



ZNCWC

**ZIMBABWE
NATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR THE
WELFARE OF CHILDREN
(ZNCWC) PVO385/68**



**ADVOCACY STRATEGY
2022-2026**



FOREWORD

We are pleased to produce this advocacy strategic document that will guide our strategic activities for the next 4 years, we appreciate everyone who has been involved in its development who include but not limited to members of the coalition, members of the ZNCWC, board members, the ZNCWC staff and our partners who funded all the work leading to this plan. We thank you for your valuable time, we look forward to further support in the implementation of the document.

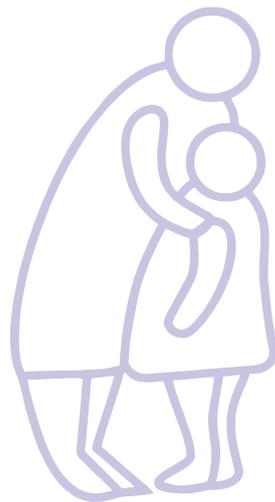


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ACRONYMS

- ACRWC** - African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- AU** - African Union
- CSOs** - Civil Society Organisations
- DSD** - Department of Social Development
- M&E** - Monitoring and Evaluation
- PVO** - Private Voluntary Organisations
- SDGs** - Sustainable Development Goals
- UHC** - Universal Health Coverage
- UNCRC** - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UNOPSC** - The United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
- NCMS** - National Case Management System
- ZNCWC** - Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children

Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of the Children (ZNCWC) is the umbrella body for child rights sector that seeks to coordinate the child rights sector in Zimbabwe. Its major thrust is lobbying and advocacy, capacity building of membership, quality assurance on child-oriented initiatives, child participation and research. ZNCWC is expected to have solid structures that enable it to fulfil its mandate of being the voice of its membership. The organisation has to maintain foundational structures which remain relevant, up to date, and are capable of adapting and responding to current issues. In order to fulfil its mandate ZNCWC seeks to provide a practical and user-driven guidance to help the organisation and its members to enhance the coherence and consistency of communications and maximize its impact.

In this era of pursuing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and achieving global targets of ending AIDS by 2030 as well as attaining Universal Health Coverage (UHC); upholding and protecting children's rights, promoting child protection and safeguarding, child and youth participation, the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) has become more critical

than never before. In a context where the Zimbabwean government is working towards reviving the country's economy, restoring social service delivery among other key deliverables, ZNCWC will meaningfully participate in the reconstruction phase and leaving no child behind. Hence advocacy has become imperative than ever before. A well-planned joint advocacy strategy is essential to supporting the team and partners to lead the narrative, achieve results, mobilize key audiences to care and take action for the welfare of children. Communications and advocacy are not only a means to promote results and impacts of fieldwork but can also contribute directly to the achievement of results. As an organisation, ZNCWC we are fully integrating communications and advocacy into the full cycle of programme planning and delivery.

To achieve its main mandate, ZNCWC is playing its civil society coordinating role and intends to facilitate platforms for CSOs to fully occupy spaces for engagement between civil society and other like-minded institutions to scale up its advocacy initiatives and influence policies at local, national and international levels.



INTRODUCTION

In recent years, complex and sensitive children's issues are increasingly being addressed through a variety of global, regional and national partnerships, platforms, and multi-sectoral initiatives. Article 12 of the UNCRC and duties in the The Children's Act Chapter 5:06 to ascertain and give due consideration to children's wishes and feelings signalled a seismic shift in the credence to be given to children's views about decisions and actions which affect their lives. There is, however, still much more to be done to make these rights a reality for all children. In spite of article 3 of the UNCRC Zimbabwe's efforts to systematically embed

children's rights into the machinery of government has taken positive strides in the past few years. These good intentions, this can also be the case with some children's services: in practice, statutory requirements, funding limitations, management priorities and professional processes can often take priority over children's wishes and feelings. Government Systems and structures can become too rigid and inflexible to be able to respond effectively enough to individuals' needs and when more than one agency is involved the experience of the service can become even more disjointed. This strategic document reveals

the advocacy strategy feeding into the shared vision and strategic direction for ZNCWC. The motive is to provide a roadmap and framework for the direction in terms of its lobby and advocacy cognizant of the role ZNCWC plays in coordinating civil society's child rights sector. This strategy is being developed at a time when the country is recovering from the adverse effects of COVID 19 and adopting a robust plan of action to align the country's strategy with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These commitments require proper advocacy plan to effectively

Article 12 entitles children to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, and to have these views given due weight in accordance with the child's age and maturity.
Article 3 requires that children's best interests are a primary consideration in all actions concerning children



This plan is a result of a collective approach, shared vision and proactive response by coalition members in mapping the advocacy strategic direction of ZNCWC to effectively coordinate and respond to children's issues. This advocacy strategy document is an output of a consultative process that sought input from the Government, local authorities, civil society organizations and faith-based organisations from community, provincial, national, regional and international level working with children in a range of programming areas. The development of this strategy was preceded by a critical review ZNCWC's organizational strategy, current projects, as well as advocacy initiatives and identify potential priorities and areas of focus. Wider consultations were held with ZNCWC current advocacy networks to identify areas for potential collaborations i.e., ZNCWC key staff members, ZNCWC Board, selected Child Rights Coalition members, ZNCWC donor and strategic partner and other key partnership informants. In addition, a stakeholder mapping was done on who can ZNCWC work with to build momentum, who has the power to make the necessary changes.

While there have been many achievements to celebrate, there are still many advocacy issues and policy goals such as ensuring effective participation, involvement and representation of children of non-discriminatory policies that have been difficult to realize due to a combination of factors such as limited political will among key actors, limited capacity on understanding and designing of child friendly programs and policies. Thus, engaging decision-makers and key influencers through advocacy will continue to be one of ZNCWC most important strategies to achieve its goals and ensure continued and progressive realization of protection and safeguarding of children.

Our Advocacy Values

This advocacy framework sets minimum values that should guide advocacy. These values include but are not limited to:

- Respecting all children's rights
- Zero tolerance of all forms of violence to children and young people
- Ensuring meaningful participation of children is integral
- Best interests of the child shall take precedence
- Ensuring sustainability of advocacy efforts and resulting actions



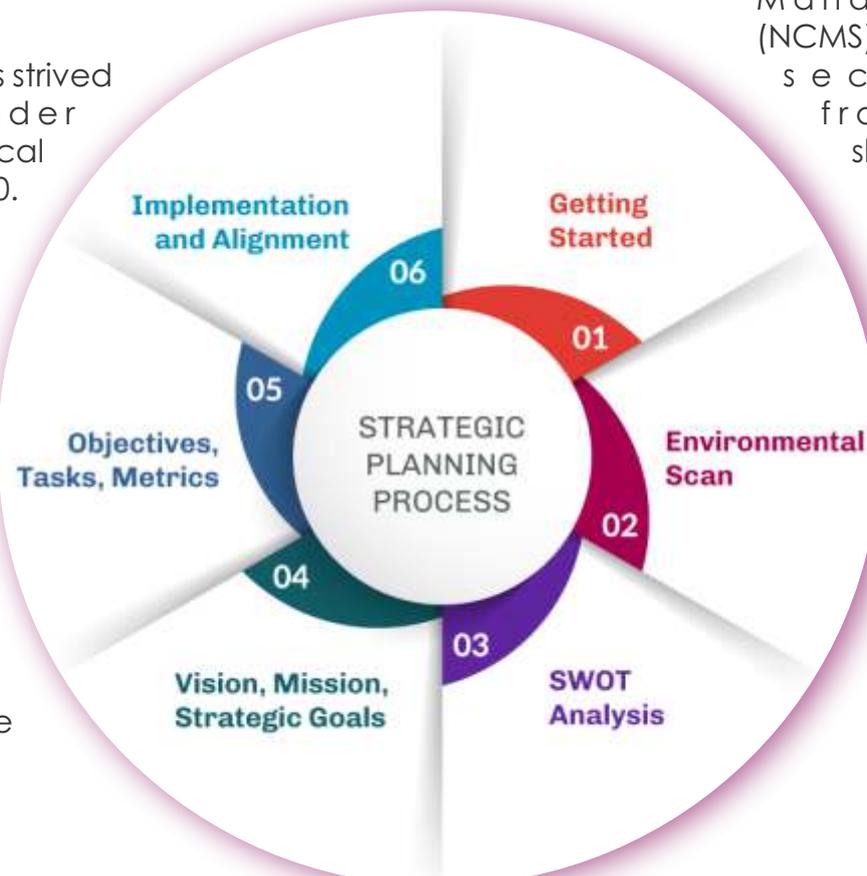
More recently, the government has established various initiatives that have advanced realization of health, the health policies and initiatives developed highlighted access to health care services as one of the key priorities in order to ensure quality health service provision and equity in access to economic, social and political opportunities. Constitutionally, the government of Zimbabwe has demonstrated effort in terms of ensuring that there is quality health service provision. To this end, the provisions envisaged in the section 76 of the Constitution specifically create room for ensuring that there is quality health service provision and this was a laudable development. However, several administrative and legislative challenges to the realization of these provisions still abound.

Zimbabwe has always strived to achieve gender equality since its political independence in 1980. Over the years, in its continued commitment to removal of all forms of sex discrimination in the society, the government has alluded to several national and international gender declarations and conventions. In the

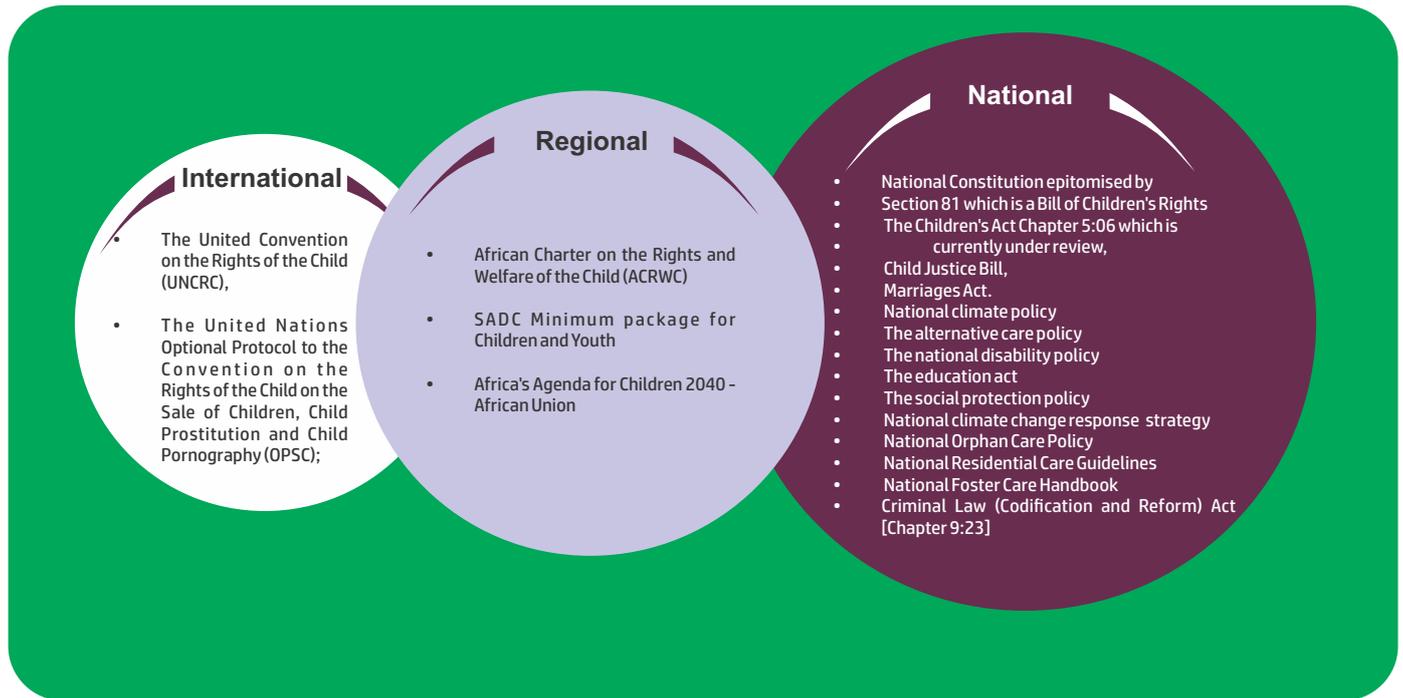
process, many policies were put in place to advance gender equality. The gender affirmative action policy of 1992, the 1999 Nziramasanga Commission, and the National Gender Policy of 2004 are illustrative. The Constitution of Zimbabwe - the supreme law of the country - specifically provides for gender equality. Amended and approved in 2013, the Constitution recognizes the rights of women and men to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres and guarantees the right to equal pay. The Zimbabwe Gender Policy is anchored on this very principle as it recognizes gender equality as the cornerstone for achieving equitable and gender just society. It dovetails the implementation of the Agenda

2030 on SDGs that recognises gender equality as a fundamental right and a driver of progress across all development goals. The policy is in line with AU agenda 2063 which aims to achieve 'full gender equality in all spheres of life' through removing all forms of gender discrimination in the social, cultural, economic and political spheres.

The capacity to provide child protection services in Zimbabwe, particularly in more rural areas, is already weak and inadequate, but worsened in humanitarian situations. In recent years these have also included climate-induced shocks, i.e., successive droughts, floods and cyclones, and then other health emergencies such as cholera outbreaks. Despite significant progress in establishing a National Case-Management System (NCMS), the child protection sector remains fragmented, with shortages in the social service workforce; minimal investment in child-sensitive justice and social welfare systems, and limited implementation of policies and legislation. Again, these gaps are exacerbated during emergencies. While Zimbabwe ratified



LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS, NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND PLANS

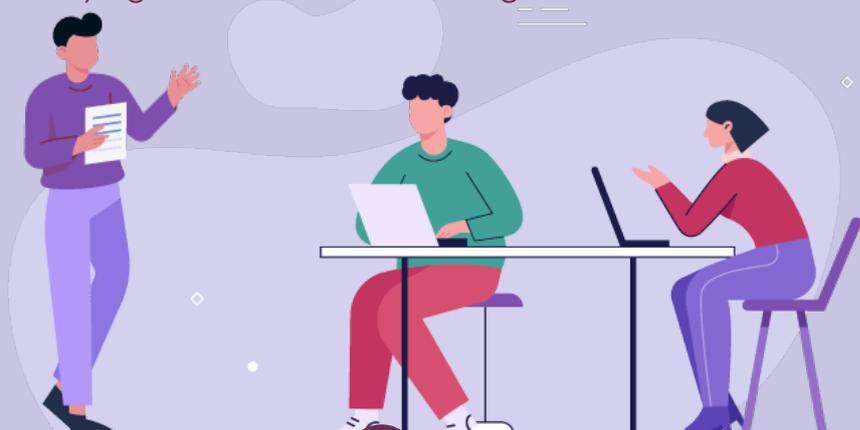


ADVOCACY DEFINITION, GOAL, OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES DEFINITION (S)

Advocacy is a process that tackles disadvantage by working with communities and key stakeholders to bring about changes in policy, process, practice, and attitudes in order to ensure communities' rights are recognised and realised. The aim is to actively support disadvantaged people to influence the decisions that affect their rights and lives- *International Centre for Human Rights Education, 317, 2009*)

Advocacy is a targeted set of coordinated activities to influence policies and practices, based on reliable and documented evidence, aimed at a defined audience of decision makers - *Manual for Facilitators of Advocacy Training Sessions, Washington Office on Latin America, 12, 2001*)

Advocacy is a planned and organised attempt at policy change and to influence policies and practices. It is a deliberate process of influencing those who make decisions about the change you want to see- *Advocacy & Lobbying, International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics*



GOAL	To influence change and ensure children's rights and responsibilities are recognized, protected and fulfilled.
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To raise awareness within communities on sexual exploitation and abuse - To influence the alignment and harmonization of child protection laws in Zimbabwe by December 2023 - To hold duty bearers accountable on all matters that relate to children - To create engagement platforms on issues faced with children and discuss solutions that are sustainable - To strengthen the capacity of children and CSO to advocate for vulnerable children at all levels - To empower children, parents, guardians and duty bearers on their rights and responsibilities
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved knowledge, attitude and practices within communities on children's issues. - Increased buy-in, efforts and tangible action from policy makers by December 2023 - Increased allocation of resources to address pertinent issues affecting children annually. - Empowered children who can confidently engage leaders at all levels - Improved community child protection systems that are responsive and effectively contribute to positive development of the child - CSOs with capacity to hold government and other duty bearers accountable - Justice system is child-friendly. - Improved knowledge by families and communities on how they can protect their children and young people. - Improved access to basic social services (Health, Education and Social protection)
ACTIVITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Children's Rights Advocacy Sensitization Sessions 2. Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Children's Rights Advocacy Engagements 3. Traditional and Religious Leaders Children's Rights Accountability Indabas 4. Junior Leadership Advocates Training of Trainers to build agency of child led advocacy on issues that concern them 5. Child Rights Coalition Advocacy Clinic to strengthen members to cascade their children's rights advocacy work to the grass root. 6. Community dialogues, mobile campaigns, use of media platforms including social media, 7. High level engagement meetings with policy makers. 8. Training of caregivers and strengthening communities. 9. Lobby for a child sensitive national budget 10. Capacity building of CSOs in relevant areas e.g., advocacy, budget analysis, networking etc..... 11. Capacity building of children and young people 12. Conduct regular policy analysis and researches to influence the same 13. Engagement of community leaders 14. Awareness campaigns, community dialogues, exchange programs, capacity building trainings.

ZNCWC advocates for: improving budget allocations; enhancing cross-sectoral coordination of services, including case management; strengthening

victim-friendly justice and law enforcement systems and reinforcing human-rights monitoring. There is need for improved coordination to reduce

fragmentation of government and CSO responses to child protection issues as they compete against each other. Below are the key advocacy

Health

Universal Health Care coverage for children. Leave no-one behind on access to health. Universal health coverage means that all people have access to the health services they need, when and where they need them, without financial hardship. It includes the full range of essential health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care. Universal health coverage should be based on strong, people-centred primary health care. Good health systems are rooted in the communities they serve. They focus not only on preventing and treating disease and illness, but also on helping to improve well-being and quality of life. Equal access to all health services to all children in their diversity and ensure services are disability inclusive and friendly.

Education

Access to inclusive, quality, basic education services and learning opportunities for all children. Increased equitable access to, and completion of, quality, inclusive education, with improved learning outcomes. Inter-sectoral barriers to boys and girls accessing education include household poverty, abuse, remoteness, poor infrastructure and socio-cultural norms. Attrition, insufficient teachers and low capacity, and risks of violence and/or emergencies jeopardise both learning quality and continuity. Implementation of the Education Amendment Act and give teen mothers a second chance back to school.

Child protection

On this area, the top priority for Zimbabwe is on developing a legislative framework around child protection, including on GBV, child marriage, access to sexual and reproductive health, civil registration, mental health, psychosocial support and access to justice. All governments have committed to end child marriage by 2030 as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. They therefore have obligations to address child marriage under international human rights law and a key role in driving transformational change in the lives of girls. Elimination of child abuse and neglect (especially for children with disabilities or other multiple vulnerabilities). The capacity to provide child protection services in Zimbabwe, particularly in more rural areas, is already weak and inadequate, but worsened in humanitarian situations. In recent years these have also included climate-induced shocks, i.e., successive droughts, floods and cyclones, and then other health emergencies such as cholera outbreaks.

Social services

Strengthening social services and its workforces for the prevention of - and responses to - violence. Social welfare, justice, law enforcement and civil registration

sectors urgently need good, gender-responsive protection services for children, with an enhanced lens on those with disabilities. Information management systems need to be much improved by using digital innovations and connectivity. Eliminating poverty which is a major cause of child marriages, exploitation and abuse (mostly physical and sexual) and also hunger.

Financing

Limited financing from the National Budget towards child protection and social protection. The CRC will advocate for increased allocation of funding for child protection and social protection system that are accessible to marginalised children with compounded vulnerabilities.

Justice services for children

Children in conflict with the law require access to child-friendly justice system and ensure that justice services become more friendly for children as they navigate through the justice system. Inadequate human and material resources adversely affect children from poor families as they cannot afford bus fare to attend court. The child-social worker ration is very low which has affected the timely production of probation officer's reports to the courts. Social workers are a critical workforce in child protection and justice delivery. The primary target group mostly affected by the challenges outlined are children (both boys and girls, young people and women, their families and communities at large.

Disability Inclusion

Disability-inclusive development means that all stages of development processes are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities. It requires that all children be afforded equal access to education, health care services, work and employment, and social protection, among others. Attitudinal and environmental barriers to participation have profound social, economic and cultural effects on children with disabilities, resulting in exclusion and creating often insurmountable obstacles in relation to health services, education and employment. Such exclusion and discrimination in turn contributes to poverty and prevents children with disabilities from participating in public discourse or in development decision-making. The CRC will take-up and lobby for the interests and needs of children with disabilities that are frequently neglected by society in particular young girls with disabilities, who experience discrimination on the basis of multiple aspects of their identities, often face heightened levels of exclusion in this regard.

Primary Audience

- National Government Line Ministries
- Ministry of Health and Child care
- Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
- Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary affairs
- Ministry of Primary and Secondary education
- Parliamentarians
- Local Authorities
- Children
- Families
- Communities
- Civil Society Organisations

Secondary Audience

- Parliamentary portfolio committee on children's rights
- Junior parliamentarians
- Chiefs Council
- Zimbabwe Council of churches
- Civil Society Organisations
- Religious and traditional leaders
- Social media influencers
- Islamic Council of Zimbabwe
- UDACIZA
- Regional and International Treaties
- Traditional Medical Professional Council

*Primary audience are the decision-makers that have the ability and authority to affect our objectives-that is, those decision-makers who can directly improve, create or implement policies

*Secondary audiences are people and groups with the greatest ability to influence the primary decision-makers.



POTENTIAL RISK	MITIGATION
-The passing of the PVO Bill and also Patriotic Bill into law may hinder/halt the operations of some NGOs who might be needed as allies for the advocacy actions hence might not see the advocacy actions being implemented at all	Compliance to the requirements of the proposed laws by the key members of the coalition
-The volatile political environment during the election period in 2023 which is usually tense may dampen the mobilization actions for advocacy engagements due to increased political activities	-Carrying out due diligence to avoid clashes with political actors before, during and after the 2023 elections period.
Resistance from other religious and traditional groups /leaders	Conduct sensitisation meetings, prior engagement and consultations
Limited finance for implementation	Resource mobilization, transparency and working with government stakeholders Collaboration and partnerships
Suspension of NGO Operations	Comply with the laws and seek clearance of all community gatherings Upto-date MOUs apolitical
Access to communities maybe denied by the authorities	Always comply and adhere to set norms or laws and seek audience with relevant authorities such that you engage in dialogue
natural disasters maybe happen in the process of implementing a strategy	Conduct regular environmental scanning and updating risk matrix preparing child sensitive early warning systems
Resistance by policy makers	Get buy in from the decision makers and target groups on the key issues from agenda setting



Collaboration is key in implementation of this strategy. Building of new partnerships and strengthening or formalization of existing ones will be pursued at both national and local levels. In addition, synergistic relationships of relevant actors will be maximized. Advocacy is centered on attaining results hence it may be necessary to partner other organizations on specific advocacy issues in areas they possess particular strengths. Nevertheless, any child related advocacy initiative would require the support and involvement of ZNCWC member organizations and institutions concerned. Technical working groups, networks and alliances will be established to support the implementation of specific advocacy efforts. Strong coordination of such efforts will be necessary to develop coherent responses.

Various stakeholders will be targeted by the advocacy framework under one or more of the following categories.

- Duty bearers who have the obligation or responsibility to bring about change
- Partners (organizations or institutions) who advocate for change
- Potential users of the framework who will use the framework as a guide for them

Advocacy Efforts

ZNCWC Coalition members at different levels can play multiple complimentary roles in

implementing the advocacy agenda. The interests of different stakeholders may converge, overlap or differ. Therefore, it will be necessary to carefully define the roles for various stakeholders in implementing advocacy initiatives.

Key Actors

1. ZNCWC Secretariat and the Board
2. Child Rights Coalition members
3. Relevant Government Ministries
4. Provincial and District DSD Departments
5. Local Authorities
6. Development partners
7. Relevant CSOs (non-members)
8. Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Children's Rights,
9. Child Rights Coalition
10. Junior Parliamentarians,
11. CSOs and their working groups,
12. Religious groups and churches
13. Private Sector
14. Media Houses
15. Independent Commissions
16. Research institutions
17. Academia
18. Informal traders



While this strategy has developed a detailed implementation framework for the identified objectives, it is expected that this plan will be reviewed and implemented in tandem with ZNCWC's other core plans - such as a thorough-going communications and engagement strategy. A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) agenda is central to the advocacy framework because:

- It will ensure that advocacy efforts are based on facts and monitored to identify strengths and weaknesses
- It will measure the extent to which the framework is implemented
- It will measure the relevance, reliability and validity of the framework over time
- It will develop tools for self-evaluation for those implementing advocacy activities
- It will provide information on the contribution of different stakeholders and will assist in redirecting the advocacy strategy if necessary

Process indicators should be developed to monitor how actions in support of the strategy or initiatives are proceeding. These indicators will determine whether the strategy is working or whether alternative approaches need to be adopted. Outcome indicators will measure the extent to which efforts are contributing to the achievement of objectives and the goal. Based on the findings of the M&E agenda, the framework will be reviewed and improved on from time to time to respond to emerging issues and priorities.



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