

**JOINT SUBMISSION TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL PLENARY 4 MARCH 2008**  
**Extracts from Situation of Zimbabwean Children in South Africa. Child and Law Foundation, Zimbabwe.**

***Life experience of children living in South Africa***

The following descriptions from research field notes give some sense of the conditions in which the children are living.



Some boys live near the dump. They do not have any water to drink or wash in. They sleep in the bushes where they have put down paper. When it rains they sleep under plastics. They eat what they find thrown away and if they are lucky they find scrap metal and get money for it. They are too frightened to ever go into town as they are so dirty they say the police will know they are Zimbabweans and arrest and deport them.



Other girls were living in backyard shacks at Mmatsoale township. They often shared the rooms with other girls.



This drawing illustrates a girl working for a month and then she is not paid.

*I used to work for some Indians. They had a small shop. I was working for them but they never gave me any money. Instead of paying they tell about going to the police to tell them I am Zimbabwean and do not have a passport or I should go to the police and tell them I was not paid. I knew that by going to the police I was going to get in trouble so I decided not to go.*

***Their experiences of deportation***

Arrest and deportation was a constant threat, more for boys than girls but both worried about it. It seemed easier for girls to win a reprieve by offering money or sex. Girls had more access to money than boys so could pay their way out of being arrested. Boys and girls had been deported and told stories of this deportation. Stories of deportation were consistently the same. Deportation began with arrest by police or soldiers.

*I was arrested at a farm nearby and taken to All Days police station for 7 days before we were deported. We were mixed adults, children in the same cell.*

Boys told stories of being beaten by officials, though this does not seem to be common.

*There was one time they beat us. They said they were looking for dagga.*