



Girl Child Network

Registered Private Voluntary Organisation 9/2004

SPECIAL

2006 End of Year In Touch Newsflash

Keeping in touch with funding partners, friends, board and supporters.

Chief Writer: Robinson Tafadzwa Chikowero

Editor: Hazviperi Betty Makoni (Director)

“All is well that ends well”! Such is the synopsis of the year 2006 and all its characteristics. This was another year that despite its myriad of challenges saw Girl Child Network standing head and shoulders above the still waters that represented the country's socioeconomic state of affairs. GCN, just like any other organisation in the country faced its own fair share of obstacles but remained resolute and crafted ways of ensuring that the target beneficiaries enjoyed the best available resources.

Hyperinflation kept the prices of basic goods and services high. The impact of the HIV/AIDS on communities and beneficiaries that saw the increase in the orphaned and other vulnerable children prevalence was also another challenge the organisation encountered. With the increase in the reporting of child abuse cases owing to intensive awareness campaigns the organisation was involved in a number of rescue, and rehabilitation missions and also case follow ups. However, vehicles were the biggest challenge as the ones available constantly broke down, sometimes at the most crucial stages of the rescue operations. Moreso, in some cases the organization worked hand in hand with some police officers and some had to provide the police with vehicles to apprehend perpetrators of child abuse in order to leave the child in a free home. Nevertheless, the organization never allowed such challenges to compound the woes of girls at risk hence it made sure that it was there for its beneficiaries.

Through this “In Touch Newsflash” we will continue to share our experiences for the year 2006 and with it you will never miss a bit of every newsworthy issue that had either a negative or positive implication on the organization during the past year.

Appreciation

Girl Child Network Director, staff and beneficiaries do not operate and survive in a vacuum hence it is in this regard that we wish to extend our deepest appreciation and profound

thankfulness to those who stood by us in these trying times, making every move we made enjoyable, lifesaving and instilling confidence. Special mention goes to the following for making GCN what it is throughout the year:

Development Partners

Our heartfelt thanks go to our individual and major funding partners for their complimentary financial and moral role they played in ensuring that our objectives were achievable through the grants and funds extended to GCN during the year or in previous years. Hats off to Oxfam NOVIB, Royal Netherlands Embassy, IDEX, Egmont Trust, American Jewish World Service, US Embassy, Firelight Foundation, UNICEF, Newfield Foundation and Global Fund for Women. We will always cherish the relationship that has developed to date and we look forward to a continued mutual working relationship in the coming years and beyond. A warm welcome to our new funding partners European Commission and the British Embassy.

Local and International GCN Friends

There are locally and internationally based friends of GCN who dedicated their precious time to the cause of the organisation and its beneficiaries. Such was their valuable contribution that in their on ways they planted smiles on the faces of many girls. It will be a disservice to their contribution not to mention the tireless efforts of Bill Parks who has ably proved to be a GCN Ambassador in Canada, Tara Doolan who had the chance to be work with GCN as an intern, Agnes Samler, Tawengwa and Paola Gianturco in the US. However this is not to belittle the contribution of the other friends not mentioned herein. Bill Sparks has assisted in selling GCN musical album "Wake Up Girls" which has gone a long way in boosting financial base for GCN unrestricted funds. To date up to US\$1 500 has been realized through CD sales. Hope Chigudu a woman activist in Zimbabwe and consultant remains the pillar of success for GCN.

Stakeholders and the Media

Despite treading on sensitive grounds, GCN still managed to create friends where it was more likely to make enemies. The synergies we created with our networking partners and other key stakeholders made life easier for the organisation and its beneficiaries as we shared experiences and worked together in a common cause for the betterment of the lives of many children from poor and disadvantaged households. Special mention in this regard goes to the Women Coalition of Zimbabwe chaired by Betty Makoni, GCN Director, NGOs, traditional leaders, government line ministries and departments such as the department of Social Welfare, Police, the courts and also school authorities in our areas of operation. In their on ways they complimented our efforts in eradicating the gravity of all dimensions of child abuse in the home, school and community.

Both the Independent public print and electronic media also weighed in with the mighty of the pen and the microphone as they exposed sensitive cases of abuse and helped popularize laws and policies governing the welfare of children and women. The struggle to achieve a positive portrayal of girls and women in the media still has a long way to go despite the efforts made so far. However GCN wishes to commend the following media houses for their unwavering and undiluted support to the fight for gender equity and equality: The Standard, ZTV's Kidznet, Kubatana, The Nehanda Guardian, The Herald, The Sunday Mail, The Daily Mirror, Feba-Zimbabwe, Radio Zimbabwe and SFM, VOA, VOP, Global Health Link and the Canadian Daily

Star. Bill Sparks' activism has done immense publicity for our organization and hats off to Bill Sparks.

The Local Corporate World

GCN is encouraged to note that of late the corporate players in Zimbabwe has joined hands with GCN and other stakeholders in responding to the plight of the girl child and children in general. It is against this background that GCN would like to appreciate the support received from such corporate players as Zimsun, CBZ Bank Limited, Stanbic, Old Mutual, Innscor Africa and Holiday Inn and also the Women In Progress Group.

GCN staff

Girl Child Network's chapter for the year 2006 will be incomplete if written without including the staff, board, volunteers and interns at the Headquarters in Chitungwiza, Chitsotso, Mwemba and Chihota Girls Empowerment Villages and club and Area coordinators in the various areas of operation. Throughout the year they exhibited unparalleled passion and commitment geared towards ensuring the development and empowerment of the girl child. They worked during odd hours after calls for help and traveling for long distances to ensure they reach out to the girl child in the remotest part of the country, sometimes receiving threats and intimidatory remarks. Despite such drawbacks GCN staff remained pliant and unyielding.

GCN is grateful to the following :

The Director and Founder	Ms Hazviperi Betty Makoni
Assistant Director	Rachel Tongoona
Finance and Administration Manager	Stephen Makuwa
Programmes Coordinator	Lucia Mbofana
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	Admire Kashambwa
Grants and Fundraising Officer	Robinson Chikowero
Information Documentation and Dissemination Officer	Francisca Nyamukoho
Hwange Area Coordinator	Ruth Bikwa
Rusape Area Coordinator	Pardon Mukuchura
Chihota Area Coordinator	Livingstone Kamwoto
Accounting Officers	Alice Sanyika
	Maidei Manjoro
Office Assistants	Simon Makurumidze
	Clever Kaseke
	Hardlove Chibanda
	Simbarashe Hunda
Programme Officers	Ntombizodwa Mvududu
	Grace Gurira
	Precious Diwura
Administrative Assistants	CharmaineTunduwani and David Tsungo
Accounts Clerks	Matthew Chitongo
Programme Assistants	Regis Manjoro,
	Gemma Rushoko,

	Revai Makosiyeni Fine Kamuhombe Milca Manhanzva Agnes Miti Margaret Chaikosa Norah Shayavanhu
Security Assistants	Justice Tinarwo Dornavan Shambare Shawn Shambare Tawanda Chavanga Mr. Chifaka
Child Monitors	Regina Rapoyo Precious Mangove Sarudzai Gumbere Liah Hodzongi Ruth Mudede Tracy Machiya
Landscape Assistants	Emmerson Gabi Walter Tawonezvi

2006 Major Highlights – Going Down Memory Lane

- ☒ THE major highlight of the year was the participation of Girl Child Network at the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto where the organisation was ably represented by the Director, Ms Betty Makoni and wrote yet another piece of history by scooping the inaugural Award for addressing gender inequalities that fuel the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Also representing GCN was GCN Community Ambassador, Shadreck Taona Gwashavanhu and Silence Mazunga a Girl Child HIV/AIDS activist. On her return scores of GCN staff and networking friends thronged the Harare International Airport to welcome her amid song, dance and ululation. This fine feat was capped by a celebration on the 8th of December 2006 where a UNDP representative presented GCN with the award and the prize money. Betty Makoni led the Girls National Executive Committee in accepting the award. The event, attended by diplomats, NGO representatives, government officials, traditional and church leaders, club members, and staff and community members was spiced by catchy performances from girls, Amanda Sagonda and the Muddy Face.
- ☒ Betty Makoni followed up this with an attendance at a fundraiser dinner at the University of Toronto. GCN would like to extend sincere gratitude to Tara Doolan, Jerad and Bill Sparks, the University of Toronto, the UT Faculty of Law, students and the lawyers and activists who attended the fundraiser night in Toronto. Special thanks goes to Tara and Bill for working so hard to ensure that the event was a success and for hoisting the GCN flag so high, Graeme Hamilton for all efforts leading to the successful event and prior and hats off to Jared Kell for producing the film that was premièred during the night.

- ☒ An erroneous and mischievous Herald report caused unnecessary unease and despondency to both GCN friends and enemies when it fallaciously claimed that the organisation had participated in the authoring of the UN Special Envoy, Anna Tibaijuka's Report on Operation Restore Order. The implications of the article were that the organisation and its Director were involved in opposition activities against the government through its involvement in the doctoring of a report that was dismissed by the government. Although it raised dust and put the organisation and its Director under uncalled for spotlight the organisation's unquestionable work on the ground saved the day for the organisation. In the strongest terms the organisation produced a press response that condemned the article and those behind it as adversaries of the campaign against acts of violence against the girl child.
- ☒ On the other hand the International Women's Day celebrations roared into life at the Chitungwiza Aquatic Complex. Vice President Joyce Mujuru, women's organisations and scores of women who also took the opportunity to display their craftwork, attended the occasion organized by the GCN, Women's Coalition and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The theme of the year was, "Women in decision making".
- ☒ The first ever inaugural National Journalistic Awards was held at the Crowne Plaza Monomotapa Hotel in Harare on the 4th May 2006. The colourful event saw the organisation for the first in the history of fighting child sexual abuse in the country honouring the media personnel for their outstanding and objective reporting of issues of girl child abuse. There were cash prizes and shields in 21 categories for the successful journalists selected by a panel of people with experience in the media and the development fraternity. The Deputy Minister of Health and Child Welfare, Dr. Edwin Muguti was the guest of honour who in his speech reiterated government's commitment to fight child sexual abuse. The event was made possible and the most successful owing to the financial and technical assistance of NOVIB, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, The US Embassy, Zimsun and CBZ Bank limited.
- ☒ GCN held a Strategic Planning Workshop from the 29th~30th June 2006 that was bankrolled by Oxfam NOVIB and Newfield Foundation and facilitated by Development Consultant, Unity Chari. This saw the organisation coming up with a Strategic Plan Document for 2006~2009 that defines the organisation's direction for the next three years. GCN has incorporated new strategies and programs to suit the changing operating environment, changing needs of beneficiaries and implementing strategies of our key stakeholders. For the organisation to be effective and innovative in delivering its empowerment programmes GCN has had programmatic and operational elements being either introduced or changed. GCN considers the changes critical in that they are responsive to the trends that either contribute to the development of the girl child or hinder her development.
- ☒ GCN was privileged to host a number of international visitors who also had the privilege to experience first hand GCN's work. It was an honour having Gerry Cameroon from Canada based Canadian Crossroads International, which is a development organisation that assists networks across the world.
- ☒ Betty Akuffor a Social Development Consultant also visited GCN on a mission sanctioned by the Stephen Lewis Foundation. From her visit she intended to familiarize with GCN work and also assess the capacity of the organisation to undertake a project funded by the Foundation.
- ☒ Paola Gianturco, renowned photographer and writer of several books on real life women's issues including; "In Her Hands" and "Celebrating Women" who had been communicating with GCN and interacting with GCN Director and Founder Betty Makoni at various international

fora, finally visited the organisation this year. During the stay, she visited the Chihota Girls Empowerment where there are girls' dormitories she personally funded. Before she left a debriefing session was held and attended by beneficiaries, staff and community members with lots of entertainment and beverages.

- ☒ Besides the international visitors, GCN is grateful that there were local corporate visitors to the organisation's project sites. Having hosted the Stanbic Bank twice in Chihota and Chitungwiza, Zimsun, represented by Mr. Manyumwa also visited and met the organisation's needy beneficiaries from disadvantaged backgrounds Old Mutual followed suit after a number of meetings with GCN officials that saw the emergence of a relationship that resulted in the institution making donations to GCN. Will continue to court the support of the corporate world in its quest to ensure a holistic and multisectoral approach to the plight of girls and other vulnerable children.
- ☒ AS if proving that 2006 will be remembered as the year of International visits to GCN the organisation hosted Kenny and Rufaro Kangai from the International Child Resource Institute. They got the opportunity to tour GCN areas of operation and met some girls. GCN certainly hopes this will give birth to a long working relationship with the Institute. Other international visitors include four students from Canada who made club visits.
- ☒ ANDREAS Lonn and Paul Bolgrein from Sweden representing the World Children Prize for the Rights of Children visited GCN and took the opportunity to interview Betty Makoni on her life and work as the Director of an internationally grassroots organisation. They also managed to get on the ground experience of the work GCN does through visits to 3 girls clubs, talking to girls at the Chitsotso Girls Empowerment Village in Rusape and attending club launches at Chinyadza and Chikumbu Primary in Rusape.
- ☒ GCN was privileged to host the Asian Diplomatic Spouses in July 2006 who got the opportunity to learn about GCN and its beneficiaries. After meeting members of staff and beneficiaries the Group donated goodies that included mealie meal, clothes and sanitary ware to the organisation's Girl Empowerment Villages.
- ☒ CANADIAN Tara Doolan from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law spent time with GCN as an intern in the organisation's Advocacy and Lobby Program. Some of the major highlights of her stay included assisting the organisation in crafting the 2006-2009 Strategic Plan Document. She also worked on refining the Child Sexual Offences Bill that is the brainchild of Girl Child Network.
- ☒ DENISE Parmentier (Programme Officer) and Monique van Zijl (Assistant Programme Officer) from NOVIB one of GCN's biggest funding partners came to undertake the Risk and Opportunity Appraisal toolbox that is being used by NOVIB to assess partners for funding. There was a two day session that saw GCN and the NOVIB team going through the possible risk and opportunities that are either setbacks or incentives for further partnership and the achievement of the proposed project outcomes.

Programs Update: The Impact

1. Girls Empowerment Clubs Program

- ☒ There is an increased number of empowered girls able to stand on their own with confidence to tackle life challenges including child sexual abuse and harmful cultural and

religious practices. For example in Gurube where cases of child abuse were rampant with girls aged between 11 and 16 being married off to elderly farmers using witchcraft to intimidate people from reporting. Setting up girls' clubs in the area aided by vigorous awareness campaigns resulted in the reduction of such practices.

- ☒ The involvement and active participation of stakeholders at club launches created a platform for a multi-sectoral approach towards the empowerment of the girl child as club members and community members benefited immensely from a wide information base.
- ☒ Community members amounting to over 11 000 (averaging 1 000 per each club launch) also joined in to help the girls in chanting slogans of empowerment and anti-child abuse. As such the message shared and disseminated to all those who had failed to attend the campaign against child abuse resulting in communities conscious of children's rights. Communities were also made aware of the importance of giving the girl child space to develop her self-esteem.
- ☒ The club coordinators workshop enhanced the club coordinators capacity to effectively incorporate gender, HIV/AIDS and human rights in club activities. This has resulted in well informed girls on all issues that affect their lives .As a result, club coordinators have been able to help the girl child to assert her rights and resist various forms and manifestations of abuse as well as helping her realize her potential in life. This has in general seen an increase in the number of empowered girls and people opening up when any form of abuse is perpetrated, especially against the girl child.
- ☒ The leadership training workshops produced girls who are assertive and unequivocally put across their views on issues that affect them. This is evidenced by the way the trained children spoke during public forums where they exuded a lot of confidence and unquestioned assertiveness. The members of the GNEC presentations during their own meetings and their ability to host events such as club launches and other events showed high levels of empowerment to girls as early as at primary school level. More than 60% of club presidents and GCN members are prefects at school and this shows appreciation of the leadership skills imparted in the girls.
- ☒ Most empowered girls in clubs are also embarking on their own empowerment activities through economic self- help projects to assist other girls in the clubs to pay fees, buy their own sanitary requirements, uniforms and stationery and also assist those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS as well as the economically disadvantaged colleagues.

2. Advocacy and Lobby Program

- ☒ Commemoration of days increased awareness of an estimated four thousand community members on issues affecting the girl child especially harmful cultural practices such as appeasement of avenging spirits and pledging of minor girls.
- ☒ Many aspects of the Child Sexual Offences Bill, which GCN had been lobbying for, have been incorporated into the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act following intense

lobbying from GCN. Furthermore the cabinet has top on its agenda the issue of child sexual abuse and has so far proposed 25 years as minimum custodial sentence for rape. Rape in Zimbabwe now attracts life imprisonment.

- ☒ The repackaging and distribution of laws has sensitized children on legal statutes that protect and promote their welfare. This has been indicated by the increased reporting of cases of abuse or attempts of abuse on girls.
- ☒ GCN joined other stakeholders in celebrating commemorative days like the day of the African Child, International Women's Day and World day for the prevention of child abuse and on International Women's day the message against gender based violence reached an estimated 5 000 people. During the commemorations the community called for stiffer penalties against perpetrators of rape, top on the list was castration.
- ☒ Strengthened networking also culminated in the fast tracking of child abuse cases by stakeholders like the police, social welfare and the courts. The fact that many chiefs (male and female), kraal heads, religious leaders, school heads, councillors, police officers are working together with GCN is a huge victory and a start of social transformation. The networking also strengthened and expanded regional and international links.

3. Girls At Risk Support Program

- ☒ More than 6 000 rape survivors have been rehabilitated and reunified with their families and 80% of the girls have been able to move on with their lives. The empowerment villages have assisted to provide environments for the girls to fight trauma and be able to face life again through life survival skills training.
- ☒ GCN managed to reinstate 2 000 children back into school through the provision of school fees, uniforms and sanitary ware for girls with limited funds and has been regarded as one of the most reliable benefactors. There is a marked increase in the number of girls attaining a high level of education owing to GCN intervention.
- ☒ The empowerment villages are playing a critical role in rehabilitating rape survivors and providing an ideal environment for quick recuperation and 75% of the rape survivors are accessing legal, medical and justice support systems.
- ☒ The WARM project is providing practical examples for the girls to emulate. Some girls assisted by GCN have excelled educationally and girls like Caroline Tanyungwe and Shylet Chidonza from Rusape are studying towards attaining Accounting degrees at the University of Zimbabwe.
- ☒ GCN has been a directory of many as to where to get assistance. Thousands of girls who approached GCN with different kinds of problems were referred to other relevant organizations. Many have written thank you letters to GCN for its assistance in this regard.

4. Community Development and Empowerment

- ☒ The department took head on all the policies, cultural and religious practices and beliefs that have an adverse impact on the well being of girls .The dust raising awareness activities in communities resulted in a number of cases that were once swept under the societal carpet being unearthed. The empowerment that went on with the awareness resulted in communities reporting cases of abuse to GCN or other responsible authorities such as the police and school authorities.

- ☒ GCN activism in the communities also invaded and made a breakthrough in some religious sects notorious for their denial of education to little girls through marrying them off to older and married man. A total of 25 OVCs and 25 other community members were trained in home based care, which reduced their vulnerability to cross infection. The training also enhanced their skills in taking care of the sick thus improving the quality of care.
- ☒ The awareness campaigns have resulted in increased community awareness on issues that affect the girl child such as Gender, HIV/AIDS, harmful cultural and religious beliefs and Child abuse. The awareness campaigns and the setting up of the Child Monitoring Committees also resulted in community leaders, religious and traditional leaders taking a Zero tolerance stand to girl child sexual abuse.
- ☒ More than 4 000 people were assisted with food, non-food items, subsistence and medication.
- ☒ Having realised that child trafficking was becoming a menace GCN embarked on a project that sought to reduce its impact through investigations, rescue missions and awareness raising campaigns. The investigations unraveled syndicates involved in the trafficking of children in border towns and some have since been arrested. GCN made rescue missions of victims of trafficking (children in transit) and 20 girls were rescued, of them are still in the empowerment villages undergoing rehabilitation and 12 where reunified with their families.

5. Information Documentation and Dissemination

- ☒ The newsflash continues to be a source of entertainment, education and inspiration to the girls reaching to an estimated 4 000 girls.
- ☒ An estimated 8 000 000 people have been reached with messages of child abuse and HIV/AIDS through information dissemination which was done through radio and television programs, t-shirts, NGO Expo, the agricultural show and book fairs where GCN exhibited its materials.
- ☒ The pamphlets produced in vernacular have sensitized communities and girls on the organization's programs and activities and also on issues pertaining to their rights and welfare.
- ☒ The Journalistic awards resulted in journalists who are sensitive to issues related to child protection. This has been indicated by the increased coverage of child abuse cases in the media especially the print media. This has in turn sensitized an estimated 2 million on child abuse who rely on the media for information. The journalistic awards have also ensured close relations between GCN and the media personnel .GCN featured prominently sensitizing readers and viewers in the media on child abuse.
- ☒ The Mutasa community was sensitized on child abuse and HIV/AIDS during the awareness campaign at Mt Jenya and this has resulted in the decrease of practices that perpetuate child abuse such as virginity testing.

It's Shocking!

A 9-year-old girl from Murambinda was married off to a 72-year-old man by her family. The man paid Z\$500 (revalued) as bride price and an old and tattered bed. GCN intervened

and rescued the girl from the abusive settlement. The girl was rehabilitated and was reunified with her family. The perpetrator is currently in remand prison awaiting trial.

A father from Mt Darwin booked a hotel in Harare every day of 2006 until it was discovered recently that the girl he took in the hotel room was his daughter aged 15.

Reverend Obadiah Msindo who is alleged to have raped his house maid is still out of custody. The Regional Magistrate said that Msindo has a case to answer. He applied to the High Court who have put the case on postponement four times in 8 months. Who knows what's next when now all males do it for themselves.

On the Cards

The biggest upcoming event for the organisation is the participation of the Girl Child Network Director at the International Guest Program in New York from January 2007 to March 2007. GCN is confident of her ability to represent not only GCN but also the country at large like she has done in other forums before.

Donations

GCN and its beneficiaries especially those in the Girls Empowerment Villages received an assortment of donations from different well-wishers who among them include members of the Women As Role Models Programme, Women In Progress, Old Mutual, Save the Children UK, Kistern Odegaard from Kuwait and the Rotary International. Donations include money for school fees, stationery and other education related requirements, bath and laundry soap, waterproofs; bath towels baby nappies, blankets, girls and boys' pants, soccer and volleyballs and nets clothes, sanitary ware and panties. They also include an array of goods and materials that include sewing machines, garden implements, blankets and peanut butter making machines. The donated items were shared among the organisation's Empowerment Villages and girls from needy and disadvantaged households. Monetary donations include (new currency unless stated):

Agnes Salmer	Z\$	250 000 for girls panties and food
Reverend Ken Mew	Z\$	60 000
Prof M. Rukuni	Z\$	4 000
Miriam Tenim	Z\$	5 708
Elizabeth Rea	Z\$	1 700
Paula Gianturco	Z\$	513 460 260.00 (old currency)
Reverend Ken Mew	Z\$	60 000
Prof M. Rukuni	Z\$	4 000
Miriam Tenim	Z\$	5 708 000
Elizabeth Rea	Z\$	1 700 000
Rufaro Kangai	Z\$	5 000 000
Sheila Korsah	Z\$	3 000 000
Pam Hutchinson	Z\$	2 000 000
Barbara Jones	Z\$	500 000
Ms S Manyuma	Z\$	160 000
Innsco Africa	Z\$	100 000

Rouzeh Eghtessadi	Z\$	70 000
Mr. and Mrs. Rukuni	Z\$	5 000
Lydeway Consultants	Z\$	160 000
Willie and Roe Green	Z\$	70 000.00
Elizabeth Rea	Z\$	5 000.00
Mr and Mrs Vickers	Z\$	90 000.00
Tara an Law Students	Z\$	250 000 for Panganai

Happy and Prosperous 2007

******"We pride in keeping you abreast, posted and closer to our work"******
For views, comments and donations get in touch with us

<u>Contact Person</u>	Hazviperi Betty Makoni
<u>Position</u>	The Director
<u>Address</u>	131 Duri Road Unit F, Seke, Chitungwiza
<u>Telephone</u>	263-70-31132/21509
<u>Cell</u>	091 288 251,253
<u>Fax No</u>	263-70-31132
<u>Email</u>	gcn@zol.co.zw or gcninfo@zol.co.zw
<u>Website</u>	www.gcn.org.zw