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DETERMINANTS OF CHILDPOVERTY IN THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY: A CASE OF SINANSENGWE IN BINGA DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

The concept of poverty is multi-dimensional. Although it is possible to measure poverty using the poverty line, which is a threshold of resources below which someone is considered to be poor, poverty line may not be enough to measure child poverty. This study; ‘Determinants of child poverty in the Zambezi valley: a case of Sinansengwe in Binga district of Zimbabwe”, set to explore the characteristics of households with children in poverty, document experiences of children in poverty, establish what determines child poverty and also understand its manifestations as well as establish the availability and accessibility of child protection services in the study area. Qualitative research approaches informed the study informed the study while a case study design was used in a carefully planned and crafted study of real life situations, issues and problems of child poverty in Sinansengwe. The case study then sought to answer questions about the what, how or why of child poverty rather than how many or how much which may be answered by quantitative methods. Semi-structured interviews, storytelling, focus group discussion and observation were used as data collection instruments in this study where in some instruments open ended questions were asked as there was need to collect in depth information from respondents. The advantages of as there was need to collect in-depth information from respondents. The advantage of open ended questions are that they provide in depth information if used in an interview by an experienced interviewer as respondents are not coerced to pick answers from the list hence eliminating investigator bias. However, the study revealed that children were seeing an evil world. Children expected everyone to play a role in protecting their rights and concerns but no one was doing that as they were initiated into adulthood at tender age. Generally, children felt unloved while community structures and community based organizations (CBOs) have a role to play in the protection and upbringing of children responsibly. However, in this study it was revealed that children felt vulnerable and exposed to factors that perpetuate poverty (HIV and AIDS, child labor and early child marriages). It also emanated from this study that children were at a level where they cannot separate good and bad morals hence the tendencies to be wayward as they saw no distinction between the two. The study questioned why and how children were at a level where they cannot separate good and bad morals hence the tendencies to be wayward as they saw no distinction between the two. The study questioned why and how children were deemed poor, since children were also not considered as a stand-alone entity. The study then recommended that there should be meaningful multisectoral stakeholder involvement of authorities, those with mandates,
roles and responsibilities towards children as enshrined in the conversion on the rights of a child, the protection and wellbeing of children. The study also concluded that there was need to capacitate and empower children and communities at large with regards to observance of child rights and entitlements for the best interest of the child.