



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH  
(Scholarly Peer Review Publishing System)

# REASONS FOR THE PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS ACTIVITIES (SLAs) IN MADZIWA AREA OF ZIMBABWE

**Edith Karimanzira**

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

[eskarimanzira@gmail.com](mailto:eskarimanzira@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

Children undertake sustainable livelihoods activities (SLAs) for varied reasons. These reasons tend to vary according to circumstances. The current qualitative ethnographic paper examined reasons for the participation and involvement of children in SLAs. 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. Eleven measures to combat challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in (SLAs) emerged from the study. Some of the reasons for the participation and involvement of children in SLAs that emerged from the study include food security, income generation; environmental management, self-reliance training, self-sufficiency training; and entrepreneurship training. The study's first conclusion for the reasons for the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area was that they were diverse and situation-specific. The other conclusion was that reasons for the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area were also found to be inextricably interwoven. The researcher proposed that participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area should not be based on flimsy and unjustified reasons. The other suggestion from the study was that more research in the studied area needs to be carried out throughout the Zimbabwean provinces so as to build a sound and grounded knowledge base in the realm of the participation and involvement of children in SLAs.

**Key Words:** Sustainable livelihoods, sustainable livelihoods activities, participation, involvement, reasons

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are a host of reasons justifying why children in different parts of the world have been involved in livelihoods to sustain themselves in their communities. Poverty among communities has been cited among key reasons why children participate in their communities' sustainable livelihood activities (de Silva, 2013; Farrington, Ramasut and Walker, 2002 in Schernthaner, 2011). Despite its usefulness as an analytical instrument to explore youth's decision-making processes in relation to the wider socio-cultural and political context, the concept has its weaknesses –especially when applied to a 'majority world' context. First of all, it is based on Western ideals of youth that are being exported to non-Western contexts where resources to adequately reproduce these ideals are missing (Ruddick 2003 in Schernthaner, 2011). Most 'successful' transitions such as entering the formal labour market and establishing one's own home are hard to accomplish for young people in poverty. Many of them are excluded from school and the labour market in which the transition to adulthood is institutionalised. Secondly, while transitions in the West are becoming longer and may well continue into one's 30s, disadvantaged adolescents living in poverty in the 'majority world' may be forced to assume adult



responsibilities already at a young age (Ruddick 2003, 340 in Schernthaner, 2011; Lloyd et al. 2005, 41 in Schernthaner, 2011; Tyyskä 2005, p. 4 in Schernthaner, 2011).

Child headed households, working children or (street) children and youth leaving parental guidance at an early age may serve as examples for this. In line with this, Skelton (2002) in Schernthaner (2011) argues that transitions to adulthood have to be defined in less narrow terms to include young people who never fitted the conventional understandings of this concept; for example, those who do not follow a linear progression from school-to-work, but choose 'alternative careers' and less conventional means of gaining independence.

UNHCR (2011, p. 3-4), while focusing on refugees observed the following as some of the reasons why people engage in sustainable livelihoods:

- a. Livelihood programmes promote and preserve the use of skills and assets, which can prevent households and individuals from slipping into poverty, and enables them at the same time to support their own communities.
- b. Increasing the economic capacity of households can promote durable solutions, particularly successful repatriation. Refugees who can build and protect their livelihood assets are more able and more likely to return to their home countries when it is safe to do so.
- c. Livelihood programmes that also benefit local populations can address host
- d. government concerns about the presence of refugees in cities (economic competition, pressure on resources, etc.) and improve the asylum environment.
- e. The pursuit of livelihoods helps restore the dignity and independence of refugees. This operational guidance to livelihood programming is aimed primarily at UNHCR Field Operations, starting with representatives and senior managers in field operations; at Multi-Functional Teams (MFT ) that include Protection, Programme, Community Services, Field and Livelihoods Officers, where applicable; and at government counterparts and operational and implementing partners, including potential new partners that may include microfinance institutions, the private sector, foundations and academic institutions.
- f. Regional representations and decision-makers in headquarters are also addressed. These guidelines address all urban persons of concern (PoC) currently under UNHCR's mandated and designated responsibility, including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDP), stateless persons and returnees.
- g. The guidelines will specify where and how approaches to different groups vary. For the sake of this document, the term "refugee" refers generally to UNHCR's populations of concern. While UNHCR is not mandated to support the local population, it is generally acknowledged that they should be included in activities that are planned in areas with a high concentration of refugees.
- h. This operational guidance is based on lessons learnt and good practices gathered across urban operations since 2008.

The issue of vulnerability resilience also demonstrates some of the reasons for children's involvement in sustainable livelihoods activities. Two interesting scenarios supportive of the preceding position are advanced by FAO (2003) in the following two paragraphs.

First, FAO (2003) observed that households with many livelihood assets are generally more able to preserve their lives and property in the face of shocks than households with fewer assets. They have enough savings that they can afford to buy food when crops fail (FAO, 2003). They have enough animals that they can afford to lose or sell a few and still have enough breeding animals to build up their herds again after the emergency passes. Resilience is the ability to withstand shocks (FAO, 2003).

Second, according to FAO (2003), households with few assets (i.e., little land, few animals, limited physical and financial capital, weak family labour, poor education and lacking in marketable skills) are much more vulnerable to outside shocks than households with more assets. In the face of prolonged drought, when crops fail, poor households are forced first to sell off their animals at low prices to buy



grain to feed their families (FAO, 2003). The longer the emergency, the more they deplete their asset base, to the point that they no longer have anything left to sell but their labour, and even their labour is weak due to hunger and failing health. When they lose their assets, they lose their means of livelihood (FAO, 2003).

Another study conducted in Nepal came up with interesting findings which could the conduct of this study. The findings revealed that various dimensions of human, natural, and economic capital and community resources influence decisions on livelihood transition in this poor rural agrarian setting of Nepal (Bhandari, 2013). The availability of working-age family labor pool, particularly the presence of working-age males and more importantly the presence of working-age children are found to be important human capital that discouraged livelihood transition from farming to non-farm activities (Bhandari, 2013). This finding is plausible because children are widely used in carrying out farming and other household activities and share a major portion of the household work burden ((Bhandari, 2013 citing Filmer and Pritchett, 1997; Kumar and Hotchkiss, 1988; Loughran and Pritchett, 1997; National Planning Commission and UNICEF/Nepal, 1996). Moreover, children may take over farm responsibilities from their parents as successors (Glauben et al., 2006 in Bhandari, 2013).

Much more recently, Osman (2016) conducted a study in Eastern Sudan and established that poverty was among key reasons for children's involvement in sustainable livelihoods. The same scholar found that Khadiga Mohammed, a Sudanese single mother in her forties, remembers all too well her days of poverty. They were, after all, not that long ago. She painfully recalls how, in 2015, she had to explain to one of her seven children that the reason she couldn't buy them milk every night is because she "can't afford to."

In Liberia, Sub-Saharan African youth population has quadrupled since 1950 (World Bank, 2006). In 2005, 62% of Africa's population fell below 25 (World Bank, 2009). 60% of total Sub-Saharan unemployed populations are youths (ILO, 2006). Four and half million (4, 5 million) unemployed youths in exist in Côte d'Ivoire (UNIDO, 2007). Forty-eight thousand (48 000) child soldiers in Sierra Leone, including approximately 12 000 girls are employed (McKay & Mazurana, 2004). Eighty-eight percent (88%) youths' unemployment is recorded in Liberia (ILO, 2006). Seven thousand to nine thousand (7 000-9 000) children and youths are involved in commercial sexual exploitation in Uganda (ILO-IPEC, 2004). Half of FATA's 3.5 million population is female, but female literacy rate stands at three percent (3%) (Dfid, 2003).

Another study conducted by Isah (2013, p. vii) in Niger State found two worthwhile findings regarding how children's rights could be violated through sustainable livelihoods activities. First, it revealed that children exposed to labour activities had very poor school attendance, were mostly females. Second, Isah's (2013) observed that child labour affect pupil's academic performance as was revealed on the poor academic achievements by pupils exposed to labour were mostly females, compared to their male counterparts.

The diverse reasons for involving children in sustainable livelihoods activities as documented in previous research were somehow given and practised at the expense of their rights appeared to be culture-bound. The applicability of such previous research observations was yet to be explored in the context of the magnitude of violation of children's rights through involving them in SLAs in Madziwa area of Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe. In addition, the foregoing findings (Dfid, 2003; ILO, 2006; Isah, 2013 etc) seem to be outdated to such an extent that they may no longer be able to stand against the test for time. Therefore, it was academically persuasive enough to carry out this study to establish the reasons involving children in sustainable livelihoods activities in Madziwa area against the background of how SLAs violate children's rights.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

I conducted this qualitative study against the background of phenomenological research philosophy with the intent to unmask reasons for the involvement and participation of children in SLAs 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 (Patton, 2002). In addition, Black (2010) 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 (Berg, 2010), 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 reasons for the participation and involvement of children in SLAs 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 (Black, 2010; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). 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 (2009) 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 reasons for 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 Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979).

## 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 (Hesse-Biber, 2007). 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 reasons for 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 reasons for the participation and involvement of children in SLAs. They were useful in this study in three ways. First, they assisted the researcher to generate data in the shortest possible time (Gray, 2009; Flick, 2009). 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 reasons for 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 narratively under the section called demographic data of participants. The actual research findings were presented using quotes and narratives, relatable to the reasons for the participation and involvement of children in SLAs with particular reference to Madziwa area of Zimbabwe.

### **3. 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 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 SLAs.

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 in SLAs.

#### 4. PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE ACTUAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Participants' perceptions on the reasons for involving children in sustainable livelihoods activities are presented in the following Table 1.

**Table 1:** Participants perceptions on the reasons for involving children in sustainable livelihoods activities

Theme	Sub-theme	Substantiation
Food	Food security	Food on the table (P5). Supply of enough food (SST4). Regular provision of food (SSP10). Alleviation of hunger (PST9).
Income	Income generation	Raising income (PSP3). Earning a living (P6).
Environment	Environmental management	Conserving natural resources (SST10). Valuing trees, vegetation, water, wild animals and soils (P6).
Labour	Cheap labour supply	Supply of child labour to complement adult labour (SST1)
Self-reliance	Self-reliance training	Training children to depend on their own (P8). Valuing own work (PSP6)
Self-sufficiency	Self-sufficiency training	Training children to produce enough food for themselves (SSP5)
Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship training	Training children to be own employers (SST9; PST2).

Participants indicated a number of reasons for the participation and involvement of children in SLAs that were thematically presented in Table 1, together with their sub-themes. These reasons included- Food: Food security; Income: Income generation; Environment: Environmental management; Self-reliance: Self-reliance training; Self-sufficiency: Self-sufficiency training; and Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship training.

#### Food: Food security

With respect to the finding of food security as a reason for engaging children in SLAs, in spite of the fact that SLAs were sometimes viewed as violation of children's rights, participants indicated the following sentiments:

*The issue of food security is perceived as a reason enough to involve children in SLAs, despite some people's reservations about its violation of children's rights. The way I see it, SLAs bring food on the table when people undertake farming, carpentry, pottery, hunting and lumbering (P5). I am of the thinking that through ensuring food security, the supply of enough food is assured in the families (SST4). With SLAs in place, I can tell you that regular provision of food in rural areas can be made possible (SSP10). Alleviation of hunger is among chief reasons for letting children be part of SLAs (PST9).*

On the basis of the above findings on food security that is ensured by involving children in SLAs, it can be deduced that valuing the role played by children in enhancing food security would convince people who doubt that SLAs are meant to benefit people. Food security ensures that children's right to the provision of food among other basic needs is observed. Thus, inaccessibility of food creates criminology activities that haunt people's livelihoods Hebinck (2002). In that regard, it can be argued that SLAs do not always violate children's rights, unless insensitive adults use unethical means such as force, threats and pretense to engage unsuspecting children.



### **Income: Income generation**

In connection with income generation as one of the reasons for the involvement and participation of children in SLAs, despite SLA's perceived violations of children's rights, participants argued:

*While some people resent involving children in SLAs, I am certain that they acknowledge its role in raising income for the families. SLAs have the capacity of boosting income bases of families and households when children complement their adults' efforts by co-producing and co-selling market gardening produce, fruits, milk, fish, honey, pots, and hoe and axe handles (PSP3). I am also sure that by involving children in SLAs it makes them responsible and accountable enough as far as earning a living is concerned. Children help in improving the standards of living in the families through their earnings that are put in the family pool (P6).*

An emerging finding from the above excerpts is income that is likely to be generated through children engaged in SLAs. SLAs in that regard are one of the surest ways of generating income for families and households in Madziwa area and beyond if they get implemented properly. Moreso, SLAs provide several income-related sources ranging from market gardening produce to lumbering. There are however some SLAs' income generating sources that are illegal. Such sources include gold panning and indiscriminate chopping of wood for sale. These illegal activities need to be legitimized so that communities would not play cat and mouse games with the rule of law. Income raised through SLAs enables communities to provide basic needs for their families, that is, food, clothing, shelter, health and education.

### **Environment: Environmental management**

With regards to environmental management as among reasons for letting children take part in SLAs, even though some people think that SLAs violate children's rights, participants gave their opinions as follows:

*As a teacher myself, I take pride in my work and what I am and believe in. Of course, I agree that SLAs are not flawless, but they can be lauded for their ability to train children and adults in the area of conserving natural resources (SST10). Valuing trees, vegetation, water, wild animals and soils is an irreplaceable blessing for any community (P6). Poorly managed environment destroys opportunities for implementing effective SLAs with the help of children (PST3). Well managed environment supports our efforts in agriculture, mining and fishing (SSP18). I believe that a good environment gives us food on the table (PSP15).*

An examination of the aforementioned sentiments regarding how environmental management has place in making sure that the participation and involvement of children in SLAs is crucial because people need a well-managed environment for not only survival, but living needs. On the basis of the findings, it can be deduced that a well- managed environment supports SLAs through good agricultural, lumbering, and fishing, bee keeping, and hunting, hawking/vending and registered artisanal mining practices. If the environment is poorly managed it leads to poverty.

### **Labour: Cheap labour supply**

Another interesting finding that emerged from the study was labour which focused on cheap labour supply through involving children in SLAs. Three participants made the following remarks:

*My line of thought is that children participate in SLAs as a way of providing cheap labour to complement adults' labour (PST7). The way I see it is that children are roped in SLAs mainly because they are the closest available cheap labour supply at the disposal of the adults (SST5). SLAs sometimes fail in the absence of children's cheap labour supply (P1). As children, we supply cheap labour to help our parents in undertaking SLAs (SSP16). I am made to work with older people than me, and it is unfair (PSP21).*

Children's cheap labour supply complemented adults' efforts in providing basic needs in the homes. Children were observed to largely appreciate the need to assist with some SLAs in farming and market gardening. They valued the ultimate gifts of labour in spite of how gruelling the SLAs would be to them. They could be seen exercising virtues of trustworthiness, responsibility, honest, diligence and accountability regardless of the view that SLAs could violate children's rights.

### **Self-reliance: Self-reliance training**

Regarding how self-reliance training was another reason why children participated and got involved in SLAs, although there appears to be claims that SLAs violate children's rights, participants remarked that:





*I think self-reliance helps us with the training of our children so that they depend on their own as they grow up; even though some of feel it violates children's rights. They learn how to look after themselves on their own (P8). SLAs teach children virtues and values of valuing own work (PSP6). I see a situation whereby SLAs foster attitudes and values that discourage children from being parasites, although they should depend on their parents for their livelihoods (SST4). Self-reliance is all about working for one's survival (PST10). We learn how to work for ourselves through self-reliance (SSP20). Self-reliance through SLAs is a basic empowerment tool for everyone in Madziwa here (SST4).*

The issue of avoiding a situation whereby people in Madziwa area become perpetual beggars came out clear in the above participants' quotes. The common feeling among the participants was that SLAs empower adults and children to work hard for their own survival means. For them to be able to do so, they need to engage in honest hard work which is associated with clean remunerations that are devoid of any corrupt tendencies. By so doing, children would not look up to others for help because they would be having the capacity to do things that assist them to survive and live in life.

### **Self-sufficiency: Self-sufficiency training**

Although some reservations were raised about the way SLAs' capacity to violate children's rights, selected participants supported them by accentuating that:

*I have often advised people that SLAs entail self-sufficiency training opportunities for children that enable them to produce enough food for themselves (SSP5). As a result of self-sufficiency training through SLAs, in spite of people's misconceptions that SLAs infringe on children's rights, rural people are prepared to deal with economic shocks caused by natural disasters such as drought, floods and climate change (SST6). Self-sufficiency is about improvement of standards of living of people (P23). Self-sufficiency through SLAs improves the quality of life of people in rural areas (SSP14).*

The foregoing remarks based on how self-sufficiency could be among reasons for involving children in SLAs appear plausible in Madziwa area. SLAs tend to enable communities to produce enough goods for consumption sale of surplus goods. The sale of surplus goods benefits societies through income earnings. Increased income earnings result in improved standards of living of people.

### **Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship training**

While SLAs could be viewed with suspicion on the basis that they could violate children's rights, participants' lines of thought backed the involvement of children in SLAs by exhorting that:

*I am of the opinion that entrepreneurship is characterised by training children to be their own employers. Gone are the days when people were used to value employment offered by others (SST9). According to me entrepreneurship training is all about dismissing the mentality of relying on others for future employment. (PST2). Entrepreneurship training, although in SLAs it might be viewed as violating some of the children's rights when children undertake practical work capacitates children with survival skills for use in future life (P26). Entrepreneurship through SLAs improves people's planning abilities about how to improve their lives (SSP11). Entrepreneurship assists people to organise their SLAs for the better (PSP13).*

The preceding findings justify the need for involving children in SLAs. They discourage the idea of having people who live by hand-to-mouth means. The encouragement that people in Madziwa area and beyond can get from entrepreneurship training is that SLAs capacitate with skills to survive in life even things get tough and out of control. People would be equipped with managerial skills such as planning, organising, decision-making, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation of SLAs in search of better living standards, but without violating children's rights. As a result of this position, children could be involved SLAs without violating their rights. This is critical because adults and children would not suffer from dependency syndrome. They would determine their own destiny through participation in SLAs.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

One of the critical conclusions for the reasons for the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area was that they were diverse and situation-specific. The other conclusion was that reasons for the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area were also found to be inextricably interwoven because they all complemented each other in trying to ensure that people of Madziwa area had to search and pursue better living standards and improved quality of life.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area should not be based on flimsy and unjustified reasons if ever the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area through SLAs are going to be combated. As the researcher, I also suggest that more research in the studied area needs to be carried out throughout the Zimbabwean province so as to build a sound and grounded knowledge base in the realm of the participation and involvement of children in SLAs.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Berg, B. L. (2010). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (4th Edition). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- [2] Bernard, H.R. (2002). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative methods* (3rd edition). AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, California.
- [3] Bhandari, P.B. (2013). Rural livelihood change? Household capital, community resources and livelihood transition. *J Rural Stud.* 2013 Oct 1; 32: 126–136. doi: [10.1016/j.jrurstud.2013.05.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2013.05.001)
- [4] Black, K. (2010). *“Business Statistics: Contemporary Decision-making”* (6<sup>th</sup> edition). London: John-Wiley and Sons.
- [5] de Silva, T.E. (2013). *Principles in International Development: Sustainable Livelihoods Edition*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.
- [6] FAO. (2003). [Economic and Social Development Department](http://www.fao.org/documents/en). <http://www.fao.org/documents/en>
- [7] Flick, U. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (4th Edition). London: Sage Publications.
- [8] Gray, D. E. (2009). *Doing Research in the Real World (2nd Edition)*. London: Sage Publications in Ghana. *Journal of Management and Sustainability*, 4(4), 1-14.
- [9] Hesse-Biber, S.N. (2007). *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*. London, Sage Publications.
- [10] ILO (2006). *The end of child labour: Within reach REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*. Geneva International Labour Office.
- [11] ILO-IPEC (2004). IPEC Evaluation Elimination of Child Labour in the Soccer Industry in Sialkot, Pakistan Phase II PAK/00/P50/USA. P. 270.06.342.040.
- [12] Isah, M.M. (2013). *Impact of Child Labour on School Attendance and Academic Performance of Pupils in Public Primary Schools in Niger State*. An Unpublished Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Faculty of Education. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- [13] Kombo, D. K. and Tromp, D. L. (2009). *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction*. Pauline’s Publications in Africa: Nairobi.
- [14] Osman, M.A.H. (2016). *Improving Livelihoods in Eastern Sudan*. New York City: The World Bank.
- [15] Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications.
- [16] Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research Methods for Business Students*. (6th Edition). Boston: Pearson.
- [17] Scherthner, M. (2011). *The struggle to belong: Dealing with diversity in 21<sup>st</sup> century urban settings*. Innsbruck: University of Innsbruck.
- [18] Spradley, J.P. (1979). *The Ethnographic Interview*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- [19] UNHCR (2011). The UN Refugee Agency. <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/4fd6f87f9/unhcr-global-trends-2011.html>
- [20] UNIDO. (2007). *Annual Report 2007 Industrial Development Board, thirty-fourth session Programme and Budget Committee, twenty-fourth session UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION* Vienna, UNIDO.
- [21] World Bank (2006). World Bank Report Overview: Equity and Development. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/435331468127174418/pdf/322040World0Development0Report02006.pdf>
- [22] World Bank (2009). The World Bank Annual Report. [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTAR2009/Resources/6223977-1252950831873/AR09\\_Complete.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTAR2009/Resources/6223977-1252950831873/AR09_Complete.pdf)

## BIO-DATA OF THE AUTHOR

Edith Karimanzira is a Lecturer for Peace, Leadership and Conflict Studies in the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences at the Zimbabwe Open University. She holds a Master’s Degree in Peace, Leadership and Conflict Studies. She also holds a first degree in Law (Bachelor of Laws). Furthermore, she is a primary school teacher by profession. This underlines her great love and interest in children.