



# SAFE SPACES PROGRAMME IN ZAMBIA

AFRICAN REGIONAL SGBV NETWORK PARTNER'S MEETING

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PROTEA HOTEL  
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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**.

# Concept of Safe Spaces

- 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

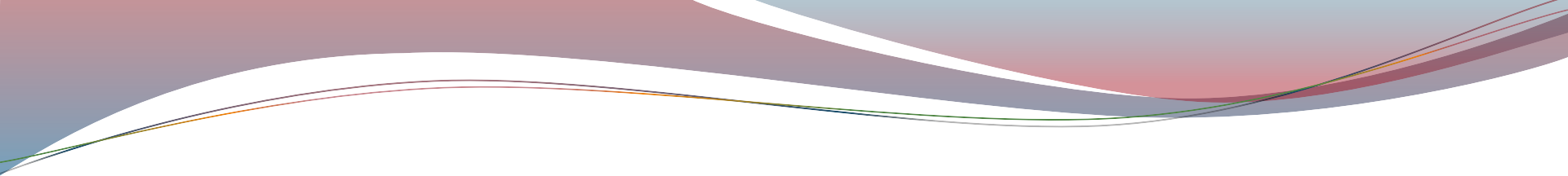
- Female mentors from the same community provide the girls with the benefit of experience and leadership while still being young enough to relate to the challenges experienced by the girls.
- The mentors also benefit from the training and through the experience become young leaders.
- This “cascading 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