

Knowledge for Change- Data and research to inform policy making and strengthen children's protection from violence

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Evidence from Studies on Violence against Children

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VAC Evidence Base has Grown

- **2006 UNSVAC spurred multiple VAC studies leading up to the study and in response to the UNSVAC recommendations**
 - UNICEF has supported Member States and civil society partners in undertaking a number of VAC studies: in 2011 alone, more than 25 countries
 - Either in collaboration with/led by national stakeholders, UNICEF alone or in collaboration with external partners
- As child protection has become more established **national household surveys** (DHS and MICS) incorporated child protection/VAC issues
- **Research and evaluation partnerships** have increased, and leveraging academic research and programmatic innovation to break new ground on measurement
- **Formative research projects are informing programming**, e.g. on community-based mechanisms, reporting of grave violations, prevention of conflict related sexual violence by state and non-state actors, etc.

VAC Evidence Base has Grown

- **Broad spectrum of VAC studies:**
 - Quantitative and qualitative studies
 - Nationally representative or focused on specific regions, groups of children
 - Either broad focus on different forms of violence against children, or specific focus on a particular form of violence
 - Different survey tools and methodologies promoted in different regions
- **Assessment of VAC studies:** Methodologies and survey tools
- **Informal lessons learned activity:**
 - How have the studies been disseminated/used? What actions have the studies triggered at national level? Lessons learned if study would be repeated?
 - Based on studies undertaken by UNICEF in collaboration with partners in Africa, CEE/CIS, Asia, Latin America

Evidence from VAC Studies: Positive outcomes

- **Important contribution to better understand the magnitude and nature of different forms of VAC:** magnitude, nature, context, risk and protective factors, services sought and received, gaps and challenges
- **Critical tool for advocacy:** evidence spurred important policy and programme response in a number of countries
- **Spurred a multi-sectorial approach:** mobilizing different ministries for an integrated systems approach engaging different sectors and actors in society
- **Served to strengthen national capacity for prevention and response:** in particular child protection systems and case management practices but also prevention efforts
- Brought national, regional, international attention to the issue and raising awareness about different forms of violence

Evidence from VAC studies: Most useful data?

- **What was the most useful data collected:**
 - Data in regards to **physical** and **sexual violence in the home**
 - **Nature and context of violence:** what form of violence do children experience, who are the victims, who are the perpetrators, where does it happen?
 - **What services** were sought and received, and what services would the children have liked to have but did not receive
 - **Data on under-reporting of violence:** level of under-reporting and reasons why

Evidence Needed to Better Inform Programmes

1) Nature and Magnitude of VAC

- Capture **all forms of VAC**: sexual, physical, emotional (and neglect)
- Experiences of **multiple forms of abuse** and links between different forms of VAC
- Capture **all forms of sexual violence** including different forms of sexual abuse/exploitation (exchange of money/goods for sex, child abuse images, grooming, live stream abuse)
- Disaggregate by **severity of violence**, particularly physical violence
- Physical and emotional **violence as a result of discipline**
- Existence of '**culturally accepted**' forms of VAC
- **More specific data on perpetrators** for the different types of violence:
 - Peer violence in relation to all forms of VAC including sibling violence
 - Intimate partner violence
 - Perpetrators met through ICTs etc

Evidence Needed to Better Inform Programmes

2) Risk and Protective Factors

- Correlation between **violence** and different types of **family structure**: (nuclear family, single parent, extended family, living away from parent for work/school)
- Extent of **parental/caretaker monitoring**: Do parents know what their children do in their free time? Who their friends are?
- Relationship with **non-biological parent/caretaker**
- Presence of **domestic violence** and/or **substance abuse** in the home
- **Protective social practices and norms**: Attitudes towards reporting VAC
- Who do **children seek advice** from with personal problems?
- Children's and families **awareness** of legal frameworks, policies, programmes and existing services
- Children's **access to information**: Where do children get information?

Evidence Needed to Better Inform Programmes

3) Health and Social Consequences

- Consequences of violence: Not only look at **health** consequences but important to also look at **social** consequences
- Relation with **school drop out**
- Early **motherhood/fatherhood**
- Better understand **attitudes** and **social norms**:
 - Perceptions of who is responsible/'blamed' for the violence (victim/perpetrator)
 - Issues of stigma/discrimination, culture of silence
 - Children's perceptions/attitudes toward violent discipline: reasons why parents/authority figures use violence; if it is considered 'normal' and effective
- Strengthen focus on **protective factors** and **social norms**

Evidence Needed to Better Inform Programmes

4) Help seeking, access and utilization of services

- Important to look at service seeking and utilization for **all forms of violence**
- Level of **under-reporting** and reasons behind: Who do children tell? Why do they not tell? Children's preferred reporting method?
- More information about official **reporting to authorities**: To which authority? Who reported? What was the follow up? Reasons for not reporting?
- **Awareness** about the mechanisms for reporting and investigating violence
- Better understand **access** and **utilization** of services: demand vs not receiving services, geographic availability, ability/willingness to pay
- Need for data, monitoring and reporting on the **quality of care**: qualified staff ready to treat and support
- More focused attention on **children's stated needs/recommendations** around preventive measures and services
- Capture **informal, community and self-care**: traditional services

Conclusions: Lessons learned

- **Positive research experience:** agreed it is important to address the different vulnerabilities children face, including both boys and girls
- **More disaggregated data** needed by province/regional data, but also age, sex, specific groups of children, particularly for programming
- How to capture out of household populations and displaced groups?
- **Many different definitions of VAC used:**
 - Not always capturing all forms of violence
 - Information not comparable across countries
 - Trigger limited policy and programme response
 - Definitions should be based on international standards** i.e. the CRC, OPSC, Council of Europe Convention, CRC Committee General Comments

Conclusions: Lessons learned

- **National ownership key:** Government ownership, buy in and participation from onset critical for how evidence and recommendations will be disseminated and used
- **Ethics around research/data collection on VAC:** Critical to strengthen capacity of national authorities and actors on how to conduct research with children on sensitive topics and ensure protective services are available
- **Resource intensive work** – essential for good programme practice but costly; will not necessarily replicate surveys but find other ways to routinely monitor/follow up results:
 - Develop core set of indicators to include in MICS/DHS and other surveys
 - Use of administrative data and proxy indicators for progress
- **More targeted qualitative research needed** to complement information by surveys
- Need to **strengthen the link** between **data collection and programme response** – prevention and protection of children from VAC:
 - Are we collecting the right data?
 - Often not enough strong link and/or existing data is not used to develop evidenced based programme response that will actually address VAC

Thank You !