

INSTITUTIONS THAT CAN BE CONTACTED

Talking to someone who empathises and understands will help you feel better and appreciated. Apart from the Department of Social Welfare, there are other voluntary and independent organisations and agencies that can offer you the assistance, support and counselling you need. **For any allegation, evidence or prevention contact the responsible local authorities, like the children's department of the police or municipality. Or contact:**

Child Protection Alliance (CPA)

Booster Extension, Fajara Atlantic South, Bakau
— (+220) 4498154

BAFROW

214 Tafsir Demba Mbye Street, Tobacco Road,
Banjul — (+220) 4225270 / 4201789 / 4223471

GAMCOTRAP (Gambia Committee on Harmful
Traditional Practices)

49 Garba Jahumpa Road, Bakau New Town —
(+220) 4497416

Department of Social Welfare (DSW)

Marina Parade, Banjul — (+220) 4228843 /
4227338

Regionally distributed by:

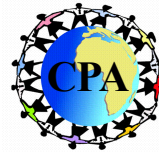
SAJUKA Working Children and Youth Organisation

Barra Point, North Bank Region

(+220) 7834340

also available for more information

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CHILD PROTECTION ALLIANCE

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CHILD PROTECTION ALLIANCE

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Studies in The Gambia have proven that sexual abuse and exploitation of children is happening in our society. Although the majority of the children who are sexually abused and exploited are girls, boys are also victims. Even babies can also be sexually abused.

Fighting child sexual abuse and exploitation is not an easy work, but with the help of this brochure and other resources, and with the support of the family and members of the society, we would be able to protect a lot of children.

WHAT IS IT?

WHAT YOU CAN DO?

TAKE A LOOK INSIDE AND LEARN MORE!



**“Protect Our
Children”**



WHAT IS IT? WHO DOES IT? WHAT CAN I DO?

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

Child sexual abuse is any sexual exploitation of a child under the age of eighteen years for the sexual pleasure or profit of an adult or much older person.

Child sexual abuse includes penetration or attempted penetration of the child's vagina or anus, encouraging a child to witness sexual intercourse, exposing genitals to a child, fondling a child's genitals, masturbating the child or the child masturbating the adult, exposing children to pornography or allowing children to be used for pornographic purposes, taking indecent photographs of children, or encouraging children to become prostitutes. It may be a single incident or may occur over a number of years.

WHO SEXUALLY ABUSES CHILDREN?

It is not just strangers who sexually abuse children. *Most children who are abused know their abuser.* Abusers include parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents, teachers, family friends, brothers and sisters, carers and minders. Perpetrators can also be travellers, especially in cities and towns which serve as an inter-regional hub. Sometimes, travellers do seek to have sex with children. Especially those who are out on the streets and public areas often.

HOW COMMON IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

Due to various factors, cases of child sexual abuse are not often reported. However, child sexual abuse does exist and many children need help and protection.

Children do not often report sexual abuse against them, because they may have been threatened, asked to keep silent or made to feel ashamed and guilty. They may also be afraid of what will happen to their family, or that no one

IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AN OFFENCE?

Child sexual abuse is a criminal offence and the abuser should be prosecuted and imprisoned. Laws such as the Children's Act 2005, Tourism Offences Act 2003, and the Criminal Code have stiff penalties for anyone who sexually abuse or exploit a child in The Gambia.

IS IT OKAY NOT TO REPORT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

To keep silent about child abuse is illegal and wrong. Reporting cases of child abuse is the surest way of ensuring that our children grow up in an atmosphere of love and safety.

WHO SHOULD PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL ABUSE?

It is the obligation of all of us to protect children from abuse and exploitation. Primarily it is the duty of the parents and those in authority over the child. The State will intervene to protect



children if parents and adults fail in their duty.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE ON A CHILD?

Sexual abuse sometimes causes physical injury and often leaves emotional scars on the child. People who have been sexually abused can feel worthless, unlovable, betrayed, powerless, confused, frightened and mistrustful of others. They might feel that the abuse is their fault. Talking to somebody who can be trusted can help children feel better.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A CHILD TELLS SOMEONE ABOUT BEING ABUSED?

Children often find it difficult to tell an adult that they are being abused. They may feel that it is their fault, and may be worried about the consequences of telling; they may not be believed and trusted; the family may be given a bad name; or their parents may get in trouble.

However, the child may feel able to talk to another member of their family, or an adult who is caring, supportive and friendly. Often families can protect and help children themselves. Children may not choose to speak to someone outside their family, for example a teacher or youth leader or a friend. *They can also ring the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) or the Child Protection*