



STOP
CHILD ABUSE

CAMPAIGN



PURPOSE OF CAMPAIGN

The purpose of the campaign is to break the silence around child abuse!

The campaign aims to mobilize leadership and commitment at all levels with a view to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation and abuse against children - including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices, such as early marriages. The campaign also targets children who are uniquely vulnerable to these abuses, such as when living without parental care and those in conflict with the law.

Violations of children's rights to protection take place everyday in Malawi and are extensive, under-recognized and under-reported. Children subjected to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect are at risk of death, poor physical and mental health, HIV/AIDS infection, homelessness, vagrancy and poor parenting in their future. They also miss out on educational opportunities that impact their future negatively.

The UN Study on Violence against children commissioned by the Secretary General in 2005 revealed shocking realities of violence against children. It provided a detailed yet sad picture of the nature, extent and causes of violence against children, and proposed clear recommendations for action to prevent and reduce such violence.

Malawi has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991 and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1987. Under these conventions, the government has an obligation to respect, protect, facilitate and promote the fulfilment of the rights that are enshrined in these conventions. These instruments and conventions must be translated into concrete legislation, interventions and development programmes.

It is for this reason that the Government through the Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with UNICEF and Civil Society is spearheading the national STOP Child Abuse campaign, scheduled to be launched on June 30, 2007.



FACT AND FIGURES

- > 4 million children living in poverty
- > 1.2 million children orphaned
- > 1.4 million children in child labor
- > 39% of married persons are children between the age of 15 and 18 yrs

WHAT IS VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN?

Violence against children includes physical and mental abuse and injury, neglect or negligent treatment, exploitation and sexual abuse. Violence may take place in homes, schools, orphanages, residential care facilities, on the streets, in the workplace, in prisons and in places of detention. It can affect children's physical and mental health, impair their ability to learn and socialize, and undermine their development as functional adults and good parents later in life. In the most severe cases, violence against children leads to death.

CRC ARTICLE 19

- States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.



WHO IS TARGETED? WHAT RESULTS ARE EXPECTED AT EACH LEVEL?

The campaign is targeting every body! We all have a responsibility to protect children.

PUBLIC

- > You, me, everybody!

POLICY/LAW MAKERS

- > parliamentarians,
- > cabinet ministers,
- > technocrats and
- > policy influencers

SERVICE PROVIDERS

- > Police,
- > Teachers
- > Community child protection workers
- > Health workers
- > Judiciary
- > Legal Counselors
- > Media

COMMUNITIES

- > Parents
- > Chiefs
- > Traditional authority leaders,
- > Gate-keepers/custodians of culture

WHAT ARE THE KEY MESSAGES?

1. **Stop Early Marriages** - give girls a chance to complete their education
2. **Stop Child Abuse** - promote justice for children
3. **Stop Child Labor** - send children to school
4. **Stop Child Trafficking** - give children their childhood
5. **Stop Sexual Abuse** - respect rights of children
6. **Stop Sexual Exploitation** - every child has a right to good health
7. **Stop Harmful Cultural Practices** - every child has a right to good health
8. **Stop Property Grabbing** - give orphans a chance to survive

Violence against children cuts across every sector and thread of society. It knows no boundaries and does not respect any laws. Violence occurs in homes, schools and streets, in care and detention centres. Perpetrators often include parents, family members, teachers, caretaker, law enforcements authorities and other children. Some children are particularly vulnerable because of gender, race, ethnic origin, disability or social status. And no country is immune, whether rich or poor.

(UN Study on Violence against Children, 2006)

WHAT ACTIONS ARE TARGETED BY THE CAMPAIGN?

The Campaign will advocate and support the creation of a protective environment for children in Malawi through the following strategies:

- > Strengthen the government commitment and capacity to fulfill children's rights -in mainstreaming of child protection in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy and national programmes, allocating adequate resources in the national budget and ensuring adequate human and institutional capacity to protect children.
- > Enforce legislative frameworks - lobby for the enactment of three important pieces of legislation pending in parliament - the Child Care Protection and Justice Bill; the National Registration Bill; the Wills and Inheritance Bill. Advocacy for the government to sign and ratify the convention on inter-country adoption to afford greater protection to orphans.
- > Address harmful traditional practices - through raising awareness and sensitization to protect girls from early marriage and other harmful cultural practices such "fisi or gwamula" which is a kind of formalised rape; Kupimbira - a traditional practice extremely common in the North - forces girls into early marriages for the interest of benefiting from dowry payments regardless of the age of the girls and the men.
- > Encourage open discussions on protection issues - using the media, schools, churches and civil society at large have a key role to play in breaking the silence that surrounds child abuse.
- > Develop children's life skills, knowledge and participation - children will be helped to identify, avoid, and if necessary deal with potentially dangerous child abuse situations. They need to be informed of their rights and how to inform about abuse safely and participate actively in decisions which affect them.
- > Improve access to, and quality of essential services for the prevention of children and recovery and reintegration of child victims, including the policy, counselors, health care providers, schools, social welfare services, human rights organization, etc.
- > Build capacity of communities and families : increase family and community awareness on child rights; improve monitoring and reporting of abuse; and strengthen referral to services, including the police, health services
- > Enhance monitoring, reporting and oversight at all levels.



WHO ARE THE PARTNERS?

A task force formed by the ministry of Women and Child Development has been mandated to come up with the campaign. The task team comprises representatives from the following organizations

- > Ministry of Women and Child Development
- > Ministry of Education
- > Ministry of Information and Civic Education
- > Malawi Human Rights Commission
- > Ministry of Justice
- > The Judiciary
- > Malawi Police Force
- > Eye of the Child
- > Plan International
- > Catholic Relief Services
- > World Vision
- > CAVWOC
- > Media
- > UNICEF



More organizations, including other UN agencies and the private sector will be invited to be part of the campaign. Other partners drawn from the partnership on Zero Tolerance in 2005 are also expected to come on board.

WHAT ROLE CAN THE MEDIA PLAY?

Violence against children is not a private matter and needs to be brought to public attention. The media can be very effective in challenging attitudes that condone violence and in promoting more protective behaviors and practices. They can also help children express themselves about violence in their lives.

For more information on the **STOP Child Abuse Campaign**, please contact:

Seamus Mac Roibin, Child Protection Specialist, smacroibin@unicef.org, Tel: 01770770

Linda Kabwila-Kalinga, Child Protection Officer, lkabwila@unicef.org, Tel: 01 770 660

Brenda Kariuki, Communication Specialist, bkariuki@unicef.org, Tel: 09 964 208

MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND
CHILD DEVELOPMENT
Gemini House, 5th Floor
Private Bag 330
Capital City
Lilongwe 3, Malawi

UNICEF COUNTRY OFFICE
P.O. Box 30375, Lilongwe 3, Malawi
Tel: +265 1 770 770
Fax: +265 1 773 162
Email: lilongwe@unicef.org

