Communication for Development Approaches to Address Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review
Communication for Development (C4D)
Working Paper Series

Communication for Development Approaches to Address Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review

Authors: Suruchi Sood and Carmen Cronin

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Communication for Development Approaches to Address Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review
FOREWORD

Despite a clear legal and ethical imperative to protect children, Violence against Children (VAC) remains pervasive. It affects millions of children every year, in their homes, communities, schools, workplaces, in detention centres and childcare institutions, and online. It can have long lasting, and often lifelong, negative effects. The vast majority of children never speak out about their experiences and even fewer receive the services they need to recover.

When the global community adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, targets were set to eradicate all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking against boys and girls, as well as harmful practices by 2030. There is increasing recognition that VAC places a long-term burden on health and social services, undermines investment and development in other sectors (such as health, early childhood development, nutrition and education) and constrains economic growth. Conversely, investment in ending violence against children and women can accelerate development across all the SDGs.

Violence against children encompasses “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse” (Article 19, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)

Transforming social norms that condone or facilitate VAC or prevent child victims from accessing support, and reinforcing positive norms that protect children from violence, has been increasingly recognized as crucial by the global community – it is, for example, one key strategy of the INSPIRE package for ending violence against children (WHO, 2016).

UNICEF has a critical role to play in ending VAC and achieving the SDGs. It is a leading global agency with the profile, reach, expertise and mandate to achieve impact at scale. Building on its expertise and technical leadership in Communication for Development (C4D), UNICEF is also well placed to lead on innovation and best practice in shifting social norms related to VAC. C4D is indeed integral to UNICEF’s VAC programmatic approach under the Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Changing social norms is also embedded in the VAC Theory of Change, as a stand-alone outcome, and as a cross-cutting strategy that influences all other outcomes.

Even so, the evidence and documentation of C4D best practices to address VAC is limited. There is an urgent need to improve access, dissemination, systematization, and use of data and evidence on social and behavior change and community engagement to promote protective practices. In recent years, several efforts have been undertaken to strengthen this. Yet there are few such efforts focused on VAC.

This report is part of a package of evidence and tools that includes this systematic review of C4D interventions to address VAC, an evidence review of randomized controlled trials, a Technical Guidance for C4D programmes addressing VAC, and training materials related to the Guidance. This suite of materials is a result of UNICEF’s investments in C4D capacity and its collaboration with Drexel University to strengthening the evidence-base on what works for preventing and responding to VAC through C4D. Several UNICEF offices are using these resources to develop country roadmaps and strengthen their strategies to address VAC through robust C4D programming. We hope that more UNICEF offices, governments, partner agencies, and others working in this area will find this package useful. We hope that it will also provide the hard evidence that governments and development agencies need for scaling up efforts to reduce violence against children.

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STEPHEN BLIGHT
Senior Advisor, Child Protection Programme Division, UNICEF
## Contents

Foreword ........................................................................................................... 2  
List of tables ..................................................................................................... 4  
List of figures .................................................................................................. 5  
Acknowledgements .......................................................................................... 6  
Executive summary .......................................................................................... 8  
Background ..................................................................................................... 12  
Structure of this report ..................................................................................... 14  
Methods .......................................................................................................... 16  
Manuscript selection and sampling ................................................................. 18  
Limitations of this systematic review .............................................................. 20  
Key findings ..................................................................................................... 24  
SECTION 1: Sampling information ................................................................. 24  
SECTION 2: Programme design elements ....................................................... 27  
Assessment of conceptual (theoretical) frameworks .................................... 27  
Assessment of programme objectives .......................................................... 28  
Assessment of communication objectives ................................................... 29  
Assessment of the level of influence of the interventions ............................ 30  
Assessment of programme implementing partners ...................................... 33  
SECTION 3: Programme implementation ....................................................... 35  
Assessment of the intended audiences for interventions ............................. 35  
Assessment of the strategic communication approach .................................. 36  
Assessment of communication channels ..................................................... 37  
SECTION 4: Overall programme evaluation processes ................................. 38  
Assessment of the overall evaluation designs .............................................. 38  
Assessment of research methods .................................................................. 38  
Assessment of analysis frameworks ............................................................. 39  
Assessment of sampling ............................................................................... 40  
Assessment of indicators ............................................................................. 41  
SECTION 5: Thematic analysis of key results by type of research ................. 44  
Formative research results ............................................................................ 44  
Process evaluation results ............................................................................. 49  
Impact evaluation results ............................................................................... 53  
Overall recommendations ............................................................................ 62  
Conclusions .................................................................................................... 67  
References ...................................................................................................... 69  
End notes ......................................................................................................... 73
## Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 1</td>
<td>Key terms for the systematic review</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 2</td>
<td>Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the systematic review</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 3</td>
<td>Search engines utilized for the systematic review</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 4</td>
<td>Location of interventions for manuscripts in the systematic review</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 5</td>
<td>Conceptual frameworks in the manuscripts included in the systematic review</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 6</td>
<td>Implementing agencies and partners for manuscripts in the systematic review</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 7</td>
<td>Intended audiences for manuscripts in the systematic review</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 8</td>
<td>Evaluation design for manuscripts in the systematic review</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 9</td>
<td>Research methods for manuscripts in the systematic review</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 10</td>
<td>Analysis methods for manuscripts in systematic review</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures

FIGURE 1: Overall recommendations based on the systematic review ........... 11
FIGURE 2: Structure of this report’s findings section ........................................ 15
FIGURE 3: Summary of manuscripts in the systematic review .................. 18
FIGURE 4: Coding criteria by thematic area of the systematic review ........ 19
FIGURE 5: Year of publication for manuscripts included in the systematic review .......................................................... 25
FIGURE 6: Summary of sampling findings .................................................... 26
FIGURE 7: Example of conceptual model from KiVA intervention ................ 28
FIGURE 8: Levels of influence included in the systematic review database .... 30
FIGURE 9: Results on levels of influence from the manuscripts included in the systematic review database ........................................................... 31
FIGURE 10: Examples of C4D interventions influencing policy .................. 32
FIGURE 11: Summary of programme design findings .................................. 34
FIGURE 12: Results on the strategic communication approaches from the systematic review .......................................................... 36
FIGURE 13: Results on the communication channels used in the systematic review .......................................................... 36
FIGURE 14: Summary of programme implementation findings .................. 37
FIGURE 15: Indicators from the manuscripts included in the systematic review .......................................................... 41
FIGURE 16: Summary of overall evaluation processes findings ................. 43
FIGURE 17: Summary of findings from formative research results .............. 48
FIGURE 18: Summary of findings from process evaluation results ............... 52
FIGURE 19: Summary of findings from impact evaluation results .............. 61
FIGURE 20: Potential directions for future research and study .................. 68
Acknowledgements

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“Violence against children cuts across boundaries of geography, race, class, religion, and culture. [...] Violence against children is never justifiable. Nor is it inevitable. If its underlying causes are identified and addressed, violence against children is entirely preventable.”
— World report on violence against children, United Nations, 2006

The Programme Division at UNICEF Headquarters in New York initiated a research study to analyse the effectiveness of Communication for Development (C4D) approaches to address Violence Against Children (VAC). The overall study aims to develop guidance and recommendations for future programming and research. This report presents the findings from a systematic literature review.
VAC is ubiquitous and manifests itself in different forms. The term ‘violence’ is often used to encompass the complexity and range of issues children face -- from trafficking to bullying to child neglect. The many manifestations of VAC explains the over 80,000 initial total hits yielded by the review. Moreover, each form of violence is influenced by a unique set of political, economic, cultural, and social factors. As such, it is critical to examine VAC along a continuum, rather than addressing it uniformly.

Overlapping results for different searches revealed that VAC cannot be easily pigeonholed by topic. Rather, VAC must be conceptualized as multiple forms or facets of violence. Linkages between different forms of VAC and other forms of violence, such as violence against women, and intimate partner violence, must be explored. No doubt this overlap presents itself as a challenge when implementing and evaluating interventions. However, it is imperative that the interrelationships and complexities between these issues be recognized and addressed holistically.

The number of manuscripts (peer-reviewed articles and grey literature) related to the use of C4D approaches to address VAC has steadily increased each year since 2000. Of the 302 manuscripts that were coded, 44 per cent discuss an intervention implemented in a developing country, which speaks to the geographic robustness of this review. A greater proportion of manuscripts discuss interventions in urban contexts as compared to rural contexts.

Roughly half of the interventions reviewed do not explicitly reference a conceptual model to underpin the interventions. Those that do, typically cite individual or cognitive conceptual models and a majority (over 80 per cent) focus on the individual level of change. About 11 per cent use community approaches and slightly less than 10 per cent report using an ecological approach.

While cognitive and individual-based behaviour change approaches are valid and useful in certain contexts, there is a growing realization that individuals are embedded within a larger social system. Effective interventions must keep in mind the interactions between levels in order to effectuate sustainable change. The social ecological model provides a framework to address the interactions between levels. Interventions that cut across the levels of the social ecological model should work towards addressing social, emotional, and behavioural skills (for example, self-efficacy) of individuals and groups, as well as norms, instead of only addressing individual knowledge and attitudes.

Manuscripts reviewed did not necessarily explicitly state the use of C4D approaches. However, upon closer examination, it became apparent that the majority of responses to VAC were inherently communicative. Programmes addressing VAC often use C4D approaches to reduce harmful practices using a ‘harm reduction’ framework. Often in these cases, programme objectives focus on the negative, whereas C4D messages for the same intervention focus on positive changes. Overall programme objectives should be linked to communication objectives, which in turn yield C4D messages. The links between these overall programme objectives and
subsequent communication objectives and messages should be clarified in order to achieve the desired outcomes in relation to behaviour and social change.

At the same time, it was difficult to distinguish between overall Child Protection (CP) programme objectives that considered the spectrum of initiatives for prevention and response and C4D objectives that focused more specifically on behavioural and social change outcomes. There was little to no evidence of the utilization of SMART or SPICED criteria when describing programme objectives. The majority of objectives relied on changing knowledge or improving comprehension, instead of activating higher levels of cognitive and affective change such as assimilating or evaluating information.

Implementation related findings demonstrated that the intended audience for the majority of interventions were individuals and did not report segmenting audiences into primary, secondary, or tertiary groups. Developing countries tended to utilize campaigns with mass media channels such as television, radio, and print, whereas United States-based interventions (often led by university-based researchers) tended to use training/capacity building trajectories.

Many of the interventions focus on intervening in the setting where violence occurs, such as the home or school. However, there is a need to look beyond settings, and take into consideration the forms of violence that occur in less concrete or discrete places, such as verbal or sexual harassment of adolescent girls in public spaces. A norms-based approach has the potential to address violence more holistically and at a broader level. It can also allow for the integration of innovative communication technologies as both channels for dissemination and mechanisms to help track intervention implementation and success.

The paucity of robust and rigorous evaluations in this review underscores the need to invest more heavily in research. Few manuscripts described formative research processes (17 per cent) or process evaluations (14 per cent). Significantly more manuscripts reported on impact evaluations (around 16 per cent of manuscripts for randomized controlled trials and 15 per cent on a pre-post case-control design without randomization). Qualitative observational data (reported in 28 per cent of manuscripts) is a commonly utilized evaluation methodology. This type of data, however, makes a weak case for C4D attribution to outcomes. Overall, there was a serious underutilization of participatory research methods for any and all types of evaluations.

There is a serious lack of evaluation data on the effectiveness of interventions and strong evidence of the need for additional effectiveness evaluations, specifically for low- and middle-income countries. The focus on the individual, as seen in the selection of conceptual models, the wording of objectives, and the level of influence, persists with regards to measurement indicators, which are further centred on low-order individual cognitive constructs. Lack of information on sampling frameworks, small sample sizes, and other methodological issues bring to light the lack of specificity and sophistication in the evalu-
ation data being collected. These issues ultimately raise doubts about the quality of information utilized to examine effectiveness of interventions.

Local indicators (incidence and prevalence) on VAC are not always readily available or accessible. This being the case, an essential first step to identifying the magnitude of VAC as a set of issues deserving of global advocacy and adequately resourced interventions would be the creation of standardized definitions and measurements of incidence and prevalence.

The review shows that prevention efforts can contextualize violence as both a cause and an outcome. Preventing and responding to VAC can be an end in and of itself. Or, VAC can be embedded as a causal factor within interventions designed to promote health or education. Both methods of understanding VAC are valid.

There was strong evidence in support of early childhood programmes (e.g. positive parenting and early childhood development). These types of programmes can lay the groundwork for generational change. By raising boys and girls that reject violence, new norms around masculinity and femininity can be created.

Finally, the role of gender cannot be overlooked when discussing VAC. Girls are disproportionately at risk for most types of violence and their specific needs must be addressed. Female empowerment has proven to be a successful and integral component of prevention efforts. The review pointed out the need to engage men and boys in gender transformative programmes. While focusing on girls is important, it should not be at the expense of boys, who are also victims of violence.

In summary, it is essential to expand outcome evaluation studies so as to enhance our understanding of global best practices, which, in turn, need to be contextualized based on what works at a local level to address VAC. Moving forward, future research and practice should consider the following 15 overall recommendations, categorised under three broad themes relevant to contextualisation and framing of the issue, programme design, implementation and evaluation, which are elaborated upon later on in the report.

FIGURE 1: Overall recommendations based on the Systematic Review

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

• Embrace the social ecological model for behaviour and social change
• Broaden conceptualizations of C4D approaches to encompass efforts that involve any form of communication/ communicative action and cut across all levels in the social ecological model
• Segment audiences by gender and address gender specific needs and differences
• Clarify direct and indirect linkages between stated programme outcomes and C4D or communication objectives and messages
• Reconfigure programme and C4D/ communication objectives of VAC interventions
• Move beyond individually-focused knowledge, attitudes, and practices by addressing social, emotional, and behavioural competencies
• Position VAC as a ‘glocal’ issue through qualitative and quantitative measurement
• Enhance investment in research
• Scale up promising interventions
This research study, initiated by the Programme Division at UNICEF headquarters in New York, systematically analyses interventions addressing violence against children through the use of communication for development (C4D) approaches.

This study focuses specifically on the effectiveness of C4D approaches in order to better understand what works vis-a-vis prevention and response. It sought to answer the following research question: 'What are the effects of communication for development approaches to address violence against children?'.

A group of children play ějīj in English in Adone village of Ta Oi district in Saravane province, Lao PDR.
This systematic review examines available peer-reviewed publications and grey literature (reports and project documents) on C4D interventions addressing VAC within a 13-year time period (from 2000 to 2013). The research question posed above requires a clear understanding of the population (children), issue of concern (VAC), and intervention approach (C4D). Definitions for these terms are provided below:

**THE POPULATION FOCUS FOR THIS REVIEW IS ON CHILDREN.** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as “a human being below the age of 18 years, unless under the law applicable to child, majority is attained earlier”.

**THE ISSUE FOCUS OF THIS REVIEW IS ON VAC.** Article 19 of the CRC defines violence as: “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse”. General Comment no. 13 seeks to guide State Parties in understanding their obligations under article 19 of the CRC to prohibit, prevent and respond to all forms of violence. It is based on the fundamental assumption that: “No violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable”, and it builds on existing guidance provided by the CRC Committee and on recommendations coming from various United Nations mechanisms and reports, including the Secretary-General’s Study on Violence against Children (United Nations, 2006).

**THE INTERVENTION FOCUS OF THIS REVIEW IS ON COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT,** which UNICEF broadly defines as “an evidence-based and participatory process that facilitates the engagement of children, families, communities, the public and decision makers for positive social and behavioural change in both development and humanitarian contexts through a mix of available communication platforms and tools” (UNICEF, 2019).

There are differences among practitioners and scholars on all the communication approaches and terms that constitute C4D. Therefore, the systematic review included several complementary terms such as behaviour change communication, social mobilization, media campaigns, and advocacy. With respect to forms of VAC, a mix of broad and specific issues is included (the complete list of key terms used for this systematic review is presented in Table 1).

**TABLE 1: Key terms for the systematic review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Populations</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication (for/ and) development</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Child protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour change communication</td>
<td>Minors</td>
<td>Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social change communication</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Gender-based violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Sexual abuse/ sexual violence/ sexual exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social mobilization</td>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>Trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community mobilization</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>Child Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Child marriage/ early marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication campaigns</td>
<td></td>
<td>Honour killings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Female genital mutilation/ cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media campaigns</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td></td>
<td>Corporal punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive communication technologies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gang violence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following chapters summarize the methodology utilized for conducting the systematic review, including an acknowledgement of the limitations of a systematic review methodology, and of this review in particular. The central section presents the key findings from the systematic review, organized into five subsections (see Figure 2). The final section provides a summary of overarching findings and recommendations for future research and practice.
The key findings of this systematic review are organized into the five subsections below:

1. **SAMPLING INFORMATION**: includes information about sampling for the systematic review.

2. **PROGRAMME DESIGN ELEMENTS**: provides information on the conceptual frameworks reported in the manuscripts, programme and communication objectives, level of influence that the interventions focus on, and the implementing agencies and partnerships involved in the interventions as reported in the manuscripts included in the systematic review.

3. **PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION**: contains a summary of the intended audiences, strategic approaches, and communication channels utilized by the interventions reported in the manuscripts included in this systematic review.

4. **OVERALL PROGRAMME EVALUATION PROCESSES**: includes information on overall programme evaluation processes such as evaluation design, research methods, analysis frameworks, sampling, and indicators.

5. **THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE KEY RESULTS BY TYPE OF RESEARCH**: provides a thematic analysis of the key results and discussion sections of the manuscripts included in the systematic review. The analysis categorizes the results by formative research, process evaluation and impact assessment/evaluation.

The key findings from each of the five subsections are summarized within the individual subsections to provide an overall picture of key learnings from the systematic review.

A visual map of the findings is presented in Figure 2. This map is intended to help the reader visualize the flow of the findings, see how each section builds upon the previous ones, and find a specific section of interest.

**FIGURE 2: Structure of this report’s findings section**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Sampling</th>
<th>2. Programme design elements</th>
<th>3. Programme implementation</th>
<th>4. Overall programme evaluation</th>
<th>5. Thematic analysis of the key results by type of research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Conceptual frameworks</td>
<td>Intended audiences</td>
<td>Evaluation design</td>
<td>Formative research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Programme objectives</td>
<td>Strategic approaches</td>
<td>Research methods</td>
<td>Process evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Communication objectives</td>
<td>Communication channels</td>
<td>Analysis frameworks</td>
<td>Impact assessment/evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level of influence</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementer and partners</td>
<td></td>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A critical first step in designing a robust systematic review is reaching overarching agreement on the inclusion and exclusion criteria for studies to be reviewed. Such criteria ensure that all relevant literature is included while winnowing out those not pertinent to the question at hand. The inclusion and exclusion criteria used for this secondary analysis are summarized in Table 2.
METHODS

The list of databases included in this review is summarized below in Table 3. A majority of these databases include peer-reviewed literature, while others such as Google Scholar, ELDS and BLDS, as well as the Communication Initiative databases, were all selected in order to include grey literature.

**TABLE 2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the systematic review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A 2000 onwards time frame for intervention reviews (2000-2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reference to a specific programme or intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The programmes or interventions include children as audiences or beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The programmes or interventions address key ‘violence’ issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The programmes or interventions include C4D approaches</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Manuscripts written or published before 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manuscripts solely on policies, editorials and commentaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manuscripts on violence or C4D approaches but not specific to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manuscripts on VAC but not utilizing C4D approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manuscripts on C4D approaches but not specific to violence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 3: Search engines utilized for the systematic review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEARCH ENGINE</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBMED CENTRAL</td>
<td>United States National Library of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC SEARCH COMPLETE</td>
<td>Journals and periodicals across disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYCINFO</td>
<td>Behavioural sciences and mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS</td>
<td>Sociology and other behavioural and social sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOGLE SCHOLAR</td>
<td>Scholarly literature including theses, books, abstracts and articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELDIS AND BLDS</td>
<td>Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE</td>
<td>Database of communication strategies and media for development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Manuscript selection and sampling

In order to systematize the review process, the shortlisting of manuscripts involved three stages of review:

1. TITLE REVIEW: Titles deemed relevant were shortlisted for abstract review.
2. ABSTRACT REVIEW: Shortlisted abstracts were scanned for relevance based on their adherence to the inclusion criteria.
3. FULL TEXT REVIEW: Full text manuscripts of the relevant abstracts were read and entered into a database.

Figure 3 below summarizes the sampling process and sample size information. While the total number of hits based on the key search criteria was 80,532, only 302 manuscripts made the final cut.

The 302 manuscripts were coded into an excel database that included 96 columns of information categorized into five thematic areas: background information, programme design, programme implementation, programme evaluation, and finally limitations and recommendations, as outlined in the manuscript by the author(s). Figure 4 provides a breakdown of information collected for each thematic area.

The staffing to conduct the systematic review included seven Masters of Public Health students at Drexel University. A series of quality control mechanisms were employed at each stage. After data entry was completed, the Principle Investigator on the study identified a systematic random sample of 30 manuscripts (ensuring that at least two articles per student involved in data entry were included) to calculate inter-rater reliability, which was manually calculated at 84 per cent, indicating statistically substantial agreement. The kappa statistic was utilized to examine inter-rater agreement and yielded a value of 0.69. According to Landis and Koch (1977), a value of 0.61 - 0.80 can be considered as substantial agreement.

The analysis of data presented in this report utilized a mixed methods approach. The quantitative components of the coded data were analysed through frequencies and cross-tabulations in STATA 12. The text data was analysed by using a grounded theory approach, in which the coded data was categorized into themes, which were further refined and expanded during the analysis process (Charmaz, 2006).

**FIGURE 3:** Summary of manuscripts included in the systematic review

- Total hits: 80,532
- Selected for abstract review: 1,909
- Selected for full text review: 414 articles; 119 reviews (total:533)
- Selected for coding: 235 articles; 68 reviews (total: 302)
TABLE 4: Coding criteria by thematic area of the systematic review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Communication approach</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Theoretical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of publication</td>
<td>Conceptual framework</td>
<td>Channels</td>
<td>Evaluation type (formative, process, impact)</td>
<td>Operational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Level of influence</td>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Legal/ethical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10-year-old Melina and her eight-year-old sister, Monica, play with a chick in remote Garkhatar Village Development Committee in Nuwakot District, 1 of 12 districts that have been severely affected by the massive earthquake in Nepal.
There are several limitations inherent in conducting any systematic review, and the following are pertinent to this specific review and need to be mentioned up front.

- Much of the analysis and reporting in any systematic review is dependent on the focus of the selected manuscript, and in the case of peer-reviewed articles, constraints of the publication process.\textsuperscript{5}
- Not all of the information about an intervention can be reported in one manuscript. This is likely the reason for missing information regarding design, implementation and evaluation processes for any given intervention.
- The inclusion of grey literature in this report is indicative of the need to conduct more robust evaluations including at the design (formative) and implementation (process) stages.
The analysis presented in this systematic review is based on a grounded theory approach. In grounded theory, categories and themes emerge or are generated from the data and are further refined and expanded throughout the data analysis process. This approach differs from a quantitative categorization of the manuscripts. Thus, it is hard to apply ‘rule-of-thumb’ criteria and classify manuscripts based on the strength of the evidence presented. In order to quantitatively compare effectiveness, one of two criteria needs to be met: either specific common outcomes need to be identified or approaches need to be limited to examine their impact on a variety of outcomes. Otherwise there is no common ground upon which to make judgments about effectiveness. VAC encompasses a range of issues and C4D includes an array of approaches. This systematic review combines both VAC and C4D as an overall framework; therefore the validity of such aggregation based on strength of evidence is limited. On the one hand it is impossible to compare the effectiveness of interventions addressing different issues and using multiple approaches. At the same time it is hard to take the interventions included in the review and fit them into mutually exclusive categories based upon either approach or issue. Sometimes interventions address multiple violence issues and/or use several approaches.

Apart from the large number of approaches and issues being covered in this review, there were overlaps between C4D approaches and different forms of VAC as evidenced by the fact that the literature search revealed the same manuscripts even after the related key terms were varied. For example:

• The evaluation of the first five years of the California Wellness Foundation’s Violence Prevention Initiative was coded as an example of community mobilization, as well as a communication for development approach (Greenwood et al., 2001).

• An intervention aimed at educating adolescent girls on family life education issues in a village of Uttrakhand, India, was coded as part of the searches on ‘social change approaches to address discrimination’ as well as ‘communication and development interventions to address child marriage’ (Saxena, Srivastava and Ahuja, 2009).

The inherent complexity of C4D approaches and VAC makes it difficult to create mutually exclusive categories for the reviewed manuscripts based on either approaches or issues. Therefore, one cannot make broad generalizations of the terms C4D and VAC, but rather one needs to examine specific issues and approaches. At the same time, this complexity is a key learning upon which broad-based guidance on the conceptualization of VAC programmes can be built.

The systematic review attempted to cast a wide net and gather information from as many data sources as possible by using multiple and different types of databases. Nevertheless, some relevant databases were inadvertently excluded such as ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre), while others were deliberately omitted, for example, student theses and dissertations. The selection of key terms for the review was based on a review of several background documents and consensus among the research team, as well as C4D and Child Protection teams at UNICEF Headquarters. This process resulted in a well-defined yet broad set of approaches and forms of violence. However, some commonly used approaches such as information campaigns, IEC approaches, and educational campaigns were not included in the search terms because of their limited use in academia.

A key limitation of including a variety of key terms to describe both C4D and child protection meant that in some cases it was difficult to parse out the communication aspect of some of the manuscripts that were included in the review, for example, counsellor training to address VAC
or dance therapy for violence prevention. Similarly, in some instances the extent to which C4D interventions were designed to address VAC was difficult to determine. An example of this are programmes addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination, where VAC related prevention and response is related to programmes designed to address issues pertinent to health and education.

Another key limitation of this review could be the fact that more than half of the information presented here is based on data from the developed world. Approximately 56 per cent of the reported interventions are from industrialized countries. In some ways this is a function of the academic nature of this systematic review and reflects the biases associated with searching in United States-based databases and peer-review publications. At the same time it is important to situate this systematic review in the context of other reviews of this nature. For example, Mikton and Butchart (2009) while reviewing child maltreatment programmes, noted in their results a woeful imbalance in the geographic distribution of child maltreatment prevention research with over 99 per cent of the publications coming from high-income countries.
These authors contend that their findings parallel the 10/90 gap in areas of health research. This review, in contrast, is therefore geographically robust given that 44 per cent of the manuscripts comes from developing countries. It is possible that the inclusion of multiple search terms to define C4D and VAC, as well as the use of multiple databases, resulted in the overall robustness of the sample.

In addition, it is important to note that while the United Nations Secretary-General’s Study noted that VAC happens everywhere and across all social groups, specific types of VAC are related to social and cultural norms of a given society. According to UNICEF, the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is concentrated in 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East. Any literature associated with FGM/C is therefore likely to come from these specific countries. While the information from interventions implemented in industrialized countries might not be directly applicable to developing country contexts, the information and data remain valid sources from which to draw conclusions and recommendations regarding C4D approaches to address VAC. A related limitation is that this review focused specifically on VAC and did not attempt to examine causal or contributing factors or outcomes associated with VAC such as alcohol abuse, or study the relationship of VAC with environmental factors such as urbanization, migration, and displacement.

This systematic review involved a fairly large team to complete the tasks in the allocated time. While the inter-rater reliability is within the substantial range and despite efforts to ensure that the data selection and entry procedures were standardized, variations by coder were detected.

This systematic review included existing reviews and meta-analyses, as well as manuscripts dealing with individual interventions. The reason for including both types of manuscripts was twofold. First, reviewing existing reviews/analyses would prove to be cumbersome and repetitive. Second, existing reviews/meta-analyses seldom include sufficient programmatic details as required by this systematic review database. It is important to mention that the inclusion of both types of manuscripts constitutes a limitation because existing reviews/analyses yield different results and have to be interpreted differently from individual interventions.

A final key limitation of this review was that it only included peer-reviewed journal articles and reports published in English between 2000 and 2013. The 2000 onwards time frame was considered appropriate as research associated with examining effectiveness of communication programmes is relatively new. Therefore, looking at interventions and evaluations preceding the 13-year time frame was not likely to yield pertinent results. Finally, the utilization of communication as a mechanism to address VAC has not been conducted in a systematic manner focused on evidence. While examining interventions previous to this time frame may have been important from a historical perspective, it was considered unlikely to add substantially to the research question at hand. It is entirely possible that this review was unable to record manuscripts that were published exclusively in other languages. For example, evaluations published exclusively in Spanish are noticeably absent. Some attempts were made to examine reports available only in Spanish through a search of the Communication Initiative Spanish language website. While the search yielded a large number of initial hits, evaluation information was noticeably absent in these publications.

“While the United Nations Secretary-General’s Study noted that VAC happens everywhere and across all social groups, specific types of VAC are related to social and cultural norms of a given society.”
Key findings

The key findings from this systematic review are organized into five sections.

- **SECTION 1:** Sampling information
- **SECTION 2:** Programme design elements
- **SECTION 3:** Programme implementation
- **SECTION 4:** Overall programme evaluation processes
- **SECTION 5:** Thematic analysis of the key results by type of research

**SECTION 1: Sampling information**

The systematic review database included background information about each manuscript such as: complete citation, type, and year of publication. In addition, geographic location was noted at increasing levels of specificity starting with region, then country, and finally sub-national level. Information on year of publication indicates that approximately half of the articles...
reviewed (53 per cent) were published between 2008 and 2013 (see Figure 5).

Data on the geographic location of implemented interventions was categorized according to the UNICEF regional office classification. The results indicate that 30 manuscripts (about 10 per cent) were from the South Asian region – with a majority coming from India (53 per cent). Some 18 manuscripts (6 per cent) were from Eastern and Southern Africa. East Asia and the Pacific and the Middle East and North Africa each contributed approximately 15 manuscripts (roughly 5 per cent). By far the largest number of manuscripts, 168 (over 50 per cent) came from industrialized countries with the United States of America leading the list by a large margin with 118 manuscripts (about 39 per cent). Some 31 manuscripts (10 per cent) were classified as being global. In most cases these global manuscripts reflected existing reviews and meta-analyses of VAC programmes (Table 4).

Information on the location of the interventions was also classified by geography ranging from regional or province level to sub-regions. For some countries (United States of America and India), states were mentioned as being the focus

### Table 4: Location of interventions for manuscripts in the systematic review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Manuscripts</th>
<th>Proportion in Database (N = 302)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western and Central Africa</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern and Southern Africa</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Americas and Caribbean</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia and Pacific</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrialized countries</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region/ province</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Region/ province</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban centre</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural areas</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of the interventions. In addition, whenever possible urban and/or rural locations were noted. The data shows that 80 interventions (over 25 per cent) were implemented in multiple locations covering, for example, both urban and rural areas. A large proportion of the interventions, 81 manuscripts (27 per cent), focused on urban locations while the proportion of rural locations was relatively smaller: 12 manuscripts (4 per cent). This information sheds some light on the nature and scope of the interventions. However, this data is based on what was reported in published manuscripts and therefore may not reflect a complete picture of intervention locations.

FIGURE 6: Summary of sampling information

- Peer-reviewed publications made up 25 per cent of the sample and project reports made up the other 75 per cent.
- The general trend in publications related to the utilization of C4D approaches for VAC was promising, with a steady increase in the numbers of manuscripts published every year since 2000.
- While the sample of manuscripts included in this review favoured developed/industrialized countries (a third coming from the United States alone), 44 per cent came from the developing world.
- A greater proportion of manuscripts are from urban rather than rural locations.
- 10 per cent of the manuscript represent ‘global’ experiences, mainly existing reviews and meta-analyses of interventions addressing key VAC.
SECTION 2: Programme design elements

The information associated with programme design elements gleaned from the systematic review includes the following information:

- Conceptual (theoretical) frameworks
- Programme objectives
- Communication objectives
- Level of influence
- Implementing agencies and partners

ASSESSMENT OF CONCEPTUAL (THEORETICAL) FRAMEWORKS

Two types of analyses were undertaken to examine the overall conceptual (theoretical) frameworks specified in the manuscripts. First, all of the frameworks or models explicitly mentioned in the manuscripts were included in the database. If more than one model/framework was described, then the database included multiple columns to note all of them. A second set of analyses pertained to the implicit inclusion of models and frameworks in the manuscript. The data entry tool permitted the inclusion of several models, and students were asked to include/refer to other models as and when they came up during the course of data entry. The list of models is summarized in Table 5.

There was limited evidence that manuscripts included an explicit statement of conceptual models to underpin described interventions. In fact, 129 (43 per cent) of the manuscripts did not clearly reference any conceptual model.

Cognitive models, reported in 51 manuscripts (17 per cent), were among the most commonly mentioned. In some cases, interventions created their own frameworks/models by building upon existing theories of change. For example, two of the manuscripts from Finland’s KiVa intervention employed the participant role approach to school bullying (Karna et al, 2011a; Karna et al., 2011b). This approach (see Figure 7) builds upon constructs of social learning theory and stages of change. The review indicated that an additional 18 manuscripts focused on individual steps and stages of change models. Therefore, close to a quarter of the manuscripts explicitly relied on individually based approaches to behaviour change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODELS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF MANUSCRIPTS</th>
<th>PROPORTION IN DATABASE (N = 302)</th>
<th>NUMBER OF MANUSCRIPTS</th>
<th>PROPORTION IN DATABASE (N = 302)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive approaches</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community approaches</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social ecological model</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps/stages approach to behaviour change</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social marketing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social norms</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems level addressing policy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights, gender and multicultural</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approaches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps/stages approach to social change</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative approaches</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social network models</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning models (COMBI, P process)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 5: Conceptual frameworks in the manuscripts included in the systematic review
Community approaches, on the other hand, were explicitly mentioned in 34 manuscripts (11 per cent). Twenty-four manuscripts (slightly less than 10 per cent) reported utilizing an ecological approach. One word of caution when interpreting these results is that comprehensive models such as the ‘social ecological framework’ encompass various levels of influence ranging from the individual level to the policy level. It is likely that the 24 manuscripts (8 per cent) that reported relying on the social ecological approach included elements from cognitive approaches stages of behaviour change, social networks, community-based approaches and social norms. There was evidence of additional models as well, for example social marketing was referenced in 15 manuscripts (5 per cent), and some 13 manuscripts (4 per cent) reported addressing social norms. In keeping with UNICEF’s strong focus on human rights-based approaches, eight of the manuscripts (3 per cent) specifically referenced a human rights, gender or multicultural focus.

Subjective interpretation of theoretical constructs by the coders indicated that over 50 per cent of the manuscripts implicitly made reference to one or more of the models listed above. Information on implicit referencing of models has to be cautiously interpreted given the subjective nature of this coding. However, it is interesting to note while only 24 of the manuscripts (8 per cent) explicitly stated using an ecological approach, the coders found evidence of an ecological perspective in an additional 32 manuscripts (11 per cent). In another example, only 11 manuscripts (4 per cent) made an explicit reference to changes at the system or policy-level as their conceptual framework, but an additional 19 manuscripts (6 per cent) were thought to be implicitly attempting to address policy-level changes primarily through advocacy.

**FIGURE 7: Example of conceptual model from KiVa intervention**

**Participant role approach to school bullying**

Finland’s KiVa intervention employed the participant role approach to school bullying. According to this approach, bullying is perceived as a group phenomenon largely enabled and maintained by class members taking on different participant roles. These roles include: assistants, reinforcers of the bully, outsiders or defenders of the victim. These roles moderate behaviour within the class social group by ‘peer group power’. The KiVa interventions encourage participants to take action against bullying by becoming defenders or helpers of victimized classmates. KiVa is based on the idea that a “positive change in the behaviours in classmates can reduce the rewards gained by bullies and consequently their motivation to bully in the first place” (Kärnä, 313). This is accomplished through skill-building exercises emphasizing self-efficacy, anti-bullying attitudes, and empathy as well as the establishment of a school mechanism to address instances of bullying immediately through counselling and small group discussions. In some ways the KiVa model combines both cognitive elements (role playing to build efficacy) and stages of change (moving individuals to serve as defenders).

**ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES**

The programme design analysis of the manuscripts included an assessment of the overall programme objectives. Thematic categorization using a grounded theory approach yielded the following broad categories:

- Policy frameworks;
- Overall impact or change over time in incidence and prevalence;
- Social change (e.g. community empowerment, social norms, and social movements); and
- Individual change (e.g. behaviours, self-efficacy, attitudes and knowledge).
The objectives related to policy frameworks were written in broad and generalizable terms and typically sought broad-based social and structural change. This was especially true of child labour reduction and elimination programmes. The second set of broad programme objectives addressed overall impact (measured in terms of prevalence and incidence of violence against children), and was most commonly designed to address issues such as bullying and/or gang violence.

The specific programme objectives geared towards social change dealt with changes in attitudes and norms associated with harmful practices such as FGM/C and child marriage. A large subcomponent of the social change objectives were written in ‘empowerment’ terms and aimed to bring about changes in efficacy (both at individual and collective levels).

The final category of programme objectives focused on individual level changes. The programme objectives geared towards individual level changes comprised the single largest group in terms of stated programme objectives. A large proportion of these individually focused behaviour change interventions appeared to address gaps in awareness and knowledge and therefore aimed at a fairly low level along an individual behaviour change continuum.

Interestingly, the thematic analysis indicates that the stated objectives of the individual behaviour change interventions were universally designed to reduce or eliminate harmful practices. Their objectives made little stated effort to focus on positive changes, which individuals could undertake, yet the messaging for such interventions was positively framed. This finding points to a potential misalignment between the negatively couched objectives and the positively framed messaging derived from those negatively couched programme objectives. For example, the programme objectives of interventions addressing child marriage were couched in terms of raising a community’s awareness of the harmful effects of child marriage or to reduce the incidence of child marriage. Meanwhile, the communication messages for the same interventions focused on raising the value of the girl child and changing gender-related attitudes. Anti-bullying interventions worked in a very similar fashion. Programme objectives were couched in terms of reducing bullying in schools, but the interventions themselves worked on issues of social support and peer relations, issues whose linkages to bullying are not always readily apparent. Clarifying the links between overarching programme objectives and communication messages by establishing intermediate communication objectives would help determine how the communication messages contribute to achieving overall programme objectives.

Of the 302 manuscripts, only one did not specify the programme objectives associated with the interventions being described. Interestingly, the analysis showed little to no evidence of the utilization of SMART or SPICED$^{15}$ criteria when describing programme objectives and subsequently indicators designed to measure these objectives.

**ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES**

Programme objectives are often broad and interventions utilizing C4D often have within them communication objectives that specify what the communication components of a given project are designed to achieve. The communication objectives included in the manuscripts were entered verbatim into the systematic review database. In order to analyse the content of the communication objectives, elements were adapted from Bloom’s Taxonomy for cognitive and affective learning objectives that were originally used in the field of education. The cognitive domain has been defined as the area of learning devoted to acquiring information, knowledge and intellectual abilities (Morrison, Ross and Kemp, 2007). Skills in the cognitive domain consist of six levels, from lowest order processes to highest: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. These skills are associated with qualitatively measurable verbs that allow curriculum designers to explicitly indicate what the student must do in order to demonstrate learning (Anderson
and Krathwohl, 2001; Krathwohl, 2002). For example, knowledge is associated with verbs such as ‘remember’, ‘recognize’ and ‘recall’. Similarly, comprehension is associated with verbs such as ‘distinguish’, ‘estimate’, ‘explain’, ‘generalize’, ‘infer’, ‘interpret’, ‘paraphrase’, ‘rewrite’, ‘summarize’, and ‘translate’. The affective domain has been defined as the area of learning devoted to attitudes and values (Morrison, Ross and Kemp, 2007). Skills in the affective domain describe the way people react emotionally and their level of empathy. There are five levels in the affective domain, from lowest order processes to highest: receiving, responding, valuing, organizing and characterizing.

Of the 302 manuscripts, 28 (9 per cent) did not specifically provide any C4D objectives guiding the intervention. For multifaceted programmes, all of the objectives are rarely included. In many instances, the communication objectives noted in a given manuscript related only to the specific intervention component being discussed. Another shortcoming that emerged while analysing communication objectives was that interventions did not distinguish between overall programme objectives and specific C4D objectives. In addition, it is important to note that all the C4D objectives were written in ‘cognitive’ terms with no reference to addressing the affective domain. As far as the cognitive objectives were concerned, the emphasis was on lower-level domains such as knowledge and comprehension. For example, verbs such as ‘awareness’, ‘understanding’, and ‘increasing’ were more commonly utilized as compared to higher order cognitive skills such as ‘examining’, ‘assessing’, and ‘evaluating’. Evidence has shown that only addressing the cognitive domain will not achieve sustainable change.

**ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF INFLUENCE OF THE INTERVENTIONS**

The systematic review database included a variable titled: ‘Level of influence’. This variable assessed the focus of the intervention in terms of seven levels ranging from the individual to the global (see Figure 8).

The results from the analysis of the level of influence (see Figure 9) indicate that overall, a majority of the interventions, 253 manuscripts (over 80 per cent), focused on the individual level. Slightly less than two thirds, 186 manuscripts (62 per cent), addressed the interpersonal level (for example, communication between parents and children). Approximately half of the interventions, 162 manuscripts (54 per cent), included organizational and community elements. The social/ environmental realm was included in approximately 36 manuscripts (12 per cent). A few of the manuscripts, especially those that consisted of reviews or analyses of individual interventions, were categorized as belonging to the ‘global’ realm as they attempted to summarize and synthesize evidence from a wide range of individual interventions. It is important to note that although these are categorized as being global in nature, the individual interventions being reviewed were likely to belong to one of the other ‘levels of influence’.

**FIGURE 8: Levels of influence included in the systematic review database**

- Individual/ intrapersonal (one person)
- Interpersonal (couples, family)
- Community (neighbourhoods, villages, localities)
- Organizational (schools, law enforcement, workplace)
- Social/ environmental (grassroots activism)
- Policy (government – executive, legislative, judicial)
- Global level
In Guinea, a girl looks up from writing in a notebook while attending class at the Mangalla school, in the town of Guéckédou, Guéckédou Prefecture.

**FIGURE 9:** Results on levels of influence from the manuscripts included in the systematic review database.
Some 69 manuscripts (23 per cent) reported that they had a policy-level component and described communication efforts that had been utilized in changing policies either through the advocacy focus of the intervention itself or as a result of the success of communication campaigns. Two pertinent examples are noted in Figure 10. The first describes comprehensive country-level efforts in an overview of Neighbourhood Peacekeeping: The Inter-American Development Bank’s violence reduction programs in Colombia and Uruguay from 1996 to 2006 aimed at rebuilding trust in criminal justice institutions and sought to: improve police performance; to improve the treatment of domestic violence victims; to strengthen civil society organizations; to reduce the potential for youth to become involved in crime; and to raise social awareness. Results on strengthening criminal justice systems, police reform and working with victims of domestic violence in both countries were positive. Police stations were effective in providing protection to victims, but were less adept at mediating cases of physical aggression against women. In Uruguay, project activities, including a public awareness campaign and training of public officials, resulted in a decrease in the number of households reporting domestic violence incidents associated with nine projects designed to improve services for victims. There was no evaluation data to correlate reductions in violent behaviour with interventions working with at-risk youth, although the results suggest moderate success in interventions that sought to place youth, in the labour market and schooling. The strategy to promote civil society’s involvement included the creation of centres providing various legal services in both countries that met a large need as indicated by the significant cases handled by the centres. The results from the public awareness campaigns were mixed. Some campaigns changed attitudes towards violence while others were less successful. The main limitations noted by the authors was that complex problems require multifaceted solutions, which can lead to the creation of ambiguous interventions and less success. Moreover, these types of interventions can be less cost-effective than small-scale and short-term interventions.

**Communication campaign to change policy: Eastern Nigeria**

This campaign used a ‘Community Action Cycle’ approach to contribute to the elimination of female genital cutting (FGC) in the project communities by challenging individuals and communities to examine their beliefs and values around FGC and encouraging action towards eliminating the practice. A robust evaluation, using cross-sectional surveys from randomly selected households based on an intervention-comparison group design, indicated that programme exposure was associated with the expected improvements in all the pertinent indicators and that the multimedia communication programme was effective in changing FGC-related attitudes and promoting the intention not to perform it. The authors reported some policy-level impact, with the Enugu State House of Assembly passing a bill in 2005 to abolish FGC.
ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTERS AND PARTNERS

The final component of programme design examined the organizations involved in programme implementation and the various programme partnerships. One key limitation in the analysis of this component is that it is based on a secondary review of manuscripts. Information on the implementing agencies and partnerships is limited to what was available in the manuscripts or what could be deduced from reading them. In some cases, the manuscripts were devoted to describing the ‘processes’ involved in the design and implementation of interventions. This is especially true of interventions that relied on community organizing and community-building approaches. In these cases, the manuscript authors explicitly provided information on the various implementers and partnerships involved in the intervention. In other cases, the manuscripts focused on a different aspect of an intervention, for example, lessons learned or evidence of effectiveness. In these instances, it is possible that not all of the intervention implementers and partners were mentioned. The codes employed in the systematic review database for the implementing agencies and partnerships were very similar and included: government, private sector, local non-governmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations, grassroots organizations, local and external research agencies, and universities.

As the data presented in Table 6 indicates, 24 of the 302 manuscripts (just under 8 per cent) did not provide any information on the implementers, while some 50 manuscripts (17 per cent) noted multiple implementing partners. Of the 302 manuscripts, 30 (approximately 10 per cent) indicated a governmental agency as the key implementer, and an additional 30 (10 per cent) relied on international non-governmental organizations. In some 13 manuscripts (4 per cent) were led by local research agencies. Given the vast number of peer-reviewed journal articles included in this systematic review, it is not surprising that the largest proportion of interventions, 99 manuscripts (close to 33 per cent), were implemented by universities.

In 151 manuscripts (50 per cent) no partnerships were mentioned. As noted before, this data is based on a review of published manuscripts and it is possible that the manuscripts did not mention specific partnerships, which may nevertheless have existed at the ground level. Partnership models comprised of multiple organizations appears to be the norm as demonstrated in 63 manuscripts (almost 21 per cent) and of these partnerships, local and international non-governmental organizations collaborating with government partners appear to be the most common combination. Other common partners appear to be research organizations and universities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED</th>
<th>NUMBER OF MANUSCRIPTS</th>
<th>PROPORTION IN DATABASE (N = 302)</th>
<th>NUMBER OF MANUSCRIPTS</th>
<th>PROPORTION IN DATABASE (N = 302)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local NGOs</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International NGOs</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grassroots initiatives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research organizations</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities/schools</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple organizations</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 6: Implementing agencies and partners for manuscripts in the systematic review
• Close to half of the manuscripts did not explicitly reference a conceptual model.
• Social ecological models were largely implicit. It is possible that conceptual models are implicitly followed but not explicitly stated.
• When mentioned, individual and cognitive conceptual models were most commonly utilized.
• Programme objectives did not follow measurable criteria.
• Programme objectives were universally designed to reduce or eliminate harmful practices and traditions, yet the C4D messaging often focused on positive changes individuals could undertake. Thus, this creates a potential misalignment. Without clearly linking programme objectives and C4D messaging, it is hard to understand what the role of C4D really is in promoting social and behaviour change.
• Communication objectives were not often specified and when mentioned focused on individual and cognitive dimensions.
• The level of influence in a majority of interventions is individually focused.
• Collaboration and partnerships for implementation with international and national non-governmental organizations working closely with government were reported as the norm. The academic nature of a systematic review likely explains the large number of university-supported interventions.

**KEY FINDINGS**

**FIGURE 11:** Summary of programme design elements
SECTION 3: Programme implementation

The analysis of programme implementation focused on the intended audiences for the interventions, the strategic communication approach noted in the intervention, as well as the specific communication channels used for interventions.

ASSESSMENT OF THE INTENDED AUDIENCES FOR INTERVENTIONS

The code sheet for the systematic review listed a variety of different intended audiences/participant groups for interventions. Intended audience/participant groups refers to the audience or individuals an intervention is trying to reach and does not necessarily refer to the individuals who hold the decision-making power to change a certain behaviour.

Three core groups of audiences emerged from the review:

1. The intended audiences included in the reviewed interventions encompassed general audiences such as children, parents/caregivers, the general public, males, females, and in a few isolated cases, perpetrators.\(^\text{17}\)

2. Another audience category included professionals such as service providers, teachers, law enforcement officials and healthcare workers.

3. A final group of intended audiences included opinion leaders such as community influentials and policymakers.

### TABLE 7: Intended audiences for manuscripts in the systematic review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTENDED AUDIENCES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF MANUSCRIPTS</th>
<th>PROPORTION IN DATABASE (N = 302)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key influentials</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service providers (social workers)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policymakers</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law enforcement</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregivers</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health-care providers</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General public</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrators</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A boy sits at his desk in a classroom at Robertito School at the Cerro Rico Mines in the city of Potosí, Bolivia.
In the event that interventions targeted multiple intended audiences, the database included multiple columns to note all of the mentioned audiences. Table 7 provides information on the individual audiences included in the interventions.

The review found that 71 manuscripts (24 per cent) described interventions targeting one type of audience. An additional 63 manuscripts (21 per cent) focused their efforts on two audience categories. What stands out is that most interventions are directed towards one group and do not necessarily consider primary, secondary and tertiary audience segments.

ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION APPROACH

The systematic analysis database focused on six different types of strategic communication approaches. The database included multiple columns to note all of the mentioned approaches. Analysis of the reported data by approach is provided in Figure 12. The results indicate that 254 of the manuscripts (84 per cent) reported the use of more than one approach to meet the intervention's objectives.

Information on the strategic approach shows that 84 interventions (less than 33 per cent) used advocacy and 93 interventions (less than 33 per cent) used mass media as their main communication vehicle. In all, 143 manuscripts

FIGURE 12: Results on the strategic communication approaches from the systematic review

FIGURE 13: Results on the communication channels used in the systematic review

KEY FINDINGS
(47 per cent) were based on community-based approaches. A majority of the interventions, 230 manuscripts (over 76 per cent), relied on interpersonal training as a means to communicate their information regardless of their intended audiences/ beneficiaries. The high number of interventions focusing on capacity building/training might be related to the fact that many of the reported activities were based out of universities in the United States of America, which are oriented more towards training and education, and have a more circumscribed focus on large-scale mediated campaigns. The mediated campaigns included in the review appeared to be from other parts of the world.

ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNICATION CHANNELS
Communication channels utilized by the interventions within the systematic review ranged from mass media sources such as television/film, radio, print; new communication technologies like Internet and mobile phones; local media such as street theatre performances; counselling, either expert or peer, and advocacy interventions such as public forums and community dialogue. A review of the information indicates that 82 manuscripts (27 per cent) described interventions utilizing only one channel of communication. An additional 96 manuscripts (about 31 per cent) described interventions using two channels of communication. This data potentially shows that almost two thirds of interventions do not utilize multiple channels to meet the needs of diverse and segmented audiences.

Figure 13 provides information on the specific channels of communication utilized. As the data indicate, a majority of the interventions, 223 manuscripts (74 per cent), employed interpersonal communication and counselling as their primary approach, and in most cases counselling was accompanied by the use of printed materials (179 manuscripts or 59 per cent use print materials). Mass media approaches such as television and film were utilized in 84 manuscripts (28 per cent), and radio in 39 manuscripts (13 per cent). Community-based local media appeared in 48 manuscripts (16 per cent), and public forums as advocacy tools appeared in 63 manuscripts (22 per cent). New technologies and mobile forms of communication such as cellular phones were used to a lesser degree, although cross-tabulations with the year of publication show a growing reliance on new technologies in later years.

FIGURE 14: Summary of programme implementation findings

- In line with the programme design-related findings that interventions utilize individual conceptual/theoretical models, the intended audience for most interventions is directed towards individuals rather than dyads or groups.
- Interventions commonly targeted children and parents and did not report primary, secondary and tertiary audience segments.
- Campaigns using media channels such as television, radio and print appear to be more commonly utilized in developing countries – United States-based interventions follow training/capacity building trajectories led by university-based researchers focusing on violence in institutionalized settings, for example in schools or within small community settings.
- The focused nature of and academic involvement in the interventions from industrialized countries allows for higher levels of systematic evaluation and documentation.
- The most commonly utilized C4D approaches are interpersonal and capacity building. The communication channels most frequently utilized are also interpersonal.
- Interventions tend to use one or two channels of communication contrary to a multiple-channel approach designed to reach a wider range of audiences.
- Utilization of mediated technologies show an increase over time.
SECTION 4: Overall programme evaluation processes

The primary research question this review was designed to answer pertained to effectiveness. Therefore, this systematic review placed substantial attention on the evaluation components of the manuscripts. Specifically, it examined the following evaluation aspects of programmes: evaluation designs, research methods, analysis frameworks, sampling related information, and indicators as reported in the manuscripts.

The evaluation information was broadly categorized as formative, process or impact. Of the 302 manuscripts included in the database, 51 (17 per cent) discussed formative research, 43 (14 per cent) included information on process evaluation, and 227 (75 per cent) included impact evaluation information. It is evident that there is little information on formative and process evaluation utilized in the interventions being examined. Despite this limitation, wherever feasible, the information in this section is disaggregated by formative, process and impact evaluation.

ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL EVALUATION DESIGNS
To assess the overall evaluation designs, manuscripts were categorized based on the following evaluation designs: randomized controlled trial; pre- and post-test design; case control design; observational study (quantitative); observational study (qualitative).

The data on evaluation design (Table 8) shows that 48 manuscripts (16 per cent) utilized the most widely accepted and most robust evaluation design (randomized controlled trials). An additional 45 manuscripts (15 per cent) relied on the most feasible and still robust programme evaluation methodology: the pre and post with case-control design. An additional 41 manuscripts (14 per cent) used only a pre and post test design and an even smaller number, 13 manuscripts (4 per cent), utilized a case control evaluation design without pre and post measurements. The most common evaluation design found in 85 manuscripts (28 per cent) consisted of observational studies featuring qualitative data with an additional 12 manuscripts (4 per cent) including a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH METHODS
The review also included a broad categorization of different research methods: quantitative, qualitative, mixed (combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques) and, finally participatory methods. Methodological information was categorized by formative, process and impact assessment (Table 9).

Interestingly, the utilization of qualitative methods was more common at the formative and process phases than the use of quantitative methods alone. Mixed methods are also utilized to a fair degree in these two evaluation phases. When it comes to impact evaluations, more manuscripts report using quantitative methods (116 manuscripts or 38 per cent) as compared to qualita-

### TABLE 8: Evaluation design for manuscripts in the systematic review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Design</th>
<th>Number of Manuscripts</th>
<th>Proportion in Database (N = 302)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Randomized controlled trial</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre and post</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case control</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational quantitative</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation qualitative</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy review</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational both</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre post case control</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY FINDINGS

tive methods (80 manuscripts or 27 per cent). To some extent this might be a function of the fact that specific journals prefer manuscripts utilizing quantitative methods. The utilization of participatory methods was very low. Of the 302 manuscripts analysed, only 24 (8 per cent) mentioned the use of participatory methods. Broken down by type of evaluation: only 11 manuscripts cited use of participatory methods during formative evaluation, four during process evaluations, and nine during impact evaluations.

ASSESSMENT OF ANALYSIS FRAMEWORKS

The systematic review database categorized commonly used statistical techniques for quantitative studies as follows: univariate (frequencies, counts), bivariate (comparisons utilizing two variables) and multivariate (three or more variables controlling for background and confounding variables) techniques. Qualitative analysis frameworks included the following categories: content analysis, thematic analysis and comparative analysis methods.

The results in Table 10 indicate that formative research analysis tends to focus on thematic reviews and involves univariate analyses, i.e. the description of individual variables such as knowledge and attitudes. The high use of thematic analysis methods is not surprising given the high proportion of qualitative methodologies used during formative research to uncover critical themes to be included in interventions. However, the lack of comparative bivariate or multivariate analysis indicates a lack of specificity and sophistication in terms of undertaking any causal or behavioural analysis. Process evaluation analysis methods focus on the use of univariate and comparative techniques. It appears that most process evaluations involve small sample sizes and focus on descriptions of quantitative information and comparisons of qualitative data. Close to a third of the impact evaluations utilize multivariate techniques, indicating that mostly quantitative data is being analysed while controlling for background and confounding variables. Four out of 10 impact evaluation manuscripts (40 per cent) relied on simple descriptive information to make a case for effectiveness; this is worrisome considering the complexity inherent in implementing and evaluating interventions.

TABLE 9: Research methods for manuscripts in the systematic review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method Type</th>
<th>Formative Evaluation</th>
<th>Process Evaluation</th>
<th>Impact Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of manuscripts</td>
<td>Proportion in database (n = 302)</td>
<td>Number of manuscripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 10: Analysis methods for manuscripts in systematic review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method Type</th>
<th>Formative Evaluation</th>
<th>Process Evaluation</th>
<th>Impact Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of manuscripts</td>
<td>Proportion in database (n = 302)</td>
<td>Number of manuscripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univariate</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bivariate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multivariate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A review of the sampling information for the manuscripts that included formative research information revealed that a majority, 51 manuscripts (17 per cent), sampled youth. In some cases, samples involved children of specific ages often denoted by school year and corresponding intended audiences for programmes. Very few cases of multiple respondents/participants were evident. Only a handful of the studies that described their formative research processes identified influentials or professionals like teachers as being a part of their sample. Very little information was available on the formative research sampling framework. When provided, the information included the utilization of community-based focus group discussions, schools, work sites, and the use of random digit dialling. Some evidence of purposive sampling strategies was evident, for example, organizations involved in interventions that provided access to their beneficiaries and child welfare staff providing access to foster parents and children.

Among the 43 manuscripts (14 per cent) that included process information, a wide variation in sampling information was observed. Additionally, a range of methods was used to gather data, from output mapping by large-scale programmes to conducting a single focus group discussion with six participants. Most of the process evaluation results are reported from within structured school-based programmes. In part this could be because such programmes involve training and educational components that are relatively easy to monitor. Of greater importance perhaps is the lack of information on process evaluation. The information on sampling frameworks for the process evaluation did not yield any generalizable information as these frameworks appeared mostly to be derived from the individuals included in a given intervention and/or involved the tracking of routine data pertinent to the intervention.

A review of the sampling information among the 277 manuscripts (75 per cent) that conducted impact evaluations showed that over eight out of 10 manuscripts (80 per cent) focusing on individual interventions relied on primary data collection to make a case for effectiveness. The manuscripts, which were reviews or meta-analyses of existing interventions, utilized secondary sources. Only two interventions reported relying on external data: one intervention used tracking crime statistics as an evaluation mechanism (McGarrell et al., 2013) and another project used programme records as a part of a terminal assessment (Pepler and Craig, 2011).

A majority of the impact assessments relied on data collection from a single source and disaggregation if done was on the basis of gender (i.e. data collection among boys and girls). Less than a quarter of the assessments reported involving multiple respondents such as children, parents and community leaders, or students and teachers. In line with data collection techniques, the sampling framework was often derived at the individual level; for community-based programmes households were used as a sampling frame, and for school-based programmes classrooms served as the criteria for selection. In less than 10 per cent of the cases, the sampling unit was conceptualized at a larger level, and units like a school or a community were utilized for sampling and subsequent analysis. One notable exception was randomized controlled trials based in schools, which were able to randomize sampling at the school or classroom level.
ASSESSMENT OF INDICATORS

Another key topic covered by the evaluation component of this systematic review focused on the type of indicators being examined in the interventions (see Figure 15). The results indicate that 228 manuscripts (76 per cent) included indicators based on data collected from individuals, without any attempt to aggregate at the family, school or community level. All the other indicator types were reported in anywhere from 33 to 56 manuscripts (anywhere from 10 to 20 per cent).

Qualitative analysis of the individual level indicators revealed that the majority sought to reflect change in the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, values and self-efficacy of the intervention’s target audience as opposed to changes in behaviour. For example, most of the anti-bullying programmes included a measurement of students’ knowledge of bullying and awareness of different types of bullying. Many interventions also performed a pre- and post-test questionnaire measuring students’ self-efficacy in handling hypothetical bullying scenarios. Other individual level indicators included measurements of an individual’s attitudes toward early marriage and family planning, teacher’s perceptions of class social dynamics, and an instructor’s evaluation of individual students’ on their acquisition of taught skills. As many of the interventions were informed by cognitive-behavioural theories, changes in knowledge, beliefs and attitudes were often the primary indicators of intervention success.

Interpersonal level indicators included measurements of dialogue, discussion and conflict resolution. For example, indicators that measured the proportion of individuals who engage in interpersonal communication and initiate discussion. Interventions focused on changing issues with a strong interpersonal foundation, such as gender-based violence, child abuse, and bullying programmes, frequently employed these indicators. Several anti-bullying interventions used reports from multiple sources including students, parents, teachers, or independent observers to record and validate data. Another intervention, Expect Respect, which focused on decreasing teen dating violence and sexual assault by improving healthy conflict resolution skills in a south central urban area in the United States., measured the frequency of perpetration and victimization in dating relationships (Ball et al., 2012).

Figure 15: Indicators from the manuscripts included in the systemic review

Community level indicators were less common than individual level indicators and were typically utilized for programmes focused on advocacy or changing social norms. For example, indicators that focused on public denouncement of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) as an intermediate measure to examine decrease the incidence of FGM/C. A 2007 report by the International Centre for Research on Women focused on the following indicators of success: transformation of harmful social norms, supporting and scaling up of community programmes, and increased access to girls’ education. Perkins, Craig and Perkins (2011) describe a social norms-
The fourth type of indicator, structural factors, was the least commonly used. Programmes using structural factors were often focused on advocacy and measured change in local, state or national policy regarding their area of interest. Boothby and Stark (2011) examined Surveillance in Child Protection Systems Development data through a case study in Indonesia to identify a ‘road map’ of a national child protection information system in Indonesia and included advocacy to increase collaboration as a key indicator. The authors indicated that the creation of a single information system (instead of several different branches and different databases), a common language, and partnerships were critical.

The final indicator, outputs, typically reflected intervention fidelity or fulfilment of specific intervention benchmarks. Some examples of output level indicators include: the number of training workshops offered, the number of participants, among others. Some specific examples of interventions describing their utilization of intervention fidelity indicators are provided below:

- An evaluation of a university-community partnership to promote a safer school environment through the establishment of a Safe School Task Force, measured the accomplishments of this task force through mapping solutions, outreach activities, and a student-led movie and message night (Adler, Chung-Do, and Ongalibang, 2008).

- Barron and Topping (2011) used video analysis of interactions to study the fidelity of a sexual abuse prevention intervention. They specifically examined indicators intervention fidelity such as: presenter body language and voice tone, presenter behaviour management, presenter explanation behaviour and the giving of instructions, length of turn-giving, listening and responding, responding to and affirming disclosures and adherence to content.
**FIGURE 16: Summary of overall programme evaluation processes findings**

- Interventions do not report on formative research processes in detail, with only 51 manuscripts (17 per cent) reporting on formative research.
- There is a marked paucity of information on how formative research is utilized for programme design.
- Process evaluations (monitoring) are uncommon with only 43 manuscripts (14 per cent) reporting process evaluations.
- When conducted, process evaluations (monitoring) are narrowly defined as a means to measure intervention outputs and not as a vital mechanism for mid-course corrections or a method of tracking outcomes.
- Reliance on qualitative observational data as reported by 85 manuscripts (28 per cent) makes an overall weak case for attribution.
- Randomized controlled trials were reported in 48 manuscripts (16 per cent). An additional 45 manuscripts (15 per cent) reported a pre-post case control design (without randomization). The lack of randomization is not surprising given the field-based nature of intervention evaluations.
- School-based intervention designs lend themselves more easily to the utilization of robust evaluation designs (randomization at the school or classroom level), checking for implementation fidelity.
- While there may be a bias on the part of journals to accept more unconventional ‘participatory’ methodological studies, there is nevertheless serious under-utilization of participatory methods with only 24 of the manuscripts (under 4 per cent) reporting the use of participatory evaluation methodologies.
- Lack of information on sampling frameworks and small sample sizes combined with the most basic analysis techniques reported in most manuscripts bring to light the lack of specificity and sophistication in the evaluation data being collected and leads to questions about quality and effectiveness.
- In line with the individual level objectives and audience segments, intervention evaluation indicators mostly focus on data collected from individuals without attempts at aggregation.
- In line with the individual-level cognitive conceptual basis of most intervention, indicators are mostly individually based knowledge, attitudes and practice-related measures.

- A randomized controlled trial to establish a ‘Communities that Care’ prevention system, designed to reduce levels of risk associated with problem behaviours, such as adolescent drug use and delinquency, used participant attendance records, changes in participant attitudes, and knowledge to establish benchmarks and milestones to measure intervention outputs (Quinby et al., 2008).

- In an attempt to redress structural inequality and institutionalized violence, the ‘Creating New Choices: Violence Prevention Project in Australia’ (Sidey and Lynch, 2001) specifically examined satisfaction with the intervention model as a means to examine initial effectiveness.
SECTION 5: Thematic analysis of key results by type of research

This section of the report provides information from a detailed thematic analysis of the key results and discussion sections of the manuscripts included in the systematic review. The information is presented in the following categories: formative, process and impact assessment results. Again, key themes were derived using a grounded theory approach in which categories and themes emerge from the coded textual data from each individual manuscript included in the systematic review.

Given the large number of themes that emerged, the themes were further clubbed into theoretical, programmatic and methodological domains. It is important to note that the categorization of themes into theoretical, operational and methodological domains is not meant to imply that these are discrete categories. There is a great deal of overlap within the themes in each domain and it is evident that themes have implications both for programming and evaluation. These divisions are simply meant to provide an overall structure and guidance for future programming and research. These themes are highlighted first and then followed by examples from the systematic review database that further illustrate key points. To the extent possible, relevant examples both from industrialized and developing countries have been provided to help the reader make contextual connections.

FORMATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

Of the 302 manuscripts included in the database, 51 (17 per cent) discussed formative research. The key themes noted below are based on the results from the specific manuscripts that included information on formative research.

SUMMARY OF FORMATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS: THEORETICAL

Key results from formative research were noted in terms of individual levels of knowledge, attitudes and practices. The following examples provide evidence demonstrating the importance of formative research:

- A child abuse intervention in Massachusetts, USA, showed clear evidence of concern for child abuse as a serious problem and community-level desire to be involved in addressing the issue of child abuse (Schober, Fawcett and Bernier, 2012).

- Formative research on a proposed intervention related to child labour and sexual exploitation of children in Thailand revealed that contrary to common misconception, birth position, parental marital instability and educational attainment were significant predictors of a girl entering hazardous labour rather than parental wealth (Taylor, 2005).

Unfortunately, there is little reported effort to understand social and structural determinants of change. Research data clearly shows the negative consequences of leaving broader concerns unaddressed. A review of 87 child sexual abuse programmes notes that failures in prevention interventions are often due to a lack of attention to social and political realities rather than a measure of intervention effectiveness (Plummer, 2001).

Interestingly, there is adequate evidence that formative research focuses on barriers and solutions. Such examinations, however, are often couched in terms of individual level barriers and solutions rather than social and structural determinants. Some notable exceptions are:

- Recent research on child marriage in India identified a combination of individual (e.g. lack of awareness), as well as social and structural factors (e.g. gender norms affecting girls’ value/role in the community, economic considerations associated with poverty and dowry, and weak enforcement of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 as perpetuating the practice of child marriage.

- Additional research on the same topic has shown a societal preference for male progeny, and the perception that
child marriage protects the virtue of girls reinforces the practice (ICRW, 2011).

- In another example, formative research from South Africa on perceptions of gender-based violence revealed that poverty, ubiquitous gendered violence, sexually exploited children and unsafe recreational spaces were major themes. Youth were identified as being consumed by issues of safety rather than pursuing other developmentally appropriate markers (Mitchell, 2003). These authors note that formative research often does not focus on underlying issues.

**SUMMARY OF FORMATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS: OPERATIONAL**

Formative research gives interventionists the ability to understand intended audiences. This issue is critical for VAC interventions that address ‘perpetrators’ who may otherwise be subject to unfair labels and blame.

- A research study with United States middle school youth found that these youth have specific and strongly-held perceptions about violence and perpetrators of violence. However, despite acknowledging acts deemed violent by their own definitions, these youth did not internalize these actions and did not view themselves as ‘violent’. The authors conclude that this finding has significant implications for behaviour change, especially in a social marketing context (Quinn, Bell-Ellison, Loomis and Tucci, 2007).

- A South African intervention addressing male involvement in gender-based violence found that barriers to participation in the proposed intervention included denial or minimization of gender-based violence (Ditlopo et al., 2007).

Formative research can serve as a means to identify key issues that must be addressed. Some examples include:

- Formative research from an anti-bullying intervention revealed that verbal harassment and the use of derogatory language is a pervasive problem in United States schools leaving students withdrawn, distracted, wounded and even ready to turn to physical violence (Wessler and DeAndrede, 2006).

- In Australia, formative research on an intervention designed to implement community-based responses to child abuse showed that while child abuse is a serious social problem, it is poorly understood by the public on a number of levels including: its true extent and nature; the short- and long-term social and financial costs of child abuse to children, families, and the community; as well as knowledge of common perpetrators of child abuse. In addition, there was a significant level of anxiety on the part of adults in accepting the legitimacy of children’s rights. The authors concluded that clear social and political commitments to children are necessary to prevent child abuse (Tucci, Mitchell and Goddard, 2001).

The literature suggests that formative research can play an important role in terms of designing programmes that are community owned. For example:

- A comprehensive child protection formative research project in Northern Thailand resulted in raising awareness of child abuse, the creation of a volunteer-led community child protection team, and the development of a participatory child protection model focusing on child protection at individual, family and community levels. The model emphasized participation from a variety of community members and local organizations (Auemaneekeul, Senaratana, Juntarawijit, Sripichyakan and Ensign, 2009).
Formative research to help design a comprehensive violence prevention intervention at a city level found general perceptions to be that youth violence is a complex problem with many risk factors. Many of the young people felt helpless to change the environment and were doubtful that things would ever change. This research resulted in the identification of five areas of collaboration: create after-school and summer programmes, increase knowledge of existing resources for violence prevention, promote positive involvement of police with children, provide parent education to reduce violence, and develop strategies for influencing media portrayal and use of violence (Meyer, Cohen, Edmonds and Masho, 2008).

Formative research focusing on audience preferences emerged as an important method of identifying communication channels that might not have been previously considered. For example:

- Research by Self-Brown et al. (2008) to assess participants’ comfort level with materials associated with the Darkness to Light (D2L) child sexual abuse prevention campaign found video-based information to be especially useful as a way to increase knowledge about the issue; video and print materials were seen as a viable way to make the topic more approachable. At the same time participants wanted more information, specifically on ways to talk to and educate children about the topic as well as culturally-appropriate materials in local languages.

- Survey-based formative research on a South African intervention aimed at increasing male involvement in addressing gender-based violence indicated that respondents recommended educational workshops and entertainment education drama to help change attitudes towards gender-based violence (Ditlopo et al., 2007).

In addition, results from the systematic review database demonstrate that formative research is especially important for programmes that wish to utilize new communication technologies.

- Research by Constantino, Crane, Noll, Doswell and Braxter (2007) on the efficacy of utilizing email mediated interactions revealed that email is a feasible and acceptable way to provide support and information to abused women (interviews with children also yielded similar results). Results showed that participants were interested in the device, compliant with learning and using it, and responded to interventionists’ email questions.

- Recent survey research associated with cyberbullying revealed that effective interventions could involve taking away an offender’s computers and cell-phones and restricting access to social networking sites (Kraft and Wang, 2009).

Formative research can feed directly into message and material design. Analysis of the manuscripts that include formative research report that pre-testing of pilot messages and materials is a critical part of the formative research process. Several examples from the systematic review provide information to reinforce this point:

- Formative research designed to identify ‘ideal’ foster parenting qualities was used to develop media messages catering to identified characteristics of the high-quality foster parents (Duer Berrick, Shauffer and Rodriguez, 2011).

- An evaluation of specific video messaging demonstrated that mothers easily grasped the scope of childhood injuries through this intervention technique. Graphic images, mood-inducing sound effects, and testimonials by other mothers all helped to achieve project objectives (Morrongiello, Zdzieborski, Sandomierski and Lasenby-Lessard, 2009).
Formative research results from a media-based intervention to address sexual abuse showed that potential participants indicated no discomfort in viewing the media materials or the booklet, and there was overwhelming agreement that media is an effective means to raise society’s awareness, increase people’s knowledge of child sexual abuse, and make the topic of child sexual abuse more approachable. At the same time, individuals noted that knowledge is not enough to prevent child sexual abuse. A combination of mass media with broad-based community involvement along with parental education and involvement was viewed as necessary to curb child sexual abuse (Self-Brown, Rheingold, Campbell and de Arellano, 2008).

Formative research has proven effective in determining key audiences, as well as partners who should be involved in interventions addressing VAC. For example:

- Participants in formative research on the feasibility of a mental health promotion intervention in American schools indicated that participants ranked teachers as the key stakeholder group that would be most likely to support and implement interventions (Evans, Mullett, Weist and Franz, 2005).

- Research on ecological approaches to designing interventions associated with youth violence showed that coalition-building in community-based interventions has a better chance of success when careful formative research is conducted to understand social as well as inter- and intra- organizational networks (Bess, Speer and Perkins, 2012).

- For community-based programmes, formative research in the form of community resource mapping is also critical to understand where and what supports exist to help address VAC (Payne and Williams, 2008).

The systematic review confirms the crucial role of formative research in the design of culturally sensitive interventions. Findings from the systematic review reveal a need for more specific information around communication related barriers and bottlenecks to desired change. Language, education, and cultural barriers may hinder the effectiveness of C4D approaches addressing VAC, according to the data. The review highlighted a few examples of formative research that reportedly contributed to making interventions more culturally-sensitive.

- The authors of a dating violence intervention for urban youth linked its success to formative research that allowed it to be culturally sensitive to audience needs (Akeo et al., 2008).

- An evaluation of the UNICEF-led Meena Programme in South Asia indicated that one key factor in its success was its underpinning in research and development processes (Chesterton, 2004).

**SUMMARY OF FORMATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS: METHODOLOGICAL**

Though rarely utilized in the literature reviewed, community-based participatory research (CBPR) has proven effective in obtaining a comprehensive picture of barriers and motivators when designing interventions. Of note are the following manuscripts:

- Leff et al. (2010) report on the results from primary and secondary data using CBPR to develop a youth violence prevention intervention. The formative research consisted of focus groups to gain a better understanding of the strengths and challenges within the local community and experiences with prior violence prevention interventions, as well as to elicit specific indicators of programmatic and/ or community success in regard to violence prevention. Literature reviews and pilot testing of the initial interven-
tion revealed that most youth thought it would be easy to implement the skills and strategies they had learned in the intervention. Then, prior to implementation, site partners and community partners along with the academic team members worked together to finalize the intervention design and all additional materials. Large-scale implementation was discussed at a community symposium. The academics wanted to conduct a randomized controlled trial, but community participants expressed a strong desire that all sites should receive the full intervention. Thus, a staged cluster randomized trial was developed instead. As this example shows, not just the intervention designs, but also the evaluation procedures were based on collaboration.

Another noteworthy example focused on building social capital through neighbourhood mobilization. Formative research involved an asset mapping component and service delivery component, as well as institutional and organizational mapping. The data from these efforts was collected by community members and housed in the centre to be used by grassroots groups. Based on the information generated from the formative research, intervention implementation involved a multi-pronged effort including a dedicated space for social and community services and activities, as well as educational initiatives for marginalized populations to improve collaboration between parents and schools in order to best meet the needs of children (Payne and Williams, 2008).

**FIGURE 17: Summary of findings from formative research results**

**THEORETICAL**

Key results from formative research were noted in terms of individual levels of knowledge, attitudes and practices, and there is considerable evidence of the importance of such research.

There is adequate evidence that formative research focuses on barriers and solutions. However, such examinations are often couched in terms of individual level barriers and solutions. Unfortunately, there is little reported effort to understand social and structural determinants of change.

**OPERATIONAL**

The literature reinforces the importance of conducting formative research. Formative research:

- Gives programmers the ability to understand intended audiences.
- Serves as a means to identify key issues that must be addressed.
- Plays a crucial role in designing interventions that are community-owned and culturally sensitive.
- Constitutes an important method of identifying communication channels that might not have been previously considered. This is especially important for interventions that wish to utilize new communication technologies.
- Feeds directly into message and material design.
- Proves effective in determining key audiences, as well as partners who should be involved in programmes addressing VAC.

**METHODOLOGICAL**

Although rarely utilized, community-based participatory research (CBPR) has proven effective in obtaining a comprehensive and complete picture of barriers and motivators when designing interventions and should be considered as part of any formative research.
PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS
Of the 302 manuscripts included in the database, 43 (14 per cent) included information on process evaluation or monitoring. The key themes noted below are based on thematic analysis of these manuscripts.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS: THEORETICAL
Process evaluation allows interventions to make a link between the implementation of specific intervention activities and subsequent impact, which in turn makes a stronger case for employing C4D approaches. For example:

- The ‘Communities that Care (CTC) Prevention System’ established in 12 communities reported that where process evaluation was conducted, on average 90 per cent of the core components achieved high implementation fidelity. These held over time and quality was maintained over five years (Quinby et al., 2008).

- In another example, process evaluation of a positive youth development intervention in Hong Kong utilizing different cohorts by Law and Shek (2012) indicated high overall intervention adherence and implementation quality. In addition, the authors were able to correlate intervention implementation with quality and success. Multiple regression analyses further showed that both implementation process and intervention adherence were significant predictors of intervention quality and success.

- The process evaluation of an FGM/C intervention in Egypt found that men and women exposed to the intervention retained more information regarding the negative health consequences of the traditional practice when compared with those who were not exposed to the intervention, thereby establishing links between intervention implementation and effectiveness (Barsoum, Rifaa, El-Gibaly, Elwan and Forcier, 2009).

SUMMARY OF PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS: OPERATIONAL
Process evaluation is especially critical for large-scale programmes where implementation may vary due to external reasons. For example, Rijsdijk et al. (2011) describe the process evaluation for a comprehensive sex education intervention targeting adolescents in Uganda. This intervention was designed to empower and support young people in making their own informed decisions about sex by changing attitudes about sexual coercion, to increase self-efficacy in dealing with situations where unwanted sex could happen, and to increase the intention to deal with unwanted sex and force. The process evaluation data from this intervention showed that full implementation was more effective than partial implementation (which resulted from not having enough computers).

Process evaluation can disaggregate measurement of implementation among diverse audiences. For example:

- Results from a foster care intervention for children with clinically significant behaviour problems supports the efficacy of an enhanced intervention among urban, primarily African-American foster parents. The findings suggest that specific enhanced elements of standard protocol (including weekly consultations by a practitioner trained in behavioural interventions) can potentially reduce the level of behaviour problems in this high-risk population of foster children (Leathers, Spielfogel, McMeel and Atkins, 2011).

- Another process evaluation of a cognitive-behavioural therapy approach also found that the use of the intervention and abuse-specific content was consistently applied across a range of diverse client characteristics, thereby building a case for the approach’s cross-cultural relevance (Kolko, Iselin and Gully, 2011).
• In an intervention designed to study relational aggression in schools, process results suggested strong acceptability and feasibility of the intervention, especially for girls (James et al., 2011).

Process evaluation can indicate initial success and serve as a means to validate and expand interventions. For example, the results of an intervention for maltreating fathers showed that in the first year, 105 men were referred to the intervention, greatly outnumbering the number of treatment slots available during the same period (Scott and Crooks, 2007). The process evaluation data tracked the source of referrals and found that the intervention even included a few self-referrals. Tracking of the numerous requests for training and implementation from other communities suggested that the need for similar programmes was not unique to the initial project community.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS: METHODOLOGICAL

Process evaluation is commonly used as a way to examine fidelity, i.e. the extent to which interventions are implemented according to plan. The examples of fidelity included in the systematic review varied widely in terms of methods (qualitative, quantitative), techniques (interviews, observations, video recordings) and the extent of process monitoring. For example:

• One study aimed at increasing knowledge of sexual abuse among elementary schoolchildren in Hawaii included observations for each individual lesson in order to ensure that school staff were appropriately trained and supported to teach the sensitive curriculum (Baker, Gleason, Naai, Mitchell and Trecker, 2013).

• In a randomized controlled universal prevention trial assessing long-term outcomes of a positive prevention intervention found that 50 per cent of sessions consistently performed fidelity checks through a protocol adherence checklist (Hahlweg, Heinrich, Kuschel, Bertram and Naumann, 2010).

• Methodological variation is evident in the use of self-reporting to examine initial outcomes of PeaceBuilders, a universal school-based violence prevention intervention. In this case, teacher interviews report on their use of the PeaceBuilders curriculum and expressed agreement or disagreement with the quality of implementation, as well as hypothesized effectiveness, using Likert scaled measures. Overall, the authors found consistent behaviour effects when comparing teacher self-reports between intervention and control schools (Flannery et al., 2003).

• In a sexual abuse prevention intervention, fidelity and intervention effectiveness was measured through video analysis of interactions between participants and facilitators (Barron and Topping, 2010).

• Process evaluations can be conducted regardless of the nature and scope of the intervention. While there were relatively few examples of process evaluations, the variety of projects ranged from one-on-one counselling efforts to small school-based interventions to large-scale media efforts.

• In a process evaluation of a one-on-one counselling intervention utilizing a cognitive-behavioural therapy model, clinicians in a child protection centre reported high levels of use for all intervention content items. The authors conclude that the intervention had been incorporated and reasonably maintained in the practitioners’ repertoires well after training ended (Kolko, Iselin and Gully, 2011).

• The process evaluation for an intervention titled V.I.K. (Very Important Kids), a school-based intervention designed to
reduce teasing and unhealthy weight-control behaviours, demonstrated that outreach can be feasibly done, at a relatively low cost, and can engage students, parents and staff (Haines, Newmark-Sztainer, Perry, Hannan and Levine, 2006).

- One unique process evaluation model involved the evaluation of a ‘place-based strategy’ via the creation of a Youth Violence Prevention Centre in Flint, Michigan in the United States. This centre created infrastructure, networking opportunities and intervention strategies that facilitated and organized efforts to address youth violence. The process evaluation model allowed for the measurement of organizational empowerment in community mobilization as a means to address youth violence (Griffith et al., 2008).

Process evaluation helps identify Type 3 error (i.e. when interventions are not implemented according to plan). In updating a meta-analysis of school-based programmes designed to address aggressive and disruptive behaviours, Wilson and Lipsey (2007) concluded that school-based programmes had positive effects on relevant outcomes. However, different treatment modalities, for example, universal interventions versus those for specific sub-populations, produced largely similar effects and the authors concluded that effects were larger for interventions that were implemented according to plan. This underscores the importance of intervention implementation as the key to success and, in turn, allows us to build a case for process evaluation.

Process evaluation is useful in tracking changes in outcomes. Traditionally, process evaluations are considered tools to track outputs, and this was the most common use of process evaluation in the reviewed manuscripts. However, we found a few notable exceptions that moved beyond outputs to tracking outcomes. These include the following:

- A review by Cornell (2011) of a student threat assessment guideline intervention designed to prevent school-based violence in the United States compared intervention and control students to discover that students in intervention schools were approximately four times more likely to receive counselling services; two-and-a-half times more likely to receive a parent conference; one-third as likely to receive long-term suspension; and one-eighth as likely to receive an alternative school placement indicating that the intervention was effective.

- Safe Neighbourhoods data on gun offenses between 2000-2005 indicated a statistically significant decline in firearm offenses in three of the five programme sites (Kroovaud Hipple, Frabutt, Corsaro, McGarrell and Gathings, 2007).
Process evaluation allows interventions to make a clear link between the intervention activities and impact, which in turn makes a stronger case for employing C4D approaches.

Operational

- Process evaluation is especially critical for large-scale interventions where implementation may vary due to external reasons.
- Process evaluation can disaggregate measurement of implementation among diverse audiences.
- Process evaluation can indicate initial success and serve as a means to validate and expand interventions.

Methodological

- Process evaluation is commonly used as a way to examine fidelity of implementation.
- Process evaluations can be conducted regardless of the nature and scope of the intervention.
- Process evaluation helps identify Type 3 error (when interventions are not implemented according to plan).
- Process evaluation is useful in tracking changes in outcomes and outputs.
IMPACT EVALUATION RESULTS
Of the 302 manuscripts included in the database, 227 (75 per cent) included impact evaluation information. The key themes from each group are presented below, each with supporting examples from the database.

SUMMARY OF IMPACT EVALUATION RESULTS: THEORETICAL
Impact evaluation data highlights the importance of utilizing an ideation model at the individual level and community level while looking to the social ecological model as a holistic framework. There is ample evidence that C4D interventions are successful in promoting awareness and knowledge. In addition, there are examples in the systematic review database of interventions that had positive outcomes but may have been considered as failures for not achieving their narrowly defined ‘behavioural’ programme objectives. Examining C4D approaches using an ideation perspective is therefore likely to yield critical information on changes in intermediate factors resulting in behaviour and social change. Some examples from the database include:

- The school-based Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) intervention resulted in significant differences between G.R.E.A.T. and non-G.R.E.A.T. students on five out of 32 outcomes, of which four were attitudinal (Peterson and Esbensen, 2004).

- A report by Brady (2007) examined the Ishraq Programme in rural West Egypt, an intervention designed to provide new opportunities to adolescent girls in socially conservative settings, and reported that Ishraq girls expressed a desire to marry at older ages and a desire to have a say in choosing a husband.

- Walker’s (2012) review of early marriage in Africa uncovered the need for a sub-regional strategy to reduce poverty and address societal inequality in general, and more specifically, gender inequality.

- Efficacy of child abuse and neglect prevention messages in a multi-pronged effort called the Florida Winds of Change reported that exposure was significantly related to measures of five out of six outcomes: knowledge of child development, knowledge of community resources for parents, attitudes towards prevention, motivation to prevent child abuse and neglect, action or behaviour to prevent child abuse and neglect (Evans, Falconer, Khan and Ferris, 2012).

Evidence of social change attributed to programmes is limited, while the need for interventions to address normative factors is imperative. As previously noted, a majority of the objectives for interventions are couched in terms of individual behaviour change. At the same time, the evidence points to the complexity of addressing VAC and the need to tackle these issues across all levels of the social ecological model, specifically focusing on norms. The following examples showcase interventions that addressed norms and social change.

- A domestic violence prevention intervention among female Iranian high school students based on the PRECEDE-PROCEED Model indicated that this model was effective since it focused on building life skills through education. (Soleiman-Ekhaiari, Shojaeizadeh, Foroushani, Ghofranipour and Ahmadi, 2013).

- A study involving men in research on gender norms reveals that a gender-transformative approach and promotion of gender-equitable relationships between men and women are more effective in producing behaviour change than narrowly focused interventions, as are interventions that reach beyond the individual level to the social context (Barker, Ricardo, Nascimento, Olukoya and Santos, 2010).

- A review of the evidence of the effectiveness of programmes to change gen-
The evidence points to the complexity of addressing VAC and the need to tackle these issues across all levels of the social ecological model, specifically focusing on norms."

SUMMARY OF IMPACT EVALUATION RESULTS: OPERATIONAL

Impact evaluation data suggests the importance of contextualizing interventions based on individual and cultural needs.

- A systematic review of 87 programmes to address child maltreatment indicated that intervention success is grounded in the acknowledgement of cultural differences (Plummer, 2001). Conversely, the author identified the failure to adapt programmes to specific sub-populations (lack of audience segmentation) as a key barrier to effectiveness.

- Evaluations of the Finnish KiVa anti-bullying intervention for grades 1-9, which has gone to scale based on several evaluations of effectiveness, also highlight the importance of tailoring interventions for subpopulations.

- An innovative intervention described by Reich, Penner, Duncan and Auger (2012) used children’s books as a way to change new mothers’ attitudes about corporal punishment. They found the books to be an effective and low-cost way to teach low-income, new mothers about typical child development and effective parenting. Results from the evaluation indicated that intervention differentially impacted women across different demographic segments, indicating the need to design and implement discrete strategies to address specific population needs.

Evidence exists regarding the success of interpersonal and community programmes targeting at-risk populations. Apart from the point made about tailoring programmes, this systematic review highlights the importance of specifically targeting at-risk subpopulations.

- The evaluation of PeaceBuilders, a school-based, universal violence prevention intervention that disaggregated low, medium, and high-risk children, showed that changes attributable to the intervention were not uniform across risk categories. Significant behaviour changes were found for children classified as high-risk for future violence between baseline and end-line (as measured by teacher-reported aggression, which decreased, and teacher-rated social competence, which increased) (Flannery et al., 2003) as compared to students in other categories.

- The impact evaluation of a universal school-based violence prevention intervention on social-cognitive outcomes presented data showing that high-risk students benefited from the intervention. High-risk students showed decreases in beliefs and attitudes supporting aggression and increases in self-efficacy, as well as beliefs supporting non-violent behaviour. Effects on low-

KEY FINDINGS
risk students were in the opposite direction, thus suggesting a different pattern of intervention is needed depending on risk. For example, combining school-based programmes with family-based programmes and tailoring interventions based on risk status (low versus high) of students (Simon et al., 2008).

It is important to keep gender in mind as a key variable in and of itself when designing programmes specifically for men and boys and as a potential evaluation confounder for research. Gender focus in the manuscripts centered mainly on issues pertinent to girls and women. This was obviously true for FGM/C, but also for global programmes dealing with child marriage.24 A similar trend was noticed with regard to descriptions of child trafficking interventions.25 Interestingly, the focus on girls was also evident in programmes designed to promote empowerment.26

The systematic review revealed only a few examples of interventions that specifically sought to involve boys and men as key audiences to support change. Nonetheless, the importance of such approaches has been highlighted. In a review of 58 programmes by Barker, Ricardo, Nascimento, Olukoya and Santos (2010), the authors categorized interventions working with men and boys to improve health and gender roles as using a 1) gender-neutral approach, 2) gender-sensitive approach, or 3) gender-transformative approach and concluded that few interventions go beyond a pilot stage or short-term. But there is compelling evidence that well-designed interventions with men and boys can lead to positive changes in their behaviours and attitudes related to sexual and reproductive health; maternal, newborn and child health; their interaction with their children; their use of violence against women; their questioning of violence with other men; and their health-seeking behaviour. Gender-transformative approaches and the promotion of gender-equitable relationships between men and women are more effective in producing behaviour change than narrowly focused interventions, as are interventions that reach beyond the individual level to the social context.

Some specific examples of male involvement from the systematic review include:

- Findings from the Men as Partners (MAP) Programme in Soweto, South Africa, indicated that the intervention was successful in improving norms and attitudes supportive of gender egalitarian relations, among other positive changes (Ditlopo et al., 2007).
- Barker’s (2006) reflections on the impact of engaging boys and men to empower girls concluded that programmes can be effective in changing attitudes and behaviours of men and boys, which is positive for well-being of women and girls. He also noted that comprehensive, multi-theme programmes focusing on norm transformation were the most effective.
- Casey et al. (2013) more recently reviewed the challenges associated with global efforts to engage men in the prevention of violence against women using an ecological perspective and came to a similar conclusion.
- The review revealed some disaggregation of reporting of differential impact on boys and girls. Haner, Pepler, Cummings and Rubin-Vaughn (2010) reported that in response to an arts-based curriculum on bullying prevention, boys reported less bullying than girls over time.

We found only one reference to the need to expand awareness of boys’ issues and male gender issues, expand boys’ participation, establish interventions and information for boys, or develop outreach for boys (Frederick, 2010). The focus on VAC specific to girls is understandable, given the higher levels of VAC that girls experience. However, boys often get left out, which can mean glossing over the forms of violence most pertinent to boys in terms of severity (e.g. child
labour and corporal punishment), and their specific vulnerabilities, as well as unique needs.

Place-based programmes need to consider the in-between spaces where VAC occurs. On the one hand, there is sufficient data to show that school-based programmes are successful in combating some forms of VAC, especially bullying. On the other, place-based programmes tend to disregard other non-discrete locations where bullying may take place (e.g. social media sites). Smothers and Smothers (2011) developed and evaluated a social ecological model of sexual abuse prevention that was implemented in a public school with diverse urban youth. The results showed significant gains in knowledge in all areas assessed and indicated that children and adolescents can be taught healthy relationship skills that might protect them from predatory behaviours or maladaptive peer relationships. Similarly, classroom-based instruction can reach both potential victims and offenders while simultaneously training school staff and faculty. But in another example, a successful school-based violence prevention programme found that most of the violence was, in fact, taking place in the family. An evaluation of Kornblum’s body-based violence prevention curriculum using dance/movement therapy for children showed a reduction in problematic behaviours (reported by teachers post-intervention), but also revealed that the primary place where children were facing problems was at home with parents and siblings (Hervey and Kornblum, 2006). These collective findings therefore underscore the importance of addressing VAC in discrete and less discrete spaces.

Several impact assessments on various issues relating to VAC highlight the importance of addressing VAC as part of early childhood development programmes. The systematic review yielded data on interventions that address issues pertinent to infants and young children such as neglect, maltreatment and abuse.

• An analysis of child maltreatment programmes indicated that parent education with a home-visiting component show promising results. Factors leading to intervention success included: the receipt of services before or as close to birth of the first child as possible; services that focus on the child’s particular development level; opportunities for parents to model the behaviours being promoted; sufficient time commitments; an emphasis on social supports and the skills needed to access these supports; a balance of home and group-based alternatives; and recognition of cultural differences (Portwood, 2006).

• Russell, Trudeau and Britner (2008) provide information on an intervention designed to increase public awareness of the caregiving practices connected to Shaken Baby Syndrome.

• Bugental and Schwartz (2009) examine the efficacy of a cognitive intervention – designed to improve a parent’s abil-
Impact assessment results showcased the importance of long-running interventions. However, there was little emphasis on cost benefit or effectiveness comparisons of interventions based on duration. For example:

• An evaluation of a bullying prevention intervention for elementary schools compared three schools with differing intervention lengths (one year versus two years versus three months). The authors found that students in the two-year intervention reported more positive attitudes towards bullying victims compared to students in the three-month intervention (Beran, Tutty and Steinrath, 2004).
• An evaluation of a sexual abuse prevention workshop in a multicultural, impoverished urban area indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between intervention and control groups at year one, but at year two there was an increase in knowledge of inappropriate touching among intervention participants and self-reported experiences of victimization decreased (Daigneault, Hébert, McDuff and Frappier, 2011).

• A preliminary evaluation of Expect Respect, a dating violence prevention intervention for at-risk youth using support groups, indicated that support group participants reported using significantly more healthy conflict resolution skills at the end of the intervention. The authors contend that the support group format, coupled with the extended intervention duration, was successful in increasing the healthy conflict resolution skills of these at-risk students (Ball et al., 2012).

There is a growing body of data on the efficacy of new communication technologies as a mechanism for intervention implementation, as well as for evaluation. A few interventions that were included in the systematic review reported examining the efficacy of new communication technologies for implementation and monitoring. For example:

• Bailey and Ngwenyama (2010) examined the impact of increased exposure to violence and community conflict by improving computer literacy through telecentre usage.

• The addition of a mobile phone-based texting component for a parenting intervention for families at risk for child neglect showed promising results. Families in the cell-phone-enhanced intervention received text messages with prompts and questions relating to the intervention, as well as supportive comments, suggestions and other information. Initial results showed that parents in the cell phone enhanced intervention were more likely to re-schedule appointments with their social workers but less likely to miss an appointment, compared to the pre-existing programme without the texting component. The authors report that cell phones may be a better means of communicating with young parents with multiple risks (Bigelow, Carta, and Burke, 2008) than through traditional channels.

• Love, Sanders, Metzler, Prinz and Kast (2013) assessed parents’ perceptions of an online parenting intervention delivered through a social networking site using interviews with parents at high risk for child maltreatment. The study found that social networking sites were a feasible mechanism for reaching a low-income and ethnically diverse population in Los Angeles County, California. Parents watching the online videos were enthusiastic, but also discussed the value of learning through shared experiences and having a moderator.

• Compared to a control group, participants in a cyberbullying prevention intervention reported gaining greater control over personal information as well as improved interactions with others on social networks (Ortega-Ruiz, Del Rey, and Casas, 2012).

The use of new communication technologies as an effective means to screen and follow up with participants was also evident in the results from the systematic review. For example:

• SafeCare, an evidence-based child maltreatment prevention intervention, used Apple iPhones to enhance and reduce face-to-face home safety sessions. This intervention found that the SafeCare Safety module yielded sub-
A young girl washes her hands with soap included in UNICEF-provided hygiene kit in Baluwa village in Gorkha district, Nepal.

Impact evaluations suggest that integrating different communication channels and contextualizing C4D within interventions geared towards policy and structural change is required to bring about sustainable change. The following examples showcase how C4D interfaces with other interventions to bring about sustainable change and can serve as an essential part of larger initiatives.

- A review of individual and group-based parenting programmes for the treatment of child abuse and neglect suggests -- through comparative analysis -- that programmes directly addressing abusive parenting may be more effective than those that do not directly reach out to abusive parents. However, the authors feel that further research is needed to assess what should be provided as core programme components for physically abusive parents (Johnston, Kendrick, Polnay, and Stewart-Brown, 2008).

- The evaluation of a community media campaign on the prevention of child sexual abuse indicated that the media campaign had significant impact on attitudes and significant impact on primary prevention responses to hypothetical vignettes. Exposure to the intervention booklet positively affected knowledge as compared to no campaign exposure. Participants retained knowledge relevant to child sexual abuse prevention immediately following exposure to the materials. However, the results show that these knowledge gains were not maintained (Rheingold et al., 2007).

- A mediated intervention on child abuse in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State in Nigeria revealed that television programmes addressing child abuse were able to place the issue in the minds of the public. They also raised awareness about the dangers of child
abuse in its many forms: child labour, child battering or sexual exploitation. However, this awareness has not translated into behaviour and social change, judging by continued widespread incidence of child battering, child trafficking, street hawking and begging. The results also showed that addressing child abuse through television is a successful advocacy tool, which resulted in many governmental and non-governmental agencies becoming engaged in activities to reduce the problem. In fact, the Edo State government passed into law bills on human trafficking and sexual exploitation. However, as the report concludes, these efforts have not decreased the incidence of child abuse (Osakue Stevenson and Awosola, 2008).

SUMMARY OF IMPACT EVALUATION RESULTS: METHODOLOGICAL

There is a serious lack of evaluation data on the effectiveness of interventions and strong evidence of the need for additional effectiveness evaluations, specifically those from low and middle-income countries. The systematic review found that close to two thirds of the studies in the database noted at least one methodological limitation in the intervention. Lack of randomization, the absence of a comparison or control group, short observation periods and lack of follow up were the most commonly listed weaknesses concerning methodological design. With regards to indicators, a large proportion of studies acknowledged problems of reliability and validity associated with using self-reported data. They underscored the absence of validated measures, and often resorted to proxy measures to assess intervention effectiveness, despite not being able to link improvements to the intervention itself. Sampling issues included small sample sizes resulting in limited statistical power, limited ability to generalize findings, and sampling bias, especially for voluntary interventions or when purposive sampling was used. Several studies cited barriers relating to data collection, such as missing data due to untrained implementers; use of leading questions, or limitations arising from the method of data collection. Examples of the latter included the use of written questionnaires that children with low literacy and poor writing skills had difficulty filling out, or problems that arose due to the use of translators.

Of greater concern is the overwhelming majority of manuscripts lamenting the paucity of adequate data. For instance, a review by Wessells (2009) concluded that the state of the evidence regarding child-focused community groups is anecdotal, impressionistic, unsystematic and underdeveloped, and specifically pointed to the paucity of information from low and middle-income countries.

Interventions driven by methodological rigor alone needed to contend with ethical concerns. It is important to consider the responsibilities associated with withholding interventions that may be useful for control group participants. For example:

- A theory-driven alternative approach to school bullying that focused on social emotional learning and positive youth development was associated with significant reductions in bullying and victimization. However, even after controlling for gender, the researchers found that the control group experienced increases in bully and victim behaviours (Domino, 2013).

- From an ethics standpoint, a review of sexual abuse and exploitation of boys in South Asia noted the alarming absence of informed consent procedures, confidentiality protocols and other mechanisms to ensure responsible and ethical conduct in research (Frederick, 2010).

- Other ethical issues in the systematic review concerned privacy and confidentiality issues when using technology-based or enhanced programmes, especially with survivors of abuse (Constantino, Crane, Noll, Doswell and Braxter, 2007).
The scope of effectiveness evaluations can be expanded to include both qualitative and participatory evaluation methods. This systematic review yielded limited data on qualitative evaluations.

- One of the few examples of a mixed methods approach that has proven effective is a study by John (2009) examining the impact of a life skills development intervention on the behavioural aspects of children in need of care and protection. Statistically significant positive changes occurred in the intervention group, and focus groups revealed that juveniles in the intervention felt more relaxed and happy, with improved achievement motivation and assertiveness. They had an improved understanding of setting realistic goals, listened and reflected better, and had improved insights about themselves that culminated in an improved perception and self-awareness.

- The evaluation of Soul Buddyz Clubs in South Africa indicated that successful clubs actively realized the vision and objectives of Soul Buddyz by mobilizing children as agents of change in their own lives and that of the community (Schmid, Wilson and Taback, 2011).

**FIGURE 19:** Summary of findings from impact evaluation results

**THEORETICAL**
- Impact evaluation data highlights the importance of utilizing an ideation model.
- Evidence of social change by interventions is limited, while the need for interventions to address normative factors is imperative.

**OPERATIONAL**
- Impact evaluation data suggests the importance of contextualizing interventions based on individual and cultural needs.
- Evidence exists regarding the success of interpersonal and community interventions targeting at-risk populations.
- It is important to keep gender in mind as a key variable, designing interventions specifically for men and also keeping gender in mind as a potential evaluation confounder for research.
- Place-based interventions need to consider in-between spaces where VAC occurs.
- Impact evaluations suggest that C4D works in conjunction with other interventions to bring about sustainable change.

- There is increasing evidence on the efficacy of new communication technologies as a mechanism for intervention implementation, as well as for evaluation.
- Several impact assessments on various issues relating to VAC highlight the importance of addressing VAC as part of early childhood development interventions.
- Impact assessment results showcased the importance of long-running interventions.

**METHODOLOGICAL**
- There is a serious lack of evaluation data on effectiveness of interventions and strong evidence of the need for additional effectiveness evaluations, specifically those from low and middle-income countries.
- Interventions driven by methodological rigor alone need to contend with ethical concerns.
- The scope of effectiveness evaluation can be expanded to include both qualitative and participatory evaluation.
“Today, violence results in more than 1.5 million people being killed each year, and many more suffer non-fatal injuries and chronic, non-injury health consequences. Despite the fact that violence has always been present, the world does not have to accept it as an inevitable part of the human condition. Violence can be prevented. This is not an article of faith, but a statement based on evidence.”

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

In an overview summarizing the major achievements and remaining challenges of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Doek (2009) reported that national efforts addressing VAC have often been hampered by a lack of financial and human resources or political will. In turn, this has impeded the proper infrastructure to support children’s rights from forming. He concluded that addressing VAC takes more than having the proper infrastructure, it requires having a culture that supports the rights of the child.

C4D approaches can challenge social and cultural norms that perpetuate and condone violence. Approaches to tackle social norms have been successfully used to reduce alcohol misuse and smoking behaviours; also, to change attitudes of young males towards risky sexual behaviours and bullying (WHO, 2009). Within UNICEF, C4D is integrated as a key cross-cutting strategy that promotes long-term behaviour and social change and is defined as: “an evidence-based and participatory process that facilitates the engagement of children, families, communities, the public and decision makers for positive social and behavioural change in both development and humanitarian contexts through a mix of available communication platforms and tools” (UNICEF, 2019). Herein lies the critical importance of exploring the role that a range of communication approaches underlining C4D can play in addressing VAC.

Key recommendations from this systematic review that apply specifically to child protection programmes as a whole, and their C4D components in particular, are categorised under the three broad themes below.

I. CONTEXTUALISING AND FRAMING VAC

1. SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS CHILDREN WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE. The search term combinations yielded over 80,000 hits. Most of the manuscripts discarded by this systematic review dealt with violence but lacked specificity in terms of their focus on children. For example, interventions addressing other forms of violence mostly acknowledged the nexus of VAC with violence against women (VAW). There is overwhelming agreement that individuals directly engaged in or responsible for violence at some point in time have been victims themselves and that the negative ramifications of VAW are multiplied manifold if and when children are involved. However, strategies dealing with VAW do not often segment by age or address VAC as a correlated issue. For example, there is an absence of age-based disaggregation in programmes addressing human trafficking. Disaggregation by age would allow child trafficking to emerge as a separate issue deserving focused attention.

2. EXPLORE LINKAGES BETWEEN DIFFERENT FORMS OF VAC. The overlap of manuscripts shortlisted across different search criteria highlights that the different types of VAC cannot be pigeonholed by topic. Rather, they must be conceptualized as multiple forms or facets of violence. For example, child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting and gender-based violence are intrinsically linked, as are corporal punishment and child abuse/maltreatment. Similarly, child trafficking and sexual exploitation co-occur. No doubt this overlap complicates both implementation and evaluation of programmes; however, it is important that the interrelationships and complexities between these issues be recognized and addressed holistically. This is especially important given the magnitude of their prevalence, the plethora of mediating and causal factors involved, and the multitude of C4D approaches we have at our disposal to address VAC.

3. EXAMINE VAC ALONG A SPECTRUM. This recommendation relates to the previous one regarding the linkages between different types of VAC. Associated topics such as VAW yield more consistent research and data than when searching for VAC. One potential explanation may be that VAW has been measured in discrete, verifiable forms – physical, emotional and sexual -- whereas VAC is often measured across broad conceptualizations.
These can range from discriminatory nutrition practices associated with girl children, all the way to interventions addressing female foeticide. Further, the review shows that the response to child labour has largely been in the area of policy change, while at the community and individual levels child labour might be considered a social good (helping poor children in need) rather than as a facet of VAC. Hence, child labour persists on a massive scale but remains virtually unseen. On the other hand, sexual abuse is clearly typified as criminal conduct, and although reporting has become more commonplace, it continues to be considered a deviant behaviour. It is important, therefore, to consider the full spectrum of potential causes and impacts when addressing VAC.

**Contextualize VAC Both as a Cause and an Outcome.** One of the key difficulties during the course of the literature search related to the complexity of understanding the nature of VAC, as it encompasses such a wide and complex range of issues. At one end of the spectrum, the systematic review revealed that programmes are based on a wide range of causal factors, ranging from the social to the psychological that result in VAC. In this regard, a majority of the manuscripts portrayed VAC as an outcome. However, at the other end, violence emerges as a causal factor for adverse educational outcomes and long-term morbidity and mortality. Both ways of understanding VAC are valid, although strategies to address it may differ.

**Start Early and Continue into Adulthood.** There is evidence of long-term success for early childhood programmes. Both family-based programmes promoting positive parenting and early childhood development programmes can address child maltreatment and neglect starting in infancy. These have the potential to sustain positive effects well into adulthood. Primary prevention efforts fostering generational change are instrumental for creating new norms of masculinity and raising a generation of men who do not accept violence as a norm and girls who refuse to accept violence silently.

**Move Beyond a Place-Based Approach to a Norms-Based Approach to Incorporate Innovative Communication Channels and to Tackle the Culture of Violence.** Most recent programmes have drawn on the United Nations Secretary-General’s Study on VAC and focused on the settings prioritised in the study. These are: the home and family, schools and educational settings, care and justice systems, work setting, and the community. Many of the programmes associated with these settings rely on techniques that are associated with the location. Therefore, programmes in school and educational settings usually involved elements of teacher (expert or peer) based training. Meanwhile, programmes in the home and family-level often fell within the social work realm. Such narrow conceptualizations result in the replication of ‘tried and true’ approaches for communication that also have a narrowly defined focus. It is important to consider innovative ways to communicate about VAC. There is some evidence of new communication technologies being utilized as a channel for dissemination and also for tracking programme implementation and success in this regard.

Place-based interventions can be implemented and evaluated in a streamlined fashion. For example, conducting a randomized controlled trial and monitoring fidelity of implementation can all take place in an institutional environment such as a school. However, while it is important to begin interventions at one place, it is equally important to branch out to address more complex social contexts. One must consider issues relating to VAC that occur in less concrete or discrete places (such as verbal and sexual harassment that adolescent girls face in public spaces) which are harder to tackle and address. Given the ubiquitous nature of VAC, it is also important to address it at a broader level. One possibility could be to address VAC through a normative lens and tackle what can be considered a ‘culture of violence’. One relevant example might be child labour. A shift from the traditional policy perspective to a normative approach would help frame this issue as one of VAC and may help address both the supply and demand for child
labour. Linking school violence to the normative violence happening outside schools would be another way of broadening the perspective.

II. DESIGNING THE PROGRAMME

EMBRACE THE SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL MODEL FOR BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL CHANGE. Much of the published literature on VAC programmes utilized a cognitive and individually-based behaviour change approach. While such approaches are useful and valid in some instances, there is a growing realization that individuals are embedded within a larger social system. Thus, effective programmes have to consider the interpersonal, family and community dimensions to generate and measure change. At the same time, a concerted institutional, policy and overall national level response is also critical to address VAC and create an enabling environment for change. This has proven effective especially in addressing female genital mutilation/cutting in many countries, where a combination of challenging harmful social norms together with legislative and policy level approaches has yielded positive results.

BROADEN CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF C4D APPROACHES TO ENCOMPASS EFFORTS THAT INVOLVE ANY FORM OF COMMUNICATION/COMMUNICATIVE ACTION AND CUT ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF THE SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL MODEL. This review included many approaches that intersect with a broad understanding of what C4D is and its integral role in the uptake and maintenance of individual and social change. Much of the information on programmatic responses for VAC reveals that these are inherently communicative: counselling, awareness raising, disclosure, negotiation, public denouncement, resistance and confrontation. Indeed, in the preliminary review of manuscripts, it was often difficult to distinguish between overall programme approaches and discrete C4D components. Interventions were not necessarily described as utilizing C4D approaches, even when they clearly did. Nevertheless, upon closer examination, C4D techniques dominated in efforts to reduce harmful practices.

SEGMENT AUDIENCES BY GENDER AND ADDRESS GENDER-SPECIFIC NEEDS AND DIFFERENCES. A number of points highlighted the importance of gender.

1. Female empowerment is necessary and successful in addressing violence, and it is therefore essential to implement interventions that specifically meet the needs of girls.
2. The need to involve men and boys more often in gender transformative interventions was highlighted.
3. A focus on females must not exclude young boys from VAC issues as they are also affected.
4. There is a need to address both men and boys in terms of their roles both as victims and perpetrators. For example, anti-bullying programmes have been designed to address the needs of boys by examining ‘machismo’ and its role in VAC.
5. There is also a growing demand to address the specific needs of marginalized groups such as gay, bisexual and transgender youth who are often subjected to widespread discrimination and violence.

CLARIFY THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT LINKAGES BETWEEN STATED PROGRAMME AND COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES AND MESSAGES. Programmes addressing VAC have often been couched within a ‘harm reduction’ framework and both programme and communication objectives have been listed in negative terms (e.g. reduction of harmful practices). Communication messages, on the other hand, have focused on the positive, for example, through the frequent use of role models for desired behaviours. Clearer linkages and flow of logic between the articulation of objectives and messaging that is designed to address or meet those objectives is needed. Establishing intermediate communication objectives would help determine how communication messages contribute to achieving overall programme objectives. A related issue deals with labelling all traditions as being ‘harmful’. This can lead to
negative unintended consequences, most notably by driving a practice underground, rather than creating sustained behaviour and social change.

**11. RECONFIGURE PROGRAMME AND COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES OF VAC INTERVENTIONS.** Many of the interventions did not use the basic SMART and SPICED criteria when describing programme objectives. It was also challenging to distinguish between overall programme and C4D objectives. VAC is an emotionally charged issue and yet programme and communication objectives were mainly couched in cognitive terms with little reference to the power of emotions to promote behaviour and social change. Cognitive objectives could move beyond enhancing knowledge and comprehension to ensuring the activation of higher-level cognitive changes associated with assimilation and evaluation of information.

**12. MOVE BEYOND INDIVIDUALLY FOCUSED KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICE BY ADDRESSING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES.** Interventions that encompass training, capacity-building, and efficacy approaches -- either as the end result or as essential building blocks -- have reported positive outcomes. This was especially true of anti-bullying programmes for school children, youth projects to reduce gang violence, or child marriage initiatives that provide economic opportunities for adolescent girls. At the same time, enrichment programmes providing preschool children with both academic and social skills showed promise in addressing child maltreatment and neglect. Even within interventions with narrowly focused individual level outcomes, it is important to step beyond the cognitive knowledge/ awareness dimensions and address emotional, relational and behavioural competencies to effect change.

**III. IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING THE PROGRAMME**

**13. POSITION VAC AS A ‘GLOCAL’ ISSUE THROUGH QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE MEASUREMENT.**

Promoting a core understanding of what VAC is in the form of a standardized definition and measurements of incidence and prevalence is an essential first step to gauging the magnitude of VAC as an issue deserving of global advocacy and concerted action. The United Nations Secretary-General’s Study on VAC is a seminal effort to provide a detailed global overview of VAC, where it occurs, and ways to combat it. However, local indicators of VAC are not routinely accessible. This hinders the data comparison at global levels and renders situation analyses for behaviour and social change interventions difficult to undertake.

**14. ENHANCE INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH.** The grey literature contains many examples of creative interventions addressing VAC, especially implemented in low and middle-income countries. However, much of this creative programming is unaccompanied by information on the effectiveness of these strategies. Much of the published literature, especially when grounded in community-based approaches, tended to focus on the ‘process’ of implementation rather than effectiveness. It is essential to expand the number of outcome evaluation studies to enhance our understanding of global best practices. This needs to be contextualized based on what works at a local level.

**15. SCALE UP PROMISING INTERVENTIONS.** Much of the robust evidence for effectiveness is based on small-scale pilot projects employing randomized controlled trial designs. This is especially true of programmes dealing with corporal punishment, bullying and gang violence among youth. However, there is scant information on the potential for scale up of promising interventions. A practical way forward might be to develop a road map of such pilot interventions along with scaling up guidelines. After evaluating progress over a reasonable time period, programme planners and implementers can determine whether to continue, adapt or discard the intervention.
In addition to secondary analysis of data collated for the purpose of this review, there is also room for further improvement through additional studies. Figure 20 outlines potential avenues for future research and additional studies.

In many ways, this review contains much detailed information on the current status of the design, implementation and evaluation of interventions utilizing C4D approaches to address VAC. It further attempts to synthe-
size the key trends and findings to highlight some imperatives that intervention planners and evaluators need to keep in mind in order to move the field forward. As such, it serves as the first step. The next steps are clearly to devise a series of practical guidelines that interventionists and practitioners, as well as their research counterparts on the ground, can utilize to plan, implement and evaluate interventions using C4D approaches to address VAC that are grounded in the local realities while being informed by global best practice.

**FIGURE 20: Potential directions for future research and study**

### Future research

- Conduct an in-depth examination of information raised through issue-specific recommendations.
- Study the existing meta-analyses and systematic reviews to draw broad-based solutions to local problems.
- Focus on specific C4D approaches.
- Compare the differential impact of specific communication approaches.
- Link intervention design with implementation strategies to find commonalities in different types of implementation.
- Compare results associated with specific evaluation designs.

### Additional studies

- Examine grey literature for information on innovative programming and evaluation methods.
- Examine grey literature to contextualize the review within the context of the outcomes of and contributors to VAC (e.g. alcohol abuse, the effects of urbanization, and other environmental factors such as migration and displacement).
- Update the bibliography on an ongoing and periodic basis in order to have easy access to current information.
REFERENCES


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1. UNICEF defines communication for development as ‘an evidence-based and participatory process that facilitates the engagement of children, families, communities, the public and decision makers for positive social and behavioural change in both development and humanitarian contexts through a mix of available communication platforms and tools’. In this study, the term communication for development (C4D) is used to cover a wide variety of communication approaches and strategies, as detailed in Table 1. Key terms of the systematic review.

2. The overarching research question of the study was: ‘What are the effects of communication for development (C4D) approaches to address violence against children?’.

3. For the purpose of this assignment, the term ‘violence’ is used in the broad sense to include all forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation.


5. As famously noted by Richard Horton, the editor in chief of The Lancet: “We portray peer review to the public as a quasi-sacred process that helps to make science our most objective truth teller. But we know that the system of peer review is biased, unjust, unaccountable, incomplete, easily fixed, often insulting, usually ignorant, occasionally foolish, and frequently wrong” [Horton, R. (2000). ‘Genetically modified food: consternation, confusion and crack up.’, *Medical Journal of Australia*, 2000, 172 (4): 148-9.]

6. Some pertinent examples include: a recent review of efficacious nutrition interventions [dif-

7. Data on the type of publication indicates that over 75 per cent of the manuscripts reviewed belonged to the ‘peer-reviewed category’ comprised primarily of peer-reviewed journal articles, and to some extent book chapters and literature reviews. Only 25 per cent of the systematic review consisted of project reports.

8. The 10/90 gap popularized by the Global Forum for Health Research posits that health research applied to the needs of low and middle income countries is grossly under resourced with less than 10 per cent of the world’s resources for health research being applied to the health problems of low and middle income countries where over 90 per cent of the world’s preventable deaths occur.

9. Available at: http://childinfo.org/fgmc_progress.html


11. Social Learning Theory: Albert Bandura’s social learning theory states that human behaviour is learned by observing the actions of others while being influenced by the environment and personal qualities of the person. Another key concept within social learning theory is modeling, which involves four steps: paying attention, retaining details about a behavior, ability to reproduce the behaviour for example through practice and finally motivation to engage in a behaviour. A final contribution of social learning theory is the idea of self-efficacy or an individual’s confidence that they are capable of performing a behaviour.

12. The term ‘stages of change’ is a central construct in the transtheoretical model. The stages examine an individual’s readiness to act on a new healthier behavior, and provides strategies, or processes of change to guide the individual through the five stages of change: Precontemplation is the stage at which individuals are unaware of their problem and have no intention to change behavior in the foreseeable future. Contemplation is the stage in which people are aware of the problem and are seriously thinking about overcoming it but have not yet made a commitment. Preparation is a stage when individuals are intending to take action. Action is the stage in which individuals modify their behavior, experiences, or environment to overcome their problems. Maintenance is the stage in which people work to prevent relapse and consolidate the gains attained during action.


14. As with any systematic review, some subjectivity is to be expected when coding data. For example, when entering data on the implicit conceptual frameworks/models the coders may have found the implicit reference to the social ecological model as reflecting their personal commitment to the social ecological approach, a big focus of the MPH programme at Drexel.

15. SMART is a mnemonic for criteria used to guide the setting of objectives. The letters broadly conform to the words: Specific – Measurable – Attainable - Relevant and Time-bound (Poister, 2003). The SPICED approach is a useful tool for thinking about how project objectives can be set in a participatory and inclusive way with local communities. The letters broadly conform to the words: Subjective - Participatory - Interpreted and communicable - Cross-checked and compared - Empowering - Diverse and disaggregated (Roche, 1999).

16. Some manuscripts mentioned various levels of influence, therefore the totals do not add up to a 100 per cent.

17. Despite the fact that some behaviours are criminalized, a research and treatment project from Germany, encouraged self-identified paedophiles and hebephiles to seek professional help. The first results from this Prevention Project Dunkelfeld (PPD) published in 2009 by Beier et al. found that a notable portion of men who admit to being attracted to minors could be success-
fully reached via a media campaign. The authors concluded that many could be encouraged to seek clinical diagnosis and a majority had already sought professional help. Another intervention from Canada specifically targeted maltreating fathers by providing counselling and training. The objectives were to change abusive parenting strategies, attitudes and beliefs that support unhealthy parenting, and increase the men’s appreciation of the impact of violence on children among men who have maltreated their children and/or who have exposed their children to abuse of their mother. The intervention achieved a high number of referrals indicating a high level of felt need for such interventions. The evaluation of this intervention found that fathers’ level of hostility, denigration, and rejection of their child and their level of angry arousal towards the child and family situations decreased significantly over the course of the intervention. Men’s level of stress was also reported to have decreased although not significantly (Scott and Crooks, 2007).

18. Formative evaluation is used to design an evidence-based intervention. Process evaluation is more commonly referred to as monitoring and commonly used to determine if an intervention is being delivered according to plan and to provide a means to make mid-course corrections. Impact evaluation is used to determine effectiveness of an intervention.

19. See for example: Law and Shek, 2012; Vuijk, van Lier, Crijnen and Huizink, 2006; Malti, Ribeaud and Eisner, 2011.

20. For a summary of FGM/C programmes, see Berg and Denison, 2013.

21. A Type 1 error is when an effect is detected when in fact none exists. Conversely, a Type 2 error refers to the failure to detect an effect when one is present. A Type 3 error occurs when an intervention is not implemented according to plan.

22. Ideation refers to new ways of thinking and the diffusion of those ways of thinking by means of social interaction in local, culturally homogeneous communities. The ideation approach has been used to assess the behavioural impact of various issues including female genital cutting (Babalola et al., 2006). The theory of ideation suggests that ‘ideation’ variables determine the likelihood of a person adopting a particular behaviour. The more favourable the ideation variables related to a particular behaviour, the more likely a person is to adopt and practice the behaviour. Ideation variables include cognitive (knowledge, belief, values, etc.), emotional (emotional response, self-efficacy) and social (social influence and personal advocacy) factors.

23. For more information on the PRECEDE-PROCEED Model see: http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1008.aspx

24. For more information on global child marriage interventions see: Amin, 2005; Erulkar, 2009; Erulkar and Ayuka, 2007; Gage, 2009; Governance and Social Development Research Centre, 2011; Graft, Haberland and Goldberg, 2003; Gupta, Mukherjee, Singh, Pande and Basu 2008; and International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), 2001.


26. See Brady (2007) for an examination of an intervention in rural Egypt and Jeejeebhoy, Acharya, Kalyanwala, Nathani and Bala (2008) for the evaluation findings of a life skills education intervention in rural Uttar Pradesh, India.
Boys at Bhagyanagar Children’s Home in India: two nearby children’s homes separately house girls and boys mostly between 6-14 years who are orphans, children of migrant labourers and potential child labourers.