

# Gender and development politics: A case study of Unicef's role in case handling child sexual abuse & sexual violence in South Africa

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze gender and development politics in the case of the role of UNICEF in handling cases of sexual harassment and sexual violence against children in South Africa. The high number of cases of sexual harassment and sexual violence against children in South Africa is caused by the patriarchal system, gender inequality between men and women, cultural practices, socio-economic conditions, and also the lack of education that people in South Africa have. The type of research used by researchers in this study is descriptive qualitative type and case studies using primary data sources obtained from interviews and secondary data sources obtained through literature studies. The results of this study indicate that UNICEF has carried out its role as fully as possible through the Training Manual For The Religious Sector on Child Protection program, establishing various policies and advocacy, responsive education and policies, opening up investment and providing technical support to the justice sector in preventing cases of sexual harassment and sexual violence against children, strengthening social welfare and child protection systems, and collaborating with the government and local organizations. These results indicate that UNICEF's role is not yet significant because of the inherent

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culture, socio-economic conditions and the lack of human resources owned by people in South Africa.

**Key words:** Children's Rights, Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment, UNICEF, Gender, Development

## **Género y políticas de desarrollo: El rol de la UNICEF en el manejo de casos de abuso sexual infantil y violencia sexual en Sudáfrica**

### **RESUMEN**

Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar las políticas de género y desarrollo en relación con el papel de la UNICEF en el manejo de casos de acoso y violencia sexual contra niños en Sudáfrica, fundamentalmente causado por el sistema patriarcal, la desigualdad de género entre hombres y mujeres, las prácticas culturales, las condiciones socioeconómicas y también la falta de educación en este país. El tipo de investigación es cualitativa-descriptiva y se abordaron estudios de caso utilizando fuentes de datos primarias obtenidas de entrevistas y fuentes de datos secundarias obtenidas a través de estudios de literatura especializada. Los resultados de este estudio indican que la UNICEF ha desempeñado su papel lo más plenamente posible a través del programa Manual de Capacitación para el Sector Religioso sobre Protección Infantil, estableciendo diversas políticas y promoción, educación y políticas receptivas, abriendo inversiones y brindando apoyo técnico al sistema judicial en la prevención de casos de acoso sexual y violencia sexual contra niños, fortaleciendo los sistemas de bienestar social y protección infantil, y colaborando con el gobierno y las organizaciones locales. Estos resultados indican que el papel de UNICEF aún no es significativo debido a la cultura inherente, las condiciones socioeconómicas y la falta de recursos humanos que posee la población de Sudáfrica.

**Palabras clave:** Derechos del Niño, Violencia Sexual, Acoso Sexual, UNICEF, Género, Desarrollo.

### **Introduction**

Sexual harassment and sexual assault sound like the same thing, but please know that sexual harassment is different from sexual

violence. WHO (World Health Organization) states that sexual violence is behavior that involves targeting one's genitals without consent such as forcing sexual acts to satisfy lust, sexual abuse in physical and verbal forms, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, forced pregnancy and abortion, forced contraception, sexual torture, and sexual surveillance that discriminates against two men, while sexual harassment is a nuanced act sexual both through physical and non-physical contact such as sexual harassment, indecent or seductive behavior, sexual coercion, expressions that lead to pornographic things and physical touch of sexuality that is offensive and intentional without consent (Nurhadi, 2022).

Sexual violence describes sexual activity in the form of coercion without the consent of both parties. These include sexual contact such as caresses and kisses, verbal sexual coercion, and attempted rapes or that the act is defined as vaginal or anal penetration (by the penis, other body parts, or objects) and oral sex obtained by force, threats of violence, or activities that take advantage of circumstances when the victim is paralyzed or unconscious (Holland, 2017). Things that are included in sexual violence are rape, sexual intimidation, sexual exploitation, trafficking of women for sexual purposes, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced contraception and sterilization, sexual torture, sexually nuanced in human punishment, and traditional practices with sexual nuances are some examples of sexual violence (Kalis, 2022).

Based on its form, sexual harassment is divided into 5 types, namely: Verbal in the form of inappropriate comments that offend appearance and sexual life; non-verbal such as noticing and looking at someone indecently; visual or showing pornographic content to any person; Psychic such as invitations to unwanted dates or invitations to travel that have been repeatedly declined; and physical harassment such as touching someone's limbs inappropriately (Widhawati, Yanita, & Widjaja, 2018).

Cases of human rights violations such as sexual abuse and sexual violence against children are interesting cases to be investigated because they will always have a place to develop and will occur continuously as long as humans do not obey the rules and also the social order that exists in society. In this case, the children in question are those under the age of 18 years. Sexual abuse and sexual violence against children include behaviors committed against children by adults or children older than the victim. Sexual harassment can be interpreted as behavior characterized by unwanted and inappropriate sexual comments, or sexually-oriented physical approaches carried out in

workplaces, professionals, or other social spheres (Rusyidi, Bintari, & Wibowo, 2019).

South Africa is a country located in the southern most part of the African continent. South Africa is a country that is very rich in mining materials. Please note that the mining materials produced are mining materials with very high selling value such as gold, platinum, and diamonds. Although South Africa is rich in high-value and special mining materials, it is unfortunate that the lives of the people there are not entirely prosper to us because South Africa also has its social phenomena that concern population problems, economic problems, as well as problems related to health aspects.

The social problems that exist in South Africa seem to have been inherent so it is quite difficult to overcome. Social problems that still occur today in South Africa include high unemployment rates in productive age, internal migration that still often occurs starting from local migration from province to province to international level and even migration outside the continent, the spread of diseases in society that occur due to free sex and sexual harassment and sexual violence, and the increase inhuman population in South Africa without being balanced with readiness to care for and guarantee the right to life of the next generation so that many children are neglected (Manlan, 2022).

Cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children are a crisis facing South African society today, despite efforts to curb this scourge. Sexual abuse and sexual violence against children is a legacy of South Africa's past which is exacerbated by poverty and high unemployment, and what is even more concerning in this country is how the crime has been normalized so that sexual abuse and sexual violence against children have been ignored in society (UNICEF, 2020).

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is an organization whose goal is to realize an apolitical international effort to provide a wide range of assistance to children and mothers around the world. UNICEF, like its other UN counter parts, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), emerged in 1946 because of its synchronicity with the stated goal of maintaining peace in the world as well as its commitment to focus on and resolve issues identified as essential to the survival of children and mothers at the end of World War II (Morris, 2015).

Historian Paul Kennedy argues that UNICEF played a very noble role in the overall UN mission, noting that its main focus was on social, cultural, and environmental issues. UNICEF launched its operation to provide temporary emergency relief to children and mothers displaced

and harmed by war, and tackle one of the most pressing social issues of our time. UNICEF then continued its existence beyond its original end date of 1950 by continuing to address social, cultural, and environmental issues that hinder children's well-being, including hunger relief, disease prevention, and relief assistance for children and mothers in disaster-stricken areas (Morris,2015).

Given that cases of sexual abuse and cases of sexual violence against children in South Africa are cases of violations of children's rights, the international organization referred to here is UNICEF. UNICEF is an international organization that has an important role in handling this case, so in this study, researchers are interested in exploring more deeply the extent to which UNICEF performs its function to help overcome problems that usurp children's rights, especially the problem of sexual abuse and violence against children in South Africa.

The research method used in this study is qualitative. These types and types of research are qualitative descriptive and case studies. The sources and data collection techniques used are primary data sources obtained through interviews, and secondary data sources obtained through documentation and data collection through documents.

## **1. Result and discussion**

Children in South Africa migrate from rural to urban areas, feeling compelled by these cultural beliefs to leave their homes and families. This crime went unnoticed for quite a long time. More often than not, incidents have been reported, and charges such as statutory rape and kidnapping are brought against perpetrators, without authorities knowing they constitute human trafficking offences.

Government officials indicated that child trafficking, especially commercial sexual exploitation, increased significantly during the pandemic. South Africa is also considered a top destination for child sex tourism, although the impact of the pandemic is likely to reduced and children in South Africa are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, forced begging, and use in illicit activities. Social programs were insufficient to address the scope of child labor, and free primary education was not guaranteed by law.

Cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence in Africa are not only experienced by girls, but boys also experience it. Take South Africa where a young man was severely traumatized by sexual abuse by three women who took the boy away and raped him for days. According to official African statistics, 110 sexual assaults can be reported a day

and only 13 cases are reported to authorities. South African police recorded 40, 035 rapes a year as of March 31, 2018, with an average of 110 each day. This data is based on a 2017 report by the fact-checking organization Africa Check. This figure has increased compared to the previous year, with 39,828 rape cases recorded in 2017.

According to data obtained from literature entitled «*Rape culture in South African schools: Where it comes from and how to change it*» written by Deevia Bhanain 2021, it is explained that in August 2021 a six-year-old first grader in South Africa was raped by a public worker in her school toilet. Public shock and outrage over the onslaught on children has brought renewed attention to young girls' particular vulnerability to sexual violence. Rape and other forms of violence in and around schools reflect broader problems in the country. At a joint parliamentary meeting on gender-based violence in 2019, President Cyril Ramaphos described the sexual harassment and sexual violence crisis as a brutal war against women and girls. But despite the political and financial will to end the crisis, the problem remains widespread (Bhana, 2021).

One in five children are victims of sexual abuse in South Africa. In the 2019/2020 Annual Crime Statistics report, more than 24,000 children were sexually abused in South Africa. Statistics are not available for schools and there is much under reporting, but an estimated 22.2% of school children have been victims of violence. Such violence takes many forms and in a culture the respect for girls is lower than that of boys. In previous research, victimized girls stated that they were sexually harassed every day in class, on play grounds, and in school corridor and toilets. Part of the sexual abuse in schools experienced by children is accepted in several forms such as groping children's limbs, stroking, sexually touching body parts, catcalling, humiliating them like prostitutes, and coercive sexual practices. These girls experience violence from boys and are vulnerable to sexual advances made by male teachers at school (Bhana, 2021).

Gender and Development Politics Gender and development politics according to Farhall & Rickards (2021) is an interdisciplinary field that examine how gender intersects development processes and policies, focusing on the social, economic, and political dimensions of gender inequality. This field recognizes that gender is not just about women, but also includes roles, expectations, and power dynamics that shape the lives of women and men. By analyzing how gender impacts development outcomes, this field aims to promote more inclusive and equitable policies that meet the specific needs and experiences of different gender groups.

Gender politics and development can be defined as the study of how gender shapes and is shaped by development policies and practices. This field explore show gender roles, norms, and power relations intersect with development processes, and how these intersections affect individuals and societies. This field recognizes that gender is a social construct that affects people's access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power, and seeks to address gender inequalities generated through policy interventions and transformative change (Gammage *et al.*, 2020).

Smith and Sinkford (2022) argue that gender politics and development are very important for several reasons. First, gender inequality still exists globally, where women and girls experience discrimination and exclusion in various areas of life. Second, address in gender inequality is not only a matter of human rights and social justice but al so has significant implications for development out comes. Gender equality is closely related to poverty alleviation, economic growth, and the achievement of sustainable development goals. By integrating gender perspectives into development policies and programs, more inclusive, responsive, and effective strategies will be created to advance gender equality and improve over all development outcomes.

The current state of gender and development politics is marked by ongoing progress and challenges. Over the years, there has been significant progress in recognizing the importance of gender equality and integrating it into development agendas at global, regional, and national levels. International frame works, such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, have provided road maps for gender-responsive development (Suleman *et al.*, 2023). However, gender inequality and discriminatory practices continue to exist in many societies, hindering the achievement of gender equality and sustainable development. To achieve transformative change, efforts are needed to overcome structural barriers, promote women's empowerment, and main stream gender equality in all development sectors.

To achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in society, there needs to be a strategy to promote gender and development politics. Policy reform is one important path to take, as it involves implementing legislative and institutional changes to ensure gender mains treaming in all sectors. These reforms include laws that protect women's rights, encourage equal representation of women in decision-making positions, and build gender-responsive budgeting mechanisms. International cooperation is also very important in

promoting gender and development politics globally. With the collaboration of various actors ranging from government to civil society, international organizations can work together to address gender issues in South Africa and promote the empowerment of women and children in South Africa.

## **2. Causes of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Against Children in South Africa**

The high rate of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in one African country, South Africa, attracts public attention with various opinions and also different points of view. Some of them strongly believe that cases of sexual abuse and cases of sexual violence against children in South Africa are caused by the patriarchal system that has become a hereditary culture of South African society. The patriarchal system here means that men have power and authority over everything that dominates more than women, and women have many boundaries. With such a system, men commit acts of sexual harassment and sexual violence because they assume that they have authority and power that surpasses women. The patriarchal system is a system that has existed since time immemorial in South Africa, which is adopted by the tribes there. With this system, men have a higher position than women.

Other factors that cause the high rate of sexual harassment and sexual violence in Africa are existing social problems such as poverty, low public knowledge due to lack of education received, immoral behavior or attitudes, the appearance of African women which is used as an excuse as a trigger for the desire to commit acts of sexual harassment and violence, because they consider that the appearance of sexy South African Women is one of the intentional factors to attract the attention of the perpetrators to cause the crime (Larasati, 2019).

According to the results of a study conducted by researchers in this case, they found that the cause of the high cases of sexual abuse and cases of sexual violence against children in South Africa is not entirely due to the existing patriarchal system, but because of social problems in the form of economic problems that exist in South Africa.

According to data obtained by researchers from direct interviews with Drs. Erlangga (2023), who is the coordinator of political functions at the Indonesian Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa in 2018-2021, researchers found that the causes of sexual abuse and sexual violence cases that occur in children in South Africa are caused by several factors, namely social problems in South Africa, the patriarchal system that positions men as the highest elders of the throne, and also because

of weak public education in South Africa. Of these causative factors, Erlangga explained that the main factor is the social problems that exist in South African society.

According to Erlangga (2023), the main factor causing cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence experienced by children in South Africa is due to poor social conditions. Cases of sexual harassment and cases of sexual violence will always exist because it is part of a person's psychological psychology. Cases of sexual abuse and violence against children also sometimes occur accidentally. Social problems are indeed the main causes such as high unemployment, poverty, and also health problems.

With social problems like this, it doesn't rule out the possibility of stress on one's thinking so it causes unstable psychiatric effects. According to psychology, stressed people tend to do things that they think will be stress relievers such as venting their sexual desires. The cause of social problems in South Africa where social life is not as advanced as in other countries because their income is still relatively low so that poverty occurs every where (Erlangga, 2023).

From the results of the interview, researchers also found that the cause of sexual abuse case sand cases of sexual violence against children in South Africa is not due to weak existing laws. In South Africa the local government is very trying to overcome the problem, if there is a problem of sexual harassment and sexual violence then the perpetrator will be immediately secured by the authorities. When secured by the authorities, the perpetrators of crimes will be tried and also punished according to their actions. However, it is undeniable that the law enforcement process has not been entirely good and successful because e sometimes rehabilitation efforts carried out by the authorities do not have a deterrent effect on the perpetrators.

The patriarchal system in force in South Africa is also one of the factors causing cases of sexual abuse and cases of sexual violence against children in South Africa. The majority of perpetrators of sexual harassment and sexual violence crimes are committed by men. Culturally, men are often positioned in a stronger and higher position, in relation to women, so it can be said that the roots of violence against women lie in the patriarchal nature of South African society, because with the power possessed, the majority of men in South Africa justify the violence they perpetrate.

It also leads to gender dynamics and masculine norms that are embraced and allowed to develop within the wider society, family, community, and social and cultural context of the country. By the time boys and girls start school, they have learned that boys and girls do

not enjoy equal status in society. Prevalent cultural practices combine with patriarchy to produce aversion female power based on sexual entitlement, misogyny, and violence that limits girls' agency.

Sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in Africa are caused by gender dominance in social norms and patriarchal systems, unequal distribution of resources and power combined with social institutions that normalize gender inequality. In the name of culture, these norms govern the behaviors and attitudes that lead to stereotypes or views and also judgments of a group that bring expectations on what individuals in that group are like and how they behave, and thus they are the greatest barrier to eliminating and preventing sexual violence against two men and girls. This violence is then exacerbated by poverty and lack of income, making this case vulnerable for women as well as girls (Dhea, 2022).

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a behavior that leads to violence against individuals based on their gender, where acts of violence are carried out to make someone subordinated because of gender inequality or power between men and women. GBV can occur anywhere, both in the realm of law, social norms, beliefs or beliefs, and also discriminatory socio-cultural practices because in its application men are allowed to power and control women (Anggreini, 2023).

Gender-Based Violence is divided into 5 types, namely physical violence such as assault and murder, verbal violence such as hate speech through words and deeds, sexual violence or that often occurs such as rape, sexual harassment, abortion, mutilating female genitals and others, fourth there is psychological violence to degrade some one, such as bullying and alienation, and the fifth type of violence is in the form of socio-economic violence such as making women economically dependent on men (Anggreini, 2023).

Gender-Based Violence occurs because of socio-economic problems that exist in society. Women in South Africa generally have a higher unemployment rate than men. Women who are not employed and do not have their own economic income bear a higher risk of violence committed by a partner because of financial dependence on the abuser. This makes them vulnerable to harassment and violence as they are unable to exercise their in dependent social and economic existence outside the constraints and control of their male partner. For women who are economically dependent on men, it tends to be difficult to leave abusive relationships.

The South African government has committed to protecting children as well as women from violence through the ratification of

international instruments and also the renewal of domestic legislation to address GBV. The South African constitution specifically also affirms that all South Africans have the right to be free from violence and the state also needs to take steps to protect that right.

The next factor that causes cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa is the lack of education carried out by the community so that people in South Africa become a society that lacks knowledge or it can be said that people in South Africa are people with low human resources. Of course, the factors causing cases of sexual abuse and cases of sexual violence against children in South Africa are interrelated. One of the links is the lack of education and weak human resources in South Africa due to poverty, coupled with COVID-19 cases that have hit the world.

Research conducted by the South African Medical Research Council found that rape is more common in social contexts where education levels are low, poverty and unemployment rates are high and men are involved in violent social gangs. One of the main obstacles facing South Africa in its education system is the high number of children out of school with 845,500,000 children not enrolled in 2018. This number is also increasing due to the corona virus pandemic (Anggreini, 2023).

Poor education is a major factor in continuing the cycle of poverty. In addition to the cost constraints experienced by children in South Africa in pursuing education, another obstacle faced by children in South Africa is their access to quality education. To arrive at school, children in South Africa need transportation because the distance traveled from home to school is very far. The lack of adequate means of transportation can affect children's ability to access educational institutions and also their safety is placed at great risk. Some children have to travel for 30 minutes to an hour to arrive at their educational institutions on foot (Anggreini, 2023).

The risk faced by girls in traveling from their place of residence to educational institutions is the risk of violence. Along the way, girls often face sexual harassment and sexual violence at school, either by fellow students or teachers who teach at the institution. Events like this can leave a deep trauma to children so that children become afraid to go to school and there are even children who stop going to school because of events like this.

One of the problems faced by all countries is the poverty factor, especially for countries classified as developing countries or under developed countries and one of them is South Africa. This poverty problem is caused by various factors, such as what happens in South

Africa due to lack of education so that South African people have difficulty in getting jobs or opening jobs and in the end will affect the economic, political, and socio-cultural systems.

The South African government has taken serious steps in handling the case but it seems never finished and seems insurmountable due to social problems in South Africa which are very vulnerable. The structure of society in South Africa has not all been able to receive a balanced education because for people in South Africa to take the education level requires very expensive costs, which is why the knowledge possessed by people in South Africa is uneven due to lack of knowledge insight. The main problem is due to the social conditions that exist in the fabric of society in South Africa.

With the existence of cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa, the impact given may be very large from this case. Whether it's the impact on victims, perpetrators, the community, government and also the state. Sexual abuse and sexual violence that occurs in children in South Africa cannot rule out the possibility of several things happening as follows: Causes infectious and dangerous diseases, namely *Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*, also known as HIV/AIDS. The enormous burden of HIV in South Africa could leave millions of children unparented and then vulnerable to further is kin child-headed households.

1. South Africa is a top destination for refugees fleeing the crisis, but children in South Africa themselves face discrimination and are often denied access to schools and health services to the detriment of children as indigenous people as well as those fleeing to South Africa to escape the crisis but inversely as they encounter an even greater crisis. It means that they will live with such crises constantly.

2. Gender-based violence is an emergency in South Africa. Children are victims of all forms of violence and there are even staggering levels of violence, especially sexual violence including rape, perpetrated against girls and young women.

3. As children and young people lead the way in digital use in South Africa, they are not only exposed to violent material on line but also victims of cyber bullying.

The South African government together with international organizations as well as other local organizations have collaborated and worked hard to minimize cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa. At the Memorial Ceremony for 16 days of activism for a non violent campaign against children and women on November 25, 2020, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa gave

his remarks and response to cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence experienced by children as rampant as the plague. In his opening remarks, Cyril Ramaphosa stated that the phenomenon of sexual harassment and sexual violence cases afflicting children and women in South Africa where South African children and women are harassed, abused, beaten, attacked or terrorized on the streets, at school, on campus, at work and places of worship, and worst is in their own homes. The cause of the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Case is gender inequality in South African society.

In his remarks, President Cyril Ramaphosa agreed that the rights of women and children are inalienable, and must be upheld. Cyril Ramaphosa also agrees that the triggers of gender-based violence are diverse and require multifaceted responses covering all sectors of society. Women's economic involvement is critical to their independence and necessary to reduce their vulnerability to violence. The fight to end gender-based violence is simple and very complex.

Violence against children and women can end immediately if every man makes a conscious decision to never hurt children and women. Chauvinistic and sexist attitudes that make men believe they are superior to their mothers, wives and partners and their daughters are an obstacle to a South Africa free from sexual harassment and sexual violence. The chauvinistic and sexist attitudes of men in South Africa can encourage the abuse of children and women, black or white, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, atheist, rural or urban, gender appropriate or gender non-conforming. This leads to the normalization of sexual harassment attitudes in public spaces, at school and at work.

To create a society where women can enjoy security, dignity, and respect, it is first and foremost that our attitudes must be changed. We must reclaim the values that are most precious to us as Africans, that we are the guardian so four brothers and sisters. (Ramaphosa, 2020)

A national strategic plan created by the South African government can guide efforts to combat gender-based violence and femicide. Since the beginning of 2020, the President of South Africa along with other government officials has moved forward with implementation in key areas of care and support for survivors, education and prevention, improving legal and policy frameworks, strengthening the criminal justice system, and women's economic empowerment. The South African government has increased the provision of essential services, made evidence available in all police stations, setup more survivor-

friendly spaces in police stations, and built more dedicated Sexual Offences Courts.

We have allocated more funds to improve the services provided in shelters and safe places, and continue to convert unused government buildings into shelters and safe houses. We have strengthened emergency response teams in provinces to respond to gender-based violence and continue to work to address case arrears in the criminal justice system and review GBV cases that are not properly investigated. (Ramaphosa,2020).

To combat cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa, there are legal reforms to protect children and women from violence and ensure perpetrators are given the hardest possible punishment. The amendment of the Sexual Offences Bill and Related Amendments, the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Domestic Violence Law will strengthen existing laws to protect women and children. Among other things, the law provides for the bail and punishment of offenders, and places new obligations on social service providers, law enforcement officials and the courts. The government is in the process of drafting the Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Council Bill, which is expected to be passed in Parliament early next year. I consider the establishment of this Council, which is part of the 2019 Declaration on Gender-Based Violence, to be very important in its implementation.

### **3. Implementation of UNICEF's vision and mission**

The function of international organizations is as an instrument, arena and actor, where the international organization is an instrument to achieve a certain goal by its members. In this regard, the state seeks to achieve its national interests through the support and assistance of international organizations. As an arena, international organizations are places or forums for their members to discuss problems that occur within the country to get attention from the international community. While as an actor means an international organization can act and make its own decisions without any intervention from outside parties.

In an interview conducted by researchers with Mr. Leonard Felix Hutabarat, S.IP., M.Si., Ph.D. (2023) who is an expert on International Organizations, he stated that International Organizations are one of the most important actors in the world of International Relations. In realizing its wishes, the state does not only conduct relations with other countries or groups of other countries, but also with International Organizations. To realize the interests of a country, it must interact

with International Organizations. International organizations are engaged in specific fields, for certain issues be it environmental, educational, cultural or socio-economic issues in a country. Cooperating with certain international organizations in international politics is very important, so all countries need International Organizations to be able to realize their country's interests.

To resolve a conflict in a region involving an International Organization depends on the consent of that country. If such countries invite intervention from an international organization such as UNICEF, when they send troops they must still care about the principle of sovereignty of a country. So only with the consent and consent of a country can the International Organization intervene. Unless there is indeed a coercive effort from International Organizations based on UN Security Council resolutions, it is because the conflict that occurs in the country threatens international security or world peace (Hutabarat, 2023).

If a conflict occurs within a state, the involvement of an International Organization is adapted to the jurisdiction of that state, if that state deems it necessary or agrees not with interference from an International Organization then the International Organization has no right to go against the policies of that state and interfere in the affairs of that state, because the sovereignty and entity of a state is so high that it can not necessarily be for an International Organization to interfere with problems in the country. International organizations need entry permits from the country to help overcome existing problems, but it depends on whether the country allows or does not allow it (Hutabarat, 2023).

That thing is what UNICEF does as an international organization that protects children's rights (Children Rights). UNICEF continues to work to better address cases of sexual harassment and cases of sexual violence and sexual exploitation to improve the safety of those served, especially in environments where the risk of sexual harassment, sexual violence and sexual exploitation is increased with the permission and consent of the South African Government. UNICEF's goal is to make zero victims of sexual harassment and sexual violence and sexual exploitation. In UNICEF's efforts to implement its vision and mission, it is undeniable that sexual harassment and sexual violence are everywhere.

UNICEF is in more than 150 countries and territories to provide first responders to children at risk of sexual abuse as well as sexual violence. UNICEF aims to provide timely assistance to every child who is a victim of sexual abuse and sexual violence through safety and

protection, medical care, psycho social support, education, livelihood support and material assistance, as well as legal assistance and support for children born as a result of sexual abuse and sexual violence.

In an interview conducted by researchers with Leonard Felix Hutabarat, S.IP., M.Si., Ph.D. (2023), he argued that:

When an International Organization will interfere in a conflict that occurs in a particular country, the International Organization must understand what is the root of the problem, the actors involved, and what the interests of each actor are. When making effort store solve a particular conflict, the International Organization must first know what the goals and interests of the countries involved in the conflict are so that they can offer various options to help resolve the problem, and be acceptable to both sides. Without knowing in depth the root of the problem and also the interests of the countries involved, it will be difficult to resolve the conflict.

In the aspect of implementing UNICEF's vision and mission to safe guard children from potential sexual abuse and sexual violence by aid workers, UNICEF takes action by training personnel, vetting partners, and providing immediate responses when abuse does occur. UNICEF takes an organization-wide approach to the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual violence, in which child protection workers play an important role, along with investigators, human resources and ethics personnel, and others. UNICEF's priority is to ensure that children are protected from sexual abuse, sexual violence and sexual exploitation and that victims are provided with the support and protection they need.

UNICEF also strives for safe and accessible reporting which means that victims should have a safe, accessible and child-sensitive grievance mechanism. These mechanisms can include telephone hot lines, SMS services, designated liaison officers, and complaint boxes. The grievance mechanism is tailored to the local context. Community mobilizations and awareness-raising campaigns about protection from sexual exploitation and abuse also occur in communities receiving humanitarian assistance. The campaign is designed to remind the public of their rights, in particular children's rights and standards of conduct for aid workers, as well as for how to report allegations.

#### **4. Efforts to handle cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa**

High rates of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children are a challenge for every country and one of them is South Africa which

is constantly making efforts to ensure that violence against children is addressed. The legacy of extreme violence and inequality from South Africa's past is compounded by today's high poverty and unemployment. This combination puts many children at risk of sexual abuse and sexual assault. The scale of sexual harassment and sexual violence in South Africa itself is alarming. What is more concerning is how cases of sexual harassment and sexual violence itself have become a normal thing in everyday life.

UNICEF, which deals with children's issues around the world, created the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention was created based on the Declaration of the Rights of the Child made by the UN General Assembly in 1989, and entered into force on 2 September 1990. South Africa has participated since 29 January 1993, the first date of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. South Africa signed the convention on 16 June 1995, two years after the establishment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Exactly one month later, on 16 July 1995, South Africa began engaging with UNICEF in Cooperation to address cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa.

UNICEF works with the government and other non-governmental organizations in South Africa to protect children's rights through the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF's South Africa branch office has implemented third-world country program to socialize children and provide institutional support strategies for the country's development priorities. To reduce cases of violence against children in South Africa, relevant elements are focusing on helping the government and civil society groups reach children and provide them with assistance.

UNICEF has done its utmost as an international organization whose role is to protect children's rights and has done a lot to address cases of sexual abuse and cases of sexual violence against children in South Africa, both through collaboration with local governments, collaboration with local organizations, and carrying out tasks such as conducting socialization about sexual harassment and sexual violence that afflicts children (Erlangga, 2023).

UNICEF is committed to ending cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa. UNICEF works tirelessly to do its role as an international organization that protects children's rights regard less of and with its commitment towards a South African vision that seeks to free children from the evils of sexual abuse and sexual violence. Despite the scale of this daunting challenge, it is with focused policy, advocacy and intervention and with shared commitment and

resources from the South African government and other partners in civil society, media, communities and business that this vision can become a reality.

UNICEF is a special organization under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), which has been given a specific mandate to protect children's rights. When UNICEF is granted permission to operate in an area, of course UNICEF has its own program, and whatever UNICEF does as long as it is following the law and does not conflict with the regulation, then they can still operate. UNICEF will also partner with existing governments in the region such as non-governmental organizations such as NGOs or other civil society organizations. So if certain issues occur and are related to children's rights or child protection, UNICEF will move with certain programs that have been coordinated with ministries that deal with children's problems as well, for example the Ministry of Women and Child protection (Hutabarat, 2023).

When UNICEF programs are implemented, they can be successful if there is support from NGOs engaged in certain fields, or other organizations whose main concern or purpose is the protection of problems experienced by children, because UNICEF itself has strengths such as expertise possessed by its personnel, institutional capacity with international cooperation, and logistical capacity. If supported again by a strong enough budget for the programs carried out, the success of the programs run by UNICEF may have an impact.

In addition to collaborating with local governments, collaborating with local organizations, and carrying out tasks such as conducting socialization on sexual abuse and sexual violence against children, UNICEF also undertakes several policies to combat cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa in all its forms. These policies include the following:

1. Changing policies and raising awareness through advocacy and social mobilization are key to combating the normalization of gender inequality. Through increased public awareness, education and responsive policies, to address cases of sexual abuse and also sexual violence against children in South Africa.

2. Early prevention and intervention aims to create programs (such as Taman Aman Isibindiand Men Care), unlock investment and provide technical support to the justice sector in preventing violence against children and helping victims.

3. Strengthening social welfare and child protection systems is critical in delivering targeted cash transfers (through the Cash Plus program) and ensuring that South Africa's social work force is highly trained in evidence-based best practices.

In addition to creating new policies, UNICEF is also taking part in working with the religious sector by running the «Training Manual For The Religious Sector on Child Protection» program, which is manual training for the religious sector in child protection. The religious sector has also identified important contributions it can make to fight the scourge of violence and joined other stakeholders to work together in addressing cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa.

To develop the program, the religious sector and UNICEF South Africa have held several workshops since 2017, to establish working relationships or partnerships within the sector to address high rates of violence against children. The sector recognizes the fundamental role the sector can play and the power of influence they have in contributing to building a safer South Africa for children. Workshops were held in Gauteng, Kwa Zulu-Natal, and Cape Town where the sector capitalized on global, regional, and country-level instruments and legal frameworks on child rights and welfare. Another important partner in the process is the Department of Social Development (DSD) at the national and provincial levels.

The workshop, which was held at the Indaba Gauteng Hotel on September 16 and 17, 2019, took concrete resolutions in the form of the formation of a child protection movement. The movement aims to empower and capitalize on the religious sector in terms of child protection. Subsequently, the Faith-Based Child Protection Movement (FBCPM) was formed and a partnership was formed with UNICEF South Africa to develop tools to train the sector. This program is a source that has been developed by the religious sector to improve its services aimed at child protection and can be changed periodically to adjust to the development of the child protection sector in the country.

In this workshop, various challenges were also identified. Here are some challenges in running the religious training manual program on Child Protection, namely the lack of understanding of the differences in laws and regulations related to child protection and violence against children, how religious leaders behave in terms of child protection, how to formulate internal child protection policies, how to support children, families, and communities, how to contribute to an effective referral system, how to make religious people aware of child protection in their organizations and religious communities at large, what services are available to child victims of violence, and how to prevent violence against children and build safer communities.

Considering the many challenges identified, the religious sector immediately decided to address these challenges by inaugurating the

Faith-Based Child Protection Movement. A team was appointed within the Movement to consult further broadly with religious leaders, Government organizations and non-governmental organizations to develop tools to address the identified gaps. After various consultative workshops, the team then began to develop training manuals with various child protection devices.

The program was held to respond to the calls made by the sector, calling for more empowerment, knowledge building and building systems of cooperation with other actors to contribute to creating safety nets for children within their communities and churches. *The 365-day No Violence Against Children Child Protection Action Program* was launched by the Department of Social Development (DSD) in December 2019 and the need for the religious sector to participate in the 365-day child protection campaign as a key stakeholder became clear. UNICEF South Africa's support in strengthening the role of the religious sector as a key stakeholder in the safety, care and protection of all children in South Africa has been invaluable. In developing this manual, various child protection training programs were consulted, and relevant materials were taken and adapted from it. Every effort has been made to correctly acknowledge such relevant sources of information.

The reasons and objectives for UNICEF conducting the Manual of religious training on «Child Protection» such as:

1. Religious communities have an important role to play in ending violence against children, as it is considered an unacceptable reality by much of the world's legal, philosophical, and spiritual persuasion. While governments have primary responsibility in implementing the recommendations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, the engagement and support of civil society and other actors at international, regional, and national levels is essential.

2. A socially cohesive society is the only way that social transformation can occur. When the religious sector collaborates with government agencies, civil society, other religious organizations, civic organizations, and non-governmental organizations, protective clothing can be woven to ensure the well-being of a child. The religious sphere has the moral capacity to transform societies through the many interventions they have undertaken to mandate within their sphere of influence.

3. The vision of the training is to link the relationship between existing child protection structure and the religious sector. The preparation of a road map will establish a sustainable structure to

eradicate violence against children. This step is done so that UNICEF can effectively influence the community.

4. One of the causes of the high rate of sexual abuse and sexual violence that occurs in children in South Africa is the impact of Corona virus Disease 19 or COVID-19. UNICEF is responding to the impact of COVID-19 on child protection, including high rates of violence against children. In collaboration with the Department of Social Development, UNICEF monitored, identified and assisted 725 families affected by COVID-19 through multipurpose cash grants. Investment, through programs, advocacy and capacity building in psychosocial support saw 230,250 children provided with mental health and psychosocial support while 33,000 children received further assistance through referral channels. In addition, approximately 1,200 youth, women, and men were provided with training on Sexual Exploitation and Harassment (PSEA) guide lines and approaches, including clear guidance on existing sexual exploitation prevention referral path ways. Child Protection also works to promote social cohesion, including addressing and responding to xenophobic incidents. This work includes engaging in peace building efforts with religious and community leaders through the Faith-Based Child Protection Movement, Action for Conflict Transformation, and Social Refugees (UNICEF, 2023).

## **5. Impact of UNICEF's presence in South Africa**

From the results of research in the form of literature studies and interviews found by researchers, UNICEF has tried their best as much as they can. From UNICEF's role in various programs carried out, cases of sexual abuse and cases of sexual violence that occur in children in South Africa can be minimized. Being minimized does not mean that this case will be handled cleanly, because cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa will always exist. But with various programs carried out by UNICEF, the community, the Government of South Africa and the children gained know ledge, understanding the importance of dealing with these cases, so that they all collaborated to be able to free South African children as much as possible from cases of sexual abuse and also cases of sexual violence.

Some of the challenges experienced by UNICEF in efforts to handle cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa are funding problems, fraud committed by some individuals or government officials, incompetent community cooperation, low knowledge or human resources owned by the South African people, cultural differences, development and also socio-economic conditions

of the people in South Africa, Public understanding of the issue, for example, if in developed countries the issue can be considered because it is considered important, while in developing countries things that are considered important may not be too much attention so that it can be said that the success of the program can be hampered due to factors that exist in the country.

UNICEF's programs may succeed in one country but not in another, because of the challenges that UNICEF often experiences in carrying out its role to solve problems regarding children's rights. Human Resources (HR) that are followed by the program can be challenging. For this reason, in carrying out UNICEF programs, local communities must be educated and must adapt to the cultural conditions in the country.

According to an interview with Erlangga (2023), UNICEF's constraints in carrying out its programs to handle cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa are hampered due to a lack of funding. In terms of funding, UNICEF has a permanent fund from the UN Grand Economic and Social Council derived from contributions from UN member state governments. However, this funding did not meet all activities, so UNICEF opened a private fund raising channel as an additional fund. The goal is that all work programs can be realized properly. UNICEF's funding depends on contributions from private companies, donor agencies, and individual or individual donations. It is estimated that as much as 92% of UNICEF's donations are distributed to services related to community service-level development programs to promote children's health and well-being (Bacalagers, 2019).

## **Conclusion**

In this study, researchers found that in carrying out its role, UNICEF has sought effective measures to handle, minimize and also overcome cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa. UNICEF has changed policies and raised awareness through advocacy and social mobilization, namely raising public awareness, education and responsive policies, unlocking investments and providing technical support to the justice sector in preventing cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children, strengthening social welfare systems and child protection with targeted cash transfers through the Cash Plus program.

UNICEF also takes a religious approach by conducting the Training Manual For The Religious Sector on Child Protection program. With this program, UNICEF South Africa has collaborated with the religious

sector in South Africa to hold several workshops since 2017 to establish partnerships to address high rates of sexual abuse as well as sexual violence against children in South Africa. The sector is capitalized on global, regional, and country-level instruments and legal frame works on child rights and welfare. The work shop was also held again in 2019 by taking a concrete resolution in the form of the formation of a child protection movement. The Faith-Based Child Protection Movement (FBCPM) was formed and a partnership was formed with UNICEF South Africa to develop tools to train the sector.

UNICEF also works closely with the Department of Social Development by investing through programs, advocacy and capacity building in psychosocial support to provide mental health and psychosocial support services to children victims of sexual abuse and sexual violence and receive further assistance through referral channels. UNICEF also conducted training on the Guide lines and Approaches for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Harassment (PSEA) including clear guidance on existing referral pathways for the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual violence against youth, women and men.

In carrying out its role in handling cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa, UNICEF has done its best but the results have never changed drastically. Cases of sexual abuse and cases of sexual violence that occur in children in South Africa can be minimized, but cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa will always exist. Cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa are problems that will never disappear from the country. Cases of sexual harassment and cases of sexual violence will always exist because it is part of a person's psychological psychology. Cases of sexual abuse and violence against children also sometimes occur accidentally. Social problems are indeed the main causes such as high unemployment, poverty, and also health problems.

Such cases will increase in time and also decrease in time due to several factors. Factors that influence UNICEF's efforts in handling cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence against children in South Africa are cultural factors that have been inherent for generations in South Africa, socio-economic conditions of the people in South Africa, public understanding of the issue, and also the Human Resources (HR) of the South African community which is still very low due to the lack of education carried.

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