

# PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ABUSE & NEGLECT

## PROPOSED MEDIA STORIES



unite for  
children



# DEFINITIONS

**Child Abuse** (and neglect, known formally by UN agencies as child maltreatment) is harm (or risk of harm) caused to a child by a parent, guardian, or another person responsible for the child's safety. There are four major types of child abuse:

- **Neglect** : failure to provide for a child's basic needs.
- **Physical abuse**: punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking, stabbing, choking, or otherwise harming a child.
- **Emotional abuse**: constant criticism, threats, rejection as well as withholding love, support, or guidance.
- **Sexual abuse**: fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

# PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

## TARGETS

## GOALS

**Children**

**1**

Children are nurtured and safe

**Families**

**2**

Families are strong and connected

**3**

Families in need access services and support

**4**

Families free from substance abuse and mental illness

**Communities**

**5**

Communities are caring and responsive

**6**

Vulnerable communities have capacity to respond

# TELLING THE STORY

- The child abuse stories that appear in our print and broadcast media often involve sensational cases that have tragic elements of disturbing injuries or even death.
- The media can refocus its reporting to child abuse cases that involve conditions where parents who face issues of instability or impairment are not able to provide basic care for their children.
- The media can explore reasons why abuse occurs by focusing on predictable situations in which abuse behaviour may happen: poverty, divorce, substance abuse, stress, limited education, unemployment, job loss, etc.

# TELLING THE STORY

- The media can place a child abuse story within the broader context of family life or a neighborhood situation to illustrate both the presence — and the absence — of risk and protective factors that affect the lives of those who care for children.
- The media can highlight the pressures surrounding families and discuss the types of services and programs needed to help these families ensure their child's healthy development.
- The media can produce follow-up stories which can help inform readers about the underlying issues associated with abuse as well as provide solutions and tips for individuals to protect children from abuse.



# KEY MESSAGES

- Each of us needs to take responsibility to transform our communities into places that care about—and actively support—families and children.
- The majority of child abuse cases stem from situations and conditions that are entirely preventable in an engaged and supportive community. A community that cares about early childhood development and parent support is more likely to see healthy and protected children.
- Cities and towns that work to create good school systems and who come together to ensure that affordable housing is available in good, safe neighborhoods are less likely to see stressed, isolated families who don't know where to turn to for help.

# KEY MESSAGES

- The **Get on Board** campaign is about providing the attention that the public craves to ending child abuse in the country. In a recent UNICEF survey, Malaysians listed child abuse as one of top three concerns in the country which deserve action.
- Each of us must pay attention to the kinds of efforts that will prevent child abuse from happening in the first place. We need to learn more about what we can do with our communities to prevent child abuse.
- Putting an end to child abuse is a shared responsibility. United, we can make a difference.



**Every child is important.  
United, we can stop child  
abuse and neglect!**



THIS BUS IS GOING  
TO **STOP** CHILD ABUSE.



## POSSIBLE MEDIA STORIES

unite for  
children

unicef 



# STORY IDEAS



- **CHILD ABUSE IN MALAYSIA**

Ministry of Women, Family & Community Devt

The tip of the iceberg?

- What is the situation of child abuse in Malaysia? How many children have died, how many seriously injured?
- Some have said that the reported figures are only the tip of the iceberg. Is it true that new cases are rising every year, and many are not reported? Do we know why?
- Malaysians are said to be caring and loving people, yet we read horrible cases of child abuse. Do we know why?



# STORY IDEAS

- **UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE**  
**UNICEF**

## A chronic social cancer? We need to know!

- Though the subject of child abuse seems to appear more frequently in our media, what exactly do we know about the extent of such behaviour in the general population?
- Do our statistics tell us anything about the trends in Malaysia? Do we know enough to stop the problem? What do we know about the situation in the country? What do we need to know to end child cruelty?





# STORY IDEAS

- **REASONS FOR CHILD ABUSE**

**Harm Reduction Counselor / Psychologist**

**Substance abuse: What impact on children?**

- Alcohol and drugs may lessen impulse control that lead adults to behave abusively. Increased stress resulting from preoccupation with drugs on the part of the parent combined with behavioral problems exhibited by the child may also add to the likelihood of abuse.
- How does a parent's substance abuse contribute to child abuse? What is the immediate and long-term consequences on children? How can we help children?





# STORY IDEAS

- **REASONS FOR CHILD ABUSE**

## **Social Economist**

### **Economic downturn: What impact on children?**

- Although there are no hard statistics, is there in fact a linkage between the economic downturn and the increased numbers of child abuse cases in Malaysia?
- Does poverty, unemployment and loss of jobs create a situation that makes children more vulnerable to abuse and neglect?







# STORY IDEAS

- **INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS**  
**UNICEF**

## Protection ... every child's right!

- Do international human treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) have a role to play in protecting children from abuse?
- If the number of child abuse cases in Malaysia are on the rise, has the CRC in reality failed these children?
- How can parents and teachers work with the Government to use the CRC to strengthen protection for children?





# STORY IDEAS



- **PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE**

Childline Malaysia / Behaviour Expert

Words and actions that hurt

- The way we talk to and act with children influences how they feel about themselves. Hurtful words and actions can leave scars that last a lifetime. Does our behaviour unintentionally hurt our children? When is this likely to happen?
- The more we hurt our children with negative messages, the more they will come to believe them. How can parents and teachers avoid such negative behaviour and words?





# STORY IDEAS



- **PREVENTING CHILD abuse**

**Parenting Expert / Malaysian Child Rights Council**

**Parents want the best for their children**

- Well-intentioned parents can sometimes cause their children harm because they lack an understanding of their children's developmental stages and hold unreasonable expectations for their children's abilities. They also may be unaware of how to discipline their children most effectively at each age.
- Prevention activities such as parent education and parent support groups can help families in need find the help they need to care for their children.

- **RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE**

**Malaysian Bar Council**

**Are our children protected? (Legislative)**

- What are the laws in Malaysia that protect our children from abuse (ie Child Act 2001)? How effective are these laws? Do we need to strengthen these laws?
- Legal proceedings to bring an offender to justice could take years. What happens to the suspect and the child during this period? What happens if a child abuser does not get convicted and returns to the family; does the abused child return to the family too?





# STORY IDEAS

- **RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE**

**Social Welfare Department / Shelter**

**Whose child is this? (Child welfare)**

- When children are neglected, abandoned or abused, they get placed in the social welfare system. What happens to them? Whose children do they become?
- Who can children count on when they are left without a family, and who will fight for their rights?





# STORY IDEAS



- **RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE**

**Women's Centre for Change, Penang**

**Can you spot an abused child?**

- While the Child Act 2001 has made reporting child abuse mandatory, often family, teachers, neighbours fail to read the telltale signs of abuse. Are there effective prevention programs that can help educate communities?
- How visible are child abuse scars? Can the public recognise these symptoms? What should adults (parents, teachers, etc) look out for to assess if a child is being abused? What should we do if we suspect child abuse?



# STORY IDEAS

- **RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE**

**Hotline Counsellor / Case Worker**

**Going behind the scenes**

- Take a look at the entire intervention process for child abuse and neglect by following the responders throughout every stage of their intervention.
- From reporting to assessing to investigating to prosecuting to treatment – explore what the child victim endures, the impact on the family, and the differences made by welfare officers, police, SCAN teams, healthcare workers and NGOs.





## • RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE

Social Welfare Department / Retired Social Worker

### Then and Now

- Carry out an in-depth, comparative look at how a child abuse case was handled in the past and how it is currently handled around the country.
- Provide a detailed look at how the multi-disciplinary approach today benefits the child victim and his/her family. This human interest angle would serve as a positive supporting evidence of the evolution of the system.





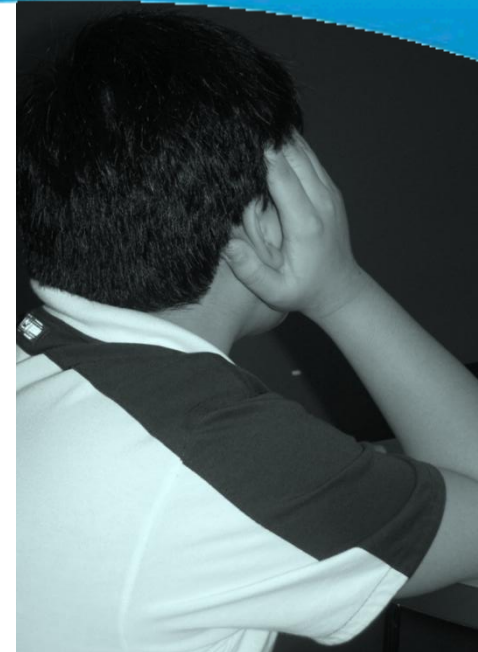
# STORY IDEAS

- **RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE**

**Clinical Psychologist / Behavioural Expert**

**Voices from the past (Emotional welfare)**

- Survivors of abuse are often traumatised and may take years to recover but even those who eventually lead normal lives carry the scars of their battle.
- What are the telltale signs of a child being abused?
- What helps put them on the road to recovery? What role can we play to help them in their journey?







# KEY ACTION DATES

ACTION DAY	DATE
Get on Board campaign launch	6 October
International Day of Non-Violence	2 October
World Mental Health Day	10 October
World Food Day	16 October
International Day of the Eradication of Poverty	17 October



# KEY ACTION DATES

ACTION DAY	DATE
World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse	19 November
Universal Children's Day	20 November
Int'l Day for Elimination of Violence against Women	25 November
Human Rights Day	10 December



# THANK YOU.

## FOR MORE INFO:

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