



African Journal of Social Work  
 Afri. j. soc. work  
 © National Association of Social Workers-Zimbabwe/Autor(s)  
 ISSN Print 1563-3934  
 ISSN Online 2409-5605

Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License

**Indexed & Accredited with:** African Journals Online (AJOL) | University of Zimbabwe Accredited Journals (UZAJ) | SCOPUS (Elsevier's abstract and citation database) | Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) | Society of African Journal Editors (SAJE) | Asian Digital Library (ADL) | African Social Work Network (ASWNet) | Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) - South Africa | SJR | CNKI - China | Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS) | EBSCO

## Climate change and vulnerabilities of children in rural Zimbabwe: The case of ward 14 of Bikita District, Zimbabwe

Witness CHIKOKO and Philemon CHIHIYA

### ABSTRACT

*The paper interrogates the impact of climate change towards the vulnerabilities of children in rural Zimbabwe. The paper utilised qualitative case study research design so as to generate the empirical evidence for this paper and the Ubuntu or Hunhu philosophy was used as a theory for analysing and, interpreting the lives of these vulnerable children. Research findings suggest that the impact of climate change has been unprecedented on the lives of children in rural Zimbabwe. Some of the impact included; hunger and food insecurity, decrease in school attendance, early or forced marriages, sexual exploitation, gold panning, child labour and abuse, child prostitution, drug use and abuse, the spread of climate change related diseases among others. The paper concludes by lobbying and advocating the Government of Zimbabwe and other key stakeholders to invest more resources on climate proof and adaptation strategies particularly in rural areas.*

**KEY TERMS:** climate change, children, vulnerable, ubuntu or hunhu, Bikita, Zimbabwe

### KEY DATES

Received: June 2022  
 Revised: October 2022  
 Accepted: January 2023  
 Published: February 2023

Funding: None  
 Conflict of Interest: None  
 Permission: None  
 Ethics approval: Not applicable

### Author/s details:

Dr Witness Chikoko is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Work, University of Zimbabwe, E-mail: wchikoko@gmail.com.  
 Mr Philemon Chihiya is a Master of Social Work graduate in the Department of Social Work, University of Zimbabwe. Email: philemonchihiya@gmail.com.

Current and previous volumes are available at:  
<https://ajsw.africasocialwork.net>



### How to reference using ASWNet style:

Chikoko W. and Chihiya P. (2023). Climate change and vulnerabilities of children in rural Zimbabwe: The case of ward 14 of Bikita District, Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Social Work*, 13(2), 78-86. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ajsw.v13i2.4>

### Special issue on:

Environmental Social Work: African philosophies, frameworks, perspectives and techniques  
 Guest Editors: Dr. Mildred Mushunje, Zimbabwe and Dr. Abel Blessing Matsika, Zimbabwe

## INTRODUCTION

The impacts of climate change are affecting many populations in the world. Climate change related challenges are increasing on daily basis and vulnerable children are at risk of climate change related problems particularly those who live in rural areas. Climate change refers to changes in the normal weather patterns for a period of time, usually seasons, years, decades or more, characterised by excessive weather events such as intensity of heat waves, heavy rainfall, floods, and drought. The Children's Act Chapter 5:06 (Zimbabwe) categorises vulnerable children as those below the age of 18 and are in need of care. These children include destitute children, orphans, children who beg, who are found in possession of drugs, children who drop out of school and those with mental and physical disability among others. Just like any other African countries, Zimbabwe experienced serious climate change challenges especially on food security, income and malnutrition.

## BACKGROUND

Global warming and climate change are two terms that are used interchangeably but they are different phenomena (Sarkar 2010). Global warming is the rise in global temperatures due to an increase of heat trapping carbon emissions in the atmosphere (Sarkar 2010). On the other hand, climate change is change in many climatic factors (temperature and precipitations) around the global or world (Sarkar 2010). However, these changes happen in different ways and rates (Sarkar 2010). Climate change and global warming have unprecedented impact on vulnerable members of society (Mpambela and Mabvurira 2017). The impact of climate change affects directly or indirectly on sectors such as health, employment, livelihoods, education, housing (Bhatasara 2018; Mpambela and Mabvurira 2017). Some parts of Africa have experienced erratic rainfall for the past three decades which resulted in droughts which significantly affected the agricultural sector (Manyeruke 2013). Crop production failed to adapt to the climatic changes and this affected many people especially children in rural Zimbabwe since agriculture is the source of their livelihood. According to ZUNDAF, (2011: 9) the agricultural sector is the main economic pillar in Zimbabwe. This is because it contributes up to 15-20% to the GDP, 40% to exports, and 60% of the raw materials used in industrial sector. Nelson et al, (2009: vii) also articulates that, the increase in temperatures being experienced across the globe will ultimately reduce crop production which prone to poverty. About 2 billion people in the world depend on agriculture as an essential industry catering their livelihoods (Feyissa, 2007: 103). As a result, climate change related problems affect all populations in rural Zimbabwe since they depend on agriculture for income and for food. Nelson et al, (2009: vii) found out that, 75% of rural population in the world practise crop production for food and income, however climate change has affected rural areas drastically due to lack of infrastructure such as irrigation systems. Some parts of Bikita district fall under ecological region three. Geographically, region three is characterised by erratic rainfall and severe droughts. As a result many children dropout of school and engaged in several child abuse forms such as child labour, child marriage, gold panning, drug sell and abuse among other factors. Chingwanda (2016) argues that, climate change related difficulties make communities to be more exposed to disasters particularly to children due their age, she also argues that climate change brings the whole world into physical, human, and economic fatalities, while inhibiting poverty eradication strategies, it results in food insecurity and degradation of the environment, losing biodiversity while destroying livelihoods and worsening socioeconomic conditions in many countries.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is underpinned by the *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* philosophy that is also known as the African Moral theory. Scholars define it as a code of behaviour in which a human being treats others with courtesy, kindness, consideration and friendliness. *Ubuntu* is more than being a human being but is a profound concept and principle which guides behaviour. According to Samkange and Samkange (1980), *Ubuntu* is a value system principally associated with black and Bantu speaking people of Sub-Saharan Africa. *Ubuntu* may have some ideas that are similar to other cultures but the concept of *Hunhuism* itself is unique to Bantu speaking peoples, regardless of individual tribal differences (Samkange and Samkange, 1980). It has different names across various languages and dialects and some of these include *vutho* and *unhu*.

The basic tenets of the African moral philosophy are brotherhood, collective unity, goodwill, collective identity, generosity and protection of community welfare and interests (Tutu 2000). The underlying principle is that humanity is achieved through others hence the popular adage 'a person is a person through other persons' (Metz, 2007). Samkange and Samkange (1980) who also refer to *Ubuntu* as *Hunhuism* and emphasize on that any behaviour that is not acceptable is termed as '*kushaya unhu*', meaning that it reflects a lack of *Ubuntu* or *Unhu*. Conversely, any behaviour that is pro social and in line with norms is considered to be '*kuva ne hunhu*' meaning that it embodies the ideals of *Hunhuism* (Samkange and Samkange, 1980).

Therefore, since time immemorial these indigenous social protection systems have been operational in Zimbabwe's communities grounded in the African philosophy of collectivism, sharing and brotherhood. Through the philosophy, the vulnerable members of society such as orphans are taken care of by well-wishers on the basis of generosity and goodwill, brotherhood (Tutu 2000). Mushunje (2006) also argues that, in Zimbabwe vulnerable children such as orphans, the elderly and persons with disabilities were taken care of by the communities through such initiatives as the *Zunde Ramambo* programme. Under the same philosophical thrust, even individual members of the community helped vulnerable neighbours in one way or another. Communities took care of their own children and provided social protection both formally and informally. However, the *Ubuntu* philosophy has a number of weaknesses, for example, the aspect of it being a vague concept and practice as observed by (Lutz 2009). The *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* theory has no clearly defined characteristics. As a result of lack of clearly defined theory or perspective, it is bound to be abused. The *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* theory is seriously affected by the globalisation phenomenon as some of its key arguments are seen as backward and very traditional. Murove (2014) argues that the problem associated with *Ubuntu* philosophy is that it has many meanings that are inexhaustible because it cannot be pinned down to have originated at a particular point in time in human history. Mugumbate and Nyanguru (2013) argue that the *Ubuntu* philosophy's key tenets, characteristics or elements are difficult to theorise and its applicability across cultures is also questionable. They further observed that the *Ubuntu* philosophy can weaken instead of strengthening communities or societies as some of its elements, tenets, characteristics would make people docile and compliant without questioning certain behaviours. There are very academic studies or literature that has been promoting *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* philosophy in social work policy and practice (Mugumbate and Nyanguru 2013).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach was utilised in this research. The study setting is ward 14 of Bikita District located in Masvingo province. The ward is part of region three in the ecological distribution. The area is characterised by too little seasonal rainfall, infertile soils, poor health facilities, poor infrastructure and poor network systems. People in ward 39 in Bikita District depend on agriculture, which is the growing of crops and animal domestication and at some point buying and selling for their livelihoods. Agriculture is the main source of income and food within the area. However, climate change has affected the region and Bikita district was not spared as it depends mainly on agriculture. The area was affected by excessive droughts, floods as well as heat waves which subsequently affect crop production and animal husbandry.

The paper targeted the rural children, from child headed families, single parenting families, those who drop out of school and those being raised by grandparents who show resilience in the face of climate change, are the target population of this study. The study participants will be children aged of 15 to 17 who resides in ward 14 of Bikita District.

A sample of twelve (12) participants was purposively selected for the study. There were four key informants who were also conveniently selected to participate in the study. The twelve (12) children were aged between 15 and 17 from child headed families, single parent families, grandparent families and those who drop out of school and residing in ward 14 of Bikita District for the past three years were purposively selected for the study. Six of the participants will be male children while six will be female participants.

In-depth interviews were utilised for data collection for this study. In depth interviews were used in this study to gather relevant information regarding impact of climate change towards the vulnerabilities of children in rural Zimbabwe. In-depth interviews provide sufficient information regarding people's experiences, beliefs and social interactions. Participants were given the opportunity to air out their views freely without any due influence from the researcher. This eliminated power dynamics between the researcher and the respondents. All interviews conducted were guided by an in-depth guide consist of open ended questions covers the entire topics to be discussed. In-depth interviews help the researcher to develop rapport with participants which makes them feel comfortable.

The study also utilise focus group discussions as data collection method. Four groups which consist of at least six to eight children in each group were used for the study. The researcher was a facilitator ensuring that all participants have an equal chance to participate within the circles of topic at hand. The researcher also encouraged group members to air out their views freely without due influence.

Key informant interviews were also used as a data collection method for this study. For this study, the researcher conducted one on one interview with the ward councillor, community headmen, an elderly resident and a foreman at Bikita Minerals.

The study used thematic content analysis method to analyse research findings obtained from in-depth, focus group discussion and key informant interviews.

The study was cleared by University of Zimbabwe Ethics committee as well as the Department of Social Development under Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings suggest that there has been unprecedented impact of climate change or global warming on children in ward 14 Bikita District, Masvingo Province. Some of them include the following;

### Food insecurities

#### *Food insecurity*

The study noted that children lived in rural areas of Zimbabwe were severely affected by climate change. This is because; many parts of rural areas in Zimbabwe depend on agriculture as their main source of food and income. However, due to unfavourable climatic conditions crop production and animal domestication was affected in many parts of the country this subsequently affected the livelihoods of rural children as food insecurity became the order of the day. One of the participants during in-depth interviews has this to say,

*Our community received too little rainfall for the past four years, this affected our farm produce to such an extent that, we do not have anything to eat or to sell so as to buy our basic needs. We used to grow crops in the fields for food and income, but nowadays we have nothing even to eat.*

During Focus Group Discussions, the participants agreed that children in rural in ward 14 of Bikita District were struggling to have something to eat; they spent some days without eating *sadza* (stable food) the staple food. It was also noted that people survived with drought resistant crops such as *chakata* and *matamba* which they collect from nearby forests. One of the members has this to say;

*We do not have anything to eat bro, we spend days without eating sadza (stable food), we are surviving with fruits such as chakata and matamba, but we have to work up early to collect chakata otherwise you find nothing if you go there late”*

One of the key informants said that;

*We do not have any other source of income in this area except getting it from our farm produce and through selling our livestock; however, the current excessive drought affected our livelihoods very badly. We received no rainfall and we do not have food to feed our families, our domestic animals are dying every day due to shortage of pastures”*

### Child marriages

Child marriages were identified as one of the vulnerabilities of children in rural Zimbabwe in the face of climate change. The study established that due to climate related consequences such as excessive droughts together with hunger and starvation cases of girl child marriages increased on daily bases. From in-depth interviews Fadzai (not real name) aged 16 years reviewed that;

*My sister got married at the age of 14 because she had nothing to wait since she dropout of school due to shortage of school fees caused by climate related challenges.*

Taping from focus group discussions, the participants agreed that, the rampant child marriages in ward 14 of Bikita District were linked to climate change among others. It was noted that child marriage cases are drastically increased. Some children are being forced to marry for dowry while others use it as a strategy of escaping hunger and starvation among their families.

One of the key informants has this to say;

*It is very unfortunate that cases of child marriage are increased on daily bases in our community. Girl children are at high risk of being married at an early age and some were sexually abused and impregnated just for a plate of sadza (stable food) or a packet of biscuits in this community. This is mainly caused by hunger and starvation due to persisting droughts in our area.*

### School dropouts

The study also noted school drop outs among children in rural areas as the key impacts of climate change in rural Zimbabwe. From the in-depth interviews, one of the participants named Tariro (not real name) aged 15 years had this to say;

*I lived with my grandparents since the death of my parents and we depend on crop production for a living but nowadays due to excessive droughts we produce nothing and this also affected my education since I do not have any other source of income to fund my studies as a result, I drop out of school at grade.*

From the focus groups discussion, it was a consensus that, climate change related disasters hindered the educational continuation among rural children; one of the participants established that;

*It is very embarrassing for me to go to school with ragged uniform, no stationery, while hungry, concentration will be difficult and some pupils will laugh at me thereby opting to drop out.*

During key informants it was also confirmed that some children were dropping out of school as a result of climate change. One of the participants had this to say; also reviewed that;

*It is difficult for a parent to let his or her children go to school without eating anything, this forced many parents to let their children stay at home like what many did in this community.*

### Spread of climate change related diseases

The study also found out that many children in rural areas were affected by climate change related diseases. Some of the diseases include; diarrhoea, bilharzia, flu and malaria. It was revealed that, during excessive rain season for example during the Cyclone Idai of 2019 some children were affected by malaria to such an extent that they were admitted at a local hospital for some time while others lost their lives. From the in-depth interviews Tanaka (not real) explained that;

*Some of the children were admitted at our local hospital during the Cyclone Idai due to malaria, children are more vulnerable to climate change related diseases as compared to adults.*

During the Focus Group Discussion, it was unanimous that;

*Children in rural areas are vulnerable to climate related diseases because, they walk long distances while bare footed to and from school, some spend the whole day in the fields herding cattle hence their chances of being soaked by rainfall are very high. As a result, they will be affected by water borne diseases such as malaria, bilharzia and influenza.*

One of the key informants had this to say;

*Many children lost their lives to malaria and bilharzia in this community, our local clinic does not have any medication or even an ambulance to ferry the sick to Silveira Mission Hospital for further treatment. Many people as a result died because they failed to get medication in time.*

### Child labour

Child labour was noted as one of the vulnerabilities associated with climate change in rural areas of Zimbabwe. The children engaged in various works that constitute child labour. Some of them included illegal gold panning, vending, herding cattle for money during normal school hours and prostitution among others. During the in-depth interviews one of the children named Tinotenda (not real name) aged 15 years articulated that;

*I used to go to school without eating anything because we produced nothing this season, so I ended up dropping out of school. I am now working as a herd boy so as to provide food for my siblings as well as my grandparent.*

During the Focus Group Discussion, the participants agreed that some of the children were working as domestic workers/labourers, herd boys, illegal gold panning among others. It was also noted that some adolescent girls were initiated into sex work. One of the group participants had this to say;

*I am a fruit and airtime vendor at Diyo Shopping Centre; I got my staff from Birchenough Bridge. I*

*generate income for a living through vending. Sometimes customer turnout will be very low but I will keep on trying because I have limited options since I am an orphan.*

During key informant interviews, the Kraal head revealed that;

*Many of children who dropped out of school migrated to nearby towns, such as Masvingo, Gutu and Chiredzi looking for greener pastures. Others go to Bikita Minerals for chrome panning and the main worrisome part is that some girl children are indulging in prostitution, they walk semi naked even in front of community elders, and they abuse drugs and alcohol. Even those who are still schooling they practice vending at our local market during weekends and after school hours leaving them without enough time to read and do homework.*

### **Commercial sex work**

Commercial sex work was identified as one of the vulnerabilities associated with climate change among the children of ward 14, Bikita District. During in depth interviews, one of the adolescent girls had this to say;

*As a result of drought, I sell sex to makorokoza (gold panners) at Bikita Minerals mine, they pay me handsomely. I am an orphan. I do not have any one to look after me.*

Another participant had this to say;

*I hang up with other girls in beer halls and public gatherings normally at night even during the day; we offer protected or unprotected sex to anyone who has money regardless of his marital or health status. All we need is money to buy our basic need.*

During Focus Group Discussion, it was noted that majority of the adolescent that had dropped out of school in Ward 14, Bikita District supplemented their family incomes through selling sex to gold panners, truck drivers among others. It was also revealed that as a result of commercial sex work some succumbed to sexually transmitted disease, unwanted pregnancies among others.

During key informant interviews, one of the *makorokoza* (gold panners) confirmed that, some adolescent girls who dropped out of school were selling sex at Bikita Minerals mine. He added that the adolescent girls were severely affected by drought and had very limited options for survival besides selling sex.

### **Substance abuse**

Substance abuse among children in ward 14 of Bikita District was noted as one of the vulnerabilities associated with climate change. The study also found out that rural children are using and abusing drugs due to economic hardships caused by climate related challenges. The study discovered that children who drop-out of school are more likely to sell and abuse drugs. From in-depth interviews one child named Munya aged 15 years had this to say;

*I grew marijuana at my private place; sell them to mafia at our local shopping centre so as to obtain income for basic needs. I did it for a year now and it works, what do you expect me to do since I am not employed and my parents failed to send me to school.*

From the focus group discussions conducted the evidence was overwhelming that children who drop out of school are the victims of drug use and abuse. One of them has to say that;

*Mudhara (elder) abusing drugs make us forgetting our climate related challenges. You can't cope with the situation while you are sober. Just imagine quitting our studies at this age, having nothing to eat or to do is very stressful Mudhara (elder). We bought mbanje, borne clear and glue from mafias in this community.*

Supporting the findings from in-depth and focus group interactions. One of the key informants also reviewed that;

*We are now worried about the future of our children, most of them especially those who dropped out of school are abusing drugs and some are now addicted to drugs. We request for an immediate intervention from the government or private organisations to help our children particularly on ways to quit drug abuse.*

## DISCUSSION

Our research findings suggest that the impact of climate change have been unprecedented on the lives of the children in rural Zimbabwe particularly those at ward 14 of Bikita District. The climate change has had debilitating impact on well-being of these children. This is illustrated as some of the children dropped out of school. Some being victims or survivors of child marriages, child labour (illegal gold panning and vending), commercial sex work, food insecurities, spread of climate change induced diseases, substance abuse among others. The vulnerabilities of children in rural Zimbabwe due to climate change are against the values of *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* philosophy. Through some of the cardinal values and principles of *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* philosophy are against the vulnerabilities of the children in ward 14 of Bikita District. The community of ward 14 of Bikita District should come together in the spirit of *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* philosophy to cushion the vulnerable children from the debilitating impact of climate change. In a village which is full of humanness, children would not go hungry, drop out of school, engaging in substance abuse and practice child marriages among others. Such vulnerabilities of children in rural Zimbabwe demonstrate the lack of *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* of people in ward 14 of Bikita District, Masvingo province. The vulnerabilities of children of ward 14 of Bikita District due to climate change are in sharp contrasts of the social justice value of *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* philosophy. Social justice is based on the principle of fairness, love, compassion, equality, genuineness among others (Mangena 2012). Such principles are part of the *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* philosophy (Mangena 2012). There is social injustice when children drop out of school, engage in substance abuse, being victims or survivors of child marriages or child labour among others.

Substance abuse among the children in rural Zimbabwe of ward 14 Bikita District illustrates lack of morals on the part of the children. Among the Karanga ethnic group of Shona people, children are not expected to engage in substance abuse. However, the blame should also be on the society who produces citizens who do not have 'good morals' (Chikoko and Rugaranganda 2020). It takes the whole village to raise a child is one of the most popular sayings associated with *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* philosophy (Mugumbate and Chereni 2019).

Child labour was established as one of the vulnerabilities of children in rural Zimbabwe, ward 14 of Bikita. The children resorted to child labour so as to survive given the constraining environment characterised with droughts and food shortages. The children engaged in various forms of child labour such as prostitution, vending among others. Similarly in Nepal, children engaged in child labour, child marriage due to droughts and flooding (Plan International 2012).

The study established that school drop outs is one of the vulnerabilities of children that has been associated with climate change in rural Zimbabwe of ward 14 of Bikita District, Masvingo province. Similarly due to climate change a number of children dropped out of school in Nepal (Plan International 2012). During flooding in Nepal, the school calendar was disturbed as classrooms were used as shelter (Plan International 2012). In another study UNESCO (2012) noted that recurrent climate-related disasters led to absolute poverty which acted as a limiting factor for parents to fund for their children's education. Both Nepalese girls and boys were affected by post-disaster hardships forcing them to drop out of school at a tender age (UNESCO 2012). During Cyclone Idai of 2019 in Zimbabwe, the school children were severely affected. The school infrastructure, books, text books were destroyed by heavy rains (UNICEF 2019).

The study also established that child marriages as one of the vulnerabilities associated with children in ward 14 of Bikita District as a result of climate change. The research findings collaborate findings from Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh where adolescent girls from a rural community were reported engaging in prostitution, forced into singing and dancing at private parties as a coping strategy from climate change related problems (Plan International 2012). In addition, girl children were also reported of being harassed and sexually abused in camps they stayed after their homes were destroyed by climate change related disasters in Pakistan (UNESCO 2012).

Food insecurities was noted as one of the vulnerabilities faced by children of ward 14 of Bikita District in the face of climate change. The vulnerabilities were demonstrated as the children would go for some days without eating sadza (staple food). It is also evident that some of the children were seen scavenging food and also resorting to eat fruits such *matamba* and *chakata* among others. According to Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET 2016), food insecurity is more prevalent in Southern African households due to droughts. For example, two (2) million people have been affected in Mozambique, in Malawi 24 out of 28 districts require food assistance for livelihoods improvement, in Zimbabwe about 30% of rural population which is 2.8 million people including children are in need of food assistance due to excessive droughts (FEWSNET 2016).

The outbreaks of diseases such as diarrhoea, bilharzia, flue, malaria among others are some of the vulnerabilities faced by children in rural Zimbabwe of ward 14 of Bikita District in the face of climate change. Climate related floods affected the well-being of children in many countries in the world for example in the

Caribbean, Hurricane Irma destroyed about 95% of houses in Barbuda, and the entire population was evacuated (UNICEF 2019). It was also found out that, in the Caribbean regions such as Dominica, Anguilla, Antigua, Turks and Caicos Islands about 143.000 people including 39.000 children less than five years were affected by the floods to an extent that some died while others managed to survive (UNICEF 2019). In October 2018, the Caribbean provinces of Trinidad and Tobago also experienced severe rainfall which resulted in intense flooding and about 80% of the

Caribbean's population including minors were affected while others were displaced (UNICEF 2019). More so, in the Eastern Caribbean, children face intensified risks due to environmental, climate change and energy-related impacts for many reasons. As a result, young children are at high risk of heat related illnesses. UNICEF (2019) in Barbados and Dominica there was an outbreak of diarrhoea cause by poor hygiene practices observed during the period of domestic water shortages. During 2009-2010 droughts, it was discovered that, many children in Dominica and Barbados dropped out of school in order to help their parents to collect water. UNICEF (2019) supported this argument saying, shortage of water resulted in complete closure of many schools in the region.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper proffers a number of recommendations so as to reduce the vulnerabilities of children to climate change and global warming. Some of the recommendations include;

- There is need to raise awareness on the impact of climate change and global warming on children and families in rural Zimbabwe
- Mainstreaming of climate change and global warming on child rights policies and programmes in Zimbabwe,
- Establishment of climate change and global warming community structures in both rural and urban communities in Zimbabwe,
- There is need to integrate children who have been vulnerable to climate change and global warming into the National Case Management System,
- There is need to revitalise the indigenous social protection programmes targeting children in rural Zimbabwe for example *Zunde Ramambo*, credit and saving schemes, extended family system, kinship foster care system among others,
- There is need to establish community structures that address children's vulnerabilities of climate change.
- The Government of Zimbabwe line ministries should provide more support to children in rural communities so as to reduce their vulnerabilities to climate change. This could be through second chance educational support among others.

## CONCLUSION

As discussed above there has been unprecedented impact of climate change on children in rural Zimbabwe, particularly in ward 14 of Bikita District, Masvingo province. The impact has been debilitating as some children resorted to child labour (gold panning, vending), school drop outs, substance abuse, prostitution, child marriages among others. Utilising the *Ubuntu* or *Hunhu* philosophy, the vulnerabilities of children in rural Zimbabwe, demonstrate lack of humanness. The people of ward 14 of Bikita District, Zimbabwe should come together in the spirit of communitarian to ameliorate the children from the debilitating impact of climate change.

### *Acknowledgements*

*This research was part of Philemon Chihya's Master of Social Work Dissertation at the Department of Social Work, University of Zimbabwe.*



## REFERENCES

- Bhatasara. S. (2018) Understanding adaptation to climate variability in smallholder farming systems in eastern Zimbabwe: a sociological perspective, University of Zimbabwe: Harare
- Chikoko. W. & Rugaranganda. W (2020) *Ubuntu or Hunhu* Perspective in Understanding Substance Abuse and Sexual Behaviours of Street Children of Harare Central Business District: *African Journal of Social Work*, 10(1); 69-72
- Chingwanda, E. (2016) A Framework for Building Resilience to Climate Change through Girls' Education Programming, Centre for Universal Education
- Famine Early Warning Systems Network. 2016. *Scenario Development for Food Security Early Warning*. Washington, DC: FEWS NET
- Feyissa. R. (2007) The Sub-Saharan African Agriculture: potential, challenges and opportunities, Oslo: Norway.
- Mangena. F. (2007) *Natural law ethics, Hunhuism and the concept of redistributive justice among the Korekore-Nyombwe people of Northern Zimbabwe: An ethical investigation*, unpublished D.Phil Thesis, Faculty of Arts, University of Zimbabwe, Harare
- Mangena. F. (2012) *On Ubuntu and Redistributive punishment in Korekore-Nyombwe culture: Emerging ethical perspectives*, Best Practices Books, Harare
- Manyeruke. C. Hamauswa. S & Mhandara L. (2013) The Effects of Climate Change and Variability on Food Security in Zimbabwe: A Socio-Economic and Political Analysis. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*; Vol. 3 No. 6
- Mbigi. L (1995) *In search of the African business renaissance*, Randburg, Knowledge Resources.
- Mbigi. L (2005) *Ubuntu: The spirit of African transformation management*, Knowledge Resources, Randburg, South Africa.
- Mpambela, M. & Mabvurira. V (2017) Effects of Climate Change and their Indelible Impact on Social Work Profession in Zimbabwe: *African Journal of Social Work*, 7 (2): pp 30-35
- Mugumbate. J. & Nyanguru. A (2013) Exploring African philosophy: The value of *ubuntu* in social work *African Journal of Social Work* 3(2): pp 82-100
- Mugumbate. J. & Chereni. A (2019) Using African Ubuntu theory in Social Work with children in Zimbabwe *African Journal of Social Work* 9 (1): pp 27- 34
- Murove. M. F (2014) *Ubuntu Diogenes* Volume 59, Number (3-4): 36-47
- Mushunje. M. T (2006) Child Protection in Zimbabwe: yesterday, today and tomorrow *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 21(1), 1-11.
- Mpambela, M. & Mabvurira. V (2017) Effects of climate change and their indelible impact on social work profession in Zimbabwe *African Journal of Social Work* Volume 07, Issue 02
- Gerald C. Nelson. G. C, Rosegrant, M, Koo, J, Robertson, R, Sulser, T, Zhu, T, Msangi, S, Ringler, C, Palazzo, A, Batka, M, Magalhaes, M, Lee, D. (2009) *Climate Change: Impact on Agriculture and Costs of Adaptation* International Food Policy Research Institute Washington, D.C.
- Plan International. (2012) *Because I am a Girl: Learning for life*. London: Plan International
- Ramose. M. B. (2002) *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, Harare, Mond Books Publishers
- Samkange. S. & Samkange. T. M. (1980) *Hunhuism or Ubuntuism: A Zimbabwe Indigenous Political Philosophy*, Graham Publishing, Salisbury/Harare
- Sarkar. A.N. (2010) *Global Climate Change: Beyond Copenhagen*, Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, UK
- Shutte A. (1993) *Philosophy for Africa*, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Tutu D. (2000) *No future without forgiveness: A personal overview of South African's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. London, Rider Random House.
- United Nations International Children Emergency Fund. (2011) Exploring the Impact of Climate Change on Children in South Africa. Summary of Findings, Pretoria: UNICEF South Africa.
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2012) *Education for all Global Monitoring Report 2012: Youth and skills: Putting education to work*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Zimbabwe Children's Act Chapter 5:06 Amendment No8 (2023). Government of Zimbabwe: Harare