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## ZAMBIA COUNTRY BRIEF



### Summative Evaluation of the EU Global Promotion of Best Practices for Children in Migration Project

Prepared by	Reviewed by	Version	Date:
MN, CC, DJ	JM, LF	1	21/11/2023
MN, CC, DJ	JM, LF	2	30/11/2023
MN, CC, DJ	LF	3	20/12/2023

## Plan Eval - Evaluation Team

### Consultants

Don Johnston – Team Leader

Camila Cirillo (Evaluation Expert)

Mulima Nyambe (Consultant – Zambia)

### Quality Control

João Mesquita (Evaluation Expert)

### Project Manager

Laís Bertholino Faleiros

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## 1 SUMMARY

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This country brief discusses the key findings of the evaluation of the European Union’s Global Promotion of Best Practices for Children in Migration (also known as Children on the Move or CotM) Project. This 33-month programme (October 2020 – July 2023) covered four countries across two continents: El Salvador and Mexico in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region and South Africa and Zambia in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region.

The purpose of this country brief is to inform the Government of the Republic of Zambia, and UNHCR and UNICEF child protection teams engaged in decision making and programming involving children on the move of the findings and key lessons learnt from the CotM programme, as identified by the evaluation. This document summarizes the main messages and draws lessons and conclusions from these experiences for similar interventions in other regions.

## 2 CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

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Zambia is a land-locked country centrally located in sub-Saharan Africa with eight (8) neighboring countries. In terms of migration, Zambia’s central location in the continent has contributed to it being a transitory route and destination for migrants, as well as being point of origin. Immigrants are largely from politically unstable countries and regions such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes; they also come from outside of Africa (such as from India). Border transit districts, like Katima Mulilo and Sesheke, (bordering Namibia and Zambia) have witnessed child migrants cross from Namibia and into Zambia. The border is also one of the exit routes for migrants transiting through Zambia to other destinations.

Reasons for migration include the search for sources of livelihoods, such as trading, domestic work and farm work, and to access essential services, such as health care. Border transit districts in neighboring Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Angola, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Namibia have witnessed child migrants cross from and into Zambia in search of informal jobs such as domestic work, trading, and farm work.<sup>1</sup> Internal rural-urban migration trends are also of concern: internal migration in Zambia occurs in situations where children move from remote rural areas to urban areas (cities), like Lusaka and Copperbelt province towns, in pursuit of informal work, such as mining in Kitwe.

Zambia is a state party to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*. Accordingly, the Government of the Republic of Zambia is obligated to address the needs of children, including children on the move. Unaccompanied or separated migrant children are often subject to exploitation; they also are at risk of violence, sexual abuse, and trafficking. In Zambia, children on the move are exposed to the potential for sexual exploitation when they provide services such as cooking and washing clothes for truck drivers, particularly at border towns; the security of boys is endangered when they cross to neighboring countries in search of herding and farm jobs.

The EU Global Promotion of Best Practices for Children in Migration (2020 - 2023) Project, is a 33-month programme (October 2020 – July 2023) funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by a partnership between the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

The objective of the CotM programme was to contribute to the better protection of children on the move and the realization of their rights through child protection systems that provide quality integrated services,

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<sup>1</sup> International Organization for Migration. (2023) Migration in Zambia: A Country Profile 2019. <https://www.zambiaimmigration.gov.zm/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Zambia-Migration-Profile-2019.pdf> Accessed 17 December 2023.

alternative care and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), all with a gender sensitive lens. The overall objective of the CotM programme was to ensure that “children on the move are effectively protected and their rights are being realized through child protection systems that provide quality integrated services, alternative care, and MHPSS.” This objective was structured around four outcomes:

- 1) **Outcome 1:** Child protection systems include gender responsive quality and integrated services in reception centres and other care and attention facilities.
- 2) **Outcome 2:** Child protection systems have integrated gender responsive psychosocial services and prevention mechanism addressing gender-based violence and other structural problems.
- 3) **Outcome 3:** Child protection systems provide alternative care options, with emphasis on community and family-based alternatives.
- 4) **Outcome 4:** Exchanges of gender sensitive good practices and lessons learnt across two regions/ four countries serve as evidence for the protection of CotM in different contexts, based on empirical evidence and data.

### 3 EVALUATION OVERVIEW

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The evaluation employed mixed methods to unpack the implementation process, the challenges it faced and to capture lessons learned from its interventions, from both the perspectives of implementers and of the beneficiaries. The key evaluation questions were focused on analyzing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the programme’s activities. The evaluation used a theory-based approach that enabled a nuanced investigation into “What worked?” “For whom?” “In what respect?” “To what extent?” and “In what contexts?” that included participatory qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The steps involved in this approach included: 1) document review; 2) secondary data analysis; 3) participatory focus groups with key informants; 4) an online survey; and 5) data analysis.

### 4 DISCUSSION OF KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

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#### Relevance

The CotM programme was aligned with the national agenda on child protection systems. The programme focused on crucial aspects of children on the move, such as the protection of unaccompanied children and separated children, or children on the move as children in need of care and protection. The CotM programme focused on interventions highlighting the age of criminal responsibility, child diversion, and mixed migration. The CotM programme also enabled the provision of psychosocial support services, and gender-responsive and gender-sensitive protection services, to children on the move, including the promotion and provision of family and community-based alternatives care options to prevent children from being detained by immigration services. This alignment was exemplified by the contribution of the CotM programme to the review of the policy and legal frameworks concerning child protection systems in Zambia, including the enactment of the *Children’s Code Act, 2022* that aimed to safeguard the rights and well-being of children on the move.

The CotM programme expanded existing partnerships with government entities, working towards the review and updating of national legislation and policies relating to children on the move. National level structures such as the National Advisory Board, Technical Working Groups, Best Interest Determination (BID) Panels, Child Protection Committees (CPC), and Community Welfare Assistance Committees (CWACs) were established and/or strengthened at the grass roots level to sensitize and raise the awareness of communities and relevant stakeholders as to the needs of CotM and to familiarize them with reporting/referral mechanisms.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Zambia also adapted their methodologies to COVID-19-related lockdowns: social workers were deployed to children's safe homes or facilities, and, with the support of Childline/Lifeline, offered remote child-friendly counselling services and psychosocial support.



### Coherence

Steps were taken to enhance complementarity with existing initiatives and to address gaps at national and regional levels. The programme was synchronized with existing coordination systems in Zambia, especially with the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security (MoHAIS), through its Immigration and Human Trafficking departments, and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, through the Social Welfare department, which led and coordinated the CotM programme through provincial and district structures. Collaboration between UNICEF and UNHCR strengthened the child protection system, establishing coordination mechanisms at various levels. The establishment and strengthening of Best Interest Determination committees and/or panels has facilitated joint care and the protection of decision-making for migrant children.

Though the established coordination mechanisms improved national child protection systems, the CotM programme faced obstacles in establishing and/or strengthening partnerships, which was exacerbated by the Zambian government's limited financial and human resources. These challenges included: staff transfers in key institutions, such as the immigration department; the absence of adequate legislation in neighboring countries; language barriers with neighbouring countries (such as the DRC) impinged upon efforts to facilitate repatriation and family tracing. The CotM programme also had limited funding for repatriating migrant children to their country of origin; difficulties in implementing case management systems persist. However, the obstacle presented by high staff turnover was addressed through ensuring that adequate funding went to sub-national committees, such as the BID panel: this ensured they remained functional. Additionally, Lifeline/Childline provided multilingual interpreters and counsellors who resolved issues regarding language barriers between social welfare and law enforcement agencies.



### Effectiveness

The programme was instrumental to addressing the prioritized needs of the children on the move. The programme ensured that children on the move could access quality integrated services, alternative care, as well as mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS); this included the mainstreaming of gender-responsive services. Implementing Partners (IPs) and other key stakeholders were trained to identify the needs of CotM and to implement the appropriate interventions.

The CotM programme served 14,425 CotM (8,011 boys and 6,234 girls) with gender-responsive protection services and psychosocial support (PSS), exceeding targets by 158%. The implementation of the statutory case management system, and its guidance on managing the cases of migrant children was a significant success; so, too, was the establishment/strengthening of national referral mechanisms for vulnerable migrants, BID Panels, the implementation of the *Child Safeguarding Framework* (by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services in 2023). Lastly, including cross-border coordination and collaboration with adjacent countries represented a significant milestone. One-Stop Centres in selected districts played a crucial role in providing MHPSS and other essential health services to survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). On-site counselors in refugee settlements (under the aegis of Lifeline/Childline), providing vital face-to-face counseling services to refugee children. This service also included the use of the toll-free helplines 116 and 933, which ensured and strengthened the provision of gender-responsive protection services.

Community sensitization initiatives organized by the Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and CWACs were instrumental in educating communities about identifying and reporting cases of GBV and sexual abuse. By



leveraging the expertise of ChildLine/Lifeline’s toll-free line 116, the CotM programme successfully bridged communication and language barriers, ensuring that translation services were readily accessible for children on the move, if needed.

The development of the *Statutory and Integrated Case Management Information System* (SCMIMS) and the strengthening of national referral mechanisms in Zambia was key in identifying the needs of children on the move and facilitating their placement in safe homes; these measures were crucial in preventing CotM from ending up in detention. However, more work remains to strengthen the operationalization of the case management and national referral systems so that in the future children on the move are not placed in detention for security reasons.

The programme also made progress in preventing the detention of migrant children. By strengthening the national referral mechanism and case management system, a coordinated approach was established to respond to the diverse needs of children on the move. Legislative and political developments, together with the emphasis on professional training, have played an important role in promoting alternative care options and ensuring a solid legal basis for structural changes. The creation of BID dashboards and trainings provided to frontline staff facilitated a proactive approach to identifying at-risk children, and in providing them with essential services and preventing their detention. Frontline staff include the officials from the Department of Immigration and the Zambia Police Service. Safe homes have also been instrumental in providing a secure environment for children on the move, promoting their recovery and well-being. Additionally, the CotM programme ensured that measures were taken to discourage children from returning to harmful activities and support was provided to their families, recognizing the importance of family stability for children’s overall well-being.

Through the capacity development of the different stakeholders and institutions, the CotM programme established the foundation needed to respond to issues that CotM face. The CotM program employed several monitoring methods, which ranged from periodic partner reports to on-site visits. However, a document review of relevant reports showed several weaknesses in monitoring and reporting systems, such as that caused by lack of a standard monitoring and reporting tools.

It was also observed that immigration systems lacked the capabilities to generate accurate data on mixed migratory flows. The evaluation found that the MoHAIS and the Police, Correctional Services, and Immigration departments, responsible for registering and recording information on immigration detention, have parallel information management systems. Another challenge encountered by the evaluation was the lack of age-disaggregated data on child migrants. There is, however, active engagement by institutions to improve these systems.



### Efficiency

The evaluation finds that resources were utilized efficiently and prudently. This is due to the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers model UNICEF used to disburse and conduct end-user monitoring of funds to the Zambian government department who co-implemented the CotM programme at national and sub-national levels. Collaboration with other partners also served to address concerns relating to human resource capacities, which was a key to successful programme implementation. This approach extended to the monitoring and learning component of the CotM programme, where resources were used also for capacity building programmes and meetings.

The CotM programme exceeded initially established goals, which may be attributed to a prudent approach regarding resource allocation in implementing activities. Such activities included: facilitating movements for the BID Panel to undertake rapid assessments, case management, providing support and care of children on the move via repatriation and placement in safe homes.

The existing structures at both national and sub-national levels facilitated the coordination of monitoring mechanisms of children on the move and included efforts to enhance and ensure compliance to existing systems. These structures included cross-border coordination mechanisms, the national committee on human trafficking, the National Advisory Board, the UN-Network on migration, the child protection Technical Working Groups, BID Panels, as well as CPC and Community Welfare Assistance Committees. The existence of these structures facilitated discussions around the CotM programme's progress and achievement of results, as well as suggestions as to how to implement a collective approach to monitor and evaluate initiatives related to data systems and migration in Zambia.



### Sustainability

CotM are now recognized in the national agenda as evidenced by the enactment of the *Children's Code Act, 2022*, which comprehensively governs children and explicitly addresses the needs of unaccompanied CotM and refugee children. Zambia also undertook the review of key legislation and policies: *Human Trafficking and Smuggling Act*, the *Anti-Human Trafficking (Amendment) Act No. 16 of 2022* and the development of the *National Refugee Policy*; and the *National Policy on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants*. The legislative framework now reflects children's rights, including those of migrant children. This is a result of the institutional strengthening and awareness initiatives carried out by the CotM programme.

While the legislative framework supporting children's rights, including children on the move, has been enacted, full implementation of the legislation and relevant policies is still needed. The establishment of these child protection structures at national and community levels is commendable and show the potential sustainability of the CotM programme. However, challenges to sustainability are evident, such as the availability of resources (both human and financial) from government institutions and IPs. Continuous training of frontline institutions and sustained partnerships with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as well as effective engagement with multiple stakeholders across different government ministries will all be necessary to ensure long-term sustainability.

## 5 BEST PRACTICES AND KEY LESSONS LEARNED

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### Best Practices

The evaluation of the implementation of CotM interventions found several good practices and lessons learned:

- a) **Shared Ownership and Collaboration:** The programme demonstrates the effectiveness of shared ownership between the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) and the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security (MoHAIS). This collaboration has led to close coordination and cooperation among ministries and with external actors, including UNICEF and UNHCR. It has facilitated joint assessments, knowledge exchange, and experience sharing, ultimately reducing the practice of detaining children on the move, and enhancing case management and protective support.
- b) **Alternatives to Detention:** Several strategies have been implemented as alternatives to the immigration detention of children on the move. These include releasing migrant children into care, preparing them as witnesses in court with child-friendly procedures, using committal orders for temporary fostering, issuing stay on report orders, and facilitating the acquisition of legal travel documents. These practices aim to prevent the detention of migrant children and provide them with suitable care and support.
- c) **Use of Immigration Reporting Orders:** The issuance of Immigration reporting orders is used as a measure to prevent the detention of children on the move. This approach allows these children to be placed under

community-based care options and to periodically report before Immigration Officers during case handling, pending voluntary repatriation or removal to their countries of origin.

- d) **Cross-Border Information Sharing:** Zambia's efforts to strengthen its case management system and engage in cross-border coordination, collaboration and information sharing with Namibia and South Africa are considered best practices. Collaboration with the Immigration department and the rollout of a case management system are critical elements contributing to the success of the programme and the promotion of alternatives to detention.
- e) **National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for vulnerable migrants:** The NRM framework fosters collaboration between law enforcement authorities, social welfare, and other stakeholders: it enhances the protection of vulnerable migrants, including children on the move. It involves both state and non-state actors in providing protection and care services and enables cross-border cooperation and communication for the reintegration of child migrants. It also expedites reintegration procedures through timely cross-border referrals.
- f) **Interpreter/Counselor Support:** The provision of interpreters/counselors as provided by Lifeline/Childline toll-free helplines 116 or 933 in Zambia, is considered a best practice. These services are utilized by law enforcement agencies, childcare facilities, and the judiciary when interacting with migrant children, improving communication and support for child migrants.

#### Lessons Learned

- a) **Incorporation of Migrant Children in the legal and policy framework:** the explicit provision in the *Children's Code Act 2022* included migrant children in the category of children in the need of care and protection. The inclusion has expanded the provision of social services to migrating children and underlined the importance of a legal framework in protecting the rights of migrant children.
- b) **Expedited Release and Repatriation:** Social welfare, in collaboration with the Department of Immigration and Zambia Correctional Service, played a crucial role in facilitating the expedited release of child migrants from detention and their voluntary return to their countries of origin. This highlights the importance of inter-agency coordination to ensure the timely release and safe repatriation of child migrants.
- b) **Data Management Support:** The lack of available administrative data on children on the move emphasizes the importance of sustained support for data management systems. Operationalizing these systems ensures the availability of data and information on the number of cases addressed, including child migrants. This data is essential for informed programming and decision-making.
- c) **Robust Application of Guidelines:** The lack of robust application of administrative practice guidelines or standard operating procedures for determining the age of child migrants hindered the provision of services to identified child migrants, such as happened with the case of Ethiopian child migrants who ended up in detention due to inconsistent application of guidelines in some implementing districts.



## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendation	Suggested activities	Structural or Operational	Responsible	Timeline
1	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Strengthen work related to gender issues at the community level, aiming to identify ways to meet the needs of children and their families that respect the cultural reality of each location, but that also contribute to eliminating stereotypical understandings that create an environment for GBV situations to occur.	Campaigns and awareness actions on gender-related issues in partnerships with NGOs, FBOs, CSOs and Ministries responsible for Gender and Health.	Operational	MCDSS, Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Health, MoHAIS, UNICEF, UNHCR, CSOs	Before the beginning of new projects
2	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Strengthen and implement community engagement advocacy strategies considering existing community structures, such as CWACs and neighborhood health committees. This could involve establishing specific training programs and workshops to educate community members on how to identify and report illegal immigrants, as well as providing them with the necessary tools to actively participate in the strengthening of child protection systems at community level.	Undertake comprehensive training the community traditional leadership and committees and FBOs to capacitate them with knowledge on child protection systems, migrants, and referral mechanisms.  Continuous training of professionals concerned with identifying and referring child victims of trafficking	Operational	MCDSS MoHAIS MoH UNICEF UNHCR FBOs CSOs Ministry of Gender	During implementation
3	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> Develop strategies to improve accessibility to information regarding migratory flows, establishing transparent and easy-to-use communication mechanisms.	Create accessible databases, user-friendly interfaces, and clear communication channels to facilitate information sharing between stakeholders.	Structural	MCDSS MoHAIS SMART Zambia UNICEF, UNHCR IOM CSOs	During implementation
4	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Ensure that the adopted models remain in force and are continually reinforced; to accomplish that ensure that at the technical level there is an effective practical application of the lessons learned throughout the Children on the Move programme.	Coordinate efforts to form teams in public institutions, at different levels.	Operational	MCDSS MoHAIS Ministry of Health	During and after implementation

#	Recommendation	Suggested activities	Structural or Operational	Responsible	Timeline
5	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> Promote alignment between M&E systems so that donors, involved agencies, IPs and the Zambian government can leverage data about children on the move with streamlined management information systems.	Standardize monitoring and reporting tools to inform administrative practice guidelines or standard operating procedures for determining the age of child migrants.	Structural	MCDSS, MoHAIS, SMART Zambia UNICEF UNHCR IOM CSOs	During implementation
6	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Strengthen the enforcement of the legislative provisions to foster an enabling policy environment to prevent and end immigration detention, and identify the root causes of migration.	<p>Organize training programs for law enforcement, immigration officers, and judiciary members on the updated laws and human rights standards.</p> <p>Launch campaigns to inform the public, especially migrant communities, about their rights and the legal provisions in place to protect them.</p> <p>Facilitate regular dialogues with stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, international organizations, and migrant representatives, to discuss challenges and progresses.</p>	Structural	MCDSS, MoHAIS, Ministry of Justice, National Prosecution Authority, NAB UNHCR UNICEF TWG on TIP and migration	During and after implementation