

# JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN TRUST ZIMBABWE

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TITLE : How can in Country advocacy effort  
for children better be supported by  
the International Community

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **WHO IS JCT AND WHY?**

- **Lawyers for children registered with Zimbabwe High Court.**
- **Providing free legal services to disadvantaged children.**
- **Children face legal issues due to political, economic and social environment.**
- **Children legal issues previously bundled with women issues**
- **State free legal services not adequate for general populace worse children**

# THE LEGAL ISSUES EMERGING AS A RESULT OF HIV AND AIDS

- Birth Registration
- Child Inheritance
- Confidentiality and the law
- Children in conflict with the law
- Child sexual abuse e.g rape, sodomy
- Guardianship, access and custody

# HOW DO WE GET OUR ADVOCACY ISSUES

- JCT provides legal services, education and facilitate law and policy reform
- Recurrent problems are identified from Legal Aid case work, data extracted from the database, Legal Education educational activities
- Consultations with stakeholders through capacity building workshops and meetings

# OUR ADVOCACY ISSUES

## ➤ Birth Registration

### ❖ Children are not registered due to

1. Lack of knowledge on the importance of Birth Registration.
2. Unfriendly legal and administrative procedures in view of HIV and AIDS
3. Lack of proper implementation of existing laws by duty bearers

# ADVOCACY ISSUES CONT

## Child Inheritance

- Existing law protects the surviving spouse.
- It assumed that children would be protected by the surviving spouse
- Due to HIV and Aids protection should target the family including children
- Children's interest at stake as parents fail to plan
- This legal framework came before HIV and AIDS had become problematic

# OUR ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

- ▶ Education to media, public, beneficiaries, policy makers and collaborators
- ▶ Litigation general and test case
- ▶ Use of role models
- ▶ Collaboration and networking
- ▶ Research
- ▶ Negotiation and dialogue



# PUBLIC EDUCATION AS A WAY OF IDENTIFYING ADVOCACY ISSUES





# USE OF ROLE MODELS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION





# Networking and collaboration



# CONSTRAINTS IN DEALING WITH ADVOCACY ISSUES

- Legal Context
  - ❖ Limited legal literacy of national, laws, policies ,regional and international instruments
  - ❖ Lack of respect of laws and policies by GVTS
  - ❖ Create communities that refuse to respect these laws and policies
  - ❖ Legal literacy of national laws and regional and international instruments.
  - ❖ A judiciary system that is partisan

# CONSTRAINTS IN DEALING WITH ADVOCACY ISSUES

- Political and economic context
- ❖ Lack of political will by GVT to allocate resource to implementation of policies
- ❖ Some laws and policies are developed for political mileage
- ❖ The operating space for advocacy is not conducive
- ❖ The political climate in Zimbabwe has taken prior
- ❖ No resource allocation for implementation of legislation hence no accountability

# CONSTRAINTS IN DEALING WITH ADVOCACY ISSUES

- ▶ Social and Cultural Context
  - ❖ Non harmonization of culture and the law
  - ❖ Children's right to make decisions/contribute is regarded as disrespect for elders in a family setup/community
  - ❖ Breakdown of the social protection nets for children e.g. non functional social services



# CONSTRAINTS IN DEALING WITH ADVOCACY ISSUES

## Funding for advocacy

- ❖ Funding partners normally concerned about number of people reached and tangible results e.g. building a dam
- ❖ Advocacy is a process that only produces results over a long period of time yet most donor contracts range between 1 to 3 years thus the contract ends whilst one is still building relationships that are necessary for advocacy

# CONSTRAINTS IN DEALING WITH ADVOCACY ISSUES

- ❖ Funding usually allocated to initiate national responses though it is critical to support national advocacy work through regional and international initiatives to put pressure on the Nation to uphold certain rights brought about by the policy/legislation
- ❖ Limited funds allocated whilst when advocating for children's rights there is need for adequate resource allocation because mobilization of the target audience to become active agents of change is only achievable when they are equipped with the knowledge and skills on issues affecting them



# CONCLUSION

- Bringing change of attitudes, practices, policies and laws is an important need to improve the lives of children
- There is therefore need for long term support to build capacity of: beneficiaries, duty bearers, policymakers
- Zimbabwe went through this process in domestic violence
- Long term support will deliver home grown policies that encompass regional and international standards
- If support takes into account the aforesaid issues then children's lives will improve

# THANK YOU

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