

Program Learning Event on Violence against Children in and around Schools in East Africa

Developing a Common Learning Agenda on Preventing and Responding to Violence against Children in and around Schools: Lessons from Research and Practice

Learning Event Report

Hotel Africana, Kampala, Uganda, 14th – 16th July 2015



A report of the program learning event on preventing and responding to violence against children in and around schools in East Africa

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Acronyms

ACPF	African Child Policy Forum
ECFG	Elevate Children Funders Group
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CHAI	Child Health Advocacy International
CODI	Community Development and Child Welfare Initiative
CCR	Caucus for Children's Rights
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DLC	Development Links Consult
IALI	Inter-Agency Learning Initiative
ICS	Investing in Children and their Societies
IRCW	International Centre for Research on Women
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
VAC	Violence against Children
VACiS	Children in Schools
VAG	Violence against Girls
VAW	Violence against Women
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation Accountability and Learning
MoESTS	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PLE	Program Learning Event
RCT	Randomised Control Trial
RTI	Research Training International
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
WHO	World Health Organisation
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UYDEL	Uganda Youth Development Links

Synthesis of the Learning from the Event

Sponsored by the Elevate Children Funders Group (ECFG), a three-day Program Learning Event (PLE) on Violence against Children in and around Schools (VACiS) held in Kampala, Uganda from 14-16 July 2015, attracted 77 practitioners, donors, advocates, researchers and government representatives in the field of violence against children from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, Germany, the United Kingdom and United States of America. The theme of the event was developing a common learning agenda on preventing and responding to VACiS. The major lessons derived from the program strategies, evidence and learning exercises were:

Lessons on effective violence against children (VAC) programming strategies and approaches

1. While the prevention of violence against children in and around schools (VACiS) is justifiable from a human rights and economic perspective, actors in the field have not prioritised prevention and current interventions are largely awareness raising. As a result, they are not effectively addressing root causes, such as social norms, that perpetuate violence. Responding to current VAC incidents should, however, remain on the radar of actors.
2. Bottom-up and top-down approaches are both critical in preventing and responding to violence. This requires strengthening both the formal and non-formal child protection systems, as well as maximizing synergies between the two. Bottom-up approaches need to link interventions at the family, school and community level.
3. VACiS takes many forms, including corporal punishment, sexual violence, bullying, and violence to and from school.
4. Children's agency is important for self-protection and in making children key actors in preventing violence against their peers.
5. Given the multiple forms of VAC and the need to address the various components of the ecological system, collaboration between state agencies, state-and civil society organizations (CSOs) and between CSOs, are essential ingredients of successful programming. School-based interventions should reach children, teachers and non-teaching staff.
6. Creative approaches to violence prevention need to be devised, piloted and scaled up. These include alternatives to current practices such as corporal punishment and positive reference groups/change agents that could transform existing social norms.
7. Successful programs have adopted practical methodologies (as opposed to technical) that touch individual hearts and minds and use concepts and words with positive connotation (for example, Good School).
8. There is a significant disconnect between violence against women (VAW) and VAC programming, although schools are an important space to integrate VAW and VAC interventions as they are places where children develop and learn positive social norms and attitudes related to power and healthy relationships.

9. It is possible to implement cost-effective prevention programs in resource-limited settings.

Lessons on evidence and learning

1. Because the process of social change is slow and complex, program implementers and funders should demonstrate patience and build learning into the program cycle. Effective ways of generating evidence about what works require being clear about expected results, and conducting quality baseline and end-line studies.
2. Traditional Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) that prioritises accountability for results is no longer sufficient. Rather, M&E objectives and processes should be geared at generating evidence for program learning. To this end, the process by which change is realised is as important as the envisaged results.
3. While there is an emerging body of evidence on effective, promising and emerging practices on VAC, developing countries are contributing less to research evidence, and the data on VAC is largely not disaggregated. The recent randomized control trial (RCT) on Raising Voices' Good Schools Program is just of the few examples of a clearly evaluated program in a developing country context.

Implications for VACiS programming

1. Prevention approaches should increasingly focus on transforming social norms that promote and sustain VAC. Effectively addressing social norms requires both a deeper analysis of how people in particular contexts view them, and collaborating with the gatekeepers in those communities.
2. Program implementers, collaborating with informed funders, should initiate experimental projects that seek to learn about more effective ways of preventing and reducing violence.
3. Funders should consider supporting collaborative projects—a set of agencies working on different fronts, but with the same goal in mind. These could include a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches, and school and community level interventions.
4. Funders will need to revisit their partner reporting schedules to better align with the expected project outcomes. The progression from outputs to outcomes and impact should be based on clearly dotted milestones over a reasonable period of time.
5. Program implementers should invest in building an organisational learning culture, benefitting from the external input of a learning partner, where necessary.

The Program Learning Event at a Glance

This is a report of the three-day PLE on VACiS held in Kampala, Uganda. The PLE was organized by the ECFG, with the technical and administrative support of Development Links Consult (DLC), a social development consulting firm incorporated in Uganda. The event, held between 14th and 16th July 2015 at Hotel African in Kampala, Uganda attracted 77 participants, representing practitioners, advocates, researchers and government representatives in the field of violence against children from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, Germany, the United Kingdom and United States of America .

With the theme of developing a common learning agenda on preventing and responding to VACiS, the event was convened to achieve three specific sub-goals, namely:

1. To enable partners to learn promising practices on preventing VACiS.
2. To share research, information and resources with partners to link theory and research to practice.
3. To connect partners for networking and learning; and discuss potential joint action (e.g. joint program development, coordination and advocacy work) on the issue.

On day one of the PLE, participants received expert input regarding theoretical frameworks on preventing and responding to VACiS; interacted with children involved in VACiS prevention initiatives; and shared experiences from their current program initiatives. On day two, participants went on a field expedition to Luwero District in central Uganda and learned about the Raising Voices' Good Schools program. They interacted with school children, teachers, partners and community based CSOs. On day three, participants were exposed to emerging evidence on effective programming, monitoring and evaluation. Current Elevate Children grantees and program partners developed ideas for program enrichment.

Session One: Welcome Remarks

1.1 Welcome Remarks

Members of the ECFG delivered opening remarks. **Dr. Michael Gibbons**, ECFG Chair, welcomed participants and outlined the objectives of the PLE. He underlined the goal of the three day event as facilitating the development of a common learning agenda on VACiS, building on the knowledge and experiences of program leaders, practitioners, and researchers.

The ECFG, he noted, is a network of private funders and donor advisors promoting social justice and rights, with a focus on violence against children (VAC), family separation and alternative care for children. Dr. Gibbons noted that over the past five years, ECFG members have collaboratively supported work on preventing and responding to VAC in the East African region, specifically in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. He applauded the PLE as a great opportunity for the ECFG to learn and connect with the work on VACiS in the region.

Ms. Blain Teketel, Oak Foundation, outlined the Foundation's 10-year grant-making support to partners in East Africa to prevent VAC, particularly sexual abuse and exploitation of boys and girls. She reiterated the challenge of preventing VAC in homes and the far-reaching effects of violence on children's wellbeing and development and to national development. She asserted that VAC is preventable, but requires cross-sectoral collaboration, and developing knowledge of effective prevention and response strategies. She urged participants to reflect upon and learn from their past work on VAC.

Ms. Maureen Greenwood-Basken, Wellspring Advisors, introduced participants, who ranged from a variety of disciplines: researchers; advocates; program implementers; directors of civil society organizations; representatives of the government and United Nations agencies; and participants from three East African Countries (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania). She stressed that it is envisaged that the PLE will serve as a periodic platform for learning on VACiS among the stakeholders.

Ms. Greenwood-Basken commended the robust legal and policy framework on VAC in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, and stressed the need to foster learning that can lead to more effective implementation of existing laws and policies. Ms. Greenwood-Basken thanked the ECFG for its funding support, the technical and logistical contributions of DLC, and the facilitation provided by Mr. Njoroge Kimani. She also informed participants that VAC has been incorporated into the United Nations' global development priorities through Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 16.2.

1.2 Official Opening of the Event

As a precursor to the official opening, Mr. Onduri Alfred, Acting Director for Social Protection and the Commissioner responsible for Youth and Children's Affairs at Uganda's Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), reiterated the reality of VAC at the household, school and community level. While noting that corporal punishment is rooted in the cultural belief that, ***"If a child is not beaten, s/he will not learn"***, he emphasized the need to intensify awareness raising and alternatives to such practices.

He described how even as a student, himself, his academic performance in primary school was heavily contingent on the predisposition of his teachers to corporal punishment: .

I went to a very rural primary school. From Primary one to four, I always held the first or second position in class. In primary five, I had a teacher who would administer up to 30 strokes on the legs until he drew blood, and on the buttocks until he saw bruises. Sometimes, the number of strokes would go up to 60. Because of this situation, I attended classes for only two weeks. For the rest of the year, I would spend school hours on a mango tree. Every morning I would carry my books and head to the mango tree with my sister. During the primary five promotion exams, I was in 19th position and my father was unhappy. When I went to primary six, I got a very nice teacher and my performance tremendously improved. I was ninth in the first term, fifth in the second term, and second in the third term. I also got a first grade in the primary leaving examination, which was almost impossible to get in a rural school. I was later admitted to Kings College Budo, the best school in the country at the time.

Mr. Alfred Onduri was also optimistic that the impending study on VAC in Uganda would illuminate the status of VAC in both school and community settings. He encouraged the participants to translate the learning from the event into actions that address VAC.

Hon. Suleiman Madaada, Minister of State in Charge of the Elderly and Disability at the MGLSD, opened the PLE on behalf of Hon. Muruli Mukasa, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development. He noted that the PLE is an important undertaking that enables various stakeholders to reflect on the protection of children from violence in and around schools. The Minister appreciated the technical and financial support of all the stakeholders organizing the PLE.

Hon. Madaada echoed the significance of creating a violence free learning environment. He also supported greater collaboration between stakeholders and the Ministry to achieve this through effective implementation of the existing legal framework. He commended the involvement of stakeholders across the region in affirming the East African Community integration process.

The Minister informed participants that the MGLSD co-chairs the Inter-sectoral Committee on VACiS with the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MoESTS). He stressed the importance of children's participation in the Committee and the need for a special focus on the protection of children with disabilities. He urged stakeholders to device workable/practical solutions beyond the workshop.

1.3 Keynote Address

Dr Shimelis Tsegaye, head of Child Protection and Development at the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), delivered the keynote address. It articulated key facts about VAC and its relevance to the African continent. Dr. Shimelis emphasized the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of VAC, which recognises that violence occurs as a result of the abuse of relationship, trust, responsibility and power. It includes both intended and unintended harm.

Dr. Tsegaye listed vulnerability/risk factors for VAC at the family, community and societal level, stressing that such factors, including poverty, permeate the imaginary boundaries between families and communities, especially in the African context. Dr. Shimelis asserted that physical punishment as a means for discipline is inter-generational, deeply engrained in the African psyche, and embedded in societal norms.

He signaled that some children first experience violence at school. He noted that physical and sexual violence, as well as bullying are more prevalent in schools than homes. Additionally, in many African countries, there are no legal frameworks on bullying. Dr. Shimelis also identified children with disabilities, children employed in domestic services and children on the street as more vulnerable to violence.

Dr. Shimeles acknowledged the commendable strides made to address VAC on the continent, including: establishment of an impressive legal and policy framework; an increased focus on a systems approach to child protection, linking child protection to social protection; creation of more early childhood development programs; establishment of one-stop child protection centers; and child participation initiatives.

He also, however, noted that programs were largely fragmented and poorly coordinated. Instead they are reactive interventions that do not rely on the evidence-base and discount community resources. He also observed that child protection is yet to become a political priority.

The future agenda, he opined, should include: national surveys to inform policy and practice; capacity building on the principles of child protection; a focus on prevention; enhanced advocacy on child protection; increased political visibility of VAC so as to frame the issue as a national priority; involvement of finance ministers in the child protection discourse; and cultivating a more collaborative interface between government and civil society.

Discussion

Participants were cautioned to recognise that while progress had been made on VAC, particularly in the development of policies and laws, insurmountable implementation challenges, such as low financing and low political will, would continue to persist.

There was consensus that the limited political clout of children has relegated child protection to the bottom-pyramid of the national development agenda. A number of interventions, such as children's parliaments and clubs, however, could potentially enable children to shape the national development agenda.

Learning points from this session

- *Focus on strategies that will strengthen the implementation of laws and policies*
- *Link family, school and community level interventions on VAC.*
- *Address societal tolerance of VAC through transforming social norms*

Session Two: Theories and Approaches on VAC

This session underlined the learning agenda framework and provided the conceptual and theoretical foundation for VAC programming.

2.1 Conceptual Framework of the Common Learning Agenda

Dr. Michael Gibbons stressed that the learning agenda provides an opportunity for stakeholders to devise ways of addressing VACiS more effectively. Dr. Gibbons emphasized that asking learning questions and experimenting with different program strategies would require deep engagement with the on-going work around learning. He noted that the key to building program knowledge is finding answers to the following: What should we do? How should we do it? What are the sources of knowledge and/or expertise?

Dr. Gibbons proposed three main sources of program knowledge: 1) **Context knowledge** which evolves from a deeper understanding of the situation, people and circumstances where work on VACiS is undertaken; 2) **Program Experience** on the best ways to organize and implement VACiS program activities in varied contexts; and 3) **Validated Science Evidence** based on formal verified conclusions of impact studies and other rigorous evaluations.

Dr. Gibbons urged participants to use these learning event three sources of knowledge to both advance the learning agenda, and move in a direction of applying this knowledge to existing interventions on VACiS.

2.2 Social Norms and Preventing VAC

Ms. Karima Manji, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, defined primary prevention as, “stopping violence before it starts.” Primary prevention includes approaches that influence the whole population (e.g. influencing policy and legislation; school-based programs to engage teachers and children; and community level interventions to change norms). She described secondary prevention as prevention directed to both reduce repeated violence against those known to be victimized, and to hold perpetrators accountable. Secondary prevention includes prosecution of offenders, drop-in centers for victims, and support groups for victims. She emphasized the importance of primary prevention by stressing the linkage between social norms and violence.

She said that norms are not the only elements that hold a behavior in place. Other factors could include structural influences such as politics, material influences such as economics, social elements such as religion, or other indirect factors.

She differentiated between attitudes, norms, beliefs, and behavior.

Ms. Manji defined a social norm as, “a set of interdependent social expectations (of what is typical and appropriate) shared within a reference group (relevant others that hold these expectations).” She noted that reference groups play a key role in maintaining compliance of social norms through sanctions, which can include reverence, acceptance or even rejection. As such, most people act or behave in a certain way to conform to reference group expectations or simply out of the need for social approval.

Ms. Manji suggested that shifting the norms of any given society requires a clear understanding of the beliefs of what is typical and appropriate; the characteristics of the reference group and the sanctions for non-compliance with the social norm. Changing a norm requires going beyond shifting attitudes or behaviors of an individual to creating new beliefs within an individual’s reference group.

Discussion

The session attracted a lot of participant interest. The discussion highlighted the reality that sanctions reinforce both positive and negative behavior. Participants noted that methods of VAC, such as corporal punishment, have persisted because the majority of the current interventions focus on changing attitudes and behaviors and not underlying social norms.

Shifting social norms requires changing belief systems and building positive reference groups, not condemning existing norms and negative reference groups. It is also critical to study and understand the social norms underlying specific practices in different contexts.

2.3 Effective School-Based Interventions on VAC

Dr. Mary Ellsberg, Director, Global Women's Institute at George Washington University, underlined the intersection between VAC and Violence against Women (VAW), noting that both are human rights violations that affect millions of people worldwide. She also stressed that where there is domestic violence, children are abused. Children who witness intimate partner violence are also likely to be victimized or perpetrators of violence as adults and the risk factors are the same.

While recognising the current disconnect between VAW and VAC programming, she identifies school as an important space to integrate VAW and VAC interventions because they are places where children develop and learn positive social norms and attitudes related to power and healthy relationships.

Drawing evidence from a scientific review of past VAW/G programs, she observed that effective prevention programs involved women and men; engaged the entire community, combined multiple approaches, lasted for a considerable amount of time (not less than 6 months); and addressed structural drivers of violence such as social norms, acceptability of violence and gender. Examples of effective school-based programs include: USAID's Safe Schools Project, Gender Equity Movement in Schools by ICRW India, and the Stop Violence Against Girls in Schools project by Action Aid. There is, however, limited evidence on effective interventions in developing countries and in VAC prevention generally.

Dr. Ellsberg recommended that school based interventions take both a whole school approach (involving students, teachers, and surrounding communities) and gender-specific approach, with a focus on empowerment; and challenge attitudes and behaviour that perpetuate gender inequalities and ultimately VAW/G.

Discussion

The discussions unearthed some divergence in the principles that underpin programming in VAW compared to VAC. For instance, mandatory reporting of violence cases is emphasized in VAC programming, while adult women victims of violence have the discretion to decide whether to report.

Evaluation of school-based programs to determine effective programs requires baseline and end-line assessments, and a control group. However, control groups should receive the same intervention after the end line study as a critical ethical consideration.

2.4 Violence Against Children in Schools- UNICEF's Experience

Ms. Yolande Baker and **Ms. Irene Nayiga** of UNICEF provided highlights of UNICEF's work on VACiS, including in creating safe schools in Tanzania and Uganda. Ms. Baker underscored the importance of intervening in schools because that is where children spend most of their time. She observed that physical, sexual and psychological violence are the three most common forms of VACiS perpetrated by both children and adults. VAC in schools is multi-dimensional and requires multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral response. Ms. Yolande further reiterated that UNICEF's child protection approach is focused on strengthening the legal and policy framework and management of coordination.

The presenters noted that UNICEF supported the national VAC surveys in Tanzania, Swaziland and Uganda¹. Some of the recent interventions supported by UNICEF in Uganda include: quarterly coordination meetings of the Inter-Sectoral Working Group on VACiS; development of the National Strategy/Plan on VACiS; development of Reporting, Tracking, Response and Referral (RTRR) Guidelines; preparation of alternatives to corporal punishment booklets; set up of the national child helpline; and Edu-track-short messaging service.

2.5 Children's Perspectives on Violence and How Communities Support Children's Wellbeing

Dr. Mike Wessels of Columbia University presented the Inter-agency Learning Initiative-(IALI's) multi - country initiative involving a global review of community mechanisms to support children and multi-stage learning and action research in Sierra Leone and Kenya. He stressed the significance of bottom-up approaches to VAC prevention which build on learning children's viewpoints, which often differ from adults. While non-formal family and community mechanisms are important in responding to the protection risks that children face, they can also be sources of VAC. He identified resilience building as an important aspect in addressing VAC as it reinforces protective factors around the child.

Discussion

Participants reiterated the importance of non-formal child protection systems as the first line of response to violence cases, stressing the need to build the capacity of non-formal actors to handle children's issues in the most appropriate and effective ways. This notwithstanding, the consensus was that both bottom-up and top-down approaches are critical in addressing VAC, signifying the need to strengthen linkages through trust building and better communication processes. In this effort, children should be engaged as actors in identifying and implementing lasting solutions to the violence they face.

2.6 Interactive Session with Children on Preventing VACiS

Girls and boys from ActionAid Uganda's intervention schools (Kibanga Primary School in Kalangala District and Kindu Primary Schools in Nebbi District) highlighted the strategies being used to address VACiS and the challenges they face. The children reported that the use of violence-free reporting boxes in their schools enables children to raise their concerns to the school administration in a confidential manner. Concerns that affect all or the majority of the pupils are discussed by the school administration during

¹ The VAC study in Uganda is underway, while the study in Tanzania on children had been concluded, and the study conducted in Swaziland focused solely on girls.

school assemblies, while others are addressed individually or presented at school management committee meetings.

At Kindu Primary school, it was reported that children are represented on the school management committee. The pupils' representative has intervened in various child rights concerns, including the beating of children by teachers and parents; insulting of pupils who give inappropriate answers in class; sexual harassment of pupils by teachers; and the teachers' inability to complete the syllabus.

Discussion

Children are involved in the running of the reporting boxes to ensure that no issue is shelved by the teachers or school management committee and to address issues that can be resolved at their level. Issues that are not resolved at the school level are forwarded to ActionAid for further support. Participants stressed the importance of ensuring that children involved in such initiatives are educated on their rights and responsibilities. The promoting rights in schools framework of ActionAid draws information from international and regional instruments on child protection, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). The latter, in particular, has specific provisions on children's responsibilities.

As a sustainability strategy, ActionAid is collaborating with the local governments (the district education office) and the Sub-County local governments through their representation on the project management committee, chaired by the District Education Officer (DEO). A suggestion was made that ActionAid compiles a Question and Answer booklet based on the issues frequently raised by pupils through the reporting boxes. It was also proposed that suggestion boxes be placed distant from the staff room to ensure confidential reporting.

Although representation of children on the school management committee is being promoted, this is not entrenched in the Education Act (2008). Kindu primary school lacks a female teacher to attend to girls' particular concerns, although the school has engaged a female member of the school management committee to provide temporary cover.

2.7 Focus Group Reflection Effective School-Based Interventions on VAC

Participants were advised to join any of the six groups, each focusing on a thematic issue on VAC: primary and secondary prevention; social norms; evidence on solutions; child participation and agency, bottom-up work and community based organizations; and policy change. In the thematic groups, participants discussed the key learning points on VAC based on the presentations and discussions.

The group that discussed primary and secondary prevention noted that the existing programs focus more on response than prevention and do not integrate the gender specific aspects of VAC. It also underscored the need for baseline studies to fine-tune projects and the significance of children's involvement while instituting adequate safeguards to ensure their safety.

The group that reflected on social norms observed that changing social norms requires a wider intervention involving changing attitudes and values. The group also noted the importance of targeting the 'gatekeepers' to alter social norms. It emphasized the need to explore the varying trends and social contexts in rural and urban areas. The group cited examples where social norms have been successfully transformed, such as the end of female genital mutilation in Senegal.

The group also recommended deeper analysis of social norms and learning from the advertising industry to shape and transform societal norms, accentuating the need to create new social norms, new reference groups and to use positive modeling, messaging and branding. It signaled that change is a process, but may involve a relapse in the behavior of some groups.

Another group reflected on the evidence on solutions and stressed the importance of observing research ethics, especially where control groups are involved. There is a need to ensure confidentiality of research respondents; to inform them of the opportunity to withdraw at any stage and keep district authorities informed of the research. Care should be taken to avoid traumatizing and victimizing participants.

The group noted the challenge of involving communities in experimental research, because they have knowledge gaps that would not ensure their meaningful participation in highly technical research. Research findings, the group suggested, should be disaggregated by variables such as age and sex. The group underlined the importance of increasing access to research documentation to children, governments, and communities.

On bottom-up work, the group members stressed the importance of balancing donor priorities and local priorities as well as packaging advocacy messages in a conflict-sensitive language that people understand. Engagements with communities should involve understanding contextually relevant norms and discussions with gatekeepers such as parents, cultural leaders, parents and religious leaders. Capacity building which equips community members with the right knowledge, skills, and attitudes is important in promoting their effective participation in influencing policy.

The group on policy change recognized that policy change is a process that should involve all actors, but championed by the government and informed by evidence. It underlined the significance of tracking budgets for children and analysing how they impact on the lives of children (both intended and unintended). It also emphasized children's involvement in policy development processes to enhance the content of the policy.

Learning points from this session

- *Efficacious prevention programs should address the root causes of VAC, which are linked to social norms.*
- *Transforming social norms requires changing belief systems, creating positive reference groups and devising sanctions that reinforce positive behavior.*
- *Alternatives to practices deemed harmful to children's wellbeing should be developed and promoted, essentially by supporting internal change agents.*
- *School based interventions should reach children, teachers and non-teaching staff. Facilitate more dialogue between researchers and program implementers in VAW and VAC to explore possible integration of prevention and response strategies.*
- *Synergy between bottom-up and top-down approaches and actors is required to effectively prevent and reduce VAC.*
- *Invest more in generating evidence on effective VAC program strategies in developing countries.*

Session Three: The Good School Program

Mr. Dipak Naker of Raising Voices Uganda and Ms. Louise Knight of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) delivered complementary presentations on the Good School Program, a case study selected for the learning event due to its rigorous evaluation.

3.1 Preventing VACiS: A New Approach to an Old Problem

Mr. Dipak Naker stressed that the program was designed at a time when evidence suggested high and, in some instances, increasing levels of VACiS. In some studies, he noted, over 90% of children reported experiencing violence at school.

Mr. Dipak also suggested that the factors that influence VACiS are both structural (related to the environment in schools) and conceptual (related to the definition and understanding of violence). Dipak underscored that the significance of a systemic and holistic approach, involving all the actors in the school setting. Part of Raising Voices intervention in this regard included formulating a positive intervention – good schools, broadened conception of VAC beyond physical violence and interventions that foster synergy such as the Good Schools Tool Kit.

He suggested that interventions to address VACiS should begin with the child and move outward, to affect others that have an impact on the child; use practical methodologies that are sharable; and involve all stakeholders, including children. He also proposed scalable interventions with inbuilt monitoring and learning strategies.

Discussion

The discussions underscored the need for legal reform in countries such as Tanzania, where corporal punishment is legalized as a means of enforcing discipline. While legal reform is pertinent, it should be driven by the government to gain the required legitimacy for effective enforcement.

It was also realised that the use of different terminologies in child protection (such as child abuse *vis-à-vis* VAC) creates confusion, more so if their vernacular translations distort the original meaning. Given the significant proportion of children experiencing violence, efforts should be geared at strengthening the referral system, although the concept of justice is more complex than most practitioners might think.

3.2 Results of the Evaluation of the Good School Program

Ms. Louise Knight presented the results of a cluster randomized control trial evaluating of the Good School Program implemented by Raising Voices. The study was conducted by LSHTM to assess the impact of the Good School Program on the children's experience of physical violence from school staff as well as their mental health and education performance.

The baseline survey was conducted in June 2012 with 3,700 children in P5-P7 (11-14 years) and 500 staff, while the end-line survey was conducted in 2014 with 3800 children and 590 staff. Both studies used interviewer administered questionnaires in 42 randomly selected schools (21 intervention schools and 21 control schools). The results of the study indicated a massive reduction of VAC up to 42 percent in the intervention schools as well as notable improvements in the children's sense of safety at school.

Discussion

The period of reference with regard to the incident of violence that children in the study reported was one week, as the children could easily recall events in the past week compared to a month or a year. Given the acclaimed success of the program, some participants expected a zero prevalence rate of physical violence in the intervention schools. It was, however, clarified that the change is gradual as this is a deep-seated practice. The Good Schools Program is not a perfect model that should be replicated elsewhere in the world, but an example of what might work.

The end-line study sample had a mixture of both same children who participated in the baseline study and those that did not, as some children could have dropped out, changed schools or transited to secondary school. The study team used an internationally recognized standardized tool that includes questions on all forms of violence. These tools were translated into Luganda and it was the choice of the children to be interviewed in Luganda or English.

Closure of Day 1

While closing day 1, Dr. Gibbons noted with satisfaction the level of engagement, connection, and rich exchange of program experience exhibited within the group. He appreciated participants for graciously working within the arrangement that had been set up. He restated that ECFG was very serious about benchmarking on this learning event to trigger learning. He invited participants to this envisioned dialogue and engagement during and beyond the learning event.

3.3 Field Visit to the Good Schools Program Sites

On the second day of the PLE, participants made a field trip to Luwero to learn about the implementation of the Good School Program.

3.3.1 Visits to Schools

Participants visited three primary schools: Bukolwa Roman Catholic Primary School, Mamuli Church of Uganda Primary School and Nsasi UMEA Primary School. While at the schools, participants interacted with children and teachers who briefed them about the Good School's activities and outcomes. Participants, children and teachers engaged in discussions on the program: activities, the child rights issues, addressed the benefits, the role of the community, and the role of children. Participants took a guided tour of the program artefacts such as talking classrooms, wall murals, wall of fame boards and violence reporting/discipline boxes. They witnessed and discussed a mock children's court session. Following the visit to the schools, participants gathered at Nimrod Hotel in Luwero to reflect on the learning from the school visit.



The Children's Council at Mamuli Church of Uganda Primary School role play a children's court session to the visiting PLE participants

Reflections on the Learning from the School Visits



Program Good Practices and Outcomes

- a) Participants commended the use of positive, child-led participatory and democratic approaches to addressing children's issues such as Children's Courts and Wall of Fame.
- b) There was a visible level of trust and positive relationship between the teachers and the children as evidenced in the way they interacted with each other.
- c) The children were empowered through the use of suggestion boxes to report violence and to run their own court.
- d) There was a significant documentation of important messages disseminated through the program in classrooms and the murals.
- e) The program is fully embraced by the schools. For instance, the school protagonists were not paid to do the extra role of child protection and the teachers articulated the program and supported activities such as the court sessions.
- f) The continuity of the intervention beyond the life of the project was very impressive. It was interesting to see children in the lower classes taking leadership of the children's court when other pupils transit to secondary school.
- g) The approach/initiative is integrated in the school activities without additional funds which will ensure sustainability.
- h) There is a need to reflect on the program and identify ingredients /elements that are scalable, how they can be scaled up, implemented, monitored and evaluated. The entire program does not have to be scaled up in its entirety.

Issues for Further Reflection

- i. Beyond disciplinary issues involving learners, there is an opportunity to increase the scope of issues that children's courts handle, while remaining cognizant of the role of various duty bearers in handling child protection issues.
- ii. A holistic protection of children would require safe homes. There ought to be interventions at the community level and create synergies with school-based activities. We need to think about the relationship between the work on VACiS and the larger landscape of VAC in families and communities, social evolution of families and the stresses they face (economic, social). The link between the work in school and the community and wider child protection landscape (bottom-up approach) should be strengthened.
- iii. The program probably has made changes in terms of attitudes towards VAC, especially among teachers, but not necessarily norm change.
- iv. There appears to be a gap in the documentation of the interventions and outcomes at the school level. For instance; teachers and pupils could not state the number of court cases handled.
- v. There is a need for increased knowledge among children of the school-based and other formal child protection structures and to strengthen linkages with the formal structures to provide the required child protection services.
- vi. Information that children, teachers and parents need to know about a Good School ought to be provided in the local language, as most children and parents are not competent enough in English.
- vii. The mural at Mamuli Primary School should have been placed in front of the school so that it is visible to the children and adults that work and visit the school.
- viii. The violence-reporting boxes are placed in classes (near the blackboard) and near the staff office. These locations might curtail reporting because they do not provide sufficient privacy. The boxes in classrooms were also placed high on the wall, which younger children may not reach.
- ix. There was no evidence that younger children are included or recognized in the wall of fame.

Questions for Reflection

- *Who should implement policies: is it the responsibility of the schools, Civil Society Organizations or government?*
- *Is the children's court a parallel structure to the official Prefect body? How can VACiS initiatives work with existing structures to ensure sustainability of school based programs?*
- *Child participation under the program is limited to the Children's Council. There is a need to explore other ways of involving children (e.g. debates, drama, talking to children on assembly) to create safe school environments.*

3.3.2 Visits to Community Centers

Participants visited two community violence prevention centers out of the 10 centers reportedly run by Non-Governmental Organizations and CBOs partnering with Raising Voices on the 1,000 schools project. The centers provide psycho-social help such as counseling to survivors of violence and conduct advocacy activities. The schools attached to the community centers refer child protection cases to the community centers for further management and referral. Through this arrangement, Raising Voices sought to connect the schools to communities and sustain the Good Schools Program.

Interactions with staff at the two centers revealed that the centers had received training from Raising Voices and subsequently collaborated with schools to respond to child protection cases. The two centers had trained teacher protagonists (2 per school in a five-day training); formed committees of teachers,

parents and children. CODI alone receives approximately five cases of child abuse from the community on a weekly basis.

Although there is a good working relationship between the centers and local governments, the staff of CODI and CHAI noted that local governments had expectations beyond the capacity of the organizations such as requests for construction of school infrastructure and desks. Trained teachers get transferred to other schools, while untrained teachers are sent to the intervention schools. CODI and CHAI have initiated in-school orientation activities for new teachers.

Reflections on the learning from the visits to the community centers

Collaboration with local partners such as CODI and linking them with schools has fostered sustainability and ownership of the initiatives and increases coverage of the programs. There is a need to strengthen the linkages between CSOs, such as CHAI and CODI, and government structures in the district. However, participants were also observant of the challenges of collaborating with government officials, such as the challenging police response to child protection, including corruption and request for financial and logistical support from CSOs.

It is important to create and support spaces where children and parents can discuss child protection to engender a common understanding on some issues such as corporal punishment and alternative forms of discipline.

Learning points from this session

- *Effective VACiS programs must be supported by interventions at the community level.*
- *It is possible to implement cost-effective prevention programs in resource-limited settings.*
- *Providing alternatives to corporal punishment is more effective in reducing VAC than condemning the practice per se.*
- *School based interventions should reach children, teachers and non-teaching staff.*
- *Programs that use practical methodologies (not very technical), use acceptable concepts and touch individual minds and hearts have a high likelihood of success.*
- *The process of social change is slow and complex, so we ought to have patience and build-in learning into our programming.*

The third and last day of the PLE focused on reflecting on the learning from the first two days to help grantees and partners improve their programming on VACiS and also define the future learning agenda and areas for future collaboration.

Session Four: Enhancing VACiS Programming

This session involved two presentations and reflections on effective design, monitoring and evaluation of VAC programs. The session closed with a plenary discussion on future collaboration and learning agenda.

4.1 Principles for Effective Prevention Programming

Ms. Lori Michau (Co-Director, Raising Voices) highlighted the common limitations in program design and six principles of effective program design. The limitations highlighted included: exclusive focus on awareness raising; implementation of activities without deep analysis; working in silos; a focus on individual change; shallow and wide focus; and a focus on final outcomes rather than process. Ms. Michau noted that the result of the above limitations is lots of efforts with less impact. Ms. Michau enlisted six principles of effective program design that partners could consider to make their VACiS programs more effective. They included:

- a) Work across the ecological model to create change in the wider environment where children live.
- b) Use a gender power analysis to address the underlying drivers of violence rather than manifestations.
- c) Create theory and evidence- informed approaches, based on a clearly articulated theory of change, while tailoring it to the local context, embracing innovation and learning about what works.
- d) Sustain multi-sector coordinated efforts.
- e) Encourage personal and collective critical thinking to ensure program's impact on people's hearts.
- f) Be aspirational; inspiring individual and collective activism; help people see the benefits of doing things differently.

Discussion

Although funders focus on results, implementers need to appreciate the process required to achieve such results. Program implementers need to dialogue with funders on what it takes to effect change (a clear theory of change) and the milestones along the way. In addition, working within the ecological model can help program implementers address the concerns of vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities.

5 Tips on a Learning Oriented Approach to Program Design, Monitoring and Evaluation

Mr. Deogratias Yiga of Development Links Consult emphasized the importance of learning – focusing on the process – without losing sight of the end result. Given the uncertainties in contexts that underpin social development programming, organizations must be willing to learn and reflect on how the processes lead to the desired change. He highlighted some of the challenges to learning oriented Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): pressure to meet donor requirements, limited budgets, limited capacity in terms of skills and tools, failure to integrate M&E across the organization and pressure for quick results amidst complex processes.

Mr. Yiga highlighted that in order for organizations to benefit from M&E, they should: make learning central to M&E and make M&E a central part of the project cycle; and spread the responsibility of M&E to foster organization-wide learning.

Discussion

One of the practical challenges raised is experimenting approaches amidst high levels of VAC. On the other hand, “doing business as usual” could bar implementers from discovering effective strategies that could prevent the further occurrence of violence. Initiating a learning agenda in an organisation would require a deeper analysis of the programs they implement to discern known effective strategies in the context from those that would be experimented. The experimental strategies would inform the learning questions that would be revisited along the program implementation cycle. It was underlined that organizations should shift from M&E to learning such that M&E provides the required information for an organization to learn from its work.

6 Lessons from the Presentations on Effective Programming and Learning

In group discussions, participants reflected on the learning from the presentations on effective programming and a learning-oriented M&E. Below are the key learning points:

6.1.1 How Could the Thoughtful Program Principles Enrich VACiS Programming?

- There is a need to strengthen interventions that target families and households.
- There is a need to analyze the drivers of violence from a gender perspective and this should be incorporated into programs.
- Learning should be bi-directional involving a genuine dialogue among parties involved.
- When organizing trainings and workshops, provide a feedback mechanism for conversations where participants can reflect and innovate on how they want to address VACiS.
- Build off critical thinking in a bottom-up arrangement to enable people to generate their own solutions or strategies that they can own and internalize.
- Identify innovative ways to sustain multi-sectoral efforts.
- Ensure intensive on-going multi-sectoral and wider eco-system engagement.
- Donors should trust organizations to try out promising interventions and innovations. Engage donors to be more receptive to learning rather than focusing on NGOs that have “credibility.”
- Involve other formal and non-formal actors in order to take on a more ecological model outside the school setting.
- Create spaces for sharing and uptake of research evidence to inform programming.
- Harmonise the work of different actors.
- Engage deeply in work on changing social norms with reference groups.
- Successful approaches require critical thinking. There is a need to understand the context before designing programs.
- Pay attention to ethical procedures while working with children.
- Train facilitators on how to work with children (including ethical issues) and devise innovative ways to capture the experiences of special groups of children, such as children with disabilities and child victims of violence.
- Pay attention to child perpetrators of violence.

- Develop, within our region, own reference points with powers vested in the groups to control their learning agendas. The concern is in dealing with the protector of the learning without diminishing the significance of the discourse.
- Deeply investigate the cultural context in which the program is working to get an understanding of norms surrounding violence.

6.1.2 How could learning be better integrated into VACiS programming?

- Publicize and package research findings to guide implementation.
- Emphasize theory of change to enrich programs, starting with engaging organizational teams to develop a learning agenda.
- Support and/or organize learning and reflection visits among partners.
- Analyze gender dimensions in programming and ultimately incorporate a gender-power perspective to ensure the unique needs of boys and girls are taken into account, for instance, when identifying alternatives to discipline.
- Adopt a multi-sectoral approach to bring together relevant sectors/stakeholders to prevent and respond to VACiS.
- Analyze the context within which programs are implemented by using the ecological model to identify stakeholders or change agents and bring them on board to address VACiS.
- Involve all staff in program design, monitoring and evaluation discussions.
- Allocate time and funds for M&E and learning.
- Work for the public good; organizations should pool and share knowledge rather than compete with each other.
- Bring everybody on board as opposed to working with children alone in school.
- Use M&E and baseline information to inform programming.
- Use a child-centered approach; a bird's eye overview for creating linkages beyond the school to wider child protection prevention and response framework.
- Encourage critical thinking and reflection instead of top-down thinking.
- Adopt an integrative approach (working across the ecological model to address drivers of violence; looking beyond the individual child to networks and structures in which the drivers are embedded).
- Harness the support of learning partners/institutions to pre-test and document best practices and connect experiences.
- Document best practices and positive aspects of norms and cultures within the communities as opposed to highlighting only the negative aspects.
- During implementation, monitoring should be taking place; documentation should be well executed and reflection with stakeholders undertaken.
- Involve governments so that they endorse programs and provide support.
- Create parallel learning systems that outline key learning questions and also look for unexpected outcomes and learning.
- Create a scheduled space for learning that is in line with planning so that reflection and learning is put into action.
- Share learning with the participants of this PLE (as a reference group) rather than keep it within the organization.
- Link programs to research institutions in order to generate as well as appreciate external perspectives.
- Conduct stakeholder views (round tables) to gather perspectives on what is working.



Partners from USAID/LARA programme reflect on the learning and how it could enrich their programmes

6.2 Enriching Partner Projects to Prevent VACiS

Participants worked together within their organizations to complete a program approaches typology² indicating proposed modifications (issues or strategies) to enrich their VAC programming. The grantees and program partners filled the good practices and program design matrix (Refer to the Table below) and identified the support needed while journeying through the new program phase. In the African marketplace (*Sokoni*), resource persons and peers visited each grantee or program partner and provided insightful considerations for better programming.

Key Learning and Support Needs of Grantees and Program Partners

Organization	Areas of support /learning
Forum for African Women Educationalists/Tanzania/Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strengthening documentation for interactive learning, sharing, awareness raising, beyond accountability and with deliberate efforts to capture the marginalized. b. How to automate M&E system and link it to organizational processes. c. Capacity building around M&E from tools development to use of M&E results for future programming. d. Strengthening information sharing through building a network of critical stakeholders.

² Framework developed following the 2006 WHO landscape study and subsequent insights from VAC studies and programme evaluations by World Vision, UNICEF and the article on principles of effective programming on VAC. The matrix highlights strategies that could be applied to four common types of violence (bullying, sexual abuse, corporal punishment, unsafe to/from school) identified in and around schools in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

USAID Uganda – Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Effective programming for sexual rights and gender based violence. b. Tools to engage children and conduct baseline studies. c. Sharing of different innovative approaches that have worked and can be adapted. d. Appropriate training materials. e. Ideas for effective training.
Tanzania Child Rights Forum (African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect /ANPPCAN-T, Plan-T, Fawe-T and all members of TCRF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Social norms on corporal punishment and how to overcome both societal and government resistance to change. b. The new education policy and its implementation; defining CSO's niche and seizing the momentum to profile the advocacy agenda.
African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect Uganda and Tanzania Chapters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advocacy to ban corporal punishment in Tanzania. b. How to affect bottom-up programming. c. How to develop an effective M&E system that promotes learning.
Raising Voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Articulating research findings in a compelling way for program, policy makers and thought/opinion leaders. b. Meaningful integration of learning into the next program phase.
AVSI Foundation Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How do we address norms around sexual violence in schools? b. Strengthening the capacity of schools in documentation, analysis and utilization of data/information on VACiS.
Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Children (KAACR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Incorporating evidence based and action research strategies in on-going advocacy work. b. Development of child friendly tools for data collection on prevention of VACiS.
Investing in Children and their Societies (ICS Africa) KY and TZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Addressing social norms in relation to VACiS. b. Development of tools for collection and analysis of programming data on VAC.
Save the Children in Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Social norms and behavioral change around teenage pregnancy. b. Developing innovative ways to convince parents to keep girls in school longer.
Plan International Tanzania	Effective ways of linking community based structures with formal a. child protection structures
Save the Children Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How do we develop quality benchmarks - minimum standards as part of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) documents. b. How to practically address the issue of norms within the community and school settings. c. How should quality school rules and regulations look like?
Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How can UYDEL change people's attitudes and norms from corporal punishment to positive discipline? b. How do we nurture communities to assume collective responsibility towards preventing and responding to VAC.
Caucus for Children's Rights (CCR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How to incorporate social norms theory and research into CCR's theory of change. b. How to integrate strategies focused on the school environment into existing community based work on VAC.

	c. Building partnerships with media companies to increase reach to the masses – e.g. with 1 minute videos highlighting the work of champions.
Law Development Centre, Legal Aid Clinic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How can Legal Aid Clinic develop a strategy document to guide interventions? b. Can we get technical orexpert support in developing the strategy? c. Technical advice on conducting a national research on an identified area or issue.
World Education Inc. Bantwana Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Effective intervention for bullying in schools. b. Navigating the complexities and sensitivity around sexual abuse. c. Testing Bantwana’s evidence-based community case management model and linking it to school and child protection response in districts. d. Conducting randomized trial on community-based model in schools. e. Need support to apply gender-power analysis to inform current program activities.
UNICEF Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Effective capacity building strategies besides training. b. Effective multi-sectoral approach in an environment where there is less support from the accounting entity. c. Develop innovative approaches to confronting VOC and other unsafe practices to and from school.

6.3 Advancing the Learning Agenda



In a brainstorming exercise, participants identified the next steps in the learning trajectory beyond the PLE. The proposed strategies are:

- i. Organize multi-country East Africa forum to foster learning and cooperation among government, non-government organizations and research institutions.
- ii. Set up a virtual platform to share tools, information, good practices and learning (e.g. WIKI or other sharing space).
- iii. Build on VAC studies in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania as opportunities to foster collaboration
- iv. Support exchanges and multi country gatherings across similar and interrelated interventions or themes.
- v. Strengthen in-country collaboration among partners and between non-governmental and government agencies.
- vi. Support the development and harmonization of policies in the region.
- vii. Promote and support greater collaboration between research and academic institutions to build evidence to inform interventions.

A Learning Partner

Participants endorsed the idea of identifying a learning partner to champion the learning agenda beyond the PLE. The proposed terms of reference of the learning partner include:

- a. Assist programs in the area of research - develop data collection tools for research on VACiS.
- b. Document and share information on existing VACiS initiatives and research.
- c. Provide technical advice to help partners integrate learning to enhance their programs.
- d. Map VACiS partners/actors and programs in terms of targets and geographical areas.
- e. Develop a learning agenda (conscious decision/process) in consultation with different actors.
- f. Document VACiS strategies.
- g. Help local partners document and disseminate learning.
- h. Provide technical training of local staff.
- i. Link partners with research institutions and /or resource persons.

Learning points from this session

- *Learning during the experimentation of change process is important for program implementers. The process of social change is slow and complex, so we ought to have patience and build-in learning into our programming.*
- *Effective ways of generating evidence about what works requires being clear about the expected results, and conducting quality baseline and end-line studies.*
- *Interventions should be based on the ecological model to create change in the wider environment where children live and this inherently requires multi-sectoral sectoral and multi-actor coordination.*
- *Traditional M&E is no longer sufficient because learning should be at the centre stage of programming*

Session Five: Closing Remarks

5.1 Way Forward

Ms. Maureen Greenwood-Basken (Wellspring Advisors) recognized the presence of ECFG partners (NEF East Africa Fund and Porticus) and their support towards the learning event. She informed participants that there were several efforts in the region that partners could engage with to advance the agenda on preventing and responding to VACiS at the international and regional levels. They include:

Global fora

- i. The formulation of the sustainable development goals in Addis, Ababa, Ethiopia. Under 16.2, there is a target of ending violence against children and its indicators.
- ii. A new global partnership championed by UNICEF on VAC announced in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Research and other information resources

- a. WHO is developing a manual on promising practices on VACiS, in collaboration with UNICEF.
- b. The Colombia University Child Protection in Crisis (CPC) network is undertaking a research on child protection, including VAC. <http://www.iicrd.org/columbia-universitys-child-protection-crisis-learning-network>
- c. A LINEA project is being implemented by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, focusing child sexual violence and exploitation. <http://blogs.lshtm.ac.uk/samegroup/linea/>
- d. The Children and Violence Evaluation Challenge Fund will generate new evidence from 18 randomized controlled studies. <http://www.evaluationchallenge.org/>
- e. At the regional level, the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) provides opportunities for research and advocacy on VAC with the African Union. <http://www.africanchildforum.org/>
- f. The Without Violence initiative presents opportunities for on-going communication and advocacy on VAC. <http://www.withoutviolence.org/>
- g. The KNOW Violence Research Project is looking at evidence validation – using existing research findings and communicating it to policy makers. <http://www.knowviolenceinchildhood.org/>
- h. The ECFG is compiling information resources on VACiS to be available from its library. It would stock resources on VACiS from partners.

Key opportunities in Uganda

- i. The ongoing discourse on the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level provides an opportunity for partners to amplify efforts on VACiS.
- ii. The new National Action Plan on VACiS is an opportunity for a coordinated VAC response.
- iii. The upcoming VAC study and subsequent national strategy provide an opportunity for data collection, advocacy and communications along the way.
- iv. The national summit on the Ugandan child October 27-28, 2015 provides an opportunity to include VAC prevention on the agenda.

Key opportunities in Tanzania

- The existence of the National Action Plan on VAC is an opportunity to garner efforts towards ensuring full implementation of the plan.

Next steps on the PLE

- a. ECFG to prepare a report that summarises the proceedings of PLE and disseminate to partners to inform future discussions and collaboration on VACiS.
- b. ECFG to consider engaging a learning partner to support the learning agenda and the potential network of actors on VACiS in East Africa.
- c. ECFG to send to partners a UNICEF link to a tool or methodology focusing on interviews with children.

- d. The partners were encouraged to promote the alternatives to corporal punishment to guide discussions with children, administrators and teachers on positive discipline and also gather more insights on how the guidelines can be improved.
- e. Partners could also explore opportunities for peer review and linking with research institutions to enrich interventions and further learning.

5.2 Official closure

Mr. Kaboggoza James, the Assistant Commissioner responsible for Youth and Children in the MGLSD, noted that this PLE is addressing an important subject, given the increasing incidents of VAC and VAW reported in the media. Mr. Kaboggoza assured partners of government's commitment to end VACiS. He informed participants that the VAC study in Uganda would commence in August 2015 and is expected to provide more evidence on the magnitude and forms of VAC in Uganda. Other interventions include the development of a national strategy on VACiS, the establishment of the Inter-Sectoral Committee to oversee VACiS interventions and the dissemination of alternatives to corporal punishment handbook. He urged all partners and stakeholders to support such efforts and other actions agreed in this PLE within the framework of the national policy and strategy on VACiS.

Mr. Nsubuga Lyaazi, the Commissioner for Secondary Education in the MoESTS delivered the closing remarks on behalf of the Director of Education. He stressed that VAC in Uganda is widespread in homes and schools. VAC is perpetuated by the very people obliged to ensure children's safety, such as teachers, parents, close relatives and community members. He observed that Articles 24 and 44 of the Ugandan Constitution (1995) protects the dignity and safety of Ugandans, including children. Therefore, a violence free environment is a constitutional right for every child.

The Commissioner reiterated the ministry's commitment to creating a violence free school environment, noting that the PLE was a timely and an enriching opportunity to develop feasible action plans to address VACiS. He underscored that collective effort is required to rebuild the societal moral fiber to appreciate every human being; to increase intolerance to VAC in all forms; and to educate all citizens to take individual responsibility to protect children at home and at school. He invited all the partners to use the learning from the PLE to mobilise resources and network to effectively address VACiS.

5.3 Closing remarks

Dr. Michael Gibbons of the ECFG thanked the government (MoESTS and MGLSD) for the opportunity to host the PLE in Uganda. He was particularly inspired by the efforts at national level in generating policies and strategies to prevent and respond to VACiS. He was also delighted by the spirit of openness and collaboration among partners. He noted that through such efforts, partners across Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and other countries in Eastern Africa can learn from each other and illuminate the rest of the continent and contribute to more effective ways of making learning spaces safe for children's potential to unfold. Dr. Gibbons urged stakeholders to continue collaborating moving the learning agenda forward.

5.4 Results of the PLE Evaluation

The evaluation captures participants' impression on seven key aspects of the event: Pre-workshop arrangements, event program, event management, logistics, learning, theme of the next PLE, suggestions

for future learning events and the most valuable aspects of the workshop. A total of 43 participants responded to the self-administered semi-structured questionnaire.

Pre-event arrangements

Most of the participants rated the pre-workshop arrangements as excellent or good. 80% of the international participants rated the travel arrangements as excellent. All the participants, except one, were satisfied with the timing of the event. Pre-workshop communication received the lowest rating (32% as excellent). Participants' concerns were inability to receive the agenda before the event, limited time to prepare presentations and lack of clarity on the contact persons for specific issues.

Assessment areas	1-Poor	2-Fair	3-Good	4- Excellent	Total (n)
Pre-workshop arrangements					
Pre-workshop communication	3 (7%)	2 (5%)	23 (56%)	13 (32%)	41
Travel arrangements (flight booking and airport transfers for international participants)		1 (4%)	4 (16%)	20 (80%)	25
Appropriateness of event timing (time of the year)		1 (2%)	19 (48%)	20 (50%)	40

Event program

Participants found the following topics most interesting/useful to their work:

- Social norms and preventing VAC
- Principles of effective programming
- Program Design, Learning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Most presentations were rated as either useful or most useful by over 80% of the participants. One participant felt that the evaluation of the Good School Program focused on one result and did not offer further learning. Some participants felt that the presentation on *social norms and preventing VAC* could have explored more content beyond definitions. The session on child participation received the lowest rating (77% as useful or most useful), as some participants felt the session was not meaningful and was poorly organized. More than 80% of the participants felt the presentations were well prepared and well executed. However, some felt that more time should have been allocated for learning and sharing best practices.

Event program	Least useful	Fairly useful	Useful	Most useful	Total (n)
Learning framework concepts		2 (6%)	19 (51%)	16 (43%)	37
Primary prevention		2 (5%)	20 (56%)	14 (39%)	36
Social norms		2 (6%)	15 (42%)	19 (53%)	36
State of the research of the good schools program	1(2%)	4 (10%)	22 (54%)	14 (34%)	41
From the bottom-up approaches/community based work		3 (7%)	16 (39%)	22 (54%)	41
Child participation	1 (3%)	10 (26%)	13 (33%)	15 (38%)	39
Principles for effective programming		2(5%)	11 (27%)	28 (68%)	41
Program design/ learning/ monitoring/evaluation		5(12%)	16 (40%)	19 (48%)	40

Knowledge and preparedness of speakers			18 (43%)	24 (57%)	42
Content and usefulness of group discussions		2 (5%)	19 (51%)	16 (43%)	37
Plenary discussions/questions and answer sessions	1 (3%)	5 (13%)	18 (47%)	14 (37%)	38
Learning activities during the field/site visits			17 (47%)	19 (53%)	36

Management of the event

Participants generally felt that the PLE was well managed as at least 80% of the participants rated most of the aspects as either good or excellent. The workshop materials (98%), overall workshop administration (98%) and the responsiveness of the event organizers (96%) were the best rated with only one participant rating each aspect as fair. Time management (76%) and the evening events (82%) received the lowest rating

Management of event	1-Poor	2-Fair	3-Good	4- Excellent	Total (n)
Time management		6(24%)	11(44%)	8(32%)	25
Was 9-5pm timing appropriate to non-residents?		3(9%)	19(59%)	10(31%)	32
Time management of event program		4(10%)	27(68%)	9(23%)	40
Did you like the evening events or preferred to be free in the evenings?		3(18%)	13 (76%)	1(6%)	17
Responsiveness of event organisers (DLC)		1(3%)	16(48%)	16(48%)	33
Accessibility and comfort of venue (Hotel Africana)	1(2%)	3 (7%)	25 (61%)	12(29%)	41
Workshop materials (handouts, resources, name tags, workshop bags, stationery, conference handbook		1(2%)	16 (38%)	25 (60%)	42
Overall workshop administration by organizers (DLC)		1(2%)	20 (48%)	21 (50%)	42

Logistical aspects

Majority respondents (more than 80%) of the participants rated the logistical aspects of the event as good or excellent. Although some participants had challenges accessing wireless internet and good quality coffee at Hotel Africana.

Logistical aspects	Least useful	Fairly useful	Useful	Most useful	Total (n)
Appropriateness of meeting rooms		2(5%)	20(51%)	17(44%)	39
Quality of meals and teas at Africana Hotel	1(3%)	6(15%)	18(46%)	14(36%)	39
Breakfast on the Road		3(9%)	19(54%)	13(37%)	35
Meals and facilities at Nimrod Hotel in Luweero (during the field visit)		2(6%)	22(65%)	10(29%)	34
Transport facilities for the field visit			16 (48%)	17(52%)	33

Quality (ambience, space, functionality, internet) of rooms at Hotel Africana (for residents)	1(3%)	3 (10%)	18 (60%)	8 (27%)	30
Responsiveness of hotel staff			19 (59%)	13 (41%)	32

The most useful aspects of the event

Participants expressed that the most useful parts of the learning event were: presentations, opportunity to learn about the work of other partners, researchers and donors and acquiring knowledge on concepts of VAC.

Suggestions for improvements

Participants felt that there should have been more thematic oriented discussions; experience sharing on the practicability of different models; more group discussions; more time for field-based learning; meaningful child participation; more interactive sharing; and learning through small group discussions.

Suggestions for the theme of the next potential learning event

Participants suggested that the theme for the next learning event (if organized) should focus on: building synergies from all practices around VAC; consolidating gains on VACiS; research into indigenous child protection practices; program links between VACiS and the community; systems building approach to addressing VAC; developing organizational learning agenda; using learning to influence policy; meaningful participation of children and communities; and program monitoring focusing on children.

Proposals on how to organize the next learning event

The main proposals suggested by participants on how the next PLE should be organized include:

- i. Organize an annual event on a rotational basis among the three East African countries
- ii. Engage a learning partner to work closely with stakeholders; documenting best practices and challenges for sharing in the next learning event.
- iii. Plan for more time for sharing and learning from the work of the partners.
- iv. Include more meaningful ways of child participation in such flora.
- v. Allocate more time for sharing of promising models and good practices.
- vi. Include sharing of more evidence of innovative practices.

Useful insights to enhance the work of the partners

Participants generally felt that the PLE was a great and timely opportunity to connect, learn, share and network with each other. However, from the PLE, the following insights were listed as ideas that could enhance the participants' work.

- i. Tapping the expertise of a learning partner to integrate evidence into programs.
- ii. Promising models in child participation and monitoring and evaluation such as the Raising Voices Good Schools Program.
- iii. Continued engagement and sharing among partners through a common learning platform.
- iv. Support to access financial and technical support to improve programs.
- v. Linkages with research institutions to support generation of evidence and critical thinking about programs.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Program for the learning event

Time	Activity	Presenter /Lead Person
Day 1: 14th July 2015		
08.15- 9:00	Arrival and registration	DLC
9:00-9:15	Welcome	Dr. Michael Gibbons, Elevate Children Funder Network Ms. Blain Teketel, Oak Foundation Ms. Maureen Greenwood-Basken, Wellspring Advisors
09:15-9:30	Official Opening Remarks by Uganda Minister of Gender Labour and Social Development	
09:30-9:55	Keynote Address: Reducing Violence Against Children in Schools: Overview on the facts and the way forward	Dr. Shemelis Tsegaye African Child Policy Forum
9:55-10:15	Overview of Conceptual Frameworks Learning agenda, Framework, Typology and Approaches.	Dr. Michael Gibbons
10:15-0:30	Table discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have we learned How does it work in your country? 	
10.30-1.00	Break tea	Hotel
Panel Presentations		
11:00-11:15	Public Health Model and Social Norms on Preventing VAC.	Ms. Karima Manji, LSHTM
11:15-11:30	Preventing and responding to VAC	Ms. Jonna Karlson UNICEF Regional Office, Nairobi
11:30-11:45	The Evidence: Promising Practices in reducing VAC	Dr. Mary Ellsberg, George Washington University
11:45-12:00	Bottom-up approaches to strengthening child protection systems: Placing children, families, and communities at the center	Dr. Michael Wessels, Columbia University
12:00-12:30	Questions to all 4 presenters on panel	Facilitator
12:30-1:30	Lunch Break	Hotel
13:30-14:15	Interactive Session of Children and Youth	Action Aid Uganda
14:15-14:45	Small Group Discussions	
15:45-15:15	Tea Break	Hotel
16:15-16:25	Brief on the Raising Voices Good Schools Project	Mr. Dipak Naker, Rising Voices
16:25-16:40	Evaluation of Raising Voices Good schools Program; Results of a cluster randomized control trial	Louise Knight, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
14:50	Closing Remarks	Maureen and Michael
5:00	End of day 1	
Day 2: 15th July 2015		

8.15	Assembling at Hotel Africana	
8.30-10.30	Travel to Luwero (more informal briefs about the Good Schools Program and the Luwero intervention*) including breakfast on the road	
10.30-11.30	Interface with school administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group 1 Happy Hours Primary School Group 2 Bukolwa Primary School 	Hassan and Yvonne
	Joint discussions with teachers and students Good school committees about Good schools Toolkit and Program in general	School Heads
	School tour	School Heads
11.30-13.30	Teams travel to next School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group 2 Mamuli Primary School 	Yvonne and Hassan (Raising Voices Team)
	Official welcoming remarks, signing visitors' book and brief information about the school.	Schools
	Discussion with teachers and students committees.	Schools
	Witnessing a mock court session in progress	Schools
13.30-14.30	Lunch at Hotel in Luwero	Hotel /DLC
14.30-16.00	Reflection on experience and feedback to Raising Voices	Facilitator
16.15	Tea and travel back to Kampala	
Day 3: 16th July 2015		
09.00-10.30	Recap on Day 2	Facilitator
	Principles for effective programming:	Lori Michau, Raising Voices
	Program Design, Learning, Monitoring and Evaluation	Deo Yiga Development Links Consult
	Plenary Discussion	Facilitator
10.30-11.00	Tea break	Hotel
11.00-13.00	Revisiting Learning agenda Discussion	Facilitator
	Discussion and application of Best Practices for GBV and other fields	Facilitator??
	Enriching Partner Projects To Prevent VACiS	Facilitator/DLC
13.00-14.00	Lunch Break	Hotel
14.00-15.45	Learning agenda Going forward	Facilitator/Wellspring Advisors
	What would a learning partner for this group look like (job description)	
	Exploration of Partnerships and collaboration and action steps going forward	
15.45-16.45	Address and Closing Remarks	Uganda Government Minister of Education and Sports
	Closing Remarks by Elevate Children	Maureen /Michael
16.45-8.00	Tea Break and Departure	

Appendix 2: List of participants

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