender Based Violence in rural communities and when there is systematic research and documentation of the effects of social and cultural norms on SGBV against

¹⁰ <https://www.law.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/documents/reprohealth/lgh-01-child-marriage.pdf>

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girls; THEN there will be enhanced child protection mechanisms and preventing of harmful practices including child marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse therefore resulting in girls pursuing their education and enhancing their mental health and well-being, pursuit for education and protection of their rights and dignity.

1.3 Objectives of the Baseline

The overall objective of baseline was to document the evidence on positive cultural norms and traditional practices that contribute to reducing child marriage and child sexual abuse including teenage pregnancy. This documentation will further contribute towards:

- An understanding of socio-cultural norms in Shamva and Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe that contribute towards Child Marriages
- Identifying gaps and giving recommendations on how best these norms can be transformed to a positive shift in norms and attitudes on children’s rights, protection, inclusion, and gender equality

1.4. Literature Review

1.4.5. An overview of child marriages and sexual abuse in Zimbabwe

As stated earlier, almost one in three Zimbabwean women are married by the time they turn 18. The COVID-19 pandemic further worsened the situation as schools were not functioning, thus leaving children with less protection and exposed to many child rights violations. The practice of child marriage is most common in the poorer regions of Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland East, where Shamva and Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe are located. (See Table below)

Table 1: Share of girls married before 18

Province	Share of girls married before 18
Mashonaland Central	52.1%
Mashonaland East	45.1%
Masvingo	43.4%
Mashonaland West	42.2%
Manicaland	38.1%
Midlands	30.3%
Matabeleland North	29.4%

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Harare	23%
Matabeleland South	20.3%
Bulawayo	10.9%
Urban	21.3%
Rural	43.7%

Source: Zimstat MICS 2019

Regarding sexual abuse, both boys and girls experience high rates of sexual violence. According to a violence against children study conducted in Zimbabwe in 2017, it was noted that more than one in six 18- to 24-year-olds (females, 17.5 percent; males, 17.3 percent) had experienced any violence in the past 12 months (including sexual violence). The prevalence of childhood sexual violence is significantly higher for females compared with male.¹¹ In the concluding observations and recommendations issued by the ACERWC in 2015, the ACERWC noted that there is a high rate of sexual abuse in Zimbabwe whereby females are the main victims and children between 0-5 years of age consisting 25% of the victims. Moreover, the Committee was concerned by the fact that out of 24% reported cases between 2008 and 2010 only 8% were brought before court of law. Henceforth, the Committee recommended the Government of Zimbabwe to urgently undertake an action to gather data on the matter, to set in place child friendly reporting mechanism and to create awareness, to prosecute perpetrators, to establish rehabilitation centres for survivors, and to take all other necessary measures in collaboration with neighboring countries to protect children from the horrific act of trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse.¹²

Child marriages and sexual abuse are also linked to teenage pregnancies as some children get pregnant as a result of being sexually abused whilst some get married at a young age as a result of

¹¹ Ministry of Health and Child Care Zimbabwe (2019) 'Young adult survey of Zimbabwe' A Violence Against Children Study, 2017 5 https://www.togetherforgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/VACS-Report_June-5-2020.pdf (accessed 21 October 2022).

¹² Concluding Observations and Recommendations by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC on the Republic of Zimbabwe Report on the status of implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

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teenage pregnancies. In 2021, it was reported that 5,000 teenage girls became pregnant in January and February and about 1,800 entered early marriages during the same period.¹³

1.4.6. Socio-economic status of Shamva and Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe Districts

Child marriages, sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies are usually linked to socio-economic factors hence the need to have an understanding on Shamva and UMP with regards to their socio-economic status.

Shamva District is a district in Mashonaland Central Province with a total population of 165 641¹⁴ and located 28 km east of the regional capital, Bindura. Major economic activities predominant in the district are small scale gold mining after the closure of the Madziwa Nickel Mine and Shamva Gold Mine which were the golden goose of the district and the anchor of many livelihoods (giving rise to the, ‘makorokoza’ (illegal miners) phenomenon). Also, the district was once a hub of commercial farming activities employing many locals but with the advent of the resettlement and land redistribution programmes many workers were left unemployed. At the same time beneficiaries of resettlement and land redistribution have embarked on tobacco production which provides sustenance. As a result of large scale mining and commercial farming activities once dominant in the district, a large pool of migrant labourers from neighboring Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi came into the area and have now settled permanently in the district endowing Shamva with cultural diversity. In view of the current volatile economic situations in the country coupled with erratic rainfall pattern, the majority of people in Shamva particularly Nyamaropa area are trapped in the vicious poverty cycle- a situation that jolts life of adolescents resulting in early marriages and teenage pregnancies.¹⁵ Many families are facing increased poverty as a result of being unable to work during the continued imposing of lockdown and other COVID induced travel

¹³ C Mavhunga ‘Zimbabwe Reports Major Rise in Teen Pregnancies During Pandemic’ (16 April 2021) <https://www.voanews.com/a/covid-19-pandemic-zimbabwe-reports-major-rise-teen-pregnancies-during-pandemic/6204648.html> (accessed 21 October 2022).

¹⁴ 2022 Population and Housing Census Preliminary Report on Population Figures, 32 https://www.zimstat.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Census2022_Preliminary_Report.pdf (accessed 21 October 2022).

¹⁵ RMT ‘Effects of social norms and cultural practices in adolescents accessing SHR information and services to prevent teenage pregnancies and child marriages in Murewa and Shamva Districts: A consolidated rapid assessment report (2020) 10.

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restrictions.¹⁶ In trying to support adolescents, RMT has been developing the Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) for girls and young women at RMT Education and Counselling Centre.¹⁷

UMP on the other hand is located in Mashonaland East and has a population 124,225.¹⁸ Most of the households are engaged in field crop production, horticulture, livestock production and gold panning along Mazoe river during the dry season. UMP has not been spared by climate change which has resulted in successive droughts and a decrease in the production of field crops. UMP is one of the poorest districts in the country. The area is also characterised by an influx of illegal miners, popularly known as Makorokoza, particularly the gold-rich banks of Mazowe River.¹⁹ The devastating drought during 2019/20 season left many households insecure both in terms of food availability and nutritionally. This has been worsened by COVID-19 lockdown measures which disrupted socio-economic activities in the district and pushed most households to rely on food assistance from donors and the Department of Social welfare.²⁰

1.4.7. Key drivers of child marriages, sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies in Shamva and UMP

In an article on child marriages in Shamva, by Kurebwa and Kurebwa, it was noted that child marriages are caused by a range of factors, the main factors being poverty, lack of education, gender inequality, religious and cultural beliefs.²¹ Child marriage and sexual exploitation and abuse are also driven up by peer pressure, and failure by some parents to play their parental roles effectively in giving advice to their children. Child marriage is also considered as a result from early sexual debut in adolescents and teenagers.

¹⁶ RMT: National Baseline Report on Maternal Health in Zimbabwe

¹⁷ RMT: Making the Connection between Child Marriages and Sexual and Gender Based Violence 2021

¹⁸ 2022 Population and Housing Census Preliminary Report on Population Figures, 43

https://www.zimstat.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Census2022_Preliminary_Report.pdf (accessed 21 October 2022).

¹⁹ UMP traditional leaders champion child marriages fight *NewsDay* <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/03/ump-traditional-leaders-champion-child-marriages-fight> (accessed 21 October 2022).

²⁰ Food & Nutrition Council 'Food and Nutrition Security in the Context of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe' UMP District Response Strategy 2 https://fnc.org.zw/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/UMP-District-Zimbabwe_FNS-Response-Strategy-in-the-Context-of-COVID-19.pdf (accessed 18 October 2022)

²¹ J Kurebwa & N Kurebwa 'Child Marriages in Shamva District of Zimbabwe' 2018 (18) *Global Journal of Human Social Science*.

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Regarding poverty and lack of education, it was noted that most children drop out of school as their parents cannot afford to continue paying school fees. As a result, children are left vulnerable to child marriages and sexual exploitation as some parents marry off their children. Families that can no longer sustain themselves may offer their children in order to get money. This was confirmed by a research carried out in Shamva by REPSSI. The research established that the school drop-out rate in the district was high among both boys and girls-a situation which leaves them with little to do and as a result, they get into marriages.²²In addition, tobacco production and artisanal gold mining around Chief Nyamaropa area has created a situation where money earned or generated from these activities is used as bait to lure adolescent girls especially from poor families into casual sexual activity and child marriage.²³

With regards to gender inequality, it was noted that boys and girls experience life differently and girls endure child marriage, sexual discomfort, and domestic violence because of discriminatory gender norms that prevent them from considering the possibility of a different life. These social and cultural pressures that girls experience lead them straight into the marital state, unlike when it comes to boys.²⁴

1.4.8. Socio-cultural norms that contribute towards child marriages and sexual abuse and Socio-cultural norms that contribute towards ending child marriages and sexual abuse: Shamva

Religious and cultural beliefs have resulted in many children, especially girls getting married early and further subjected to sexual abuse. With regards to religion, it is alleged that some apostolic sects and churches are the major contributor to child marriages. A report by Tag a Life International on child marriages in Mashonaland West highlights that in some of the apostolic sects, young girls have to adhere to a certain traditional sitting arrangement wherein they have to sit facing men directly and these men are at liberty to marry as many wives as they want in the church, including children. This practice thus makes young girls vulnerable to abuse and most of the time they cannot cry for help since their parents and guardians accept and support this

²² RMT (2020) 14-15.

²³ RMT (2020) 14-15.

²⁴ Kurebwa& Kurebwa (2018).

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practice.²⁵ Further, cultural values and beliefs are also deeply rooted in the Madziva Community in Shamva and some of the cultures encourage child marriages. According to the By-Laws on ending child marriage in Shamva, the following cultural practices expose children to child marriages and sexual abuse:

- Chiramu Chemabimbiri
- Chimutsamapfihwa
- Virginitiy Testing
- Kuzvarira/ Betrothal
- Kuripa ngozi nemwanasikana
- Chisahwira chemabimbiri
- Incest/ Chimina/ Makunakuna
- Chimimba Muteku
- Madivisi
- Kupinira
- Kutema Ugariri

According to a research done in 2020 by RMT in Shamva and Murewa, the findings indicated that cultural and religious factors were responsible for child marriages and teenage pregnancies as well as illegal abortions for it is a taboo for a girl or woman to be pregnant outside marriage.²⁶ It was revealed that there were traditional and cultural practices like “*chiramu*” and “*chisahwira*” which violated body zones of space leading to sexual abuse of sister in-laws and subsequent child marriage. Respondents expressed fears in that nowadays children are socialised into abusive language and sexually suggestive lexical items adolescents such as; “*anegumbo*,” “*mazakwatira*,” “*anodonhedza musika*” “or” *magate*.” Some language aspects used in the local community perpetuate abuse and violation of women and girls like the proverb, “*muzukuru mugunde wepwa waasekuru*” giving impetus to the phenomenon of child marriage. Similarly, some traditional dances like “*zunza mazakwatira*” were found to be sexually suggestive entice adolescents into

²⁵ Tag a Life international (TaLI) ‘The Face of Child Marriages in Mashonaland West’ 4.

²⁶ RMT (2020) 37.

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wanting to experiment on sex. On a similar note, there were some identifiable positive language items which could be exploited and used as a rallying point to discourage child marriage in the community. This is where the proverb, “*Regai dzive shiri mazai haana muto.*” Similarly, there is a wise *Korekore adage* which says, *Regai dzive hunde tsotso hadzina mavhunze.*” These are powerful and influential cultural tools used to inhibit practices of proposing love to adolescent girls who are not yet mature. In addition, there are some strong messages of counsel to adolescents embedded in the proverbs “*Mandikurumidze akazvara mandinonoka,*” and “*Takabvako kumhunga hakuna ipwa.*” These all serve to warn young boys and girls against early indulgence in sex before completing their school. Furthermore, the church and cultural practices of virginity testing (chinamwari/ makumkuro/kuenda kurukova) were identified as amounting to abuse and violation of girls’ rights.²⁷

In the RMT research, stakeholders lamented that cultural and traditional institutions have crumbled and were in shambles, a situation which paves way for churches and schools to take over roles once played by aunts and uncles in the past. They blame this scenario for the upsurge of child marriage and teenage pregnancies in the district. In this regard the traditional leaders, parents and guardians yearned for the revival of lost traditional institutions like the” Gota” and” Nhangang” considering that they are spaces that were used culturally to advise and mentor adolescents and reduce teenage pregnancy and child marriage. The discussions focused on reintroducing these spaces for discussions in the community with adolescents especially girls who are mostly affected as they end up dropping out of school taking multiple roles of becoming a mother, wives and daughters in law at an early age.²⁸

It was also noted that parents and the local community place more value on marriage than education, hence the high number of cases of child marriage and teenage pregnancies. This stems from fact that adolescent girls are regarded as a source of wealth and are under pressure to get married early. Dove-tailed to this is the need for status by parents through payment of “*chimanda*” and “*lobola*” which also provides impetus to child marriage. Hinged on the value placed on

²⁷ RMT (2020) 30.

²⁸ RMT (2020) 27.

marriage, it was found that adolescent girls carry out illegal abortions to preserve their dignity and status to avoid being labelled and rejected in marriage which endangers their lives and health.²⁹

On a positive note, it was found that Chiefs and traditional leaders command respect and yield influence in communities to address negative social norms cultural, traditional and religious practices that encourage child marriages and teenage pregnancies. On the same note, the no longer visible traditional ways of counselling adolescent boys and girls at the Dare and Nhanganya by experienced and trusted uncles and aunts as well as grandmothers could be revitalised to delay their impulsive rush into sex and child marriages. It was also observed that there are some positive language units like “*Regai dzive shiri mazai haana muto*” implying let the eggs hatch into chicks and in turn chickens which are beneficial. Also, “*Regai dzive hunde tsotso hadzina mavhunze*” implying that small tree should be allowed to grow into big ones so as to yield more firewood. These could be the rallying philosophy in the community to inhibit men bent on destroying the future of adolescent girls by disturbing their education and prospects of a career by marrying them early as children.³⁰

1.4.9. Impacts of child marriages on children

Child marriages are a major threat to children’s rights and welfare. As stated by Viljoen, child marriages are highly likely to affect the enjoyment of children’s other rights. These include non-discrimination, survival and development, education, health, protection against child abuse and torture, as well as protection from sexual exploitation. Child marriage ‘especially when it is assumed to be followed by childbirth, is a denial of the essence of childhood.’³¹ Child marriages also have an impact on children’s mental health both in the short and long term. The case of the late Anna Machaya who died during labor at an apostolic church shrine is an example of how child marriages can have devastating impacts on children. The late child was only 14 years old. Surprisingly, it is alleged that the parents were offering their nine-year-old daughter as a replacement to the perpetrator. The parents also went further to supply false information to the

²⁹ RMT (2020) 45.

³⁰ RMT (2020) 46-47.

³¹ F Viljoen International Human Rights Law in Africa (2012) 397.

police, trying to make it appear as if the deceased was 22 years old. This is an indication of how some parents would try by all means to conceal child marriages, to the detriment of their children.

Looking at the literature above, it can be noted that Rozaria Memorial Trust has already been implementing work in Shamva and there have been a few research studies that have been done to see the cultural canvas in Shamva. There is however little to no data that has been collected specifically by Rozaria Memorial Trust for UMP as it is a new area of implementation, hence this baseline survey.

1.5. Structure of the report

The report is divided into 6 Chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Chapter 2: Normative Framework on protection of children from child marriages and sexual abuse

Chapter 3: Survey approach and methodology

Chapter 4: Baseline Study Findings

Chapter 5: Communication channels

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

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CHAPTER 2

2.0 NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND ENDOGENOUS PRACTICES PROMOTIVE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

2.1 The normative framework on child marriage and sexual exploitation and abuse

Zimbabwe draws its obligations to protect children's rights from an array of international and regional human rights instruments. The United Nations and the African Union provide a normative framework for the protection of children from child marriages and sexual exploitation and abuse. There is also non-binding but authoritative soft-law standards that guide States in protecting children from sexual abuse and child marriage. In Zimbabwe, various pieces of legislation provide for the protection of children's rights, including sexual abuse and child marriages. This chapter briefly discusses the international legal framework on protection of children from sexual abuse and child marriages. The chapter further provides an in-depth analysis of the protection of children from sexual abuse and child marriages, analysing the extent to which such protection is in line with international norms and standards.

2.1.1 The international normative framework

At international level, the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** which was adopted in 1989 provides for the protection of children from sexual abuse in article 19 which provides that States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement. Article 34 reinforces this position as it provides that States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and

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multilateral measures to prevent the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity and the exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices. In 2011, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) adopted **General Comment No. 13 on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence**. In terms of the general comment, violence against children also includes sexual exploitation and abuse. The General Comment also lists child marriage as a form of harmful practice against children and calls upon States to take legislative, administrative, social policy, and educational measures to prevent all forms of violence against children.

The UNCRC and the CEDAW Committee also developed a **Joint General Comment on the rights of the child on harmful practices**. In terms of the general comment, States parties are obliged to plan and adopt appropriate legislation, policies and measures and ensure that their implementation responds effectively to specific obstacles, barriers and resistance to the elimination of discrimination that give rise to harmful practices and violence against women. Each State party is under the obligation to send a clear message of condemnation of harmful practices, provide legal protection for victims, enable State and non-State actors to protect women and children at risk, provide appropriate responses and care and ensure the availability of redress and an end to impunity.³²

Further, the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** which was adopted in 1979 and came into force in 1981 provides in its article 16 (2) that the betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory. In that regard, an obligation is placed on Member States to put in place legislation that prohibits the marriage of children.

At regional level, the **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women (Maputo Protocol)** guarantees extensive rights to African women and girls and includes progressive provisions on among many other things, harmful traditional practices,

³² UN CRC, Joint General Recommendation No.31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/ General Comment 18 of the Un CRC on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/GC/31/CRC/C/GC/18 (2014).

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e.g. child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). Of particular importance to note with regards to child marriages in the Maputo Protocol is that in terms of article VI (b), the minimum age of marriage for women is 18 years. This provision is noteworthy as it clearly sets the age of marriage in line with the definition of a child in the African Children's Charter, thus prohibiting child marriages.

Children's rights are further protected in the **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)**. To begin with, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) has identified four rights in the ACRWC that must be understood as general principles to inform the realization of all other rights. These are:

- a) Non- discrimination
- b) Best interests of the child
- c) Life, survival and development
- d) Respect for the child's views

The four rights all have relevance to the protection of children from sexual abuse and child marriages. The principles apply not only to States but to other stakeholders such as parents, traditional leaders and community representatives.

Child marriages and the betrothal of girls and boys is prohibited under article 21 (2) and Member States are required to that the minimum age of marriage is 18 years. Almost similar to the CRC, protective measures under this Article shall include effective procedures for the establishment of special monitoring units to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting referral investigation, treatment, and follow up of instances of child abuse and neglect. Regarding sexual abuse, article 16(1) requires States parties to adopt specific 'legislative, administrative, social and educational measures' to ensure the protection of children from all forms of 'torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse'. Further, article 27 places an obligation on state parties to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. In particular, state parties are required to prevent the use of children in pornographic activities, performances and materials.

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Article 11 of the Charter regarding the right to education is also worth mentioning with regards to teenage pregnancies which might result in child marriage as some children are expelled from school and their resort to being married in order to sustain themselves. Article 11 (6) encourages States to take all appropriate measures to ensure that children who become pregnant before completing their education shall have an opportunity to continue with their education on the basis of their individual ability.

It is important to note that the ACERWC and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) developed a **General Comment on ending child marriages** in 2017. Notably, the General Comment defines a child as any human being aged below 18 years, even if majority is attained earlier under national law. This definition guarantees all persons below 18 the enjoyment of all rights under it while at the same time ensuring that young people enjoy favourable provisions in States where adulthood is attained earlier. As such, all children are protected from child marriages. Part IV of the General Comment stipulates that States Parties should enact, amend, repeal or supplement legislation as appropriate to ensure that the betrothal and marriage of children under the age of 18 years is prohibited. This prohibition should be without exception and should apply to all forms of marriage. Further, legislative measures should also ensure that practices of abduction and kidnapping for purposes of marriage are prohibited. Legislative measures that prohibit child marriage must take precedence over customary, religious, traditional or sub-national laws and States Parties with plural legal systems must take care to ensure that prohibition is not rendered ineffectual by the existence of customary, religious or traditional laws that allow, condone or support child marriage. Further, in terms of the General Comment, the retention of children in school is essential to preventing child marriage and mitigating its effects. States Parties must put in place measures to retain all children, especially girls in school and to raise awareness about the importance of their education. States Parties are also under an obligation to ensure access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services. Third party permission for accessing these services should not be required and services should be integrated, rights-based, women-centered and/or youth-friendly and free of coercion, discrimination and violence. States Parties should develop and implement comprehensive sexuality education and information programmes. Age appropriate information about sex, sexuality, sexual and reproductive health rights and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS, should form part of the formal school

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curriculum and should also be disseminated widely among the general public, including in non-school settings and in media which reaches rural and remote settings.

States Parties must protect the reproductive rights of women and girls by authorising medical abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape, incest and where the continued pregnancy endangers the mental and physical health of the mother or the life of the mother. Because girls in child marriages are at such high risk of pregnancy related health complications, medical abortion is of great consequence and must be provided.

In addition, in 2021, the ACERWC developed a **General Comment on article 27 ‘sexual exploitation’**. The General Comment which was adopted in 2021 expounds upon the nature of the State’s obligations under section 27 of the Charter to prevent, combat, and protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation, including both offline and online. Among other things, paragraph 131 provides that States have the obligation to implement legislative and policy measures to prevent and address all aspects of sexual violence and exploitation, which should be fully compliant with human rights standards. Paragraph 144 provides that ‘protection and support for the victims of sexual violence should be provided, regardless of whether they wish to engage in legal proceedings or testify against the perpetrator. This support must include services such as legal assistance, medical assistance (including access to a forensic medical examination), sexual and reproductive health care, and care for the prevention and treatment of HIV. It must also include psychological and financial support.’

Another instrument worth discussing is the ACERWC’s **Agenda 2040** which was adopted in 2015 to cater for the progressive improvement of the child in the wider framework of Agenda 2063. Aspiration 7 of Agenda 2040 calls for the protection of every child against violence, exploitation and abuse. Among other things, Aspiration 7 calls for the need for States to domesticate laws designating the minimum age of marriage as 18 years and the need for States to prohibit all forms of sexual violence and exploitation, child marriages and child pornography. Notably, Aspiration 7 also calls upon States to strengthen collaboration with traditional and faith leaders in the fight against child marriage and other harmful practices affecting children. Further, it encourages traditional leaders to play a decisive role in the protection of children from violence, including harmful practices, by using their influential voice to enhance awareness amongst families and

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communities about the detrimental impact of harmful practices on children; to clarify that these practices are not based on or legitimised by religion; and to support a process of social change that may lead to the permanent abandonment of these practices.

At sub-regional level, children are protected from child marriages in the **SADC Model Law on eradicating Child marriage and protecting children already in Marriage**. The Model Law defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 years. Some noteworthy provisions of the Model Law are section 6 which provides that children shall not be subjected to physical and psychological violence or abuse, neglect and any other form of exploitation, including being used in sexual work, induced or coerced to engage in any sexual activity, exposed to obscene or pornographic materials, sexually abused or groomed using the internet, or sold, enslaved, trafficked or abducted by any person. Section 7 prohibits the marriage and betrothal of girls and boys and encourages governments to ensure that necessary laws specify the minimum age of marriage. The same prohibition is stipulated in section 17. Section 23 provides for the need for States to put in place preventative measures and interventions to prevent child marriage. Some of the measures include programmes and incentives to delay marriage e.g. providing education for children, especially girls, and provide opportunities for children whose families live below the poverty datum line to complete their primary and secondary education among other things (section 26). Lastly, Part V the Model Law provides for measures and interventions to mitigate effects of child marriage and protect children already in marriage.

Further, the **SADC Protocol on Gender and Development** provides for the protection Article 8 of the Protocol says that ‘no person under the age of 18 shall marry, unless otherwise specified by law, which takes into account the best interests and welfare of the child.’ This provision creates loopholes as it seems to allow child marriages ‘if specified by law’. Child marriages should be explicitly prohibited as provided for in the ACRWC and there should be no exceptions. Article 11 (1) (d) on the Girl and Boy Child calls upon States to protect girls from economic exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence including sexual abuse.

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2.1.2 The national legal framework

As a state party to various international instruments that protect children from sexual abuse and child marriages, the government of Zimbabwe has an obligation to undertake to take the necessary steps, in accordance with its Constitutional processes and with the provisions of these instruments to adopt such legislative or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the provisions of these instruments. Notably, the ACRWC provides that any custom, tradition, cultural or religious practice that is inconsistent with the rights, duties and obligations contained in the Charter shall to the extent of such inconsistency be discouraged. In that regard, any practices that are a violation of the rights enshrined in the African Children’s Charter should be discouraged.

The table below indicates the status of ratification of these instruments by the government of Zimbabwe, which is followed by an analysis of the status of the laws on sexual abuse and child marriages in Zimbabwe.

Table 2: Ratification of International and regional instruments

Instrument	Ratification Status
Convention on the Rights of the Child	Ratified
Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	Accession
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	Ratified
MAPUTO PROTOCOL	Ratified
CEDAW	Accession

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As a country that has ratified or acceded to these international instruments, Zimbabwe is responsible for ensuring the full implementation of these instruments throughout the country. This includes legislative, administrative, and educational measures to ensure the protection of children.

The **Constitution of Zimbabwe** defines a child as an individual below the age of 18. Regarding sexual abuse, section 81(1) (e) provides for the protection of children from economic and sexual exploitation and any form of abuse. Regarding child marriages, section 78 provides that every person who has attained the age of eighteen years has the right to found a family. No person may be compelled to enter into marriage against their will. The provisions can thus be interpreted to mean that children, as individuals below the age of 18 cannot be married. These provisions are reinforced by section 26 (1) (b) which provides that the state must take appropriate measures to ensure that children are not pledged in marriage. It should be further noted that a child's best interests are paramount in every matter concerning the child in terms of section 81(2), in line with international standards. The Constitutional provisions are notable as they place an obligation on the government of Zimbabwe to take effective measures to protect children from sexual abuse and child marriages.

Notably, child marriages were declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court in the case of *Mudzuru & Another v Ministry of Justice, Legal & Parliamentary Affairs N.O & Others*.³³ The court held that the obligation imposed by article 21 of the ACRWC to observe 18 as the minimum age to marry was clear and Zimbabwe is duly bound to comply with it and abolish child marriages. The Constitutional Court further declared that any law, custom and practice which authorizes child marriage was unconstitutional. It was held that as of 1 January 2016, no person, male or female, may enter into any marriage, including an unregistered customary law union or any other union including one arising out of religious rite, before attaining the age of 18.

The recent enactment of the **Marriages Act 1 of 2022** which consolidates the laws relating to marriages is also a noteworthy development in the protection of children from child marriages. The former Marriages Act and the Customary Marriages Act did not prohibit child marriages as the former Marriages Act provided for the solemnization of a marriage of a minor with the consent

³³ [1] [2016] ZWCC 12.

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in writing of legal guardians. Further, the Act provided that no boy under the age of eighteen years and no girl under the age of sixteen years shall be capable of contracting a valid marriage except with the written permission of the Minister. These provisions undoubtedly encouraged child marriages and were inconsistent with international norms and standards on the protection of children. The Customary Marriages Act on the other hand had no age limit for marriage, hence exposing children to the risk of being married at an early age. Remarkably, the new Marriages Act repeals the Customary Marriages Act and the previous Marriage Act and it explicitly prohibits and criminalizes the marriage of children under eighteen years and the pledging, promising in marriage or betrothal of a child in section 3. There are no exceptions to this prohibition. Other notable provisions include the fact that it shall be an aggravating factor in an offence if the offence was by a parent or a person in loco parentis to the child concerned.

This is commendable as the Marriages Act has been aligned to the Constitution of Zimbabwe and the provisions are in line with the provisions of the African Children's Charter and other human rights instruments which prohibit child marriages.

The **Children's Act** provides for the protection of children from sexual abuse. It should be noted however that the Act defines a child as a person under the age of sixteen years-which is inconsistent with international norms and standards and the Constitution. However, a Children's Amendment Bill is in process and seeks to reconcile the discrepancies on age of majority among other things. Regarding sexual exploitation, section 8(2) of the Children's Act however provides that 'any person who causes or conduces to the seduction, abduction or prostitution of a child or young person or the commission by a child or young person of immoral acts shall be guilty of an offence.'

Other laws that protect children from sexual abuse are the **Domestic Violence Act**. In terms of the Domestic Violence Act, among other things, domestic violence includes sexual abuse, pledging of women or girls for purposes of appeasing spirits and child marriage. Acts of domestic violence constitute an offence, hence the Act protects children from child marriage and sexual abuse.

The **Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act** criminalises various forms of sexual abuse of children particularly in section 65 (rape); section 66 (aggravated indecent assault); section 67 (indecent assault); section 70 (having sexual intercourse with a young person); and section 78

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(sodomy). Section 70 sets the age of consent to sexual intercourse at 16. This provision is problematic as the discrepancy between the age of consent and age of marriage can be a cause for child marriage because of likelihood of early sexual activity resulting in pregnancy.

Notably, in May 2022, the Constitutional Court in the case of *Kawenda v Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and Others* raised the age of consent to sexual intercourse from 16 to 18. The court struck down as unconstitutional provisions in the Criminal Law that set the age of consent for sex at 16. Following the court's decision, the Minister of Justice and Parliament should enact a law that protects all children from sexual exploitation in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, within 12 months.³⁴ The decision of the Constitutional Court is commendable as it protects all children from sexual exploitation, as opposed to the former position that only protected children below the age of 16 years.

In terms of section 3 of the **Sexual Offences Act**, any person who (a) has extra marital sexual intercourse with a young person or (b) commits an immoral or indecent act with or upon a young person or (c) solicits or entices a young person to have extra marital sexual intercourse with him or to commit an immoral or indecent act shall be guilty of an offence. In terms of section 8, non-consensual sexual acts (rape) are criminalized. Further, the act criminalises solicitation of another person for immoral actions in section 9(1) (c), procuring a person to have sexual intercourse in section 11 and coercing a person to have extra-marital intercourse in section 12. Young persons are defined as persons below the age of 16 in the Act, and this is inconsistent with the definition of a child in the African Children's Charter and the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Therefore, whilst the Act can be used to protect children from sexual abuse, not every child is protected. There is therefore a need to align the Act with the provisions of the Constitution to ensure that every child is protected.

Zimbabwe has taken other initiatives to end sexual abuse and child marriages such as the launching of the Disability Policy in 2021 provides for the protection of children with disabilities and children

³⁴ Farai Mutsaka 'Zimbabwe's court raises age of consent for sex to 18 years' *The Washington Post* 26 May 2022 https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/zimbabwes-court-raises-age-of-consent-for-sex-to-18-years/2022/05/26/d0f9607a-dd16-11ec-bc35-a91d0a94923b_story.html

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of parents with disabilities from all forms of abuse including child marriage in Clause 3.16.10. Further, the Government of Zimbabwe launched the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) (2021 to 2025) under the theme “Towards a Prosperous and Empowered Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030.” Under the Social Protection Key Area there is emphasis on improving care and protection of vulnerable groups and of note, speaks to introduction of children grants as well as women and youth empowerment programmes. If implemented effectively, the strategy can contribute towards ending child marriages as the grants can cushion economically disadvantaged families that might tend to marry off their children as a way of gaining money.

Given the link between child marriages and teenage pregnancies, Zimbabwe has made efforts to ensure that pregnant girls do not get married in the provisions of the **Education Amendment Act** which provides that every child has the right to education and no child should be discriminated against on a number of grounds including pregnancy. Further, section 68(c) of the Act provides that no pupil should be excluded from school on the basis of pregnancy. This is notable and in line with the African Children’s Charter which encourages States to ensure retention of pregnant girls in school. It should however be noted that there is a need for the provision of psychosocial support to those children to enable them to continue with their studies.

The **Termination of Pregnancy Act** may be used in addressing teenage pregnancies. One of the grounds upon which pregnancy can be terminated is where there is a reasonable possibility that the fetus is conceived as a result of unlawful intercourse. Given the recent Constitutional Court ruling raising the age of consent to 18, besides in cases of rape, these provisions may be used in the termination of pregnancy in cases involving sexual intercourse with young persons below the age of 18.

Access to sexual and reproductive health services is key in addressing child marriages and teenage pregnancies. The issue is however still a challenge in Zimbabwe as the current laws particularly the Public Health Act, restricts children under the age of 16 from accessing SRH services such as contraceptives and emergency family planning pills because they are below the age of consent. Age of consent laws serve as a means for regulating children and young people’s sexual activity and behavior, and to protect them from sexual predators. But these laws do not, of course,

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guarantee that young people will remain abstinent in practice.³⁵ The ACERWC General Comment on sexual exploitation encourages the provision of sexual and reproductive health services to survivors of sexual violence. Children must therefore be afforded access to a comprehensive range of sexual and reproductive health rights. The General Comment stipulates that ‘States should ensure that third-party authorizations, including the need to obtain parental consent, are not requirements for adolescents to access sexual and reproductive health services. They should guarantee that laws that prescribe the age of consent to reproductive health services are not an impediment to adolescents’ access to the aforementioned health services.’³⁶

The discussion above indicates that Zimbabwe has made great strides in aligning its child protection laws in line with international norms and standards. However, Zimbabwe continues to be bedeviled with problems of child marriages and teenage pregnancies. This suggests that the laws are not being implemented or that there are some underlying causes of child marriage and teenage pregnancies which are embedded in the socio-economic and cultural as well as religious practices which need to be investigated and interrogated.

2.1.3 Best Practice: By-laws on ending child marriage in Shamva

The by-laws were formulated to strengthen efforts made in promoting the rights of children at the grassroots level, to ensure that children complete school, and effectively partake in the country's economic development processes. The by-laws are considered a collective concrete step to strengthen the cog-wheel role of traditional leaders to address the bellicose and impunity within Chief Bushu and Chief Nyamaropa areas and tackling the vice of child marriage in particular and child abuse in general.

Section 3.0 of the by-laws prohibits the marriage of children below 18 years. It further goes on to prohibit cohabiting, engagement in sexual activities, eloping and founding a family with regards to children. Culture and religion cannot be used to justify or rationalise child marriages. No person,

³⁵Zimbabwe should promote adolescent access to sexual health services (April 2019) <https://fp2030.org/news/zimbabwe-should-promote-adolescent-access-sexual-health-services> (accessed 18 October 2022).

³⁶ ACERWC General Comment on article 27 ‘Sexual Exploitation’ (2021) para 148.

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parent or guardian shall facilitate, preside over, or recognise any marriage which involves anyone below the age of 18 in Bushu and Nyamaropa Chiefdoms and this is in line with the provisions of the new Marriages Act. No parent/guardian shall accept any child as daughter-in-law or son-in-law. The provisions are also non-discriminatory as they include both girls and boys. These provisions are noteworthy as they are in line with the provisions of the African Children's Charter which prohibits harmful practices affecting children, including child marriages as well as section 3(2) of the Marriage Act which provides that under no circumstances shall any person contract, solemnise, promote, permit, allow or coerce or aid or abet the contracting, solemnising, promotion, permitting, allowing or coercion of the marriage, unregistered customary law marriage or civil partnership, or the pledging, promise in marriage or betrothal of a child. Section 3.5 states that, It will be an offence to organise or offer any space as a brothel for children to engage in sex. This provision is in line with the provisions of the Child Amendment Bill under Clause 7. Section 3.10 to Section 3.15 provides for the community safeguarding measures against sexual abuse in the beer halls, mining and agriculture areas. This is an innovative safeguarding measure especially the establishment of a register by employers to be submitted to the traditional leaders makes it even more practical in safeguarding children against exploitation such as child labour in section 11 of the Labour Act and Part V of the Children's Act. This is applauded as businesses also have a role to play in child protection.

Section 4.0 of the by-laws provides for the roles of various stakeholders in ending child marriages. These are traditional leaders and cultural elders, the chief, the headman, village head, the family, parents, extended family and children. This is noteworthy as Agenda 2040 encourages traditional leaders to play a role in advocating for the eradication of child marriages. Section 4.3.1 provides for the penalty of dismissing a village head or headman after solemnizing a child marriage. However, there is need for further engagement and reporting such cases to the ZRP as this is now a criminal offence in terms of the new Marriages Act Chapter 5.15.

Section 4.4.3 gives powers and mandates community leaders to investigate sexual abuse cases. The Protocol on the multi-sectoral Management of Sexual Offences in Zimbabwe has abolished any investigations on sexual offenses and these must be immediately reported to the Police for investigations as the informal investigations may lead to the destroying of evidence and confusing

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witnesses. In that regard, community leaders should not handle and investigate sexual abuse cases but should instead report them to the responsible authority, that is, the police.

The role of parents and the extended family is also noteworthy, in line with article 20 of the African Children's Charter which provides that parents have the responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child and have the duty to ensure that the best interests of the child are their basic concern at all times. The role of children on the other hand is also noteworthy, in line with article 31 of the African Children's Charter which provides for the responsibilities of the child towards their families, society, the state and other legally recognized communities and the international community.

Section 5.0 of the by-laws provides for the banning of various harmful cultural practices such as *Chiramu Chemabimbiri*³⁷ *Chimutsamapfihwa*,³⁸ virginity testing, betrothal, *kuripa ngozi nemwanasikana*³⁹ *chisahwira chemabimbiri*,⁴⁰ incest, *chimimba muteku*,⁴¹ *madivisi*,⁴² *kupindira*,⁴³ and *kutema ugariri*.⁴⁴ The by-laws note that these harmful practices expose children to sexual exploitation and child marriages hence they are banned. The banning of such practices is applauded as it is in line with international norms and standards, as well as the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the Marriages Act and the Domestic Violence Act.

Section 6.0 of the by-laws stipulates various positive cultural values on ending child marriages. Under Section 6.1, *kuonekera* which enables the pre-assessment of the parties to marriage to determine if they are not children. This is a cultural safeguard against child marriages which is prohibited. Section 6.2 of the by-laws provide for *munyai/dombo/nhume* for those who want to

³⁷ These are extreme jokes involving physical play or fondling between brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law

³⁸ This is when a girl takes over her late sister's or aunt's husband as a wife. This practice exposes children into child marriages and forced marriage.

³⁹ This is the act of appeasing avenging spirits by giving away the child.

⁴⁰ A no holds barred joking/advisory relationship legitimizing foul language and fondling.

⁴¹ This is a myth that causes the grandfathers to be denied their conjugal rights under the assumption that continued engagement in sex will create a false pregnancy on women who would have reached menopause. These grandfathers will seek sexual gratification elsewhere thus creating a danger for young girls as well.

⁴² This involves the use of magic, rituals where elders engage in sex to enhance their agricultural production.

⁴³ This practice occurs when a woman is assumed infertile and a male relative substitutes the said man to bear children on his behalf.

⁴⁴ This involves the payment of *roora* through labour which may violate the boy and the girl rights.

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get married. This is a go-between person for those intending to marry, The by-laws offer have a penalty to any Dombo who solemnizes or approves child marriages and this is in perfect harmony with the provisions of the Marriage Act Section 3 (2) which states that any person who contracts, solemnize, promote, allow or coerce or aid or abet the contracting, solemnizing, promotion, permitting, allowing or coercion of the marriage shall be guilty of level 10 offence or be imprisoned for a maximum of 5 years. The by-laws sentence is however not as deterring as the Marriages Act sentence because *munyayi* only pays a fine of a cow.

The positive cultural practice of *Mitupo* under Section 6.3 of the by-laws has enabled the Chiefdom of Bushu and Nyamaropa to respect relationships by Mitupo as part of preservation of identity and prevention of incest. This is also prohibited under Section 7 (1) of the Marriages Act Chapter 5:15 states that no persons who are related to each other in any degree of relationship specified in section 75(2) of the Criminal Law Code shall be capable of contracting a valid marriage.

Dare repamusha in section 6.6 and Community Nhanga and Dare under Section 6.12 of the Shamva by-laws serves as platform for counselling, mentorship and the creation of cordial relations between the elders and young person. This enables the family unit to have responsible children who are responsible citizens and this is in line with ACRWC Section which provides for responsibilities of parents in Article 20 with responsibility of upbringing and responsibilities of Children in Article 31 to be equipped with tools of being responsible and contribute to family and community development in line with their age and maturity. These provisions promote harmony in the family unit and enables to freely report any form of sexual abuse.

The positive cultural norms such as Nhanga and Gota in section 6 enable grandmothers and grandfathers to enforce skills and enable children to develop through counsel, skills building, leadership training, growth and development issues. This is in line with one of the 4 key child rights principles of participation in Article 12 and right to development in article 6 of the UNCRC.

The positive cultural norm of a granary for storing food after harvest in Section 6.9 and the provision of the kitchen hurt in Section 6.8 of the by-laws promotes food security which sustains families in dry seasons. This norm eliminates poverty in an African homestead and reduces

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chances of pledging children and kuzvarira which are negative cultural practices which are caused by poverty.

Bedroom for parents under Section 6.10 protects children from juvenile delinquency due to exposure to sexual activities at an early age. This promote privacy and respect for the parents who do not expose children to sexual activity exposure. Probation officers' reports indicate that children end up committing sexual violence offenses due to sharing the same bedroom with parents and end up acting out what they see at home to other children. Therefore, this cultural practice must be adopted as a best practice in developing other by-laws.

Kubvakachirana under section 6.14 guards children against incest thus marrying close relatives. Close relatives will be aware of prohibited marriage between related persons under any degree of relations, this is a provision in harmony with under section 75 of the criminal law code. This also creates good relations with vanatete who can be used as the first point of referral when a child is abused.

Kupanana nhumbi/nduma under section 6.15 is the traditional DNA that is used as evidence of courtship. These practices help children to identify the accused or the perpetrator in case they deny teen pregnancy or alleged abuse.

Section 7.0 deals with teenage pregnancy, child marriage and sexual abuse /exploitation. In terms of section 7.3, all girls who fall pregnant must get maternal assistance at the local hospital. These guard against maternal mortality, child mortality and further complications at labour. The use of traditional medicine on children who will be pregnant is prohibited i.e. *mishonga yemasuwo* and all other traditional medicine. In terms of section 7.4, sexual reproductive health rights should be offered to all children and all children and young women who are sexually active should access age appropriate sexual health services to protect them from STIs and HIV. These provisions are important as the ACERWC and ACHPR's joint general comment notes that child marriage deprives children the full complement of their right to health and increases their risk of exposure to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS. Remarkably, the by-laws do not impose an age limit to the provision of sexual and reproductive health services unlike other laws

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in the country that require parental consent in cases involving children below 16 years (e.g. the Public Health Act)

Section 7.5 of the by-laws provides that termination of pregnancy can only be done in accordance with the Termination of Pregnancy Act [Chapter 15:10]. However the study suggests that there is need for advocacy to allow termination in all forms of sexual abuse so as to fully protect children against effects of sexual abuse especially the girl child who suffers the most due to teen pregnancy.

In terms of **section 7.1**, it is an offence to abuse or take advantage of children with disability. Children with disabilities must be accorded the same opportunities, respect and value with their counterparts. Children with disabilities have been shown to be at heightened risk of sexual violations and are usually discriminated against in communities, hence this provision goes a long way in ensuring that children with disabilities are protected from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Section 8.0 of the by-laws provides for the measures to reduce poverty and vulnerability of children. These include education and empowerment of children. Child participation is enhanced in the by-laws as children should be involved in court proceedings. This is not a tokenistic child participation but informed child participation. These provisions are in line with article 4 of the African Children's Charter which stipulates that in all judicial or administrative proceedings affecting a child, a child who is capable of communicating his/her views shall be given an opportunity to be heard. It is also consistent with article 7 of the Charter which provides for the right to freedom of expression. Section 8.2.2 provides for the allocation of farming plots for survivors of child marriages and teen mothers so as to be able to sustain their child. The traditional leadership in this chieftdom must encourage all programs for child empowerment that aim to provide skills development such as mining and technology and assisting children with goal setting abilities and effective communication skills such as being assertive. This shows active child participation of the girl child.

The measures to reduce poverty and vulnerability of children further include *zunde ramambo*, *pfumvudza* and *muzindawamambo*.⁴⁵ These cultural norms eliminate poverty in an African

⁴⁵ Zunde Ramambo is a communally owned agricultural plot which aims at sustaining food security and whose proceeds shall be used to assist vulnerable families especially child headed families and survivors of child marriages.

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homestead and reduces chances of pledging children to child marriages which are negative cultural practices which are caused by poverty. All these measures are noteworthy as they are in line with the provisions of the ACERWC and ACHPR joint general comment on ending child marriages which encourages the education of children as it is essential to preventing child marriage and mitigating its effects, and further calls upon States to undertake effective measures to reduce poverty. Thus, addressing the root causes of poverty and expanding access to education constitute the two most powerful counters to the phenomenon of child marriage.

Section 9.0 provides for the handling of cases in traditional courts and notably provides for counselling of survivors of child marriages and the retention to school. This provision is in line with the best interest of the child in section 81 of the Constitution, article 3 of the CRC and article 4 of the African Children's Charter, and it further ensures the continued enjoyment of the right to education by survivors of child marriages.

Section 10.0 provides for the establishment of the special chief's court on ending child marriages. The court shall preside on matters to do with incest, child marriage and child abuse. The court will be a child friendly traditional court created in line with the victim friendly court.

Section 11.0 provides for penalties on child marriages and other abuses against girls. Any person who marries a child shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to a penalty of two cattle. This also applies to parents who facilitate the marriage of children. Whilst this is notable, the punishment is lenient, considering the negative physical and psychological impacts child marriages have on children. The penalty of those who facilitate child marriages should be stiff. Further, it is suggested that considering that child marriages are criminalised in the new Marriages Act, this study suggests that chiefs should not preside over criminal matters but these should be reported to the police so that criminal proceedings can be instituted. Chiefs can deal with civil matters within their jurisdiction but cases of a sexual nature and child marriages should be referred to the police.

Pfumvudza is a household plot that aims at promoting food security with very minimum inputs. Regarding muzindwamambo, each Chieftom is encouraged to establish a cultural multipurpose centre which will provide for cultural activities and emergency shelter.

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In terms of section 11.10, assisting a child to terminate pregnancy is an offence which attracts a fine to be paid in the form of two cattle. This punishment is however too lenient, considering that in section 60 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, illegal abortion is punishable by up to five years in prison. This study suggests that the provisions of the by-laws therefore need to be strengthened so as to deter any would-be offenders. As mentioned previously, such criminal matters must be referred to the police. In situations when children of less than 18 have engaged into sex that leads to child pregnancy both children should undergo counselling so as to also have a holistic child protection system. Further, to have a comprehensive child protection system, the by-laws must include the boy child as they are also exposed to child sexual abuse.

In terms of section 11.6, any person who engages in sexual relationship a child within a prohibited degree shall be guilty of an offence. Further, in terms of section 11.8, sexual abuse/violation of the rights of children with disability is an offence. These provisions are also noteworthy as they protect children, including children with disabilities from sexual abuse.

Further, section 11.11 provides that any person who impregnates a child shall be liable to a fine of two cattle. This punishment should be further amended, and a stiffer penalty should apply. In terms of section 11.12, a child who survives abortion shall not be neglected, unfairly discriminated, stigmatised by this chiefdom but must be offered counselling and related psycho-social services. This is in line with the provisions of the CRC and the ACERWC which provide for non-discrimination, and further the ACERWC General Comment on sexual exploitation which encourages psychosocial counselling for children who are victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Section 11.13 on the other hand provides that every man who impregnates a girl under the age of 18 shall bear the costs of maintaining the pregnancy. Whilst this is notable, the support should not only be limited to the pregnancy but the man should also contribute towards the upkeep of the child upon birth.

Section 12.0 provides for the establishment of the Anti-Child Marriage Compensation Fund which is the best practice to be adopted nationwide, however to strengthen the accountability process, the funds need to further specify the type and particular assistance for the survivors, that the funds will cover e. g. witness expenses to the courts.

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Section 13.0 provides for the tracking and monitoring of the by-laws and it promotes the dissemination of the by-laws to the community members and child protection members such as the Child Care Workers and Community Development Officers. It also provides for training of the community leaders such as the village heads and advisory committee to the Chief's court. There is a report produced every six months to be shared with stakeholders. These measures enable effective tracking of results and measuring progress. This enables the chief to measure failure and success, he can also reward and reinforce successful measures and share the best practices with other chiefs. For further strengthening of monitoring and tracking of the by-laws there is need for the monitoring committee which includes all stakeholders and child participation who can monitor the effective implementation and give technical advice on effective implementation through producing general comments visiting chief's reports and giving an external overview on the progress of by-laws.

These by-laws can be used as a best practice by other districts as they play a critical role in strengthening efforts made in promoting the rights of children at the grassroots level, to ensure that children are protected from harmful traditional and cultural practices that expose them to child marriage and sexual abuse.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

The consultant team in engagement with the organisation undertook an intense Qualitative-Research process strongly aligned to qualitative enquiry tools which were child-friendly, engaged stakeholders in a participatory manner and enabled an in-depth exploration of issues.

Interviews were conducted with various relevant stakeholders in the child protection sector and government ministries, traditional leaders, children and families as indicated in figure 2 page 36 and table 4 page 37. Three focus group discussions were conducted with children and adolescents to gather their views and inform programming as detailed in table 11 and 12. Academic articles, books, research reports and other reports and publications by civil society organisations, inter-governmental organisations, government and the media were used in building the context before and during the study. National laws, by-laws and policies related to child protection, particularly protection from abuse and child marriage, education, sexual reproductive and health rights were reviewed. RMT reports such as, Making the Connection between Child Marriages and Sexual and Gender Based Violence 2021, RMT National Baseline Report on Maternal Health in Zimbabwe and RMT ‘Effects of social norms and cultural practices in adolescents accessing SHR information and services to prevent teenage pregnancies and child marriages in Murewa and Shamva Districts: A consolidated rapid assessment report (2020) were utilised to inform the findings.

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3.2 Study Areas

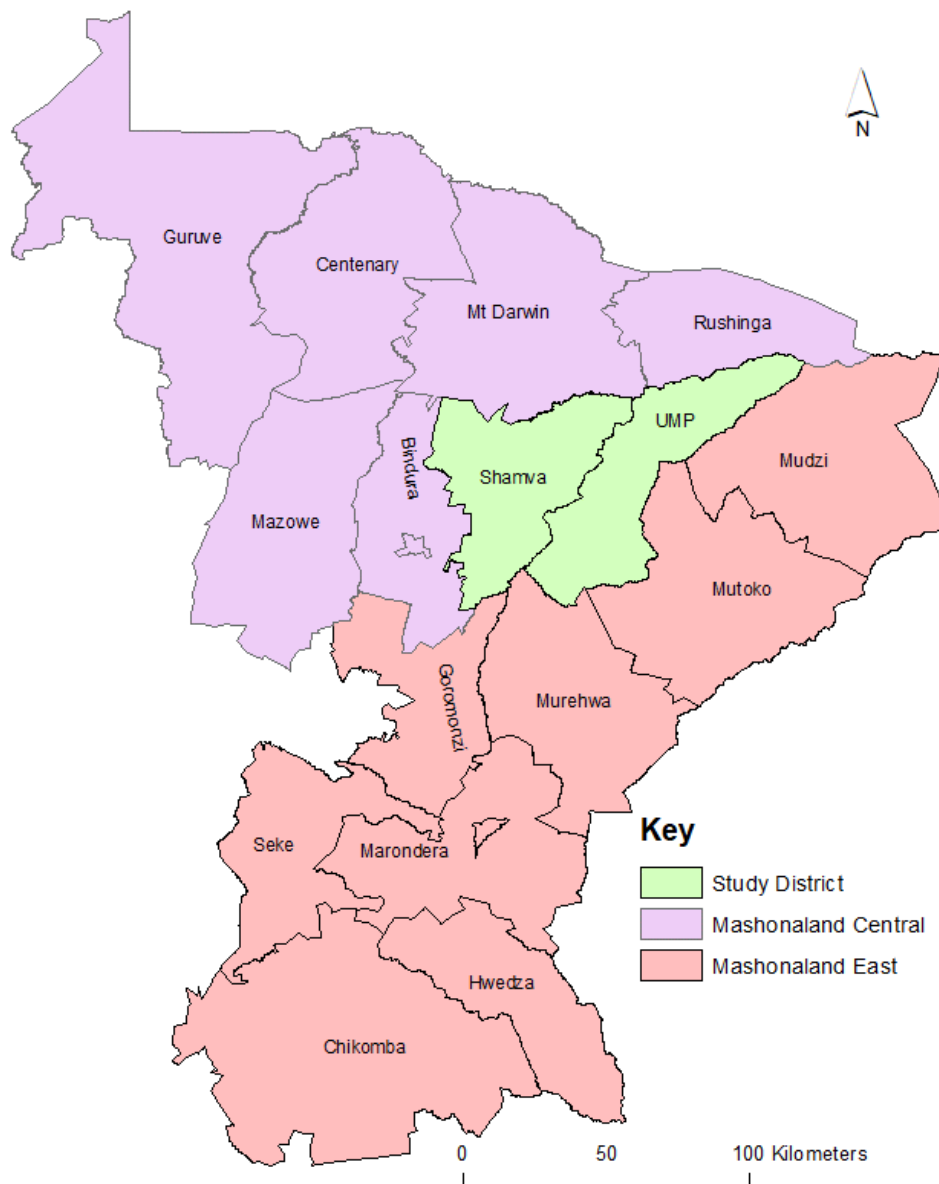


Figure 1: Shows the Study focus Areas

3.3 Secondary data collection

Secondary data was collected by means of desk research. This included a review of the following:

- (i) By-laws on child marriages by the Traditional Chiefs;
- (ii) RMT Programme Reports;
- (iii) Programme reports by other stakeholders working in Shamva and Uzumba;
- (iv) Academic articles, books, research reports and other reports and publications by civil society organisations, inter-governmental organisations (including the AU Goodwill

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Ambassador on ending child marriages in Africa monitoring reports); government and the media; and

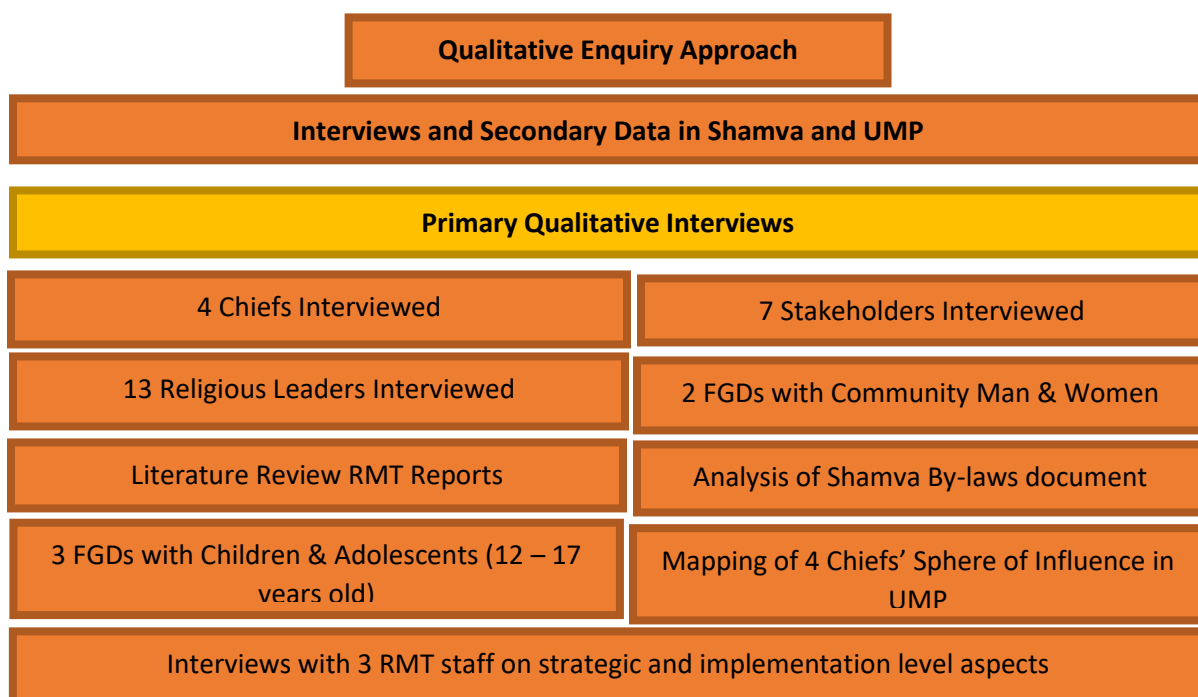
- (v) National legal and policy instruments that relate to child protection and child marriages

3.3 Primary data collection

3.3.1 Methodological Approach

Figure 1 shows the methodological approach used in the process of primary data collection and the number of interviews taken during qualitative enquiry.

Figure 2: Shows a pictorial summary of interviews conducted



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Table 3: Shows the stakeholders interviewed during qualitative enquiry in detail.

INSTITUTION: MINISTRY/DEPARTMENT	DESIGNATION OF THE RESPONDENT	QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION METHOD	SEX/TOTAL
Ministry of Local Government and Public Works.	Local District Economists and Assistant DDO	Key Informant Interview	2 Males
Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation	District Development Officer	Key Informant Interview	1 Male
Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small, Medium Enterprise Development. (MoWACSMED)	District Development Officer	Key Informant Interview	1 Male
ZRP-Victim Friendly Unit	Victim Friendly Unit Coordinator	Key Informant Interview	
National Prosecuting Authority	Public Prosecutor	Key Informant Interview	1 Male
Ministry of Health and Child Care	Mid Wife/VFC Nurse	Key Informant Interview	1 Female
Department of Social Development	Social Worker	Key Informant Interview	1 Male
Chief Chinhanga	Chief	Discussions	1 Male
Chief Chipfiyamiti	Chief	Discussions	1 Male
Chief Nyajina	Chief	Discussions	1 Male
Chief Chitsungo	Chief	Discussions	1 Male

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Religious Leaders	12 Church Denominations	FGD	13
Community Men and Women		FGD	
Adolescent Boys and Girls	19 to 25 years	FGD	6 males and 6 females
Boys	13 to 16 years	FGD	12 males
Girls	13 to 16 years	FGD	12 females

3.3.2 Tools for engaging Girls and Boys

The consultants deployed a mix of child-friendly internationally proven tools in order to engage girls and boys, including the Most vulnerable children, in safe, playful, but thoughtful activities that explore issues of risk and protection in their daily lives. The Free list tool (Appendix xxx) was deployed to help identify all and prioritise the top three child protection issues that girls and boys face in their community - especially cultural norms that contribute to child marriage and sexual abuse. This tool mostly allowed children to reflect on what are some things happening in this community that make boys and girls feel happy and safe. It also pondered on some things in the community that make boys and girls feel sad, scared, or unhappy.

In addition, the Problem-Tree tool was used to identify root causes of the identified and prioritised cultural norms that contribute to child marriage and sexual abuse. It helped boys and girls describe some of the root causes of the issues identified during the Free List activity. And then, the Spider-diagram was used to help children identify all networks and stakeholders in the area that girls and boys go to for help, and to discuss how girls and boys participate in decision making and how children's participation can strengthen the protective factors.

Older Girls and Boys aged 18 to 25 years were then engaged with a child-marriage Focus Group discussion guide to validate and rank child protection issues identified by children. They were required to also add any other critical child protection issues especially cultural norms that contribute to child marriage and sexual abuse.

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The consultants managed to use the school going Children's tools with the Girls group and the Boys group and a combined group of Adolescents between the ages of 19 to 25, 6 boys and six girls.

3.3.3 Tools for Engaging Adults

The consultants team used the Focus Group Discussion guide for engaging Community Women and Men to validate and rank child protection issues identified by children. In addition, it was expected that adults would add any other critical child protection issues especially cultural norms that contribute to child marriage and sexual abuse. The key questions explored included asking; What is being done to prevent these child protection issues from happening? What services do boys and girls say exist in the community (formal and informal) to protect and provide support to children who are at risk or have experienced abuse, neglect, or exploitation? And what was the role of Community and Faith leaders? How do the Community and Faith leaders help? Two groups of adults managed to be interviewed.

3.3.4 Tools for engaging stakeholders

The consultants engaged a number of key informants working within the protection referral pathway and coordinating case-management end to end. A key informant guide exploring child marriages and Sexual violence was designed to collect information from formal and informal stakeholders whose roles relate to protecting boys and girls from violence. It was also meant to build understanding of the formal and informal aspects of the child protection system and the linkages of the formal system to the informal or traditional mechanisms.

The key informants that were interviewed were the following; Ministry of Local Government and Public works, Assistant District Development officer and the Local District Economist; interviewed the Ministry of Women Affairs, District Development Officer, Interviewed the Ministry of Youths, Sports Arts and Recreation; the District Development Officer; Interviewed a Public Prosecutor in the National Prosecuting Authority, and Interviewed the ZRP Victim Friendly Unit, a VFU Coordinator. Under Ministry of Health and Childcare we interviewed the Victim Friendly Clinic Nurse and the Mid-wife. Four Chiefs were interviewed, Chief Chinhanga, Chief Chipfiyamiti, and Chief Nyajina and Chitsungo covering Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe area.

3.5 Geospatial Mapping

In engagement with stakeholders, the consultant also mapped the spatial experiences and identified the various socio-cultural norms in Uzumba at ward level to also identify the hotspot areas. The graphic representation makes it easy to visualise, comprehend and bring out the exact geo location at ward and district level as well as come up with targeted interventions that will have the greatest impact in addressing the identified gaps and giving recommendations on how best these norms can be transformed to a positive shift in norms and attitudes on children's rights, protection, inclusion and gender equality.

3.6 Documenting Best Practices & Case Studies

The consultant also documented best practices in terms of by laws that have been put in place in order to transform the negative socio cultural norms to a positive shift. Case studies on some of the interventions that have been implemented by RMT have been documented and presented.

3.7 Key Limitations

First, due to limited planning time between contract signing and start-up of the process; There wasn't adequate time to plan efficient mechanisms of engagement with many groups of children to explore issues, as could have been anticipated. However, within the limited time, the consultant managed to optimise representative output across all the targeted groups to meet data-needs for the study.

During the study, it was found that mostly teenage boys, unlike girls were illiterate and couldn't open-up and verbalise with confidence on a number of issues as expected. It was letter established that, most boys in the local area engage in gold-panning and only come to schools for two days.

Overall, in order to ensure depth in this study, to mitigate data-gaps, the consultant emphasised upon engagement to talk especially with practitioners who had a stronger understanding of field level issues, which was found to be helpful in exploring emergent issues in detail.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 BASELINE STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 Shamva: Endogenous practices promotive of violence against children and sexual gender based violence prevention

4.1.1 Child Marriage

From both key informant interviews and focus group discussions it was clear that child marriages are one of the major endogenous practices promotive of violence against children and sexual gender based violence prevention in Shamva. This is not surprising given the fact that Mashonaland Central province has the highest child marriage prevalence rate at 49.5%. Shamva district was identified as one of the Hotspot districts when it comes to child marriages. Some of the major causes of child marriages include peer pressure as girls compete to get married and have children, illegal gold panning “MaGermany” who lure young girls by buying them nice things, pressure from parents who see girls as “commodities”, the view that child marriage is an easy escape route from poverty, child sexual abuse, being chased by parents after coming home late, pregnancy and lack of school fees as well as being lured by tobacco farmers especially during the tobacco selling season. This is an indication of the need to address the root cause of child marriage, which is poverty and lack of education, and the need to educate parents on positive parenting so as to avoid instances whereby children are forced into marriage as a way of ‘discipline’.

4.1.2 Labelling/Name calling and use of derogatory terms for unmarried girls

It was established that society has no kind words for girls who do not get married and these are labelled as societal outcasts. In one of the FGDs the girls pointed out that when a girl reaches the age of 16 without getting married, they are labelled a “Chikombi”, which is a derogatory term. This name calling is derogatory and affects the girls psychologically who feel as if they are social misfits since they are not yet married. The girls noted that the name calling is so serious that they are now scared to go to public places such as shops and markets for fear of being embarrassed by boys who call them with such derogatory terms. As such, the unmarried girls no longer feel safe in public spaces hence there is need for the local traditional leaders to come up with sensitization programmes as well as local laws that address such behavioral practices and stereotyping unmarried girls. There is also need for provision of psychosocial support to girls facing such psychological torture through support groups such as the Nhanga Model.

4.1.3 Gule wankulu Practice: Sexual Initiation of boys into “Manhood”

Endogenous practices promotive of violence against the boy child were also identified. These are mainly practiced by the ‘Gule wankulu’ and mostly prevalent in compounds in former white commercial farms where local chiefs/traditional leaders do not have much control over.⁴⁶ It was established that in order for a boy to be classified as a real man, they have to undergo sexual initiation and engage in unprotected sexual activity with the “Queen”, a woman who initiates them into manhood. In one sad case, more than 14 boys under 16 years of age were infected with a serious STI after being initiated into sexual activity by the “Queen”. This shows how the boy child is made vulnerable and exposed to STIs and HIV under the guise of initiation into manhood. It was also established that the boys are also subjected to physical violence as part of graduation into the “Gule wankulu” cultures. As such there is need to engage the “Gule wankulu” so that they do away with these endogenous practices promotive of violence. Perpetrators should be prosecuted as the sexual initiation is in fact, child sexual exploitation and abuse.

4.1.4 Marriage seen as an achievement and an end in itself

The grooming of a girl child for marriage starts at a tender age with them being assigned gender roles that make them become good wives to their husbands. The girl child is physically, socially and psychologically groomed for marriage at a tender age and is made to see marriage as an achievement and an end in itself.

“Semusikana totodziziswa tirivadiki kuti usanyadzise mhuri yese nekutadza kuroorwa,saka ndichitokura ndirikutotarisira kuti ndiroorwe kuitira ndisanyadzisa vabereki vangu”;”As a young girl child I am taught not to embarrass the whole family as a result of me failing to get married, so I am looking forward to getting marries so that I do not embarrass my parents”⁴⁷

4.1.5 “Commodification of the girl child”

It was highlighted that parents view a girl child as a “commodity” ready for exchange with monetary and material things for their own benefit.

⁴⁶ Key informant interview

⁴⁷ Participant at one of the FGDs (Nhanga) with survivors of child marriages in Shamva

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“Musikana agara atone degree rake rekuroorwa”; “A girl child already has her own degree of getting married”.⁴⁸

This has made the girl child vulnerable as they are not given adequate support when it comes to continuing with their education with preference being given to the boy child. This has led girls to drop out of school and get married early with some getting married as young as 12 years of age.

Table 4: Endogenous practices promotive of violence against children and sexual gender based violence in Shamva.

Endogenous practices promotive of violence against children and sexual gender based violence prevention in Shamva.	Explanation	Rationale	Gender disparity & Risk Factors
<i>“kuripa ngozi”</i>	Giving away a girl child to another family to compensate for the murder of someone or appeasing the dead.	Patriarchal society which believes only the girl child can be used to appease the dead	-Women and girls don't have power to make decisions -Women & girls treated as commodities that can be exchanged i.e. to compensate for killing someone
Use of derogatory terms e.g. <i>“Tsikombi”</i>	Refers to a girl who reaches the age of 16years without getting married in Shamva District.	Patriarchal society which believes women/girls should prioritise getting married over everything else -Patriarchal society also sets the age at which girls should get married failure to get married once a girl reaches that age	-Risk factor is that girls end up getting married out of societal pressure -Girls not being prioritised for other developmental issues like school -Name calling has negative effects on girls confidence and self esteem

⁴⁸ Participant at one of the FGDs with survivors of child marriages in Shamva

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Endogenous practices promotive of violence against children and sexual gender based violence prevention in Shamva.	Explanation	Rationale	Gender disparity & Risk Factors
		attracts ridicule and hence name calling like “Tsikombi”	
Marrying a girl child with disabilities seen as a favour	By marrying a girl child with disabilities one will be actually doing that child and her family a favour by lessening the burden of them caring for the child.	Girls with disabilities are seen as an embarrassment to the family and most of them are hidden -Marrying a girl with disabilities is “bringing shame to the family”.	-Girls with disabilities not valued hence hidden most of the times -Most of the abuse that happens is not reported since girls with disabilities are kept away from the public
“ <i>Chiramu</i> ”	Chiramu is a Shona cultural practice that entails the breaking down of barriers between in-laws of the opposite sex. This is a practice in which a brother in law can indecently assault his young and unmarried sister in law under the guise of culture. This is meant to teach young girls how a man proposes and how to avoid him.	Patriarchal society which believes man as breadwinners have the power to “play” with in laws of the opposite sex -Issue of power relations	-Exposes the girl child to high risk of physical and sexual abuse -It promotes the culture of silence and encourages girls to accept abuse as normal. -Abuse of power and authority by man.
“ <i>Gule wankulu</i> initiation into manhood for boys”	Initiation of boys into manhood through having sex with a woman referred to as “Queen”.	Belief that boys to be considered “real man” in society they must be able to satisfactory	-Young boys being sexually abused in the name of initiation -Young boys being exposed to indecent

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Endogenous practices promotive of violence against children and sexual gender based violence prevention in Shamva.	Explanation	Rationale	Gender disparity & Risk Factors
		perform during sex -Failure of which brings ridicule	behaviour at a young age thereby increasing their risk of them engaging in anti-social behaviour
<i>‘Kuzvarirwa’</i>	Kuzvarira is a traditional customary practice of marrying off, without her consent, an underage girl (sometimes as young as eight or even before birth) to a rich man who already has another wife or wives in exchange for money, food and other arterial possessions that guarantee the girl’s family not to suffer acute economic deprivation ever again ⁴⁹ (Financial Gazette, 2/12/2004)	Patriarchal society which believes in man determining the fate/life of women -Women/girls being seen as “commodities”	-Exposes girls to physical and sexual abuse -Disempowers girls and women and instils the idea that they should always depend on man
<i>“Kumutsamapfiwa”</i> Inheritance of right of Marriage	Normally, it is considered compulsory that in case of death of a wife the husband automatically gets the right to marry the sister of the deceased. In fact, it is the choice of the widow and her parents to agree to this. ⁵⁰		-Removes women’s and girl’s choices -Reinforces the idea that man/boys determine/control girls/women’s life

⁴⁹ M Mawere (2012), Violation and abuse of women’s human rights in the customary practice of ‘kuzvarira’ among the Ndaou people of Mozambique; <http://ir.gzu.ac.zw:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/169>

⁵⁰ Country Advice Zimbabwe – ZWE37447 – kuripa ngozi (virgin pledging) – Customary marriage – Women – State protection – Police – Bantus – Domestic violence – Sexual assault – HIV/AIDS – Legal provisions 16 September 2010

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Endogenous practices promotive of violence against children and sexual gender based violence prevention in Shamva.	Explanation	Rationale	Gender disparity & Risk Factors
Culture of silence especially women and children	Whatever happens in a home should be kept a secret even if it is violence.	-Women forced to accept abuse so that they don't expose family happenings -	-Exposes girls and women to physical and sexual abuse
<i>“Kugarira vana vangu”</i>	Women even if they are facing GBV they are encouraged to hang on and also stay for the sake of their children.	Patriarchal society using children as a way of keeping hold on women in marriages. Women encouraged to stay on in abusive marriages	-Exposes women to high risk of physical and sexual violence
<i>“Chisahwira Chemabimbiri”</i>	A no holds barred joking/advisory relationship legitimising foul language and fondling. This practice renders children vulnerable to SEA.	-Women forced to accept foul and derogatory languages -Grooming of girls to accept abuse	- Exposes women to high risk of physical and sexual violence
<i>“Chimimba Muteku”</i>	This is a myth that causes grandfathers to be denied conjugal rights under the assumption that continued engagement in sex will create a false pregnancy on women who would have reached menopause. These grandfathers will then seek sexual gratification on children thus posing a danger to young girls.		

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Endogenous practices promotive of violence against children and sexual gender based violence prevention in Shamva.	Explanation	Rationale	Gender disparity & Risk Factors
<i>“Madivisi”</i>	This involves the use of magic, rituals where elders engage in sex especially with children (virgins) to enhance their agricultural produce.	Patriachal society that believes abusing women	Exposes women to high risk of physical and sexual violence
<i>‘Kupindira’</i>	This practice occurs when a man is deemed infertile and a male relative substitutes the said man to bear children on his behalf. This is prevalent in Shamva.		

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4.2 UMP: Endogenous practices promotive of violence against children and sexual gender based violence prevention

4.2.1 Chiefs Spheres of Geographical Influence/Coverage

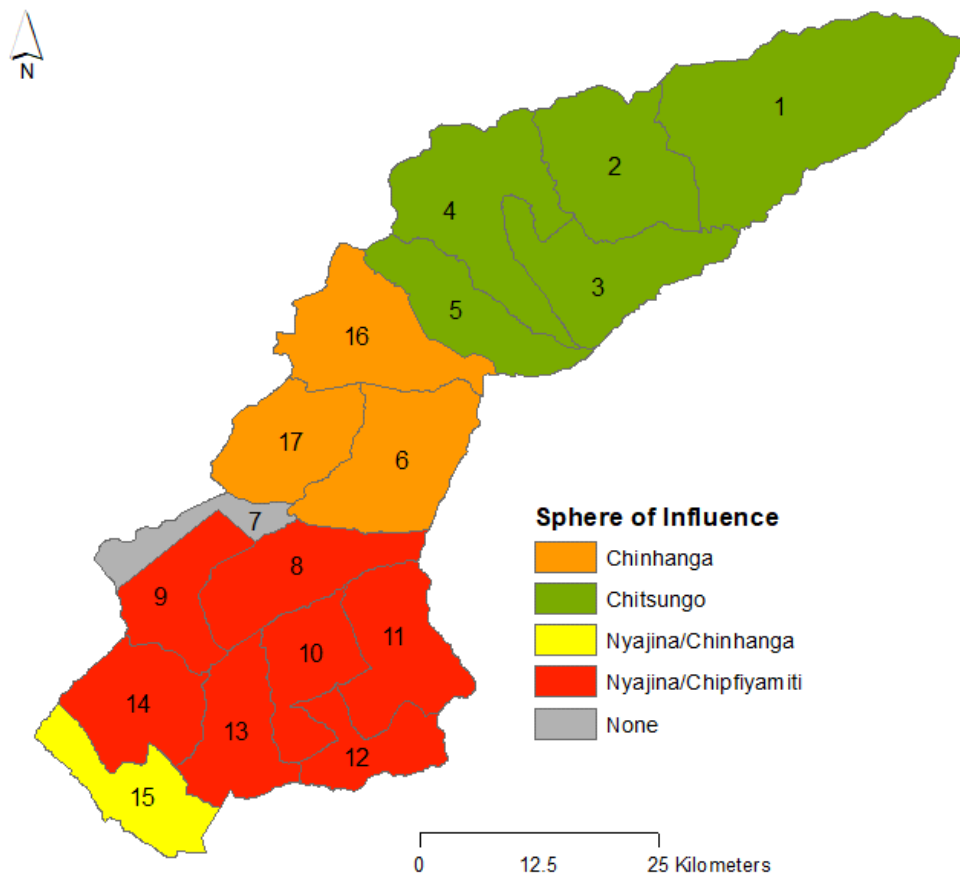


Figure 3: Shows a geospatial view of Chiefs spheres of geographical influence in UMP

It was established that there are four Chiefs in UMP. In order to understand the endogenous practices promotive of violence against children and sexual gender based violence prevention in UMP it is important to understand each Chiefs sphere of influence both in terms of power and cultural influence. From the Key Informant Interviews with the four chiefs we established each Chiefs sphere of influence as depicted in the above map. As such it is critical for RMT to understand each Chiefs sphere of influence and also take note of the overlaps for effective engagement with the Chiefs when programming activities.

Table 5: Indicates the four ump chief's leadership structure, geographical sphere of influence

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Name of Chief	Year Installed	Tribe/Ethnic Group	Ward	Headmen	Village heads
Chinhanga	2012	KoreKore the most dominant and a few Mabuja	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 (Mutawatawa, Saparanyambuya), 16 (Maramba, Borera) • 17 (Bangari, Chiwore, Nyagande) • Part of ward 15 	2	57
Chipfiyamiti	2021	ZeZuru more dominant and a few KoreKore	Still to be officially allocated	Still to be officially advised	Still to be officially advised
Nyajina	2014	Mixture of Zezuru and Kore Kore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 (Chipfunde, Marowe, Shambanhanga) • 9 (Katiyo) • 10 (Chidodo) • 11 (Rudawiro, Karimbika, Nyamasanga) • 12 (Nyamha, Muswe, Mapaya, Musanhi) • 13 (Rukariro, Matsenga) • 14 (Mayema, Nakiwa, Kaseke) 	3	172

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 (Marembera, Chitimbe) 		
Chief Chitsungo	2018	Zezeru and Korekore.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 1-5 	2	

NB: Chief Chipfiyamiti highlighted sharing wards with Chief Nyajina. Chief Chipfiyamiti is still yet to be given clear demarcations of his jurisdiction

4.2.2 Common Cultural/traditional Practices that define UMP community

All the four Chiefs pointed out that there are common cultural/traditional practices under their jurisdiction which are widely practiced in UMP. Discussions with the chiefs in relation to cultural/traditional practices showed that the chiefs practice similar traditional practices and only differ slightly in how they practice them.

- a) **Kurova makuva:** Uzumba community has a cultural practice called “kurova makuva”, which is done to call the spirit of the dead to be able to take care of their families.
- b) **Kugadzirira midzimu:** They also perform what is called “kugadzirira midzimu, Kugadzirira kuti mvura iwuye”, It happens in all wards after the harvesting season and when the trees start flowering. This practice is done at family level and it’s not done as a community. They seek permission from the chief and also notify the community leadership.
- c) **Minamoto mikwerera:** Uzumba Community also conducts Minamoto mikwerera, these are prayers and traditional ceremonies don for the rainfalls. These are done at community level and they are done by man who are selected by the chief based on their wisdom and understanding of culture and tradition.
- d) **Chisi:** Discussions with chiefs showed that the local communities observe a day termed as “Chisi” which is deemed to be sacred. It is a day of honouring spirit mediums and of rest each week. Common belief is that failure to observe “Chisi” will bring forth a curse upon the land and the local people. Community members are not supposed to go and work in their fields during this day. The chiefs highlighted observing different days of “Chisi”. Chief Chinhanga and his people observe “Chisi” on Friday while other Chiefs and their people on Thursdays. RMT can take opportunity to engage communities on Sexual Gender

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Based Violence during the Chisi days when communities have “free” time to ensure full participation.

- e) **Moon Phases:** During the beginning and end of the moon phase the people of the community are not permitted to go to the fields because the phases are considered to be sacred. Interviews with chiefs revealed that each moon phase has a spiritual meaning, hence the beginning and end of the moon phases being seen as sacred.
- f) **Consulting Spirit Mediums:** Community members of Uzumba have different spirit mediums that guide, protect and lead them. The name of the spirit medium which Chief Chinhanga and his people follow is called “Hombiro”. The Spirit mediums are consulted in a house called “Danho”. It is thatched in a special way different from the other local chiefs. The house is located at the chiefs’ homestead. Chief Chipfiyamiti and his people originally had a spirit medium which originated from a pig. However, it got replaced with the current one which is called “Nemauyu”. Rituals to appease these spirits are performed by the elders of the community and the chiefs preside the ceremony. Places inhabited by spirit mediums are so sacred that people of the community are not allowed to wear red colours in those places.
- g) **Rain making ceremonies:** The local communities conduct rain making ceremonies as part of their cultural and traditional practices. Beer is brewed in order to appease the spirit mediums so as to initiate rain. All the chiefs confirmed conducting rain making ceremonies in a similar way. A raining making ceremony termed “Dzimbahwe” to initiate the coming of the rain season is performed in a sacred mountain or forest. During the ceremony alcohol is brewed by elderly women who have passed menopause and the ceremony is conducted between September and October just before the official rain season. Absence of rain after the rain making ceremony is an indication that the spirit mediums are angry and a ceremony to appease them will need to be conducted.
- h) **Sacred mountains:** Interviews with Chiefs pointed out that Uzumba has a number of sacred mountains. According to Chief Chipfiyamiti certain mountains are only to be visited by the elderly people and members of the traditional councils. For example, Marowe Mountain is considered to be sacred and specific elderly people and chiefs are buried there. Rituals are also performed in these sacred mountains and only the elderly and traditional

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leaders are allowed to be part of such ceremonies. Under Chief Nyajina Mountain “Chevazumbani” is considered scared as it is inhabited by their local spirit mediums. Ceremonies to appease these spirit mediums are conducted in such mountains. The traditional council led by the chief and a traditional healer “N’anga” take the leading role in such ceremonies.

- i) **Worshipping spirit mediums:** According to chiefs interviewed, spirit mediums are worshipped in various forms. Firstly, it is considered a taboo to kill snakes such as pythons as they are seen to be possessed with spirit mediums. Traditional leaders make sure that the community is well aware such types of snakes are not killed. The Rural District Council as well as the Zimbabwe National Parks ensure that pythons are not killed as well. Community members as specified by chiefs are prohibited from cutting down certain trees. These trees include Misika, Mutamba, Muhacha Mupfute and Muuyu. These are seen to be associated with different spirit mediums, hence chopping them down is a sign of disrespecting spirit mediums. Disrespecting spirit mediums results in the land and the people being cursed. Ceremonies such as paying of bride price, appeasing spirit mediums or any other ceremony are not permitted to be performed in the month of November. In the local community culture, November is seen to be a sacred month. Any ceremony that is conducted in November is believed to be cursed as it will not have the support of the ancestors and the spirit mediums.

NB: These common practise present an opportunity for RMT especially in enhancing relationship among the four chiefs and their communities which makes it easy to come up with standard messages when it comes to Sexual Gender Based Violence.

4.2.3 Issues to be included in by-laws

Findings from discussions with chiefs show that when crafting by-laws issues of pertaining to **appropriate dressing** need to be addressed. Chief Chipfiyamiti and Chief Nyajina emphasized the need for standardized and appropriate dressing. It was suggested that there should be standardized laws on dressing based upon the local traditional culture. The freedom to dress how one wants is against the tradition and culture of the community. It should be clearly stipulated the expected dressing when visiting the local areas.

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In addition, the two chiefs concur that certain **educational teachings** should be banned such as use of condoms. The assumption is that when a child is taught on how to use condoms basically that child has already been exposed to inappropriate things and this makes them susceptible to child abuse.

“Zvino mukamudzidzisa mwana kushandisa macondoms matomudzidzisa kuti apinde mu situation yaasati apinda. Anoda kudzivirira chinyi chaasati apinda?” (If a child is taught about the use of condoms they have been basically introduced to such situations. What would the child want to prevent if they have not been involved in it?), remarked Chief Chipfiyamiti.

The current education system was questioned as it was seen to be promoting child abuse as well as child sexual exploitation because children are being introduced to inappropriate material at an early stage.

Chief Nyajina felt that the **Parliament of Zimbabwe** has to be involved in the affairs of the community. The parliament should be able to see from the community’s perspective. He believes that constitutional is clashing with customary law, hence traditional laws should guide communities on how to respond to child abuse and GBV. The introduction of western ideologies/western culture has distorted local norms and values. He strongly suggested revisiting of gender equality phenomena.

“Tsika dzedu ngadzirege kuyerera nemvura takatarisa” (Our culture should not be washed away as well look).

A representative of Chief Chinhanga had different sentiments to issues that need to be put in the by-laws. Firstly he suggested reducing the rights of the child. *“Rights of the child are too many as compared to their responsibilities”*. More focus has been on the rights of the child and nothing about the responsibilities of a child and this has led to juvenile delinquency. He pointed out that teachers should be given the responsibility to discipline children appropriately. **There is need for RMT to engage the Chiefs to enhance their knowledge on children’s rights and to ensure that when programming, awareness on children’s rights also includes awareness on the responsibilities of the child.**

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A common issue raised by all chiefs that needs to be incorporated into the by-laws is the need for customary law being respected. Strong resentments on the justice system were highlighted, hence the need for the justice system to be strict and the course of the law being transparent. It was shared that the current law is not strict with regards to taking away a girl's virginity and that virginity testing should be reintroduced so that parents can quickly be made alert that a child has been violated. Whilst there is a need to respect customary law, it should be noted that virginity testing has been identified as a harmful cultural practice affecting children and does not conform to the best interests of the child. Customary beliefs that are inconsistent with the African Children's Charter are void and should not be condoned. There is therefore a need to engage chiefs and educate them about harmful practices, to ensure that customary laws and practices are consistent with international human rights standards.

The chiefs stated that they want laws that enforce the traditional way of dressing which promotes respect and does not reveal too much. *Tinoda mitemo inochengetedza tsika nemagariro edu pakupfeka kunehunhu*

They also stated that by-laws must have stiffer penalties when it comes to perpetrators of any violence and harsher laws that reprimand those who sexually abuse children. They also agreed that they want laws that stipulate clear type of punishment for those who promote and facilitate child marriages. The chiefs also agreed that if there is child neglect and exploitation and child abuse there is need to have stipulated punishment for the offence

There was 100 % consensus on the need for laws that protect the village from strangers who come with foreign norms and values that lead to violence and GBV. Anyone who comes to the village must be registered and known by the chief because cases of strangers who impregnate girls were on the rise.

There was also need to make accountable mine and farm workers and the need to develop a register of all new farm and mine workers so they can be tracked after committing an offence and that needs to be part of the by-laws.

4.2.4 Role of Chiefs in ending SGBV against Children

a) **Implementation and Enforcement of Laws on SGBV & Child Marriages:** The chiefs stated that they support the laws that restrict and outlaw child marriages, child abuse and GBV. When

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chiefs identify or get a referral of an individual who facilitates child marriages or parents who marry off children, they take them and teach about the disadvantages of child marriages and teach them the effects of child abuse and GBV because if the Chiefs don't empower them they will commit crimes due to lack of information and knowledge. Chiefs are responsible for putting down laws and punishment to the offenders so that other people may not repeat similar offenses in their district, wards and villages. However, they stated that when it comes to serious crimes they refer and report to the police for the arrest of such perpetrators.

b) **Sensitising communities:** The chiefs also teach ways to prevent violence and “kuendesa vanha kuchikoro kudzidzisa tsika ne hunhu”, and the importance of taking children to school allowing them to complete their studies

c) **Sensitising on dangers of Child Marriages:** Chiefs also teach their people on dangers of child marriages., As rightly put by one of the chiefs, *tinodzidzisa kuti vana vadiki vakamhanyira kumusha ma operation anowanda and nyama dzavo dzinenge dzisati dzasvika pa point-we teach the parents on the effects of teen pregnancies and the deaths related to child pregnancy because children would not have fully developed hence may face challenges in giving birth.*

d) **Part of the referral system:** Discussions with Chief Nyajina, Chief Chipfiyamiti, Chief Chinhanga and Chief Chitsungo revealed that they have a fundamental role to play when tackling issues of GBV and child abuse. These include responding to reported cases of child abuse and GBV, ensuring that families of the victim and perpetrators are summoned to the chief's court, vetting and judging cases of child abuse and GBV at local traditional councils (through “Dare”) and also referring such cases to the police. Moreover, chiefs ensure that the rights of the child are respected through educating the community on safe keeping of children. Chief Nyajina of Uzumba had the following words to say:

“As the chief I was fortunate to attend a seminar in Sweden on human rights issues. The focus was on child abuse and GBV”.

Thus, any form of gathering that is done in the community within the jurisdiction, the chief attends and ensures that the community is reminded to respect the rights of the child and also urged to put an end to GBV. Chief Nyajina highlighted that currently he is acting as an advocate of such issues because at all functions, such issues are discussed. All the chiefs pointed out that they are assisted

by their headmen and village heads in the fight against child abuse and GBV through sensitizing the community on the prevention and effects of child abuse and GBV.

4.2.5 Support needed by Chiefs

a) **Clear Definition of a Child:** Chiefs stated that they would want support when it comes to the definition of a child. They raised concerns that 18 years should not be an age of marriage because *“mwana mwana chete” (A child is a child)* and they should listen to the instruction of parents and continue going to school instead of being married before finishing school based on 18 years of marriage. **This is an opportunity for RMT to engage and clearly explain to the chiefs the laws and implications of the legal definition of a child so as to have a standard messaging and sending the same message to the communities.**

b) **Dress Code:** The Chiefs mentioned that they want support on the laws that define dress code, e.g. *“kana tati zvfeko zvakadai hazvina kukodzera patsika dzedu” (when we say this type of dressing is not acceptable under our culture) we need the government to support that so that it becomes law and it’s followed because tikataura tega (when we say it alone) people do not strictly follow”*. **This is also an opportunity for RMT to engage the Chiefs and explain more on the power dynamics involved especially given the patriarchal nature of the society in Shamva and UMP and how this has the potential of violating the rights of girls and women.**

c) **Support in enforcement of By-laws:** The Chiefs want the government to support them in the enforcement of by-laws in their communities and the Police to support them when it comes to the cases they report. They stated that they want them to deal with child abuse properly and not engage in corruption when it comes to child abuse and GBV because when people see a perpetrator out of custody in 2 days, they also commit similar offenses. The chiefs agreed that the government should support *“mitongo inopihwa namabo”* (the judgements/sentences given by the Chiefs).

They indicated that they need workshops so we are taught laws as chiefs and shares ideas because when people see that chiefs are supported by government they take the chiefs decisions.

The major concern for chiefs in addressing child abuse and GBV was revealed to be the undermining of the role of the chiefs. Chief Chipfiyamiti reiterated that traditional leaders’ authority should be recognized rather than undermined. This is similar to the sentiments highlighted by Chief Chinahnga’s headman *“Traditional leaders should be given enough power*

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to preside over the issues of the community". Efforts ought to address child abuse and GBV should be targeted on emphasizing the fundamental role played by Chiefs as they have influence over people in the community. From the four chiefs, three highlighted that they should be given enough power and authority to rule based on the customary law because customary law preserves the culture of the community and its people. Chief Nyajina had a different perspective on the support he needs in the fight against child abuse and GBV. His major concern was on access to transport as it is vital in the movement between villages and wards. He maintained that effective prevention and response to child abuse and GBV is based on the ability to engage with people within their respective homes at village level rather than assembling them at ward level as some may fail to attend meetings.

"It would be ideal to go to the people in their villages rather than them assembling at a central point. Some may fail to attend because of inability to travel long distances. Kindly requesting for RMT to provide transport so that the work of the Chief and the council is made easy. Failure to access transport in order to move from one ward to another is hindering progress. RMT should continue conducting workshops frequently as much as on a monthly basis."

d) Addressing discrepancies between customary law and statutory law: It was indicated that "The law about the girl child contradicts the customary law. The customary law believes that when a girl has had her virginity removed, she should be married by that person". No underage marriages but our traditional laws say no child should be left after being having her virginity removed. *There is a need for RMT to further engage Chiefs on this issue and raise awareness on the context of child marriages and forced marriages.*

One of the Chiefs pointed out that the verdicts of the traditional courts are not being respected. The chiefs are being undermined as there seems to be conflict between the customary law and the constitutional law. "This conflict between customary law and the constitutional law is resulting in the undermining of the role of the chief". For example, under the customary law, the chief is in charge of the allocation of land but now it seems the council has more power to allocate the land. Without the approval of the Rural District Council, the decision taken by the chief will be deemed as being illegal". "Traditional leaders should be given enough power to preside over the issues of

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the community. The chief should be given enough power and authority to rule based on the customary law because customary law preserves the culture of the community and its people”.

One of the Chiefs recommend that “Virgin testing should be reintroduced so that parents can quickly be made alert that a child has been violated”. **This shows an urgent need for RMT to engage and build the capacity of the Chiefs on children’s rights.**

4.3 Mapping of SGBV Stakeholders in UMP

Table 6: Shows the roles undertaken by various stakeholders

Name of Stakeholder	Roles
National Prosecuting Authority	<p>-Making sure that all cases of violence against children and sexual gender based violence are prosecuted in court by being guided by the High Court and down to the Magistrates court. Dockets from the police are received and processed for court procedures.</p> <p>“Our main agenda is to make sure that we protect the rights of children above everything guided by the Constitution. Thus, the best interest of the child should be upheld”.</p> <p>-Working in close contact with the Department of Social Development through information provided by the Probation Officer’s report so as to get information to the background of the child, circumstances of the child and the family of the child. An assessment of whether the child is the victim or the accused is done. If the child is the accused, it helps the team to make sure that they have recommendations especially on sentencing and if the child is the victim they know how the circumstances and background and family can be used to help the child. Within 3 days of receiving cases pertaining to violence against children or sexual gender based violence the case is taken to court and the case is prosecuted.</p>

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	<p>-Educating community members on the stance of the National Prosecution Authority {NPA) in relation to violence against children and sexual gender based violence.</p> <p>“The aim is to make sure that justice is not only seen to be done, but is done”.</p>
<p>Ministry of Health and Child Care</p>	<p>-Attending to clients who would have been referred by the Police for medication examination and counselling. Clients are screened for STIs and HIV testing.</p> <p>-Completion of medical affidavit forms for victims of violence and also referring clients to the police if they have not yet made a police report.</p> <p>-Conducting awareness campaigns on GBV. The midwife highlighted having worked with Musasa on awareness campaigns pertaining to GBV.</p>
<p>Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education</p>	<p>-Supervising schools on cases of violence against children and gender based violence. Schools submit monthly returns (statistics on child marriages, school dropout rates as result of pregnancy or because of financial constraints.</p> <p>-Conducting outreach programmes. The aim is to assess the reasons why some children are failing to attend school. Each school have a targeted number of children who are assisted to enrol at a local school. Targeted children will be then be assisted with their fees through BEAM (Basic Education Assistance Module).</p> <p>-Conducting feeding programs. These are done at each school whereby during school days at 10 am in the morning students are given “hot meals”. “We have seen that this has increased enrolment of children because some were failing to come to school because of hunger”. The program has increased enrolment in school because once the student is aware that there is food provided at school they</p>

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	<p>become motivated to attend classes. For example, Chipawa Primary School started a feeding program in partnership with Caritas Zimbabwe and school had a sharp increase in enrolment from 200 students to 400 students.</p> <p>-Guidance and counselling. Children attend lessons on guidance and counselling where they are taught on all forms of violence and GBV. These lessons are conducted once every week.</p> <p>-Setting up of clubs related to violence against children and GBV. “In these clubs they learn a lot about violence against children and GBV”.</p>
<p>RDC Gender Focal Person</p>	<p>-Conducting Awareness Campaigns in conjunction with sister departments on GBV, early child marriages and drug abuse. These are done in partnership with Women Affairs, Ministry of Health and National AIDS Council among others.</p> <p>-Promoting gender equity and equality. All council programs use social inclusion in their activities, thus both the girl child and boy child are included in programming women, men and persons with disability are also included. “All our programs have an element of gender mainstreaming to all people be it boys, girls, men, women and persons with disabilities”. When a project is implemented issues of gender inclusivity have to be taken into consideration.</p> <p>-Education assistance of less privileged children so that they stay longer in school. The beneficiaries of the bursary are means tested by NAPH (National Association of Primary Heads). Names of vulnerable children in the community are submitted to NAPH and primary school heads help in verification and assessment of the vulnerability of the children.</p> <p>-Women Empowerment through projects. “We believe that some causes of GBV are issues to do with poverty, hence if women find means to sustain themselves cases of GBV may be reduced”.</p>

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<p>National Aids Council (NAC)</p>	<p>-Educating girls and boys on all types of violence as well as on their rights. This is done through the Brotha2Brotha project in partnership with NAC which focuses on drug abuse awareness to the boy child and DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe girls and women) project were girls are empowered on issues that pertain to violence and abuse.</p>
<p>Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation</p>	<p>-Responsible for Economic Empowerment. Also responsible for carrying out awareness campaigns on Gender Based Violence. - Under Sports and Recreation, they conduct Tournaments and we have what are called social Clubs as a way of reducing sexual activities.</p> <p>-Ministry encourages and promotes participation in the social clubs for sharing of idea.</p> <p>-On Arts and culture, youths are encouraged to participate so that they can learn from each other and learn how to work together. If they are busy there is no room for GBV. The drug and substance abuse is caused by being idle hence economic empowerment, social clubs reduces the crimes committed under the influence of alcohol.</p> <p>-The ministry is also responsible for youth development. This encourages the youth to learn skills, to be taught on GBV because some end up in sexual GBV due to lack of knowledge, so they teach them skills that can help them to earn a living and they are well informed about consequences of violence.</p> <p>-The ministry also carries out vocational trainings for those who can't read and write so that they can learn mabasa emaoko and there is program called ISOP which stands for Integrated Skills Outreach Program, this is done so as to bring the training to the community and we also enrol those who cannot afford tertiary education.</p> <p>-The ministry carries out a baseline survey on what skills they want to do and after training and graduation they empower them more</p>

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	<p>through linking them to the Empower Bank to get start up kits and they are also linked to the market place where they can sell their products and this reduces the element of GBV.</p>
<p>Ministry of Local Government and Public Works</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mandated to promote sound local governance, undertake and coordinate rural and urban development to enhance the socio-economic development Zimbabwe. -The Ministry coordinates with line ministries, NGOs and partners who have programs to do with GBV and child abuse. -Disseminates national policies in the districts and ensure that they are implemented. -The Ministry monitors activities of line ministries, NGOs and other partners who have any programs that have anything to do with child abuse and GBV and coordinates all development activities in the district and facilitate effective communication within the district. -Ministry also collaborates in programming with other line ministries on gender-based activity programming.
<p>Ministry of Women Affairs Community Small Medium Enterprise Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Responsible for creating awareness in the community as far as child marriage and gender based violence is concerned and coordinates women and girl child empowerment programs. - Offers assistance to survivors through internal lending and saving schemes (ISALS), Women development fund. (Availing loans to women groups for various projects) Skills training. - Responsible for sensitization of communities against GBV, targeting smaller groups, including men and the elderly. (Intensive sensitization program with the aim of reducing GBV.) -The ministry coordinates all government and non- government department activities on GBV, receives and refers various GBV cases and facilitates protection orders for clients.

4.4 Stakeholders definition of GBV

According to survey participants who were key informants from various stakeholder groups, Gender based violence (GBV) is any form of physical, emotional and psychological abuse that is targeted at both women and men. Interviews conducted with key informants revealed that GBV is most common in women because men tend not to reveal it when they experience it.

“When people hear about GBV they are quick to say it is violence against women”, said a Prosecutor based at Mutawatawa Magistrate Court.

From the qualitative data obtained it was unanimously agreed that dialogues conducted with men revealed that those who attempted to report the cases of abuse they are mocked even by the police. Society has socialized boys to toughen up, hence when they become men even if they are abused they will not come forward to report the issue. Thus, this contributes to the wide misconceptions from different people when it comes to defining GBV. **This is an opportunity for RMT to engage boys and men in its programming.**

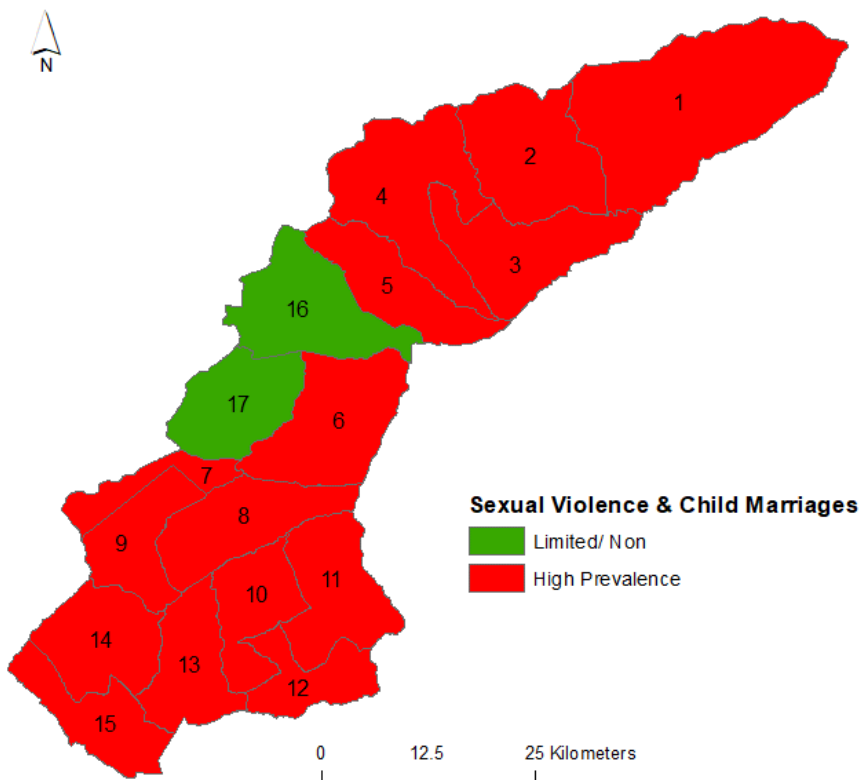
Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small, and Medium Enterprise Development defined GBV according to the Domestic Violence Act GBV Act Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation defined GBV conflicts between people which degenerates into violence which may end up killing each other and this applies to all age groups. The types of violence were said to include rape, child battering and economic violence where children are supposed to be sent to school for one reason or the other they don't send children or do not pay school fees and children are sent back home. Ministry of Local Government and Public Works defined GBV as violence perpetuated on an individual based on their gender.

4.5 Estimating Prevalence of SGBV and child abuse in UMP

According to a Schools Inspector from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, in the period 2020-2021, about 20 cases of violence against children from the 94 schools in UMP would be recorded on a monthly basis. This was mainly because of the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Figure 4: Shows the Mapping of Prevalence of Sexual Violence and Child Marriages in UMP



A midwife stationed at Mutawatawa District Hospital acknowledged that the biggest challenge is that most cases of violence against children and GBV are not being reported despite community members being well aware that these cases in Uzumba district are very high. For example, the hospital received 3 cases of violence against children from Uzumba district the week beginning 3 October 2022. Many fail to report the cases because of transport challenges.

“Many cases are not reported, but I think violence against children and GBV cases are from all local places”, stated a Midwife based at Mutawatawa District Hospital.

The Gender Focal person highlighted that in ward 8, rape cases are very high in villages such as Mukururanopa maenza, Nyamhara and Marowe. She highlighted that all wards generally experience some form of violence against children but the major problem is that the community is failing to report such cases.

A prosecutor under the National Prosecuting Authority revealed that most cases they receive that pertain to GBV and violence against children come from Pfungwe with major cases being Section

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70 (Sexual intercourse or performing an indecent act with a young person) and Section 65 (Rape) cases. A lot of cases referred to the National Prosecution Authority have mostly been from Pfungwe. On average 8-10 cases of both Section 70 and 65 cases are received from Pfungwe on a monthly basis. Mutawatawa also has moderate to low cases of violence against children.

4.6 Contributing factors and major causes/drivers of violence against children and GBV

The main causes of GBV and child abuse were identified as poverty, lack of knowledge by community members, discriminatory social norms and ignorance by perpetrators. Poverty was attributed as the major cause of violence against children and GBV. Poverty has resulted in men and women resorting to various ways of sourcing for income. For instance, women are resorting to prostitution and men to gold panning. This usually means parents may be away from their homes for days and those left to look after the children abuse them or children are being left by themselves without any adult supervision, hence exposing them to violence from fellow community members.

According to the Gender Focal Person, GBV is caused by male farmers who divert money from their sales to other activities rather than feeding their families, hence this results in a conflict between a husband and wife leading to violence in most cases. Drug abuse rampant mostly in boys who are of school going ages was highlighted as cause of violence against children. Drug abusers end up being the perpetrators of violence to their peers as well. However, a Prosecutor based in Uzumba believed that GBV and violence against children is caused by the patriarchal nature of the society. This concurs with findings from an interview with a midwife at Mutawatawa District hospital who pointed that GBV and violence against children is caused by the society being patriarchal. *“We live in a Patriarchal society were for example men are entitled to sexual intercourse whether with or without your consent”*, said a midwife based at Mutawatawa District Hospital. Ignorance from perpetrators was pointed out as being another cause of GBV and violence against children. The Prosecutor based at Mutawatawa Magistrate court disclosed when they have interviews with perpetrators, some of them indicate not knowing that the act they did was an offence. *“Ignorance of the law is very high among perpetrators, hence we need outreaches on the Constitution itself, Domestic Violence Act, and the causes of GBV”*.

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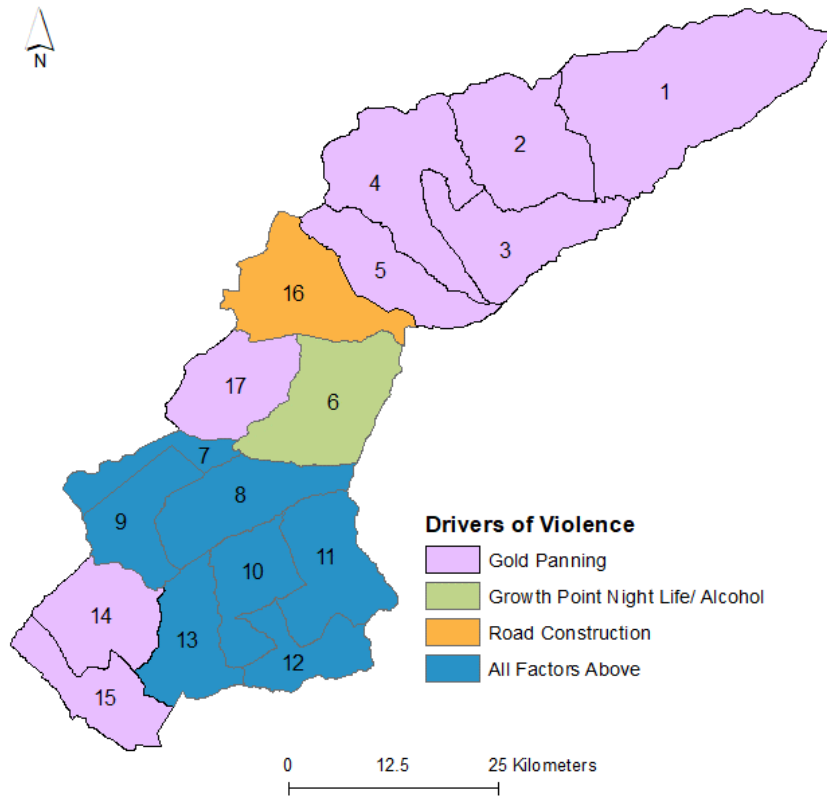
VIOLENCE PREVALENT AREAS AND MAJOR DRIVERS OF VIOLENCE

Table 7: Shows the prevalence of violence by location

AREA	COMMON TYPE OF VIOLENCE	MAJOR CAUSE/DRIVERS	Victims
Ward 1 to 5, 7 and 9	Sexual and Physical	Gold Panning	Men, Women and Children
Ward 6, (Mutawatawa),	Intimate partner violence Sexual	Growth Point night life	Sex Workers
Ward 11	Sexual Violence	Quarry Mining and Black granite mining	Children and Women
Ward 16	Sexual Violence	Road Construction Workers	Children and Women
Ward 14 and 15, Makiwa and Musosonwa	Sexual Violence and Child Marriages	Religious Practices eg Johane Marange	Children
Pfungwe ward 1,2,3,4,5 and 6	Sexual Violence and Child Marriages	Above Factors	Children and Women
Maramba, Ward 7,8,9,11,14,15,	Sexual Violence and Child Marriages	Above Factors	Children and Women
Ward 10, 13, 14 and 15 area known as Muzinda and Zanya.	Sexual Violence and Child Marriages	All Factors	Children
Mutawatawa and Uzumba villages	Sexual Violence	Alcohol and drug abuse known as tumbwa and ndari	Girls and Boys

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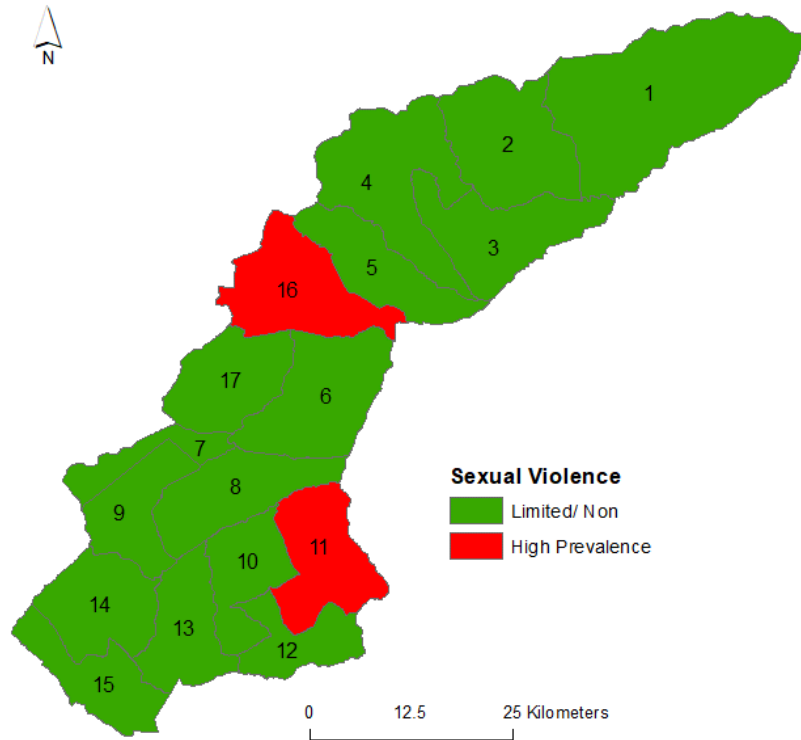
Figure 5: Shows the mapping of drivers of sexual violence and child marriages in UMP



The key informant from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small, Medium Enterprise Development attributed violence against children and GBV to Gold panning which has caused people to temporarily move from their homes and settle along Mazowe river. They settle in places where they have a lifestyle of lawlessness taking into consideration that gold panning is illegal. It was said that gold panning perpetrators are violent in nature and they therefore do not hesitate to commit crimes like rape which is a form of GBV. Their children won't be go attending school It was indicated that violence against children and GBV is mostly prevalent in wards 1 to 5, 7 and 9.

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Figure 6: Shows the mapping of Hot Spots for Sexual Violence in UMP



Ward 6, (Mutawatawa), is a growth point and industry is limited. It is centered around government departments, so some women who are not employed survive on “night life” (sex workers) and some children tend to admire these ‘ladies of the night.’ In Ward 11 there are people who work at quarry sites which is something that is regarded as prestigious by children so these people tend to abuse children who they entice with corn snacks. Most of these workers are male. They tend to take advantage of young girls. In ward 16 a road is being constructed and there have been cases of construction workers abusing children. This issue was even once discussed at parliamentary level and the area was cited as the area where children were abused by road construction workers. In ward 14 and 15, Makiwa and Musosonwa, the Johanne Marange religion is prevalent and members are perpetrators of child marriages. In Pfungwe ward 1,2,3,4,5 and 6 which is Maramba, also 7,8,9,11,14,15, child abuse cases are widespread within the district, and the cases are mostly child marriages.

The key informant from the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation attributed the following factors as causes of violence and GBV:

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Drug and substance abuse- this causes children to be abused and they may also abuse other children as well. The key informant from the Ministry of Local Government held the same sentiments, indicating that alcohol and drug abuse has contributed significantly to violence against children and GBV. For instance, there was a murder recently as a result of children who were under the influence of alcohol and drug abuse. There is now common alcohol known as tumbwa and ndari in Mutawatawa areas in Uzumba villages

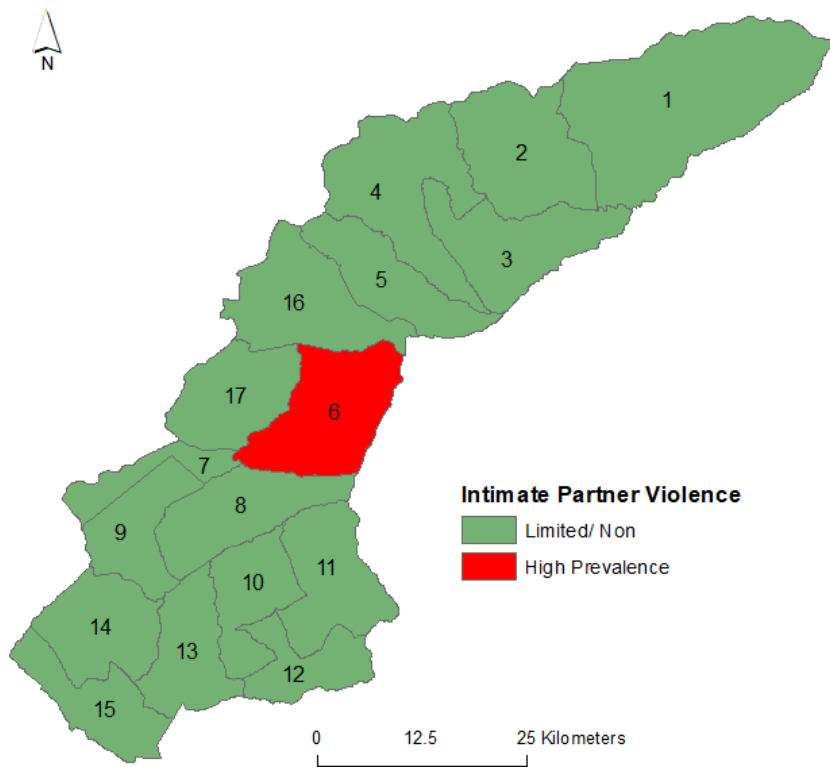
Child marriages prevalent in Pfungwe for both boys and girls with 15-year-old boys marrying women as old as 45 years.

Poverty- when there is no money, children end up being exploited and they drop out of school. The key informant from the Ministry of local government held the same sentiments saying, “Nzvimbo dzinotambura there is a lot of violence e.g. kuripa ngozi using a child, or kuzvarira as a form of payment”. Where people are hungry they tend to be more violent. Dropping out of school exposes children to sexual violence, teen pregnancies and child marriages. The violence is common in wards along Mazoe River where mining is rampant, that is, Ward 4, Ward 7, Ward 9 Ward 16 and Ward 17. Ward 11 is dominated by black granite mining and there is violence perpetuated against children by those doing mining of granite blocks and the truck drivers who carry the granite in the area. Further, people coming from all over end up in love triangles with children and exploiting children knowing well that they are not in the area for a long time. Beam doesn't pay for children hence if a child is an orphan and 'arikuchengetwa nagogo', they are left home and not go to school and at times they are exposed to child labour and that is violence against children.

The key informant from the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works held that the main causes of violence against children are poor parenting skills, (leaving child headed families due to search for greener pastures.) School drop outs and children who do not attend school are susceptible to all forms of violence such as teen pregnancies and child sexual abuse. Children engage in early child marriages when they are about to write exams and between the ages 15 to 18 years. Child marriages and child sexual abuse are common in ward 10, 13, 14 and 15 area known as Muzinda and Zanya. Abuse also takes place in farming areas by both indigenous and commercial farms

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Figure 7: Shows the prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence in UMP



Infidelity is another main cause of GBV. Kuita zvikomba and girlfriends amongst married couples has led to intimate partner violence (GBV). Further, in UMP area, even if people are given seeds, they do not farm because they prefer mining, considering that gold can be discovered in a week and the value is high, compared to 10 tons of maize.

4.7 Traditional/cultural practices are practiced in UMP that are promotive of violence against children and GBV in UMP

Table 8: Shows the Calendar of traditional/cultural practices in UMP

Ceremony/activity	Ward	Timeline when its conducted	Who takes lead	Who is involved	Where is it done
Kugadza mapfiyo or kuzvarira.	ALL	After the death of the girl's aunt or sister	Family members	Sisters and other aunts	Homestead

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Kuripa Ngozi	ALL	After a crime has been committed	Victims family	Victims and Perpetrator`s families	Burial Site and Homestead
Using Deregatory Word eg Waedzerwa	ALL	After judging that the girl`s body or looks is of marriageable age.	Community	Community	Community
Incest	ALL	Anytime	Close Relative	Close Relatives	Homestead
Chinamwali	ALL				
Child marriages due to mining, pay <i>lobola</i> from mining money	Ward 1 - 5, 7 and 9	After paying roora	Close Male Relatives eg the father and his brothers	Close Relatives	Homestead
Religious Practices	ALL	When the holy spirits shows the church elder the any girl he is to marry	Church Leaders	Parents and Congregants	Church Shrines

NB: This is an opportunity for RMT to programme its activities around this calendar of activities where possible as it makes it easy for mobilisation and reach so many people e.g. during the Chinamwali and Gule Wankulu ceremonies.

From the study, prominent cultural/traditional practices promotive of GBV and violence against children and wards they are prevalent in are depicted in the table below.

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Table 9: Shows the cultural traditional practices promotive of GBV and Violence against children by wards

Cultural traditional practices promotive of GBV and Violence against children	Wards
Early Child Marriages	8 (Shambanhanga, Marowe, Mukuruanopa maenza, Nyamhara)
Pledging a Minor	8 (Marowe)
Chiramu	9
Polygamy	6, 8, 9

Culturally, *Kuripa Ngozi* is the custom of appeasing avenging spirits, through a payment in form of a girl child for a murder that would have been committed.

All the stakeholders agreed that Chiramu has promoted sexual violence on girls through relatives related abuse, *Chiramu* is letting an in law fondle the girl child and not rebuking the practice, the whole family will be involved normalizing the act. A District Development Officer (DDO) commented that, "kana ndine muzuku or muramu, there is a tendency of man to say mkadzi wangu achitorova magaro, apa achiti mkadzi kune mwana mudiki." such cultural practice promotes violence against children.

There is a custom and a norm of parents trapping their children into affluent families and forcing them to marry in rich families after coming home late saying dzokera kwawanga uri. They also use derogatory words to refer to a girl child whom they consider to have passed the age of marriage. When they say 'waedzeerwa', it pushes girls into child marriages. Religious practices are the most prevalent as some perpetrate child marriages, marrying children as young as 12.

One participant indicated that 'Foster parenting promotes violence as our culture states that when parents die children are left in the care of relatives and those same relatives who have custody of children end up abusing them. There is also remote parenting caused by parents who go to the diaspora and leave children nana gogo, tete and they end up being abused nana bamkuru, e.g. in ward 11 children were left in the hands of tete and they ended up being sexually abused na

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Bankuru who would say that they are his wives, this was contributed by the cultural practices such as Chiramu.’

‘Kuripa Ngozi, which is an appeasement of the spirits kana ini ndakauraya kumba kwenyu you would want payment of the murder through a girl child and it is only the girl child and not the boy child.’ ‘Kuzwarira is another cultural practice for example when I make an agreement with someone to use my girl as a payment method for example if I have a problem and I approach another man to say please assist me and when I have a girl child you will take her as your form of payment and the child can’t refuse because a contract has been signed.’

4.8 Proposed measures to address violence against children and GBV in UMP/recommendations

In response to addressing GBV and violence against children, key informants recommended the following:

- Interventions should start at family level. Most cases of violence against children are within the family, eventually the cases are withdrawn from the police because the affected families would have decided to deal with the issue at family level, thus intervention to address violence against children ought to be directed to families.
- Schools should be child friendly so that a conducive environment for growth of the child is enabled. This means schools ought to have good ventilation and good facilities in place.
- Cases of violence against children should not be withdrawn. The justice system should be left to take its course effectively.
- Children and vulnerable adults need to be empowered. There is need for adolescents to have projects so that they do not resort to early marriages or get themselves exposed to people who will abuse them
- Conscientise the youths and adolescents on violence against them and GBV. Knowledge should be imparted on them. There is great need to go to schools to educate the girl and boy child on abuse and encourage them to report abuse.
- Impact knowledge to parents for safe keeping of children. Some parents’ negligence towards children exposes them to abuse. The priority of the parents is to keep their children safe.
- Parents should be encouraged to report cases of early child marriages timely.

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- General deterrence. Those within the Justice system when passing sentences should take into consideration that a certain case is for general deterrence. It is a way of using 1 or 2 people as an example. The sole purpose is to discourage the general public from committing criminal activities by making 1 or 2 people as examples of the consequences of the crimes committed.
- Individual deterrence. Setting examples on offenders deters “would be” offenders from committing the same offences.
- Conducting workshops- All major stakeholders should teach the society on the laws of the country. People are not well aware of the law.
- Draft/Amend legislation- Legislation should be in line with the Constitution.
- Formation of more school clubs that help girls to become well versed with issues to do with violence and abuse.
- Conducting Awareness campaigns targeting children and their parents.
- Conscientising traditional leaders on violence against children and GBV.
- Children should have their own clubs and projects to keep them busy.
- Have traditional reporting mechanisms in place for reporting any form of violence. Each village should have suggestion boxes.

The key informant from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small, Medium Enterprise Development mentioned that there is a need to change the culture since it's dynamic and there is need to transform the culture to suit the times that people are living in. Establishing a new culture is sustained effort to fight and eliminate child abuse. The Ministry also highlighted the need to continue raising awareness and sensitization against GBV to everyone in the community. These were the same sentiments said by the Local government and public works' key informant that there is need to carry out awareness campaigns at village and family level because families do not know the next step to take when there has been a case of abuse. The key informant from the Ministry of Youth indicated that there is need to empower victims on how to report cases early so as to avoid late reporting and how to access clinical services in 72 hours. The communities do not know the reporting structure hence, as mentioned by the Women Affairs District Development Officer, people need to be made aware of the law and traditional leaders need to be involved in the fight

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against GBV. There was a common comment amongst stakeholders highlighting that people have more faith in the penalties imposed by traditional leaders, more than law enforcing agents, citing corruption and the fact that it is not deterring enough to give community service than being punished to pay a fine of a cow. The stakeholders mentioned the need for sensitization of children, and engaging children at a tender age to know what is good and what is bad.

The key informant from the Ministry of Local Governance indicated that GBV needs a holistic approach that involves everyone at all levels such as individuals e. g. the victim and perpetrator, family, government, leadership, law reforms. The key informant indicated the same sentiments shared by the Ministry of Women Affairs DDO on the need to give more powers to the traditional leaders so that they can be able to deal with ‘makunakuna’ in their areas to preserve the cultural values and norms that prevent violence. They emphasized the importance and need to build more safe houses so that people do not continue staying under the same roof with the perpetrator Further, they emphasized the need to engage traditional leaders and ensure that the congregations are aware of violence and the referral pathway because there is a case in UMP which was reported but the families were defending the religious leader due to church policies. A concern was raised by all the stakeholders on the need for police and the judiciary to play their role in the conviction and arresting of perpetrators and deal with cases timeously. There was emphasis on the need for the proper implementation of the laws that abolish child marriages.

‘ Yes we have the laws and good policies but big fish escape and the laws are not known at local levels. Hence the need to empower traditional leaders.’

During the discussion stakeholders raised a concern on the empowerment of young perpetrators, especially young boys so as to prevent violence when they get older. The government needs to come with programs and strategies at local and national level to fight GBV and SVAC.

The key informant from the Ministry of Youth made the following recommendations to address violence against children and GBV UMP:

Instilling child protection committees from schools and in the communities not just committees for elders because we say there is nothing for us without us, so we are saying children should be involved in all committees at all levels vana vanofanira kunge varipo so that they can input- Child participation. Child participation support for junior counsel kuita parliament yavo, funds

permitting sessions are supposed to be held so that children discuss and share ideas and all the ills happening in their areas."WE ARE NOT HAPPY with the way judiciary procedures are done when it comes to sexual offenses, perpetrator is apprehended, avarirwa kumacells, next time time akunzi anemarights to be heard out of bail and then you realize that more abuses continue kana kuti these guys when they are out there they interfere with investigations and hapana chinozobuda."

They emphasized the need for alignment of laws with the Constitution. statutes because some of the laws that are being used are 42 years old after independence are and as such the laws were not meant for the current generation because they were not user friendly. There was concern over alignment of the Constitution with the statutes.

4.9 Child Participation; Children's Views

4.9.1 Focus Group Discussions with Children

The focus group discussion comprised of 12 girls aged between 13 to 16 years and they were all secondary school going. From the spider diagram discussions, it was observed that children face various child abuse problems which can be categorized in the following manner;

- sexual abuse related problems
- neglect related problems
- emotional abuse problems
- development problems
- poverty related problems
- exploitation related abuse

It was revealed that they report to different individuals from the family, community, church and friends and child protection stakeholders such as Police and CCWs. It was noted during the discussions that some children need to be empowered on the referral pathway and how and when to report sexual abuse cases. Some children's responses indicated the need to offer counselling to the children and referring cases to the appropriate service providers. Some problems mentioned indicated personal stories that girls are going through and some stories indicated that children do not know where to go when faced with challenges because their parents died or they are afraid to stress their parents or caregivers.

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Table 10: Shows the Children's reporting structure when faced with problems

TYPE OF PROBLEM	PERSONS THEY REPORT TO	TOTAL NUMBER OF GIRLS WHO MENTIONED THIS PROBLEM
SEXUAL ABUSE RELATED PROBLEMS		
Being forced to have a boyfriend	Police	1
Being forced to follow a harmful religious doctrine	No One	2
Seen with a boyfriend	Grandmother	1
When I am raped	Mother and tete, Police	4
Kana mkomana achida kana kuti akandibatabata	Grandmother	2
Child Marriage	Grandmother and Police, trusted friend, tete	6
Kuita chigara mapfihwa	Grandmother and Police	1
Teen pregnancy	Mum and tete	2
NEGLECT RELATED PROBLEMS		
No birth certificate		2
No sanitary pads	No one to tell	2

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EMOTIONAL ABUSE PROBLEMS		
Being Insulted for no apparent reason	Village Police, Friend and Teacher.	1
Being denied right to play with a friend of my choice	Tete	1
Being denied right to go to a church of my choice	Community police and mother	1
Being forced to follow a harmful religious doctrine	No one	2
Being accused of something I did not do	Village Police, Friend and Teacher, mother	2
Being denied the resources to wash school uniform	Neighbor and teacher	2
Bullying	Teacher and Mother	4
Parents divorced	counselor	1
Kuitirwa jelous nevamwe kuchikoro		1
Vabereki kushaya hanya nevana	teacher	1
Stressed	Friends	2
PHYSICAL ABUSE PROBLEMS		
Fighting at school/ Assault	Teacher	3
Being assaulted by a boy for refusing love proposal	Teacher	2

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Corporal Punishment	Teacher	3
Domestic violence	Police tete and mbuya	1
DEVELOPMENT RELATED PROBLEMS		
When I start my menses	Grandmother and Sister	3
Period Pain	Mother, Sister	3
Sickness	Mother	
POVERTY/ECONOMIC RELATED PROBLEMS		1
Not having school basic needs	Teacher, neighbor parents, section leaders	3
Poverty	teacher, neighbor parents, gvt	3
Being a single orphan	grandmother and village head	
Being returned home due to failure to pay school fees	mom and uncle	2
Failing to buy me under garments	Tete and mum	1
No Food	Parents	1
EXPLOITATION RELATED PROBLEMS		

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Child labour	mother	1
Child Pornography	Police	1
JUVENILE DELIQUENCY PROBLEMS		
Theft	Tete	1
Seen with a boyfriend	Grandmother	1
When a boy proposes love to me	Friend and my teacher	3
Being robbed of my school belongings	Tete sekuru dad mom	1

The girls identified the following things happening in the community that make boys and girls feel happy and safe:

- parents doing nice things for children such as giving them money;
- free medical services;
- free COVID-19 vaccination;
- being empowered on life skills;
- doing sporting activities;
- free school fees payment;
- free pads, stationary and uniforms for girls through DREAMs Program
- going to church and being taught respecting elders and humility;
- watching TV and listening to radio;
- being forgiven by elders after a wrongdoing;
- getting counsel from aunty and uncles;
- learning guidance and counselling;
- ceremonies such as *mitambo yepasichigare*;
- shelter and food;

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- having someone to can trust;
- feeling safe when wearing clothes;
- awareness campaigns;
- having the police in the community, having parents, school trips, free gift of life

The listed things showed how girls become happy and safe by having basic needs, having community police and being free from violence.

The girls were able to identify some things happening in the community that make boys and girls feel sad, scared, or unhappy and this was done in their 2 different groups. The issues mentioned were- being punished at school, Gender based violence, sexual abuse, bullying at school, being discriminated at school, being threatened by adults, not being able to attend school, being an orphan, divorcing parents, not being taken for medical assistance, being beaten for refusing love proposal from girls, not having undergarments, teen pregnancy, being robbed all your school belongings, child marriage, being sick and not taken to hospital, being forced to go to church that a child doesn't want, child labour and *kurohwa nemugoti mazamu*

The following traditions an ceremonies are done to celebrate boys and girls:celebrating life achievements and eating delicious cultural food whenever relatives meet and there is a an adage that says 'Hukanama igaswa unozadziswa nechikafu', entertainment through melodious traditional music and dances, kudzidziswa magariro netsika dzedu, kusangana nehama neshamwari kuvhakachirana, kana kuroorwa kana kuroora kwa sisi tinononga mari and we get encouraged to get married when mature, kupemberera michato.

The groups managed to list traditions or ceremonies that make boys and girls feel uncomfortable or unsafe which include teen Pregnancy by *bamkuru / or sekuru or hama*, *Child marriages*, *kurohwa nemugoti mazamu*, *Kutizira*, *Chimutsa mapfihwa*, *Kudhonza matinji*, *Kupota,nekugomera kuitira matinji akure*, *kubatwa chibharo*, *mhirizhonga mudzimba*, *Chiramu*, *Kuzvarira*

Girls identified particular groups of children that are more vulnerable to these issues than others such as children who go to apostolic churches that practice child marriages e. g. marange, children who are drug addicts, children who come from violent families, school drop outs, child marriage

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survivors, poor and vulnerable children, orphans, survivors of sexual abuse, child headed families, children living with HIV, children living in streets, children living with disabilities.

Table 11: Positive and negative cultural practices as identified by Girls in UMP

POSITIVE CULTURAL PRACTICES	NEGATIVE CULTURAL PRACTICES
Being empowered on life skills during <i>Nhanga</i>	Teen Pregnancy by bamkuru / or sekuru or hama
Getting counsel from aunty and uncles <i>kuwana anatete vanotidzidzisa uye nekutiraira.</i>	Child marriages
<i>Mitambo yepasichigare.</i>	kurohwa nemugoti mazamu
Cooking and eating delicious cultural food whenever relatives meet Hukama igaswa unozadziswa nechikafu.	Kutizira
Entertainment through melodious traditional music and dances.	Chimutsa mapfihwa
Rain making ceremony	Kudhonza matinji
Nhimbe	Kupota, nekugomera kuitira matinji akure
Zunde ramambo	kubatwa chibharo
Kudzidziswa magariro netsika dzedu,	mhirizhonga mudzimba
Kupemberera michato	Chiramu
Kuzvarwa kwemwana mutsva	Kuzvarira
Kuwana ma puberty rights_kuenda uchiudzwa	
Kurova guva	
Kusenga muroora	
Mukwerera	
Kuroorwa kana kuroora kwa sisi or bhudhi tinonhonga mari and we get encouraged to get married when mature.	

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Kusangana kuvhakachirana	nehama	neshamwari	
Bira			

4.9.2 Focus Group Discussions with Adolescent Boys

A FGD with adolescent boys aged between 10 years and 18 years was conducted at Shambanhanga Community Hall. The Group comprised of 15 adolescent boys. The FGD with adolescence boys was divided into three parts. The first exercise involved using a free list tool in order to understand the most prevalent child protection issues for boys, a problem tree to identify and analyze the root causes and effects of the three prioritized child protection issues and a spider diagram which showed problems faced by the adolescent boys and their point of contact. Adolescent boys were tasked to reveal issues that make them feel happy and safe in their community. A Focus Group Discussion with the adolescence boys revealed that when it comes to their local communities they feel safe and happy because of the presence good schools in the area and they highlighted that quite a number of children have access to education. The majority of the adolescent boys pointed out that they are very much pleased that their siblings (girls) are being assisted with sanitary pads, tuition and school uniforms through the DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free Mentored and Safe) project.

“We are happy about the DREAMS project that caters for girls because many of them can now attend school.”

Further discussions with the adolescent boys showed that other children are being assisted by BEAM (Basic Education Assistance Module) and this makes them feel happy as well. In addition, the group disclosed that the Brotha2Brotha project has helped local boys to feel safe because issues of drug abuse are being addressed. Many adolescents are abusing drugs and some of them engage in criminal activities, but a lot of work is being done to ensure that young boys are made aware of the dangers of drug abuse. It was also revealed that organisations usually come into the community to teach them about child abuse, GBV, early child marriages and drug abuse regularly. After the workshops, they are given money, food, stationery and t-shirts and this makes them feel happy as well.

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Discussions with adolescent boys showed a number of issues make them feel unsafe and unhappy in their communities. The majority admitted that rampant early child marriages in their communities scare them a lot. It was revealed that these are common in ward 8 (Shambanhanga). Many young boys are witnessing their siblings and school mates as young as 11 years being married off to older men.

“Vabereki vakurodza vana vasati vatamba humhandara nekuda mari kunyanya”. (Parents are marrying off their children before they enjoy their youth because of the love of money).

They pointed out that it is scary and alarming that those who are supposed to protect children are the ones at the forefront in harming them. Poverty has made some parents resorting to marrying off their children so that they get money. In addition, the adolescent boys noted that girls are being impregnated because of the love of money and abuse at home.

“Vari kumitiswa nekuti vanoda mari uye vakushungurudzwa kumba”. (They are being impregnated because they love money and also they are being abused at home).

It was reported that girls are dressing inappropriately and attracting men who are abusing them at gold panning sites. Some of them voluntarily go to the gold panning sites to “lure” men and in turn are sexually exploited in exchange for money. From the discussions with the adolescent boys it emerged that, some of their peers are resorting to gold panning and usually violence erupts at those gold panning sites and some boys end up being physically abused. Upon probing further, it was revealed that boys are resorting to gold panning because of poverty and also because of the harsh treatment they receive at school, hence they resort to gold panning as it seems as a better option than attending school. Some also felt that orphans are being neglected and denied access to education and food. As a result of deprivation of their rights, they are preferring to look for work rather than to go to school.

In concluding the free list tool, the adolescent boys had to write down ceremonies that are conducted for boys and highlight the ones that they like and dislike. Results of the exercise showed that most ceremonies involve the whole of the community. Poverty has resulted in many young boys dropping out of school and becoming artisanal miners, thus they have no time to attend to any ceremonies as they view ceremonies as a waste of time. A hand few attend the common community ceremonies but majority usually prefer not to attend. The cultural practice of “*Kurova*

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guva” was pointed out as scary because it involves bringing back the spirit of the deceased person, yet biblically, once a person dies, the spirit of that person is no longer part of the family but a stranger. Boys indicated being most affected by such ceremonies as compared to girls because during such ceremonies they are actively involved especially when cattle or goats need to be slaughtered.

After the free list tool session was completed, the adolescent boys were tasked to identify child protection issues they are facing using a problem tree analysis tool. From the identified issues they had to identify the three major child protection issues that need urgent attention. Top of the list was early child marriages which were revealed to be common in ward 8 among the Johanne Marange sect. The early child marriages are mainly being caused by poverty. Adolescent boys indicated that some children are double orphans and those left to support them are abusing them, hence them preferring getting married way earlier than to stay with people left to take care of them. These early child marriages are resulting in early deaths. A case of an 11-year-old girl in Marowe village who died whilst giving birth was brought up. Both the child and the mother died in the process of giving birth. Some who survive childbirth unfortunately become physically impaired. Others despite not facing such circumstances end up dropping out of school and denied their right to education. A lot of girls that experience child marriages end up dropping out of school. This is because of the stigma and discrimination associated with early child marriages.

The second child protection issue raised was maltreatment of children. This was stipulated to be common among young boys at school. Teachers were accused of maltreating boys when they are late for school or are found breaking school rules.

“We are slapped in the face when we are late for school or misbehave”.

From the discussion, some remarked that because of the maltreatment they experience at school, they resort to absconding from school lessons. Another form of maltreatment highlighted was that of orphans being abused by their guardians. Mostly double orphans are being abused emotionally, physically and psychologically by their guardians. They are assigned chores which are beyond their age.

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“They would have been left under the care of people who end up making them do chores that are way beyond their age simply because their parents are deceased and no one is there to stand up for them”.

When questioned on the causes of maltreatment being experienced by adolescent boys, it was disclosed that it is because of unresolved issues being faced by teachers at their respective homes which leads to them venting their frustrations to students. Further, emotional and psychological burdens experienced by parents, care givers and guardians as a result of economic challenges and which make parents, care givers and guardians find it hard to cope results in all frustrations are diverted to children. This results in juvenile delinquency as children end up committing crimes in frustration of the treatment they receive at home and school.

The third child protection issue raised was child labour. Gold panning in ward 8 has become so common to the extent that many young boys are bunking and dropping out of school. Some are forced into gold panning so that they can make ends meet. Others are resorting to farming tomatoes and selling them at Mbare Musika, Harare so as to earn a source of income. The major cause of this is poverty. The adolescents remarked that it is more ideal to look for work to feed themselves than to go to school because tuition for their studies will not be available. Abuse at home experienced by children was highlighted as a cause of a child labour. Those who are abused at home end up preferring to leave their homes in search of “greener pastures”. The effects of such decisions and actions are that children are being denied their basic right to education. When one engages in child labour, they are robbed of their right to education.

Socialisation has made boys and men to conceal any form of abuse. A number of the adolescents indicated not having any point of contact when faced with any form of abuse. A hand few mentioned their parents and the police. There is need for young boys to be made aware to report any form of abuse they encounter.

In response to the three major child protection issues identified, adolescents’ boys suggested having a similar project like the DREAMS project, but a project that caters for the welfare of young boys. A request to assist orphans as well as young boys was made as evidenced by several sticky notes submitted written “*Batsiraiwo nherera ne vana vakomana*” (Assist orphans and boys). It is apparent that most projects introduced in communities are for the benefit of young girls and

women. In addition, it was revealed that parental and guardians support is needed. Parents and guardians should be able to support and take care of their children so that they do not end up being involved in early child marriages and child labour. Moreover, the group suggested life skills training in schools as well as in communities. The basis of the discussion was that if boys had organisations that assisted them in setting up individual projects as well as catering for their welfare they would not have to resort to child labour or abuse of drugs.

4.10 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

A FGD with community members in ward 8 was conducted at Shambanhanga Community Hall. The group consisted of both men and women. From the qualitative data obtained through focus group discussions with the community members, the community seemed well aware that a child is defined as any person below the age of 18 years as stipulated in the Constitution of Zimbabwe. It was noted that when it comes to defining GBV despite a majority admitting that it is any form of violence inflicted on a man or a woman, some assumed it was violence targeted on women. It was unanimously agreed that dialogues conducted with men revealed that those who attempted to report the cases of abuse they are mocked even by the police. Society has socialized boys to toughen up, hence when they become men even if they are abused they will not come forward to report the issue. Thus, this contributes to the wide misconceptions from different people when it comes to defining GBV.

The FGD with the community members revealed that Uzumba is well known for growing tomatoes, cucumbers, okra and supplies these crops to Harare at Mbare Musika. The community is also well known for having good leadership in place as it has vibrant chiefs who actively advocate for the needs and welfare of their people. In addition, gold panning (ward 8) and granite mining (ward 9) are very common in the community. Women in the community also have “Mikando” groups where they assist each other financially so that a woman finds means of starting a business. Some members of the community also do piece jobs commonly referred to as “Maricho” in exchange for money or food in order to feed for their families. In order to keep the community united, the participants acknowledged that community members are encouraged to marry among themselves so that traditional/cultural practices are preserved. Importantly during the FGD, women and men noted that farmers have cooperatives in which they combine farm

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produce for sell locally and in Harare. This ensures that each person is concerned about the welfare of the other person as people try to ensure everyone in some form has a source of livelihood, thus the community is united.

Community members pointed out that they practice a number of traditional practices and these include appeasing spirit mediums in sacred mountains. Certain mountains are deemed sacred and should not be tempered with. Only the chief, his council and the elderly are allowed to appease spirit mediums in the sacred mountains. A traditional healer is invited to lead the process as he/she possesses the powers to connect with the spirit mediums. It was also revealed that the community conducts rain making ceremonies. These ceremonies are usually conducted in October before the onset of the rain season. The chief leads the ceremony and a traditional healer “N’anga” is invited to perform rituals so that the upcoming rain season is associated with good rains. Another cultural practiced which emerged from the discussions is “Kurova guva”. This is held a year after the death of the deceased. This is a way of bringing back the spirit of the deceased into the family and the spirit becoming a member of the ancestors so that sacrifices and prayers are offered to them. It is a cultural rite usually done in August. The deceased’s family and relatives lead the process of “inviting” the deceased’s spirit back into the family. Usually family and relatives attend the ceremony. Beer is brewed and cattle is slaughtered then a traditional healer performs the process of ‘inviting’ the spirit of the dead person. The process is usually done in a kraal.

Ceremonies such as paying of bride price, appeasing spirit mediums or any other ceremony are not permitted to be performed in the month of November. In the Shona culture November is seen to be a sacred month. Any ceremony that is conducted in November is believed to be cursed as it will not have the support of the ancestors. It was also noted that during the beginning and end of the moon phase, community members are not allowed to perform any work in the field as the moon phases signal sacredness.

It was revealed that all wards follow the above cultural practices. However, despite all wards practicing these ceremonies, some community members because of the coming of western ideologies are slowly losing their identity. For instance, in ward 6 (Mutawatawa), the community practices the ceremonies but moderately. Upon being questioned the positive aspects drawn from such practices, the community members acknowledged that when the community religiously

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follow all traditional practices, the culture of the community is preserved, identity of the community is kept and the people have a sense of belonging, the community is unified and protected when the traditional practices are strictly adhered to. Any form of deviance from the norms and values of the community is believed to be harshly dealt with because the spirit mediums who are seen as the guardians and protectors of the community would have been angered. However, they noted that some practices are promoting child abuse. For example, ceremonies like rain making and “kurova guva” among others involve slaughtering of cattle and the cattle could have been sold to raise tuition for children in the community, thus children in the process are denied access to education because resources are being diverted to keep traditional practices alive. Women from the group disclosed that usually almost all the ceremonies, men take the leading role and this gives a lot of power to men which leads to the abuse of women and children.

All the community members agreed that the prevalence of GBV and child abuse is highest in ward 8 and 9. A case of a girl who was severely raped in Marowe, ward 8, was brought up. The community was agitated that the perpetrator is roaming about freely in the community despite the victim being diagnosed as paralyzed after medical examinations. The community members felt that the justice system has failed the people in the community especially the family and relatives of the girl. Such outcomes encourage more people to become perpetrators as they know they will get away with it.

In addressing GBV and child abuse, it was recommended that girls need to be empowered. This is because they are being lured and sexually exploited by men who are into gold panning and granite mining. It was revealed that some girls are so desperate to get money to the point of not being afraid of being infected with STIs and HIV. Such activities are common in ward 9 (gold panning) and ward 8 (granite mining).

“The girls are not even afraid of being infected with diseases as they even go voluntarily to look for men and this is a sad reality”.

The group revealed that gender based violence is being fueled by poverty and agreed that almost all cases of GBV are as a result of poverty, thus there is need to address poverty itself through introducing various projects in the community so that both women and men are able to sustain themselves. The group unanimously agreed that children are being involved in sexual activities

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and later being abused because of the New Curriculum at school. The new curriculum teaches sex education at an early stage and it is promoting juvenile delinquency as teachers are not allowed to administer corporal punishment.

“They have pornography material in their mobile phones, but as teachers our powers have been reduced any form of discipline may be misinterpreted. The new curriculum needs to be revised”.

Thus, the group highlighted that the new curriculum needs revisiting. It was also recommended that people in the community need to be conscientized on the effects of child abuse and GBV. The men and women also strongly felt that children are being delinquent and later being abused because they know more of their rights rather than their responsibilities, hence it was recommended that they should be made aware of their responsibilities. Community members emphasised the need for the law to be respected and perpetrators being harshly treated and given a minimum of a 5-year jail term. It was revealed that law implementers are being bribed.

“The Justice system is characterized by corruption. Perpetrators should not be given bailout. Those who commit murder are given bail, but those who commit petty crimes are not given bail this is very distressing especially to the families affected”.

In this view, community members made an urgent request that the justice system needs to be firm when it comes to dealing with perpetrators of child abuse and GBV. Religious leaders were tasked to play a pivotal role in addressing child abuse and GBV. The group agreed that people need to be conscientized to fear God as they believe that the fear of God will govern people’s morality.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

5.1 Existing Communication Channels in Shamva and UMP

On the basis of data collected from the field, this section is premised on consideration of multiple dimensions of communication in the context of the study. It also includes both formal and informal channels of communication on GBV and child marriage issues used in UMP. Communication channels are hereby considered within a *systemic approach* – comprising of the broader focus on theme/topic of the communication, the media used, the key institutions involved in various communications, the strategies used and the limitations and challenges to effective communication on GBV, child marriages and child abuse. When applied to communication, the Systems Theory Paradigm seeks to understand the interconnectedness of human communication rather than looking at just one part. The basic idea behind **Systems Theory** is, “*The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.*” The power of looking at communication from a systems perspective is that every communicative act impacts the system as a whole. When there is a change in one part of a system, it changes the entire system to some degree. Much of the way we communicate is culturally and contextually specific.⁵¹ This section does not therefore seek to make universal generalizations about GBV and child marriages communication, but rather, explain the totality of interactions as deciphered from field data.

The main institutions whose communication strategies were captured include the Prosecutor, the Gender Focal Person for UMP RDC, Ministry of Women Affairs, Mutawatawa District Hospital, Ministry of Youth, District Schools Inspector, chiefs, Department of Social Development, ZRP Victim Friendly Unit and a Youth Club/Peer Group. Indications of communication channels they indicated are reproduced in the table below:

Table 12: Shows the Communication Strategies employed by various stakeholders

Institution/Club/ Office	Message Type/Content	Channel	Outcome/Results <i>C = Current</i> <i>E = Expected</i>
	Receive docket from the Police Working, in liaison with the Department of Social Development (DSD) through	-Physical face-to-face interface -Phone calls	-To get information on the background, circumstances &

⁵¹ ER Services (2022) Systems Theory Paradigm, Introduction to Communication. Available at <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-introductiontocommunication/chapter/systems-theory-paradigm/#:~:text=When%20applied%20to%20communication%2C%20the,this%20is%20baking%20a%20cake.>

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Prosecutor	information provided by the Probation Officer's report -		family of the child (C/E). - Generation of recommendations especially on sentencing (C/E)
	Education to community members on the stance of the National Prosecution Authority (NPA) in relation to violence against children and sexual gender based violence	-Physical face-to-face interface	-Ensuring execution of justice (<i>"The aim is to make sure that justice is not only seen to be done, but is done"</i>).
Rural District Council (Gender Focal Person)	Conducting Awareness Campaigns in conjunction with sister departments & other stakeholders on GBV, early child marriages and drug abuse. These are done in partnership with Women Affairs, Ministry of Health and National AIDS Council among others	-Presentations by technical experts -Physical group based activities -Social media posts (eg WhatsApp) -Use of posters and pamphlets -Community & youth meetings	-Heightened awareness of the impacts of GBV and Child Marriage issues, and their implications on human rights (including child rights) and sustainable human development (C/E) -Reduction in behaviours and practices promoting GBV and Child abuse (E)
Ministry of Women Affairs	Conduct awareness & sensitization in the community on child marriage and GBV.	-Presentations by technical experts -Physical group based activities -Social media posts (eg WhatsApp) -Use of posters and pamphlets -Community & youth meetings	-Increased awareness on child marriages and GBV (C/E) - Reduction in behaviours and practices promoting GBV and Child marriages (C/E)
	Coordinating all government and non- government department activities on GBV.	-Meetings -Various forms of correspondence -Telephone calls -Social media (WhatsApp)	-Coherence in implementation of activities (C) -Avoidance of duplication (C)
	Receiving and referring various GBV cases.	-Correspondence -Telephone calls -Social media (WhatsApp) -Meetings	-Ensure standardization and adherence to legal & policy requirements (C/E)

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		-Physical, face-to-face interaction	
Mutawatawa District Hospital (Mid-wife)	Messaging from the Police for medication, examination and counselling of clients	-Physical, face-to-face interface -Correspondence -Telephone calls -Social media (WhatsApp) -Phone calls/messaging	-Provision of a comprehensive medical support package to survivors (clients)(C)
	Completion of medical affidavit forms for victims of violence and also referring clients to the police	-Correspondence -Documentation -Physical, face-to-face interface	-To screen for STIs and HIV (C) -Detection of physical evidence of violation, abuse, injury, etc (C)
	Conducting awareness campaigns on GBV	-Use of posters and pamphlets -Community & youth meetings -Physical, face-to-face interface	-Increased awareness on child marriages and GBV (C/E) -Reduction in behaviours and practices promoting GBV and Child marriages (C/E)
Ministry of Youth	Carrying out awareness campaigns on Gender Based Violence	-Use of posters and pamphlets -Community & youth meetings -Physical, face-to-face interface	
	Encouraging and promoting youth participation in social clubs for sharing ideas	-Community & youth meetings -Physical, face-to-face interface -Social media (WhatsApp)	-Increased awareness on child safeguarding, rights and responsibilities (C/E)
District Schools Inspector	Receipt of monthly returns (statistics on child marriages, school dropout rates as result of pregnancy or other factors)	-Documents (reports)	-Trend profile of school children turnover to inform decision making and interventions (C)
	Conducting outreach programmes.	-Use of posters and pamphlets -School child and youth meetings -Physical, face-to-face interface	-Assessment of reasons why some children are failing to attend school and to motivate them to attend school (C/E).
	Guidance and counselling sessions for school children once every week	-School child and youth meetings	-Increased awareness on child rights,

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		-Physical, face-to-face meetings	safeguarding, abuse and GBV (C/E)
Chiefs	Educating the community during the cultural ceremonies on the dangers of violence and violence prevention	-Community meetings	-Increased awareness on violence and the need for maintaining peace (C)
	Use of <i>mahumbwe</i> games (where children imitate adult roles of father, mother and children in the presence of adults) to empower young boys and girls on violence prevention, effects and solutions	-Community gatherings	-Increased awareness on violence and the need for maintaining peace (C)
	Conducting awareness raising and teachings on the dangers of child and early marriages	-Community gatherings & meetings	- Reduction in behaviours and practices promoting GBV and Child marriages (C/E)
	Referring serious crimes to the Police	-Correspondence -Physical, face-to-face interface	-Prosecution of offenders and justice and rehabilitation of the survivor/victim (C/E)
	Summoning families of the victim and perpetrators to the chief's court	-Chief's aides	
Department of Social Development	Awareness campaigns to strengthen positive cultural practices to reduce/prevent child marriages, targeting leaders and community members	-Use of posters and pamphlets -Community & youth meetings -Physical, face-to-face interface	- Reduction in behaviours and practices promoting GBV and Child marriages (C/E) - Increased awareness on child safeguarding, rights and responsibilities (C/E)
Zimbabwe Republic Police Victim Friendly Unit (ZRP VFU)	Child protection awareness campaigns with parents/guardians and children especially in schools	-School child and youth meetings -Physical, face-to-face meetings	
Youth Clubs and Peer Groups (Brotha2Brotha)	Brotha2Brotha	-School and community child and youth meetings -Physical, face-to-face meetings	Project has helped local boys to feel safe because issues of drug abuse are being addressed (C/E).

Limitations to Effective Communication on GBV and Child Marriages

There is shortage of transport as a means of movement between villages and wards. Out of all the Police stations in UMP, the VFU is at Mutawatawa Police Station only and this makes it have a very big sphere of coverage, thereby making it difficult to effectively and efficiently navigate through such a big area for awareness campaigns, investigations and other related duties. In regard to this, the ZRP VFU key informant indicated that it would be ideal to go to the people in their villages rather than them assembling at a central point. In addition, some community members

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may fail to attend because of inability to travel long distances. Another weakness identified during an FGD with a group of youths is that there are no regular awareness campaigns in rural areas, and this needed to be addressed in order to reach out to more youths.

5.2 Communication plan (channels, tools & target audience)

Table 13: Shows the proposed communication plan

Target Group	Communication Mix/Tool-Activities	Intended Outcome
Community members (All)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Radio -Website -Facebook -Twitter -WhatsApp -Posters and Brochures (translated to the local language) -Outreach and Exhibitions -Mobile/Web based applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Change public attitude towards SGBV -Support advocacy initiatives -Understand the significance of the organisation's mandate -Promoting positive behaviour change -
Community/Traditional Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sensitisation meetings -Position papers -WhatsApp -Engagement meetings -Traditional ceremonies -Chiefs Court sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Involvement in the organisation's initiatives -Enforcement of laws
Children (Girls & Boys)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -trainings and workshops -peer groups -TV & Radio Programmes -WhatsApp Groups -Soccer Tournaments -Nhangang model -Simplified posters and brochures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Empower them in decision making -Self confidence -Equip them to train others (TOTs) -Amplify the message
Stakeholders at a local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Twitter -Facebook -Multimedia -Newsletter -Website -Engagement meetings -WhatsApp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Support activities -Amplify the voice

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Policy Makers at National Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Position papers -Twitter -Facebook -Engagement meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Support activities -Take up issues for consideration in decision making process -
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Press Release -Radio -Opinion/editorial -Features -Field visits invitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Amplify messages -Profile the organisation -Awareness raising
Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Women's Groups -WhatsApp groups -Nhangas model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Empower them in decision making -Self confidence -Equip them to train others (TOTs) -Amplify the message
Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Men's groups -WhatsApp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Promote positive behaviour change -Promote positive masculinity -Participate in SGBV prevention

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusion

Given the evidence from both primary and secondary data, it is evident that there are various endogenous practices promotive of violence against children and sexual gender based violence prevention in UMP and Shamva. These were clearly identified by all stakeholders including traditional leaders, key service providers, children, women and men, it is therefore important to tackle these starting from community level through a Multisectoral approach which involves every actor playing their own specific and complementary roles. The RMT project should ride on the various opportunities presented as it kicks starts its project on ‘Reinforcing positive societal attitudes on the prevention of violence and harmful practices against girls in Shamva and Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe (UMP).

4.2 Recommendations

- a) **Engagement of Community traditional leaders:** There is need for RMT to have structure and consistent engagement with the Chiefs in both Shamva and UMP in order to build their capacity on women and children’s rights. Findings from interviews with the Chiefs in UMP brought out the urgent need for RMT to engage the chiefs on various child rights issues so that they all have the same understanding and interpretation of the issues.
- b) **Community Sensitisation meetings:** For positive community behavioural change amongst the communities with regards to child marriages and sexual abuse, there is a need for RMT to conduct awareness raising on a number of child protection issues such as the laws on child marriages and sexual abuse, children’s rights and responsibilities, negatives of child marriages and sexual abuse on children, balancing customary practices with children’s rights, and positive parenting. These initiatives should include all stakeholders including traditional leaders and the children themselves
- c) **Engagement meetings with boys and men:** In order to influence positive behaviour change when it comes to SGBV there is need for RMT to actively engage man and boys as allies in its programming. As noted by PLAN International, ‘boys and men can play a powerful role in ending the practice, particularly as men often occupy positions of power in families and communities. As fathers, brothers, husbands, community and religious

leaders, or politicians, men hold many of the decision-making roles that allow the practice to continue. Challenging dominant norms of masculinity, and promoting positive masculinity and gender equality are also necessary to ensure that men and boys become strong advocates for combating child marriage and for changing attitudes and behaviours in communities and society at large.^{52g}

- d) **Supporting the four chiefs in UMP in developing Bylaws aimed at addressing SGBV:** Making use of the best practices of the By-laws currently being used in Shamva, RMT should adopt and enhance these to suit the context in UMP
- e) Establishing clear community communication and engagement channels
- f) Supporting and strengthening of the SGBV Referral pathway in Shamva and UMP
- g) **Engagements with children-** there is a likelihood of a backlash from community members when addressing sensitive topics with social, cultural and religious significance. To mitigate against this, RMT needs to support both boys and girls to identify potential risks and harms, including physical, sexual and emotional harms which they might face when speaking-up for their rights – and advise them on how to use safety planning mechanisms to assess such risks and avoid harm

Establishing or scaling up of the Nhangwa Model in UMP- the Nhangwa provides space for children to be mentored on a number of issues including sexual and reproductive health issues thereby reducing child marriages and teenage pregnancies. These need to be revitalised in Shamva whilst in UMP there is a need to establish the Nhangwa Model as well to create space for children to be culturally advised

Using chinamwali to end child marriages- The study noted that to mark their rite of passage into adulthood, children in Shamva and UMP undergo initiation ceremony camps, chinamwali whilst some boys, particularly in UMP are made to engage into sex as a mark of transition into adulthood. Such traditions corrupt children's minds and makes them vulnerable to child marriages and sexual abuse. In addition to training children on their cultural norms and vices, respect and

⁵² Plan International Inc 'Submission to the report of the United Nations Secretary-General on progress towards ending, child, early and forced marriage worldwide'(2016) 6
https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/Earlyforcedmarriage/NGOs_Individuals/PlanInternational.pdf (accessed 21 October 2022).

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how to be useful citizen, sexual reproductive health and anti-child marriage talks could also be tendered at such gatherings. Parents and traditional leaders could brainstorm proper ways of giving instructions during chinamwali without solely going against the whole tradition.

i) Identification, supporting and engagement with religious leaders- 'Religious and traditional leaders are the custodians of religious beliefs and traditional values which might contribute to practices such as child, early and forced marriage. However, given their influential positions, religious and traditional leaders can be key agents of change and powerful allies in generating mass support to end child, early and forced marriage among the members of their respective congregations or communities.'⁵³ RMT should therefore consider engaging religious leaders as they can positively influence communities on the need to eradicate child marriages and sexual abuse of children.

j) Facilitate and support community action plans to end child marriage- RMT should support the development of community action plans, which may successfully lead to concrete commitments and change in attitudes towards child marriage.

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⁵³ Plan International (2016).