

I S S U E 1 3 : 2 0 0 9

Childline South Africa Newsletter



# Network News

## Editorial from Joan's Desk

**THIS YEAR HAS BROUGHT MANY CHANGES TO THE CHIDLIN NATIONAL OFFICE**, all of which were necessitated by an expansion of the workload as well as the receipt of PEPFAR funding for some of our services specific to orphans and vulnerable children.

**PEPFAR funding brings with it the need to expand our data collection and monitoring and evaluation capacities** – and the advantage of this is that the developments demanded by PEPFAR, will benefit our other programmes also.

Childline SA has also **expanded its training capacity** borne out of the need for training of our network and partners following the passing of the Children's Acts (implementation is planned for the 1st April), the Child Justice Act and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, and the expansion of the need for some of Childline's more specialized services, such as the treatment services for abused children and their families. (Please see below a short introduction of our new staff members.)

**Some very challenging issues** are also on the horizon for Childline. These include:

- Concerns about the impact of the recession on the lives of children, which have been expressed by a number of our provincial offices.



Joan van Niekerk

### In this issue...

**Intro from the National Office**

**Comment on the budget speech**

**Training in Northern Cape**

**News & Views**

**Childline SA website update**

- Planning for the FIFA World Cup and the potential impact of this event and all the event brings with it, and hence the vulnerability of South African children as well as the children of neighbouring countries.
- The planned closure of schools for the entire 6 week duration of the Fifi World Cup and the lack of alternative caring and protective environments for children in their own communities. The school provides a second safety net for children, after that of the family, so its closure during the World Cup, when many parents are unable to be on leave, will put the resulting thousands of unsupervised children at risk.
- The influx of unaccompanied children from Zimbabwe is a crisis that is taxing existing resources considerably.

The National Office, together with the provincial Childlines, is beginning to consider these challenges and search actively for solutions – so watch this space for ideas and developments – as well as offer some of your own. Please note that we do welcome letters and articles for the Childline newsletter.

## *Meet the expanding team...*

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My name is Petunia Ngubane nee, Tsotetsi. I am a BA (Social Work) Hons graduate. I also have a management diploma and an assessor certificate. I intend to pursue a course in becoming an accredited moderator.

I have been in the social work field for twelve years, working with vulnerable children. I have vast experience in training, management and dealing with different issues pertaining to children and their families.

I strongly believe that no one stands as tall as when they kneel to help a child hence I am proud and honored to be part of a team that is so passionate about the welfare of the children of our country.



I am a Psychology graduate, currently continuing my studies doing a Post Graduate Honours degree in Psychology through Unisa.

I am working part-time for Childline South Africa at the National office doing research and counselling. I am a trained crisis line counsellor, doing online counselling via email and running a pilot project for online Counselling.

I am Zama Kubheka. I am the national Programme Manager for PEPFAR: OVC Programme, responsible for managing and evaluating the implementation of the programme.

I joined Childline SA in March. I have a Bachelor of Social Science degree (majoring in Industrial Psychology and Media & Communications), Project Management Diploma and also Diploma in Employment Assistance Programmes. I am a registered Assessor and Moderator.



Nikki Hewitt has a passion for animals and children (not sure in which order!). Prior to working at Childline, Nikki worked in a local veterinary practice. She is methodical and keeps all of the Childline National Staff and our administration in order, including the PEPFAR financial administration.

She holds a BA Social Science in Social Work (Hons) degree from Uniwest (UNIBO), and several certificates in Development and Facilitation from CDRA, Olive Development Organization and Training and other well-known tertiary institutions in South Africa including UNISA and WITS.

Kukie is a Social Development Practitioner specialising in community development, capacity building and empowerment. She has done extensive work in social security, social work, land reform, organisational development and crime prevention with a strong community development perspective.

Most of her working years have been spent in government (28 years), with three years in the NGO sector.

Ms Nkomazana has worked for NICRO and was then appointed in the Department of Safety and Liaison (Director) addressing the issues of crime.

Her vision for Childline Northern Cape is:

- to see children playing freely and being safe without fear of abuse, abduction or molestation.
- All parents taking their role and responsibilities as primary care givers.
- Children ensuring that their rights are realized by adhering to and practicing responsibilities that goes with their rights.



Kukie Nkomazana

**Brief  
Background  
information  
on *Kukie  
Nkomazana***

**(Coordinator:  
Childline  
Northern  
Cape)**

# Comment on the Budget Speech

By Joan van Niekerk, Childline South Africa, February 2009

**There has been mixed reaction to the 2009 budget speech of Minister Trevor Manuel. He has been lauded by many for presenting a budget that balances various interests as well as taking into account the present global recession and its impact on the South African economy.**

However from the perspective of the poor, and children, the budget offers little relief from the challenges of their day-to-day existence. Minister Manuel opened his speech by noting that the budget had been guided by five enduring principles, the first of which is “protecting the poor”. However what followed in the full content of the speech, offered more to protecting the taxpayer and business – especially small business, rather than the poor.

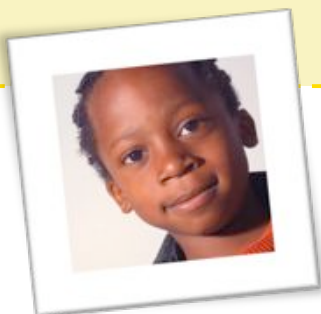
The increase in the child support grant is a paltry 4% to R240 per child living in a low income or no income family (nowhere near the rate of inflation). For some families the child support grant may be the only income the family has, and there is little likelihood of being able to provide food, clothing, shelter and education for a child from this small amount.

Even more concerning is the failure to extend the grant beyond 15 years. During 2008, Minister Pandor from the Education Ministry, noted with concern, the high drop out of children aged 15 years and above from school, but failed to make the connection to the fact that there is simply no material support for children above this age to remain in school.

Minister Manuel did note that the possibility of extending the grant was being explored, in line with the commitment during 2008 from the Minister of Social Development to move towards this. However an extension may be linked to school attendance and other conditions. This is counter-productive as it will increase the cost of administering the grant system and also it must be noted that school attendance has of itself a cost attached and many children who do not attend school do not do so because of reasons beyond their and their family’s control.

The difference in the amounts between the child support grant (R240) and the foster care grant (R680) is also cause for concern. It does not support children remaining in the care of their biological parents – as one mother living in dire poverty once said to me on the Childline telephone counselling line. *“My children would be better off if I abandoned them to the care of another relative – then they would be supported more adequately through the foster care grant”.*

Moving towards a lesser discrepancy between the two grants might impact more positively on keeping biological families together as well as reduce the pressure on the child protection system which as a result of the impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, is overwhelmed by the outstanding number of foster care applications for the placement of children orphaned and in need of care. A more adequate child support grant would enable extended family members caring for orphaned



children to apply for this grant rather than go through the cumbersome process of a foster care application. This would also free up more professional social work (identified as a scarce skill) services for other professional responsibilities.

However the budget contained some further poverty relief provisions:

- An extension of the school feeding schemes.
- Increasing the percentage of schools that would be covered by the “no-fee schools policy” from 40 to 60%.
- Reducing class size in schools in poor communities.
- Increasing the old age pension (many state pensioners support entire households).
- Increased budgets for child vaccines.
- An extension of the screening of pregnant mothers and the phasing in of an improved drug regimen to prevent mother-to-child transmission.
- Provision for the extension of the anti-retroviral programme – keeping HIV infected parents alive and well prevents orphanhood and sustains the ability to remain in employment and is truly an effective child protection measure.
- Funding for the implementation of the Child Justice Bill.

- An increase in the provisioning for the Extended Public Works Programme and other employment projects.

### **A concluding comment on the budget**

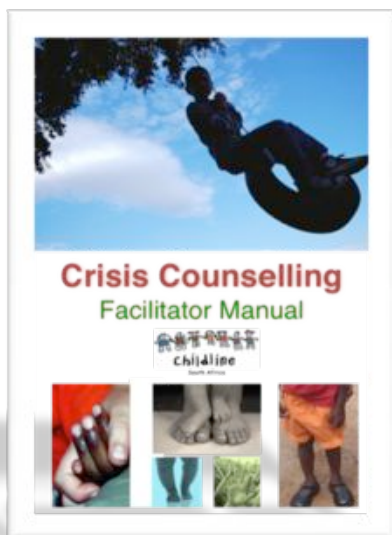
Perhaps we need to move away from “protecting the poor” - a core principle of the budgeting process - to “empowering the poor” and enabling them to move out of their socio-economic condition.

A significant contribution to this is ensuring adequate provisions for the holistic development of children.

Furthermore what one would also like to see is a number of Minister Manual’s comments translated into reality:

- *“we will not be blind to incompetence or greed” (no specific mention of corruption)*
- *“ it will be necessary to take stronger action in pursuit of efficiency and better targeted expenditure. There is insufficient control of foreign travel, advertising and public relations activities and consultancy services..... A greater sense of responsibility needs to permeate the ethos of government...”*

## **Finalisation of the Crisis Counselling Manuals -----**



**With funding from the DG Murray Trust, Childline South Africa has finalised the revision and production of the Crisis Counselling Manuals (learner and facilitator) as well as its accreditation with SAQA.**

**After sourcing materials used for this training from each Childline regional office, the national office then sifted through the information, decided what to keep, revise and add to.**

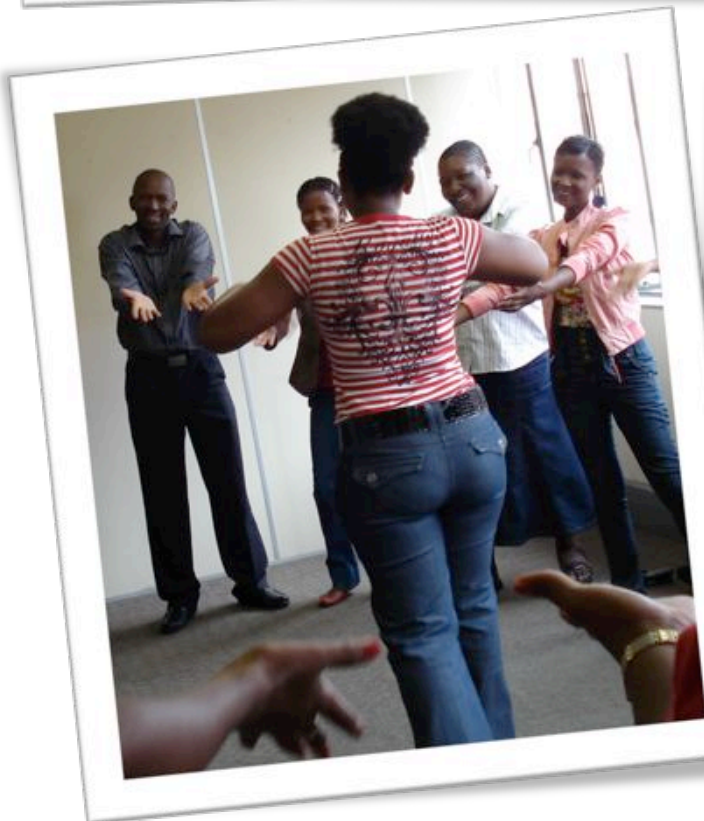
**The process of this revision and accreditation was lengthy to say the least but the Head Office is very happy with the result of this hard work. Volunteers to the crisis line can look forward to comprehensive, standardised training across the Childline network, which will no doubt benefit those seeking help on the crisis line!**

## A good start to the year: training in Kimberley for crisis counsellors using new Childline manual.

Childline South Africa trained 20 crisis line counsellors at Childline Northern Cape for a week from the 26th to 30th January 2009.

This is an intensive training course which touches on a number of issues including Child Development, Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, Pornography, Children in conflict with the law, Discipline and Parenting. Counsellors are equipped with counselling skills, communication and problem-solving skills. This is to ensure that they provide quality services to children and adults who use Childline services.

This was a group of very committed and creative community members who are set to make a difference in the lives of children in the Northern Cape. They share Childline's vision of creating a safe environment for the children in South Africa, free from any form of abuse and realizing children's rights.



# Report on the submission to the All Africa Conference of Churches Maputo, 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> December 2008

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), a Pan-African Ecumenical Christian organisation with 173 members in 40 countries, has met every five years since its founding in Uganda in 1963. Since the 7<sup>th</sup> such meeting, there has been a growing recognition of children and young people as role-players in the activities of the AACC.

## SEVERAL PRESENTATIONS

On this occasion, the 9<sup>th</sup> AACC General Assembly, one afternoon was assigned to a “children’s track”, on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December. The afternoon gave space to several presentations: a panel of young people presenting on different issues of concern to them (including sexual abuse and trafficking), an input on the importance of ministering to children, the launch of the AACC publication “*Do Not Stop Them*”, and a panel on different child rights issues. It was in this section of the meeting that the Regional Network to End Corporal Punishment was given space. The other presenters on that panel dealt with “who are vulnerable children” and a further input on Children’s Ministry.

In their presentation, the young people made an urgent and strong appeal for adults to listen to and hear them.

Also, it is important to note that Childlines in Southern Africa, who were in Maputo to further their cooperation as members of the Southern African Network Against Trafficking, attended the AACC Children’s Track in solidarity with the Regional Network (all Childlines in the region are members of the Network).

Keith Vermeulen presented broadly on child rights as human rights (human rights are children’s rights because children are human too) and Carol Bower presented the Network’s submission calling for support from the AACC for the prohibition of all forms of corporal and humiliating punishment in all spheres including the home, with recommendations. Unfortunately, the meeting was under serious time-pressure and only 10 minutes were available for both Carol and Keith’s presentations. This meant that there was no time for questions or discussions. Several people, however, did come up to me after the meeting to request further information. The materials that were available on the issue were distributed the next day.

The very short amount of time made available for this issue and the fact that there was no time for discussion on it, begs the question of the impact of the presentation. However, it is likely that, for the AACC, this is a very controversial issue and advocacy over some time will be needed to “bring everyone on board” with it. Also, the Network should consider exploring future opportunities of working with children and children’s groups in Africa on this issue, to elicit their support and advocacy.

**For the PowerPoint presentation to the AACC Maputo, go to the Childline South Africa website and you will find this under Documents for Download under the Protection Network tab.**



## PRESS RELEASE

### WHO CARES ABOUT CHILDREN?

**Are parents and caretakers aware of the fact that schools are closing for the entire 6-week duration of the FIFA World Cup?**

This is a Cabinet decision. The proposal was mooted in a Government Gazette some time during 2008 but who actually has access to and reads this? No alternate forms of child care have been put in place for this lengthy period. The question must be asked: Who is going to look after this country's children whilst parents and caretakers are working and schools are closed?

During the holiday periods, Dec/January and July, (and during the national Educator's strike during 2007), Childline experiences substantially larger numbers of calls to our toll free line for children in South Africa. Children are often particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation during these holiday periods due to lack of caretaker/carer and parental supervision. We also tend to receive more reports of difficult and problematic behaviour exhibited by children. This is especially but certainly not exclusively, true of children in situations of disadvantage and poverty.

During December 2008 the Childline Call Centre in the Gauteng Province alone was called 72 000 times during the month of December. This figure does not include the calls made to Childline's call centres in other provinces. Not all of these calls come from children in distress – many come from children who are at home – or in their community alone, bored and without supervision – and therefore vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and involvement in unacceptable behaviour. However serious calls also increased markedly and some provinces reported high levels of reports of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, and neglect.

Our concern is that closing schools during this period will place substantial numbers of children at risk. Furthermore, during this period, child protection services are likely to be further depleted due to police and safety and security personnel being on special duties related to the World Cup. This will contribute further to our inability to provide adequate protection for children.

The school provides children with a critically important safety net. No other safety net has been put in place.

We appeal to the general public to lobby actively for the decision to close schools during the period of the FIFA World Cup to be reversed in the interests of providing care and protection of most precious national asset - our children.



# Children's Day Speech

Excerpts from the speech given by Michele Danielle Uys  
(member of Junior Childline Management Committee)

*Good Morning Friends*

I'd like to start by introducing myself. My name is Michele Uys. I'm 15 years old and go to school in Polokwane. I am privileged enough to be a member of the Junior Childline Management Committee. I am here to tell you that there is hope. While there is life - there is always hope.

Many of you have been **abused, abandoned, tortured, mistreated or neglected**. Yes, many of you may not have been treated with the respect and dignity every human being deserves; but are instead subjected to violence, poverty, racism and the ignorance of adults.

Child abuse is so rampant in South Africa that the majority of entries to an art competition held by Childline, showed widespread killings, sexual abuse, beating, drugs and other related phenomena. I was shocked to hear that in South Africa a child is raped every five minutes and child abuse has rocketed by 108% since 1993, according to the National Council for Child and Family Welfare.

These statistics are shocking and represent a **national disgrace**.

I am here to tell you that 'it's easy to be strong if you have someone to talk to'. Childline Limpopo has very qualified counsellors who are there to listen, support and help you. We are one phone call away.  
MEMORISE THIS NUMBER – 0800055555.

The supreme law of South Africa, which is the constitution, guarantees that all people under the age of 18 has children's rights.

- You have the right to be a child
- You have the right to be cared for by your parents and family.
- You have the right to healthy food.
- You have the right to health care when you are feeling sick.
- You have the right to be protected and to feel safe.
- You have the right to education.
- If you have a disability you have the right to special care.

The tide has turned, we NEED to build a safer and more secure South Africa for all children. You all have the right. Remember, preventing crimes against children is everybody's business.

If you are a victim or suspect one of your friends is being abused, call the South African Police Service -10111- or Childline. It's your right- SPEAK OUT. If you are feeling threatened, tell someone you trust. Never allow abuse to become a secret between you and the abuser. If you have already been abused, do not protect them but report it.

We can no longer remain silent. Let us join hands, children of Limpopo. Lets stand up. We are the future leaders of this beautiful country. Let the children of Limpopo lead by example. Speak out and stand up for your rights.

As Kofi Annon said; *"There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring their safety and rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and that they grow up in peace"*.

"Peace be with you all" and remember you are never alone. Childline is a friend, who comes in when it looks like the rest of the world is going out!  
Thank you.



Childline Limpopo held a Provincial Children's Day on the 1st November at Mhinga Village in Vhembe District, which was attended by more than 5 000 children from the area. Since it was a children's event, Childline Limpopo decided to invite Michele Uys (chairperson of the Children's Management Board at Childline Limpopo), to address those present.

Childline Limpopo's Children Management Board supplements the Adult Management Board, thereby ensuring child participation in the activities of the organisation.

## Childline SA website news....

The following articles/reports/documents have been added under the 'documents for download' and news sections:

- the Childline SA AGM Report April 2007-March 2008;
- the Children's Day speech given by Michele Uys and featured in this newsletter;
- a RAPCAN document highlighting parenting in schools; and
- articles concerning children used with permission from the *Your Family* magazine.

Various wish list items for the provincial offices have also been uploaded.

Childline SA is still appealing to the protection network to send information that would be useful to children and teens to be placed on our website. If you have anything, please could you forward to Isabelle at [quillmediaworks@telkomsa.net](mailto:quillmediaworks@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](http://www.childlinesa.org.za)



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