CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE/INCEST
IN THE CARIBBEAN
“BREAKING THE WALLS OF SILENCE”

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**Note:**

“Breaking the Walls of Silence” is an action-oriented research Project designed by the University of the West Indies, St Augustine campus with UNICEF Trinidad and Tobago and partners and launched in 2011. The Project seeks to “break the silence on the taboo subject of child sexual abuse/incest and its implications for HIV throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

The present paper uses the concept “Break the Silence” as well as the symbol – a blue teddy bear with a bandage over its heart – created by the Trinidadian Project team as entry point for a regional initiative on the creation of a new social norm.

The blue teddy bear, although not designed for this purpose, is featured in this paper as a powerful symbol used for public statement and evidence of adherence to the new norm.

It is hoped that this regional initiative – and the theory behind it – could be implemented in the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Island, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos, Belize, Jamaica, Guyana, Surinam, Haiti and Trinidad & Tobago.
Description of the problem

One of the most hidden forms of abuse against children is sexual abuse, which many times is committed by persons closely related to the child. Child sexual abuse is not a new phenomenon. It is present in every country. It occurs in all racial, ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups and affects children of all ages, including infants. Both boys and girls are sexually abused although girls are more at risk. Child sexual abuse has been known to originate in many places: the home, home of relatives and family friends, schools, child care institutions, and community locations. When originated within the family sphere, child sexual abuse is commonly referred to as incest and is usually perpetrated by males who are in positions of trust and intimacy and power – fathers, fathers-in-law, grandfathers, stepfathers, brothers, uncles, brothers and other male relatives.

A) Why child sexual abuse and incest and not just child sexual abuse?

Incest is a sexual abuse generally understood as meaning sexual intercourse between biologically-related siblings and between children and biological parents; however, in many countries incest is also defined as including sex with non-biological parents such as step-parents and adoptive parents.

Child sexual abuse may or may not involve actual physical contact and includes penetrative acts (e.g. rape or buggery) and also non-penetrative and non-contact activities, such as involving children in watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually explicit ways and exposing them to inappropriate sexual material. Child sexual abuse also includes involving children in prostitution and pornography. In the majority of cases of sexual abuse, perpetrator is a person who the child knows and trusts (parent, other relative, caretaker, teacher, neighbor etc.).

Child sexual abuse, including incest usually happens behind closed door in “secrecy”. Putting the emphasis on both concepts: sexual abuse and (more specifically) incest and addressing them together present several advantages:

- **It forces people to use the word “incest” and break the taboo around it:** Incest has historically been condoned by the tacit silence and the passivity displayed by the law-enforcing machinery, which considers family relations as being harmonious and tied by affection and solidarity and equated family with sanctuary (“home, sweet home”). Family environment has thus been considered as strictly private and one that has to be protected from all forms of external interference. This myth has allowed perpetrators (parents) to practically enjoy impunity for their acts and maintain their victims (children) under their grips.

- **It moves the focus away from the family member as “perpetrator”:** Because incest usually happens between children and biological parents, addressing solely “incest” means targeting the parents and family relations. Putting the emphasis on sexual abuse more broadly provide opportunities for family members to act on abuse that happens
outside of the family settings, allowing members of the family to regain trust in one another and in protection systems that are mandated to address the problem, and play a more active role in ensuring environment where children encountered themselves are safe.

- **It provides opportunities for adopting comprehensive approaches:**
  Focusing on child sexual abuse/incest requires addressing problems such as corporal punishment in the home and in school, domestic violence, neglect and maltreatment, as well as alcohol and drug abuse.

- **It allows for a re-categorization of the “problem”:**
  Addressing both concepts (sexual abuse/incest) provides opportunity to focus on the role of the family as the primary environment for the protection of children: from family as a harmful place to family as protective environment (changing the script).
  Focusing on improving family functioning – especially family management, problem-solving and positive practices have proved effective in reducing home and family violence and promoting positive parental knowledge, skills and behaviour and offer opportunity to link the family to the community.

**B) What is the situation in the Caribbean?**

**Sexual Abuse and Incest**

Inadequate data for most countries in the Caribbean (for instance Belize, Jamaica, Suriname, Guyana and Haiti) make it difficult to get an accurate picture of the occurrence of incest and sexual abuse in all its manifestations on Caribbean children. However studies conducted in Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean countries and Trinidad and Tobago suggest that the incidence of child sexual violence and abuse in the Caribbean is alarming. No country in the Caribbean can claim to be free of child sexual abuse. Studies conducted in the region show that between 70-80% of the children victims are girls, that in 50% of cases, the perpetrators live with the victims, and that in 75% they have a direct relationship with the victim. Results from a World Bank Report\(^1\) also shows that the Caribbean has the earliest age of sexual ‘debut’ in the world with many young people being initiated into sexual behavior as a consequence of child abuse as early as five (5) years old in some countries and 10 years in others. The same study indicates that the abuse usually continues until the child reaches mid-adolescence.

According to a study on child abuse in Guyana and Suriname, Anguilla, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat and St. Kitts and Nevis child sexual abuse is socially accepted. Most cases of child abuse taking place in the home (in most cases by family members) happen with the complicity, silence, denial and failure of other adults to take appropriate action. The study also reveals that around 20% to 45% of people in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean have experienced behaviour that could be described as child sexual abuse. A study by the University of the West Indies on Trinidad and Tobago indicates that “children are often reluctant to disclose the abuse because of coercion and manipulation by the perpetrator, feelings of guilt and shame, and a fear that they may not be believed. Even where disclosure is made, the abuse may not be reported for a number of reasons including the tabooed nature of the crime, family dynamics, and reluctance to expose the child to the criminal justice system and a rejection of the child’s complaint, among others.”\(^2\)

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\(^1\) World Bank’s Caribbean Youth Development Report, 2003
\(^2\) Child Sexual Abuse in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean, Rosalie Barclay, January 2009
Moral and legal norms against child sexual abuse and incest

All countries in the Caribbean are party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and have following the ratification of the CRC initiated a process of reform to harmonize their legislation with the CRC. Most countries in the Caribbean have enacted laws prohibiting incest and other sexual offences (rape etc.). In countries such as Grenada, the laws sets clear limits and boundaries with regard to sexual behavior and prescribe adequate penalties to deter and punish abusers. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Sexual Offences Act\(^3\) include heavy penalty on sexual offences. The offence of incest was extended to include additional blood relationships and greater protection for children against sexual intercourse by close non-blood relatives such as step-parents and adoptive parents. The Act provides for in-camera hearing and mandatory reporting of sexual offences against children, and for the admissibility of a child’s statement where the child is being prevented from giving evidence. In Belize, the Evidence Act has been amended to allow for the taking of evidence of children in sexual offences without the need for corroboration by another witness Caribbean countries have also made advances in terms of establishing institutions/entities responsible for enforcing laws on sexual offences (mechanisms for reporting, protocols etc.).

Surveys on beliefs and expectations conducted in the Eastern Caribbean and Trinidad and Tobago suggest that most people disapprove of child sexual abuse/incest because of their moral values. Christianity (Catholicism, Protestantism) is by far the dominated religion in the Caribbean (followed by Hinduism and Muslim). Hence, countries in the Caribbean shared strong moral values. These include the belief in the family unit as an integral part of the community, tolerance and understanding, respect for law and other and therefore peace; in a word respect in the basic human rights of the individual.

Violence in the Caribbean

There are many factors that explain the high prevalence of child sexual abuse/incest in the region. Children in the Caribbean are exposed to a high level of violence. Fear is part of their daily life. During the last few decades, the level of street violence in the Caribbean has reached epidemic proportions. The Caribbean ranks at the first place when it comes to murder rates in the world (at 30 per 100,000 populations annually). The Caribbean also ranks high when it comes to rape. Rape rates in countries such as St Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica and St Kitts and Nevis are twice as high as the world average for reported incidents of rape (at 112 per 100,000 inhabitants for St Vincent and the Grenadines). A major factor in the surge of violence and gun-related criminality is the traffic of narcotics\(^4\) and the proliferation of small arms. Furthermore, risky behaviours such as widespread social acceptance of use of alcohol and marijuana, youth gang, and other factors such as cultural perceptions and attitudes to abuse as well as cultural values about sexuality and sex, etc., put Caribbean children at great risk of victimization.

II- What Strategies have been implemented to date?

UNICEF country offices in the Caribbean region have been supporting a series of interventions and programmes in order to tackle child sexual abuse and incest. These include, among others:

- Advocacy and promotion of child rights and awareness-raising on violence against children

\(^3\) Sexual Offence Act, Chapter 11:28, Trinidad and Tobago (amended in 2000)
\(^4\) Addressing small arms violence in the Caribbean, Kenneth Epps, 2008
- Programs and campaigns to educate parents, the public on child rights generally and on maintaining positive relationships with their children
- Strengthening the legal framework to ensure that laws cover all forms of children against children, including child sexual abuse and the prohibition of corporal punishment
- Capacity building of judges and those working with and for children
- Programs for recovery and social reintegration services for victims of abuse
- Creation of accessible and child-friendly reporting systems and mechanism
- Knowledge generation and research on the roots causes of violence against children
- Establishment of Child Protection System to detect, care and respond to children victims of abuse.

III- What explains the normative deviance?

**Definition of childhood (age)**
The CRC defines a child as a human being below the age of eighteen years old. However, within the age of majority, there are different “minimum legal ages”. Most existing “minimum ages” are based on the concept that an arbitrary age can be set to separate "adults" from "minors". Moreover the age of puberty⁵ differs from the age of majority and is usually lower than 18. In a few countries in the Caribbean, when a child attains the age of puberty, he/she can get married with parental consent. There is also a distinction between the age of majority for civil matters, the age of marriage and the age of sexual consent. In countries, such as Trinidad and Tobago (for the Muslims) and Guyana the age of marriage is set at 12 years old. In the survey conducted in the Eastern Caribbean, the majority of the respondents were of the view that children were children at least until the legal age of sexual consent (16 years). The survey also indicates that “a significant number of people also believe that childhood ends at 13 years old”⁶.

**Legacy of the colonial system**
The harmonization of national legislation with the CRC poses special challenges in most countries in the Caribbean. Historically the legal system of the Commonwealth Caribbean is based primarily on the British common law, which is a legacy of the colonial period, with the exception of Guyana, St. Lucia, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago. A dualist system is usually adopted in common law system, meaning that treaties apply in the domestic legal system only if they have been incorporated and received by national legal procedure. The legal system in Jamaica resembles closely the one in the United Kingdom of which it was a colony until 1962, when it achieved independence. Guyana has the influence of the Roman-Dutch tradition and St. Lucia and Haiti of the French civil law. Dominica introduced an executive presidential form of government and Trinidad and Tobago became a republic in 1976. In addition, there were minor influences noted arising from other legal traditions such as Hindu/Indian and Islamic, which were incorporated into the legislation of some of these countries. In the past, the common law system recognized “the superior parental right of a man in a family unit created within a marriage, and was more concerned with safeguarding his parental rights than the interests of children.” Legal authority over legitimate children was vested in the father thereby excluding the mother and the welfare of the child was not considered.⁷ Legislative reforms in common law countries are usually a slow process as

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⁵ Age at which a boy or girl becomes capable of adult sexual functions.
⁶ Child sexual abuse in the Caribbean, Adele D. Jones, Ena Trotman Jemmott, 2009
common law derives its authority solely from usages and customs of immemorial antiquity, or from judgments and decrees of the courts recognizing, affirming and enforcing such usages and customs.

**Parents-children communication (corporal punishment)**

When parents and other caregivers have the “right” to hit and humiliate children, their capacity to detect child sexual abuse or speak up about it might be hampered. In many countries in the Caribbean, corporal punishment in the home is not prohibited – in a few countries, particularly in the Eastern Caribbean, it is permitted by law. Corporal punishment is an action taken by a parent, teacher or caregiver that is intended to cause physical pain or discomfort to a child. It is administered to the child’s body in many ways. For infants and toddlers, corporal punishment sometimes takes the form of shaking. For older children, it may involve the use of an object to strike the kid. In the Caribbean, 96% of people believe corporal punishment reflects parents’ “caring enough to take the time to train the child properly”. In addition to corporal punishment, in many countries, children exhibiting “uncontrollable or anti-social behaviour” partly constituted by “speaking back to adults” or engaging in sexual activity that cannot be controlled by the parents or legal guardians can be put in rehabilitation center.

**Inconsistencies within the legal framework and enforcement mechanisms**

Laws against sexual abuse are strong incentives, as they are considered as deterrent. However, even in the case of existence of strong enforcement mechanism laws can be ineffective. Indeed, although countries have adopted legislation on sexual violence against children, in most cases, laws have been ineffective in protecting children, one of the main reasons being the inconsistencies between the laws. The Families and Children’s Act of Belize promote the protection of children from abuse and neglect and the law is strengthened by the National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents 2004-2015 which provides for a multi-disciplinary response to the abuse and neglect of children in Belize. However, the law does not offer protection to boys who are victims of sexual offence. There is indeed no specific provision for addressing sexual assaults, incest, rape or other sexual offences committed against boys, and there are differences in the sentences provided for rape committed against girls aged below 14 or older. While the age of sexual consent is set at 16 for girls, there is no age of consent for males in Belize. In addition, other laws such as the Criminal Code still contain provisions that legalise harm to children or expose them to harm, as well as allows force or harm to be used to correct a child for misconduct.

In Barbados, a number of the statutes toughen the criminal sanctions for child abuse, but few are aimed at reinforcing the mechanisms and institutions that are designed to ensure the care and protection of children. The domestic violence legislation has been ineffective as a child protective device because there are no accompanying laws and policies to implement it such as mandatory reporting of child abuse and guidelines. A few countries in the Eastern Caribbean countries have enacted legislation aimed at protecting children from abuse in their home. However where legislation does exist, they are often fragmented and dispersed throughout several different pieces of legislation and institutions. In addition, mechanisms and responses to protect children from sexual abuse in particular incest, and to punish those who perpetuated abuse on children are for the most part ineffective.

In Jamaica, before the reform, the offence of incest was a misdemeanour with a maximum penalty of five years of hard labour. However, the current legislation lacks provisions to address the social, psychological and physical trauma associated with incest, given the extent
of incest in Jamaica. The Act also provides that in the trial for incest the jury may acquit of incest and find the accused guilty of an offence of unlawful carnal knowledge (rape) of a female idiot or imbecile (emphasis added), the penalty for that offence being three years.

**Perceptions**

Despite the achievements of the Caribbean region in the area of child rights, in many of these islands child sexual abuse/incest have been “normalized” through socialization and intergenerational behaviors patterns and thus are not perceived of as abuse. Underreporting (and non-reporting) continues to hamper efforts to fight and prosecute, and provide attention to victims. A significant factor in terms of under-reporting throughout the Caribbean is the insensitivity on the part of police in dealing with victims of sexual offences. Studies show that “in country where sexual offences law and procedure can lead to situation of humiliation for the victims in the courtroom, people are reluctant to report sexual offences because of their mistrust of the criminal system”. 8

**IV) Creating a positive social norm: Breaking the walls of silence**

**Harmonizing legal, social and moral norms**

A. Mockus, the former mayor of Bogotá, argued that “the reason to abide by a norm change depends on the type of norm in question”. In the case of behaviours that are regulated by legal, social and moral sanctions, when there is divorce between the legal, moral and cultural or social regulations, each individual may choose to a certain extent whether or not to follow the norms, by assessing the positive or negative consequences of his/her behaviour. Actions to prevent child sexual abuse/incest and responses to these phenomena are extremely complex, costly and lengthy. It is also recognized that there are also limitations to the child protection, therapeutic and justice response. In most Caribbean countries, these challenges are exacerbated by the “secrecy and silence” around strong possibility of stigma for the victims due in part by the small population of most of the Caribbean countries. These challenges are also exacerbated by the wide distance between legal, moral and social norms.

A culture of inaction to instances of child sexual abuse/incest has traditionally existed in most countries in the Caribbean. Arrests or sentences for child sexual abuse are insignificant in spite of wide acknowledgement of the incidence of this type of crimes, due in part to the high level of reluctance to initiate proceedings against offenders. Studies in the Caribbean shown that usually children do not report because of fear and shame; children also do not report because they feel responsible for the violence. A large proportion of children interviewed in Guyana (during the preparation of the UN Study on violence against children) believed that girls were often the instigators of sexual abuse as they wore revealing clothing9. Mothers (and women) who knows and do not report do so – even in the worst cases of abuse - because of the recognition of the failure of legal and protection systems and of the perceived “limited ability” of society to negatively sanction these behaviors10.

Victims and other witnesses are hence caught in a weak equilibrium (in red) whereas they follow the majority, prefer to keep their mouth shut and suffer in silence.

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8 Violence against women in the Caribbean, UNIFEM 1998
9 Voices of children: Experience with violence, UNICEF Guyana 2004
10 Child abuse in the Eastern Caribbean, 2008
When the three regulatory systems are aligned, when they coincide in the prohibition or encouragement of the same behaviours, then there is harmony between the law, morality and culture\textsuperscript{11}. In that case, the challenge is to bring the existing obedience to the legal norms closer to the moral norms by creating a social norm to break the walls of silence around child sexual abuse/incest and call upon family and community to be the eyes and ears of law enforcement. Not only does this social norm allow family and community to fight child sexual abuse/incest, it also provides an opportunity to bring the family closer to the community and facilitate the creation of bonds between family and community. This social norm draws upon the compassion of average people and their conscience, asking them to speak up about child sexual abuse and assist in the process of preventing and reporting suspicious acts and signs of child sexual abuse.

Game theory makes the assumption that people only care about their own payoff. In the case of sexual abuse and incest, if people (victims or others) know that they will suffer if they disclose that they will “keep quiet” and “keep their mouth shut”. When children, family members and other members of the community are sufficiently sure that they are dealing with people who “cares” they can change the structure of the game. Because they know that society will condemn and punish bad behaviours. At the same time, those who “report” will feel pride and recognised by their community because they seek “social approval” and want to “fit in” a valued group\textsuperscript{12}. They will thus have a strong incentive to “report” and by doing so create a new social norm that will turn the “prisoner dilemma” into a coordination game and achieve a dominant Nash Equilibrium (in green). The new norm will become self-fulfilling as everyone believes others will play their role.

\textsuperscript{11} Mockus: Citizenship-Building, p. 17
\textsuperscript{12} C. Bicchieri: The Grammar of Society
The idea behind this strategy is similar to the one used by Mockus for the protection of life (Life is cared). “Because most often we cannot modify the causes or the agents that produced a phenomenon (in our case child sexual abuse/incest), there are several ways in which we can act upon those factors (rules of secrecy) that make its occurrence probable. Since people don’t obey the law, let’s change some customs”.  

V) Signaling Change and creating expectations

For change to occur it needs to be visible: “I believe what I see”. The aim of the “Blue Teddy Bear” is exactly that. It represents the symbol of the new norm, one which helps generate a sustained social movement against child sexual abuse/incest. The Blue Teddy Bear (BTB) symbol was not initially designed for this purpose. However, it potential for bringing people together on a cause is very high. The BTB is close to children and represents a strong symbol that tells them not to feel threatened and intimidated when reporting instances of abuse. For change to occur, community also needs to own the change. For adults the BTB is a public statement and evidence of adherence to the new norm. Hence the BTB is used an avenue for mobilizing children, parents, citizen, government, communities and society in general

The “Blue Teddy Bear”
The BTB involves much more than giving visibility to the “coordinated shift” toward a new norm. It is a form of recognition that the group has adopted the new norm.

In concrete terms it means that the groups:
- Care about children well-being
- Share a common understanding on childhood
- Know what constitutes incest and other forms of child sexual abuse
- Is able to recognize the signs of abuse
- Know what to do in case of abuse (where to report etc.)
- Will take action and break the silence around child sexual abuse

As argued by C. Bicchieri, “Without normative beliefs, empirical expectations, and conditional preferences for conformity by a sufficient percentage of individuals in a population, no norm will survive”. The BTB symbol helps address these challenges. The BTB is intended to be displayed in different forms (pins, banners, seals, etc.). It is crucial to the creation of the new norm as it triggers it. When seeing the symbol, people will recognize that: 1) the norm exists and is applied in that specific context i.e. neighbourhood, school, hospital, community location etc. (contingency condition); 2) that people in that context

13 See Mockus, p. 19
prefers (or will) follow the norm i.e. they will report any suspicious acts or signs of sexual abuse and incest because (conditional preferences) because a) they believe most people in their group follow the norm (empirical expectations) and that b) they believe that most people in their group expect them to follow the norm (normative expectations). In other words, if they see something they will speak up because they know this is what others will do and that this is expected from them and are prepared to sanction violations.

It is not enough for the community (individuals or institutions) to display the BTB, what’s important is the belief that the group shared a common understanding and will act. This is what must be recognised by the community. Although there is a risk involved in keeping the BTB free from any form of “certifying” requirements, this risk disappears once the group reaches the appropriate threshold. In that case, as it is about a “norm creation”– the threshold must be high, meaning there must be a critical mass of followers.

**Building Trust/Common understanding**

Trust and common understanding are necessary to guarantee a collective decision to follow a social norm. The Study on “Child Sexual Abuse in the Eastern Caribbean” conducted between 2008 and 2009 by researchers from the University of Huddersfield is considered a landmark study since not only was it the first time that a comprehensive investigation of child sexual abuse had been carried out across several Caribbean countries, it was unique because it was underpinned by the philosophy that policy and programmes for dealing with child sexual abuse should be relevant to the cultural and social context in which abuse occurs. A key aspect of the ethical imperative for the study was the establishment of National Response Teams for each country. These teams comprised volunteer counselors whose role was to support persons affected by the psychological impact of the study and to facilitate the follow up of concerns revealed during the process regarding children at risk of child sexual abuse. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, the action oriented research project was specially meant to break the silence on the taboo subject of child sexual abuse/incest. The project conducted by the University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus adopted participatory processes which involve key actions and opinions leaders and was successful in from the initial stage to bring network together. For the rest of the Caribbean, it is hoped that similar action oriented research could be done lead by renowned universities.

One of the aims of these studies was not only to raise awareness on child sexual abuse/incest but also generate public outrage against this phenomenon and motive people to change behavior. This is indeed important in the creation of new norm. The group first needs to be aware of the existence of the problem; have a common perception of the “punishments” and “rewards”. This is what will lead them to a coordinate game where “interests are convergent”

**VI) Organised diffusion – Strategy of implementation**

**Child-Friendly Initiative: It matters where we start**

Schools play an important role in transmitting new knowledge. In terms of protecting children, schools also facilitate information and advice. Many countries in the Caribbean are engaged in Child-friendly school initiatives. The Child-Friendly educational system and

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15 Adele D. Jones, Ena Trotman Jemmott, 2009 University of Huddersfield
16 Harvard University (possibility for the research in Haiti)
17 Schelling, Interdependent decision p. 86
schools developed by UNICEF is characterized as "inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, effective with children, and involved with families and communities - and children" (Shaeffer, 1999). Within this framework, schools not only must help children realize their right to a basic education of good quality. They are also needed to do many other things — help children learn what they need to learn to face the challenges of the new century; enhance their health and well-being; guarantee them safe and protective spaces for learning, free from violence and abuse; raise teacher morale and motivation; and mobilize community support for education.

As stated by Valente\textsuperscript{18} in many cases, it may be beneficial to identify groups in the network and create behaviour programs implemented by or in the group. Because of the small populations of most of the Caribbean countries\textsuperscript{19}, schools are a good place to start to be able to reach a critical mass and stimulate "coordinated behaviour" and help the norm become self-sustaining.

\textsuperscript{18} Social Networks and Health, Thomas Valente, p 209
\textsuperscript{19} Except for Jamaica (around 3 millions) and Haiti (10 millions)
Reorganizing the network – Connecting all the dots

Like real bridges, child friendly schools provide the path for reorganizing the network, building this critical mass of followers and diffusing the information from one group to the other.

VII) Re-categorizing the situation

“Social norms are embedded into scripts” (C. Bicchieri, p. 137); once a situation is categorized as being of a certain type, a script is activated that will involve players’ interlocking roles. By modifying the scripts and re-categorizing the situation, it is possible to change what is supposed to happen and the interactions between the individuals. In the case of child sexual abuse/incest, a change of script consists of modifying the role played by perpetrators, victims and family members (i.e. bystanders) by keeping them in a more positive framework and providing them with opportunity to discuss and deliberate and gradually introduce common shared values. Several schemas/initiatives could be implemented to achieve this:

- **Fathers for daughters**
  Geared towards fathers and teen daughters, the program’s goals are to deepen personal relationship and create open environment for dialogue and affirmation. The program is also aimed at enhancing fathers’ ability to protect their child from violence, exploitation of abuse, by building trust and self-esteem of both fathers and daughters, reducing the risk of sexual abuse/incest.

- **Good touch bad touch**
  This is an initiative targeting school children (from kinder to secondary school) and enabling them to recognize the signs of abuse, violence and exploitation and know what to do, whom they can trust. Good-Touch/Bad Touch is a body safety program, which teaches our children a very comfortable way to talk about very sensitive problems. The program aims at informing children on concepts to help lessen their vulnerability to abuse: For instance:
  - Touch can be good, bad, or confusing
  - Children can say “No” to touches they don’t like
Children can tell a trusted adult if they ever have a problem with sexual abuse or other confusing touches.

Other programs with the similar objectives are:

- Men to men initiative (Trinidad and Tobago)
- “I am Belize” (Belize)

The creation of the new norm has to be accompanied by other strategic interventions:

- Empowerment children, particularly girls (through art-based interventions)
- Strengthening the legal system
  - Protocols and Self-enforcing reporting mechanism

Very few countries in the region have referral mechanisms or protocols for monitoring and reporting cases of child abuse or other similar mechanisms that can strengthen the potential for detecting child violence and abuse and improving their access to justice. In countries such as Belize, protocols for referral of violence and abuse cases for primary and secondary school teachers have substantively improved the attention to children victims of child abuse.

- Enforcement mechanism (Justice system)
  - Child sensitive justice system (burden of proof)

Gesell Chambers can dramatically reduce the chances of both types of re-victimization of children. Gesell Chambers are single interview rooms for attending victims of sexual abuse and allow children to testify in private, more comfortable spaces outside of intimidating, formal courts. In these chambers, the victims are interviewed by a psychologist in a session that is observed by members of the justice system. With these chambers, all necessary testimonial witnesses agree to meet one time, immediately after the report is filed. The child also does not need to repeat his/her story multiple times and this also reduces the interview process time. The witnesses observe from behind one-way glass a single interview between the victim and a child psychologist. The child is far less intimidated and more likely to open up without various people in the same room. If a medical exam is required, the child is taken to another room within the very same facility and all tests are completed from this one exam, eliminating multiple humiliating visits to the hospital and doctor's office.

- Strengthening of Child Protection System
  - Therapeutic (attention)
  - Protection (ex.: helpline and Inter-country reporting mechanism)

In recent years, child helplines have emerged as an effective Child Protection tool to help ensure children’s needs and concerns are acknowledged and met. In Trinidad and Tobago, the ChildLine offers the only national helpline service dedicated exclusively to the welfare of children. The majority of calls received were for sexual exploitation, rape, incest, physical and psychological violence, neglect and abandonment.

Inter-country reporting mechanism and other reporting system (using technologies, cellphone etc.) are good options for many countries in the region to counter the challenges of underreporting due in part of the challenges related to their small populations (everybody knows everybody):

- Open/Public debates - Social Campaign
- High level events (with Head of States and using celebrities such as Rihanna\textsuperscript{20}, Machel Montano\textsuperscript{21} etc.)

\textsuperscript{20} Rihanna – singer from Barbados (a victim of domestic violence)
\textsuperscript{21} Machel Montano is a famous soca singer, record producer and songwriter from Trinidad and Tobago.
VIII) Measuring change

Monitoring change on the occurrence of sexual abuse/incest is complicated. This can however be done by conducting knowledge, Attitude and Practice surveys (looking at attitudes, beliefs, and expectations) and by tracking reporting of cases of child sexual abuse over time.