

Mercy Chidi



Mercy Chidi is the director of Ripples International in Meru, Kenya which focuses on children who live with grandmothers or in child-headed households or children who need protection.

We started to hear stories from children who wanted to leave home and sleep somewhere else. When we investigated we found that an uncle or a grandfather was abusing the girl. We said, THIS MUST STOP.

There's a myth that sex with a virgin is a protection against AIDS. The younger the better – some of the girls are as young as 3 or even 1½. We were desperate to access JUSTICE for these girls, to break the culture of impunity. When a girl took her story of rape to the police they wouldn't believe her, insisted on two witnesses, told her she had asked for it, or even locked her up and abused her themselves.

I met Stephen Lewis and took a course in Ontario, where I learned about the Jane Doe case where a rape survivor took the police to court for not protecting her from a rapist they knew was breaking into homes in her area. Ripples' project collected the names of 160 girls they had worked with up until 2010 and with lawyers from the Equality Effect, they accused the Kenyan government of not protecting girls.

May 27, 2013 WE WON A LANDMARK CASE!

The police were held accountable for their failure to investigate the rapes of the 11 girls used as test cases.
OTHER COUNTRIES WILL FOLLOW

Poem by Luckline

via Sally Armstrong

Luckline is from Meru, Kenya. At 15, she was raped by her neighbour. She wrote this poem when 39 weeks pregnant. "This happened to me on May 13, 2010. I will make sure this never happens to my sister"

Here I come

Walking down through history to eternity

From paradise to the city of goods

Victorious, glorious, serious and pious

Elegant, full of grace and truth

The centrepiece and the masterpiece of literature

Glowing, growing and flowing

Here, there, everywhere

Cheering millions every day

The book of books that I am

Luckline

Sally Armstrong, Ascent of Women p.35

CBC radio IDEAS The New Revolutionaries Mon Oct 3, 2011

