

LEARNING CONVENING 2017: ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Harnessing Evidence, Learning, and
Partnerships to End Violence
Against Children in East Africa





Learning report prepared by IIDC and HakiElimu Tanzania

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Children's Dignity Forum
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Tanzania Child Rights Forum
Tanzania Women Teachers' Association
The Young Domestic Workers
The Agakhan Foundation Tanzania
The Global Partnership
The Government of Canada – The Canadian High Commission
Uganda Child Rights Network
Uganda Government
UNICEF
UZIKWASA
WAJIKI
Wellspring Advisors
World Health Organization (WHO)
YWCA

Acronyms

AATz	ActionAid Tanzania	NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	NPA	National Plan of Action (Tanzania)
CAK	Communication Authority of Kenya	OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
CDO	Community Development Officer	SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations	TCRF	Tanzania Child Rights Forum
EAC	East African Community	TWG	Technical Working Group
FAWE-U	Forum for African Women Educationalists Uganda (FAWE-U)	TZ	Tanzania
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	UCRNN	Uganda Child Rights NGO Network
GBV	Gender-Based Violence	UG	Uganda
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus	UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
ICS	Investing in Children and their Societies	URT	United Republic of Tanzania
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	VAC	Violence Against Children
IIDC	Impact and Innovation Development Centre	VACiS	Violence Against Children in Schools
JCM	Junior Council Member	VAW	Violence Against Women
KAACR)	Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children	WHO	World Health Organization
KDHS	Kenya Domestic and Household Survey		
KE	Kenya		
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation		
NAP	National Action Plan (Uganda)		

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Learning Convening

In September 2015, world leaders ratified and committed their governments to Agenda 2030, which embodies 17 sustainable development goals with goal 16 focusing on the eradication of all forms of violence against children. This global commitment spurred several national and regional initiatives to end violence against children.

In 2016, eight organizations in East Africa made a commitment to collaborate in piloting a learning agenda to reduce violence against children in schools. As part of the learning agenda, the participating organizations agreed to convene annually to strengthen collaborative learning, and reflect on progress and new pathways to their work. These convenings provide a platform to catalyze conversations, encourage coordination, and creatively solve some of the most critical human problems.

By bringing together academicians, policy makers, practitioners, researchers, development organizations and those directly affected such as children, youth and vulnerable groups to conferences like these, we are taking actionable steps towards a more positive future for all.



Welcome note

Fiona Musana, of IIDC welcomed participants to the learning convening, acknowledging the co-hosts, Impact and Innovations Development Centre and HakiElimu, Tanzania, as well as representatives from International Child Rights-Wellspring Advisors, a private philanthropic consulting firm based in Washington.

Opening remarks



Deogratias Yiga, Executive Director, Impact and Innovation Development Centre

“We are at a time when there is great global momentum around issues of violence against children all over the world at all levels. We are going through a period when governments internationally, regionally are making commitments to address issues of violence against children. Yet we know that the levels of violence against children in our region remain unacceptably high. This disconnection between our commitments and our aspirations and the realities of children, this gap, continues to challenge us to reflect on the relevance and effectiveness of what we are doing to protect our children.

However, we are encouraged that in this gathering we are bringing together experts who lead efforts to fight violence against children, experienced practitioners at all levels including at grassroots level, and those in government who foster an enabling environment by creating the space for policies, practices, and procedures that seek to protect children from violence.

We hope that this meeting of minds will help us to raise the difficult questions that confront us and explore and identify innovative ways of tackling violence against children. We look forward to this kind of bottom up, top-down, horizontal vertical learning and sharing of experiences and reflections geared at getting solutions and innovative ways to deal with violence against children.”



John Kalage, Executive Director, HakiElimu

“There are alarming rates of physical, sexual and emotional violence in our countries including places which ideally are considered to be safe like schools. For example, UNICEF’s report that was published in 2011 on violence against children in Tanzania shows that over half of Tanzanian girls and boys who experience physical abuse as punching, whipping and kicking, identified a teacher as the abuser. Among children who have experienced sexual violence, 16.7% of girls reported that at least one incidence occurred on school grounds; while 25.5% of girls reported that the incidence occurred while going to or from school. These worrying levels of sexual and physical violence in schools and communities are detrimental in achieving learning outcomes for children especially girls.

We welcome the experience of regional organizations; your evidence based learning, your lessons on relevance, your perspectives on practical program designing, your thoughts on monitoring and evaluation, as well as your thoughts on the right tools to enable us understand how best to measure the impact of our work in East Africa.

Opening remarks

As we discuss and deliberate during this convening, I would like to urge each of us to remember that we have an obligation to end violence against children. Let us take a moment to demonstrate understanding of the applicability of lessons learned towards our work. I urge us to also demonstrate the ability to lead and manage innovations in relation to national and regional work. I believe that if we take the lessons learned to the next step, we will be able to report adequately, constructively, and positively on the initiatives being taken to reduce against children in the region.”



Dr. Michael Gibbons, Director International Child Rights and Education, Wellspring Advisors

“We are gathered here in Dar es Salaam because Tanzania is one of the countries leading the way globally in the drive to prevent violence. It was one of the first countries in Africa to conduct a national violence against children study in 2009 and is one of the first pathfinder countries to develop a comprehensive national action plan to end violence against women and children.

I represent, in this forum, some of the external allies lending support to East African leadership and efforts to prevent violence against children. We recognize that successful programs here must be anchored in deep understanding of local reality in different parts of each country, shaped by an African way of seeing the world and of solving social problems. When this kind of regional and local knowledge is blended appropriately, with the guidance generated across countries by research studies about what works, and then tested thoroughly by African agencies and their program areas, then African solutions are enhanced and they feed important knowledge into the evidence base that can guide programs across the world.

Local violence prevention knowledge involves deep understanding of the nature of local relationships, power structures and dynamics, gender and social norms operating in the community, and how and why things happen in a particular way in particular settings. The organizations working in the assembled learning cohort here, including three Tanzanian organizations, are the pioneers exploring and defining this kind of local violence prevention knowledge in their work. We are, therefore, appreciative of Impact and Innovation Development Centre facilitating the cohort learning process that helps these agencies share and compare what they are learning from their program experience and evaluations with each other and with their government counterparts.

It is vital that lessons about what works is built up not only within East Africa, but is also shared globally. Worldwide, efforts are being coordinated by The Global Partnership to End Violence against Children which seeks to coordinate the cross-regional effort to share knowledge and to build momentum in the drive to reduce and prevent violence against children.”

Opening remarks

Maureen Greenwood-Basken, Senior Program Officer, International Child Rights and Education, Wellspring Advisors



“As a member of The Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, we congratulate Tanzania for its role as a pathfinder country of The Global Partnership to End Violence against Children which advances more than five United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, related to ending violence against girls and boys. Tanzania has led in using national survey data to create a groundbreaking plan that integrates violence against women and children and is a model country for creating evidence based solutions across sectors. The country has also contributed to the scientific body of evidence of what works in preventing violence as more than two studies from Tanzania have informed INSPIRE, the evidence consolidation of what works to prevent violence against children.

We can prevent violence. Girls and boys themselves, families, communities and governments all have a role to play in ending violence. To quote Nelson Mandela, ‘safety and security don’t just happen; it’s the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe children, the most vulnerable children of our society, a life free from violence and fear’.”

“....safety and security don’t just happen; it’s the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe children, the most vulnerable children of our society, a life free from violence and fear’.”

-Nelson Mandela

Official opening



Margareth Lusai, Director of Children, Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children

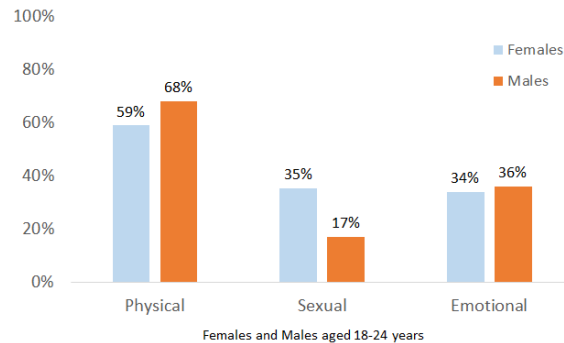
“More than 3 countries have gathered here in Dar es Salaam Tanzania to discuss and explore the potential utility of global resources and the prospect and opportunity for more practical and targeted action to end violence against children in East Africa, and this we are doing through greater collaboration between and across sectors.”

Tanzania has taken on several actions based on SDG targets to ensure children grow to their full potential and are protected from violence. Violence prevalence in Tanzania is high. The Violence Against Children survey which HakiElimu quoted here revealed that nearly 1 in 3 females aged 13-14 experienced at least one incidence of sexual violence before the age of 18. Among males in the same age group, nearly 1 in 7 reported experiencing at least one incidence of sexual violence prior the age 18.

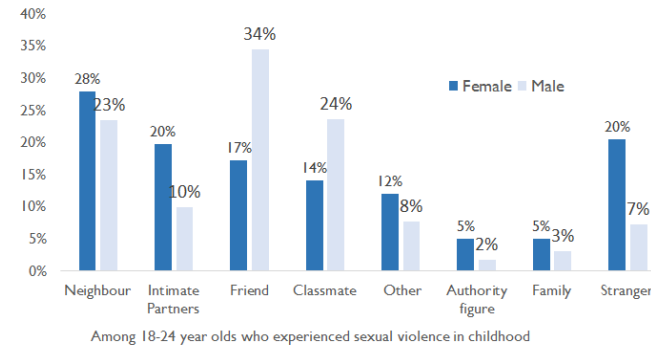
We decided to develop a comprehensive five-year national plan of action to end violence against women and children – that consolidated several existing plans, and 11 government ministries committed to implementing this plan, including the Ministry of Finance. This plan focused on the INSPIRE model. Our plan has eight thematic areas and we expect that by 2022 we can reduce violence by 50% for both women and girls. If well implemented, the plan targets among others to reduce early pregnancy from 20% to 5%, school dropout cases due to pregnancy by half, and of course increase education support for girls from poor families from 23% to 54%.

Violence prevents our economy from attaining its full economic potential as it diverts resources from their optimal use and it has significant negative impact on attaining sustainable development goals, and globally, the economic impact and cost of physical, emotional and sexual violence against children is approximately 3% of global GDP. In Tanzania for violence, in general, is estimated to cost over 6.6 billion US dollars which is 7% of the national GDP. That is why according to our plan we are focusing on prevention rather than responding. I believe that after three days of discussions and sharing best practices you will go back with new knowledge in planning and programming that will guide you in developing interventions that will create a non-violent environment for our beloved children.”

Magnitude of Physical, Sexual and Emotional Violence before



Perpetrators of First Incident of Sexual Abuse



Key initiatives

- Uganda child helpline – Sauti 116 main mechanism of response to VAC –operational in 122 districts with 34 action centres
- National policy to end child marriage and teenage pregnancy – developed through a multi-sectoral approach
- Management information system – OVC IS keeps track of children that are getting services
- Strengthened policy and legal environment – amended the Children’s Act, Cap 59 for VAC, forced marriages, alternative care; action plan due for online sexual abuse
- The Orphans and Vulnerable Children policy in final stages
- National Strategy and National Action Plan for VACIS
- Uganda is a pathfinder country with a multi-sectoral technical working group and task force. The TWG is comprised of development partners, national NGOs and line ministries overseeing the process of ending VAC; dissemination of VAC Survey results for advocacy
- Initiatives to end VAC through sports, teachers, the boy-child, and opinion leaders in the community
- Conduct advocacy meetings with European Union, UNICEF, World Vision

Country status reports | Uganda

Challenges:

- Negative cultural norms and practices – e.g. marrying off a girl at the onset of her first menstrual period
- Duplication of services amongst service providers accompanied by a weak social welfare system – poor case management; insufficient number of social care workers at district and especially at county level
- Failure to differentiate between VAC in the African context and in the western context – positive cultural norms e.g. training a child how to cook, how to wash and helping on the farm
- Budgetary constraints are being addressed by Bantwana support to include VAC in social development sector strategic plan, in the Child policy and in the national action plan

Next steps:

- Disseminate key findings of VAC survey
- VACS final report development
- Integration of the VACs report into the Child Policy



Priority actions

- Dissemination of information and uniform messages related to VACS prevention, response, norms to service providers, law enforcement, community leaders, community members, families, children
- Improving linkages and referral systems among service providers
- Tracking systems (Case reporting in health -HMIS, case reporting in social services & law enforcement), perpetrator/background check data system, Child helpline
- Enforcement of laws and policies-harmonization and dissemination
- Safe spaces for disclosure
- Advocacy to change cultural norms and behaviour



Overview of the National Action Plan

- Tanzania is the first pathfinder country, selected because it already had child protection systems
- Developed a National Action Plan (NAP) based on SDGs (2030), Africa Development Agenda (2063), National Development Vision (2025) and national 5-Year Development Plan II. It involved CSOs, international NGOs, children, religious leaders and cultural and community leaders, 11 line ministries at its launch in 2016
- Eight national actions plans targeting women and children were merged as abuse is often done to both groups have similar needs - e.g. health, legal and psychological, easier to coordinate
- The NAP is implemented through 8 thematic areas around the INSPIRE model to address VAC:
 - Household economic strengthening – increase opportunities for employment, access to capital and revenue, reduce child labour
 - Eradicate negative cultural practices and values
 - Parenting education and improved relationships within the family
 - Review laws to make the legal system more child-friendly and expedite VAC judicial proceedings and expedite justice
 - Improve response and support services and infrastructure e.g. one stop center and drop in centre, increase number of social welfare officers, train staff manning the gender desk
 - Ensure safe schools and provide life skills in schools – eliminate VAC within educational settings – positive parenting curriculum, promote child participation through children’s clubs in school
 - Ensure safe environment in public places – leisure activities – bars, public transport and other areas women and children visit
 - Strengthen coordination, monitoring and evaluation to improve availability of reliable and quality data (baseline and target data) on VACW to measure progress on implementation of the NPA – e.g. have joint comprehensive coordination, M&E of the NPA aimed at increased efficiency

👉 Strategic pathways

Capacity building and knowledge sharing

- Training of SWOs and CDOs in all regions in Tanzania Mainland
- Participation in budgetary session of the Parliament to raise awareness of Ministry of Finance and Planning to increase budget
- Dissemination and distribution of the NPA to different stakeholders
- Translation of NPA into Kiswahili – ease implementation at lower level (grassroots)
- Guidelines on implementation of NPA – including the formation of VAC committees at local government level

Ongoing activities:

- NPA communication strategy to cater for different target groups – elderly, parents, etc
- NPA M&E Plan
- Printing and dissemination of coordination guidelines for strengthening and merging existing committees

Challenges:

- Resources for implementing the NPA – financial gaps
- Working tools for coordination, implementation, M&E e.g. transport facilities, equipment and materials (computers, printers, stationery, etc)
- High demand for human resources and capacity building of implementers at national and lower level – CDOs and SWOs



Trends of VAC

- NGOs collaborate closely with the government of Kenya but only to offer complementary support - “It is the role of government to protect children”
- Kenya conducted a national survey in 2010 by UNICEF Kenya Country Office – this informed the 2013-2018 Response Plan
- Survey results
 - More than 800 children were abused
 - 33% police and law enforcement officers commit VAC
 - 28% parents and care givers commit VAC
 - 21% women and girls aged 15-49 undergo FGM before 18; it’s a universal cultural practice among Somali and Samburu (KDHS, 2014)
- Kenya launched VAC campaign titled “It takes us all to end violence against children” in March 2017 in Llaramatak in Narok county where child marriages are prevalent (41% - UNICEF 2014)

Perpetrators of VAC

- Girlfriends/boyfriends (highest)
- Neighbors (next highest)
- Family members
- Strangers
- Others (involves all the rest including teachers, authority figures, etc)

Type of violence and main perpetrators for each type

- Emotional violence – parents, neighbors & teachers
- Physical violence – teachers, police and public authority figures (mostly against males under 18 years)

Country status reports | Kenya

👉 Circumstances under which VAC occurs

- Economic and social pressures
- Cultural practices that justify VAC (FGM)
- Discipline vs. punishment - results in physical violence
- Exploitation of children in the informal workforce - child labor
- Cultural, religious beliefs and attitudes towards physical, mental or emotional disabilities
- Bullying, including harassment, insults and name-calling
- Rising trend of incomplete families - death & divorce - single parenthood or step-parenthood following remarriage
- Cultural and religious beliefs about contraception - leads to abandonment and stigmatization
- Widespread availability and use of pornography – may lead to sexual violence
- Societal beliefs related to the treatment of HIV/AIDS – children raped in the belief that it is a cure for HIV/AIDS

Challenges:

- Ad hoc and unsystematic manner of delivery of services coupled with budgetary & societal constraints
- Weakness in coordination mechanisms-the structures for reporting child violence at community level, school & other settings, or for referring victims of violence are not clearly defined
- Lack of a harmonized monitoring and evaluation framework to track uptake of services and identify areas that require greater investment in terms of resources or training
- The framework for policy & operational guidelines on service provision for child survivors is inadequate
- Victims of abuse fear repercussions – limits reporting of aggressions against them.



Legislative and Policy framework

- The Constitution (2010)
- Children's Act (2001)
- Sexual Offences Act (2006)
- Basic Education Act (2013)
- Prohibition of FGM Act (2011)
- Child Labour Policy
- Child Trafficking Bill

Specific actions taken so far:

- Child protection centres setup in strategic locations
- Development of a government community strategy
- Introduction of standard operating procedures for all departments and government ministries

Plenary Discussion: Regional issues



Issue
How do you use technology to ensure accurate and efficient data collection because with incidents of abuse it is critical to get timely reports to the authorities?

Uganda Child helpline – Toll free line 116

Kenya has a helpline – 116 and a GBV helpline – 1195 for sexual violence. Kenya works closely with the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK) which has developed a booklet on cybercrime and children and they work closely with National Council of Children and NGOs. Annual stakeholders meeting to reduce cybercrime

Issue
How do you address the attitude of silence as most children shy away from reporting and end up suffering quietly?

Uganda Child helpline – Toll free line 116

In Tanzania efforts are on sensitization and awareness activities in the community on child rights

Child participation – supporting children to talk about issues affecting them in dance, drama, music

Issue
A lot of abuse is occurring in homes, what measures are being taken to handle this?

Uganda: The parenting guidelines are being rolled out under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development with support from partners such as Parenting in Africa Network

Kenya: Works with the Department of labour to handle incidents of violence in the home, and parents, to employ only responsible child minders

Tanzania: Parenting education training manual; a school package to sensitize children about violence; community workers trained to educate families on positive parenting

Plenary Discussion: Regional issues



Issue
What can be done to make sure children with disabilities who are abused can be taken care of? The safety of children who report such cases is also a matter of concern.



Kenya uses awareness creation on abuse towards these children and they involve the children with disabilities themselves.

Tanzania: All children have the same rights. We are strengthening the capacity of people who work with children to support them. The Parenting Manual educates parents on how to support children with disabilities rather than hide them in the house. Teachers are educated on how to care for children with disabilities. Child protection is done in the community, in schools and at national level.

Issue
How do we deal with the issue of commitment towards ending VAC whereas budgets are not available for implementation?



Uganda: Issues related to gender and children are not funded because the ministries in charge of these issues are underfunded. There is a need to bring policy makers and power holders, to make ensure sufficient budgets are provided

Kenya: Lobbying being done to get network members to become policy makers so that they can lobby for children issues and raise awareness among the policy makers.

Tanzania: Other revenue sources sought e.g. CSO, NGO and the private sector to complement government efforts.

👉 Further discussion

Targeting specific groups identified as recurrent perpetrators e.g. bodabodas (motorcycle riders)

Bribery in the law enforcement and judicial system especially in regards to VAC issues

Securing policy maker buy-in to VAC discussions and action plans

Children's Perspectives

Members of the Junior Council Members from Ilala Municipality, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, shared their perspectives on violence against children. The Junior Council draws members from secondary school students as part of the children's democratic institution established 17 years ago under the ministry responsible for children. The Council has representatives in each district. Pauline Tete, representing children, described the multifaceted nature of VAC and addressed the factors that lead to VAC. She emphasized the role of stakeholders in preventing violence against children.



“Watoto wanachoka badala ya kucheka!”

(In Swahili, ‘let children be children and play’)

Causes and types of VAC

- Discrimination based on tribe, gender, income
- Cultural beliefs where children do not confront elders in spite of wrongs e.g. child marriage, FGM
- Rape and sodomy
- Not being listened to
- Manual child labour
- Abandonment
- Beating and harassment
- Using children to commit crimes
- Poor parenting where children are neglected and cannot express their feelings or talk about their problems

Role of stakeholders in reducing VAC

Parents & relatives

(Build close relationships with children and their self-esteem and avoid harmful cultural practices, avoid favouritism based on gender)

The community

Wider community and religious institutions need to educate and sensitize through their teachings

Government

Monitor implementation of laws & punish perpetrators heavily

Civil Society

Educate children about their rights and establish centres to defend child rights; public advocacy

Children

Report cases of VAC and protect themselves

Plenary perspectives

How do you support children to reduce VAC?

Parent meetings at schools; discussions on the basic needs of a child including to be loved, to be listened to and to be protected

Girls were advised to embrace the government motto which says: “I am a girl, let me continue with my education!”

Establish school committees (clubs) and a system where children can report VAC to their guardian teachers

Foster collaboration between government and other stakeholders-an institutional framework required

The Role of Civil Society

Civil Society Efforts to Reduce Violence against Children

Representatives of national coalitions from the three East African countries engaged in a panel discussion regarding national/country-specific perspectives on reducing VAC in the region.

Panelists:

1. Mr. Eric Guga, Tanzania Child Rights Forum
2. Ms Stella Ayo Odongo, Uganda Child Rights NGO Network
3. Mr. Timothy Ekesa, Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children

“Efforts to eliminate harmful cultural practices have not been successful because culture is an evolving process and change doesn’t happen in one day because culture evolves from long standing taboos, traditions and practices. Not all aspects of what we call harmful cultures are bad.”

-Eric Guga, Tanzania Child Rights Forum

Apart from papers, policies, what is civil society actively doing to reduce VAC?

Uganda: We are working to strengthen the relationship between government, the children and civil society to bridge the gap between policy and implementation through advocacy on both the national and global level, good results e.g. Uganda is now a pathfinder member as a result of civil society efforts

Kenya has a Child Rights Network with 20 county members who work with county governments to get children into elective positions in the county. The network has successfully brought perpetrators of VAC to face justice

“There is power in networking; there is power in working with one another.”

What strength does Civil Society have in holding governments accountable?

Tanzania: We work with communities at the basic level –neighborhood, congregations, because their basic rights and basic human needs are the same regardless of where we are. That is what we have learned and that is the secret of our success. **“Instead of attacking the government we work with it.”**

The tripartite relationship is extremely crucial and starts with the recognition that we all have something to contribute towards VAC elimination based on our experiences. The biggest work our organization has done is to facilitate collaboration between the different actors.

How is Civil Society engaging the private sector?

Kenya: Initially the private sector engagement used to be limited to corporate social responsibility but **now NGOs have facilitated the private sector to support children in more meaningful ways based on the children’s expressed, priority needs.**

Uganda: The Child Rights Business Principle that is jointly being developed with Save the Children and UN Compact has drawn about 20 companies. The network has deliberately invited the private sector to listen to children’s needs.

A special session was held with parliamentarians, and this time the children shared their harrowing experiences of violence. The parliamentarians vowed to build on current policy addressing VAC.

VAC data challenges in East Africa

KENYA

“We cannot protect what we don’t know”

As a network, Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children works with other NGOs in the different counties who send up to date statistics on children to the network. The network also works with the national department that deals with statistics to ensure that the data is disaggregated to highlight children issues, e.g. children on the street, children with disabilities, children who are orphans.

NGOs realize they cannot have their own data; they have to use national data, which guides their programming.

“If you want to reach out to the wider communities about changing attitudes and norms you need to empower informal child protection structures such as the family, traditional leaders, influential leaders, who play a bigger role in handling violence.”

BLINDSPOT ISSUES

Statistics or VAC data often not captured include:

- VAC against children with disabilities
- VAC against the male child
- Other forms of VAC for example recruitment into militia groups



UGANDA

“Real time information is needed to inform evidence based programming”

VAC study collected some useful data, but data collection remains fragmented as it is conducted differently by multiple organizations without clear standardization

Heavy reliance on helpline data (1000 calls per day) which only identifies hotspots

TANZANIA

As a network we build capacities of partners who implement intervention so that they can implement effective interventions.



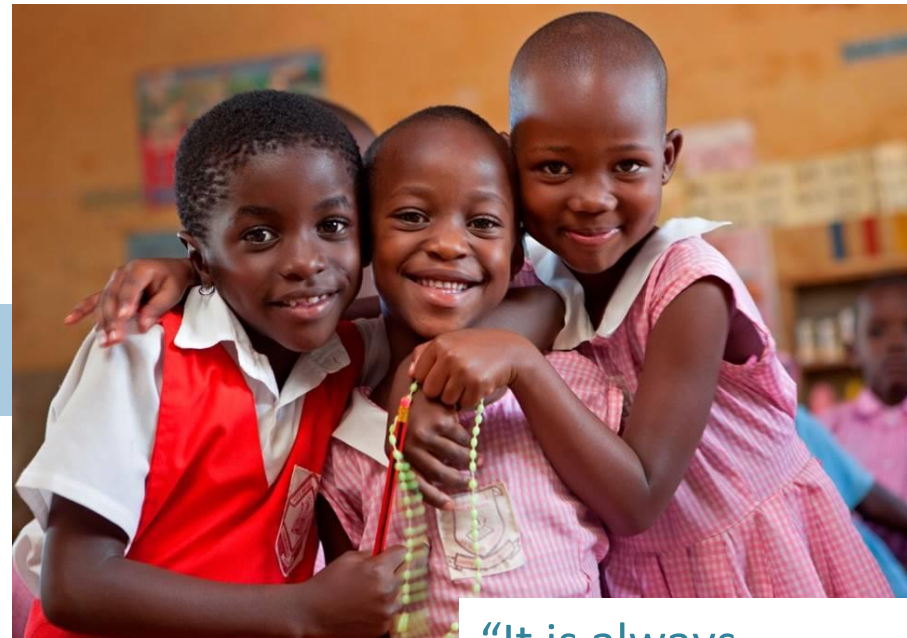
Learning from practice

A case study by Raising Voices, Uganda

Presented by Hassan Mullusi and Thabitha Suubi

Following a 14 year period of violence prevention work in Uganda, Raising Voices conducted a randomized control trial (RCT) to assess the effectiveness of their two models –Violence against Children and Women (VACW -SASA), and the Good Schools Toolkit in violence prevention. The trial was conducted in 21 intervention schools with 21 control schools using focus group discussions and interviews with students, teachers, community members, and community leaders and lead teachers who were rolling out the GST initiative with VAC Prevention Centre (PC) staff and district officials.

The violence against children prevention centres are community based organizations that work with the people based on their own understanding rather than of international and regional definitions.



Findings

VAC prevention centres are effective

► They build strong referral networks in communities and foster coordination between different stakeholders. This improves response to VAC cases as they are referred to the relevant organization promptly.

► VAC PCs helped to roll out the GST to scale and managed to reach 300 schools. Each of the 10 VAC PCs reached out to 30 schools.

► Effective community mobilization is possible because they understand the unique dynamics of their context, which also improves community outreach.

“It is always important to contextualize and come up with your own operational definitions”

Learning from practice

A case study by Raising Voices, Uganda: Enhancing Prevention

Even though overall the model was seen to be working, there were a few adjustments required. For example, VAC PCs were doing community engagement haphazardly and so the content had to be structured. Raising Voices is developing a Community Activism Toolkit that incorporates approaches in mobilizing communities to prevent VAC.

To support other organizations implement violence prevention interventions correctly, Raising Voices established a learning center and organizes courses where other stakeholders can learn how to implement the GST. Once the Community Activism Toolkit is ready Raising Voices will start training on community engagement and mobilization to prevent VAC.

Raising Voices plans to build a team of activists to enhance community-to-school linkages. This will help to strengthen community support to schools and to sustain the gains that have been made from the implementation of the GST methodology. The organization will work with VAC PCs to identify community members that are active and interested in VAC prevention to provide support to schools, to report cases and advocate against violence.

Violence usually happens in settings where, and around people, with whom children feel safe – it's a paradox. Violence happens at home or in schools where they are supposed to feel safe. Children cannot differentiate whether they are safe or not where they are supposed to be safe.

How is the government involved or integrated in case management?

▶ Raising Voices has a cordial relationship with the government of Uganda. It took the lead in designing alternative approaches to corporal punishment –positive discipline, and with UNICEF support, the government disseminated the tools to schools. Raising Voices has also entered into partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports to scale up the methodology to all the 19,000 schools in the country.

How are you building on to what already exists and has proven to work rather than re-invent the wheel?

▶ We have learned and adapted from other initiatives. IIDC helped to mobilize other organizations and referred them to us. We communicate regularly with other partners to leverage each other's expertise.

Like INSPIRE adoption as a tool at global level, can SASA and GST be adapted with those localized definitions?

▶ Our localized definition is based on the ground context to help local communities conceptualize what we are talking about. The local definitions are in tandem with the international definitions, the difference is that the terminologies that have been broken down into simpler words.

Global Trends in VAC

Presented by Pedro J. Guerra, UNICEF

To contextualize VAC, Guerra highlighted findings from a **2017 UNICEF report 'A Familiar Face'**, that examined data on violence in 80 countries around the world.

- VAC has no economic boundary – it is not an issue of the north and south, the rich or the poor. It is a global trend.
- Violence is the same everywhere – common trends, same kind of violence, same type of perpetrators.
- Close to 300 million (3 in 4) children aged 2-4 worldwide experience violence discipline by care givers on a regular basis.
- Globally, 1.1 billion (more than 1 in 4) caregivers believe that physical punishment is necessary to raise children properly
- Peer violence – can take many forms - bullying by school mates is the most common form. Violence in schools is not only done by the teachers; even students are involved. Boys are mostly prone to physical violence and threats and girls to emotional violence
- Some of the school infrastructure also provides opportunity for violence to occur – for example the location of the toilets in a dark place
- Data from Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam reveal that violence in schools leads to a dislike of school and lower scores in mathematics, self-efficacy and self esteem



Exposure to traumatic experiences can produce 'toxic stress' which is defined as *“prolonged, strong or frequent adversity in which the body’s stress-response system remains activated.”* This can alter the structure and functioning of the brain during the formative early years.

Global Trends in VAC

VAC prevention strategies

- Cultural constructs and concepts of masculinity have to be re-examined; there are societies where to prove that you are a man you have to kidnap your girlfriend.
- Reworking social norms: Invest in boys for them to know what it means to be a man and to be recognized in the community; in some communities as soon as a girl starts menstruating she is considered a woman, ready to become a wife.
- Male engagement through parenting programs to avoid domestic disputes due to differing parenting methods
- The school should be looked at as part of the community not separate from it
- Fighting the bystander approach: We need to change perceptions so that the community does not condone and accept violence against women and children
- We need to involve children in the solutions. Kenya has a lot of experience working on sexual violence with adolescent boys and girls. Girls are being taught how to stand up and defend themselves and how to stop aggression.



Access to services – availability of services

“We tell girls and boys that they have the right to go to the police or to social welfare, but what happens when the services are not there or there is no response when they get there? They lose trust and confidence in the system and next time violence happens, they don’t report it.”

Global Trends in VAC

Presented by Anna Maembe

Overview of the global perspective on VAC

Agenda 2030 – Goal 4, 5, 8 and 11 have components on ending violence. Specifically, goal 16 is clear and articulate in addressing VAC – a result of global coalitions on how to address VAC – a global partnership of like-minded individuals and organizations

Key principles – rights focused, child centred/child sensitive, universal but look at solutions that can be adapted; gender-sensitive, inclusive, transparent, evidence based and result oriented

The End Violence Fund was established not only to provide financial support, but countries can benefit from technical assistance on planning and implementation.

All countries that wish to accelerate action at national or sub-national level to end VAC need to:

- Strengthen ownership, coordination and planning - collective ownership implies collective implementation and collective celebration of successes.
- Use existing VAC prevention tools optimally– INSPIRE, Together for Girls, SASA
- Match pathfinder status not only by lip service, but by resource allocation to implement the plan (Uganda and Tanzania are pathfinder countries.)



“Having local and international information is important in dealing with VAC and building national, regional, and global partnerships. Having children as we discuss solutions is even more powerful.”

Global Solutions Summit: 14th-15th Feb 2018, Stockholm, Sweden

Raise awareness about children’s protection from violence, SDG 16.2, End Violence and existing solutions (incl. INSPIRE and the Model National Response)

Showcase stories of success around the world in order to stimulate further action at national level

Enable technical discussions around the evidence on what works to prevent violence against children

Global Trends in VAC

World Health Organization: VAC trends and implications

Presented by Berit Sabine Kieselbach

- The VAC surveys use prevalence data but there is so much more about the characteristics of the household, the families, that can inform programming. We need to use the data better and adjust our programmes accordingly
- Regarding help seeking –very few children seek help when they are affected by violence. The VAC study in Tanzania shows only sexual violence is being reported – but the numbers are very low – its only ½ of girls and a 1/3rd of boys told somebody about their experience. Figures for emotional and physical violence are even lower and only a fraction of violent acts get known to authorities
- More data is required on perpetrators of violence – a multi-country study revealed that 70% of men admitted to inflicting sexual violence against somebody.
- VAC consequences: death, disability, post traumatic stress disorder, HIV, adoption of risky behaviour, socio-occupational problems, cycle of violence-victims become perpetrators; global economic losses 4-8% of GDP



“The SDGs clearly describe violence prevention as an essential ingredient for sustainable development – but we need to encourage sectoral collaboration.”

WHY FOCUS ON PRIMARY PREVENTION?

- Has serious lifelong consequences
- Only a small fraction of victims and perpetrators come to the attention of authorities or services
- VAC can be effectively prevented and is cheaper and more effective than trying to remediate VAC effects
- Prevention can have beneficial outcomes – reduction of substance use, positive educational outcomes
- More and more outcome evaluations that measure effectiveness of interventions are being conducted
- More knowledge convergence between organizations --with INSPIRE we have a small set of effective and evidence-based steps supported by international, national organizations enabling us to develop the same programs and strategies

Global Trends in VAC

Strategies for challenging issues

► **The advancement of information and technology has introduced new platforms for violence –cyber bullying, online violence sexual exploitation; to what extent is it a problem, and how are we dealing with it?**

This is a serious problem as the world becomes a global village, for example suicides triggered by the exposure of children in compromising situations or cyber bullying. Our children are phone and computer addicts and they learn and are exposed to a lot of inappropriate information. UK is funding a program to look at online violence against children with a view to develop strategies – USD\$40million earmarked for 15 projects in different countries.

► **What best practices are there in terms of influencing governments to commit resources?**

Focus your efforts on prevention efforts. With budgets you need to be very strategic – no data no right to speak. You need to show how ignoring child protection can lead to greater socio-economic and health problems. Decision makers are also parents – approach them from that perspective. Governments only invest in what is visible and plan and budget for what is economically and socially viable. It is a process that can be achieved by consistently raised the issue sustainably. We also need to get other people talk about it. Let the social sector remain quiet for a change and let the health sector and agriculture sector talk from the health and productivity perspectives – that will make VAC a good investment.



Analyzing the WHO Manual

Preventing VAC in schools

Presented by Berit Sabine Kieselbach

WHO is developing a toolkit on school based violence prevention and hopes that the tools already developed can be adapted in other countries in the region. The goal is to develop a one stop resource for VAC in a school setting.

Why focus on schools?

- During early childhood development, most of the violence can be prevented
- Adolescents are neglected – no UN organizations deals with adolescents - more focus on younger children
- Schools have potential for intervention but are underutilized – they can reach a large number of children - global school enrolment rate is over 90%
- Global commitments – SDG 16.2 as well as SDG 4 which focuses on quality education

The scope of the toolkit

- Schools can play an important role in addressing all forms of violence not only what happens in school but other types of interpersonal violence
- Violence prevention requires sectors to work together – we all have the same goal but use different methodologies – sometimes pieces of the puzzle overlap – there are many variables to consider including guiding strategies
- First step – identify what guidance exists – there is a lot but it is often not informed by the evidence – it is fragmented it looks only on a specific type of violence – e.g. corporal punishment or only a particular target group – e.g. teachers rather than involvement of parents

👉 PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Develop **clear school policy** on how to deal with violence and school culture that condemns violence
- Collect **data on violence** for evidence based prevention– use existing data where it exists – e.g. surveys
- Integrate **violence prevention strategies** that are age and gender appropriate
- Focus on **teaching technical skills** and less on social and emotional skills
- **Teach younger children** to identify abuse, how to seek help and develop healthy relationships
- Address the **by-stander syndrome** where children watch when an older child is bullying a younger one
- **Focus on dating violence** – prevent gang enrolment
- Ensure **safety online**
- Discourage **social and gender norms** supportive of violence before they get deeply ingrained
- **Train teachers in positive classroom management** – calm, orderly environment – promote learning
- Tackle **risk factors for violence** – lower academic achievement , truancy, alcohol, drugs
- Behavior problems – **hyperactive children have a higher risk for violence** - identify these children and help them before they display violent behaviors

Global Trends in VAC

Strategies for challenging issues

► **Is there evidence of a minimum package that would give certain results to help organizations to address areas that they may not have influence over but can continue to engage in areas that they do?**

Ensure that there is a system to store sharp objects like grass cutters; construct proper fencing so that drug peddlers and other solicitors do not have access to children. The entire school compound needs to be reviewed to identify what times and where violence is likely to happen.

► **How would you address the problem of having a mobile teacher population with regard to sustainability?**

The idea is to train as many teachers as well as non-teaching staff so that even when there are transfers not all leave at the same time. Many of the life and social skills focus on different things but they need to include component of managing anger and emotions and have an approach that involves parents and teachers and school staff.

► **Is there evidence for the success of child rights clubs in addressing violence?**

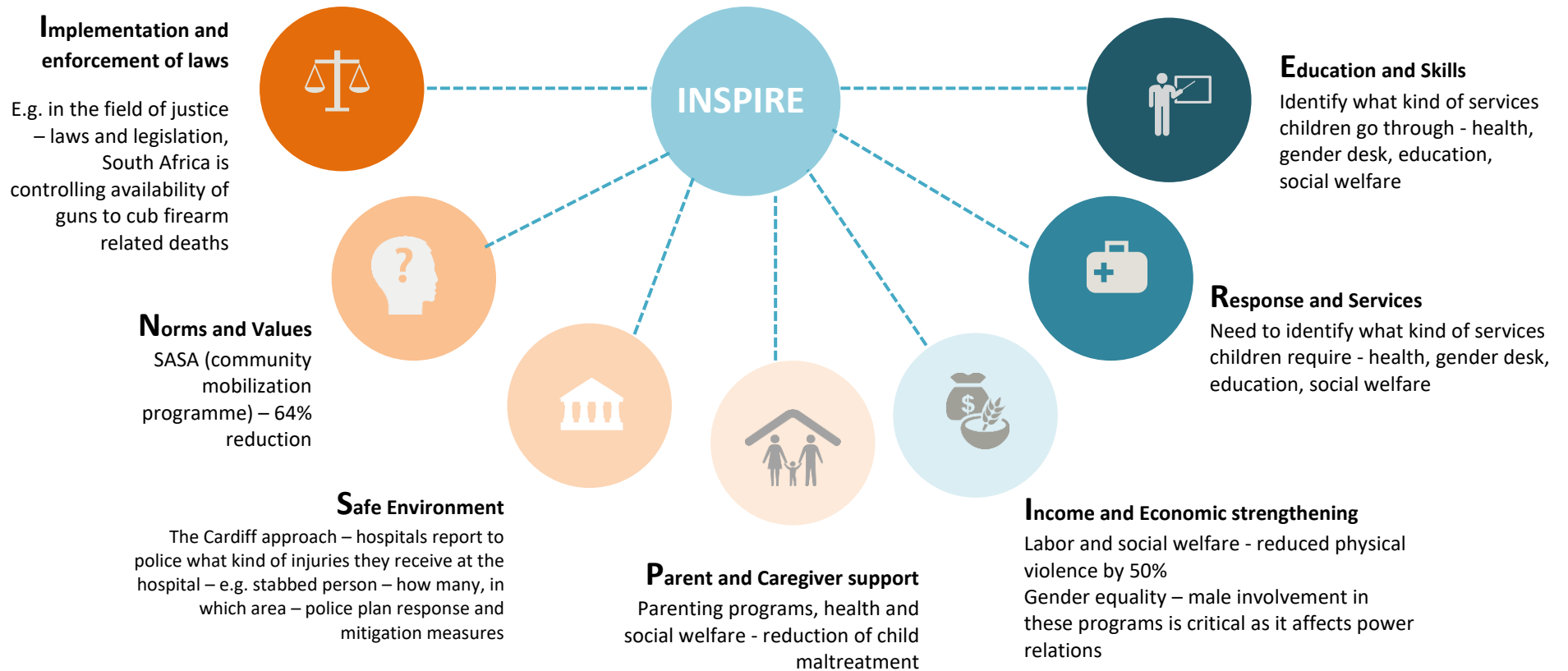
These clubs are active as long as the program is owned by children and there is continued external support. The best way is to integrate the concept with existing systems. Also, as long as the teachers are active, the club will remain active. The question is what can be done to motivate teachers to sustain the clubs? In schools where clubs were are still active, the main driving force was aspiration by some of the members. Clubs that died relied too much on external input. The issue of privacy and confidentiality is also very important.



Unpacking the INSPIRE model

The INSPIRE model shows clearly that multiple stakeholders have a role to play in preventing VAC.

“If you are not using strategies in INSPIRE model it does not mean that your approach doesn’t work – it’s just that there are missing pieces. INSPIRE is a learning and research generation initiative – participants should think of themselves as co-creators of the next version of INSPIRE.”



Perspectives on the INSPIRE model

EMERGING ISSUES

- In some societies, empowering women is a threat to masculinity and may result in more violence; programmers need to identify how to explain the benefits to the partner e.g. less sick children, more time spent in school
- Service provision for victims of violence remains poor. Service providers must be given clinical guidelines in response to child sexual abuse on issues around identification, keeping children safe, treatment including PEP and ensuring security in the system.
- Most countries do not have a well-established mental health system, there are very few practitioners; WHO is trying to develop low intensity interventions to be delivered by lay people who are not trained
- To get community and parental buy-in there is need to emphasize that preventions measures are not designed to stop disciplining a child rather provide alternative, more helpful, positive discipline
- Generating credible evidence is expensive, and many times local researchers, who have unique, and on the ground perspectives are not consulted. It is expensive but doing things wrong is more expensive – in Tanzania the VAC study was very expensive but it was worth it as it guides intervention.
- It is clear that no organisation can implement all 7 elements of the INSPIRE model; there is need for strategic coordination mechanisms that guide who does what.

“Partnership is part of the package of evidence and learning; you cannot succeed until you realize that you cannot meet all of the needs and you can only provide only so much. To have the intended impact you have to draw in other actors to complement your efforts.”



KEYWORDS FOR VAC PREVENTION

Prioritise, relevance, community focus, documentation, engagement, understanding audience, parental responsibility, evidence-based strategies, documentation, local content, testing

Revisiting Social Norms

Use of social norms theory in programing for reduction of VAC

Presented by Investing in Children and their Societies - ICS, Kenya

The objectives of the study were to identify and define social and cultural norms and how they support physical and sexual violence; document perceptions and the impact that they have on children; as well as the willingness of different actors to intervene. Interviewees included children in and out of school, caregivers, community leaders, community health volunteers, ICS-SP staff, teachers, School management committees, PTA representatives, TSC officials, MOE officials, Local area advisory councils, legal advocates and child officer.

Key findings

- Parents state that they are justified to engage children in household chores any time irrespective of whether they are going to school or not
- Parents state that children should be caned to be disciplined – different definition of discipline – but often means punishment
- Education of boys is valued more – investment in the boy-child was perceived to be more viable
- Girls can be enticed into sexual exploitation by gifts – boda boda riders, teachers, and other male labourers in the community
- Kangaroo courts are still common; when there is a case of rights violation community members and community leaders seek to resolve the issue out of court
- Corruption allows perpetrators to avoid courts of law as they bribe law enforcement personnel
- Despite efforts of different actors – cultural and social norms are still influencing behavior of children, families and communities
- There are major challenges in resourcing child protections services including for children requiring temporary shelter and legal services



Revisiting Social Norms

Understanding Social Norms to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children: FAWE Uganda

Presented by Dr. Richard Wamimbi Wotti

Study Purpose and objectives: Understand the role of social norms in preventing violence against children to make schools and communities safer for children

- Establish the existing social norms that underpin and perpetuate VAC in and around schools
- Investigate the role of social norms in driving, sustaining and mitigating behavior that contributes to violence against children in and around schools
- Explore the existing reference groups (networks) and their role in influencing social norm change in and around schools?
- Suggest a programming framework that may be applied to enhance positive social norms and shift harmful social norms in different context to prevent violence against children
- Three types of VAC explored: Child marriages, sexual violence, corporal punishment

Findings:

- Social norms reinforcing VAC: Socio-economic factors; belief of honour and stronger social networks for child marriages;
- Overall there were fewer positive norms and beliefs that oppose or mitigate child marriages.

“A girl child does not menstruate or get her first menstrual periods in her parents’ house because it brings misfortune to the family. She should marry off before it happens.”

“It is very common in our community because girls look for boda boda men by themselves to give them money. Girls love eating well and dressing well, so a girl can have like 3 men-a boda boda man to take her to school and give her money, a teacher at school to buy her lunch, and a boyfriend for sex.”

“They believe if a child is beaten, they will understand, fear and respect whoever is subjecting them to punishment for example at school they respect the teachers and parents at home.”

Revisiting Social Norms

CHANGES IN SOCIAL NORMS ARE DRIVEN BY:

- Child and human rights movement
- Mass sensitisation and civil society advocacy efforts
- Enforcement of a child protection legal framework
- Generations of younger parents have a different perspective of children and are more respectful of their education and other rights
- Reduction in corporal punishment has been visible due to strong legislation on corporal punishment

INTERCONNECTED DRIVERS OF VACC

- The relationship between differing cultural root values underlying social norms such as “honour”, kinship ties and the economic benefits for families
- Targeting important kinships ties that shape social norms e. g sengas (aunts)
- The role of faith and religious institutions
- Recognize the importance of children’s agency in early marriage social norm change (children as “influencers” of social norms)
- Identifying and targeting the reference groups on each of the practices (change reciprocal expectations among enough of the people in the reference group)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Agencies that plan to design and implement social norm interventions should start with social norms formative assessment and diagnosis to understand the norms and beliefs that sustain and mitigate VAC in schools and communities in order to inform effective programme design and measurement

Continuous stakeholder mapping and scoping using participatory methodologies will be important to understand the reference groups and those who have influence over particular norms so as to encourage social norms change

Establish and strengthen reporting and referral mechanisms in the country

Establish a network of specialized institutions that can provide care, support and restoration to those children already under harm

Create public awareness aimed at weakening negative norms and beliefs while promoting the positive social norms to allow for social change at different levels

Integrate positive social norms within the education and life skills interventions to dispel negative norms and beliefs and empower children as leaders and champions to create social change

Utilize ICT through SMS and other social platforms like Whatsapp, and Facebook to promote positive norms

Identify and support role models in the country and use them as reference group for promoting and diffusing positive norms that can prevent VAC

Revisiting Social Norms

The value addition of the social norms framework to programming: Lessons from the Bantwana Western Uganda Program

Presented by Christine Kizza

Bantwana started operations in three high HIV prevalent districts with focus on OVCs . They worked with households indirectly through CSO partners to support caregivers and their children by strengthening household incomes, building their ability to respond to abuse and become aware of their rights and responsibilities. In subsequent phases, Bantwana worked with children, teachers, and school management of 40 schools fostering discussions with community structures and the government to address corporal punishment in schools.

Lessons learned

- Involve all key actors including parents, care givers and their children when designing programmes and campaigns to ensure all stakeholders have a similar vision and mindset. Community engagement has increased over time with the formation of reference groups for caregivers, children and teachers.
- It is impossible to address social norms without addressing economic needs and serving with a purpose. The process requires critical reflection, changing approaches and strategies. Specifically, reference groups need to be acceptable in the community and have to be passionate about issues of children.
- It takes time to zero down to specific social norms – from 14 to 4 major concerns affecting children particularly around gender roles
- We have to look into the way we identify community activists – are they voluntary or are they compensated? It takes time to form a reference group – role models sometimes do not live up to the expected behaviour.
- On reporting, children can share on their own through peer leaders and suggestion boxes and individually to teachers. In those months that were reported it was by children themselves and not by teachers.

Revisiting Social Norms

Use of ICT in programming for reduction of VAC

Presented by Dr. Richard Wamimbi Wotti

A key priority of the study was to establish the risk factors that promote and perpetuate ICT enabled violence against children in and around schools.

Findings

Figure 1: Types of people children approach / report to when they receive wrong messages

	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Parent	613	59	755	64	1368	62
Police	463	45	626	53	1089	49
Friends/peers	335	32	337	29	672	30
Teacher	226	22	336	29	562	25
ICT technicians	192	19	118	10	310	14
Neighbors	129	13	148	13	277	13
NGO/CBO/Religious	93	9	77	7	170	8
Sibling	103	10	59	5	162	7
Community worker	72	7	86	7	158	7
None	25	2	13	1	38	2
Don't know	11	1	11	1	22	1



Figure 2: Children's exposure to sexual violence while using ICT devices

	Did not report sexual abuse or violence		Reported sexual abuse or violence		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Total	417	19	1818	81	2235	100
Setting						
Urban	207	20	827	80	1034	100
Rural	210	17	991	82	1201	100
Gender						
Male	211	19	888	81	1099	100
Female	205	19	928	82	1133	100
Age group						
<13 years	111	26	311	74	422	100
13-15	180	20	734	80	914	100
16-18	115	15	661	85	776	100
19+	8	8	97	92	105	100
Highest level of education						
Primary	267	24	868	76	1135	100
Secondary	147	14	935	86	1082	100
Whom do you stay with						
Father and mother	242	18	1130	82	1372	100
Single parent	84	18	384	82	468	100
Guardian / other relative	77	23	256	77	333	100
Alone	6	20	24	80	30	100

Revisiting Social Norms

Actions to reduce ICT enabled

- Establish peer support ICT groups for children who are vulnerable to ICT enabled sexual abuse
- Collectively map out risk places and perpetrators and adapt methods to avoid them
- Actively participate in identification and reporting of ICT abused children to authorities
- Parental control of ICT gadgets
- Intentionally and systematically train children about the benefits and dangers of ICT content
- Regulated use and access to ICT devices while creating a friendly atmosphere and environment for children to confide in them about utilization of their phones
- Caregivers should ensure close supervision of ICT devices particularly at night to ensure proper use
- Place ICT devices e.g. computers and TVs in open places to avoid improper use of the devices
- Support children clubs to raise awareness on ICT utilization
- Train law enforcement officers e.g. police to address ICT enables VAC
- Support teachers with skills to understand and curb ICT enables sexual abuse and exploitation



Community led approaches to reduce VAC

Lessons from Investing in Children and their Societies (ICS), Kenya

Presented by Kudney Joram

ICS shared their community approaches applied in Western Kenya and Northern Tanzania; a key lesson being the need to contextualize interventions based on local realities. ICS works with groups of parents – 18-30 parents per group to discuss child development stages. More importantly, they work with existing groups to ensure sustainability.

The program is embedded in economic empowerment as it focuses on skillful parenting with the following aspects: ending violence against children, agribusiness, as well as capacity building of community based partners. Skillful parenting is built upon an understanding that change will only take place if people are convinced of the need to change. This project has been scaled up to West Africa because of how it worked in Kenya and Tanzania.

Lessons Learned

Initially, the focus was predominately on prevention but now ICS has learnt that there is need link the interventions so that prevention is complemented by response.

Male involvement is a key strategy in order to promote shared parenting roles. Organizations working on skillful parenting need to develop relevant strategies to promote buy-in, particularly in patriarchal settings since it is mainly men that make critical decisions about the family.

For effective programming training teachers alone is not sufficient. There is need to train parents as well especially because of the children. If they are safe at school and yet when they go back home there is no support or continuity it will not work.

The support from community based organizations is essential in the success of interventions – they are the ones who know the type of challenges communities are facing.

Innovation matters: While more children and their parents are gaining the courage to report cases of violence there is also fear of retribution from neighbors. This has therefore promoted the use of ICT to report anonymously as the message comes directly into the system of the Department of Social Welfare.

Evidence and Documentation for VAC

Presented by Fiona Musana

The convening last year had a very strong focus on documentation, storytelling, and communication; this year is focused on messaging and how we are taking advantage of current trends.

Critical issues in knowledge management

- It is critical that people are motivated to share their knowledge with others, to build communities of practice.
- One of the fundamental issues in the knowledge management sphere is the willingness to admit that things went wrong, and document them
- It is critical that organizations integrate knowledge management right from program design stating how evidence will inform programming – knowledge management is an intricate pillar of program design
- There is need to understand why documentation matters from an institutional and technical perspective
- For all NGOs communication strategy development should be aligned to program management
- The development of social media policies is now an essential element of planning
- Capacity building in communication skills is important
- Creating a community of practice and using ICTs is paramount

Creating compelling stories

Actors need to assess how they can make VAC initiatives stand out. This can be informed by how and where we get our evidence and make it interesting for the audiences that we want to move to action. Questions abound such as: **do we know whom we want to reach`and how do we create a sense of urgency?** More importantly, do we have an overarching communication strategy and how does the communication strategy feed into what we are doing.

Achievements and Progress

Outcome 1:

Program inception and reflection meetings have been held with each of the organizations

Four organizations benefitted from more engagement out of the seven organizations.

Community approaches training was conducted for all partners.

Outcome 2:

Facilitated the exchange of experiences and sharing of insights through the annual meetings.

Promoted bilateral linkages and exchange in information between learning cohorts – non IIDC-initiated meetings between cohort partners.

IIDC is looking at the possibility of developing VACiS Country groups to ensure that partners are engaged in existing networks rather than create new ones – started in Tanzania through Action Aid.

Outcome 3:

Tailor made M&E trainings for FAWE and ICS, Action Aid and Bantwana
Data collection tools revision with FAWE and ICS

Outcome 4:

Field visit during inception state – to get a feel of the context in which partners plan to operate to look for potential stories of changes

Link partners to VACiS Platforms and national level for agenda setting purposes



Reviewing IIDC's role as a learning partner

- Capacity strengthening of staff on M&E and documentation –
- Joint development and review of current M&E tools – this has enhanced ICS-SP documentation efforts
- Deeper understanding of VAC / Opportunities/best practices on VAC interventions/approaches/strategies
- Defining and refining the SN framework
- Inter-linkages with other partners
- Communication Resource Person
- Twinning community approaches
- Regular review meetings for in-country learning
- Learning in country and inter-country
- Capacity strengthening on M&E/refinement of LFA
- Evaluations – baseline, midline and end-term; publications; IECs and media engagement – print and electronic; case studies; periodic re-ports; documentation of good practices
- Access to complementary resources, e.g. Community Mobilization
- Insights to reflect on how we are doing in our work

Forward Thinking: **Next Steps**

What opportunities are we going to leverage and what challenges are we going to tackle based on our discussions during this convening?

- Facilitating continuous interaction among cohort members
- Engineer/facilitate common advocacy agenda/platform among implementing partners
- Pairing organizations to promote focused learning and inbuilt accountability
- Collaborative fundraising
- Study learning visits; social media platform; shared drive on tools and materials; development of good quality materials; link partners for more advocacy at national level
- Integrate INSPIRE/WHO tools in our program design/interventions
- Periodic documentation of best practices – they will complement existing tools/resources
- Facilitating cross-learning

CALL TO ACTION

- Develop **country specific VAC strategy based on new knowledge**, understanding and context
- “Put the Children first”, ensuring a robust parent involvement strategy is established
- **Governments should be viewed as progressive partners** to end violence against children and promote their wellbeing through establishment of policies and programs, which create a supportive environment for children and youth.
- **Sharing best practices** enriches planning and programming that strengthens interventions
- East African governments need **to identify ways to link resources to the existing plans** particularly for coordination and monitoring at community levels. Local authorities need to be empowered to initiate, coordinate and monitor VAC programs. The ministries responsible need to unravel the complex divisions of responsibilities between the national organizations and district bodies. Governments cannot do this alone and therefore need to create enabling environments for civil society and the private sector to collaborate and complement their work.
- Through **mechanisms such as the Global Partnership**, international players have the opportunity to identify stories of success and share them on their various platforms. Linking regions such as East Africa with other universities, think-tanks and other scientific bodies would add value to the work that is already happening around INSPIRE. Working together with civil society, international actors can, and should use their positions of influence to help shape change not just at country-level but also regionally.

CONCLUSION

The three-day event was a reminder to the Learning Cohort together with IIDC that violence against children in East Africa remains rampant. As participants discussed their own interventions, there was a general agreement that while many are winning battles, there is more to be done to prevent and respond to violence against children. The challenges are real, urgent, evidence-based action is needed to remedy this crisis.

Governments, NGOs, and the private sector need to ramp up efforts to prevent and reduce violence against children. Additionally, although there have been substantial investment in initiatives to reduce violence against children, the policies and programs have not necessarily translated into better lives for children. This reality provides both a challenge and opportunity for those who are advocating to reduce violence against children.

As observed by all participants, VAC is a multi-faceted challenge which can only be tackled through partnerships, collective learning and multi-stakeholder engagement. Evidence shows that the fight against VAC can be won if all parties agree to work together, to share experiences and to be willing to learn.

Globally accepted tools like INSPIRE, provide a flexible roadmap for every country's unique context. As a Learning Cohort, the NGOs in East Africa need to show that they can move beyond rhetoric, to implementing measurable interventions against violence in East Africa.





ANNEX 1: List of participants

No.	ORGANIZATION	NAME	CONTACT
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