

CHILDREN'S SHONA GAME SONGS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A CASE OF ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

Shona is one of Zimbabwe's indigenous languages spoken by the majority of its citizens. The Shona people speak the Shona language and subscribe to its culture. Thus, this chapter explores and analyses the game songs of the Shona children in order to show that these game songs, as part of indigenous knowledge systems, are useful tools for information dissemination and knowledge creation. For that reason, they can be effective tools for implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As reservoirs of norms and values cherished by the Shona people and as an embodiment of human factor values, the Shona children's game songs could enhance and sustain development education for effective implementation of the SDGs. This is in line with the goals of Zimbabwe's Competency Based Curriculum (also referred to as the Updated Curriculum Framework) for Primary and Secondary Education, 2015-2022. By virtue of their discursive infrastructure, Shona game songs can be useful tools for propagating, cascading and sustainable implementation of the SDGs, which are critical for human factor development. This is so because the cross-cutting themes in the updated curriculum such as *ubuntu/unhu/vumunhu* humanness, HIV and AIDS, environmental issues and child abuse, among others, are in line with sustainable development goals which touch on poverty eradication, quality education, reduced inequalities, clean water and sanitation, responsible consumption and production, decent work and economic growth, good health and well-being and gender equality, among others. The writer applies critical discourse analysis, constructivism and social constructivism to the analysis.

Keywords: Shona; Game songs; Pedagogy; Competency Based Curriculum/Up-dated curriculum; Sustainable education; Sustainable development

Introduction

A background to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as Zimbabwe's Competency Based Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Education [2015-2022] will lay the platform for the situation of Shona children's game songs as tools for implementation of the SDGs. The link between the two will also be illustrated for easy future reference.

The Sustainable Development Goals

The SDGs also known as the Global Goals were adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity (Zhou et al., 2020; Kupika et al., 2020). This cannot be achieved single-handedly but through collaboration among governments, civil society, private sectors and citizens. Through such collaborations conducive conditions are created for the present while the planet still remains with better conditions for the future. The call was enunciated through seventeen (17) SDGs which are highlighted below:

Goal 1- No poverty entails ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Goal 2- Zero hunger aims at ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture. For example, contribution to food banks known in the Zimbabwean context as “*zunde ramambo*” could be one way of ensuring food security during difficult times like droughts, and for the poor even during good times. Encouraging growing of organic crops, supporting agriculture and investing in rural development are also possible ways of eradicating hunger (Gulseven et al., 2015).

Goal 3- Good health and well-being aims at good healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages. Gulseven et al. (2015: 4) posit that, “ the definition of health as implied in this goal, does not necessarily mean the absence of disease or infirmity but a complete state of well-being, physically, mentally and socially”. What it simply means is that all citizens should live happily, healthily and comfortably (Lim et al., 2016). This can be possible through adopting healthy lifestyles, promoting healthy economies and easy access to quality health care, expansion of medical service coverage and investing in health care, among others (Gulseven et al., 2015; Lim et al., 2016).

Goal 4- Quality education focuses on ensuring inclusive and quality education for all as well as promoting life-long learning. As posited by Gulseven et al. (2015) and Hak, Janouskova and Moldan (2016), quality education is a crucial goal to be achieved as it has an impact on most of the SDGs. Low quality education leads to many negative effects such as low-income jobs, more poverty, hunger, lack of access to clean water and deteriorating health standards (Lim et al., 2016). Education also empowers individuals, makes them knowledgeable and helps reduce inequalities, enables upwards socio-economic mobility allowing individuals to escape poverty and leading to healthier and sustainable living while at the same time fostering tolerance between people, and in the end, contributing to more peaceful societies (Gulseven et al., 2015; Cerner and Fenner, 2020). Thus,

achieving quality education also ensures inclusive and equal educational opportunities and promotion of life-long learning opportunities as individuals would continuously want to improve themselves in order to make a meaningful contribution to their communities.

iii) Goal 5-Gender equality aims at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls who have been previously disadvantaged since time immemorial. This does not mean that men are left out in the equation. The goal aims at ensuring equality and unity between both genders, that is men and women, so that they enjoy and exercise the same fundamental rights as in being allowed to do the same jobs, have access to healthcare and have the right to quality education. What the goal calls for is equal treatment, respect and support for all, regardless of gender, in terms of equal opportunities, leadership roles and equal remuneration for equal work. The goal also calls for policies that empower and protect women and children to be put in place.

v) Goal 6- Clean water and sanitation has to do with access to water and sanitation for all. These play an important role in the achievement of good health called for in SDG 3. Poor quality of water and lack of access to sanitation results in many diseases and deaths due to negative effects on health (Milan, 2017).

Goal 7- Affordable and clean energy deals with ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. Clean and affordable energy resources are in the form of solar energy, wind energy and energy produced from recycling waste products. Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy would ensure fulfilment of Goal 13 *Climate action* through the elimination of side effects of pollution, and Goal 15 *Life on land* where deforestation could be minimised through sustainable management of forests whereby citizens would no longer require energy from wood and thus avoid the reckless cutting down of trees.

Goal 8- Decent work and economic growth targets the promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. Its main thrust is provision of better job opportunities and taking firm steps against issues of forced labour, human trafficking and exploitation of labour rights as well as creation of new jobs and provision of career opportunities for women and encouraging entrepreneurship (Gulseven et al., 2015).

Goal 9- Industry, innovation and infrastructure involve building resilient infrastructure, promotion of sustainable information and fostering innovation. This

can be done through investment in infrastructure and ensuring efficient management of resources, among others.

Goal 10- Reduced inequalities aims at reduction of inequalities within and among countries. It encourages equality in all spheres of life be it materially or socially, at both national and international level. The equality is also supposed to be inclusive of the usually marginalised and the minorities. Implementation of the goal can be through promotion of fairness and justice, raising voices and taking action against any forms of inequality, formulating policies against all forms of inequality and provision of equal opportunity laws and protection of minority rights (Gulseven et al., 2015).

Goal 11- Sustainable cities and communities focuses on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. This calls for the need to proper planning of cities and communities so that negative effects such as squatter camps and haphazard construction of houses in both rural and urban settings can be curbed for easy servicing and development. The goal is also linked to use of solar energy and renewable resources, and this calls for proper planning in the development of cities and communities.

Goal 12- Responsible consumption and production drives at ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. The goal implies that in the consumption and production of food, there is need to raise awareness in the food and agriculture sectors, for example, regarding management of and use of chemicals and waste products.

Goal 13- Climate action focuses on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. This has to do with prevention and elimination of side effects of pollution in whatever form.

Goal 14- Life below water deals with conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources. In the Zimbabwean context focus would be on sustainable consumption of river, lake and dam based resources. This could, for example, be achieved by not over-exploiting water sources through fishing, especially where nets are used and also not disposing waste into them. If ever waste has been disposed therein, then clean-up campaigns would be required to ensure there is no pollution.

Goal 15- Life on land, focuses on sustainable management of forests, desertification, halting and reversing land degradation and halting bio-diversity

loss. This could be achieved through pronouncement of policies against deforestation, stopping activities that harm wildlife like veld fires, and stopping activities such as hunting for sports.

Goal 16- Peace justice and strong institutions is aimed at promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies. Its main thrust is the promotion of peace, stability and justice across the globe by bringing together effective institutions and organisations. Peace and stability can be brought about by focusing on humanitarian crises and mitigation where there is conflict or violence. For example, in the educational set up, curriculum content that encourages acceptance of differences and respecting others' opinions could be infused so as to help learners grow up into responsible citizens. They may not practice violence, be it in the home or workplace.

Goal 17- Partnerships for the goals targets revitalisation of global partnerships for sustainable development. The goal is clear on the issue of partnerships in that it encourages partnerships at global level so that both developed and developing countries benefit to the maximum out of business activities. However, even though this goal focuses on global partnerships, there is nothing to stop individual countries from promoting partnerships locally as well as among individuals, policy makers, educational institutions and businesses for the sustainable implementation of the SDGs. (Hak, Janouskova & Moldan, 2016; Kopnina, 2017).

The 17 SDGs hinge on sustainable development (Kupika & Mbereko, 2020), that is, development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations Brundtland Report, 1987). Sethi (2012) gives the UNDP's(1994) succinct, operational definition of sustainable development by describing it as a process for realising human development“ ...in an inclusive , connected, equitable, prudent and secure manner.” The descriptors in the above quote are explained thus:

Connectivity embraces ecological, social and economic interdependence.

Equity suggests fairness within and across generations.

Prudence connotes care and prevention, technologically, scientifically and politically.

Security demands safety from chronic threats and protection from harmful disruption.

(slideshare.net/drsuneel/what-is-sustainable-development-11736479)

Pradhan (2016) posits that for sustainable development to be achieved, it is crucial to harmonise three core elements, which he calls pillars of sustainability. These pillars

include economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. Sustainable development, it should be noted, is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of continuous change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

The Zimbabwean Competency Based Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022

Zimbabwe's Competency Based Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Education, 2015-2022, generally referred to as the up-dated curriculum, is meant for the rapid and sustainable transformation of the education system to sustain the gains already made post-independence. It is hinged on the recommendations of The Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET, 1999:11) which:

underscored the need for the education system to be underpinned by a philosophy of *Ubuntu/Unhu/ Vumunhu* (humaneness). This can only be possible if learners get the experience and opportunities that nurture self-actualization and, promote a sense of community and patriotism.

Hence, the then Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Dr Lazurus Dokora indicated that, apart from the disciplines, learners would also be exposed to heritage studies in order to mould learners who cherish and practice the Zimbabwean philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu/Vumunhu* (Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education, 2015-2022: iv). From the Minister's point of view, content mastery alone is not adequate. Indeed, the Minister advocates for the development of a total person endowed with higher order thinking skills and competencies. For Dr Dokora, for success to be achieved, there should be 'implementation, implementation and implementation' (Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education, 2015-2022:v). This is in line with the United Nations' clarion call for the implementation of the SDGs in order to achieve success. The then Permanent Secretary for the Primary and Secondary Education ministry, Dr Utete-Masango highlighted that the goals of Zimbabwe's updated curriculum show a close link between the framework and the SDGs. She stated the purpose of the Curriculum Framework as:

To equip learners with requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes that will allow them to succeed in life taking into account the opportunities and challenges they may face.

To develop young Zimbabweans who are knowledgeable, can think critically, creatively, have leadership skills and are able to communicate effectively.

To imbue the learners with values, ethics and a sense of national identity to make the right choices for themselves, their family and the nation with a view to enduring

and overcoming life's inevitable challenges. (Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education, 2015-2022:vi).

A close look and deep understanding of both the goals of the updated curriculum and the SDGs calls for pedagogical and curricular shifts in education, hence the need to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems that can enhance the implementation of the SDGs for education for sustainable development. Education for sustainable development (ESD) is the process of equipping students with knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes needed to work and live in a way that safeguards environmental, social and economic well-being, both in the present and for future generations (Pradhan, 2016). It becomes clear here that both Zimbabwe's Framework for Education and the SDGs have the same goal. They both strive towards sustainable development. The link between the two can be seen in the table below illustrating what the Zimbabwean Framework envisages learners to be, having gone through the curriculum vis-à-vis the SDGs.

Table 1: Link between Exit Profiles and SDGs

Zimbabwean Framework Exit Profile	SDG
Creative, innovative, inventive and enterprising	Goal 4 – Quality education Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure
Able to engage in independent life-long learning	Goal 4 – Quality education Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure
Able to work independently	Goal 4 – Quality education Goal 8- Decent work and economic growth
Aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities	Goal 1- Zero poverty Goal 2 – Zero hunger Goal 3 – Good health and well-being Goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production

	Goal 16- Peace justice and strong institutions
Conscious of the need to preserve and protect the environment for the sustainable and productive use of present and future generations	Goal 6 -Clean water and sanitation Goal 13-Climate action Goal 14- Life below water Goal 15- Life on land
Able to live and work with others in peace and harmony	Goal 5- Gender equality Goal 16 – Peace justice and strong institutions Goal 17 – Partnerships for goals
Multi-literate and able to perform multi-tasks	Goal 4 –Quality education
Prepared and oriented to life, work and leisure through competence-based education	Goal 4 – Quality education Goal 1- Zero poverty Goal 2 -Zero hunger Goal 3- Good health
Patriotic, disciplined and rooted in Zimbabwean culture [Ubuntu/unhu/vumunhu](Humaneness)	Goal 17- Partnerships Goal 10 – Reduced inequalities

(Exit Profile adapted from Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015 -2022; SDGs-(Gulseven et al., 2015; Kupika and Mbereko, 2020).

Table 1 above clearly shows that there is an intricate link between the SDGs and the anticipated exit profiles from the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education, 2015 -2022. Thus, if learners are engaged in critical discussions and reflection on issues to do with the SDGs, if a conscious effort is made, implementation and achievement of these goals can be enhanced while the anticipated exit package is likely to be instilled in the learners.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), constructivism and social constructivism are applied in the analysis of the Shona children's game songs.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysts like Van Leeuwen (2006), Wodak and Meyer (2009), Fairclough and Wodak (1997) are agreed that CDA can be understood and discussed as an approach that colligates a concoction of approaches whose main intention is to understand social life better through analysing language. CDA also touches on other linguistic factors that include culture, society, political and even economic factors imbedded in the language under analysis. CDA allows one to look at the functions of language in different contexts, be they social, cultural, situational or cognitive, among others (Van Dijk, 2007; Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Action and interaction are also important in CDA studies, hence, as a theory it can be applied to the analysis of Shona children's game songs since they are action and discourse based. It allows analysis from different angles as reflected by the different approaches to CDA.

Firstly, there is Teun van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA), a socio-psychological approach to CDA that takes into cognisance events or experiences that are unique to a particular group in analysing discourses (Wodak, 2013). As an approach, it is a triadic system involving discourse, cognition and society. The theory of social representation values the importance of how social actors involved in a discourse use their individual experiences to construct knowledge and come up with meaning. This tallies well with constructivism which emphasises use of previous experience as a springboard for a better understanding or grasping of new knowledge through various social interactions (Ganga and Maphalala, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Brooks and Brooks, 2004). It is also in sync with social constructivism which considers the importance of the role of a social and cultural context wherever discourse is involved.

The second approach is Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl's Discourse Historical Method, also known as Discourse Sociolinguistics. This approach focuses on the study of a text in context and realises the importance of both the text and the context in which it is created in analysing discourse (Wodak, 2009). The other approach is Norman Fairclough's Critical Language Study (CLS) and Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA). DRA deals with social conflict and attempts to identify how discourses reflect power differentials in society (Fairclough, 1989; 1992; 1995; Wodak, 2009). Rooted in the Marxist tradition, the approach is steeped in the belief that there is a dialectical link between human activities and all social engagements. This can be linked well to children's game songs, because as the children perform, some values embedded in the songs may influence their behaviour. Relationships between children becomes inevitable because their behaviour can be influenced by what goes on within their environment, be

it social, political, religious or economic. Finally, there is Theo-Van Leeuwen's Social Actors Approach (SAA)(Wodak, 2009). The SAA is premised on the notion that social actors continuously form and reproduce the existing social structure through language (Wodak, 2009). In the context of this chapter, ideas will be drawn from these various approaches and applied during the analysis of the game songs in an attempt to cater for the various sustainable development goals and in line with Zimbabwe's Competence Based Curriculum.

Constructivism and Social Constructivism

Constructivism and social constructivism are learning theories that consider learning as an active process. For this reason, views from both theoretical perspectives will be applied in the analysis of Shona children's game songs. Both perspectives are discussed briefly below to show the tenets that relate to the analysis.

John Dewey is considered the father of constructivism, while Piaget and Bruner are the leading proponents of cognitive constructivism. Constructivism describes how humans learn and acquire knowledge. It posits that learning is an active process where people construct knowledge through relating to real life experiences encountered. Hence, during learning learners do not just acquire knowledge but they construct it and interpret what becomes their reality subjectively, depending on their past experiences. Constructivism views learning as a process in which the learner assumes a central role in the construction of information and making meaning out of the learning material presented before him/her (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2010; Kriz, 2010; Berk, 2007). Constructivists do not view learners as empty pitchers to be filled with knowledge by the all-knowing teacher. Rather, they believe that learners can use their previous experience as a springboard for better understanding or grasping of new knowledge through various social interactions (Ganga and Maphalala, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Brooks and Brooks, 2004). The teacher still has his/her teaching moment where he/she presents new information or knowledge, but he takes into account the learners' previous knowledge throughout his/her interaction with them. The teacher is not a know-it-all figure, but a facilitator, someone who creates a conducive environment for the learners to be actively involved in the teaching-learning process as co-creators of knowledge (Reece and Walker, 2003). Learners are treated as collaborators in all classroom interactions not just passive recipients. A constructivist set up, allows learners to question things, explore and relate what they already know to what is being presented (Jonassen, 1994; Jonassen, 1991). Both the teacher and the learners play an important role in the learning process if it has to be meaningful and fulfilling. The teacher on one hand guides, co-discovers with the learners, sets challenging tasks for them, observes how learners interact and supports their activities (Ganga and Maphalala, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Reece and Walker, 2003). The learners, on the other hand, actively participate during classroom interactions relating their previous experiences to new concepts being learnt. Accommodation of learners' experiences and divergent

thinking within the learning environment becomes possible, making the classroom a laboratory where learners try things out, think critically and find solutions to challenging tasks set by the teacher and by themselves too (Ganga and Maphalala, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Tuckman and Monetti, 2011).

Lev Vygotsky is considered the key figure in social constructivism, a learning theory that focuses on the importance of social interactions and the role culture plays in the creation of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1967; 1978). Unlike constructivism that emphasises personal experiences in the construction of knowledge, social constructivism emphasises the importance of social factors and posits that social interaction is pivotal in knowledge construction. From a social constructivist perspective, the assumption is that it is through social interaction that reality is created, hence knowledge is social production and the learning process itself is social. What is implied is that as people interact in whatever way or form with others in society, their knowledge either changes or is broadened (Nedha, 2015). Thus, social constructivists believe that learning, by nature, is collaboratively bound by both cultural and social contexts where learners are integrated into a knowledge community (Olusegun, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). The learning process no longer becomes a process of information absorption but one in which there is collaboration, exchange of ideas, promotion of social and communication skills. All this interaction is useful if learners are to succeed in life where they come across challenges and opportunities that require them to co-operate and exchange ideas and experiences with others (Nyoni, 2019).

Both theories consider learning as an active process and acknowledge the subjective view of knowledge and the resultant reality. They only differ in that constructivism believes that knowledge and reality are created within the minds of individuals, while social constructivism believes that this creation is a result of what happens between people as they interact and work together. Both are, therefore, appropriate for use in the analysis of Shona children's game songs which are, by nature, collaborative discourses or conversations. Shona children's game songs seem to provide such a platform as advocated for by these theorists. Shona children's game songs require one to co-operate with others, follow rules, participate actively as a team player, among many other requirements. Such a platform can come about through incorporating Shona children's game songs among other children's oral art forms into their learning. The game songs constitute part of their cultural base and infusing them into their educational processes could help create a link between indigenous ways of learning and formal ones as well create a cultural synthesis between traditional African (Shona) values and Western-oriented ones without looking down upon the former (Nyoni, 2019). This is critical for successful implementation of the SDGs which cannot be achieved single-handedly but through collaboration between governments, civil society, private sectors and citizens. Thus, from its key tenets, constructivism becomes a relevant theory to apply in the analysis of Shona children's game songs to establish their relevance as pedagogical tools

for implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals through the Competency Based Curriculum of Zimbabwe.

Methodology

The qualitative paradigm was chosen for methodology since the researcher, a non-participant observer, was interested in studying children's oral art forms as the children performed them. This methodology had the advantage of allowing an insider's perspective to the study as focus was on the subjective experiences of the selected children and teachers, taking into consideration the contexts in which they orally performed and the purposes of performing. The paradigm allows the researcher to gain insights of and understand inner feelings of the participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). The other advantages of this approach include that it is fluid, evolving and dynamic in that data analysis can even start during the gathering process. The qualitative paradigm is not as rigid and structured as the quantitative methods (Blaikie, 1991; Denzin and Lincoln 2000). The researcher gets the chance to work through problems in real life environments since he/she gathers data personally (Magwa and Magwa, 2015;Creswell, 2013; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Punch, 2005).

For this study the researcher observed learners as they performed, interviewed teachers and held focus group interviews with the learners. She did this in eight selected primary schools in Masvingo District. The schools were purposively selected from four different environments, that is, urban, peri-urban, rural and rural resettlement, respectively. Such a sample allowed the researcher to capture differences, if any, and similarities in the types of game songs, manner of performance and images used by the children in the different environments.

Analysis And Discussion Of Selected Shona Children's Game Songs

Shona children's game songs are recitations Shona children perform. These recitations are accompanied by actions and sometimes require a partner or a group for the performance (Nyoni and Nyoni, 2013).The game songs analysed here were recited by learners during focus group interviews and some were given as examples by teachers during interviews. After purposively sampling the schools to cater for urban, peri-urban, rural and rural resettlement, the researcher randomly selected two groups of learners from each category for interviews. The groups had equal representation in terms of gender, with each constituted of five boys and five girls. The groups also cut across all grade levels from pre-school, ECD up to junior level. Each group comprised learners from the same class for easy interaction when the need for group performances arose. In the presentation and analysis, individual learner responses are coded for easy identification of the learner and group to which he/she belongs. For example,L5G1: Learner 5 Group 1, L10G2: Learner 10 Group 2, L3G6: Learner 3 Group 6 and so on. Interview responses

by the teachers will be infused in the analysis after each game song and learners' responses where need be. Full versions of some of the game songs referred to in the discussion and analysis are found in Appendices 1-4.

Children's game songs and environmental issues

There are some game songs that are linked to the realisation of several SDGs to do with climate action and the environment such as SDGs 6, 13, 14 and 15. One such game song is *Tinocheka Uswa* (We cut the grass – **See Appendix 1**), a game song that was recited by a group of 7-8 year-old Grade 3 learners at a peri-urban school during a focus group interview. The children imitate the cutting of grass as they sing. The game song has to do with important environmental issues such as preservation of grass. If the grass is cut in broad day light, for purposes such as thatching a hut or mulching in the garden, among others, then, it is not a crime. The ideophone '*nyeu*' indicates the act of cutting using a sharp object, in this case, a sickle. In this game song, it is repeated to give a pictorial image of how the grass is cut. One does not cut a sheaf of grass once and rise but cuts about three or more times before putting the bundle of grass down (Nyoni, 2019). It also shows that it is hard to work in the heat, bent over for that matter, hence the cry, "*Yuwi musana! Yuwi musana!*" ("Oh, my back! Oh, my back!"). The second stanza of the game song, however, shows that it is criminal to burn grass, for by doing so, wildlife and their habitats are destroyed. Triplication of the ideophone '*pise*' (burn) is indicative of some carelessness and wanton destruction on the part of whoever is burning the grass. Such behaviour is punishable by law. In Zimbabwe, The Environmental Management Agency (EMA), is tasked to deal with such culprits including those who dump waste willy-nilly.

The creativity shown by the learners in the two stanzas of the game song clearly shows that it can be extended to other environmental issues such as deforestation, soil erosion and litter, among others. This can be useful in the implementation of a number of goals. These include Goal 6 which is about clean water and sanitation; Goal 13, about climate action and particularly focusing on the prevention and elimination of side effects of pollution in whatever form; Goal 14 on life below water, especially about conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources, and Goal 15, which is about life on land and specialising on the sustainable management of forests, desertification, halting and reversing of land degradation as well as halting bio-diversity loss. Implementation of these goals tallies with the goals of Zimbabwe's updated curriculum, one of which aims at conscientising learners on the need to preserve and protect the environment for its sustainable and productive use by present and future generations (Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015 -2022).

The learners indicated that their infant teacher had taught them that rhyme. The following lessons were given by individual learners from this group:

L6G7: *Hatifaniri kupisa uswa nokuti hwakakosha.* (We should not burn grass because it is important).

L9G7: *Hatifaniri kupisa uswa nokuti munogara mhuka* (We should not burn grass because it is animal shelter).

L4G7: *Zvakaipa kupisa uswa hwekupfuririsa dzimba.* (It is bad to burn grass that we need for thatching huts).

The lessons given by the learners at such a tender age show that, they are already conscious of environmental management issues and the need to live in harmony with nature. Being knowledgeable of such important issues, makes the learners aware of the negative impact of wanton destruction of the natural environment which may have a negative impact not only on the environment and animal habitats but also on man himself. Tatira (2005) clearly articulates this where he draws on selected folktales to argue that man should always remember that he is dependent on the environment for both his survival and development, hence, he should take care of it. Failure to take care or any form of carelessness on his part would be a recipe for his own destruction. For, without the environment man will definitely perish. It is this awareness of the importance of the environment to man that has made environmental issues a major concern globally. Resultantly, many international conferences have been held on the issue, the latest being the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) held in Glasgow, Scotland, from 31 October 2021 to 12 November 2021 (<https://unfccc.int>). The fact that it is the 26th conference shows the seriousness with which the UN treats environmental issues, which are an important component of the SDGs. Emphasis at such conferences is always aimed at encouraging stakeholders to do better on environmental issues and to bear in mind the notion of sustainable development. Conference participants stress the idea that development should always meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs in relation to the environment (Kupika and Mberekw, 2020; United Nations Brundtland Report, 1987). This is at the core of the SDGs as well as Zimbabwe's updated curriculum goals. Hence, if teachers make a conscious effort at using Shona children's game songs as pedagogical tools for curriculum implementation, it would be possible to achieve the SDGs as illustrated in the analysis of the game song.

The fact that one game song can be extended to various other concepts is in line with social constructivism. During classroom interactions learners play an active role in their learning as they relate their prior knowledge to new concepts being learnt. The game songs enable learners to interact in an interesting manner. Learners become co-creators of knowledge and gain personal understanding through interpreting and selecting ideas related to new concepts in relation to their previous experience (Walker, 2003). They construct their own reality through reviewing and integrating as they actively engage with

concepts, for example, on environmental issues, from grass to forests, litter to rivers, among others. Learners' experiences and divergent thinking are accommodated within the learning environment (Ganga and Maphalala, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Tuckman and Monetti, 2011; Green and Gredler, 2002).

Paita mwana (There is a child-See Appendix 1) is another game song that raises awareness on the need for creation and maintenance of a conducive environment to live in for all. The game song is in line with Goal 11, about sustainable cities and communities, which focuses on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It was performed by 9-10 year-old Grade 5 learners at a peri-urban school. The game song presents two categories of children. One is from an urban environment "*Paita mwana wemudhorobha*", (There is a city child) while the other is from a rural environment "*Mwana wekumaruzevha*" (A child from the villages). The game gives each child the chance to say what either makes them happy or sad in the particular environment mentioned. In the game song the children seem to envy one another's environments for a particular reason. The city child is envied for going to school by car: "*Zvako, zvako unoenda kuchikoro nemota ini ndinoenda netsoka*" (Lucky you. Lucky you. You go to school by car, as for me, I go to school on foot). The rural child is envied for unrestricted playing space, "*Zvako, zvako unotamba pamadiro, ini ndinotambira muggedhi*" (Luck you. Luck you. You have enough space to play, as for me, I play inside the gate). From both learners' perspectives there are pros and cons in each environment. For example, from the short recitation given, while the urban child has the advantage of going to school by car, when it comes to play environment, the child is restricted. On the other hand, the rural child travels long distances on foot to school, but when it comes to playing space, the freedom is unlimited. Looking at Goal 11, there is need to attend to both environments so that they become conducive for both children. None should be disadvantaged in any sphere because of where they live. Hence, it gives pointers as to what could be done to fully implement Goal 11.

Children's game songs and quality education

SDG 4 focuses on provision of quality education for all. Effective teaching of concepts across the curriculum is one way of ensuring this. The game songs *Nyarara kuchema mwana*, (Stop crying baby), *Zvandadzidza pano* (What I have learnt here) *Bata musoro* (Touch the head), *Madhadha mashanu* (Five ducks) and *Dudu muduri* (Crush it in the mortar), recited by a group of 6-year-old infant learners from a peri-urban primary school do speak to this goal(**See Appendix 2 for full versions of the game songs**). The researcher noticed that the popularity of these five game songs was common across the four environments covered: urban, peri-urban, rural and rural resettlement.

In *Nyarara kuchema mwana*, (Stop crying baby), the learners recite the lullaby with vowels first, then go on to recite it with syllables like /ma-, me-, mi-, mo-, mu-/ among

other various syllables. The dragging that accompanies each vowel or syllable gives rhythm to the recitation which is pleasing to the children's ears. Thus, while pretending to lull the baby, the concept being taught is further grounded in a playful manner. *Zvandadzidza pano* (What I have learnt here!) and *Bata musoro* (Touch the head) are game songs that focus on body parts. *Bata musoro* (Touch the head) goes as follows:

Leader: *Bata musoro* (Touch the head)

Response: *Uyu* (Here it is)

Leader: *Mumwe wacho* (The other one)

Response: *Hapana* (There is none)

In this game song the body parts are identified in the mother tongue only. The children also get to know how many of these parts they have.

In *Zvandadzidza pano* (What I have learnt here!) what makes the children wonder are the English naming words for the body parts that they already know in Shona. The Shona words in *Bata musoro* (Touch the head), did not amaze them but the names in the new language have really left them in awe, " *Musoro kuti* head maiwe!" (That 'musoro' is called 'head', what a wonder!).

The learners indicated that they liked the rhymes for the following reasons:

L1G3: *Tinonakidzwa tichitamba tichitoziva nhengo dzemiviri yedu*. (We enjoy ourselves playing and getting to know our body parts).

L5G3: *Tinodzidza Chirungu* (We learn English).

L2G3: *Tinobva taziva kuti nhengo dzemiviri yedu dzinonzi chii neChirungu* (We get to know the names of our body parts in English).

L3G3: *Tinonakidzwa tichitamba nevamwe*. (We enjoy ourselves playing with others).

L6G3: *Tinodzidza ma a e i o u* (We learn a e i o u-s [meaning we learn vowels and syllables]).

L7G3: *Tinoziva mazita edu, emitu nemhuka kunyanya patinoita Dudu muduri* (Crush it in the mortar).

(We get to know each other's names, names of trees and names of animals, especially when reciting *Dudu muduri* [Crush it in the mortar])

L10G3: *Madhadha mashanu inotidzidzisa kuverenga*. (Five Ducks teaches us counting)

Despite their young age, the learners were able to give quite meaningful lessons learnt from the game songs and rhymes they know.

In an interview with their teacher on these game songs, she indicated that at that level, it was mandatory that they infuse an element of play in their teaching. Hence, she had actually taught the learners the rhymes as part of play. However, she pointed out that she, indeed, has found game songs such as the two presented above useful for teaching about body parts. With *Bata musoro* (Touch the head) the learners get to learn names of the human body parts wholly in Shona. On the other hand, in *Zvandangidza pano*. (What I have learnt here.), a new language, English, is introduced. The teacher indicated that the code-mixing was intentional as English is the target language in this case. The learners already know the body parts in Shona from *Bata musoro* (Touch the head). The teacher's intention, therefore, is to teach the names of the body parts in English. The game song, thus, allows her to juxtapose the parts, reinforcing the Shona names and introducing the English ones concurrently as well. What learners already know becomes a spring board from which to learn the new, which, indeed, amazes the learners while at the same time making the learning interesting.

Code switching and grounding of mathematical concepts was also evident in the game song *Madhadha Mashanu* (Five Ducks). During the interview, the teacher indicated that one can adapt the game song to teach counting, subtraction and addition in Mathematics at different levels. If the concept being taught has to do with subtraction or counting down, the game song begins with five ducks (or more, depending on the numbers involved), then they are subtracted until none remain. If the concept has to do with addition or counting upwards, then the game begins with one duck and others are added on up to five (or more as indicated earlier).

The teacher further pointed out that with pre-scholars (ECD), the game song allows learners to use language as well as enjoy themselves, whereas at infant level (Grades 1 and 2), it is then used to ground concepts as indicated above. The teacher's illustration here is in line with Bruner's concept of the spiral curriculum in constructivism, where information is structured and taught from simple to complex. Ideas are taught in a simplified manner first, and then they are re-visited as the teacher builds on them at more complex levels later (Bruner, 1960). As the numbers get bigger, code switching comes in for maintenance of rhythm as illustrated below:

Madhadha twelve ari pamutsetse (Twelve ducks, in a queue)

Ndikabvisa two panosara ten (I remove two and ten remain)

It can also be noted that in Shona, numbers above ten become a mouthful and switching to English helps keep the rhythm of the rhyme. Generally, the game 'Five Ducks' has to

do with subtraction, but as shown above it can be extended to addition. This is in line with Bruner's (1960) concept of transference in constructivism, where knowledge created and found to be useful in one area can be transferred and applied in many other situations. An example for addition is given below where, instead of reducing the ducks as is the case with subtraction, they are increased:

Dhadha rimwe riri pamutsetse (One duck in a queue)

Ndikaisa rimwe ava maviri (I add one to make them two)

Madhadha fifteen ari pamutsetse (Fifteen ducks in a queue)

Ndikaisa five ava twenty.... (I add five to make them twenty)

In this case the teacher does not simply end at imparting knowledge. He/she stretches learners, challenging them to facilitate their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This they can then transfer and apply to other situations. For example, the same game song can be used to teach the concept of number in Shona. The English numbers are replaced by the Shona counting system: *Dhadha rimwe* (One duck), *Madhadha maviri* (Two ducks), *Madhadha gumi* (Ten ducks), *Madhadha gumi nemashanu* (Fifteen ducks) and continues up to the concept of counting being taught, say twenty, thirty or fifty and so on. With such varied approaches, quality education as called for in SDG 4, is assured since grounding of concepts is enhanced.

The teacher also gave another game song, *Mari yakaperera mutrain* (The money was used up for the train) as a good example that also uses code-mixing to ground concepts. The teacher indicated that the game song could be useful in the teaching of key concepts under the key topic 'transport'. In this case the children learn about different modes of transport in an enjoyable manner. If punctuated with sounds produced by the different modes of transport, the more the learners master and remember the different modes. She exemplified this by capturing the various sounds ideophonically thus, *zhimu zhimu* or *dhuruu dhuruu* ideophone for the sound made by a starting vehicle such as car, bus or lorry, and the ideophone *guju guju* for the train sound could be used before returning to the chorus. The interviewee further indicated that due to the multilingual nature of the Zimbabwean society, the switches from Shona to English and Ndebele was not something unusual since these languages are in contact. She also pointed out that code switching was inevitable since both learners and teachers come from different linguistic backgrounds. Thus, quality education as called for in SDG 4 is enhanced through employing game songs as pedagogical tools.

A closer look at the game song *Mari Yakaperera Mutrain* (The money was used up for the train) shows that three languages are at play, that is Shona, English and IsiNdebele. These are part of the sixteen languages recognised in the Zimbabwe constitution. 'Train'

is in English, '*mamalo-o-o*' is a borrowing from IsiNdebele and the rest of the game song is in Shona. At intra-word level, 'train' is prefixed by class 18 locative *mu-* making Shona the matrix language and English the embedded language since it comes in to fit into a Shona grammatical structure construction. '*Mamalo-o-o*' is used as a tag to maintain the rhythm and make the game song more interesting.

The teacher supported the idea of a play component during teaching and learning by pointing out that there are theorists and psychologists who have carried out studies whose findings attest to the fact that children learn through play. She gave examples of Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky, Montessori and Froebel among others who all emphasised that play allows children to discover their world. The interviewee concluded by pointing out that Shona children's game songs are relevant to teaching and learning since they allow learners to engage in performances, thereby creating an atmosphere for play for their benefit. Fisher's (2002) and Rieber (2004)'s views that it is important to create a learning environment that allows learners to investigate, explore and be part of the action do support the teacher's argument.

From the game songs analysed above, it becomes evident that game songs can play a crucial role in the teaching of concepts across the curriculum, if purposefully used as pedagogical tools. This could help in the meaningful implementation of Goal 4 on quality education, which focuses on ensuring inclusive and quality education for all as well as promoting life-long learning. The game songs make mastery and grounding of concepts enjoyable and meaningful for the learners and may contribute strongly towards the implementation of this goal as well as the achievement of quality education.

Game songs and contemporary issues

The game song *Apa pangu*. (This part of me) was also recited by the same group of 7-8 year-old Grade 3 learners who recited *Tinocheka Uswa* (We cut the grass) in a focus group discussion discussed earlier. *Apa Pangu* is sung in unison with the children's performed action. It goes:

Apa pangu don't touch x2 (This part of me! Don't touch!)

Don't Don't! Don't touch!

Usabata! Don't touch! (Don't touch! Don't touch!)

Usabata! Don't touch! (Don't touch! Don't touch!)

The children would indicate parts of their bodies they would not want to be touched including breasts, bums and private parts using their hands. On being asked where they had learnt the rhyme from, the learners indicated that the members of the police who had come to their school to talk about child abuse had taught them the rhyme. They pointed

out that the lady officer had told them not to allow anyone to touch them on these respective parts of their bodies. The researcher noticed from the actions of the learners that they were touching only their private parts mentioned earlier. Their teacher confirmed that the policemen and women were members of The Victim Friendly Unit from the Zimbabwe Republic Police, who had come to talk to the learners at the school on matters of child abuse. The fact that the learners recited the rhyme without being triggered to do so shows that they had mastered it and it had become part of their recitation repertoire. Not only that, it was also a reflection that learners had benefitted from learning that rhyme. This became crystal clear when the researcher asked them what they had learnt from the rhyme:

L2G7: *Tinodzidza kuti takakosha, hatifaniri kurega vanhu vachitibata miviri yedu.* (We learn that we are important and should not let anyone touch our bodies).

L6G7: *Tinofanira kuudza vabereki vedu, vadzidzisi kana mumwe munhu mukuru kana pane atibata padon't touch.* (We should tell our parents, teachers or an adult person if ever someone touches us on the parts we say don't touch).

FG7L5: *Tikaona munhu achibata shamwari yedu, tinoudza vana ticha, kana vabereki vedu kana mapurisa.* (When we see someone touching our friend we should tell our teachers, parents or tell the police).

L1G7: *Hatifaniri kutura kana kujairirwa nevanhu vatisingazivi.* (We should not talk or be friendly to strangers).

L10G7: *Chero vari daddy vako, hama yako, ticha kana muvakidzani akubata murevere.* (Even if it is your father, relative, teacher or neighbour who touches you, report them).

The learners' responses clearly show that lessons had been learnt and were not likely to be forgotten easily. What also becomes clear here is that if a once off address by members of the police force could leave such indelible lessons in the impressionable minds, what more could happen if this was consciously done by the teachers? A game song such as this one could be very useful for the implementation of Goal 16, Peace justice and strong institutions, which is aimed at promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies. This would also be in line with the curriculum exit package that focuses on awareness of their rights, duties and responsibilities as members of the wider community as stipulated in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015 - 2022. The end result would be acceptance of differences and respecting opinions of others. Learners also become aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities which are critical aspects of both the SDGs and the Zimbabwe updated curriculum.

Another topical contemporary issue which is critical for the successful implementation of the SDGs is that of human rights. *Sarura Wako* (Make your choice- **Appendix 3**) is one

such example of Shona children's game songs that can consciously instil lessons in learners if used as pedagogical tools for information dissemination. It was recited by a group of 11-12 year-old Grade 6 learners from an urban primary school. In the game song, the game leader makes his/her choice and the one chosen takes over as the leader. Mawere(2012)points out that the traditional version of *Sarura wako* (Make your choice) mainly focused on the physical appearance of the one to be chosen, as evidenced by use of adjectives like *mutema* (dark in complexion), *mutsvuku* (light in complexion), *murefu* (tall), *mutete* (slim), *mukobvu* (stout) among others. However, this group's recital went beyond the physical appearance and touched on other aspects. These aspects included qualities that make one virtuous, for example, being kind-hearted (*mwoyochena*), likes and dislikes like food as well as sitting on more comfortable furniture such as the sofa instead of the floor or mat. At the end of one's recitation, the leader also sought the group's approval on whether he/she had made the right choice, hence, the question: "*Ndimutore here?*" (Can I take him/her?). If the group approves they respond thus: "*Tora hako mwanasikana/komana*", (You can take her/him my daughter/son). Seeking group approval is one aspect of '*ubuntu*'. People do not live in a vacuum but become who they are because of other people. Mbiti's (1969: 108-109) argument succinctly captures this:

Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say I am because we are; and since we are; therefore I am.

Scholars like Leketsa (2013), Masolo (2010), Metz and Gaie (2010) explicitly posit that the African philosophy of '*ubuntu*' is premised on the notion that one's sense of self is dependent upon how one relates with others. The philosophy imposes a sense of moral obligation on an individual to be responsible for others before the individual can even think of the self. In addition, the individual should behave well towards others or do things that benefit others (Metz and Gaie, 2010; Metz, 2007). '*Ubuntu*' thrives more on the 'we' as opposed to the 'me'. The individual's success is the community's pride, while his failure or misdeeds are the community's shame. The group or community matters more than self but the self is content and safe in the context of the group. Thus, allowing someone to make a wrong or poor choice will not only affect them individually, but also impacts negatively on the person's family and the community as a whole. That is why there is need for approval from the group in a game song like *Sarura wako* (Make your choice). It is also important to note that the game song is about making choices, a right which every individual can exercise. However, the right comes with the responsibility not to infringe on others' rights as well. This is in sync with Goal 5 on Gender equality, which aims at achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls who have been disadvantaged since time immemorial. Such empowerment does not mean that men and boys are left out. As highlighted earlier, the goal aims at ensuring equality and unity between both men and women so that they enjoy and exercise the same

fundamental rights as in being allowed to do the same jobs, have access to healthcare and have the right to quality education. Hence, making choices as taught through the game song *Sarura Wako* (Make your choice) is a right that every individual is entitled to. The game song also encourages team work, which is important for the implementation of Goal 17 which aims at promoting partnerships for sustainable development. This is also in line with making learners aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities as stated in Zimbabwe's Competency Based Curriculum exit package profile.

On being asked what they learnt from the game song the learners proffered responses such as the following:

L5G1: *Kunze kwekutibatsira kushara shamwari dzakanaka, tinodzidza kuti kana uchishara make good choices. Kunyanya paya patinosvikapastage yekuroorwa, hatizongonjoberi usina kutarisa maqualities omunhu. Zvakare kwete kungogumira pakunaka chimiro chete asiwo mwoyo wakanaka, kuti ane chikoro here nezvimwewo.*

(Apart from helping us learn how to choose good friends, we learn that when making a choice, we should make good choices. Especially when we get to the stage where we want to get married, you won't just pick blindly without considering a person's qualities. You also do not just end at looking at one's beauty but things like kind-heartedness, education and other things.)

The learner's argument is quite inspiring. In a world where ills such as child abuse (a cross-cutting theme in the new curriculum) and love for material things abound, this learner is likely not to be taken advantage of. For her, material things do not matter at all. She is so enlightened that luring her with such would be unsuccessful. She appears to have been socialised to look beyond that. Nyoni and Nyoni's (2013:238) position in their analysis of *Sarura Wako* strongly supports the learner's view:

Apart from considering physical qualities or features (outward beauty), the young are encouraged this early to look at virtues of *ubuntu* or humanness such as kind-heartedness, cleanliness, responsibility and so forth, what one can call inner beauty.

To ensure that in making choices, one has to look at more than one variable, the Shona put forth this proverb: *Guyu kutsvukira kunze, mukati rina masvosve* (A fig may appear enticingly ripe, yet it is full of ants inside). Therefore, even when making a choice in a game song such as *Sarura Wako* (Make Your Choice), the children are already aware of the fact that they should not focus on outward beauty alone, lest they end up picking bad apples after being enticed by outside appearances. In '*ubuntu/unhu*' (humanness), what is important is not outward beauty, but whether one has those qualities that make him/her human. Qualities that are valued and considered virtuous in *ubuntu/unhu* as an African culture include, humility, love, justice, peace, social responsibility, trustworthiness, self-

reliance, hard work, honesty, perseverance, a cooperative spirit, solidarity, hospitality, devotion to family and the welfare of the community, and integrity, among other ethical values (Leketsa, 2013; Mandova and Chingombe, 2013; Nziramasanga, 1999; Nyoni and Nyoni, 2013).

Another learner gave the following response:

L3G1: *Tinodzidzawo kushandisa mazwi akanaka kutsanangura vamwe nekutsvagawo zvakanaka zvinoita vamwe.* (We also learn to use good words to describe others and acknowledge good things others do).

Looking for good in others leads to peaceful co-existence in communities, a value that helps build some connection between the individual and the community. This is in line with SDG 16 which advocates for building of peace, justice and strong institutions and what the Zimbabwe updated curriculum also advocates for in producing learners who are able to live and work with others in peace and harmony. When there is peaceful co-existence as highlighted by the learner the likelihood of violence against each other or between nations is curbed. This is so because the existence of others is a necessary component of the development of the self (Masolo, 2010; Metz and Gaie, 2010). Thus, there is no better way of building peace than being able to describe others positively and acknowledge the good things they do as pointed out by the learner.

Yet another learner had this to say:

L6G1: *Tinodzidza kuti tinofanira kuita tsika dzakanaka kuti tisashaiwa shamwari. Hapana anoshara munhu ane tsika dzakashata sekubira vamwe, kutaura zvinyadzi, kutuka, hutsvina nekusada zvechikoro.* (We learn that we have to behave well in order to be befriended by others. No one chooses someone who behaves badly like stealing from other people, one who uses vulgar language, scolds others, is dirty or is not serious about education).

This learner's response was also supported by another learner who indicated that, while anyone can join in playing the game, the wayward members are usually not chosen:

L10G1: *Pakusarudzwa vane tsika dzakashata sokutuka vamwe, kubira vamwe muclass kana kutaura vulgar language, hapana anovashara kusvika mutambo wapera. Kana pari pabreak sairini inongorira pasina avatora. Kana munhu akada zvake anoita sefani kumusarudza, asi pakuti Ndimutore here? vamwe vese vanoti "Siya zvako mwanasikana/komana.*

(On making choices those who have bad habits such as scolding others, stealing other people's things in class or using vulgar language are not chosen until the game is over. If it's break time, the siren goes while they have not been chosen. If someone jokingly

chooses them, when time for group approval comes everyone will say, 'Leave that one my daughter/son').

It becomes quite explicit that the game song can be a tool for reigning in wayward individuals so that they may not be shunned by their class mates when playing such games. In this case, toeing the line is the only option for one to be an acceptable member of the group. In a way, therefore, the game has a behaviour regulatory function, to avoid the embarrassment of not being chosen as the bad apple. Children will thus strive to always do their best, behaviour-wise (Nyoni and Nyoni, 2013).

This clearly shows that even as children, the learners know what constitutes bad behaviour. It appears they are aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities not only for their good but that of the community at large. This is important for adult life as required by SDG 17 where partnerships for sustainable development are required. No individual would want to partner a rowdy individual. The same applies with a country or nation. Discipline and good character are important aspects when it comes to striking partnerships. The importance of education is also conspicuous in the learner's response syncing well with SDG Goal 4, which hinges on the importance of education through provision of quality education. Similarly, Zimbabwe's updated curriculum also aims at producing individuals who value education by engaging in independent life-long learning and can live and work with others in peace and harmony.

On why they had gone on to talk about one not sitting on the floor but only on a sofa, "*Haagari pasi*" (She/He does not sit on the floor) "*Sofa chete*" (on the sofa only), there was consensus among the group that such ideas inspired them to aim for a better lifestyle as opposed to the ordinary. Even concerning food, learners also indicated that one should aim at having the best such as the mentioned chicken, which is a delicacy in most homes. This links well with Goal 3 which aims at provision of good health for all and promotion of well-being.

Vana venyu waitamba (Your children were playing) and *Pane chandada* (There is something I like) are two more choice game songs sung by another group of 10-11 year-olds at a rural school (**See Appendix 3**). These two are novel creations by the children since they are not part of the traditional Shona children's games recitations such as *Sarura Wako*. In *Vana venyuwaitamba* (Your children were playing), when all sing "I can *kurunga mapoto! Kurunga mapoto! Kurunga mapoto! Newe!*" (I can stir the pots! Stir the pots! Stir the pots with you!) in unison, the leader dances in front of the person he or she has chosen from the circle, who in turn takes over as the leader. The new leader can change the subject of the game song depending on what he/she likes. So, the group can sing about what is found in the environment like fruits, animals, grass, cars and others. Nyoni (2019) points out that if a leader chooses to play with something considered dangerous or bad, the one invited to take over declines until the leader chooses what is acceptable to all.

The notion of freedom of choice that does not infringe on the freedoms of others comes in again.

Pane chandada (There is something I like) is sung while the children are seated in a circle unlike in *Vaitamba neshuga* where they stand in a circle in readiness to dance. Only the leader moves around singing. *Pane chandada*, just like *Sarura Wako* (Make your choice) and *Vana venyuvaitamba* (Your children were playing!) is a game song to do with making choices. In *Pane chandada* (There is something I like) group approval is also sought for just like in the other two since the leader asks if he/she can take what he/she likes. Permission can either be granted or denied by the group saying '*Tora chawada*' (Take what you like) if in agreement or '*Kwete chawada*' (No to what you like), if they disapprove. However, even though group approval is sought, the onus still remains with the individual who has to weigh the situation and act accordingly. The proverbial 'bad apple' remains unchosen. It is clear from this analysis that these game songs instill in the learners lifelong values for survival, including freedom of choice, the need to be a team player, making the right choices without rushing, behaving well so as to be acceptable by others, among other virtues. Lessons learnt drawn from the learners' responses attest to this:

L6G8: *Magames aya anotibatsira zvakanwanda chaizvo. Anaita kuti tifarira tichiwirirana neshamwari dzedu. Tinodzidzawo kunyatsa kuterera zvinozotibatsira chero muchikoro. Tinotodzidzawo kungwarira pazvinhu nekushandisa mutauro zvakanaka.*

(These games help us in many ways. They give us joy as we play together with our friends. We learn to listen attentively, and this will help us even in class. We also learn how to use language properly).

L10G8: *Tinodzidza kuti kana uchiita zvakanwanda hapana anokushara* (We learn that if you behave badly no one chooses you).

The responses show a high level of self-reflection by the learners. One can see the degree of the level of awareness of the important role the game songs can play in the learners' development. If education practitioners could consciously use these game songs as pedagogical tools for knowledge creation and dissemination, their role in enriching classroom interactions for the benefit of learners would be immense. Teachers, as the more knowledgeable, would simply guide and direct interactions while children become active participants in knowledge creation in an interesting manner and in a conducive environment that Shona children's game songs create.

Another important contemporary issue that could be reinforced through children's game songs is respect for work. The game song *Kurima Musana Wondirwadza* (Working causes me back ache) exemplifies this. It goes as follows:

Kurima musana wondirwadza (Working causes me back ache)

Pakudya ndomera manhenga (When it comes to eating, I grow feathers)

The children accompany the singing with actions of someone working in the fields with a hoe. The growing of feathers is metaphoric for being active, lively and enjoying the produce from hard work, which causes back pain. Going beyond the surface meaning of the game song shows that it encourages hard work. No matter how painful the task is, one should endure the pain if they are to enjoy the fruits. The result of hard work far outweighs the pain that one goes through while carrying out the task. One cannot enjoy the fruits of what one has not worked for. The Bible, in 2 Thessalonians 3 verse 10 does succinctly puts it thus, "...if a man will not work, he shall not eat". The game teaches learners to cherish hard work, and to abhor laziness and idleness. This orientation towards a work ethic is a critical component of the anticipated exit package from Zimbabwe's Competence Based Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Education, 2015-2022. It encourages respect for the dignity of labor which is in sync with Goal 8 of the SDGs, which encourages decent work and economic growth. Respect for work will, in turn, feed into the other SDGs like Goal 1- Zero poverty, Goal 2 – Zero hunger, and Goal 3 – Good health and well-being. Hard work results in economic growth where poverty and hunger can be eradicated and good health and well-being for all improve.

Responses from some of the learners in Focus Group 5, a group of 11-12 year-olds confirm the lessons learnt by the children:

L1G5: *Tinodzidza kuti tinofanira kushanda nesimba kuti tizonakirwa nekudya kana kutowanawo zvekupfeka zvakanaka tikatengesa zvirimwa zvedu.*

(We learn that we should work hard in order to enjoy our food or to even get nice clothes after selling our farm produce).

L7G5: *Tinodzidza kuti kushanda kwakanaka uye kwakakosha* (We learn that working is good and important).

FG5L10: *Tinodzidza kuti kushanda kunorwadza asi unozofara kumagumo* (We learn that working is not easy but in the end you will be happy).

The responses show that if children are aware of the importance of working hard at a tender age for learners, the latter will enjoy working for their own benefit later in life and in the wider community. The result not only fulfils Goal 8 but also several other SDGs such as Goals 1 and 2, which aim at the eradication of poverty and hunger, respectively, as well as Goal 3 on good health and well-being for all, among others.

Children's game songs and personal care/health

The game song *Kudya kudya* (Food.Food.) was performed by a group of 9-10 year-old Grade 4 learners at a rural resettlement school. From the game song it can be concluded that it can contribute towards the implementation of Goal 3 on good health and well-being, which aims at good healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages. It also contributes towards attainment of Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production, which drives at ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. This is so because it touches on issues of healthy eating and a balanced diet. The game song emphasises that food, but not all food, is good for one's body. This is reflected in foods like fruits, meat, *sadza* and milk getting the nod, while sweets and chocolates get a thumps down. The learners pointed this out in response to the question on what they had learnt from the game song:

L1G6: *Tinodzidza kudya kwakanaka kwete junk food.* (We learn about good food to be eaten and not junk food).

L5G6: *Tinodzidza kudya kunovaka moviri.* (We learn about body building foods).

L3G6: *Tinoziva chikafu chinokuvadza miviri yedu semasweets anoorea mazino.* (We get to know food that is bad for our health like sweets that cause tooth decay).

L10G6: *Tinodzidza kuti hazvisi zvekudya zvese zvakanakira miviri yedu.* (We learn that not all food is good for our bodies).

The learners' responses clearly show that they are being conscientised to become responsible consumers as young people, and responsible producers as adults. If learners can differentiate between body building foods and junk food at such a tender age, then the better for present and future generations. By catching them young, responsible citizens are moulded.

The same group recited the same game song in English but this time focusing on other issues:

Food! Food!

Food is very good for my body!

Is very good!

AIDS! AIDS!

AIDS is very bad for my body

Is very bad!

On the question regarding where they had learnt the game song in English learners indicated that their teacher had taught them during an HIV and AIDS lesson. The teacher indicated that she had taught them the English version of the game song during an HIV and AIDS lesson where she defined the disease, taught how it is acquired and its signs and symptoms. She pointed out that she was, however, surprised to hear the learners stretching it to the one recited in Shona above. This scenario shows what constructivism encourages, that the teacher as the more knowledgeable, guides and creates an environment for learners to stretch themselves and be co-creators of knowledge. The teacher does not simply impart knowledge, but instead stretches the learners to facilitate their critical thinking and problem-solving skills which they can then transfer to other situations since they assume a central role in the construction of knowledge and making meaning out of learning material (Nyoni, 2019; Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2010; Kriz, 2010; Berk, 2007). As a facilitator, the teacher guides, directs learning and creates a conducive environment for the learners to be actively involved as opposed to being passive recipients. Learners are allowed to question things and apply their natural curiosity to the world (Brooks and Brooks, 2004; Jonassen, 1994). This is the case with this group of learners. They applied what they had learnt from their teacher to other aspects. This is in line with quality education, which capacitates the individual to be able to apply knowledge to different situations that arise in life. This tallies with being able to work independently, which is one of the anticipated exit profiles of Zimbabwe's Competence Based Curriculum (Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015 -2022; Gulseven et al., 2015; Kupika and Mbereko, 2020). The interviewee, however, bemoaned how most of her colleagues, especially those teaching at junior level, were a big let-down as they concentrated more on teaching for examinations, instead of giving learners a chance to engage in performances of game songs. Her response verbatim was:

Dai maticha aiziva hawo kuti vana vanobata zvinhu sei oral art forms, game songs included vaisamboswera vachizhaka vana pavanotadza, asi kuvaitisa izvi kuti vanzwisise uye vasakanganwa.

(If only teachers knew how quickly learners grasp concepts through these oral art forms, game songs, they wouldn't expend their energies beating learners, but would just have them perform these songs to enhance their understanding and memory.)

Her response shows someone who is quite aware of the pedagogical value of these indigenous ways of knowing in the teaching and learning processes, and values them. Hence, they can be useful tools for implementation of the Zimbabwean updated curriculum as well as attainment of the sustainable development goals. What it means then is to make it compulsory for these game songs to be part and parcel of classroom

interactions. Indeed, the content taught would go a long way in the implementation of the SDGs.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an analysis and discussion of Shona children's game songs to show that they are useful tools for knowledge creation and information dissemination. Their discursive infrastructure allows them to be adopted, adapted and used for teaching any concept across the curriculum. In the same vein game songs can be used to propagate, cascade and ensure sustainable implementation of the SDGs that are critical for human factor development. Use of the game songs to teach concepts across the curriculum feeds into SDG 4, a goal that aims for quality education. Game songs related to environmental issues strengthen the implementation of Goal 6 -Clean water and sanitation, Goal 13-Climate action, Goal 14- Life below water, and Goal 15- Life on land. Those game songs relating to contemporary issues enhance the implementation of Goal 5- Gender equality, Goal 16 – Peace justice and strong institutions, and Goal 17 – Partnerships for goals. Overall, game songs instil into learners the norms and values of Shona culture such as responsibility, integrity, honesty, respect, team work, family values, friendship and living in harmony with nature, among others, which are at the core of 'ubuntu'. This zeros in on implementation of Goal 1- Zero poverty, Goal 2 – Zero hunger, Goal 3 – Good health and well-being, and Goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production. The norms, values and skills embedded in children's game songs are important for the successful implementation of the identified SDGs. Hence the use of Shona children's game songs as pedagogical tools for knowledge creation and dissemination across the curriculum within the Zimbabwe Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education, 2015-2022 is not by choice, but a necessity since the cross-cutting themes in the Competency Based Curriculum are intrinsically linked with the SDGs.

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APPENDIX 1: Game Songs and Environmental Issues

Tinocheka Uswa (We cut the grass)

Tinocheka, tinocheka uswa! (We cut the grass, we cut the grass!),

Tinocheka, tinocheka uswa! (We cut the grass, we cut the grass!)

Zuva rakadai! Zuva rakadai! (When the sun is this up! When the sun is this up!)

Tichiti nyeu nyeu nyeu! (We go cut, cut, cut!)

Tichiti nyeu nyeu nyeu! (We go cut, cut, cut!)

Yuwi musana! Yuwi musana! (Oh, my back! Oh, my back!)

Musapisa musapisa uswa! (Do not burn, do not burn the grass)

Musapisa musapisa uswa! (Do not burn, do not burn the grass)

Chero Zuva rakadai! Zuva rakadai! (Even if the sun is this up! The sun is this up!)

Muchiti pise pise pise! (You just burn! burn! burn!)

Muchiti pise pise pise! (You just burn! burn! burn!)

Mhuka dzotsva! Mhuka dzotsva! (Animals are burnt! Animals are burnt!)

Paita Mwana (There is a child)

Leader: *Paita mwana!* (There is a child)

Respondents: *Mwana wemudhorobha!* (A city child)

Leader: *Ndoenda kuchikoro nemota* (I go to school by car).

Respondents: *Zvako, zvako unoenda kuchikoro nemota ini ndinoenda netsoka* (Lucky you! Lucky you, you go to school by car, me I go to school on foot).

Leader: *Paita mwana!* (There is a child).

Respondents: *Mwana wekumaruzevha* (A child from the villages).

Leader: *Ndinotamba pamadiro* (I play freely).

Respondents: *Zvako, zvako unotamba pamadiro, ini ndinotambira musedhi* (Lucky you! Lucky you, me I play inside the gate).

APPENDIX 2: Game songs for quality education

Nyarara kuchema mwana, (Stop crying baby)

Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara

a-a-a Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara

e-e-e Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara

i-i-i Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara

o-o-o-Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara

u-u-u- Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara

(Free translation: After reciting each vowel, it is followed by the chorus 'Stop crying baby, stop crying').

Zvandangidza pano! (What I have learnt here!)

Zvandangidza pano, maiwe!

Zvandishamisa!

Zvandangidza pano, maiwe!

Zvandishamisa!
Musoro kuti head maiwe!
Zvandishamisa!
Meso kuti eyes maiwe!
Zvandishamisa!
Zheve kuti ears maiwe!
Mhino kuti nose maiwe!
Zvandishamisa!
Muromo kuti mouth maiwe!
Zvandishamisa!
Huro kuti neck maiwe!
Zvandishamisa!
Mafudzi kuti shoulders maiwe!
Zvandishamisa!
Chifuva kuti chest maiwe!
Zvandishamisa!
Dumbu kuti stomach maiwe!
Zvandishamisa!
Chivuno kuti waist maiwe!
Zvandishamisa!
Mabvi kuti knees maiwe!
Zvandishamisa!
(What I have learnt here makes me wonder, Oh mother!)

Madhadha Mashanu(Five Ducks)
Madhadha mashanu ari pamutsetse
Ndikabvisa rimwe kunosara mana
Madhadha mana ari pamutsetse
Ndikabvisa rimwe kunosara matatu
Madhadha matatu ari pamutsetse
Ndikabvisa rimwe kunosara maviri
Madhadha maviri ari pamutsetse
Ndikabvisa rimwe kunosara rimwe
Dhadha rimwe riri pamutsetse
Ndikabvisa rimwe kunosara pasina
(Five ducks in a queue
I remove one
Four remain...).

Mari Yakaperera Mutrain (The money was used up in the train)
Leader: *Mutrain! Mutrain!* (In the train!In the train!)

Chorus: *Mari yakapereramutrain mamalo-o-o*

Mari yakaperera mutrain (The money was used up in the train, mother oh!)

Leader: *Bhazi ndorikwira nei?* (What shall I use to board the bus?)

Chorus: *Mari yakaperera mutrain mamalo-o-o*

Mari yakaperera mutrain (The money was used up in the train, mother oh!)

Leader: *Mota ndoikwira nei?* (What shall I use to board the car?)

Chorus: *Mari yakaperera mutrain mamalo-o-o*

Mari yakaperera mutrain (The money was used up in the train, mother oh!)

Leader: *Lorry ndoikwira nei?* (What shall I use to board the lorry?)

Chorus: *Mari yakapereramutrain mamalo-o-o*

Mari yakaperera mutrain (The money was used up in the train, mother oh!)

Leader: *Ndege ndoikwira nei?* (What shall I use to board the plane?)

Chorus: *Mari yakaperera mutrain mamalo-o-o*

Mari yakaperera mutrain (The money was used up in the train, mother oh!)

(Loosely translated the rhyme goes: What shall I use to board the bus, car, lorry, plane etc.? The money was used up in the train.)

APPENDIX 3: Game songs and contemporary issues

Sarura wako! (Make your choice!)

Leader: *Sarura wako!* (Make your choice!)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Wangu mutsvuku* (Mine is light skinned)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Wangu murefu* (Mine is tall)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Ane bvudzi dema* (She/He has black hair)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Haagari pasi* (She/He does not sit on the floor)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Sofa chete* (Sofa only)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Haadyi sadza* (Does not eat sadza)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Rice chete* (Rice only)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Ane moyochena* (Is kind- hearted)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Ndimutore here?* (Can I choose him/her?)

Chorus: *Tora hako mwanasikana/komana* (You can choose that one daughter/son)

Leader: *Handei darli* (Let's go darling).

Vana venyu waitamba(Your children were playing!)

Leader: *Vana venyu waitamba* (Your children were playing!)

Chorus: *Heyahe waitamba neshuga* (Aye! Aye! They played with sugar).

All: I can *kurunga mapoto! Kurunga mapoto! Kurunga mapoto! Newe!* (I can stir the pots! Stir the pots! Stir the pots with you!)

Chorus: *Heyahe waitamba neshuga.* (Aye! Aye! They played with sugar).

Pane chandada (There is something I like)

Leader: *Pane chandada* (There is something I like)

Chorus: *Pane chandada* (There is something I like)

Leader: *Nditore chandada* (Can I take what I like?)

Chorus: *Tora chawada* (Take what you like)

Leader: *Simuka unditevere* (Rise and follow me)

APPENDIX 4: Game songs and personal care/health

Kudya, kudya(Food !Food!)

Leader: *Kudya, kudya*(Food! Food)

Kudya kwakanakira muviri wangu. Kwakanaka (Food is very good for my body)

Respondents: *Kudya kudya !Kupi kudya kwacho?*

Kwakanakira muviri wangu(Food ! Food is very good for my body, is very good)

Chorus: Nyama hongu(Meat, yes!)

Ice-creamkwete (Ice-cream, no!)

Sadza hongu (Sadza, yes)

Sweets kwete(Sweets, no!)

Mukaka hongu (Milk, yes!)

Chocolate, kwete!(Chocolate, no!)

*Michero, hongu!*Fruits, yes!)

Is very good, for my body is very good!