
BASELINE STUDY REPORT

Child protection and birth registration in Mbare and Epworth

VIVA NETWORK ZIMBABWE
March 2019

Abstract

This report gives the findings on the current state of child exploitation and birth registration in Mbare and Epworth high-density suburbs of Harare. The research was conducted mainly to ascertain the level of child exploitation, the availability of child protection channels, the competence of the existing channels, the level of knowledge of the community and the reports on prevalence of child exploitation and none birth registration. The baseline study used a mixed method, both qualitative and quantitative methods where employed and data analyzed simultaneously for the purposes of triangulation.

The objectives of the research were:

- 1. To gather information on child abuse, exploitation and child protection channels in Epworth and Mbare*
- 2. To establish statistical data on birth registration in Epworth and Mbare*
- 3. To evaluate the needs of justice operators for improved delivery of justice for children services in Mbare and Epworth.*

The key findings of the study indicates a high level of child abuse and exploitation, a low birth registration, very limited knowledge on importance of birth registration, justice operators, birth registration processes and also very high doubts on the competences of the existing systems by the community.

This report shall be pivotal to Viva Network Zimbabwe in implementing its child protection and birth registration project in the aforementioned areas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to her vision to see all children living in safe and loving families and communities, Viva Network Zimbabwe (VNZ) envisions to embark on a Child Protection intervention targeted at child protection (of children going through abuse and/or exploitation) and access to birth registration. During the period September to December 2018, VNZ carried out an in-depth situational analysis on the situation of children in Harare. The study reports that the current challenges faced by children in Harare include but are not limited to child abuse (Sexual, Physical, Emotional, Verbal, etc.) and exploitation (Child Labour, Vending, Neglect, Child headed families, Opharnhood, Child Marriages, Child prostitution, Substance abuse etc.) as well as low access to basic services (birth registration, health, education, legal protection, nutrition, etc).

Child Protection as defined by UNICEF (2006) is a process of preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children to include commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices such as child marriage. Children subjected to abuse, violence and exploitation are at risk of developing illnesses and infections like HIV/AIDS, disturbed physical and mental health, educational problems and displacement among others. Following Mushunje (2006), children's wellbeing is crucial for sustained socio-economic development of a country. The promotion and safeguarding of children's rights have been a major concern in Zimbabwe, particularly in highly vulnerable communities of Mbare and Epworth. For a relevant, effective and targeted intervention, VNZ thus embarked on a baseline survey in the communities of Mbare and Epworth to gather foundational facts.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND

Viva Network Zimbabwe (VNZ) is a Zimbabwean network founded in 1999 which seeks to link volunteers, churches and local groups to improve the situation facing children in the city. This particularly includes vulnerable children in high-density suburbs; and children living and working on the streets, children with impairments and those living with imprisoned parents. VNZ is bonded around the core values of collaboration, excellence, child-centredness and Christ-guided. The network's membership draws together various perspectives and backgrounds and is helping to support children through initiatives such as Good Treatment Campaign, Pavement Counselling Project, Good Fatherliness Program, Let your Light Shine Program, Life Skills and Support for

the Youths, Child Health Evangelism and children Christmas parties among a cocktail of interventions. VNZ improves the quality of service delivery provided by its membership through exposing and supporting them in appropriate capacity strengthening initiatives such as the impending interventions that may be resultant of this baseline study.

2.2 BACKGROUND OF EPWORTH

Epworth is a largely informal settlement 12 kilometres east of Harare and arguably Zimbabwe's biggest slum settlement. The suburb has a population of approximately 123,250 making it the 3rd biggest city populated by mainly poor residents of Harare. Most residents are informal traders and vendors with small-scale, backyard, service, manufacturing and repair industries. Socially unacceptable illegal and risky activities which include pit sand digging, firewood selling, theft, begging (street children) and sex work are the order of the day. Over the years, Epworth has been exposed to over crowdedness and depletion of services due to the economic hardships experienced by the country. The family systems have also undergone devastating changes due to the effects of HIV/AIDS and the economic meltdown which has resulted in massive mobility, broken homes, child-headed families and child prostitution. Exploitation is so rampant such that in every 3 children over the age of 7 years, one has been exposed to either vending or one other form of exploitation. Epworth is highly vulnerable with commercial sex work by children being cited by Msindo et al, (2013) as a menace in Epworth and attributed to poverty and low access to education. In a 2015 study carried out by Mwashita (2015) on Violence Against Children (VAC), it is reported that there is a high prevalence of childhood sexual violence, especially among females amounting to an estimated 32.5%. Mwashita et al (2015) also reported that more than 64.6% of young women they studied, reported starting selling sex below the age of 13. Msindo (2017) also testifies that young girls of 13 to 15 years are engaging in prostitution in Epworth, with more than 70% of the girls forced by hunger and neglect.

2.3 BACKGROUND OF MBARE

Mbare is a high-density suburb of Harare, approximately 5, 5 km from the Harare CBZ, Zimbabwe. The population of Mbare was approximately 162,000 in 2012 but has since risen to nearly 800,000 showing an increase of 493%. The average number of families staying in the same house is 4 in a 4-roomed cottage with each family being an average of 6 people 4 of whom are children and 2 of the children being under 13. Approximately 40% of the children in Mbare do not go to school,

either for lack of school fees or lack of birth certificates while about 58% of children below the age of 5 do not have birth certificates. 47% of the children in Mbare are orphans living with their grandparents and other guardians while approximately 32% are children living with one parent or an extended family relative. VNZ's (2018) situational analysis reports that children in Mbare are exposed to multiple forms of exploitation that include but are not limited to child prostitution (13%), child vending (34%), Child Labor, substance abuse (approx. 18% boys, 4% girls) and other activities like

2.4 CHILD PROTECTION IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe ratified some of the regional and international educational rights frameworks and this includes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights of Children (ACRWC), among others and these play a big role in relation to the protection of children on Zimbabwe. Additional to these international guidelines, there are a number of policies guiding the legislative framework for children in Zimbabwe. Beginning with the Constitution Amendment 20 of 2013 is the main national legislation. There are several legislative documents guiding the welfare of the children including the Children's Act Chapter 5:06. In addition, there are other policies which although implicitly are child focused and complement NAP for OVC on areas of child protection. Other pieces of legislation that speak into child welfare include the Marriage Act, Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, Guardianship of Minors Act, Maintenance Act, etc. In general, Zimbabwe has a very sound and robust policy framework for child welfare which needs effective implementation and reinforcement.

Muridzo et al (2015) attest that child sexual abuse remains topical in Zimbabwe and this is evidenced by the statistics, literature and debate which reflect the growing public concern about this child maltreatment. The National Baseline Survey on the Life Experiences of adolescent of 2011 made a conclusion that almost one-third of females reported experiencing sexual violence in childhood, whilst one in ten males aged 18 to 24 years also reported the same (ZIMSTAT-Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency). Although having a very sound legal framework for child protection, there are still gaps in the enforcement and implementation of justice for children. This points to the gaps in laws and policies that may be acting as obstacles to birth registration, thus, the need for a baseline study to ascertain areas needing intervention for systems strengthening.

2.5 BACKGROUND ON BIRTH REGISTRATION

The right to a name, identity and to be registered at birth is a right of all as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 7 and 8) among other human rights instruments. Unfortunately, a huge number of children in Epworth and Mbare still go unregistered. Children with no birth certificates do not exist before the law, and are in danger of remaining on the margins of society or being shut out altogether. They are more likely to face major challenges in accessing healthcare, education and social assistance. They are the first to fall through the cracks in protection systems; their invisibility makes it more likely that discrimination, neglect and abuse they might experience will be unnoticed, and unchallenged. Without an age established by birth certificate, there is no protection against child labour, against being treated as an adult in the justice system, against child marriage and trafficking. Birth registration is an essential part of a country's civil registry, providing governments with vital statistics to support accurate planning and monitoring of a country's education, health, social welfare and economic policies. Ultimately, birth registration shows that children belong to a family, a community and a nation, and guarantees their right to assume their place in the social and political life of the country, as adults.

According to the Justice for Children Trust in a Birth Registration of Children in Zimbabwe document (2007), it was discovered that the main contribution to non-registration included the strict and rigid requirements from the Registrar General's office. Along with that, it was discovered that the long queues and the rude nature of the attendants tend to discourage the birth documentation behaviour of the children's guardians. Other major hindrances in obtaining the birth certificate include:

- The level of bureaucracy at the Registrar's offices
- The rigorous systems of obtaining birth certificates
- The long distances that parents and guardians have to travel to the Registrar's offices
- Some parents or guardians overlook the importance of obtaining birth certificates for their children
- High fees to access birth certificates
- Corruption

Among multiple reasons given for low birth registration, the most cited included parental absence, parents not having legal documents themselves, broken families, orphanhood, unknown parents,

distance to registration points, family strains and ignorance. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) of 2014 indicated that only 32% of the children below the age of five in Zimbabwe have birth certificates, the number being 57% in urban areas (ZIMSTAT 2015). Fees set to access birth certificates at a later stage are high, employees at the Registrar-General's office are largely unhelpful, bureaucratic procedures and corruption in acquiring the birth certificates are some of the barriers that hinder children from accessing birth certificates.

3. AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aimed at gathering information on access to justice and access to birth registration for children at risk or victims of exploitation in two highly vulnerable communities of Harare, Mbare and Epworth. It also sought to understand whether child abuse cases are being addressed and if the channels available for child protection and birth registration.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were:

1. To gather information on child abuse, exploitation and child protection channels in Epworth and Mbare
2. To establish statistical data on birth registration in Epworth and Mbare
3. To evaluate the needs of justice operators for improved delivery of justice for children services in Mbare and Epworth.

5. JUSTIFICATION

Despite government and other stakeholders having intervened in issues of child protection, the communities of Mbare and Epworth have remained highly vulnerable for child abuse and exploitation yet with multiple barriers to justice for children. While children's rights are enshrined in Zimbabwe's constitution, children are rarely enjoying these rights as would be desired. The nation since November 2018 faced a very volatile, dynamic and unpredictable political environment which directly negatively impacted the economic system of the nation. January 2019 also saw political violence that left approximately 235 children affected directly in Mbare and Epworth Combined (JCT, 2019; ZCTU, 2019; Bulawayo 24 (18-01-2019)) and an unknown number of children affected indirectly by the violence that erupted during the month of January 2019. With very few organizations and individuals being able and willing to stand for the children,

these events have exposed a huge gap needing intervention in the communities of Mbare and Epworth as well as in Zimbabwe at large. It is however unfortunate that there is no data readily available to guide intervention for child protection in these areas. Viva Network Zimbabwe 2018 situational analysis report records that children in Mbare and Epworth are facing low access to birth registration, child abuse, child exploitation, child prostitution, child marriages, child neglect, low access to education and other multiple diverse child vulnerabilities. Moreover, the VNZ's 2018 situational analysis reports that systems and structures that are there for Child Protection are no longer effective in operation. It is against this background that this baseline survey is undertaken to obtain current data that can inform effective intervention in terms of child protection, birth registration and provision of litigation services for children at risk and in different vulnerabilities. Moreover, this baseline will be vital in ascertaining the availability, number and needs/capacity of organizations and structures for child protection in the communities of Mbare and Epworth.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This baseline was conducted to determine the status of child protection and birth registration in Harare, Zimbabwe narrowing down to two high-density suburbs of the city which are Mbare and Epworth. The aspects of focus were the availability of child protection channels, the functionality of these channels in addressing cases reported, and knowledge from the community of these channels. It also aimed at analyzing the level of birth registration in these two communities and on whether the communities were aware of the importance of these birth certificates.

6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research took a mixed approach that combined qualitative and quantitative methods. While qualitative research employed focus group discussions to gather subjective testimonies and narratives from the residents of Epworth and Mbare in context-specific setting, quantitative research utilized questionnaires to gather statistical data. The researchers made visits to Mbare and Epworth to obtain first-hand information on the situation of children in these locations with issues to do with child protection and birth registration. A team of four (4) field researchers visited the community with eight (8) more research assistants for data collection and conducted a Baseline survey in Epworth and Mbare, Harare. The researchers spent 3 days in each of the two communities studying and researching on children's access to justice, provision of legal services, level of child

protection and also on birth registration. The researcher distributed questionnaires (Likert Scale), on birth registration and child protection. In addition to the questionnaire, 2 focus groups were held in each community with community members and in-depth interview were done with key informants from the authoritative sources. The ultimate goal of the research was to ensure that key information was gathered before implementing projects so that a judgement can be passed about the quality and development of results achieved from the project. This intensive research period in each location allowed the gathering of both quantitative and qualitative information within the two communities. All ethical considerations including informed consent, debriefing, rights to freedom of withdrawal and confidentiality were strictly observed. Research instruments were designed and written in English (considering that Zimbabwe uses English as the language of instruction in schools as well as in the workplace) but on the field, where necessary, researchers did verbal translations to ensure that the participants clearly understood the questions

7. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The baseline utilised mixed methods data analysis which involved analyzing the data from both the qualitative and quantitative approaches used in the study. Qualitative data were analysed thematically and narrowed down to specific information that clustered down to the demands of the objectives of this study while the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilised for quantitative data analysis. The bi-directional data analysis was done and presented concurrently for the purposes triangulation.

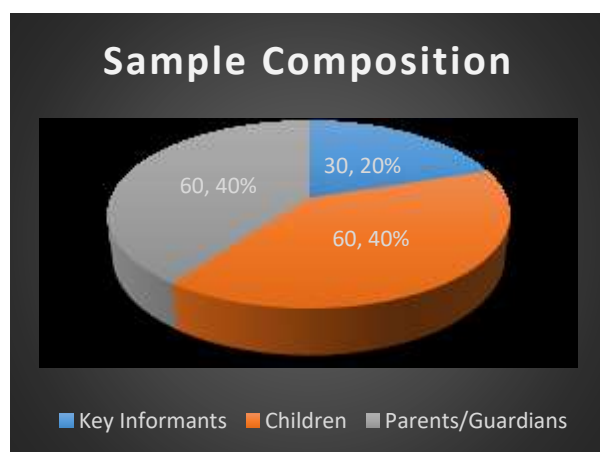


Figure 1: Sample Demographic Composition

7.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

This sample distribution was viable for credibility and representativeness of the results considering a 10% margin of error and a confidence level estimated at 90% with a response distribution of 80%. This was proportional to the population of the children at risk in two communities as well.

7.2 CURRENT GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD PROTECTION

Legal and Policy Frameworks

Legislation	Provisions of the Legislation
Children's Act [Chapter 5:06]	- the protection, welfare and supervision of children - the recognition and registration of certain institutions and institutes for the reception and custody of children - the establishment of children's courts (Victim Friendly Units) - the requirement of contributions by certain persons towards the maintenance of children and the adoption of minors.
Child Abduction Act [Chapter 5:05]	- Gives effect within Zimbabwe to the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction - Secures the prompt return of children wrongfully removed to or retained in any country party to the Convention (Contracting States) - Ensures that rights of custody and of access under the law of the Contracting State are effectively respected in the other Contracting States - The function of the Central Authority under the Convention for all child abduction matters is discharged by the Secretary for Justice - The Secretary may institute or defend proceeding in the High Court, or intervene as a party in any such proceedings.
Guardianship of Minors Act [Chapter 5:08]	- Provides laws relating to the guardianship and custody of minors - The High Court is the upper guardian of all minors - The principle of the best interests of the child is of utmost importance
Maintenance Act [Chapter 5:09]	- Provides for the making of orders for maintenance of persons and the enforcement of those orders - The person to be maintained has to be a "dependant" meaning any person whom that responsible person is legally liable to maintain. - Parents of a child are primarily and jointly responsible for the maintenance of the child.
Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act [Chapter 4:01]	- Gives a child a right to name, nationality and identity - Children who are born in Zimbabwe acquire Zimbabwean nationality by birth if the father is a citizen.
Public Health Act [Chapter 15:09]	- Provides for immunization of all children even in the circumstances where parents object to such immunization on religious grounds - Empowers the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare to make regulations in respect of infant nutrition - The regulations encourage and promote the breastfeeding of infants, quality, sampling and testing of infant food etc.
Education Act [Chapter 25:01]	- Education is critical and plays the foundation for the future of a child - The Act covers education issues and sets out fundamental rights and objectives of education - It provides that every child in Zimbabwe has a right to school education - No child shall be refused admission to a school on the grounds of race, tribe, colour, religion, creed, and place of origin, political opinion or the social status of his or her parents.
Labour Act [Chapter 28:01]	- It prohibits economic exploitation of children, especially child labour - No contract of employment shall be enforceable against any person under the age of sixteen years of age
Criminal Codification and Reform Act [Chapter 9:23]	- The Act widens the range of sexual offences and increases penalties for such offences - It also contains provisions dealing with sexual offences committed against young persons - Further, it seeks to prevent sexual exploitation of young persons within and outside Zimbabwe and to curb prostitution and the spread of HIV and AIDS.
Administration of Estates Act [Chapter 6:01]	It provides for the protection of widows and children under the inheritance laws in Zimbabwe

6.2.1 International Laws Ratified by Zimbabwe

a) United Nations Convention on The Rights Of The Child (CRC)

This Convention is a remarkable milestone for the protection and realization of the rights of children worldwide. Zimbabwe by ratifying this Convention, undertook to commit to protect and ensure children's rights. The Convention sets out rights that children enjoy as human beings and also identifies special rights and protections they require during this vulnerable phase of their lives. There are 54 Articles in the CRC. These set out universal human rights, including the rights to survival, develop to the fullest, protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation, participate fully, cultural and social life

b) The African Charter on The Rights and Welfare Of The Child (ACRWC)

Zimbabwe also ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACWRC) in 1995. Like the CRC, the Charter is a comprehensive instrument that sets out rights and defines universal principles and norms for the status of children. It emphasises the need to include African cultural values and experiences when dealing with the rights of the child. It recognises the child's unique and privileged place in African society and that African children need protection and special care

6.2.1 Child Protection Programmes in Zimbabwe

(A) Pre-Trial Diversion for Young Offenders

The Pre-trial programme stemmed from the realisation that the disposition of cases involving juveniles and young offenders was unsatisfactory, with a number of juveniles being unnecessarily prosecuted and incarcerated. It aims to make child offenders responsible and accountable for their actions, to provide an opportunity for reparation, to prevent a young offender from receiving a criminal record and thus being labelled as a criminal, to open the judicial process for education and rehabilitative procedures and to lessen the case load on the formal system. This program targets juveniles under the age of 18 who have been arrested for offences considered not being too serious, and which would ordinarily attract a sentence of 12 months or less within the formal system.

(b) National Programme of Action For Children (NPA)

This programme ensures the promotion of child survival, development and protection. It creates a platform to strengthen and spearhead the development of a National Child Welfare Policy and strategic documents.

(c) The National Action Plan for Orphans And Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC)

In the spirit of cooperation between Government and Non-Governmental Organisations, the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP) was established to facilitate interventions for orphans and vulnerable children. The goal of the NAP is based on the four underpinning principles of the Convention on the Rights of a Child. Monitoring of OVC interventions at the different community levels is done by the Child Protection Committees as mandated by the NAP. The child protection committees are composed of Government Departments represented in the area, NGO's, Faith Based Organizations, Care Based Organizations, traditional leadership (custodians of OVC in rural communities), traditional healers and child representatives.

(d) Victim Friendly Courts

These are courts established to give a friendly environment to child offenders. These courts allow all vulnerable witnesses to give evidence in a closed circuit system without the fear of facing the perpetrator, thereby protecting the integrity of the victims.

(e) Child Welfare Council (CWC)

The members of the CWC are appointed by the Minister of Labour and Social Services. Members comprise representatives from the Ministries of education, health, the registration of births and deaths, justice, local government and the creation of employment, police, NGOs, and Council

(f) Child Protection Committees (CPC)

These provide a forum for inter-agency working on child protection in every area of Zimbabwe. Members have responsibility on behalf of their organisations to;

- Individually and collectively, demonstrate leadership and accountability for child protection work and its effectiveness.

- Agree collectively the constitution for the CPC including the delegation of roles and responsibilities to take forward multi-agency issues in respect of child protection and the authority to do so.
- Appoint representatives to the CPC with the appropriate delegated authority and responsibility to take forward child protection issues on behalf of each agency as required.
- Agree work plan, strategic & operational priorities and resources with the CPC taking account of the requirements for child protection.
- Undertake analysis & research on child protection trends and identification of issues locally & report findings to organisations.
- Develop & provide information to the public & professionals.
- Raise public awareness and engagement with children and families.

g) Child Protection Society (CPS)

CPS is a dominant actor in the field of promoting children rights in Zimbabwe. It is a national and nongovernmental children rights organization that also takes part in the promotion of children rights other than Justice for Children. It is regarded as the oldest child rights watchdog that is there to fully address the rights of children as it was established in 1952. Hence it is governed by an executive committee that has a mandate of safeguarding children rights in the country. It also promotes the well-being of vulnerable children and assists them to become self-reliant as well as responsible inhabitants of the community at large.

7.3 CURRENT BIRTH REGISTRATION SYSTEMS IN ZIMBABWE

a) Registrar General's Office

A birth certificate is an important document that confers and confirms Zimbabwean citizenship on a child once issued after the registration of the birth. The Birth Certificate enables a person:

- To obtain a National Identity Card
- To obtain a Passport, and for
- Insurance purposes
- Pension purposes
- School purposes
- Employment

There are two modes of birth registration namely:

- Current Registration - this is a registration effected within 42 days of birth. These are citizen's birth certificate issued throughout the country by all the District Registries.
- Late Registration - this is a registration effected after 42 days of birth up to any age of the child. These registrations involve children either born at home (i.e. out of medical institutions where there are no written records) or born in medical institutions where there are written records.
- Non-citizen's birth certificate issued by the Registrar General only at Central Registry.

b) Mobile Birth Registration/ Outreach Programmes

In addition to the decentralized situation of the District Registries throughout the country and the establishment of Sub-Offices, annual out-reach programmes are carried out, in the form of Mobile Registration Exercises since 1981. These mobile exercises carry a full package of births, deaths, national and voter registrations. These exercises are meant to alleviate people from travelling long distances and encourage them to register their children's births by bringing the services almost to their doorsteps. The mobile registration exercise normally runs for one or two months depending on availability of funds. Some of the constraints in the exercises are lack of caravans and necessary camping equipment for use by personnel and four wheel drives pick –up vehicles for use in areas where there is bad terrain and poor road network. Zimbabwe birth registration is carried out on daily basis and outreach programmes are complimentary to this.

7.4 FINDINGS ON CHILD ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

Child abuse and exploitation corrode the strong foundation that children require for leading healthy and productive lives. Globally, studies show that exposure to violence during childhood can increase vulnerability to a broad range of mental and physical health problems, ranging from depression and unwanted pregnancy to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. In a Violence Against Children (VACS) study conducted in 2015, patterns in the prevalence of any form of childhood sexual violence reported among females in Zimbabwe was high (32.5%¹), yet Zimbabwe had a considerably lower reported prevalence of sexual violence against males ²(8.9%). Zimbabwe continues to lack specific social interventions targeting sectors in which Child Labour is most prevalent. Gaps remain in the

¹ Violence Against Children Study (VACS) 2015, Zimbabwe

² Multi-Cluster Indicator Survey (2016)

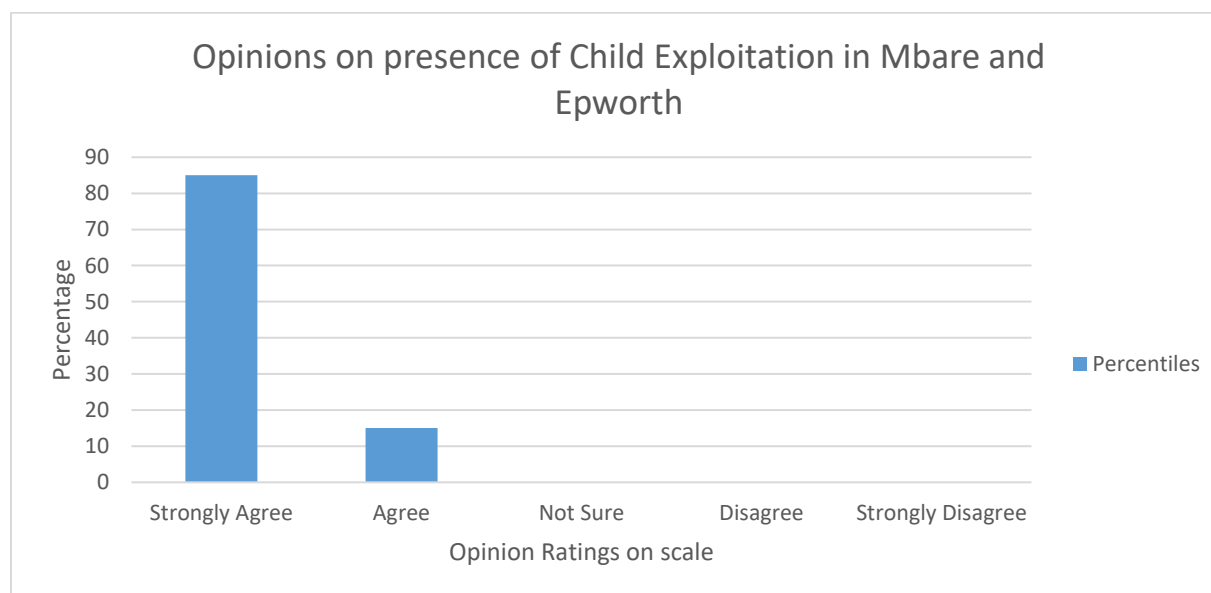
country's legal framework against Child Labour. Education is not compulsory or free, which increases children's vulnerability.

6.2.1 Prevalence of Child Exploitation in Mbare and Epworth.

In tandem with previous findings and reports, this study unveils that Child Protection is still far from pleasing in the areas of Mbare and Epworth. On a five-options (strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree) Likert scale, 85% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is child abuse and exploitation in Mbare and Epworth while the remaining 15% of the respondents agreed with the same. There was no response for any of the other scale ratings, thus showing a high prevalence of child exploitation and abuse in the areas. Bouncing to the focus group discussion, one responded (a vendor in Epworth) responded saying,

“that is common knowledge, children are abused every day here and very little is being done to rescue them, they do not even know where to go!”. Fig 2 below shows responses on prevalence of child exploitation in Mbare and Epworth.

Fig 2: Child Exploitation in Mbare and Epworth



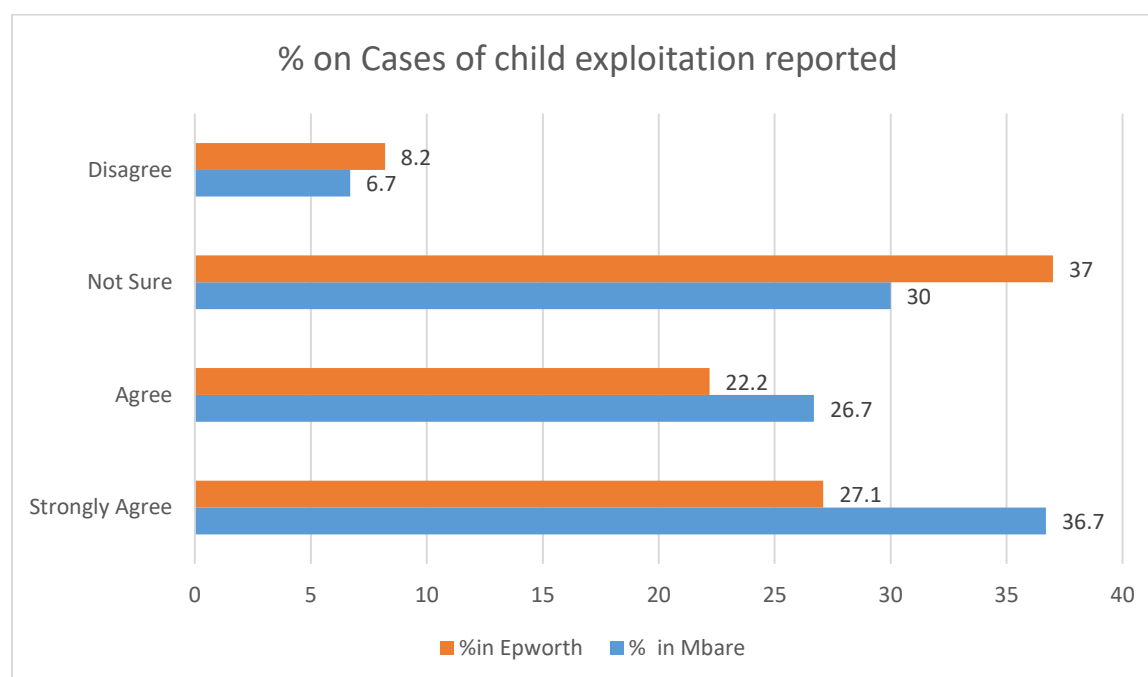
Source: i VNZ - Likert Scale on Child Exploitation

6.1.2 Reported Child Exploitation and Abuse Cases

While there are rampant child exploitation and abuse occurrences, there is a very low rate in terms of cases being reported to the police and other justice operations with a cumulative percentile reaching to 63.4% of the respondents confirming that cases are being reported. The remaining 30%

confessing uncertainty on whether cases are reported or not and 6.7% saying the cases are never reported. Information obtained from the focus group discussion and key informants points out that there is a major challenge on cases being reported citing issues like fear, ignorance, neglect, stigmatisation, lack of transport money, lack of emotional support and unavailability of support after reporting cases. However, hotlines like Childline have been used effectively. Data gathered via desktop research suggests that 37% and 58% of child exploitation and abuse in Mbare and Epworth respectively, are not reported (NAP III, 2016-2020³).

Figure 3: Cases of Child Exploitation Reported



Source: ii: Consolidated Data from, Likert Scale, Questionnaires and FGDs

6.1.3 Child protection channels

There is evidently a fair police presence and other reporting channels in the communities of Mbare and Epworth. There are also other child protection channels like CCW⁴s, Child Protection Committees and other pathways to justice. However, both focus groups and questionnaire data reveals that both children and caregivers are not well informed about these channels. While almost everyone knows that cases are reported at the police, for example, only 35% of the respondents

³ National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, phase 3. 2016 – 2020.

⁴ Case Care Workers (from the Department Of Social Services)

confirmed knowing the victim friendly unit; of which this is the proper unit that handles child protection matters. More so, there was no direct synchronization and availability of databases of child protection channel lines save for the Childline 116 hotline, which is known by 62% of the respondents.

Table 1: Child protection in Mbare and Epworth

		Correlations										
		Sex	Age	Status	Location	Children_Misused	Reported_Cases	Cases_Addressed	Knowledge_of_Channels	Functioning_Channels	Assisted_Children	Complaint_Author_Operations
Sex	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.034	.149	-1.000**	.140	-.004	-.102	.107	.117	-.008	.159
	Bfg (2-tailed)		.798	.285		.286	.978	.446	.415	.373	.951	.224
Age	Correlation Coefficient	-.034	1.000	.004	.034	.208	.235	.156	-.291*	.018	.117	.168
	Bfg (2-tailed)		.798		.974	.799	.198	.324	.024	.091	.373	.197
Status	Correlation Coefficient	.149	.004	1.000	-.149	.004	-.010	.138	.005	.158	.153	.420*
	Bfg (2-tailed)		.255		.974		.994	.942	.321	.967	.235	.243
Location	Correlation Coefficient	-1.000**	.034	-.149	1.000	-.140	.004	.102	-.107	-.117	.008	-.159
	Bfg (2-tailed)		.798	.285		.286	.978	.446	.415	.373	.951	.224
Children_Misused	Correlation Coefficient	.140	.208	.004	-.140	1.000	.111	-.020	-.136	.306	.889	.149
	Bfg (2-tailed)		.286	.188	.684	.286		.401	.082	.300	.017	.265
Reported_Cases	Correlation Coefficient	-.004	.235	-.010	.004	.111	1.000	.208	-.005	-.090	.231	.434*
	Bfg (2-tailed)		.978	.971	.942	.978		.481	.108	.875	.498	.001
Cases_Addressed	Correlation Coefficient	-.102	.156	.138	.102	-.020	.208	1.000	.177	-.305	.248	.137
	Bfg (2-tailed)		.440	.274	.321	.440	.992	.109		.177	.018	.957
Knowledge_of_Channels	Correlation Coefficient	.107	-.291*	.005	-.107	-.136	-.005	.177	1.000	-.283	.310	-.071
	Bfg (2-tailed)		.415	.024	.987	.300	.978	.177		.028	.816	.588
Functioning_Channels	Correlation Coefficient	.117	.018	.158	-.117	.306	-.090	-.305	-.283	1.000	.308	.118
	Bfg (2-tailed)		.373	.091	.235	.373	.017	.408	.018	.328		.402
Assisted_Children	Correlation Coefficient	-.008	.117	.153	.008	.089	.231	.248	.310	.008	1.000	.510*
	Bfg (2-tailed)		.951	.373	.243	.951	.975	.097	.916	.953		.003
Complaint_Author_Operations	Correlation Coefficient	.159	.168	.420*	-.159	.148	.434*	.137	-.071	.118	.510*	1.000
	Bfg (2-tailed)		.228	.187	.001	.228	.201	.297	.588	.402	.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

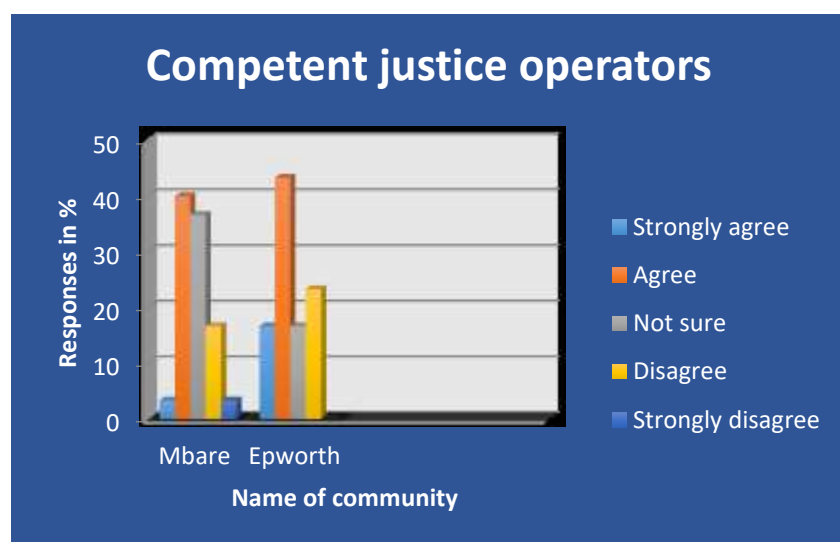
Table 1 above indicates that there is a -0.090 correlation between functioning child protection channels and reported child abuse cases which indicates that there is a faint negative link between the two. This may indicate that availability of functioning channels of child protection does not translate to an increase in reported cases. This could be because of reluctance of the community in reporting child abuse cases or rather, a lack of awareness on the availability of channels of child protection. There is a direct relationship between the level of knowledge on channels of reporting child protection cases and the ultimate number of cases finally reported. It, therefore, resonates that while there is evidence that child protection matters are not reported, it may not point to weaker justice operators but rather to an uninformed population that is therefore not utilizing the existing reporting channels.

Further, there is a positive correlation between sex and knowledge of child protection channels with a coefficient of 0.107 at a 0.05 level of significance (2-tailed). This designates that the knowledge of the child protection channels is determined by one's sex, where females tend to be

more aware compared to men. A general assumptive explanation is that females are more involved with children in the Zimbabwean community compared to men.

The research established that both Mbare and Epworth have justice operators that are fairly known, although not by everyone. These justice operators are installed by different and multiple stakeholders that include the government, community-based organizations, Non-governmental organizations, networks and others. This research thus attempted to inquire about the effectiveness or competence of these justice operators. There were mixed feelings on the competences of these justice operators with 26.6% choosing to be indifferent in their responses. The graph below shows the cross-tabulation of the responses in Mbare and Epworth.

Figure 4: Report on Competence of Justice Operators in Mbare and Epworth



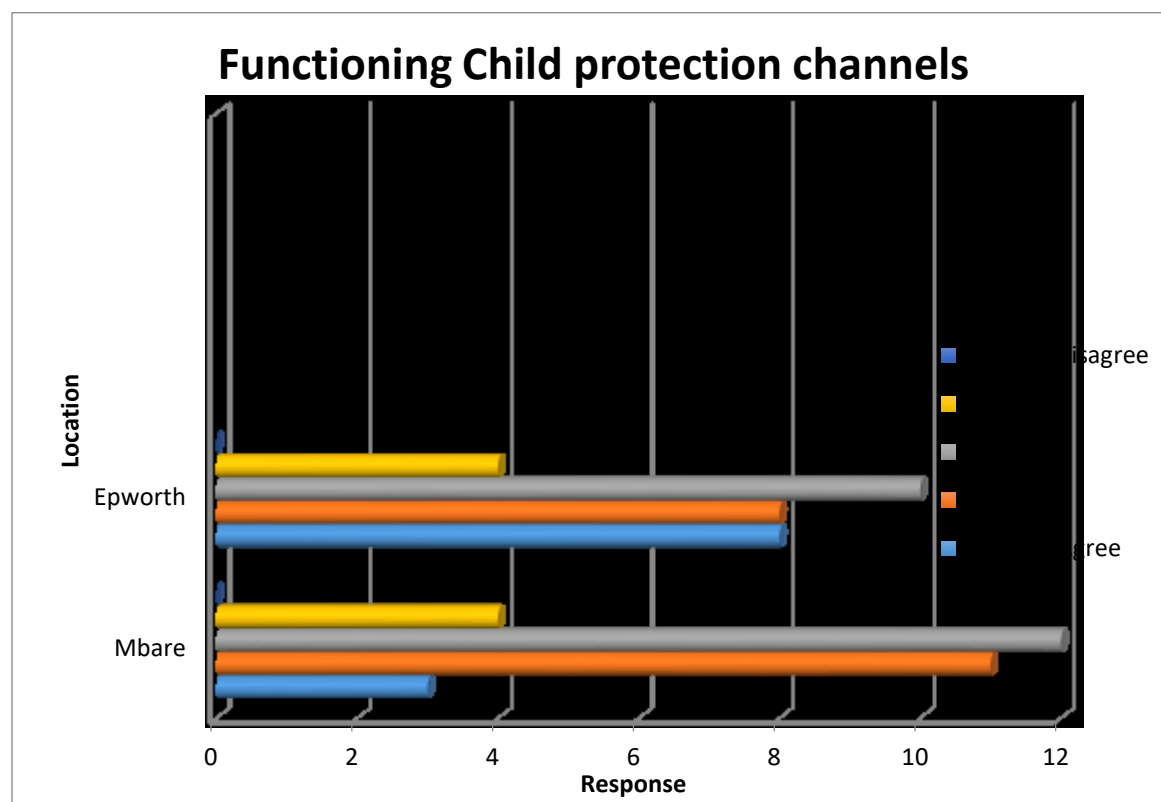
Source: iii Cross tabulation of questionnaire results : SPSS

Fig 5 above presents the views of the communities of Mbare and Epworth on the competencies of justice operators. It basically explains how each of the two communities identifies the justice operators in their area as proficient and effective in addressing issues to do with child abuse. The above data

was obtained from a Likert scale of five measures which are: Strongly agree (completely certain), Agree (somehow certain), Not sure (have no idea/ uncertain), Disagree, Strongly disagree and was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results indicate that the opinions from the two communities differ in certain areas where Epworth has a 16.67% of people who strongly agree that the justice operators in their community are competent while Mbare only has 3.33% of those that strongly agree. However, almost the same amount of people in both communities agrees on having competent justice operators with 40% in Mbare and a 43.33 in Epworth. Mbare has 36.67% of people that are not sure whether their justice operators are competent or not while Epworth has a 16.67%. This could be due to the fact that some of these

people are either ignorant of the justice issues in their community or they have never heard of them before and this suggests that there is lack of awareness concerning this. 16.67% and 23.33% of people in Mbare and Epworth disagree respectively while there is not a single individual that indicated strongly disagreeing with the competence of justice operators in Epworth while there is a 3.33% in Mbare of those that strongly disagreed on the competence of justice operators in their community.

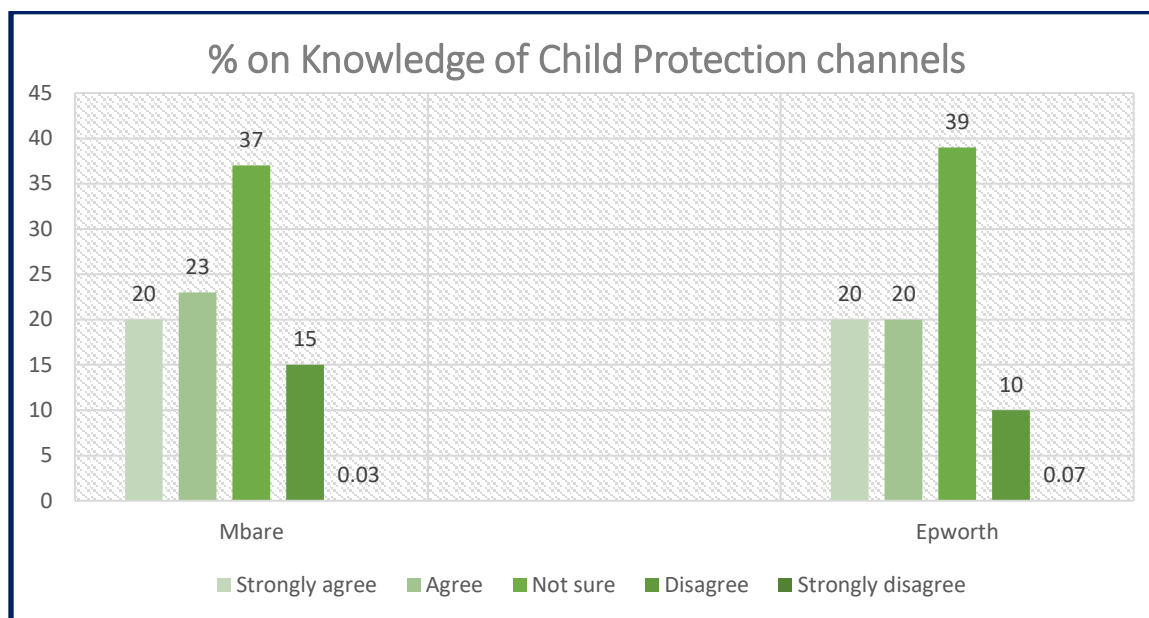
Figure 5: Child Protection Channels in Mbare and Epworth



It is unfortunate that despite presence of certain child protection channels, few people in these two communities of Mbare and Epworth are aware of their existence. This is indicated by the **not sure** response as highlighted in the graph above. Several reasons may have contributed to this, and these may include that, parents and caregivers may be ignorant, negligent and/or lack concern over the welfare of children in their community. Further it may be noted that, despite the high responses that agree with the functionality of the child protection channels, there still seem to be few reported child abuse cases especially in Mbare. This is indicated by the figure 3 on *percentiles of responses on whether child protection cases are reported* where only 35% of the respondents confirmed

knowing the victim friendly unit; of which this is the proper unit that handles child protection matters, and 35% is a very worrisome representation for a vulnerable community like Mbare.

Figure 6: Knowledge of child protection channels

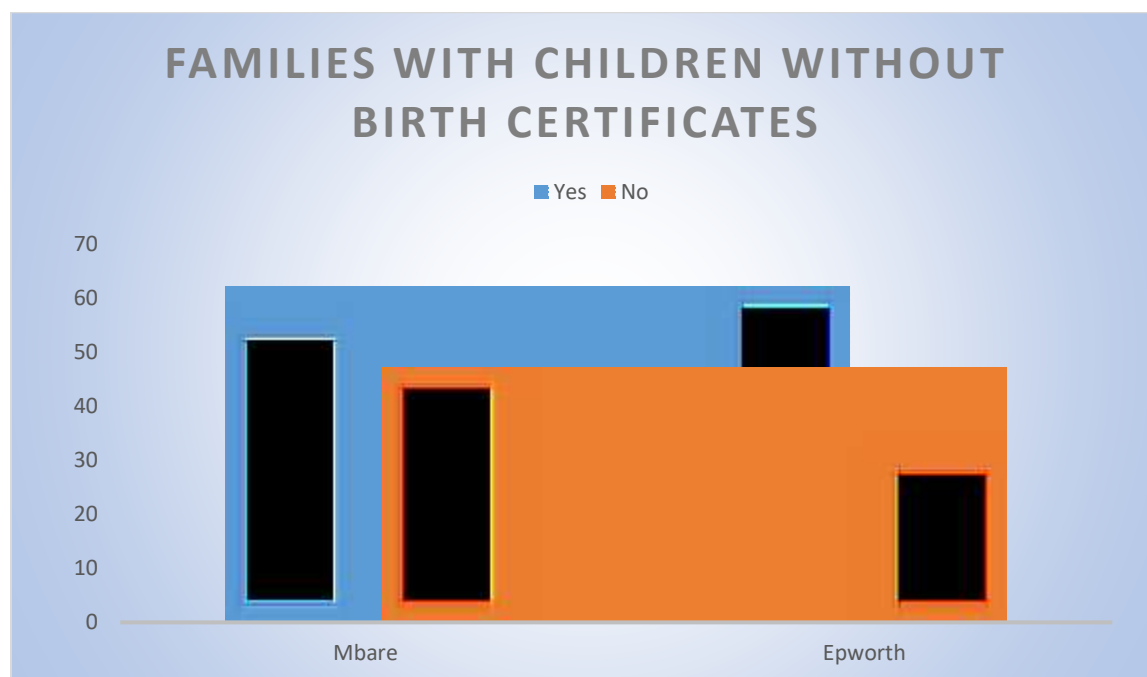


This graph above also gives a clear pictorial presentation of how parents and caregivers in Mbare and Epworth (37%,39%) have limited knowledge about the child protection channels involved in their communities. This supports the findings indicated above in the functionality of channels and competent justice operators sections, which indicate that the major contribution to the rise of child abuse problems in Mbare and Epworth is lack of information and knowledge among caregivers and parents concerning child protection and its channel. The findings of this research indicate that while an average of 37% are in complete darkness, the remaining average of 61% had very limited knowhow on child protection with only 20% being certain in both communities.

7.5 FINDINGS ON BIRTH REGISTRATION

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) of 2014 indicated that only 32% of the children below the age of five in Zimbabwe have birth certificates, the number being 57% in urban areas (ZIMSTAT 2015). Children without birth certificates cannot sit for national examinations, because schools do not enroll children without birth certificates. Desktop research reports that fees set to access birth certificates at a later stage are high, employees at the Registrar-General's office are largely unhelpful, bureaucratic procedures and corruption in acquiring the birth certificates are some of the barriers that hinder children from accessing birth certificates.

Figure 7: Lack of Birth Registration in families



A cumulative average of 76% of the parents, caregivers and other children admit knowing a child without a birth certificate in their own family where there are more in Epworth than in Mbare. With support from the focus groups that were done during this baseline survey, it was indicated that there are several contributions to these children's not having birth certificates and some of the reasons include parental absence, parents not having legal documents themselves, broken families, orphanhood, unknown parents, and distance to registration points, family strains and ignorance.

Figure 8: Children without BC in the community

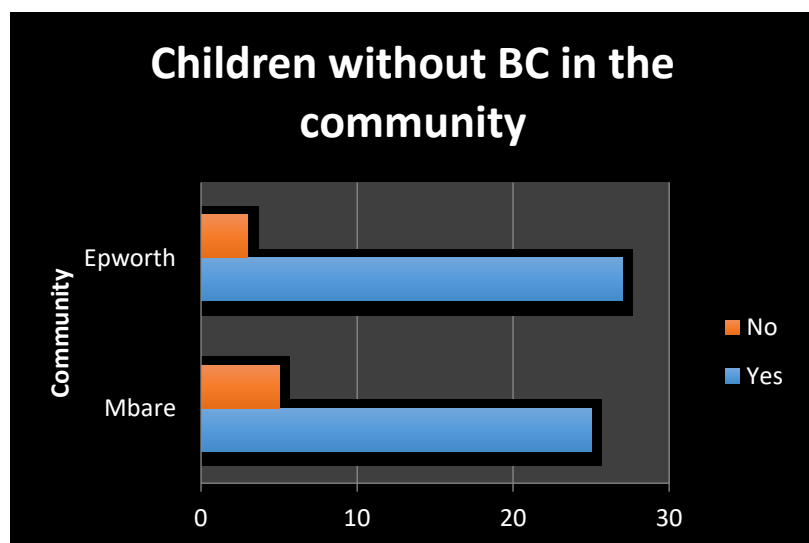


Figure 8 indicates the responses from caregivers concerning their knowledge of children without birth certificates in their communities. Epworth has a slightly higher number of yes responses on knowledge of children without birth certificates compared to Mbare, despite Mbare having a higher population of orphans and vulnerable children.

Figure 9: Correlations of children without BC

Correlations											
		Sex	Age	Status	No. of Children	Children Without BC in Family	Children Without BC in Community	Knowledge of importance of BC	Knowledge of requirements for BC	Knowledge of BC registration	Difficulties in getting BC
Sex	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.029	-.018	.339	-.097	-.099	-.175	.837	-.089	.079
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.827	.893	.767	.916	.458	.182	.779	.467	.591
Age	Correlation Coefficient	.029	1.000	-.072	.172	.035	.168	-.084	-.481**	.076	-.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.886	.188	.793	.198	.523	.000	.583	.498
Status	Correlation Coefficient	-.018	-.072	1.000	-.099	.205	.033	-.042	-.267	.125	-.011
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.850	.116	.804	.751	.067	.341	.936
No. of Children	Correlation Coefficient	.339	.172	-.099	1.000	.038	.048	-.114	.067	-.042	-.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.916	.729	.384	.613	.752	.772
Children Without BC in Family	Correlation Coefficient	-.097	.035	.205	.038	1.000	-.048	-.079	-.102	-.311	-.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)						.728	.558	.438	.186	.718
Children Without BC in Community	Correlation Coefficient	-.099	.168	.033	.048	-.048	1.000	-.062	-.028	.088	.347**
	Sig. (2-tailed)							.532	.828	.595	.007
Knowledge of importance of BC	Correlation Coefficient	-.175	-.084	-.042	-.114	-.079	-.082	1.000	.081	.328	-.074
	Sig. (2-tailed)								.538	.010	.574
Knowledge of requirements for BC	Correlation Coefficient	.837	-.481**	-.267	.067	-.102	-.028	.081	1.000	-.083	.195
	Sig. (2-tailed)									.530	.428
Knowledge of BC registration	Correlation Coefficient	-.089	.076	.125	-.042	-.211	.088	.328	-.083	1.000	.093
	Sig. (2-tailed)										.237
Difficulties in getting BC	Correlation Coefficient	.079	-.091	-.011	-.038	-.048	.347**	-.074	.105	.083	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)										
Failure to get BC	Correlation Coefficient	.115	.074	-.120	.020	-.038	.000	.020	-.064	.155	.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)										

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Figure 9 highlights the correlations between the number of children without Birth Certificates in Mbare and Epworth against multiple variable related to low birth registration as given in the questionnaires (Appendix 6) and it can be noted that there is a negative correlation between difficulties accessing birth certificates and knowledge of importance of birth certificates. This therefore, indicates that knowledge about importance of birth certificates may not have a direct influence in accessing one, thus there might be other contributing factors towards failure for a child having a birth certificate for example, the parent might not have legal documents as well, or if the child is orphaned, there might not be a death certificate to assist in the process, or the parents may have separated before the child got a birth certificate thus hindering progress.

8. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the study revealed that Child Protection is still far from pleasing in the areas of Mbare and Epworth. Cumulatively, 85% of the respondents reported that there is child abuse in these 2 areas. In as much as there is child abuse the study also unveils that there is a very low rate in terms of cases being reported to the police with 53% of the respondent not even aware of the ZRP - Victim Friendly Unit. This clearly shows that children are at risk and are suffering in these communities only an average of 43% of the respondents reported knowing competent justice operators. Although there are channels of reporting child abuse cases in Mbare and Epworth it was discovered that both children (47%) and caregivers (53%) are not well informed about these channels, thus revealing ineffectiveness of interventions that are in place to deal with Child

Protection. This shows a gap in the implementation of Child Protection also echoed by the average of 44% respondents knowing of reported cases against only a 13% recalling the cases being resolved successfully. Despite child abuse, the study also revealed that there is low birth registration in areas of Mbare (32%) and Epworth (27%) rating with the ages 0-5years.

Lack of birth registration has left children prone to different forms of abuse and exploitation. Of the interviewed respondents most cited that the major reasons for having no birth certificates were parental absence (23%), parents not having legal documents themselves (35%), broken families (41%), orphanhood (26%), unknown parents (5%), and distance to registration points (4%), family strains and ignorance (9.5%). This evidently highlights that children who have no birth certificates are children at risk and this is also worsened by their failure to access birth certificates as some are already orphans and some from broken families. Considering the 85% **strongly agree** and the remaining 15% being an **agree** to presence of exploitation, it is imperative that there be intervention to bridge this gap in helping children at risk in these communities.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the results of this study possible intervention strategies were suggested to come up and improve the situation of children in communities of Mbare and Epworth. These include:

1. Awareness Campaigns
2. Strengthen Child Protection systems
3. Counselling for restoration of children passing through abuse and exploitation
4. Partnership with government in birth registration process and litigation services
5. Encouraging justice for children through formation of a child protection alliance
6. Educating parents and guardians in the importance of Birth certificates
7. Assisting with transport funds to get Birth certificates
8. Legal and policy framework/ System strengthening
9. Strengthening families and preventing unnecessary separation through offering counselling, mentor families, workshops and good parenting programs.

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11. APENDIX

Annex A

ANNEX A: CHILD ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION SURVEY (ADULTS)

Please fill in this questionnaire in honesty with knowledge and experience based on the past 5 years.

Please tick or fill in the boxes provided below.

Sex Male ☐ Female ☐
 Age 15-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31 and above ☐

Title in the family

Parent..... Relative (please specify)

Other (please specify).....

Please complete the following question based on your knowledge for the past five years in or about this community.

NO.	QUESTION	Please tick in the box below your chosen answer				
		STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NOT SURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1.	I know of a child that has been abused in my community in the past five years?					
2.	I know of or have reported a case of child abuse to responsible authorities in the past five years?					
3.	Reported child abuse cases are addressed effectively					
4.	I am aware of channels of reporting child abuse cases in my community					
5.	These channels of reporting child abuse are fully functional					
6.	I know of children who have received help through these channels					

Annex B

ANNEX B: BIRTH REGISTRATION SURVEY

Please tick or fill in the boxes provided below.

Sex Male ☐ Female ☐

Age 19-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 30 and above ☐

Title in the family

Parent..... Relative (please specify).....

Other (please specify).....

Please tick or fill in where appropriate.

1. Number of children in your family
2. Number of children in your family that don't have birth certificates
3. Do you know any child who doesn't have a birth certificate in your community
Yes ☐ No ☐
4. Do you know the importance of a birth certificate
Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Are you aware of the requirements for one to register for a birth certificate
Yes ☐ No ☐
6. Do you know where birth registration is done
Yes ☐ No ☐
7. Would you say it is difficult to get birth registration for a child
Yes ☐ No ☐
8. Do you know of anyone who has tried to get a birth registration and failed
Yes ☐ No ☐

Annex C

ANNEX C: CHILD ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION SURVEY (CHILDREN)

Please fill in this questionnaire in honesty with knowledge and experience based on the past 5 years.

Please tick or fill in the boxes provided below.

Sex Male ☐ Female ☐
 Age 5-10 ☐ 10-15 ☐ 15-18 ☐

Title in the family

Parent..... Relative (please specify)

Other (please specify).....

Please complete the following question based on your knowledge for the past five years in or about this community.

NO.	QUESTION	Please tick in the box below your chosen answer				
		STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NOT SURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
5.	I know of a child that has been abused in my community in the past five years?					
6.	I know of or have reported a case of child abuse to responsible authorities in the past five years?					
7.	Reported child abuse cases are addressed effectively					
8.	I am aware of channels of reporting child abuse cases in my community					
5.	These channels are fully functional					
6	I know of children who have received help through these channels					

Annex D

ANNEX D: BIRTH REGISTRATION SURVEY (Children)

Please tick or fill in the boxes provided below.

Sex	Male	☐	Female	☐
Age	5-10	☐	10-15	☐
			15 - 18	☐

Title in the family

Child..... Relative (please specify).....

Other (please specify).....

Please tick or fill in where appropriate.

1. Number of children in your family
2. Number of children in your family that don't have birth certificates
3. Do you know any child who doesn't have a birth certificate in your community
 Yes ☐ No ☐
4. Do you know the importance of a birth certificate
 Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Are you aware of the requirements for one to register for a birth certificate
 Yes ☐ No ☐
6. Do you know where birth registration is done
 Yes ☐ No ☐
7. Would you say it is difficult to get a birth certificate
 Yes ☐ No ☐
8. Do you know of anyone who has tried to get a birth registration and failed
 Yes ☐ No ☐