



REWIND

RWD <<

The Voices of
Children and Young People
in Africa

2003 - 2013
126 million
contacts



The Global Network of Child Helplines: African memberships as of April 2013

Current members in Africa - 30 members in 27 countries

Associate members

Full childhelpline members: 23 members in 23 countries

- Childline Botswana **Botswana**
- Direction Generale de L'Encadrement et de la Protection d L'Enfant et de L'Adolescent (Ministere de L'Action Sociale et de la Solidarite Nationale) **Burkina Faso**
- Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE) - Cote d'Ivoire **Cote d'Ivoire**
- Enhancing Child Focused Activities - (ECFA) **Ethiopia**
- Child and Environmental Development Association (CEDAG) **Gambia**
- Association Guinéenne d'Assistance Sociale (AGUIAS) **Guinee Conakry**
- Childline Kenya **Kenya**
- Childline Lesotho **Lesotho**
- Association Serasera Fanantenana **Madagascar**
- Tithandizane Child Helpline/YONECO Malawi **Malawi**

- Association Mauritanienne de la Santé de la Mère et de l'EnfantAMSME **Mauritania**
- Halley Movement **Mauritius**
- Lihna Fala Crianca **Mozambique**
- LifeLine/ChildLine Namibia **Namibia**
- Human Development Intiatives - HDI **Nigeria**
- Centre GINDDI **Senegal**
- Don Bosco Fambul **Sierra Leone**
- Childline South Africa **South Africa**
- Ministry of Education Toll-Free Line **Swaziland**
- Allo 1011 (Ministère de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarité Nationale) **Togo**
- Uganda Child Rights NGO Network - UCRNN **Uganda**
- Lifeline/Childline Zambia **Zambia**
- Childline Zimbabwe **Zimbabwe**

Associate childhelpline members: 7 members in 5 countries

- Plan Benin (USHAHIDI) **Benin**
- OCPM (L'Office Central de Protection des Mineurs, de la famille et de la lutte contre la traite des êtres humains) **Benin**
- Defense for Children International (DCI) Cameroon **Cameroon**
- War Child UK (Tukinge Watoto) **DRC**
- War Child Holland **DRC**
- Direction de la police Judiciaire (Brigade des Mœurs) **Madagascar**
- Child Helpline Tanzania **Tanzania**

« AFRICA »

1986

'Child Line South Africa' is the first child helpline to be established in the region.

1991

The Day of the African Child is launched and celebrated on 16th June every year.

1999

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child enters into force.

2000

Nkosi Johnson (11 years) delivers a heartfelt speech at the 13th International AIDS Conference in July, in which he calls for the destigmatisation of HIV/AIDS.

2001

The African Union (AU) replaces the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU).

2001

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is established in July.

1989

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is adopted.

1996

The first international (CHI) meeting of child helplines is held in Venice, Italy.

2001

International meeting of child helplines in Pune, India ignites the idea of a Global Network: Child Helpline International (CHI).

*** 2003**

Child Helpline International is founded in Amsterdam with 49 child helpline members in 46 countries.

2003

CHI's Mission: to respond to children in need of care and protection and voice their concerns to policy and decision-makers.

2003

CHI's Vision: A world where technology allows children to be heard one by one and through their voices shape the world and realize their rights.

*** 2004**

The first Regional Consultations are held in Africa, Americas and Caribbean, Asia Pacific and Europe.

2004

The most common reasons for contact with a child helpline 'surface from data': reason related to 'peer relationships', followed by 'abuse and violence', 'psycho-social and mental health' and 'sexuality and sexual awareness'.

2004

CHI has grown to 74: 64 full members and 10 associate members by the end of the year; 27 child helplines were from developing countries.

2004

CHI submits its first recommendation to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

*** 2005**

The International Telecommunications Union and CHI sign a Memorandum of Understanding.

2005

In this year, child helplines in the CHI network received over 10.6 million contacts from children and young people.

2005

The Second International Consultation of child helplines is held in Amsterdam, The Netherlands (20 -23 March).

2005

The first Regional Consultation in MENA is held in Cairo, Egypt.

*** 2006**

For the first time, child helplines in the CHI network received more than 12 million contacts from children and young people (12.4 million).

2006

The CHI network grows to 88 member child helplines in 76 countries (associate and full members) and worked in another 58 countries to establish child helplines.

2006

The Third International Consultation of child helplines is held in Stockholm, Sweden (1 - 4 October).

2006

Child helplines are recommended as a tool to create child-friendly reporting mechanisms in the United Nations Violence Against Children Report in overall Recommendation 8.

*** 2007**

CHI starts its second strategic period. The network has three objectives: Advocate for better child protection services, increase recognition of children's voices by creating awareness about child helplines and establish a global network of child helplines.

2007

The CHI network grows to 91 child helpline members (full and associate).

2007

CHI publishes its first Violence Against Children follow-up report (November 2007).

*** 2008**

CHI celebrates its fifth anniversary.

2008

The CHI network grows to 99 full members in 88 countries and 27 associate members in 27 countries.

2008

International Child Helpline Day is celebrated for the first time under the theme Towards a Regional and Global Number.

2008

The Fourth International Consultation is held in Amman, Jordan (17 - 19 November).

2008

The ITU issues a statement on the allocation of short toll free numbers, preferably 116 111 to child helplines.

2008

Nearly 30% of all contacts to child helplines worldwide were about abuse and violence. Other common issues that children and young people wanted to talk about were family relations and peer relations.

« WORLD »

2005

The first Africa Regional Consultation meeting is held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

2006

The second Africa Regional Consultation is held in Durban, South Africa.

2007

The third African Regional Consultation is held in Entebbe, Uganda.

2008

The fourth African regional Consultation is held in Windhoek, Namibia.

2009

The fifth African Regional Consultation is held in Blantyre, Malawi.

2011

The sixth African Regional Consultation is held in Nairobi, Kenya

2012

The 2012 International Consultation is held in Africa (Durban, South Africa).

2012

Child Rights Network for Southern Africa is launched.

2009

The CHI network grows to 108 full members in 92 countries and 27 associate members in 27 countries.

2009

Child helplines in the CHI network receive 12.6 million contacts from children and young people.

2009

Children and young people most commonly wanted to talk about psycho-social mental health (19%), abuse and violence (19%), peer relationships (15%), sexuality and sexual awareness and family relationships (both 10%).

2009

CHI contributes to the development of the International Telecommunication Union's Global Guidelines on Child Online Protection.

2009

CHI and Relaf (Red Latinoamericana de Acogimiento Familiar or The Latin American Foster Care Network) sign a Memorandum of Understanding.

2009

Plan International and CHI sign a Memorandum of Understanding to start a pilot project on Violence in Schools.

2009

The role of child helplines to fulfill children's Right To be Heard is recognized in the Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment on article 12:
“... to establish easy access to individuals or organizations to which they can report in confidence and safety, including through telephone helplines, and to provide places where children can contribute their experience and views on combating violence against children.”

* 2010

The CHI network grows to 109 full member child helplines in 95 countries and 38 associate member child helplines in 38 countries.

2010

The number of contacts received by child helplines tops 13.6 million. The number of visits to websites increases rapidly to 3.8 million visits in 2010.

2010

Most common reasons for contact were abuse and violence (19%), psycho-social mental health (17%) and peer relationships (15%).

2010

CHI improves its data collection questionnaire to add a gender dimension.

2010

The Fourth International Consultation of Child Helplines is held in Madrid, Spain (25 – 27 October).

2010

CHI's soul statement is formulated: *Children are full citizens of the world. They need, deserve, and have an inalienable right to respect, nurturance, and support aimed at keeping them safe and helping them to participate fully in their lives according to their individual capabilities. Adults have a special obligation to ensure that children are safe and receive this respect, nurturance and support. Child helplines provide children with unique opportunities to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs and to seek help in their own terms, without fear or inhibition. Trusted by children, child helplines help to keep children safe and to receive respect, nurturance and support. They do this through their own direct responses and by using the knowledge given to them by children to advocate on their behalf.* CHI exists because child helplines around the world gain strength from working together to express these shared ideals, values and beliefs

2010

The North American Alliance of Child Helplines is established (May 2010).

2010

CHI signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Aflatoun and the BeCause Foundation.

* 2011

The CHI network grows to 114 full members in 98 countries and 41 associate members in 40 countries.

2011

The number of contacts that child helplines in the network receive continues to grow to 17.3 million. Another 4.3 million visits to child helpline websites are registered.

2011

Abuse and violence was an issue for one in five of the children who contacted child helplines around the world. Other common issues children and young people wanted to discuss were psycho-social mental health (17%), peer relationships (15%) and family relationships (11%).

2011

The CHI network starts its third strategic period. Its objectives are to: establish more child helplines, strengthen the network and use child helpline information to strengthen national child protection systems worldwide.

* 2012

CHI publishes its fifth Violence Against Children Report which is launched by Marta Santos Pais, United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative on Violence Against Children in Paris, France (25 January).

2012

CHI network grows to 167 member child helplines in 135 countries.

* 2013

In ten years, child helplines received 126 million contacts from children and young people.

2013

In ten years, 118 child helplines in 95 countries have joined the CHI network.

2013

CHI holds its first Policy Dialogues.

Nenita La Rose,
Executive Director
Child Helpline International



Introduction

Dear Readers,

Each year we commemorate *the Day of the African Child*. We celebrate the sacrifice made by the South African youth who in 1976 protested against the inferior quality of their education and fought for their rights to be heard.

Child Helpline International applauds the African nations for initiating this day for all African children, as well as the adoption of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the “Plan of Action Towards Africa Fit for Children”. Our data supplements those efforts, and shows that to date many African children are still struggling to be heard.

Child helplines from Sub-Saharan Africa have always been at the forefront of child protection, allowing children and young people to receive counselling and assistance when in need. Our data demonstrates that over 126 million contacts were made with child helplines worldwide, and of those, over 18 million were in Africa.

Child helplines in Sub-Saharan Africa are operating in a region that on the one hand is developing fast but on the other faces many challenges such as dominant social and cultural practices. As I look at the trends in the data collected and analysed by Child Helpline International over the past ten years, we can see an increasing number of children and young people who are denied access to services or who are forced into early marriage. Commercial exploitation is another serious emerging issue. It accounts for 5% of the total number of contacts made with child helplines in Africa over the past

ten years. Data also shows that children and young people have consistently contacted child helplines on issues related to: abuse and violence, corporal punishment in schools and at home, and HIV/AIDS.

I strongly believe that child helplines empower children to take their lives in their own hands and resolve their problems as much as they can. They also serve as an early warning system to politicians and policymakers. They act as a social barometer that cannot be ignored and which indicates what is going on in the lives of one of society’s most vulnerable groups. Whilst this publication offers further insights into the many serious problems faced by children in the region, I can see a great deal of hope for the future, especially when child helplines work together with key decision makers.

This publication of ten years of Sub-Saharan African data is about the voices of our children and young people who grow up in societies, encounter joy, but also experience hardships which shape them for the rest of their lives. They are our future leaders, doctors, craftsmen, entertainers, teachers and they all have the right to be protected and to be heard. They all have, without exception, the right to live a dignified life.

That is why I personally urge politicians, policy and decision makers, and partners to read the *Voices of Children and Young People in Africa*. It contains a wealth of information, stories and trends. Please take it to heart and listen to their voices in all your work. Only by collective action can we ensure a bright future for the next generation of children and young people in Africa.

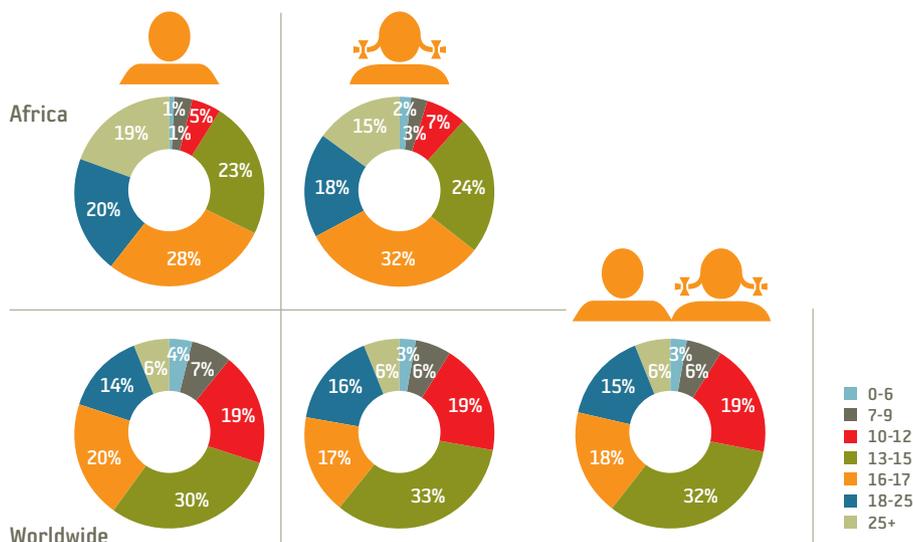
Executive Summary

The popular African proverb “*It takes a village to raise a child*”, is an approach which is routinely preached and practised across Africa. Contrary to common perceptions, Africa is one of the most progressive regions in taking steps to improve the lives of children and young people. In 2001, African nations adopted the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*, and also set up a mechanism called the African Committee of *Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* which monitors the implementation of the Charter.

WARNING SIGNS

- Harmful social and cultural practises have a negative impact on the life and development of children and young people.
- Abuse and Violence is the most reported topic and represents one in three contacts made with child helplines in Africa.
- During 2010-2012, children and young people in Africa are facing emerging issues that are related to: homelessness, basic needs and runaways; commercial and sexual exploitation; birth registration and access to basic services such as health and education.

I. Age and gender of children and young people contacting child helplines in Africa and worldwide



Led by the African Union, the African states launched the 'Plan of Action Towards Africa Fit for Children' in 2001, and renewed their pledge in 2012 with the 'Call for Accelerated Action on the Implementation of the Plan of Action Towards Africa Fit For Children'.

On the Day of the African Child, celebrated on the 16 June 2013, the African Union called upon African governments to address harmful social and cultural practices that have a negative impact on the life and development of children and young people in Africa. With this publication called *the Voices of Children and Young People in Africa*, CHI has compiled data on interrelated issues of harmful social and cultural practices that are experienced by children who reach out to child helplines in Africa, for care and support. These topics include abuse and violence, corporal punishment, HIV/AIDS, forced union/child marriage, commercial exploitation and access to basic services and homelessness.

In the past ten years child helplines all over the world received more than **126 million contacts** from children and young people. **Over 18 million of these contacts were made with child helplines in Africa**, either through telephone, walk-in services, or other means of communications such as text messaging. The child helpline network in Africa has grown at a rapid rate. In 2003 there were only 5 helplines, however a decade later there are 30 child helplines in **Sub-Saharan Africa** (excluding child helplines in North Africa which are analysed in the Middle East and North Africa regional publication). Of these 30 helplines, 20 submitted data to CHI over the years.

Children and young people are feeling more empowered than before and are reaching out to child helplines to obtain information, support and care. CHI data demonstrates that during 2010-2012, contacts increased *per child helpline in the region, per year*. For instance, in 2009 each child helpline in the region received only 12,000 contacts, however in 2010 the amount of contacts per child helpline per year increased to 32,000, in 2011 to 40,000 and in 2012 to 72,000.

The rise in contacts could indicate that either more children are contacting child helplines due to increased accessibility and awareness, or that there are new emerging issues that should sound alarm bells to decision makers.

In a region where infrastructure is still developing, child helplines are redefining resourcefulness especially in child protection. It is also important to acknowledge the unconventional creativity and ingenuity that child helplines employ in challenging situations - in spite of limited financial means, capacity and human resources. The innovative spirit of child helpline staff and the strong connections they build with referral systems (such as the police, hospitals, social and judicial workers and community members) not only strengthens child protection mechanisms, but also is a crucial access point for children and young people.

Evidently, child helplines in Africa provide an invaluable service to children as demonstrated through the various case studies presented in this publication.

Ten years of CHI data from African child helplines show that the highest numbers of contacts focused on areas of: abuse and violence (29%), sexuality and sexual awareness (12%), homelessness (10%) and HIV/AIDS (7%). Some of the problems and fears that children and young people face have remained consistent over the decade, whilst other new and significant issues have emerged - especially during 2010-2012. These issues relate to homelessness, basic needs and runaways; commercial and sexual exploitation; birth registration and access to basic services such as health and education.



Every child has the right to be heard. Governments and NGOs should partner with child helplines, as they provide a safe and risk free environment for children who are in need of support.

Octavia Moneedi-Tivane
Regional Representative for Africa, Linha Fala Criança
(Child helpline Mozambique)



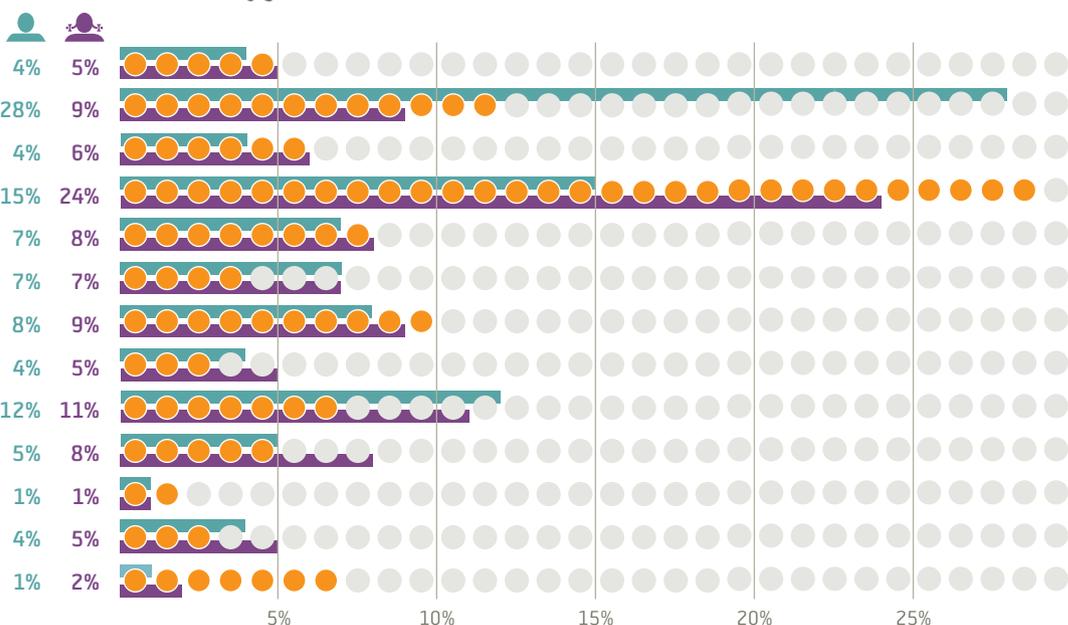
The data in this publication supports the Plan of Action Towards Africa Fit for Children. In November 2012, at the 3rd Pan African Forum for Children held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, representatives for children and young people called on governments and civil society organisations to establish child helplines in all African states. It is imperative that governments and civil society listen to this call for action and ensure the strengthening of child protection systems by: **supporting existing child helplines and establishing child helplines in countries where they do not exist.**

>> Many child helplines in Africa find themselves filling the void of inadequate or inaccessible legal resources for children. << SOUTH AFRICA, 2011

II. Reasons for contact

	Grand total
PEER RELATIONSHIPS	5%
SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL AWARENESS	12%
PSYCHO-SOCIAL, MENTAL HEALTH	6%
ABUSE AND VIOLENCE	29%
FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS	8%
SCHOOL RELATED	4%
HOMELESSNESS/RUNAWAYS/BASIC NEEDS	10%
PHYSICAL HEALTH	3%
LEGAL MATTERS	7%
COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION	5%
SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE	2%
DISCRIMINATION	3%
HIV/AIDS INFECTED/AFFECTED CHILDREN	7%

II. Reasons for contact by gender



THE DURBAN RESOLUTIONS

Gathered in Durban, South Africa on 20 November, child helplines operating in 136 countries adopted the Durban Resolutions. Child helplines call upon all stakeholders in governments, agencies and the private sector to:

- Recognise child helplines' unique capacity to bring the voices of children to bear on strengthening child protection;
- Partner with child helplines to ensure that they are sustainable and accessible for all children free of charge; and,
- Ensure that the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include the protection and empowerment of children and young people.

Children and Young People Abused

Abuse, violence and neglect emerge as the most common reason for children and young people to contact child helplines in the African region. In ten years, one in three (29%) of all cases reported to child helplines dealt with this issue, and the data demonstrates that the number of these cases is increasing.

Ten years of data on abuse, violence and neglect shows that 23% of these contacts were about sexual abuse, 19% related to emotional abuse, 17% on neglect, and 11% on bullying. Generally, more girls (56%) report or experience different forms of abuse - namely physical, emotional, and sexual - compared to boys.

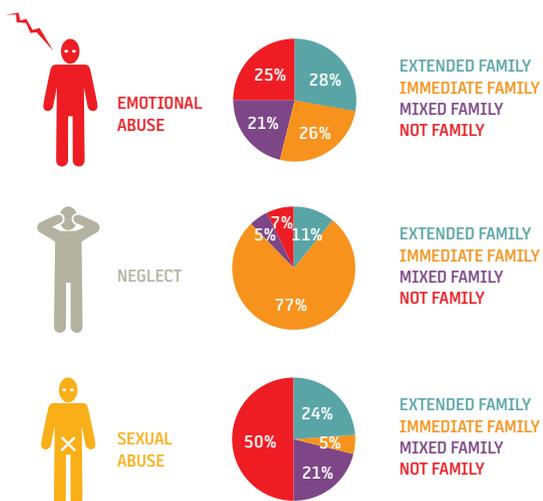
Sexual abuse is the second most prevalent form of abuse faced by children and young people. Almost one in four (23%) reported abuse and violence cases were related to sexual abuse. In one in three (29%) of sexual abuse cases, an immediate family member or member of the extended family was named as the perpetrator. In over 91% of sexual abuse cases, a male was reported to have committed the offence against the child or young person. Girls (80%) reported more sexual abuse cases than boys.

Similarly more girls (55%) than boys reported **emotional abuse** cases (55%) the majority of which were perpetrated by a male (65%). Immediate family members and/or the extended family were responsible for 54% of all emotional abuse cases.

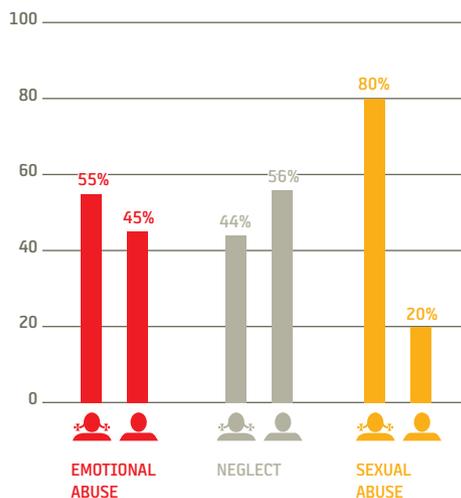
Nearly one in five abuse cases involved a child or young person being neglected. In these cases, 88% of the contacts mentioned an immediate member of the family or extended family as the perpetrator. More boys (56%) than girls reported cases of neglect.

Case: Mirembe reported to her teacher that she had been sexually abused by her father. The teacher in collaboration with the child helpline informed the police. *The child helpline facilitated medical treatment, legal counselling, psycho-social support, and safe relocation for the child. (Uganda, 2008)*

RWD 1a. Relationship between victim of abuse and their perpetrator per form of abuse in Africa



RWD 1b. The % of girls and boys that report different forms of Abuse and Violence



Case: Nuru (15) called the child helpline stating that her adoptive father was “doing things to her”. Nuru reported that every night when her mother went to night classes, her father would sexually violate her and justify his actions by saying that he was “testing if she was still a virgin”. When Nuru tried to report such incidents to her mother she did not believe her. *After telling her story to a child helpline counsellor, the child helpline immediately took action and reported the case to the police. Nuru was examined by doctors, who confirmed her abuse. With collaborative efforts from the child helpline, police, hospital and Department of Social Services/Welfare, Nuru was removed from her adopted parents and placed in a safe environment. (Botswana, 2010)*

WARNING SIGNS

- Abuse and Violence are the most common reasons for children and young people to seek support from a child helpline in Africa.
- Immediate and extended families are involved in a substantial number of abuse and violence cases suffered by children and young people.

Corporal Punishment in Schools and at Home

In some African states corporal punishment is still legal. Corporal punishment is the infliction of pain, injury or discomfort on an individual for the purpose of control or punishment. Culturally, corporal punishment in Africa is often considered a norm because parents utilise it as a form of discipline at home and support its use in schools. In many cases, any form of physical punishment can easily cross the line to physical abuse and in such instances the child is seriously harmed or punished in an unreasonable way.

Physical abuse is the number one reason why children and young people contact all child helplines in the region. Ten years of data collection shows that one in three reported cases of Abuse and Violence dealt with physical violence. In 23% of physical abuse cases, a perpetrator was either an immediate or extended family member. Girls (52%) reported more physical abuse incidents than boys.

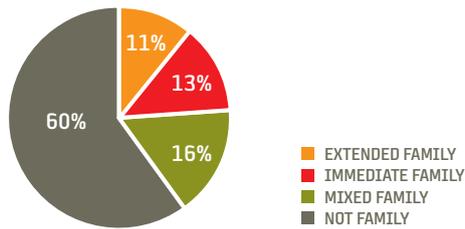
School is one of the most important places in a child's life and ideally should be a safe place where children and young people can learn without fear. This is not always a reality as many physical abuse cases are perpetrated by teachers in schools.

Data collected from child helplines in the African region shows that teachers are indicated as the perpetrator of one in ten (13%) physical abuse cases. More girls (55%) than boys (45%) reported cases of physical abuse by a teacher.

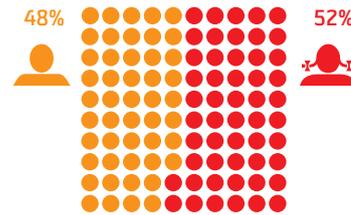
There are also a significant number of cases where a child or young person felt that they had been bullied by their teachers. In 40% of **bullying** cases, the child or young person reported a teacher as the perpetrator.

Case: A father contacted a child helpline because his child has been physically abused by a teacher at school, and required medical treatment. *The helpline informed the father of his legal options, and the father decided to press charges against the teacher. The teacher was convicted and action was taken to prevent the teacher from ever working in schools again. (South Africa, 2006)*

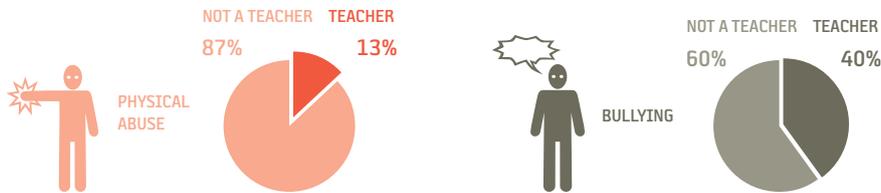
RWD 2a. Physical Abuse - Relationship between victim of abuse and their perpetrator



RWD 2b. The % of boys and girls who report Physical Abuse to child helplines in Africa



RWD 2c. Teachers as perpetrators of different forms of abuse in Africa



Case: “My father wanted to discipline me, he came from behind me, pushed me to the ground and tied both my hands and legs together. He then put dry leaves around me and brought a burning piece of wood and set me on fire. All this time my grandmother, auntie and other children were looking at me. Father forbade any one from saying anything about the incident. Then he jumped onto his motorcycle and rode away!” exclaimed Charles when describing his story. Charles was severely burnt and needed serious medical attention. *The child helpline assisted the family through many means, following up and working closely with the police and magistrate. Eventually Charles’ father was arrested and imprisoned. The helpline also helped the child with transportation on many occasions to hospitals, court and the police, as well as providing for basic needs such as special clothes and medical prescriptions. (Uganda, 2008)*

WARNING SIGNS

- One in twelve cases reported to child helplines in Africa involved physical abuse.
- Teachers are responsible for 13% of physical abuse cases.

Children Infected and Affected by HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has had a huge impact on the lives of children and young people in Africa. Compared to our global data, child helplines in Africa received the majority of contacts regarding HIV/AIDS. According to child helplines in the region, counselling and services on HIV/AIDS are provided to the majority of contacts - given the widespread prevalence of this disease and its link to abuse, exploitation, and poverty. While this reveals the growing support that child helplines provide to children and their families, it also highlights the need for extra efforts in dealing with this issue.

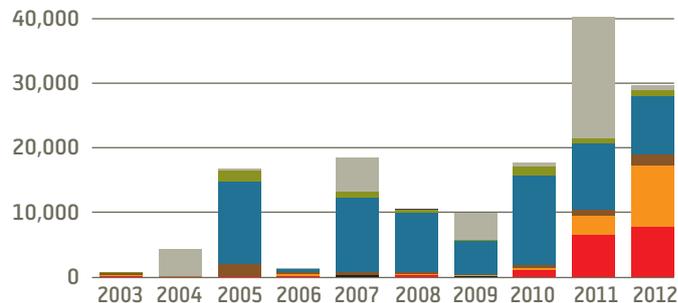
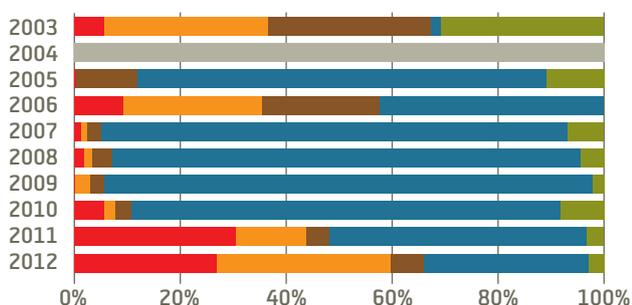
Over the past ten years, 150,000 contacts on HIV/AIDS were received by child helplines in Africa. Although these numbers seem low, these contacts specifically relate to the HIV status of the child, family or carer (it does not relate to other topics of abuse/poverty or exploitation of children and young people). Over 72,000 contacts were from children and young people seeking information on HIV/AIDS and another 14,000 contacts sought advice on how to live with HIV. Additionally 16,000 contacts were due to bereavement and 7,000 contacts were from children and young people who have parents or family members living with HIV/AIDS.

Data also indicates that more girls (52%) contacted child helplines on HIV/AIDS issues than boys (48%). Nearly 55% of the contacts made by children and young people who are living with HIV were from girls.

WARNING SIGNS

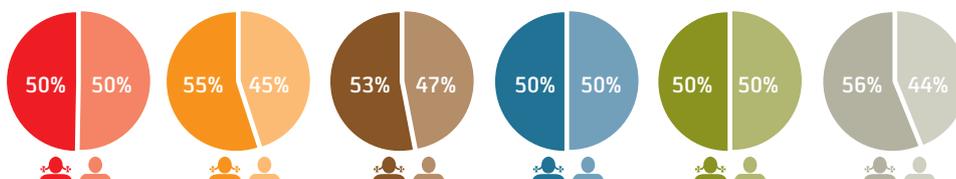
- According to child helplines in Africa, a vast number of contacts are interrelated within HIV/AIDS because they are linked to abuse, exploitation and poverty.
- The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to affect the lives of children and young people and there is the need for a robust support mechanism especially for children and young people who suffer from bereavement or infection.

RWD 3a. The increase in contacts made by children to child helplines on issues related to HIV/AIDS, year by year



- BEREAVEMENT
- CHILDREN LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS
- CHILDREN ORPHANED DUE TO HIV/AIDS
- INFORMATION ABOUT AIDS
- PARENTS (OR FAMILY) WITH HIV/AIDS
- OTHER

RWD 3b. The percentage of girls and boys who contact child helplines because of HIV/AIDS



Case: Naledi (5) was repeatedly violated by her uncle. When her case was reported, the child helpline took Naledi to hospital to be examined, and also supported the judicial process against her perpetrator. The uncle was sentenced to prison and post-abuse support was provided in the form of counselling and food supplements. Naledi now has HIV, which is believed to have been contracted from her abuser. (South Africa, 2010)

Case: A family member contacted a child helpline because they did not know how to disclose the HIV positive status to the child that had the disease. Through face-to-face counselling the family member was equipped with the right skills on how to disclose such a matter to the child. The child is now living positively, and is committed to helping other young people who are experiencing similar problems. (Namibia, 2008)

» Almost every contact that we have, either with a child or family member, will include a conversation about HIV and AIDS. «
ZIMBABWE, 2013

Importance of 116 as a Regionally Harmonised Emergency Number

In Africa, there are 17 child helplines which have obtained the 116 regionally harmonised toll free number to date. The easy to remember toll free number, 116 - increases the accessibility of child helpline services to children and young people during emergency situations, especially across borders when children are displaced. On 17 September 2012, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) issued a statement signed by its chairperson Mrs Agnes Kaboré, which recognised child helplines as important tools for reporting and protecting children from abuse and violence. The committee called on all African countries to promote the establishment of child helplines using the emergency 116 number, in compliance with the recommendations of WSIS 2005, the UN study on Violence Against Children 2006 and the Rio Declaration on sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

The following helplines have already obtained the regionally harmonised 116 number in Africa:

- Childline Botswana Botswana
- Direction Generale de L'Encadrement et de la Protection d L'Enfant et de L'Adolescent Burkina Faso
- DCI Child Helpline Cameroon
- Allo Enfant en détresse..... Cote d'Ivoire
- Association Guinéenne d'Assistance Sociale Guinee Conakry
- Childline Kenya Kenya
- Childline Lesotho Lesotho
- Association Serasera Fanantenana Madagascar
- Tithandizane Child Helpline/YONECO Malawi
- Association Mauritanienne de la Santé de la Mère et de l'Enfant AMSME Mauritania
- Lihna Fala Crianca Mozambique
- LifeLine/ChildLine Namibia Namibia
- Centre GINDDI Senegal
- Don Bosco Fambul Sierra Leone
- Uganda Child Rights NGO Network - UCRNN Uganda
- Lifeline/Childline Zambia Zambia
- Childline Zimbabwe Zimbabwe

Message



Violence against children becomes particularly pernicious in the context of certain harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, sexual violence and child abuse - inflicted upon over two million girls per year. Children exposed to the violence often do not know where to turn, how to report the abuse suffered or how to get help and support to overcome the trauma. This is why child helplines in the region provide an invaluable service to children. Still, children exposed to violence in all forms remains a worrying concern. If strong measures are not taken by the authorities to curb this inhuman and devastating plague, society is at risk of a moral crisis.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by the majority of African Union Members, and is the main point of reference for African states. In some cases, many African countries have further adopted statutes that are context specific, in order to further ensure the protection of children. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child exhibits this and is an important tool for advancing children's rights in Africa. The Charter highlights issues of special importance in the African setting such as harmful social and cultural practises. Furthermore, the African Union's agenda contains concrete actions to ensure that legal systems in African Member States are child-friendly, combat violence against children and increase the protection of vulnerable children.

Violence against children is under-reported. Child helplines are perhaps the only way for some of them to seek help. Importantly, data collected from child helplines puts a microscope on the situation of children and highlights the reasons why children and young people seek help, care and protection. Therefore I am delighted that on their 10th anniversary, Child Helpline International is releasing ten years of data collected from African child helplines. Data demonstrates that we need to provide children with services and mechanisms that empower them to report violations and receive the best care and protection possible.

Data collected by child helplines should be used to improve policies for children whilst focusing on prevention and the strengthening of child protection systems at a national level. I call on the governments of the African Union and civil society to develop and enforce policies and programs that take into account the invaluable data collected from child helplines, and to guarantee that such actions are carried out in the best interests of children.

Mrs. Djènè Conde

First Lady of the Republic of Guinea,

President of PROSMI - Promotion of Maternal and Child Health.

Forced Union

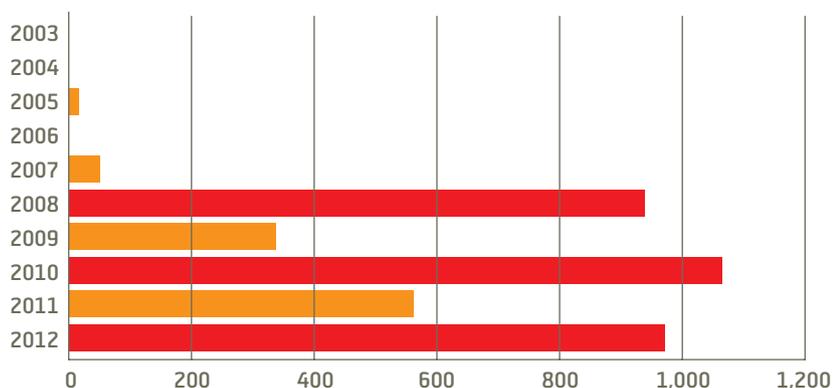
A forced union is often known as child marriage. In the African region this is often considered a traditional practice, perpetuated by dominant social norms. Such a practice excludes girls from decisions regarding their lives, choice of spouse and in many cases they are forced to engage in sexual relations with a considerably older man. Child marriage jeopardises the rights of girls and inhibits their social and economic development. Child brides are therefore more susceptible to incidents of abuse and violence, denied education, endure premature pregnancy, and in some cases suffer from HIV/AIDS.

Over ten years, data shows that 3,940 contacts were made to African child helplines regarding forced union. Although figures are low, child helplines often find that the child or young person's case is initially referred to as a sexual abuse case and therefore documented this way. In more recent years, a significant increase in contacts regarding child marriages in Africa were registered. In 2003, there were no contacts made, however from 2011 to 2012, 2,596 children and young people in the region contacted child helplines on this matter. Girls (81%) contacted child helplines more on this issue than boys (19%).

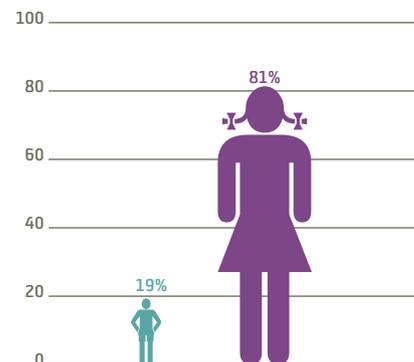
Case: Towela (13) called the child helpline because her friend Kitana (12) was no longer attending school. She explained that Kitana's mother forced her to marry an adult man. *The child helpline's counsellor referred the case to a social worker and the police. The social worker immediately followed up on the case and removed the child from the exploitive situation. Kitana was placed in a safe shelter whilst further investigations were undertaken. The husband was arrested and Kitana is now back in school. (Zambia, 2008)*

Case: Bongile (16) who had a one year old child, was sold by her grandmother to a shop owner and was expected to act as his wife and sex slave. When she refused, the shop owner violated her and held her captive for a week. She escaped and her grandmother denied her shelter. *Bongile sought help through the child helpline which placed her in the appropriate organisation that could assist her with the right support, shelter and vocational skills whilst being with her child. (Uganda, 2011)*

FWD 1a. An increase in contacts in child marriage 2003-2012



FWD 1b. Child marriage by gender



Case: Talandira (16), made a distressed call to a child helpline because she was being forced into marriage with a prominent businessman in her community, in order to settle her father’s debt. “My father took a bag of cement on credit and has now failed to settle his debt. He can’t find money to pay his debt off and has asked me to marry the businessman. My father has said that if I refuse to get married to the businessman he will disown me as his daughter and not pay my school fees”. *The counsellor advised the girl to report the issue to the nearest Police Victim Support Unit. She reported the matter to police and later informed the child helpline counsellors and social workers that thanks to their advice she was able to approach the police and force her father to change his mind (Malawi: 2012)*

WARNING SIGNS

An increased number of children are contacting child helplines in Africa due to forced child marriage.

Commercial Exploitation

One of the most worrying trends emerging from the data is an increase in contacts concerning commercial exploitation. The commercial exploitation of children is the exploitation of a child below the age of 18 by an adult – involving a transaction in cash or in kind to the child or to one or more parties. It is an abhorrent violation of the human rights of children.

Commercial exploitation represents 5% of the total number of contacts made with child helplines in Africa. On average 11,000 contacts were received by child helplines in the African region per year on the issue of commercial exploitation. This highlights the intensity of the problem. Generally, when children and young people contacted child helplines it was to discuss child labour (47%), children being used for begging (31%), sexual exploitation (9%) or child trafficking (5%).

Child labour represents over 47% of the contacts on commercial exploitation of which 30% related to domestic child labour, 13% bonded child labour and 5% other forms of child labour. More girls (63%) than boys contacted child helplines on matters related to domestic child labour and bonded child labour.

Commercial sexual exploitation is one of the worst forms of child labour and accounts for almost one in ten cases of commercial

exploitation. Since 2010, there has been a marked increase in the number of contacts on this issue. Almost 7,000 children were reported to have been sexually exploited during this period, of which 68% were girls. These numbers highlight the need for urgent action by governments and civil societies on this issue.

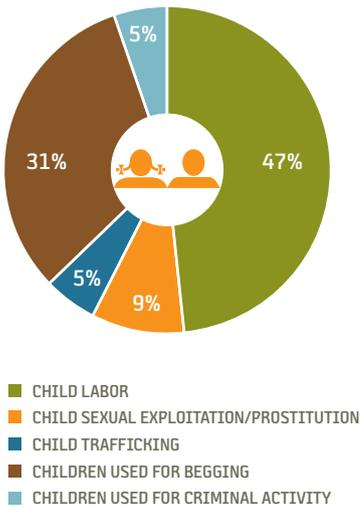
Sexual exploitation is often linked with **child trafficking**. Ten years ago, there were no contacts on this issue, however since 2007 an increased number of reports have been documented. On average, one in 20 contacts on commercial exploitation concerned child trafficking of which more boys (62%) contacted child helplines than girls.

Children and young people are being used by adults to beg for food. On average each year, every child helpline in the region receives almost 145 contacts from a child or young person being forced to beg for food by an adult.

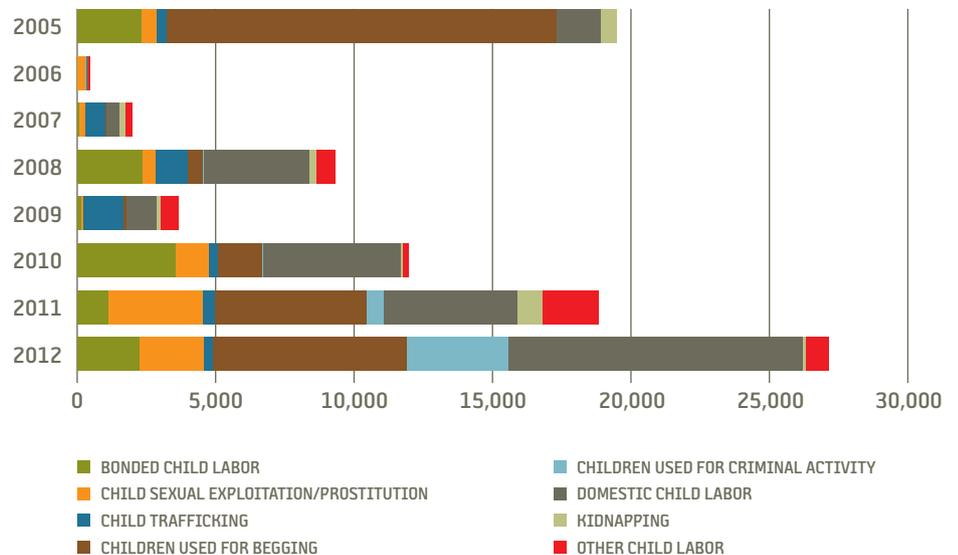
>> The trafficking of children for the purpose of child labour is an emerging trend. In collaboration with the Government's Immigration Child Welfare Unit, the child helpline provides trafficked children with shelter while searching for their families << GAMBIA, 2011

>> More and more children and young people are contacting child helplines because they are experiencing the worst forms of child labour << GUINEE CONAKRY, 2012

FWD 2a. The % of contacts on Commercial Exploitation in Africa



FWD 2b. Number of contacts on Commercial Exploitation in Africa



Case: A neighbour called the child helpline to report a case of child labour and physical abuse concerning a 13-year-old girl who was a domestic worker next door. A few days later, a team from the child helpline made a home visit and found the girl looking after children. Because she was coerced by the employers to resist being rescued, the police were called to take her away and place her at the Centre for Domestic Training and Development, for temporary shelter (Kenya, 2010).

WARNING SIGNS

- Child labour is on the rise and more girls than boys are being exploited.
- Sexual exploitation of children has increased since 2010.
- One in thirteen contacts on commercial exploitation involves sexual exploitation.
- One in twenty contacts on commercial exploitation is linked to child trafficking.

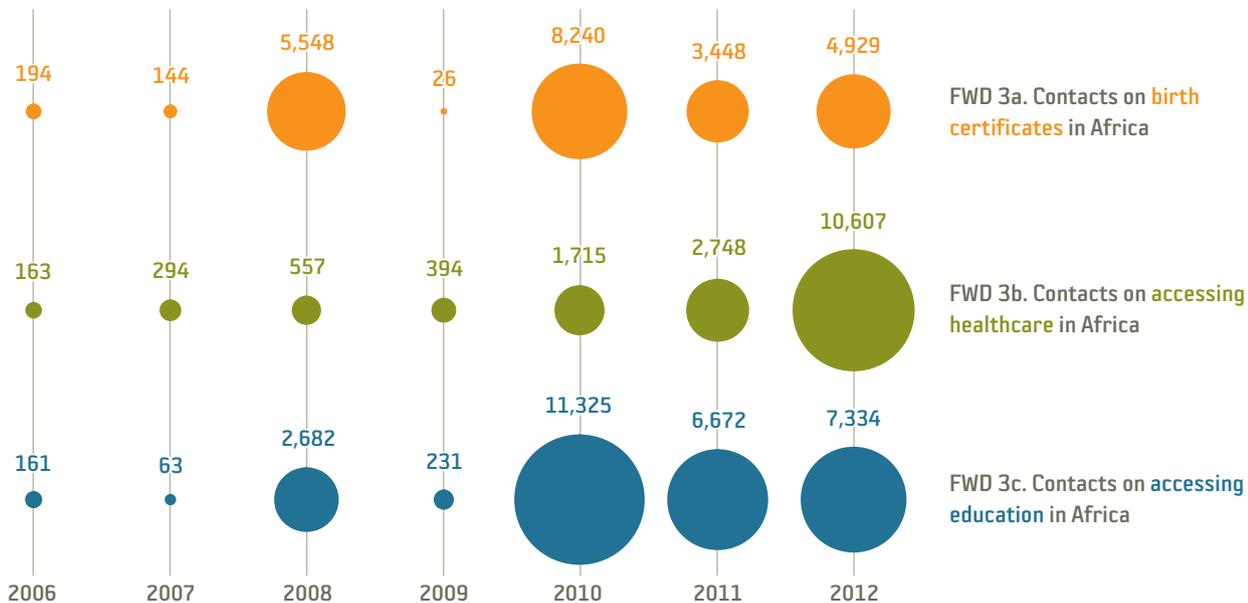
Access to Services

A birth registration is the first legal acknowledgment of a child's life that allows him or her to access civil, political and economic rights. Without a birth certificate, a child in Africa cannot enrol in school, or obtain access to healthcare or government subsidised support programs. Children living in remote areas and conflict zones often find it difficult to obtain birth certificates, due to lack of access.

In Africa, the numbers of children and young people seeking information from child helplines about **birth certificates** have increased. During 2010-2012 nearly 17,000 contacts were received during this period. This means that approximately 23 children contacted every child helpline every month on this matter. This highlights the urgent need to address the difficulty children and young people face in obtaining birth certificates.

Access to healthcare is also an emerging issue and represents one in two contacts made by children and young people concerning physical health issues. Between 2003 and 2009, there were few contacts on this issue, however during 2010 and 2012, 15,000 children and young people contacted child helplines because they were denied access to healthcare.

Access to education is a growing challenge for children and young people in the African region. During 2003-2005, there were no contacts to child helplines on this matter, but during 2010-2012 over 25,341 children and young people contacted child helplines in order to speak about the barriers that they were facing in accessing education. In 2012, on average, each helpline in the region received 367 contacts on access to education.



Case: A family contacted the child helpline after a boy called Thulani had been blinded in a domestic accident. Thulani needed a special school that could cater to his condition. *A social worker from the child helpline researched and identified a school and managed to network and gather resources for the family. The boy was enrolled in a special school catering for blind children where he is reported to be one of the best students. (Zimbabwe, 2010)*

Case: A woman called the child helpline: "Help. I want my child to go to school but they said I need a birth certificate. I didn't know the child must be registered, and I didn't know where to register him. No one told me and now he can't go to school". (Malawi, 2009)

WARNING SIGNS

- An increasing number of children and young people are calling child helplines for advice on obtaining birth certificates.
- Access to healthcare is an emerging issue and represents one in two contacts made by children and young people concerning physical health issues.
- Since 2010 an increasing number of children have contacted child helplines because they were unable to access education.

Life on the Streets and an Increase in Basic Need

Children are at risk of running away from home, being abandoned or orphaned due to the complexity of harmful traditional practices, HIV/AIDS, civil conflicts, poverty in the region and abuse and violence at home. When these circumstances occur, children contacted child helplines to ask for assistance, services and resources such as shelter, financial aid, food, or employment opportunities. Child helplines, together with referral organisations offer children and young people solution based intervention in order to keep them safe.

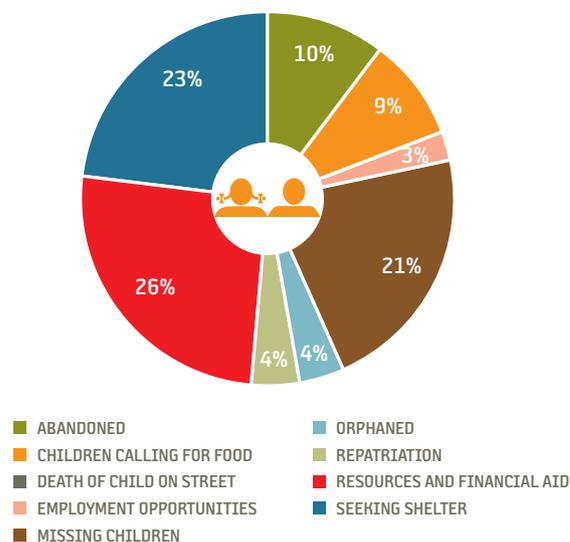
In Africa, a quarter of a million children and young people contacted child helplines on issues of **homelessness, running away and basic needs**. These issues together account for one in ten contacts received by all child helplines in Africa, and constitutes the third most common problem that is reported in the region.

One in four (25%) of these contacts were children and young people asking for resource and financial assistance and 23% of the contacts were from those seeking shelter. Another 22% of contacts related to missing children and 9% were from children asking for food.

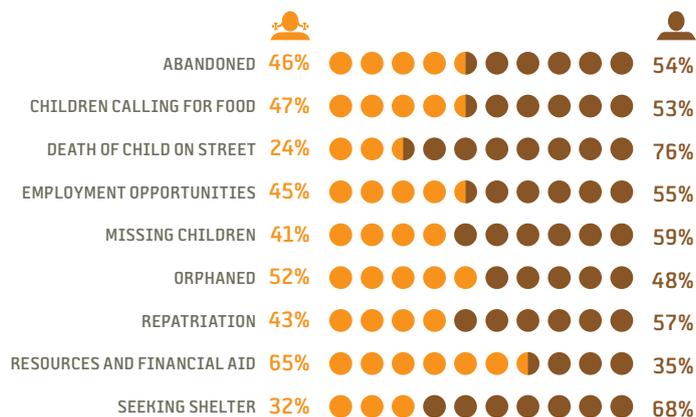
Interestingly, data on homelessness and basic needs shows a clear gender distinction. For instance, more boys contacted child helplines about abandonment, lack of food, employment opportunities, and seeking shelter. More contacts were made by girls on issues including becoming orphaned, repatriation and seeking resources or financial aid.

During the period 2010-2012, data received from African child helplines indicates an increasing number of contacts (over 151,000) seeking assistance and counselling because of homelessness or the need to acquire certain basic needs.

FWD 4a. Contacts on Homelessness and Basic Needs 2003-2012



FWD 4b. Gender distinction on Homelessness and Basic Needs



Case: Kaleem (12): "I ran away from home because my father would beat me. I'm hungry and need some food". (Mauritius, 2011)

Case: Sipho (17) left his home due to poverty. Sipho's situation at home was so bad, that he and his siblings would often have to take turns eating, so that each of them could be fed - every second or third day. He ran away from his village in hopes of making money in the city. Sipho got sick on the streets and a passer-by telephoned the child helpline for help. *The counsellor on duty organised for Sipho's readmission to hospital, and to be placed in a shelter thereafter for recovery. A child care worker managed to trace Sipho's family and refer his mother to the right services, so that she could apply for child support. Sipho was too old to qualify for the grant but was referred to a shelter where he was given the opportunity to go back to school, as well as keep in touch with his family.*

WARNING SIGNS

- One of the most common reasons (one in ten contacts) for children and young people contacting child helplines in Africa relates to homelessness, basic needs and running away.
- More boys than girls contacted child helplines about abandonment, lack of food, employment opportunities, and seeking shelter.
- High increase in homelessness and basic needs are evident between the period 2010-2012.

The Importance of Child Helpline Data

Since its foundation, child helplines in the Child Helpline International network have received over 126 million contacts. These numbers clearly demonstrate the need for children and youth to discuss their questions, their need for social support and help.

Child helplines play a unique role in supporting children and young people due to the combination of several characteristics:

1. caller anonymity produces an emotionally secure environment and enhances self-disclosure;
2. mediated communication increases the caller's perceived control and ;
3. the elimination of time and distance barriers significantly increases the accessibility of support. Child helplines offer confidentiality and serve vulnerable individuals in crisis, at times when free of costs access to other services is unavailable.

Scientific study of child helplines has shown that child helplines succeed in having confidential conversations with children and young people that empower them (Butler, Potter, Danby, Emmison, & Hepburn, 2003). Staff of child helplines generally succeed in creating a supportive environment that affords the caller emotional safety. Staff is able to establish rapport with the child, focusing the conversation on their problems and managing the conversation while adapting the pace and duration to their needs.

Statistical analysis of data from European child helplines shows that impressive numbers of children were seeking support in the last decade. The data does not show evidence for decreases for either answered or responded calls. The overall picture that emerges from the data is that child helplines continue to fulfill a need for the child population.

The CHI database has, as any database and empirical study, its strengths and weaknesses. The use of data in international comparative research is not without pitfalls (see Hantrais, 2009, for example). The database, with its limitations, represents a unique collection of international, longitudinal data. The registration of child helpline contacts, which show a wide variety of topics, is structured by a concise set of problem categories that are used internationally. The extensive collaboration between different child helplines in the CHI network for the past ten years has stimulated the constructive debate and exchange of findings between different members. Seen from this perspective, the CHI database has summarized the stories of children in need of answers, social support and help worldwide for the past ten years.

Prof. dr. Ruben Fukkink
*Professor at the Graduate School
of Child Development and Education
University of Amsterdam*

Child Helpline International (CHI) is the global network of 173 child helplines in 141 countries (April 2013). In ten years together child helplines in the network received more than 126 million contacts from children and young people in need of care and protection. CHI supports the creation and strengthening of national toll free child helplines worldwide and uses child helpline data and knowledge to highlight gaps in child protection systems and advocate for the rights of children.

Colophon

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Disclaimer:

CHI's work is firmly grounded in the principles and values enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), including children's right to privacy and protection from harm. To this end, and to preserve the trust and confidence children place in child helplines worldwide every day, all identifying details and information about individual children cited in this report have been removed or altered. Although cases and quotes are real, the names of children and young people are not.

This publication is based on the analysis of information received from child helplines in the CHI network in the African Region and the world through CHI's data questionnaire. The conclusions and statements are based on this information and they do not capture the full scope of practices and policies of all countries and cases handled by child helplines and other child protection organisations at national level.

Data has been collected for 10 consecutive years. Some graphs and tables are based on a subset of data, as some information was not collected for all years. The totals of different graphs and tables, are therefore, not always compatible.

CHI would like to thank the following countries who submitted data: 116 Burkina Faso, 199 Helpline (Gambia), Action for Children & ANPPCAN Uganda, Allo Fanantenana (Madagascar), Centre GINDDI (Senegal), Child Helpline Lesotho, Child Helpline Mauritius, Childline Botswana, Childline Kenya, Childline South Africa, Childline Zambia, Childline Zimbabwe, HDI Child Helpline (Nigeria), Lifeline/Childline Namibia, Linha Fala Crianca (Mozambique), Ministry of Education Child Toll Free Line (Swaziland), Nazreth Child Helpline (Ethiopia), SOS Enfant en Detresse (Cote d'Ivoire), Telephone vert AGUIAS (Guinée-Conakry), Tithandizane Child Helpline (Malawi).

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Child
Helpline
International



GIVING A VOICE TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WORLDWIDE



FWD >>

The Voices of
Children and Young People
in Africa

2003 - 2013
126 million
contacts