Protecting Children from Violence

A Comprehensive Evaluation of UNICEF’s Strategies and Programme Performance

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Background

- Violence of children (VAC) is a serious violation of child rights.
- VAC is pervasive and statistics are sobering: 6 in 10 children are regularly subjected to physical punishment by their caretakers and 1 in 10 girls have experienced forced sexual act at some point in their lives.
- Protection of children from violence is a core mandate of UNICEF, as guided by the CRC.
- The focus on VAC has been refined over the last decade, following the Child Protection Strategy (2008) and during the MTSP (2006-13).
- This work has never before been evaluated in a comprehensive manner and there is a general lack of evidence on what works to protect children from violence.
- A synthesis review (2012) reported weaknesses in the coverage and quality of evaluations of UNICEF’s VAC programme interventions and need for more evidence.
- A corporate decision was made in 2012 to comprehensively evaluate UNICEF’s work to address VAC focusing on both prevention and response aspects.
Evaluation Objectives

1. Assess the adequacy of UNICEF’s global and regional VAC strategies.
2. Assess UNICEF’s leadership, leveraging and convening roles at the global, regional and country levels.
3. Assess the design, implementation and results of UNICEF-supported programmes.
4. Identify dominant programme models set out in global and regional strategies and the relevant evidence base.
5. Provide forward-looking conclusions, lessons and actionable recommendations.

Learning

Accountability
Evaluation Scope
(Ref. 2008 CP Strategy and 2006-13 MTSP)

Focus
- Systems Strengthening
- Social Norms Change
- Use of Data and Knowledge Management
- Leadership/Advocacy
- Gender/Equity

Criteria
- Relevance and Coherence
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Sustainability
Evidence Base

(Case studies + document review + web-survey + stakeholder interviews)
Key Findings and Conclusions
Findings (Key Results Areas)

Systems Strengthening (partially achieved)

- Improved enabling environments (esp. legal and policy frameworks) in many countries,

- Strengthened institutional capacities in some countries (but gaps remain at community level)

- No country has a functioning national system that both prevents and responds to VAC.

- Important gaps include: coverage, funding of relevant ministries, implementation of legal and policy frameworks; measuring improvement in the functioning of systems; linkages between formal and informal structures
Findings (Key Results Areas)

Social Norms Change (not yet adequately achieved)

- Strong focus and expertise on traditional harmful practices while focus on other forms of VAC limited (non-socially accepted VAC)
- Shortcomings in alignment of responses to specific needs and types of VAC, scarcity of mapping and VAC prevalence data and limited sharing of information among UNICEF offices

Monitoring, Research, Evaluation and Use of Data (not yet adequately achieved)

- Strong ethical protocols in place, visible progress during evaluation period on data collection and use
- Data scarcity still a major issue; gaps in data collection on service provision and results monitoring (common definition, drivers of VAC)
Findings (Cross-Cutting Issues)

Advocacy, Leadership and Partnerships (mostly strong findings)

- UNICEF’s capacity and leadership role recognized by governments and other implementing partners
- Gaps in inter-sectoral collaboration and unseized opportunities at the regional level

Gender/Equity (mixed)

- Some good examples on targeting girls, abuse of children with disabilities and of boys (and the social norms related to boys’ masculinities) not given sufficient attention
- Weak implementation is a key issue in general; children are included in UNICEF VAC activities but not sufficiently.
Conclusions on UNICEF Strategies

- The **relevance, appropriateness and coherence** of UNICEF’s work to address VAC is mixed.
  - **Global level**: Global objectives on VAC in the CP Strategy (2008) and MTSP (2006-2013) were largely internally coherent.
  - **Regional level**: Strategies and results were uneven and mixed.
  - **Country level**: Alignment with national contexts was generally adequate but many programme logics on VAC were not fully coherent and not properly evidenced.
  - **VAC programme design** was largely consistent with country needs but will require significant strengthening to meet the expectations related to SDG 16.2.
Conclusions on Programme Performance (Effectiveness)

- Results in the area of **systems strengthening** have been partially achieved.

- Results on **social norms change** have not yet been adequately achieved.

- Results in terms of **monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data** have not yet been adequately achieved.

- Overall performance on **advocacy, leadership and partnerships** is strong, but there is scope for improvement, especially at the regional level.

- Performance on **cross-cutting themes and implementation modalities** is mixed with some good examples (e.g. targeting girls). Weak implementation is a key issue.
Conclusions (Efficiency, Sustainability and Scale Up)

- Performance in terms of **efficiency** (allocation of available budgets and staff) has been generally adequate, within the limits of resources available.

- Staff capacity and resource limitations remain a concern in countries and at the RO level.

- **Sustainability** and further expansion of VAC prevention and response efforts are likely to be hampered by limited budgets, limited partner capacities and lack of coherence in global planning and standard setting.
Recommendations
Recommendations (to UNICEF and partners)

1. Make VAC an organization-wide multi-sectoral priority with strong involvement at the regional level.

2. In 2016, develop and launch a multi-sectoral road map to reducing VAC within a particular time frame.

3. Strengthen context-specific advocacy and resource mobilization, including at the regional and global levels.

4. Accelerate the roll-out of the systems strengthening approach.

5. Renew the focus on preventing violence, including through addressing social norms.

6. Improve the focus on gender and equity approaches and interventions within the overall systems approach.

7. Institutionalise child protection systems mapping and assessment exercises and strategically plan for follow-up research and data initiatives.

8. Develop a web-based knowledge networking platform that facilitates information sharing.