

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN TRUST

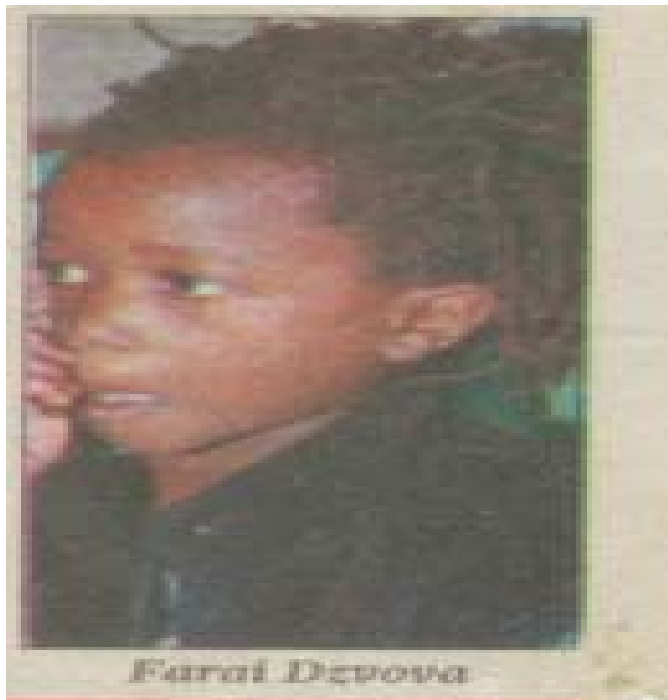
February Newsletter

Dreams for the right to education fulfilled

The right to education is clearly spelt out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child as well as in the Education Act of Zimbabwe. It is the duty of the government to ensure that all children have access to education regardless of their gender, race, religion and beliefs. Our justice delivery system is playing a leading role to ensure that children access their fundamental right to education without being disadvantaged due to whatever reason. The Herald of 12 October 2007 carried a story of a pupil who had been expelled from a certain school in Harare for wearing dreadlocks.

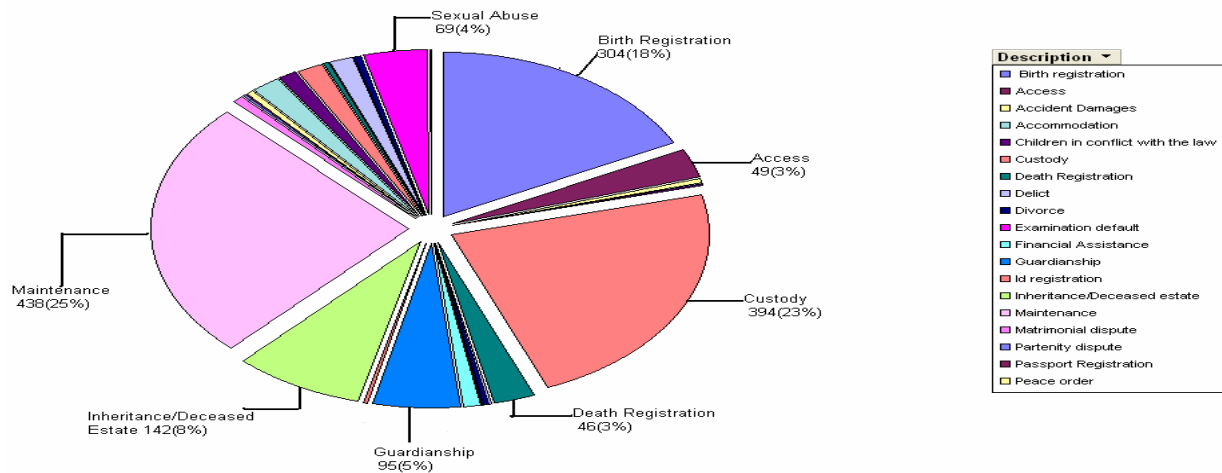
Farai Dzvova's education was nearly jeopardized because of his religious beliefs and this is grossly unacceptable in a democratic society. There is hope in the justice delivery system in terms of the protection of children's rights as evidenced by the Supreme Court's ruling in the case of the young boy. Justice Cheda highlighted in his judgement being SC 26/07 that ,” It is hereby declared that expulsion of a Rastafarian from school on the basis of his expression of his religious belief through his hairstyle is a contravention of ss 19 and 23 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe” . Therefore all those children who are marginalized by other children because of their religion can now have faith in the justice delivery system. The picture below shows Farai Dzvova as it came out in the Herald report of 10 October 2007.

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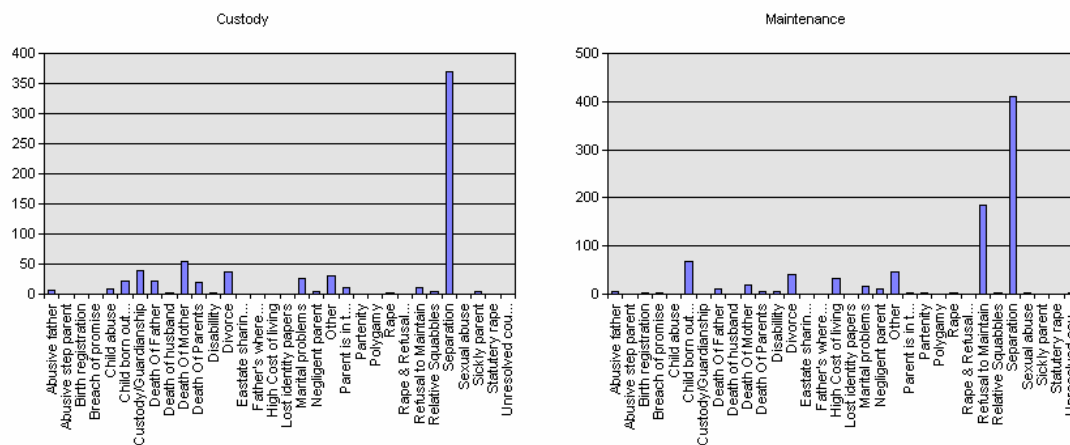


Justice for Children Trust's overall statistics for 2007

The organization continued to assist children by providing free legal services. The graph below shows the statistics for the year of 2007 as extracted from the organizational database. A total of 1 744 new cases were received and most of them were on Maintenance and Birth Registration.



The analysis of the Maintenance and Custody cases shows that the major underlying cause is divorce or separation of parents as depicted by the graph below. For whether it is true that separation or divorce is on the rise, please check our March issue.



Who should champion children's rights?

Due to the cases of child abuse being received by JCT, the organization pioneered training of children in the schools through a schools project so that the children would become peer educators who identify and report child abuse cases to the responsible authorities. This year JCT has been training these children in pro – action and leadership skills. In Harare and Chitungwiza sometime in February 2008 101 students from 29 surrounding schools received the training. After being trained, the children organized a clean up campaign at Makoni shopping centre in the same area. During the campaign the children were spreading the message of child protection as the responsibility of the society through drama, poetry and songs as evidenced by the picture below. Children from Seke 1, 2 and 5 and Zengeza 1 high schools participated.



Remember the children of Zimbabwe during elections

As people talk about the impending historic harmonized elections to be held on the 29th of March 2008, it is important to focus on children as a special category of human beings deserving to be always above the political divide. All people are reminded to shun all forms of violence and cherish the peace prevailing in the country for the benefit of our children who should always be considered as zones of peace. It is not advisable for those seeking support to use school children to distribute their campaign materials.