



## RESEARCH ON THE EXTENT OF CHILD ABUSE IN ZAMBIAN SCHOOLS



April 2011

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## List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
Cama	Camfed Association
Camfed	Campaign for Female Education
CDC	Community Development Committee
COSSAZ	Colleges and Secondary Schools Arts of Zambia
CSTL	Care and Support for Teaching and Learning
CRC	Children Rights Club
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV	Human Immune-deficiency Virus
IDI	In-Depth Interview
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MSG	Mother Support Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PEO	Provincial Education Office
PS	Permanent Secretary
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SBC	School Basic Committee
RT	Resource Team Member
VSU	Victim Support Unit

## **Acknowledgements**

Since early 2008 Camfed Zambia, has been running a zero tolerance child protection programme to engage every level of society in an effort to make schools safe places to learn. Two years on, we wanted to assess the impact of this programme, and draw key lessons and recommendations to inform national guidelines for safe schools.

This report presents the findings of this research, highlighting opportunities for scale and pointing to the reality that we still have a way to go in affecting genuine change in this sensitive and important area.

This research was a joint effort between Camfed Zambia and Camfed International. Regina Lialabi, Camfed Zambia M&E Manager led the field team which also included Tommy Mateo, Camfed Zambia Senior M&E Officer and Abigail Kaindu, a Cama member who had been trained in research methods during Camfed's 2008 baseline. Maria Mascarucci, Camfed International Senior Impact Manager provided significant inputs to the design of the research instruments and the report drafting, which was also supported by Laurie Zivetz, Camfed International Executive Advisor, Impact.

Students, school administrators, teachers and parents as well as CDC members in the six district contributed time and invaluable insights.

Support from Irish Aid made this research and the overall initiative to address child protection possible.

Barbara Chilangwa,  
National Director  
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April, 2011

## Executive Summary

Child abuse is still a very real and pervasive part of life in rural and urban schools and communities in Zambia. Results from the research indicate that abuse takes a range of forms including child labour, sexual, physical, and verbal abuse. Neglect, inattention or ignorance about the emotional consequences inform the way abuse cases are commonly settled, but can also compound the impact on the child.

Abuse stems from a constellation of factors related to longstanding traditional practices like sexual initiation and child marriages; children's role in the household economy; patriarchal values; poverty; and uneven power and economic relationships at school and in families—factors that seem to impact on orphans and children from more impoverished families more profoundly.

The first section of this report provides a snapshot of research findings on the types of abuse and the attitudes of a variety of stakeholders to abuse in the research districts, communities and schools. The second section reports on a range of Camfed-supported responses being carried out in the schools and communities under study. The final section suggests broad areas for critical attention including potential programme and policy focus. These are spelled out in greater detail in the evaluation of the Irish Aid programme and in the guidelines for a government and multi stakeholder response to the issues.

### 1. Types of abuse occurring in Zambia

Stakeholders identified four types of abuse:

**Child labour.** Child labour is integrally linked to poverty and affects poorer households and vulnerable children more acutely. In rural settings the fine line between learning key survival skills and exploitation may be difficult to draw, particularly for families living at the margin. Observers note that children who are living with relatives or friends are more likely to be exploited for labour. Respondents report that lighter forms of child labour happens at school too, when teachers require students to perform menial tasks in the classroom or their residence and to work in the community fields as a funding raising venture for the school.

**Sexual abuse.** The research indicates that power, patriarchy and economics drive sexual abuse in the school, community, and the family. Reports from high schools in particular indicate that teachers still entice girls to have sex with them for better grades and small sums of money. Sexual abuse was also found to be linked to traditional practices. The type of family-based abuse most often cited was between a male relative and a girl child living in the family, essentially a transaction of sex in exchange for accommodation and sustenance. Sexual abuse, both school and family based, was found to be rarely reported.

**Corporal punishment.** Although the use of physical penalties in childrearing have been common in many communities in Africa, more enlightened recent laws have considerably restricted the extent to which corporal punishment can be used for discipline in the school. Nevertheless, some stakeholders, including some parents, teachers and officials, felt it would be better to reinstitute corporal punishment, suggesting that young people would improve their behaviours if this was an option. This points to a lack of understanding of the damaging impacts of physical violence on a child's emotional and physical development.

**Traditional practices.** Observers mentioned a range of traditional practices as enablers of child abuse. These included early marriage and initiation ceremonies. Although they seem to be less common in the *boma* area, some districts in the most remote rural areas are still practicing them.

## **2. Prevention and reporting of abuse: the main factors**

**Increased awareness of the issue.** Although the research found an increase in the level of discussion in the research districts around child protection, due to the many organisations that work in this field, there was difficulty translating this increased awareness into action. Respondents know abuse is wrong, but find it challenging to analyse the root causes or the impacts on the victims. Camfed appears to be the only agency providing sensitisation outreach in more remote areas. This, combined with the limited reach of law enforcement services, adds up to a more limited impact of sensitisation initiatives in rural areas, including more infrequent reporting in very rural communities and schools.

**Peer support encourages reporting of abuse.** Camfed has supported the establishment of a “Help Desk” in a number of primary, basic and high schools. The Help Desk is an initiative which brings together, on a weekly basis, a committee made up of students and the Camfed-trained Teacher Mentor<sup>1</sup>, to discuss issues around child protection at the school. The research found that both the presence of a Help Desk that enabled peer support, and the presence of an informed and sympathetic adult in the Teacher Mentor were important in encouraging students to talk and act on the issues, including increased reporting when abuse took place.

**Improved school facilities provide more conducive learning environment.** More awareness of the nuances of child protection has led some schools to fix some of the school structures, such as roofs, toilets, and water pipes, so that the environment is more beneficial to learning and children have fewer chances to be exposed to damaging effects.

**Provide vulnerable girls with a package of support.** Observers agreed that bursaries for vulnerable girls and Safety Net Funds provided by Camfed have helped provide girls with an alternative to engaging in sex for money in order to buy basic items.

**Leadership is critical.** The role of traditional and government administrative leaders in effecting genuine change cannot be overemphasised. In communities where traditional leaders were working closely with Head Teachers, and both were committed to leading change in their respective spheres of influence, a tangible impact could be seen—in terms of the level of discourse and the numbers of cases that were prosecuted.

**Parent-school involvement is essential.** Community engagement has proved to be a critical factor in creating a safe school environment. In schools where Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Based Committees (SBCs) provided active fora for discussions of child protection, both school administrators and parents felt awareness and actions to protect children had improved. On the other hand, one of the schools where stakeholders fairly unanimously agreed little change had taken place also reported low levels of parental involvement.

**The type of abuse affects whether it is reported or not.** The research found that reporting is linked with variables such as the type of abuse and the “space” where the abuse happened (school being public, home being private) and the perceived “gravity” of abuse (emotional and sexual being the two extremes). For sexual abuse at school the reporting may happen if it is peer to peer, if there are visible consequences (pregnancy) or if the transactional sex “agreed”

did not provide what was expected. For sexual abuse within the private sphere, informal negotiations between the perpetrator and the family are generally preferred to bringing officials or law enforcement in.

**Law enforcement discourages reporting of abuse.** Law enforcement was often seen as unwilling to prosecute abusers. The introduction of the Victims Support Unit (VSU) in many places has helped in this respect with a more sympathetic option. However, even representatives of the VSU say that often it is difficult to get enough evidence to bring an alleged perpetrator to trial (including, but not limited to the cost of clinical services in the case of a rape). And certainly there are powerful social pressures not to do so.

### **3. Key Recommendations**

1. Don't transfer teachers who are accused of or found guilty of abuse. This is a common practice that just transfers the problem to another school. Teachers accused of abuse should be tried in a legal format.
2. Insist on a strict teachers' code of conduct and enforce it.
3. Bursaries and other types of support for economically and social vulnerable students are important to help mitigate potentially exploitative relationships.
4. Providing young people with information about their rights and their reproductive health is a critical stepping stone.
5. Informed, organised peer support and feedback with school administration is essential for raising awareness and momentum to say *no* to inappropriate overtures and report abuse.
6. Having a trusted female adult to whom students can turn, as is the case with the Teacher Mentor, makes it more likely that they will confide personal issues, including experiences of abuse.
7. There is need for increased sensitisation that includes schools, communities and traditional leaders especially in the more remote areas.

## Section 1. Introduction

Camfed Zambia is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to the eradication of poverty through the education of girls and the empowerment of young women as leaders of change.

Camfed Zambia puts the welfare and well-being of children and young people at the centre and recognizes that the safety of schools is fundamental to enabling a learning environment where children can thrive.

Camfed Zambia works in close partnership with communities, government and civil society institutions to ensure that the principles of children’s rights and entitlements are enforced in practice. At district level, Camfed works with Community Development Committees (CDCs), community driven committees which manage the Camfed programme and Cama, a network of young women in Zambia who have been supported by Camfed during their secondary school education.

At school level, Camfed works with SBCs (the decision-making committee for school matters), and Mother Support Groups (MSGs; women who have come together to take collective action to protect the welfare of orphaned and vulnerable children in the wider community).

### 1.1 Context

The Zambian Global School Student Health Survey (2004)<sup>ii</sup> found that as many as one in three girls reported having been physically forced to have sex. The latest Zambian Demographic Health Survey (2007)<sup>iii</sup> reported that one in five women have experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives with 15% of women sexually assaulted at age 14 or younger, and 20% being in the age group 15-19 years. Of the women below 15 years of age who reported that they had been sexually assaulted only 34% reported the assault to be carried out by a stranger whereas the remainder were by people known or related to the victim.

Child abuse refers to any form of physical, emotional or sexual harm to or lack of care that results in actual or potential harm to the child’s development, dignity or well being in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust and power. Abuse prevents children from living life to the full and achieving their full potential. An abused child may fail to attend school, perform well at school and their health may be threatened.

*Source: Camfed Zambia Child Protection Policy*

The Landmark case in which civil action was instituted by a school girl who sued her teacher who raped her for damages is a case in point showing lack of structures and guidelines for dealing with cases of abuse in schools. The judge awarded the pupil damages of K 45,000,000 (about USD 9,000) and referred the case to the Director of Public Prosecution for possible criminal prosecution of the teacher and directed the Ministry of Education (MoE) to put in place “guidelines for schools to follow and deal with cases of abuse in schools”.

Previous Camfed studies revealed that there are numerous attitudinal and power dynamics that enable abuse in and around the school, and prevent adequate reporting and prosecution. Evidence from many sources indicates that most types of abuse, when disclosed, tend to be



dealt with “internally” without officially reporting or pursuing legal consequences for the abusers.

These abuse cases occur in a context of poverty, entrenched cultural practices and the myriad negative impacts of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which have eroded the family fabric and adversely affected, among other things, families’ abilities to engage in meaningful income-generating activities to provide for their children. In this environment, children’s vulnerability to abuse has increased.

Against this background Camfed had developed an integrated child protection approach, which includes:

- A network of psychosocial support in schools that includes specially trained female mentors to provide encouragement, counselling and a first-response to problems girls may present.
- Setting up Help Desks at school level as a forum for students to discuss issues around children’s rights and protection at the school and community level.
- Working with the SBCs of all partner schools to implement Child Protection Policy
- Support from CDCs to include Child Protection in their regular monitoring at schools in order to ensure that girls’ rights are protected.
- Training of other local government service providers and traditional leaders in child protection, including health workers, police, justice representatives and chiefs.

In Zambia, Camfed is part of the National Coordinating Unit (NCU) of Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) Initiative, a pilot project that is being implemented by six member states of the Southern African Development Community, including Zambia. The CSTL initiative aims to address the impact of poverty and disease on the education sector, and ensure that Zambian schools are child-friendly and gender-sensitive. Camfed has used its membership in the NCU to extend their work beyond their partner schools in the three provinces.

## **1.2 Background**

In 2007 Camfed Zambia and Irish Aid began a partnership to secure a national child protection policy for schools. The partnership included a three phased programme of intervention.

During Phase 1 (December 2007 - March 2008) Camfed Zambia launched a multi-faceted campaign to lobby the Ministry of Education (MoE) to introduce a zero tolerance response and to commit to a process for defining standard protocols for enacting a child protection policy for schools. Collaboration between national stakeholders was established and child protection was integrated into the MoE Child Friendly Teaching Manual under the CSTL initiative.

In Phase 2 (October 2008 - December 2009) the campaign was extended to 26 districts and linkages between schools, communities and policy makers in relation to child protection were consolidated.

Phase 3 (April 2010-March 2011) aimed to support the MoE to operationalise the Zero Tolerance Response to Child Abuse through a formal set of guidelines for schools to prevent and deal with abuse cases. As follow on to the 2008 baseline which informed the design of the Irish

Aid initiatives, Camfed undertook research into child protection in partner schools. The research presented in this report, is expected to provide grassroots data on attitudes around abuse to inform the development of national policies and guidelines consistent with the government's Zero Tolerance programme.

## **Section 2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Research aim and objectives**

This research was carried out at the end of Phase 3 to document the type, incidence, reporting, action and relative effectiveness of a variety of interventions related to abuse at the school, and to come up with recommendations to improve programme delivery, advocacy at national and community level as well as policy influence.

The research aimed to answer the following overall research question: Is there any evidence that Camfed interventions had an impact on awareness, attitudes or actions related to child protection in schools?

### **2.2 Research design**

A team of three researchers spent two weeks in the field conducting a series of in-depth interviews in six districts. Respondents were drawn from six basic and six high schools and the surrounding communities in the Northern Province.

Districts were purposively selected based on how long Camfed has been implementing the Camfed programme of support to girls' schooling (the programme started in three districts in 2006, one in 2005, and two in 2007), and the presence of the Irish Aid project in the Province. The districts selected were: Nakonde, Isoka, Chinsali and Kasama, Mpika, Mbala.

Schools in the districts were intentionally selected based on whether they had been implementing Help Desk activities. The Camfed-initiated Help Desks compliments existing clubs such as student councils in basic schools and Colleges and Secondary Schools Arts of Zambia (COSSAZ) in high schools to promote child protection awareness and peer support through drama, poems and songs. Membership on the Help Desk is open to all students in schools and has a committee of five students and the president is female and the vice president male. The teacher mentors provided trained, informed support to the helpdesks, offering them life skills training, psychosocial support, peer mentoring, child rights and responsibilities and any other child welfare/protection aspects.

Since the Help Desk was expected to play a key role in the zero tolerance campaign, five partner schools with Help Desk clubs and seven partner schools without a Help Desks were selected for the research to understand whether in fact it made any impact.

### **2.3 Research sample and data collection**

Six groups of stakeholders were interviewed: students, parents, teachers, and School Based Committee members, young women members of Cama and CDC members.

Two students (one male, one female) who had been in the school over the past two years were randomly selected from the ones present in the classroom on the day of the research (students from Grade 8 and 9 in Basic School, and Grade 11 and 12 in High Schools). If schools had a Help Desk students in the committee were interviewed instead.

The selection of parents, SBC, MSG, Cama, and CDC members was based on their involvement in the programme and availability. Every Head Teacher and Teacher Mentor in the selected schools was also interviewed since they had received direct training from Camfed in child protection.

Two different qualitative methods of data collection were used to interview stakeholders: in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The IDI questions included awareness and understanding of child abuse and measures for child protection; capacity to respond and tackle child abuse; reporting structures and child safety in schools and communities. The focus group guidelines encouraged discussions about types of abuse in the communities, perspectives on what currently happens to the perpetrators and what should happen, changes observed in how communities think and act about abuse. The two instruments are included in the appendix to this report.

Table 1 below shows the breakdown by strata and type of interview.

<b>Respondent Category</b>	<b>Number of IDIs</b>	<b>Number of FGDs</b>
Students	16	5
Parents		6
Head Teachers	7	
Teacher Mentors	8	
Teachers		4
SBC	10	
Cama	8	
MSG	1	
CDC	17	
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>15</b>

The Camfed Zambia M&E Manager (female), Camfed Zambia M&E officer (male) and a Cama member (female) who was trained and experienced in research with Camfed, undertook the study. The IDIs were conducted by each team member separately. The focus groups were conducted by a facilitator. In some cases the FGDs were tape recorded while in others hand notes were taken by a research team member.

Notes from the IDIs and FGDs were initially read through, organised across strata and combined by themes. When tapes were used, records were transcribed first, then cleaned and eventually organised by themes as well.

## Section 3. Research Results

### 3.1 The extent and nature of abuse

This section considers the key types of abuse that stakeholders mentioned in the course of the research and provides some evidence on the factors that enable the continuation of these practices.

#### 3.1.1 Child labour

Child labour is perhaps the most prevalent and under recognized form of abuse. It continues to impact on a child's ability to attend school, and to take full advantage of academic opportunities even when they are in class. Some stakeholders reported children being taken to the field to weed or harvest on an empty stomach before attending classes, resulting in students' inability to concentrate and tiredness. Child labour is integrally linked to poverty and the contribution that children can and do make to the household economy; it affects poorer households and vulnerable children more acutely. In rural settings the fine line between learning key survival skills—fetching water, crushing stones, gathering firewood, and even agricultural tasks—and exploitation may be difficult to draw, particularly for families living at the margin.

*“Child labour is common in the communities during the rainy season when most families have no food. Children are sent for piecework for 7 to 15 hours and only given a 5kg tin of maize. Children miss school mostly on Mondays and Tuesdays to finish work started on Friday, so they will miss 3 days of school in a week. Their academic performance is affected.”* Senior Teacher

During the caterpillar harvest period<sup>iv</sup> especially in Mpika, whole families temporarily migrate and set up camps in areas where they can maximise the harvest. This is irrespective of the school calendar. In other contexts—when children are selling stones, carrying sand or food - most observers agree that this is outside of what is acceptable. Observers also note that orphans or other children who are living with relatives or friends are more likely to be exploited for labour. Some parents and students mentioned also that child labour can also take place at school, when students are sent to buy items (credit for phones, vegetables) for teachers, or asked to sweep and clean teachers' houses. They also work in other people's fields to raise money for the school as a fund raising venture for the school.

#### 3.1.2 Sexual abuse

The research indicates that power, patriarchy and economics drive sexual abuse in the school, community and the family. Reports from high schools in particular indicate that teachers sometimes entice girls to have sex with them for better grades and small sums of money to purchase soap and other essentials.

*“[Teachers] are persistent so it is very hard for a young girl to refuse and they have a trick: they offer girls favours to help them with exams of which they don't. They just sleep with the girl.”*  
Grade 11 male student

Findings from Camfed's 2008 baseline revealed an environment in which victims of abuse are often blamed for succumbing to sexual pressure. Two years on, this research points to a trend that sees the responsibility being shifted from girls to perpetrators.

*“We should blame both, the girl is supposed to refuse but the teachers use their influence and force a girl sometimes even make false promises to help her with exams during the exam period. Above all teachers are the ones who propose love”.* Grade 12 female student

But as this quote shows, while there is recognition among stakeholders that girls may accept love proposals from a teacher because of their vulnerability and lack of money to buy essential items, there are still some respondents that feel that the blame has to be shared, even amongst those with greater exposure and greater authority.

*“It depends on the context. Some girls incite teachers to fall in love with them. Girls fall in love with teachers for economic gain. There are some teachers who have sex with the girls because they are sex maniacs.”* CDC member

Sexual abuse was also linked to traditional practices where individuals running businesses believed that having sex with a child would grow their business.

*“People believe that having sex with a minor will help them grow their business, they have sex with children aged 8 to 18 so that their business can grow in 10 years and by the time the girl is 18 years she is too old. They look for another minor to have sex with”* VSU Coordinator-CDC member

In other instances it was pointed out that there was a belief that having sex with minors would cure diseases such as HIV/AIDS (a practice which can result in infecting minors with the virus). There were also reports of sex amongst juveniles in some basic schools.

The type of family-based abuse most often cited was between a male relative and a girl child living in the family—essentially a transaction of sex in exchange for accommodation and sustenance. In one case the perpetrator was a high profile member of the community and while it was common knowledge that the victim was a relative living in his family, his status in the community rendered him a level of immunity.

Sexual abuse, both school and family based, is rarely reported, as generally most of the evidence is circumstantial. The cost and availability of medical examinations at hospitals and access to law enforcement the Victim Support Unit particularly in the remote areas are additional factors that hinder victims and their families from reporting.

### **3.1.3 Corporal punishment**

Use of physical penalties in childrearing has been common in many communities in Africa. Until very recently, caning a child was seen as an appropriate way for a teacher to motivate a student to pay more attention to their school well or punish a student who misbehaviour. New, more enlightened laws have considerably restricted the extent to which corporal punishment can be used for discipline in the school. Corporal punishment in schools was banned by the MoE in 2003.

While many are aware of the law (in Camfed’s 2008 baseline, 60 % of the respondents were aware of the law) two years later, neither parents nor teachers make a clear and direct connection between the law and the reasoning behind it, with many respondents still unaware of the damaging impacts of physical violence on a child’s emotional and physical development.

Except for two schools, all the schools reported that they did not administer corporal punishment any longer, a positive finding. The two that did, indicated that this was applied only in ‘special cases’ involving severe breaking of the school rules. In fact, although some stakeholders distinguished the range of appropriate disciplinary measures in response to the type of misbehaviour, a few, including some parents, teachers and officials felt it would be better to reinstitute corporal punishment, suggesting that young people would be better behaved if this were an option.

*“It is very difficult to control naughty male students in class with the illegality of corporal punishment. The boys even haul insults at us in classes because they know they will get away with light punishment. A little whipping could help us”* Teacher at Ituna High School, Kasama.

Overall though, stakeholders perceived counselling the child who misbehaved to be the first action to take before any punishment. This trend points to an increase in awareness by stakeholders of the challenges children face in and out of schools that can affect their behaviour.

### **3.1.4 Traditional practices**

Observers mentioned some traditional practices as enablers of child abuse, including: eloping; preferential education of boys rather than girls— who are instead married off at the tender age of 14; and polygamy. In some remote communities, initiation ceremonies are still performed for girls when they reach puberty. They are kept in the house for two weeks and a ceremony takes place in the community which attracts male attention, making the girls more vulnerable to abuse.

Although some traditional practices cut across districts, the location of communities within districts affect whether some practices are still maintained: people living in the *boma* (municipality) area of the districts are generally less rooted to traditional practices, while communities located in the most remote areas of the district are much more prone to maintain the traditions.

## **3.2 Factors contributing to the prevention and reporting of abuse**

### **3.2.1 Increased awareness of the issue**

In the districts under study there are a large number and variety of agencies working to provide awareness about the law and the negative impacts of a range of types of abuse.

<b>District</b>	<b>Organisations providing child protection awareness</b>
Nakonde	UNICEF, Social Welfare and VSU, MoE, Association of Lay Missionaries (ALM), Society for Women and AIDS in Zambia (SWAAZ), Development Aid from People to People (DAPP), FAWEZA, CRS, Community

	Development, World Vision (Corridors of Hope)
Isoka	Society for Women and AIDS in Zambia (SWAAZ), Catholic HBCs, UNICEF/Child Justice Forum, Association of Lay Missionaries (ALM), MoE, Catholic Youth Association
Chinsali	MoH, MoE, African Network for the Protection and Prevention Against Abuse and Neglect, UNICEF/Child Justice Forum, YWCA
Mpika	Mpika Children at Risk, World Vision, MoE, Catholic Youth Association, Social Welfare/Community Development, DAAP, Mpika Child at Risk, Zambia Civic Education Association/Child Participation Inclusive Mpika, CARE, Africare, Caritas
Kasama	DAAP, MoE, SNV, YWCA/VSU
Mbala	Norwegian Scholarship, World Vision, MoE, Social Welfare, Victim Support Unit,

These organisations are conducting sensitisation meetings through local structures and include programmes such as training, mass media, and community outreach. These activities appear to have generated a lot of interest around the issue, and stakeholders interviewed pointed to an increase in reporting of abuse cases as well.

However, the research also shows that increasing awareness does not automatically translate into taking action or wider behavioural changes—respondents know abuse is wrong, but sometimes have difficulty making the links between the root causes of abuse and the impacts on the victims.

Further, the impact of these activities seems to be geographically circumscribed. Observers noted that people around the *boma* area in the districts were more aware about abuse as they have more access to radios and TVs where child protection issues are discussed more frequently than the communities in more remote areas. In addition, since the VSU office and the Social Welfare office are located within the *boma* area, schools and communities within the *boma* have easier access to these departments and are more likely to report abuse cases. For those in the remote areas, access to these departments is difficult because transport is not easily accessible.

Camfed appears to be the only agency providing sensitisation outreach in more remote areas. This, combined with the limited reach of law enforcement services, adds up to a more limited impact in the rural areas, including more infrequent reporting in very rural communities and schools.

*“Camfed is the only organisation which has gone beyond Chinsali Boma in terms of child protection activities”* CDC member

### **3.2.2 Parent-school involvement is essential**

Community engagement surfaced as a key determinant of the ability of school authorities to create a safe school environment. In schools where PTAs and SBCs provided active fora for discussions of child protection, both school administrators and parents felt awareness and actions to protect children had improved. In some schools, rules to protect girls were developed

through a participatory process with parents, students and teachers. Some of the rules mentioned by the respondents were that girls are not allowed to sweep offices for teachers and they are not allowed to be dropped off or picked up by strangers.

*“[Protection of children] calls for a holistic approach; the parents have entrusted the school with their children, the school authorities including various departments have to ensure that children are not abused in schools, the security officers, the school boards, PTA, NGOs and auxiliary staff”.* CDC member Kasama District

Observers at Ngoli Basic School reported that their SBC had created sub-committees in each ward in the community, which carried out door to door sensitisation activities on child protection. This led to prevention of early marriage on a number of occasions (for instance of a Grade 7 pupil who has since been brought back into school. The SBC reported the matter to the school Head Teacher and they promptly followed up and disrupted the marriage proceeding)

On the other hand, one of the schools where stakeholders fairly unanimously agreed little change had taken place also reported low levels of parental involvement although it had been targeted by multiple agencies for sensitisation on child protection. Parents rarely attended PTA and sensitisation meetings organised by the school administration or other members of the community and they rarely collected report cards to follow up on their children’s academic progress. This school is based in a high population density area, where petty trading is the principle source of livelihood and competition for selling things is high. This causes people to maximise chances for selling, and to consider “unproductive” time (such as sensitisation meetings or going to school to collect their children’s report cards) as a waste of time.

### **3.2.3 Improved school facilities provide a more conducive learning environment**

Introduction of school health and nutrition programmes in schools which emphasise the need to provide a safe learning environment for children led to some schools to fix windows and roofs, so that children are now protected from rain, sun, cold and windy weather. Some boarding high schools also rectified water problems so students do not need to draw water and bathe in nearby streams thus exposing themselves to sexual abuse. Some boarding schools for girls have employed security guards to ensure girls are not abused.

### **3.2.4 Provide vulnerable girls with a package of support**

Observers agreed that bursaries for vulnerable girls and Safety Net Funds provided by Camfed have helped girls not to engage in sex for money in order buy basic items. They noted that the programme has reduced the number of pregnancies recorded by the schools. Girls who had dropped out of school have been able to enrol back into school when they heard that Camfed was willing to provide support for them. Other support provided by Camfed mentioned by respondents was i) tuition fees for girls during the holidays, which enabled them to remain in school to study so that they can improve their performance; ii) financial support for a science camp for girls where child protection was discussed; iii) funds for Cama members so that they could conduct sensitisation meetings on child abuse, early marriages, and pregnancies in schools through the community health programme and teach girls how to be assertive, helping them to say no to sex; iv) district funding to monitor child abuse in schools; v) raising awareness among



the girls on the importance of education so girls who had dropped out of school due to pregnancies enrolled back into school.

### ***3.2.5 Leadership is critical***

The role of traditional and government administrative leaders in effecting genuine change cannot be overstated. In each district, Camfed establishes a Community Development Committee, made up of government department representatives, traditional leaders and parents who work with the Camfed national office to oversee programme implementation and provides a critical forum for bringing together community representatives. Their role in Child Protection is to report on child abuse cases picked up during their monitoring visits, follow up cases and link schools and victims to legal support systems in the district.

The research found that CDCs, as Camfed's main partner in the districts, are seen by stakeholders as one of the strongest organisations working to promote child protection. The chairing of the CDC by the District Education Board Secretary was viewed as strategic and effective, as the position is highly regarded in the education system. It was further observed that the multi stakeholder composition of the CDC, including Social Welfare officers and officers from the Victim Support Unit, made it more effective for creating awareness, tackling abuse cases and closer collaboration between departments.

Observers noted that in communities where the CDC was working closely with Head Teachers, and both were committed to leading change in their respective spheres of influence, a tangible impact could be seen—in terms of the level of discourse and the numbers of cases that were prosecuted. Observers noted a case in Kopa chiefdom in Mpika district, where the traditional leader punishes people who are reported to have abused minors by forcing them to do manual work in a field, which is known in the traditional language as the “field of shame”. Observers noted that this has resulted in reduced cases of abuse in the community.

### ***3.2.6 Peer support encourages abuse reporting***

One of the most lauded and cost effective school-based measures studied by this research was the Help Desk. A Help Desk is an after school club run for and by students who are directly involved in conducting sensitisation meetings on child protection. Some of the helpdesks compliments on existing COSSAZ clubs in high schools and student councils in basic school which used drama, songs and poems for students to grapple with sensitive social issues. Each Help Desk is run by a committee of five students and its membership is open to all pupils in the school. The Help Desk meets weekly and it is supported by regular meetings with the school Teacher Mentor. Teacher mentors are female teachers in partner schools trained by Camfed in psycho social support and counselling. The Teacher Mentor's role, in reference to the Help Desk, is that of a facilitator, providing children with life skills, psychosocial support, peer mentoring, extra tuition, discussing child rights and responsibilities and any other child welfare/protection aspects. Help Desks organize activities which encourage the dialogue around child protection amongst the pupils in the school. During school hours and sometimes after too, they carry out sensitisation drama, produce messages at sport events, and provide talks around abuse issues.

Students and Camfed-supported Teacher Mentors alike agreed that the Help Desk was an important focal point for students to support one another on key reproductive health issues and strategies for navigating challenging, sensitive situations.

Notably, Help Desks provide peer support in case of abuse. The presence of a Teacher Mentors in schools provide a critical reference point for the children who are more comfortable to report abuse cases to them instead of going to higher local authorities (e.g. the police). The research found children in schools where the Help Desk was active were more confident and aware of where to go to report personal problems. The two strategies—Help Desks and Teacher Mentors in tandem appear to synergize in important ways.

*“Teacher [mentors’] role is to protect us so that we feel safe and concentrate on our studies. That way, children will participate more in class, clubs and study more”* Grade 11 female student

An example of the effectiveness of this synergy was reported by a stakeholder in Kasama district. A Grade 1 girl who was physically abused by the deputy Head Teacher in one school, she reported to the Help Desk members who then reported to the Teacher Mentor. The Teacher Mentor reported the matter to the police and the deputy head teacher was eventually dismissed from employment.

### **3.2.7 Level of reporting depends on the type of abuse**

In order to find out the extent of abuse in communities, schools, and districts, respondents were asked their opinion about the proportion of abuse that gets reported. It seems that reporting is linked with variables such as the type of abuse and where the abuse happens—in a public place like the school, or private space like home.

- *Physical abuse* – most stakeholders agreed that abolition of corporal punishment in schools has resulted in a reduction in the number of children reporting physical abuse by teachers. Nevertheless they noted that when it happened, it may get reported in school only if the child is visibly injured as a result. On the other hand, it never gets reported at home as the abuser is generally the father who is the breadwinner and the head of the household.
- *Psychological, verbal and emotional abuse* – most stakeholders agreed that no incidents of such nature that happen at home are reported as they are considered part of life. On the other hand verbal abuse or bullying that happens in school seems to be more public and gets reported more often.
- *Sexual abuse* – this is the most socially complex form of abuse and most respondents mentioned that sexual abuse cases almost never get reported. If the abuse happens within the family, the matter tends to be settled within the family so connections are maintained. Sometimes the abuser is charged a little money to pay for the damage or requested to marry the girl. In some communities families would rather negotiate for the abuser to pay cattle or money than reporting it. If the abuse happens at school it may get reported if it is peer abuse, or if the consequences are visible (e.g. pregnancy) or if the transactional sex “agreed” did not provide what was expected.

*“For sexual abuse it’s difficult to say whether these are reported or not, though there are rumours that some girls are having affairs with teachers. If there is an agreement then it’s difficult to say its sexual abuse, most of the time the girls are influenced by the teacher”.* Teacher Mentor

*“For sexual abuse cases, many are reported though the community fails to pursue them; sometimes the case is resolved within the community. For physical abuse about 5% is reported because the abusers mostly are male parents and the mother says if he is jailed then who would provide for the family? Psychological cases don’t get reported”.* VSU Coordinator-CDC member

### **3.2.8 Attitudes and access to law enforcement discourages reporting of abuse.**

Law enforcement was seen by many as unwilling to prosecute abusers, and there were many stories about police belittling victims who sought to bring abuse to their attention. With the introduction of VSUs, more victims have found a sympathetic option. However, even representatives of the VSU (who are members of the police force) say that often it is difficult to get enough evidence to bring an alleged perpetrator to trial (including, but not limited to the cost of clinical services in the case of a rape). And certainly there are powerful social pressures not to do so.

*“Last year there was a sexual abuse case involving a boy who used to stay with his over 50 year old grandmother. The case was reported to the police, the boy was taken to the hospital where it was discovered that he was being abused sexually. The community is still silent over such issues they do not want to report cases of abuse because it is traditionally accepted to abuse a child”.* Senior Teacher

## **Section 4. Stakeholder Recommendations on Improving Child Protection**

During the focus group discussions, stakeholders were asked what actions would improve child protection in their own schools and communities. The following recommendations were made:

### ***Increase bursary and SNF support***

- Include vulnerable boys on the bursary programme.
- Increase the money for groceries for the girls so that they do not engage in risky behaviour to raise money.
- Include food and nutrition programmes to support orphans and vulnerable children.

### ***Continue awareness campaigns***

- Continue awareness campaigns on child protection in communities in remote areas
- Involve village headmen and chiefs in sensitisation meetings as they are agents of change.
- Use the media such as the radio for sensitisation messages since these reach a lot of people.
- Strengthen Help Desk activities and existing clubs such as COSSAZ<sup>v</sup> so they continue raising awareness on child protection.
- Encourage children to invite their parents for these sensitisation meetings.

- Address the responsibility aspect when talking about children’s rights so that children are aware that to every right there is a responsibility.
- Make sure to follow up on the outcome of sensitisation meetings conducted in communities to ensure that they hit the right target.
- Distribute Information, Education and Communication materials for sensitisation meetings and other educational resources on child protection

***Provide more capacity building and extend advocacy***

- Train more Cama members on child protection so that they are able to embed child protection and raise awareness during outreach sessions in schools and communities.
- Train more teacher mentors, CDC and SBC in psychosocial care and support to oversee protection and respond and act on cases of abuse.
- Conduct refresher trainings for stakeholders in child protection.
- Include dissemination of child protection messages in the Community Health Programme.
- Advocate for the dismissal, not transfer, of teachers who abuse children.

***Provide financial support to stakeholders***

- Provide grants to MSGs for Income Generating Activities so that they can support more children.
- Support the CDC financially so that they are able to follow up cases of abuse in the communities.
- Keep providing funding for sensitisation meetings for the CDC to reach remote areas.
- Provide teacher mentors with transport so that they can follow up on child abuse cases in the communities

***Strengthen school initiatives***

- Introduce Help Desks in all schools
- Construct shelters for abused children so that they are protected; when a child is abused by their parents and the case is reported to the police, the child has still to live at home while the parent is pending sentence meaning the child remains in the custody of the abuser exposing them to more abuse.
- Provide education materials on HIV and AIDS, stories on abuse.
- Promote life skills for students.

**Section 5. Recommendations Arising from the Research**

The research makes recommendations in the following areas:

1. ***Provide clear guidelines for reporting:*** The culture of silence around child abuse must be broken and every reported case of child abuse should be followed up. To facilitate reporting and follow-up, head teachers, teacher mentors, CDC, SBC, MSG and Cama members must be provided with guidelines on what steps they should take to report and follow up abuse cases. Reporting needs to be sensitive to protecting the child as well as prosecuting the

perpetrator. A specific section regarding cases of abuses discovered should be added to the data collection monitoring forms for the CDCs.

2. **Networking and Linkages:** Camfed should strengthen linkages between communities, other organisations and service providers working to improve the welfare of children by helping communities map service providers in their communities and districts.
3. **Policy Issues:** Camfed should lobby the government to put in place a specific child protection policy in learning institutions to guide schools on how to deal with cases of abuse.

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<sup>i</sup> Teachers mentor are teachers trained specifically by Camfed in psychosocial counseling. Since 2001 Camfed Zambia has trained over 1700 Teachers Mentors

<sup>ii</sup> Zambian Global School Student Health Survey, 2004

<sup>iii</sup> Zambia Demographic Health Survey, 2007

<sup>iv</sup> Caterpillars are a delicacy in rural communities and a source of income for the families.

<sup>v</sup> Colleges and Secondary Schools Arts of Zambia (COSSAZ) These clubs use activities such as drama, poems and songs to raise awareness on child protection.