



GIRL CHILD NETWORK

Gravity of Girl Child Sexual Abuse in Zimbabwe

“Towards Creating A Culture of Prevention”



Rape survivors Support Group Chitungwiza August 2004

‘The stories we listened to made us bleed inside, the genital wounds we later had to help nurse evoked us , the long distances we traveled every day and night to educate girls on their rights made us strong , the songs of joy and sorrow the girls sang made us more passionate, everything to do with girlhood and the fact that we were there for the girls pushed us to do even more and more from the heart ,soul, mind and all. The fact that we finally claimed the girls’ spaces where the girls now live and develop free of violence makes it imperative that we share the great tidings’

Introduction on the Girl Child Network and History on Activism

Girl Child Network(GCN) an activist development organization whose mission is to support the empowerment of the girl child has tracked and tackled over 20 000 cases of child sexual abuse over the past 8 years in at least 6 provinces of Zimbabwe covering an estimated population of 6 million people. 70% of GCN`s work is covered in the rural areas, 20% is based in the high density suburbs whilst the other 10% is shared between low density suburbs, peri urban settlements, mines and farms. GCN activism around child sexual abuse started in 1998 and the August 2004 Gender Based Desk study closely analysed 20 000 child sexual abuse cases.

GCN embarked on a March Against Child Sexual Abuse in 2000 from Chitungwiza to Mutare. This awareness on child sexual abuse to the girls and communities from Chitungwiza to Harare, Ruwa, Bromley, Marondera, Macheke, Headlands, Rusape, Nyazura, Penhalonga and Mutare saw women and girl child activists calling upon girls to break silence on child sexual abuse especially rape. This march went a long way in unearthing the many cases of rape that for long had been swept under the carpet. After this long March Against Child Sexual Abuse which took 17days and covered 280 kilometres the silence on girl child sexual abuse was broken and people responded to the awareness campaigns positively and every weekend child sexual abuse campaigns were conducted at open places at most high density suburbs shopping canters. GCN cannot give all the credit on the level of awareness on rape to this particular march as many ngos and government ministries had similar programmes which went a long way in breaking silence on rape. The victim friendly system was just perfect and assisted greatly in responding to this menace. One female journalist working with The Herald, Ropafadzo Mapimhidze, who met face to face with the rape survivors at GCN Empowerment Village shed tears and was greatly disturbed with what she saw. Within the media circles coverage of girl child sexual abuse has always taken centre stage. Since then it is now apparent that Ropa was so evoked that she made several visits to GCN and girl child sexual abuse media coverage has intensified.

Hope Chigudu in her *Amazing Double Talk* which is still work in progress correctly and aptly sums up what GCN is all about as she is the one who did the evaluation on the impact of GCN in communities:

Bringing the example closer home, a case study of our own Girl Child Network may serve to illustrate how policies and strategies that are adaptable to real life situations will always succeed in addressing real life situations as well as in ensuring meaningful results for women and children in their struggles for survival.

The Girl Child Network was practically born out of discussions between a female schoolteacher and ten upper six girls at a local school in Chitungwiza following numerous cases of ill treatment and discrimination from male teachers and male students in the school. Each time the girls attempted to participate fully in

class and in other school activities, they were jeered at and booed down by their male colleagues simply on the basis of their womanhood. Having been formally abused in her childhood, Betty Makoni, the schoolteacher organized with the female students and formed a Girl child club, a solidarity group to assist these young girls to cope with their deprivation and insecurity. With time more Girl child clubs were subsequently formed in other schools in Chitungwiza, and the driving force behind the clubs was one; the subjectivity and suffering of the girl child. With so many clubs sprouting, the need to coordinate their activities culminated in the formation and launch of the network in 1999.

Within its short life, the Girl Child Network has succeeded in raising awareness about issues related to girl children, especially the issue of being able to identify and name the abuser, an element that is pertinent to the issue of abuse in a context where silences around abuse are normalized. The Girl Child Network has always ensured that girls participate in gender sensitization programs at an early age, and girls have been equipped with information for survival skills. The most important thing is that the organization was able to do this resounding work with very little funding at the beginning. Instead of crying for bigger budgets from the donors, the Girl Child Network placed so much emphasis on practical activities such as marches, activities that the girls themselves had to engage in with very little financial support. At one time they organized a march from Harare to Rusape, passing through and stopping over in farms and rural villages, conscientizing women, men and children on the ills of child abuse. The success of their marches lay in that they also involved gender-sensitive men, who acted as role models to other men on how important it is for the whole nation to team up against abuse. Stopping over in farms and rural areas was a powerful strategy since such areas are often neglected and deprived of information, yet these are the places where most of the abuse occurs. This programme was an eye opener to many women and girls, some of whom were able to come out during the March and report cases of abuse. If a single march could yield such wonderful results, what kind of results would similar marches in all districts of Zimbabwe yield if women could just value the importance of coming together and committing for a common cause without having to wait for budget approvals from the donors.

Girl Child Network tries to uplift the image and esteem of children in the realization that children who feel positive and confident are more likely to be able to accurately recognize and then respond appropriately to potentially abusive situations. Thus they have developed material and programmes that enhance and develop self-esteem and a positive self-concept. Their role model programme which started in 2 000 aims at connecting young survivors of abuse to successful female role models that the girls could look up to and aspire to emulate.

If Girl Child Network works in an area, the masses will know that the Girl child Network is here. Ordinary people, medical staff, chiefs, teachers, district administrators, church people, police and significant others. Different social groups or individuals may all not be supportive and some have not been but its presence will be felt. Girl Child Network has got its own supporters, people who will cry, kick and fight if it was threatened. Some of the girls testify that they have been empowered by the organization, so its outputs are clear. In the same vain, its enemies are also clear, those who would rejoice if it died. Most important is that it is rooted in the communities, has a power base. At the same time, it is part of the women's movement and had been rather vocal at the

national level. It has tried to create a mass movement at least at community level.

For Girl Child Network to be effective, it has created room for activism in its plans. It has budged for it emotionally and financially. There are many times when the Director has had to wake up in the middle of the night to rescue an abused girl 400 km away. Imagine if she had to consult the operational plan or call the chair of the board at 2 am to ask for permission. Would she really manage to rescue abused girls? Some of the girls have stayed with members of staff without counting the cost. Abusers have ambushed staff and some have invaded the organization. This is the price an activist pays for passion. It cannot be budgeted for, and it might not be easy to include in a strategic plan. This is not to say that strategic plans are not useful.

The Girl Child Network still needs to work on a broader political strategy for long-term prevention of child abuse by lobbying for appropriate state policies, guidelines, programmes and legislation. Doing this is realizing the importance of the law, without which justice in social relations can never be attained. The organization should also involve the young girls in political awareness through programmes like the youth cabinet or the youth parliament, especially now that we have a female Vice President in place. Focusing on such role models will give the young people political awareness and socialize them into active politics at a very young age, thus demystifying the concept that active politics is a male domain.

To sum up we need to question the way we organize as women activists. Can we change the situation of women without creating a mass movement, without a power base and a clear constituency? Can bureaucratized organizations, driven by the donor ideologies bring about real changes? Do the strategic plans we formulate respond to the needs of the people we claim to represent? Some soul searching in the women's movement is needed.

GCN'S Mission

We are an organization that supports the empowerment of the girl child in Zimbabwe in all spheres of home, school and community.

Vision

We envision a society where girls enjoy their economic, social and political rights and become future women walking the fullness of their potential.

With a clear and agreed definition of empowerment, we are convinced that our mission summarizes who we are and what we stand for.

Definition of Empowerment

An Empowered girl is one who does not allow anyone to impede their full growth and development in all spheres of life

A Definition of Violence Against Girls

Defining violence against girls:

1998 -2004 helped GCN come up with a better and more concrete definition of violence against girls as captured in the girls' stories, poems and several reports they brought to GCN, police, Social welfare and other children's agencies .Violence against girls is best defined through the girls' feelings. The following definition was concluded after various consultations during training workshops, counseling sessions, club launches with girls and other stakeholders. Whenever GCN refers to violence against girls, this is best understood as:

Physical, emotional, social, political intrusion and invasion of the girls` space by socially, economically and politically advantaged persons with the sole purpose of causing physical, mental, emotional and psychological harm. There are maximum benefits derived from causing harm on the girl child by those better placed and in advantageous positions in the home, school and community. The girl becomes afraid and gives in to one's sexual desires, offers free labour, runs away and leaves more room for others, becomes afraid and succumbs to social, sexual and economic slavery .Violence perpetrated against girls in most communities is taken as norm and perpetrated by men, women and boys either directly or indirectly and this emanates from the socialization process where the girls` position is less regarded for girls are minors as children and the weaker sex as women. Girls are affected by both age and gender and endure combined violence perpetrated against both women and childrenⁱ

GCN 's definition of violence against girls uses the word "space" a lot for the simple reason that social, physical and sexual space in the home, school and community is denied the girls to grow and develop to their full potential. Rights and access to education are denied the girl child and physical and emotional attack on their sexuality is aptly described by most girls during GCN awareness campaigns.

The Girl Child Phenomenon

Girls are affected by both age and gender

Though women, men and boys can be victims of Gender Based Violence, girls have been discovered to be more vulnerable and the primary victims because of their subordinate status of gender and age in the society. To girls society has become an unfair environment because of the many violent encounters that they face each and every day because of age and gender. The gender concept is therefore focused on socially constructed differences between men and women based on shared expectations and norms within a society. It is also based on culturally ascribed set of characteristics that define what it is to be a man or woman looking at their behavior, characteristics and role. The age concept focuses on the number of years and experiences of a human being. In this case a child is the youngest and most vulnerable human being. Based on the two concepts of age and gender, society is generally agreed that the girl child is the most vulnerable for she has to survive against a background where the woman, fairer sex is unjustly treated and taken as a second class citizen in most societies and where as a child one solely depends on adults for survival who can choose to take care or not, provide or not provide the three basic needs of

food, shelter and clothing. The world over the issues of women and children take centre stage and if girls are both women and children it automatically entails their issues being dealt with separately and as a core group. This is not the case in many instances as it is evident that in many studies that have been conducted before girls are either bunched with women or children and in making recommendations it has proved difficult whether to classify girls' problems as women's problems or children's problems for girls belong to both. This desk study solely deals with girls' issues and violence perpetrated against them as a core group and an entity.

General overview of child sexual abuse in Zimbabwe

Facts and figures on girl child sexual abuse in the home, school and community point out to Increased reporting on unreported rape cases than increased fresh raping

GCN conducted a gender based violence desk study against girls stretching from 1998 –2004. The results of the nature and extent of child sexual abuse are shamefully shocking. They used rape, incest, and virginity testing and forced marriages as the different variables of child sexual abuse.

GCN is receiving an average of 6 rape cases per day as from January 2005 up from 3 cases per day in 2004. The media almost on a daily basis report on child sexual abuse. These staggering statistics exclude the many children out there who are being sexual abused but not reporting for various reasons.

The table below shows cases of girl child sexual abuse physically and directly attended by GCN.

Form of abuse	Rape	Forced marriages	Virginity testing	Incest	Total no. of cases
1998	500			125	625
1999	1500			435	1935
2000	1300	5	-	390	1695
2001	950	45	2000	105	3100
2002	1700	10	5000	480	6815

2003	1050	6		455	1511
2004	3000	4		940	3944
Total	10000	70	7000	2930	20000

- Out of the 20 000 child sexual abuse cases in the diagram only 5 % were fresh cases reported at least within 3 to 7 days. GCN's analysis shows that there is increased reporting on unreported rape cases owing to media coverage and sensitisation programmes around child abuse in general and girl child sexual abuse in particular by various stakeholders. There are 350 girls clubs positioned strategically throughout Zimbabwe
- Most rape cases that resulted in pregnancy were settled out of court even though they involved minors aged 16 and below. Such cases posed a lot of challenges even up to now as GCN tries to unearth for example, the Marondera school girls case impregnated by a well known doctor cum politician in the town .Similar cases were reported in other areas like Mazowe
- Child sexual abuse cases where girls under 13 years got married and such marriages endorsed by church elders were unearthed several years later when death was imminent due to complications associated with pregnancy
- The virgins cure HIV and AIDS and virgins make businesses thrive myth is rampant and the Hwange case of a girl raped by her own father from grade four to form four is a clear example of the so many daughters who suffer within family circles for years
- The father as a bread winner factor has perpetuated a culture of silence on rape within families and in most instances this comes out when the girl becomes terminally ill
- School heads and teachers, general hand staff to include security guards, caretakers, drivers, boarding masters and matrons, bursars etc were not reported on at all because of their command of authority in the schools. Though so many cases of rape surface now from the schools and still we paid lip service to this menace there are many living examples of women whose lives were destroyed by rape within the school system. Clear examples include two Seke schools, Chishawasha, Hwange, Nyanga, where a form two girl raped was by a teacher at Bonda Girls High School, and another teacher is right now paying a settlement of \$800 000 to family members at Mbaza School in Mutasa District, St John's Primary School in Murewa left a well known paedophile in the school system after he allegedly raped a grade six girl. Many more girls who go to fetch water, clean teachers' houses and are trusted to any household chores are turned into sex slaves. If only suggestion boxes would be put in every school and an independent enquiry conducted in every school the stories would be most shocking. Macheke case is a tip of the iceberg. In Domboshava GCN

unearthed one case of a trainee teacher linked to people in influential positions who sexually abused girls. The price we had to pay was to be permanently banned from entering Domboshava and this further protected the perpetrators we feel are even more from what we heard from the girls themselves. The current system in education that restricts girls from creating a platform to meet and open up on sexual abuse is a big hindrance. The school system is harbouring a lot of paedophiles and even a lot of women of our age from long back have suffered in the same system and though we expected Macheke girls to open up earlier none of us has dared to do so even though we are out of the system.

- Most women are going through domestic violence and they are economically dependent on men. No one wants the breadwinner to go to jail.
- Some churches have informal schools on early marriages. Johane Marange is but one such where girls who upon virginity testing are found to be non virgins are labelled “dirty and unclean” and this is justification to be married and raped.
- Trafficking of girls in brothels is quite rampant due to some economic challenges the country is facing. Some young girls on a daily basis are trafficked from schools to brothels and some of the owners of the brothels instil so much fear in the girls that they will never open. Harare is infested with brothels for school girls under the guise of lodges
- Little babies cannot report child sexual abuse. They are in the category of those who are physically and mentally challenged. A lot more girls are dumb and use sign language. With babies and those who are handicapped their very survival depends on us since their communication is close to none. Child sexual abuse is rampant amongst them. In Rusape at least ten men raped one mentally disturbed girl in 2003. A lot more babies are made to suck male organs and 1 in 10 parents gets to know this. In one case in 2003 a baby vomited out semen.

Reasons why rape cases are not reported immediately

As GCN we safely concluded that there is increased reporting of girl child sexual abuse. There are a lot of reasons why girls do not immediately report which should be the focus of any meaningful and effective intervention

- During the rape act girls are threatened with death or a knife or any dangerous weapon
- Little girls are often given sweets or cash and this silences them
- There are indirect perpetrators like mothers, aunts, church elders who go for out of court settlements. The law is not clear on such perpetrators
- Most girls do not fall pregnant and therefore to just open up on such abuse may not be an emergency and it can result in further victimization. The home is not victim child friendly
- In the school system the boys, male teachers and school heads are symbols of male dominance and power-situations women are enslaved to.
- There is false promise of marriages and compensation for damages to parents

- The court procedures are cumbersome and parents and girls give up easily. In most instances the perpetrator is granted bail and maybe out to intimidate the victim or to settle the matter out of court.
- The victim dies before conclusion of case with the courts

Statistics for January- April 2005

January to April 2005 GCN received a total of 418 rape cases from Chitungwiza, Chihota, Macheke, Marondera and a few from other surrounding areas covering an average population of 3 million and if we are to base on this figure for an estimated population of 15 million that would give us 2 090 per 4 months and if we are still to go on further with the analysis we can safely conclude that at least 6 270 girls report rape annually in Zimbabwe date backing 6-10 years.

A picture of the gravity of child sexual abuse in Zimbabwe

- The youngest rape victim in Zimbabwe and the world over is a two-weeks-old baby in Shamva together with her two and three year old sister.
- The youngest married girl is aged 11 from Muchekabuwe village
- The oldest rapist is an 83 yrs old man from Nyamaropa, Nyanga
- At least about 2000 rape victims have died as a result of the Rapist to Child transmission of HIV/AIDS between 1998-2004.
- Many babies are being sexually abused on a daily basis but only a fraction of 1/10 gets to know about it. This is mainly because most babies are sucked and made to suck male organs until ejaculation occurs Myths – e.g. pure blood of a virgin cures HIV and AIDS
- Clitoris/ any genital part of a virgin girl mixed with certain herbs boosts a men's impotence and the only way to get such parts is through rape and murder
- Culture of silence on rape is rife in most families- mothers afraid of reporting their husband merely because they are afraid the breadwinners will be put behind bars.
- Some churches e.g. the Johane Marange sect legitimizes marriages within the set of young girls
- Longstanding attitudes perceptions and practices that expose children to sexual abuse like virginity tests, exchanging daughters for food (kuzvarira) inheriting one's sisters / aunt's husband after death (chimutsamapfiwa) and other sexual imitation ceremonies done to girls under the age of 16

Girl Child Sexual Abuse Syndicates Have Architects, Defenders, Authors, Etc And These Are:

- * Domestic child sexual abuse syndicates
- * Gangster and Public Sexual Violence syndicates
- * Date Rape syndicates
- * Organized Religious Child Sexual Abuse Syndicates
- * Organised Cultural/ Traditional Child Sexual Abuse syndicates
- * Organised Commercial Sex Syndicates
- * School Child sexual Abuse syndicates

Breaking into such syndicates requires tactic and a whole girl child social movement.

The categories of identified rapists are

- * Virgins Cure Aids Belief and Girls As safety Nets Rapists
- * Violent, Rogue, Hooligan, Sadists Rapists of Minors
- * Impotence Booster Rapists
- * Marriage Pretext Rapists
- * Idlers and Sexual Desire Rapists
- * Teenage Sex Orientation Rapists
- * HIV Revenge Mission Rapists

Some of the worst documented paedophile style and rape of minors in the home, school and community.

The cases below are extracted from the over 20 000 cases of child sexual abuse cases GCN dealt with since 1998 to date.

In the home

Details of paedophile style	Relationship to victim(s)	Place and year	_Follow up action and update	Further comments
Raped up to 10 girls from the neighbourhood in his tuck-shop over unspecified period of time	Neighbour	St Mary's 1978	Case was never reported until 2002 when GCN director chose to go public using her personal testimony	Experience used to develop therapy, programs and prevention for girls, GCN model has incorporated experience of survivors.
Father sucked, had forced penetration with daughter aged 3 weeks, and three year	Father	Shamva July 2001 also reported in the Herald	Father convicted	The youngest rape victim in Zimbabwe and the world over to date
Grandfather and his son had a history of raping female family	Father and grandfather	Rusape , Muchekabuwe	Perpetrator dragged to village rape court and later	One of the worst cases where Sadomba girls

members Girl raped from 12- 14 years			committed suicide	confessed this was normal in their families and they saw no reason to report this one case
Father raped 3 daughters aged 3 -14 years .Mother died of TB	Father	Chitungwiza	Perpetrator died in prison	The 3 girls fully rehabilitated with their uncle who is a school head
Father raped sisters and exchanged them nightly	Father	Mutasa District	Case still with police and no conviction but young daughter with GCN EV	Father confessed to police
Father boasted to his wife that she is not as sweet as her daughters and he sexually enslaved his daughters	Father	Chitungwiza St Mary's	Perpetrator not convicted	Cases of child sexual abuse in St Mary's have reached alarming levels
Father sexually abused his daughter from grade 4 to form 4and also sodomised his son	Father	Hwange	Father died while in police custody Hwange local newspapers and courts negatively exposed the girl GCN took custody of the girl	The perpetrator was a life saver at a company swimming pool. Several girls are believed to have frequent his house. N'anga from Chivhu prescribed daughter n'anga who as cure for AIDS com from
Boarding master alleged to have	Boarding master	Chishawasha 1981-1994	Perpetrator dismissed from work	Given the fact that this was never

sexually abused over 100 boys over an unspecified period				publicized and circumstances never known close investigations highly called for
Perpetrator raped 5 girls aged 7 and below with instruction from one Maria n'anga at boarder Mozambique that he would own kombis and be rich.	Neighbour	Penhalonga Manicaland 2003-2004 September	Perpetrator sentenced to 15 years for raping 5 girls Girls under GCN custody and have started grade 1	N'anga not convicted and poses big threat in Manicaland He openly confessed that he has done it to little girls only. More research on him critical and can give way forward as he openly confesses
Two girls were raped by an unknown person at a boarding school	Unknown	Chimanimani Mid 2004	No one convicted	This case should have sent strong warning signs to Ministry of Education
Deputy school head at a school in Chitungwiza	Deputy head	Chitungwiza 1997- 1999	Perpetrator died of HIV and AIDS	In 1999 the girls opened to their head who is now current program manager for GCN. Need for through investigation GCN intervened and got victimized but won the case leading to more cases being

				unearthed
Teacher impregnated 13year old girl Current GCN Director did the story	Teacher	Mashala Primary School Hwange 2000-2002	Teacher acquitted by Hwange Magistrate courts	A thorough investigation of this case can help unearth many cases and help curb the menace in girl child sexual abuse in rural schools
N'anga tracked a number of school girls on their way from school	Traditional healer	Gokwe 2004	Case reported but no conviction	GCN intervened and rehabilitated one girl
Pastor Guti from ZAOGA church Zengeza raped girls aged 7 and 9 in the eyes of his 6 year old daughter	Pastor	Chitungwiza 2003	Pastor jailed for twelve years	Church had another rape case and tried out of court settlement. It means this church has not learnt anything
Teacher attempted to rape a 15 year old girl	Teacher	Penhalonga case	Case reported to police but no conviction School Head has given up on the case	Parents and teacher agreed upon an out of court settlement of \$800 000 paid over 2 instalments
Isabel raped and murdered for ritual purposes	Unknown	Norton	Results of investigation not publicised and this kept all of us afraid	Results should have been publicised to deter further similar abuse cases
2 primary school girls gang raped from school by Kombi touts (Hwindi) and	<u>Hwindi</u>	Bindura	Still to confirm as announced by news reporter	GCN intervened and assisted the girls to heal from the post sexual

others in grade 1 raped in Chitungwiza				abuse trauma. However it is appalling to note that one of the girls was physically and emotionally abused by family members and was accused of having an affair with the touts
14 girls sexually abused by Tsikamutanda	Tsikamutanda	Rusape Matsika		
4 Seke 6 primary girls raped repeatedly on their way from school	Unknown	Chitungwiza Zengeza 2005	Investigations still underway	The police still searching for the perpetrator
Unspecified number of girls fallen prey to a certain <i>force</i>	force	Tsanzaguru 2004	Reports confirmed and investigations still underway	GCN has to pay price for activism and no stone will be left unturned
Thousands girls from the Johanne Marange apostolic religious sect	Church mates	Bocha, 2004	Situation chaotic and needs an urgent multi-sectorial approach	GCN rescued one 11 year old girl married off in Bocha and rehabilitated her as well reinstated her into school.
Mentally challenged 14 year girl repeatedly abused at a local shopping complex	Unknown but identified persons	Chitungwiza	Still under investigation	The girl was being abused by many people including influential people

One girl at a school recited this poem

*I don't know whether to call him my teacher
Or Monica's husband
Or Prisca's sugar daddy*

*In 3A1 he kissed Teclar
In 4A1 he impregnated Daizy
In 2A2 he fondled Lucia's breasts
In his storeroom I can't say
Only the books are witnesses*

*I do not know whether to call him
My teacher, cheater, lover boy, abuser or user
Where do you stand cheater?*

The whole school jeered at teachers, a clear indication that there is a story behind the story at the school.

What has been done so far in responding to Child Sexual Abuse: Macheke as a Case Study

Stakeholder	Action response	Comments	Recommended Action
Media	- Exposed the case under controversial circumstances - Scouted around for detail and comments to develop story. - Front page story with disturbing issues around HIV and AIDS - Left the general public hanging - Story last reported in April - Print Media was more than television or radio - Report had impact	It is commendable that the media was able to publicise the issue there by bringing more players to deal with the issue Need to develop and safely conclude on the story	Development of story key so as to keep public knowledgeable Need to engage and also highlight challenges encountered in accessing accurate information Press conference key in such controversial stories and need for way forward to minimise stigma and to cool temperatures
School head and	Not confused	The way the issue	Counselling of

staff	and traumatic state at the moment • Publicity affected them and matrons dismissed without charge for negligence • Not sure what's next?	was handled by the responsible persons is not authentic especially the dismal of the matrons	the entire school staff • Engage them at the various workshops being hold
Ministry of education and psychological services	• At the helm of the case investigation etc security at school and ensures no one gets into the school without written permission • Adults it is embarrassing state of affairs	Security measures installed at the moment only serve to draw too much attention to the school which adversely affects all people directly involved	The need for the ministry to relax its stringent security measures at the school in order not to further stigmatise the girls. There are so many empowerment strategies that could be most effective. Wider consultations key
Victim friendly courts (police)	• Arrested perpetrator and conducted investigations	It is applaudable that the VFU made great strides in the case	VFC to hasten the process employing if possible the 30 days incarceration pending investigation proposed period
Family support trust	• Examined the girls and conducted usual medical tests Front line counseling	• The FST played their part effectively and the other stakeholders has to input into the post – sexual abuse phase Continuous Post Counselling services are also essential for the abused child for they	Counseling services need to be effective children not ready to testify in court Need to create a wider consultation in such serious cases

		help her in regaining confidence and self esteem-failure to post counsel the victim may have an adverse effect on the development of the victim. A victim who is not dealt with well may become an abuser herself	
Other NGOS	• SAFAIDS funded and called for discussion forum • Child line working with Ministry of Education	Fruitful discussions were held thereby giving other organisations a starting point on how to intervene in the case	It is of utmost importance to implement what has come out of this discussions so that these are not talkshops but workshops Lobby for the adoption of an effective and more specific piece of legislation that addresses the plight of children abused
Girl Child Network	• Overall monitor of all interventions • Confidential crisis counseling offered on a one to one basis • Intensified preventive strategy through Marondera Girls Network • Documentation, analysis and	• Reliable information and better interaction with Ministry of Education • Should have staged a demo	• Need to engage Ministry of Education and shared empowerment model. It has been most effective

	using experience to come up with refined intervention		
Cabinet	Discussed the issue and concluded that there ought to be a massive awareness campaigns on prevention of child sexual abuse	The fact that the case was deliberated by the cabinet is crucial to the process of getting to the lasting solution .The cabinet is in agreement with GCN MODEL and so is GCN	Continuously play an effective role as it has more influence
School heads Associations	No official position and action	Silence questionable and worrying	Effective input required
Teachers' Association	No official communication and action	Teachers should take a lead in these issues for they are the ones directly working with the girls in school	There is need to engage these in various workshops being held on child sexual abuse
Members of Parliament	No official comment except from Governor of Mashonaland East through the media where he condemned the abuse	The fact that the case was deliberated by the cabinet is crucial to the process of getting to the root of this case	Continuously play an effective role as it has more influence
Ministry of Women Affairs and other Government Ministries	Strategizing on the issue of the girl child with more vigour	On family day they advocated for stiffer penalties for a minimum of 25 years imprisonment	To follow up on the Ministry 's speech and the creation of a girl child unit within the Ministry
Ministry of	No official	To engage on	To actively

justice	response on proposed Child Sexual Offences Bill submitted by GCN and other stakeholders	the issue of a child friendly sexual offences Bill	participate in these issues and put forward statements pertaining to the case • To formally respond on list of pending test cases submitted by GCN • The justice delivery system is inept at handling child sexual abuse cases hence perpetrators are keeping on abusing children and children abused do not report because nothing much is being done for them. Repairing of Victim Friendly Court System where victims may be assisted
Women's coalition	• Followed up on what is being done by various organizations • Coordinated the whole issue	• Credit must be given for the active participation and coordinating efforts to do something about the case	• Need to implement on the ground what is being discussed in the various workshops
Quick Action on child Abuse (QACHA)	• Several meetings conducted in	• This concept should be shared widely	• This concept has to be spread round

	Chitungwiza with GCN on the lead should find ways of empowering all the girls in Macheke.	and implemented to the full	the country as all parents are willing and able
Parents	- Still in traumatic state and grappling with reality and no crisis counseling - Skills and empowerment skills - A lot more want case silenced and have spoken out against media - Ensure security at school	- Parents undergoing hard time hence the need for stakeholders to offer maximum support - How best to develop parents of affected children into activists	- Counselling for parents and or guardians - Should be given assistance in seeking recourse to justice - Should contact GCN on holiday empowerment programs before all girls perish
Magistrates court	- Remanded perpetrator in custody - Putting together	Action taken so far noble but the need to work on victim friendly machines in the court	- To fast track the judgement and show that our courts are child friendly - Repairing of Victim Friendly Court System because abused children need to be dealt with a lot of sensitivity and this can only be achieved through an enabling environment
The girls	Not engaged	Girls not	Girls to form

themselves	professionally except to be examined and back to school • No support group in place and no platform to interact and empty ant • No comment from them	empowered to manage stigma • Vaginal therapy not conducted • The girls can heal through activism	empowerment clubs • They should be trained in leadership and confidence building • Should create own platform to deal with this issue
Boys	• Not empowered to understand their counterparts and their plight	• Gender socialisation process inhibits boys from understanding these issues	• Need for re-socialisation process • Need for more sensitisation campaigns
			•
Donor community	• Action Aid wanted to find out what had been done	• Funding has been forthcoming	• Funding should be ongoing thus should be proactive than reactive
Churches	• No official statement but very coordinated	• Apostolic sects should follow government policies	• A number of pastors who are alleged of having sexually abused girls and a call to urgently address these issues
Zimbabwe as a whole	• Grippled with fear and struggling for a more coordinated and effective approach to dealing with this and other cases	• To implement effective programmes	• Need for a multi-sectoral co-ordinated approach • Attach urgency to rapist- child HIV transmission There is need for all custodians of children to redefine the

			value of a child in society and report all suspected rape cases without fear or favour •
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Proactive and reactive response. Crisis intervention without Stigmatization- Macheke Primary School as a case study.

Given the situation that at least on a daily basis 3 cases of rape of minors are exposed through the media a lot of them involving girls of school going age it is imperative that our action be proactive, long term and develop a culture of prevention. Sending men to jail over rape cases and given the magnitude of the problem is not an answer. Girl Child Network's Empowerment Strategy is but one proactive response that can go a long way in arresting the menace. Crisis intervention as in the case of Macheke is reactive and can stigmatise and further damage the school in terms of image.

For example the proposed security measures:

- All gates are locked up as if pupils and staff are in a prison
- It takes an average of 45 minutes for the school head to respond to you if you are a visitor from outside.
- Diverse media reports and different commentators
- Lack of Ministry of Education to engage other stakeholders more fully and consult more widely on this and other cases. Governor Msipa and the cabinet and Women's Affairs Ministry got it right that when in recent comments they said that NGOs are there to complement government efforts.
- The security measures at the school need reviewing by the government. A school should be secure and at the same time allow staff and pupils freedom and space. An empowering security strategy is more sustainable.
- Media is a key stakeholder and need to be engaged in a more meaningful way. Remaining tight lipped on critical information results in them drawing their own conclusions. Ministry of Information needs to be fully engaged on how best to work around children's stories.
- "Blame your" attitude does not serve us any good. Infact, when something of this magnitude is exposed every stakeholder should be part of the blame and with good will good intent work towards a solution. Everyone in this forum has a solution. No one should take all credit as has been the case.
- Many girl children who are sexually abused are absorbing the social impact of the epidemic of HIV and AIDS. What should be of major concerns is the need to realise that children have got their own rights unfortunately we have abrogated our obligation in that respect.

- Sexually abused children will develop a low self esteem characterized by a high sense of insecurity, prompting development of the compensatory mechanism of coping e.g. violence and prostitution
- With the HIV scourge most abused girls are infected resulting in their dehumanised and traumatized by society. Because they are psychologically destroyed and their psychic support collapse they do not have the strength to carry on and are no longer capable to self actualize.

Recommended Way Forward

• In the community

Rusape and Chivhu are clear examples of most effective strategies by community leaders and SDA committee members to deal with child sexual abuse. Both Chivhu (Zinatsa) and Rusape (Makoni East) recorded no rape cases in 2004 as a result of laws and policies put together by the traditional leaders. Most communities need to interact and do exchange programs with these two communities. The laws and policies at community level are deterrent to would be rapists. One clear example is for the Village Rape Criminal Courts where a case is made public and perpetrator embarrassed in public during especially rape awareness campaigns. Kraal heads and councillors have made it a policy to flush out all rapists in their communities on bail. Besides whatever punishments rapists await with the courts they pay back the family of the abused child. There are also policies on monitoring and reporting of child sexual abuse in these communities. Every community member agrees to adhere to the policies and laws of that community. This has significantly reduced incidents of rape of minors.

• In the School

1998-2000 GCN came across a Ministry of Education circular on management of child sexual abuse in the schools. This circular is quite clear and an effective tool in curbing the menace. It is imperative that every prefect, girls clubs and indeed every pupil be furnished with reporting procedures. If teachers or any other staff know of the stiff penalties this can be deterrent. This circular has to be evoked, amended and widely distributed. Sometimes we spend a lot of funding on the same things we would have worked on. Teachers GCN has interacted with thirst for empowerment skills around child sexual abuse and it is imperative that the Ministry of Education engages all stakeholders including the Girl Child Network.

• In the home

There is generally a culture of silence on rape by family members in most homes. It is a policy and a law as well as a taboo for parents and their children to generate conversations around sexual issues.

It is imperative for parents to create a policy framework within the home where information on child sexual abuse is made a priority. There are so many national laws and policies distributed by various organisations that offer clear guide lines on the Children's Act, Sexual Offences Act, etc. Parents should make it a policy to have guidelines so that in the event of sexual abuse they know which laws and policies guide them. Laws and policies should also be formulated at a family level to help protect children e.g. a law that prohibits older girls and boys from sharing same room, garden boy from giving a baby girl a bath, outsiders from entering premises without the parents' consent. The policies and rules should act as simple guidelines to both parents and children. To a greater extent every parent needs basic counseling skills and knowledge so that in the event of a case like Macheke every parent is well prepared to deal with their own situation. A policy for the family should be one that allows children to give feedback on what happens at school. Whereas parents buy children any other goodies they never give them money to pay for empowerment training on child sexual abuse.

Zimbabwe laws and policies need to come up with stiffer deterrent penalties

In Zimbabwe therefore there are almost sufficient legislation, policies, child rights advocacy mechanism and the victim friendly courts that have been incepted in Zimbabwe which have the potential of addressing the child sexual abuse menace threatening children and the future. However, what is needed is intensive implementation to see that children's rights are not violated. Through Advocacy that is mobilizing people, communities various key stakeholders in the fight against child sexual abuse will impact positively by ameliorating child sexual abuse. Lobbying for the adoption of various pieces of legislation that serve to give children the importance that they warrant will also assist in preventing and controlling child sexual abuse. Child Sexual Abuse can be mitigated if stiff penalties are introduced which will serve to deter prospective abusers. Awareness campaigns that can be done through media coverage, or in communities, may reach out to a number of people. Awareness campaigns serves to sensitize people give them direction. Awareness campaigns through the media will raise the people's level of awareness especially children thus they know and be in a position to prevent child sexual abuse

- **Collective stakeholder action**

GCN believes in collective action, government, communities, churches, media, private sector and other ngos for violence against girls is a huge problem and challenge that cannot be tackled by the law, awareness campaigns and any one single strategy or organization.

- **Government**

There is need for the government and other concerned stakeholders to ensure the provision of free HIV and AIDS related drugs to rape victims who would

have contracted HIV in the process Government to implement a policy of testing, counseling and provision of post exposure prophylaxis for rape survivors at risk of HIV infection. Government to ensure courts, police and social welfare departments are seriously implementing the Children's Protection and Adoption Act .there is need to establish potential life saving treatment, for example

- i. Safe abortion
- ii. Emergency contraception
- iii. Abortion pills
- iv. Anti retroviral drugs including Nevirapine

- Rapists must be sent for HIV tests before judgment is passed in court
- There must be child friendly laws that prevent children from being abused and GCN has already set sights on advocating for a strictly Child Sexual Offences' Bill
- Victim Friendly Courts need to fast track rape cases
- There is need for Village Rape Criminal courts which give traditional leaders powers to deliberate on rape cases considering that there have been delays in the conventional courts system
- Community Participation is very critical and this entails involvement of everyone at every stage of development work

• **For Parents, Schools And Ministry of Education**

Parents and guardians of children are strongly reminded to trust children to themselves ONLY. After school, children should be accompanied by an adult. Parents Committees can meet and organize parents who can take it in turns like the case in other schools to take children to and from school. The Ministry of Education in 1998 had a circular on child abuse and its management in schools. This is an excellent document that should be evoked and get schools to implement it. Management of young girls during menstruation should be added to this policy to help curb child abuse.

• **Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Zinatha**

There has been a call from all walks of life to address church organized marriages and the beliefs that young girls are a possible cure of HIV and AIDS. GCN hopes to come up with joint National Action with the Council of churches and Zinatha with hopes to bring to book champions of these beliefs and practices.

• **Neighbourhood watch-Sexual Abuse Monitoring Committees involving:**

- Local political and traditional leaders
- Local community (men, women, youth)
- Local government service providers.

The committees have to handle, track and monitor local sex trafficking and sexual abuse cases.

REVIEW OF POLICIES THAT ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS OF THE GIRL CHILD

Legal Review policy finally brought together key stakeholders in government, civil society, religious circles and indeed intellectuals to closely examine laws and policies that protect children especially the girl child.

Gaps were identified and general consensus is that in Zimbabwe there are so many good national, regional and international legal instruments which when implemented to the full but can in essence play a critical role in the lives of girls.

At one workshop it was generally agreed that there ought to be advocacy around legal and policy implementation for the following reasons:

- a) Most polices and laws mitigate and do not prevent crimes against girls and children.
- b) When it comes to implementation of laws and polices various government departments work as separate entities whereas they seek to achieve the same. There is no sensitivity in certain circles when it comes to implementing policies and laws. Even before the Legal Review Policy workshop kick started one stakeholder remarked, “We do not want to come up with yet other policies that gather dust----” The out burst was justified for indeed policy on paper remains meaningless and only assumes meaning when fully implemented.
- c) The Zimbabwean government ratified the Children’s Protection and Adoption Act 2001, which makes it an offence for children to be forced into prostitution or to reside in a brothel. It is also an offence to adopt a child for the sole purposes of sexual exploitation.
- d) The Sexual Offences Act 8/2001 makes it an offence for a young person for the purpose of extra marital intercourse with another person or persons or that person having extra marital intercourse or conduct himself or herself in an indecent or immoral act with a young person
- e) The Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) of 1999 provides support for school children through payment of their school fees after they have been identified as disadvantaged by their communities Gender Sensitivity is highly recommended in selection of beneficiaries
- f) National Orphan Care Policy of 2001 gives guidance of the best ways of taking care of orphans who are being left due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

Gender sensitive economic policies

The number of girls being driven to a state of helplessness by the current socio-economic hardships is rising at an alarming rate and has already reached an unofficial national disaster status. The number of girl school dropouts in the country has reached alarming levels and as an organization championing the cause of the girl child, GCN decided to tackle this problem that is a real threat to the empowerment and emancipation of the girl child. Failure to put such a

measure in place will see sex Trafficking and sexual abuse figures soaring at an alarming level.

Development of a child sexual abuse and HIV and AIDS Empowerment programme

CAMPAIGN AGAINST RAPIST - TO -CHILD - TRANSMISSION OF HIV

GCN has gathered that Rapist-To-Child-Transmission of HIV needs more attention on a national level. There is an imperative need to raise awareness and sensitise the community and stakeholders around this issue. Considering the prevalence of cases of Rapist-To-Child Transmission of HIV there is need to raise awareness on the part of law enforcement agents, policy makers and implementers as regards the imperativeness of fast – tracking rape cases within the courts channels and the law enforcement process. This is because justice delayed is justice denied and this result in delaying of post exposure treatment.

- There have been rampant beliefs and myths that having sex (this is always forced) with a virgin certainly cures one of HIV and AIDS. This widespread trend has been cemented by wayward prescription from traditional and faith healers; hence a lot of young girls have been raped in and around domestic spheres. Furthermore the media is awash with rape cases and many of these rapists, including prominent people have been found to be positive and to have subsequently infected their victims.
- There are men who are HIV positive and are on a revenge mission which is influenced by their bad past sexual experiences with women. As a result of frustration after contracting HIV they embark a mission to infect vulnerable and innocent girls they come across

GCN has dealt with a number of forced marriages which are nothing more than harbours of rape and widespread sexual violence. In most cases girls, some of them below the age of 12 are forcibly married off to older men who have been sexually active with multiple sexual partners thereby exposing the young girls to HIV infection. What is mind boggling as regards people's ignorance as to how this subjects girls to the dangers of HIV and AIDS is the fact that communities especially some apostolic sects have been sanctioning such marriages without considering the far reaching risks that this poses to innocent girls.

While the issue of forced marriages has been prominent in our programs as antithetical to children's rights, GCN feels that there is need to streamline the role of HIV and AIDS in this regard and sensitize girls, responsible authorities and communities on the increasing phenomenon of Rapist-To-Child-Transmission of HIV.

The challenges in this regard are the fact that perpetrators have become so daring that they have resorted to killing their victims after abuse as a cover up so that ritual motives are blamed. In relation to this, enough has not been done by law enforcers as more and more girls continue to fall prey. The justice system has also been very inconsiderate of the fact that post-exposure treatment is vital yet cases are delayed for ages. The setting up of Victim

Friendly Courts and implementation of law and fast tracking of rape cases is long overdue.

Lack of protection of victims has also meant that they have suffered in silence as in most cases they are threatened by perpetrators who are allowed to walk free. On the other hand some families have been so greedy to get compensation through marriage at the expense of justice and children's rights.

Such are some of the lessons we have learnt and the challenges we have faced.

There is urgent need therefore to:

- sensitize girls and the community through awareness campaigns on the effect of child sexual abuse in particular and rape in general in the light of HIV and AIDS.
- lobby stakeholders, policy makers, implementers and local and traditional leaders to prioritize the fight against rape of minors in the wake of a rising trend of rapist-to – child – transmission of HIV
- empower girls to challenge for the promotion and provision of their rights as regards the twin menaces of rape and HIV and AIDS
- campaign for the easy access to post- exposure treatment on the part of girls who get abused by HIV positive perpetrators.

Community development and empowerment on the girl child

Community empowerment and development programs help in facilitating community capacity building for communities to own and be able to sustain programs on their own. Structures fostered within the communities are and will always be conduits for future programming in a way that sustains results.

Conclusion

On a lighter note ,given activism around the issue of violence against girls It is however gratifying to say that there has been a growing number of girls resisting sexual abuse and other forms of violence having gone through GCN empowerment programs. After an awareness campaign in Mwemba Village, Hwange in August 2004 , our Area Coordinator, Ruth Bikwa sent an email message to Director of GCN which reported that:

“On Saturday 18 September 2004, barely a week after the launch of Neshaya Secondary School in Makwa village, a Neshaya secondary school girl was way-laid by a man who had just been released from jail for raping his aunt. He tripped her down, produced a knife, pinned her down and attempted to rape her. The ordeal was disturbed by a passing vehicle, which resulted in the girl overpowering the perpetrator who ran in the opposite direction into the bush. The girl picked the man's bag, boarded the passing car and went to report the case to our centre. Our security guard using information in the bag managed to hunt for the rapist and arrested him. The villagers wanted instant justice and have the rapist

pinned down with a stick hovering above him until the police came as the Director of GCN had said at the launch of Neshaya secondary school.ⁱⁱ

N.B. The girl is in Form 4 and aged 15 years. The case was fast tracked and the rapist awaits trial soon. Thanks to the resident police of Mwemba Cst. Fugawo.

Commenting on the above incident GCN Director said,

If only as many girls as possible could out rightly through life survival skills training resist violence perpetrated against them then this would in the long run teach men and boys to know the power in girls to claim their space as equal partners. The fact that at least the girls can stand firm and resist violence is a clear indicator of empowerment where one seizes to be a miserable victim of violence to being a victor, a real and true survivor not physically, psychologically and emotionally injured. Sometimes society tends to be protective of girls when they are supposed to be protective of themselves, to be in control and in charge of situations and guard jealously invasion of their spaces and everything around them.`.

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ⁱ GCN definition of violence after June 2004 Consultative workshop at Quality International Hotel, Zimbabwe