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## **RAPING OF GIRLS**

*Given a girl's age, sex, submissive gender construction, social pressures to have sex, marriage, child-marriage, susceptibility to violence and abuse, social stigma, lack of protective laws, lack of protective cultures, lack of education, sex-centered media, poverty, fear, drugs and alcohol, unstable family and community structures, conflict, lack of sex education, she will be highly susceptible to being raped in her lifetime.*

### **STATISTICAL INFORMATION**

- One in three girls will be sexually abused before the age of 18; the average age for first abuse being 9 years old.
- The lifetime risk for violent victimization including sexual assault for girls and women who live with homelessness and mental illness is 97%.
- The existing laws in different countries pertaining to sex and children are inconsistent – in some countries it is illegal to have sex with girls under 18, but in other countries child marriage is legal, resulting in an estimated 60 million child brides under the age of 18.
- The global rape situation is dire: A girl born in South Africa has a greater chance of being raped than learning how to read; 1 in 2 South African women survive rape.
- Given the cross-cultural social, cultural, and legal barriers which surround rape and perpetuate underreporting, rape statistics only represent a fraction of actual cases.

### **GOOD PRACTICES TO PREVENT RAPE**

- NGOs, such as UNICEF, Save the Child, Clinton Global Initiative, local and international organizations and others who have partnered with countries including Swaziland, China, Tanzania to educate people about sex and decision making, rape, and rape prevention as to facilitate sex awareness and prevention practices.
- In the face of inconsistent laws surrounding girls and rape, the UN has been on the forefront of making the raping of girls an international crime.
- Personal Safety Behavior Classes

## WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO STOP RAPE?

### UN and Governments

- UN organizations must start supporting national, governmental, and grassroots outcries against sexual violence and rape.
- Because the contexts of sex and violence are different from region to region, UN organizations must involve members of communities by listening to their suggestions on how to address sexual violence on their relative ground level.
- Ensure local legal enforcement receives additional training on sexual violence so that they are prepared to handle the delicate nature of rape case involving girls.

### Businesses

- Businesses should provide fliers and information about local resources for survivors of sexual violence, including clinics, legal assistance, and reporting hotlines.
- There should be a conscious marketing schematic to raise awareness of rape; market the message that “rape is wrong, but it is right to talk about it”.
- Rape Hotline number in Ladies Rooms on the door of the ladies room stall

### NGOs and individuals

- Organize rallies, community outreach programs, distribute fliers, go to local schools, concerts, social clubs – make rape a topic of conversation. Make it real. No one can stop what they are not aware of.
- Get educated about sex, decision making, and the results of being stigmatized as a ‘rape victim’. Be prepared to recognize the signs of rape.
- The development of reliable community resources for rape victims to be able to report an attack and receive trustworthy legal assistance all the way to the prosecution of their attacker(s).
- The aftermath of rape can be detrimental to a victim’s mental, physical, and social life. Depression, fistulas, risk of honor killings, social ostracizing, substance abuse, STIs, HIV, unwanted pregnancy, mental health issues, risk of dropping out of school are only a few of the many results of being raped. Don’t let any survivor endure these pains alone.

## UN RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

- *Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women*, UNiTE to End Violence Against Women campaign
- *Violence Against Children*, United Nations Secretary-General’s Study

