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
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 to 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?
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
4) Help seeking, access and utilization of services

- Important to look at service seeking and utilization for all forms of violence
- 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 !