

I S S U E 1 4 : 2 0 0 9

Childline South Africa Newsletter



# Network News

## Editorial from Joan's Desk

MUCH HAS HAPPENED since the last newsletter – South Africa has a new President in the person of Jacob Zuma – and Childline will continue to track the protection of children's rights through government policy and its implementation. However the national Childline office also has seen changes in leadership!

We welcome the appointment of Dumisile Nala as the Chief Executive Officer of Childline South Africa. Dumisile was appointed in September 2008, with a view to her taking over the leadership of the Childline national office. She originally worked at Childline KZN, initially as a Social Work Therapist, rising to the position of Deputy Director. Dumisile then moved to the UK where she was employed as a social worker in various Local Councils in and around London, and even there, she rose to a management position. However her heart remained in South Africa and she accepted the position of Deputy National Coordinator at the Childline SA office, working closely with the National Coordinator in order to familiarise herself with the somewhat complex responsibilities and tasks of the office.

Congratulations Dumisile! Having worked with you for the past 9 months, I have valued your calm and astute input and vision enormously.

I have now moved to the position of Manager, Advocacy and Training. This enables us to devote more time, energy and expertise to these vital national office activities. With the passing of the three core pieces of legislation that will drive the protection of children's rights in South Africa, the Children's Act as Amended, the Child Justice Act and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, the need for training our entire network and our partners has become imperative, apart from other training activities in the Childline network of services.



Joan van Niekerk

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# MXit Online Counselling Project

IN AN EFFORT to keep up with the ever-increasing number of children spending time online, Childline South Africa is now running a pilot project, which offers online counselling.



The project works through MXit and went live on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2009. Counselling and assistance is being offered nationally and is available Monday - Saturday, from 2pm – 6pm. The counsellors are Durban-based and operate from the Childline South Africa National office. The project is in full operation with the very kind assistance of volunteer counsellors who were recruited and trained in April and who have been working hard to make a success of this project.

To our great delight we have had an amazing response to the online counselling thus far, already having to increase the number of available counselors per shift. There are now 3 counsellors and a second group of counsellors are in the process of being recruited to meet the increasing number of requests from MXit users.

The project has not received any funding as yet and is in full operation with the assistance of volunteers and a dedicated and diligent project manager. With the increasing requests and the fast growth of the project, there is a rising urgency for funding so that we can effectively meet the demand.

If you would like more information on the MXit Online Counselling project or know of anyone who would like to help sponsor or assist our project, please contact Lamese Mukadam, Project Manager at [research@childlinesa.org.za](mailto:research@childlinesa.org.za).



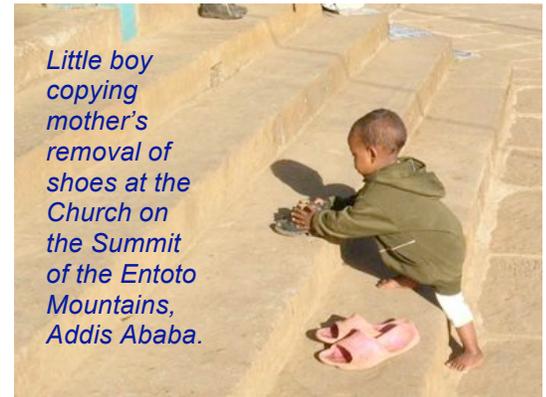
Online counselors busy at work at the National Childline SA office.

## Childline SA represented at Ethiopian Conference

Dumisile Nala (CEO) and Joan van Niekerk (Manager – Advocacy and Training) recently had the privilege of attending the Biannual conference of the African Network for the *Prevention and Protection of Children Against Abuse and Neglect*.

The theme of the Conference centered around Early Childhood Development as “*Early Childhood is the foundation for overall human development. It is a period when human beings cultivate a culture of tolerance, respect and mutual understanding. It is an important period for socialization. Early Childhood Development is also a critical period for the development of healthy and responsible citizens and therefore requires special care and attention. Despite this known fact, the issue of Early Childhood Development and Education has not been given the care and attention it deserves by concerned child protection parties in Africa.*”

Childline SA presented two papers at the conference, one on the *Parenting Project* (see pages 4-6 of this newsletter) and one on *Inter-sector Protection and the Preschool Child*. Both presentations are available on the Childline SA website.



*Little boy copying mother's removal of shoes at the Church on the Summit of the Entoto Mountains, Addis Ababa.*



*A view of Addis Ababa.*

## The Child Justice Act - Roll out of diversion programmes

The State President has now signed this Act into law and implementation is planned for April 2010. To this end the National Inter-sector Committee on Child Justice have been meeting regularly, as well as the National Committee.

The Act centres on the use of diversion for child offenders, a restorative justice process that directs children towards remedial alternatives to address their behaviour. This encourages children to take responsibility for their behaviour, and also has the potential to refer the child and family to services that address conditions that support the behaviour.

One of the supporting policy documents for the implementation of the Child Justice Act is the “*Minimum Norms and Standards For Diversion*” document. All diversion programmes have to comply with the norms and standards laid out in this document in order to attract funding from government. The document lists 95 minimum norms and standards which relate to *Organisational and Capacities Standards* (governance, financial management, business planning, record keeping, profit, staff recruitment and deployment as well as some specific minimum norms and standards that

relate to particular programmes such as drug and alcohol dependency and sex offending by children.

The roll out of diversion programmes for children in conflict with the law presents an enormous challenge to the Criminal Justice System, including the Department of Social Development and other social service providers, especially for the development of programmes for children living in rural areas.

The number and sophistication of the norms and standards listed in the *Minimum Norms and Standards Document*, although laudable in its intent to provide quality services to children in conflict with the law, may thus slow down or prevent the implementation of diversion programmes as a viable alternative for those children who already live in the very situations of disadvantage that may in themselves have contributed to the child's behaviour.

The *Minimum Standards for Diversion Document* is not available on the Department of Social Development Website, or in hard copy at this point. We have therefore loaded this document onto the Childline South Africa Website under the documents for download section.

**To view, visit [www.childlinesa.org.za](http://www.childlinesa.org.za)**

# The Parenting Project

## Promoting Alternatives to Corporal & Humiliating Punishment

By Joan van Niekerk, Childline South Africa, February 2009

### Are you ever challenged as a parent or caretaker of children? If so – read on!

Childline South Africa has experienced a significant increase in reported physical and emotional abuse of children in the past three years. If one looks at a year-by-year comparison of physical and emotional reports of abuse to the Childline Crisis Line, calls relating to both these forms of abuse have doubled over this period.



Calls to the Childline Crisis Line	2006	2007	2008
Physical abuse	1775	2538	3428
Emotional abuse	2065	2914	4827
Neglect	2109	3356	3883

Many of the calls relating to physical abuse appear to relate to efforts to cope with children's "misbehaviour" rather than arise from a deliberate intention to harm a child. Much of the physical abuse was related to misguided efforts to discipline or when the parent or caretaker lost their temper and lost control, resulting in harm to the child.

It is noted that pre-school children are particularly vulnerable to physical injury when corporal punishment is used and that this is an age group that parents and caretakers find particularly challenging to parent without the use of smacking and hitting.

Many of Childline's crisis line counsellors have themselves been raised with the use of corporal punishment and in communities in which violence is common. Counselling parents and caretakers on discipline without hitting, smacking and other forms of violence is not easy without some training in alternatives to corporal and other forms of humiliating punishment.

Thus began the Parenting Project, which seeks to develop culturally appropriate parenting materials to be used for the training of Childline Counsellors. This project also intends exploring culturally congruent and non-violent positive parenting practices in countries across Southern Africa with a view to applying the developed materials in those areas too.

With a view to preparing a format for focus group with parents and children in the participating countries, aimed at exploring culturally non-violent parenting practices, representatives from South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, then attended a workshop in South Africa.

The workshop produced formats for focus group discussions for children in either the 6 to 12 or 13 to 18, age group. With the younger age group it was decided to use a story in order to stimulate ideas from the children about their perceptions of positive parenting. A standard reporting format was also produced for the systematic collections of outcomes by facilitators.

In all, 30 groups involving 547 children were held across the countries involved in the project, and **a number of common themes emerged from all categories** (two of children and one of parents).

- ▣ Children themselves, even the youngest ones, acknowledge the need for discipline and structure in their lives.
- ▣ Children of all ages experience that adults sometimes have unrealistic expectations of their abilities and capacities.
- ▣ Parents involved in the focus groups had a good academic understanding of the role and purpose of parenting.
- ▣ It was also noted that many children who attended the focus group discussions were not living with their biological parents.

#### **Relationships within families:**

- ▣ Children of all ages asked that parents treat the children in the household equally, and with consideration of their evolving capacities. For example, a child from South African stated, *“When my uncle gives his child another chance, but punishes me, it doesn’t feel fair and I feel very angry”*.
- ▣ Children want their parents to encourage a peaceful, happy environment in which children are affirmed; they want parents to set for their children the example of what it means to be an adult. *“Aunty needs to be kinder and not always be so angry*

*because that makes us frightened”*.

Child in focus group – children 6 – 10 years, Lusaka, Zambia

#### **The importance of parental/caretaker role modeling:**

- ▣ Children were very clear that it is not enough for parents to tell them what to do – they need to see it for themselves.
- ▣ If we want children to be considerate of others, we need to treat children with consideration.
- ▣ The youngest children were adamant that parents should not be violent and aggressive with each other so that they (the children) can learn not to be violent and aggressive themselves. *“If adults fight, children will fight too”*, Child in focus group: children 6-10 years, South Africa.

#### **The importance of communication**

- ▣ All the groups involved in the project, prioritised communication between parents and their children.
- ▣ Children said that communication is a ‘two-way street’ – parents should also share with their children the problems they are facing; a lack of communication makes children feel isolated and insecure.

#### **Establishing Rules**

- ▣ Even the youngest children understood the need for rules and discipline.
- ▣ Parents need to understand that everyone can make a mistake – including parents.
- ▣ Children want to be involved in establishing the rules and the consequences for breaking them.
- ▣ Rules should be reasonable and make sense to everyone involved – and be equitably applied to everyone.

- ▣ Rules should be focused on helping children to develop a sense of responsibility.

### **Responding to misbehavior**

- ▣ The youngest children were particularly anxious that parents give them an opportunity to explain what happened and why, and also to consider the circumstances under which the child acted as (s)he did.
- ▣ When there are disciplinary issues to be considered, parents should be reasonable and should not contradict and conflict with each other about the consequences of the “misbehaviour”.
- ▣ Parents’ responses should also be age-appropriate.

### **Conclusions and recommendations to this phase of the parenting project**

- ▣ The parents groups strongly emphasised the need for parenting support groups and access to information on child development and alternatives to physical punishment.
- ▣ Parents need to understand more about the rights of children, and their own rights, linked to responsibilities.
- ▣ Thus, a strong recommendation arising from the first phase of this project is to develop the focus group format further so that it can be used beyond researching the views of children and parents on parenting to facilitating the development of positive parenting practices and positive responses from children to parents.
- ▣ Regular training and awareness-raising opportunities should be provided to parents.
- ▣ The information gained from the focus groups should be used to develop clear

and culturally appropriate messages around positive parenting and easy to use materials to promote positive parenting.

- ▣ Messaging should be empowering and focus on what is positive, not on what is negative.
- ▣ Information should be readily available on child development (physical, emotional, social and cognitive) in accessible formats and local languages.

### **Childline South Africa plans to take this project forward via:**

- ▣ Establishing a reference group comprising a range of experts from the Southern African Region, which will “meet” electronically and telephonically.
- ▣ The production of actual materials to support parenting.
- ▣ Developing training materials on the use of the materials for supporting parenting and provide training.
- ▣ Link to current initiatives on the African continent.
- ▣ Continue to participate in forums, conferences and meetings in order to highlight the negative consequences for children of living with violence of any kind in their lives, and encourage a positive and supportive environment in homes and communities.

**For the FULL article, please visit  
[www.childlinesa.org.za](http://www.childlinesa.org.za)**

Grateful thanks are extended to Save the Children Sweden for funding this project, as well as to Carol Bower, Child Rights Consultant, for implementing this project with Childline South Africa.

# Report on the ISIBINDI Child Protection Camp March 2009

Submitted by Petunia Tsotetsi



Petunia Tsotetsi

IN MARCH 2009, the Isibindi project in Venda identified 23 children between the ages of 8 and 19 to attend a treatment camp. The objective of the treatment camp was to provide a seven day intensive residential therapeutic child

protection program.

Only 20 of identified children attended the camp. These children have been sexually abused, are orphans and live in poverty (their guardians are in receipt of foster care grants but it is either being misused or the children are no longer staying with them due to neglect).

The staff from the National Association of Child and Youth Care Workers as well as two therapists from Childline, worked together to ensure that the camp was a success.

Each child attended three individual therapy sessions and two group sessions. Two of the children received four therapy sessions because they had to be prepared for court. The child and youth care workers had to interpret, as the therapists could not speak Venda and Tsonga languages and some of the children could not communicate in English. This did not hamper the therapeutic process. The usage of interpreters during therapy sessions is not ideal but it is an alternative solution to leaving a child traumatized with no therapeutic intervention.

Ten of the children were referred to the camp because they were engaged in sexual activities, and it became evident during sessions that some of them were using sex as means of survival e.g. needing food, school uniform etc. They had disassociated themselves from the trauma of the abuse. Their primary concern was where their next meal was going to come from.

Numerous studies have confirmed that early sexualization can create a pattern of promiscuity and risky behavior. However, these children were also faced with challenges of coming from dysfunctional environments and therefore, projected an aura of neediness, which is often identified by potential molesters. Since their abuse, they have not been able to access therapeutic support and social services due to their location and age. Lastly, service providers are often overwhelmed with the number of sexual abuse cases and the ages of the children who have been abused, and the reality is that the quality of therapeutic and legal services offered to the children and their families is not adequate.

The Childline therapists had to focus on one of the major areas of therapeutic work, which is treating children in their own right, with space to express and explore their own concerns (the child centered approach).

It was imperative for the counsellors to recognise that no one symptom is unique to children who have been sexually abused, nor do all (or even the majority) of them display any one symptom. As such, their assessments of the children resulted in a treatment intervention that was specific to the child's response and needs, even taking into account their living situation.

NACCW followed up with district social workers to ensure that they attended the case conference with Childline therapists and child and youth care workers on the last day of the therapeutic program. Their attendance at this case conference was essential as they would be responsible for implementing some of the recommendations.

The Childline therapists, NACCW staff and district social workers remain in contact, with the objective of ensuring that all the children receive further therapy and appropriate social services.

**Editors Note:** The experiences of the older children who attended the treatment camp underline the consequences of the child support grant terminating at the age of 15 years – it leaves 15 to 18 year olds without any means of support, and thus contributes to the sexual abuse and exploitation of this age group, creating a high risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

# PEPFAR Progress Report

(Presidential Emergency Plan for Aids Relief – OVC Project)

The PEPFAR OVC project is progressing well with all those involved in the project from the seven participating provinces understanding what they are supposed to do. It is now becoming clear how they should capture, collate data and report on all the number of OVCs served in all the eleven service categories.

## Monitoring & Evaluation visits

Monitoring and Evaluation visits have been conducted in three provinces, namely Gauteng, North West and KwaZulu-Natal. From the visits conducted it shows that the implementation is going well and it is apparent that the project is adding value to the children they are serving.

However, there are still lessons to be learnt, with each province having something unique to offer the process. The monitoring and evaluation process was finalized in June.

## Financial Management Training

One of the important functions for the success of this project is having a good financial management system in all Childline Offices. During first months of the project it was identified that there is a need for all Finance Officers in all provinces to be trained, as they are responsible for all the PEPFAR claims and invoices.

The training by PACT SA (Private Agencies Collaborating Together), Mpumalanga and Childline SA was conducted on the 21-22 May 2009 at the Childline National Office training room.

The training was very effective and it will help not only in managing and reporting on the funds for PEPFAR project, but also on managing funds from other donors. It will enhance the process of controlling, monitoring and recording the finances. The National Office is also in the process of streamlining and changing their financial management system and everything will now be captured and controlled internally.



Submitted by  
Zama Kubheka

## What is PEPFAR?

In 2003, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was launched to combat global HIV/AIDS - the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in history.

Through FY2013, PEPFAR plans to work in partnership with host nations to support:

- \* Treatment for at least 3 million people
- \* Prevention of 12 million new infections
- \* Care for 12 million people, including 5 million orphans and vulnerable children

To meet these goals and build sustainable local capacity, PEPFAR will support training of at least 140,000 new health care workers in HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care.



## NEWS & VIEWS

The article, *Disturbingly sexual*, raises important questions about the exploitation of the sexuality of children in commercial advertising and marketing. The article is a response to a billboard advertising “Huggies”.

“SEXY GIRLS ARE STANDARD BILLBOARD FARE, but there is something different about the girl blown up huge on the billboard on Cape Town's Roeland street with her provocative little pout, the coy backwards glance over her shoulder, the hand posed provocatively on her hip. It's a pose from 100 million fashion magazines. You've seen it all before. Or not. Because the girl in question is a baby. A friend has dubbed her Slutty Waitress Baby. It suits her perfectly - as does her sassy tagline: 'Work It, Baby!' You know, like the kind of thing you call out to models. Naomi Campbell urging on her wannabes: 'That's it, work the look! Work your body!' Strip joint clientele calling out to the girls on stage: 'Come on, baby, work it. Work that sweet little ass, give it to me, baby, oh yeah.' Slutty Waitress Baby looks a bit huffy - as if her teddy bear customers have been giving her a tough time. She looks like she has attitude - the kind of girl who doesn't take any shit. She looks like she's wearing lipstick. She looks sassy. Precocious. Disturbingly sexual.



“I know I'm not imagining this. It's not just me. Everyone I've spoken to finds the ad unsettling. One friend says, 'I feel sick every time I see it.' The others in the Huggies Denim series of a painter girl or a cowboy are genuinely innocent and very sweet. It's the combination in Waitress Baby that reads so horribly wrong: that pose + that pout + that dodgy tagline.

“Maybe I find Slutty Waitress Baby disturbing because I'm a new parent. Because living in South Africa means that among the paranoias about terrible things that might happen to my child – she might fall on her head, she might get meningitis, she might run into the road - is the brutal, unfathomable reality that she might get raped. South Africa has horrifying statistics on child rape. On baby rape. I couldn't bear to look up the figures. But barely three weeks ago, on April 3, a **16-month-old toddler was raped** and beaten when her mother left her in the care of a "friend" while she went to do her washing. It was so horrific; the police needed trauma counseling afterwards.

“Do I think this ad is going to inspire someone to go out and rape a baby? No. But I think it contributes to a bigger picture, of normalising this skewed cultural idea of little girls as sexy. It's a tacit endorsement. I also don't think it was intentional or malicious on the part of the nappy manufacturer or their advertising agency - just short-sighted, naïve and grossly insensitive to the reality of sexual violence. “I guess the ad is cute. It's a cute parody of adult sexuality. Slutty Waitress Baby looks backwards over her shoulder at the city, her head wrapped in a fuchsia bow, bare-naked from the waist up above her cute high-fashion denim diaper. Is that confidence in her eyes? Or a come-hither? Can you tell the difference?”

This article can be viewed from [www.news24.com/News24v2/Components/](http://www.news24.com/News24v2/Components/) and is part of an article entitled THE EXPLOITATION OF THE SEXUALITY OF CHILDREN, by Ilyar Chetty, which can be viewed on the Childline SA website.

## FEEDBACK & Childline SA website news....

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

- "Sexting" & Child Pornography.
- "Sexting" – Danger to Children.
- The Exploitation of the Sexuality of Children.
- Comment on Budget Speech 2009.

Just felt compelled to drop you a line - to say - what a fantastic newsletter.

**Patricia Martin,  
ACCESS**

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. We are 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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