



Girl Child Network

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Mid Term In Touch Newsflash January~June 2006

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

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Having managed to overcome a plethora of social and economic challenges that tested the character of the organisation in 2005, Girl Child Network entered 2006 with a lot of enthusiasm and renewed vigour to tackle and champion the various issues that hinder or promote the upliftment of the girl child respectively. Half a year down the line and just like it did in 2005, GCN has so far emerged with a lot of smiles on the faces of its target beneficiaries and satisfaction on the part of those who continue to stand by the organisation and help it overcome the numerous obstacles it tumbles upon as it champions the development and empowerment of the girl child in all spheres of life. The "In Touch Newsflash", as has become its tradition, will continue to furnish you with all the relevant and interesting information pertaining to the work of the organisation and the plight of the beneficiaries who are the only reason why the organisation still exist.

News In Brief: This Year So Far



GCN was privileged to host 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. He managed to attend an HIV/AIDS and child sexual abuse awareness campaign in Manicaland witnessed and attended by key stakeholders and about 500 community members in the area. After several visits to GCN areas of operation and meetings with GCN staff and networking partners Gerry expressed the willingness of his organisation to work with GCN and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe chaired by GCN Director. He further promised to facilitate exchange programmes between GCN and other relevant organisations in women and children's issues.



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. She went on to visit the organisation's areas of operation including the project target areas. In this regard, GCN is pleased to announce that the visit and subsequent correspondence between GCN on one hand

and Betty and the Foundation on the other hand have led to the approval of a proposal submitted by GCN to the Foundation to be implemented in the organisation's Chihota and Mhondoro areas of operation. GCN warmly welcomes The Stephen Lewis Foundation to the growing list of GCN funding partners.

📖 HAVING communicated with GCN and interacted with GCN Director and Founder Betty Makoni at various international fora renowned writer/photographer, Paola Gianturco finally visited the organisation. During the stay the writer of several books on real life women's issues including; "In Her Hands" and "Celebrating Women", attended GCN programmes to include a club launch and field visits in Chitungwiza. She also visited the Chihota Girls Empowerment where there are girls' dormitories she personally funded. Her trip also acted as a promotional tour of her book "In Her Hands" part of whose proceeds will be channeled towards the Global Fund for Women who will in turn assist women and children's organisations. By the way Global Fund for Women also funded GCN. Before she left a debriefing session was held and attended by beneficiaries, staff and community members with lots of entertainment and beverages. GCN will feature in her new book, "Beacons of Hope" to be launched in 2007.

📖 A UNESCO team also visited the organisation to establish areas of cooperation and collaboration. However, besides the international visitors GCN is grateful that there have been 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. 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. The organisation held a meeting with Old Mutual and it is hoped that a relationship will eventually develop in the near future that will also encourage the participation of the corporate world in addressing issues affecting children. After the meeting Old Mutual staffers, Margaret Vera and Linna Mfarinya made a subsequent visit to GCN offices for further discussions.

📖 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 and Tara who is now attached to GCN on an internship programme was part of them.

📖 THE GCN Director, Betty Makoni attended four regional workshops/conferences in South Africa, Zambia and Swaziland. The Swaziland trip in which she presented a paper on best preventive strategies in the battle against gender based violence seem to be a potential to bear positive results. This is particularly so bearing in mind that there are plans to have an inter organisation exchange programme between GCN and the Swaziland Women's Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA). GCN acknowledges the role being played by Gerry Cameroon in ensuring that this is achievable.

📖 A Stakeholders Consultative Workshop was held under the CIDA-GESP funded project that saw the organisation sharing the project results, the project's best practices and also mapping the way forward for the sustainability of the project and its activities and strategizing on scaling up the project activities. 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".

📖 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 article went on to inaccurately indicate that the GCN Director went on monthly sojourns overseas mobilising funds. 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.

📖 THE 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 the Jewel Bank (CBZ)

📖 ON the same day there was a Policy Makers Consultative meeting. The meeting was geared towards lobbying for the adoption of the long overdue Child Sexual Offences Bill which will go a long way in mitigating and curbing the horrendous acts of child sexual that continue to be perpetuated without effective restraint domestic mechanisms. If passed into law the Bill, marking the height of the fight against child sexual abuse in Zimbabwe, will act as a deterrent measure and will eventually contribute to the reduction of child sexual abuse cases.

Programs Update

Advocacy and Lobby Program

During this quarter the program was mainly focused on Networking and commemoration of International Days. Such efforts were meant to bring together stakeholders to put measures in place that will ensure effective response to the plight of children in general and girls in particular in the light of the socioeconomic challenges communities encounter that in turn counteract the development of children in society.

Networking

The Programme featured on many networking fora with various like-minded stakeholders in a bid to craft a strong lobbying front and on voice on issues affecting children. The organisation belongs to such coalitions as Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of children (ZNCWC), the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) with the Director, Ms Betty Makoni as the chair and National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) where the GCN Director is a Board member. The coalitions enable Girl Child Network to deliver quality service to the targeted beneficiaries. The several invitations GCN is receiving are an indicator that people appreciate the input from GCN and also that GCN get good referrals for our clients as organisations there is need to complement each other's efforts.

Commemoration of International Days

GCN commemorated *International Women's Day* on the 8th and 11th of March 2006 respectively as the month of March is known as the National Women's history month.

Women are credited for bringing communities together and restoring hope in the fall of the impossible odds. On the 11th of March 2006 various women in decision making positions presented on the theme thus girls were given the opportunity to learn about the extraordinary achievements of women presenting an authentic view of history. This perspective served to encourage girls and women to think bigger and also to give men present a fuller understanding and appreciation of women's experiences. Great women like the Honourable Vice President, Joyce Mujuru, the Minister of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development, Honourable Oppah Muchinguri, the Minister of Science and Technology, Doctor Olivia Muchena, the Anti Corruption Commissioner, Doctor Rutendo Wutaunashe, Doctor Hope Sadza the brain behind the Women's University in Africa and the Director for GCN, Betty Makoni presented on the day. However many women's NGOs from Harare did not attend the International Women's Day.

Print and Electronic Media Coverage

The Media has complimented GCN efforts as some of its programmes were flighted and beamed by both the print and electronic media. GCN is partnering with other organisations to lobby for the Domestic Violence Bill hence it took part in activities that sought to sensitize people on the Bill like the popular television talk show-Mai Chisamba Show. The International Women's Day received coverage from the Newsnet and the Kidznet thus reaching out to a lot of people.

As a result of GCN's ongoing advocacy campaigns impact has been recorded in different dimensions:

- ✓ GCN's targeted clients are accessing GCN's services owing to the number of people seeking GCN's assistance for example a woman who suffered severely from domestic violence for six years with her children only got to know about GCN on the electronic media and escaped.
- ✓ Many girls living outside Harare are coming to GCN or phoning requesting rescue from rape

- ✓ Through various advocacy campaigns, many people are rallying behind GCN as can be witnessed by the fact that high profile people in their campaigns are condemning child abuse e.g. Vice President Mujuru in Chivhu and Mutoko and Honourable Oppah Muchinguri in most of her campaigns.
- ✓ The community at large appreciates the need for stiffer penalties for perpetrators of abuse and this is highlighted by their endorsing of signatures on the penalties to the policy makers that are to be used as lobbying tools for stiffer penalties by GCN.
- ✓ On International Women's Day message reached more than 5 000 people since the event was hugely attended.
- ✓ Families generally are appreciating the fact that girls and boys should be on the equal footage as can be seen by the fact that in the face of limited resources they are struggling for both girls and boys to have the same opportunities.

Target Beneficiary Protection and Emergency Program

Despite the biting economic conditions that come heavily on the organisation's target beneficiary base the Target Beneficiary Protection and Emergency Programme has managed to ensure that smiles linger on the faces as the intended beneficiaries were reached and tremendously benefited through TBEPP's programmes. The department has continued to assist beneficiaries with school fees but however should be haste in pointing out that the prevailing economic environment and the skyrocketing school fees have counteracted the efforts to ensure girls access education. Currently the department has 1 500 girls on the waiting list and most of them are on the brink of dropping out of school as their guardians are failing to provide for their educational needs. At least 32 applications are received at the head office on a daily basis. It is nonetheless encouraging to note that those who have benefited have submitted acknowledgements of payments and thank you letters have been received from school heads, guardians and beneficiaries.

Humanitarian Assistance

Through donations from well-wishers the department also managed to respond to the humanitarian needs of the target beneficiaries. This included provision of clothes, shoes, sanitary ware, and subsistence to over 600 girls among them girls at GCN's Empowerment Villages and beneficiaries at Young Africa Skills Centre.

Child Abuse Cases and Case follow-ups

On the other hand the department responded to different dimensions of abuse reported to GCN and other authorities that included sexual, emotional, physical abuse, negligence, forced marriages, indecent assault, medical requests, domestic violence, estate wrangle cases and sex trafficking. Those that were beyond the organisation's jurisdiction were referred to the relevant organisations. In the light of the reported cases the department attended court sessions for deferred trials and initial trials. Home visits were made to ascertain the conditions of survivors and rescue missions also involved those who needed the closer attention of the organisation especially considering that they were staying with the perpetrators. From September 2005 to June 2006 GCN recorded 3 900 cases of child sexual abuse.

Networking

TBEPP Officers attended a meeting on the 25th of April 2006 in Mt Pleasant with some members of the Women As Role Models Program-a program that seeks to ensure that women who have made it in life also contribute to the education of girls from poor and disadvantaged households. The meeting, which was attended, by the GCN Director, some beneficiaries and TBEPP Officers was aimed at updating the WARM members on the current state of affairs as far as the program was concerned. It also discussed the challenges faced in networking with each other and the best possible solutions and recommendations.

Despite the challenges the department faces such as rising school fees, biting socioeconomic climate and delays in court cases the department has made the necessary impact on the communities. Many girls are able to continue with their education after paying their fees and for those at boarding schools, they are still accessing quality education. Thank you letters are still flocking into the department. Cases of abuse are now being exposed, as communities are now aware of abuse and reporting more than before to the police as well as GCN. The courts and other stakeholders are now seriously considering the rights of the girl child as indicated by their cooperativeness in dealing with abuse cases.

Women As Role Models Programme

In the light of the ever-rising school fees and costs of other basic needs for girls to remain in school such as sanitary ware and stationery GCN is grateful to the members of Women As Role Models (WARM) Programme. To date over 123 girls in boarding, primary and secondary schools in Gokwe, Chivhu, Chitungwiza, Norton, Bindura, Beatrice and Chihota have benefited from the members' contributions. The beneficiaries have so far received the following; school fees, cotton wool, clothes, panties and towels. Others have commendably donated building materials and mealie meal for the Empowerment Villages. The WARM programme members have been so instrumental in ensuring that girls access education and, having made it in life they have ploughed back into the community through such assistance to girls. Below are the ladies committed to the development and empowerment of the girl child through provision of educational assistance. Angela Hatendi, Barbara Jones, Sheilah Korsah, Esi Chinyanga, Rouzeh Eghtessadi, Elizabeth Rea, Joe Brackett, Pat Ritchie, Rebecca Mano, Violet Kaitano, Marge Davis, Anne Robinson, Helen Van Resburg, Janet Hall, Caroline Maposhere, Louise Allart, Shelley Anderson, Rufaro Kangai and Isabelle Genskens. GCN will always welcome donations from the other members of the programme who pledged donations and those willing to join the programme feel free to get in touch.

Education and Training

The Education and Training Department has so far undertaken the following activities that are tailor made to contribute to the empowerment and development of the girl child. These encompass club launches in Rusape and Mutasa, training workshops, an exchange program between GCN and Padare Boys and two club visits

Club Launches

Mapfekera Primary School girls club in Mutasa district was officially launched on the 24th of February 2006. A total of 64 girls were officially recognized and accredited with journals. Girls from Sherukuru and Bvumba primary schools recited poems. The area coordinator for

Mutasa district gave an update of all the 13 clubs in her area and overallly urged parents to empower all girls by sending them to school. Sherukuru Primary School GCN club was launched in Mutasa on 5 April 2006. The Director accredited the club, presented the 81 girls with journals after they had recited the pledge. Girls from Njerama Primary and Vumba Secondary School girls clubs recited poems as a way of entertainment. The club president gave a brief background and a summary of the clubs activities. The Club Coordinator then chronicled how the club started in 2003 with 66 girls, and indicated that two later died and to date 32 girls have benefited from GCN school fees, sanitary ware and panties assistance. So far four clubs have been launched to include St Mary's Primary and Mwemba Primary Schools in Hwange.

Club Visits

The Education and Training department conducted two club visits with the following objectives, to equip club coordinators and club presidents with necessary and relevant information on how to run and manage girls clubs, to allow girls to openly share their experiences with GCN as a Network, to document clubs activities and to assess impact of GCN programmes at club level.

Clubs Exchange Programmes

GCN always ensures that its club members get the opportunity to share experiences with other organisations whose activities succour in changing the societal attitude towards the gender disparities. As such GCN club members at Zengeza 1 High and Seke 1 High organized a Child Participation Forum in conjunction with club members of Padare Men's Forum of Gender from Seke 1 High. The two clubs exchanged a lot of materials, such as poems on child abuse, child labour, HIV/AIDS and orphan hood. The proceedings of the day were wholly sponsored by and coordinated by GCN. Participating were GCN club presidents from Herentals, Zengeza 3 High, Seke 1 High, Seke 4, 7, 8 Primary Schools and St Mary's Secondary. The Chitungwiza Junior Council, ZNCWC, ZRP and the event was covered by Kidznet a subsidiary of Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings..

Girls National Executive Committee (GNEC) Termly Meeting and Training Workshops

The GNEC is mandated to meet once every term and it is in this regard that GNEC held its first termly on the 7th of April 2006. Members of GNEC from Chivhu, Chitungwiza, Bindura, Chihota, Rusape, Mutasa and Harare attended the meeting and members from Mhondoro, Seke Rural and Domboshawa failed to attend due to other commitments. Members reported back on successes and challenges as recorded in their respective areas. However the members were concerned about the constant and unprecedented rising of school fees and the GNEC feared that most of the girls might not go back to school next term. They also noted the need to assist girls clubs in establishing self-help projects necessary for the sustainability of all members, so that they are financially weaned from the network.

The department also conducted a two-day leadership training in Marondera from 31st March to 1st April 2006. It covered such areas as how to start and run clubs, appreciative inquiry, confidence building, leadership principles, public speaking skills, counseling, child participation, children's rights and child abuse. Participants were drawn from 20 schools, DEO and provincial offices. The major concern raised by the participants was the need to invite policymakers to training sessions and also the need to compile one book outlining stages and

conditions essential for empowerment of the girl child. Since the inception of the training in Marondera, the Education and Training department has had more clubs from Marondera registering and new clubs sprouting as well.

Information Documentation and Dissemination

The department persists to live to its reputation as the ear and eye of the girls as it continues to gather and disseminate the pertinent information that will be vital for the development of the girl child.

Newsflash and Materials Production

The girls' newsflash was produced in January and April 2006 respectively and distributed to all schools and empowerment villages through the Education and Training Program. GCN In-Retrospect, which captures the road the organisation, has traversed from 1998–2005 was reproduced and distributed at various networking workshops in and outside the country.

Media Monitoring and Tracking

GCN has realised that the media has become an important ally in the fight against all the atrocities as perpetrated on the girl child and as such it maintained a record of all the newspaper articles that have portrayed the girl child either positively or negatively. The department has also compiled a directory for journalists who are gender sensitive and have a passion for the girl child. Since January GCN has been featured on a number of radio and television programs. The table below clearly shows the number of radio and TV programs GCN was featured and the audience GCN has reached as a result of the programs.

Date	Medium	Estimated Audience	Article/Programme Content	Journalist
16/02/06	Television	3000000	ZTV Kidznet Child Alert Programme. Featured GCN Awareness Campaign in Mutasa District.	Sandra Mazunga Vitalis Jeremiah
09/03/06	Television	3000000	ZTV Kidznet Child Alert Programme. The club visit at St Oswald's School was featured.	Sandra Mazunga Vitalis Jeremiah
27/04/06	Radio	5000000	Isiqokoqhela Sendaba: Radio Zimbabwe phone in programme which was about the Girl Child Network and what it has done to date. Most listeners who phoned in wanted more information about GCN and the cases it has handled to date.	Gray Gambizamoyo

Networking

The Department had the opportunity to grace various networking workshops. These included a luncheon at the US Embassy's Public affairs Section where it was announced that they were moving to Eastgate. During the relocation GCN received office furniture for the Director's Office that include, two chairs, two bookshelves, steel cabinet, wooden cabinet, a television stand, two television sets and a PA system.

The department also attended the Girls Education Movement (GEM) meeting at the UNICEF offices, as GCN is a partner in GEM. The meeting was a recapitulation of last year's planned activities and the way forward for this year. All the partners were given tasks and GCN's task is to help other schools with no clubs to form GEM clubs. The organisation is also responsible for mobilizing the community to adopt the girls' club strategy.

With such activities the department managed to positively impact on the girls and the generality of communities as the newsflash continues to be a source of entertainment, education and inspiration to the girls as each month girls come to the GCN center looking for the newsflash. An estimated 8 000 000 people have been reached through GCN's activism during radio and television programs.

Community Development and Empowerment

The Community Development and Empowerment Programme was largely preoccupied with responding to the plight of disadvantaged community members and was funded by Oxfam GB while other funding partners like HIVOS, Action Aid and Save the Children UK contributed in their own ways. In this regard activities were mainly humanitarian in nature. As such the department managed to distribute food vouchers and food items, deliver counselling sessions, conduct some home visits, beneficiary identification and mobilization. Its target beneficiaries incorporated the most vulnerable members of the society to include the child headed households, the elderly, people living with HIV, single parents, the orphans and the survivors of child abuse

Homes visits

In order to come up with the most needy beneficiaries GCN undertook home visits in Chitungwiza and Epworth. The home visits were followed by a desktop selection using the home visits information that saw GCN and Oxfam agreeing to assist the most vulnerable community members. 600 and 200 potential beneficiaries were identified in Chitungwiza and Epworth respectively.

Voucher Distribution and Redemption

A total of 800 food vouchers received were distributed to 600 and 200 beneficiaries for Chitungwiza and Epworth respectively. The redemption of the vouchers followed with GCN using OK Town Centre as the redemption outlet while NHZ used Food Favorites as their redemption centre. The food voucher basket comprises of 20kg maize meal, 750ml cooking oil, 2kg sugar beans, 500g salt and 375ml peanut butter bottle.

Non-Food items Distribution

Using the distribution cards, beneficiaries received the following non-food items; cotton wool, hygiene kits, baby nappies, blankets and primary care giver kits. 650 beneficiaries got primary care giver kits, 4000 cotton wool, 562 blankets, 4 000 baby nappies, 800 hygiene kits and 100 water filters while in the end 3200 benefited in food vouchers

Home Based Care Training

Hospice Association of Zimbabwe in collaboration with GCN conducted a train the trainer Home Based Care workshop at GCN Zengeza Offices from the 30th of January 2006 to the

5th of February 2006. A total of fifty (50) people were trained and the main objective of the workshop included to provide clients with basic information on HIV/AIDS related conditions, to explore the concept Home Based Care, to demonstrate home Nursing skills required for bed ridden and terminally ill patients and to demonstrate the ability to provide emotional and practical support to bereaved families.

Networking

To ensure effective implementation of the humanitarian programme GCN attended meetings with other organisations involved in similar work. One of the meetings involved Oxfam GB, GCN and Christian Care. It was aimed at tackling such matters as finalising the issues stated on the distribution plan, the voucher serial number system, beneficiary identification cards, itemized registers, distribution plan, HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, accountability plan and procurement issues. Another involved Oxfam GB, GCN and OK Supermarket's representatives to understand the choice of the Supermarket and to evaluate the progress made by Ok Supermarket on the distribution plan.

Community Group Counseling Sessions

To ensure it reached to a large audience in all its dealings with communities, the department adopted the use of focus group meetings as a means of sharing information with beneficiaries. Beneficiaries were classified into groups according to their places of residents. Each group was made up of 50 people. Issues discussed at the gatherings included GCN's mission and vision, beneficiaries expectation in terms of, what are their priority basic needs, the communication channels available and areas that need improvement, the use of a suggestion box and its placement, awareness of the forth coming humanitarian aid, election of focus group leaders and the empowerment of the girl child in all spheres of life be it at school, community or homes.

Through such activities GCN was able to post positive impact on communities reeling under the effects of the prevailing socioeconomic conditions. The successful provision of humanitarian aid in form of food and non-food items helped in the improvement of the general health and the well being of the poor. After the gender, HIV/AIDS campaigns were carried out the beneficiaries showed signs gender sensitivity and are now in a position to define what constitute an abuse. Beneficiaries are now conscious of the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has decimated households living a trail of orphaned children in its wake. The fact that GCN managed to conduct group counselling helped in the achievement of the goal of creating safe homes, where children have somewhere to turn to when subjected to abuse.

Chitsotso Girls Empowerment Village

Girl Child Network continues to institute community based initiatives to respond to the impact of the AIDS scourge through its HIV AND AIDS, prevention, mitigation and support for the girl child programme in Mutasa district. The programme that is funded by the Egmont Trust is implemented by Chitsotso Girls Empowerment Village and has so far posted far-reaching impact to the girls and the community at large through the activities undertaken:

HIV, AIDS and Sexual Abuse Awareness Campaigns

Three awareness campaigns were held in Mutasa District. School club activities were used as a platform to conscientise the communities and schoolchildren on HIV, AIDS and sexual abuse and all other dimensions of abuse. The Child Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Draft Bills were also explained during the campaigns. Key stakeholders and participants at the campaigns included among others government line ministries District Aids Committee, ZRP, Victim Friendly Unit, Local church leaders, The chiefs and councilors, GCN Director and staff members.

The first campaign was held during the club launch of Mapfekera Primary School on the 5th of February 2006 where a total of five hundred people including the community members, all the village heads and local leadership attended. The second awareness campaign was held at Sherukuru Primary School on the 5th of April 2006 reaching out to more than nine hundred people. Collin Williams, a trustee of Egmont Trust, also graced this event. As if that was not enough the event was flashed in the press by Manica Post thereby extending the impact of the event to its readership. The third awareness campaign was held at Vumbunu Secondary School on the 26th of May 2006 attracting an audience of more than eight hundred people. Four new schools from the other side of the District came to witness the day and complemented the activities of the day by presenting poems and songs laden with HIV, AIDS and child abuse messages.

HIV and AIDS care, support and mitigation for Chitsotso Girls Empowerment Centre

The Chitsotso Girls Empowerment Village has also been able to put measures in place to ensure the mitigation of the impact of AIDS on its beneficiaries and child sexual abuse survivors including food, clothing, school fees and medication and psychosocial support in general. The challenge lies in taking care of HIV and AIDS victims who need proper care and support as they need to visit the doctors once or twice a week and the transport costs are increasing on a daily basis. In its bid to ensure improved service delivery at the Empowerment Village the following has been undertaken:___

- ✓ The centre managed to equip its clinic with basic medical supplies and staff is now able to deal with minor health cases.
- ✓ The centre managed to buy some foodstuffs for the girls in the Village and the Balanced Diet Chart for girls is now in place. This has greatly improved the health status of the girls.
- ✓ School uniforms and tennis shoes were acquired for the girls who are now presentable and comfortable in winter season.

To facilitate community based responses to the effect of AIDS GCN established a revolving loan to assist individuals and groups to get into income generating projects. This has seen the communities being able to take care of the orphans within their families to get access to education and their basic needs. The beneficiary communities, schools and individuals are very much happy to receive such assistance and they are doing their best to make sure they repay their loans within the stated period. They are involved in such activities as goat and cattle rearing, poultry, candle and soap making buying and selling, sewing, stationery selling, gardening and pig rearing.

Also through the HIV and AIDS prevention, mitigation and support for the girl child programme in Mutasa district GCN has ensured the reunification and reintegration of survivors of sexual abuse and other harmful traditional and religious practices that are antithetical to girls' development. At least 9 girls were reunified over a period of three months through cases follow-ups.

It's Shocking!

This column of the newsflash will bring to you the atrocities and deplorable statistics of violence against girls in all spheres of life.

- ✂ A 14-year-old form two girl gave birth after being sexually abused. The perpetrator admitted to the offence in court and was sentenced to 6 months in prison. 2 months were suspended for 3 years on condition that he does not commit the same offence. 4 months were also suspended on condition that he performs 120 hours of community service at a local school! The under age girl is now staying with the perpetrator as husband and wife!
- ✂ A 54-year-old perpetrator yet to be apprehended sexually abused 4 girls aged below 10 years over 4 months. Two of the victims and the perpetrator's wife are now deceased as a result of the abuse. The remaining girl is now terminally ill.
- ✂ For marrying a 14-year-old girl and keeping her as a sex slave the perpetrator walked out of the courts a free man after paying a fine of a trifling Z\$1 million (US\$10)!
- ✂ A girl aged 16 years was sexually abused by her father's friend who is also an ex-police officer. She was subsequently abducted and went missing for over a month. She was let brought back home by some people allegedly known to the perpetrator. However she appeared mentally disturbed as she could not recognise people including her own mother

On the Cards

Look out for the following exciting events lined in the near future by the organisation. If you are in the vicinity please make a date with us and donations towards any event are welcome.

- 📖 Girl Child Network will hold a Strategic Planning Workshop at a date to be announced. The aim of the workshop will be to strategise on the path the organisation will follow for the next 3 years. This follows the end the three year project cycle funded by NOVIB which was also preceded an external evaluation of the programme.
- 📖 GCN also intends to hold a very special and big day where it will invite the corporate world to support its endeavours in fighting for the development of the girl child. This follows the efforts made by such corporate players as CBZ, Stanbic Bank, Zimsun, and Old Mutual. Modalities of the day are still in the pipeline.

Donations

So far the organisation has received the following donations from well wishers mostly members of the Women As Role Models Programme, which have gone a long way in bringing smiles on the faces of many a girl from poor backgrounds. Donations have also ranged from cash, sanitary ware to clothes from Kistern Odegaard from Kuwait, Louise, Barbara Jones, and sanitary ware, shoes, books and mealie meal from the Rotary International.

Paula Gianturco	Z\$513 460 260.00
Reverend Ken Mew	Z\$ 60 000 000.00
Prof M. Rukuni	Z\$ 4 000 000.00
Miriam Tenim	Z\$ 5 708 000.00
Elizabeth Rea	Z\$ 1 700 000.00
Rufaro Kangai	Z\$ 5 000 000.00
Sheila Korsah	Z\$ 3 000 000.00
Pam Hutchinson	Z\$ 2 000 000.00
Barbara Jones	Z\$ 500 000.00

Girl Child Network has managed to remain afloat throughout turbulent times owing to the unwavering and unconditional moral and technical support of our long term funding partners. On behalf of the beneficiaries GCN extend its warm gratitude to the following funding partners who, over the years have brought smiles to the faces of the girls.

Funder	Purpose of funding	Comments/Impact
NOVIB	Programs and Administration	Through the three-year partnership, which ended in September 2005 and set to be extended. The results of the empowerment of the girl child were remarkable as the Evaluation Report confirms. The grant contributed the highest percent to GCN programs and administration budget and was the longest partnership GCN has ever had making NOVIB its principal funder.
CIDA	Program of action on issues affecting the girl child in Zimbabwe	The project was successfully implemented and a Stakeholders Consultative Workshop was undertaken to assess the impact of the project in the areas of operation. The project contributed immensely especially to the change in attitude towards the girl child in the 5 areas of operation especially as shown by the commitment pledged by traditional and religious leaders to work with GCN in eradicating the abuse of girls institutionalized in their sects. This project ended in April 2005.
Firelight Foundation	Rusape Safe village program on empowerment of the rural girl child and institutional development	The project that is currently running as a regrant has produced remarkable results in rehabilitation of survivors of all forms of abuse. With the grant the Chitsotso Empowerment has been turned into a safe and reliable sanctuary for abused girls.
IDEX	Empowering Girls through Education and Economic Programs	The project is located in Hwange and just like the Chitsotso Girls Empowerment the project has contributed to the successful rehabilitation of survivors of all forms of abuse at Mwemba Girls Empowerment Village. Besides that it also involves the empowerment of girls in Hwange through GCN's various programmes.
American Jewish World Service	Economic Empowerment through Self-Help and Humanitarian Aid	This is a project that is aimed at empowering girls and communities to cope up with their disadvantaged backgrounds

		and has impacted positively to that effect.
Global Fund for Women	School fees for primary school girls	The grant was mainly and specifically for reinstatement of disadvantaged girls into school. It was through this grant that the organisation reinstated more than 1000 girls into school.
Egmont Trust	HIV and AIDS Prevention, Mitigation and Support for the girl child in Mutasa District, Zimbabwe.	Implementation of the project is already underway in Mutasa district. It will go along way in mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS on the girl child
Stephen Lewis Foundation	Community Empowerment and HIV and AIDS Prevention, Mitigation and Support in Mhondoro and Chihota districts Zimbabwe.	Implementation of the project is already underway in Mhondoro and Chihota districts focusing on HIV prevention, mitigation and support.
New Field Foundation	Institutional Capacity Building and Area Coordinators Security	The project has immensely contributed to the organization's staff capacity and ensured that it effectively implements programmes
Pacific Institute For Women's Health	Community based approach Campaign Against Domestic Violence and Harmful Cultural Practices	This is a short term project still running that seeks to deconstruct the perception of longstanding cultural practices that have perpetuated gender based violence in all its dimensions with the girl child as the ultimate victim.
UNICEF	Reunification and Reintegration of Children living on the streets. Community Based Response Strategy for OVC	The projects are currently running and has contributed to rehabilitation of girls who used to live and work in the streets and capacitating child protection committees and are joint initiatives with Streets Ahead and Childline and also Child Protection Society and Family Support Trust

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For views, comments and donations get in touch with us

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