

impact

ON CHILD PROTECTION



Save the Children / Egypt/2010



Save the Children

October 2011

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Save the Children: the sun that gives light to whoever is under it

A poem by Memory Phineas Matsheza, Musina High School, South Africa

(See his story on page 29)

I have defined Save the Children as the mother
Of all little angels sent by Mighty God.
With love, care proudness and good heart.
The Mother of all children in the world.
It gives hope to children and restores lost futures.
Foreigners are given everything they want.
Keeping your rights as a child,
Save the Children took that to be its responsibility.
Without payment it will never give up.
God helps vulnerable children through Save the Children.
Its funders, donors and partners don't lose hope.
Save the Children fought for your rights
You as a child without guns but with love.
I speak through the voice of all other foreigners.
Giving the voice of thanks to Save the Children
To never give up its beautiful job.
I was lost and had never known my rights
But I am now able to set a goal for my future.
Keep on Save the Children with the work you do.
Inspiring dramatic change for the children
That's your motto and mission.
Give them care, love and support,
And they will be responsible leaders of tomorrow.
I thank you for sending me to school and supporting me.
Your Son, Memory.

WELCOME TO IMPACT

Dear colleagues and friends,

The October 2011 edition of IMPACT focuses on our Child Protection work in Africa. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the basis of Save the Children's work on child protection.

Children in every country, every culture, and at every social level face various forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. The abuse takes place at home, in school, in institutions, at work, in the community, in armed conflict and natural disasters. Children continue to be in need of protection from violence, abuse, exploitation, and harmful cultural practices across the world

Children are often afraid to report incidents of violence, neglect, exploitation and abuse against them. In Africa, Save the Children works with children, local organisations, communities, governments, and partners from all sectors to prevent abuse and neglect from happening, and to ensure the victims of violence and abuse receive the support they need to survive and thrive.

Increasingly, individuals, communities and organizations are taking initiatives to protect children, with initiatives ranging from community rehabilitation solutions for children with disabilities (see Ethiopia story) to communities providing safe spaces (see Malawi and South Africa stories) where children can play, learn and interact with other children in safe environments, and even receive counseling and mentoring.

It is encouraging to see communities stand up to protect their own children from harmful traditional practices (see Ethiopia 'mingi' story), while other partners work with us to advocate and lobby for better systems (see South Africa and Kenya stories).

We hope the stories in this issue will inspire you to stand up for children, and stop the violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Our children are counting on us to take action, and we hope you will join us in making the world a safer place for children.

Sincerely

Save the Children Directors in Africa

The sad reality in 2011 is that children continue to be humiliated, beaten, burned, and sexually abused by the adults in their lives, their parents, teachers, and caregivers, and that few areas of progress have been realized.

— *From Five years on: A global update on violence against children, 2011*

Dear colleagues,

It is with pleasure that I welcome this issue of IMPACT focusing on child protection in Africa.

I am impressed by the wealth and variety of child protection programs that are being implemented all over the continent.

The worldwide scale of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children is still unknown, due to the lack of consistent and comparable data. But what children tell us and what we know is the devastating impact that it has on their physical and psychological integrity, their lives and development. Violence against children also has a huge cost and impact on society.

The Child Protection Initiative has been set up by SC members in order to improve Save the Children's capacity to protect children, through preventing violence from happening in the first place, to put an end to it and help children who experience violence, abuse and exploitation to recovery. We want to do so but ensuring that we reach more children with effective and more quality programs, by working with civil society and children themselves. We also advocate the governments to strengthen national child protection systems.

The Child Protection Initiative focuses on 4 priority areas: Children without appropriate care; Child protection in emergency; Working children; Physical and humiliating punishment. Some of the programs that are showcased in this IMPACT issue fall within those priority areas.

To date, we have been able to secure regional representatives in Africa covering West and Central Africa, Clare Feinstein, based in Dakar (claref@waf.savethechildren.se) and the Middle East and Central Europe (covers North Africa, Jumanah Zabaneh (jumanah.zabaneh@rb.se)). I encourage those of you based in those regions and working on child protection to get in contact with them.

We have been closely collaborating with the Africa Advocacy Initiative during this year and have appreciated your support. The production of this issue of IMPACT is yet another concrete example of our collaboration.

We look forward to continuing working with you all to ensure that all forms of violence against children will come to an end.

Lena Karlsson
Director, Child Protection Initiative



Save the Children Norway/Ethiopia 2010

Six-month-old Ethiopia (pictured above) was born ‘mingi’, a child who, due to various super-stitious traditional beliefs, is considered cursed and is to be killed immediately or within days after birth. Ethiopia is a member of the karo tribe located in southwest Ethiopia. She was considered cursed because her mother had failed to get the blessing of the local elders, which involves a brief ceremony, before she conceived. But this is not the only thing that makes a child ‘mingi’. If a child’s upper teeth emerge before those on the bottom, if a baby is born to unmarried parents, or a child is born to couples who did not announce their intention of having a baby to the rest of the tribe, the child carries a curse and is considered ‘mingi’. People from the tribe believe that the presence of a ‘mingi’ child on the land will bring a curse to the tribe and catastrophe to the community. By killing the child, the curse is buried with him/her. They do this because they firmly believe that there is no other choice. Killing the child is for the sake of the collective good.

Saving my child from 'mingi'

How a harmful traditional practice nearly claimed a child's life

IN ETHIOPIA THERE ARE ABOUT 140 different types of harmful traditional practices affecting mainly children and women. The type and prevalence of the practices differs from region to region, and among tribes and includes not only 'mingi' (which is specific to the Karo community in Hamer Woreda), but also female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage.

For the past ten years, Save the Children has been implementing projects to protect children against the impacts harmful traditional practices. In five regions in Ethiopia. Save the Children uses cross-cutting strategies that include building upon traditional and modern communication systems to disseminate positive change, support women and girls' empowerment through education, strengthening local structures, actively involving religious and tribal leaders, as well as other influential groups, supporting the mainstreaming of the issues of harmful traditional practices into other programmes of stakeholders involved, legitimizing change through community-driven and rights-based approaches, and networking for advocacy.

As a result, since 2001, over 10,000 girls have been protected from female genital mutilation, and 1,500 child marriages have been cancelled. Over 200,000 community members have been made aware of the negative consequences of harmful cultural practices and the prohibition of the practices under the criminal and family laws. Community and tribal leaders have been actively engaged in prevention endeavors through declaring bylaws, community education and other activities.

Ethiopia is one of the first children who has managed to grow up despite being 'mingi'. Her mother is grateful that her daughter's life was saved thanks to Save the Children. "The day I knew I had conceived, I realized that I was going to give birth to a child who would under no circumstance be allowed to grow up. The days moved fast. I delivered a baby girl. I did not have the courage to abandon her, nor did I dare inform the elders. Thus, I began desperately waiting for the day when someone would come to me and take my child out of my arms. My life became a nightmare. To my relief, one day a member of my village told me that a project to prevent 'mingi' had started in our area. I couldn't believe my ears. The following day, a social worker came to my house and assured me that nobody would harm my child. She was right. Now I walk around the community carrying my daughter without any fear of losing her. My child is no longer referred to as 'mingi'. She is just a cute little girl. I never get enough of seeing her smile!"

For more information, contact Save the Children Norway-Ethiopia at scne@scne.org

Integrated programs making school attractive

NOURHAN HAS A WHITE COMPLEXION and is rather tall for a 13 year old. She lives in a large family home with her parents, grandmother, and five siblings: Amir in 9th grade, Bothaina in 5th grade, Gehad in 3rd grade, twin brothers who are about to enter first grade, and one year-old Hagar. She and her family live a simple life. Her father runs a small coffee shop and adjacent grocery store, with which the whole family helps out.

Nourhan went to school up until the 6th grade. She wanted to continue but because there's no junior high in the village, was not allowed to. Her father refused to send her to a school in another village, due to safety and financial reasons. Her parents also thought that was a better use of her time to stay at home and help out with chores and the grocery store.

Her days were very routine and dedicated to her family: helping her mother out with the house chores, working at the grocery store and playing with her siblings before preparing dinner with her mother and going to bed. Nourhan stopped becoming exposed to the outside world as a result.

Through Save the Children's programs her father was able to begin a new business and now she can continue her studies at a junior high-school in a nearby village. Save the Children held sessions about the importance of educating girls which swayed the minds of Nourhan's parents and many other parents within the community. Nourhan's mother also took part in a program to teach financial skills to adult women.

Nourhan has also joined in Save the Children's New Beginnings program, and has attended a summer camp and other capacity building activities. She's become more active in her community, has skills in craft making because of the summer camp activities and has interacted a lot with other school children. Overall, Nourhan loves going to school and can't wait to go to university and become a teacher herself one day.

Save the Children provided financial solutions to Nourhan's struggling family. It also provides loans and the ability for families like Nourhan's to enroll their children in school activities, like summer camps and other important stages of early childhood education, for free. Save the Children also attempts to help Nourhan's family help themselves, so they can support the rest of their children's need for education.

For more information contact Mohamed Zanati, Education Officer, Save the Children Egypt, mzanati@savechildren.org



Save the Children / Egypt 2010

Save the Children provides integrated programs that make school attractive for children, and financially attractive for adults.



Save the Children/South Africa 2010

Advocacy for a better social grants administration system

SOUTH AFRICA HAS A SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM that is designed to alleviate extreme poverty and provide for the protection of the most vulnerable of children. Legislation surrounding these cash grants, however, is relatively new and there have been considerable implementation challenges which have resulted in highly inequitable results for those meant to benefit from them. With child protection as one of its primary concerns, Save the Children together with its partners Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security (ACCESS) and the Centre for Child Law (CCL) has embarked on several initiatives to address these challenges.

The South African Children's Act provides principally for two types of state-issued cash grants: the Child Support Grant (CSG) and the Foster Care Grant (FCG). The former is directed specifically at poverty alleviation. Up until 2009 this grant was only available to children under the age of 13, leaving millions of poverty-stricken children without access to any form of child-specific social assistance from the state.

Save the Children collaborated with ACCESS (a network of approximately 1300 child rights CSOs) to have this age threshold raised to the age of 18. This initiative involved a multi-pronged strategy including submissions to Parliament, the Department of Social Development and various other stakeholders. In 2009, after nearly 10 years of advocacy, the campaign finally saw success with the extension of the age threshold to all children below 18 years. This has enabled the Child Support Grant to reach a potential 2 million more children. However, while this is a definite step in the right direction, the monetary amount of the grant remains too low to provide adequate support to severely impoverished children. As such, various interest groups continue to advocate for an increase of this amount.

The Foster Care Grant was originally intended for vulnerable children who had been placed in foster care. In order to be eligible for this grant, proof that a child in question

is in need of care and protection and does not have any visible means of support is required. This grant is worth almost three times more than the CSG, making it more desirable.

Confusion arose as to whether orphaned children staying with relatives qualified for the Foster Care Grant. Lack of clarity in this regard caused magistrates to be unsure as to whether they should accept or reject such applications. In many cases the only difference between a child receiving the Foster Care Grant and one whose application has been denied is that the former's primary caregiver is not related.

Over 1.5 million orphans in South Africa currently live with relatives with an average monthly income of R463 (under \$50), which is well below the poverty line. Their caregivers fulfill the same role as foster-parents; the only difference is that they are related, thus cannot access the Foster Care Grant.

In 2010, the Centre for Child Law identified a child living with his aunt and uncle who had been unable to access the Foster Care Grant. With the assistance of Save the Children, they brought an application to court with a view to obviate this confusion. The magistrate declined this application. An appeal has been lodged with the intention to set a precedent clarifying the situation and hopefully to acquire a more balanced interpretation to better protect children in similar situations.

The newly implemented Children's Act has also affected administration of the Foster Care Grant, changing the review process from an administrative to a judicial one. In theory this was a positive change as it increased the accountability and transparency of the process. However, this has resulted in massive backlog in the court system, and between April 2009 and March 2011, at least 113,400 Foster Care Grants lapsed due to failure to review or extend the grants, leaving all of their beneficiaries in limbo. A second court application against the Department of Social Development was to resolve this crisis. The matter was settled out of court and all the lapsed grants were reinstated. A comprehensive solution is yet to be found and has forced the government to review its implementation strategy.

Given that children without access to resources are among the most vulnerable of all children, constant vigilance is required on the part of civil society to ensure their protection. Groundbreaking advocacy has set the stage for definite gravitation in the right direction. Through continued engagement and involvement in the review process, Save the Children and its partners continues to play a significant role in the improvement of the protective mechanisms for millions of vulnerable children in South Africa.

By Nicole Breen and Deidre Kleynhans, Save the Children Sweden, Regional Office for Southern Africa. For more information contact deidrek@saf.savethechildren.se

Worku Yenehun, 17, became physically disabled at age 5, because of polio. “My dream was to become a theology student and I used to move around by crawling to the church yard wishing to get the church education” he says, thinking of his past life. “But the attitude of the society towards people with disability like me was so negative that I suffered a lot... In my community, people with disabilities, who have church education used to be feared and avoided by the society because they are considered as witches...”. Currently Worku is a 6th grade student; he and his mother are also getting income through shoe repairing business after receiving the skills training and financial support. He says “...Now I can move around the town much more easily than before with the tricycles donated by the Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) project ... I am included and I face no discrimination in my school. The days of discrimination are gone ...”

Community-based rehabilitation for children with disabilities

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT OVER 2.5 MILLION CHILDREN in Ethiopia are living with disabilities. Children with disabilities are some of the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups in Ethiopia. They have to cope with poor awareness in the society and limited social support; the children are highly vulnerable to abuse and they suffer from prejudice that exists among the society. The children face different forms of neglect and discrimination, including social and familial rejection, many are kept hidden at home, they lack access to education and other opportunities. Due to the lack of acceptance and interaction from their families and community, these children are at high risk of psychosocial stress, which further critically impedes their emotional wellbeing and capacity to succeed in education and other social environments.

Since 2005, Save the Children in partnership with local NGO Handicap National and Ethiopia's Gondar University Faculty of Medicine have been implementing a project on Community Based Rehabilitation of children with disabilities. The project is linked with Save the Children's inclusive education programme.

Project results have been encouraging:

- Over 5,000 children with disabilities (over 50 per cent are girls) and their families were supported through home based care for counselling and physiotherapy support, appliance and medical support through referrals, vocational training and school support. Over 10,000 children under five were supported to access vaccination as preventive measure.
- Care providers for Children with disabilities (over 80 per cent are women) were provided with business skills training and financial support. As a result they now earn an improved income which enables them to provide for their children. Parents also received skills trainings to improve their provision of care for their children with disabilities. Support groups for parents and care providers were organized to help them support each other in social matters.
- Over 800 health extension workers, teachers and adult community members got training on disabilities among children, community based rehabilitation strategies, and inclusive education. They have started taking actions to protect and rehabilitate children with disabilities in their respective communities.
- Over 50,000 community members benefitted from community awareness: addressing negative beliefs embedded in the society against persons with disabilities; preventing disabilities among children; and the rights of children with disabilities.

The lessons learned have been many, including:

- Consistent and continued community dialogue is paramount to bring about the desired behavioral changes for persons with disabilities, and sustain the changes throughout the communities.
- Building the capacity of the local community groups, and involving them from the inception of the project has proven to be an effective approach in strengthening community response for the protection of children with disabilities.
- The active participation of children in advocating for the rights and social inclusion of children with disabilities is commendable. Children participate in identifying and reporting hidden children with disabilities within their neighbourhoods and in conducting awareness raising activities within their communities and schools thereby promoting the inclusion in these settings of children with disabilities.

For more information, contact Save the Children Norway-Ethiopia at scne@scne.org



Mayen Abun

Voices of children fleeing conflict

IN THE NEWLY INDEPENDENT NATION of South Sudan, the stark inequalities between girls and boys, and the lack of access to basic services in rural areas are all so evident.

As fighting continues in Abyei and Southern Kordofan State, along the border between north and south, South Sudan is also struggling with safety and protection for thousands of children fleeing the violence.

During conflict, children are at high risk of separation from their families. People run in all directions and children are separated from their mums and dads. Family Tracing and Reunification (FTR) is a crucial part of Save the Children's work in South Sudan, reconnecting lost children with their parents and relatives.

Throughout the crisis in June 2011, Save the Children in South Sudan supported these children through the creation of Child Friendly Spaces (CFS), where they come to play and talk to their peers in a safe place with access to games, drawing materials and health education.

Save the Children, operating in north Sudan, is still delivering much needed aid to families in the Abyei and Agok areas who are affected.

Here are some testimonies from children caught up in the fighting, their experiences of fleeing into South Sudan and how it has disrupted their lives and education.

Note: Names of children have been changed to protect their identities, and photographs are not of the children who have shared testimonies.

For more information, contact Jenn Warren, Communication Officer, Save the Children South Sudan, J.Warren@savethechildren.org.sd



My family is Dinka. My mother is called Abuk. My father died during the first attack (May 2008). He was an SPLA soldier. I have three brothers; we all came with our mother to Mayen Abun. I don't like being in this place because we are homeless staying under the trees. Rain washes over us, the heat from the sun beats down on us.

—Lual, 14



Being in the IDP camp is not good because there is not enough food, and not enough water. I was lost and reunified with my mother in the village Anet, and we ran together to Mayen Abun. My mother says we will all go back to Agok. We are staying under trees and at night we sleep in the school. We need food and shelter before the rains come heavily. Save the Children place is good to keep us happy. We hope it will continue to bring the materials for activities, games and recreation.

— Alek, 9





Valente Oyukutu (left), Eric van der Lee (right)

At four in the evening there was an Antonov plane moving around over my house three times, and then boom. My mum told us to stay together. We slept, and there was the sound of shooting.

My mother collected a few items and the shooting continued. We ran to Anet Town and walked for four days to reach Mayen Abun. We were so tired and my younger brother and sister cried so much. We really don't like being in Mayen Abun. Life has changed and there is not enough food.

“We are homeless and my mum cries every night. Our father was killed last year. We like Save the Children because the Child Friendly Space keeps us busy and makes us forget the incident that we have undergone.

— Achil, 12



My mother and father are from Magwi County, Eastern Equatoria State. We moved to Abyei, and then came here (to Mayen Abun) with our mother because our father is an SPLA soldier. He did not come with us. I am not happy with this fighting because I am homeless and I don't know where my father is. There is no food, no clothing, and no shelter. We ran without bringing our clothing, and we have no bed sheets. My mother has no money to buy us food and clothes. I would like to go to Juba to be with my uncle. The Save the Children Child Friendly Space is good, though, because we can play every day. I like drawing pictures and playing games. I have new friends and new teachers.

— Agnes, 15



I like this place because it keeps me and the other children busy. We play games and I have new friends. I like drawing and colouring my pictures. We are given many good games to choose for ourselves. This place is good.

— Malnut, 10



Community solutions for children in conflict with the law

CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW are neglected in the Ethiopian legal system and practice. Very young children have to pass through the rigorous and unfriendly formal justice system/police and courts. They are likely to end up in prison and “remand homes” for committing minor offences, such as pick pocketing, which is in most part due to poverty. Children who pass through such a system have a high likelihood of suffering from various forms of abuse, while the rate of re-offending may also be as high as 20%.

In order to protect children who find themselves in conflict with the law, Save the Children has designed a program that diverts children from detention and focuses on alternative arrangements, such as informal and community based correction approaches.

Children who have committed minor offences are referred to community-based-centers where they receive counseling, entertainment, skills development trainings and educational support. The program requires the active involvement of parents who take responsibility for implementing the rehabilitation plan by being present at the center and at home. The community at large is also essential for the child’s reintegration. Therefore, Save the Children invested in the capacity building of volunteers and ‘Mekari Shemagles’ (highly respected community leaders) who play an important role in solving disputes within the community. This aims to ensure a smooth reintegration and acceptance of the children in their families, peers and community at large.

The program is implemented in partnership with a local NGO called Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment, and involves multiple stakeholders including local NGOs, local government offices including Women and Children’s Affairs offices, community based organizations, police and courts. The interventions are planned in close consultation with children and other stakeholders who are both present in relevant steps of the program implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

In order to protect children who find themselves in conflict with the law, Save the Children has designed a program that diverts children from detention and focuses on alternative arrangements, such as informal and community based correction approaches.

Replicated in other regions of the country, including Oromia, Dire Dawa and other parts of Addis Ababa, this program is also expected to start in the Southern Region of Ethiopia.

The impact of the program has been significant:

- In a period of 10 years, more than 2,500 children have directly benefited from the program. The re-offending rate in these centers is less than one percent.
- Improvement of juvenile justice system as the program has been fully integrated into the final criminal justice policy draft and procedure code, both of which are awaiting Parliamentary endorsement.
- Through the tutorial support of the centers, children improved their academic performance and consequently some have joined universities. The latter in turn provide tutorial support to children coming to the centers.
- Improvement in child participation through recreational activities offered by the center, which serves as a platform for children to raise their voices and share their views.

Lessons learned include:

- Only through consistent advocacy and capacity building, multiple actors are able to raise awareness about children in conflict with the law, to refer them to rehabilitation centers and to share their experiences.
- Youth are crucial change agents and it is relevant to involve them as much as possible in order to build a sense of ownership, which is fundamental for sustainable change.
- A cultural shift is needed towards children in conflict with the law who should not be considered as a threat to society but children in need of attention and support.

For more information, contact Save the Children Norway in Ethiopia, email scne@scne.org

A tale of community initiatives to protect children

SEDINHA JOSÉ IS 11 YEARS OLD. She lives with her mother, Mavilate Joanete in the community of Tsagoa, Mozambique. Mavilate, like much of the rest of the community is involved in small-scale traditional agriculture. This reliance coupled with the fact that the area is prone to erratic rainfall and characterized by a semi-arid climate leaves most households vulnerable to food insecurity.

When Sedinha's mother was pregnant with her, Sedinha's father fell ill and was unable to provide for the family. Mavilate's brother-in-law came to the aid of the family helping them through this difficult time. At Sedinha's birth, it was his that wife served as midwife.

It is common practice in the district of Guro and in the surrounding area of the province of Manica that at birth an agreement can be made with the baby girl's parents to contract engagement to an older man. Once the girl reaches puberty she is wed and officially taken as a wife to serve as a concubine or general servant. This long standing tradition called *milongo* ties the child to the man through an engagement ritual where presents are bequeathed and a pledge made to pay the child's expenses. Mavilate's brother-in-law entered into such an agreement, promising his niece, Sedinha to an older man in marriage.

Years later during routine campaigning, the community committee which had been sensitized on child protection issues and child rights became aware of the case. The committee consulted with Mavilate and over the course of a few weeks she made the decision to turn down the engagement. When her brother-in-law came to collect Sedinha, Mavilate confronted her brother-in-law, who rejected the petition. Still intent on marrying Sedinha, he resorted to threats and coercion, speaking of social shame that would result if Mavilate did not honor the familial duty.

The community committee intervened, summoning the brother-in-law and informing local authorities. Soon after, the issue was dropped and today Sedinha is still in school completing 5th grade. "I am happy my mother rescued me from such a marriage, I am still young and want to continue with my studies," says Sedinha.

The school headmaster reported that a total of 63 children had been brought back to school after their parents had pulled them out for similar motivations of marriage and to put them to work on the family farm or herd livestock. Mavilate's experience



People are now giving in to the idea of allowing young girls to go to school and letting them choose to marry when they have grown up.

motivated her to join the child protection committee. “People are now giving in to the idea of allowing young girls to go to school and letting them choose to marry when they have grown up,” says Mavilate.

These successes are some of the fruits born of Save the Children’s work in protection of orphaned and vulnerable children. Our work is implemented through child protection community committees composed of community members and children who carry out sensitization campaigns and work directly with families and vulnerable children. Initially perpetrators who violated child rights challenged the committees authority but by working with local government and police, their credentials and authority were verified and they have been registering successful cases ever since. Anecdotally various community members cited a drastic fall in child marriages and a range of other issues acknowledging the work of the empowered community members and their interventions.

This success story lends credence to our program model of situating the locus community activism and interventions in the hands of local institutions that are empowered and recognized by the community.

For more information, please contact (interviewer) Tomás Pereira Viageiro: pviageiro@savechildren.org; or (case writer) Emmett Costel: ecostel@savechildren.org



Save the Children/Malawi/2011

Child Care Centers: a safe place to be a child

WATCHING THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD DORICA MAKUNGANYA playing with her friends, it is nearly impossible to comprehend the challenges that she faces. Just a year ago Dorica's mother died. Soon after her mother's passing on, her father abandoned Dorica and her siblings to start another family with a new wife. He relocated to an unknown destination. Dorica, who was only twelve years old at the time, was left with the huge responsibility to care for her three younger brothers.

As the head of a crowded household at such a young age, the most difficult thing for Dorica was the fact that she did not know where to go to for help. This scared her a lot. The only uncle she had who could have taken the responsibility to look after Dorica and her siblings had no interest in the children.

The resolve of the influential members of the community to compel the uncle to take responsibility over Dorica and her siblings met strong opposition from him. To abet incessant community ridicule the uncle accepted to take Dorica and her siblings under his care, only to abuse and subject them to work beyond their ages.

Each morning Dorica went to fetch water for the family. She did the laundry, cooked for the family and looked after the uncle's two-year-old child. At times she joined the uncle and his wife to the garden while the rest of her peers went to school. Whenever the uncle felt Dorica's work was unsatisfactory he would beat her.

A year ago Dorica's mother died. Soon after, her father abandoned Dorica and her siblings to start another family with a new wife. Dorica, who was only twelve years old at the time, was left with the huge responsibility of caring for her three younger brothers. A Children's Corner in her village allowed Dorica to be a child again.

Dorica's plight caught the attention of the village headman and other senior members of the community who demanded better treatment for Dorica and her siblings. Equally concerned were the volunteer-counselors and caregivers at Save the Children's Child Care Centre who took an interest in Dorica and further impressed upon the authorities in the community to act on her behalf. At first, they wanted the authorities and neighbors to understand that there was a child-headed household nearby that needed help.

Dorica's peers too shared her predicament and took the initiative to introduce her to the newly introduced Community Child Care Centre in the village. The interactive activities and care giving support at the Centre gave Dorica a new beginning. Dorica started going there each week, to interact with her peers and become a child again.

"When I first started coming to the centre, I did not have any idea how this place would greatly impact my life," said Dorica. "It has turned out to be an incredible place of escape for me."

Dorica is now able to be a child again.

For more information, please contact, Ruth Kamphanje, Early Childhood Facilitator, Zomba Field Office, Malawi, rkamphanje@savechildren.org

Protecting children on the move

TODAY, MANY CHILDREN ARE ON THE MOVE at a very young age, five to eighteen. They face hunger, disease, abuse and exploitation throughout Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso. Many of these children are looking for work in cocoa, coffee and cotton farms, or study as talibés in koranic schools. Though many leave to help their struggling family members, the problem has now also become a cultural one: many communities view living abroad as an exciting adventure.

Though studies on the exact number of children on the move are lacking, 17,000 to 20,000 children visit support centers in all three countries every year. Around 10,000 of them are far from their families or country. Thanks to Jacob's Foundation, Save the Children has started initiatives to reduce children's vulnerability as they move to communities far from home.

Save the Children recognizes that children cannot be stopped from leaving their communities to find opportunities elsewhere. Therefore, our programs focus predominantly on educating important actors and ensuring communities are mobilized and knowledgeable of the risks associated with children on the move. The programs are located in Sikasso, Mali, right on the border with Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. They are ideally situated to intervene in the children's hometowns and during their trip to the Malian border.

At the community level, Save the Children has mobilized the community through a number of strategies. For instance, a new radio program has been produced and so far, 23 discussions have been broadcasted. Children run the show, many have lived in Ivory Coast and can attest to the difficulties and traumas experienced. Moreover, 37 committees on child rights have been formed; all run by children. The radio show, the committees and other workshops have educated 4,189 children in Sikasso and Kadiolo on their rights so that they can protect themselves against exploitation and abuse, and avoid hunger and sickness.

At the Regional Level, Save the Children is strengthening the capacity of all actors who work with children to advocate for national reforms in Child Protection. Each

Intervention strategies have had very positive effects on communities in limiting children's vulnerability. Bringing together different expertise in the public and private sector, and the civil society has been crucial in tackling the issue.

actor develops an annual action plan and Save the Children runs workshops on children's rights. Police officers are trained to recognize the papers that prove that the child will be legally employed at his or her destination, and will always be accompanied by a legal guardian. If these papers are lacking, police officers know to refer the children to social services or a non-profit organization backed by Save the Children; and the adults accompanying these children are sent to court. Judges are encouraged to sanction anyone guilty of trafficking children. Like the police, drivers and health workers are also invited to refer their cases to social services or NGOs. All groups are encouraged to work together as a network. Thus community structures ensure that children are protected by the police, offered medical assistance by the community health centers and provided shelter by the City Hall if ever in need.

The lessons learned so far include:

- Strengthening actors' capacity and local institutions enables communities to protect more adequately vulnerable children.
- Intervention strategies have had very positive effects on communities in limiting children's vulnerability. Bringing together different expertise in the public and private sector, and the civil society has been crucial in tackling the issue.
- Moreover, focusing on one region has resulted in stronger community mobilization.

Some the challenges that remain are:

- The legal documents proving that children have a stable job in neighboring countries is a great idea but is limited in practice, as the document is hard to obtain at the porous borders.
- Children must find a job once they return home, as poverty will undoubtedly send them back to neighboring countries if they cannot help their families financially.

For more information, please contact Ousmane Sanogo, Child Protection Program Officer, osanogo@savechildren.org

Community child protection systems

THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD JUDY transferred from a school in Nairobi to Butere where she lives with her aunt. She walks every morning and evening to school, a 5 kilometer stretch. One day while on her way from school she was confronted by a group of boys who called out and asked her to stop and tried roughing her up; these boys were drug addicts and were notorious for mugging and defiling girls. She escaped with bruises. The following day the boys ambushed her again and beat her up, accusing her of failing to respect them. Judy screamed and attracted the attention of a passerby, forcing the boys to flee. The passerby advised her to report the case to authorities. Once home, she reported the incident to her aunt who advised her to report to the head teacher.

The following day while in school, Judy shared her unfortunate incident with her colleagues in the child rights club, who in turn, informed their patron. The boys in the club further said they would confront the rowdy boys, who had dropped out of the same school. That evening the boys escorted Judy home and on the way they found the boys at the same spot. They confronted the boys and a fight ensued. They subdued the boys who pleaded for mercy and had this to say, '....this is a newcomer and we just wanted to know her'. The rowdy boys pledged not to harass Judy again. The club members further urged the boys to go back to school but they dismissed them telling them to go learn on their behalf. The patron afterwards reported the issue to the local chief who took legal action. No similar incidences have been reported in the area since then. Afterwards Judy had this to say '....being relatively new in this area, I feel more secure among other child rights club members'.

Save the Children, through its local partners (KAACR and CRADLE) has been able to create elaborate community based child protection structures that pull together all stakeholders, which includes the community, local chiefs, teachers, police, various service providers, local NGOs, children clubs in schools, and Area Advisory Councils (legally mandated semi-governmental committees for child protection). These structures give communities the forum to report various abuse cases. Sensitization and trainings have ensured that all the involved stakeholders as well children know who to report what case to, and how to follow it up until it is resolved.

For more information contact Job Ochieng, Regional Programme Manager, Save the Children Finland, email job@savethechildrenfin.or.ke



Save the Children/South Africa/2010

Children on the move: Memory's dream

MEMORY MATSHEZA **CROSSED THE BORDER** from Zimbabwe into South Africa in search of a better life. Memory was living with both parents before they divorced, his father went to Mozambique and his mother started abusing him. He stopped attending school because his mother said it was too costly for her. Memory says "I dropped out of school in Zimbabwe not purposely but because of my parents. I decided to come to South Africa for a better life and to also further my education, it was difficult to travel alone and I walked a long way without transport until I reached Beitbridge".

Memory became involved with Save the Children at the Musina show grounds where asylum seekers were being helped, and he was taken to the Boys shelter. Save the Children assisted Memory to enrol at a local school in Musina.

Memory is interested in playing soccer and writing poems. His ambition is to finish school and become a social worker so that he can help children like himself in the future. He became involved in the children's committees and is involved in a children's newsletter which is published once a month. He actively participates in Save the Children's projects which seek to provide a voice to vulnerable children.

At the One Goal march in the run up to the 2010 World Cup hosted in South Africa, Memory was among other vulnerable children who brought attention to the public, their concerns around access to quality education.

Memory is one of many beneficiaries of the Save the Children Limpopo programme which seeks to strengthen the provision of comprehensive and compassionate care, protection and education for children made vulnerable by migration, HIV and AIDS. The project was established to strengthen the protection system for vulnerable children including children on the move in Musina, on the border with Zimbabwe and across Limpopo province back in 2003.

The interventions to date have included outreach programmes in farming areas, supporting children on the streets and at the border, the establishment of a boys shelter for children in transition and the design and pilot of an interagency child

I dropped out of school in Zimbabwe not purposely but because of my parents. I decided to come to South Africa for a better life.

—Memory Matsheza

protection information management system designed to track children on the move. Save the Children funded additional social workers to strengthen the child protection system locally in Musina and introduced a 24 hour protection service.

Save the Children also successfully transitioned the management and coordination of the inter-agency child protection information management system to the Department of Social Development in the Musina Municipality. The programme supports a number of shelters, and drop-in centres that provide food and non-food items to children, as well as a number of early childhood development sites in the province.

The South Africa Programme works with the Department of Social Development and Save the Children in Zimbabwe to voluntarily repatriate and reunite children with their families in Zimbabwe or elsewhere. In collaboration with other organizations including UNICEF and the Department of Social Development, we developed a best

interest determination tool as part of a global child protection initiative based on the Musina experience.

The Limpopo staff sit on a number of local and provincial committees to highlight the plight of migrant children and ensure that children on the move access basic services. For example a comprehensive set of Standard Operating Procedures was recently developed and agreed between South Africa and Zimbabwe during the cross border coordination meetings facilitated by Save the Children for unaccompanied and separated children, in partnership with UNICEF, Red Cross, Government representatives from National and Provincial Department of Social Development in South Africa and Zimbabwean Government officials.

An external evaluation of Save the Children's response to the situation affecting vulnerable children specifically children on the move since 2008 was completed early in September 2010 the excerpt below summarises the impact of the programme.

“The programme has had a positive impact on the lives of children on the move and other vulnerable children in the area through the provision of basic services, IDTR (identification, documentation, tracing and re-unification) services and improved access to education. It has also had an impact on the intervention sites which have benefitted from the training undertaken by Save the Children. Furthermore, the protective environment around children has been strengthened largely because of Save the Children's work around promoting and supporting the coordination of child protection services in Musina. Their advocacy related activities have had an impact by creating awareness of the plight of Unaccompanied Migrant Children at a national and regional level”.

Memory, a keen poet, dreamed of returning to school—a dream that Save the Children helped him to realise, but Memory is just one of the many vulnerable children who migrate in search of opportunities to attend school or eek out a living to support themselves families far way to survive. Save the Children in Southern Africa together with its partners must continue to focus on this vulnerable group by endeavouring to provide equal and quality access to basic services and advocating to government decision makers to scale up and replicate best practice models and agree on norms and standards that will ensure the care, support and protection of all vulnerable children, especially those on the move, like Memory.

For more information, please contact Karen Allen, Advocacy and Communication Advisor, Save the Children UK, South Africa, email kallan@savethechildren.org.za



Save the Children US/Ethiopia/Khurram Masood/2011

Protecting children in emergencies

The Horn of Africa drought 2011

ARAAB AHMED IS 14-YEARS-OLD and comes from a small village in Bardari, Somalia. He has been in the transit center for refugees in Dollo Ado in Ethiopia for almost a month. He came here after traveling for two weeks, mostly by foot, with his aunty and her children. He says, “Thousands of people were leaving their homes to come here and find food. Most are women and children. We are leaving our homes because we are poor and there have been no rains so we cannot stay there.” Araab has two older brothers and three sisters who are still in the village but are getting ready to leave and cross the border into Ethiopia and join Araab in the refugee camps.

Araab says, “I am the youngest son and my father said that I should go to Dollo Ado in Ethiopia first and that my elder brothers will help in shifting the whole family.”

“The reason why we are leaving our home is that there is no food, the land is dry and the animals are dead. My father told me to go with my aunt and come here. He said I will be safe and at least I will get food. He promised that he will bring my mother, sisters and brothers as soon as they have packed the household items and arrange for transport. It’s been over a month since I left home and they have not yet arrived. I hope they will be here soon.”

Araab regularly attends the Child Friendly Space (CFS) established by Save the Children in the transit center. He enjoys playing and learning with his peers and explains, “It helps me keep busy and makes waiting for my family a little easier. I enjoy learning the alphabet and also playing with the other boys. We all come from different areas but we have become friends and spend the whole day with each other. The people at the Child Friendly Space are kind and funny. They make us laugh and help us when one of us has a problem.”

The reason why we are leaving our home is that there is no food, the land is dry and the animals are dead. My father told me to go with my aunt and come here. He said I will be safe and at least I will get food. He promised that he will bring my mother, sisters and brothers... they have not yet arrived. I hope they will be here soon.

—Araab Ahmed, 14

Araab is lucky to have a close relative with him in the refugee camps. There are hundreds of other children who have no one. In addition to establishing and running Child Friendly Spaces, Save the Children facilitates the reunification of families and finds foster families that can take care of unaccompanied children.

Araab has never been to school. “This is the first time I am learning new things and want to carry on. I know there are schools and Child Friendly Spaces in the other camps and hopefully when my family comes here, I can bring along my brothers and sisters.” he adds.

Despite the fact that he has never attended school and has never travelled outside of his village up until now, Araab is a bright and determined young man. He says, “When I grow up, I want to become a teacher or help refugees when they are in difficulty.”

For more information, please contact Getachew Dibaba, Communication Officer, Ethiopia, gdibaba@savechildren.org

Think about this...

Across **37 countries** an average of **86 percent** of children aged **aged 2-14** experience physical or psychological violence in their homes each month.

92 million girls are subject to Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting.

78 countries still authorize corporal punishment by teachers. In some countries up to **97 percent of students** have been beaten while in school.

Children with disabilities are **4 to 5 times** more likely to experience violence and sexual abuse than non-disabled children.

At least **150 million girls** and **73 million boys** worldwide are raped or subject to sexual violence each year.

115 million children are involved in hazardous work.

1.2 million children are trafficked every year.

The known number of juvenile offenders executed worldwide rose by more than **50 percent** in the last five years.

impact

IMMEDIATE AND LASTING IMPROVEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN AFRICA

Impact is a magazine to highlight the work of the ten different Save the Children members working in Africa. Save the Children undertakes or supports projects in about forty different African countries. Enjoy impact three times a year. It is available in electronic and printed versions. This issue was edited by Brenda Kariuki. For more information on *impact*, please contact her at bkariuki@savechildren.org



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