

## Action!

The grown ups responsible for protecting children in the camp will get together and discuss what you said in the report. They will put together a plan of action to make children's lives in the camp better. Remember to ask about this plan.

## Children have rights!

It is important to remember that children have rights. Have you heard of the Convention on the Rights of the Child? This is an international agreement to make sure that the rights of children are protected. Almost all of the countries in the world have agreed to create laws to protect children's rights. Zimbabwe has signed this convention, which means that the government has promised to make sure children in this country, including refugee children are safe from all types of violence.

It was good that you told us about the problems in your camp, because now the grown ups know what is needed to make sure your rights are respected.

# You told us about your lives!



A report-back to children involved in the participatory assessment on refugee children's views of violence

**Tongogara Refugee Camp, Zimbabwe**

March 2007



## Dear children and young people

Do you remember that some people from UNHCR, World Vision and the Government organised art workshops and had discussions with you? Do you remember us talking together about your lives and the problems you face in the camp? What you told us was very interesting and very useful too! We gave the report to many different people in Zimbabwe and at the camp. These people were very interested in the report. The staff at the camp and at the UNHCR Office have talked about things they could do to solve some of these problems. This may take some time, and we cannot promise that things will change immediately. But it is good that more people now know what happens to children living at Tongogara. Well done, and thank you for telling your stories!

**The report we wrote is very long because you told us lots of things, so we have written a short report here for you to read.**

## What the report says about problems children face in your area

Children walking to the primary school are chased by Zimbabwean boys on the way to school. These boys sometimes beat children and also touch them all over. Children in the primary school get punished because they do not have covers on their books. The punishments are sometimes beatings and sometimes digging in the garden. Some teachers also say bad things about refugee children when they punish you. Young people in the secondary school are also punished with beatings or by digging and cutting trees, and they miss lessons while doing this.

Young people in the secondary school worry about the quality of the teaching they are getting. They worry that they will not pass the Form 4 exams, and about missing lessons when they have to work on the farms.

Children report that many adults get drunk at the bars in the camp and then shout and beat children. This is a problem for boys who are sent to the shop. Some boys are even sent to the bars to buy beer for adults.

Older girls and boys have to work very hard and do not always have time to do their homework after school. When the electricity breaks down girls have to fetch firewood. You do not like this as it is heavy work and there are sometimes men and boys who chase you in the bush.

Overcrowded homes and broken taps, pumps and toilets are also a problem. Sometimes you have problems at the clinic and at the hospital in Chipinge, when people do not help you with your health problems.

Orphans have a more difficult life in the camp than other children because they do not have adults to give them advice or help them get what they need. Some foster parents beat children.



## How you protect yourselves

You try to walk in groups to keep safe, even though this does stop boys from chasing you on the way to school.

You know that education is an important step toward building your future.

You enjoy taking part in the activities that take place at the camp, such as choirs, sports teams and drama groups.



## These are some suggestions you made for making things better for children in the camp

We do not want corporal punishment.

We want the teachers to love us and treat us well. If there is no love we cannot learn well.

The leaders in the (refugee) community and parents need to talk about ways of solving the problem of the boys who harass us on the way to school.

Parents and older children need jobs so girls do not have to sell sex for money. This will reduce pregnancy.

We need more exercise books for school so we do not get punished. The books should be distributed at the camp office.

We think the quality of education at the secondary school could be improved if some refugees were employed there.

The water taps that are not working should be fixed so that we don't have to go outside the camp for water and risk being attacked.

We want peace with locals so they do not bring cattle in our fields and chase children on their way to school.

We need more medicines in the clinic and special care for children with disabilities or special medical needs.

We think there should be a meeting between teachers and parents to discuss how working on the farms instead of learning affects our education.

