Evaluation Technical Report

Children in Governance Project

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End of Term Evaluation Report

Evaluation Report submitted to
Save the Children Zimbabwe

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Children in Governance Project
End of Term Evaluation

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Acknowledgments

List of acronyms

ACDRC	Africa Community Development and Research Center
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance module
CPC	Child Protection committee
CRG	Child Rights Governance
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV	Human Immune–Deficiency Virus
HIV	Human Immune Virus
IEC	Information–Education–Communication
IMC	Inter–Ministerial Committee
NANGO	National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations
NPA	National Program of Action
TOT	Training of Trainers
UMP	Uzumba–Maramba–Pfungwe
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
ZNCWC	Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children

Executive summary

The Children in Governance Project was implemented over 24 months between 2009 and 2011 as part of Save the Children Zimbabwe's Children Rights Governance (CRG) Program to accelerate progress in children's participation in governance processes that affect their lives and community realization of children's rights. Its specific objectives were:
   i.   To strengthen the capacity of civil society, child led groups, national and local governing bodies to implement, monitor and report on national compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and;
   ii. To promote child participation in national and local governance processes and structures.

The project pursued the above objectives by establishing child–led groups in schools and strengthening already existing ones through organisational skills training. These groups in turn took the initiative to broaden the scope of their operations through their weekly meetings and consultations with mentors (designated schoolteachers who advised them) and adults as well as knowledge exchanges with children in other regions. At the time of evaluating child–led groups were implementing income–generating projects and using the proceed thereof to finance the education of some needy orphans or to sponsor charity work in old people's homes and children's homes. In addition, the child–led groups raised awareness of children's rights and responsibilities in neighboring schools and communities through outreaches and commemorations of special days such as the Day of the African Child. In cases where the children detected the potential or incidence of child abuse they either drew the attention of relevant law enforcing authorities or they educated the potential perpetrators of the abuse while counseling relevant children.

The project linked children to policy making processes by engaging the National Association of Non–Governmental Organisations (NANGO), which created forums for children to partake in pre–budget consultations to push for a child–friendly budget. It resuscitated the Child Welfare Council through a series of consultative meetings and financial support to the level where it could more meaningfully resume its mandate of advising the government on child rights and participation matters. Thereafter this council became the secretariat coordinating a 32–member coalition of civil society organisations concerned with child rights in documenting the complementary national report on the state of Zimbabwe's observance of child rights to serve as feedback to the UNCRC monitoring process.

Recognizing the centrality of government in upholding children's rights, being the signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the project supported the technical capacity building of:
   a.   the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, which hosts the Inter–Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and;
   b.   the National Programme of Action (NPA) for Children under the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare.

The purpose of these efforts was to improve the research, documentation, monitoring, evaluation and child rights programming capacities of the above government ministries in readiness of their production of the national report on the state of Zimbabwe's observance of the UNCRC.

This evaluation was carried out to take stock of the project's activities and performance in addressing community needs related to child rights and child participation in governance. This assessment was guided by an analytical framework that directed the evaluation's focus to project relevance, effectiveness, appropriateness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Data was

collected via interviewing 94 respondents, 75 of them children, and facilitating focus group discussions of children in Mvurwi, Kadoma, Chinhoyi, Marondera and Rafingora. Relevant project documents such as project reports and the original proposal submitted to the European Union (EU) were reviewed to place the evaluation into the proper programming context.

Evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations

The evaluation showed that:

⟩ The project successfully established 10 new child–led groups and strengthened 40 existing ones through additional training, administrative backstopping and logistical support. These child–led groups had successfully taken to mobilizing local communities to support children's cause in fulfillment of child rights, albeit against resistance in some areas such as Mvurwi. Holding weekly planning meetings, child–led groups resolved to run income–generating projects the proceeds of which they directed towards the educational expenses of needy orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) at their schools and community charity work that benefited the aged, institutionalized children and children with disabilities. They held annual commemorations of the Day of the African Child, using the occasions as platforms for further campaigning for child rights. This saw adults in communities increasingly appreciating the children's movement and realizing the importance of observing children's rights. This is especially because parents and guardians who informed this evaluation did not see their children's academic performances declining as a result of their child–led group activities. Instead, they cherished the sharp increase in their children's self–confidence and even positive academic results, let alone the assumption of leadership responsibilities by most members of these groups.

⟩ The project was successful in engaging the IMC on Human Rights and International Humanitarian law, the NPA for children, Child Welfare Council, NANGO and the media in pursuit of improved child participation in local and national governance. Indeed, child–led groups, represented by junior councilors, actively partook in district council decision making processes. In Kadoma, Mvurwi and Marondera junior councilors' action plans were recognized in the town planning processes, as the relevant town councils funded part of the children's budgets. This illustrates the impact of the project–supported child–led movement on governance decisions.

⟩ The project produced and distributed publicity materials in the form of 300 T-shirts, 600 posters, booklets on child rights laws (2,000 copies), on child abduction (1,500) and on child trafficking (2,000) as well as 1,500 IMC brochures for publicity. This contributed to the raising of awareness of children's rights and responsibilities. Visibility of children's movement for child rights was further enhanced through the project's use of the electronic media, where 50 children participated in the popular Mai Chisamba Talk Show discussing various contentious issues including corporal punishment in schools, bullying, the effects on the quality of education of the mushrooming of private colleges and schools and children's responsibilities. This enabled the project to indirectly reach approximately 150,000 children according to the project's reports.

⟩ Through NANGO the project facilitated platforms for children to interface with budget and policy planners to lobby for a child–friendly national budget through a series of pre–budget consultations. Subsequently, the raising of national budget allocations to the ministries of Education Sport Arts and Culture as well as Health and Child Welfare from USD276,753,600 and USD156,473,600 in 2010 to USD469,367,000 and USD256,198,000 in 2011 respectively cannot be explained without mention of the project's contribution, though this cannot be entirely attributed to its efforts.

On the strength of these findings this evaluation view the Children in Governance Project as a very relevant initiative, which was effective and made substantial impact in transforming community perceptions about child rights as well as policy makers' appreciation of children's input in national development matters. The following lessons can be drawn from the project's experiences:

〉 The violation of children's rights can be voluntary or involuntary and poverty is at the center of both, with OVC the most vulnerable. Poverty is cyclic and part of its cycle is the systematic violation of children's rights. Dropping out of school becomes the first violation of the child's rights and can lead him/her into more abusive situations such as teen marriages, commercial sex work, drug abuse, child trafficking and so forth. Child–led groups' charitable acts were all geared at addressing poverty–induced situations.

〉 Income–generating projects are feasible under the management of child–led groups and these can be a sure way of sustaining the child–led movement in the absence of external funding. However, caution should always taken to avoid the possibility of children investing more energies in these projects than their academic endeavors, although schoolteachers who mentored the group members reported that participation in child–led groups in fact enhanced one's academic performance and self–confidence.

〉 The government best functions and becomes more relevant if supported by CSOs, especially technically and financially. The Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs revealed that the Government of Zimbabwe operated on very tight budgets, which forced ministries to focus their attentions of a few priorities, which sometimes entailed sacrificing some critical values such as children's rights. The following are the advantages of strengthening government capacities to fulfill its mandates:

   a. The government, being a permanent national development institution with structures in all parts of a country, is best paced to serve as the custodian of human welfare.

   b. The government creates frameworks that regulate the development of an entire nation and not just localities through policy making, budgeting and so forth.

   c. The government controls and distributes national resources, so supporting it technically can guarantee the increment of resources to children's priorities.

〉 The child–led movement cannot be successful without the involvement of parents, guardians and adults of local communities in general. These adults are important to children for granting them permission to participate in child–led group activities.

〉 The effectiveness of the CSO–government collaboration and partnerships between child–led groups and business people or community institutions shows that great results are achievable through networking. This suggests the necessity to continue widening partnerships with other sectors such as the private sector and representative bodies for children with disabilities.

〉 Technical capacity building builds a firm foundation for trainee–initiated growth and hence contributes to the sustainability of project activities.

On the basis of the above lessons and the evaluation findings the following is hereby recommended for the project's consideration:

〉 In addition to the audiovisual documentary that the project produced as its conclusion and the best practices report that it produced from its monitoring and evaluation data, a written manual of how to replicate the implementation model of this project is worth serious

consideration. Of particular importance is a manual or 'starter pack' of "How to start and maintain a successful child–led group".

⟩ The project should further strengthen its systems and tools for its monitoring and evaluation in quantitative terms. The evaluation relied on anecdotal evidence to claim that there were improvements in the reportage of cases of child abuse and declines in the school drop out rates or number of early marriage. Notable components to be considered for quantitative monitoring may include but not limited to the following:
   a. Number of students whose fees were paid by child–led groups by gender, by district
   b. Amount of fees paid by district
   c. Number of school dropouts by gender, by reason for abandoning school
   d. Number of cases of child abuse reported by type of abuse, by gender of victim
   e. Number of prosecuted cases of abuse against children

⟩ Exchange programs between child–led groups should continue but involving more members of child–led groups than just the leaders. As much as this invites budgetary implications, this move is worth serious consideration.

⟩ Income–generating projects should be made a universal feature of child–led groups across Zimbabwe through exchange learning programs or the recommended manual on how to start and manage a successful child–led group.

⟩ The project should consider widening its strategic partnerships to include the private or business sector as well as representative organisations for children with disabilities such as Zimbabwe Association of persons with Disabilities. The private sector can be strategic as a source of resources to sustain the project at the grassroots.

Table of contents

CHAPTER ONE
Introductory Background

S ave the Children started working in Zimbabwe in 1984, implementing various development programs, including Child Rights Governance (CRG), child protection, basic education, HIV and AIDS, emergency responses, livelihoods support and health initiatives.   Between February 2010 and February 2012, the organization has been implementing the Children in Governance Project with funding from the European Union (EU), aiming to assist the State, civil society organizations and children to monitor the implementation of the UNCRC and good governance mechanisms. Guided by Save the Children's long standing commitment to the fulfillment of children's rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), this project is part of scaling up the already existing Child Rights Governance (CRG) Program. The project was designed to be implemented over 24 months and therefore became due for final evaluation by February 2012. Its specific objectives are:

iii. To strengthen the capacity of civil society, child led groups, national and local governing bodies to implement, monitor and report on national compliance with the UN Convention on the rights of the child and;
iv. To promote child participation in national and local governance processes and structures.

1.1.   Description of the Children in Governance Project

The Children in Governance Project implemented a range of activities in its pursuit of the two specific objectives mentioned above. Under Specific Objective 1 of *strengthening the capacity for implementing, monitoring and reporting on national compliance with UNCRC*, the project held Training of Trainers' (TOT) workshops to equip leading members of child–led groups with research and documentation skills. Through its partnership with the National Association of Non–Governmental Organizations (NANGO), the project supported consultative meetings where children would interface with relevant social sector ministries' consultative meetings and the Ministry of Finance on budgets to express their views and add their inputs to relevant processes. The project technically assisted child–led groups to initiate their own livelihood projects by which they could generate income for sustaining their operations and support some of their financially demanding activities. It also delivered trainings to strengthen the technical capacities of national institutions responsible for state party reporting to the United Nations, namely the Inter–Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law under the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs' Department of Legal and Policy Research, and the National Programme of Action (NPA) for Children under the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare.

In pursuit of Specific Objective 2 of *promoting child participation in governance processes and structures,* the project supported workshops to raise awareness of children's rights and protection among staff of child focused organisations. Media practitioners were invited to these workshops to receive training in skills of child sensitive reporting and communication. The project supported institutions that produce information education communication (IEC)

materials to develop and disseminate child rights specific publicity materials. Children were technically and financially supported to carry out their campaigns for legal reform, which focused on promoting child centeredness in the making of all policies and formulation of national budgets. The media took part in broadcasting children's legal reform campaigns.

The project pursued both the first and second specific objectives by documenting the lessons and best practices of its implementation. It invited articles by children to publish them in its bi–monthly newsletter and an annual public relations publication of Save the Children Zimbabwe. An audiovisual documentary of the project was planned for similar purposes to be used as an advocacy tool. In addition, the project technically supported children to initiate self–help or income–generating projects to enable them to sustain their operations and keep the movement of promoting children's rights alive even with minimal or no further financial support from Save the Children Zimbabwe. The diagram below illustrates the project's overall design.
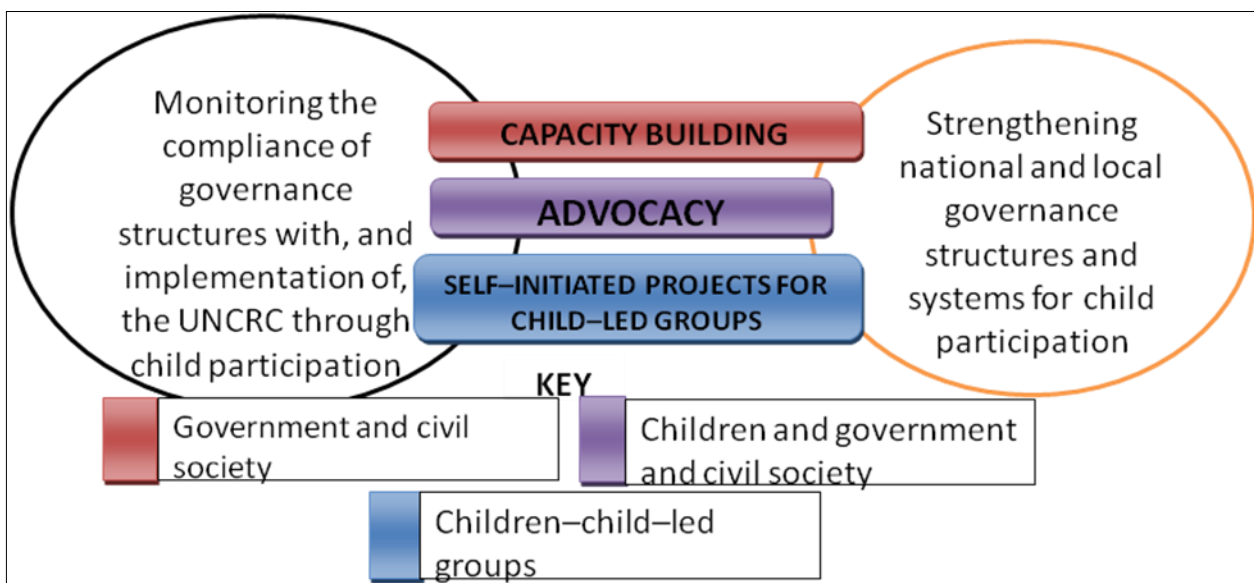
According to the above illustration, government and civil society made up the project's major target in its capacity–building activities. All stakeholders that the project targeted, namely children, government and civil society, were to be involved in child rights advocacy at various levels while self–initiated projects would exclusively involve and benefit children. Advocacy was therefore the meeting point, and probably the ultimate outcome of the project's investments. Where Save Children supported capacity–building or wherever children initiated self–help projects, the goal was to fuel advocacy for the observance of children's rights on a sustainable basis. The analysis of the Children in Governance project through this evaluation was built on this understanding.

1.2. This evaluation

This evaluation marks the end of the project according to the contract that Save the Children signed with the European Union. Its broad objectives are:

i.   To assess the appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project and;
ii. To identify and document lessons learnt as well as challenges and recommend future interventions accordingly.

1.2.1. Specific evaluation questions

The evaluation of the project's performance and results was based on the following criteria:

(1) Appropriateness of the intervention
Whether the project's design adequately addressed the problems at hand, (i.e., by ensuring the strengthening of the capacity of civil society, child–led groups, national and local governing bodies to implement, monitor and report on national compliance with the UNCRC and the promotion of child participation in national and local governance processes and structures). Specific evaluation questions attached to project appropriateness were:
 – How did the execution of activities and allocation of resources reflect the priorities and needs of project beneficiaries?
 – Are activities and outputs as reflected in the project proposal consistent with the overall goal and objectives?

(2) Results in terms of the outputs achieved (Effectiveness of the intervention)
 – How effective were project activities in achieving objectives?
 – Did the project reach the expected number of beneficiaries?
 – What are the major factors (internal and external) influencing the achievement or non achievement of the objectives?
 – Were the beneficiaries satisfied with the quality and delivery of services? If not, in what way did the services not meet with beneficiary expectations and why?
 – Judging by the way the project was designed and implemented, did it achieve its purpose and/or make a meaningful impact on children's lives?

(3) Achievement of projected performance indicators and targets (Efficiency).
 – What has been the project's performance with respect to projected performance indicators and agreed responsibilities for its implementation?
 – Did the project implement the targeted activities within the planned timeframes?
 – Was the project effective in following its strategy?
 – Was the project cost–effective? Do its activities justify the outputs?
 – Did the project have a clear monitoring and evaluation framework, how effective was it in following that framework?

(4) Assessment of project outcomes and impacts (Impact)
 – Did the project meet its projected impact targets? If yes, how? If no, why?
 – What concrete improvements that can be attributed to the project or positive changes are observable in the lives of the targeted population (children)?
 – How could the project's impact have been improved?
 – What factors, if any, may have impeded the achievement of the overall project goal?
 – What are the project's unintended positive or negative impacts?

(5) Assessment of the long lasting effects of the intervention (Sustainability)
– Will the project's effects remain over time?
– Will the project's activities/services continue in the absence of external funding?
– How supportive are relations and coordination of targeted communities with key stakeholders (e.g., government departments, child protection committees, councilors, etc) to ensuring sustainability of the project?
– Will the infrastructure/assets created by the project continue to give the same outputs in the absence of Save the Children's direct support?
– Will the project's trainings/capacity building remain beneficial in the long run?
– How sustainable are capacity–building efforts, particularly for child–led groups

(6) Lessons learned
– Are there any broad lessons learnt on any aspect or dimension of the project design or implementation that have implications on future operations or which can be incorporated into future projects?

Chapter Three of this report addresses these questions in reference to the primary and secondary data that was gathered through methods described in detail in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO
Evaluation Methodology

T his evaluation was carried out within the qualitative research design, although some quantitative data was gathered from secondary sources to strengthen the descriptive dimension of the report. Active child participation was a virtue that influenced the collection of data within this design. A consultative inception meeting with key project staff of Save the Children Zimbabwe preceded the design of research tools and planning of fieldwork. At this meeting, the evaluator and technical staff of Save the Children agreed on sample size, methodology and timelines for completing the evaluation's exercises. Various evaluation methods and tools were employed to gather data on the project's different components, which are based on its specific objectives as shown in the table below.

Specific objective	Methods of enquiry	Data source(s)	Type of data sought
1. To strengthen the capacity of civil society, child led groups and national and local governing bodies to implement, monitor and report on national compliance with the UN Convention on the rights of the child	Review of documents on the project's capacity building exercises	Workshop reports, project documents	Number and types of participants
			Contents of trainings
			Outcomes of trainings
	Focus group discussions	Members of child led groups	Significance of capacity building on the operations of child-led groups, Government and civil society organisation officials
	Interviews with key informants who have received capacity–related support	Officials of ZNCWC, Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, NANGO	
	Administration of project implementation checklist	Save the Children staff working on the project	Project activities and performance against set targets
2. To promote child participation in national and local governance processes and structures.	Focus group discussions	Members of child–led groups	Project effectiveness and impact
	In–depth interviews of adults in children's communities	Members of Child Protection Committees (CPC), schoolteachers/ animators, senior staff of town councils	Appropriateness and relevance of project activities
3. Objectives 1 and 2 above	Project implementation checklist	Save the Children staff working on the project	Sustainability of project operations, especially at the level of child–led groups
	Focus group discussions	Members of child–led groups	

The table above shows that evaluative data was collected by reviewing relevant project documents, facilitating focus group discussions, interviewing key informants and administering a project implementation checklist.

2.1. Evaluation procedures of collecting data
2.1.1. Focus group discussions

The evaluation relied most heavily on data gathered through focus group discussions of children belonging to child–led groups in five project sites of Kadoma, Chinhoyi, Rafingora, Mvurwi and Marondera. This method was used most dominantly because the children, who are the project's ultimate beneficiaries and major stakeholder, participated in its activities collectively, especially

as members of child led groups. The evaluation questions relating to both objectives of the project of reference were explored through focus group discussions because children participated at all levels of the project's design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. To gather the data through this method, children were asked to discuss a set of questions in small groups and share their responses through a plenary session in the form of drawings, drama, poems, songs, speeches, proverbial expressions or simple narratives depending on the range of special skills available at each gathering. This approach brought edutainment to the process and allowed children to express their views about the project through diverse communication methods of their choice. A focus group discussion guide (Annex 1) was employed to guide the discussions, with a list of evaluative themes for children to explore. Outcomes of the focus group discussions were categorized according to the evaluation themes in the terms of reference. Where children drew pictures to illustrate their understanding of the project, the evaluator scanned their drawings to reproduce it in the relevant sections of Chapters Three and Four. Poems, speeches and written narratives are similarly quoted verbatim in these chapters where necessary.

2.1.2. Administering the project implementation checklist

The project implementation checklist was administered on Save the Children Zimbabwe personnel responsible for implementing, monitoring and evaluation the project. The tool was used to gather information on what the project was able to implement in practice against what it planned. The checklist was developed in reference to the project's description in the proposal sent to EU. Responses showing that more planned activities were successfully implemented were taken to reflect project efficiency and effectiveness. Outcomes from this tool were verified against what children said of the project through focus group discussions.

2.1.3. In–depth interviewing of key informants and community adults

Key informants who were interviewed in this evaluation include some senior officials of urban councils, schoolteachers and heads of schools, officials of civil society organisations and relevant government departments as well as line staff of Save the Children Zimbabwe. Other interview respondents were parents or guardians of child–led group members and adult members of child protection committees (CPC). These were interviewed in the format of natural conversations with the aid of a semi–structured interview guide that was informed by the evaluation's terms of reference. Key informants were interviewed within their offices to enable them to refer to files wherever necessary, while community adults were interviewed at their children's schools because that is where they often hold their meetings.

Government officials and staff of relevant civil society organisations were asked questions regarding the relationship between the evaluated project and their organisation's mandates as well as how the project enhanced their capacity to safeguard the rights of children, monitor and report about the observance of these rights. The evaluation further interviewed these key informants about their respective contributions to the two specific objectives of the project. Interviews of parents and guardians focused on adults' assessments of the relevance of the project vis–à–vis the extents of the violation or observance of children's rights in their communities. Parents whose children were members of child–led clubs shared their observations of any changes in the behaviors of their children to demonstrate the project's positive and/or negative impacts.

In total the evaluation data was obtained from 94 people, 39 of them female. The table below breaks down the overall sample of the evaluation.

Profile of the evaluation sample

Informant category	Marondera		Mvurwi		Kadoma		Chinhoyi		Rafingora		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Children	8	4	7	10	8	5	13	3	4	9	71
Youth Advisors	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	5
School Heads	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Teachers/ Animators	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	10
Local Authority	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Govt officials	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
CPC	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Parents/ Guardians	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Totals	**9**	**6**	**7**	**11**	**15**	**6**	**16**	**5**	**7**	**11**	**94**

The table above shows that data was collected from five districts representing three provinces namely Mashonaland East, central and West. The choice of these provinces was largely based on economic criteria, although the child–led groups therein represent widely diverse realities on the basis of which a thorough analysis of the project is possible. Children made up 71 of 94 respondents because they are the project's major stakeholder and primary beneficiaries. All five Youth Advisors who work with child–led groups and are therefore a strategic stakeholder were interviewed, along with schoolteachers who oversea the activities of child–led groups as animators. The smallest fraction of the evaluation's respondents was, as expected, made up of key informants and community adults.

2.1.4. Review of documents

The evaluation reviewed the documents with the design, progress updates and performance assessments of the Children in Governance Project. Among these, most attention was paid to the proposal submitted to EU because this contained the original plans of what the project intended to do, the detailed outline of the nature of challenges the project had to address and the ideal situation that the project had create. The project's original proposal therefore served as the benchmark for the evaluation's analysis. Other documents that were reviewed included reports that child–led groups produced as updates of the project's progress and Save the Children's project reports. The data that was gathered via the project implementation checklist was extracted from project monitoring and evaluation documents that Save the Children produced as the project progressed.

2.2. Outline of the next chapters

In line with the evaluation's terms of reference, Chapter Three of this report presents the findings on the project's outputs to demonstrate at the outset whether or not the planned project activities were successfully implemented as scheduled. This lays the foundation for Chapter Four of the evaluation report to discuss the project's performance, according to the

analytical parameters outlined in the terms of reference, namely project appropriateness, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. This discussion informs the project's overall assessment in Chapter Five where the success factors inherent in its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as lessons are presented. Chapter Six concludes the evaluation report by listing the recommendations for increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the same or related projects in future. The results of the evaluation, their discussion and recommendations are provided under each of the project's specific objectives for logical harmony.

CHAPTER THREE
Evaluation Findings on Project Outputs

3.1. Project description

As portrayed in Chapter One, the Children in Governance Project pursued two major results: strengthened child participation in the implementation and monitoring of the UNCRC and strengthened national capacity to implement and monitor the UNCRC in Zimbabwe. The table below profiles the activities that the project implemented under each of its specific objectives. Actual project performance per objective is discussed in detail separately in the table below.

Objective	Activities
To strengthen the capacity to implement, monitor and report on national compliance with UNCRC	Training of Trainers' (TOT) workshops to equip leading members of child–led groups with research and documentation skills
	Partnering with the National Association of Non–Governmental Organisations (NANGO) to support consultative meetings where children can interface with budget and policy makers to add their inputs to budgetary processes
	Trainings to strengthen the technical capacities of national institutions responsible for state party reporting to the United Nations, namely the Inter–Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law under the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs' Department of Legal and Policy Research, National Program of Action (NPA) under the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare and the Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children (ZNCWC)
To promote child participation in governance processes and structures	Technically and financially supporting children to carry out campaigns for legal reform, focusing on promoting child–centeredness in the making of all policies and formulation of national budgets.
	Supporting workshops to raise awareness of children's rights and protection amongst communities, children and staff of child–focused organizations.
	Supporting the media to broadcast children's legal reform campaigns and to publicize their views on child rights observance and child protection issues (This invited the training of media practitioners in child–sensitive reporting and communication).
	Supporting institutions that produce information–education–communication (IEC) materials to develop and disseminate child rights–specific publicity materials.
Objectives 1 and 2 combined	Documenting the lessons and best practices of its implementation. The project invited articles written by children to publish them in Save the Children Zimbabwe's bi–monthly newsletter and its annual public relations publication. The project planned to produce an audiovisual documentary of its work to be used as an advocacy tool.
	Technically supporting children to initiate self–help or income–generating projects to enable them to sustain their operations and keep the movement of promoting children's rights alive even with minimal or no further financial support from Save the Children Zimbabwe.

3.2. Profile of implemented project activities

In view of the activities that the project planned per objective, according to the above table, the evaluation revealed the following as the project's immediate accomplishments.

3.2.1. Specific objective 1: Strengthening capacity to implement, monitor and report national compliance with UNCRC

Under specific objective 1 the Children in Governance Project's focus of activities was training, where would–be trainers among children were equipped with research and documentation skills with the intention to place children in the driving seat of reporting about the country's performance in implementing and monitoring national compliance of the UNCRC. NANGO was engaged as a partner to link children with platforms for the discussion and formulation of policies, notably via its Child–friendly budget initiative, which involves engaging children in pre–budget consultations to ensure that the national budget is formulated from children's perspective and that more resources are allocated to children's welfare. Meanwhile, government arms responsible for Zimbabwe's reporting to the United Nations were trained on state party reporting, data gathering, monitoring and evaluation.

The evaluation, through interviews of relevant key informants in Government and civil society as well as focus group discussions of children, generally revealed that the project had managed to execute these activities as planned.

i. Training of trainers in documentation and research skills

The project was able to facilitate Training of Trainers' workshops on research and documentation skills. It had a target of running two such workshops and reaching 100 participants. The evaluation revealed that two workshops were successfully held for the training of trainers, and outcomes thereof are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

ii. Facilitating child participation in policy–related consultative meetings

The project's strategy of engaging children in consultative meetings for the formulation of national budgets and policies affecting their welfare was to partner with NANGO, which is mandated to periodically convene two–day consultative meetings for citizens and budget or policy makers. The project was able to facilitate 15 two–day consultative meetings involving 30 children and 20 policy makers on average as planned, thereby enhancing child participation in policy dialogue and pre–budget formulation consultations. Through field–based focus group discussions with children the evaluation was informed that child–led groups held their own prior meetings to prepare their leaders for the NANGO–brokered consultative meetings. Some of the ideas that they shared in these meetings regarded the challenges that girls from poor families faced in accessing proper sanitary pads, inadequacy of government allocations to the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) vis–à–vis the growing population of poor children, the need to support childcare institutions and to widen access of children to immunization services nationally.

iii. Capacity strengthening of national institutions responsible for state party reporting

The Children in Governance Project scheduled four meetings for planning the revival of ZNCWC, which is an advisory body to the Government on the state of children's well being in the country. The organisation had been defunct. In addition, the project sought to build the capacity of Government bodies responsible for state party reporting. These include the Inter–Ministerial Committee (IMC) on human rights and International Humanitarian Law under the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs' Policy and Research Department and the National Program of Action (NPA) under the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare.

The Government official interviewed by this evaluation reported that Save the Children Zimbabwe had financially and technically supported the Ministries of Justice and Legal Affairs as well as the Ministry Health and Child Welfare. The former had resolved in one of the training workshops supported by the project to conduct a baseline survey to use as its basis for state party reporting and claim check whether the situation was improving or deteriorating. In addition, the project supported the creation of a 32–member child rights coalition, with ZNCWC serving as the Secretariat.

A ZNCWC official informed the evaluation that she began participating in the Children in Governance Project in January 2011, being involved in developing the Child Rights Policy and benefiting from trainings on child rights and participation, which the project facilitated "in order to increase and harmonize participants' general understanding of relevant topics". Zimbabwe is expected to submit its UNCRC State Party's report in 2011, and ZNCWC will be strategically positioned, on behalf of civil society organizations, to submit the first Supplementary Report that will complement Zimbabwe's State report. In that supplementary report ZNCWC plans to incorporate children's views that will be captured through the child participation processes that the project has supported. Already ZNCWC writes quarterly reports on the state of child rights observance in Zimbabwe and these will inform the ultimate supplementary report that will be submitted to UN.

In addition, as part of the project's component of building awareness and capacity, ZNCWC has been actively pursuing its mandate of training CSO and government officials on children's rights and promoting child participation. "Our advocacy strategy is also to have government account for its obligation and commitment to children namely by complying with the requirements of the international instruments that Zimbabwe ratified," a ZNCWC official explained. "We are further mandated to lobby and do advocacy targeted at bringing legal reform and creating a better environment for children to enjoy their rights and participate freely in processes of making decisions that affect them."

3.2.2. Specific objective 2: Promoting child participation in governance processes and structures

The Project promoted the participation of children in governance processes and structures by setting up new and/or strengthening existing child–led groups in selected districts throughout Zimbabwe. It then followed this up by technically and financially supporting children in these groups to campaign through various activities for legal reform, focusing on promoting child–centeredness in the making of all policies and formulation of national budgets. The project further supported workshops for raising awareness of children's rights and protection among staff of child–focused organisations while media practitioners were targeted for skills training in child–sensitive reporting and communication. In turn, the media

broadcasted children's legal reform campaigns and publicized their views on child rights observance or child protection. IEC materials on child rights and child participation were developed and disseminated to the wider populace in Zimbabwe.

i. Setting up and strengthening of child–led groups

The project successfully set up 10 and strengthened 40 child–led groups – a total of 50 – in 9 provinces of Zimbabwe, reaching a total of 1,426 children. Fifty–four percent of child–led group members are girls. The table below shows the distribution of child–led groups by geographical locations and the gender of members.

Table 3.1: Distribution of child–led groups by geographical location and gender of members

Province (and districts)	No. of child–led groups created/strengthened		No. of child–led group members		
	# created	# strengthened	Males	Females	Totals
Harare: Harare and Chitungwiza	1	5	64	69	133
Bulawayo: Bulawayo	0	3	30	35	65
Mashonaland Central: Bindura, Mvurwi, Rushinga, Muzarabani	0	6	111	127	238
Mashonaland East: Marondera, Mutoko, Chivhu, Macheke	3	5	106	118	224
Mashonaland West: Chinhoyi, Kadoma, Rafingora	5	5	157	181	338
Masvingo: Bikita	1	2	25	30	55
Matabeleland South: Beitbridge, Gwanda	0	4	45	64	109
Manicaland: Katiyo	0	4	40	45	85
Midlands: Gokwe, Mberengwa, Zvishavane	0	6	83	96	179
TOTALS	**10**	**40**	**661**	**765**	**1,426**

Table 3.1 above shows that the 1,426 members of 50 child–led groups were from 21 districts in nine provinces. The project could not reach Matabeleland North Province to set up or strengthen child–led groups. It fell short of the number of child–led groups that it planned to initiate or strengthen according to the proposal submitted to the European Union by 10 districts, namely Mudzi, Uzumba–Maramba–Pfungwe (UMP), Hwedza, Murewa (Mashonaland East province), Bubi, Hwange, Lupane, Nkai, Tsholotsho (Matabeleland North), Matobo (Matabeleland South). Of these districts, only Hwedza, and Murewa are close to Harare where the project's offices are located. The rest are distant or hard to reach by road, especially in Matabeleland North.

The evaluation revealed through a review of child-led groups' reports that all 50 child–led groups were active in campaigning for children's rights and participating in forums where issues pertaining to child rights monitoring, budgeting and policy review or development issues were discussed. An assessment in five districts revealed that child–led groups in those, already established, characteristically had gone on to use their own resources to establish other grassroots child led groups in other parts of the district, annually commemorate the Day of the African Child on 16th June each year, raise awareness of children's rights, document their work through quarterly reports and take part in meetings arranged by Save the Children Zimbabwe, NANGO and/or television programs. All child–led groups had well established leadership structures in the form of committees that managed

children's programs through weekly meetings with the support of youth advisors and animators (i.e., schoolteachers responsible for advising child–led group members) and stakeholders such as town councils, the police, Child Protection Committees (CPCs), school authorities, business people and others.

ii. Supporting children's campaigns for legal reforms

The project planned to financially and technically support three child–led campaigns for legal reform involving 600 children and one media production contributing towards legal reform campaigns. It successfully financed and technically supported three campaigns for legal reform in respective districts of various child–led groups as planned, but reached more than 600 children. Media campaigns were channeled through the following productions:

⟩ Two Mai Chisamba Talk Shows (16 August 2011 and 24 February 2012) where 50 children participated in each. Through these shows children discussed and debated about community's observance of child rights, status of child participation in critical matters of development, child–friendliness of school environments and the rights issues implied in corporal punishment, bullying, lives of children on the streets and the emergence of private schools. This enabled the project to reach and inspire debate more children and adults indirectly, increasing public interest in child rights matters.
⟩ Awareness raising workshops involving children and adults such as one held in Zvishavane and attended by 45 children and five adults to discuss the importance of creating an environment in which children can enjoy their rights. The project reports that adults who attended this workshop came out with plans to play their part in supporting the children's movement for child rights, especially because the workshop had emphasized not only on child rights, but on children's responsibilities as well.
⟩ Information–Education–Communication (IEC) material production, where 300 T-shirts, 600 posters, booklets on child rights laws (2,000 copies), on child abduction (1,500) and on child trafficking (2,000) as well as 1,500 IMC brochures for publicity were produced and distributed. This channel helped spread the message about child rights widely among the reading public who may have missed the television programs.
⟩ Commemorations of the Day of the African Child, World Day Against Child Abuse and the Universal Children's day were exploited to share the message about the importance of observing children's rights in all districts were child–led groups were established and/or strengthened.

iii. Supporting child rights awareness raising

To support child rights awareness–raising, the project planned four three–day awareness raising workshops, targeting 200 participants from civil society organisations. It managed to support all four planned three–day workshops and managed to reach 200 participants. The project further planned one workshop for training media practitioners in skills of child–sensitive reporting and communication, which was accomplished successfully. Six thousand IEC materials with child rights information were subsequently developed and disseminated, again, as scheduled. In so doing, deliberate effort was made to involve children with disabilities in all activities. This was evidenced by the participation of children with disabilities from Rubatsiro School and Tariro Children's home who are members of the Kadoma Child led group in the planning and management of a poultry project in Kadoma.

3.2.3. Outputs for objectives 1 and 2 combined: Staff recruitments, materials procurements, documentation and supporting child–initiated projects

Cutting across specific objectives 1 and 2, the Children in Governance Project had plans in its proposal to create new staff positions within the structures of Save the Children

Zimbabwe, to procure motorcycles for youth advisors, to document the project's work and to support income–generating projects for sustaining child–led groups.

i. Strategic staff recruitments and equipment procurements

The project's proposed new staff positions were for Provincial Youth Advisors to give guidance to child–led groups and train children on their rights and in project management skills. Eight Provincial Youth Advisors were recruited in line with plans to have one advisor per province. An Information and Communication Officer was recruited from existing Save the Children Zimbabwe staff to spearhead the project's dissemination of information by writing reports, newsletters and reports on media coverage of child rights issues. This officer was also assigned to coordinate the documentation of the project's best practices and production of a documentary of its accomplishments.

To increase the project's efficiency, five motor cycles which were budgeted for were procured and distributed to child led groups in Kadoma, Zvishavane, Katiyo Chinhoyi and Rafingora. Youth advisors in these areas were marked to use the vehicles to enhance their reach to the several child–led groups in their districts.

ii. Documenting best practices

The project planned to document its best practices through a quarterly newsletter, one annual publication and an audiovisual documentary. The evaluation learnt that child–led groups were indeed writing quarterly reports and submitting them to Save the Children Zimbabwe for inclusion into the organisation's quarterly newsletter. At the time of the evaluation, the audiovisual documentary and the draft annual publication were under review.

iii. Supporting child–initiated income–generating projects

All the five visited child led groups had at least received support from the project and initiated income–generating projects, with varying degrees of success. The table below summarizes the nature and significance of income–generating projects at three project sites.

Table 3.2: Distribution of child–led groups by income–generating projects

Province	District	Nature of project	Total income raised (USD)	Major uses of income
Mashonaland West	Rafingora	Market gardening	160	USD70 –school uniforms for orphans at a farm
				USD30 – paying fees for orphans
				USD60 – buying fertilizer for commercial maize farming
	Kadoma	Poultry	Figure not provided	Buying blankets donated to Rimuka Old people's Home, clothes for children at Tariro Children's Home and items for a volleyball kit for Chemukute High School
	Chinhoyi	Poultry	560	USD53 – paying school fees for one orphan USD507 – invested back into business
Mashonaland Central	Mvurwi	Poultry	225	USD115.60 – commemorating Day of the African Child in 2011
				USD 50 – Used to pay fees for two orphans USD 60 Invested back into the business
Matabeleland South	Gwanda	Freezit making	215	USD 100- Sewing jerseys which were donated to 10 orphaned children within the group USD 115 – Invested back into the business

Midlands	Zvishavane	Candle making Poultry	320	USD 100- Used to carry out a cleanup campaign to raise awareness on cholera USD 100- Used to pay school fees for two children and uniforms USD 120- Invested back into the business

Table 3.2 above demonstrates children's innovativeness in generating income and that children had raised their levels of responsibility to levels of contributing to charity work even for the benefit of adults (e.g., Kadoma groups). Paying school fees and buying school uniforms for underprivileged children was common to all child–led groups. In Rafingora children demonstrated capacity and willingness to diversify and expand their business from market gardening to commercial maize farming. Although the project provided some financial support to child–led groups for income–generating projects, children in Mvurwi exhibited special resource mobilization skills, by raising USD210 of their income through fund raising activities and appeals to local business people. The Youth Advisor of Rafingora reported that the child–led group at Katawa Primary School had successfully lobbied the headmaster to provide the group with the resource centre which would house the office for the youth advisor.

3.3. Overall assessment of project outputs

Information in this chapter shows that the Children in Governance Project generally managed to carry out its planned activities and received the cooperation of stakeholders such as the electronic media, government ministries and civil society organisations with which it networked. It managed to set up and strengthen child–led groups, which subsequently sustained themselves through income–generating projects and maintained their visibility through awareness raising campaigns in other schools and communities. The Child Welfare Council was resuscitated while IMC and NPA were technically supported to pursue their mandates more effectively. This is the foundation on which the project's performance discussed in the next chapter was built.

CHAPTER FOUR
Discussion: Project Performance Assessment

The description of the Children in Governance Project in Chapter Three is the basis of the analyses of the appropriateness of project strategies as well as the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of project activities discussed in this chapter.

4.1. Project appropriateness and responsiveness

This evaluation's terms of reference define project appropriateness in terms of whether or not there were adequate mechanisms in the project's design to address the problems at hand and bear the desired results. Essentially, these desired results are:
   a. A strengthened capacity of CSOs, child–led groups and national or local governing bodies to implement, monitor and report on national compliance with the UNCRC and;
   b. Enhanced child participation in national and local governance processes and structures.

The terms of reference stress the importance of the evaluation to assess how project activities and allocation of resources reflect the priorities and needs of project beneficiaries as well as whether the activities and outputs as reflected in the project proposal are consistent with the overall goal and objectives of the project.

It is this evaluation's assessment that the Children in Governance Project was highly appropriate in view of the needs at hand and that its design had mechanisms for the accomplishment of the desired results of enhancing the required technical capacity and child participation in child rights governance.

4.1.1. Project's appropriateness in relation to the problems at hand

The Children in Governance Project was initiated in response to problems that occurred at two levels namely capacity challenges among institutions responsible for monitoring and reporting national compliance with UNCRC and limited child participation in local and national governance processes and structures.

a. Project appropriateness to institutional capacity–related challenges

Through interviews and focus group discussions, the evaluation confirmed that child rights–related government ministries and departments, CSOs and children had a number of technical shortcomings that reduced their potential impact in their fight for children's rights, revealing that the Children in Governance Project squarely responded to these shortcomings. The Child Welfare Council which is mandated to oversee child rights–specific capacity building, lobbying and advocacy and the promotion of child participation in policy making was too financially challenged to play its role vibrantly. The project availed financial resources to support strategic planning meetings to revitalize the Child Welfare Council and, in particular, enable it to play the advisory role to the Government on child rights.

Staff in the Policy and Research Department of the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs and the child rights desk of the National Program of Action (NPA) in the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare received training in the areas where their capacity was limited such as child

rights, documentation, data collection and monitoring and evaluation. Prior to the project's inception, these government ministries and departments were unable to cope with the many responsibilities that demanded their attention. For example, the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs oversees the administration of a number of acts which fulfill the entire range of human and people's rights, not just children's. In so doing the ministry liaises with so many stakeholders and has to carry out so many tasks that there are strong chances of it failing perform its mandates to the full, especially because of financial and human resource limitations. In other words, without additional technical and financial support the ministry can be too burdened and technically challenged to deliver its expected results, especially considering that Zimbabwe is coming out of a period of serious economic and political downturn. The officer responsible for the Children in Governance Project in the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs evaluation as follows

> "Our ministry has so many responsibilities to fulfill on tight budgets that we end up prioritizing those that we feel are more urgent and economically more affordable and convenient to address than others, but in the process we sacrifice important values such as our duty to safeguard children's rights."

This officer further explained that her ministry welcomed the relief that comes with CSOs that bring forth complementary resources and expertise to the ministry in the way that Save the Children did. "Organizations, like Save the Children and others, bring specialized expertise such as on children's rights, monitoring and evaluation as well as additional financial resources which are needed by the Government of Zimbabwe." "We now have plans to carry out a baseline survey and a number of workshops on children's rights because this project has supported us and we now afford to move ahead" In addition, the project supported the creation of data base where all the information collected on the state of children's rights will be kept in as data for the 2015 state party report. The government now receives quarterly updates of the state of child's rights observance from the child–led groups attached to the project in the nine provinces of Zimbabwe.

b. Project appropriateness to the promotion of child participation in governance

The evaluation was informed that although child–led groups had always been in existence in most parts of Zimbabwe, these had a narrower focus and a heavily localized significance than after the project's inception. Although the nine existing child–led groups actively promoted children's rights in their communities, they were marginally or not involved in governance processes and structures that tellingly influenced the realization of their rights. Members of child–led groups that this evaluation engaged in focus group discussions all concurred that children's participation in the formulation of policies before the project's inception was token and their views were barely regarded seriously. This left them having to address the outcomes of unfriendly policies and structures. During a focus group discussion's plenary session in Mvurwi, a group of children reported that "we were not consulted in the making of the town's budget and this put us down a lot." As part of the project, the group reported, "We talked to the Councilor and asked him to allow us to take part in the making of the town's budget." This request was accepted and by the time of the evaluation Mvurwi Town Council was involving children in its planning and budgeting. The same was reported at varying degrees in Marondera, Kadoma and Chinhoyi. Further, just because of its emphasis on governance, the project introduced children to a range of strategic skills such as report writing, monitoring and evaluation, research and documentation, project planning, business management and others. It also helped children to expand their strategic networks to include fellow child–led groups in other areas (through

exchange learning programs), local business people, junior parliamentarians, junior councilors, government departments and media practitioners. The significance of these networks is discussed in more detail under this chapter's section on the project's impact. The chart below illustrates children's perception of the networks that the project enabled them to create for their own advantage.

Chart 1 above shows that children are at the center of the partnership strategy that the project employed to enhance children's influence in governance processes and structures.

Chart 1: Networks of strategic synergies connected to child-led groups

Diagram concept by Shingirai Chikazhe, Mvurwi
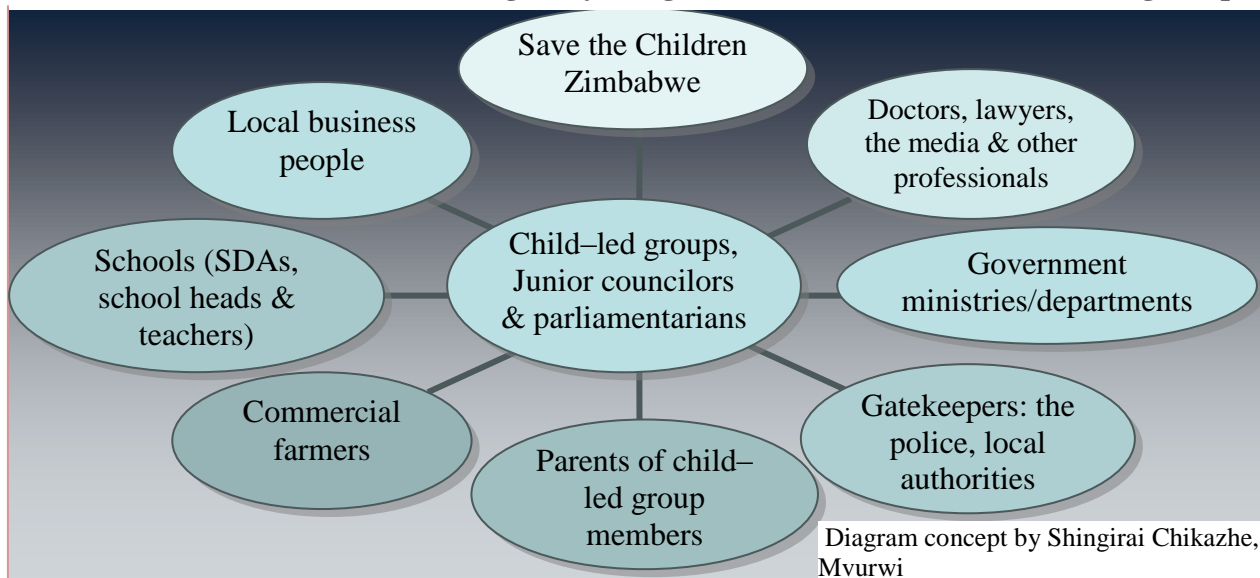
The above–illustrated network of children's partners varied in diversity from one district to another, but its appropriateness to child participation in governance for improved child rights observance was most elaborately portrayed through focus group discussions in Chinhoyi, where one group came up with the table below.

Partner	Appropriateness of partner
Save the Children Zimbabwe	Providing financial support, materials, technical guidance and administrative backstopping, including compiling composite reports on behalf of children in various districts of the eight participating provinces
Ministry of Education, Arts, Sport and Culture	Granting permission for school teachers and children to carry out project activities on and outside school premises
Ministry of Health and Child Welfare	Providing medical services to survivors of sexual assault or other abuse
	Educating children about HIV and AIDS as well as distributing IEC materials
The police (Victim–friendly Section)	Escorting children during their marches to commemorate the Day of the African Child or for any other campaign
	Prosecuting child abuse cases
School teachers	Advising child–led group members on technical matters as necessary, especially with regards the management of their income–generating projects
	Instilling and maintaining discipline among children during their trips for meetings and workshops
	Serving as the interface between school heads and child–led groups
Heads of schools	Granting child–led groups the permission to carry out their activities within school

Partner	Appropriateness of partner
	premises and, in some cases, providing operating space to these for the execution of their activities. For example, the Head of Katawa Primary School offered the Rafingora Youth Advisor an office at his school
Local authorities	Contributing financially or in kind towards child–led projects (e.g., Kadoma Municipality partly funds annual budgets of the district's child–led groups)
	Providing space, especially in the form of community halls, for children to carry out their activities
	Accommodating junior councilors or parliamentarians to partake in the processes of formulating town policies and budgets
Commercial farmers	Granting permission for child–led groups to educate farm employees and their children about children's rights along with the importance of adhering with them
Parents, including School Development Committee (SDC) and CPC members	Granting children the permission to go to school for child–led group meetings
	Discussing children's well being during SDC and CPC meetings
	Attending commemorations and other functions that child–led groups organise to raise awareness of children's rights
Local business people	Contributing financially and in kind towards children's plans. The Mvurwi child–led group raised the highest amount of income from local business people
Doctors, lawyers, media personnel, social scientists and related professionals	Providing specialized services and advice, including education on health, legal and social matters that affect children's rights. Doctors, for instance, enlighten children on how they can diagnose the occurrence of abuse and what kind of medical intervention they can seek to avert health problems (e.g., post–exposure prophylaxis can be recommended for rape survivors wishing to avoid HIV–infection)

4.1.2. Project appropriateness to beneficiaries' needs

The appropriateness of the evaluated project most strongly lay in its responsiveness to the needs of children, who are the primary beneficiaries. Through focus group discussions, the evaluation established that children in various geographical regions encountered similar problems at varying degrees and the project's design reflect its consciousness of these. Poverty is at the center of the dynamics that culminate in the abuse of children's rights, according to this evaluation. Adults and children interviewed by the evaluation trace poverty and the subsequent violation of children's rights to HIV and AIDS, observing that "the growing problem of orphans in Zimbabwe is a result of HIV–related sicknesses and deaths" (a Mvurwi group of discussants). The evaluation identified the following dynamics by which HIV and AIDS causes or worsens poverty, resulting in the violation of children's rights.

a. When HIV–infected breadwinners become chronically ill and automatically fail to financially support their children's education, their c can hardly concentrate on their lessons at school, worrying about whether their ailing parents would recover from sickness or afford their educational and nutritional needs. These children also face problems such as labeling, stigma and discrimination. Child–led groups have stepped in with their peer counseling and awareness raising initiatives that respond to this challenge. With a recent survey by the Kadoma CPC estimating that Rio Tinto suburb alone had about 3,000 orphans, chances of children's right to quality education being violated are extremely high. This makes the initiative by child–led groups of using the proceeds of income–generating projects to pay school fees and buy uniforms and/or stationery for extremely needy children an appropriate intervention.

b. When HIV–infected parents die, leaving their children increasingly poorer, unable to continue with their education and more vulnerable to various social ills: In Kadoma and on Mvurwi commercial farm compounds, orphaned girls commonly deal with their poverty by abandoning school and marrying prematurely. As reported about Mvurwi commercial farm compounds, there are religions that condone the practice of adult men marrying teen girls. These religions discourage the education of girls as well in order to firmly consolidate these child rights violations in their foundations of parental ignorance. In Rafingora the trafficking of orphans from poor families and out of school to urban areas where they become employed as underpaid maids or gardeners is common. Close relatives of these children and sometimes parents facilitate the trafficking to shed their burden of economic dependents. According to discussants in Rafingora, employers characteristically sack these young maids or gardeners without paying them enough money to return to their rural homes, thereby pushing many children into the streets where they abuse drugs and survive on stealing and prostitution. The poem below reflects the above scenarios.

Box 4.1: A Poem – Children of today

The sad story always begins and ends with disgrace to a girl,
Impregnated at a tender age by uncaring adult sex monsters,
Having to abandon school to live a hard life,
A life of being rejected everywhere by everyone,
Now what happens next?
Abortion, baby dumping–further disgrace to today's girl child,
After abortion, what happens next?
She joins countless colleagues on the urban streets,
To make a living out of prostitution and further disgrace
Relieving sex–starving men, who killed her dreams in the first place,
What a disgrace there is lying in wait for today's girl child!

For today's boys the story is totally different,
They are simply becoming idle
They are now becoming a threat to their parents
They spent much of their time taking drugs
Sneaking out of school
At the end of year they will get poor results in their exams
They will now blame teachers and their parents

By Megan Makomborero Rupiya, Form 3 student' Holy Rosary High School, Mvurwi

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The project's support of child–led groups has helped intensify local campaigns by which children alert each other of the dangers of early marriages, child trafficking and related abuses. Income–generating projects of child–led groups offer a platform for orphans to explore alternative safe survival strategies.

Related to poverty, the evaluation identified that ignorance of children's rights among adults and some children is one major problem that the project responded to through its support to child–led groups. In addition to the tendency of poor adults to facilitate the early marriages of their teen daughters and trafficking of their sons and daughters for economically

exploitative jobs, the project responded to two other examples of critical social needs, where awareness–raising played an important role:

a. There was a low reportage of cases in which children were abused, where the perpetrators of whatever abuses intimidate their victims into silence or, if caught, parents use family courts to prosecute and fine the perpetrators before forbidding their children from reporting the abuse. During the project's term, child–led groups have directed their focus to raising the reportage child abuse cases through responsive awareness raising efforts. The project was so serious about breaking the silence of abused children that an increased rate of reporting child abuse counts among project's impact indicators.

b. For a long time orphans' right to an identity has always been under threat because of the caregivers' ignorance of either the importance of birth certificates or the channels they can take to secure these from the Registrar's office. The project supported child–led groups technically and by connecting them to strategic government offices to enable them to obtain the birth certificates. The salience of birth certificates as a right is one of the leading messages of child–led groups under the project.

4.1.3. Summary of evaluation's assessment of project appropriateness

Project strategy	Appropriateness rating and justification	Areas for improvement
Child–led awareness raising campaigns to promote child rights and responsibilities	Highly appropriate: ⟩ Adults were ignorant about child rights with some viewing child–led groups as vehicles for child rebellion. ⟩ Children did not report their abuse to relevant authorities or seek legal recourse.	The project should strengthen the statistical monitoring and reporting of the occurrence and reportage of child abuse, especially by measuring any improvement or decline against a baseline figure.
Child–initiated income–generating projects	Highly appropriate: ⟩ Because of poverty, especially caused by HIV–related deaths and illnesses, some children dropped out of school into early marriages, domestic employment or street crime. ⟩ The projects enabled child–led groups to sustain their operations with minimal help from adults	The income–generating projects are so key to child–led activism that all groups should be technically supported to sustain vibrant ones and reinvigorate weak ones.
Exchange learning programs for leaders of child–led in different districts	Highly appropriate: ⟩ Child–led groups in various districts had initiated unique interventions to address their diverse realities but had no ways of sharing experiences of best practices.	More resources are required to enable leaders and members of child–led groups to benefit from exchange learning programs, which should be tied to joint strategic planning processes.
Institutional capacity building coupled with some financial support	Highly appropriate: ⟩ Line government ministries and departments had limited expertise in and financial support for child rights programming. ⟩	None
Facilitation of forums for policy dialogues involving children	Highly appropriate: ⟩ Adults alone were self–organised and access to the dialogues that influenced policies related to the well being of children.	None

4.2. Project effectiveness

The evaluation's terms of reference define effectiveness as the project's ability to achieve its objectives and to reach the expected number of beneficiaries through its activities and strategies. This is here discussed within the context of the internal and external factors that influenced the project's performance in pursuing its objectives. At another level and in qualitative terms, the terms of reference allude to the extent to which target beneficiaries obtained or lacked satisfaction from the quality and delivery of services. The evaluation's face to face interviews of adults and focus group discussions of children were used to explain the extent of beneficiaries' satisfaction with the project's services.

4.2.1. Project ability to achieve its objectives and reach the target numbers of beneficiaries

With respect to the first specific objective of the Children in Governance Project, namely to strengthen the capacity of relevant state institutions to implement, monitor and report national compliance with UNCRC, it is this evaluation's assessment that the project was highly effective. As planned, it managed to engage all targeted strategic partners at head office and grassroots levels and built the necessary synergies. As a result, all planned meetings and workshops that depended on these synergies took place and produced the desired results as follows:

a. The Child Rights Desk of NPA and the IMC under the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs received financial support to intensify their child rights programs, with the latter planning a baseline survey to more accurately inform its compilation of the state party report due in 2015. Thanks to the project, Zimbabwe expects a state party report that will better tell children's stories than previous ones.

b. The partnership of the project with NANGO allowed children access to the debates and discussions that inform national policy and budget decisions. The children who participated in NANGO–facilitated dialogue sessions did so after receiving prior enlightenment on the pertinent child rights priorities and consulting fellow members of child–led groups for ideas. At the grassroots, children managed to widen their networks of partners too as illustrated in Chart 1 on page 17. This evaluation was informed that except in Rafingora the project had linked child–led groups to junior councils, junior parliamentarians and senators who formerly operated as a parallel movement. As these junior councilors, parliamentarians and senators attended meetings of child–led groups to gather input for their meetings with their adult parallels, junior councils, parliaments and senates became more responsive to children's needs than before the project. Interviews with senior officials of the Kadoma Municipality revealed that junior councilors had become a force to reckon with, which received a share of the town council's budgets for their child–led activities. These councilors were also invited to council meetings to represent children's interests.

c. Zimbabwe Child Welfare Council was also revived to resume its role as the statutory advisory body to the Government on the situation of children's rights in the country. Through the project's financial support and consultative meetings

In relation to Specific Objective 2 of promoting child participation in governance processes and structures the project reached some of its targets and was highly effective in qualitative terms. It had planned to build child participation upon the foundation of strengthened child–led groups, and the project successfully established nine and strengthened 19 of these. Located in 21 districts of nine provinces, the child–led groups that the project supported reached 1,426 children, 54% of them girls. Its success in reaching more girls than boys is commendable given that girls are the most vulnerable to sexual abuse, early marriages and child trafficking. All child–led groups annually celebrate the Day of the African Child, which their reports say are well attended by adults and children. In addition to fighting for their rights, children in this movement intensified charity work in their communities, thereby putting their lessons about child responsibility as enshrined in the African Charter on the Rights and responsibilities of the child into practice. Children in Kadoma, for example, managed to donate clothes to Tariro Children's Home, blankets to Rimuka Old People's Home, a volleyball kit to Chemukute High School and paid school fees for some orphans. Those in Mvurwi, Chinhoyi and Rafingora paid school fees for needy orphans, with those in Mvurwi going a step further by donating clothes to orphans at a nearby Mandindindi Farm.

a. *Child–led groups took the observance of other children's rights into their own hands:* All child–led groups whose income–generating projects were profitable, including Mvurwi, Rafingora, Chinhoyi, Zvishavane, and Kadoma used the proceeds from their sales to pay school fees and/or buy stationery and school uniforms for orphans who could not afford these. Outreaches to neighboring communities were employed to discourage adults from abusing children by facilitating the teen marriages of girls at the expense of their education (Kadoma, Rafingora), trafficking child laborers to urban areas (Rafingora), sexually abusing girls (Mvurwi, Kadoma, Chinhoyi and Marondera) and denying children their right to an identity by not securing birth certificates for them (all areas). At the same time the child led groups empowered other children with information about their rights and responsibilities, encouraging them to report abuse through legal procedures and referral networks available to children in each area. Reporting about training received by a child–led group, one child reported: *"We were educated about the rights of children including the 12 rights of working children and where we could go to seek advice and help in cases of abuse or if we wish to learn more about our rights and responsibilities."* A speech by one child from Mvurwi in Box 4.2 below further emphasizes the role of child–led groups in defending other children's rights and enlightening them accordingly.

Box 4.2: – A speech: The entire life ahead of us

It is our duty as a child–led group to ensure that every child is secure, that is, free from abuse and all sorts of insults and assaults. As a child–led group we enlighten people, especially children and youths, about their rights. This is one of our ways of assisting orphans and vulnerable children in the community. As a group our aims are to build awareness of one's rights and responsibilities among children, to provide basic necessities such as food and clothing and to ensure that every child is educated – to mention but a few objectives. All the above activities were done with success through our projects although we had a few challenges such as the ignorance of the elder people in our community.

By Gracious Mutsikwi, Mvurwi

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b. *The project harmonized the work of child–led groups with that of junior councilors, parliamentarians and senators:* Before the project's inception, junior councils, parliament and senate operated in isolation and in some areas such as Mvurwi there were no junior councils.

As part of linking child–led groups to key decision making structures and processes, the project connected child–led groups to junior councils, parliamentarians and senators.

c. *The project laid a firm foundation for child–led groups to be sustainable:* the evaluation observed that all child–led groups had become self–organised to sustain their operations, with clear leadership structures and procedures for conducting their projects. They all held weekly meetings to plan their work, review the state of child rights observance and strategize accordingly. All the child led groups have written their own constitutions to guide their operations and enable succeeding leaderships to maintain their systems of conducting business. In addition, all child–led groups received from the project training in data collection skills in line with its monitoring and evaluation systems and they compile quarterly progress reports. Each of these had its own network of strategic partners whose diversity varied from one district to another depending on the innovativeness of children involved.

d. *Child–led groups managed to secure the full support of adults in their communities:* adults in communities of all child–led groups that informed this evaluation formerly perceived the child rights movement as a rebellion against parental guidance. The Mvurwi child–led group reported that it once experienced so strong resistance when it initially took its outreach work to one commercial farm because of this. Some parents went to the extent of discouraging their children from participating in the child–led group activities. One parent told her child: "From today your children's rights will have to pay your school fees". However with the project's technical and financial support child–led groups were able to convince adults that their focus was not only children's rights but their responsibilities as well. They used cleanup campaigns, charity work and peaceful marches to convince adults that they were responsible children. . The Day of the African Child commemorations were exploited to address all misconceptions that adults had about child–led groups. Parents who feared that child–led group activities could take children's attention from academic studies informed the evaluation that they had in fact realized that a child who participated in these groups gained more self–confidence and their academic performance indeed had improved remarkably.

4.2.2. Beneficiary satisfaction with the quality and delivery of services

All stakeholders involved in this project, including the government, CSOs, children, schools and parents overwhelmingly expressed satisfaction with the project's services. The government ministries involved appreciated the training they received from the project in child rights programming and reporting as well as financial support to hold workshops and carry out researches. The Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs is on course to carry out a baseline survey that should enhance the scientific objectivity of its next state party report on UNCRC implementation. CSOs appreciated the project's financial support that enabled them to broaden the scope of their operations and enhance their relevance. NANGO, in particular, added a child participation dimension to its advocacy work. Children's appreciation of the project is simply manifest in their passion for their child–led group activities, which has seen them donating towards just causes, raising awareness of children's rights and responsibilities in communities and so forth. The same can be said for local community institutions like schools, with Katawa Primary School Headmaster donating a resource center to the local child–led group and Rafingora Primary school donating an office to the Youth Advisor.

4.2.3. Internal and external factors affecting project effectiveness

. The project supported exchange learning meetings between members of child–led groups from different geographical areas. Children informed the evaluation that exchange learning workshops and meetings could be more fruitful if five or more members from each group attended and if these were done as part of each group's strategic planning process. This evaluation gathered ideas of maximizing the use of the project's best practices and these are discussed in this report's recommendations in Chapter Six. The factors responsible for the project's inability to meet some of its targets are outlined below:

⇒ **Resource constraints**

The numerical targets in the proposal of the project proved to be too high to be achieved with the budgeted resources over two years. Motor cycles were procured for Youth Advisors of just five child–led groups in Zvishavane, Katiyo, Kadoma, Rafingora and Chinhoyi even though this form of transportation is important to groups in other areas because resources were insufficient to meet all the needs. Some child–led groups failed to accomplish their plans because of this challenge, with Marondera group failing to initiate income–generating projects for its sustenance. In Rafingora the children, striving to increase their profits by venturing into commercial maize farming, had managed to buy fertilizer but not the maize seed because of limited resources. Further, the project arranged exchange learning programs for child–led groups in different districts, but afforded to involve only youth advisors in these. If a sizeable proportion of the members participate, these exchanges can be a powerful tool for helping child–led groups to share their best practices which would encourage others to improve in their weak areas.

⇒ **Turnover of prominent leaders**

The continuity of child–led groups rests upon the consistency of leaders and members' participation. However, because all child–led groups are based at schools, the educational calendar dictates that children have to go for holidays at specific times and that some students have to leave secondary school for good at some stage. It has been the project's experience that the completion of high school or transference by students who lead the child–led groups can affect the consistency of a group's operations. For example, the relocation of leaders of one child–led group was immediately followed by a temporary decline in attendance rates at weekly planning meetings.

⇒ **Technical gaps among child–led groups**

The evaluation identified some technical gaps among some child–led groups that affected the project's effectiveness. For example, the Marondera Fight Club showed signs of facing challenges in managing its income–generating projects viably, citing inadequate start–up capital and shortage of space to set up their desired projects. This group evidently requires resource mobilisation skills, which can be enhanced by facilitating exchange learning processes between its members and children in Mvurwi, who managed to raise USD210 from local donors. Similarly, Rafingora child–led groups had no link with the area's junior parliamentarians or councilors and hence less access than their urban colleagues to local governance structures and processes.

⇒ **Resistance of the child–led movement**

The project–supported children's movement continues to face resistance from local communities even though it has largely conquered in this regard, and should not be complacent but continue to mainstream awareness–raising into their activities.

4.3.   Project efficiency

In line with the evaluation's terms of reference, project efficiency was measured against its achievement of projected performance indicators and targets. Efficiency was also taken to refer to whether or not the project achieved its target within the planned timeframes, according to its planned strategy, cost effectively and within a clear monitoring and evaluation framework.

4.3.1.   Project efficiency vis–à–vis indicators and targets

Under Specific Objective 1, the project was able to meet its targets of building Government and civil society capacity to implement and monitor UNCRC through the trainings that it facilitated and financial support that it provided. All scheduled trainings and meetings were executed as planned and they bore the expected outcomes, where, for example, ZNCWC resumed its services as the secretariat of the child rights coalition that would compile the supplementary report to the main state party report on UNCRC. NANGO's child–friendly budget initiative broadened its reach to cover members of child–led groups attached to the project for pre–budget consultations. The project's financial support and capacity building enabled the Government to play its part of state party reporting while child–led groups became abler to broaden the scope of their operations and involvement in national and local governance. Its contribution of note was therefore to increase the joint efficiency of state bodies in the implementation and monitoring of UNCRC by enabling different stakeholders to play their various roles more effectively. In this respect the project enhanced the collaborative efficiency of all parties, whereby government, civil society and children all played active parts in consultation with each other in creating a child–friendly policy formulation, budget making and progress reporting framework.

In relation to objective 2 which pertained to promoting child participation, the project met its targets of setting up and strengthening child–led groups to the level at which they could initiate many other activities without external support. The project indeed achieved efficiency in child participation more in qualitative than numerical terms because all child–led groups that it supported uniformly became self–organised to engage fellow children in child rights activism. They expanded to new communities by educating other children about their rights and responsibilities before establishing new child–led groups.

4.3.2.   Did the project achieve its target within the planned timeframes?

The project scored perfectly in implementing its activities within the planned timeframes even as its various activities were coordinated by different players. Its notable achievement in this regard was its ability to maintain a facilitating role and to allow the Government and civil society partners, children and their communities be the hands–on implementers who autonomously chatted their courses of action but within guided frameworks that the project provided. The ability of these different players to all achieve the project's targets within the

planned timeframes reflects the efficiency of Save the Children Zimbabwe in providing the necessary financial support, technical guidance and administrative backstopping.

4.3.3. Was the project's implementation cost–effective?

This evaluation revealed that the project used cost–effective approaches for its implementation in the following ways:

a. It invested into existing structures that had been tried and tested as opposed to attempting to set up new structures. Instead of taking the writing of the UNCRC supplementary state report into its own hands, Save the Children Zimbabwe engaged and revived the operational capacity of ZNCWC, which already has the relevant mandate and expertise to play this function. Of the child–led groups that the project engaged, 68% were already in existence and all it had to do was to strengthen them. It then went on to establish from scratch the 32% of the remaining child–led groups, using the models adopted from existing ones. These child–led groups operate in partnership with stable community institutions such as schools and local councils, which have good track records for public accountability. The same can be said for the project's partnership with government ministries and departments.

b. It maintained a bottom heavy implementation structure, where a small head office staff compliment oversaw the implementation of a project reaching out to 1,426 children, 28 schools, six government ministries, 32 civil society organisations and many other stakeholders. To make this possible, the project heavily invested in technical capacity building to enable its implementing stakeholders to monitor, evaluate and document their work through a harmonized progress reporting system. An officer was placed at the project's head office to manage information and communications with various partners, which meant less administrative costs on the part of Save the Children Zimbabwe and more resources for support and expand grassroots activities.

c. Although motorcycles can be viewed as capital equipment, the project procured only five to pilot test their significance and left them under the care of local authorities to guarantee their maintenance. The motor cycles indeed worthy asserts for the child led groups because they will enhance the efficiency of youth advisors in coordinating the project in their zones and initiating new child–led groups in other communities. The life story of the Rafingora youth advisor in Box 4.3 below testifies to this fact:

Box 4.3: A life story on project coordination efficiency, Rafingora Youth Advisor
"I coordinate child–led groups in four wards including Wards 12, 13, 14 and 30. To visit them I have to travel on foot or by public transport, which makes my work difficult and tiring because there are long distances separating these wards. I do not complain, though, because I love what I do, especially for children because I once experienced the same problems as these children. I think I cover a radius of 13 kilometers to reach the four wards because public transport in this area is not regular I am always forced to walk from ward to ward, but that means I cannot attend to needs of two or more wards if they require me at the same time. I greatly appreciate the motorbikes that the project bought for us, but I do not yet have a license. I appreciate even a bicycle. Our child–led group at ARDA Sisi Farm collapsed because I lost touch with it and the children who were active in running it are no longer in school. The child–groups here at Katawa Primary and Secondary Schools are the

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most active because I live just three kilometers away and soon we will be having a resource room that I will be using as an office."

The above life story simply demonstrates that the relevance of the motorcycles that the project procured to enhance youth advisors' coordinating efficiency outweighs any economic considerations.

4.3.4. How clear was the project's monitoring and evaluation framework?

The evaluation of the project's monitoring and evaluation framework was clear to the relevant Save the Children personnel and children and youth at the grassroots, especially youth advisors had been educated about how they could contribute to it as reflected in the continuation of the Rafingora youth advisor's life story in Box 4.4 below:

Box 4.4: My role in project monitoring and evaluation, Rafingora youth advisor

I am responsible for linking child–led groups to all stakeholders such as Save the Children, other NGOs, local leaders, school staff and adults in general. This role makes me the most suitable person to relay information that I receive from various sources to members of our child–led groups and vice versa. In this role Save the Children expects me to mobilise child–led groups for special events such as visits of important delegates from Harare wishing to view what the project is doing in Rafingora. I am usually the one who receives and entertains these visitors just as I have received you (the evaluator). In turn I send reports to Save the Children, including quarterly progress reports, annual reports, quarterly case studies of our successful innovations and proposals of projects that we need technical and financial support for. As part of our child participation in governance we also compile updates of the state of child rights governance in our district once every two years and this is taken up to the team that writes the national state party report on UNCRC. Once every year we participate in national budget consultations at NANGO.

To help us do this work well the project organised a youth advisors' workshop on M & E skills at which they helped us to come up with a uniform template for each periodic report that we are expected to compile. I also attended another M & E workshop where we were trained in skills of collecting M & E data using the 'spider web' methodology and guided on what our roles and responsibilities should be, how we should handle children, carry out strategic planning meetings, implement and manage income–generating projects, document and file our work. In addition, Save the Children arranged a knowledge exchange workshop that I attended in Chinhoyi on behalf of the child–led groups. The workshop was so educating and helpful that I just wished if other children, especially in the leadership, had attended. I learnt from the Chinhoyi experience that income–generating projects are important if we want to help other children to realize their rights. Therefore when I returned from the workshop our groups started market gardening projects. I also saw that there are several child councilors, child parliamentarians and child senators in the Chinhoyi child–led groups, which we do not have. I know that there is a child member of parliament in this district but she/he does not know about us and we do not work together with him/her. But one thing that I liked about our groups is that we have primary school pupils and form threes

in our leadership, which enables us to go even if form fours move to other areas after writing their exams.

The above life story has many similarities with what youth advisors from other districts said about the project's M & E framework. The evaluative remarks that can be picked from the research's finding about the project's M & E are as follows:

⇒ The project has specially designated personnel for monitoring and evaluation in the field in the form of youth advisors.

⇒ A monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework is available to guide data collectors in reporting the project's progress at the grassroots. This framework is founded on trainings that youth advisors received, which specified their roles and responsibilities as data captors, defined performance indicators to be reported on and developed a harmonized reporting template and schedule. This evaluation reviewed reports by child–led groups to verify evidence that some M & E training was done and it confirmed that it not only took place, but is in good use as demonstrated by extracts from some of the child–led groups' progress reports and action plans below.

⇒ Project implementation is guided by action plans developed through prior strategic planning meetings that children hold at their own initiative. These strategic plans are the ones that set forth the performance indicators that the children report on.

⇒ The project built the capacity of child–led groups to use the logical framework matrix attached to its M & E framework and in developing their action plans and reporting progress according to the relevant M & E framework. These matrices, as observed by the evaluator, have five columns if used in a progress report and seven columns if used in an action plan as exemplified by the extracts from one sample report and one action plan below:

Extract of the logical framework matrix for progress report

Objectives	Activity conducted	People reached	Results achieved	Any other comments
To reduce child abuse	*Door to door campaign against child abuse*	*Children and adult community members*	〉 *Increase in group membership* 〉 *Increase in reported cases* 〉 *Good relations between group and community*	

Extract of the logical framework matrix for action plan

Objectives	Activities	Resources	Target group	Baseline	Expected results	Timeframe
To review plans for the previous year	Holding the first quarter meeting	Stationery	Members of different grassroots child–led groups	30–40 participants	A well designed action plan Way forward for our project and activities	By 21 January 2012

⇒ The above logical framework matrices reflect intensive efforts that the project has invested in building the M & E capacity of its structures. However, more work still needs to be done to refine the capturing of quantitative data, especially on critical variables such as the rates of child abuse or its increase/decrease, reportage rate of child abuse cases and so forth. The project may also need to consider tightening the results based framework of monitoring, evaluation and reporting to provide for the clear capturing of outputs, outcomes and impacts of data, especially in quantitative terms.

4.4. Project Impact

This evaluation measured the impact of the Children in Governance Project by asking the following questions as laid out in the terms of reference:
- 〉 Did the project meet its projected impact targets? If yes, how? If no, why?
- 〉 What concrete improvements that can be attributed to the project or positive changes are observable in the lives of the targeted population (children)?
- 〉 How could the project's impact have been improved?
- 〉 What factors, if any, may have impeded the achievement of the overall project goal?

4.4.1. Did the project meet its impact targets?

It is this evaluation's conclusions from the findings in Chapter 3 and preceding discussions in this chapter that the Children in Governance met its impact targets and laid a firm foundation for greater impact to be realized. This however does not close any room for improvement, as many lessons can be derived from this evaluation. These lessons and recommendations for enhancing the project's impact are outlined in Chapter Five.

The project's support enabled children to make the duty bearers or Government accountable through their engagements of various Government departments such as the IMC on human rights and International humanitarian law and the Parliamentary Portfolio committee on budgets and Finance and the Ministry of Finance. Child rights sector organizations were more actively engaged, resulting in the creation of a 32–member child rights coalition tasked with the production of CRC supplementary report. The coalition has so far produced a universal periodic report on child rights (UPR), which was submitted to the Human Rights Council. The project can readily be credited for improvements in the observance of children's rights, a more coordinated approach to the implementation and monitoring of UNCRC and more effective responses to child rights concerns in Zimbabwe. The project also facilitated the interaction of children from various child–led groups for experience sharing and increased their understanding of their rights and responsibilities. This is evidenced by the way children took to raising awareness of child rights and responsibilities in other communities and doing works of charity to help underprivileged children and adults. The project resulted in the resuscitation of two important state bodies, mandated to coordinate the national programs for children's welfare in Zimbabwe such as the NPA and ZNCWC. By resuscitating these state bodies, the project injected renewed keenness and energy in them to carry out their mandate or activities. The initiative to support the revitalization of Government bodies that have been defunct in as far as child rights are concerned was very well received.

4.4.2. What concrete improvements can be attributed to the project?

There are several concrete improvements that are attributable to the project, although these are more in qualitative than quantitative terms. Child–led groups need additional technical support to increase their capacity to capture and document quantitative improvements to the status of child rights observance in Zimbabwe. Notable improvements that came courtesy of the project are as follows:

〉 The project effectively transformed child–led group activities into a vibrant movement: All child–led groups that informed this evaluation had taken their awareness raising campaigns to neighboring schools and adults in their communities. In all the schools where these campaigns were taken, new child–led groups were born. This has seen a massive expansion of the child–led movement of promoting children's rights, where the groups in Marondera formed a 450–member General Assembly called the Mashonaland East Association of Child–led Groups, comprising Marondera Fight Club, Young people's Mission, Youth Advocates Zimbabwe, Marondera Junior Council, Mashonaland East Junior Parliament and others including the district's CPC.

〉 The project's pursuit of its first specific objective strengthened the civil society–government collaboration in the promotion of child rights and reporting of the country's performance in that regard. The project renewed the activism and self–organisation of governmental and non–governmental stakeholders, especially through strengthening the capacity of ZNCWC to fulfill its mandate of coordinating and overseeing all national efforts towards child participation and child rights observance. Now serving as the secretariat of the 32–member child rights coalition, which has room to accommodate more members, ZNCWC gained increased national relevance and this can strengthen its position when raising funds for its future activities. Similarly, the government of Zimbabwe's enhanced technical capacity, especially in the area of child rights programming and data management, through the project's effort leaves it abler than before to produce sounder state party reports that reflect children's views. On the same token the project raised the child–friendliness of the media institutions with which it collaborated. The media's widespread influence of public opinion and even behavior needs no further emphasis than to expect the project's investments in building the child–sensitive reporting of the media to transform behavior if utilized.

〉 The project increased child involvement in decision making as desired. The evaluation was informed that all child–led groups developed annual plans that included activities attached to the planning cycles of respective local authorities. Junior councilors in Mvurwi, Kadoma and Marondera reported that they shared their annual plans with their senior municipality officials so that children's interests could be mainstreamed into town council business. The increase in national budget allocations to education and health sectors between 2010 and 2011 may not be entirely attributed to children's participation in the child–friendly budget initiative, but undoubtedly this effort contributed to that development. National budget allocation to the Ministry of Education Arts Sport and Culture was increased from USD267,753,600 in 2010 to USD469,367,000 by 2011 in line with children's push for increased support for child education. Apart from that the education ministry introduced and strongly promoting the concept of making school environments child–friendly. On the other hand the budget allocation to the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare was raised in 2011 to USD256,198,000 from USD156,473,600. This evaluation came at a time when the draft child rights policy had been developed with the active involvement of children and was at draft stage awaiting parliamentary approval. Within the schools most child–led group members were regarded sufficiently responsible to be appointed prefects – duties which they exploited to apply their knowledge about children's rights and responsibilities.

〉 Through child–led educational sponsorship of OVC the project prevented numerous children from dropping out of school and saved these from the subsequent vulnerabilities that deprive them of their rights, say, to protection from harm. School drop outs are most commonly vulnerable to sexual manipulation or abuse, unplanned pregnancies, early marriages and internal displacement or trafficking. This form of impact is based on

anecdotal evidence because child–led groups had not track the school drop out rate from the time the project started to the time of the evaluation.

〉 Anecdotal evidence that the evaluation gathered further point to the rise in the rate of reporting abuse and attributes this to the project's awareness raising campaigns. "At first abused children remained silent in fear of victimization," a teacher in Chinhoyi reported. "However, it was easy to see from their behavior when playing with others at school or during lessons that they had been abused and members of the child–led group counseled or referred them to us for assistance, which enabled them to open up and talk about the abuse they had experienced." Child–led groups in all districts are credited for linking fellow children to the referral network of authorities and institutions that can handle cases of abuse. The only improvement that is required in respect of this achievement is to improve the recording of the number of cases reported, along with outcomes of the prosecution processes.

〉 The project harmonized the movement steered by child–led groups with the policy making processes of adults and junior councilors, parliamentarians or senators. In places such as Mvurwi where there were no junior councils, the project facilitated the creation of new ones. Child–led groups became a major constituency of junior councilors, parliamentarians and senators which they consulted from time to time, enabling these to speak from an informed position.

〉 The project contributed to increasing a sense of responsibility among members of child–led groups. All child–led groups made charitable deeds a part of their business, donating materials to the aged, disabled and sponsoring the education of needy OVC. Kadoma child–led groups uniquely visited the town's general hospital to campaign against adult men's cruelty that leads to teen pregnancies of girls. Schoolteachers interviewed by this evaluation reported that child–led group members had far better disciplinary records in general than non–members. "Most of our prefects are also members of the child–led group," the Katawa Primary School Head in Rafingora reported. All the heads of schools who this evaluation interviewed felt that a child's participation in the project as a member of a child–led group enhanced their chances of passing school exams because it exposed them intellectually arousing debates and to opportunities to speak in English, which is an examinable subject. One school head said, "When you hear some of them speaking you really get convinced that 'this one will become a human rights lawyer some day.'" The income–generating projects that the project supported strengthened the business or project management skills of participating children and they can use these skills for their advantage in the distant future. This is especially encouraging considering the high rate of youth unemployment and the growing emphasis on entrepreneurship as a youth economic empowerment tool.

Other impacts of the project, especially at the level of participating children are best portrayed in the form comparisons between members of child–led groups and other children. The table below shows the differences.

Attributes of child–led group members	Attributes of other children
They report abuse to relevant authorities if they personally experience or witness it because they are aware of the relevant referral network and reporting channels or procedures	They may not report it if abused. The best they can do is to report abuse to child–led group members and expect these to take matters to relevant authorities, which is a longer route
They share their personal problems through peer	They may struggle to deal with personal problems,

Attributes of child–led group members	Attributes of other children
counseling mechanisms that are inherent in their procedures of conducting business	which they keep to themselves. The less they share their concerns is the more prone they become to rash and destructive decisions such as suicide
They more actively participate in national development processes alongside adults (e.g., through junior councils, parliament or senate, the Girl Empowerment Network under the Ministry of Gender, NANGO–facilitated pre–budget consultations, the Mai Chisamba Show and others.	They are closed from national development discourse and may be unaware of critical policy issues affecting their well being, which need their actions. Their inactivity in these processes means limited chances to put the knowledge they gain from academic studies such as History, sociology and others into practice.
They are more intellectually exposed through public speaking competitions and debates about pertinent national issues with adults (e.g., on Mai Chisamba Show), which increases their self confidence and improves their academic performance.	Their knowledge of civic matters is restricted to textbook material and schoolteachers' input. With no platforms to express their knowledge and limited opportunities to publicly express their knowledge under public scrutiny, they enjoy limited support for their intellectual growth.
Most are occupy positions of responsibility and authority as prefects, class monitors, junior councilors, parliamentarians and senators. By virtue of this they are naturally inclined to be more presentable.	They are comparatively found in lower numbers within leadership positions and are inclined to be less presentable.

4.1.3. How could the project's impact have been improved?

Without taking anything away from its impact, the project could have enhanced its impact by widening its network of partners beyond key government ministries/departments and civil society organisations. This evaluation revealed that the project's sensitivity to the needs and rights of disabled children could have benefited immensely from the participation of organisations the represent the interests and coordinate initiatives targeting disabled children (e.g., Zimbabwe Association of Persons with Disabilities, etc). This move may have made it more possible to develop and disseminate IEC materials that children with disabilities can use. Partnerships with private sector or business players could also make a difference as far as sustaining the flow of funding for the child rights movements beyond the project's life. Corporate social responsibility is among the leading marketing strategies for businesses today and the project could sell child rights as an arena for exercising corporate social responsibility. The project could further improve not just its impact, but the monitoring and reporting thereof by developing tools for quantitatively capturing improvements in the well being of children (e.g., rate of decline in school drop outs, etc).

4.1.4. What factors may have impeded the achievement of the project goal?

Resource constraints at all levels can be here cited as the major impediment of the project's pursuit of its goal. Almost all the stakeholders of this project including government departments engaged, ZNCWC and child–led groups needed financial support to boost their technical and operational capacity. This strong need for financial support stretched the project's resources to the limit, resulting, for example, in five motorbikes being procured although child–led are established in 21 districts, most of them rural. Youth advisors in rural districts reported that they covered extensive areas that could not be covered efficiently on foot. Encouragingly, resource mobilisation skills are among the capabilities that the project

equipped its stakeholders with. ZNCWC is now doing work that naturally attracts the interest of potential funding partners while child–led groups will continue to finance their future activities from income raised from their projects and donations.

4.5. Project sustainability

The terms of reference which guided this evaluation define project sustainability as the long lasting effects of the intervention, directing the evaluation's analysis to the potential of the project's effects remaining over time and activities continuing in the absence of external funding. The evaluation further assessed the supportiveness of relations and coordination of targeted communities with key stakeholders (e.g., government departments, child protection committees, councilors, etc) to gauge the potential thereof to guarantee project sustainability. The sustainability of the project's investments in the form of infrastructure or assets and capacity building efforts was also evaluated.

4.5.1. Will the project's effects remain over time?

There are more bases of claiming that the effects of the project will outlast its contract period than there are justifications for the contrary position. This is because of the following findings of the evaluation:

   i. The project strengthened and created child–led groups which immediately transformed themselves into a movement involving self–initiated outreaches to new areas to create additional child–led groups. The profitability of these groups' income–generating projects has made them self–revolving, sustainable and motivating enough to continue beyond the project's official term. Of the ones that the evaluation visited, only the Marondera Fight Club was experiencing viability challenges in trying to initiate income–generating projects.
   ii. The project invested more into technical capacity building than on capital financing, which left its stakeholders with the skills to sustain the project's effects over time in ways that are described in detail in the section 4.4.2 below.
   iii. The project relied on permanently established community and national institutions as custodians of its activities and resources. State party reporting of country performance in UNCRC adherence will remain in the hands of IMC under the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, but they will execute their mandate more competently because of the technical support that the project provided. Local councils will continue to involve children in making their decisions because this practice became their culture soon after the project introduced it to them. Children have always participated in local council planning meetings ever since. Motorcycles that the project procured were placed under the custody of local authorities, which have suitable administrative procedures to guarantee the safekeeping and maintenance of the vehicles beyond the project's life.

4.5.2. Will project activities continue in the absence of external funding?

The evaluation identified five levels of project sustainability related to the capability of its activities to continue in the absence of funding. These levels are motivational, technical, relational, financial, livelihood and institutional sustainability.

i. Motivational sustainability

Motivational sustainability here refers to a project's ability to retain the motivation of children and stakeholders to continue implementing project activities in the absence of further funding. The Children in Governance Project had strong mechanisms for motivational sustainability, especially at the level of child–led groups. It was designed in such a way that children remained in the driving seat of advocating for their rights and raising child rights awareness in their communities, which instilled and strengthened their sense of ownership of the project. Child–led groups were given the onus to autonomously set their own priorities, make plans and formulate budgets for which they subsequently mobilised resources. Where Save the Children Zimbabwe provided financial resources it only responded to children's proposals. This has not only enabled children to make a mark in other people's lives, especially orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), but given them the ownership of all the credit that comes with their successes, which motivates them to do more on their own initiatives with minimal or no further external help.

Further motivation for children outside child–led groups to join and for those inside to remain members came from the extra incentive of the exposure to the mass media that the project facilitated through its partnership with producers of popular television shows such as the Mai Chisamba Show. The children may need the continued support of Save the Children Zimbabwe to access media resources in future but that may not involve further financial commitments given the ability of most child–led to mobilise resources for their activities. CSOs such as NANGO have also found motivation in the impacts it has made on children's lives and the policy making landscape by involving members of child–led groups in its child–friendly budget initiative. The organisation obviously owns the credit for all achievements recorded thereby and will be motivated to carry on with the initiative on resources mobilised from other sources. Similarly, ZNCWC remains motivated to uphold its role as the coordinating secretariat of the child rights coalition beyond the project's term.

ii. Technical sustainability

Technical sustainability relates to the range of skills that the project imparted to enable the participants, beneficiaries and stakeholders to handle project activities with minimal or no external help. This is the form of sustainability that the project did best to inculcate because it invested most of its energy, time and resources in capacity building. From the time Save the Children Zimbabwe partnered with the Ministries of Health and Child Welfare through NPA and the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs the project funded all capacity building workshops related to children's rights, which these government ministries could otherwise not afford before. Of major significance are trainings that government officers received on children's rights and skills of managing campaigns to uphold these rights as well as on data collection. The plans of the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs to conduct a baseline survey demonstrate the effectiveness of the project's training. The findings of the survey will be useful in informing future programming and reporting by the government of Zimbabwe in the absence of the project's funding.

The only threat to the sustainability of the technical skills that the project transferred is if some trained government officials resign to be replaced by incumbents who did not receive similar training. This makes it critical for the project to equip all institutional and individual recipients of its capacity building with written and/or electronic manuals for future reference.

The production of the audiovisual documentary is a good move. The same can be said of the project's distribution of IEC materials on children's rights, although better results could have been achieved by producing and disseminating IEC materials that suit the needs of children with disabilities. The technical skills that the project imparted at various levels, especially among children, further safeguard sustainability in the following ways:

〉 It supported capacity building activities with potential to inspire self–driven actions in future. The project supported workshops and meetings that would equip its partners like ZNCWC, NANGO, government, the media and children with strategic or action plans, technical skills and networks to perform the rest of their mandates on their own initiatives. This proved to be more cost effective than if Save the Children had attempted to replace its financially, logistically or technically challenged partners and assume their roles.

〉 The project's use of the Training–of–Trainers (TOT) approach in imparting research and documentation skills allows for children to share knowledge with others on their own initiative post the project's life cycle. Already all child–led groups were exercising their skills by reaching out to other communities to raise child rights awareness. By collectively compiling periodic reports and developing their annual action plans and budgets, the leaders and members of child–led groups have been able to share research and documentation knowledge gained through the project's training.

〉 The video documentary of the project and IEC materials developed during the project's course are permanent reference materials that can be consulted from time to time to replicate the project's model in future and other settings. A step by step guide or manual of how to start and sustain a successful child–led club can further enhance the project's sustainability and is worth serious consideration.

〉 The project's support of experience sharing visits between child–led clubs made it possible for children to exchange experiences and learn from practical situations. However, children felt that they could benefit more from exchange visits if more members and not just their leaders attended.

〉 The project's impartation of skills of initiating income generating skills counts among its most successful investments because it offered a very comprehensive and holistic package of training, where children received technical business and project management skills, resources for starting the projects and technical guidance in planning the project. The training equipped children with technical knowledge of production and financial management to make sure that the resources availed for the income–generating projects could be profitable utilized and professionally managed. These resources, including financial assistance, gave child–led groups a head start while the project's guidance in strategic planning helped by directing children's focus to their desired targets.

iii. Relational sustainability

Relational sustainability pertains to the health of relations between project implementers, participants or beneficiaries and stakeholders whose importance to the project is critical enough to determine its continuation or collapse. One of the project's remarkable achievements was to enter new relationships with government, CSOs and child–led groups as well as to facilitate and/or strengthen relations between these and other stakeholders. Even though Save the Children's partnerships with government departments and CSOs

were forged within the context of EU funding, the relationships so created are certain to continue at the technical level beyond the life of the Children in Governance Project. NANGO will not stop involving children in its child–friendly budget initiative after the term of the evaluated project but has committed to mobilise resources for expanding this component of their work. The Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs will conduct a baseline survey with the project's financial support and will need its collaboration and technical guidance to convert the survey's findings into workable programs, which entails a lasting relationship.

At the grassroots, children have created relationships with multiple stakeholders and entered partnerships with these without Save the Children Zimbabwe's direct involvement or facilitation. These relationships do not need the project's financing or technical support to continue beyond its term, but they are key to the continuance of child–led groups' activities. For example, the groups will continue to rely on town councils for operating space and to cut costs by using municipal facilities such as community halls to carry out their major events (e.g., Day of the African child Commemorations). In Kadoma the municipality in fact funds a substantial component of the budget of junior councilors who, through the project, have become an integral part of the child–led groups along with their movement for children's rights. Mvurwi set an example of how good relationships with the business fraternity can sustain the operations of child–led groups when children in this town raised USD210 from business people's donations. All child–led groups commonly reciprocate the good will of their community supporters through social responsibility gestures such as clean up campaigns and charity work. In general, this evaluation attaches the cordial relations between children and multiple stakeholders to the sustainability of child involvement in child rights governance on account of the following strengths:

〉 Child–led groups relate with institutions that are permanently established in and naturally duty–bound to serve their communities (e.g., schools, town councils, etc). This means, for instance, that child–led groups based in schools can last as long as schools remain in business and schools can continue to be credited for innovativeness as long as child–led groups exist.
〉 Community and national institutions as well as the media have a chance of earning credit for supporting children's cause, so it is in their interests to keep doing so.
〉 Children's relationships with their stakeholders enable them to cut the costs of carrying out their activities (e.g., an adult who the Mvurwi child–led group appointed as its patron donated a generator at one of their functions when it had been disrupted by an electricity power outage, town councils avail community halls for no fee, schools offer premises for child initiated projects, etc). This lowers the potential of some child–led groups to collapse because of financial challenges.
〉 Child–led groups will continue to get professional and mature guidance from the adults with whom they relate. This guidance is inescapably necessary as a conflict management mechanism. Children need the guidance schoolteachers or animators to avert the possibility of conflicts among them getting out of hand and dividing them. The motorcycles that the project procured for youth advisors to use in five project sites were placed under the responsible and mature custody of town councils so that children do not fight over these resources, but they remain the property of child–led groups across succeeding youth advisors.

iv. Financial sustainability

The evaluation classifies as financial sustainability the capabilities with which the project's design or efforts equipped its beneficiaries and stakeholders to enable them to handle financially demanding commitments in the absence of external funding. The financial dimension is probably the most challenging form of sustainability, especially for CSOs and government departments that partnered with the project, especially the latter. The government may scale down on workshops for planning activities related to children's rights without the project's financial support, but, just as much, these workshops may be less important now than when the project started. CSOs will manage to sustain the operations that the project initiated by mobilizing resources from other sources. What is encouraging is that both NANGO and ZNCWC highly prioritise the project components that were assigned to them and they committed to mobilizing new resources to carry the project forward.

Child–led groups recorded the surest potential for financial sustainability on the following two grounds:

〉 Most of them had initiated viable income–generating projects, managing to generate resources to spare for financing the education of their colleagues and do other charitable deeds.
〉 They all had the strong backing of resourceful community institutions, business people and related stakeholders who helped them to cut costs by offering their facilities at no cost and donated in cash and in kind.

The only worry that the project needs to clear is of child–led groups such as the Marondera Fight Club, which have not managed to initiate viable income–generating projects or to fund this initiative from locally mobilised donations. Exchange learning sessions may be a worthy consideration for helping groups in this situation, few though they are.

v. Livelihood sustainability

Livelihood sustainability refers to the capability of stakeholders to sustain the project's operations without threatening the socioeconomic well being of participants. The existence of livelihood sustainability can be assessed by asking and getting a 'yes' answer to a question like, "would a project stakeholder choose to partake in a project activity if there is a competing priority related to their livelihoods. This form of sustainability does not apply to the government and CSOs where staff involved in the project are salaried. There can be a threat of possible turnover of government or CSO staff that benefited from the project's technical support, especially if these are replaced by people who shift their priorities away from child participation in governance. However, as no organisation reported the occurrence of this setback, it remains a threat and its solution in advance would be to produce a manual of the project's model of child participation in governance to guide government and CSOs accordingly in future.

For child–led groups, livelihood sustainability is high given that:
〉 The project was designed in such a way that the movement for children's rights and income–generating projects were made inseparable components of the same movement. Now, because these projects have generated income that has been used to pay fees for and prevent some OVC from unduly dropping out of school, there is

every motivation to keep them going, especially among the OVC who have been so assisted. The same has secured strong adult backing for the groups, which should outlive the project.

〉 The project centrally targeted children in school thereby connecting the movement for children's rights to the core business of students. Schools accommodated child–led group activities among its extra–curricular activities and no reports were made to this evaluation of these activities disrupting children's attention to academic activities. If anything schoolteachers and heads commended child–led groups for enhancing children's self–confidence and preparing them for their future formal employment. One school head said, "child–led group members are so responsible that most of them end up as school prefects, class monitors and (sporting) house captains."

vi. Institutional sustainability

Institutional sustainability here refers to the availability of mechanisms in the project's design to keep institutional functions (e.g., operating space or offices, administrative services such as typing, etc) active in a future without the project's support. The following strategies have guaranteed institutional sustainability for the Children in Governance project:

〉 The government, CSOs and community institutions into which the project entrusted knowledge and resources have well established systems of resource management. Accordingly the evaluation was informed that motorcycles were in safer hands under the custody of local authorities than child–led groups or their youth advisors.

〉 Classrooms and resource centers in schools and community halls serve as the offices and meeting places for child–led groups. However these facilities are better equipped in some districts than in others (e.g., junior councilors in Kadoma have access to information technology and spacious board rooms at the Municipality of Kadoma, which, unlike those in Rafingora, enable them to type their reports and file them electronically). Child–led groups without access to information technology still handwrite their reports and can only file them in hard copies, which are prone to damage or loss.

〉 All child–led groups have leadership structures and clear procedures of installing and removing or replacing leaders. The Marondera Fight Club had a constitution in place to further clarify leadership and membership roles for harmony. This keeps the businesses of child–led orderly and professional.

〉 All child–led groups have a coordinating mechanism that is anchored on youth advisors who link children in various points of a district with each other and relay information from stakeholders to children and vice versa. Youth advisors of five child groups have access to motorcycles and the privilege of traveling long distances within short periods, but none of them had a driver's license at the time of evaluating. This evaluation nonetheless showed that these vehicles are appropriate and cost effective acquisition that will widen the reach of child–led groups equipped therewith.

CHAPTER FIVE

Lessons learnt, Recommendations and Conclusions

This chapter provides an overarching analysis to give more meaning to the findings and discussion of the project's performance in chapters 3 and 4 by illuminating the lessons that can be derived from the analysis in these two chapters and concluding with recommendations of strategies to maximize the benefits of the evaluated project.

5.1.   Lessons from the evaluation

From the findings in Chapter 3 come the following lessons:

ii.   The violation of children's rights can be voluntary or involuntary and poverty is at the center of both, with OVC the most vulnerable. This evaluation revealed that poverty is cyclic and that part of its cycle is the systematic violation of children's rights. A good example is of an orphan whose loss of parents deprive him/her of financial support to proceed with education. Dropping out of school becomes the first violation of the child's rights and can lead him/her into more abusive situations such as teen marriages, commercial sex work, drug abuse, child trafficking and so forth. In Rafingora the evaluation revealed that the children who were trafficked to urban areas as child laborers were predominantly OVC and from poor families. Therefore, the most effective strategies of reducing child abuse are those that are centered on reducing or eliminating poverty. On these grounds the evaluation commends that the Children in Governance Project for supporting self–initiated income–generating projects for child–led groups.

iii.   Income–generating projects are feasible under the management of child–led groups and these can be a sure way of sustaining the child–led movement in the absence of external funding. However, caution should always taken to avoid the possibility of children investing more energies in these projects than their academic endeavors, although schoolteachers who mentored the clubs reported that participation in child–led groups in fact enhanced one's academic performance. One schoolteacher reported: "Members of child–led clubs are highly self–confident, disciplined, respectful and charitable". Besides, most income–generating projects that children have initiated are strongly related to their practical subjects (e.g., poultry rearing projects fall in line with their agricultural studies). This means that by participating in these projects, children benefit from practical exposure of what they learn in the classroom.

iv.   The government best functions and becomes more relevant if supported by CSOs, especially technically and financially. The interview at the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs revealed that the Government of Zimbabwe operated on very tight budgets, which forced ministries to focus their attentions of a few priorities, which sometimes entailed sacrificing some critical values such as children's rights. The interviewed government official from this ministry reported that the government's access to resources coming from overseas funding partners was through NGOs. In future, therefore, Save the Children Zimbabwe should consider supporting initiatives that strengthen the capacity of the government to more effectively or meaningfully deliver its mandate. According to this evaluation, this approach has the following advantages:

a. The government, being a permanent national development institution with structures in all parts of a country, is a worthy custodian of human welfare. Projects that invest in government systems and structures, according to the project's experience have strong chances of being sustainable.

b. The government creates frameworks that regulate the development of an entire nation and not just localities through policy making, budgeting and so forth. By working with the Research and Policy Department of the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, for example, the project set in motion processes that have a potential to influence Zimbabwe's child rights policies and programs.

c. The government controls and distributes national resources. Therefore project initiatives such as the NANGO–led child–friendly budgeting initiative can more meaningfully drive national budgets towards placing children at the center of all considerations.

v. The child–led movement cannot be successful without the involvement of parents, guardians and adults of their communities in general. These adults are important to children for granting them permission to participate in child–led group activities. On the same token they can deter children from benefiting from child–led groups if adults do not appreciate the importance of children's rights. The evaluation revealed that the threat of community or adults' resistance to the children's movement for child rights continues to exist even though the project has largely conquered it. This means that complacency should never be accommodated and the project should continue to mainstream awareness–raising into child–led activities.

vi. The effectiveness of the CSO–government collaboration and partnerships between child–led groups and business people or community institutions shows that great results are achievable through networking. This suggests the necessity to continue widening partnerships with other sectors such as the private sector and representative bodies for children with disabilities.

vii. Technical capacity building builds a firm foundation for trainee–initiated growth and hence contributes to the sustainability of project activities. This research shows that the project invested in building the technical capacities of government and child–led groups before committing its financial resources. This inspired actions such as plans for a baseline survey by government and income–generating projects among child–led groups.

5.2. Recommendations

On the basis of lessons in 5.1 above and the evaluation findings and discussion in Chapters Three and Four, the following is hereby recommended for the project's consideration:

⟩ In addition to the audiovisual documentary that the project produced as its conclusion and the best practices report that it produced from its monitoring and evaluation data, a written manual of how to replicate the implementation model of this project is worth serious consideration. Of particular importance is a manual or 'starter pack' of "How to start and maintain a successful child–led group". A manual of this nature can be

used to initiate the child–led movement for children's rights in many schools and districts thereby sustaining the momentum that the project started without its direct involvement. In a manual of this nature, experiences of success recorded by different child–led groups on such innovations as income–generating projects, Day of the African Child commemorations, child rights awareness outreaches, charity work, child–led fundraising or resource mobilisation, partnership building and others should be captured as step by step instructions that lead to success. The same can cover the nature of challenges that can be expected when managing a child–led group (e.g., the turnover of students vis-à-vis leadership consistency) as well as the strategies of dealing with these.

〉 The project should further strengthen its systems and tools for its monitoring and evaluation in quantitative terms. The evaluation relied on anecdotal evidence to claim that there were improvements in the reportage of cases of child abuse and declines in the school drop out rates or number of early marriage. There should be a baseline for each of the key indicators of improvements to allow for objective measurements of percentage increases or decreases of phenomena. Notable components to be considered for quantitative monitoring may include but not limited to the following:

   a. Number of students whose fees were paid by child–led groups by gender, by district
   b. Amount of fees paid by district
   c. Number of school dropouts by gender, by reason for abandoning school
   d. Number of cases of child abuse reported by type of abuse, by gender of victim
   e. Number of prosecuted cases of abuse against children

〉 Exchange programs between child–led groups should continue but involving more members of child–led groups than just the leaders. As much as this invites budgetary implications, this move is worth serious consideration. Importantly, future exchange programs should be carried out within the framework of strategic planning so that children from one district can immediately incorporate lessons from another district into their annual plans.

〉 Income–generating projects should be made a universal feature of child–led groups across Zimbabwe through exchange learning programs or the recommended manual on how to start and manage a successful child–led group.

〉 The project should consider widening its strategic partnerships to include the private or business sector as well as representative organisations for children with disabilities such as Zimbabwe Association of persons with Disabilities. The private sector can be strategic as a source of resources to sustain the project at the grassroots. The importance of corporate social responsibility to a corporate entity's marketing is a bargaining opportunity worth exploring. Disability associations guarantee the guidance in the project's development and dissemination of IEC materials that are friendly to children with disabilities. The same can be a source of experience–based or research information on the well being of children with disabilities.

5.3.   Conclusions

On the token of this evaluation's findings, discussion and lessons learnt, it is this evaluation's conclusion that the Children in Governance Project used appropriate strategies to strengthen government and CSO capacity for child rights programming and to enhance child participation in matters affecting them. The evaluation shows that the project was highly effective in achieving its objectives, although resource constraints prevented it from reaching all its targeted geographical sites.   Its central emphasis on capacity building and maintenance of a facilitating rather than implementing role accelerated simultaneous progress at all levels, from the national government to children at the grassroots. There is evidence that all stakeholders went on to use the skills they acquired through the project and to take the movement of defending children's rights forward, signifying project sustainability. Consequently the project placed children strategically to challenge duty–bearers to respond to their needs and facilitated the expansion of the child–led movement to promote child rights. For these great achievements and the prospect of enhancing the project's impact through implementing the recommendations above, CONGRATULATIONS!

Annex 1: Research tools used in the evaluation

CHILDREN IN GOVERNANCE PROJECT EVALUATION

Semi−structured interview guide for key informants

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information for the final evaluation of the Children in Governance Project that Save the Children Zimbabwe initiated in partnership with the European Commission, the Government of Zimbabwe, your organisation and other stakeholders to facilitate the realization of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The evaluation is assessing the project's appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. You have received this questionnaire and are requested to please complete it because of collaboration with this project on behalf of your organisation. This questionnaire predominantly contains open−ended questions because the evaluator would have preferred to interview you face to face, so please try you r best to be as exhaustive as possible in responding to each question in the spaces provided and to supply any additional information if you feel that the questions herein do not adequately address specific project components of interest. Thank you for your kind participation.

Section A: General Information

1. Date –
2. Name of your organisation –
3. Type of organisation (e.g., NGO, etc) –
4. What is you position in your organisation –
5. Sex of respondent –
6. Number of years of service in the organisation – ___ years

Section B: Project−related Information

Evaluation theme	Question	Your answer (keep your responses in red ink as provided for in this table)
General project information	7. When did you (or your organisation) start to participate in the Children in Governance project?	
	8. Why was your organisation selected to take part in the above project's implementation?	
	9. What roles does your organisation play in the project's implementation?	
Project relevance	10. Briefly, what are your organisation's major mandates?	
	11. In what ways is the Children in Governance Project related to your organisation's mandate?	
	12. In what ways does your organisation's mandate contribute to the objectives of the Children in Governance Project?	
Relevance	13. In your opinion, does the Children in Governance Project address the	

Evaluation theme	Question	Your answer (keep your responses in red ink as provided for in this table)
	most pertinent child rights issues? In what ways?	
	14. If there are any areas of improvement in as far as the Children in Governance Project can better address child rights issues please state them here	
Appropriateness	15. Through what channels or platforms has Save the Children Zimbabwe engaged you or your organisation on matters of the project?	
	16. Please state the mechanisms, if any, that the project avails to you to provide feedback for its improvement. Please give examples of the advice that you may have given to the project through the feedback mechanism(s) that you have mentioned	
	17. In the project's approaches of implementing its activities, are there any approaches that you think are not appropriate enough to bear the desired results or may need improvement. Which are these, and how can the project improve?	
Effectiveness	18. In your understanding of the project, was it effective, partially effective or ineffective in pursuing its goals? Please justify your response, demonstrating where possible if it could not accomplish any or some of its objectives	
	19. To which strategies would you ascribe the project's effectiveness (ability to accomplish its objectives) or ineffectiveness?	
	20. What challenges, if any, may you associate with the project's inability to achieve any or some of its objectives?	
Sustainability	21. Do you feel that the Children in Governance Project is sustainable? In which ways is it sustainable or not (please be as exhaustive as possible)?	
	22. Are there any factors that may adversely affect the project's sustainability? Which ones are these?	

Evaluation theme	Question	Your answer (keep your responses in red ink as provided for in this table)
Recommendations	23. What can the project do better to become more relevant to child rights needs of today	
Recommendations	24. What can the project do better to improve its strategies and implementation approaches so as to be more appropriate and effective?	
	25. What can be done better to maximize project sustainability?	
Any other issues	26. If there are any other comments that you think are relevant to this evaluation please list them here	

Thank you for honestly responding to this short questionnaire. The evaluator will do everything to accurately reflect your opinions and experiences.

CHILDREN IN GOVERNANCE PROJECT EVALUATION

Project Implementation Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to verify whether and how far the Children in Governance Project met its implementation targets as laid out in the original proposal submitted to the European Union. The information solicited by this tool will enable the evaluator to provide an overall picture of the project, especially given that he visited selected geographical areas or project sites and left others. You are requested to please complete this checklist in your capacity as the officer primarily responsible for the project's implementation. You obviously may need to consult specific project files and/or the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for information in order to complete the checklist accurately enough. Thank you for your kind assistance.

Section A: General Information

27. Date –
28. What is you position in your organisation –
29. Sex of respondent –
30. Number of years of service in the organisation – ____ years

Section B: Project–related Information

B1. Geographical coverage of the project

31. Did you reach all the planned geographical areas that you targeted with the project's services in the proposal? To respond to this question please complete the table below.

Province	District	No. of child–led groups created/strengthened		No. of child–led group members		
		# created	# strengthened	Males	Females	Totals
Harare	Harare					
	Chitungwiza					
Bulawayo	Bulawayo					
Manicaland	Mutasa					
	Odzi					
	Nyanga					
Mashonaland Central	Bindura					
	Mvurwi					
	Muzarabani					
	Rushinga					
Mashonaland East	Marondera					
	Mudzi					
	Mutoko					
	Chivhu					
	Uzumba–Maramba– Pfungwe					
	Hwedza					
Mashonaland East	Macheke					
	Murewa					
Mashonaland West	Chinhoyi					
	Kadoma					
	Rafingora					
Masvingo	Bikita					

Province	District	No. of child–led groups created/strengthened		No. of child–led group members		
		# created	# strengthened	Males	Females	Totals
Matabeleland North	Bubi					
	Hwange					
	Lupane					
	Nkayi					
	Tsholotsho					
Matabeleland South	Beitbridge					
	Gwanda					
	Matobo					
Midlands	Gweru					
	Gokwe					
	Mberengwa					
	Zvishavane					
	TOTALS					

32. Did you experience any challenges in achieving your desired geographical coverage and/or in monitoring the project's implementation in all provinces and districts? If yes, please give details below and if not please explain the strategies that you used to achieve 100% coverage of your targeted geographical sites.

> *1. Challenges*
> -
> -

> *2. Strategies for maximizing geographical coverage and monitoring the project in all regions*
> -
> -

B2. Project performance in implementing planned activities

33. Please list the staff positions that were created and filled for the purposes of efficiently implementing the project in the table below:

Position	Major responsibility	Target	Actual recruited	
			Male	Female
Provincial Youth Advisors				
Information & Communication Officer				

NB: If there is any organisational structure that is specific to the project, please kindly paste it onto this page in the space below or send it as a separate attachment.

34. Did the project experience any staff–related challenges? If yes, please give details in the box provided below"

> -
> -

35. Procurements:

1. How many motor bikes were procured for the project's implementation? In the box below please give details of their distribution and usage, especially in relation to whether or not they may have contributed to the project's efficiency.

2. Please give details in the box below of books and disability reference materials that the project procured (if it did), emphasizing on how many of what kinds of materials were procured, where they were distributed and what they were meant for.

Qqq werrttyuioooooovvv

36. For each of the project's activities, please describe in the table below the status of implementing each individual component:

Activity component	Specific activities	No. of sessions of activity executed		No. of beneficiaries/ participants reached	
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Example: Capacity building	e.g., Training youth advisors in monitoring and evaluation skills	e.g., 6 workshops	e.g., 4 workshops	e.g., 60	e.g., 40
Awareness raising	Three–day awareness raising workshops				
	Training of media practitioners in child sensitive reporting and communication for change skills				
	IEC materials development in partnership with experts in the business				
Support campaigns for legal reform through research	Financially and technically supporting children's campaigns for legal reform				
	Media productions contributing towards legal reform campaigns				
Capacity building for child–led groups	TOT workshops on research and documentation skills (and about the state party report writing process)	2		100	
Creating forums for children to interface with decision makers	Support of NANGO–convened two–day consultative meetings for children and budget policy makers	15		30 children	
		15		20 policy makers	
Capacity building for child–initiated projects	Training skills of initiating projects and managing them	10 trainings			
State party capacity building	Meetings with relevant authorities to revitalize NCWC and set up a secretariat	4			
	Training of IMC and child rights desk of NPA	1			
Documenting lessons and best practices	Communication and advocacy workshops	1			
	Children's articles incorporated in newsletter	2 issues of newsletter			
		1 public relations publication		N/A	N/A
	Video on best practices for advocacy	1 video		N/A	N/A

If in the above table there are any variances between the planned targets and actual accomplishments what factors are responsible for the variance (kindly use the space in the box below)

Do you have any pertinent comments to make about the project's efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability and/or impact? Please list them in the box below.

1. Relevance
-
-
2. Effectiveness
-
-
3. Efficiency
-
-
4. Sustainability
-
-
5. Impact

Thank you for completing this checklist. The evaluator will do everything to accurately incorporate this data into what was collected from the beneficiaries and stakeholders.