

Recommendations



To ensure that the rights of children are protected and that their well-being is promoted during the construction of the Zambezi Bridge, the following recommendations have been made by members of the communities in Caia and Chimuara. These include suggestions from various sources including district government officials, civil servants in the health and education sectors, traditional leaders, representatives of local and national non-governmental organizations and associations, businesspeople, youth and children.

Prevention

- Construction contractors and sub-contractors should make their employees aware of and enforce company codes of conduct prohibiting acts of child abuse or exploitation in any form.
- The government of Mozambique, through the National Road Administration (ANE) and Zambezi Bridge Construction Office, should encourage the contractors to establish (if necessary) and enforce codes of conduct designed to protect children. These offices should also play a role in monitoring this situation throughout the construction period.
- The district governments should provide their police forces with additional training or refresher courses on rights, laws and enforcement relating to child sexual abuse, exploitation and prostitution. There are past examples of this where the government of Mozambique has provided training to police in how to aid child prostitutes, and held seminars to assist police in handling cases of child sexual abuse.¹
- The National Road Administration (ANE) has proposed a Project-Community Liaison Committee that would be comprised of representatives of ANE, the construction companies and members of the local communities. As one of its mandates, this committee should devise a strategy to address a potential situation of child sexual abuse, exploitation and child labour. The committee would also be served by involving children themselves in their deliberations.

¹ US Department of State. (2004) "Mozambique: Country Reports on Human Rights Practices." Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. February 28, 2005. Available at: <www.state.gov>

Children have indicated, for example, that boredom and a lack of other recreational facilities in the community draws them to barracas and workers' camps for entertainment. The committee should come up with suggestions as to what alternatives could be set up to prevent this. This could include youth clubs and a location for children to spend weekends and evenings in positive play and recreation.

- The contractor is responsible for sub-contracting an NGO or other institution to design and implement HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention activities. In addition to this, it is strongly recommended that this organization create programmes to educate the communities about their rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis protecting children from abuse and exploitation. Other NGOs and associations working in Caia and Chimuara would be effective partners in this work.
- The contractors should financially assist employees from outside the area to bring their wives to live in the camps. If this is not possible, the contractors should provide adequate leave for workers to visit their wives and families. Both policies could help reduce sexual contact between workers and girl and women prostitutes.
- Children under 18 years of age should not be hired to do heavy, dangerous labour during the construction of the bridge. In order to prevent child labour associated with the project, those in charge of hiring should ask applicants for proof of age (e.g. birth certificates²) so children are not given construction jobs. Although many children in Caia and Chimuara do not have such documentation, all employee applicants should at least be asked for this. The National Road Administration and Zambezi Bridge Construction Office should work with the contractors in monitoring hiring practices throughout the construction period to ensure children are not employed.
- In terms of reducing child labour in the barracas, owners should be discouraged from hiring children. If children are employed, they should be given work that is not hazardous, does not require them to work long hours, especially at night, and that does not conflict with school enrolment and attendance.
- Some members of the local communities have suggested that one way of reducing the problem of prostitution of young women and the related issue of the spread of HIV/AIDS is to ensure they are given jobs associated with the construction project. If women are given other employment options to support their families they would not necessarily be forced to become involved in sex for money. In addition, one way of reducing demand by construction workers for prostitutes is to recruit local labour because these male workers will be in close proximity to their wives and families.
- There are few play and positive forms of entertainment for children in Caia and Chimuara. For example, children are exposed to violent and pornographic movies by the river crossing. Some children also spend time in the barracas at night with adults and are therefore exposed to negative influences. The creation of new spaces, resources and activities on both sides of the river where children can play and learn such as community centres, football pitches, children's gardens and educational movie centres would help improve this situation. The theatre and videos on HIV/AIDS prevention by the river settlements have been popular among local children and their communities. These existing programmes should be expanded with more funding and resources.

² According to a 2004 Save the Children baseline study of 300 households, only 13% percent of households have birth certificates for all those aged 0-18 years. Only 8% of households have birth certificates for all those aged 0-18 years in Chimuara. In addition, between 79% of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) in Chimuara and 87% of OVC in Caia indicated they did not have a birth certificate. Furthermore a similar percentage indicated they did not have a personal identity certificate.

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Protection

- Strengthen the capacity of district police forces and the legal system to deal more effectively with possible cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation by workers during the construction of the bridge. This can be accomplished in a number of ways by:
 - increasing the number of district police officers in Caia and Chimuara and having the police posted near the new barraca sites, workers camps and by the construction site during the day and the night;
 - enforcing existing Mozambican laws to protect children from sexual abuse, exploitation and prostitution;
 - investigating allegations of child sexual abuse or exploitation based on reports made by children and people in the local communities. The police should be prepared to make arrests based on evidence gathered in their investigations. If these cases are reported, it is important to set a precedent early on in the construction period demonstrating that these offences will not be tolerated.
 - In community meetings and in everyday communications with the public, the police and district government officials should encourage children, their families and civil servants such as teachers and health officials to report cases of sexual abuse and exploitation to the authorities.
 - The District Courts in Caia and Provincial Court in Quelimane should prosecute workers who are accused of child sexual offences.
- The owners of barracas in Caia and Chimuara have encouraged the situation of child prostitution by allowing girls to sell sex on the premises. The owners have also profited directly from the money these girls earn. This happens elsewhere in Mozambique where there is a demand for child prostitution such as in Beira and along the Beira Corridor. Owners of bars and discos use children to attract customers.³ Barraca owners should be prosecuted if cases of child prostitution take place in their premises. In addition, they should work with the local police to enforce existing laws that prohibit children from being in the barracas at night. Owners should also ensure that adequate lighting is installed to reduce dark places in and around the barracas that expose children to danger, and ensure that garbage is disposed of away from the sites to avoid unsanitary conditions that can cause disease.
- The district police forces should enforce a national law which regulates access of children to public night entertainment areas including bars, discos and barracas. To date the government and police have not had adequate resources to enforce this law effectively in Caia and Chimuara. Resources should be provided to ensure that improved policing of these provisions takes place. All groups should work together to enforce this law that prevents children under 17 from being on adult premises after 9 p.m.
- There is also a role for Save to Children and other child-focused NGOs in monitoring

³ Perschler-Desai, Viktoria. op.cit. ft. 43.

and reporting cases of child abuse and exploitation, particularly around the workers camps and barracas where children are more vulnerable to these risks. This should also be accompanied by a campaign of education to ensure that children, parents, communities and construction workers are aware of children's rights and the negative impacts of the involvement of children in prostitution, child labour, premature marriage and leaving school early.

- Children have complained of risk of injury due to speedy driving by motorists and drunk driving. With the increased volume of traffic during the construction period this risk will also increase. Speed limits and reckless or drunk driving should be strictly monitored and enforced, and offenders fined and prosecuted.

Care and support

- Since local agriculture is so important to the short and long-term health and well-being of children and residents of Caia and Chimuara in general, activities promoting agriculture development should be created and supported in parallel to the bridge construction project. Learning new farming and animal husbandry methods and having access to much needed agricultural equipment and implements would benefit these communities. Since the majority of children in Caia and Chimuara will likely depend on small-scale farming to sustain themselves and their families, those associated with construction of the bridge could help fund

a young farmers programme to teach new agricultural techniques. This could be done in collaboration with the district education authorities. For example, a model similar to the junior farmers programme in Manica and other areas of Sofala funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) would be useful here.

- Food insecurity and children dropping out of school have been identified by the communities as major problems facing children in Caia and Chimuara. Providing a daily meal at school for vulnerable children would benefit their physical and mental development and would encourage them to remain in attendance. In some schools in Caia District, the World Food Programme (WFP) has a similar initiative which district government officials believe has been beneficial. This could be extended to assist other children, removing one of the reasons for school drop out and their subsequent engagement in hazardous labour or prostitution.
- To the extent possible, it would be beneficial for the communities if the construction companies were to purchase local food products to help maintain or improve livelihoods of children and their families in this area during the construction period.
- More funding and resources for local health facilities should be provided. Children would benefit if both local health facilities and temporary facilities for construction workers collaborated to provide better overall health care for everyone in the area.