

YOUTH FOR CHANGE - YOCA

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION REPORT

FOR CHILD PROTECTION

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Child Abuse cannot be challenged without communities and concerned stakeholders coming together to discuss and strategize on preventive measures to mitigate the problem. We should agree that some children need more protection than others because of being in certain circumstances that expose them to extreme risk of lack of basic needs and further deny them their human rights. Youth for Change notes with deep concern the increased vulnerability of many children to sexual, labor and alcohol exploitation as a result of increasing poverty, social and gender inequality, discrimination etc. in the community.

This report discusses the preventive, mitigation and monitoring and evaluation measures for child protection. It discusses what the concept of child abuse is in the local concept of Matero community and the global picture.

It has been renowned that, the most prevailing case that results to child abuse is Child Neglect; this is according to the findings of our community mobilization meetings on child protection. Child Neglect was seen to be the root cause of child labour, child alcohol abuse and child sexual abuse. Child labor - which is directly linked to poverty - is among the major challenges. It is preventing children from developing their potential to earn higher incomes later in life, and will slacken national economic growth in the long term.

In conclusion, Youth for Change-YOCA wishes to express its gratitude to all participants for their generous support in sharing information, time and ideas during the community mobilization meetings. YOCA would particularly like to value Firelight Foundation for the financial and technical support rendered for the implementation of the project.

2.0

THE CONCEPT OF CHILD PROTECTION

Child protection is a broad term used to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. Conceptually, child protection bestows a duty to individuals, communities and organisations (including individuals associate with those organisations) towards children in their care. To this extent, child protection becomes a responsibility as well as an area of activity for organisations. In an effort to mobilise international support for child protection, the United Nations has initiated various efforts, one of which has been a movement to create a world fit for children. At the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children in 2002, states committed themselves in the declaration of *A World Fit for Children*, to building:

“A world in which all girls and boys can enjoy childhood...in which they are loved, respected and cherished...in which their safety and well-being are paramount and in which they can develop in health. Peace and dignity”.

Child protection therefore is the responsibility of all individuals and institutions in society and it entails taking responsibility for issues children face in communities. The bottom line in child protection is to ensure children do not suffer any harm whether intentional or otherwise. Hence it complements other rights that, inter alia, ensure that children receive that which they need in order to survive, develop and thrive. In child protection, the concern is such that children do not suffer harm in terms of:

- Shortened lives;
- Poor physical and mental health, and growth and development;
- Educational problems (including dropping out of school);
- Poor parenting skills later in life;
- Homelessness, vagrancy and displacement;

There are many issues in society that are likely to lead to these outcomes. These include such issues domestic violence, abuse by services providers, commercial sexual exploitation, child labour, child neglect, child marriage etc.

If children are protected from these situations and, therefore child protection is successful, these protection actions increase a child's chances to:

- Grow up physically and mentally healthy,
- Be confident and self-respecting, and
- Less likely to abuse or exploit others, including his or her own children.

Introduction

The aim of the meetings were to engage the community members in creating harmonized responses to prevention, mitigation and monitoring evaluation methods of child protection in Matero community. Both group and consultative meetings were held with concerned stakeholders. These meetings proved to be fruitful in that they brought out new knowledge beneath fears, hopes and needs which need to be addressed.

The methods used was the non-directive approach method where Youth for Change-YOCA as the initiator of the idea indirectly explained issues surrounding child abuse and sought support and action from the community members. Where a one-on-one consultation was held, expertise advice was carefully explored through direct questions on child protection programming. Group discussions were very important sources of information as illustrated by the tables below representing community voices and thoughts on child protection.

3.1 Success

A community mobilisation exercise has the advantage that it may be used to achieve various ends. Effective community mobilisation can be developed and maintained for successful joint decision-making and joint problem-solving which are necessary for child protection. Below are the immediate success factors as observed during the Youth for Change community mobilisation process on child protection:

- Youth for Change tapped the voices and concerns of a wide cross section of community members on child protection.
- Through community mobilisation meetings, participants brought to surface community resources that may be exploited to meet community needs like using existing community offices as Walk in Centres to report child abuse cases.
- Issues of concern were identified like child neglect.
- Appropriate prevention, mitigation, monitoring and evaluations methods in the context of Matero community were discussed and agreed upon.

3.2 Challenges

Various challenges were encountered in trying to mobilise the community for action. The following were some of the challenges faced:

- Gender imbalance in the representations from various community wings during the community mobilization meetings where more males were present for meetings than females.
- Poor child participation where only one child was present for the community mobilization meeting to give a voice for the fellow children. The child really expressed concern ‘over the need to engage her friends over the next meetings so that they too can learn new things like she did’.
- Insufficient resources to engage more community members in a child protection dialogue.

3.3 Recommendations

Despite the challenges faced, thrusts were made and the following resolutions were reached at:

- Protection of the whistle blower to be considered important for fear of victimization.
- Joint Patrols (JP) to be undertaken to increase awareness of child protection and prosecution of perpetrators.
- A committee representing actors in child protection i.e. organisations and individuals within the target community be established for monitoring and evaluating progress.
- More preventive measures to be undertaken in schools during weekly assemblies so as to reach out to more pupils and train child advocates for this end.
- Use counseling to help victims of abuse.
- Strengthening coordination at community level and enforcement agencies/CSOs/CBOs.
- Formation of a committee to meet on monthly basis to evaluate and review the activities on child protection.

4.0

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS



Group discussions were used for problem analysis in trying to understand the underlying causes of child abuse, and discussing prevention, mitigation and monitoring and evaluation methods for child protection.

TOPIC	FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR	METHOD OF PREVENTION	MITIGATION METHODS	MONITORING & EVALUATION
CHILD LABOUR	Street vending, maids, bus conducting, stone crushing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sensitization to parents /guardians/ care takers/ and children on the vices of child labour. 2. Job creation for parents 3. Sensitization campaigns on child rights 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joint patrols to trading places with law enforcement agencies like police. 2. Prosecution of child labour perpetrators. 3. Counseling of children abused 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of child labour cases reported. 2. Number of children counseled out of child labour.

TOPIC	FORMS OF CHILD NEGLECT	METHOD OF PREVENTION	MITIGATION METHODS	MONITORING & EVALUATION
CHILD NEGLECT	Failure to meet children's needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitization campaigns on child rights to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Families, family values, vices of early marriages, divorce. Communities Learning institutions Access to information on Child Neglect <ol style="list-style-type: none"> media adverts/talk shows Flyers Posters Bill boards T/Shirts Early Child Interaction <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dialogues amongst children and parents/guardians. Service providers Child centered competitions/games Enhancing communication <ol style="list-style-type: none"> SMS /Hot line for children Focus point person 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the legal framework through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy Lobbying Strengthening coordination at community level and enforcement agencies/CSOs/CBOs. Human resource development e.g. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Human rights training Internships in law enforcement agencies Infrastructure development which should include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Centres for reporting child abuse cases (walk in centres) Hosting neglected/abused children Resource centres Logistical support <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improving transport Enhancing good communication systems like hot lines 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Independent visits to target institutions. Number of child neglect cases being reported to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Victim support Units Walk in centres. Number of children reporting/disclosing abuse/neglect. Literature developed e.g. brochures, modules, bill boards Number of human rights activists trained. Number of walk in centres established
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TOPIC:	FORMS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE	METHOD OF PREVENTION	MITIGATION METHODS	MONITORING & EVALUATION
Child Sexual Abuse	Incest, defilement, sexual stimulation of the minor, child prostitution, exposure to pornographic materials.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sensitization to parents /guardians/ care takers/ and children on the vices of child sexual abuse. 2. Children should not be exposed to risky places/materials. 3. Sensitization in schools through drama performances, 4. Coordination among stakeholders. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reporting child abuse cases to police and Walk in Centres. 2. Opening up more Centres where to report. 3. Building up the capacity of systems that are already established. 4. Establishing community networks for child protection. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtaining monthly reports from police or health centres/social welfare on cases reported on child sexual abuse. 2. Formation of a committee to meet on monthly basis to evaluate and review the activities on child protection.
Child Alcohol Abuse	Selling alcohol, buying alcohol, alcohol/drug consumption	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sensitization to parents /guardians/ care takers/ and children on the vices of child sexual abuse. 2. Children should not be exposed to risky places/materials. 3. Sensitization in schools through drama performances, 4. Coordination among stakeholders. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reporting child abuse cases to police and Walk in Centres. 2. Opening up more Centres where to report. 3. Working with the local authority like Lusaka City Council to revoke trading licenses for bars selling alcohol/drug to children. 4. Joint Patrols in bars with local authorities. 5. Counseling of children abusing drugs/alcohol. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of child alcohol/drug abuse cases reported. 2. Number of children counseled out of drug/alcohol abuse. 3. Number of Joint Patrols undertaken. 4. Number of Licenses revoked.

5.0

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The meeting attracted different stakeholders including teachers, ward development committee members, police service and victim support and child protection advocates. It was discussed that in order for the child protection program to take root in the community, we need to tap what is within the community before reaching out for external support such as use existing offices within Matero wards as Walk in Centres for reporting, prevention, mitigation and monitoring and evaluation of child protection.



Above, a Police Officer (Matero Police Victim Support Unit) makes a presentation and Mary Manjoni talking about the need to engage more children in child protection discussions.



Above, group discussions and the new outlook of the Youth for Change office.