

## A KZN Programme to stop violence against girls in the schools is vision of a boy!

Twelve year-old Mziwe Thutu Mlondo is showing that having boys as strategic allies is a great advantage for girls. Thanks to Mziwe, the Malanga Senior Primary School in rural KwaZulu-Natal now has its own successful programme to curb violence against girls in schools.

Concerned about the high levels of violence experienced by girls in his community and school, Mziwe and fellow pupil Sikhulile Jiyane, who are both orphans, accompanied their principal Lydia Kekana to a presentation by children at the Chatsworth Primary School in Durban put on for visiting UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy, in which boys and girls showed off their own solutions to the problem of violence.

They impressed young Mziwe with their frank and creative approach in addressing the problem using drama and dialogue to engage their peers, parents and educators on the issue. After the presentation, Mziwe stepped right up to CRISP (Crime Prevention in the Schools Project) director Bashi Devnarain and said "I wish we could have a programme like this in my school." It didn't take long for Lydia and Bashi to take action, and with UNICEF support, Malanga's programme was off and running shortly after. Now the programme has received additional support to continue its community outreach through a private donation from the US Fund.

"The children are quite happy about this initiative," says Ms. Kekana, "and I have seen a lot of improvement in their interpersonal skills and dealings with people, in particular in dialogue with their parents about these difficult issues. Both of them are now counsellors", she says proudly. And what do the Malanga School children themselves have to say? Read below for some of their comments.

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By Mziwe Thutu Mlondo, age 12

"There are many topics that are covered by CRISP like Basic Counselling. Things have changed at school. It is a place where it is nice to be and learn in it. We know our rights that are violated and we don't bully girls anymore. We play with each other nicely and we don't call them with other names. Some people get sick with HIV/AIDS. We have been taught to love them and how the disease spread. We wish to share this with other school in our area."

By Sikhulile Jiyane, age 13

"Presentation of CRISP at our school helped to change life at our school. We were faced with violence, sexual abuse like rape, gender conflict. Boys used to bully girls and there was a lot of name-calling and stealing of girls' toys, food and money. Boys did not want to do house-hold work like sweeping. Things have changed. We know how to respect each other. There are no name calling and bullying. Boys can sweep with brooms and scrub floors when necessary."