

LAUNCHING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

A community of practice, is a term coined by Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave, has been defined, in the article 'Communities of Practice', simply as a

'...[group] of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly' (Wenger, 2006, p1).

There are three characteristics which make up a community of practice: domain, community and practice. The domain is the common interest and activity that unites the different people that make up the community. The community is the development of those relationships through effective communication. The practice is the desired result of the community coming together to share ideas and experiences based on their mutual concern. When each of these elements exists, we have a community of practice.

Our coming together today should result in a community of practice on the street child, if we each actively strive to learn from each other.

AGREEMENT OF BEST PRACTICES

It should therefore be our desire to complete the day with agreement of best practices to implement in our various areas of work. For this outcome to be derived, the day's activities must be purposefully coordinated. We therefore encourage as much consultation and communication prior to the day as possible, so that when we come together, our time and resources will be effectively spent.

To consider best practices, you will need to reflect on your work, and the usual approaches you have adopted to common issues. Are they reactive or proactive, defensive or preventative, evidenced-based or emotionally driven... This honest reflection will enable each of us to come ready to share our experiences and challenges and make recommendations for best practices.



It is just as important to get the children's views... They can inform our practice

FAIR LIFE AFRICA FOUNDATION AT KURAMO BEACH

IDENTIFYING ISSUES AND CONCRETE SOLUTIONS

While a best practice model guides us on how to approach and deal with common situations in everyday practice, there is a need to locate the underlying issues and find solutions collectively. Someone once said, 'the first step to solving a problem is admitting that there is one'. I think the second would be in identifying where the problem is located, and dealing with the root (cause) and not the branches (evidence) of the problem.

The third outcome for the Street Child Awareness Seminar is therefore the identifying and resolution of issues. Through group work, participants from various organizations will discuss a specified subject area and its related topics, with the aim of presenting concrete solutions to the gathering. There will be responsibilities and duties for specific organizations or governmental institutions. There will be a need for creating awareness among the general public. There will also be a need to draft and implement a communiqué for professionals.

STREET CHILD AWARENESS SEMINAR

DISCUSSIONS ON THE CHILD

SERIES TWO

10/05/2011

THE GIRL CHILD

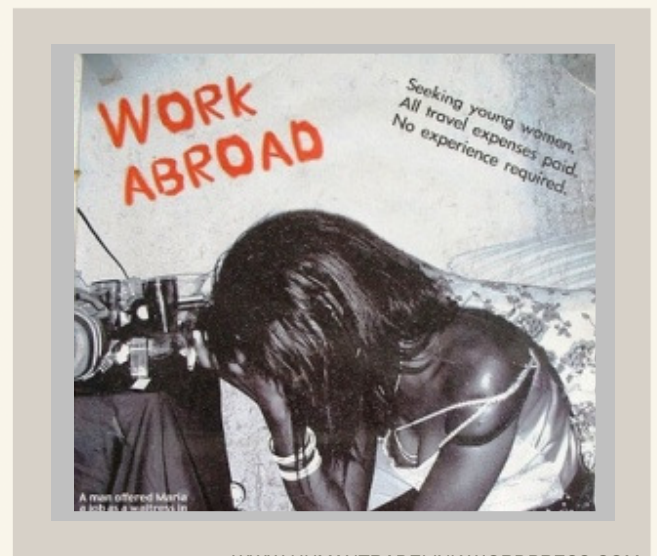
PROSTITUTION, DRUGS, TRAFFICKING, TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND THE SALE OF BABIES

Prostitution is regarded as the world's oldest trade, and normalized by those who make a very good living out of exploiting others. The sex industry is one of the most profitably industries in the world now, and the girl child is the human sacrifice for such 'prosperity'. The age old argument as to whether it is a viable profession or oppressed servitude continues. Efforts to promote the liberty of those who may make the 'choice', often leave the enslaved further neglected.

The girl child is a very vulnerable human being, and once victimized, she can lose her sense of self and dignity, resulting in low self esteem. Sexual abuse is a well known pathway to prostitution. It can have a grooming effect, by first stripping the girl of private ownership of her body, and then her mind, when the fight for control is lost repeatedly. The link between prostitution and drugs is closer still. **Drugs** are used by predators to keep prostituted girls dependent on easy money, and hence the lifestyle of selling sex.

Trafficking can often predate sexual abuse and prostitution, and a more notable pathway to this entrapment is poverty. Rural young girls are tricked by members of their own community, who may have received a settlement, into following strangers abroad, with the promise of employment.

"It can have a grooming effect, by first stripping the girl of private ownership of her body, and then her mind, when the fight for control is lost repeatedly".



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THREE BARRIERS TO CHANGE

- **Poverty.** There is no denying that poverty is one of, if not, the root cause of prostitution. It causes people to do unthinkable things; such as a mother selling her child to traffickers so that the family can cope. The lure of 'easy riches' causes yesterday's victim to become today's predator, as ex-trafficked girls return to recruit new slaves into the industry.
- **Demand.** It will be virtually impossible to end the sex trade without addressing the demand for it. It is often something people do not want to think about, much less talk about. Some have even gone so far as to say that prostitution minimizes rape in society, as if to say that men have a right to women's bodies - *for sale or by force*.
- **Corruption.** In a society where bribery is commonplace and people can pay their way out of justice, the law has little power. The issue of corruption must be addressed. It is hard to swim against the tide alone, but that must be our determination; to stand for justice and truth. However, if we can find an association with like-minded people, then we have a greater chance of making an impact.

THE GIRL CHILD IS A PRICELESS TREASURE.

A trafficked child is essentially a child sold into slavery, and for girls, this is usually sex slavery as well as domestic servitude. Should they fall pregnant from their many sexual duties, they are either forced to endure abortion, or made to forsake their babies to the will of their masters. These babies may be retained or sold to other slave owners.

What is even more awful is **the phenomenon of selling babies** to desperate people seeking to adopt, by those who are supposedly supporting these child mothers! The work of these treacherous people cuts at the foundation of trust genuine charitable bodies seek to build with these young girls and with the community at large, as they intervene in their lives.

These practices and abuses against the girl child make them the hidden street population. Where they are visible, they are hard to reach, as they usually refuse to engage, either due to fear of pimps, dependence on drugs or lack of trust in human kindness. However, their hardened state requires our persistent efforts. They need to know that there is a way out, which starts with the mind.

To deny the child's agency is to rob them of what they still have. However victimised a child has been, their ability to reason and power to choose, should be acknowledged and promoted. Interventions with street girls need to therefore tap into the power of the mind. It is also true that some girls turn to the streets in search of liberty, where there are cultural or family expectations on them. The question is posed: in cases where we realise that a choice was made to leave home, to sell sex and to take drugs, how can we intervene in a non-judgemental way? When all else is lost, let there be unconditional positive regard.

STREET CHILD AWARENESS SEMINAR

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NIGERIA NETWORK OF NGOS

A Multi-Agency Forum to Discuss and Strategize on a Deep-Rooted Phenomenon

Thanks to our sponsors

(Individual sponsors include Mrs Orehime Iwuagwu, Mr Adefemi Adelekan, Mrs Folaseto Akin-Olugbade)



WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT...

The street child phenomenon is not peculiar to Nigeria, neither to Africa alone. It is a global problem, and every society where it rears its awful head must strategically, and unrelentingly, oppose it. This can only happen when all stakeholders and concerned citizens recognize that there is a problem, and resolve to commit their efforts and resources to eliminating it.

FAIR LIFE AFRICA FOUNDATION

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FAIR LIFE AFRICA OBJECTIVES

- To enrich the lives of the most impoverished in society;
- To support and empower the most vulnerable members of society, enabling them to live a fair life;
- To effect positive changes in their lives through social initiatives and programs.

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING
PART IN THIS EVENT TO
COLLABORATE FOR
CHANGE**

**Please leave feedback and keep in
touch!**