African Child Trauma Conference 2020

Partners:
- jelly beanz
- HOPE
- UNICEF
- ECPAT International
- Teddy Bear Foundation

Supported by:
- Standard Bank
- GovChat
- MPC
The 2020 African Child Trauma Conference was successfully hosted virtually on 7 & 8 October 2020. A ground-breaking achievement with collaboration between Jelly Beanz, UNICEF, Teddy Bear Foundation & ECPAT. In response to ‘The Charter: Leave No Child Behind: Ending Violence Against Children in Africa’ which was adopted at the 2019 Child Trauma Conference, the key outcome of the African Child Trauma Conference 2020 was to develop an Emergency Action Plan. Children face many especially in the field of Child Protection. Services are over-stretched, social systems are under stress, the South African economy has entered recession and unemployment figures have increased significantly resulting in heightened household poverty. With the sudden arrival of the Covid–19 pandemic, there has been an increased detrimental impact on weak national economies. This in return has significantly weakened the capacity of families, caregivers and communities to provide children with the holistic, nurturing care they need to survive, to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect and violence and to develop to their full potential.

A total of 375 delegates attended the virtual conference.

122 delegates received full scholarships made possible by the generous sponsorship from Standard Bank.

45 NGO’s working in the child protection sector, attended the conference at various hybrid venues.

The objectives of the conference included:
1. To secure the provision of services and support in respect of the heightened levels of risk, deprivation and violence against children exasperated by the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. To highlight the dire need for allocation of additional resources and commitment for support.
3. To discuss, agree, draw up and implement an Emergency Action Plan for Children in Africa to reinforce the commitments already made to children.
Keynote speakers:

We were privileged to have these eminent and knowledgeable keynote speakers share their expertise at the conference. Through their attendance and participation the conference provided platforms for further discussions and networking.

Margaret Nienaber from Standard Bank opened the conference.

A message of support was provided by Sabine Rakotomalala, Senior Advisor from the Global Partnership to End Violence.

Closing remarks were provided by Ms Christine Muhigana, UNICEF Representative.
Dr Addai was joined by Dr Joan van Niekerk (Jelly Beanz), Dr Chantell Witten (Child Health Priorities Association), Hellen Nyangoya (UNICEF) and Prof Ann Skelton (Advocate & member of UN Committee on the Rights of the child).

Dr Omar facilitated a discussion with key role players Dumisile Nala (Childline), Enid Smith (Department of Education), Carina Coetzee (National Prosecuting Authority) and Maurice Smithers (Southern African Alcohol Policy Alliance in South Africa).

Willy Buloso presented alongside panellists Dorine van der Keur (ECPAT), Tim Ekesa (Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children) and Sinah Moruane (UNICEF) on the ground resolutions to children’s protection online.

Edith Kriel asked child protection warriors including Marita Rademeyer (Jelly Beanz), Carla Brown (Red Cross Children’s Hospital) and Clever Ndanga (REPSSI) to share their expertise.

Gloria Khosa included Janine Hills (Authentic Leadership), Eldrid Jordaan (GovChat) and Nonhlanhla Onverwacht (Multichoice) in this important debate as to stage the beginnings of a social compact with corporate to invest in children.

All panel discussions are available on the Jelly Beanz Facebook page.
Contributions throughout the conference had a crucial role in the development of the Emergency Action Plan.

Need to reduce the commercial sexual exploitation of children by strengthening the existing child protection system. (Sophie Omutanyi, African Network For Prevention Against Child Abuse & Neglect)

Children as secondary victims of Intimate partner violence affects child development negatively (Cyndirela Chadambuka, Social Worker)

Strengthening families is strengthening communities (Nicolette Vigeland, counsellor)

Social connectedness is crucial especially in a time of lockdown: there is an increased need to encourage active digital citizenry and to create opportunities for children to engage in high level policy discussions (Phakamile Khumalo, Webrangers)

High levels of adversity have a negative impact on attachment: vulnerable children are fragile learners (Francesca Chetwin, Psychologist)

Murdering of children and babies by their mothers is under-reported in SA (Faith Nkomo, Social Worker)

Caregivers responses impact directly on children’s emotional status; emotions are “contagious”.(Jessica Wasserman, Educational Psychologist)

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Only 50% of children feel safe at school: A need is identified to create awareness of the seriousness of school-based violence. (Dr Antoinette Basson, Research Psychologist)

https://vimeo.com/475874173/a7826ea5bd produced by Bazarts, Progress and Tuba films
Lighting the candle of HOPE and sharing with colleagues at the end of the conference

The fabulous Mamma of Ceremonies (MC) - Tozama!

One of our notetakers,

Beanz having fun!

Key outcome of the conference: the Emergency Action Plan for Child Care and Protection

The ‘Leave No Child Behind: Ending Violence Against Children in Africa’ Charter (The Charter) was adopted on 21 August 2019 by South Africa, along with other countries. The Charter is a response to the many factors that contribute to violence against children. The Emergency Action Plan serves to strengthen the systems to better serve, protect and build children, parents, other caregivers to deal with the challenges made worse by the pandemic and provide children with the care they need to be safe, protected, heard, seen and empowered in their homes, schools, playgrounds, online, and in their communities.
Feedback from our delegates

Covid19 did not cause the violence but unveiled it and highlighted this hidden form of violence by bringing it out into the open. This requires a response beyond Covid19. We agree with Prof Hlengiwe that intervention and prevention needs to be in tandem with each other to disrupt the cycle of violence. But we also need to engage families in the intervention process."

"The Covid pandemic removed the mask that buried violence against women and children, it happens and was ignored. Now is the time to have the open conversations. We need to take our boys and men on this journey."

Love the phrase "NOT TO LEAVE ANY CHILD BEHIND"

Love this presentation Edith. We work with children with profound disabilities and through animal assisted therapy children have started speaking and walking. Their spirits come alive around animals, it’s truly magical."

Love the phrase ”Not to leave any child behind”

"Thank you once more Dr Joan for the reflective questions that is kicking me off my comfort zone to act “

Thank you for the hard work that you and your team and your children have put into organizing this amazing conference!!!! we are most grateful. “

Fascinating presentation on the interconnectedness of different kinds of pain and how stress exacerbates trauma for children - thank you, Annemarie!“

Thank you for delving into this much needed topic Garth. Our children need positive and inspiring male role models now more than ever.“

Thank you Jelly Beanz team for a phenomenal conference. Inspired, informed, hopeful! “

You have to work with the whole system. Completely agree with Marita!

Again, a successful conference bringing us together, reminding us of our calling & our roll in advocacy for children."

Tozama, yesterday you were SIMPLY THE BEST Program Director ever! Well done! Your energy, passion and enthusiasm is contagious. I wish I could bottle you and take a sip on difficult days! Good luck for today and God bless!”

Thank you to everyone for a wonderful conference. I feel blessed to have shared these 2 days with you all. I will take many gems with me, and the biggest inspiration to me personally has been sis Tozama’s vibrant, effervescent energy! enkosi mama!"

Thank you for all the hard work and effort of the whole team. Also to Tozama for your vibrant and joyful directing.“

Thank you to Ms Thomas with an incisive articulation of the plight of children.”
The global and regional community of treaty bodies, development institutions and partners, and civil society must:

1. **Ensure global, regional, and national, state-wide recognition and prioritisation** of adequately resourced measures to solve the deep inequities, vulnerabilities and risks

2. **Demonstrate leadership** at the highest levels of governments, international organizations, civil society, faith groups, international celebrities, media and sport, religion, and the private sector to ensure collective and coordinated actions in the best interest of children.

3. **Create a national, regional and global movement for children, with children**, through strong child-centered, rights-based advocacy.

4. **Learn from the COVID 19 experience** and boost global and regional child rights treaties.

5. **Increase, share, disseminate and use knowledge through effective child-care and protection systems** to prevent, detect and provide support to survivors of violence.

6. **Fast track implementation** of evidence-based strategies to ensure that solutions and good practices continue to be shared.

7. **Establish effective mechanisms for coordination, multi-stake holder cooperation and multilateralism** for coordination and cooperation between stakeholders at all levels.

8. **Create strong alliances** globally and between African member states to tackle common historical and emerging risks such as trafficking, online exploitation, and ensure the most vulnerable, including migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking children are reached.

9. **Invest more resources** from all relevant sources.

10. **Create a digital platform** on the global situation of children to monitor the protection of children’s rights and to allow for adjusted budgeting and programming.
We call upon all partners (including government, the United Nations, the African Union, civil society and corporates) to be working together with the building blocks highlighted here in order to take this Emergency Action Plan forward.

**Leadership and coordination**

Establishing an integrated child rights management and monitoring structures at all levels of government to provide strong leadership, effective coordination and accountability.

**Law and policy**

National laws, policies and supporting strategies to be adopted, implemented, and reviewed.

**Adequate programmes that secure the required package of integrated services**

Well-defined programmes must be developed and/or strengthened to provide appropriate combinations of family support services across the life course to reduce the risks and challenges faced by especially vulnerable families, that limit their ability to provide nurturing care.

**Information management systems for evidence-based planning & monitoring**

Government must take decisive measures to ensure adequate infrastructure to support implementation by mapping the infrastructure requirements and develop a costed infrastructure plan to ensure the necessary environments and resources are made available, maintained, and regularly reviewed for adequacy and safety.

**Human resources**

To ensure implementation of the above we need an appropriate workforce that is adequate in numbers, qualifications, skills and commitment as well as support and mentoring for this workforce to enable continued quality implementation.

**Infrastructure**

Government must ensure that their national social protection, child care and protection systems are supported by an information and case management system that collects appropriate, timely and reliable data for evidence-based planning, monitoring, reporting and quality improvement of services.

**Financial resources**

Government must substantially increase their investments in promotion, prevention, and protection services for the care of children.
Thank you to **Standard Bank** for the generous donation of funds that has been used to sponsor delegates to attend the African Child Trauma Conference.

Thank you to **GovChat** for making their facilities available as a hybrid venue for the MC’s and Organizing Committee.

Thank you to **Medical Practice Consulting** (MPC) for issuing certificates of attendance and Continuous Professional Development points and for making the conference accessible online going forward.

Our Mamma’s of Ceremonies, **Tozama Ngcongolo** was exceptional! She created a remarkable sense of unity and participation to this virtual conference, making everyone feel connected. Many thanks also to Carol Bouwer for her assistance being MC for some of the streams and last panel.

This conference would not have been possible without the loyal dedication and commitment of the organizing committee. Thank you to **Mayke Huijbregts** (UNICEF) **Dr Shaheda Omar**, Teddy Bear Foundation, **Willy Buloso**, ECPAT International and **Dr Joan van Niekerk**, **Edith Kriel** and **Natasha Botha** from Jelly Beanz.

A special note of thanks to **Cebisa Conferences** for their assistance in managing the virtual platform.

**Thank you** to everyone for making the conference possible and for taking the lead in the protection and care of our children of Africa!