

# Understanding Community and Service Providers Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on Child Sexual Abuse in Malawi

MacBain Mkandawire - Youth Net and Counselling, Malawi,  
Ewenat Gebrehanna, ACIPH, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Asmeret Mogos ACIPH, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Yemane Berhane ACIPH, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

# Background and Introduction

- Child Sexual Abuse in Malawi is high with limited services as it is entrenched in the cultural settings
- Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO) is implementing a Learning Without Fear project that has a component addressing CSA.
- The research provided an opportunity to evaluate the LWF project which seeks to reduce violence against children in schools and communities

# Study Objective

To assess if there is a change in community and service providers' knowledge, attitudes and practices around child sexual abuse after the implementation of the Learning without Fear project

# Methods

- **Study Area**
  - Zomba, Balaka and Mangochi districts in Malawi where YONECO operates
- **Study Design included qualitative and quantitative methods**
- **Field workers were trained using WHO guidelines for GBV research**

# Methods - Qualitative

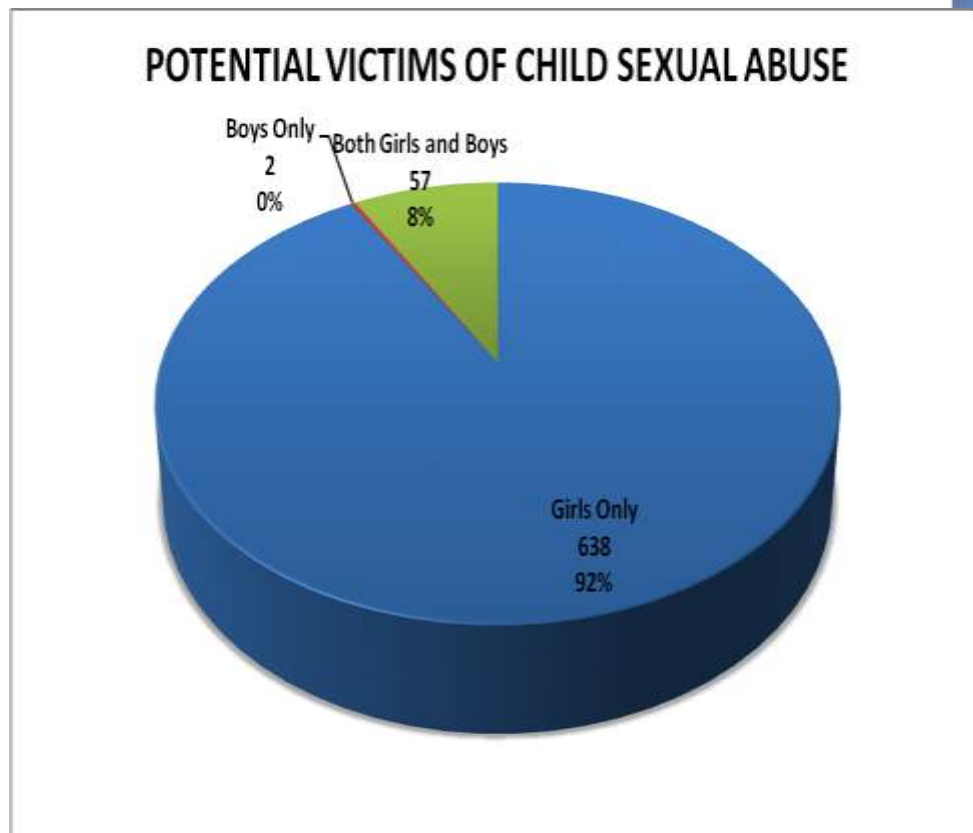
- 30 Key informant interviews with police, social services, community leaders (including church leaders and local chiefs)
- 12 FGDs with community members
- Data from the FGDs and KII were transcribed and analysed using the open code
- The results for the Qualitative Study do not form part of the presentation today

# Methods: Quantitative

- A community household survey will be conducted at baseline and end-line of the LWF intervention
- A two stage cluster sampling was used to identify households.
- One adult per household
- A structured questionnaire was administered to 896 individuals (595 women and 271 men, aged 18 and older) at baseline

# Awareness about CSA

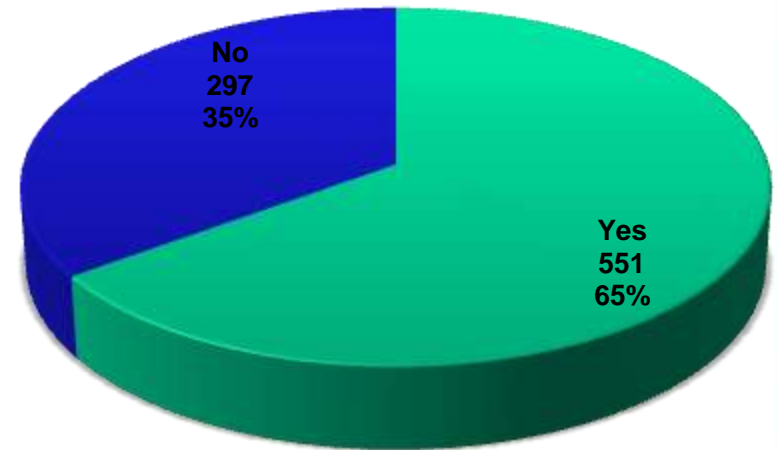
- **Awareness on existence of CSA is high with belief that only girls are CSA victims**
  - Awareness about CSA was 84.8 %.
  - Majority (91.6%) of the respondents believe that only girls are victims of CSA



# Access to CSA information by children is low

- Just over half (57.3 %) adults reported that children have access to CSA information.
- The most important CSA information source was family discussion.
- More than half (65%) parents discuss CSA with their children.

## PARENTS DISCUSS ABOUT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE WITH THEIR CHILDREN





# Perceptions of CSA

- The most recognized forms of CSA are sexual penetration (98%), insertion of an object in the genital (93.6%) and fondling a child (90.2%).
- Other forms of CSA were not recognized e.g. looking at a child's genitalia (52.5%) and showing children one's sex organs were least classified as CSA.
- While 38.5% don't know that boys could be victims, 48.8% believe that sexually abused boys are usually homosexuals.

# Reporting and responding to CSA in the community

- Significant respondents (36.3%) agree that CSA cases are never reported.
- Shame is one of the reasons cited as a reason for not reporting.
- 3.8% and 57.4% suggested that CSA should be reported to police and health facilities respectively. 71.1% believe that perpetrators are more likely to be arrested once they are reported.
- Poor treatment by the service providers also hinder the access to services and responses from service providers

# Recommendations (1)

- Increase access to information CSA for children
  - *Need to diversify CSA information sources*
  - *improving parent-child communication skills*
- Demystifying that CSA is for girls only
  - *Create awareness that boys are also affected by CSA*
  - *Provide education that CSA has nothing to do with morals*

# Recommendation 2

- Education required on Broad CSA issues.
  - *Education and awareness programmes should tackle other forms of CSA like bad touches, pornography etc for effective support to victims*
- More work required to deal with responses and reporting of CSA
  - *Enhance programmes that will change the attitudes of services providers on CSA*
  - *Community reporting Structures needs to be enhanced as well*

# Conclusions and lessons learnt

- **Empowering Process**

- *The process provided for an opportunity for YONECO to develop skills and engage in other forms of research*

- **Emerging issues used in other programmes**

- *Emerging issues have been used to develop further and improve programmes in child protection like child helpline services*