

Action!

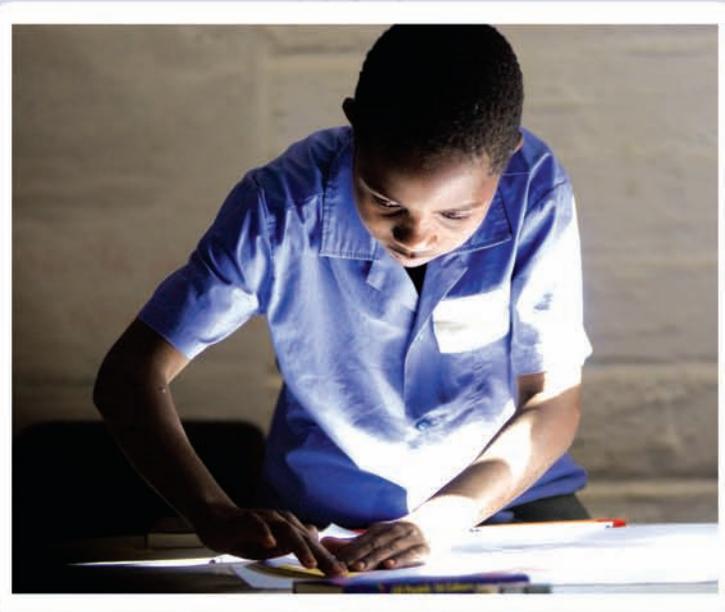
The grown ups responsible for protecting children in the camp will get together and discuss what you said in the report. They will put together a plan of action to make children's lives in the camp better. Remember to ask about this plan.

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. Namibia 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

Osire Refugee Camp, Namibia

June 2007



Dear children and young people

Do you remember that some people from UNHCR, AHA, JRS, 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 Namibia 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 Osire. 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

Young children are afraid to walk around the camp because of drunken adults. Some men get drunk and then come home and beat their wives and children. Older children (mostly boys) said that many teenagers drank or took drugs and this made them fight with boys and girls and even teachers. Children were worried that these boys would influence them or hurt them.

Children told us about being beaten at home, sometimes for small things. Children say they know that sometimes they need to be punished, but that they would rather adults talk to them and find out their side of the story before beating.

Young and older boys sometimes steal in order to get money for gambling.

Girls give sex for money because they need food and clothes. Children thought that this happened more often to children living alone.

Younger and older children worried about the high rate of teenage pregnancy. They thought that if parents advised children and listened to them this could be reduced.

Children and young people said they were happy with school though sometimes teachers do not show children respect. Many children at Osire live without their parents; this is a problem as they do not have anyone to advise them.

They felt that these children were more likely to drink and take drugs or get pregnant.

Some young people give up hope about getting to Grade 11 and 12 because they know they do not have money to pay to go to school outside the camp. Young people felt this was one reason for children dropping out of school and for taking drugs and alcohol to forget their problems.



How you protect yourselves

You feel safe at home and at school and try to walk in groups to keep safe. You know that education is an important thing to help your future. You enjoy going to school.

You enjoy being part of the choirs, sports teams and other groups that are in the camp.

The Osire Boys Club and Osire Girls Club are an important place for you to learn and also to find the skills you need.



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

We want those in authority to reduce alcohol and drug abuse by stopping illegal practises such as brewing beer, selling alcohol to underage children and selling drugs.

We want parents, community leaders and other adults to talk about the problem of substance abuse with each other and with us.

We also asked for parents to communicate more with their children. We suggest that NGOs in the camp could run parenting courses to help parents with this.

It is important to respect and obey our parents but we would also like our parents to talk more and beat less.

We want more income generation projects for adults and young people and feel this would stop girls selling sex for money and give boys hope.

Though we enjoy the recreational activities that do exist, we ask for more recreational activities such as cultural and sports programmes.

We also want for more education about HIV and AIDS.

