NO ONE TO TURN TO

THE EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF CHILD VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE BY THE AID SECTOR

Evidence from Corinna Csaky
International Development Committee Inquiry

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VICTIMS ARE ALREADY VULNERABLE

“There is a girl who sleeps in the street, and there were a group of people who decided to make money off of her. They took her to a man who works for an NGO. He gave her one American dollar and the little girl was happy to see the money. It was two in the morning. The man took her and raped her. In the morning the little girl could not walk.” (Young Boy, Haiti)
PERPETRATORS ARE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL

“The humanitarian staff committing the abuse are often from the local community. Therefore, you cannot consider abuse by humanitarian workers and abuse by other people separately. You need to think of them both together and deal with them both together.” (Mother, South Sudan)
ABUSE IS UNREPORTED

“We have never heard of anyone reporting the cases of abuse.” (Teenage girl, Côte d’Ivoire)
“We all work at the peacekeeping camp. We go there to earn money to help support our families. Sometimes they ask us to find girls, especially our age (14). Often it will be between eight and ten men who will share two or three girls. They also use their mobile phones to film the girls. I find them girls in the town. They are often keen because of the gifts that are promised such as mobile phones and food rations. For us, we say to ourselves that even if it is bad we are gaining too, such as money, new t-shirts, souvenirs, watches and tennis shoes.” (Boy aged 14, Cote D’Ivoire)
SPEAKING OUT CARRIES HUGE RISKS...

• “He’s using the girl, but without him she won’t be able to eat.” (Teenage girl, Cote d’Ivoire)

• “Some children are scared they might be killed by the abuser.” (Young boy, Haiti)

• “Your name will be ruined” (Young girl, Cote d’Ivoire)

• “The father would try to persuade the man to take the girl as a bride and to pay cattle for her.” (Young girl, South Sudan)
... AND VERY LITTLE GAINS

- People in Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire and South Sudan had not heard of the victim receiving medical, legal, psychological or financial support.

- This was not even acknowledged to be necessary.
NO ONE TO TURN TO

• “Who would we tell? We wouldn’t tell the police... they can’t do anything. Anyway, I’ve heard that the police do this kind of abuse too.” (Young boy, Haiti)

• “The people who are raping us and the people in the office are the same people.” (Young girl, Haiti)

• “How will we even get in to see the managers?” (Father, Cote d’Ivoire)
IMPUNITY BREEDS ACCEPTANCE

• “They don’t even hide what they are doing.” (Father, Cote d’Ivoire)

• “If a case is reported, the fact that nothing happens can put people off coming forward” (Father, Cote d’Ivoire)

• “The organization should dismiss the person so that other men will learn that you cannot go around abusing children in this way. Often no action is taken and that is the problem.” (Young girl, South Sudan)
STRENGTHEN CHILDREN’S VOICES

• Children and their communities must value their rights and protection
• They must have confidence that speaking out will bring about a positive change
• Victims must be given effective medical, psycho-social, financial and legal support
• Children and their communities must receive feed-back and supported to hold us to account
• Reporting and response mechanisms must be effective for all children – especially those who are marginalised
“An orphan cannot say anything against her abuser because she has nothing.” (Mother, South Sudan)