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Childline South Africa Newsletter



Network News

Editorial from Joan's Desk

It has been an exciting two months since the last newsletter was compiled and circulated – with much work, travel and networking.

Changes at Head Office

Childline South Africa is delighted to announce the appointment of Dumisile Nala to the National Childline Office. She began work as the deputy National Coordinator of Childline SA on the 1st September and was immediately “thrown in at the deep end” with introductory appointments. As Dumisile experiences the broad workload of the national office, decisions will be made around workload division, but I am so relieved to have someone to discuss projects, decisions and challenges with. It has already been two months since Dumisile started and I am beginning to wonder how we managed without her!

Dumisile hails from KwaZulu-Natal where she completed her social work training; she worked at Childline KZN for several years before leaving the country and working in various child protection teams in and around London over the past 7 years. Her knowledge of child rights, her varied experiences in child protection, and her grounded approach to the work that Childline does, makes her a very valuable asset to the Childline family. She is also completing her Master's degree in Social Work through Huguenot College, Western Cape. WELCOME DUMISILE.



Dumisile Nala



Joan van Niekerk

In this issue...

**Introducing
Dumisile Nala,
Deputy-National
Coordinator, Childline S.A.**

**Training in
Mozambique**

News & Views

**Childline SA
website update**

Children's Act & Amendment Act

The Children's Act and Amendment Act continues to occupy much time in the national office. The focus of work has been on the regulations – which are lengthy and complex, including the National Child Protection Strategy which has to be in place before the Act is implemented, and implementation planning. Meetings continue through into December and continue to challenge our ability to manage the workload in the office.

4th International Consultation of Child Helplines

I am writing this editorial in the city of Amman, capital of Jordan whilst attending the 4th International Consultation of Child Helplines. What an interesting country and city, steeped in history,

friendly and hospitable people, but the city is confusing to drive and walk around with many hills, valleys and twisty turning roads.

Childline South Africa has offered a number of developing Childlines in the African Region placement opportunities and training, as well as sharing of our data collection programme. Many Childlines thanked us for this sharing of information and resources. The International Consultation is characterized by warmth and sharing, mutual support and a diversity of experience. The pool of knowledge expands with each International Consultation and it is great to be part of this international "family".

Read on for more interesting news and views – and please write to us with opinion comments and brief articles.

Training for Childline Mozambique counselors



Dumisile Nala (National Childline Office), far left and Priscilla Molaudzi (Director Childline Limpopo) far right, with a trainee counsellor from Childline Mozambique.

DURING OCTOBER 2008 Dumisile Nala, Childline SA Deputy National Coordinator, and Priscilla Molaudzi, the Director of Childline Limpopo, traveled to Maputo to train 16 Childline counselors in order to facilitate the development and opening of Childline Mozambique.

Much to learn in short space of time

The trainers and trainees worked extremely hard as much had to be covered during the week in the way of both skills and knowledge development, and furthermore they were using the new counselor manual developed in preparation for the SAQA registration of Childline training (funding for this received with gratitude from DG Murray Trust).

The trainee counsellors approached the training with much enthusiasm and were eager to learn. For many, the information and skills training was eye opening and had an impact on them both as individuals, and community members.

The final evaluations indicated, not only an informed approach to crisis line counseling by the trainee counselors, but also a different approach to their own parenting and interaction with children in the community.

We look forward to the launching of Childline Mozambique in December 2008.

Feedback from ISPCAN Conference,

DEVELOPING COUNTRY FORUM – GOOD PRACTICES AND LIMITATIONS OF CHILD PROTECTION WORK

6th September 2008

Points included in a presentation given by Ambassador Moushira Khattab, a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, and National Frameworks for Child Protection.

- Egypt has embarked on a process of law reform in child protection. These reforms included the right to free birth registration, the right for a mother to register her child at birth and to issue a birth certificate with only the mother's name where desirable and appropriate, and the right to education.
 - An attempt was made to prohibit corporal punishment but was not successful. However, a watered down provision was included in the law.
 - Child protection: all forms of violence, abuse and maltreatment are criminalised and penalized both by fine and imprisonment. This is considered one of the biggest successes of the law reform process. This is included in the penal code.
 - Trafficking and other forms of exploitation of children: all forms of trafficking have been criminalised and a special unit on child trafficking has been established. This Unit is very young and monitors the implementation of national legislation and Egypt's obligations under international treaties to combat child trafficking.
 - Children of imprisoned mothers: the mother has the right not to be separated from the child.
 - A new comprehensive strategy to prevent juvenile delinquency and to target children at risk has been initiated and a structure called the new Child Protection System has been developed. This system includes an empowered child helpline network; and newly created child protection committees.
- The reformed Juvenile Justice System has a restorative rather than punitive focus and recognises new categories of children – those at risk, witnesses to crimes, those in conflict with the law. This system also insures children's right to legal assistance and their rights to be heard in legal or administrative procedures, to be detained separately from adults and ensures their education if children are detained in secure care.
 - There are challenges facing the new amendments:
 - Raising societal awareness and motivating media to adopt and defend the cause of child protection.
 - Capacity building of all professionals and attracting them to accept the notion of training.
 - Getting ministries and NGO's to focus on the prevention of child delinquency.
 - Monitoring and evaluation systems need to be developed and implemented.
 - Allocation of adequate human and financial resources.
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- Points included in presentation give by Joan van Niekerk, Childline South Africa on Good Practices in Child Protection Work, Examples from South Africa.**
- Legislation provides the framework for child protection. The involvement of Child Protection Organisations in the process of law making ensures appropriate law and policy for child protection and is critically important. However other professionals, for

example, those with expertise and experience in the interpretation of law and budgeting, are necessary to assist with the process of advocacy for law reform.

Good practice experiences with regard to developing child protection law and policy:

- Analysis, lobbying and advocacy is more powerful with strong alliances among child protection organisations. The teamwork that is so essential for good child protection practice is also essential for law reform. Childline SA therefore joined both the national Children's Bill Working Group and assisted with the establishment of the national Sexual Offences Working Group and both these structures developed strong and effective lobbying and advocacy strategies.

How did these alliances help (amongst other strategies)?

- A good understanding of the content of proposed legislation and policy is important – as well as a good working knowledge of the political and parliamentary processes of law making. The alliances assisted their members with educational materials and workshops on the proposed reforms as well as the context and process of law making.
- Many of the organisations belonging to these groups brought specialised knowledge of their fields into the discussions and advocacy process (e.g. disability).

What we learned collectively

- Building relationships and personal contacts with decision makers are important.
- Finding out and working with effective pressure points is critical.
- It is helpful to decide on the “must haves” – the essentials that are non-negotiable.
- Trade offs are painful – but often necessary.
- Teamwork is critically important.

Monitoring Implementation

- Law and policy means nothing if not implemented.
- Monitoring implementation in child protection is complex due to the number of sectors/ disciplines involved in child protection.
- This presents a challenge that is always beyond any single role-player in child protection.

Budgeting issues

- Implementation of law and policy is dependent on having adequate resources allocated to implementation.
- We need to look at how government budgets for the implementation of law and policy relating to children, and how these budgets are detailed and then used, and, where appropriate, lobby for the allocation of adequate budgets to implement new legislation.

Training

- Working as a collective on law reform also highlighted the need for inter-sector training.
- Training has been supported through the ISPCAN Oak Training.
- Training is sometimes compromised by the personal experiences and life histories of trainees and space has to be given to deal with these issues.

An example

- South Africa is a country characterised by a history of inequality.
- About 50% of all children live in poverty.
- The issue of child labour became a very difficult one to deal with in training as trainees struggled to come to terms with their own experiences and the notion that if they grew up without a sense of adverse impact when involved in child labour as children, why should children of today be protected from similar situations?



The 17th Biennial Congress of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect was held in Hong Kong in the second week of September 2008 and was attended by over 700 delegates.

Childline South Africa presented two papers at this Congress – one on inter-sector training and another on rehabilitation work with adults and children who commit offences against children.

Hong Kong is such a fascinating city. It is a series of islands with massive skyscrapers EVERYWHERE.

Each evening in Hong Kong, across the waterfront skyscrapers, there is a 15 minute music and laser light display. It is beautiful and was especially welcome to relax, listen and enjoy after working continuously to prepare for and participate in working sessions during the day.

Joan van Niekerk,

Childline SA National Coordinator

- This struggle needed space in the training programme for trainees to unpack their feelings and experiences and to see them in the light of the context in which they grew up. Only when they came to terms with their own experiences were they able to engage with the issue of protecting children from exploitation through child labour.

Conclusion

- Law and policy provides the framework for child protection work.
- Practice is informed, enhanced or limited by law and policy.
- Child protection workers, especially those with practice experience, have the responsibility of ensuring that their child protection practice is enhanced and not limited by law and policy.

For a full version of these presentations and the report back from discussion groups, please visit the Childline South Africa website:

<http://www.childlinesa.org.za>

WHAT IS ISPCAN?

The International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN), founded in 1977, is a multidisciplinary international organization.

ISPCAN's mission is to support individuals and organizations working to protect children from abuse and neglect worldwide.

ISPCAN's members from nearly 180 different countries represent every key professional group involved in shaping the response to child abuse at both the country and international levels. The ISPCAN community includes social workers, physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, child protection workers, mental health workers, psychologists, lawyers, judges, law enforcement officers, investigators, government/ community officials, researchers, educators, non-government organizations, leaders, advocates, clergy and other professionals.

Visit www.ispcan.org for more information.

RESEARCH INTO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ON CHIDLINER GAUTENG CRISIS LINE

Edited version of the powerpoint presentation given to Childline South Africa head office by Lynne Cawood, Director Childline Gauteng

IN ORDER to gain a better understanding of the extent of satisfaction of children and adults with concerns about children who contact the crisis line in their time of need, as well as identify the strength and weaknesses of the services, the Childline Gauteng office recently completed research into their crisis line with great results.

Telephone interviews were conducted with a group of people who had called the Childline Gauteng crisis line for assistance, between February and July 2008, and whose calls were classified as "cases". Names of people to be contacted for the research were gathered through the crisis line by counsellors after they were guaranteed confidentiality and told that they were not compelled to participate and they would be called on a separate occasion.

Overall, more than 300 people who had given correct contact information were interviewed. Following is a description of the participating callers:

Age: The youngest caller in the survey was nine years of age. The callers were younger, on average than the average of the population of the country aged nine years or more.

Highest level of education: The callers were more educated, on average than the general public of South Africa in the same age category.

Home language: Almost three in every 10 (27,9%) were IsiZulu speakers. Almost one in five (18,0%) were Setswana speakers.

Population group: Almost nine in every ten

callers (87,3%) was an African. This is a higher proportion than the percentage of Africans in the relevant age category in the population as a whole (78,3%).

Sex of the caller: About one in four callers (23,8%) were male, while approximately three quarters (76,2%) were female.

As in most research conducted, the researcher highlighted the following limitations:

- The sample consists of those willing to participate.
- It does not meet the criteria of a probability sample of callers with serious problems seeking assistance from Childline.
- There may be selection bias.

The findings of the study need to be regarded as exploratory. They cannot be generalised to the various people who call Childline helpline for assistance, and whose issues are classified as cases.

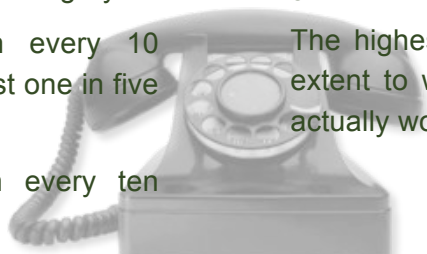
In spite of these limitations, it was noted that the information gathered from participants may be regarded as indicative, but not representative, of the attitude of callers to the assistance they received from the crisis line of Childline.

Overall satisfaction

In general, people who participated in the survey were very satisfied with the service they received from the crisis line of Childline Gauteng. More than 95% of respondents were positive about their experiences when contacting the crisis line.

The lowest average score for satisfaction with the service (6,5 on a 10 point scale starting at zero) and concerned the extent to which the participating callers perceived that the counsellor got to know them as a person.

The highest average score was obtained on the extent to which the callers felt that the call was actually worthwhile (7,2 on the 10 point scale).



Conclusions

Although Childline Gauteng cannot generalize these findings to all callers who have their problems classified as cases on the crisis line, the main conclusion that can be drawn is Childline Gauteng is offering a very useful and supportive service to those callers who participated in the survey, at a time of their lives when they are facing a crisis.

While general relationship-building skills are good among the counsellors, there is room for improvement but there is little doubt that the counsellors are to be congratulated on their empathy and their knowledge of the available services to assist people when facing a crisis.

For a full version of this powerpoint presentation, please visit the Childline South Africa website <http://www.childlinesa.org.za>



NEWS & VIEWS

A recent case of child abuse that led to the death of a small boy in Britain, poses questions that are relevant throughout the world. An extract of an article from The Observer, UK follows (full version available online).

IN EARLY November Britain's radio phone-in shows were dominated by a single, tragic subject: the short and brutalised life of the child who will forever be known as Baby P.

Amid the cacophony of anger, one comment stood out. The husband of a social worker spoke of how his wife often arrived home from work angry and in despair. In her case files were children who went hungry and unwashed, were sadistically treated by their parents and in many cases, she believed, sexually assaulted. When she was at her lowest, she raged that some men and women should be sterilised.

'We both know that this would be wrong, but what is the answer?' the husband asked.

Indeed. Baby P's legacy is a national debate over how we protect our children and why, in a modern educated society, do we still have mothers, fathers and carers who gratuitously inflict pain on those they have brought into the world?

Sue Berelowitz, a former social worker and the new deputy children's commissioner, is better placed than many to answer. During the Seventies, Berelowitz was at the frontline of Britain's battle against child abuse, visiting families that were straight out of nightmares.

'What I have come across is one sorry saga after another, where people have had really terrible lives and that does get played through generation upon generation,' Berelowitz said. 'I can think of families where I feel furious with the parents because of the awful things they have done to their children, but what I also know is that they have gone through stuff that I would not have wanted to go through.'

Inevitably, the immediate focus has been on the professionals who came into contact with the blue-eyed, blond, 17-month-old boy in the months leading up to his death. In the last weeks of P's life there were countless missed opportunities to save him. Haringey council's serious case review stated P's mother 'presented her son to health professionals eight times, and in his last week, he was seen by a social worker and a paediatrician. None of those professionals identified major concerns about the child's health and well-being.'

Full version available at www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/nov/16/child-protection-uk-crime

Nepal's "living goddess" quits to go to school

after the supreme court branded the custom of worshipping a virgin child outdated.



Photo: AFP/GETTY

The centuries-old custom involves a girl being chosen at the age of three, locking her in a palace and worshipping her until she starts menstruating, at which point a new goddess is chosen.

But the current deity is going to retire at the end of the year after the country's Supreme Court said that nine-year-old Preeti Shakya has the right to go to school.

The court said there was no justification for the specially chosen pre-pubescent girl, known as the Kumari, to be subjected to a practice.

The court's verdict was prompted by a complaint from local lawyers that keeping a young girl cooped up in an ornate but decrepit palace in Kathmandu's medieval quarter was a violation of her rights.

The Supreme Court's spokesman, Hemanta Rawal, said: "The court ruled there were no historic or religious documents that state the child should be denied the rights of education, movement etc. She should not be denied these things just because she is the Kumari."

The "living goddess" concept may be scrapped entirely now that Nepal is officially a secular republic run by ultra-leftist ex-rebel Maoists keen to do away with the country's "feudal" practices.

The people in charge of looking after the Kumari said they took orders from the heavens, not the Supreme Court. They denied that her human rights were violated because, they said, a teacher comes to the palace every day and she is allowed to meet people for three hours a day.

Written by Jessica Salter, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/nepal/2595592/Nepals-living-goddess-quits-to-go-to-school.html> and sent in by Kader Hassim (see comment on pg 9).

Background info...

Kumari, or **Kumari Devi**, is a living goddess in Nepal. Kumari literally means virgin in Nepali and was the name of the goddess Durga as a child. A Kumari is a prepubescent girl selected from the Shakya clan of the Nepalese Newari community. The Kumari is revered and worshipped by some of the country's Hindus as well as the Nepali Buddhists, though not the Tibetan Buddhists.

While there are several Kumaris throughout Nepal, with some cities having several, the best known is the **Royal Kumari** of Katmandu, and she lives in the Kumari Ghar, a palace in the center of the city. The selection process for her is especially rigorous. The current Royal Kumari, Matani Shakya, aged three, was installed in October 2008 by the Maoist government that replaced the monarchy.

A Kumari is believed to be the bodily incarnation of the goddess Taleju (the Nepalese name for Durga) until she menstruates, after which it is believed that the goddess vacates her body. Serious illness or a major loss of blood from an injury are also causes for her to revert to common status.

Information from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumari>



Childline SA website news....

The Childline South Africa website aims to be as interactive as our schedules allow.

Articles/reports/documents are routinely added under the 'documents for download' section. Such a document is one entitled 'Use of children in photos for publicity', produced by the Children's Rights Centre with input from Childline SA.

New links have also been added to The Mens Bibliography; the National Traumatic Stress Network; National Crime Victims Research & Treatment Centre.

Thank you for having me on your mailing list for the Newsletter. It comes across as professionally done. I refer to the layout, the attractive frontispiece and the proofread articles.

Kader Hassim, APDUSA
Views.

If anyone has articles that would be useful to children and teens, please could you forward these to Isabelle at daruty@telkomsa.net for placement on the site. I am sure that our site's readers would appreciate added resources.

Visit our website at www.childlinesa.org.za

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