

COMMUNITY BASED PREVENTION INITIATIVES: SWAGAA GIRL'S EMPOWERMENT CLUBS

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CONTEXT AT A GLANCE

Swaziland has been classified as a lower middle income country

According to the VAC 2007, 69% of the population is living in poverty- majority are women

Acute patriarchy and gender inequality

By 2007, 26% of people aged 15-49 yrs were living with HIV

ANC data (2008) showing 42% of pregnant women are HIV positive from 39.2%



CONTEXT CONT...

- ❑ NSF on HIV and AIDS identifies Early sexual debut and Intergenerational sex as major drivers
- ❑ Higher prevalence rate among females (31.1%) compared to males (19.7%)
- ❑ Peak among 15-24 year old bracket
- ❑ Early marriages
- ❑ Under-reporting by children

EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM:

“A NATIONAL DISASTER”

- ❑ Every day media reports cases of GBV & CSA
- ❑ For the first time survey provided population based estimates (UNICEF 2008)
- ❑ High prevalence
- ❑ Ages 13 – 24 years
- ❑ Approx 1 in 3 females experienced some form of sexual violence as a child
- ❑ Only in less than 1 in 7 incidents did females seek help
- ❑ Majority were not even aware that they had been abused

BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAMME

- ❑ Largest proportion of SGBV cases- girl child
- ❑ adapted from The Girl Child Network (GCN) in Zimbabwe
- ❑ Founded by Betty Makoni, a Zimbabwean teacher – a survivor of abuse
- ❑ Partnerships were formed with GCN through Canadian Crossroads International (CCI)
- ❑ Adaptation of manuals for the program to address key issues affecting Swazi girls

GEC PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- ❑ To provide a safe space for girls to openly engage and learn about a variety of issues affecting young girls- allowing children to express their thoughts and feelings freely
- ❑ To create an enabling environment for confidence building, empowerment for SGBV and HIV prevention and response among girls
- ❑ Promote emotional wellness, belonging, and self-esteem
- ❑ To create linkages for provision of comprehensive support to child survivors of SGBV

THE GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT CLUBS

- ❑ The GEC program was piloted in 6 schools, 3 Primary schools and 3 High schools, in February 2008.
- ❑ To date, 8 clubs have been successfully established and launched.
- ❑ School selection initially based on proximity to SWAGAA counseling sites and target communities
 - ❑ Now mostly on demand- request by head teachers

GIRLS IN SCHOOL (AGED 7-14 AND 14-21)

4 PRIMARY SCHOOLS

4 HIGH SCHOOLS

SCHOOLS IN RURAL, URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AREAS

EACH CLUB COMPRISES 40 MEMBERS.

TEACHERS AS CLUB COORDINATORS/SUPPORTERS



ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GEC

- ❑ Introductory meeting with school administration
- ❑ Presentation to school children during assembly
- ❑ Voluntary membership into club
- ❑ (limited involvement of parents)
- ❑ Election of a focal teacher, Club President and committee
- ❑ Training of club Presidents and teachers using GEC training manuals

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GEC

- ❑ Initial baseline assessment conducted using standard questionnaire: SRH, SGBV, CSA, HIV, self awareness etc among girls
 - ❑ Knowledge level assessment is conducted
 - ❑ Assessment of values, attitudes and behavioural patterns
 - ❑ Measurement against behavioural and knowledge indicators

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GEC

- ❑ Trained club coordinators use club manuals for all meetings
- ❑ IEC materials produced and disseminated
- ❑ Records of meetings and participant registers kept
- ❑ All girls participate in club activities

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GEC

- ❑ To create a sense of unity and belonging all girls recite a GEC pledge at the start of every meeting
- ❑ Use of journals by all girls as an outlet
- ❑ SWAGAA Club coordinator and assistant assess journals periodically to identify possible cases of SGBV- immediate case management by SWAGAA (10 in 2010)

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAMME

- ❑ Use of a variety of age appropriate approaches used, such as: poetry, life story book, music and dance, drama
- ❑ Incorporation of CSA, SGBV, children's rights, sexual reproductive health, including HIV prevention,
- ❑ Peer to Peer engagement
- ❑ Participation of girls in SWAGAA and national events
- ❑ Increased sense of social responsibility amongst girls

MENTORSHIP AND MONITORING

- ❑ SWAGAA Club Coordinator conducts weekly visits to each club
- ❑ Clubs meet on a weekly basis (minimum) depending on school schedule
- ❑ Refresher trainings for club presidents and coordinators conducted

M&E

- ❑ Following a 9 month piloting period- clubs evaluated for effectiveness
 - ❑ Independent clubs are launched through an event organised jointly by SWAGAA and the girls
- ❑ A mid term evaluation of the programme has been conducted by an independent officer from CCI:
 - ❑ Assessment of impact of the piloted programme and need for scale up
 - ❑ Assessment of change in behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, and confidence levels
 - ❑ Assessment of ability for each to continue to operate independently of SWAGAA staff
 - ❑

IMPACT/OUTCOME OF THE GEC PROGRAMME

- ❑ Increased understanding and challenging of gender stereotypes
- ❑ Increased confidence and self awareness
- ❑ Improved communication and public speaking skills
- ❑ Increased consciousness about human rights and legal literacy
- ❑ Improved academic performance
- ❑ Reduction in teacher-student relationships

IMPACT CONT....

- ❑ Referral of cases to SWAGAA > comprehensive support
- ❑ Reported abstinence from sexual activity among most girls
- ❑ Promotes information sharing and the correction of misconceptions around gender, HIV, SRH, Human trafficking etc
- ❑ Broadened view on career aspirations
- ❑ Support system provided for OVC in schools
 - ❑ Socialization
 - ❑ Access to information

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAMME

- ❑ The program was awarded for 'Best Practice' at The Gender Summit Awards held in South Africa in 2010.
- ❑ The girls have received national recognition through showcasing their work in public forums and national events
- ❑ The girls have begun to raise funds to assist community members in need e.g. the elderly


CHALLENGES

- ❑ High demand -Limited resources have led to limited coverage
- ❑ High staff attrition within SWAGAA
- ❑ Transfer of club coordinators to other schools affects progress of the clubs
- ❑ Enrolment in clubs is difficult to manage – high demand
- ❑ Poor linkages to community support structures
- ❑ Limited engagement with the girls on completion of school

CHALLENGES CONT...

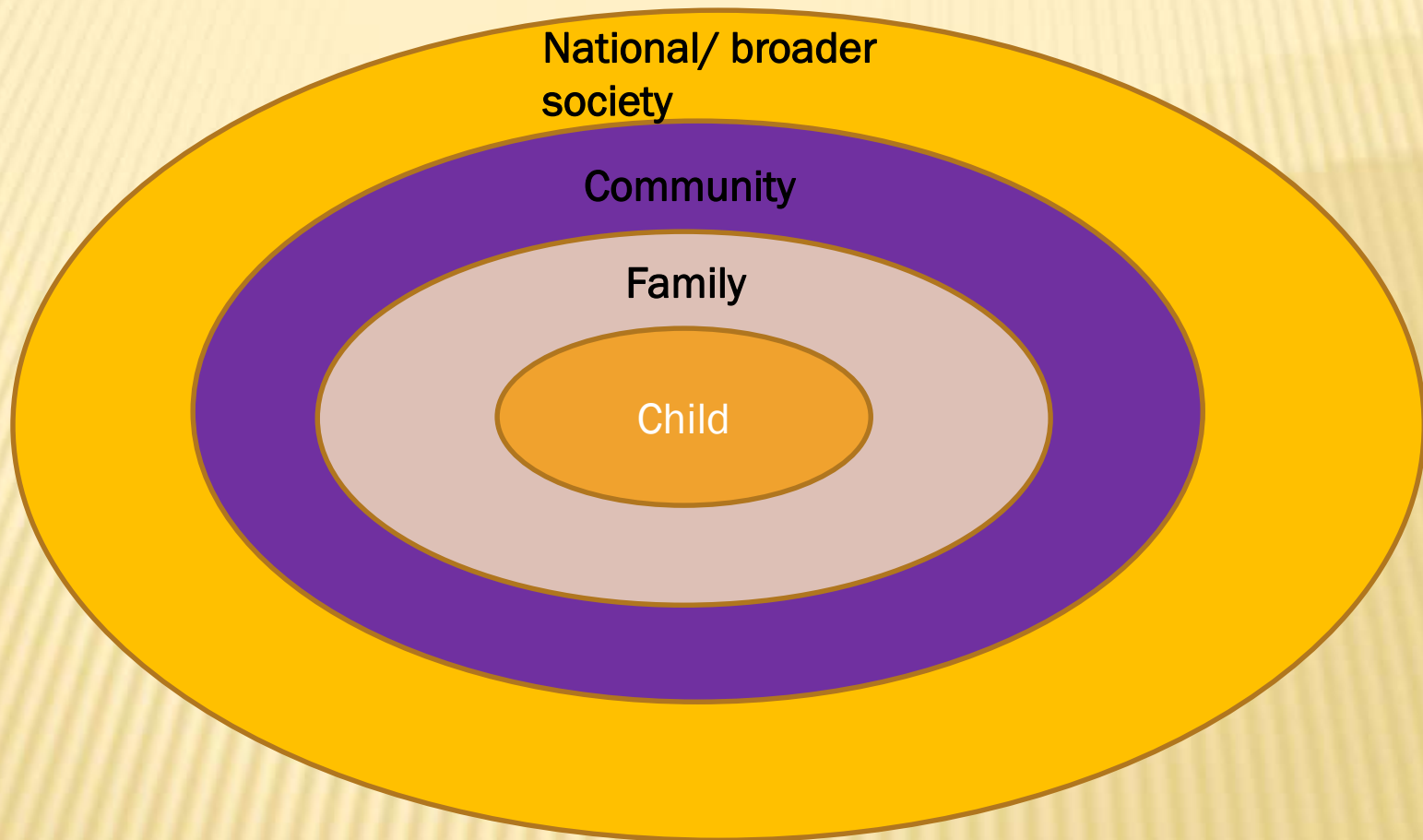
- ❑ Lack of comprehensive legislation on SGBV and CSA
- ❑ Reporting of SGBV cases require a parent or guardian
- ❑ Limited time for engagement with girls during school hours

LESSONS LEARNT

- ❑ Importance of support structure at home and community
- ❑ Importance of Assessment of what components of the programme are working
- ❑ Engagement of boys critical for SGBV and HIV Prevention  complementing GECs
- ❑ Min Ed buy in critical- engagement for incorporation into curriculum
- ❑ Involvement of care givers in GEC to support girls beyond the club

NEXT STEPS

- ❑ Facilitate more club exchange visits for experience sharing and learning
- ❑ To incorporate basic skills on entrepreneurship – establishment of income generating projects
- ❑ To compile the girls ‘Most Significant Change Stories as an evaluation mechanism for the programme
- ❑ Establish Boys Re-Socialization clubs



**Levels of Psychosocial support
to child survivors and OVC**

NEXT STEPS CONT...

- ❑ To establish a linkage with SWAGAA broader Lihlombe Lekukhalela (LL)- Child Protection Committee Programme at community level for PSS provision to girls and expanded prevention initiatives
- ❑ Strengthen LL linkage to OVC in school
- ❑ Expand programme on strengthening community systems for SGBV prevention and response – linking community social actors to service providers
- ❑ Collaborate with Population Council for comparative analysis of the programme > GEC+ Initiative

AREAS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- ❑ Technical support for documentation of what has worked and approach for expansion of programme
- ❑ Development of manuals for comprehensive approach- family, community
- ❑ TA for development of resource mobilization strategy
- ❑ Strengthening of M&E and research component
- ❑ Human resource for expansion of programme

