SAFE SPACES PROGRAMME IN ZAMBIA

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BACKGROUND

• The Safe Spaces program began in response to the case of RM, a thirteen year old school girl who was raped by her teacher in Lusaka.

• Both the school system and the criminal justice system failed to protect RM. The teacher was not disciplined by the school or arrested and prosecuted. He still remains free.
The RM Case

- Zambian civil society organizations and Equality Now helped a private lawyer to bring a civil case on RM’s behalf.
- RM won a landmark civil judgment. She was awarded damages for pain and suffering, mental torture, and medical expenses.
- The government was instructed to arrest and prosecute the teacher and introduce guidelines in schools to prevent defilement in the future.
The Coalition

- RM’s case propelled Zambian civil society into action. A coalition of Zambian groups (Tisunge Ana Athu Akazi), facilitated by Equality Now, started working on a multi-sectoral pilot project to ensure that other Zambian girls do not go through RM’s experience. The project includes the following activities:

- Safe Spaces: The establishment of safe spaces where adolescent girls are able to learn about and access their rights.
Concept of Safe Spaces

The Safe Spaces programme is aimed at empowering girls to know their rights and develop networks that will ultimately prevent sexual abuse. It has three core elements.

1. A physical space where girls can meet.
2. Mentorship to provide the girls with relevant knowledge and skills. Typically, there are 10 girl mentors, 2 teacher mentors and 8 mother mentors per 100 girls.
3. Friendship and the creation of girls' networks.
The Population Council helped develop a curriculum for Safe Spaces on core issues of sexual violence.

We teach girls about HIV and AIDS, puberty, adolescence, challenging gender stereotypes and human rights.
Concept of Safe Spaces

MENTORS

• Female mentors from the same community provide the girls with the benefit of experience and leadership while still being young enough to relate to the challenges experienced by the girls.
• The mentors also benefit from the training and through the experience become young leaders.
• This “cascading leadership” model becomes self sustaining as girls grow up through a program, graduate, and then become mentors for younger girls.
Concept of Safe Spaces

The skills learnt by girls in the safe spaces:
• Protect them from sexual violence and abuse
• Equip them before and after the event
• Provides them with a network of support
• Provides them with where to seek help in the event of sexual abuse
• Trains teachers
• Trains girls
We work to empower girls and to ensure that girls’ voices and concerns are reflected in every intervention.

The 4 NGOs working on safe spaces on the programme are:
• Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED)
• Forum for Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA)
• Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ)
• Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)
Safe Space Clubs

- YWCA – Lotus Basic School, Kamwala; Kamwala Basic School
- FAWEZA – Kamulanga Basic School
- PPAZ – Munali Basic School, Munali; Chazanga Basic School, Chazanga
- CAMFED – Chongwe Basic School, Chongwe
Project Implementation Structure

- Pop council – safe space consultant, provides TA
- Program officers
- Junior mentors – how you choose them and their roles
- Senior mentors/mother mentor (teachers and community members) - how you chose them and their roles
Activities

- Selection of the most vulnerable girls—This is led by Pop Council TA with mentors (questionnaires administered)
- Formation of school based clubs – Safe Space Clubs.
- Identification of girls suitable to be trained as junior mentors by teachers and Pop Council TA
Safe Space Club Activities

- Weekly meetings led by Junior and Senior Mentors
- Knowledge and Skills based Safe Space curriculum is followed, covering topics such as:
  - Girls are encouraged to open up and share experiences with their friends in the discussions safely.
  - Mentors provide a safe environment in which the girls can share difficult things.
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS