

COUNTING PENNIES

A review of OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Impact: Democratic Republic of Congo



“Now I’m able to safely denounce abuse that’s done to my peers and to be sure that perpetrators are punished. This will contribute to our protection.”

Nicole, Child Parliament President

ENDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

“Imagine yourself: In the evening, you go back home. You find your daughter of two years crying. She is totally desperate, trying to wipe away her tears, and you learn that she has been raped by your own brother, her uncle”.

This is the story of the parent of a child rape survivor. In the east of the DRC, these stories are too numerous.

A project financed by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in Beni Town supported a wide range of stakeholders to strengthen their knowledge of child protection and sexual violence laws. Beneficiaries included Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and networks, Children Clubs (CCs), child protection police, health workers, teachers, traditional leaders, faith leaders, child-mandated institutions, and child parliament members.

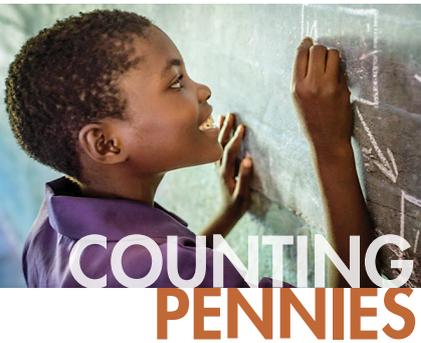
As a result, Children Clubs designed and led a project through which they established a complaint mechanism, implemented in four schools in Beni Town. This project supported stakeholders to strengthen their skills in terms of monitoring and referring child abuse cases and connect them with the judicial system: the police for investigations, and lawyers to bring offenders to trial.

Thanks to this investment, children can bring their abusers to justice and can access the care they need in the aftermath of the abuse.

MEET NATASHA, CHILD SURVIVOR

“I was sexually abused by a boy I knew from the village. After the rape I denounced him to the neighbourhood chief who linked me with the child parliament. The child parliament filed an accusation with the police. When the boy knew the police was looking for him, he ran





away. Fortunately he was arrested after three months and brought to trial where he was convicted. Even if he is not able to compensate me for this act, I'm glad he is punished. For me it is already a solace."

Twenty-six cases of child abuse have been brought to court. Seven out of these cases were for sexual violence, three of which have already resulted in a successful ruling against perpetrators. Punishments have included a minimum sentence of five years in prison, as well as reparation and compensation fines.

Throughout this process, children have demonstrated their capacity to lead a monitoring process, and to influence adults and leaders in their communities. Equipped with the necessary skills and connections, child survivors become the main agents of change in their villages.

Beni Town community will support other communities to replicate this approach aiming to replicate it across the country.

Official development assistance (ODA) investment helps children across the world by preventing and addressing violence against children. But this is not enough to end the problem. Imagine what can be done if we increase investments.

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