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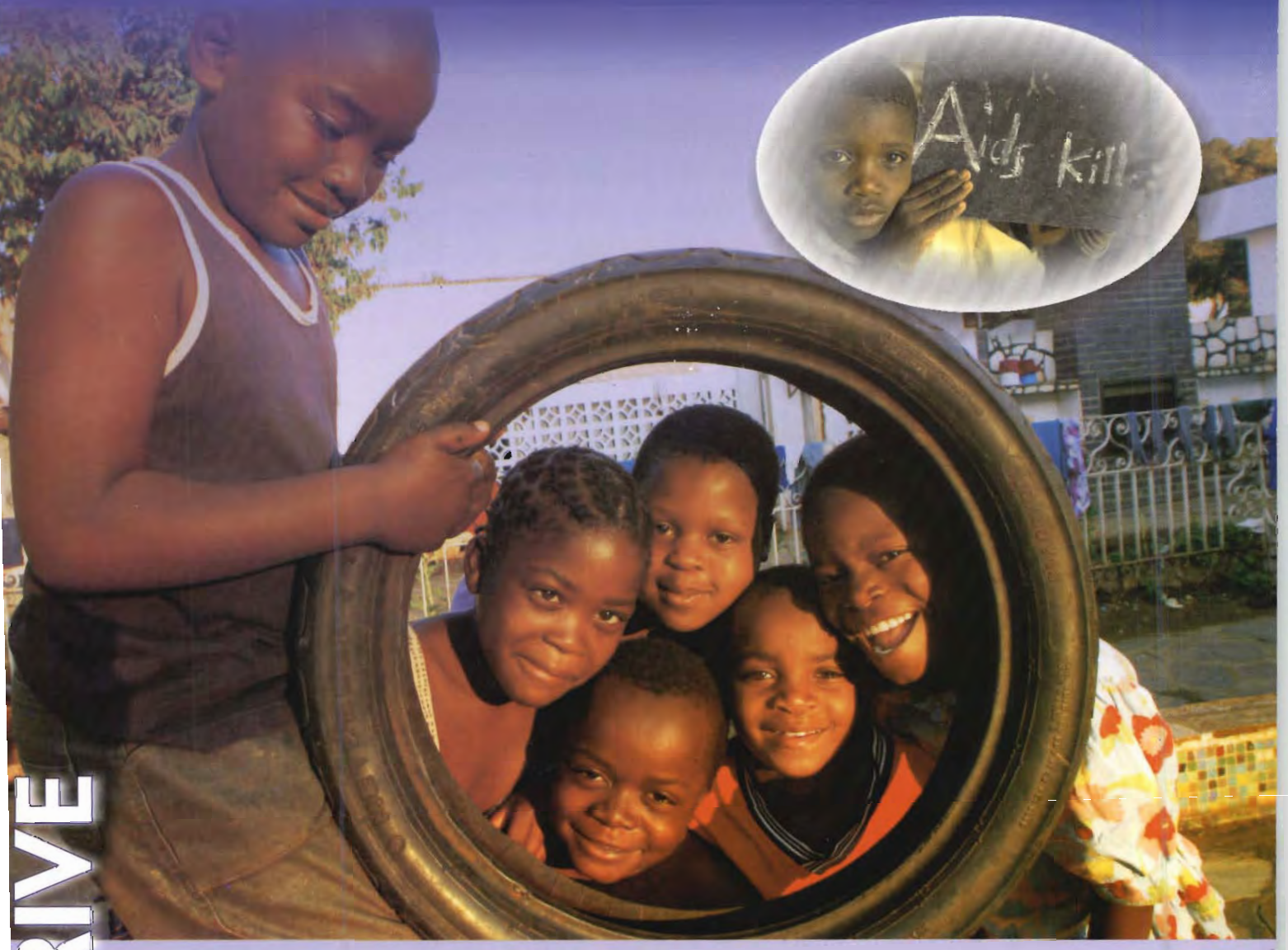
Turning The Tide: lessons learned, sound practice, and corrective action in OVC programming



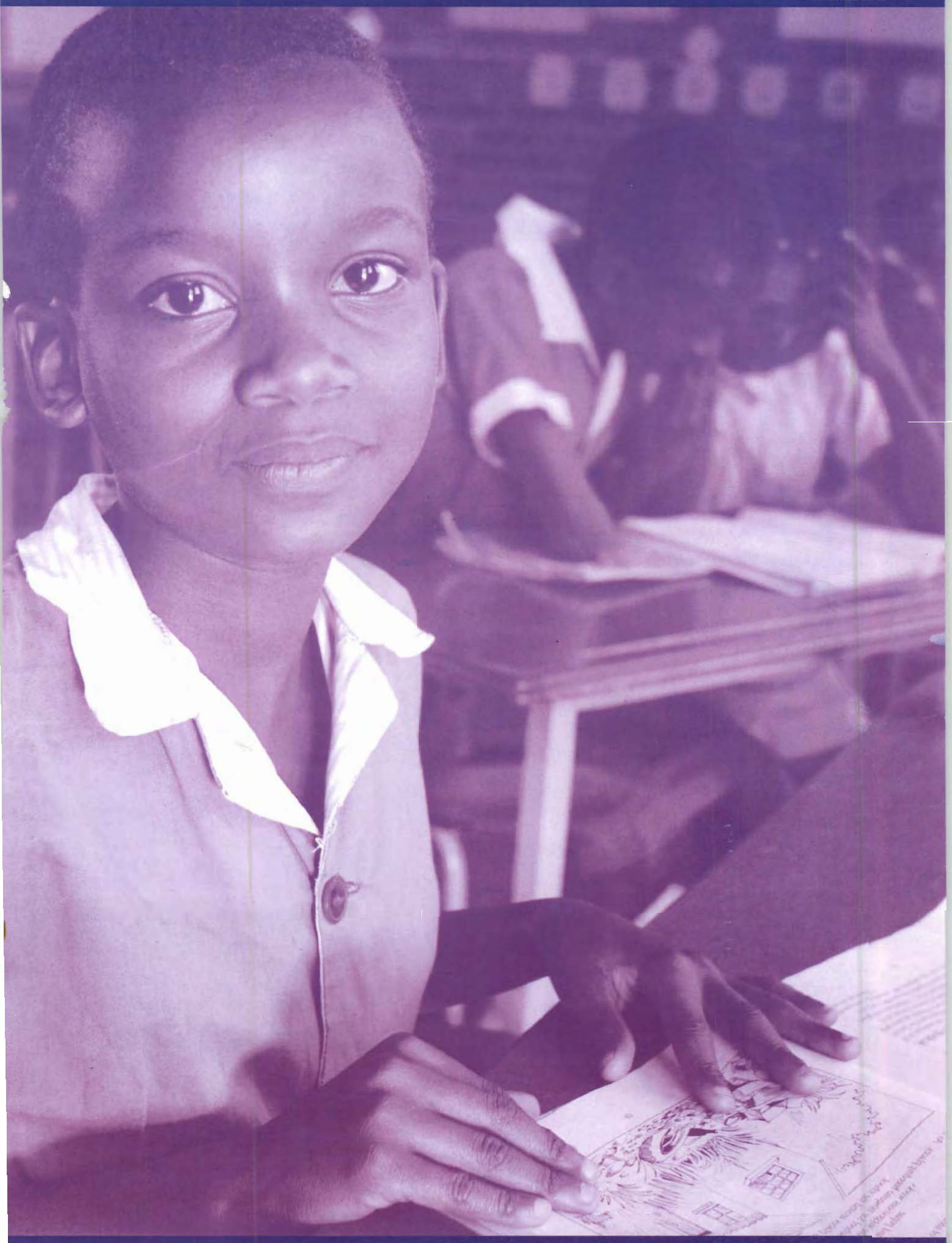
STRIVE

Phase I Summary Report

Support To Replicable, Innovative Village/Community- Level Efforts for Vulnerable Children in Zimbabwe

CRS-STRIVE Phase I Summary Report

CRS
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES



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CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES
ZIMBABWE

NO CHILD WILL BE LEFT BEHIND

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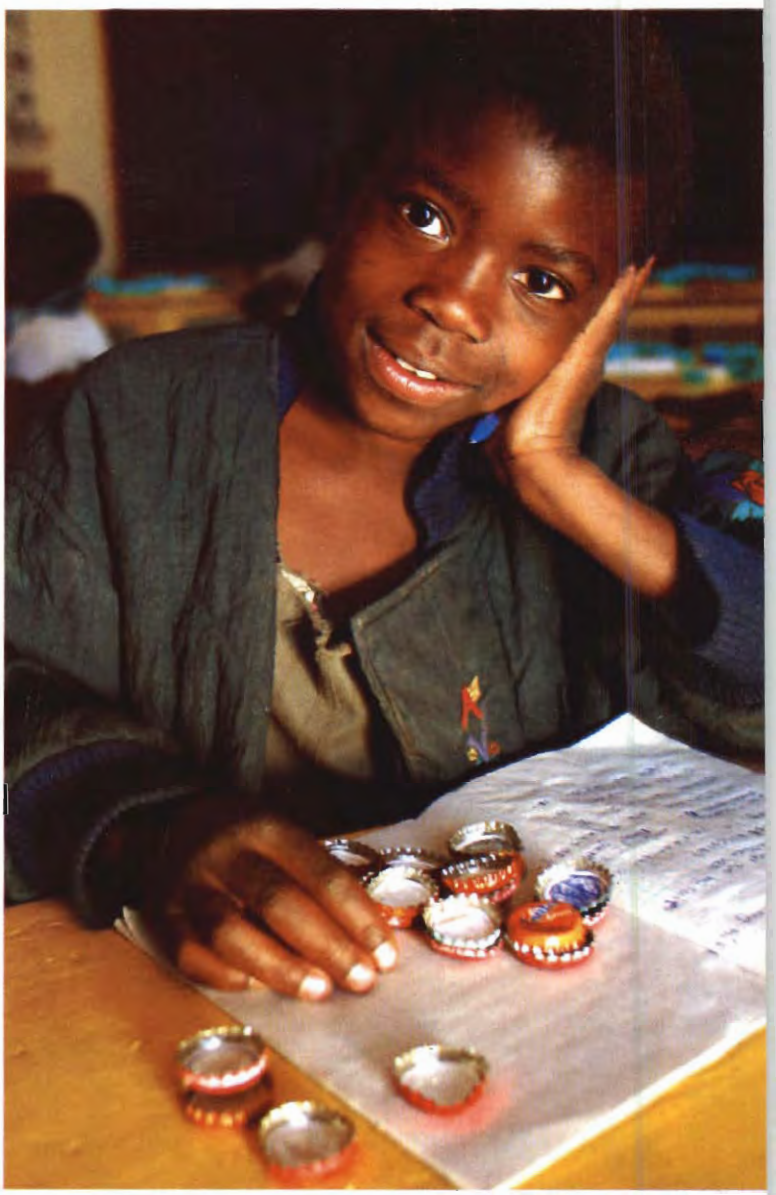
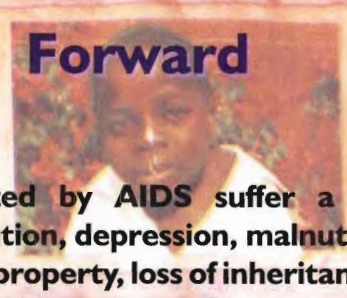
Turning The Tide: lessons learned, sound practice, and corrective action in OVC programming



Phase I Summary Report

Support **T**o **R**eplicable, **I**nnovative **V**illage/Community-Level **E**fforts for Vulnerable Children in Zimbabwe

Forward



Orphans and other children affected by AIDS suffer a catalogue of deprivations and vulnerabilities, including family dissolution, depression, malnutrition, lack of access to education and health care, homelessness, loss of property, loss of inheritance, stigma, discrimination, abuse, psychosocial distress, increased risk of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unplanned and unwanted pregnancies. Consequently, they are at the highest risk for not realizing their full potential.

Zimbabwe, along with Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho and Rwanda has the world's highest proportion of orphaned children. Conservative estimates suggest that in these five countries 17-19% of all children under the age of 15 had lost one or both parents by 2004[1]. In Zimbabwe, that amounts to 1.3 million orphans out of a total child population of approximately 5.8 million. Of these, approximately 980,000 orphans have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Further, Zimbabwe is believed to have 240,000 children living with HIV& AIDS[2]; 600,000 internally displaced children; 150,000 children living with disabilities; 12,000 homeless children; 5,000 children in institutions; and 26% of children aged 10-14 engaged in child labor[3].

I addition to the devastation caused by the AIDS pandemic, Zimbabwe has been hit with three additional interrelated crises over the past several years: drought, food insecurity, triple digit inflation, and political/humanitarian discord. This combination of destructive forces has driven Zimbabwe to the brink of full-scale disaster affecting every sector of this once vibrant and growing economy. More alarming is that the hardest hit by these crises have been the children of Zimbabwe.

As disquieting as the situation might be, the people of Zimbabwe hold on to a hope that the AIDS pandemic, which has undermined social and economic coping strategies and has left an ever-increasing number of children orphaned, will be mitigated. Despite the damage inflicted by HIV and AIDS, families and communities continue to respond to the challenge and remain the most vital sources of care and support for Zimbabwe's children.

This book seeks to demonstrate how communities in Zimbabwe, with the support of CRS and local partners, are coping with the overwhelming number of children in need along with the overlapping humanitarian, health, and economic crises.

CRS has faith that the research as well as monitoring and evaluation from which this publication is derived will effectively chronicle how hope prevails in Zimbabwe despite the harsh realities of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and how others working with children in difficult circumstances might provide quality assistance to their beneficiaries.

[1]UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID. "Children on the Brink 2004: A Joint Report of New Orphan Estimates and a Framework for Action," 2004.

[2]UNAIDS Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections, 2002 Update.

[3]Presentation by Zimbabwean delegation at the Regional Workshop on Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Windhoek in November 2002, except children living with HIV/AIDS which is from UNAIDS figures quoted earlier.

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Acknowledgements

This report is a common effort of the staff and partners of the STRIVE Project of Catholic Relief Services/Zimbabwe. It was developed, compiled and edited by Kyle Jemison Ph.D. and Jennifer Lentfer of the CRS/Zimbabwe Operations Research Unit. We are indebted to fellow colleagues of the STRIVE Project and Catholic Relief Services/Zimbabwe, staff of the STRIVE partner organizations, especially the Operations Research Officers, our donors, and the many individuals, ministries, agencies, and organizations who are also involved in OVC programming. Without their invaluable contributions this book would not have been possible. May the Lord bless and guide the work you are doing.

Special thanks to Stella Musimwa and Katherine Pondo who coordinated the photos and text for the captions contained in this book.

Photos by Giacomo Pirozzi courtesy of Catholic Relief Services

Implementing partners:
Africare
Archdiocese of Bulawayo
Batsiranai
Bekezela Home Based Care
Bethany
CADEC Chinhoyi
Child Protection Society (CPS)
Diocese of Mutare (DOMCCP)
Farm Orphan Support Trust (FOST)
Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG)
Inter-Country People's Aid (IPA)
Mavambo Trust
Rural Unity for Development Organisation (RUDO)
Salvation Army Masiye Camp
Save the Children (UK)
Scripture Union
Tsungirirai
Uzumba Orphan Trust

Technical Partners include: CARE International, LEAD, Catholic Relief Services School Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI)

May we all continue to work together to provide improved care and support to children in Zimbabwe.

Executive Summary

An examination of current HIV & AIDS field programs indicates that while experiences are being shared, it is in an unsystematic manner. Information varies in both content and in method of collection and assessment from one community to another, making it extremely difficult to compare programs and different interventions. Consequently, sound practices are difficult to identify and evidence of project impact tends to be either weak or non-existent. Along with the absence of strong Monitoring and Evaluation systems, one of the principal causes of this problem is the lack of systematic ways with which to explain *why* a particular way of doing things is working or not, and *how* to most effectively share these conclusions with other groups dealing with similar problems.
It is important that we triangulate information so as to get a clearer picture of the situation for children and how to best deliver support services to them.

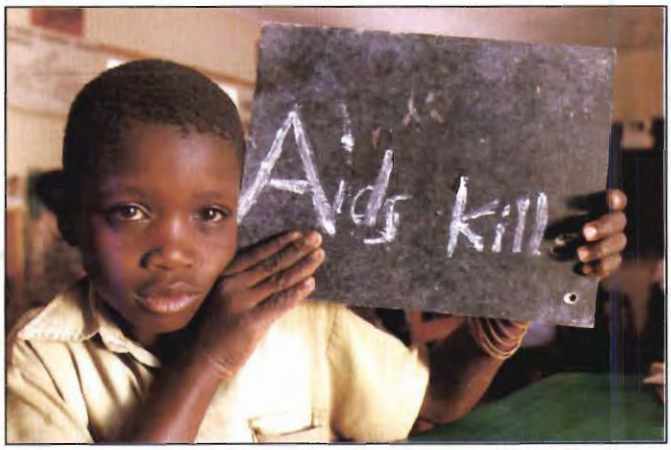
What is STRIVE?

STRIVE is the acronym for Catholic Relief Services' project, Support To Replicable, Innovative, Village/community-level Efforts to support orphans and other vulnerable children in Zimbabwe.

Through systematic monitoring and evaluation and a comprehensive operations research approach, the STRIVE Project has been able to identify and rigorously test models of care and support to ensure appropriate cost effective delivery of services to children in difficult circumstances. It is our sincerest hope that the lessons learned and sound practices contained in this document will help to enhance the delivery of services to children for many years to come.

STRIVE Project Overview

Catholic Relief Services/Zimbabwe coordinated the implementation of partner projects under an umbrella grant entitled "Support to Replicable, Innovative Village/Community-Level Efforts." A $2.5 million grant awarded to CRS/ZW by USAID, matched by $1.8 million from CRS' private resources, financed Phase I of the STRIVE Project from December 2001 to June 2004. CRS provided technical assistance and support to enhance the capacity of local partner organizations to implement effective programs that improve care and support for children affected by HIV/AIDS. Over the course of Phase I, the Project identified successful interventions in child-centred programming in order to replicate them throughout Zimbabwe and other parts of sub-Saharan Africa.



STRIVE Goal and Objectives

The STRIVE Project's overall goal is to improve the care and support offered to children and youth affected by HIV/AIDS throughout Zimbabwe. Its objectives are:

- To support and develop appropriate, effective, and sustainable community-based approaches to supporting children affected by HIV/AIDS through participatory learning and action.
- To improve the organizational capacity of at least eight local organizations, so that they are able to deliver high quality care, support, and prevention activities for children and their families.
- To increase access to quality education for children, with a special focus on girls.

List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
AREX	Agricultural Recovery Exchange
CABA	Children Affected By AIDS
CA	Cost Analysis
CADEC	Catholic Development Commission
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEA	Cost Effectiveness Analysis
CHH	Child Headed Household
CPS	Child Protection Society
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DOMCCP	Diocese of Mutare Community Care Project
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Organization
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FOST	Farm Orphan Support Trust
FS	Food Security
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HOCIC	Hope for a Child in Christ
IPA	Inter-country People's Aid
IS&L	Internal Savings and Lending
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
LEAD	Linkages for the Economic Advancement of the Disadvantaged
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OR	Operations Research
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PSS	Psychosocial Support
PSWB	Psychosocial Well-Being
REPPSI	Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative
RUDO	Rural Unity for Development Organization
SCF-UK	Save the Children Fund United Kingdom
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Styrelsen för Internationellt Utvecklingssamarbete)
SNAP	School Nutrition Assistance Program
STRIVE	Support to Replicable, Innovative Village/Community Level Efforts to support children affected by AIDS in Zimbabwe
SU	Scripture Union
SVF	Seed and Voucher Fair
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UOT	Uzumba Orphan Trust
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar

The Situation for Children in Zimbabwe

Southern Africa has been particularly badly affected by HIV/AIDS, with UNICEF predicting that by 2010, around one-third of children will have lost one or both parents in the five worst HIV-affected countries, including Zimbabwe. With current figures estimating that 1.3 million Zimbabwean children were orphans by the end of 2003, the future looks bleak for many of the country's children, and the development of long-term, appropriate responses remains essential.

- Every year, more than 200,000 children in Zimbabwe lose at least one parent to AIDS.
- There are over one million orphaned children in Zimbabwe.
- By 2005, it is projected that there will be more than 1.5 million orphans in Zimbabwe, 33 percent of whom will be under the age of 15.
- More than 30 percent of all children in the STRIVE operating areas are orphans and nearly 90 percent of all children have in some way been affected by AIDS.

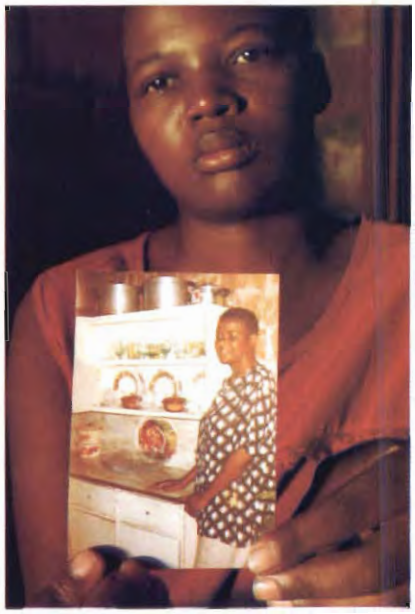
As well as being particularly susceptible to infection, children bear an enormous burden as a consequence of living in households affected by HIV/AIDS. Children affected by HIV/AIDS are often denied basic rights, such as the right to education, shelter and food security, because of their role in caring for sick and dying members of the family, and contributing financially to income or food production within households.

While orphans and vulnerable children face enormous obstacles in their everyday lives, it is equally true that there are innumerable small, humble, but powerful local initiatives in which ordinary people are doing extraordinary things to care for and support children affected by AIDS. The STRIVE Project is a way of recognizing and supporting these significant and sustainable efforts as they work to build a better future for the children of Zimbabwe.

Source: UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID. "Children on the Brink 2004: A Joint Report of New Orphan Estimates and a Framework for Action," 2004.

Children who lose parents may be forced to leave school prematurely. While a kind uncle has been able to pay for Szelibanzi's school fees, his sister Thobikile has not been so fortunate. Not only is she unable to complete her education, it is also unlikely that she will be able to find work, as a result.

Thobikile does not complain. She has assumed a domestic role instead. "Mother looked after us. Now it's just my brother and I to look after each other."



Adapting Our Approach to Children

Partners' programming initiatives that rely only on the former "charity model" of child welfare activities cannot adequately serve the overwhelming numbers of children affected by AIDS.

The "charity model" of handouts serves only the immediate and basic needs of children, often resulting in sporadic, fragmented programming which lacks the continued holistic services desperately needed by children.

Community Based Organisations must change their approach so as not to replace the role of children's primary duty bearers, which is first and foremost, the community.

Complementing Services

Complementing services provided by community groups or organizations can be an important part of a holistic approach. A holistic approach entails meeting a child's needs regardless of whether or not that child is receiving another distinct form of assistance from elsewhere.

FOST shares their education assistance beneficiary lists with other organizations offering similar assistance in order to prevent "double dipping."

Although organizations may be working in the same geographic location, this is not necessarily duplication of effort, as they may offer very different types of services to children or may be serving different populations. STRIVE partners are sometimes able to provide a component not covered by other assistance programs, e.g. providing psychosocial support to those in school.

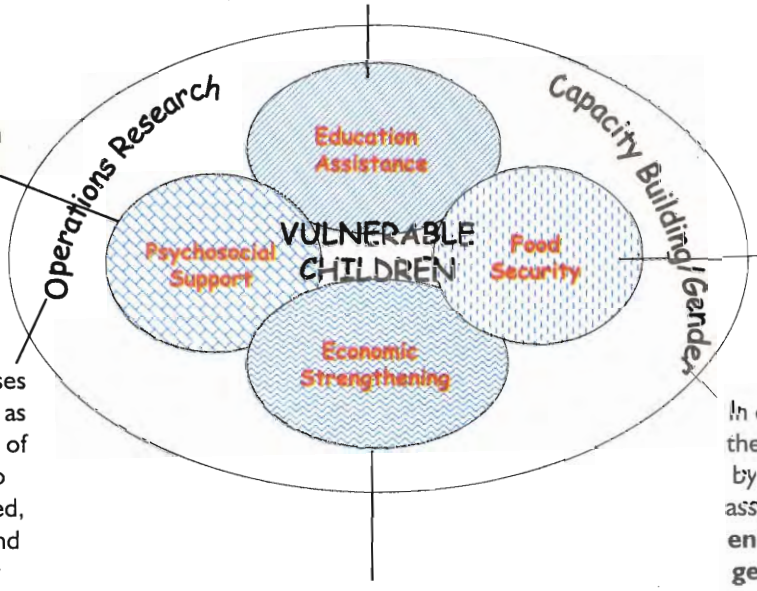
Bekezela adopted a holistic approach by providing complementing services to vulnerable children who are part of other programs. For instance, some children who receive direct education through the government received uniforms through Bekezela.

In the STRIVE Project, examples were found of children who actually switched from being beneficiaries of one organization in order to benefit from another organization who provided more services in the same area, suggesting the importance of a holistic approach to meeting children's varied needs.

A Holistic Approach in the STRIVE Project

In order to provide integrated and holistic services to vulnerable children, STRIVE partners carry out various combinations of activities from a menu of four broad, results-oriented intervention areas: psychosocial support, economic strengthening, education assistance, and food security.

Activities improve access and quality of education.



Child-focused activities aim at improving psychosocial conditions.

Community activities improve the nutritional status and food security of children

The STRIVE Project uses **operations research** as an integral component of STRIVE's mandate to uncover lessons learned, emerging practices, and the different activity combinations that have the greatest impact on the well being of children.

In order to better respond to the needs of children affected by HIV/AIDS, CRS/STRIVE is assisting local organizations to **enhance their capacity** and **gender awareness** to carry out the above interventions in an effective and sustainable manner.

Economic activities improve household economic situations and boost community safety nets.

The need for medical assistance for children to complement other interventions became increasingly apparent throughout Phase I of the STRIVE Project. Uzumba Orphan Trust expressly included medical assistance in their programming, which was especially important for children infected with HIV in their catchment area.

STRIVE partners provide a menu of interventions that benefit children, including:

* Kids Clubs
* Block Grants
* Life Skills
* Legal Services
* Seed Vouchers & Fairs
* Internal Saving & Lending Groups
* Experiential learning camps
* Community Gardens

Scripture Union's project reflected the sometimes overlooked need to integrate HIV prevention within OVC programming. They were included as a partner in the STRIVE Project in the second round of partner selection to increase the awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS in children and young people in Chitungwiza and Makoni district.

RUDO used a holistic approach at creches in their area, recognizing the tie between food security and pre-school education. RUDO noted that enrollments at creches had gone down, which was attributed to hunger. By providing meals at the creches, RUDO not only increased the food security of the younger children who returned, but the intervention also had a positive effect for the older siblings of those children. With their younger siblings at the creches, the older children were able to return to school.

Community Mobilization in the STRIVE Project

Community mobilization has proven to be vital for the effective implementation of STRIVE projects. Research and experience both consistently demonstrate that despite all of the damage inflicted upon families and communities by HIV and AIDS, they remain the most vital sources of support and care for vulnerable children. Facilitating community responses is therefore one of the most important ways for organizations to provide sustainable support to children. Indeed, it may be the only effective way.

Interventions should help community members to recognize that to some degree, their existing local resources, abilities and ideas are already responding to problems, but that their response can be more effective if they work together.

"When entering a new area of operation, it is vital that all influential people get the correct message of your intention and how you intend to operate. It will make the community realize that the problem is theirs right from the onset."
RUDO

Perhaps most importantly, interventions need to help communities take ownership of project activities, while becoming effective advocates for their own needs and priorities. (Building Blocks: Africa-wide Briefing Notes).

Some STRIVE partners have found support for their programming in the private sector. For instance, in Bulawayo, Barclays Bank, Bulawayo Rainbow, and CABS are assisting child-headed households with shelter, clothing, and food.

"Effective identification, enumeration and registration of children can only be achieved if the communities are effectively sensitized and accept the project by being in the forefront in the implementation and monitoring of the project."
The Bethany Project

DOMCCP uses Orphan Galas (dances, drama, sports, road shows) to raise awareness about problems faced by orphans and their caregivers. These galas are a source of learning as well as entertainment for children and community members.

Community Targeting for More Effective Services

Rather than organizations simply designating which children are eligible for a program, the process is strengthened when it is instead left to the local community. Community members should themselves first establish the criteria for participation and then identify and advocate for highly vulnerable children and households, many of whom might otherwise be overlooked during the selection process. In this manner, communities are not only given an opportunity to help shape the very nature of the intervention, advocate on behalf of others, and take ownership of the process, but a forum for future discussion, idea sharing, and identification of strengths and weaknesses is created.

There is, however, one important caveat to utilizing communities to target beneficiaries. Experience has shown that in order for the community selection process to be successful, it is essential that the implementing organization verify that beneficiaries are being targeted because they really are the most vulnerable members of the community, and not for some other reason such as nepotism.

When targeting committees are made up of a diverse group of community-identified local leaders and respected individuals, they can be responsible, not only for organizing beneficiary selection consultations, but also for reviewing those selected to determine if they are already enrolled in other programs. The committees make it possible to fully involve the community in the selection process, while still maintaining a coordinating unit that knows which potential participants are already benefiting from similar interventions.

Batsiranai devised beneficiary selection guidelines to communicate appropriate and fair selection criteria for communities. These guidelines explain requirements and spell out step-by-step the expected procedures to be followed in identifying, recommending, and selecting children for education assistance.

Volunteers in the STRIVE Project

Most STRIVE partners rely on community volunteers to deliver their services to children. However, the role of volunteers in Zimbabwe continues to change as a result of Zimbabwe's difficult operating environment.

Volunteerism is usually perceived as an act of goodwill towards those in need. For those fortunate enough to have adequate physical, emotional, and monetary resources, volunteerism is something to be done in one's free time.

Today, however, volunteers frequently find themselves among the most disadvantaged members of a community. Thus, the time given to the community as a volunteer has an opportunity cost that can adversely affect the ability of volunteers to contribute to their own family's needs. It is one thing to tutor a child once a week if you have a healthy family, steady income, and a comfortable home to return to at the end of the day. It is quite another thing to dedicate several hours every day to a project that works directly with sick, dying, neglected, and stigmatized children when you must also struggle to find your next meal or care for a sick relative.

> "Volunteers are from within the community and therefore have a better understanding of the community's needs."
> *Scripture Union*

While every volunteer's situation is unique, many face the threat of burnout. It is at these times that support becomes essential. Organizations must recognize the immense challenges faced by volunteers, by responding with appropriate support and ways to address and overcome the challenges faced by volunteers.

Who is a typical volunteer?

CPS conducted a survey of their volunteers to create the following profile:

- Female
- Minimal education
- Unemployed
- Personally affected by AIDS, sick themselves, caring for a terminally ill relative, or have lost a family member to the disease
- Themselves caring for orphaned or vulnerable children

At ITDG, community volunteers are affectionately known as "mothers" because of their maternal role at the center of community-based orphan care. The "mothers" are largely responsible for offering parental and livelihood support to the orphaned children lying within their respective wards. Each volunteer cares for an average of ten orphan households where they perform a number of duties that include assisting children with their household chores, counseling, and coordinating basic household materials.

Without the hard work and dedication of countless volunteers, the work of STRIVE and its partners would simply not be possible. So to all our volunteers...

THANK YOU! MAZVITA! SIYABONGA!

Growing Beauty is a volunteer at a local nutritional garden. She leaves her son, Philip, at the garden crèche, built by the community for the children of volunteers, who diligently tend to the garden and its upkeep.

Volunteerism: More Questions Than Answers

- What sort of training and orientation do volunteers need when they first join the organization? What sort of training do they need on an ongoing basis?

- How important is spirituality in motivating and retaining volunteers? Does the religious/secular nature of the project help or hinder volunteer recruitment and retention?

"Ongoing training is essential as a means of motivating volunteers."

- If volunteers are "compensated," at what point do they stop being volunteers and start becoming staff? If they are in need, should volunteers become automatic beneficiaries of a project they serve?

- What responsibility do donors have in encouraging volunteerism?

- Are incentives and tools warranted?

- Is it important to have a diverse pool of volunteers (men, women, old, young, educated, uneducated, poor, wealthy, foreign, domestic, white, black) or is there an "ideal" volunteer?

What motivates volunteers?

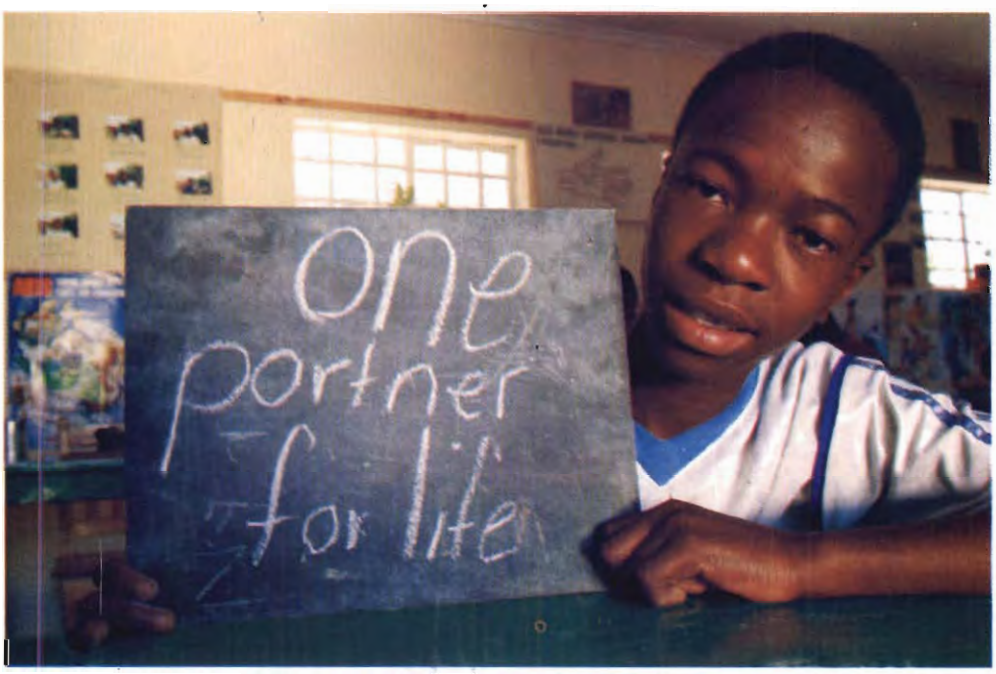
- A desire to help children.
- The opportunity to improve job prospects.
- The hope that someone will look after their children in the future.
- Faith in God.
- Personal altruistic & emotional needs.

- Do volunteers have an effective voice in making programming and planning decisions within the organization?

As their children sleep peacefully, Beauty and the other women grow onions, tomatoes, carrots and rape to feed those living with AIDS, children orphaned by AIDS and the volunteers themselves. When there is a very good harvest, volunteers may also sell the produce in local markets in order to fund school fees, uniforms and other necessities for children who have no parents to provide for them.

Education Assistance in the STRIVE Project

Keeping children in school is the most comprehensive way to provide support. Through STRIVE's M&E, Operations Research and partner reports it is clear that, beyond the obvious benefits of increased education, access to school can provide many other activities and services that can provide continuity in human relationships and thus, a range of psychosocial support. Even modest success in school can provide a child with important experiences that enable him/her to see themselves into the future.



One of the greatest challenges presented by the AIDS pandemic is sustaining children's education as social networks are fragmented and economic conditions decline. CRS supports many child-focused organisations, working diligently to help keep children in school as well as to teach invaluable prevention messages.

Nineteen-year old Tendai insists, "It is sad that [some] people do not openly talk about AIDS, if they did then there would be less stigma surrounding the disease." Instead, young people recognise that the ability to discuss and learn about the virus might change their lives. In older children's classes, they are specifically taught about HIV/AIDS and teachers are pleased by their interest and candour: "It is amazing what young people think about AIDS, we learn from them all the time."

Education must extend beyond HIV/AIDS information and awareness to include the ability to read, write, and to acquire a marketable skills. In their ability to provide for themselves, young people retain the freedom to make choices that can prevent infection.

Education Assistance

STRIVE Education Assistance initiatives improve children's access to quality education, with a special emphasis on the girl child. In Phase I, education assistance interventions significantly increased enrollment, attendance, retention, and completion of schooling, but also enhanced the quality of education. Examples of education assistance activities include:

- Block grants to schools for the purchase of supplies in exchange for enrolling an agreed-upon number of children to attend school.
- Direct assistance scholarships for individual vulnerable children covering tuition, fees, levies, uniforms and school supplies.
- Crèches where children heading households can leave their siblings while they attend school.
- Integration of life skills and HIV prevention to the existing school curricula to promote and reinforce positive social behavior among children and youth.
- Support of teacher in-service training on issues affecting children and youth.

Lessons Learned in Education Assistance

In light of the ever-increasing number of OVC in Zimbabwe, the demand for education assistance underwent a corresponding increase. For example, in a primary school at Birchenough Bridge, out of a total enrollment of 1,600, nearly 50% of students were reported to have been orphaned.

Merely targeting and providing support to a few, or even large numbers of selected children, doesn't count for much unless this support is coupled with an improvement of the learning environment itself.
Save the Children U.K.

During Phase I, the food crisis drew many children away from school, indicating the necessity of instituting supplementary feeding programs in schools and crèches. Food supplements to all children at targeted schools, as well as dry, take-home rations for especially vulnerable children, help increase children's attendance and improve their concentration and performance while in school.

FOST learned that the central role of schools in the community can be enhanced to make schools not just centers of learning, but also places where the welfare of all children can be monitored and supported, where vulnerability can be assessed and holistic interventions with OVC can be initiated.

Schools are often the only place of stability for vulnerable children in an otherwise chaotic and uncertain world. Schools become places where children not only learn academic subjects but where they develop resilience, learn important life skills, receive emotional and social support, and learn to support each other.
Farm Orphan Support Trust (FOST)

The longer a child is kept at school, the easier it is to add other interventions such as psychosocial assistance and economic strengthening, thereby furthering a holistic approach to supporting children. The active involvement of community members in beneficiary selection can help ensure that the most vulnerable children are reached and can promote ownership of education assistance activities.

Batsiranai Involves the Community in Education Assistance

Batsiranai has developed a unique system of paying school fees that promotes community participation:

- Budget amounts are proportionally allocated to schools based on the number of vulnerable children enrolled.
- Community members are entrusted as the main conduits between the project, the school, and other relevant authorities.
- Community members, along with school authorities, choose the children who will benefit from the project. Retention and gender balance is prioritized.
- Community members are entrusted with responsibility for making the payments, collecting receipts, and following up with schools to ensure that children are continuing to benefit.
- Batsiranai staff members simply carry out spot checks in some of the schools to physically verify that the children are attending school.

Block Grants & Resource Exchange

Block grants and resource exchange have proven to be a highly innovative intervention in the STRIVE Project's efforts to support local initiatives that assist children. When properly negotiated, block grants are an example of a sound practice because they offer a means of providing school assistance to a larger number of children at a lower long-run cost. While the initial cost of implementing a block grant or resource exchange can be high, they allow children to attend school for longer periods of time without preoccupying the child, community, or partner organization with the availability of funds to assist the child in the next term.

One school administrator observed: "One major advantage of the block grant system is that it takes away stigma."

The primary benefit of block grants is that while the entire school community is able to benefit from the purchase of materials or the enhancement of infrastructure, a targeted group of orphans is still able to receive education that they would otherwise have been unable to access. Because benefits are not limited only to targeted children, direct beneficiaries are at less risk of the stigmatization and isolation that frequently accompany direct education assistance.

Furthermore, block grants require a one-time monetary disbursement, rather than ongoing payments each term, making them much easier to manage and monitor, and significantly decreasing organizations' opportunity costs.

What is the difference between a block grant and resource exchange?

In a block grant initiative, a school receives a lump sum payment at the beginning of a school term, which it is then able to spend on books, uniforms, school refurbishments, etc. In exchange, the school agrees to admit a pre-determined number of vulnerable children who are exempted from paying school fees.

A resource exchange operates on the same principal, but rather than receiving a monetary payment, the school is actually given the physical items. For example, in exchange for admitting 100 orphans and vulnerable children for two years, a school might receive fifty desks, fifty chairs, and twenty-five textbooks.

The block grant scheme, if successfully implemented, takes into account the community's and school authorities' moral duty to support and care for children.
Archdiocese of Bulawayo

Lessons Learned and Challenges in Block Grants & Resource Exchange

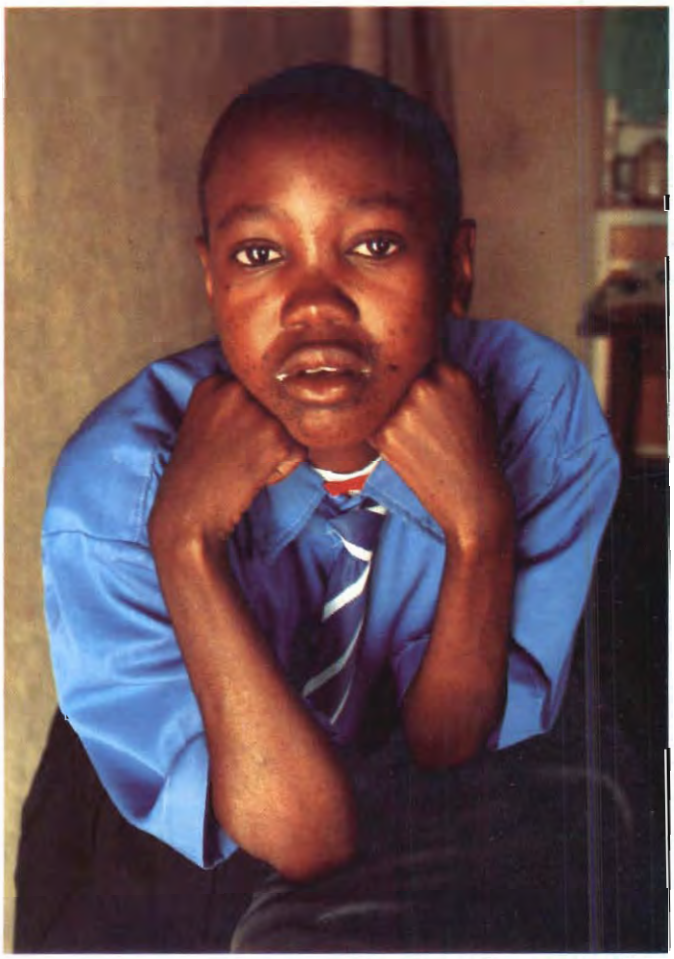
- The implementation of block grants must be carefully planned in a hyperinflationary environment. It is critical to protect and maintain the schools' day-to-day operating costs, and then use the block grants to enrich the learning environment with minimal disruption of the school's financial systems.

- Memoranda of understanding between organizations and schools must include the provision that when children directly benefiting from the block grants drop-out, transfer, pass away or complete their education, a replacement will be made.

- Schools must be given, and take the time to understand, the benefits and costs of the Block Grant, rather than merely satisfying their most immediate needs. They must also be fully informed of the legality of the agreements and make informed decisions on whether to participate.

- For sustainability, local members of the School Development Authority, Parents and Teachers Association, and Education Assistance committees should take part in negotiating block grants and in monitoring their results.

FOST identified that using pre-determined numbers of direct beneficiaries at each school through the block grant system was not proportional nor adaptive to the schools' and communities' needs. When implementing block grants, organizations should be encouraged to allow the communities to determine the number of beneficiaries, based on the number of vulnerable children as well as the available resources.



Tafadzwa (left) is fifteen-years old and lives with her mother and brother, Tendai, in Rusape. Although her illness has frequently lead to absence from school, she is an interested and dedicated student and receives school supplies and health support.

Food Security in the STRIVE Project

Food security initiatives seek to stabilize children and their families by enhancing their access to adequate, reliable sources of nutrition. STRIVE supports community-based activities to improve the nutritional status and food security of children affected by HIV/AIDS and their families. Examples of food security activities include:

- Community fields and gardens (Zunde RaMambo or Isiphala Senkosi).
- Community contributions of labor, agricultural inputs, etc. to communal fields and to the land of vulnerable households.
- School supplementary feeding programs.
- Seed vouchers and fairs.
- Promotion of drought-tolerant, low maintenance and nutritionally valuable crop varieties.
- Drip irrigation kits to assist child-headed households
- Promotion of labor-reducing and yield-improving agricultural production techniques.

These initiatives not only slow the rate of mortality for HIV/AIDS infected individuals, thereby decreasing the rate of orphaning, but they also allow communities to reallocate resources that were once used in the desperate scramble for food towards HIV/AIDS prevention and care for children. What is of vital importance for all organizations implementing FS interventions is that short-term interventions be paired with long-term interventions to achieve maximum impact.

Miriam teaches her daughters "ways to look after themselves. That is why I work so hard at the herbal garden and at home." Having learned from their mother, who uses herbs to treat opportunistic illnesses, Miriam's daughters use the herbs to treat common colds, rashes and shivers.

The School Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

In early 2003, it was noted that a number of children were continuing to miss school to find food despite having had their associated school fees paid. The drought and subsequent food crisis experienced in Zimbabwe had resulted in children skipping class in order to find food while those children who continued to attend class were increasingly more lethargic as a result of malnourishment. In an effort to combat the effects the food crisis was having on children, the Archdiocese of Bulawayo joined CRS in its efforts to keep children in school by providing school meals. The School Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provided supplementary feeding to school children in Bulawayo urban, in wards where the Archdiocese of Bulawayo operates, as well as in Masiye Camp. Ten staff were hired to carry out the program, while nearly 150 individuals from the community volunteered to serve as cooks. The program fed approximately 12,500 children every day at eleven different schools. SNAP staff also carried out a number of workshops, training sessions, and forums for participating schools so as to equip headmasters, teachers, and school staff with the skills necessary to successfully carry out the program.

SNAP reduced the effects of the food crisis by providing food to school children, which also improved their attentiveness in school.

CADEC Chinhoyi Uses Three Models of Community Gardens

There are numerous options available to organizations working to increase food security. CADEC Chinhoyi in Murombedzi supports three models of community nutrition gardens. Each of these models contributes to long-term sustainable efforts of increasing household and community self-sufficiency of agriculture production.

- Cooperative Model - The most popular, this village-based model involves participants that are mostly guardians of children. Each garden is governed by a Food Nutrition Committee responsible for day-to-day operations and the sharing of vegetables among the beneficiaries.
- Individual Model - CADEC offers technical advice to individuals with the assistance of local agriculture extension officers. Neighbor to neighbor assistance is also encouraged.

- Seedling Model - Community members sow nurseries in a common garden, especially helpful to those individuals starting new gardens. Each member of these gardens receives his/her share and establishes a garden at home where they can access sufficient water.

Capacity Building & Gender in the STRIVE Project

By building the capacity of partners, STRIVE seeks to expand the scope and scale of sustained community initiatives, thereby reaching more children. Capacity building and gender dynamics cut across all other intervention areas. Examples of capacity building activities include:

- Skills building in community mobilization and participatory development techniques.
- Participatory self-assessments of organizational capacity.
- Development of partner capacity building action plans.
- Coordination of technical assistance strategies and other program and management quality workshops .
- Gender audits.
- Periodic meetings amongst partners to share ideas and exchange information and experiences.
- Catalyzing fora among NGOs, CBOs, FBOs and other community structures on issues affecting children and youth.

Lessons Learned in Capacity Building

- "Coaching clinics" are an effective and efficient means of capacity building for organizations since they provide individualized and focused technical assistance. As an alternative to holding workshops, this practice can be shared and replicated in providing technical assistance.
- Governance must be based in policy rather than practice, thereby necessitating appropriate procedures and systems for professional organizations. The active involvement of community-based management boards can increase accountability to donors, as well as responsiveness to the community.
- Many organizations participating in the STRIVE Project had existing HIV and children's programming and were looking to increase their projects' outreach and impact through effective community mobilization.
- There is significant evidence of commitment to serving children as a main motivator for partner staff.

DOMCCP adapted and cascaded management training they received for their management boards at the community-level.

Monitoring & Evaluation in the STRIVE Project

In light of the rapidly expanding numbers of vulnerable children, it is vital that AIDS service organizations learn from their own projects and similar interventions being implemented by others.

This process of continuous learning and improvement is vital, due to the constantly evolving nature of both the crisis and the disease itself. In order to carry out the process effectively, an organization must be able to collect, analyze, and disseminate information quickly and clearly.

Key Questions for Developing Data Collection Plans

- **What do we want to know** or measure? What kinds of information would help us to know whether we are meeting our objectives?
- What information do we collect at the moment that is **relevant to our needs**?
- Do we need to stop collecting any of the information we currently collect? Or collect any new types of information? Why?
- How do we **collect** our monitoring information in a **systematic and appropriate** way?
- How do we **report** the information in a systematic and appropriate way?
- How do we really **use** monitoring information to influence project activities? How do we use monitoring information to **plan and manage** the project?

Monitoring is a process that systematically and critically observes events related to interventions, thereby making it possible to adapt activities to changing conditions. Evaluation, on the other hand, is the assessment of a project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact on the target population and beneficiaries. Evaluation draws on data collected during the monitoring process and can be supplemented by additional data from surveys and studies.

The monitoring process
has to be both
diplomatic and participatory.
Farm Orphan Support Trust

Characteristics of the STRIVE M&E System

- Provides for more efficient use of data & resources.
- Serves the needs of many constituents, including: government, program managers, researchers, donors, and most importantly the children we have committed to assisting.
- Disseminates information to avoid duplication of work.
- Ensures indicators and sampling methods are comparable over time to minimize duplication.
- Co-ordination in M&E encourages communication between different groups involved in the national response to children affected by AIDS.

By utilizing a systematic M&E system, the STRIVE Project was able to set performance indicators and targets and then gather information regularly to check the project's progress.

Based on the information gathered, it becomes possible to make informed decisions and take corrective action when problems emerge. Monitoring includes the following activities:

- Periodic record keeping (Write down which children were served, where, when, how many, in what ways, etc.)
- Reporting (Inform management of results, share findings with colleagues from other organizations, publish results, etc.)
- Storage of data (Create a formal archive of the collected information)
- Analysis/Reviews (Is the recorded information accurate? Is there enough of it? What does it indicate? etc.)

Using Spot Checks: "Spot checks" can be used as an effective means of data verification. Especially when projects are serving a large number of children, it is often impossible for officers and field staff to visit every site on a regular basis. An organization carries out a "spot check" by randomly selecting a few sites and conducting "unplanned" visits. Although spot checks are not a means to collect complete data, they can often uncover certain trends about how completely records are being kept, the effectiveness of the beneficiary selection process, and the actual number of children being served in a given site.

"Station Days:" Making Data Collection Fun

One of the most significant challenges of collecting data from children is finding a way to do it that is beneficial to both the child and the organization, and that is...fun! Often times, and especially with children, data collection easily becomes a situation in which we take information from children but it is not necessarily something from which they gain.

Giving children appropriate opportunities to express themselves as key stakeholders has been widely underemphasized in the monitoring and evaluation of programs serving children. However, participatory monitoring and evaluation methodologies that enhance learning can be adapted for children, resulting in the realization of their right to participation.

In 2003, Tsungirirai developed station days to enhance children's participation in the organization's monitoring and evaluation activities so that staff could better understand the critical priorities, constraints and influences on children's lives. This remarkable innovation not only makes it possible to regularly collect accurate data on children's health and psychosocial status, but also provides a useful tool for distributing material goods and disseminating information to children in a way that is enjoyable for them.

What is a Station Day?

A station day is a regular monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activity that is held at a centralized location for children participating in Tsungirirai's interventions. At the "entrance" of the event, each child receives a "ticket" that is used to verify the child's attendance and participation. Children then pass through various "stations" that vary with the type of information to be collected or given. Examples of stations include: height/weight measure, the "clinic" where a medical check up is performed, a "counseling room" where the child can discuss questions focusing on his or her home life (such as "What did you eat for dinner last night?" "Whom do you usually talk to if you have a problem?" etc.), an informational station in which they participate in a talk or discussion on topics ranging from personal hygiene to HIV/AIDS. Once a child has gone around to all the stations and this is reflected on their "ticket", they can move to the final station, where they can play a game or receive a donated item such as soap or a school notebook.

Stations from a typical Tsungirirai Station Day

- Gate: Each child is given a "ticket" and a vitamin.
- Clinic: Height, weight and a general health check is recorded.
- Training Room: Five questions are asked to each child, including:
  - Do you have any concerns about your health?
  - Why is it important to brush your teeth on daily basis?
  - How many times do you wash your uniform each week?
  - What is child abuse?
  - What would you do if you or another child you know is being abused/has been abused?
- Library : Children complete a homework assignment.
- Gazebo: Children are given a talk on hygiene, i.e. laundry.
- Recreation Room: After finishing all the stations, children can play games and receive a bar of soap.

Adapting M&E Methods for Children

NGOs must make specific adjustments to conventional M&E methods and tools in order to adapt them to the specific ages, interests and situations of the children they serve. Station days have proven to be an extremely promising means of combining data collection with other activities for children and they have become an important part of Tsungirirai's initiative to sensitize communities on the importance of *listening* to children. Not only do station days assist staff and community members in assessing and evaluating the support services that they provide to children, they are an important mechanism for Tsungirirai to identify special cases and trends among the children they serve.

At a meeting Tsungirirai held with children recently, they were asked to describe what a station day is. The response?

"It is a day that Tsungirirai makes sure we are healthy and happy."

The data collected at station days has proven to be consistent, reliable, comparable, and much simpler to collect than with other methods. But most importantly, station days are fun and exciting for the children themselves. Creating a "child-friendly" environment positively increases children's cooperation and frees them to express themselves. Making M&E activities enjoyable for children ensures that they will want to participate, thus improving the quality of information received.

Economic Strengthening in the STRIVE Project

Child care professionals have long recognized the negative consequences of chronic poverty on child development. This has been amplified in the current context of Zimbabwe where recent drought, population displacement, and hyperinflation have conspired to undermine the food security and earning capacity of families.

The well-being of children depends upon the resilience of household and community safety nets, both of which are severely threatened by the impact of AIDS. Economic strengthening initiatives are designed to enrich these weakened safety nets through activities such as micro-enterprise services (internal savings & lending groups, microfinance, facilitating market linkages) and community resource mobilization (asset/resource mapping, skills and talent inventories, fundraising activities).

Why should children be involved in economic strengthening?

- Access to regular income
- Access to loans for medicine
- Access to moral/psychosocial support
- Inheritance of income earning opportunities
- Self reliance
- Contribution to household income
- Increased self-confidence
- Access to social fund benefits
- Improved contribution to household
- Election to positions in community activities

What is IS&L?

Internal Savings and Lending (IS&L) is an innovative savings and credit scheme that is community-based and self-managed. In coordination with CARE, the STRIVE Project supported three partners, RUDO, Batsiranai and DOMCCP to facilitate the establishment and management of IS&L groups in their catchment areas. The purpose of the IS&L intervention is to establish community-based structures that ensure access to financial services by economically active, but poor, AIDS-affected households, with the final goal of improving the well-being of children in the households. IS&L group members are self-selecting and an average group has seven members. Much like a round, group members each make monthly contributions to a central, social fund which they have access to as individuals on a rotating basis. Ideally, members use their "turn" as a means of diversifying their income, to purchase and replenish household assets. Groups are trained and are offered support as they meet regularly to manage the savings and lending. While traditional income-generating activities produce low returns due to hyperinflation, members of internal savings and loan groups appear better able to shield their households from financial crises, relative to non-member households. This is a result of the IS&L scheme itself, as well as the enhanced collective social capital and coping abilities that result from the support individuals receive as members of the group.

IS&L group member households become better positioned to collectively cope with the increased burdens placed on households due to the toll of AIDS, hyperinflation and the food crisis as a result of in-kind income transfers.

Lessons Learned in Economic Strengthening

- Previous analysis of internal savings and lending has revealed marked increases in household assets. However, the current economic and food crises faced by these households further exasperate the ability of groups to enhance their economic positions.
- Despite the many confounding factors, group member households are better positioned to collectively cope with the increased burdens placed on households by the rising prevalence of AIDS, hyperinflation, and general food insecurity.

Psychosocial Support in the STRIVE Project

Children affected by AIDS frequently experience psychological distress as a result of the loss of loved ones, food insecurity, reduced access to education, stigmatization, etc. STRIVE therefore supports initiatives such as the provision of basic counseling, therapeutic recreational activities such as sport, music, drama, and combinations of life skills and vocational skills.

STRIVE supports child-focused initiatives to improve the psychosocial condition of orphans and other children affected by HIV/AIDS and their caregivers. Examples of psychosocial activities include:

- Provision of basic child-counseling skills.
- Therapeutic recreational activities such as music and drama for children and youth.
- Life skills transfer for orphaned adolescents heading households.
- Vocational skills transfer to youth.

Memory Books and Boxes are used by children who have lost - or who will soon lose - their parents. Carefully, they fill these boxes with their treasured items – watches, pictures and other small objects - which remind them of their parents. In their books, they record their feelings of loss and about death, their family histories, names of relatives and important family traditions.

Psychosocial support programs give children the ability to accept and to manage difficult situations.

Now I know that God had planned for it to happe in life there are sometimes I wish my father could be there for me but he is nowhere to be found I cryed on the day of his funeral becos I knew I will never see him again I love you father I say to you rest in pace.
My mother is a pretty girl I say because I love her My mother this I hate her but the truth is that I love her I always that God protects her up to the very end she is the bread winner of the family I know things are tough but I only wish if I could have a change to go and becos my mother will change this state she is in right she was not but know she is thin I do not whats eating her I pray to God to take away the problem from her. I write this becos my mother things I have her but love which is in me is high but I will do something to show love to her.
Prayer. God I come before you I cry I need to protect my mother up to the end
Amen.

Responding to Isolation, Despair and the Loss of a Parent

Isolation and withdrawal are the enemies of healthy child development. Children affected by AIDS face a wide range of stressful events and circumstances, including the loss of caregivers and loved ones, having to drop out of school, the burden of adult-like responsibilities, poverty and social isolation. Programs for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) increasingly address not only their material and educational needs, but also the impact of stressful events on their psychosocial well-being.

It may not be realistic to expect typical PSS programs to make a dramatic difference on psychosocial well-being in the presence of multiple and pervasive causes of trauma and stress in this setting. These ongoing day-to-day stressors represent a serious challenge for PSS programs. Without systemic, structural changes in their environment, PSS programs are up against considerable obstacles in seeking to reduce psychosocial distress among children and youth.

PSS programs should address worry and despair, while cultivating resilience. An important role for PSS is to link youth with trusted and reliable adults with whom they can discuss problems and relationships and other issues. These adults must be trained to take youth seriously.

In comparison to their non-orphaned peers, orphaned adolescents demonstrate greater psychosocial distress. While programs should not target orphans exclusively, this reinforces the belief that orphans are a vulnerable group and highlights the need for PSS that is responsive and sensitive to the unique strains of losing a parent.

Excerpt from Horizons, REPSSI, STRIVE Operations Research Study of PSS Support in Bulawayo

Kid's Clubs Make a Difference

Kid's clubs are proving to be an outlet for children to share ideas while fostering a sense of empowerment. While it is too soon to predict the quality and sustainability of the PSS interventions currently underway, it is clear that Kid's Clubs help to harness the social capital necessary for continued program operations.

Kid's clubs conduct activities such as football, volleyball, knitting and a host of other activities aimed at helping to increase PSS well-being. Orientation for a number of these clubs has helped to stimulate participation by teachers, community leaders, and volunteers. The participatory nature of the kid's clubs provides a unique opportunity for children to share ideas with their peers and adults while fostering a sense of empowerment.

Africare- Mrs. Chigweshe, the patron for St. Columbas Primary School noted, **"My children cannot afford to miss their weekly life skills session. They appreciate the unique experience of people who share the same problems coming together to assist each other. The various songs, poems, drama and debates are playing a significant role in helping the children to open up. The children decided to call the club 'Rufaro' because it makes them happy."**

Children may find themselves without a home and be forced to live a life on the streets while others a burden of loneliness. Twelve-year old Louisa writes:

I Am a Destitute

Who would have thought? I would wonder alone In the streets in such poverty I have no friends to turn to No relatives to rely on No parents to call on Yes, I am a destitute...

Children who experience loss and separation are prone to isolation and withdrawal, which are the true enemies of healthy child development. Human development rests upon the continuity of important social relationships and thus, efforts to strengthen social structures can provide essential psychological support.

"Indeed, the core notion of "Ubuntu" as understood in the context of southern Africa, suggests that we are only human in relationship with other people."

Kirk Felsman
Chief of Party
CRS-STRIVE

Local PSS Camps: Cost Effective Alternative

The practice of sending children and youth to camps in order to receive needed psychosocial support (PSS) has been reported as a successful intervention in Zimbabwe and throughout southern Africa. In such camps, children leave home in order to receive life skills training in problem solving, goal setting, teamwork, confidence building, and conflict resolution through experiential learning methodologies. While services provided tend to be of high quality and children's experiences at these camps extremely positive, other types of PSS interventions need to be considered by organizations for their cost-effectiveness and sustainability.

STRIVE Partners have developed an effective means of conducting PSS camps. The practice of holding camps locally is proving to be more cost-effective, easier to plan logistically and most importantly, local camps allow for the possibility of community contributions.

CRS/STRIVE and its partners recognize that in order to adequately address the emotional and psychological vulnerability of children who suffer from high levels of stress, anxiety, grief and stigma in their families and communities, NGOs and CBOs must consider the continuation of PSS services to children as an important part of the quality of the intervention. These PSS interventions are strengthened when they are delivered to children in their known environment, with full community participation. The opportunity for community contributions, as well as lower input expenditures for "sending kids away to camp" make community-based PSS interventions more cost-effective for NGOs and CBOs wanting to provide psychosocial support to children.

STRIVE partners who had been sending their beneficiaries to camps outside of their catchment areas looked for alternatives due to cost implications and the desire to involve the immediate communities in PSS interventions. These partners were especially interested in what happened to the children after the camps, e.g. how would their lives change when they came home? Partners piloted local camps and other community-based PSS interventions such as kids clubs that were deemed successful due to their greater cost-effectiveness and wider community participation.

Operations Research in the STRIVE Project

An examination of current HIV & AIDS programs indicates that while experiences are being shared, it is in an unsystematic manner. Information varies in both content and in method of generation, making it extremely difficult to compare programs and interventions. Consequently, sound practices are difficult to identify and evidence of project impact tends to be either weak or non-existent. Along with the absence of strong Monitoring and Evaluation systems, one of the principal causes of this problem is the virtual non-existence of Operations Research (OR) to evaluate service delivery in relation to impact, cost effectiveness and sustainability by projects. It is important that we triangulate information so as to get a clearer picture of the situation for children and how best to deliver support services to them.

Operations Research takes scientific, systematic methods and applies them to decision making. It is a problem-solving tool that focuses on the day-to-day operations of working with children. In practical terms, OR is a continuous process with five basic steps:

1. Research question identification and explanation (What do we want to know? What is happening? Why is it happening? Who is being affected?)
2. Strategy selection (There are many potential approaches to the issue: which is the best?)
3. Strategy testing and evaluation (How well does our response address the issue? Should we continue implementing our response or try a new one?)
4. Information dissemination (How can we best share our successes and failures with others?)
5. Information utilization (How can we use the lessons learned to better select and design future initiatives?)

Using data from the monitoring and evaluation activities of STRIVE partners, as well other research initiatives such as special studies, the OR Unit shares lessons learned and intervention combinations that will promote sound programming initiatives. The learning facilitated by activities in the OR Strategy is used by CRS and USAID to scale up project and program initiatives to meet the scope of HIV/AIDS' impact on children, their families and communities.

The STRIVE Project has been guided by a mandate to reveal not only sound practices in OVC programming, but also the interventions that have the greatest impact on the well being of children in Zimbabwe. Through a comprehensive operations research approach, the STRIVE Project tests models of care and support for children in Zimbabwe. The CRS/STRIVE OR Unit investigates four key questions within its operations research strategy when examining partners' pilot inter-ventions:

1) What is the impact of interventions on community coping mechanisms?
2) What is the cost-effectiveness of the different kinds of interventions?
3) How replicable is each intervention and what elements are unique to each intervention?
4) What is the quality of care being provided by the various interventions?

Conducting Operations Research

OR is about more than simply seeking practical solutions to the challenges faced by children. While OR does indeed seek such solutions, it also takes the essential next step of explaining *why* a particular way of doing things is working or not, and *how* to most effectively share these conclusions with other groups dealing with similar problems.

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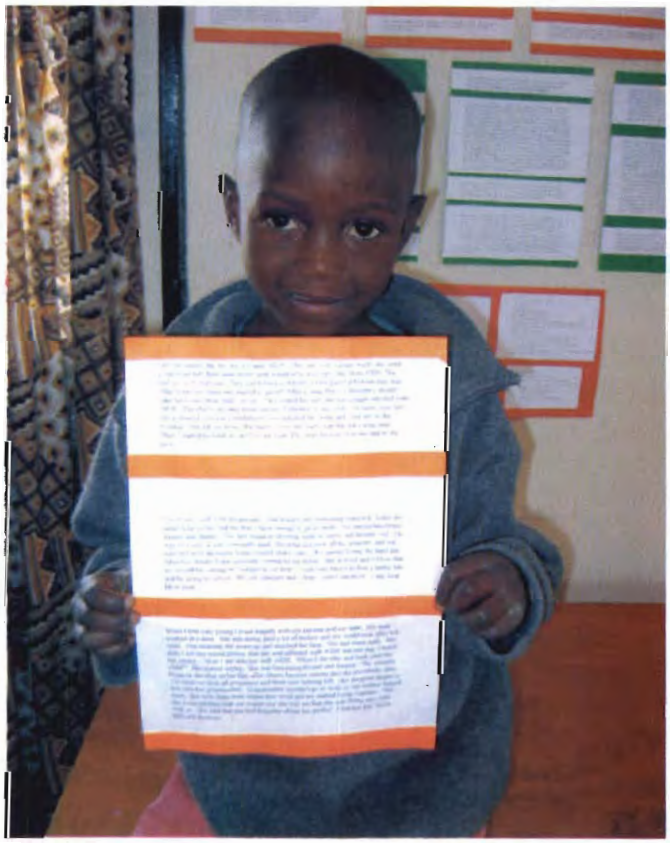
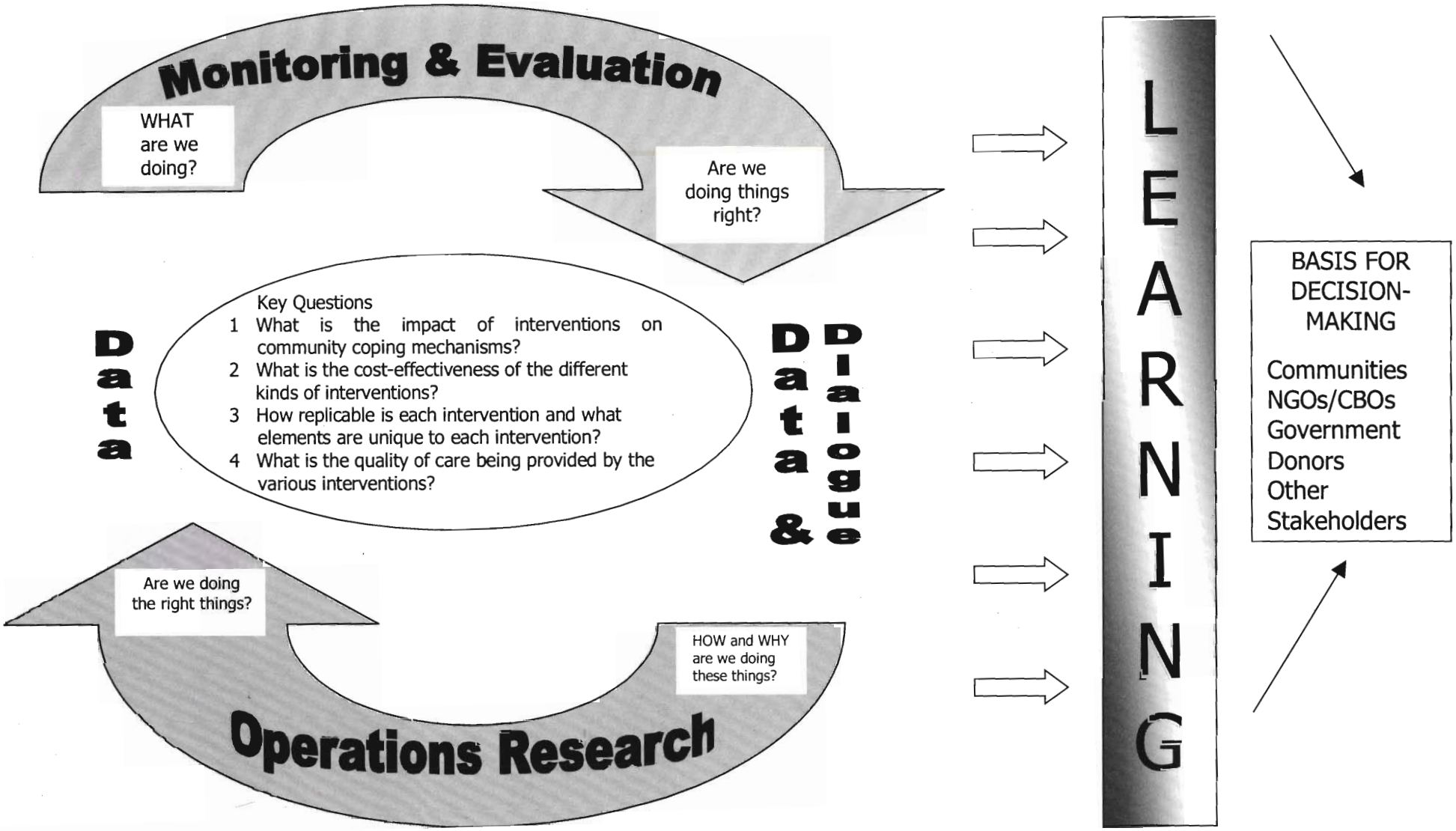
Operations Research in the STRIVE Project

Why OR?

- M&E is important but may not provide all the answers.
- Information can be used to **improve programming**.
- We can **measure effectiveness** of interventions, especially *"Are we reaching the most vulnerable?"*
- Projects are enabled to track their **impact on beneficiaries**.
- Organizations can learn from different experiences and **share results**, findings, and sound practices with others.
- M&E/OR systems allow us to calculate **how to allocate resources** to achieve the best overall result.
- We can identify new priorities, especially in an **increasingly complex operating environment** in which projects must respond quickly to a vast array of demands and challenges.




Monitoring & Evaluation
WHAT are we doing?
Are we doing things right?
Key Questions
1 What is the impact of interventions on community coping mechanisms?
2 What is the cost-effectiveness of the different kinds of interventions?
3 How replicable is each intervention and what elements are unique to each intervention?
4 What is the quality of care being provided by the various interventions?
Data
Data & Dialogue
Are we doing the right things?
HOW and WHY are we doing these things?
Operations Research
LEARNING
BASIS FOR DECISION-MAKING
Communities
NGOs/CBOs
Government
Donors
Other
Stakeholders

Cost Effectiveness Analysis

There are a variety of different forms of economic evaluation and costing methods that can be conducted for program evaluations. A traditional Cost Analysis takes the total cost of a project, divides it into increments, and arrives at a unit cost. For example, a project that costs $240,000 a year has an incremental cost of $20,000 per month. While such a simple analysis provides easily quantifiable data about a project, it is not particularly useful in determining effectiveness or comparing different interventions.

Another traditional form of analysis is the Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA), in which the potential benefits of a project are weighed against the potential costs using a sophisticated analytical matrix. While a CBA can provide an excellent tool for analyzing the effectiveness and efficiency of a project, it is an extremely demanding process that may be too complex for small-scale organizations. Additionally, it may prove extremely difficult to quantify intangible costs and benefits such as an increase in children's psychosocial health or a decrease in community dependence.

A Cost Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) is a sound practice that addresses many of the shortcomings of a simple Cost Analysis and the more complex Cost Benefit Anaalysis. A CEA divides the Cost Analysis figure by an appropriate effectiveness measure. For instance the program was found to cost $20,000 per month. If the program reaches 4,000 children per month, it can be determined that the cost per child, per month, is $5.

The advantages of using a CEA over a simple Cost Analysis are immediately apparent. While using a Cost Analysis alone might suggest that one intervention is more costly than another, the CEA may show that it is actually cheaper because it is more effective and achieves greater coverage. CEAs can therefore be used to find the most efficient way to achieve a given objective (e.g. how to support 1,000 children). CEAs can also indicate the most efficient way to spend a given budget (e.g. what model to use in order to maximize the number of children reached, within a given budget). Additionally, a CEA is much easier to carry out than a CBA and can provide data that is easier to compare across different organizations.

In order to use a CEA, it is necessary to have similar methods for collecting cost data across programs. The outcomes, outputs, or impacts being measured must be similar. It is also essential to remember that an analysis of CEA results can be oversimplified if they are used as a tool to identify the most "efficient" intervention as the best one.

For example, if one project reaches 100 children at a cost of $1.00 per child, while a second project reaches 1,000 children at the cost of $1.10 per child, program managers, policymakers, or donors utilizing a CEA might be tempted to declare the first project more "efficient." However, such a decision would prioritize "efficiency" over coverage, and 900 less children would be reached. Decision makers must decide if the opportunity costs of reaching more children are greater than $.10 per child.

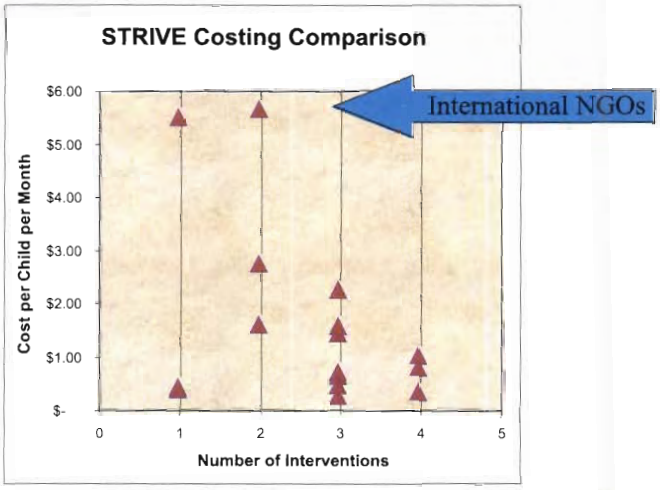
As the example illustrates, CEA data cannot be used in isolation to guide decisions on programming. Furthermore, most programs targeting children include multiple interventions with distinct inputs/outputs/and outcomes. Since a standard of child-based activities does not exist, it can be difficult for the CEA to represent actual program data. Despite these complications, the CEA can still provide an excellent tool for analyzing interventions and distributing resources, if its contributions and limitations are considered in the context of broader analyses and objectives.

Costing of Interventions in the STRIVE Project

The sixteen partners' monitoring and reporting systems provide most of the essential data for the operations research process, including monthly cost-effectiveness analyses. Data on the various interventions, primarily how many children are served, is gathered on a quarterly basis and is contained in STRIVE partner organizations' reports to CRS/STRIVE. Using this data, cost effectiveness is compared and analyzed using the cost per child per month per partner organization and the intervention area(s) covered by partners (e.g. single intervention such as education assistance only versus a mix of interventions). Because the STRIVE Project offers support to varied types of organizations, the available organizational capacity assessment scores of the partners were also considered.

Results

STRIVE partner organizations involved in only one or two interventions, primarily psychosocial support, had some of the lowest costs per child per month since most of these activities could be done at schools with little overhead. However, some partners offering a mix of interventions (especially those offering three or four interventions) had an even lower cost per child per month. On average, those partners offering four interventions had an average cost of $0.73 per child per month, while partners offering three interventions had an average cost of $1.06 per child per month.



While large international organizations undoubtedly have a role to play in the delivery of services to children and should not be discounted for their many contributions to the STRIVE project and other projects, there is a need to think more critically about how to best use their services. While international organizations typically have great technical expertise and training ability, community and faith based organizations appear to have a comparative advantage over international NGOs when it comes to delivering services to the most beneficiaries in the most cost effective manner.

Organizational capacity was a factor with regards to large international NGOs, whose costs per child per month are much higher than any local community-based organizations supported by the STRIVE Project.

Implications

Comparing cost per child has very wide implications, especially for donors, as the orphan crisis continues. Considering this cost analysis, the STRIVE Project will continue to encourage its partner organizations to offer a combination of interventions, which is consistent with the STRIVE Project's holistic approach. Offering a mix of services to children increases the quality of care to orphans and vulnerable children by addressing their diverse needs. While organizations offering one intervention may have a low cost per child, organizations offering a package of services can also be just as cost-effective in their programming.

Seed Vouchers and Fairs in the STRIVE Project

CRS established the Vouchers and Seed Fairs Program to enhance the food security of farmers, primarily in rural areas, by making local and commercial seeds available for purchase through a voucher system. Beneficiaries use the CRS vouchers, which are valued at about ZW$50,000 (US$ 7.50), which are redeemable only at the local seed fairs. At the Seed Fairs, local companies and small seed vendors gather to make their products available to beneficiaries by accepting the Seed Vouchers and redeeming them for cash. Beneficiaries are able to purchase their own seeds at the fairs, based on the local farmers' knowledge and ability to make wise choices about which varieties are better adapted to their local ecological

environment of Zimbabwe. In addition to empowering the farmers and sustaining agricultural productivity, this program also strengthens the rural market because local seed traders will have a guaranteed market through the Seed Fairs.

Sustainable Practice

Seed Vouchers and Fairs (SVF) are a perfect example of a medium to long-term food security sound practice. SVF are designed to allow vulnerable farmers access to a wide variety of ecologically appropriate, locally produced crops. They begin with an extensive consultation process with the local community and key stakeholders, which is used as a means of targeting vulnerable beneficiaries and inviting local farmers to participate in the fairs by bringing their seeds.

Once consultations are complete, SVF are organized on specific days and at specific locations within rural communities. Households that have been identified as vulnerable by the community are given vouchers by the organization hosting the SVF. Vouchers are worth a specific cash value, but can only be used to purchase seeds and tools from registered sellers at the seed fair. Registered sellers are drawn from both the local community and larger seed vendors. This is done to maximize community participation, while providing beneficiaries with the greatest possible variety of seeds. At the end of the fair, sellers redeem their accumulated vouchers for cash from the host organization. What makes SVF a sound practice is the innovative way in which they combine numerous key aspects of food security. At the same time that SVF provide vulnerable farmers with the seed they desperately need in order to provide for themselves and their families, SVF also stimulate the local seed market and inject cash into the economy. Because of the voucher mechanism, beneficiaries are not limited to just those farmers who receive seed, but also those local farmers who are given the opportunity to sell their seeds at the fairs for a reasonable return. This opportunity provides an incentive to create a sustainable local seed market.

> The Voucher and Seed Fairs Program helps communities to produce their own food as opposed to waiting for food aid. One beneficiary, Diana Ndlovu says, "**We are happy with the seed fairs because they make us be providers of our own food. When we sell the surplus produce, we earn money to buy other provisions for our families.**"

By relying heavily on the local community, SVF are also a powerful tool for empowerment. Community leaders and other members are involved in every step of the process, from beneficiary selection to supervising the distribution of seeds on the day of the fair.

Child Protection in the STRIVE Project

It is hard to disagree that children's rights are being seriously compromised in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The protection, respect and fulfillment of the rights of children should form the basis for programs serving children affected by AIDS. As program managers, project directors, social workers, teachers, and caregivers, we must all recognize children as legitimate claimants of human rights.

All too often, disadvantaged children are widely considered objects of charity rather than holders of rights with valid claims on society. However, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights of the Child provide strong and essential frameworks for our response to the orphan crisis in Zimbabwe. The four general principles of the CRC and the African Charter include: 1) survival and development, 2) best interest of the child, 3) participation, and 4) nondiscrimination, or equity.

Children are indeed the subject of rights and not simply the passive recipients of adults' decisions. The CRC identifies children as active claimants to rights and provides a basis for addressing the vulnerabilities of children affected by AIDS. While we are all aware of the specific vulnerabilities of children, we often do not acknowledge that these vulnerabilities directly result in a denial of their human rights.

Major Highlights for Protecting Child Rights

The following list highlights the rights of children affected by AIDS. While the first group of rights are held by all children as expressed in the CRC, the next group of rights are more specific to the unique situations created by the AIDS pandemic.

Rights held by all children:

- *right to identity*
- *right to health and nutrition*
- *right to a family environment*
- *right to education and leisure activities*
- *right of participation in decisions that affect them.*

Rights specific and/or urgent for children affected by AIDS:

- *right to appropriate psychosocial care and support*
- *freedom from taking sole responsibility for households*
- *freedom from all forms of abuse*
- *freedom from participating in exploitive labor*
- *right to avoid HIV infection and to avoid situations that would make them more vulnerable to infection*
- *freedom from discrimination*
- *right to inheritance.*

Programs & Projects Serving Children

Children's rights go beyond civil liberties, expanding to a greater call for economic and social justice. Programs and projects serving children must uphold children's human rights while expanding the choices and capabilities of children and those who care for them.

A discussion of child rights in the context of Zimbabwe must also include the responsibilities of children to their families. Prior to the AIDS pandemic, children were expected to care for sick family members and to help with agricultural labor. However, these expected household duties now become harmful when they impede children's rights to education, for example. As stated by one project manager, "children are assuming parental responsibilities too early."

The challenge for managers and employees of OVC projects is to balance the urgent survival and protection needs of children, while contributing to the social, economic and legal transformation that will guarantee sustained protection and fulfillment of their rights.

The Future...

A major part of the STRIVE Project's mandate is to catalyze duty bearers' engagement in and ownership of children's well-being. The STRIVE Project has a responsibility to facilitate learning and collaboration between each layer to improve care and support interventions for vulnerable children in Zimbabwe. Catholic Relief Services and its partners will build upon what has been learned and presented in this summary report.

Knowing that the time horizon of the HIV & AIDS pandemic is long and the rate of orphaning will continue to climb even when the tide of increased infection has been turned around, it becomes essential to ensure we make the most efficient use of resources. Along with supporting the duty bearers within communities, STRIVE partners will increasingly acknowledge and support the role that children and adolescents play in their communities, including their efforts to care for siblings, ill parents and family members. Their participation and views will increasingly be given voice. The process of learning within STRIVE will continue to yield important knowledge of field-based practices that can inform policy and practices in a changing environment.

Recognition of the negative and long-term impact of chronic poverty on child development will prompt increased efforts in the areas of economic strengthening, health and food security. Some STRIVE partners will also reshape their interventions to reach children at an earlier age, adding emphasis to the nutritional, social, and educational needs of children under seven.

Building upon STRIVE partners' achievement with regard to school assistance which emphasizes girls, STRIVE partners will increase the social space for girls in local communities through support for programming access to information on nutrition, basic safety, and reproductive health that can be accessed without the potential stigma which can accompany awareness.

STRIVE will continue to reach more broadly to ensure that all vulnerable children and adolescents are provided with access to services, including out-of-school youth, children within informal settlements, disabled children and children infected by HIV & AIDS.

M*.... is HIV positive and will, most likely, die of an AIDS-related illness. Still, to many, his is a story of hope. He defies his fate and proclaims his own victory. Through the streets he walks, his chin held high, boldly displaying the placards he has made. He is a teacher and mentor to his siblings and friends. To his community he is ...
The Politician.

**Name with held to protect privacy*

The material contained in this book is a result of the hard working STRIVE and OR teams. Thanks to all those who generously worked day and night to better serve the children of Zimbabwe. Special thanks to our STRIVE partners, the many community leaders, members, volunteers and children who took time out from their schedules to be interviewed, to answer questions, to share their views and to otherwise make certain that the story of Zimbabwe's children be told. The CRS/STRIVE team and Operations Research staff, in particular, deserve special recognition for their willingness to ensure precise and adequate reporting. We sincerely hope that we have adequately reflected the ideas and sentiments that were conveyed to us and that the information and recommendations contained in this document will contribute to a better quality of life for Zimbabwe's vulnerable children.

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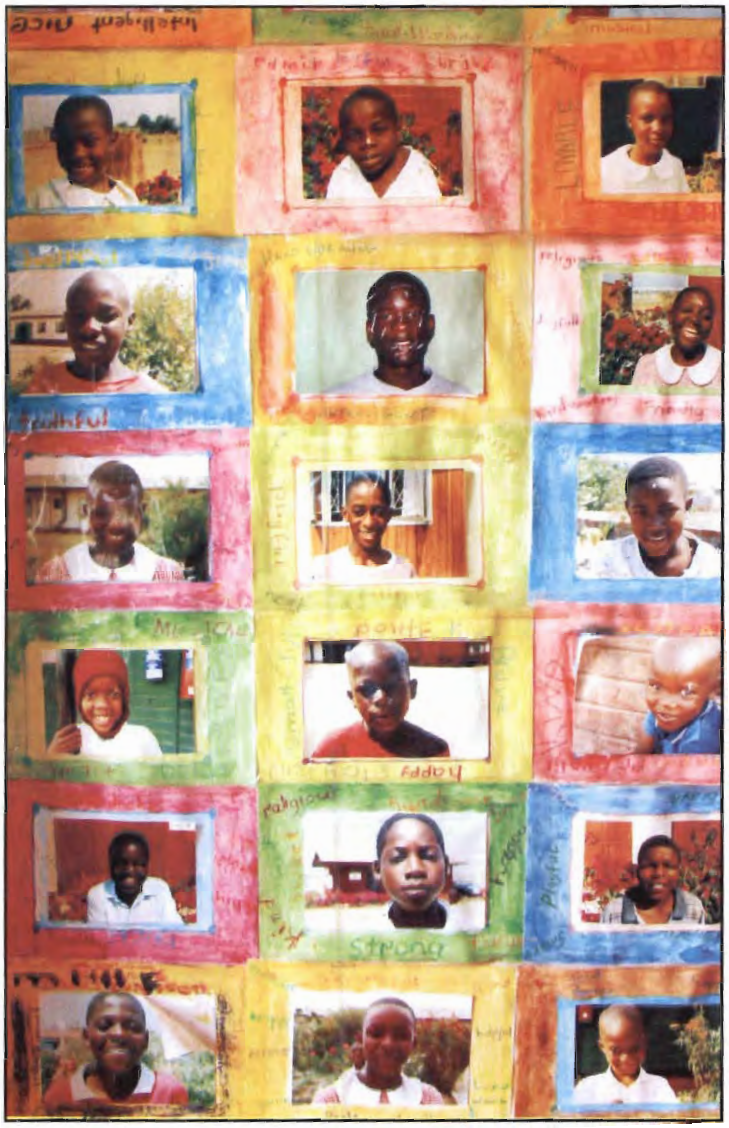

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Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is the official international relief and development agency of the United States Catholic community. CRS has been operating in Zimbabwe since 1989, with its main offices in Harare. The agency works with local partner organizations on HIV/AIDS, food security, and peacebuilding initiatives.

Support To Replicable, Innovative Village/Community-Level Efforts for Vulnerable Children in Zimbabwe

NO CHILD WILL BE LEFT BEHIND

To learn more about the STRIVE Project, please contact:
Catholic Relief Services Zimbabwe
The Country Representative
OR
The STRIVE Chief of Party

Website
www.catholicrelief.org

Phase I of the STRIVE Project has been supported by:

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