



Ending Corporal Punishment of Children: Africa E-Newsletter

FRENCH VERSION ALSO AVAILABLE

Issue 3: December 2010

In this issue

The highlight of this issue is that The African Child Policy Forum, the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children and Save the Children Sweden have launched the new All Africa Report 2010 on corporal punishment of children in Africa. Read details of this in our resources section....

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1 Who we are

The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children is a non governmental organisation (NGO) which aims to act as a catalyst to encourage more action and progress towards ending all corporal punishment in all continents. We support national campaigns with relevant information and assistance (www.endcorporalpunishment.org). The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) is an independent, Pan-African research and advocacy organisation which aims to put children in Africa on the public and political agenda through promotion of supportive policies and laws. ACPF works with

other child rights organisations and governments to develop and implement effective pro-child policies and programmes (www.africanchildforum.org).

The Global Initiative and The African Child Policy Forum initiated a joint project in 2009 to promote law reform and support national campaigns in all regions of Africa with information and strategies. The joint project aims to build a continent-wide network of supporters of prohibition of corporal punishment of children in Africa.

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2 Recent developments in Africa

Positive moves

Zanzibar: With support from Save the Children in Zanzibar, the Ministry of Education has established a Coordination Unit responsible for alternative forms of discipline and a coordinator has been recruited accordingly. A training manual on positive discipline has also been developed by Save the Children in Zanzibar. Once it is approved by the Ministry of Education the manual will be incorporated in the Zanzibar teacher training curricular.

The Southern African Network to End Corporal and Humiliating Punishment of Children: Ms Judith Mulenga, executive director of the Zambia Civic Education Association and member of the Southern African Network to End Corporal and Humiliating Punishment of Children, has been appointed as *Eastern and Southern Region Representative to the International NGO Advisory Council for follow-up to the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children*. The Council was formed in 2007 to support strong and effective follow-up to the Study. Its central role today is to work closely with the *Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children* to ensure civil society participation in the follow up activities. Ms Mulenga's longstanding commitment to the prohibition of corporal punishment in Zambia and beyond will be a great asset to the Council.

But...

Uganda: Prohibition of corporal punishment in schools was included in the Children (Amendment) Bill submitted to parliament by the Uganda Law Reform Commission. However, Ugandan CSOs have been informed that amendment 106 B prohibiting corporal punishment in schools may be dropped from the Bill at parliamentary level. CSOs including Raising Voices, Save the Children in Uganda and Ugandan Child Rights NGO Network have strongly mobilised to ensure that amendment 106B is retained in the Bill. For more information, please contact: dipak.naker@raisingvoices.org

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3 Campaigns and other moves towards prohibition

Benin: In 2008 a study report of Benin's Ministry of Family found that 55% of students reported they had experienced corporal punishment inside or outside the school. In February 2010, in close partnership with Benin's Ministry for Family and the Centre for Social Protection, Plan Benin launched a text message based system to collect and map out reports of violence against children in communities in Benin and Togo. Children or anyone that experiences or witness violence, can send a text message from their mobile phone to an application which is connected to the website of Plan partner Ushahidi. The project aims to help children report and denounce violence against them in their communities. Plan

West Africa Region aims to collect data about incidences of violence and measure the magnitude of violence and respond to cases with support from government and/or local partners. An initial assessment of the project was due in early November 2010 and a revised plan would be drawn up accordingly. See <http://plan-international.org/where-we-work/africa/benin/what-we-do/our-successes/mapping-violence-against-children-in-benin> and <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2010/10/19/benin-text-messages-to-help-protect-children-against-violence-lessons-learned/>

Botswana: Corporal punishment of children is lawful in Botswana. The need for schools to become violence free zones remains a major challenge to parents, teachers and students in Botswana. With the support of the UNFPA, the Kagisano Society Women’s Shelter Project has been working in schools to address the issue of corporal punishment and bullying of children and try to change behaviour. The Kagisano Society Women’s Shelter Project staff along with volunteers from the peace organisation Servas participated in a five-day workshop at the Kagisong Centre on Alternatives to Violence (AVP) and Help Increase the Peace Projects (HIPPP). The Alternatives to Violence Programme aims to break the cycle of abuse by adopting non-violent discipline methods in the schools of Botswana. For more information please go to <http://avpinternational.org/workshops.html>

Ghana: Recent investigations into care institutions and schools in Ghana have revealed that corporal punishment of children is widely used by caregivers and teachers as a way of disciplining children under their care. Corporal punishment is used in the form of caning, kicking and slapping; as a result, some children have developed fear and dislike for their caregivers, with many others playing truant to escape corporal punishment at school. Ghanaian child rights activists, including Platini Ashiagbor, Founding President of End Violence Against the Next Generation, have campaigned against the practice which “defies logic and is unbeneficial to a child’s wellbeing”. A private school teacher in Accra recommended that some form of training in disciplining children by using positive and non-violent ways should be incorporated in the teachers’ training curriculum. See <http://www.evangghana.org/> and <http://news.myjoyonline.com/news/201009/52028.asp>

Zimbabwe: Children were asked to play an integral role in the review of Zimbabwe’s Constitution. A special Children’s National Consultative Outreach Programme, was conducted in September 2010 in Harare by the Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) with support from UNICEF. The participating children – representing all 63 districts of Zimbabwe – called for a new Constitution guaranteeing the rights and best interests of every child; they identified, amongst other things, the abolition of corporal punishment in schools as key to ensuring that their rights are well protected through the new Constitution. COPAC Co-Chairperson Hon. Douglas Mwonzora guaranteed to the children that their contributions would find their way into the chapters of Zimbabwe’s constitution. See http://www.unicef.org/esaro/youth_old_6655.html

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4 Human rights monitoring

Key decisions and recommendation, etc.

The **Committee on the Rights of the Child** published its concluding observations on states examined at the 55th session, 13 September – 1 October 2010, including on Angola, Burundi and Sudan. The Committee recommended prohibition of corporal punishment in all settings, including the home, drawing attention to its General Comment No. 8 on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel and degrading forms of punishment.

The Global Initiative regularly briefs human rights treaty monitoring bodies prior to examination of state parties, and encourages national NGOs and human rights institutions to do likewise. Current opportunities to submit advance briefings on states coming up for examination are listed below. We are always willing to advise NGOs and human rights institutions on the practical details of how to submit briefings (email info@endcorporalpunishment.org).

The *Committee on the Rights of the Child* pre-sessional working group will be meeting at its 56th session in January/February 2011 to consider the issues to raise in its forthcoming examination of Egypt. **Briefings on Egypt should be submitted before 20 December 2010.**

The *Committee Against Torture* will be meeting at its 46th session in May 2011 to examine Ghana and Mauritius. **Briefings on these states should be submitted by 25 April 2011.** During the same session, the pre-sessional working group will consider the issues to raise in its future examinations of Djibouti, Madagascar, Morocco and Tunisia. **Briefings on these states should be submitted by 9 February 2011.**

The *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* will be meeting at its 48th session in January/February 2011 to examine Kenya and South Africa. **Briefings on these states should be submitted by 3 January 2011.** During the same session, the pre-sessional working group will consider the issues to raise in its future examinations of Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho and Mauritius. **Briefings on these states should be submitted by 17 December 2010.**

The *Human Rights Committee* will be meeting at its 101st session in March/April 2011 to examine Seychelles and Togo. **Briefings on these states should be submitted by 28 February 2011.** During the same session, the country report task forces will consider the issues to raise in its future examination of Malawi. **Briefings on Malawi should be submitted by 14 December 2011.**

The 12th session of the *Universal Periodic Review* will take place in October 2011. **The deadline for making submissions on Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, and Zimbabwe is 14 March 2011.**

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5 Resources: Research/Reports/Publications

Ending legalised violence against children: All Africa Report 2010 – Following up the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children

Jointly published by The Global Initiative to All Punishment of Children, The African Child Policy Forum and Save the Children Sweden, the report includes key messages of eminent child rights' experts, recent progress, challenges and opportunities on the issue of corporal punishment of children in Africa. The All Africa Report aims to encourage prohibition supporters to learn from and collaborate with one another, and to renew their determination to end the legality of violence against children once for all. It is available online at www.endcorporalpunishment.org. A limited number of hard copies will also be available (email Sonia Vohito, vohito@africanchildforum.org).

Ghana: *Children's perception of physical punishment in Ghana* by Dr Afua Twum-Danso. Published in September 2010, this research project conducted between August 2009 and August 2010 in Ghana explores 158 children's perceptions of being disciplined by the various adults in their lives. The research focuses on children going to school in rural and urban areas. It found that 4.4 % have experienced physical punishment every day while the majority experienced it several times a month or

irregularly. Almost a third of children (30.4%) claimed to have experienced physical punishment methods ranging from being beaten with a belt or a cane, being slapped or hit; 22.8% reported that they were physically punished by relatives (other than those with whom they lived as their primary caregivers). For more information, please contact: a.twum-danso@sheffield.ac.uk

Namibia: The Legal Assistance Centre has issued a new report on corporal punishment – *Corporal Punishment: National and international perspectives*. It presents the opinions of over 2,000 children surveyed for the public consultation on the Child Care and Protection Bill. It also includes sections on the effects of corporal punishment, common justifications for its use, international human rights standards, the current national legal situation, examples of law reform in other countries, the promotion of positive parenting, and answers to frequently asked questions on the issue.

Zanzibar: The National Child Consultation Programme, a partnership between the Ministry of Labour, Youth, Women and Children Development and Save the Children, UNICEF and others, has published a report on the proposed new Children’s Act – *Capturing Children’s Views on the Children Bill 2010: The National Child Consultation Programme in Zanzibar*. Of the children consulted on the Children’s Bill 2010, 77% described corporal punishment as a harmful, arbitrary and meaningless practice and over 80% called on the government to prohibit it in schools and promote alternative forms of discipline.

ACPF Parenting Initiative: In November 2010, The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) launched an initiative to identify and document good practices of parenting in Africa. Through this project ACPF aims not only to identify, document and protect good parenting practices but also to actively disseminate the practices across the continent to enable parents to raise their children successfully amidst the numerous parental challenges. Suggested areas of documentation will include various positive disciplining techniques that African parents are using. The research will be carried out in Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, Zambia and Sierra Leone. For more information, please contact: alemayhu@africanchildforum.org

Upcoming publications

Ending legalised violence against children: Global Report 2010 – Following up the UN Secretary General’s Study on Violence against Children

This fifth Global Report from the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children and Save the Children Sweden reviews progress towards prohibition of corporal punishment and deliberate humiliation of children throughout the world, in the context of the follow-up to the UN Secretary General’s Study on Violence against Children. The report will be published this month (December 2010) and will be available at www.endcorporalpunishment.org.

Breaking the silence: Violence against children with disabilities

The African Child Policy Forum is launching this retrospective assessment of violence against children with disabilities in five African countries – Cameroon, Ethiopia, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia. It was conducted to increase understanding of the patterns and dynamics of violence experienced by this vulnerable group. The study reveals that corporal punishment (hitting, punching, kicking and beating) is widely used in each of the five countries studied. The report will be published this month (December 2010). For more information, please contact: info@africanchildforum.org

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6 Media watch

Algeria: In spite of the existence of a law against corporal punishment of children in school (Law no. 08-04 of January 2008), corporal punishment is still widely used by teachers in the school setting. At the Sebbala-Djedida ADDL Primary School in El Achour, Algiers, parents disclosed the ordeal of their children at the hands of some of their teachers. Parents feel that school is not secure for their children and they fear for their children's safety. They felt that they could not officially complain to the school principal for fear of reprisal against their children. (*All Africa.com*, 20 October 2010; *La Tribune*, 20 October 2010)

Namibia: Students of the Okatana Combined School and their parents organised a demonstration with the support of the school board members; the demonstration was staged in protest against one of the school teachers. The teacher was accused of several accounts of "unacceptable behaviour" including the excessive use of corporal punishment against students. He allegedly beat students with sticks, canes, kicked and punched them, a behaviour that is in conflict with Namibian laws and directives. The demonstrators handed over a petition to the Inspector of Education, calling on the education authorities to take urgent measures against the teacher. (*New Era*, 20 October 2010)

Senegal: The pilot project "schools friends of children", which is implemented in some schools of Kolda (one of the poorest Senegalese regions), was set up by schools' boards and has led to students' better performance. The project is run in collaboration with NGOs and school authorities, under the supervision of the local authority. The students demanded an "end to corporal punishment as it prevents them from reaching their full potential". An agreement was signed between students and teachers to stop using corporal punishment and to address issues through dialogue. (*Agence de Presse S n galaise*, 22 November 2010)

Tanzania: A reporter followed a debate on corporal punishment held by students from the Essacs International School in Tanzania. One opponent to corporal punishment stated: "Teachers who beat up students may not know the psychological background of such students; some of them may be having problems at home and beating them is like adding petrol on fire". (*The Citizen*, 17 October 2010)

Uganda: Five clan chiefs in the Apac District of Uganda have been arrested in connection with the death of a 16-year-old boy of Atek Oyengo Owo. The clan chiefs allegedly caned the boy from morning up to 3pm when he lost consciousness and finally died. They accused him of stealing a radio from a neighbour. The incident happened on 13 May 2010 but the suspects were only arrested in October 2010 following an outcry from the boy's relatives. (*The Monitor*, 27 October 2010)

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7 Events in the region

Experts' Consultation on Laws and Policies on Violence against Children in Africa, 13th to 14th December 2010, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

In collaboration with Plan Norway, The African Child Policy Forum will hold this consultation meeting in order to offer an opportunity for policy makers, practitioners, civil society, and academics from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia to reflect and debate on the steps needed to strengthen the national legal and policy instruments to ensure the realisation of the rights recognised in the UN Convention on the

Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The consultation meeting will address child rights' issues including positive initiatives on full prohibition of corporal punishment in Africa, as well as child protection and response mechanisms in Africa. The meeting will be attended by members of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. For further information, please contact: Lishan@africanchildforum.org

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8 Can you help?

We would appreciate any **information on laws** prohibiting or authorising corporal punishment in the following countries and settings:

Penal system (sentence of the courts) – Equatorial Guinea, Gabon

Penal system (disciplinary measure in penal institutions) – Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Guinea, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sao Tome and Principe

Alternative care settings – Guinea-Bissau, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

And finally, if draft legislation is proposed in your country which provides an opportunity to prohibit corporal punishment, or if laws are enacted which achieve this in any setting, please let us know so that we can **keep our information up to date**.

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