

## Challenges Associated with the Involving and Participation of Children in Sustainable Livelihoods Activities in Madziwa Area, Zimbabwe

Edith Karimanzira

Lecturer, Department of Peace, Leadership and Conflict Studies in the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences at the Zimbabwe Open University

**\*Corresponding author**

*Edith Karimanzira*

**Article History**

*Received: 09.12.2017*

*Accepted: 15.12.2017*

*Published: 30.12.2017*

**DOI:**

10.36347/sjahss.2017.v05i12.022



**Abstract:** The children's participation and involvement in SLAs in Madziwa area of Zimbabwe is not devoid of challenges. This study assessed challenges associated with the children's participation and involvement in SLAs in Madziwa area of Zimbabwe. This was a qualitative ethnographic study which was informed by phenomenological research philosophy. One hundred and ten (110) participants namely, 30 parents, 30 primary and 30 secondary school pupils and 10 primary and 10 secondary school pupils were selected using quota sampling. The data generation methods were in-depth face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. Findings regarding challenges associated with the involving and participation of children in sustainable livelihoods activities in Madziwa area of Zimbabwe were child labour, exploitation of child labour, child abuse, lack of recreation, lack of the right to be heard, lack of freedom of choice, compromised health and health care, lazy parents and caregivers, food insecurity, and forced labour on land. While sustainable livelihoods activities were expected to improve the quality of life of Madziwa area people, they were also associated with some instances that violated children's rights, whether consciously or unconsciously on the part of the people in Madziwa area. The magnitude of violation of children through SLAs varied according to family needs and season. Moreover, the challenges were situation specific. There is need for involving various stakeholders such as parents, school teachers, pupils, community leaders, human rights and children's rights organisation to keep a watchful on how children could be engaged in SLAs in a bid to curb the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs. Second, it is necessary further studies in this area to be conducted at macro-level countrywide using quantitative and mixed methods research methodologies with the intent to establish and confirm a large body of knowledge in the field of challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs.

**Keywords:** Challenges, sustainable livelihoods, sustainable livelihoods activities, participation, involvement

### INTRODUCTION

An episode of talk between policy makers, Non-Governmental Organisations such as Childline and legal experts is one of the attempts to put in place mechanisms and measures to observe human rights, which include children's rights. All too often, in practice, however, issues of children and young people are seen only as a social 'issue' - while their health, safety. Education and rights are inextricably linked to economic growth and shared prosperity, a protected natural environment and more stable, safer societies [1]. In fact, Zimbabwe values and observes children's rights in all spheres of life. She however attempts to make sure that her citizens in their different communities pursue sustainable livelihoods. However, as communities struggle to achieve sustainable livelihoods, this struggle is not a preserve of adults

alone. Children of school going age have had to complement the efforts of their parents and guardians in order to achieve sustainable livelihoods. In that regard, children had to undertake different tasks meant to help adults attain sustainable livelihoods. By so doing, the extent to which some of the children's rights would get unconsciously or consciously violated through their participation in sustainable livelihoods activities is yet to be explored.

The abuse, neglect and exploitation of children are a serious and neglected social problem, with major long-term economic and human development implications. Sexual and physical abuse: An estimated 150 million girls and 73 million boys worldwide have experienced unwanted sexual contact, while between 0.5 and 1.5 billion children and young people globally

experience physical violence annually [2]. While the foregoing abuses imply violation of children's rights, they did not relate to how children's rights could be violated through SLAs in Zimbabwe.

Both sexual and physical violence can lead to injuries, death, mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and lower educational achievement and lifetime earnings. Early marriage: Recent data indicate that 14% of girls in low-and middle-income countries marry by age 15, and 30% by age 18. This equates to 14.2 million girls worldwide married before their 18th birthday [3]. Early marriage (before age 18) is considered to violate individuals' right to consent to marriage when sufficiently mature and to legalise sexual relations at an age when they would otherwise be considered sexual abuse. It is associated with early childbearing, significantly higher rates of infant and child mortality and morbidity and a greater risk of intergenerational poverty cycles. Girls and young women married as children are also at greater risk of violence and abuse from spouses and in-laws [4, 3]

Inadequate care: Studies in middle-income countries indicate that between 30% and 48% of children have been left alone or in the care of other children while their parents are working putting them at increased risk of injury and worse educational and behavioural outcomes [5].

While children in different parts of the world have been involved in livelihoods to sustain themselves in their communities, their rights have been subject to violation. According to Peterson and Pederson [6], too much exposure of children to livelihoods disempowers them in their societies. The preceding finding is echoed by de Silva [7] who established that livelihoods deprive children of their basic entitlements. United Nations Convention of Children's Rights [1] documents two ways by which children's rights can be violated by sustainable livelihoods. First, childhood is a unique period of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development and violations of children's rights, such as exposure to violence, child labour or unsafe products or environmental hazards may have lifelong, irreversible and even transgenerational consequences. Second, children are often politically voiceless and lack access to relevant information. They are reliant on governance systems, over which they have little influence, to have their rights realized. This makes it hard for them to have a say in decisions regarding laws and policies that impact their rights.

The worst forms of child labour which are indicative of the extent to which children's rights are violated as perceived by ILO Convention 182 in Hanmer [8] entail prostitution, all forms of slavery, sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and forced labour, as well as work likely to harm their 'health, safety and morals'. All signatories are required to

identify these forms and develop a national plan of action to eliminate them. Underlying these Conventions is a commitment to promote the 'best interests' of the child, although interpretations of these interests can differ considerably [8].

In Malawi, Kakhome and Kuombola [9], p.vi) made the following pertinent observations regarding how sustainable livelihood activities violated children's rights:

1. During the low season, 42% of children of 6–17y of age (and 59% of the 12-14) are working long hours per week and 56% of children of 6-17y of age are working long hours per day.
2. In low tobacco season 10% of the children work long hours in tobacco related work, while this percentage increases to 23% in high season. If considering only tobacco growing families these percentages are 16.5% and 36.4% respectively.
3. The mean length of daily hours' children work on weekdays is 3.9 in low tobacco period
4. 24% of all children are exposed to hazardous work (for instance carrying heavy loads, work causing injuries/sickness, application of chemicals, working more than 43 hours/week)
5. 32% of children in tobacco growing families are exposed to hazardous work environments, 24% of the children apply chemicals.
6. 12% of the children were injured or sick because of work.
7. Of all the children, 8% are out of school because of work or their schooling is affected by work. This percentage is 10% for the 6-14 yr children from tobacco growing families (14% for the 12-4 yr)
8. Illness is the main reason given by the children for school absenteeism.
9. 16% of the parents said their children were out of school because of lack of school
10. Materials like uniforms, shoes and money for fees. 52% consider that their child (aged 6-14) are either too young or too old to be at school.

Marcus [10] noted that violation of children through sustainable livelihoods could noticeable through different forms of child abuse as indicated in the subsequent four paragraphs.

First, Marcus [10] revealed that, "The abuse, neglect and exploitation of children is a serious and neglected social problem, with major long-term economic and human development implications". With regards to sexual and physical abuse it was established that an estimated 150 million girls and 73 million boys worldwide have experienced unwanted sexual contact, while between 0.5 and 1.5 billion children and young people globally experience physical violence annually [2, 10].

While communities perceived participation and of involvement of children in SLAs through child labour as a good and normal practice for socializing the child in their pursuit of means of survival, they seemed not to realise the negative consequences associated with such practice. This study thus investigated challenges associated with the involvement and participation of children in sustainable livelihoods activities.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

I conducted this qualitative study against the background of phenomenological research philosophy with the intent to fully understand challenges associated with the involvement and participation of children in sustainable livelihoods activities in Madziwa area, Zimbabwe. I employed an ethnographic research method to carry out the study. It allowed me to fully understand the culture of the people in Madziwa area because I had to stay with them for seven months. In other words, I was immersed in their culture since I attended in most of their societal functions such as 'nhimbe, hoka and majanha' (communal tasks).

### **Selection of participants**

The research site was purposefully selected because it had farming and mining activities which provided sustainable livelihoods to Madziwa area people. For the research sites, the researcher selected one primary school out of six primary schools and one secondary school out three secondary schools, as well as one village out of the five villages that were close to the aforementioned schools in Madziwa area. The sites were chosen for five reasons. The first reason was their density characteristics. Their population was located in a rural area that had poverty experiences. The second reason was that they shared common broad livelihood sustaining activities such as farming, pastoralism, mining and fishing. The third reason for their choice was based on administrative and geographical characteristics. The population was located in Mashonaland Central Province which is well known for sound farming and mining activities. The fourth reason was on pre-existing vulnerabilities because the population was located in areas of high poverty and malnutrition despite the fact that the research site has good agro-ecological conditions. The fifth reason was that the selected village had pupils who were enrolled at the chosen primary and secondary schools. In this regard, quota sampling was used in this qualitative ethnographic study to identify and select information rich cases which were presumed for the most effective use of resources [11]. In addition, Black [12] supports the above by exhorting that quota sampling is a non-probability sampling that occurs when elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. Since qualitative research does not work with predetermined samples [13], but the researcher entered the field with a kick of sample of 25 participants to enable the data generation to commence. The 25 participants comprised five primary school

teachers, five secondary school teachers, five parents, five primary school children and five secondary school children. It therefore implied that the study's sample of 110 participants (30 parents, 10 primary school teachers, 10 secondary school teachers, 30 primary school pupils and 30 secondary school pupils) was determined when data generation reached data saturation. Data saturation occurred when the researcher and the research assistants when the sample reached 110 participants. It was at this point when the researcher and the research participants were no longer getting any new data from the same participants after administering repetitive interviews and focus group discussions on them. The participants were coded by means of open coding. The participants were coded as follows; primary school pupils (PSP1-30), primary school teachers (PST1-10), secondary school pupils (SSP1-30), secondary school teachers (SST1-10), and parents (P1-30).

The participants were selected by means of quota sampling which was then stratified in order for the researcher and the research participants to obtain data from participants in different age, socio-economic and power strata. It thus assisted researcher to compare and contrast experiences and perspectives of participants from different socio-economic backgrounds with respect to the phenomenon sustainable livelihoods and children's rights in Madziwa area of Zimbabwe. The researcher used expert judgment to select participants who had research sought characteristics. Thus, the researcher uses judgment to choose cases that help answer the research questions or achieve research objectives [12,14]. Ten primary and 10 secondary school teachers were assumed to have knowledge about how involvement of children into sustainable livelihoods activities violated children's rights. This was because of the nature of sustainable livelihoods that obtained in Madziwa area. As of six parents, six primary and six secondary school pupils, their purposive selection was plausible because of their involvement into sustainable livelihoods activities. In this study, purposive sampling involved identifying and selecting individual participants and groups of participants that were knowledgeable about the phenomenon of sustainable livelihoods and children's rights in Madziwa area. Thirty parents, 30 primary school pupils and 30 secondary school pupils had experience and knowledge about the magnitude of violation of children's rights through involving them in SLAs because the three groups of participants' involvement in SLAs. Ten primary and 10 secondary school teachers were relevant participants in this study because of their knowledge and experiences based on their observations of how sustainable livelihoods violated children's rights through involving children in sustainable livelihoods activities.

After selecting participants using quota, they were then stratified in order to place them in specific

groups that permitted the researcher and researchers to obtain perception diversity. The researcher identified and defined the population in Madziwa area. She then determined the desired sample size of 110 participants. Furthermore, she identified strata and classified all members of the population as members of one subgroup (30 parents, 10 secondary school teachers, 10 primary school teachers, 30 primary school pupils, and 30 secondary school pupils). These strata had different social status, economic standing, knowledge and experience levels regarding the participation and involvement of children in SLAs. Thus, quota sampling, according to Kombo and Tromp [15] enables researchers to obtain data from different participants belonging to varied socio-cultural backgrounds. To be included in this study the participants must have been staying in Madziwa rural community either intermittently or continuously for at least two (2) months. Special attention regarding the exploration of the subject under study was delimited to the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area of Zimbabwe. As a result of the use of quota sampling techniques, the researcher and the research participants were impressed by the level of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner as noted by Benard [16] and Spradley [17].

#### **Data generation**

Data generation in this study was done using the in-depth face-to-face interview guide and focus group discussion guide. The interview process enabled the researcher to gather the perspectives and experiences of children and thus made accessible to the researcher the voices of this marginalised social stratum [18]. Ten primary and 10 secondary school teachers were interviewed by the researcher and the four research assistants at least twice between 1 August 2017 and 15 October 2017. A total of 40 interviews was reached after each of the above two strata was interviewed twice. The interviews were recorded using a mobile phone by the researcher and the research assistants, with each interview lasting between one (1) hour and one (1) hour 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted, transcribed and analysed by the researcher. The interview guide contained two sections with questions for the bio-data of the research participants and the actual research findings. The first section of the interview asked questions about the primary and secondary school teacher participants' sex (this one was not asked as it was obvious and could embarrass the participants), age, marital status, grade/form taught, employment status, subject taught if secondary trained, and length of teaching experience, educational qualifications and length of stay in Madziwa area. These data enabled the researcher and the research assistants to select participants who had relative knowledge about the nature of the the participation and involvement of children in SLAs. The second section

of the interview guide contained five unstructured questions tailored to the research title.

Focus group discussions were used to generate data from 30 primary and 30 secondary school pupils. The researcher used two focus group schedules for 30 parents, 30 primary school teachers and 30 secondary school teacher. The researcher made sure that the child expert took part in all the 30 focus group discussions that involved primary and secondary school pupil participants. This move enabled the generation of consistent and credible data. Thirty focus group discussions were held between 1 August 2017 and 15 October 2017. Therefore, 30 focus group discussions were held parents and primary and secondary school pupils, that is, two per group same groups during separate days by the same researcher to ensure credibility of the findings. Each focus group had six participants, that is, six parents, six primary school children and six secondary school children were group interviewed twice by the same the researcher. These were conducted in Shona Language in order to obtain much more convincing data since the participants were not literate enough to enable them to effectively converse in English Language. The same instrument contained items written in English Language and Shona Language in brackets. The researcher prepared schedules two weeks before interview dates on 1 August 2017 and on 1 September 2017. The parents were organised with the assistance of the headman who was also a participant. In the schools, the head and teachers assisted with the facilitation of organising pupils into strata comprising pupils of equal number in terms of sex and different grade and form levels with the intent to obtain varied experiences regarding the effect of sustainable livelihoods on children's rights. They were useful in this study in three ways. First, they assisted the researcher to generate data in the shortest possible time [19, 20]. In this regard, focus group discussions enabled the researcher to interview five groups of six participants within the Madziwa area to obtain their perceptions with respect to the participation and involvement of children in SLAs. Each discussion occurred within a period of one hour or so, unlike in an interview session where a similar time actually lapsed while interviewing each individual participant.

#### **Data presentation and analysis**

The data profiling the research participants were presented descriptively without tables and figures, but words under the section called demographic data of participants. The actual research findings were presented using direct quotes and excerpts summarizing long quotes, relating to the interface between the participation and involvement of children in SLAs with particular reference to Madziwa area of Zimbabwe. Use of direct quotes and excerpts from in-depth face-to-face interview data and focus group discussions in the form of explanatory, descriptive, analytical and evaluative narratives would give the readers the first hand

information which affords them a sense of being present at the research sites during the data gathering process.

### **BIO-DATA OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

In this section, the research characteristics of the participants are going to be presented and described narratively in terms of number, strata, sex and age among other bio-data variables because they were selected by means of quota sampling as indicated in chapter 3. Altogether, 110 participants took part in this study. Thirty of them were parents, 30 were primary school pupils, and another 30 of the participants were secondary school pupils. The other 10 participants were primary school teachers and the last group of participants was made up of 10 primary school teachers. Thus, the research participants were categorised in the foregoing five strata. Diverse opinions from these groups of participants were meant to determine the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area. Parents, primary and secondary school pupils were exposed to focus group discussions twice in five groups of sixes twice in each group by the researcher, children expert and four research assistants. Primary and secondary school teachers were interviewed twice individually by the researcher and the research assistants. The children's expert did not interview adult participants. Thus, 30 focus group discussions were conducted on parents, primary and secondary school pupils, while 40 interviews were conducted on the primary and secondary school teachers.

The first stratum had 30 parents. Fifteen out of 30 parents were male, while the other 15 out of 30 were female. This distribution of participants by sex was balanced and could give sex-sensitive perceptions on the magnitude of violation of children's rights through sustainable livelihoods in Madziwa area of Zimbabwe. Eighteen out of 30 parents were aged between 30 and 39 years, while 12 out of 30 parents were aged at least 40 years. Twenty-five out of 30 parents indicated that they were married, while three of them were divorced, and two of them were widowed. Twenty-one out of 30 parents indicated that they had children of primary school going age, while 11 out of 30 parents pointed out that they had children of secondary school going age, and nine out of 30 parents reported that they had children of both primary and secondary school going age. They all reported that they were involved in some form of sustainable livelihoods activities and they sometimes involved their children as well. In that regard, the participants had some research sought experience in the area of sustainable livelihoods, although the participation and involvement of children in SLAs was yet to be known. The highest level of education among parents was Form 4. Three out of 30 parents were holders of an Ordinary level qualification. Twenty-seven out of 30 parents were holders of a Grade 7 qualification. In order to generate credible data from them, they were asked questions in Shona Language

during the focus group discussion. Their level of literacy was not compatible with the English Language that was used as a medium of instruction in the focus group discussion guide.

The second stratum was made up of 30 primary school pupil participants. Fifteen out of 30 primary school pupils were male and another 15 out of 30 primary school pupils were female. Just as the case in parent participants, this distribution of participants by sex was balanced and could give sex-sensitive perceptions on the participation and involvement of children in Madziwa area of Zimbabwe. Ten out of 30 primary school pupils were aged 10 years, 14 out of 30 were aged 11 years, four out of 30 were aged 12 years, and two out of 30 were aged 13 years. Six out of 30 primary school pupils were in Grade 3, 12 out of 30 were in Grade 4, four out of 30 were in Grade 5, four out of 30 were in Grade 6, and four out of 30. These participants were relatively old enough to freely participate in the focus group discussions to air their opinions on the magnitude of violation of children's rights through sustainable livelihoods. In order to generate credible data from them, they were asked questions in Shona Language during the focus group discussion because their level of literacy did not match the level of English Language proficiency required during the focus group discussions.

The third stratum had 30 secondary school pupil participants. Fifteen out of 30 secondary school pupil participants were male and another 15 of them were female. Just as the case in parent and primary school pupil participants, this distribution of participants by sex was balanced and could give sex-sensitive perceptions on the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area of Zimbabwe. Six out of 30 secondary school pupils were aged 12 years, 12 out of 30 were aged 16 years, eight out of 30 were aged 17 years, and four out of 30 were aged 13 years. Eight out of 30 secondary school pupils were in Form 1, six out of 30 were in Form 2, 10 out of 30 were in Form 3, and six out of 30 were in Form 4. These participants were relatively old and mature enough to freely participate in the focus group discussions to air their opinions on the magnitude of violation of children's rights through sustainable livelihoods. In order to generate credible data from them, they were asked questions in Shona Language during the focus group discussion. Just like the parents and primary school pupils, the secondary school pupils' level of literacy was not compatible with the English Language that was used as a medium of instruction in the focus group discussion guide.

The fourth stratum was made up of 10 primary school teachers who comprised seven males and three females. Despite the small sample of 10 primary school teachers, the sex distribution appeared to be in favour of male teachers because most female teachers tend to be

deployed in urban area primary schools where their spouses and families live. Eight out of 10 primary school teachers were aged between 30 and 39 years, while two out of 10 were aged at least forty years. All primary school teacher participants were married, although four out of ten teachers were not staying with their spouses. Six out of 10 primary school teachers had a teaching experience of at least 10 years, while four of 10 primary school teachers had a teaching experience of less than 10 years. Two out 10 primary school teachers were teaching Grade 3 pupils, two out of 10 primary school teachers were teaching Grade 4 pupils, while Grades 5, 6 and 7 classes were taught by two primary school teachers, respectively. Three out of 10 primary school teachers were holders of first degrees namely, Bachelor of Education in Educational Management, Bachelor of Science in Special Education and Bachelor of Science in Physical Education. Seven out of 10 primary school teachers were holders of a Diploma in Education (Primary). These participants were interviewed in English Language since their literacy levels enabled them to understand and converse in English Language well. The primary school teacher participants also indicated that they taught pupils who complemented their parents' efforts in undertaking sustainable livelihoods activities as shall be seen in the presentation, analysis and discussion of the actual research findings.

The last stratum consisted of 10 secondary school teacher participants. Six out ten secondary school teachers were male, while four out ten secondary school teachers were female. In spite of the small sample of 10 secondary school teachers, just like the case in the primary school teachers, the sex distribution appeared to be in favour of male teachers because most female teachers tend to be deployed in urban area

secondary schools where their spouses and families live. Ten out of ten secondary school teacher participants were married, although two out ten teachers were not staying together with their spouses. One out of 10 secondary school teachers was teaching History and Geography to Form 1 classes. Three out 10 secondary school teachers were teaching Mathematics, Accounts and English Language to Forms 3 and 4 classes. Six out of 10 secondary school teachers were teaching Commerce, Shona, Bible Knowledge, Agriculture, English Literature and Fashion and Fabrics to O' Level classes. Five out 10 secondary school teachers were holders of first degrees such as Bachelor of Education in Science Education, Bachelor of Education in Shona, Bachelor of Education in Home Economics, Bachelor of Education in History, Bachelor of Education in Religious Studies, and Bachelor of Education in Mathematics. The other five out of 10 secondary school teachers were holders of a Diploma in Secondary Education. The foregoing qualifications are indicative of the degree to which the secondary school teacher participants were comfortable with being interviewed in English Language. Just like the parent and primary school teacher participants, the secondary school teachers also indicated that their pupils were sometimes engaged into sustainable livelihoods activities as shall be seen in the presentation, analysis and discussion of the actual research findings.

**PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE ACTUAL RESEARCH FINDINGS**  
**The Challenges Associated with the Participation and Involvement of Children in SLAs**

Findings related the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs is presented in Table-1 below.

**Table-1: Participants' perceptions on the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs how SLAs violate children's rights**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Substantiation</b>
Labour	Child labour	1. If labour for sustainable livelihoods is obligatory, it becomes forced labour (SST7; P26)
Exploitation	Exploitation of child labour	1. Children sometimes overwork for no reward at all (PST3). Parents and caregivers own all labour produce (SST4). Children water excessively in the garden (PSP5). Children work long hours (P11). Children's labour is not priced (P8)
Abuse	Child abuse	1. Children get abused by getting exposed to foul language at markets (SST5; PST8). Some children face sexual abuse at the markets (SP9). Other face emotional and physical abuse when adults feel that they had not worked hard enough (SST2). I often see children getting unnecessary punishments (SST8)
Education	Lack of education	1. Little time left for homework (PP5). Study time is cut short (SSP6). No time to visit libraries and study groups (SST1). Exam preparation is compromised (SST10)
Recreation	Lack of recreation	1. Little time left for play (SST4). Work is good for preparing children for future living, but needs to be supported with leisure (P15). Recreation promotes overall development of children (P28)
Audience	Lack of the right to be heard	1. Children need to be listened to (PS7). Children need involvement in decision making (SST2)
Choice	Lack of freedom of choice	1. Sustainable livelihoods activities are chosen for the children (P5). Children do not determine when to do work (PP8). Patterns of work are decided for the children (SST1).
Health	Compromised	

Laziness	health and health care	1. Children undertake harmful activities (P8). Children are never given protective clothing (SSP7). Some children work even when they are not feeling well (PS97)
Food	Lazy parents and caregivers Food insecurity	1. Some parents let children do work for the whole family out of sheer laziness (PST7). Although training children to work, children must not be taken advantage of by some lazy adults (P27)
Land	Forced labour on land	1. Adults who fail to provide food on the table for children will violate children's right to be provided with food (P23). Adults should not take child labour as a passport to the achievement of SSLs (PST20) 1. Children are sometimes overworked on the land (PSP5). Some children perform multi-tasks on the land (SST3)

Eleven themes and their sub-themes as presented in Table 1 emerged from the study indicating the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area. Their presentation and discussion is going to be done below.

#### Labour: Child labour

The issue of child labour as result of children's exposure to SLAs has been viewed by selected participants in the following ways:

*If labour for sustainable livelihoods are obligatory, it becomes forced labour on the part of the children (SST7). When children do not work willingly and voluntarily in the fields, gardens, plots, forests, and artisanal mines, they feel hurt emotionally and physically (P26). I sometimes cut reeds in the river when it is cold in winter (PSP7). I am expected to chop wood and look after marketing gardening on a regular basis, that is, six days a week (SSP16). I have observed that when certain parents are angered by children, they resort to the use of coerced participation in SLAs as a form of fixing children (PST2).*

The results show that working through coercive child labour is one of worst forms of violation of children's rights in the realm of SLAs. Forced labour is a form of unwanted and illegitimate punishment on the children. It defeats the whole purpose of carrying out SLAs in Madziwa area. It denigrates the children. It also dehumanises them. Furthermore, children feel unwanted and unaccepted by the society if they get unjust punishments. Their rights as children become hardly observed.

#### Exploitation: Exploitation of child labour

Related to the issue of child labour, was the exploitation of child labour. In trying to explain how exploitation of child labour violated children's rights through their engagement into SLAs, participants had this to say:

*Children sometimes overwork in SLAs for no reward at all (PST3).  
Parents and caregivers own all labour produce; even they work as*

*a team with their children (SST4). Children water, hoe weeds, and spray herbicides and insecticides excessively in the garden (PSP5).  
Children work long hours in the gardens and at the growth points and markets after attending school (P11).  
Children's labour is not priced. They provide absolutely cheap and free labour (P8).*

The foregoing quotes show how exploitation of child labour discredits SLAs. When children's labour is exploited, children get abused and misused. They might end up being forced to undertake uncouth SLAs such as drug dealing and selling, engaging in commercial sex work activities and touting which all expose children to dangers of loss of health and manners. Although children should not be paid for helping out with free labour during the conduct of SLAs, parents, caregivers and other adults should show some degree of appreciation by giving children tokens of appreciation which could verbal or material. This would go a long way in making adults realise that exploitation of child labour is bad.

#### Abuse: Child abuse

Besides child labour and exploitation of child labour was the issue of child as means of showing the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs. Some participants indicated that:

*Children get abused by getting exposed to foul language at markets (SST5; PST8). Some children face sexual abuse at the markets (SP9). Other face emotional and physical abuse when adults feel that they had not worked hard enough (SST2). I often see children's getting unnecessary punishments (SSP8). Child abuse disturbs children's future in school, work and life as an acceptable citizen that fits in Madziwa area (PSP19).*

New insights into the violation of children's rights through SLAs appear to emerge from the preceding excerpts. Sometimes children fail to survive

diverse forms of abuse from the weather, adults, co-workers and customers. Their exposure to these forms of abuses and abusers dishearten them very much. These findings are congruent with Pinheiro's [2] unwanted sexual contact, while between 0.5 and 1.5 billion children and young people globally experience physical violence annually. When children get abused they curse and regret the day they were born. Under such circumstances, SLAs become a curse and hell rather than a blessing worth undertaking.

#### **Education: Lack of education**

While education is considered a gateway to observation of children's rights, it emerged from the study that:

*Little time left for homework makes children love to hate SLAs (PP5). Study time is cut short when SLAs are overdone (SSP6). No time to visit libraries and study groups when children spent long hours undertaking SLAs such as weeding, spraying herbicides, digging animal manure or makingcomposts (SST1). Exam preparation is compromised by depriving children of their right to study (SST10). I get so disheartened to learn that some children miss out on educational opportunities due their involuntary incessant engagements in SLAs (P29).*

Another area that study came up with to illustrate the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs was lack of education. The above observation disconfirms the view that education enables smallholder farmers to practice good methods of farming, how to access markets for their products, how to get financial support and to take precautions that keep them health in order to guarantee their continuity in agricultural activities poverty Benhabib and Spiegel [21]. When adults show no concern for their children's learning, they would be bound to violate their children's fundamental rights to education, yet when Zimbabwe got her independence declared education as a free and fundamental right to education. This declaration remains a dream in the pipe if the above findings are left to stand against the test of time.

#### **Recreation: Lack of recreation**

The study also revealed that recreation or lack of it determined the the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area. On the basis of this finding, participants pointed out that:

*SLAs rob children of their play time. There will be little time left for children to play if they spent the whole day learning and working (SST4). Work is good for*

*preparing children for future living, but needs to be supported with leisure (P15). Recreation promotes overall development of children. Children need rest and to refresh their brains and the physical bodies through rest and play (P28). I am of the view that while work is good for the children, too much of it compromises the way how children would relate with others in their bid to fit into the societal roles (PST5).*

The above findings underscore the role of play, rest and recreation which when ignored through children's participation in SLAs would result in the violation of children's rights. Lack of rest, leisure, play and recreation are a conduit to the worsening of the magnitude of violating children's rights through their involvement in SLAs. Recreation enables children to appreciate them to work very hard in SLAs so that they could create enough time to mingle with others after doing their work.

#### **Audience: Lack of the right to be heard**

Another finding that seemed to depict the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area was lack of the right to be heard by adults on the part of the children. To illustrate this lack of participation, some participants indicated that:

*Children need to be listened to when the voice their concerns about their participation in SLAs (PS7). Children need involvement in decision making; otherwise they will resist associating themselves with SLAs (SST2).When children feel unvalued, they derail all the adults' efforts to pursueSLAs (PST2). Children who stay with poor listeners often get disgruntled and end up disliking work (SSP21). My elders don't listen to my suggestions.... (PSP6)*

Parents and other adults who are not good listeners to their children's viewpoints run the risk of enlarging the magnitude of violating children's rights through children's unwanted participation in SLAs. In contrast, parents and caregivers who spare some time listening to their children instil a spirit of teamwork among adults and children undertaking SLAs. Adults and parents in that regard would not face resistance from children even though children would be aware of how their rights could be violated through taking part in SLAs. Therefore, it can be argued that listening is key to children's participation in SLAs without worsening the magnitude of violating their rights.

#### **Choice: Lack of freedom of choice**

Related to the lack of the right to be heard is lack of freedom of choice by children in connection



with matters related to the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs was another finding. In substantiating this finding, selected participants reported that:

*Sustainable livelihoods activities are chosen for the children (SSP16).  
Their right to suggest their opinions is thrown out. They don't get  
the necessary audience at all (P5). Children do not determine when to  
do work, how to do it, and why doing it? (PSP8).  
Patterns of work  
are decided for the children by adults without considering possibilities of  
either observing or violating children's rights (SST1). Freedom of choice  
gives children the right to offer their labour to SLAs at their own will, but its  
absence results in increasing the magnitude of violating children's  
rights through SLAs (PST10).*

What is coming out of the preceding findings is the fact that sometimes SLAs entail violation of children's rights circumstantially when adults fail to give children a listening ear. The researcher observed that children of today seem to be aware of the rights which they vow to fight for them. They tend to obtain such information about their rights from the schools, churches, and various forms of press media. It is against these observations that parents are advised to give their children the right to be heard and participate in matters relating to SLAs.

#### **Health: Compromised health and health care**

One other area of concern regarding the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area that emerged from the study was compromised health and health care. To illustrate this view, participants revealed that:

*Children undertake harmful activities (P8).  
Children are never given  
protective clothing as they work under scorching  
sunny, chilly and rainy  
weather conditions (SSP7). Some children work  
even when they are not  
feeling well (PSP27). Other children get  
exposed to unsafe water  
bodies which expose them to malaria, bilharzia,  
typhoid, cholera and  
dysentery (P7). It is a pity that some children  
work on land without wearing  
shoes. They run the risk of getting exposed to  
thorns, sharp stones and  
metal objects, and snakebites as well because  
most snakes enjoy biting  
bare feet and angles (SST8).*

Findings above clearly demonstrate the unrealized negative side of involving children in SLAs with respect to health-related issues. It appears that not all work environments provide healthy and conducive working conditions which could be safe for children working for SLs. In earnest, the working conditions for children vary according to places. Inadequate care: Studies in middle-income countries indicate that between 30% and 48% of children have been left alone or in the care of other children while their parents are working putting them at increased risk of injury and worse educational and behavioural outcomes [5]. Therefore, unsafe work environments are a prime source of the magnitude of violation of children's rights through their participation in otherwise profitable SLAs.

#### **Laziness: Lazy parents and caregivers**

The study also established that lazy parents and caregivers also played a part in determining the magnitude of violation of children's rights in Madziwa area through SLAs. In clarifying this finding, participants argued that:

*Some parents let children do work for the whole  
family out of sheer  
laziness (PST7). Although training children to  
work, children must not  
be taken advantage of by some lazy adults (P27).  
Indolence on the part  
of elders is a recipe for disaster in SLAs (SST9).  
Lazy parents increase  
workloads unnecessarily on the children who  
should otherwise offer their  
help when need rises (SSP14). I see that lazy  
parents disadvantage their  
children during SLAs by failing to support their  
families, thereby, ending  
up violating children's rights (PSP30).*

Laziness is a disease that perpetuates poverty levels among people. The preceding findings denote the extent to which lazy parents and caregivers appeared to infringe on children's rights in Madziwa area. These findings give new insights into the argument that not all parents are lazy to the extent of heightening violation of children's rights through SLAs, but others may be old, sick or disabled to such an extent that they can fend themselves. Under such a scenario, they can let their children work for their SLAs, albeit violation of children's rights.

#### **Food: Food insecurity**

The issue of food insecurity was also found to be rampant in Madziwa area as it negatively impacted on the magnitude of violation of children's rights through SLAs.

*Adults who fail to provide food on the table for  
children will*

*violate children's right to be provided with food (P23).*

*Adults should not take child labour as a passport to the*

*achievement of SLAs (PST20). Food insecurity gets worsened*

*when children are coerced to take part in SLAs (SSP30).*

*When there is food insecurity, adults and children hate*

*working under the guise of violation of human rights (SST9).*

Food insecurity left people in Madziwa with no choice other than compelling children to pursue SLAs alongside them. Families could not afford to suffer from hunger when they had cheap labour in the form of their children. These findings are consistent with Stanning's (1989) observations that individuals who are food secure do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. In addition to the fear of hunger, instability of food supply in female headed families can force them to venture into extra livelihood strategy like prostitution FAO [22]. The findings however also tend to in agreement with Omoruyi and Ngoran [23] who states that the current food insecurity in Zimbabwe is the result of complex interlinked factors resulting from both man-made crisis of a political and economic nature as well as extreme vulnerability to climate shocks affecting the overall agricultural production of the country. While previous research findings were plausible enough, the researcher is content that, just like in find of lazy parents, parents should not sit in their laurels when their dependents fall victim to hunger, famine and starvation which worsen their poverty levels and violate children's rights as well.

#### **Land: Forced labour on land**

Another revelation from the study was forced labour on land. Participants indicated that:

*Children are sometimes overworked on the land to chop trees,*

*till the land, remove the weeds, manure the land, and harvest*

*crops (PSP5). Some children perform multi-tasks on the land that*

*range to from ploughing to reaping and storing grain, fruits and*

*vegetables (SST3). Some are seen ploughing around 4.00 am*

*and selling farm produce around 6.00pm (PST5).*

A cursory look of the above observations informs the researcher SLAs appear to be viewed with suspicion by some people. The argument against SLAs was that they promoted use of forced labour which according to the participants was cheap. The cheapness of that labour was that it was not priced. Therefore, it

was free, but children were not taking part in SLAs freely and willingly. They appeared to have no choice at all. These findings tend to dispute De Negri, Thomas, Ilinigumugabo, Muvandi, and Lewis' [24] participatory development approach outlining that participation of all people and stakeholders in agricultural activities promotes production. For instance, integration of agriculture extension services, public services in issuing of agro inputs, veterinary services in providing health services to livestock, ministry of agriculture in monitoring and evaluations and other stakeholders including children facilitate high production in agriculture sector and other industries that depends on agro-products as their raw material. The findings also contradict Sebates' [25] observations that land reform avails the need for training people to enhance their full participation in agricultural activities so if people are equipped with good farming methods they can produce enough food and improves their livelihoods because agro-products fuel continuity of industries that depends on agricultural products.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

From the foregoing findings related to the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in sustainable livelihoods activities Madziwa area, I conclude that while sustainable livelihoods activities were expected to improve the quality of life of Madziwa area people, they were also associated with some instances that violated children's rights, whether consciously or unconsciously on the part of the people in Madziwa area. The magnitude of violation of children through SLAs varied according to family needs and season. Moreso, the challenges were situation specific.

#### **Recommendations**

In the light of the above findings and conclusions, I make two recommendations. First, there is need for involving various stakeholders such as parents, school teachers, pupils, community leaders, human rights and children's rights organisation to keep a watchful on how children could be engaged in SLAs in a bid to curb the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs. They should report any cases of violation of children's rights to relevant authorities without fear or favour so that children could enjoy living in just and loving society. Second, it is necessary further studies in this area to be conducted at macro-level countrywide using quantitative and mixed methods research methodologies with the intent to establish and confirm a large body of knowledge in the field of participation and involvement of children in SLAs.

#### **REFERENCES**

1. UNICEF R. United Nations Children's Fund. Improving Child Nutrition: The achievable imperative for global progress. 2013 May.

2. Pinheiro PS. World report on violence against children.2006.
3. Young MT. End child marriage. New York: United Nations Population Fund. 2012.
4. Kishor S, Johnson K. Profiling domestic violence: A multi-country study.2004.
5. Heymann J. Forgotten families: Ending the growing crisis confronting children and working parents in the global economy. Oxford University Press; 2006 Feb 16.
6. Petersen EK, Pedersen ML. The sustainable livelihoods approach. Aarhus: Institute of Biology, University of Aarhus. 2010 Jun.
7. De Silva TE. Principles in International Development: Sustainable Livelihoods Edition). New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.2013.
8. Hanmer L. *Child Labour; Policy Planning and Implementation*. Netherlands: DFID.2001.
9. Kakhome L, Kuombola H. *Integrated Labour Elimination Project-Phase II*. Dowa:Soza Education Zone-Kasungu Katalina Education Zone. 2008.
10. Marcus R. Poverty and violations of children's right to protection in low-and middle-income countries: A review of the evidence.2014.
11. Patton M Q. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications. 2002.
12. Black K. *"Business Statistics: Contemporary Decision-making"* (6<sup>th</sup> edition). London:John-Wiley and Sons.2010.
13. Berg BL. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (4th Edition). Boston:Allyn and Bacon.2010.
14. Saunders M, Lewis P, Thornhill,A. *Research Methods for Business Students*.(6th Edition). Boston: Pearson.2012.
15. Kombo D K, Tromp DL. *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction*. Pauline's Publications in Africa: Nairobi.2009.
16. Bernard HR. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative methods* (3rd edition). AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, California.2002.
17. Spradley JP. *The Ethnographic Interview*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.1979.
18. Hesse-Biber SN. *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*. London, Sage Publications.2007.
19. Gray DE. *Doing Research in the Real World (2nd Edition)*. London: Sage Publications. in Ghana. Journal of Management and Sustainability, 2009; 4(4), 1-14.
20. Flick U. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (4th Edition). London: Sage Publications.2009.
21. Benhabib J, Spiegel MM. The role of human capital in economic development evidence from aggregate cross-country data. Journal of Monetary economics. 1994 Oct 31;34(2):143-73.
22. FAO. *The state of food insecurity in the world*. Washington DC. 2007.
23. Ngoran SD, Yvette B, Ngoran BS, Xue X. Circumscribing the Nexus between Natural Disaster, Water Resources and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. J. Res. Dev. Manage.. 2015;7:31-40.
24. de Negri B, Thomas E, Ilinigumugabo A, Muvandi I, Lewis G. Empowering Communities. Participatory Techniques for Community-Based Programme Development. 1998 Dec;1.
25. Van Oorschot W, Arts W. The social capital of European welfare states: the crowding out hypothesis revisited. Journal of European social policy. 2005 Feb;15(1):5-26.