

Firelight Newsflash! 12 May 2008

Sharing Evaluation Results: Action for Children in Uganda

An article in the international journal, "Families in Society" recently highlighted an evaluation conducted of Action for Children (AFC) in Kampala, a Firelight grantee-partner since 2004.

In alignment with international and national policies supporting deinstitutionalization, Action for Children developed a community based orphan care program in Uganda. Direct support was provided to families raising orphans. The article, entitled "**Evaluation of a Community Based Orphan Care in Uganda.**" indicates that the households' need in certain categories, such as housing and food security, decreased significantly after services were received. Children's senses of belonging and permanency appeared promising. The report documents these strengths as well as recommended changes and implications for policy, practice, and further research.

To view the article, see:

<http://www.crin.org/docs/FamiliesinSociety.pdf>

Upcoming E-Discussion on Child Rights Programming

14-26 May 2008, Led by Wout Visser, War Child Netherlands

Participants will have opportunities to consider strategies to adopt a (child) human rights-based approach in organisations. The aim of this e-discussion is to share experiences of those who took the challenge and explore lessons they learnt. The discussion will also seek to draw out any preconditions for success that can be identified and suggestions for other colleagues to get on board and influence their organisational culture. This e-discussion will take place over a 12 day period, from 14 May – 26 May.

To learn more and sign up, see:

<http://www.equalinrights.org/pages/eventitem.html?id=2981>

DONOR PROFILE: Wallace Global Fund

Contact Information:

1990 M Street, NW, Suite 250 Washington, DC 20036 USA

tel (202)452-1530fax (202)452-0922

email tkroll@wgf.orginternet <http://www.wgf.org>

Geographic focus: Global - funding national level programs (core or project-specific support) or "significant local or regional initiatives offering the potential to leverage broader national or global impact"

Issue focus: Natural Resources, Women's Human Rights, Justice, Media and Leadership, Civic Engagement

Grant size: \$2,000 - \$400,000 - average of \$50,000

Application process: Grant proposals are processed and reviewed on a continual basis. See website for concept paper guidelines or write to primary contact.

TRAINING MANUAL: Legal Education and Will Writing for the Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children and People Infected and Affected by HIV/AIDS

From Family Health International in Nigeria, this training manual has been developed to encourage succession planning through will writing. First, the objective is

to train those who are capable of influencing behaviour in the communities where affected children and families live. Such trainees would include staff of civil society organisations (CSOs) who work with orphans and vulnerable children and their families; caregivers and guardians of young children; older orphans and vulnerable children; community leaders; faith-based leaders; and other adults and custodians of culture and tradition.

Second, the aim is to create awareness on fundamental human rights, especially child rights, build skills in will writing, and on how to mobilise community support for legal education and will writing. This manual also aims to facilitate the creation of legal support structures in communities where affected children and their families live. Finally, the hope is that the manual will also encourage CSOs to bring discrimination and other legal abuses to the attention of human rights organisations.

This interactive training manual is easy to understand and leaves room for suggestions by participants on customs, traditions and religious (Islamic and Christian) positions on will writing and inheritance. It can easily be adapted to different cultural backgrounds and state laws.

To view the facilitator's guide, see:

<http://www.fhi.org/NR/rdonlyres/efsprodxdasqrdokgrbds3er35kbiyhchkiizvpizoytcbc>

**Call for Nominations for the Southern Africa Drivers of Change Award
Deadline: 4 July 2008**

The Southern Africa Trust is inviting nominations for the 2008 Drivers of Change Award. The prestigious non-monetary awards acknowledge innovative practices and models that contribute to overcoming poverty in the region. In the four award categories of business, civil society, government, and individuals, winners must demonstrate innovation in the strategies used to develop and implement better public policies to end poverty and inequality in southern Africa. They must particularly demonstrate how they have collaborated with others to create new models for cooperation to overcome poverty. All nominations must include a motivation of not more than two A4 pages explaining why you believe the organization or individual you are nominating should be recognised as a Driver of Change to overcome to overcome poverty in Southern Africa. The Southern Africa Trust is an independent, regional, non-profit agency established to support deeper and wider engagement in policy dialogue to overcome poverty in southern Africa.

For more information,

see: http://www.southernafricatrust.org/drivers_of_change/index.html

**"FROM THE FRONTLINE" Interview with Kenyan Child Rights Lawyer,
Gilbert Onyango
1 April 2008 - CRINMAIL 970**

Gilbert Onyango is a lawyer and Deputy Director of [The CRADLE-The Children's Foundation](#), based in Nairobi, Kenya. His organisation mainly offers legal advice and representation to children, but also undertakes lobbying and advocacy on child rights issues and monitoring of human rights standards.

The CRADLE recently launched a [national campaign to establish a complaints procedure under the CRC](#) and he recently presented the work at an [NGO side event at the Human Rights Council](#) session in Geneva. He is also a member of the [NGO Advisory Council](#) for Follow up to the UN Study on Violence Against Children, representing East and Southern Africa. He is 35 years old, married, and soon to be a father for the first time.

People, and particularly men, still look down on children's rights, that needs to change. When I went to work at the CRADLE, I was the first male lawyer representing children and there was this thing that a man cannot do this job, that this is a job for women, it was an uncharted territory. It can be cool to be a male lawyer dealing with

children's issues! We are trying to sell pro bono services as something cool, and not just something for women - but it's not easy. **The problem with lawyers is that they are not trained to deal with the human being.** But think about it, it's bad enough for an adult to go to a court, so you can imagine how bad it is for a child. Often children just need reassurance. **I became a lawyer because I have always been driven by the desire to serve.** I know everyone says being a lawyer is about making money, but it has never been my driving force. I have never charged anybody for my services, I don't know what it means. I don't know whether it equates to dying a poor man, but I want to believe that the practice of law can be different and human. **The issue in child rights which I feel deserves more attention is sexual violence.** Obviously I am biased because this is the area my organisation focuses on, but I think more needs to be done. This is one problem which is very difficult for a child to deal with, and a child in Africa... it's twice as hard because of the cultural implications attached to the issue of sex within the community. In most places it's considered a taboo, now when you start talking about sexual exploitation and sexual violence, that's not easy. **The greatest achievement in my career was** when I got a young girl who had been charged with murder acquitted. She was going to spend the rest of her life in prison and it was against all odds. I had never done this before. By using international human rights and child rights standards, (the African Charter, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Kenyan Children Act), I got an acquittal. This girl was destined to spend the rest of her life in prison. At the end, she came to me and said thank you, and she cried... that was something! **The best thing about the Convention on the Rights of the Child** is that it comes from the international level but we can use it to give it life at national level. It's not about the paper in Geneva or New York or Addis, it can become a document in the court corridors and in everyone's house. **The worst thing about the Convention** is that very few judges in Kenya have an appreciation for international human rights instruments. And child rights are not given the attention you or I would love to see. When I joined the child rights sector in 2001, straight out of law school, the first question I was asked from the prestigious law firm I was working at was: 'are you unable to represent adults?' I laughed it off. **We provide training for lawyers.** So far we trained 200 lawyers on child rights litigation and using child rights instruments, and on child psychology. With all those three levels of training, a lawyer should be able to represent a child. **We work with children on an individual level to help them feel like they have received some justice,** everyone wants justice. Victims are not going to say 'I want to talk to the minister to get the law changed', they want the perpetrator to pay. We then use the information that comes from those children to support our argument at the policy level to try to effect change on a wider scale and for a number of children. We have done this quite a bit, for instance in drafting the Sexual Offences Act, or the Anti trafficking Bill in Kenya. Now, I want to go to the international court. **The recent violence in Kenya was terrible.** People were being targeted everywhere, we were forced to cut down our operations, closed shop and asked staff to stay at home until the crisis calmed down. That was hard because a lot of things were happening, particularly sexual violence. Reported cases of sexual violence have risen dramatically, but perpetrators are getting away with it because the police's priorities are elsewhere. Women are reporting cases to the police and hospitals, but nothing happens beyond treatment. It's all due to a combination of fear, panic, displacement, lack of food, people are finding themselves in

unfamiliar territory. **The truth needs to come out if this is ever to be sorted out.** Truth and justice is essential so that we can start the national healing process. As to how it will all play out, no one knows. There is enough to go around for everyone. We all need to accommodate each other for the country to move forward. We need to put our bigotry and selfishness behind. **The child rights advocate I most admire is my mentor Millie Odhiambo.** She is a brave woman, very brave. Brave almost bordering on dangerous. She has been doing things even men would fear doing. When we were lobbying for the Sexual Offences Act, she led the crowds in a march to the Parliament offices. Security forces were there to try to stop civil society, but she went, blocked the street, lied down on the floor – all the while with an AK47 pointing at her. **The best thing about my job** is being able to affect the lives of millions of children in Kenya and billions across the world in my own small way. I am sure sitting in that room at the Human Rights Council will have its little impact. **The worst thing about my job** is the slow pace at which things move and the fact that sometimes it takes too long for people to appreciate the simplest thing. And the fact that people's personal interest and national interest sometimes comes over and above something that is otherwise very important. **If I were not answering these questions** I would be working on my thesis for my masters. **My perfect job in child rights would be a job** that would allow me to do what I am doing at this level but with more clout. So that then a lot more people can listen to me, not as somebody trying to convince them, but somebody telling them what to do. **If I were not working in child rights...** Honestly I don't see anything else I would want to do. I will do everything I can to ensure I remain in this sector. I love my job. I really love what I do, it's out of this world! **I would like to mentor younger people,** I was mentored and it is important to help younger people. I would like to help them do what I am doing and if possible, do it even better. We often get too busy, doing this or that, but we must take time to give them power to run the show. **If you could give child rights advocates one piece of advice...** lets do it for the love of the child. **If I had to sum up children's rights in one word,** it should be non-contentious.

Have you seen our new legal database? Find out about child rights and the UN, complaints, what laws exist in your country and much more: <http://www.crin.org/law/index.asp>