



Girl Child Network

Registered Private Voluntary Organisation 9/2004

End of Year

Special In Touch Newsflash 2007

Keeping in touch with funding partners, friends, board and supporters.

Chief Writer: Robinson Tafadzwa Chikowero

All is well that ends well. Such is the summation of the year 2007 as it unfolded in the life of Girl Child Network. The year was an eventful one full of happy and sad moments for the organisation and the girls. That we are able to write this newsflash thanking all those who stood by the organisation and wishing you happy holidays is a sign and evidence enough to show that the organisation survived the turbulent times to look back and relieve the memories of the year. Such is the resilience of the organisation and its visionary leadership that it managed to bring smiles on the faces of many a girl child when the whole world expected them to shed tears. Even the arrest and intimidation of the Director and some of GCN's friends did not deter the organisation from ensuring that its beneficiaries had something to smile about.

In this "Special In Touch Newsflash" we will take the opportunity to thank all those who clinged by the wings of the organisation as it swirled away from the plethora of challenges it encountered. We will share with you the moments that had all those who interact with the organisation smiling, laughing or crying. The newsflash will bring you closer to the organisation's work through updates on grants and activities implemented by the organisation's different programmes and functions.

Appreciation

The Girls

They are the owners of the organisation, the owners of the programmes, they are the over 30 000 registered girls belonging to over 600 girls empowerment clubs spread over all the ten provinces. Their participation, demanding their rights where they are due, denouncing perpetrators of violence against them keeping the GCN staff on their toes to ensure they get their deserved benefits through the programmes, activities and services provided by the organisation. They are the reason why the organisation exists. GCN would like to commend them for their participation in all programmes designed to ensure their empowerment and development in the school, home and community. Their enthusiasm to understand and address issues that hinder their development was inspirational. Their togetherness standing for each other and fighting child abuse was touching. Through their songs, poems, drama, pledges and

in their journals they made their feelings, views, concerns, demands and declarations known. Hats off to the girls for the sky is the limit.

GCN Director and staff

For all their passion and commitment to ensure the development and empowerment of the girl child the GCN Director and staff members should be applauded for their resilience in the face of adversity. Competently led by the Founder and Director, Betty Makoni the GCN staff were a pillar of strength for many girls facing challenges of different magnitudes at home, school and the community. No girl was far away, no time was odd for GCN staff. For their commitment thumbs up to the GCN Director, staff, board, volunteers and interns at the Headquarters in Chitungwiza, Chitsotso, Mwemba and Chihota Girls Empowerment Villages and club and Area coordinators in the various areas of operation.

Funding Partners

Our heartfelt thanks go to the following funding partners for the role they played in ensuring that our objectives were achievable throughout the year through the grants and technical assistance availed during the year. Oxfam NOVIB, European Union, CIDA, Stephen Lewis Foundation, American Jewish World Service, New Field Foundation, IDEX, Firelight Foundation, Global Fund for Women, World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, Art Venture, Medica Mondiale, the British Embassy, The Pink Travel, Lift Project and Canada Cross International. GCN looks forward to working with potential funding partners we have established a relationship with like World Education Inc., Artists International Direct Support (Rotary Club Canada), Global Development Network, Addie Gutang Family Foundation and Bernard Van Leer Foundation.

Media

Having worked with the media and trained some of the journalists on objective and gender sensitive reporting GCN would like to acknowledge the critical role played by the media fraternity in fighting child abuse and spreading the gospel of girl child empowerment through the press. The role of both the print and electronic media succoured in ensuring that the organisation's programmes reached all corners of the country. The battle is not yet won and GCN still hopes that a lot that still needs to be done will be done.

Nevertheless, our special thanks go to Midlands News, The Nehanda Guardian, The Herald, The Sunday Mail, The Standard, ZTV's Kidznet, Kubatana, and SFM.

Stakeholders

GCN would like to extend heartfelt appreciation to all our stakeholders who made our work light and complimented our efforts in our areas of operation. Our work could have been difficult if not meaningless without their unconditional support. We tackled sensitive issues with some of the stakeholders but in the end we all realised that we were working not for GCN or the stakeholders but for the development and empowerment of the girl child. As a result we made more friends than enemies. Traditional leaders, organisations working with children, government lines ministries and departments such the Social Welfare, Police, the

courts and also school authorities in our areas of operation complimented our efforts in fighting child abuse in the home, school and community.

Local and International GCN Friends

GCN is indebted to a number of people who have voluntarily offered their time and in most cases their resources to further the cause of the organisation from different parts of the world. These people donated to the organisation in both cash and kind and GCN staff had the opportunity to spend time with some of them. For dedicating their time, financial and human resources GCN would like to say hats off to Bill Sparks the GCN Volunteer Coordinator based in Canada for working so tireless for the organisation and the Director in Canada, David Miller, Jackie Van der meluen and Kim Bremer for coming and working at GCN as international interns and offering their expertise to the organisation and its beneficiaries, Somell Richards, Michealene Risley and Paola Gianturco in the US. In the same category GCN would like to thank members of the Women as Role Models, Women in Progress and those in the corporate sector who donated to the organisation in different ways like Old Mutual, Holiday Inn and Intermarket Building Society.

Major Highlights of the Year

GCN Director, Betty Makoni at ICTE 2007: As GCN Expands and Strengthens International Networking.

📁 The year started on a high note with the GCN Director being selected and participating at the International Center for Tolerance Education as a Guest in New York between January and February. It was an opportunity she utilised to enhance and strengthen GCN's programs on gender and girls' rights, fundraising and networking as well as creation of synergies with international organisations and networks. Events and activities of note at the international program included officiating at the International Women's Day sponsored and organised by IDEX, meetings at UNGEI in New York , Funding partners' meeting with representatives from IDEX, New Field Foundation, Global Fund for Women and Firelight Foundation at the New Field Foundation offices for a funder briefing regarding the latest developments in GCN, updates and pertinent information for funders and also the interview on New York Public Radio (organized by AJWS) for a show called "Underreported: A Weekly Feature on The Leonard Lopate Show" Live phone in at the IDEX Office. She also met with many NGO representatives working on gender based violence in New York.

GCN Director and Staff take GCN projects global through networking.

📁 The ICTE program seemed to have set the tone for GCN networking drive as more and more avenues opened up for the organisation to share its best practices with other organisations. The networking experience the organisation at large acquired was also valuable to staff members through personal development, learning and skills sharing. Staff members got exposure to other different situations and different working environments that assisted them improving their work through sharing notes with people from others parts of the world working around gender, HIV/AIDS and various dimensions of violence against children. GCN Director and staff members presented at such platforms as the Oxfam NOVIB Roundtable, Global Fund for Women, Skillshare South Africa, Africa Gender Monitor, UNGEI Secretariat, Women Deliver Conference,

World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, Ashoka Change Makers, Southern Africa Trust Drivers of Change, SWAAGA/GCN Exchange Program, Intermon Education Sudan, Groots International, Global Women Leadership in HIV/AIDS. It was out of the many regional and international trips that GCN created synergies and established relationships with individuals and funding partners that have benefited the organisation.

Girls Speak Out on HIV/AIDS

📁 GCN facilitated the first ever Stephen Lewis Foundation funded girls' national conference dubbed, "The National Girls HIV/AIDS Speak Out Conference" which attracted the participation of close to 300 girls drawn from all the ten provinces of Zimbabwe. The conference held over two days was also attended by club coordinators, invited guests well known in AIDS activism and the media. It was a first of its kind in that for the first time it was girls speaking out their minds on the pandemic as it has affects them while other people listened. The girls took advantage of the conference to make a declaration that contained the following 15 points:

1. That the media be sensitive in its portrayal of HIV /AIDS issues especially where they concern girls.
2. The media should publish for all ages and not focus on adults. This also refers to the adverts carried in the media about HIV.
3. Home based care programmes should be strengthened and involve all sectors of society to allow girls space to attend school as they are spending a lot of school time taking care of relatives.
4. Programmes that fight discrimination and stigma must be strengthened, especially in school, and specific AIDS programmes must be introduced into the school curriculum and taught by specially qualified staff.
5. HIV education and awareness programmes on abuse should begin in Grade Zero to raise awareness of HIV and abuse from the earliest learning age.
6. There is need to increase awareness about other forms of transmission of HIV, not to focus on sexual transmission.
7. Children's income generating programmes especially in school clubs be promoted and strengthened to allow children to gain financial capacity to care for the needs of fellow children infected and affected.
8. Programmes that benefit orphans and vulnerable children, especially those living with HIV should be scaled up.
9. Money allocated to HIV/AIDS programmes for children should be used transparently and be accounted for properly
10. All cases of rape and child abuse should be treated swiftly and equally without considering the position or influence of the alleged perpetrator.
11. Access to Post Exposure Prophylaxis should be a right for all victims of rape.
12. Testing and counseling centres should engage children as peer counselors to enable children to speak out better.
13. Children living with HIV /AIDS should have access to playing a meaningful role in programmes that affect them.
14. Discussion on HIV issues and the status of members should be openly discussed from national to family level to demystify the issues.

15. All organisations that work in the field of HIV/AIDS should work closely together between themselves and with the national programmes in order to derive maximum benefits for the girls who need the interventions.

"How are the children in Zimbabwe?": Zimbabwe participate in the Global Vote.

- 📁 On the 30th March 2007 Zimbabwean school children aged below 17 years participated in the Global Vote for the first. The Global Vote organised by the World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child pitted Betty Makoni, the Girl Child Network Director and Founder, Cynthia Muang of Burma and Inderjit Khurana from India who had shown unparalleled commitment to fighting for the rights of children through various ways in and outside their countries. This was the first time that Zimbabwean children joined over 6 million children in the world and participated in this exercise that presented them with an opportunity to get involved in a democratic process in which they chose the person they felt really represented them in the realisation of their rights. Close to 600 schools in Zimbabwe took part and it was encouraging to note that all the school authorities of participating schools threw all their weight behind the event such that it was a resounding success and well coordinated. Betty Makoni came out of the contest with flying colours as she walked away with 2 Global awards.

More Awards and Nominations for GCN and its Director

- 📁 The impact of GCN work and the leadership qualities of the Director and Founder continued to reap fruits for the organisation. This has been evidenced by the number of awards and nominations the Director and the organisation have received throughout the year. The Director scooped the following awards, nominations and recognition in 2007:
- 🏆 *Most Outstanding Young Person in the World-Humanitarian and Voluntary Leadership by the Junior Chamber International*
 - 🏆 *Drivers of Change Award for her contribution in the Civil Society*
 - 🏆 *30 most outstanding young people in the world Betty nominated among the top 10. September 2007.*
 - 🏆 *10 Most outstanding persons in Zimbabwe by the Junior Chamber International Zimbabwe*
 - 🏆 *Recognised and Awarded for Contribution to National Development through humanitarian work (Zimbabwe) by the Zimbabwe Institute of Managers*
 - 🏆 *Global Friends Award awarded by the World's Children Prize for the Rights of the Child 2007*
 - 🏆 *Children's Jury Prize awarded by the World's Children Prize for the Rights of the Child 2007*
 - 🏆 *Selected to be a fellow for Ashoka Fellowship*
- 📁 On the 23rd of May 2007 Girl Child Network held its second National Journalistic Awards Ceremony at the Meikles hotel. GCN scored a first in terms of promoting child participation as the event was organised and officiated by children who went on to present the prizes with a few selected dignitaries. This year's awards held under the theme "awarded globally, awarding locally" saw 20 journalists walking away with shields and cash prizes for outstanding and objective reporting on gender and girl child issues. The event was attended by NGO representatives, media personnel from all the media

houses in Zimbabwe, regional NGO Directors from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Nigeria, Sudan, Swaziland and Uganda, WEG members from Sudan and Denise Parmentier of Oxfam Novib. Swedish Ambassador Stern Rylander and Roxanne Dube the Canadian Ambassador were also in attendance. The ceremony was supported by Oxfam Novib, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the British Embassy.

- ☞ Unfortunate and sad moments were also part of the year as represented by the arrests first of the GCN Director and her two American friends who had come to do a documentary on Betty and her work as GCN Director and second of Betty and Zimbabwe Television talkshow host, Rebecca Chisamba on allegations spruced up by people who want to bring GCN down for exposing their child sexual abuse atrocities. This did not in any way deter the Director nor the organisation from carrying out its mandate of championing the advancement of girls' rights in the home, school and community environments. GCN would like to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who stood by the Director during these trying times. GCN would like to assure the girls, stakeholders and funding partners that the organisation will continue to its work without fear of perpetrators of abuse who want to flex their political muscles by intimidating GCN staff.

Programmes Update

GCN's programmes machine was well oiled by funds from the European Union for the advocacy and awareness on children's (girls) rights in five areas of operation, Royal Netherlands Embassy for the Community Education, Empowerment and Development for the Orphaned and Vulnerable Girl Children in Chivhu and Chitungwiza, Oxfam Novib for the girl child empowerment strategy, Firelight Foundation for Chitsotso Girls Empowerment Village and Community Support programme, American Jewish World Service for the Economic Empowerment of Girls in Chihota, Stephen Lewis Foundation, Egmont Trust for the HIV/AIDS support and mitigation programmes, US Embassy for the Ant trafficking programme, New Field Foundation IDEX for institutional support programmes for Hwange and Chitungwiza, CIDA for the gender, HIV/AIDS and human rights capacity building, Global Fund for Women for girls' education, Medica Mondiale and Art Venture. The technical support of these funding partners made it facilitated the functioning of GCN's following programmes and activities.

Girls Empowerment Clubs

The G.E.C programme successfully managed to register 65 clubs with 98 active clubs expressing interest to join and have been put on a waiting list for 2008. This year the department encountered overwhelming demand for new club and GCN programs across the country as the impact of the organisation's programmes was felt countrywide. The GEC programme, Club Coordinators and Area Coordinators carried out club visits to clubs in their respective areas of operation with a total of 213 clubs being visited. The visits presented a good opportunity to carry monitor girls clubs' activities and out a baseline survey on training needs of girls in clubs aimed at in improving the quality of empowerment programs designed for girls.

319 club presidents from 40 GCN areas of operation underwent Leadership and Empowerment Skills Training. Fruits of this training manifested in Lisa Bonongwe (12) is one striking example of the leadership qualities evident in some of the girls. She was part to the delegation that went to Sweden for the World Children's prize for the rights of the Child. GCN has also taken gender to greater heights in a more practical manner. GCN now has 15 male Club Coordinators and some actively participate in GCN programs especially in Mutasa, Guruve, Marange, Chihota and Mutare,

As a way of building the capacity of club coordinators and decentralizing activities and responsibilities of the GEC programme 20 area coordinators attended a Train the Trainer workshop. To ensure the exchange of information on club activities the programme facilitated 68 cluster meetings were held in all 40 areas of operation representing a 97% implementation rate.

Advocacy and Lobby

The Advocacy and Lobby programme undertook a number of activities meant to raise awareness around issues of children's rights and the available international and domestic legal statutes that cater for children's rights. In this regard and supported by the European Union the programme undertook school lectures on children's rights, repackaged and distributed laws protecting children and undertook community awareness campaigns on children's rights. The repackaged and simplified local and international statutes included the United Nations Charter on the Rights of Children, The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children, Children's Act and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act. Some of the laws were also translated into the vernacular to ensure they are understandable at all levels of the society. The programme also held sensitization workshops with law enforcement agents on the implementation of laws that protect children, and held sensitization workshops with traditional and religious leaders on harmful religious and cultural practices.

Community Development and Empowerment Programme

Having realised that for the total empowerment of the girl child there was need to empower communities to ensure that they become receptive of GCN programmes and participate in the empowerment process. In this regard the Community Development and Empowerment Programme realised the need to design programmes for the communities. As such communities were trained in and given funds to start income generating projects, non food items were distributed to the communities and conducted outreach programmes on anti trafficking and imparted knowledge on gender, HIV and AIDS and sexual abuse to traditional leaders and religious leaders.

From the beginning of the year 5 HIV and AIDS awareness campaigns were done in remote parts of Chivhu, Mutasa and Chitungwiza. 1562 people were reached by this programme. 28 community based organisations have been registered with GCN and three (Ray of Hope, Maunganidze Children Organisation and New Hope Foundation) have already been linked to funding partners like the Firelight Foundation. 20 member Child Protection Committees have been formed in Chivhu, Sadza, Mutasa and Chitungwiza to help report and manage cases of child abuse. Gender, HIV and AIDS and children's rights issues were taken to remote parts

of Chivhu, Mutasa and Chitungwiza were 1 500 people were reached. Economic insecurity has always increased the vulnerability of girls and GCN decided to reduce their vulnerability by providing start up capital to 16 community based clubs and 20 school clubs received funding to start income generating programmes.

Girls At Risk Support Programme

The programme responded to the calls from many girls at risk in various communities in many ways. Rescue missions which removing girls from abusive environments, reporting cases and as well as placing victims into places of safety were undertaken. A total number of 438 girls were rescued areas where their rights were violated left, right and centre with rape constituting 60% of the cases and 30% of the rape cases leading to pregnancy, 5% to infection and 5% leading to forced marriages had 5% . GCN worked with the police, hospital, courts and the department of social welfare in the rescue operations. It was not an easy road as the GCN faced resistance and intimidation from high profile and prominent people and such cases that led to victimization include the Makanaka case which attracted the interest of high ranking police and some politicians.

On the education front GCN successfully reinstated and retained a total of 5130 vulnerable girls through provision of school fees and other educational related needs. The Most of these girls were survivors of abuse, orphans, underprivileged girls as well as those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. GCN has decided to send survivors of abuse to boarding schools to give the girls a positive head start in building and shaping their future.

GCN also provided study fees for 12 University girls studying at different tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. GCN further linked some of these University students with international universities and also engaged some of them in its internship program. Besides provided school fees the organisation provided school uniforms and stationery for the more vulnerable beneficiaries as it is not only non payment of school fees that culminates in girls dropping out of school.

Information, Documentation and Dissemination

This programme was involved in the following activities through out the year that included production of the 2000 newsflashes, 800 pamphlets, 10 sets of posters, 738 t-shirts, 9 television and radio programmes, 4 adverts on television focusing on new laws protecting children. As part of networking, creating synergies for information sharing the department attended one NGO expo in Harare, one book fair in Harare, one agricultural show in Bindura and one AIDS Expo where GCN scooped an award and a certificate.

GCN has incorporated the use of arts in the rehabilitation of survivors of abuse. In using Art as therapy GCN facilitated the training of survivors in this regard in Chihota and managed to reach 31 girls who produced 6 short plays, 6 poems, 6 songs and several dances. This succoured in promoting and increasing girls' participation in documentation and dissemination of information.

40 journalists were trained in objective Gender Sensitive reporting. This saw the increase in reportage of issues affecting girls one way or the other. The following number of articles summarized this: 3 cases of early marriages, 32 on HIV and AIDS as it affects girls, 94 on Rape, 44 on GCN work, 67 on girls' Women as role models, 103 on gender issues and 44 on Betty Makoni.

Grants Check

During the year under review GCN managed establish first time funding relationships with a number of funding partners like European Union, World Education Inc., Artists International Direct Support (Rotary Cub Canada), World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, Art Venture, Medica Mondiale, the British Embassy and Canada Crossroads International while at the same time preparing the ground for future funding relationships with such funding partners as Global Development Network, Addie Gutang Family Foundation and Bernard Van Leer Foundation.

GCN through its fundraising efforts succeeded in having grants with some of its funding partners renewed for this year which is a clear indication of a vote of confidence in the work GCN has been doing with the girls. This was with such partners as CIDA, Stephen Lewis Foundation, Oxfam NOVIB, American Jewish World Service, New Field Foundation, IDEX, Firelight Foundation and Global Fund for Women.

On the Cards

Girl Child Network calls upon all the stakeholders, funding partners and local and international friends to join us as there are a number of programs lined up for the coming the year and those interested in attending any of the organisation's upcoming programs do not hesitate to get in touch for arrangements. Do not miss out on getting first hand experience with grassroots programs.

Merry Christmas
Happy and Prosperous 2008

*****"We pride in keeping you abreast, posted and closer to our work"*****

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For views, comments and donations get in touch with us

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