



POLICY REPORT

WE CAN DO IT

SOLUTIONS TO
PREVENT VIOLENCE
AGAINST CHILDREN





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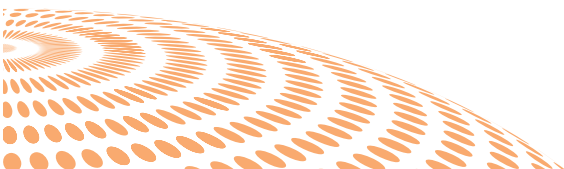
Author: Daja Wenke. Senior Editor: Heather Elliott. Content editor: Katie Chalk/Chalk It Up.

Production Management: Katie Fike, Daniel Mason. Copyeditor: Joan Laflamme. Design: Friend Creative.

Layout: Alice Contreras. Proofreading: Melody Ip.

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For thousands of children working on sugarcane plantations in the Philippines there has been no alternative but to labour if their families were to be able to pay for their school supplies. Through the ABK3-LEAP programme, over 51,000 of these children are being supported to stay in school, some sugarcane producers have adopted Codes of Conduct, and child labour in the sugarcane industry has been reduced by 64 per cent.



Three years ago, planting sugarcane would have been Oscar's¹ destiny. He lives in an area of the Philippines where child labour in the sugarcane industry has been an accepted practice. His older brothers did it, he sometimes helped, and he believed he would take it up full-time when he was old enough.

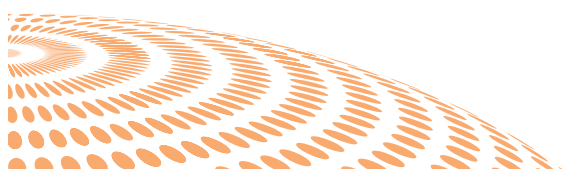
Instead, aged 12, Oscar is at school and doing well enough to volunteer as a 'little teacher' – a tutor for younger children who have missed school or fallen behind. He also regularly joins the child labour community education team, part of World Vision Philippines' ABK3 project to combat child labour in the sugarcane industry. The team visits sugarcane communities to build awareness and action on what types of work are acceptable for children. Oscar takes part because he wants to ensure that other children never have to do the type of hazardous work that he and his brothers were forced to do only a few years ago.

'My dream is to finish my studies,' he says. 'That is how I can really help my family.'



Photo: World Vision/Jesse Eaves

¹ Not his real name.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the magnitude and entrenchment of violence against children, evidence increasingly shows that it is a problem that can be solved.

Violence against children is a universal problem affecting children in every country in the world. It comes with considerable costs for individuals and society.² Violence often significantly harms children's health, keeps them from school or social participation, and restricts them from realising their potential as adults.

Protecting children from violence in all its forms is undoubtedly complex. Agencies and organisations working in child protection continue to work together to share understanding and knowledge of what works in reducing or ending risks of violence. The consistent themes emerging are timely and relevant considering current discussions on the post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

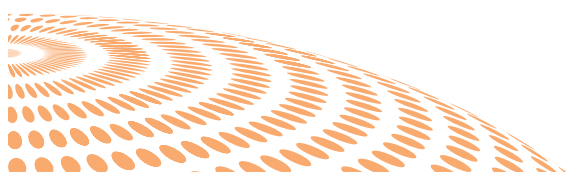
This paper is World Vision's contribution to the discussion on effective policies and programmes that can address violence in different forms across different contexts.


A review of existing knowledge, evidence and experience from World Vision and others reveals the following thematic approaches that are proven to address violence against children:

1. supporting families and caregivers through parenting skills training, sensitisation of parents for child protection concerns, home visiting programmes and family livelihood support programmes
2. empowering children as citizens with information, knowledge and skills to protect themselves, manage risks and positively influence their environment
3. changing attitudes and social norms that tolerate or condone violence against children
4. ensuring a continuum of services for prevention, protection and empowerment, which helps vulnerable children mitigate risks and cope with experiences of violence
5. prohibiting all forms of violence against children by law, and implementing the laws in practice
6. investing in violence-free schools through initiatives to end corporal punishment in schools, address bullying and other forms of violence, train teachers on positive, nonviolent discipline, and engage parents and communities to address violence against children.

From analysis of projects considered successful by World Vision, a further theme is revealed that is key to how World Vision works with and among local communities. Project evaluations show the

² See Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2013), *Toward a World Free from Violence: Global Survey on Violence against Children*; UNICEF (2014), *Ending Violence against Children: Six Strategies for Action*.

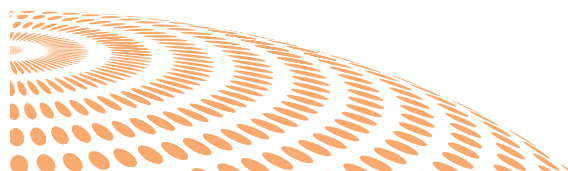




importance of community-led solutions. Hence, the following vital proposition is offered to accompany the previous list:

7. developing locally owned solutions, built on community assets, through partnerships among the families, children, communities, traditional leaders and government institutions, is critical to ensure real changes in children's lives.

These solution-oriented propositions are closely interrelated. The impact of each is strengthened when applied in combination. World Vision's experience from working with children and communities in low-income, medium-income and fragile contexts strongly underscores that the way in which these strategies are implemented critically affects the results that are achieved. Hence, the utilisation of systemic, holistic and multifaceted approaches is critical to address the variety of drivers behind different forms of violence, abuse and exploitation.



INTRODUCTION

In the follow-up to the 2013 global UN study on violence against children, national and international actors have risen to the challenge of finding evidence on the tangible benefits of investing in child protection. The child protection sector is complex, with violence against children often hidden and data notoriously unreliable. Despite this, there is growing recognition that violence against children is preventable.

Evidence from interventions and projects globally demonstrates not only that there are positive pathways to end violence against children, but also that the results bring better opportunities for the social, economic and human development of nations. This year, as the international community and national governments negotiate the post-2015 development agenda, is a vital and powerful moment for ensuring that existing knowledge, experience and evidence on child protection contribute to a changed world for the children and communities of the future.

Within this favourable context for action, international organisations and agencies are working with renewed focus to identify and present child protection programming experience and evidence. For instance:

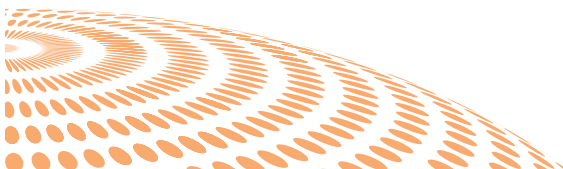
- in 2010, the World Health Organization's *Violence Prevention: The Evidence* distilled key messages for violence prevention informed by evidence from public health programmes globally
- in 2013, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children (SRSG) identified 'eight imperatives' for violence prevention on the basis of data generated through a global survey in follow-up to the UN violence study³
- in 2014, UNICEF's *Ending Violence against Children: Six Strategies for Action* reviewed project-based evidence and identified effective programmes that respond to and prevent violence against children and reduce its impact.

These evidence-informed strategies and recommendations reveal clear synergies. Five broad areas of interventions emerge where strategic investments consistently yield concrete results: supporting caregivers and families; empowering children to protect themselves and influence their environment; service delivery and better access for particularly vulnerable groups; changing attitudes and social norms that tolerate violence against children; and introducing legal bans of all forms of violence and ensuring that these bans are enforced in practice.

As well, each agency or organisation notes priority measures in line with its specific approach and mandate, for instance, protection from weapons and alcohol (World Health Organization [WHO]) or introduction of a legal ban on all forms of violence against children (SRSG VAC).

This report represents World Vision's contribution to evidence-based protection priorities. It is the result of reflection on WHO, SRSG and UNICEF recommendations through the lens of World Vision's own programming experiences and evidence. World Vision is a key actor in the child protection sector in developing and fragile contexts, particularly at the community level, where locally based interventions

³ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, *Toward a World Free from Violence*.



to prevent violence are ongoing. While World Vision continues to develop models and ideas, it also has many approaches to child protection that have been tested and proven through monitoring, evaluation and research in multiple contexts. Seven of these evidence-based models are used as reference throughout this report to illustrate how the global community's protection priorities can become solutions in action.

Knowing that these approaches consistently deliver or surpass expected results, and therefore that violence against children can be prevented even in some of the world's most difficult protection contexts, the report aims not only to inform but also to inspire policymakers, donor institutions, other organisations and World Vision programmers directly. These propositions for change encourage further development of affordable and scalable solutions. Strategic investments in child protection, a field often characterised by limited public spending, can yield effective outcomes and sustainable results.

Table 1 maps the protection solutions of WHO, UN SRSG and UNICEF alongside those generated by World Vision and described in this report. The similarity of findings is remarkable, offering clear opportunities for child protection actors to streamline resources and build consensus on what works in violence prevention.

Violence against children: The evidence⁴

Although all forms of violence are clearly prohibited under Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, acts of violence against children occur on a significant scale in all countries around the world. They take many different forms, including physical, sexual and psychological abuse; exploitation; maltreatment; and neglect. Violence happens in the home, in communities, at school, in institutions, at work and on the streets. Though actual figures are difficult to obtain, it is estimated that:

- 150 million girls and 73 million boys experience sexual violence every year
- 168 million children are involved in exploitative labour
- 1 billion children 2–14 years old (or 60 per cent of all children in this age group) are regularly exposed to physical punishment by their parents or caregivers.⁵

Violence is known to undermine the chances of boys and girls to develop capacities and life skills that they need to achieve their full potential. Evidence also demonstrates that the impact of violence against children extends to the whole society, undermining human progress, stability and sustainable development. It slows economic development and erodes the human and social capital of societies and nations. The global costs related to physical, psychological and sexual violence against children are estimated to range between 3 per cent and 8 per cent of the global GDP, while the costs of children's involvement in hazardous work is estimated at US\$97 billion per year.⁶

⁴ Cited in World Vision International (2014), 'Knowledge Summary Report: What We Know about Violence against Children'.

⁵ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, *Toward a World Free from Violence*, 1, 44; WHO (2006), 'World Health Organization Says Violence against Children Can and Must Be Prevented', <<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2006/pr57/en/>>; UNICEF, *Ending Violence against Children*, 4.

⁶ Perezniето, P., Montes, A., Langston, R., and Routier, S. (2014), *The Costs and Economic Impact of Violence against Children*, Child Fund Alliance report, 48.

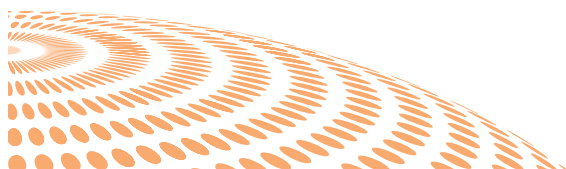
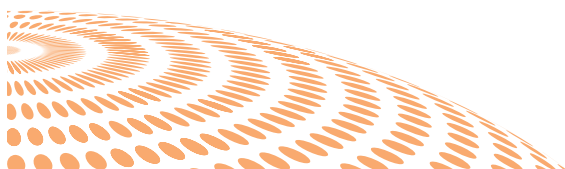


Table I: Strategies, evidence and recommendations to reduce and prevent violence against children⁷

World Health Organization	Special Rep. of the UNSG on Violence against Children	UNICEF	World Vision
Evidence for violence prevention (2010)	Eight imperatives (2013)	Six strategies for action (2014)	Solutions to prevent violence against children (2015)
Developing safe, stable and nurturing relationships between children and their parents and caregivers	Develop national strategies to address violence against children	Supporting parents, caregivers and families	Investing in the support of families and caregivers
Developing life skills	Commitment to children's active participation	Helping children and adolescents manage risks and challenges	Empowering children as citizens
Victim identification, care and support programmes	Strengthen the focus on the factors that influence levels of violence and the resilience of children	Promoting and providing support services for children	Providing a continuum of services for prevention, protection and empowerment
Changing cultural and social norms that support violence	Address the social acceptance of violence against children	Changing attitudes and social norms that encourage violence and discrimination	Changing attitudes and social norms that tolerate violence against children
Reducing access to guns, knives and pesticides	Legal ban of all forms of violence accompanied by effective enforcement and implementation	Implementing laws and policies that protect children	Enacting and enforcing laws that prohibit all forms of violence against children
Promoting gender equality to prevent violence against women	Collect appropriately disaggregated data on violence against children	Carrying out data collection and research	Investing in safe schools
Reducing the availability and harmful use of alcohol	Ensure the social inclusion of vulnerable children		Developing locally owned solutions and fostering social accountability
	Violence against children recognised as a priority and a cross-cutting concern for the post-2015 development agenda		

⁷ Table cited in World Vision, 'Knowledge Summary Report'. See also, UNICEF, *Ending Violence against Children*, 12; WHO (2010), *Violence Prevention: The Evidence*, 3–7; Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, *Toward a World Free from Violence*, xix.



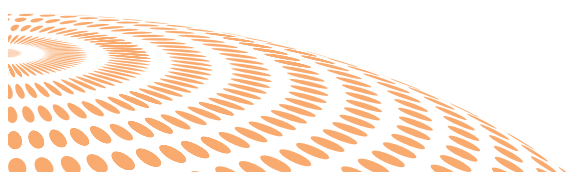
PROVEN CHILD PROTECTION APPROACHES

Seven project case studies from World Vision’s programming are presented throughout this report to illustrate the effectiveness of the seven solution propositions. All models or approaches have been tested in multiple settings and contain multifaceted combinations of the recommended strategies. While not all are required in all circumstances, it is clear from observations of these successful projects that single propositions will not work in isolation from others. Holistic strategies must be built to meet unique contexts and needs.

Table 2 below considers which solutions were most relevant to bringing change for children, followed by a brief description of each project and its achievements.

Table 2: How project models apply solutions to reduce and prevent violence against children

	SAFE SEAs, Cambodia	Home Visitors Project, Malawi	SA&CP, South Sudan	KCSO, Middle East/ Eastern Europe Region	VCP, Senegal	ABK, ABK2, ABK3-LEAP, Philippines	VCA, Eastern/ Southern Africa Regions
Investing in the support of families and caregivers	●	●				●	
Empowering children as citizens	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Providing a continuum of services for prevention, protection and empowerment		●	●	●	●	●	
Changing attitudes and social norms that tolerate violence against children	●	●	●		●	●	●
Enacting and enforcing laws that prohibit all forms of violence against children	●		●	●	●	●	●
Investing in safe schools			●	●	●	●	
Developing locally owned solutions and fostering social accountability	●	●	●	●	●	●	●



SAFE SEAs: Supporting parents and families to prevent the sexual exploitation and abuse of children

World Vision implemented the SAFE SEAs programme in Cambodia between 2010 and 2015. The programme aimed to strengthen the capacity of government and civil society, including children directly, to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse of children (SEA). Parents attended courses on parenting skills and positive discipline so that they were better prepared to protect their children from sexual exploitation and abuse. World Vision also trained volunteers to deliver these courses and to provide ongoing family support as needed.

Home Visitors Project: Community-based support and counselling for families at risk

World Vision implemented the Home Visitors Project (HVP) in Malawi in 2007 and more recently in Zimbabwe and Mongolia. The model is centred on trained, dedicated community volunteers who pay regular home visits to vulnerable families and connect the families to existing services and informal or formal support networks that can help them.

Social Accountability and Child Protection Programme: Building child protection networks from existing resources

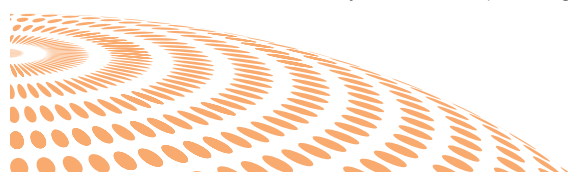
From October 2011 to March 2014, World Vision's Social Accountability and Child Protection Programme (SA&CP) in South Sudan offered interconnected strategies for reducing community-based violence against children in a context where few institutional protective mechanisms currently existed. Protection interventions included:

- community structures (by establishing and empowering committees of concerned citizens, including children)
- community mobilisation (by introducing World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action as a way for communities to participate in planning appropriate protective services)
- life skills for children (through schools-based Child Rights Clubs and peer communication).

KCSO: A circle of care to ensure children are protected from violence originating online

Keeping Children Safe Online (KCSO) is an approach to reduce the risk of violence originating from online activity, tested over five years of implementation and evaluation by six countries in World Vision's Middle East/Eastern Europe Region (MEER).⁸ KCSO enhances the knowledge, awareness and skills of children, caregivers, teachers and authorities to build a culture of safe and responsible use of Internet and mobile devices. By targeting everyone in a child's circle of care, it ensures additional layers of protection if the first – the child's own choices – falter. It emphasises policy alongside behaviour, building relevant national laws, policies and procedures so that child protection systems are strong enough to respond to online cybercrime against children.

⁸ The KCSO project has been or is being implemented in six countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Jerusalem-West Bank-Gaza and Lebanon. See World Vision MEERO (2014), *Keeping Children Safe Online*, Evidence 4 Change Report; World Vision Lebanon (August 2013), *Keeping Children Safe Online Project: Evaluation Report*, Refugee Programme, 26.



Vélingara Child Protection Project: Strengthening community-based child protection

World Vision's Vélingara Child Protection (VCP) project in Senegal took place in 21 communities between 2010 and 2012. VCP was a low-cost, logical approach to create better protection structures across all spaces where children were at risk – in the home, in the streets and in schools – by linking networks of care already in place in the family and community. Relevant community decision makers and leaders incorporated specific protection elements into their ongoing community roles, including identification of risk, mediation of community conflict and referral of cases to appropriate authorities. This work was complemented by school-based committees training teachers and children to recognise, report and prevent child abuse, and by advocacy and awareness on birth registration. Children contributed by forming theatre groups and performing regularly to raise awareness of protection issues such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM) and child labour.

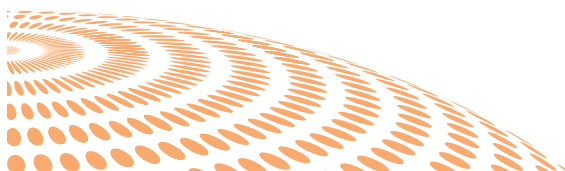
ABK3-LEAP: Cross-sector collaboration on valid alternatives to hazardous child labour

Since 2003, World Vision Philippines' ABK initiative⁹ has linked community groups with local and municipal bodies on a variety of child labour issues, resulting in the decrease of this abusive practice by 74 per cent in target households. The ABK3 – Livelihoods, Education, Advocacy and Protection to Reduce Child Labour in Sugarcane Areas (LEAP) – project, funded by the US Department of Labor, has focused since 2012 on child labour in the sugarcane industry by positioning schooling as a viable option to child labour. Families, teachers, local authorities and the private sector partnered to remove children from the workforce, get them back into schools and protect those at risk of dropping out.

Vulnerable Child Advocacy: Local empowerment on legislation and action to protect children

Vulnerable Child Advocacy (VCA) is a child protection approach woven into World Vision projects worldwide, but with a particular focus on harmful practices affecting children in Africa. Initially implemented to protect children who were stigmatised by HIV and AIDS, it has proven a successful solution to a variety of other issues, including sexual cleansing, female genital mutilation, child marriages, child labour, sexual abuse, birth registration, property and inheritance rights, and access to quality education. VCA aims to improve protection services and systems. The VCA approach includes raising awareness, championing and revising the by-laws, and campaigning to change the community's attitudes in partnership with community groups, traditional leaders and local governments so that children are better protected from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

⁹ ABK stands for *Pag-Aaral ng Bata para sa Kinabukasan*, translated 'Child's Education for the Future'. All three phases of the ABK project have been implemented by World Vision in partnership with Child Fund Philippines, Educational Research and Development Assistance Foundation (ERDA), the Sugar Industry Foundation (SIF), the Community Economic Ventures (CEV), and the University of the Philippines Social Action and Research for Development Foundation, with funding from the United States Department of Labor.



SOLUTIONS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

1) Investing in support of families and caregivers

Strengthening and supporting families is proven to be a critical investment for keeping children safe from abuse, violence, exploitation and other forms of violence.¹⁰ Too often, acts of violence against children are perpetrated from within the direct or enlarged family and their social networks.¹¹ The choices made by parents, families and caregivers on discipline, education, health and the value and status of children all determine the level of protection not only in the home but across all the child's social interactions.

Projects such as the Home Visitors Project and Cambodia's SAFE SEAs prove that making families stronger through a variety of social supports for the family unit will reduce the vulnerability of children to witnessing or experiencing violence. The effectiveness of child protection interventions with broad social goals is likely to increase considerably if household-level services are included in the mix. Positive and enabling mechanisms include parenting skills training, sensitisation of parents to child protection concerns, home visiting programmes and family livelihood support programmes.

Malawi's Home Visitors Project sought to address underlying causes of children's vulnerability to violence through a combination of approaches such as health-care support, early childhood development services and saving schemes. Many of these existing services and support mechanisms were outside the reach of the most vulnerable families. As familiar and friendly faces within the community, volunteer home visitors were able to bridge the gap between families and services, including action to protect children directly when required. A high success rate in intervening on child neglect (over 80 per cent of reported cases) as well as significant progress on taboo issues such as early marriage and sexual exploitation emerged quickly as a result of volunteer home visits and monitoring.

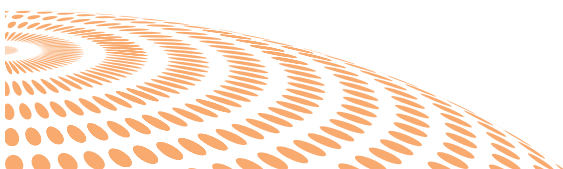
While the SAFE SEAs project addressed institutional responses to enhance protection, its local component was equally important and particularly effective. Positive parental attitudes to protection of children rose substantially (from 35 per cent to 60 per cent of evaluated project participants) within one year, leading to their stronger commitment neither to use physical punishment nor to allow their children to take part in harmful labour. Children commented that their parents were refraining from violence, were using gentler language with them, offering emotional support, motivating rather than punishing and giving good advice. The parents confirmed this perception, noting that they had previously shown less concern about their children and that the programme activities had inspired and guided them to care better for their children.¹²

Both models are essentially community-led responses to reduce the risks of violence occurring at the hands of or under the protection of primary caregivers. Volunteer based, rooted in communities and focused on increased parental responsibility, the solutions represent local ownership, sustainability and cost effectiveness.

¹⁰ UNICEF, *Ending Violence against Children*, 12, 18; WHO, *Violence Prevention*, 9–26.

¹¹ Violence in the home is a particularly widespread form of violence globally. See UNICEF (2014), *Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence against Children*, 7.

¹² Autencio, *Safe SEA Mid-Project Evaluation Report*, 17.



2) Empowering children as citizens

World Vision's programming results consistently show the value of empowering children with information, knowledge and skills as a proven strategy to prevent violence against children.¹³ Results are strengthened still further when this is met by increased understanding from adults that children can be active, resourceful and confident citizens and community members.

The low social status of children, especially of girls, and perceptions of children as passive, powerless and dependent members of families and communities tend to foster a culture in which violence against children is more easily condoned.¹⁴ But this, like the violence itself, is preventable. Evidence is available to show that the status of children in society can quickly change once children are allowed to lead and succeed, particularly in matters concerning them. As more respect is accorded to child participation and children's perspectives, adults change their behaviour towards children. In some cases,¹⁵ adults' hesitancy to use physical violence can be at least partially attributed to the empowerment of the children living in their homes and communities.

World Vision supports this change by helping girls and boys to acquire life skills, to know their rights, to promote and claim these rights for themselves and their peers, to develop positive relationships, to negotiate conflicting interests and to manoeuvre difficult situations.

Evidence from several countries implementing the Keeping Children Safe Online (KCSO) project indicates that children who participated have increased not only their knowledge but also their skills and good judgment in protecting themselves and their peers from online contacts that could result in violence and risky content. In Lebanon, for instance, the project training increased the knowledge and protective skills among the participating children, youth, parents and caretakers by 20 per cent,¹⁶ while WV Armenia reported enhanced knowledge and application of Internet safety rules among parents (69 per cent), teachers (85 per cent) and children (92 per cent) who had participated in the project training.¹⁷

The project evaluations revealed that the active participation of children in peer and parental training fostered inter-generational communication and, over time, became an important factor in challenging the prevailing low status of children in society in this region. Adults were impressed by the competence and skills demonstrated by the child trainers; this in turn increased the level of respect for children as community assets.¹⁸

The Social Accountability and Child Protection programme in South Sudan empowered children with knowledge, awareness and life skills, as part of a broader strategy for networks of protection. School-based Child Rights Clubs provided a forum for children to find out about their rights and to exchange their views and experiences. Despite a broad gender gap in the community at large – in terms of

¹³ UNICEF, *Ending Violence against Children*, 12, 26; WHO, *Violence Prevention*, 27–44.

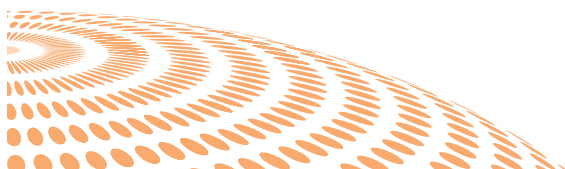
¹⁴ See, for instance, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment against Children (February 2013), *Access to Justice and Ending Violent Punishment of Girls: Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for the General Discussion on Access to Justice*, available on <<http://www.ohchr.org>>.

¹⁵ For instance, the Tambura Social Accountability and Child Protection Programme, South Sudan, or Cambodia's SAFE SEAs project.

¹⁶ World Vision MEERO, *Keeping Children Safe Online*, 9–10. The increase was measured among a sample of 290 children and youth as well as 117 parents and caregivers who participated in the end-of-project evaluation.

¹⁷ World Vision Armenia, *Keeping Children Safe Online Phase 2*, 5.

¹⁸ World Vision MEERO, *Keeping Children Safe Online*, 37.



opportunity as well as vulnerability to certain types of violence – participation by gender in the clubs was roughly equal. At the time of evaluation, 73 per cent of child club members said they had talked to other community members about child protection themes; the ratio of girls to boys reporting this was also around equal.¹⁹

The consequent growth in awareness,²⁰ alongside improved child protection and reporting structures, led within two years to a significantly reduced use of physical violence against children. At the start of the programme children’s exposure to violence was shockingly prevalent. By the end, when children were asked what forms of violence they had encountered in the previous year, 54 per cent said they had not been exposed to violence from adult family members, 76 per cent said they had been safe from community violence²¹ and 34 per cent stated they had lived free from any form of violence that year.²² In contrast to the starting point, when children were disconnected from structures that might protect them, 77 per cent of children in the end-of-project evaluation expressed trust in their communities’ capacity to prioritise and address child protection issues.²³

Children win respect for their performances on ‘mature’ themes

Children’s theatre groups in Senegal’s Vélingara Child Protection Project addressed contentious themes relating to children’s involvement in work and labour, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. These were issues that many children in the community had personally faced but that were rarely discussed with or among them. The ability to take up serious issues and advocate for their resolution was rewarding for the children and motivational for the adults. Testimonies from children, community leaders, teachers and parents showed that they increasingly perceived girls and boys as responsible community members who merited an audience for their viewpoints.

‘My participation in the school theatre helped me to denounce violence I suffered or that my classmates at school suffer.’

—6th grade pupil at the Thierno Moustapha Barry school

‘The participation of children in the sensitisation activities through the theatre activities helped develop their intelligence, their expression and their ability to listen and watch. . . . Not only their parents, but even their “crooked uncles” dare not approach them; they are uninhibited and will not hesitate to denounce anyone.’

—Teacher at the Thierno Moustapha Barry school²⁸

¹⁹ World Vision South Sudan (N.D.), ‘LEAP Semi-Annual Programme Management Report, Tambura Rehabilitation Programme, Social Accountability and Child Protection Project’ (October 2013–March 2014), 4; World Vision International (March 2014), ‘End of Project Evaluation Report, Programme Partnership Agreement: Social Accountability and Child Protection Project’, PBAS#195647, DFID PPA2 (October 2011–March 2014), World Vision South Sudan, 32–33.

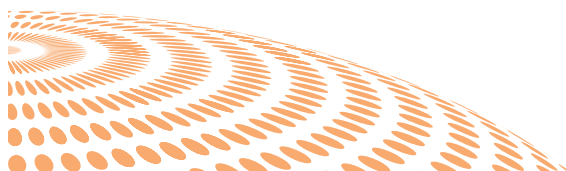
²⁰ World Vision International, ‘End of Project Evaluation Report’, 32.

²¹ Ibid. 19.

²² Ibid. 4–5, 30–31. The data refer to children in Mupoi and Source YubuPayam, two of the districts targeted by the project activities.

²³ Ibid. 24.

²⁴ World Vision Senegal (N.D.), Testimonies, 1–2.



3) Changing attitudes and social norms that tolerate violence against children

Attitudes and mindsets around violence against children are closely intertwined with the prevailing understanding of childhood. Where children are not valued in the same way as adults and not seen as citizens in their own right, violence against children will go unnoticed and unreported more often, and might be tacitly condoned. This is the case, for example, with some forms of physical violence to discipline children, such as the use of corporal punishment in homes, institutions and schools. Traditional attitudes, beliefs and social norms perpetuate harmful practices for children, including child marriage and life-threatening rites of passage.

An end in sight for sexual cleansing in Keembe, Zambia

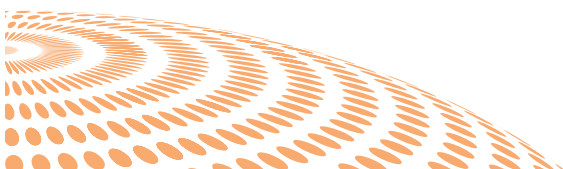
Demonstrating the potential of community-level attitude change, a special project in Zambia successfully mobilised communities and their leaders in the remote rural area of Keembe to reject the long-held traditional practice of sexual cleansing. Sexual cleansing comes from a deep-rooted belief that a widow or widower cannot remarry or have sex without this practice, which is intended to remove the spirit of the deceased partner from the living spouse. Children are often used for the ritual because of their perceived innocence. The risks are obvious and alarming: sexual abuse, physical and emotional violence, HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases.

As a result of community mobilisation on child protection, traditional leaders agreed to support the elimination of this practice throughout Keembe. A local by-law was enacted in December 2009 stating: 'Sexual cleansing should be stopped. Anyone found practicing it or assisting in it should be reported to the chief and be penalised. . . . The use of children in any form of ritual cleansing . . . is banned in my chiefdom and anyone found practicing it or assisting therein should be reported to the chief.'

This was put to the test shortly afterwards. In April 2010 a rural farmer involved with the project discovered that a 10-year-old boy had been selected for a sexual cleansing ritual with an elderly widow. He said, 'When I heard about it, I quickly mobilised some of our committee members and we used the by-law on sexual cleansing to safeguard the boy's health.'

Supporting UNICEF's evidence that harmful attitudes, social norms and practices are within the scope of influence for change,²⁵ World Vision's experiences show that community-led advocacy to protect children can be framed as an intervention model successful in many different contexts. The Vulnerable Child Advocacy (VCA) model has proven itself as a solution for widely divergent issues facing children, from HIV stigma and related health barriers to witchcraft. The strength of the model, particularly in Africa, is the involvement of traditional and informal leaders and the active engagement of communities to foster a local commitment for change. Under the patronage of respected authorities, advocacy groups guide principles into policies or by-laws, then promote implementation of law, improvement of services and protection for the most vulnerable or marginalised groups. This has been particularly effective in empowering communities and civil society organisations to address and reduce harmful traditional practices like sexual cleansing and female genital mutilation, child marriage, child labour and

²⁵ UNICEF, *Ending Violence against Children*, 12, 33; WHO, *Violence Prevention*, 97–106.



sexual abuse of children.²⁶ For instance, in Northern Ethiopia, where the practice of child marriage in children as young as 9 is widespread, a mobilisation and advocacy project in close cooperation with law-enforcement agencies prevented 250 cases of child marriage in two years.²⁷ A similar approach in Bukomero Sub County, Uganda, showed 57 per cent less school absenteeism due to child labour in the three communities where the project was implemented. In Uganda's Nabukalu region, community determination forced an end to witchcraft practices using child sacrifices.²⁸

4) Providing a continuum of services for prevention, protection and empowerment

Quality child protection services and support structures are vital for protecting children from violence and also for helping children, families and communities to mitigate risks and cope with experiences of violence.²⁹ Child protection programmes commonly provide services for the identification, referral and assistance of child victims of violence and children at risk; support services for parents, caregivers and families; social services; health; and education.

Evidence from World Vision's child protection programmes demonstrates that responses to violence are more effective and sustainable when they are planned and delivered through a continuum of services for prevention, protection and empowerment of children. Continuity means essentially three things:

- a *holistic approach* that promotes children's right to be safe in relation to all the other rights afforded under the Convention in order to reduce risks and strengthen the resiliency and resources of children and families
- an *inclusive approach* that targets a broad group of child victims, children at risk and particularly vulnerable groups and fosters social inclusion
- a longer-term *continuity of care approach* that follows up with child victims and children at risk to support their recovery and rehabilitation and prevent further harm.

World Vision enables continuity in practice by strengthening the circles of care around children. Circles of care include caregivers within the family, peers as well as key professionals such as social workers, lawmakers, police, teachers and health-care staff. Each person has his or her own protective capacity. When all are well informed and linked, they provide even stronger safety nets for children as they work together towards the common objective of keeping children safe.³⁰

This circle was key to the Philippines' ABK3-LEAP project, which combined resilience for families, changes in community tolerance, increased school attendance for children and better accountability from the corporate sector in order to reduce the prevalence of child labour. This multifaceted approach empowered all participants to visualise and plan for a world without child labour. As a result, the

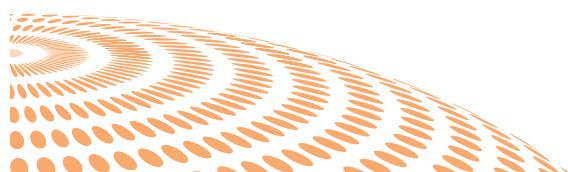
²⁶ World Vision International, 'Vulnerable Child Advocacy', 15.

²⁷ 2009/2010, in Lebo, KemKem district, Northern Ethiopia.

²⁸ International Institute for Child Rights and Development, Columbia University and World Vision (2014), 'A Child Protection Theory of Change Research Study to Strengthen Formal and Non-formal Protection Systems in Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia', draft (forthcoming), 41.

²⁹ UNICEF, *Ending Violence against Children*, 12, 38; WHO, *Violence Prevention*, 113–27.

³⁰ See World Vision International (2011), *A Systems Approach to Child Protection: A World Vision Discussion Paper*, <<http://www.wvi.org/child-protection/publication/systems-approach-child-protection>>, 9.



numbers of children working in the sugarcane industry in targeted households fell by a remarkable 64 per cent in just two years.³¹

World Vision's most successful initiatives also demonstrate the impact of child protection services when they work in combination with services for education, health, civil registration and livelihoods support, and when due attention is given to ensure access to services for particularly marginalised and vulnerable groups. Financial or in-kind assistance to most vulnerable families in the ABK3-LEAP project had a demonstrable impact on strengthening family assets and ensuring that children stay away from child labour.

Community-based child protection committees help to make national child protection systems operational at the local level. They are often the first points of contact for children and adults who wish to seek advice or to report an incident, and they are sometimes trusted more than formal state services. In Senegal, the Vélingara Child Protection project set up community child protection groups, including local government, teachers, traditional leaders and faith leaders, to monitor and respond to protection needs of the most vulnerable children. These groups developed and integrated over time, institutionalising inter-disciplinary cooperation as well as informal and formal networks of service and support at local and district level. The end result was a structure based on existing local mechanisms that could meet needs for early identification and prevention of violence, mediate among different interests and positions of children and caregivers, mobilise diverse resources and efforts to prevent violence against children, and facilitate the referral of cases to the state authorities to take legal action when required.³² The existence of the child protection groups also contributed to fostering confidence and trust in the capacity of both local actors and state authorities.³³

The continuum of care in South Sudan's SA&CP programme used similar principles in a context very poorly resourced at the state level with policy or accountable roles. The project established volunteer Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs) to work with communities, child protection authorities, the police and other relevant actors to enhance protection of children from violence.³⁴ Around 45 per cent of the 120 committee members were women. As these groups reached further into communities, reporting of violence and neglect markedly increased, the majority reported by parents, children and church leaders.³⁵ The SA&CP evaluation found that the CCPC held a central function in local child protection structures and acted as a coordinating body that connected the community structures with local justice mechanisms.³⁶ Although children and families generally have poor access to support and referral services in Tambura County, 77 per cent of the children who participated in the evaluation expressed trust in their community's capacity to address and resolve child protection issues.

³¹ ICF International (2011), *Independent Final Evaluation of Combating Child Labour through Education in the Philippines: The ABK initiative phase II*, World Vision, Cooperative Agreement Number: IL-16570-07-75-K, Funded by the United States Department of Labor, xi.

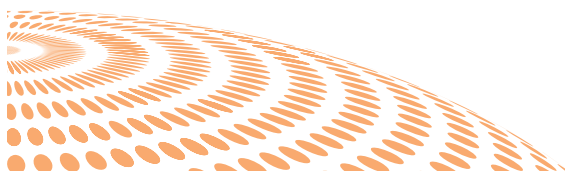
³² World Vision Senegal (2014), *Questionnaire for Documenting Solutions-based Practice*, 4.

³³ *Ibid.*; République du Sénégal, *Stratégie Nationale de Protection de l'Enfant* (N.D.), 64.

³⁴ World Vision International, 'End of Project Evaluation Report', 27.

³⁵ World Vision South Sudan, *LEAP Semi-Annual Programme Management Report*, 10–11.

³⁶ World Vision International, 'End of Project Evaluation Report', 4.



5) Enacting and enforcing laws that prohibit all forms of violence against children

A solid legal framework that prohibits violence against children in any form, in compliance with international and regional standards, is foundational for achieving sustainable prevention of violence against children. While law and policy reform constitute an important first step in addressing violence against children, concerted action is required to ensure that laws and policies are applied and enforced effectively in practice at the local level where the children live.³⁷

World Vision's child protection programmes promote the translation of national laws from paper to practice through law reform, advocacy, fostering social accountability, monitoring and oversight. This strategy becomes particularly effective at the local level, where national laws can be broken down into concrete regulations and contextual legal provisions, including defining roles, responsibilities and resources to ensure local implementation and accountability.

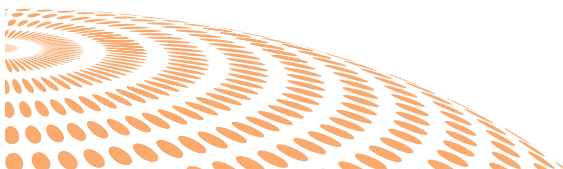
In the context of the ABK3-LEAP project for reducing child labour in the Philippines, local ordinances and children's codes contextualised national laws to draw a line between acceptable working conditions for children and unacceptable child labour or hazardous labour. A result of successful advocacy from local community groups in partnership with supportive local government, these local laws also ensured that some of the essential project activities would be sustained beyond the duration of World Vision's project. For instance, the government agreed to continue after-school tutoring and remedial programmes for struggling learners, as well as community saving schemes that support families in building sustainable livelihoods. The local ordinances and children's codes also institutionalised local child protection structures, such as the child protection monitoring groups (community watch groups) that regularly monitor children who have withdrawn from hazardous labour, Local Councils for the Protection of Children and Child Labour Education Task Forces.³⁸

The adoption of local-level laws and ordinances has been instrumental for achieving a lasting reduction of child labour in the Philippines. As evidenced by the project evaluation, the adoption of local laws offered an opportunity for the local authorities, communities and civil society to work together to formalise protection interventions; to create a basis for monitoring, oversight and accountability; and to integrate individual activities into more consolidated, comprehensive and locally owned systems for child protection.

The ABK3 project had reduced the rates of child labour in the sugarcane sector by 64 per cent among targeted households when measured at the project's mid-term. The project evaluation attributed this achievement in large part to the successful local-level law reform and effective implementation measures. It is worth noting that this project is the third of a series focusing on hazardous child labour in the Philippines, all of which have followed similar models including the strengthening of local laws and services. The success rate overall for ABK1 and ABK2 projects, measured in terms of reduction of child labour in the target areas, is a staggering 74 per cent reduction. It is projected that ABK3 will reach up to 52,000 children by its end, adding to the 61,000 who have already benefited from ABK1 and ABK2.

³⁷ UNICEF, *Ending Violence against Children*, 12, 42.

³⁸ Sistemas, Familia y Sociedad (2014), *ABK3-LEAP, Philippines, Livelihoods, Education, Advocacy and Protection against Exploitative Child Labour in Sugarcane, Independent Interim Evaluation*, 31–32.



‘Policy writeshops’ draft and promote local ordinances against child labour in the Philippines

When communities, children and local leaders are involved in the law-making process, ownership, acceptance and social accountability can be significantly increased. In the Philippines, World Vision promoted local policy consultations, or ‘policy writeshops’, to develop local ordinances as part of the ABK3-LEAP child labour project. The policy writeshops were important to develop and communicate child labour law as a collective expression of the social frame for the conduct of individuals and the community. They also allowed for contextualisation of the ordinances to local language, structures and perspectives.

This approach proved effective for fostering a multi-stakeholder and inter-disciplinary approach in the drafting process and enabled the socio-political participation of diverse members of community and civil society. The consultative process ensured a particularly high level of awareness and ownership of the local laws, maximised relevance to the local context and prepared a fruitful ground for subsequent adherence and enforcement.⁴³

6) Investing in safe schools

Better schools are pivotal to reducing the risks of violence against children. A safe learning environment is a basic right that often goes unmet, depending on the school’s resources, preparedness, commitment and culture. Particularly in developing contexts, children may see school as a threatening place, one where verbal, physical and sexual abuse is inflicted on them by peers and teachers.⁴⁰ Some children drop out of school due to bullying, corporal punishment, or other forms of violence, whilst others, mostly girls, are withdrawn by their parents to protect them from the risk of sexual harassment or abuse.

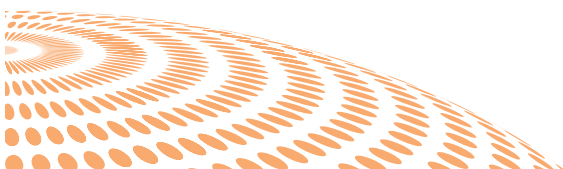
Child protection programmes that actively engage schools have been successful in reducing violence both in schools and in the surrounding communities where children live, achieving positive change in ending corporal punishment in schools, training teachers on positive nonviolent discipline, addressing bullying and other forms of peer violence, and engaging parents and communities to support violence-free schools.⁴¹ Beyond the achievement of reduced violence and greater protection, safer schools benefit the community through lower dropout rates, especially of girls, better educational outcomes and a smoother transition into adulthood, the labour market and economic independence.

World Vision’s experiences support this conclusion. Many of the child protection models in this report revolve around schools as partners and implementers, and teachers as key actors in the circle of care for monitoring, reporting and referral. Programming experience shows that the transformative potential of safe schools and socially responsible teachers who are committed to keeping children safe and in school is not limited to the school premises. When teachers offer a stronghold in children’s circles of care, they contribute also to making communities generally safer for children. Teachers also empower children through knowledge, information and life skills, while schools bring children together in a space

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ See Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, *Toward a World Free from Violence*.

⁴¹ UNICEF, *Ending Violence against Children, Six Strategies for Action*, 26, 29, 30, 33.



where they can be heard and develop capacities and confidence. Thus, developing awareness of child rights and child protection in teachers and other school duty bearers is likely to have significant impact on students in the long term.

The ABK3-LEAP project sought to create school environments where teachers were committed, qualified and competent to deal with children at risk of or engaged in hazardous labour. Teacher training encouraged teachers to take a position on social development issues that were of concern to their communities and students, including (but not restricted to) child labour. The participating teachers, with strengthened awareness, determination and teaching skills, then took on a central role as advocates for keeping children in school.⁴² As already mentioned, the project showed rapid and significant progress in reducing the number of boys and girls dropping out of school to take up child labour, as well as seeing 64 per cent of child labourers in targeted households (or around 20,000 children) return to school or informal learning within two years of implementation.⁴³

In South Sudan, the SA&CP project used community mobilisation, empowered by knowledge of government education policies, to advocate for an increase in the quality and equitable access of education through schools. Parent Teacher Associations drew up codes of conduct to facilitate agreement between schools and community members on roles and actions needed for positive change.

The SA&CP end-of-project evaluation reported outstanding improvements in school enrolment, completion and children's safety and well-being whilst at school. Of the children who participated in the end-of-project evaluation, 95 per cent stated that they now felt safe at school.⁴⁴ The enrolment rates in primary schools nearly doubled in two years, from 2,696 in 2011 to 5,085 in 2013, and primary school completion rates rose from 52 per cent to 98 per cent over the same period. The evaluation also noted improved student performance and a reduction in school pregnancies and related dropouts of girls, from 28 in 2012 to 4 in 2013.⁴⁵

Much of this was made possible through goals and commitments set by the primary schools to adhere to the agreed codes of conduct, which were used as monitoring standards within schools and eventually aggregated for institutional use by the county education department.⁴⁶

7) Developing locally owned solutions and fostering social accountability for child protection

Within the matrix of solution-oriented priorities for ending violence against children in all its forms, World Vision proposes to add another vital strategy based on experiences and evaluation in some of the world's most difficult programming contexts. World Vision data indicates that implementation choices critically affect the success and sustainability of the preceding strategies. Developing locally owned solutions built on existing resources and assets fosters ownership, monitoring and accountability for

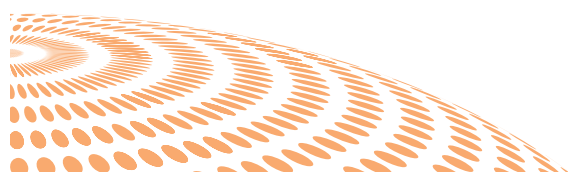
⁴² De Guzman Culanag, D., *ABK2 Initiative: Take Every Action for Children Now! (TEACH Now!): Good Practices in Empowering Communities to Protect Children from the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, World Vision, III Global Conference on Child Labour, Brazil, 8 October 2013, 14; Sistemas, Familia y Sociedad, ABK3-LEAP, vii.

⁴³ ICF International, *Independent Final Evaluation of Combating Child Labour through Education in the Philippines*, xi.

⁴⁴ World Vision International, 'End of Project Evaluation Report', 18.

⁴⁵ World Vision South Sudan, *LEAP Semi-Annual Programme Management Report*, 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 5; World Vision International, 'End of Project Evaluation Report', 13.



outcomes. Lasting partnerships form among communities, families, children, traditional and religious leaders, and government institutions.

This is particularly true in fragile contexts and low-income countries where institutional infrastructure and capacities for service delivery and implementation of the laws may not be strong or suitable to implement successful practices that have worked elsewhere. In these circumstances reaching the most vulnerable children, particularly in remote communities, can be challenging.

World Vision's programming experience has shown that the impact of child protection interventions is more sustainable, cost efficient and effective when they are built on local assets and capacities, including informal positive local practices, values and community structures, alongside the more accessible priorities of public administration and local government. Community-based protection solutions that bring everyone together can play a critical role in strengthening violence prevention, reporting and basic response (as explored in the concept of building a circle of care).

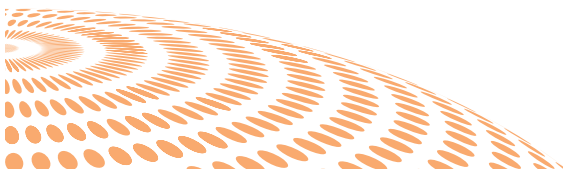
Examples of these solutions include:


- local ordinances and by-laws ensuring protection of children from harmful traditional practices or child labour
- teaching by religious leaders against harmful practices
- community mediation and monitoring of children at risk
- community partnerships with police and schools to prevent violence.

Such approaches mobilise formal and informal actors to work together, fostering social accountability, and also help overcome challenges that can emerge from decentralisation of the public administration and resulting resource constraints. With strengthened statutory and informal child protection bodies at the local level, successful and innovative local solutions are made visible to the public administration at the regional and national levels. There is even potential to take a strong solution to the national scale to strengthen the child protection system as a whole, for instance, in the rewarding outcome of the Senegal VCP model.

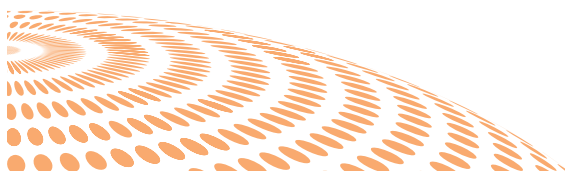
Programme comparison indicates that addressing complex issues, for instance, harmful traditional practices, often requires holistic and multifaceted approaches to violence prevention. To this end, policies and programmes that employ local multi-dimensional interventions and address not only causes of violence but also underlying vulnerabilities and structural risk factors. Preventing violence and empowering children at risk from violence will be dependent on the resolution of many other social policy issues, for instance, economic policies, the labour market and employment, migration policies, education and health systems. Strategies are also dependent on fiscal policies, budget allocation and rule of law. This makes it critical to utilise the multi-sectoral approach and ensure that child protection mechanisms function effectively at the local level as well as at other levels.

The ABK Child Labour Project in the Philippines, the Vélingara Child Protection project in Senegal and the Social Accountability and Child Protection project in South Sudan are proven examples of effective approaches that combine social mobilisation and attitude shifts with programmatic inputs. They demonstrate the outcomes possible when projects build on local assets, capacities and structures,





as well as the effectiveness of multi-sectoral interventions to address root causes and strengthen a protective environment around all children. While some of these interventions started demonstrating impact in a relatively short time, it is important to note that they greatly benefited from the long-term presence of World Vision in the targeted and/or neighbouring communities. That presence contributed to building trust and pathways to sustainability.



CONCLUSIONS: USING WHAT WE KNOW TO BUILD 'HOW TO' CONSENSUS

The evidence, knowledge and experience emerging from programme reviews affirm that investing in violence prevention is not only a human rights imperative but also generates direct and indirect social and economic returns for the society and the state in the short, medium and longer term. Based on the evidence from World Vision's child protection programmes, this report concludes that reducing or preventing violence against children is possible, that it is not necessarily costly, and that it has a dramatically positive impact on the safety, well-being and development of children, families and communities.

As we near the end of the post-2015 process, the debate on 'what works' to prevent and reduce violence against children has gained new momentum. The strategies, evidence and recommendations identified herein demonstrate a high degree of alignment. In essence, we *know* what works. As a result, there is growing understanding and will that child protection agencies and organisations build consensus further to identify not only shared goals but shared strategies and direction.

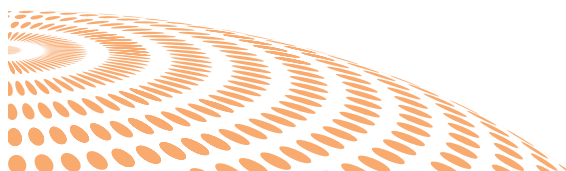
It is worth noting that conclusions from evidence usually focus on thematic priorities and models of interventions, for example, life skills education or parental training. Rooted in programming experience, they advise us on what to do or what type of child protection programmes to invest in. Less guidance exists on how to do it, that is, how to develop policy measures that will ensure development of strategies suitable to local contexts and enable public administrations and partners to enhance the quality of implementation at the local level where the children live. This paper has sought to bridge the gap from evidence-based interventions to policy recommendations, which will support the scaling of evidence-based approaches.


It is evident – and timely – that policy action is needed to make programmatic approaches work effectively in practice and to grow in capacity, reach and impact in the long term. This is the next step for building knowledge and consensus among child protection agencies and organisations. It calls for review and analysis of specific needs and challenges in different contexts and the significance of system-strengthening approaches in holistic responses to complex forms of violence against children.

Evidenced-informed policymaking and programming are essential. And it is just as important to use the evidence wisely to shift from reactive approaches – measuring violence reduction – into forward-looking approaches – creating visions for change. Indicators currently focus on incidents of violence and victims, law and policy reform, and institution building. There is a need for alternative indicators that consider the increasing capability of public administrations and their partners to implement laws and policies in practice, and the quality and scope of this implementation.⁴⁷

The 'capability of public administrations to implement' embraces two dimensions of change that are often overlooked in political reform processes. The first is the human factor: the attitudes, mindsets and commitment of public officials and their capability to translate political goals into practice and make national child protection systems operational and effective. The second is the structural set up of the

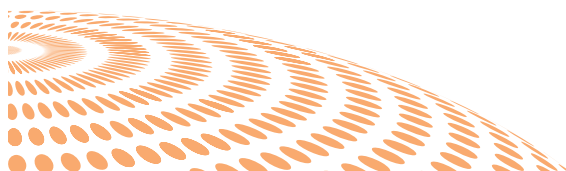
⁴⁷ See, for instance, Pritchett, L., and de Weijer, F. (2010), *Fragile States: Stuck in a Capability Trap?* World Development Report 2011 Background Paper; and Pritchett, L., Woolcock, M., and Andrews, M. (2010), *Capability Traps? The Mechanisms of Persistent Implementation Failure*, Centre for Global Development Working Paper 234.





public administration and the mechanisms in place for policy implementation. Adoption of an excellent child protection law is only the first step. The public administration and its partners must be equipped and prepared to work together across all levels and relevant sectors to see it through, to learn from implementation successes, and to recognise gaps that call for continued improvement and reform. Likewise, families and children that benefit from these measures should be equipped to monitor their implementation and hold authorities accountable.

At the international level, inter-agency collaboration is instrumental to review and analyse existing evidence, knowledge and experience in a consensus-building process leaning towards strategic questions of how to address violence against children. This growing consensus and its potential for impact will build a compelling argument for renewed energy in the child protection sector, with stronger investments in policymaking and programming combinations to improve safety, well-being and development of children, families and nations.



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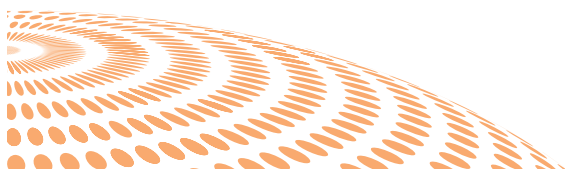
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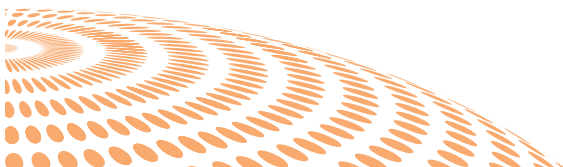
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CONTACTS

World Vision International Executive Office

1 Roundwood Avenue,
Stockley Park
Uxbridge, Middlesex UB11 1FG
United Kingdom

World Vision Brussels & EU Representation

18, Square de Meeûs
1st floor, Box 2
B-1050 Brussels
Belgium

World Vision International Geneva and United Nations Liaison Office

7-9 Chemin de Ballexert
Case Postale 545
CH-1219 Châtelaine
Switzerland

World Vision International New York and United Nations Liaison Office

919 2nd Avenue, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10017
USA

www.wvi.org

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