

Report

Strengthening Community Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

The Case of Matobo and Mberengwa Districts' Child Protection Committees (CPCs)



November 2013



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“It is our collective responsibility to care for our children”, CPC



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Abbreviations

CCPC	Child-led Child Protection Committee
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
DCPC	District Child Protection Committee
DSS	Department of Social Services
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HBC	Home Based Care
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoPSLW	Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MoPSLW),
NAP	National Action Plan
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PIM	Programme Implementation Manual
PSRT	Psychosocial Support Research and Training Centre
RDC	Rural District Council
SC	Save the Children
SRS	Simple Random Sampling
ToR	Terms of Reference
VCPC	Village Child Protection Committee
VHW	Village Health Worker
WCPC	Ward Child Protection Committee

Introduction

In 2002, Save the Children (SC) partnered with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and eight local authorities in a pilot project of mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS on children. The project's goal was to mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS on children through strengthening community structures to care and support OVC, strengthening community coping mechanisms and increasing HIV knowledge to the 15-24 year age group.

The design of the project was centred around addressing the prevailing gaps in the response arising from the brain drain as professionals were leaving the country at a time when OVC were increasing in numbers and the extended family systems were overwhelmed. The project therefore saw the need to involve communities to take responsibilities of caring, protecting and supporting OVC.

Save the Children facilitated the establishment of Child Protection Committees from village to district levels. The targeting of community structures was premised on the understanding that the community is best positioned to understand the needs and identify sustainable solutions to the problems. Activities to strengthen these community structures included training, supportive and mentorship visits to communities by coordinators and staff, skills transfer for developing community coping mechanisms including a culture of savings and support identified children in need. This was also extended to district structures in which systems for support to the community were also targeted for strengthening.

The support provided by SC was guided by the organisation's Theory of Change, which is anchored on building partnerships with the target groups (children), communities and other stakeholders to come up with innovative and evidence-based solutions to address identified needs as well as advocate for appropriate and effective responses to these needs to achieve the desired change at scale and sustainably.

**"Parenthood has no boundary",
CPC**

Theory of Change

We will...



Over time, the project earned recognition as one of the best models for OVC programming.

In view of the experiences and positive results, SC commissioned this exercise with a focus on documenting the component of establishing CPCs and their effectiveness in the protection, care and support for OVC. The framework for the documentation was guided by three closely related factors as follows:

- i. The growing recognition that Child Protection Committees are very effective and make impact in the care and support of OVC making them one of the best models for OVC programming.
- ii. The need to understand and document how the CPCs were formed, operationalized, sustained in order to enable other OVC stakeholders to make informed, high-quality decisions about how to support the establishment and operation of CPC institutions that meaningfully contribute in caring and supporting OVC.
- iii. The need to raise awareness among stakeholders, of promising practices and lessons learned in the establishment, operation, and supporting of community CPC institutions.

Methods

This documentation exercise adopted a process evaluation approach that utilised a cross-sectional descriptive design and qualitative methods. The process sought to unpack the underlying processes and causal pathways from the formation of CPCs right through to their operationalization and sustenance.

The documentation exercise was done in Mberengwa and Matobo Districts, the two districts, which SC was interested in learning from and sharing lessons. The study population within these districts included the CPC groups, community members, children, and community and district leadership. Since the coverage of the support was at district level, the full list of wards in the districts was used as a sampling frame from which six wards per district were selected using Simple Random Sampling (SRS). A replacement rule was used to substitute the very remote wards with the next ward on the list in view of time and logistical limitations in the fieldwork. However, this was applied for only those wards beyond 80km from the Rural District Council (RDC) offices. One site was randomly selected within the selected wards and participants within these sites purposively selected with consideration of their participation in the programme, and whether they were stakeholders or beneficiaries.

The study was mainly qualitative in nature. However, wherever relevant and feasible, the review utilized quantitative data in project reports to triangulate qualitative data on the implementation and performance of the project. PRA techniques used in data collection included the community mapping exercise, timeline reconstruction of events, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews, Observation, MSC and Photography.

A total of 12 FGDs with adult CPCs, 12 FGDs with children's groups/child-led CPCs, 12 FGDs with adult community members (non-CPC members), 10 key informant interviews with community and opinion leaders as well as five (5) key in-depth interviews with district leaders were held across the two districts.

The recordings and field notes were transcribed verbatim and translated to English. The transcripts were coded using the deductive method (i.e. using a set of pre-designed themes and codes) and any new emerging themes (inductive method) were noted. The coding and analysis was undertaken using NVivo software.

CPC Documentation Sites



The Situation of OVC in Mberengwa and Matobo Districts

The high prevalence of orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) is a notable footprint of the protracted effects of the generalized HIV epidemic across Zimbabwe's communities including Matobo and Mberengwa districts. The two districts were both estimated to have at least 20% of the children being orphans in 2005¹. The 2010/11 Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) estimates the provincial orphanhood prevalence for Midlands and Matabeleland South, the provinces for Mberengwa and Matobo districts, to be 23.7% and 25.2% respectively against the national estimate of 21.3%.

Despite the high prevalence the status of OVC in Mberengwa and Matobo is seen to have markedly improved from the widely documented challenges that typically face these children countrywide. The main challenges have been the lack of access to basic social services i.e. education, food, health, clothing and parental support. The 2010 UNICEF Report (Situational Analysis on the Status of Women and Children) provided the following national estimates: 25% of girls below 18 years affected by HIV are exposed to sexual violence, 22% of children report experiencing abuse by a caregiver; and 30% of children are unable to complete primary education amongst other indicators.

The cross-section of respondents in this inquiry indicated that the communities had in the past years witnessed positive changes in the situation of OVC. Of note, they highlighted marked improvements in the school enrolment and attendance of OVC, a significant reduction in reported cases of child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse (CSA); increased awareness and upholding of child rights and responsibilities as well as an increased responsibility to reduce emotional distress among the OVC.

According to the key informants, in previous years major disparities in school enrolment and attendance rates were visibly apparent between children who are orphaned and vulnerable and those who are not. Children who were neither orphans nor vulnerable were seen to be more likely to enrol and or attend school consistently than OVC.

"...When we look at the previous years, most orphaned children were not enrolling in school; it was very common to see children of school going age fetching firewood or herding livestock during school hours..."

Programme reports indicate that as at September 2013, Matobo district had an estimated 60,310 children of which 10,453 (17.3%) were OVC. Of the 7,147 eligible to attend school, only 397 (5%) were not in school. This has dropped

from the previous estimates of above 10%. School enrolment disparities were resulting not only from the general widespread poverty but also from mere negligence of parents and guardians.

"...This community is impoverished as you can see...but sometimes we tend to overemphasize it. As a people we search within ourselves and definitely somehow we find the potential in us to provide for our children. In most cases because of laziness we would find it easy to just sit and say we are poor so we don't do anything..."

There is widespread satisfaction with the sharp decline in cases of abuse, particularly Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) of the girl child. These cases are now rare, it is noted, and the communities are said to be now able to detect even those cases that previously used to be covered up within the family arrangements.

Many children, especially orphaned girls living in child headed households were being sexually abused and cases went without anyone noticing. Although somehow we knew it was wrong, no one would take the initiative to intervene. Girls were getting impregnated and left to suffer right under our nose. All that has changed now, it is now rare, if ever there are any cases happening, those who are doing it are being highly discreet but we are confident that these are not happening anymore. VCPC, Matobo District

The community also professed an enhanced consciousness of child rights.

"...we had no clue on what those are and we were not recognising these in our everyday lives. All of us are now conscious of these and we try to avoid violating these, for example, we now understand that it is against child rights to ask them to skip school in search of missing livestock or asking them to carry very big buckets of water," Community Member, FGD, Mberengwa

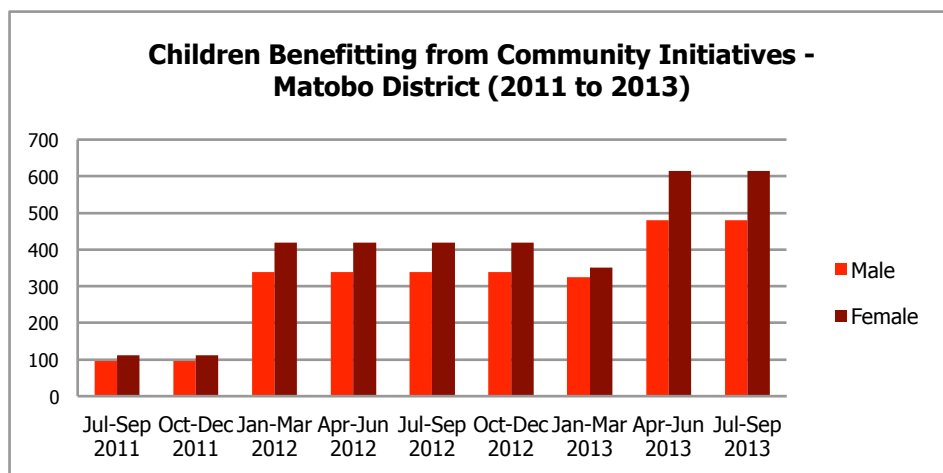


These positive changes were largely attributed to the work and role of Child Protection Committees (CPCs). Respondents, including community members and leaders, strongly felt CPCs played a crucial role in ensuring that children are protected from harm, abuse and any forms of inequity. CPCs have been operational in Mberengwa and Matobo since 2002 and 2009 respectively. It was noted in this inquiry that CPCs have gradually and over time contributed to the realisation of the aforementioned changes. In both districts, since the CPCs became operational, they have been acting as watchdogs for the upholding of children's rights and wellbeing. They play a crucial role in **identifying children in need** and **link them with relevant resources, raise awareness and educate** the community about child rights and responsibilities and health related matters, facilitate the **addressing of problems** affecting OVC such as child abuse, school dropout, birth registration, **mobilize resources** and create synergies with other related programmes to ensure timely implementation of OVC interventions, identify opportunities for knowledge and **skills sharing** with other CPCs and stakeholders.

The CPCs are noted to have had substantial coverage in reach, particularly for the provision of material and educational support. For example, CPCs in Mberengwa district had at the time of documentation assisted 1400 children. The figure below shows the children reached quarterly in Matobo district alone between July 2011 and September 2013.

This documentation exercise therefore explored the processes, trajectory and micro-causal pathways from the formation of CPCs in the two districts to their contribution to the aforementioned changes.

Figure 2: Children Reached Through CPCs



The Concept of Child Protection Committees (CPCs)

Whilst the concept of using CPC structures dates several decades back, Save the Children introduced the concept in Zimbabwe at a programming level in 2002. Then the approach had not yet been adopted at national level. As shall be discussed in later sections, today the CPC have become the cornerstone of OVC programming in Zimbabwe. Save the Children first introduced this concept as a pilot under the project **Light the Children's Path: Mitigating HIV and AIDS Impact on Children in Zimbabwe**.

This project aimed to enable local authorities to improve their coordinating function, and to ensure that local communities are able and organised to provide support for vulnerable children within their home communities. The same project was building on, and strengthening the 2001 national strategy for supporting children in difficult circumstances.



Development of the CPC Project in Matobo and Mberengwa Districts

The Need Identified

Child Protection Committee (CPC) structures were formed to promote and protect children's rights and welfare (including access to basic services), and deter any unfair practices or influences against children including child labour, neglect, abandonment, service denial, unfair treatment and any other forms of abuse and exploitation. CPC members across both districts unanimously agreed that the rationale behind the formation of these structures was the need to contribute to and complement the government and other stakeholders efforts to protect, care and support the OVC who were facing a host of psychosocial problems as a result of HIV and AIDS including poverty. Most OVC were suffering from psychological distress due to multiple deaths of parents, lacked food and educational support leading to school drop-outs and also suffered neglect as they were left to live in child-headed households. In these circumstances they had heightened levels of vulnerability levels to further abuse within their households and the community.

According to the Falcon Ward (Ward 22) CPC in Matobo district, children were made vulnerable and to become child-heads because of out-migration of parents and guardians to the neighbouring countries Botswana and South Africa. Children were left alone to fend for themselves and girls were forced to drop out of school and engage in intergenerational sexual relationships, particularly with the cross-border commuter omnibus drivers and conductors. Other children were also forced to migrate to these countries without necessary travel documents. These situations exposed them to sexual abuse, early and unwanted pregnancies and HIV infection. Apart from death and migration of parents, the districts experience annual droughts resulting mainly from erratic rainfall and as such food shortages are a common feature for most families. The formation of CPC structures was therefore premised on the fact that committee members are in close and direct contact with the vulnerable children, they can easily identify them and they can provide timely support to the vulnerable children in their communities.

Consultations

The HIV and AIDS Mitigation project was developed in close consultation with the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MoPSLW), the Local Authorities CEOs and Chairpersons in the district councils and community

stakeholders (chiefs, village heads and villagers). In 2002, Save the Children engaged the MoPSLW in talks on the need to support setting up the CPCs. The local councils were brought on board, sensitised to incorporate attention to OVC in their broader social welfare projects.

Mberengwa district was engaged in 2002 amongst other districts under the project, Light the Children's Path project, which served as a pilot. As already indicated, the Light the Children's Path project was a pilot project whose primary function was to examine and document the processes by which improved care for children can be achieved, and then be replicated in other areas. As such the project was piloted for 2.5 years between 2002 - 2004. The report on its experiences showed incredible successes amidst challenges faced. Lessons learnt were used to generate recommendations for the continuing phases of programming.

Matobo district came on board in the second phase in 2007 with additional support from National Action Plan for OVC Phase II. The consultations broadly involved mapping a strategic framework to provide a common understanding on what the expected outcomes of the project were and how these were to be ascertained as well as defining each stakeholder's role in the implementation of the project.

Creating a Strategic Framework

The CPC concept is rooted in the very fact that CPCs are sustainable community based structures which are not only better placed to know the existing needs of the children but also able to intervene at the best possible short time. Once they are aware of the material, psychological and social needs of the OVC, they can be a rich resource in supporting the children within their context. The development of the strategic framework, and in particular the set of envisaged changes, was guided by a combination of etic and emic approaches based on the use of conceptual frameworks, experiences from other settings as well as local knowledge systems. The latter was largely premised on local stakeholders' understanding of the community dynamics in responding to their priority needs. The consultations were therefore participatory and inclusive. In May 2002, local authority and community leaders participated in a consultative and planning workshop with other council partners as part of the pilot project's inception phase. Similar consultative meetings were held in Matobo district prior to the implementation.

A common thread evident through the reports and minutes of the workshops is the focus on validating the problem of OVC in the target areas, sharing ideas on the desired changes and possible strategies of attaining these as well as the roles and responsibilities of the different actors.



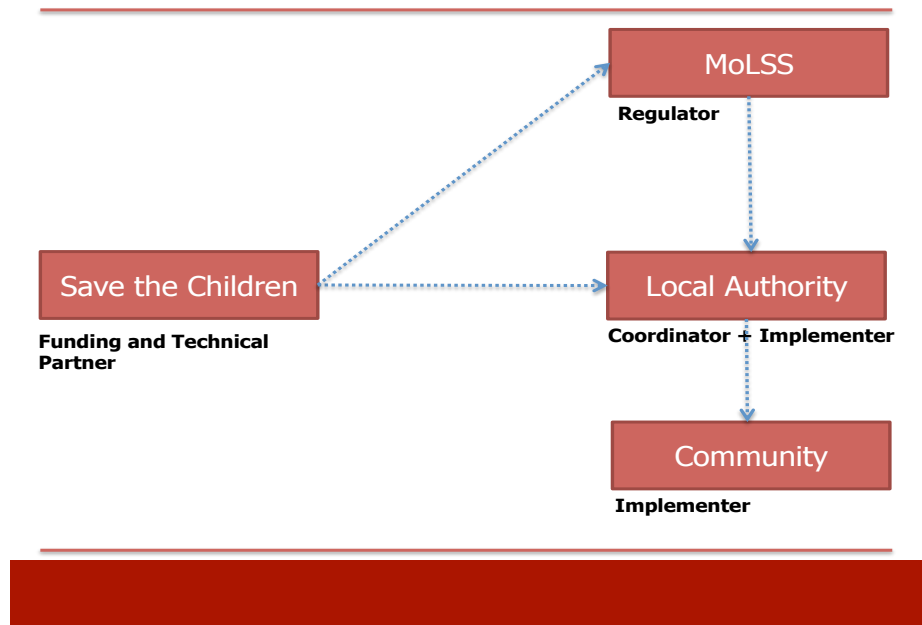
Institutional Arrangements and Structures

Central to the setting up the CPC structures was the collaboration and institutional arrangements between the various actors. Clear Terms of References (TORs) for each stakeholder were developed and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed. Save the Children's role was to provide financial, administrative and technical backstopping to the Ministry and the participating local authorities as well as to monitor and evaluate the project. The role of the Ministry was to provide overall co-ordination of the project activities. The local authorities were basically the custodians of the project and were responsible for the coordination. They were responsible for identifying and coordinating stakeholders in their districts, promote awareness in the communities of the OVC and develop capacity to respond to their plight. Local councils were expected to appoint a coordinator who will be responsible for the CPC project and Save the Children was expected to support the post of the district child protection coordinators, meet the logistical costs associated with meetings in which attending community stakeholders might claim for expenses incurred¹. Through their identified district child protection coordinators, local authorities were also expected to provide periodic monitoring data on the situation of OVC in their respective districts in order to inform programming on the priority needs of OVC and this was done regularly. The first phase of the implementation in which Mberengwa district participated with seven other districts under the Light the Children's Path Project, was implemented under the guidance of a National Coordinator, who was supported by Save the Children.

The National Coordinator was a former (retired) employee of the DSS hence brought with her some expertise in policy, strategic planning and coordination at a national level.

Key persons interviewed from both districts, including the CEOs of the local councils, expressed strong positive sentiments of the institutional setup and that replication of such can be a strategic priority in future projects. Key benefits noted to arise from this setup were that it facilitates systems strengthening particularly in the domains of human resources, service delivery and financing of the response. The capacity of the local authorities were seen to be strengthened by the presence of a focal person, the coordinator as well as the financial and technical support for the planning, implementation and coordination. The arrangement brought with it some accountability mechanisms, from community to institutional level, which have already been integrated with internal systems. The local authorities are committed to continue supporting the position of the coordinator. An issue brought forward as a key issue for consideration in similar arrangements is to ensure clarity in the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Social Services and the Local Authority, paying particular attention to the institutional setup vis a vi support, coordination, supervision and reporting.

Figure 2: Institutional Arrangements



Setting Up the CPCs

The Process and Timelines of Setting Up CPCs

The first CPCs were formed in 2003 - 2006 with most of the VCPCs formed in between 2008 – 2012. Matobo district has a total of 127 CPCs and 18 functional Child-led groups (all in schools) and Mberengwa has a total of 410 CPCs. The formation of CPCs was gradual and happened at different levels starting with the Ward levels then down to Village levels hence the differences in time when each CPC was formed.

A strong community driven social marketing component is evident in the process of forming CPC groups within the communities. This was noted to have evolved from the initial efforts to sensitise community stakeholders particularly the chiefs, headmen, councillors, village heads and the general community members. Having raised awareness on the concept, implementation approach and likely benefits; the key follow-up steps included the identification and selection of CPC members, training of members and the actual service provision. The following box provides a summary of the key steps used and that may be considered in setting up CPCs in the community.

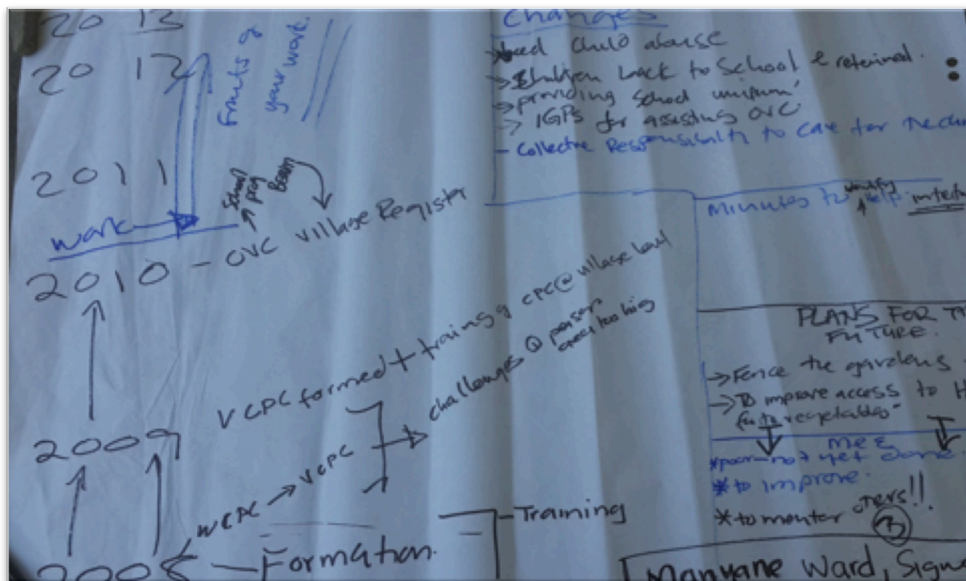
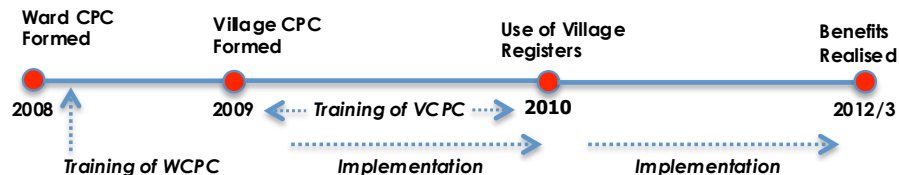
The Process of Setting Up A CPC

1. Observe the local systems by sensitising the community leadership and obtain their buy-in.
 - Be specific about what role you want them to play and how the initiative will benefit their community
2. Ask the community leadership to mobilise their communities and encourage their participation
 - Have the leadership and the community identify individuals who can be at the forefront of the initiative.
3. Train the identified groups in the CPC ToRs, Be sure to cover topics on:
 - Roles and responsibilities of the CPC
 - The specific roles of each CPC member,
 - The specific CPC service delivery (Case identification and Management – Abuse, Birth registration, Education, etc)
 - The reporting channels and support networks
 - Group formation and management and organisational development
 - Identification of group members and selection into specific positions
 - Resource mobilisation
4. Allow groups to form and organise themselves and provide them with timely technical and moral support as necessary



Figure 3 below also shows the timeline for Manyane Ward 13, Sigwaza Village CPC in Matobo District from the time it was formed up to the time it became operational.

Figure 3: Sigwaza VCPC Fomation and Implementation Timeline



Targeting and Selection of CPC Members

The consultations and planning had concrete outputs, principal among them being the structure of the CPCs within the districts. Although some differences were noted in the current implementation of CPCs in the two districts, both recognise District, Ward and Village level CPCs in the design. Each level was seen to have a specific role in the execution of the mandate, which was discussed and agreed by all members of the CPCs.

In Mberengwa district, CPCs are visible at village and district levels whereas in Matobo they are visible at village, ward and district levels. In both districts, the District CPC (DCPC) is constituted by a multi-sectoral representation from all the

line ministries¹ and civil society¹ organisations operating in the area. They are chaired by the DSS and are mainly responsible for activity coordination and supervision of child protection and safeguarding activities at the district level. At community (village and ward) levels CPCs are made up of general community members. The Ward level was envisaged to assume a similar role to that of the DCPC but at the ward or community level. The Village CPC was seen to be the primary implementer of the specific child protection and safeguarding activities.

The targeting and selection of CPC members were noted to vary across the levels, justifiably due to the differences in the primary functions at the different levels. In both districts, District level CPC membership is by "default" as it is based on a multi-sectoral approach in the response. All sector ministries qualify to be in the CPC as well as any civil society organisations whose programming is focused on children in the district. The Department of Social Services (DSS) chairs the DCPC.

At the community level, some differences were also noted in the selection process across the two districts. The selection of committee members in Matobo was based on a community voting system in which community members identified persons whom they felt were better placed to undertake child protection activities based on an agreed selection criteria. Except for the Village Head and Ward Councillor who also became CPC members by default (as a result of their leadership position in the community), the Ward Focal Persons and the Village level CPC members were selected and volunteered in by the community members based on a community defined criteria that stipulated that the person to be chosen must have the following qualities:

- Be knowledgeable about the community,
- Have no criminal record and has not been seen to abuse children,
- Be a permanent resident of the community,
- Be patient and concerned with the welfare of children, and
- Have good relations with the community,
- Is motivated and volunteers to undertake the duties that come along with being the CPC.

In some instances, the nominated names could also be voted for during community gatherings. Members that typically constitute community CPCs in Matobo district include representatives from HBC groups, VHWs, churches, local health facility and school in addition to the Village Head and Councillor. In Mberengwa district, in which Ward Focal Persons and Community mobilisers were identified by the appropriate local committees based on their levels of activity and involvement in community activities or previous and on-going programmes such as VHW, HBC and Peer Education work, and general perception of their potential to influence positive change. At village level, anyone can be a member of the CPC as long as they are willing to be one and are motivated to provide care and support for the children.

However, the ward focal person played an extremely pivotal function in the “recruitment” process. It was apparent in all the sites visited in Mberengwa district that the Ward Focal Person undertook some critical demand creation activities that included initially sensitising community leaders including the village heads, headmen, and chiefs on the programme followed by household level awareness on the need to take ownership in addressing the plight of OVC in the respective villages. Community level discussants in Mberengwa commonly felt that it is through the talks by the focal persons and leaders, that the spirit of a community driven response to the problem was fostered. The discussions on how the CPCs were formed in the villages were frequently punctuated by phrases such as “...then when Mai...came and talked to us, we felt the need...” Although the inclusion in the groups was inclined towards a self selection mechanism driven by volunteerism, the criteria or attributes of a CPC member earlier outlined were also considered by the community and in particular within the group.

Training and Capacity Building

District Child Protection Committee (DCPC) members received training during the inception and rollout phases in the two districts. The discussion notes and minutes of the planning meetings provide evidence of deliberate efforts to ensure a common understanding of the committee’s mandate as detailed in the CPC terms of reference. The training of the community CPCs was provided at two levels. Firstly, they were trained on their Terms of Reference. Particular focus was placed on the establishment of CPCs (Mission – i.e. what CPCs are and what their mandate is), Membership, Operations (how they should function), Child Participation and Networks and Support. Secondly, the trainings then zeroed-in on CPC service delivery. In both districts, during the rollout, the trainings started with Ward Focal Persons in Mberengwa and Ward CPC members in Matobo.

The coordinators trained these cadres on their terms of reference and service delivery. At this level, trainees were expected to also in turn train the lower level (Village) CPCs. As such, trainings adopted a training of trainers approach and mainstreamed a rights based approach. The specific topics covered during these trainings included: how to increase awareness of the plight of OVC in the communities and how CPCs members can assist the children, the need for holistic care and support for children, providing psychosocial support and material support, child rights and responsibilities, child abuse, child participation and referral chains and reporting systems. A review of the training manuals used indicates that there was deliberate effort to make it clear that CPCs must be self sufficient, command the local resources and not to expect or rely on external support, if such support comes, it should be viewed as only catalytic and supportive not as a permanent feature. They were encouraged to make efforts to address any problems and needs of children in their communities as mechanisms to identify them. Having been trained, the Ward Focal Persons and Ward CPCs in Mberengwa and Matobo respectively, provided similar training to their Village CPC chairpersons and secretaries.

The co-ordinators periodically provide refresher trainings to Ward Focal Persons and Ward CPCs who also do the same to Village CPC chairpersons and secretaries. The refresher trainings are done on a quarterly basis and typically cover 3 – 5 days depending on the topics to be covered.

Some aspects of the training processes and approaches were observed to require some strengthening. In particular, the training of CPCs at different levels was guided by different handbooks and resource materials and did not make use of a structured training manual specifically designed for the purpose. The major shortcoming of this was that some aspects of child protection and safeguarding such as basic counseling or communication skills to deal with psychological issues were not well developed amongst the trained CPC members. As a result, most work of this frontline cadre, as shall be discussed, was mainly limited to material support provision. In addition, certain subject matters such as child rights and responsibilities did not smoothly and accurately cascade across the levels such that they presented a potential conflict with the local societal values and norms of parenting within the community. Children are reported to have misconstrued the teaching and in most cases were no longer taking up some delegated chores and responsibilities, due to their regard of them as abuse and in the process confronting parents. This was however addressed timeously with further training and awareness.

Group Structure and Governance

The external technical support to this initiative also sought to ensure that the community is capacitated to respond to the needs of OVC in a structured manner. The composition and structure of groups as well as the frameworks governing the operations of these groups was a key discussion point in the trainings leading to group formation. It is however important to note that although these discussions were included in the trainings, great effort was placed to avoid imposing specific structures and operating procedures for the groups. Members were given the opportunity to develop these in an inclusive and participatory manner within their groups.

In Matobo, the CPCs have between 7 to 15 members and in Mberengwa they can be as many as 30. All committee members have specific roles and responsibilities within the CPC structure. In Mberengwa district, unlike Matobo, CPCs are formed by groups of individuals who feel the need and desire to contribute to child protection issues. Successes made by some CPCs motivate other community members to form groups who become CPCs.

"...For us to form a CPC, we were challenged by the CPC group of the Grandmothers. We attended the function they hosted when they were handing over the uniforms to the children in one school. They were all smartly dressed and satisfied with the work they have done, it really challenged and motivated us to learn from them. So we asked them to teach us how they did it, and we formed ours..." Chiedza, Danga Village, Cluster CPC Leader

They can start as small groups of five individuals and grow into as many as 30. If they grow bigger they can then break into two smaller groups and allocate each CPC specific roles and responsibilities. Other community members may join any of these CPCs at anytime upon contributing a nominal fee of ZAR20 (Rands) or \$US1 to show commitment to the CPC group.

The structure of CPCs in Matobo is more apparent within the common positions such as Chairperson, Vice-Chair and Treasurer standing out. However, Mberengwa CPCs present a somewhat different picture in that although the leader and treasurer can be identified fairly easily for some, there is a general tendency of having group execution of tasks amongst the CPC members.

These CPCs are bound by a constitution, which spells out the terms of reference, mission, rules, roles and responsibilities of each CPC member, expectations and consequences of breaking the rules. Each CPC develops its own constitution and a set of operation rules. Members are bound together by their constitution and there is a very high level of pride and respect for the constitutions by the members. This was mainly attributed to the "home-grown" nature of the constitutions. When groups are formed and constitution is set, they get it stamped by the Chief and Local ZRP to make the constitution and

legally binding document.

The CPC Mission

While each CPC interviewed had its own stated mission, all were commonly pointing to one goal: To protect, care and support children ensuring that they fully enjoy their rights and exercise their responsibilities in a child safe environment. All CPCs were noted to be on course (though in different levels) in their efforts to fulfil their mission. CPCs were noted to be engaging local authorities in facilitating birth registration for some OVC, working closely with BEAM committees in the selection of most deserving children, encouraging expecting mothers to undergo VCT early in pregnancy, engaging in both income generating and non-income generating activities (IGAs) aimed at supporting children in need, providing school uniforms, stationery and paying school fees, holding community functions celebrating child dedicated days and Christmas parties for the children, providing shelter for neglected children and supporting with food and other financial assistance, conducting community meetings to raise awareness on child rights, seeking justice for abused children and teaching the OVC basic life skills. In both districts, the District Child Protection Coordinators indicated that the emergence CPCs in the communities have changed the attitudes of people towards care of all children, not just the OVC. Their existence have created a feeling that **someone is watching! , It is everyone's responsibility to care and support children; A child is a community's child, as parenthood has no boundaries.** The CPCs have come up with motivational songs encouraging the community to care and protect the children: **Chengetai Vana Ava.**

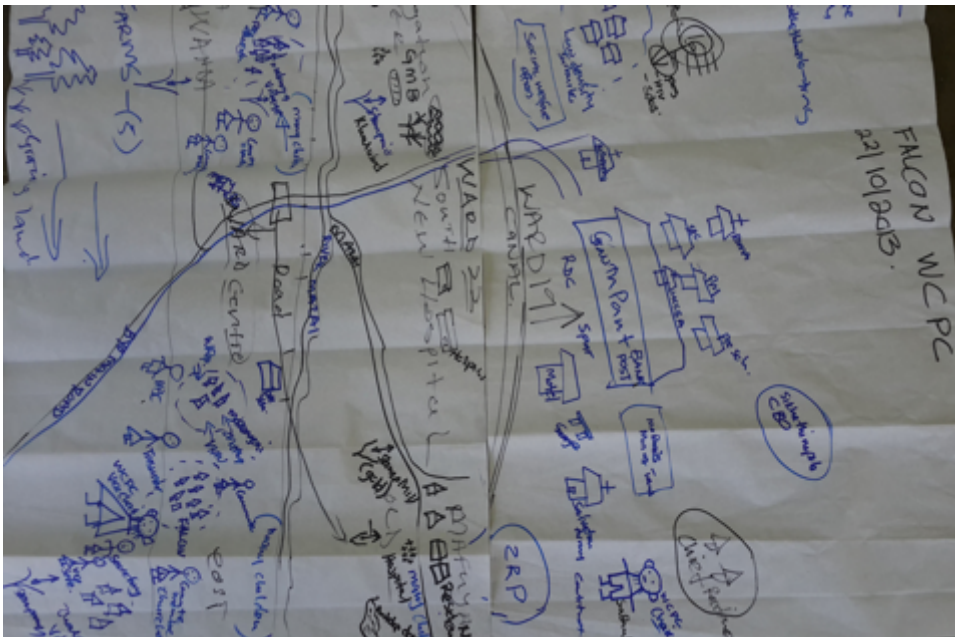


Implementation of CPC Work

Package of Services and Operations

CPCs provide OVC with material, educational, financial and psychosocial support. Material support includes giving the needy children food in the form of mealie-meal, vegetables, clothes and uniforms. They also try and ensure that all the school children have uniforms and their school fees are paid for. They help with the repair of the disintegrated homes of OVC, keep an eye on child headed households and assist them with food. They also organise functions to celebrate child-dedicated days and Christmas parties for the children. The services provided by CPCs in both districts were seen to be inclined towards the basic material needs to address the perceived immediate issues such as appearance of the child mainly through clothing, school attendance and hunger.

In Matobo district, the operations of the VCPC are confined within the boundaries of the villages. This is somewhat slightly different with Mberengwa where a CPC can cover neighbouring village (s). Each village has a CPC specific to it. Villages are made up of about 18 to 40 or more households and headed by a Village head (Sabhuku) and Wards can be constituted by up to 15 or more villages. The figure below shows a typical ward map for Falcon Ward and Village CPCs within the Ward. Areas covered by Village CPCs are



generally wide hence CPCs members are found scattered around the village to facilitate ease of identification of children requiring support and providing timely interventions.

Targeting of Beneficiaries

In Matobo, targeting of beneficiaries is based on the OVC registers. Priorities are given to OVC who are recorded in the register and also based on what kind of support is required. There is no room for having one child repeatedly benefiting from the same kind of support from CPC or other stakeholders. The CPC try to ensure that resources are spread to reach as many children as possible. Every child is a potential target for CPC support in Mberengwa district. The CPCs in this district have adopted a general approach to target every child regardless of their orphanhood status, although orphans do get priority attention where the situations require that. There are minimal exclusion errors in the targeting as all groups were seen to be working towards ensuring that every child in need regardless of their orphanhood status receives some assistance. CPCs identify the children in need in various ways.

a. Observation

This is the primary means of case identification. CPC members are part of the community and as community members, they are aware of what is happening around them, just as one CPC member in Madwaleni Ward, in Matobo put it across:

“...As community members and neighbours we know each other and what is happening around. If there is a funeral in the area we inform each other and by default we know what the situation for the children in that household will be like...”

b. Reports by other community members and children themselves

The community members inform CPC members if they come across a child in need. The community is generally aware of the existence of the CPCs in their community as each village has one. Children are also aware of the CPC so in some cases they come forward to seek help from the CPCs. Child Led groups also play a vital role of relaying information to adult CPCs about children who may be in need.

c. Anonymous reports

For sensitive cases involving child sexual abuse, the information is gathered through anonymous tip-offs, grapevine and suggestion boxes. CPCs receive anonymous calls that tip them off about a suspicious situation and then they investigate.

Referral Pathways

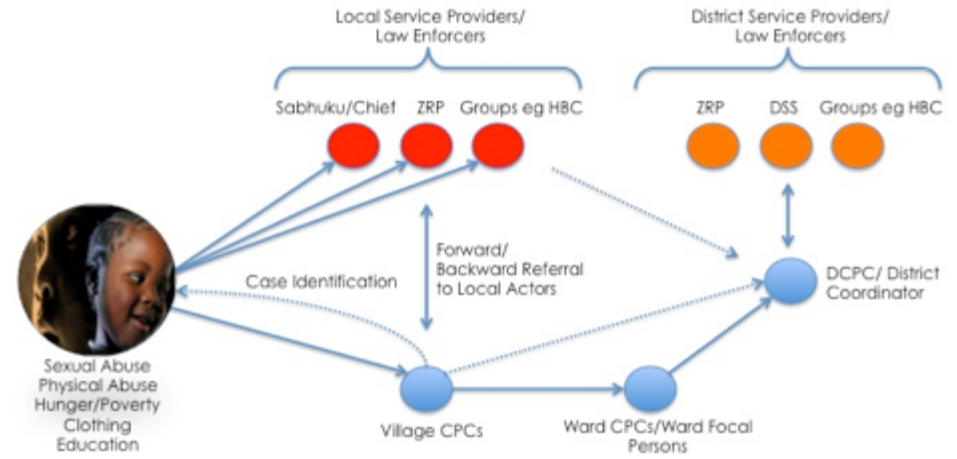
The CPC have a defined referral pathway, which they were appraised of during the trainings. All children considered vulnerable are registered in the OVC Village register. CPCs make use of the referral chain to facilitate that children obtain support as soon as possible. CPCs work closely and are aware of the readily available service providers who are permanently locally based within their communities whom they regard as the first line of referral in the event of any case requiring their relevant support such as ZRP (Police, VFU), Schools (Headmasters/Teachers) Health Centres (Nurses), Community Leaders (Chief, Village Heads, Headmen) and Department of Social Services (Social Welfare Officers). Cases that are beyond their capacity are quickly referred to those who can best intervene.

Cases of CSA in particular are reported within 12- 24 hours. Firstly the information is relayed to the Ward Focal Persons who then relays the information to Co-ordinator at the district offices. From there the coordinator reports the case to the ZRP Victim Friendly Unit (VFU) and investigations commence. Other cases such as those relating to food, clothing, education etc are usually dealt with at Village level within the responsible CPC. Explaining how CPCs link OVC to relevant resources, one CPC Ward Focal Person said,

"...Anyone, organisation or what that has anything they want to do which involves children is now obliged to work with the CPC and through the OVC register we inform them which children need what...if they want to pay school fees, we inform them which children are already receiving the education support so that their support reaches the deserving children..."

The steps in referral for the major child protection issues such as physical and sexual abuse, neglect and poverty were well understood within the community and CPCs. However, it was not clear whether the current approach is robust and sensitive enough to identify children with other salient distress symptoms, particularly those suffering from the psychological trauma arising from bereavement or caring for ill relatives as well as stigma and discrimination.

Figure 3: The Referral Chain



Child Participation

Both districts exhibited efforts to ensure children contribute to the mitigatory support activities and particularly play a role in peer or self-referrals within the chain. The strategy for child participation was anchored on Child-led groups whose formation was supported in the schools. Child representatives from the child parliamentarians, school prefects and other children considered influential among other school children constitute some of the child-led groups. These groups raise awareness about child rights, child abuse, health related issues, conduct fund-raising activities within the schools to help other children,





they refer other children to Adult CPCs if they notice the need for intervention and they also relay some information to the teachers about children who need their support. They are proactive in reporting their needs and abuse cases that they come across. They do this through quiz competitions and drama shows, which are usually well attended and by the DCPC, VCPC, Community leadership, general community members and other school children. The children also make use of anonymous suggestion boxes to alert cases of abuse or highlight grievances. Children themselves were also noted

to be well aware of their rights and were able to give examples of child abuse scenarios within their communities.

Project Management

a. Meetings

In both districts, unless there is an emergency, CPC meet just once a month to discuss any child protection related issues. Members however also meet twice or thrice a week to work on their community IGA initiatives/projects. During these meetings they also share information on other life issues including advice and ideas on how to solve some personal problems. During their meetings, CPCs document issues discussed, decisions taken to address presenting matters and action plans are drawn. The minutes are shared with the Ward Focal Persons who then compile the report and submit to the district child protection coordinators. The CPC chairperson chairs a typical meeting, the secretary reads minutes of the previous meetings and the committee recaps on previous agenda. They move into the business of the day where members report back on their action points. New tasks are allocated to members as necessary. On issues that the CPCs are not able to assist themselves, they seek support from the DCPC through the Ward Focal Persons. The District Child protection coordinators, with the support of their respective DCPCs and Other stakeholders provide technical and material support to the CPCs as and when need arises and if funding allows.

b. Finances

The CPCs engage in both income generating and non-income generating activities in order to support the children. Typical non-income generating

activities include the Community Basket (where they collect old clothes which they repair, reshape and resize and distribute to the children in need of clothing), homestead reparations for OVC households, sewing uniforms and clothes for the children. Income generating activities include Tuck-shops, vegetable gardening, baking, goat rearing, free-range chicken rearing, weaving mats. The CPCs have been nurtured to work towards self-sustenance. Through these projects, they have been able to generate some income to support the children but not adequate enough. In Matobo, they have obtained some material support in the form of sewing machines, seeds and gardening tools and small livestock to kick-start the projects and they were observed to be performing well. They have also been supported with some volunteer incentives in the form of soap during the dry periods in the areas where most income is generated through gardening.

They keep simple income and expenditure reports through the CPC treasurer and these are shared through the M&E function of the District Child Protection Coordinators. They keep their finances in the Eco Cash Accounts. In Mberengwa district, through their fund IGAs, the CPCs have been able to fund community functions meant to raise awareness on child rights and also supported formation of new CPCs.

c. Ongoing Monitoring Activities

The project made use of a simple but systematic regular tracking mechanism for both the process and results components of the project. Through the use of a standard reporting tool, information on project activities and outputs were transmitted from the VCPCs through their chairpersons and secretaries, to the Ward Focal Persons and to the District Coordinators who compiled reports that were submitted to the Council and Save the Children. The reporting to or with the DSS was in some cases unclear although there was evidence of information sharing through the DCPC meetings. The district coordinators made use of their monthly community visits to provide feedback to the community and the CPCs based on their analysis. Quarterly and annual reports with both qualitative and quantitative information for the reference periods were available during the documentation period. However, the monitoring could have benefitted from an automated system or database that could allow for the storage of the huge amounts of data and facilitate a quick analysis of the programme. In addition, outcome level results such as the incidence of child abuse cases could have been integrated in the routine monitoring using a longitudinal approach.

Evolution of the Child Protection Committee's Work

CPCs have evolved over time. Since their inception and introduction in the current districts, they have had their ups and downs. They did not take off smoothly due to a number of challenges. The CPC concept was new, placed responsibility on the community to lead their development and did not have any immediate direct material or tangible benefits. This meant that the concept faced some resistance emanating from negative attitudes and expectations of material gains by the community. Buy-in to these structures was slow. It took time for the CPC to take off. Factors leading to these delays were attitudinal, expectations of gains, lack of knowledge and understanding of the concept, political instability.

"..I cannot do that, care and look after children whose parents are alive, parents who don't care about their own children! No way..."

"...this does not pay, just working for free, hmmm no..."

With time the people began to understand the concept and were able to identify the children in need but could not help them, they had no means of helping them. So with the support of Save the Children and other organisations working in the communities, they introduced the IGPs to help sustain the intervention. The IGPs were building on the available community coping mechanisms such as the community gardens, free range chicken rearing and goat rearing. Proceeds from these IGPs were used to assist the children.

It was observed that CPCs identify children in need and intervene in a way that helps the child. In Mberengwa, these structures have gone beyond just identifying the vulnerable children and registering them in the Village OVC register. They have over time become innovative and creative by coming up with community based solutions for providing for the children where they can do so. For instance, the CPCs engage in income generating activities (IGPs), which are dedicated to contribute to supporting the children. The IGPs include simple vegetable gardens, poultry (free range also known as road runners), sewing, baking and goat rearing.

Proceeds from sale of these are used to pay school fees for the children, buying materials to sew school uniforms for the children, contributing towards celebrating children's birthdays and annual Christmas parties, procuring some resources for use during significant commemoration days dedicated to

children. Some CPCs have become innovative and creative by collecting old clothes from the community and redistributing them to OVC, they adjust and sew the sizes, modernise the look of the clothes and give the children. They empower the children with life skills through encouraging them to participate in IGPs during weekends.



Chiedza, Danga Cluster CPC member explains how the Danga garden (Ward 16, Mberengwa District) works. *"...This is a Cluster/or Ward level CPC vegetable garden. We grow seasonal vegetables including rape, onions, tomatoes, carrots, beans etc. Each member is mandated to work in the garden and ensure that each week they sell at least 2 bunches of vegetables amounting to \$1. In our CPC we are 30 so we raise about \$30 per week. That amount is brought to the CPC pocket and used to purchase, materials and threads to sew children's uniforms or to pay school fees for the children. We also use it for transport when going for exchange visits and give to the hosting CPC as motivation to continue the good work they are doing. Apart from this, vegetables are also harvested and given to the children in need of relish. If fresh vegetables are not bought, we dry and store them for sale during the dry season..."*

"...The IGPs have helped us in many ways, before these started you could find plates and pots riddled with holes and even failing to find a spoon in some households, but now we are able to buy plates and pots for each other. We even hold Kitchen Parties where as a group we buy some kitchen utensils for the host invite other CPCs to come and celebrate with us. We cover the utensils and request those wishing to see the goods to pay \$1 each and we give the collected money and acquired utensils to the host ..."



Mberengwa District Ward 6 (Masvingo) CPC and Community Leaders
Showcasing a Bakery Project

Name: Tashinga CPC (Ward 28, Mberengwa District)

No. Of Members: 10

Date Formed: Saturday 13 March 2010

No. Of Children: 34, i.e. 11 Boys, 23 Girls

Projects: Sewing, Knitting, Mats

How The Group Was Formed

We realised that we were left behind. All the women in the area had started on clubs for helping children in the area. So we felt it was necessary that we also form our group. We all contributed a joining fee of \$1 per month and we bought material for sewing children's clothes and shorts. We then got some more money from the other CPC groups when we hosted a ceremony of handing over the clothes that we had sewn for the children. We then used the money to sew uniforms for the children. We also held a Christmas party for the children. We have now started a free-range chicken project and we have 30 birds at the moment.

Factors Contributing To CPC Effectiveness - Key Lessons

Several factors were identified as having contributed to the effectiveness of the CPCs in the two districts as well as the differences in performance that was noted. These factors were noted to be both design related and contextual.

By and large the findings provide strong evidence to **validate the theory of change** as the partnerships across the various levels (institutional and community) have been pivotal in facilitating action, the flexibility in giving the communities the room to identify solutions has stimulated innovations whilst the use of key advocacy messages through song, IEC materials including t-shirts have been powerful in bringing the voice of the child in the forefront.

Community leadership: There is a huge buy-in of the CPC concept by the community leaders in Mberengwa district. The leadership has used their powerful positions to mobilise communities and support them in the work they are doing. They call the people for meetings, and functions and they also attend such meetings. Communities believe in what their leaders believe in and through their combined efforts, they have made the CPC successful and effective. Community leaders have been kept out of the CPC structure (that is they are not within the CPC membership per-se but they are consulted whenever required). In the areas in Matobo for example, where the leaders such as the councillor and village heads are part of the CPCs, they have made slow progress (When councillors change as a result of elections, the structure tends to dis-integrate on the grounds of political affiliation, it also takes time for the new councillor to understand and prioritise the CPC work and hence this affects the progress of CPCs)

It is important to note that one of the main enablers of this support and overall ownership of the project by the leaders and the community was the awareness and sensitization of the project, which was undertaken during the inception phase. In addition, the trainings that were held for DCPC, Councilors, community leadership on Child rights and protection consolidated the perceptions of the programme with sound evidence.

Support from NGOs and Local Structures- The technical support in the form of sharing ideas, observation visits, training and capacity building, provision of materials (fence, seed money etc) have contributed to the existence and effectiveness of CPCs. The monitoring and mentoring by SC staff was also noted as having instilled amongst the communities a sense of importance in the programme and what the communities were doing, in addition to providing

direction and ensuring programme compliance.

Having the community leading the intervention- CPCs are implemented in such a way that the community leads all the process. They are the owners of the intervention. CPCs in Mberengwa clearly demonstrated a strong conviction that they can drive the process with minimal direct funding support but rather supportive mechanisms from outside. This is seen to have been one of the key differentiating factors between the two districts in as far as replication of groups is concerned.

Building on existing community coping mechanisms: The CPC IGP mechanisms are built on the usual coping mechanisms found in the community. Nothing new and complex was brought and prescribed. CPC groups chose which IGPs they would want to pursue based on the resources at their disposal. They also had no limit as to the number of IGPs they can adopt. One CPC can be involved in vegetable gardens, sewing, goat rearing and ISALs. In the absence of the conviction of self-reliance as outlined above, the start-up and replication of the IGPs were noted to be difficult as there is some dependency on external support for initiation. In that regard, projects in Mberengwa were seen to be more visible and flourishing.

Motivation of CPC Members:- The feeling and satisfaction with doing good essentially motivates these cadres. The CPCs repeatedly reported that they felt proud each time they served a child in need. They experienced a positive feeling when they distributed uniforms and stationery. They experienced this especially when they did this in front of the community and getting praise. They noted that this motivates them to do more and it even motivates other community members to form new groups and contribute to child protection. Another important factor was the regular and consistent support from the district. This, most CPC members opined, was of great value to them to note that there are people at the district and national level who appreciate their work and who come to provide that moral support.

Other motivators include status in the community, occasional incentives that may come along with doing community work such as soap, bicycles, empowerment with knowledge and skills as they receive training, being in an organised group that has also started its own income generating projects (outside the CPC agenda) and seems viable. The latter was also noted to be the cornerstone of the sustainability of the CPC initiative.

Skills and Information Sharing Platforms: CPC group meetings have also become a useful platform for information and skills sharing. In their meetings they discuss a wide range of issues from health and hygiene, marital, cooking skills and recipes, etc. Through the colleague support, CPC members have

learnt from each other: **life skills and teamwork**. Their meetings also become a useful platform for information and skills sharing. In their meetings they discuss a wide range of issues from health and hygiene, marital, cooking skills and recipes, etc. They also share information on other life issues including advice and ideas on how to solve some personal problems.

"...look at us right now, we are smart, we have learnt a lot from each other...",
CPC Member

'...these women are now hygienic, you can see that they are smart and you can just see by the way they dress themselves that they are participating in these groups", Female Non-CPC Member FGD Participant

Exchange Visits and Innovative Motivation

The CPC groups also periodically undertake inter-village and ward exchange visits in which they learn from each other what they are doing to support the children. During these visits they share information, ideas and any innovative ways of using the available resources to enhance the support they provide to the children. Exchange visits are also complemented by the showcasing events where the groups host ceremonies to hand over material support they would have gathered and produced over time. Other groups also attend these to provide moral and financial support to motivate the hosting group to continue doing the good work. These platforms encourage positive and healthy competition across groups. They also motivate the groups to want to perform much better than the other groups.



Male Involvement and Support: Men support the women involved in CPCs. They assist them with digging in the gardens and encouraging them to attend their meetings while they remain guarding the livestock, homesteads and fetching firewood. Although the general perception of the ideal engendered structure of the CPCs was one in which there is a mix of women and men in the committees, the Mberengwa CPCs presented as women groups. This, on prima facie, seemed like a structural flaw but discussions with both men and women in the community and within the groups identified some strength in the setup, which to some extent was felt to be also contributing to the performance of CPCs in the area. Women CPC members felt that their group gender composition allowed them to freely explore initiatives, particularly the IGPs, and that it was easy to plan and delegate with minimal power dynamics. Men felt that women have traditionally been the primary carers with some noting: “*ah ndezvemadzimai izvi*” (“**ah, this is for women**”, **Male FGD Participant**) and that they were fully behind by supporting them in the activities and certain decision-making. The men in Mberengwa affirmed that they were participating but they were just not committee members.

Constitutions and Group Rules and ToRs: The members are bound together by their constitution and members respect these.

Opening up to everyone to become a CPC member: The no-restrictions as to who can or cannot be a member has seen everyone being responsible for the care and support for the children. However, there is also a supportive acknowledgement and agreement of the qualities of a CPC member with previous offenders such as child-abusers being ineligible to do such work.





Key Achievements and Successes

The programme indeed has played a critical role in the collective mitigatory efforts that have seen some of the results discussed in the first chapter of this report. Several elements have been noted to exist in the trajectory of the results chain.

Coverage in educational support - CPCs distributed uniforms and stationery and also paid school fees to various schools in their wards and there is strong evidence to suggest they will continue to do so. They were very proud of what they have done so far. During the documentation exercise, the areas that were visited, the research team hardly met children without school uniforms. Some of the children previously supported are now successful in their career and leadership. In one site, reference was made to a local policeman who was once a beneficiary as well as another individual now working for the government in Mutare

Reduced stress among children – Stress related to looking different among other children by ensuring that each child has a uniform and attends school

like all others.

Reduced OVC separation by supporting them in their households ensuring that the siblings grow up together.

Improved community relations and sense of ownership and instilling a sense of responsibility in everyone in as far as caring for children is concerned. Community has changed as a result of the CPC

Improved awareness on child rights and abuse: - This has resulted in reduced incidence of child abuse. Their existence has played a crucial role in the reduction of child abuse cases. Community is aware that someone is watching.

Enabled children to take first steps towards claiming their rights through ensuring they are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities as well as the available support mechanisms

Strategic Considerations

The findings of the inquiry undertaken in this documentation exercise point to a number of key aspects to consider and herewith presented as recommendations proffered to Save the Children and partners. These fall under three domains of Design, Implementation, M&E and Sustainability.

Design

- The project can and should be replicated, maintaining the design and institutional arrangements. Of particular note, the partnership with the local rural councils works and as discussed in earlier sections facilitates ownership and locally relevant approaches in the approaches used. The findings support the assumptions in the theory of change that such partnerships can be the nuclei for the development of a response at the local level. It is however imperative that the roles and responsibilities of actors, especially between the Council and DSS, including standard operating procedures as stipulated in the MoUs be constantly referred to and reviewed. The use of a Project Implementation Manual (PIM), developed during the consultation phase of the project is highly recommended for similar projects. A PIM would typically outline the institutional arrangements, the operating procedures for all components of the programme as well as the project management tools to facilitate the implementation.

Implementation

- There is need to make use of a standardised training manual for CPCs which can be adapted at the various levels. The use of a training guide will help in ensuring that there is standardised and accurate information dissemination regarding child protection and safeguarding, balancing the service provision to address the physical (including material), psychological, social and spiritual needs of children as well as having standard protocols of operation of the CPCs.
- The potential for knowledge transfer within the communities can be optimised through the use of Discussion Guides which may be used by community CPCs a simple participatory discussion tool during monthly sessions to explore child protection issues as well as map approaches to support OVC in their communities. Save the Children and the District Councils should consider developing these discussion guides with input from communities. These can also be used as a cost-effective way to further strengthen the initial training provided to CPC members in the community.
- It is essential that the case definition for the children to be targeted and who can potentially benefit from available resources be stressed during training and implementation. This should ideally go beyond the definition

of an orphan but also include those children who are abused, bereaved, those with emotional distress or psychological trauma as well as those who lack access to basic social services. It appeared the criterion was generally understood but these should be documented in simple vernacular language and disseminated to CPC members and communities to minimise any possibilities of exclusion errors. There is also need for flexibility in the criteria to ensure no child in need of assistance is left out.

- There is need to provide Case Identification and Management training to all CPC members. This module should also be a part of the discussion guides earlier recommended. It is imperative that all CPC members are able to identify children in need, provide counselling and communication skills to ensure quality routine and/or emergency frontline support to the child before referral.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- There are opportunities to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the programme to facilitate community level learning and focus on results; and understand the dynamics of change for future programming. It is worthwhile to consider a greater role and participation of the community in M&E. This can be achieved through integrating M&E with the CPC training but making sure that is maintained at a simple level. Evaluations can be more periodic and ensure that higher-level results are captured. In addition, process monitoring and evaluation can be introduced to ensure that the dynamics of the changes at the community level are better understood and adopted in project refinement efforts.

Sustainability

Although the capacity building activities as well as the current strategies to ensure ownership all contribute to the likely sustainability of the initiative, it is important to note that the regular supportive visits from district and national levels were noted as one of the key factors contributing to the success of the project. It is therefore strategic that the local councils adopt the positions of the district coordinators. In addition, the technical and funding support through national programmes, particularly the NAP II should recognise the strengths of having the local partners as local level coordinators in the institutional arrangements.



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