

EVALUATION REPORT

**PROTECTING CHILDREN
FROM VIOLENCE: A
COMPREHENSIVE
EVALUATION OF UNICEF'S
STRATEGIES AND
PROGRAMME
PERFORMANCE**

EVALUATION OFFICE
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Protecting Children from Violence: A Comprehensive Evaluation of UNICEF's Strategies and Programme Performance

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This report on *Protecting Children from Violence: A Comprehensive Evaluation of UNICEF's Strategies and Programme Performance* was prepared by independent consultants Mei Zegers, David Cownie and Elena Grilli, recruited by Development Researchers' Network (DRN). The document also benefited from inputs by Christopher Yeomans and Nina Frankel, recruited by DRN as consultants on the Tanzania and Mexico case studies respectively, and by Elena Buonomini, project manager on behalf of DRN. Krishna Belbase, Senior Evaluation Specialist, led and managed the overall evaluation process, supported by Tina Tordjman-Nebe, Evaluation Specialist in the EO.

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Preface

The year 2015 is a pivotal year in which the global leaders and the people at large shape their vision for the world we want for the decades to come. A world free of violence against children is at the forefront of this vision. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its target 16.2 calls for “end[ing] abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children”. Indeed, protection from violence, exploitation and abuse is a right of all children as per the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by 195 state parties globally (all but South Sudan and the USA). There is a broad global consensus that living a life free from violence is the right of children everywhere, and that violence against children is never justifiable.

Yet each year the lives of millions of children in rich and poor countries are torn apart by violence. Violence has many faces: A young person is killed by violent conflict every five minutes; 6 in 10 children worldwide are regularly subjected to physical punishment by their caregivers; 1 in 3 adolescent girls have been victims of emotional, physical or sexual violence committed by their husbands or partners. Over 1 in 3 students between the ages of 13 and 15 worldwide experience bullying on a regular basis. And the list goes on – with devastating effects. Violence and maltreatment can lead to life-long physical and mental health problems, lower educational achievement, and even affect a child’s brain development. Countries that fail to address violence against children lose significant amounts of national income as their investments in education, health, and other human development spheres are compromised.

UNICEF has an established track record of advocacy, standard setting and programme response to help address violence against children. While UNICEF’s work to prevent and respond to violence span more than two decades, its strategies and programme performance in the area have never been comprehensively evaluated. The present evaluation is an attempt to bridge that gap. Based on evidence gathered, it shows what has worked in UNICEF’s past action, what hasn’t and why. The findings indicate that while much work has been done, there are still major challenges and demands that need to be addressed in strengthening national systems, in bringing about social change and in using data and research for more systematic action to yield measurable results. More importantly, the evaluation provides some concrete recommendations for going forward for more effective actions by UNICEF and its partners towards a world where children are free from violence. These recommendations will also serve as inputs to further strengthening UNICEF’s Child Protection Strategy, enhance implementation of UNICEF’s current Strategic Plan and inform UNICEF’s positioning in operationalising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Every child has the right to a healthy childhood free from fear. To help make that happen, girls and boys need safe, peaceful and nurturing environments at home, in school and in their communities. We hope that the evidence and learning from this evaluation will make a significant contribution to the work of UNICEF and its partners in implementing the 2015-30 agenda to end violence against children.

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This evaluation is the result of the commitment, efforts and contribution of a large number of individuals and institutions. The evaluation was conducted mainly by a team of experts recruited by Development Researchers' Network (DRN). Mei Zegers and David Cownie were the lead evaluators who were supported by Christopher Yeomans (team member for Tanzania case study) and Nina Frankel (team member for Mexico case study). Elena Grilli was the data analyst on the team who played a major role in preparing the desk review report. Elena Buonomini was the project manager on behalf of DRN who provided important inputs to the report particularly to ensure coherence of the desk study and the synthesis report.

The evaluation was steered by an advisory group which had significant involvement throughout the evaluation process including review of several drafts of the inception report and the synthesis reports. The advisory group included Christian Salazar, Theresa Kilbane, Kendra Gregson and Karin Heissler from UNICEF's Programme Division; Cornelius Williams at UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office; Andrew Brooks at UNICEF's Western and Central Africa Regional Office; Andrew Mawson at UNICEF's Office of Research; as well as Krishna Belbase and Tina Tordjman-Nebe from UNICEF's Evaluation Office. Shreya Dhawan and Celeste Lebowitz respectively edited and formatted the evaluation report.

We are obliged to the UNICEF country offices and members of the National Evaluation Reference Groups in the four case study countries, Bangladesh, Ghana, Mexico and Tanzania, for giving their time and expertise to help improve the quality and utility of the evaluation (please see the respective case study reports on the UNICEF website). Most importantly, we would like to thank all the children, parents, members of various community groups and local leaders who shared their experiences and contributed important insights to this evaluation.

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Acronyms

CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States
C4D	Communication for Development
CP	child protection
CPMERG	Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	civil society organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department of International Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EAPRO	East Asia and Pacific Regional Office
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
EQ	Evaluation Questions
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
FGM/C	female genital mutilation/cutting
GEROS	Global Evaluation Report Oversight System
INTRAC	International NGO Training and Resource Centre
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KAP	knowledge, attitudes and practices
KM	Knowledge Management
KRA	Key Results Area
LACRO	Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office
MENARO	Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoRES	Monitoring Results for Equity Systems
MTSP	medium-term strategic plan
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ROMP	Regional Office Management Plan
ROSA	Regional Office for South Asia
SBCC	social and behaviour change communication
SAIEVAC	South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SP	Strategic Plan
SRSG VAC	Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children
TACRO	The Americas and Caribbean Regional Office
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UPR	Universal Period Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAC	violence against children
WCARO	West and Central Africa Regional Office
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

Violence against children (VAC) is a serious violation of child rights. Yet, VAC is pervasive: 6 in 10 children worldwide are regularly subjected to physical punishment by their caregivers and 1 in 10 girls have experienced forced sexual acts at some point in their lives. Other forms of violence, including psychological violence and various forms of deliberate neglect, are also common. Many studies have shown that violence is detrimental to all aspects of a child's development – including physical, psychological and social development and functioning—and can have lifelong repercussions. Combatting VAC is thus a major development priority.

Protecting children from violence is central to UNICEF's mandate as an organization guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). UNICEF's Child Protection Strategy (CP Strategy, 2008) and strategic plans (medium-term strategic plan, MTSP 2006-2013, and strategic plan, SP 2014-2017) provide organizational strategies and results frameworks to address VAC. UNICEF's advocacy and programme response to protecting children from violence spans more than two decades, but has never before been comprehensively evaluated.

Therefore, UNICEF commissioned an independent evaluation to assess (a) the adequacy of UNICEF's global and regional strategies in protecting children against violence and their application at the national level, (b) UNICEF's leadership, leveraging and convening roles, and (c) the design, implementation and results of UNICEF-supported programmes addressing VAC, considering aspects of both prevention and response, (d) identify dominant programme models being implemented in various contexts and to (e) provide forward-looking conclusions, lessons and actionable recommendations. The evaluation concentrates on VAC in the family/household and the community, including both the public and private spheres. This includes sexual, physical and mental violence as well as harmful traditional practices and deliberate neglect and/or maltreatment by the caregiver. The evaluation does not cover self-inflicted violence, child labour and child marriage prevention, but does include VAC *within* these settings. The analysis of results through country programmes focused mainly on systems strengthening, social norms change, monitoring/research/evaluation/use of data, as these were the key result areas for addressing VAC in the MTSP. In addition, this evaluation looks at advocacy, leadership and partnerships and at equity as cross-cutting issues.

The evaluation provides concrete inputs to a forthcoming management review of the CP Strategy and to implementing the child protection objectives within the 2014-2017 strategic plan. Furthermore, it informs UNICEF's positioning and future direction with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG target 16.2 that reads “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children”. At the country level, the evaluation informs country-level policy and programme development and response over the coming years.

Data for this evaluation was selectively gathered at the global, regional and country levels using the following methods:

- In-depth fieldwork in four case study countries (Bangladesh, Ghana, Mexico and Tanzania), including site visits/observation, focus groups/interviews with beneficiaries and key informant interviews with a variety of national partners;
- Detailed review of documentation from 18 programme countries, including qualitative content analysis using Atlas-ti;
- An online survey of 70 UNICEF country offices;
- Broad-based consultations and key informant interviews at UNICEF headquarters, in two regional offices and with selected partners.

A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyse the resulting data, including comparative and strengths/gap analysis. This consisted of triangulating collected data and analysing content for common trends, themes and patterns. Evaluation limitations included lack of baseline, end line and impact data. There was also a scarcity of independent documentation such as programme evaluations to complement annual reviews and other documents produced by UNICEF. Comparability and generalizability for some topics were limited due to country specificities.

Findings and conclusions

Results with respect to the targets UNICEF had set for itself through the MTSP (2006-2013) were found to be variable. Although progress has been made in some countries, particularly with respect to adoption of legal and policy frameworks, a great deal of work is still required to substantively reduce VAC. Evidence indicates varying degrees of relevance of VAC strategies at the country level. The evaluation found that results on systems strengthening were partially achieved whereas results on social norms change, and monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data have not yet been adequately achieved. Likewise, while efforts were undertaken to address gender and equity issues, there are still major gaps including a weaker focus on boys as well as on disabled children. Child participation was often found to be very limited with respect to children's actual impact on decision-making. Efficiency regarding financial and human resource management has been generally adequate, within the limits of resources available. Staff capacity remains a concern in some situations. Sustainability of results achieved is likely to be hampered by limited budgets and unclear accountabilities internally and by limited partner capacities externally.

Conclusion 1: Performance on relevance, appropriateness and coherence is mixed. VAC programme design was largely consistent with country needs over the period evaluated but will require significant strengthening to meet the expectations related to SDG 16.2.

Overall findings suggest that, over the evaluation period, the CP Strategy and strategic plans were largely pertinent as frameworks within which to address VAC at the country level. The alignment of country programmes with the national context on VAC was generally adequate with respect to national plans and priorities, including international obligations concerning child rights

and gender. The strategies and global objectives on VAC were largely internally coherent. The MTSP indicators, however, were not very clear as they did not sufficiently consider the range of issues that needed to be addressed in each VAC-relevant key results area. The SP (2014-2017) is an improvement, but the issue remains. Country programme logics on VAC were not fully clear and coherent and not properly evidenced in most cases. On the whole, UNICEF's work to respond to and prevent VAC is still not sufficiently broad-based and multi-sectoral to match expectations related to SDG 16.2 and UNICEF's current advocacy focus on VAC.

Conclusion 2: Results in the area of systems strengthening have been partially achieved.

Overview of achievements vis-à-vis strategic plan result areas and targets (MTSP, 2009-2013)	
At least 60 programme countries have identified areas through mapping that require strengthening of the national child protection systems.	According to the current evaluation findings, 50 of the 70 countries included had conducted some type of mapping or gap analysis on systems strengthening that included addressing VAC. Only 20 of these had conducted 'substantial' mapping or gap analysis.
At least 60 programme countries, including emergency-affected countries, have improved systems and implemented programmes to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation and abuse .	32 out of the 70 countries included in the current evaluation state that they have achieved at least moderate progress on developing both legal and policy frameworks, providing a coherent response to VAC while also reaching children in need and developing tools for systems strengthening. All 70 countries had engaged in some systems strengthening in at least one area, but this is not deemed sufficient to improve systems.

In most of the country cases examined in this evaluation, systems change was visible in strengthened enabling environments. Within that, successful advocacy for improved legal and policy frameworks was the strongest area of success identified in the evaluation. UNICEF was widely perceived as a catalyst for institutional and capacity strengthening and many institutions showed increased capacities with respect to designing and implementing systems to prevent and respond to VAC. Some UNICEF-supported pilot VAC response actions to strengthen the capacity of service providers at the community level are promising, though coverage is limited.

The evaluation found that the social norms approach to addressing VAC was not yet adequately integrated into the overall systems approach. Similarly, linkages between formal and informal structures to prevent and respond to VAC are frequently weak. Other important gaps remain in terms of geographic coverage and reaching all children in need, adequacy of funding of relevant national institutions, enforcement and implementation of legal and policy frameworks, and measuring actual improvements in system functioning and overall outcomes for children and families.

Conclusion 3: Results in the area of social norms change have not yet been adequately achieved.

Overview of achievements vis-à-vis strategic plan result areas and targets (MTSP, 2009-2013)	
Reduce social acceptance of practices harmful to children.	The current evaluation found that no country had achieved substantial change by addressing harmful traditional norms and practices; only 40 out of 70 countries reported they were at least moderately countering them while the remainder were not able to address social norms (yet).

While numerous initiatives to change social norms to prevent and respond to VAC are being developed and implemented, many gaps remain. These include the scope of issues addressed, geographic coverage, and determining the actual impact of methods to bring about behavioural change. In addition, there is a lack of differentiation between socially accepted and non-socially accepted VAC. For example, child rape, incest and severely debilitating physical abuse are almost universally forbidden across cultures. While UNICEF's focus on traditional harmful practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting is strong, attention is more limited on other (non-socially accepted) forms of VAC such as incest. Furthermore, aligning the specific needs of different populations with regard to the types of VAC prevalent within different socio-cultural contexts falls short. This is partly due to shortcomings with regard to the mapping and sharing of VAC prevalence data and other relevant information within UNICEF and outside. In sum, UNICEF is supporting initiatives on social norms change in many settings, but these needs to be vastly scaled up and linked more coherently to the overall systems strengthening approach.

Conclusion 4: Results in terms of monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data have not yet been adequately achieved.

Overview of achievements vis-à-vis strategic plan result areas and targets (MTSP, 2009-2013)	
At least 75 countries incorporate disaggregated baseline data on child protection indicators in national development plans and reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.	Only half of the 18 sample countries had reported to the Committee on the Rights of the Child using disaggregated indicators on child protection indicators. Exact figures were not available across the 70 countries but from the various types of information gathered, it was concluded that important gaps remains.

During the period covered by this evaluation, there has been significant progress on VAC data collection and use. However, the amount and quality of data still often fall short of requirements. In particular, data collection and results monitoring on service provision is weak and will need considerable attention in the future. Effectiveness in data management and measurement of results is hampered by the lack of a common and agreed upon definition of VAC with a sufficiently comprehensive analysis of prioritized types of VAC and their drivers. While strong

ethical protocols are in place, methodological rigour is variable, resulting in challenges with respect to comparability of findings.

Conclusion 5: Overall performance on advocacy, leadership and partnerships is strong, but there is scope for improvement, especially in some regions.

The evaluation found that in general, UNICEF has effectively leveraged its partnership networks to contribute to initiatives, interventions and resource mobilisation for addressing VAC at the global level. UNICEF is regarded a lead advocate for child rights on VAC-related issues and a strong partner in developing appropriate strategies and interventions on VAC, including by government agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs) in the four case study countries. However, there is a wide variation in terms of advocacy and leadership roles at the regional and country levels. Further, inter-sectoral collaboration within the organisation can be improved.

Conclusion 6: Performance on cross-cutting themes and implementation modalities (child participation, gender equality, disability, human rights and equity considerations) is mixed with some good examples on targeting girls. Weak implementation is a key issue.

UNICEF generally includes human rights, gender equality and equity approaches in programme planning to prevent and respond to VAC. Attention to gender issues is strongest in programmes designed to address violence against girls. Performance on cross-cutting issues in programme implementation at the country level is more limited when it comes to the abuse of boys and social norms related to boys' masculinities, children with disabilities, children in conflict with the law, and the integration of children from privileged socio-economic groups who can also be subjected to VAC. Children are able to express their opinions on how to address VAC but feel that they lack the power to effectively influence decision-making and social norms change. Children are included in UNICEF activities to combat VAC but not sufficiently.

Conclusion 7: Efficiency in terms of financial and human resource management has been generally adequate, within the limits of resources available. Staff capacity remains a concern in some situations.

Overall, UNICEF received and allocated limited funds to addressing VAC. The funds allotted were usually well utilised. In the case study countries, several examples of cost-effective human resource and financial management were identified. Efficient resource management was particularly evident in the – grossly underfunded – area of monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data. Increasing regional-level targeted technical support to countries on indicator identification, monitoring and reporting were a success factor. However, so far, the human resources allocated at the regional level to strengthen this area have been inadequate to effect substantial improvements at the country level.

Conclusion 8: Sustainability and further expansion of VAC prevention and response efforts are likely to be hampered by limited budgets, limited partner capacities and lack of coherence in global planning and standard setting.

There is evidence of increased national ownership and recognition of the need to reduce VAC. Progress has been made towards strengthening institutions and capacities, suggesting that the results achieved with respect to systems strengthening are likely sustainable. However, in countries where project-supported activities are not well linked with systems strengthening, their sustainability is limited. Planning and attribution of roles and responsibilities to prevent and respond to VAC across sectors remain limited at the global and regional levels.

Without an increase in the available national and donor budgets, scaling up of interventions and systems building, and subsequently coverage within countries, will be limited. This is a crucial limitation for longer-term sustainability of results achieved so far.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluation puts forward the following recommendations. It is to be noted that the recommendations are not stand-alone but are inter-linked and should be implemented as such. The detailed recommendation text can be found in the last chapter of the evaluation report.

Overarching strategic recommendations

1. Revision of the CP Strategy and/or mid-term review of the SP should **make VAC an organization-wide multi-sectoral priority with strong involvement at the regional level**, coordinated by the Programme Division in NYHQ. Review efforts should emphasise (a) the development of an overarching Theory of Change for addressing VAC and (b) agreement on core indicators for measuring VAC prevention and response actions.
2. **In 2016, develop and launch a multi-sectoral road map to reducing VAC within a particular time frame.** The roadmap will need to be translated into regional and country specific strategies and plans, focusing on capacity strengthening down to the service provision level as well as on prevention and response actions for children with specific vulnerabilities to VAC.
3. **Strengthen context-specific advocacy and resource mobilization, including at the regional and global levels** – on the basis of bolstered evidence and use of data (see recommendation 7) - commensurate with higher expectations for UNICEF action in light of SDG 16.2.

Detailed recommendations: Operationalizing the systems approach

4. **Accelerate the roll-out of the systems strengthening approach** to preventing and responding to VAC: Allocate significant additional resources and invest in capacity building for staff and partners; include programming for specific vulnerable populations with involvement of formal and less formal actors; strengthen service delivery across sectors; and improve integration of the social norms approach in systems strengthening work.
5. Renew the focus on **preventing violence**, including through fostering supportive social norms, addressing harmful social norms, strengthening structural change for equality and equity and reducing drivers at the personal level that may lead to VAC.
6. **Improve the focus on gender and equity approaches** and interventions within the overall systems approach, including through child participation in the prevention and response to VAC and through stronger targeting of boys and children living with disabilities.

Detailed recommendations: Data, knowledge base development and use

7. **Institutionalise child protection systems mapping and assessment exercises and strategically plan for follow-up research and data initiatives.** Promote and support the use of practical protocols to aid measurement of results on VAC, so as to inform future programme planning and provide an evidence-base for advocacy and resource mobilization.
8. **Develop a web-based knowledge networking platform** that facilitates information sharing and incorporates the experiences (good practices, lessons learned) of countries on child protection systems strengthening overall with particular attention to VAC.

Resumen ejecutivo

El maltrato infantil constituye una grave violación de los derechos del niño. Pese a ello, se trata de un problema muy extendido: 6 de cada 10 niños de todo el mundo sufren regularmente castigos físicos por parte de sus cuidadores, y 1 de cada 10 niñas ha experimentado actos sexuales forzados en algún momento de su vida. También son frecuentes otras formas de violencia, como la violencia psicológica y diversas modalidades de abandono deliberado. Numerosos estudios han puesto de manifiesto que la violencia resulta perjudicial para el desarrollo del niño en todas sus vertientes –incluidos el desarrollo y el rendimiento físico, psicológico y social– y puede tener consecuencias a lo largo de toda la vida. Por lo tanto, combatir la violencia contra los niños representa una prioridad fundamental desde el punto de vista del desarrollo.

La protección de los niños frente a la violencia es crucial para el mandato de UNICEF como organización guiada por la Convención sobre los Derechos del Niño. La Estrategia de protección de la infancia de UNICEF (2008) y los planes estratégicos de la organización (Plan Estratégico a Mediano Plazo 2006-2013 y Plan Estratégico 2014-2017) definen sus estrategias y sus marcos de resultados para combatir la violencia contra los niños. UNICEF lleva ya más de dos decenios llevando a cabo una importante labor de promoción y desarrollando programas de lucha contra la violencia infantil. No obstante, este trabajo no se había sometido hasta el momento a una evaluación exhaustiva.

En consecuencia, la organización encargó una evaluación independiente dirigida a determinar a) la idoneidad de la estrategia mundial y de las estrategias regionales de UNICEF en el ámbito de la protección de los niños frente a la violencia, y la aplicación de dichas estrategias a escala nacional, b) las funciones de liderazgo, convocatoria e influencia de UNICEF, y c) el diseño, la ejecución y los resultados de los programas de lucha contra la violencia infantil respaldados por UNICEF, teniendo en cuenta tanto los aspectos relacionados con la prevención y la respuesta, d) identificar los modelos de programa dominantes en los diversos contextos, y e) proporcionar conclusiones y extraer lecciones prospectivas, así como recomendaciones prácticas. La evaluación se concentra en la violencia contra los niños en la familia o el hogar y en la comunidad, tanto en la esfera pública como en la privada. Contempla la violencia sexual, física y mental, además de las prácticas tradicionales dañinas y el maltrato o el abandono deliberado por parte del cuidador. La evaluación no aborda la violencia autoinfligida, el trabajo infantil ni la prevención del matrimonio infantil, pero sí la violencia contra los niños en esos contextos. El análisis de los resultados de los diferentes programas nacionales se centró fundamentalmente en el fortalecimiento de los sistemas, el cambio de las normas sociales y el seguimiento, investigación, evaluación y utilización de los datos, puesto que estas eran las esferas de resultados clave recogidas en el Plan Estratégico a Mediano Plazo para abordar la violencia contra los niños. Además, esta evaluación analiza como cuestiones transversales la labor de promoción, el liderazgo y las alianzas establecidas, pero también la equidad.

La evaluación realiza aportaciones concretas de cara al próximo examen de gestión de la

Estrategia de protección de la infancia y a la inclusión de los objetivos de protección de la infancia en el Plan Estratégico 2014-2017. Además, aporta información útil para definir la posición y la dirección futura de UNICEF en lo que respecta a los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), en particular la meta 16.2: “Poner fin al maltrato, la explotación, la trata, la tortura y todas las formas de violencia contra los niños”. A escala nacional, la evaluación aporta información para el desarrollo y la ejecución de políticas y programas nacionales a lo largo de los próximos años.

Los datos utilizados en el marco de esta evaluación se recopilaron de manera selectiva a nivel mundial, regional y nacional empleando los métodos siguientes:

- un trabajo de campo exhaustivo en cuatro países para los que se elaboraron estudios monográficos (Bangladesh, Ghana, México y Tanzania); dicho trabajo de campo incluyó visitas y observaciones *in situ*, entrevistas y grupos de discusión con personas beneficiarias y entrevistas con informantes clave de diversos asociados nacionales;
- un examen detallado de la documentación de 18 países en los que se ejecutan programas, incluido un análisis cualitativo de contenidos utilizando el programa Atlas-ti;
- una encuesta en línea a 70 oficinas de país de UNICEF;
- celebración de amplias consultas y realización de entrevistas a informantes clave en la sede de UNICEF, en dos oficinas regionales y con socios seleccionados.

Se utilizó una combinación de métodos cuantitativos y cualitativos para analizar los datos obtenidos, que incluyó un estudio comparativo y un análisis de las fortalezas y debilidades. Mediante la triangulación de los datos recabados y el análisis de contenidos se estudiaron las tendencias, los temas y los patrones comunes. Entre las limitaciones de la evaluación cabe citar la falta de datos iniciales, finales y de impacto, así como la escasez de documentación independiente (evaluaciones de programas, por ejemplo) complementaria a los exámenes anuales y a otros documentos elaborados por UNICEF. Determinados temas ofrecían una comparabilidad y unas posibilidades de generalización limitadas debido a las particularidades nacionales.

Hallazgos y conclusiones

La evaluación observó resultados variables en lo que respecta a las metas que se había fijado UNICEF en su Plan Estratégico a Mediano Plazo (2006-2013). Pese a que algunos países han realizado progresos, sobre todo en lo que concierne a la adopción de marcos jurídicos y normativos, sigue siendo necesario un trabajo ingente para lograr una reducción sustancial de la violencia contra los niños. Las pruebas disponibles indican que las estrategias en este ámbito muestran diferentes niveles de pertinencia según los países. La evaluación puso de relieve que se habían logrado parcialmente resultados en el terreno del fortalecimiento de los sistemas, mientras que los resultados en lo que se refiere al cambio de normas sociales y el seguimiento, investigación, evaluación y utilización de los datos resultaban, por el momento, poco satisfactorios. De igual modo, pese a que se habían invertido esfuerzos para abordar las cuestiones relacionadas con el género y la equidad, continúan observándose deficiencias fundamentales, como la menor atención prestada a los niños varones y a los menores con

discapacidad. La evaluación descubrió asimismo que la participación y la influencia de los niños en la adopción de decisiones es, a menudo, muy limitada. La eficiencia en la gestión de los recursos humanos y financieros se consideró en general adecuada, dentro de los límites de los recursos disponibles. En determinadas situaciones, la capacidad del personal sigue suscitando preocupación. Es probable que la sostenibilidad de los resultados logrados se vea comprometida por las restricciones presupuestarias, por la escasa claridad de la definición de responsabilidades en el plano interno y por las limitadas capacidades de los socios desde el punto de vista externo.

Conclusión 1: En lo que respecta a la pertinencia, la idoneidad y la coherencia, la evaluación obtuvo resultados mixtos. El diseño de los programas de lucha contra la violencia infantil fue en gran medida congruente con las necesidades nacionales a lo largo del período evaluado, pero será necesario reforzarlo significativamente con el fin de cumplir las expectativas relativas a la meta 16.2 de los ODS.

En términos globales, los hallazgos de la evaluación sugieren que, a lo largo del período evaluado, la Estrategia de protección de la infancia y los planes estratégicos en este campo ofrecen en gran medida marcos pertinentes para abordar la violencia contra los niños a nivel nacional. La adecuación de los programas nacionales al contexto nacional de violencia contra los niños era generalmente elevada con respecto a los planes y las prioridades nacionales, incluidas las obligaciones internacionales referentes a los derechos del niño y las cuestiones de género. También se observó una importante coherencia interna de las estrategias y los objetivos mundiales sobre la violencia contra los niños. Sin embargo, los indicadores del Plan Estratégico a Mediano Plazo adolecían de cierta falta de claridad, pues no tenían suficientemente en cuenta los diferentes tipos de problemas que era necesario abordar en cada una de las esferas de resultados clave pertinentes para la violencia contra los niños. El Plan Estratégico (2014-2017) constituye un avance, pero el problema persiste. La lógica de los programas nacionales en el ámbito de la violencia contra los niños no era suficientemente clara ni coherente, y en la mayor parte de los casos tampoco se aportaban pruebas adecuadas que la respaldaran. En conjunto, el trabajo de prevención y respuesta ante la violencia contra los niños que desarrolla UNICEF no goza todavía de una base lo bastante amplia y multisectorial como para responder a las expectativas relacionadas con la meta 16.2 de los ODS y con el enfoque actual de promoción en lo que respecta al maltrato infantil.

Conclusión 2: Los resultados en la esfera del fortalecimiento de los sistemas se han logrado en parte.

Resumen de los logros alcanzados en cuanto a las esferas de resultados y las metas definidas en el Plan Estratégico a Mediano Plazo (2009-2013)	
Al menos 60 países en los que se ejecutan programas han identificado, a través de la cartografía, esferas que requieren un	De acuerdo con los hallazgos actuales de la evaluación, 50 de los 70 países analizados habían llevado a cabo algún tipo de análisis cartográfico o de deficiencias sobre el fortalecimiento de los sistemas, que incluía el estudio de la violencia contra los niños. Solamente 20 de ellos habían

fortalecimiento de los sistemas nacionales de protección de la infancia.	efectuado un análisis cartográfico o de deficiencias "sustancial".
Al menos 60 países en los que se ejecutan programas, incluidos países afectados por situaciones de emergencia, han mejorado sus sistemas y ejecutado programas dirigidos a prevenir y hacer frente a la violencia, la explotación y el abuso.	Un total de 32 de los 70 países incluidos en la evaluación actual afirman que han logrado, como mínimo, un progreso moderado en el desarrollo de sus marcos jurídicos y normativos y la provisión de una respuesta coherente a la violencia contra los niños, al tiempo que han sido capaces de llegar a más niños en situación de necesidad y de desarrollar herramientas para fortalecer sus sistemas. Los 70 países participantes en la evaluación habían emprendido algún tipo de iniciativa encaminada a fortalecer sus sistemas en al menos una esfera, si bien esto no se consideró suficiente para lograr una mejora real.

En la mayoría de los casos nacionales examinados en el marco de la evaluación, el cambio de los sistemas se manifestaba en la creación de unos entornos más propicios. En ese sentido, la esfera de mayor éxito identificada en la evaluación fue el impulso de la mejora de los marcos jurídicos y normativos. Existía una percepción generalizada de que UNICEF desempeña un papel catalizador en el fortalecimiento institucional y el fomento de la capacidad, y muchas instituciones mostraron un aumento de sus capacidades de diseño e implantación de sistemas dirigidos a prevenir y hacer frente a la violencia contra los niños. Algunas de las medidas experimentales de respuesta ante el maltrato infantil respaldadas por UNICEF con el objetivo de fortalecer la capacidad de los proveedores de servicios a nivel comunitario resultan prometedoras, pese a que su alcance es limitado.

La evaluación puso de manifiesto que el enfoque basado en las normas sociales para combatir la violencia contra los niños no estaba todavía suficientemente integrado en el planteamiento general de los diferentes sistemas. De manera similar, se observó que los vínculos existentes entre las estructuras formales e informales para prevenir y hacer frente al maltrato infantil suelen ser débiles. Además, continúan existiendo deficiencias en términos de cobertura geográfica, atención a todos los niños en situación de necesidad, nivel de financiación aportado por las instituciones nacionales pertinentes, aplicación y ejecución de los marcos jurídicos y normativos, y evaluación de las mejoras reales del funcionamiento de los sistemas y de los resultados globales que obtienen los niños y sus familias.

Conclusión 3: Por el momento no se han logrado resultados satisfactorios en la esfera del cambio de las normas sociales.

Resumen de los logros alcanzados en cuanto a las esferas de resultados y las metas definidas en el Plan Estratégico a Mediano Plazo (2009-2013)	
Disminución de la aceptación social de las	La evaluación puso de relieve que ningún país había logrado un cambio sustancial a través del abordaje de las normas y prácticas tradicionales perjudiciales; tan solo 40 de 70

prácticas perjudiciales para los niños.	países señalaron haber conseguido una mejoría moderada en este terreno, mientras que el resto no había podido hacer frente aún a dichas normas.
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A pesar de que se están desarrollando y llevando a cabo numerosas iniciativas encaminadas a modificar las normas sociales con el fin de prevenir y hacer frente a la violencia contra los niños, se siguen observando múltiples carencias; entre ellas cabe citar el alcance de los problemas abordados, la cobertura geográfica y la determinación de los efectos reales de los métodos utilizados para cambiar los comportamientos. Además, no existe una diferenciación entre la violencia contra los niños socialmente aceptada y la que no cuenta con la aceptación de la sociedad. Por ejemplo, la violación infantil, el incesto y el maltrato físico gravemente debilitante son prácticas prohibidas en casi todas las culturas del mundo. Si bien UNICEF lucha con determinación contra las prácticas tradicionales dañinas, como la ablación/mutilación genital femenina, no presta tanta atención a otras formas de violencia contra los niños (que no gozan de aceptación social), como el incesto. Además, queda mucho por hacer para armonizar las necesidades específicas de las diferentes poblaciones con respecto a los tipos de maltrato infantil predominantes en los diversos contextos socioculturales. Esto se debe, en parte, a las carencias existentes en materia de cartografía y de puesta en común de los datos sobre la prevalencia de la violencia contra los niños (y de otra información pertinente) tanto en el seno de UNICEF como fuera de la organización. En resumen, UNICEF está apoyando iniciativas que persiguen modificar las normas sociales en muchos contextos, pero es preciso ampliar considerablemente estos esfuerzos y vincularlos de un modo más coherente con el enfoque global de fortalecimiento de los sistemas.

Conclusión 4: Por el momento no se han logrado resultados satisfactorios en términos de seguimiento, investigación, evaluación y utilización de los datos.

Resumen de los logros alcanzados en cuanto a las esferas de resultados y las metas definidas en el Plan Estratégico a Mediano Plazo (2009-2013)	
Al menos 75 países incluyen datos de referencia desagregados sobre indicadores de protección de la infancia en sus planes nacionales de desarrollo y en los informes que presentan al Comité de los Derechos del Niño.	Tan solo la mitad de los 18 países de la muestra habían presentado informes al Comité de los Derechos del Niño utilizando indicadores desagregados sobre protección de la infancia. No se disponía de datos exactos para los 70 países; no obstante, a partir de los diversos tipos de información recopilada, se concluyó que siguen existiendo importantes carencias.

Durante el período abarcado por esta evaluación, se han producido avances importantes en lo que respecta a la recogida y utilización de los datos sobre la violencia contra los niños. No obstante, la cantidad y calidad de los datos suelen ser inferiores a las requeridas. En particular, la recogida de datos y el seguimiento de los resultados sobre la prestación de servicios presentan debilidades y exigirán una atención considerable en el futuro. La eficacia de la

gestión de los datos y la evaluación de los resultados se ve comprometida por la falta de una definición comúnmente aceptada del concepto de violencia contra los niños y de un análisis suficientemente exhaustivo de los tipos de maltrato infantil considerados prioritarios, así como de los factores impulsores de este tipo de violencia. A pesar de que existen sólidos protocolos éticos, el rigor metodológico es variable, lo que genera dificultades desde el punto de vista de la comparabilidad de los hallazgos.

Conclusión 5: Se observan, en general, importantes resultados en la esfera de la promoción, el liderazgo y el establecimiento de alianzas, aunque también existe margen de mejora, sobre todo en algunas regiones.

La evaluación llegó a la conclusión de que, por lo general, UNICEF ha aprovechado eficazmente sus redes de colaboración para contribuir a las iniciativas, las intervenciones y la movilización de recursos con las que se pretende hacer frente a la violencia contra los niños a escala mundial. UNICEF está considerado como uno de los principales defensores de los derechos del niño en las cuestiones relacionadas con el maltrato infantil, y como un socio fiable para el desarrollo de estrategias e intervenciones adecuadas que desarrollan en esta materia los organismos gubernamentales y las organizaciones de la sociedad civil (OSC) en los cuatro países para los que se han elaborado estudios monográficos. Sin embargo, se observan variaciones muy significativas en cuanto a las funciones de promoción y liderazgo a nivel regional y nacional. El grado de colaboración en el seno de la organización es manifiestamente mejorable, y debería potenciarse también la cooperación intersectorial.

Conclusión 6: En los temas y modalidades de ejecución transversales (participación infantil, igualdad de género, discapacidad, derechos humanos y equidad) se obtuvieron resultados mixtos; cabe destacar algunos ejemplos positivos en iniciativas dirigidas a las niñas. Las deficiencias en la ejecución representan un problema fundamental.

UNICEF incluye normalmente los enfoques relacionados con los derechos humanos, la igualdad de género y la equidad en la planificación de sus programas de prevención y lucha contra el maltrato infantil. En los programas dirigidos a combatir la violencia contra las niñas se presta la máxima atención a las cuestiones de género. Los programas de ejecución nacional arrojan resultados más modestos en los temas transversales, por ejemplo en cuanto al abuso de menores de sexo masculino o las normas sociales relacionadas con la masculinidad de estos niños, los niños y niñas con discapacidad o en conflicto con la ley, o la integración de los niños pertenecientes a grupos socioeconómicos privilegiados, que también pueden sufrir maltrato infantil. Los niños son capaces de expresar sus opiniones sobre la forma de combatir este tipo de violencia, pero perciben que carecen del poder necesario para influir realmente en la adopción de decisiones y en las normas sociales. UNICEF incluye a los niños en las actividades de lucha contra el maltrato infantil, si bien de forma insuficiente.

Conclusión 7: La eficiencia en la gestión de los recursos humanos y financieros se consideró en general adecuada, dentro de los límites de los recursos disponibles. En determinadas situaciones, la capacidad del personal sigue suscitando preocupación.

En términos globales, UNICEF recibió y destinó a la lucha contra el maltrato infantil un volumen limitado de fondos. Cabe destacar que normalmente la financiación asignada se utilizó de forma correcta. En los países para los que se elaboraron estudios monográficos se identificaron varios ejemplos de gestión eficaz en función de los costos de los recursos humanos y financieros. La eficiencia de la gestión de recursos resultó particularmente evidente en la esfera —manifiestamente infrafinanciada— del seguimiento, la investigación, la evaluación y la utilización de los datos. La intensificación de la asistencia técnica selectiva a escala regional que reciben los países en relación con la identificación, el seguimiento y la elaboración de informes sobre diferentes indicadores demostró ser un factor de éxito. Hasta el momento, sin embargo, los recursos destinados al fortalecimiento de esta área en las diferentes regiones han sido insuficientes para lograr mejoras sustanciales en el plano nacional.

Conclusión 8: Es probable que la sostenibilidad y la expansión ulterior de las iniciativas de prevención y lucha contra el maltrato infantil se vean dificultadas por las restricciones presupuestarias, las limitadas capacidades de los socios y la falta de coherencia en la planificación y la definición de normas a escala mundial.

Existen pruebas que demuestran un incremento de la apropiación y el reconocimiento nacionales de la necesidad de reducir la violencia contra los niños. Se ha avanzado en el campo del fortalecimiento de las instituciones y del fomento de las capacidades, lo que sugiere que es probable que los resultados logrados en la esfera del refuerzo de los sistemas sean duraderos. No obstante, en los países en los que no existe una vinculación adecuada entre las actividades respaldadas por los proyectos y el fortalecimiento de los sistemas, la sostenibilidad de estos resultados es limitada. La planificación y asignación de funciones y responsabilidades en la lucha y la respuesta contra el maltrato infantil siguió siendo escasa en todos los sectores, tanto a nivel mundial como regional.

En ausencia de un incremento de los presupuestos nacionales o aportados por los donantes, no será posible ampliar de forma significativa las intervenciones ni el desarrollo de los sistemas, lo que a su vez incidirá negativamente en el alcance de estos en el interior de cada país. Esta es una limitación crucial para la sostenibilidad a largo plazo de los resultados logrados hasta ahora.

Recomendaciones

Con base en los hallazgos y en las conclusiones expuestos, la evaluación destaca las recomendaciones siguientes. Es preciso tener presente de que no se trata de recomendaciones independientes entre sí, sino que están interrelacionadas y deberían aplicarse en consecuencia. El texto detallado de las recomendaciones puede consultarse en el último capítulo del informe de evaluación.

Recomendaciones estratégicas de carácter general

1. La revisión de la Estrategia de protección de la infancia o del examen de mitad de período del Plan Estratégico deberían **definir la violencia contra los niños como una prioridad multisectorial en toda la organización, con una fuerte implicación a escala regional** y coordinada por la División de Programas de la Sede, en Nueva York. Las iniciativas de examen deberían hacer hincapié en a) el desarrollo de una teoría general del cambio para hacer frente a la violencia contra los niños, y b) alcanzar un acuerdo sobre los indicadores fundamentales para evaluar las medidas de prevención y lucha contra el maltrato infantil.

2. **Elaborar y poner en práctica en 2016 un plan de trabajo multisectorial dirigido a reducir el maltrato infantil en un plazo concreto.** Este plan de trabajo deberá materializarse en estrategias y planes regionales y nacionales, centrados en el fortalecimiento de la capacidad (descendiendo hasta el nivel de la prestación de servicios) y en acciones de prevención y respuesta dirigidas a los niños que presentan vulnerabilidades específicas en lo que respecta al maltrato infantil.

3. **Fortalecer la labor de promoción y la movilización de recursos específicas al contexto de que se trate, incluidos los niveles regional y mundial** –sobre la base de una mejora de la utilización de los datos y de las pruebas disponibles (véase la recomendación 7)–, en consonancia con las expectativas superiores que suscitan las acciones de UNICEF en vista de la meta 16.2 de los ODS.

Recomendaciones detalladas: Puesta en práctica del enfoque sistémico

4. **Acelerar el despliegue del enfoque centrado en el fortalecimiento de los sistemas** en lo que respecta a la prevención y la lucha contra el maltrato infantil: destinar un volumen significativo de recursos adicionales e invertir en el fomento de la capacidad del personal y los asociados; incluir programas dirigidos a poblaciones vulnerables específicas, en los que participen actores formales y otros más informales; fortalecer la prestación de servicios en todos los sectores; y mejorar la integración del enfoque basado en las normas sociales en la labor de fortalecimiento de los sistemas.

5. Volver a situar en primer plano la **prevención de la violencia**, a través, por ejemplo, del fomento de normas sociales de apoyo, la lucha contra las normas sociales dañinas, el fortalecimiento del cambio estructural en favor de la igualdad y la equidad y la reducción de los factores individuales que pueden conducir al maltrato infantil.

6. **Mejorar la atención prestada a los enfoques e intervenciones centrados en el género y la equidad** en el seno del enfoque sistémico, incluso a través de la participación de los menores en la prevención y la lucha contra el maltrato infantil y de una consideración más específica de los niños de sexo masculino y de los menores con discapacidad.

Recomendaciones detalladas: Desarrollo y utilización de bases de datos y de conocimiento

7. Institucionalizar la cartografía y las iniciativas de evaluación de los sistemas de protección de la infancia, y elaborar planes estratégicos para la obtención de datos y la realización de investigaciones de seguimiento. Promover y apoyar la utilización de protocolos prácticos que resulten útiles para medir los resultados alcanzados en el ámbito de la violencia contra los niños, con el fin de aportar información de cara a la planificación de futuros programas y de proporcionar pruebas que respalden la labor de promoción y movilización de recursos.

8. Desarrollar una plataforma de intercambio de conocimientos basada en la Web que facilite la puesta en común de información e integre las experiencias (buenas prácticas, lecciones aprendidas, etc.) de los diferentes países en lo que se refiere al fortalecimiento de los sistemas de protección de la infancia en general y al maltrato infantil en particular.

Résumé analytique

La violence contre les enfants constitue une violation grave des droits de l'enfant. Cependant, ce type de violence est omniprésent : 6 enfants sur 10 de par le monde sont régulièrement soumis à des châtiments corporels administrés par les personnes qui les élèvent et 1 fille sur 10 a été victime de viol à un moment de sa vie. D'autres formes de violence, notamment la violence psychologique et diverses formes de négligence délibérée, sont aussi courantes. De nombreuses études ont révélé que la violence porte atteinte à tous les aspects du développement de l'enfant – notamment au développement et au fonctionnement physiques, psychiques et sociaux— et qu'elle peut avoir des répercussions sur le reste de sa vie. La lutte contre la violence contre les enfants est donc l'une des grandes priorités du développement.

La protection des enfants contre la violence fait partie intégrante du mandat de l'UNICEF, une organisation guidée par la Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant. La Stratégie de l'UNICEF pour la protection de l'enfance de 2008 et les Plans stratégiques (Plan stratégique à moyen-terme, PSMT 2006-2013, et le Plan stratégique, PS 2014-2017) fournissent des stratégies et des modèles de résultats pour combattre la violence contre les enfants. Les activités de plaidoyer et programmatiques de l'UNICEF en matière de protection de l'enfance contre la violence s'étalent sur plus de deux décennies mais elles n'ont jamais fait l'objet d'une évaluation en règle.

L'UNICEF a donc commandité une évaluation indépendante afin de a) définir la pertinence des stratégies mondiales et régionales de l'UNICEF en termes de protection des enfants contre la violence et leur application au niveau national, b) définir le rôle dirigeant, l'influence et la capacité de rassemblement de l'UNICEF, et c) définir la conception, la mise en œuvre et les résultats des programmes de lutte contre la violence contre les enfants soutenus par l'UNICEF, en tenant compte à la fois des aspects prévention et intervention, d) d'identifier les modèles de programmes appliqués dans des contextes variés, et e) d'apporter des conclusions, des leçons et recommandations applicables pour aller de l'avant. L'évaluation porte essentiellement sur la violence contre les enfants dans la famille/le ménage et la communauté, en englobant les sphères tant publique que privées. On parle ici de la violence sexuelle, physique et mentale, ainsi que des pratiques traditionnelles dangereuses pour la santé, de la négligence délibérée et des mauvais traitements administrés par la personne responsable de l'enfant. L'évaluation ne couvre pas la violence auto-infligée, le travail des enfants et la prévention des mariages précoces, mais elle couvre la violence contre les enfants dans ces contextes. L'analyse des résultats dans le cadre des programmes de pays porte essentiellement sur le renforcement des systèmes, l'évolution des normes sociales, le suivi/la recherche/l'évaluation/l'utilisation des données, car il s'agit des domaines dans lesquels les résultats sont déterminants pour traiter de la violence contre les enfants dans le PSMT. Par ailleurs, cette évaluation considère la sensibilisation, le leadership et les partenariats, ainsi que l'équité comme des questions transversales.

L'évaluation apporte des éléments concrets à intégrer dans l'examen prévu de la gestion de la

Stratégie pour la protection de l'enfance et dans la mise en œuvre des objectifs en matière de protection de l'enfance figurant dans le plan stratégique 2014-2017. Par ailleurs, elle étaye le positionnement et l'orientation future de l'UNICEF concernant les Objectifs du développement durable (ODD), en particulier la cible 16.2 qui vise à « mettre un terme à la maltraitance, à l'exploitation et à la traite, et à toutes les formes de violence et de torture dont sont victimes les enfants ». Au niveau du pays, l'évaluation sous-tend l'élaboration des politiques et des programmes, ainsi que les interventions pour les années à venir.

Les données de l'évaluation ont été réunies de manière sélective aux niveaux mondial, régional et national en se fondant sur les méthodes suivantes :

- Travaux en profondeur dans le cadre de quatre études de cas menées au Bangladesh, au Ghana, au Mexique et en Tanzanie, et comprenant des visites et observations directes sur le terrain, des réunions de groupes thématiques et des entretiens avec les bénéficiaires, ainsi que des entrevues très informatives avec un large éventail de partenaires nationaux ;
- Examen détaillé de la documentation de 18 pays du programme, notamment analyse du contenu qualitatif à l'aide d'Atlas-ti ;
- Enquête en ligne portant sur 70 bureaux de pays de l'UNICEF ;
- Consultations à large base et entretiens auprès de sources clés au siège de l'UNICEF, dans deux bureaux régionaux et avec des partenaires choisis.

Un mélange de méthodes quantitatives et qualitatives a permis d'analyser les données, notamment de procéder à des analyses comparatives, ainsi que des points forts et des lacunes. Il a fallu trianguler les données réunies et analyser les contenus pour en extraire les tendances, les thématiques et les éléments communs. Les résultats de l'évaluation ont été limités par l'absence de données de référence, de données finales et de données sur l'impact. On a également constaté une pénurie de documentation indépendante telle qu'évaluation des programmes pour compléter les examens annuels et autres documents produits par l'UNICEF. La comparabilité et la généralisation ont été limitées pour certains thèmes par les spécificités nationales.

Résultats et conclusions

Il est apparu que les résultats concernant les cibles que l'UNICEF s'est fixées dans le cadre du PSMT (2006-2013) étaient variables. Bien que certains pays affichent quelques progrès, en particulier en ce qui concerne l'adoption de cadres juridiques et politiques, il reste encore beaucoup à faire pour faire reculer la violence contre les enfants. Les études révèlent divers degrés de pertinence des stratégies visant à combattre la violence contre les enfants au niveau du pays. L'évaluation a révélé que les résultats recherchés concernant le renforcement des systèmes ont été partiellement atteints, tandis que les résultats concernant l'évolution des normes sociales, ainsi que le suivi, la recherche, l'évaluation et l'utilisation des données, n'ont pas réellement été atteints. De même, malgré les efforts entrepris pour résoudre les problèmes liés à l'égalité des sexes et à l'équité, des disparités importantes restent à combler, notamment le peu d'attention accordée aux garçons et aux enfants handicapés. On a constaté que la

participation des enfants était souvent très limitée, ce qui entrave leur impact réel sur les prises de décisions. La gestion des ressources financières et humaines s'est avérée relativement efficace compte tenu des ressources disponibles. Les capacités du personnel restent préoccupantes dans certaines situations. La viabilité des résultats risque d'être affectée par des budgets limités, un manque de clarté quant aux responsabilités internes et par la faiblesse des capacités des partenaires externes.

Conclusion 1 : Les performances en matière de pertinence, d'adéquation de cohérence sont inégales. La conception du programme visant à combattre la violence contre les enfants a tenu largement compte des besoins des pays pendant la période évaluée, mais il faudra le renforcer considérablement pour répondre aux attentes liées à la cible 16.2 de l'ODD.

Les conclusions révèlent que pendant la période évaluée, la Stratégie pour la protection de l'enfance et les plans stratégiques étaient bien adaptés en tant que cadres visant à combattre la violence contre les enfants au niveau national. L'ajustement des programmes de pays sur le contexte national concernant la violence contre les enfants était généralement approprié par rapport aux priorités et aux plans nationaux, y compris les obligations internationales liées aux droits de l'enfant et à l'égalité des sexes. Les stratégies et objectifs mondiaux étaient généralement cohérents aux niveaux internes. Les indicateurs du PSMT étaient cependant peu clairs car ils n'ont pas pris suffisamment en considération tout l'éventail des problèmes à résoudre dans chacun des domaines de résultats clés relatifs à la violence contre les enfants. Le PS (2014-2017) constitue une amélioration mais le problème reste entier. La logique qui sous-tendait le programme de pays n'était pas totalement claire et cohérente, et dans la majorité des cas, elle n'était pas bien étayée. Dans l'ensemble, les travaux de l'UNICEF visant à combattre et prévenir la violence contre les enfants n'ont pas une base assez large et ne sont pas suffisamment multisectoriels pour répondre aux attentes liées à la cible 16.2 de l'ODD et pour s'inscrire dans la priorité accordée actuellement par l'UNICEF à la violence contre les enfants.

Conclusion 2 : Les résultats escomptés dans le domaine du renforcement des systèmes ont été partiellement atteints.

Examen des succès par rapport aux domaines de résultats et aux cibles du plan stratégique (PSMT, 2009-2013)	
Au moins 60 pays du programme ont identifié des secteurs par cartographie exigeant un renforcement des systèmes nationaux de protection de l'enfance.	Selon les résultats de l'évaluation, 50 pays sur les 70 inclus ont procédé à une forme quelconque de cartographie ou d'analyse des lacunes concernant le renforcement des systèmes englobant la lutte contre la violence contre les enfants. Seuls 20 d'entre eux ont procédé à une cartographie ou une analyse « substantielle » des lacunes.
Au moins 60 pays du programme, y compris ceux en proie à une situation	32 pays sur les 70 inclus dans l'évaluation déclarent avoir accomplis des progrès au moins modérés en termes d'établissement de cadres tant légaux que politiques, afin de

d'urgence, ont amélioré leurs systèmes et mis en œuvre des programmes visant à prévenir et sanctionner la violence, l'exploitation et les mauvais traitements.	réagir de manière cohérente à la violence contre les enfants, tout en apportant un soutien aux enfants dans le besoin et en élaborant des outils de renforcement des systèmes. L'ensemble des 70 pays avait entamé une forme de renforcement des systèmes dans au moins un domaine, ce qui n'est toutefois pas jugé suffisant pour améliorer les systèmes.
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Dans la majorité des pays examinés dans le cadre de cette évaluation, le changement était visible en termes de renforcement des environnements favorables. Dans ce cadre, le domaine de succès le plus vigoureux identifié dans l'évaluation concernait des activités de plaidoyer couronnées de succès en faveur de cadres juridiques et politiques améliorés. L'UNICEF était largement perçu comme un catalyseur du renforcement institutionnel et capacitaire, et plusieurs institutions ont affiché de meilleures capacités en matière de conception et de mise en œuvre de systèmes visant à prévenir et à sanctionner la violence contre les enfants. Certaines actions pilotes de prévention de la violence contre les enfants, soutenues par l'UNICEF, visant à renforcer les capacités des prestataires de services au niveau communautaire, sont prometteuses, bien que la couverture soit encore limitée.

L'évaluation a révélé que l'approche des normes sociales pour combattre la violence contre les enfants n'était pas encore totalement intégrée dans l'approche systémique générale. De même, les liens entre les structures formelles et informelles visant à prévenir la violence contre les enfants et à la combattre sont souvent faibles. D'autres lacunes importantes subsistent en termes de couverture géographique et d'aide à tous les enfants qui en ont besoin, de financement approprié des institutions nationales pertinentes, de mise en vigueur et d'application des cadres légaux et politiques, de mesure des améliorations réelles du fonctionnement des systèmes, et de résultats globaux en faveur des enfants et des familles.

Conclusion 3 : Les résultats escomptés dans le domaine de l'évolution des normes sociales n'ont pas été atteints.

Examen des succès par rapport aux domaines de résultats et aux cibles du plan stratégique (PSMT, 2009-2013)	
Réduire l'acceptation sociale des pratiques dangereuses pour les enfants.	Selon l'évaluation, aucun pays n'a enregistré des changements notables en termes de rejet des normes et pratiques traditionnelles dangereuses pour la santé ; seuls 40 pays sur 70 indiquent avoir pris des mesures peu énergiques pour combattre ces problèmes tandis que les autres n'étaient pas prêts à s'attaquer aux normes sociales (pour l'instant).

Bien que de nombreuses initiatives visant à modifier les normes sociales pour prévenir la violence contre les enfants et la combattre aient été élaborées et mises en œuvre, il reste beaucoup de lacunes à combler. Ces lacunes portent sur l'envergure des problèmes traités, la

couverture géographique et la détermination de l'impact réel des méthodes visant à entraîner un changement de comportement. Par ailleurs, la différence entre la violence contre les enfants socialement acceptable et socialement inacceptable n'est pas clairement établie. Par exemple, le viol, l'inceste et la violence physique gravement invalidante sont presque universellement interdites. L'UNICEF accorde une large priorité à la lutte contre les pratiques traditionnelles dangereuses pour la santé telles que les mutilations génitales féminines et l'excision, par contre l'attention accordée aux autres formes de violence contre les enfants (socialement inacceptables) comme l'inceste, est plus limitée. Par ailleurs, l'alignement des besoins spécifiques des populations sur les types d'actes de violences contre les enfants prévalant dans différents contextes socioculturels laisse à désirer. On peut l'expliquer en partie par les déficiences concernant la cartographie et le partage des données sur la prévalence de la violence contre les enfants et d'autres informations pertinentes au sein de l'UNICEF et à l'extérieur. En résumé, l'UNICEF soutient les initiatives relatives à l'évolution des normes sociales dans de nombreux contextes, mais il convient de les transposer à bien plus grande échelle et de les lier de façon plus cohérente aux approches générales de renforcement des systèmes.

Conclusion 4 : Les résultats escomptés en termes de suivi, recherche, évaluation et utilisation des données n'ont pas été atteints.

Examen des succès par rapport aux domaines de résultats et aux cibles du plan stratégique (PSMT, 2009-2013)	
Au moins 75 pays intègrent des données de base ventilées sur les indicateurs relatifs à la protection de l'enfance dans les plans de développement nationaux et les rapports présentés au Comité des droits de l'enfant.	La moitié seulement des 18 pays de l'échantillon a présenté des rapports au Comité des droits de l'enfant en utilisant des données ventilées relatives aux indicateurs de protection de l'enfance. Les chiffres exacts n'étaient pas disponibles dans l'ensemble des 70 pays, mais au vu des divers types d'informations réunis, on a pu en conclure que des lacunes importantes subsistaient.

Pendant la période couverte par cette évaluation, des progrès importants ont été accomplis en termes de collectes et d'utilisation de données relatives à la violence contre les enfants. Cependant, le volume et la qualité des données ne répondent souvent pas aux exigences. En particulier, le suivi de la collecte de données et des résultats concernant les prestations de services est faible et exigera une attention considérable à l'avenir. L'efficacité de la gestion des données et la mesure des résultats sont entravées par le fait qu'il n'existe pas de définition commune et acceptée par tous de la violence contre les enfants comportant une analyse suffisamment globale des types prioritaires de violence contre les enfants et des facteurs qui sous-tendent la violence. Bien que des protocoles éthiques vigoureux soient en place, la rigueur méthodologique est variable, ce qui rend difficile la comparabilité des résultats.

Conclusion 5 : Les performances concernant le plaidoyer, le leadership et les partenariats sont généralement bonnes mais elles peuvent être améliorées, surtout dans certaines régions.

Selon l'évaluation, l'UNICEF a généralement amélioré efficacement ses réseaux de partenariats susceptibles de contribuer aux initiatives, interventions et à la mobilisation des ressources visant à combattre la violence contre les enfants au niveau mondial. L'UNICEF est considéré comme le chef de file des droits de l'enfant sur cette question et comme un partenaire solide lors de l'élaboration de stratégies et d'interventions relatives à la violence contre les enfants, par les agences gouvernementales et les organisations de la société civile dans les quatre pays soumis à l'étude de cas. Cependant, des différences profondes subsistent en termes de plaidoyer et de leadership aux niveaux régionaux et nationaux. Par ailleurs, la collaboration intersectorielle au sein de l'organisation peut être améliorée.

Conclusion 6 : Les performances concernant les thèmes transversaux et les modalités de mise en œuvre (participation de l'enfant, égalité des sexes, handicaps, droits de l'homme et équité) se mêlent à quelques bons exemples de ciblage des filles. La faiblesse de la mise en œuvre est notable.

L'UNICEF intègre généralement les droits de l'homme, l'égalité des sexes et l'équité dans la planification des programmes de prévention et de lutte contre la violence à l'égard des enfants. La question des sexospécificités bénéficie de la meilleure attention dans les programmes visant à combattre la violence contre les filles. La performance concernant les thèmes transversaux dans la mise en œuvre des programmes au niveau des pays est plus limitée lorsqu'il s'agit de la violence contre les garçons et de normes sociales portant sur la masculinité des garçons, les enfants handicapés, les enfants en conflit avec la loi et l'intégration des enfants appartenant à des groupes socioéconomiques privilégiés qui peuvent aussi être victimes de violence. Les enfants peuvent exprimer leur opinion sur la manière de combattre la violence contre les enfants mais ils ont le sentiment qu'ils ne pèsent pas sur les prises de décisions et ne font pas évoluer les normes sociales. Les enfants participent, mais pas suffisamment, aux activités de l'UNICEF visant à combattre la violence contre les enfants.

Conclusion 7 : Il apparaît que la gestion des ressources financières et humaines s'est généralement avérée efficace, dans la limite des ressources disponibles. Les capacités du personnel continuent à poser problème dans certaines situations.

L'UNICEF a globalement reçu et alloué des ressources limitées à la lutte contre la violence contre les enfants. Les fonds alloués ont généralement été bien utilisés. Dans les pays inclus dans l'étude de cas, plusieurs exemples de gestion bien faite des financements et des ressources humaines ont été identifiés. L'efficacité de la gestion des ressources était particulièrement évidente dans le domaine – qui manque cruellement de fonds – du suivi, de la recherche, de l'évaluation et de l'utilisation des données. Le renforcement de l'appui technique ciblant le niveau régional aux pays pour l'identification d'indicateurs, le suivi et l'établissement des rapports est un facteur du succès. Cependant, jusqu'à présent, les ressources humaines

affectées au niveau régional pour renforcer ce secteur n'ont pas permis d'apporter des améliorations notables au niveau national.

Conclusion 8 : La viabilité et l'élargissement des mesures de prévention et de lutte contre la violence à l'égard des enfants risquent d'être entravés par la faiblesse des budgets, les capacités limitées des partenaires et l'absence de cohérence de la planification et de l'établissement de normes mondiales.

Les pays se sentent concernés et reconnaissent de plus en plus la nécessité de faire reculer la violence contre les enfants. Des progrès ont été accomplis en matière de renforcement des institutions et des capacités, ce qui permet de penser que les résultats atteints concernant le renforcement des systèmes ont de bonnes chances d'être durables. Cependant, dans les pays où les activités soutenues par le projet ne sont pas bien reliées au renforcement des systèmes, leur viabilité est limitée. La planification et l'attribution de rôles et de responsabilités pour prévenir et réprimer la violence contre les enfants dans tous les secteurs restent limitées au niveau mondial comme au niveau régional.

Sans augmentation budgétaire aux niveaux national et des donateurs, l'élargissement des interventions et l'établissement de systèmes, et la couverture qui en résultera dans les pays, resteront limités, ce qui constitue une entrave importante à la durabilité des résultats accomplis.

Recommandations

Les résultats et les conclusions de l'évaluation ont permis de faire les recommandations ci-dessous. Il convient de noter que ces recommandations ne doivent pas être suivies indépendamment mais qu'elles font un tout et doivent être appliquées comme telles. Le texte détaillé des recommandations figure au dernier chapitre du rapport d'évaluation.

Recommandations stratégiques générales

1. Il convient de faire en sorte que la révision de la Stratégie pour la protection de l'enfance et que l'examen à moyen-terme du Plan stratégique fasse de la **violence contre les enfants une priorité multisectorielle au niveau de l'organisation, bénéficiant d'un fort engagement au niveau régional**, coordonné par la Division des programmes au siège de New York. Les examens doivent mettre l'accent sur a) l'élaboration d'une théorie du changement globale permettant de combattre la violence contre les enfants et b) un accord sur des indicateurs de base permettant de mesurer la prévention et la lutte contre la violence à l'égard des enfants.

2. **En 2016, élaborer et lancer une feuille de route multisectorielle visant à faire reculer la violence contre les enfants selon un calendrier défini.** Cette feuille de route devra se traduire en stratégies et plans spécifiques à la région et aux pays, en privilégiant le renforcement des capacités jusqu'au niveau inférieur des prestations de services, ainsi que la prévention et les interventions en faveur des enfants plus spécifiquement vulnérables à la violence.

3. Renforcer le plaidoyer et une mobilisation des ressources spécifiques au contexte, notamment aux niveaux régional et mondial – en prenant appui sur les conclusions et les données (voir recommandation 7) – pour que l'action de l'UNICEF puisse répondre aux attentes liées à la cible 16.2 de l'UNICEF.

Recommandations détaillées : Mettre en opération l'approche systémique

4. Accélérer la mise en œuvre de l'approche de renforcement des systèmes de prévention et de lutte contre la violence à l'égard des enfants : allouer des ressources supplémentaires importantes et investir dans le renforcement des capacités du personnel et des partenaires ; inclure des programmes destinés à des populations vulnérables spécifiques avec la participation d'acteurs formels et moins formels ; renforcer les prestations de services dans tous les secteurs ; et améliorer l'intégration des normes sociales dans les travaux de renforcement des systèmes.

5. Renouveler la priorité accordée à la prévention de la violence, notamment en encourageant des normes sociales positives, en combattant celles qui sont néfastes, en renforçant les changements structurels en faveur de l'égalité et de l'équité et en réduisant les facteurs personnels qui déclenchent la violence contre les enfants.

6. Renforcer la priorité accordée à l'égalité des sexes et à l'équité et les interventions dans l'approche systémique générale, notamment grâce à la participation des enfants à la prévention et à la lutte contre la violence à l'égard des enfants et en ciblant plus précisément les garçons et les enfants handicapés.

Recommandations détaillées : données, développement fondé sur les connaissances et utilisation

7. Institutionnaliser la cartographie des systèmes de protection de l'enfance et les exercices d'évaluation et planifier stratégiquement les recherches sur le suivi et les initiatives liées aux données. Promouvoir et soutenir les protocoles pratiques permettant de mesurer les résultats de la lutte contre la violence à l'égard des enfants pour les intégrer dans la planification des futurs programmes et disposer d'une base d'informations utiles pour le plaidoyer et la mobilisation de ressources.

8. Élaborer une plateforme de mise en réseau des connaissances informatiques facilitant le partage d'informations et intégrant les expériences (bonnes pratiques, leçons apprises) des pays concernant le renforcement des systèmes de protection de l'enfance, en accordant une attention particulière à la violence contre les enfants.

1 Introduction

Violence against children (VAC) is a serious violation of child rights. UNICEF recently prepared an analysis citing shocking statistics¹ from in-depth studies carried out across the world. The analysis indicates that 6 in 10 children worldwide are victims of repeated physical violence and 120,000,000 girls have experienced forced intercourse or other forced sexual acts.² Other forms of violence, including mental violence and various forms of deliberate neglect³ are also common. Many studies have shown that violence is detrimental to all aspects of a child's growth – including physical, psychological and social development and functioning – and can have lifelong repercussions.⁴ Reducing VAC is thus a major development challenge.⁵

Levels of income, age and gender are important factors in understanding the dynamics behind violence and planning effective actions against VAC. In the case of homicide rates, for instance, high-income levels and low inequality levels also lead to low homicide rates, while in low- and middle-income countries and in those with high levels of inequality, significant variations in homicide rates are found.⁶ Death is, of course, the extreme consequence of violence. UNICEF's recent report, *Hidden in Plain Sight*,⁷ reveals that as recently as 2012, violence was one of the leading causes of preventable deaths among adolescents (from 9 to 20 years).⁸ Where children live greatly influences the probability of their being victims: more than half of all young homicide victims worldwide were killed in 10 countries.⁹ It should be noted, however, and as will be discussed in the current report, VAC is not exclusively linked to poverty.

Research shows that violence is detrimental to all aspects of a child's growth. In the case of sexual violence, not only it is commonly associated with multiple forms of violence and exploitation that lead to poly-victimization (i.e., sexual and commercial exploitation, physical and psychological abuse), but it is also very difficult to detect and prevent due to underreporting, often linked to the stigma that sexual abuse generates. "...research has shown that between 30 and 80 per cent of victims do not disclose experiences of childhood sexual abuse until adulthood²⁹, while many others (a number impossible to quantify) remain silent for their entire lives. Some studies have suggested that boys are even less likely than girls to report incidents of sexual abuse."¹⁰ Data from 40 low- and middle-income countries indicate that, despite the major differences across countries, forced sexual intercourse is not uncommon among adolescents aged 15 to 19 years, affecting as many as 22 per cent in some countries.

It is sadly not surprising that violent discipline is the most common form of VAC. On average,

¹ United Nations Children's Fund, *Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children*, UNICEF, New York, 2014.

² Ibid.

³ Such as withholding food and/or medical care.

⁴ *Hidden in Plain Sight*

⁵ United Nations Children's Fund, 2005. *The UNICEF medium-term strategic plan, 2006-2009*. Investing in Children: the UNICEF contribution to poverty reduction and the Millennium Summit agenda. New York: UNICEF. This Plan was later extended to 2013.

⁶ As an example, in 7 countries in Latin America homicide is the highest cause of mortality for adolescent boys.

⁷ *Hidden in Plain Sight*

⁸ *Hidden in Plain Sight*

⁹ Nigeria, Brazil, India, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mexico, Ethiopia, United States, Pakistan, Colombia, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

¹⁰ *Hidden in Plain Sight*, pp. 62–63.

about four in five children between the ages of 2 and 14 are subjected to some kind of violent discipline in the home, with rates ranging from 45 to 95 per cent in 62 countries analysed. All children are at risk of violent discipline methods: for example, in all of the countries in both sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa, more than 7 in 10 children aged 2 to 14 years are disciplined in a violent manner.¹¹ In Latin America and the Caribbean and in Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS), an average of 50 per cent of children are exposed to violent discipline, and this prevalence is comparable to that of some high-income countries.

The recent report of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) on VAC¹² notes that since the publication of the UN study on VAC in 2006,¹³ some progress has been made, including “a growing commitment to the prevention and elimination of violence at the international, regional and national levels”. The SRSG underlines that the global community’s “understanding of how and why children are exposed to violence has deepened, and [that] strategic actions are underway in several countries to translate this knowledge into effective protection. Significant normative, policy and institutional developments have advanced national implementation of child protection measures.” Nonetheless, challenges exist worldwide, notably, lack of investment in prevention, fragmented or non-existent national strategies, uncoordinated policy interventions, unconsolidated and poorly-enforced legislation, inadequate attention to the gender perspective, insufficient focus on the situation of particularly vulnerable children, inadequate recognition of children’s cumulative exposure to violence, low levels of investment in child-sensitive mechanisms, insufficient recovery and reintegration services, and scarce data and research.

Protecting children from violence is central to UNICEF’s mandate as an organization guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).¹⁴ UNICEF strives to establish children’s rights as enduring ethical principles and to institute international standards of behaviour towards children. The agency works towards ensuring protection for the most disadvantaged children – victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities.

UNICEF’s advocacy and programme response to protecting children from violence spans more than two decades, but has never been comprehensively evaluated. A synthesis review of UNICEF programme evaluations (UNICEF Evaluation Office 2012)¹⁵ reported weaknesses in the coverage and quality of evaluations of UNICEF’s VAC programme interventions. The review consequently identified a need for further evaluation, including a more systematic analysis of UNICEF’s work on advocacy, systems strengthening and social norms. UNICEF therefore commissioned an independent evaluation aimed at assessing the organization’s strategies and

¹¹ Based on analysis of exposure to violence during the month prior to the collection of data.

¹² Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, *Toward a World Free from Violence: Global survey on violence against children*, SRSG, New York, 2013.

¹³ Pinheiro, Paulo Sérgio, *World Report on Violence Against Children*, 2006, <<http://unviolencestudy.org>>.

¹⁴ United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990, <www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>, accessed 20 May 2014.

¹⁵ United Nations Children’s Fund Evaluation Office, *Protecting Children from Violence: A synthesis of evaluation findings*, UNICEF, New York, 2012, p. 168.

programme performance in protecting children from violence. Consequently, the current report, identifying successes and strengths as well as failures and gaps, aims to help UNICEF and its partners in identifying effective ways to strengthen strategies and action at all levels to protect children from violence.¹⁶

UNICEF's Child Protection Strategy (CP Strategy) (2008)¹⁷ and strategic plans, in particular the 2006-2013 medium-term strategic plan [MTSP (2006-2013)],¹⁸ provide organizational strategies and results frameworks to address VAC. This comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF's strategies and programme performance focuses on the time period from 2009-2013. The evaluation is formative in nature as the findings are expected to feed into the implementation of UNICEF's 2014-2017 strategic plan [SP (2014-2017)], which builds on the last MTSP.

The MTSP (2006-2013) outcome area which encompasses a response to VAC focuses on placing "the protection of children from violence, exploitation and abuse more prominently on the development and humanitarian agendas of Governments, and make the protective environment more effective for all children."¹⁹ The CP Strategy (2008) has two key strategic aims related to VAC. The first stresses the development of appropriate child protection systems as related to VAC. The second aim is to support social norms to enhance the implementation of the CRC, as related to VAC.

1.1 Evaluation purpose

The broad purpose of the evaluation is to contribute towards meeting UNICEF's needs for accountability, learning and strengthening performance with respect to its work on violence against children and, in particular, to provide sound evaluation evidence and conclusions to inform UNICEF's future strategies and programmes in this area. The evaluation conclusions and recommendations will serve as inputs to a management review of the CP Strategy, scheduled for 2016, as well as to enhance implementation of UNICEF's SP. Furthermore, the evaluation results will inform UNICEF's positioning in operationalising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular SDG target 16.2 that reads "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children".²⁰ At the country level, the evaluation is expected to inform country-level programme development and response over the coming years.

The evaluation had five main objectives:

- 1) Assessing UNICEF's leadership, leveraging and convening role at the global, regional and country levels in protecting children from violence.

¹⁶ United Nations Children's Fund, *Protecting Children from Violence: A comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF's strategies and programme performance*, Terms of Reference, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

¹⁷ United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF Child Protection Strategy, UNICEF, New York, 2008.

¹⁸ The MTSP (2006-2009) was updated and extended to 2013. Version 1 to 2009: United Nations Children's Fund (2005) *The UNICEF Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP), 2006-2009: Investing in children – the UNICEF contribution to poverty reduction and the Millennium Summit Agenda*, E/ICEF/2005/11, UNICEF, New York, 2005. New version valid to 2013: United Nations Children's Fund, 'Revised Annexes to Medium Term Strategic Plan, Annex 1: Results framework by focus area', UNICEF, New York, 2012.

¹⁹ This statement is the overarching Strategic Intent of the MTSP (2006-2013) as per the revisions: United Nations Children's Fund, 'Revised Annexes to Medium Term Strategic Plan, Annex 1: Results framework by focus area', UNICEF, New York, 2012, p. 25.

²⁰ United Nations, Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal.html>>

- 2) Assessing the adequacy of UNICEF's global and regional strategies in protecting children against violence and their application at the national level, considering aspects of both prevention and response, and whether they are sufficiently focused on areas where VAC is widely prevalent.
- 3) Assessing the design, implementation and results of UNICEF-supported programmes addressing VAC, considering aspects of both prevention and response, focusing on countries where VAC is a major concern, and taking account of the range of contexts in which children are victims of violence.
- 4) Identifying dominant theories of change (programme models) set out in global and regional strategies and assessing the extent to which these are applied at the country level to protect children from violence, and to what extent they are based on evidence from programme experience of effective approaches to protecting children from violence in various contexts.
- 5) Providing forward-looking conclusions, lessons and actionable recommendations to strengthen UNICEF's leadership and advocacy, organizational policies and strategies, programme response and partnerships for addressing VAC in various settings.

The evaluation has an important formative and forward-looking orientation to feed into improved future strategies and programme performance.

1.2 Evaluation report structure

The report is composed of eight main chapters:

- The introduction (Chapter 1) provides an overview of the evaluation purpose, scope and process;
- Chapter 2 details the evaluation approach and methodology;
- Chapter 3 analyses the findings on relevance and coherence of programming on VAC;
- Chapter 4 assesses the effectiveness of systems strengthening, social norms change, and monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data. An analysis of UNICEF's leadership and partnership roles is also included;
- Chapter 5 focuses on the effectiveness of cross-cutting strategies, including gender, equity and child participation;
- Chapter 6 deals with efficiency issues in programme implementation and in obtaining results;
- Chapter 7 provides an analysis of the potential sustainability and scaling up of results;
- Conclusions and recommendations, based on the findings described in the preceding chapters, are included in Chapter 8.

1.3 Evaluation scope

The evaluation analyses VAC-related strategies and results of the MTSP (2006-2013) and the global CP Strategy (2008) as detailed in Section 1.3.1 and 1.3.2.

It is important to stress that the scope of the evaluation does not cover the overall UNICEF child protection strategies, but more specifically relates to VAC within the implementation of these child protection strategies. The evaluation does not assess UNICEF's work on child protection in the context of emergencies and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), which were addressed by other global corporate-level evaluations.²¹ Where appropriate, the analysis draws from these evaluations, especially the FGM/C evaluation which falls within the scope of the present exercise.

1.3.1 VAC in MTSP (2006-2013)

The evaluation analyses specific key result areas (KRAs) within the MTSP (2006-2013) Focus Area 4: Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse.

MTSP (2006-2013) KRAs relevant to the current evaluation are as follows:²²

- **KRA 1:** Better child protection systems that include national laws, policies and services across sectors, in particular justice and social protection, to protect all children from violence, exploitation and abuse.²³
- **KRA 2:** Dialogue stimulated on social networks and nationally that reinforces social conventions, norms and values that favour the prevention of violence, exploitation, abuse and unnecessary separation for all children and lead to questioning of child rights' violations, including harmful conventions and practices, while ensuring respect for the views of children and strengthening of young people's resilience.
- **KRA 4:** Improved country-level monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data on child protection.²⁴

The evaluation does not, however, include all organizational targets, such as those related to general actions on child labour and birth registration within civil registration and vital statistics.

²¹ UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Evaluation, *UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating change 2008-2012*, Vol 1-2, UNFPA-UNICEF, New York, 2013; United Nations Children's Fund, *Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies: Synthesis report*, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

²² The KRAs for Focus Area 4 were updated in 2010 as part of the updating of the MTSP results framework. See United Nations Children's Fund, 'Updated Annexes to the Medium-Term Strategic Plan', UNICEF, New York, 2010.

²³ In the 2009, 2010 and 2011 Annual Thematic Reports on Focus Area 4, KRA1 is defined as 'Better national laws, policies, regulations and services across sectors to improve child protection outcomes, in particular justice for children, social protection systems, and services in place to protect, reach and serve all children, notably those identified as vulnerable to harm, marginalized, or in contact with the law'.

²⁴ Until 2012, KRA 4 was: 'Children are better served by justice systems which ensure greater protection for them as victims, witnesses and offenders'. United Nations Children's Fund, *The UNICEF Medium-Term Strategic Plan, 2006-2009: Investing in children – the UNICEF contribution to poverty reduction and the Millennium Summit agenda*, E/ICEF/2005/11, Annex I, July 2005, p. 84. The original MTSP also included a fifth KRA, dropped in all subsequent revisions: 'Key result area 5: Children and families identified as vulnerable are reached by key community and government services aimed at reducing their marginalization'. Ibid., p. 86.

1.3.2 CP Strategy (2008) and overlapping areas of relevance in MTSP (2006-2013)

The strategic aim of the CP Strategy (2008) is to enhance child protection through strengthening national child protection systems and promoting social norms that are highly relevant to addressing VAC. Regarding child protection systems, strategic aims to incorporate child protection into national and decentralized planning processes and ensuring that social protection reform contributes to child protection outcomes are included. The child protection strategy also emphasizes the promotion of justice for children within the Rule of Law agenda, enhancing coordination among child protection system actors and strengthening the social welfare sector.

Regarding social norms, key strategic actions are oriented towards knowledge and data collection, the protective role of families and communities, meaningful child participation and empowerment, public education and social dialogue. These strategic actions are very well aligned with elements of the MTSP (2006-2013).

1.3.3 VAC in UNICEF SP (2014-2017)

The UNICEF SP (2014-2017)²⁵ has incorporated key findings, recommendations and lessons learnt from the implementation of the MTSP (2006-2009) (extended until 2013), specifically from the 2012 end-of-cycle review of the UNICEF MTSP.²⁶ It is structured around seven outcomes²⁷ encompassing major aspects of child well-being. Child protection is Outcome 6, where the impact-level result is defined as follows: “*Improved and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children*”. Equity is given prominence in the SP (2014-2017). The strategic approach to achieve the impact-level result emphasizes the importance of strengthening child protection systems and supporting social norms for improved protection of children.

1.3.4 Delimitations of VAC definition within the evaluation scope

UNICEF uses the definition of VAC derived from the CRC, Article 19: “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child”.²⁸ Discussions within the Evaluation Team and the Evaluation Advisory Group led the team to consider a definition adapted from the 2002 World Health Organization (WHO)²⁹ definition of violence. The WHO definition of violence reads as follows, “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against

²⁵ United Nations Children's Fund, *The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017*, E/ICEF/2013/21, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

²⁶ United Nations Children's Fund, Report on the end-of-cycle review of the medium-term strategic plan 2006-2013, E/ICEF/2013/4, 2012, <www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2013-4-End-of-cycle_review-MTSP-ODS-English.pdf>

²⁷ 1) Health; 2) HIV/AIDS; 3) Water; 4) Nutrition; 5) Education; 6) Child Protection; and 7) Social inclusion.

²⁸ United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990, <www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>, accessed 20 May 2014.

²⁹ World Health Organization, *World Report on Violence and Health: Summary*, WHO, Geneva, 2002, p. 4

a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”³⁰

This evaluation concentrates on VAC in the **family/household** and the **community**, including both the public and the private spheres. This includes:

- Sexual violence³¹ of all types: incest; abuse in communities, schools, residential care; commercial sexual exploitation.
- Physical violence: beatings and other forms of domestic violence; corporal punishment in schools and residential care; infanticide.
- Mental violence: humiliating threats and discipline; bullying; other degrading treatment; forcing children to perpetrate acts of violence in any setting.
- Harmful traditional practices, which may include sexual, physical and/or mental violence such as FGM/C (based on secondary data), honour crimes, abuse of children with disabilities in families and communities.
- Deliberate neglect and/or maltreatment by the caregiver, including deliberate failure to meet children’s basic physical and emotional needs, protect them from danger, and/or obtain medical or other services despite financial or other means available.³²

The evaluation does not cover self-inflicted violence, child labour and child marriage, but does include VAC *within* these settings. The recent UNICEF publication analysing statistics on VAC across the world uses the same definition adopted for the current evaluation.³³ The focus includes violence in schools (community) and also violence perpetrated on children *within* the workplace, child marriage or other institutions such as residential care facilities. While the evaluation team recognizes that birth registration is an important part of child protection systems, it is not specifically evaluated in the current analysis. Birth registration contributes to, for example, improving the case management of children who have experienced violence. As agreed during the evaluation inception period, the subject of birth registration deserves a deeper focus and should thus be excluded from this already broad evaluation.

While the MTSP (2006-2013) did not explicitly include deliberate neglect, work during the inception period indicated that deliberate neglect is a major VAC issue. Children may, for example, not be fed as a form of punishment while children with disabilities may be hidden in dark rooms.³⁴ Deliberate neglect as an area within VAC is therefore included in the current analysis.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Sexual violence would include all forms of abuse including rape, molestation, and involving children in commercial sexual exploitation (prostitution, pornography of all types).

³² UN General Assembly, Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children, Sixty-first session, United Nations, New York, 2006.

³³ United Nations Children's Fund, *Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children*, UNICEF, New York, 2014.

³⁴ African Child Policy Forum, *The African Report on Violence Against Children*, ACPf, Addis Ababa, 2014.

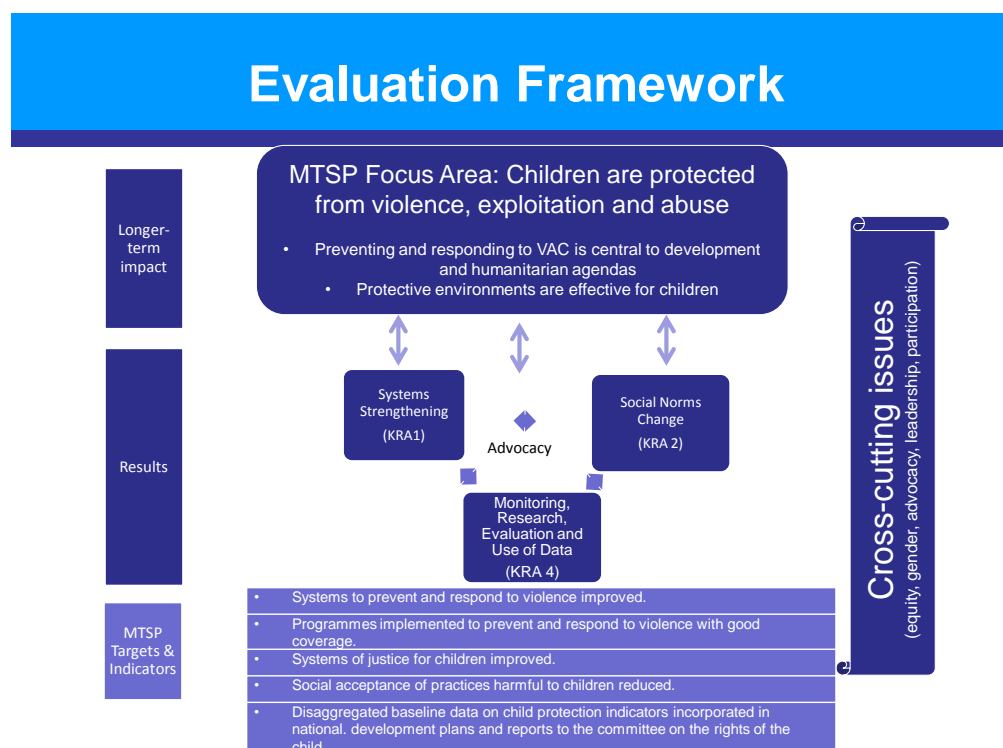
2 Evaluation approach and methodology

This chapter elaborates upon the overall approach to the evaluation, lists the evaluation questions and describes the methods and tools for data collection and data analysis.

2.1 Evaluation framework

The overall evaluation framework used for this evaluation brings together the VAC-related elements of the MTSP (2006-2013) and the CP Strategy (2008). Based on these documents, the evaluation focuses on three core areas of results: 1) systems strengthening; 2) social norms change; and 3) monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data to bring about change in both prevention and response. Cross-cutting issues, namely, equity, gender, advocacy, leadership and participation, are considered throughout the evaluation (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Evaluation framework



While the framework presents the key elements in separate boxes, it is important to emphasize that the evaluation does not follow a strictly linear logic. The evaluation examines monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data and how they contribute to social norms change and systems strengthening for short-term and long-term impact on VAC.

2.1.1 Evaluation questions and criteria

The core EQs are based on the evaluation framework (Figure 1). They apply OECD/DAC³⁵ evaluation criteria and relate closely to the Terms of Reference requirements. In accordance with the evaluation framework, the EQs integrate focus on the extent to which a systems strengthening approach, emphasis on social norms, and use of data contribute to preventing and responding to VAC. They also include attention to the cross-cutting elements of advocacy, equity, gender, leadership and participation indicated in the evaluation framework. While there are some questions that are specific to these cross-cutting elements, the evaluation considers them carefully within each EQ.

Table 1: Evaluation questions and corresponding evaluation criteria

Evaluation question	Evaluation criteria
EQ 1: How relevant, appropriate and coherent is UNICEF's global CP Strategy and the related strategies and results proposed in the MTSP (2009-2013) with respect to protecting children against violence?	Relevance, coherence: The extent to which objectives are consistent with global priorities, country needs, and partners' and donors' policies; the extent to which the approach is strategic.
EQ 2: How relevant and coherent is the Theory of Change (or programme logic) of the global and regional strategies and plans? And of the country programmes?	Relevance, coherence: The extent to which strategies and country programmes are logical and consistent at each level.
EQ 3: How effective have UNICEF-supported country child protection programmes been in terms of implementation processes and programme results with regard to VAC?	Effectiveness: The extent to which the objectives were achieved –or are expected to be achieved – taking into account their relative importance. The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
EQ 4: How effective have UNICEF's advocacy, leadership, leveraging, convening and partnership roles been at the global, regional and country levels in protecting children from violence?	Effectiveness: The extent to which the capacities and arrangements put in place support the reduction of VAC.
EQ 5: How effectively have the VAC-related country child protection programmes integrated key cross-cutting themes and implementation modalities, including gender equality, disabilities, other human rights and equity considerations such as child	Relevance, effectiveness with respect to cross-cutting themes and modalities.

³⁵ Development Assistance Committee, 'Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management', Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, 2002, <www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/54/35336188.pdf> accessed 25 May 2014.

Evaluation question	Evaluation criteria
participation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and feedback into policy and decisions?	
EQ 6: How efficient have UNICEF's organizational policies, strategies and country programme management practices been in obtaining results with regard to VAC at the country level?	Efficiency and effectiveness (results): The extent to which economic resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results. The extent to which the allocated human, financial and organisational resources are adequate to achieve stated objectives.
EQ 7: To what extent are VAC programme implementation processes and results sustainable and can they be scaled up over the immediate, medium and long term?	Medium and potential long-term impact, sustainability: The strategic orientation of the intervention towards making a significant contribution to broader, long-term, sustainable development changes; the likelihood that the results of an intervention are durable and can be maintained or even scaled up and replicated by intervention partners.

The evaluation matrix in Annex 3, Volume II, includes the sub-EQs, indicators, and data sources.

2.2 Methods and tools used for data collection and analysis

The evaluation employed a mixed methods approach to the collection and analysis of data. Qualitative data collection and analysis allowed for an in-depth understanding and illustration of key issues, while quantitative data collection and analysis helped identify overall trends and ensure the integration of a broad spectrum of information and data. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used in parallel. The use of mixed methods and triangulation of findings from various sources enhances the quality and credibility of findings and conclusions.

Furthermore, the wide geographical coverage of the evaluation, along with the involvement of a large array of stakeholders, required a clear strategy to ensure that the quality of data collected enabled sound analysis and delivery of solid conclusions. For this reason the approach included:

- i) creating comprehensive guidelines and clear checklists on gathering data;
- ii) testing these tools through simulation within the team and during the first country case study visit;
- iii) developing a common understanding among all team members and fine-tuning the tools through continuous teamwork sessions;

- iv) providing guidelines and formats for data reporting, which focus on reducing subjectivity in reporting data and supporting a team member's judgments with solid evidence and a possible indication of the limits of the data;
- v) assuring the respondents of confidentiality so as to enable them to speak freely;
- vi) triangulating the information; and
- vii) appropriate planning of field visits and their respective agendas.

2.2.1 Data collection

Five main methods were employed to secure and assemble information and data:

- *Document and literature review:* Qualitative content analysis of secondary documentation, including securing materials via web searches, from the Evaluation Office, from regional and country offices, and from other sources throughout the evaluation period. Attention was paid to innovations that were fairly recent for UNICEF, particularly the adoption of a theory of change approach to programme design and implementation, and Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES). The original Inception Report included a wealth of information, which was also carefully reviewed. Well over 300 documents were carefully reviewed. Statistical data related to VAC available at the global, regional and country levels (with focus on the 18 countries that were the object of the evaluation) were consulted and analysed.
- *Consultations and key informant interviews:* A range of meetings were held at the global, regional and country levels with UNICEF, partner organizations, governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), and others. Hundreds of activists, officials and UNICEF officers were interviewed as part of a consultative process. A semi-structured interview tool was used. Patterns and trends emerging from key informant interviews were analysed. Data on consultations was recorded in detail and analysed using coding methods and ATLAS.ti³⁶ software.
- *Fieldwork in four countries:* Fieldwork was conducted in the four case study countries. Two team members went to each of the case study countries. Participant observation, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions were conducted in-country with children, parents and caregivers, community activists, local leaders and officials, and CSOs, including UNICEF implementing partners. Semi-structured tools were employed at this level, comprising a focus group discussion instrument and a key informant interview instrument, adapted to the particular interviewee. Hundreds of children, adults and officers were consulted.
- *Desk study of 14 countries:* Fourteen countries were selected for desk studies. A semi-structured tool was sent to each of these countries with clear instructions on completion. Of the 14, 13 completed the desk review narrative form (the exception was Nepal). Where necessary, Skype follow-up interviews were held (a total of four Skype discussions were held to fill gaps in this regard).
- *Online survey of UNICEF programme countries:* An online survey was developed and

³⁶ ATLAS.ti, 2014, <<http://atlasti.com>>, accessed June 2014.

circulated by the Evaluation Office to all UNICEF country offices with the exception of those operating in emergency situations.³⁷ Of these, 70 countries responded with completed forms.

The selection of 18 countries and 2 regional offices was based on a range of key criteria. These included ensuring diversity in country size, population, regional exposure, state fragility and child protection-VAC programme experience in the sample. When selecting the two regional offices, i.e., the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) in Nairobi, Kenya, and the East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) based in Bangkok, Thailand, other factors were also taken into account. Notably, the share of programme assistance for MTSP Focus Area 4; and evidence of a body of knowledge on child protection.

Figure 2: Case study and desk review countries map³⁸



Legend: Dark blue = case study countries; light blue = desk review countries

The online survey questionnaire relied heavily on attitudinal scale statements to allow easy completion, with space provided for comments. Provision was also made for attachments from countries participating in the online survey. A total of 70 countries responded to the online survey. All regions were well represented.

For country case studies, key informant interviews were based on a semi-structured approach to collect in-depth information on key issues. Focus group discussions conducted at the community level employed a variety of methods. These included discussions, games and exercises (see Annex 7 for examples) and use of the Most Significant Change approach. In some cases less homogeneous groups (such as child protection committees) were split into

³⁷ In January 2015, this included about 140 country offices. Therefore, the response rate was about 50 per cent.

³⁸ See Annex 4 for details on the selection of the desk review and case study countries.

sub-groups for discussion purposes on subjects of targeted interest. The focus group discussions endeavoured to collect data on programme successes, challenges, gaps, and evidence of social norms change in the community via the voices of children and other community members. The aim was to enable triangulation of evidence in order to derive recommendations to improve efforts to address VAC.

The evaluation team established contact with the country team in each case study country well ahead of the proposed travel dates. A special guide was developed introducing the evaluation, explaining the needed documentation and the methodologies for selecting sites for evaluation visits, key informants and types of focus groups.³⁹ These preparatory interactions with the country teams helped secure a range of documentation. Additional literature searches were conducted and websites consulted including with guidance from the country offices. On arrival in each case study country, the evaluation team obtained several additional documents from the child protection section, including resources available only on-site.

2.2.2 Identification of interviewees and focus group participants

The evaluation used purposive sampling to select the individuals to be included in interviews and focus groups in the case study countries. Purposive sampling involves selecting respondents based on a series of strategic choices to ensure that the EQs can be usefully answered. Interviewees and other respondents were partially selected on the basis of their ability to provide credible information in response to the EQs. Other criteria included gender balance, and representation of government, United Nations, and international and national CSOs. Focus groups were also selected using purposive sampling at the community level with child protection committees and other groups of relevant stakeholders, including parents and children.

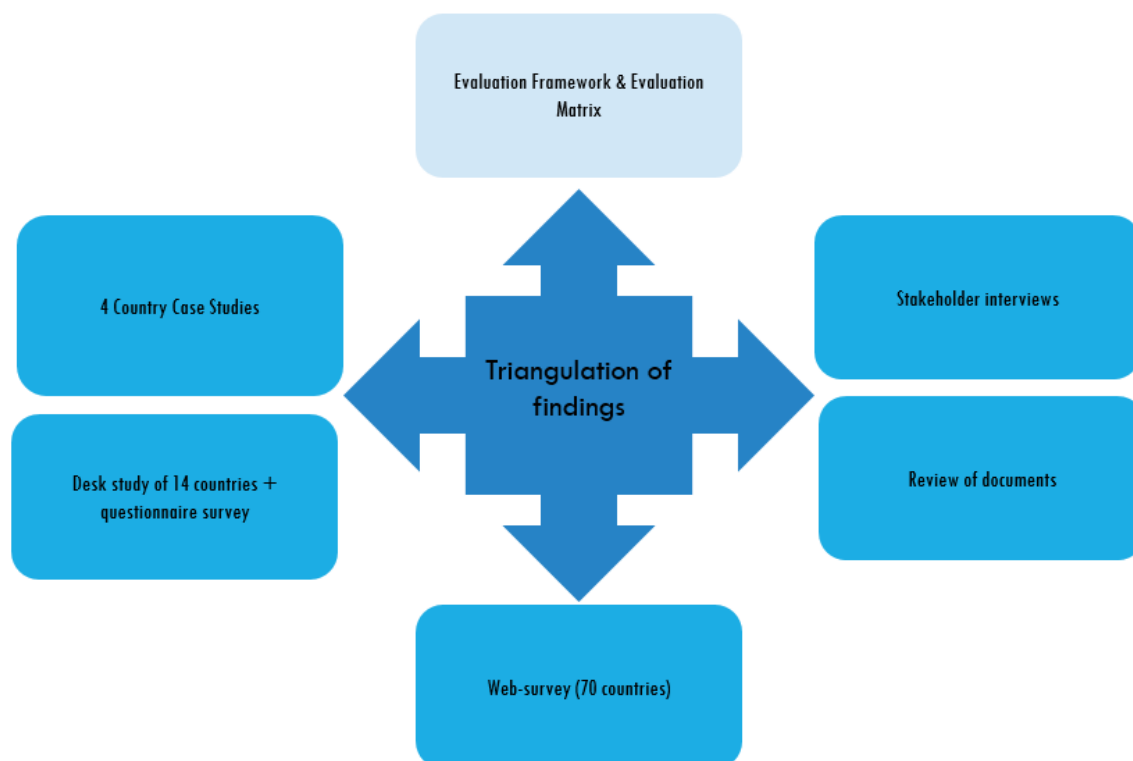
At the global and regional levels, interviewees comprised child protection specialists, members of the Evaluation Advisory Group, and specialists in other areas such as education, health, planning and monitoring and evaluation. Interviewing specialists from fields other than child protection was important in order to determine the extent to which VAC is integrated into other UNICEF focus areas. At the country level, consultations involved a range of agencies and activists dealing with varied aspects of child protection, including human rights agencies, implementing partners, policymakers, and a range of CSOs.

³⁹ See Annex 7 for a sample of the guide.

2.2.3 Sources of data

As described in the previous sections, a wide variety of data sources were used during the evaluation.

Figure 3: Sources of data



The evaluation matrix in Annex 3 includes a detailed list of specific data types and a mapping of stakeholders included in the data gathering. The table below provides a snapshot of the main sources of data used at the various levels of the evaluation.

Table 2: Data collected to answer the EQs

Overall analysis:

Global and regional strategic planning documents and reports with VAC-related components. These include strategy documents, bi-annual office management plans, UNICEF global annual reports, and UNICEF and international research sources on the prevalence of VAC. Key informant interviews with UNICEF officials at the global and regional level were also conducted. Cooperation protocols, agreements, and joint programmes with United Nations Agencies and international non-governmental organizations were also consulted.

Four country case studies:

Review of VAC-related strategies and documents, including research on VAC, as relevant to countries. Mid-term reviews and annual reports were analysed, including reports on programme expenditure by country. Key informant interviews were conducted with UNICEF country office directors and managers, Child Protection Section staff, and staff of other sections to determine collaboration. Key informant interviews were held with other international agencies, implementing partners – including government and CSOs – community groups and individual stakeholders, including children. In-country observation during field visits helped analyse the types of actions being carried out, and the level of commitment and ownership of implementing partners. National plans and policies were analysed.

14 Desk review countries:

Review of key country planning, strategy and research documents, as well as mid-term reviews and annual reports. A desk analysis was conducted using a detailed narrative survey⁴⁰ completed by the country offices. In some cases, follow up Skype calls were conducted to obtain clarifications and additional details on some of the answers.

Online survey of 72 countries:

Based on the interim findings, an online survey⁴¹ was developed covering all the essential information needed on the EQs. Seventy-two countries from across the UNICEF regions completed the form.

2.2.4 Analysis of information and field data

The main methods used for data analysis included:

- *Content analysis:* Content analysis constitutes the core of the qualitative analysis undertaken by the team. The team analysed documents, consultation/interview notes and qualitative data emerging from the survey to identify common trends, themes and patterns for each of the key EQs. Content analysis was also used to highlight diverging views and opposite trends. In such cases, further data collection was sometimes needed to arrive at credible evidence. Emerging issues and trends were the basis for developing preliminary observations and evaluation findings. Specific attention was given to the analysis of strengths and gaps.
- *Comparative analysis:* Comparative analysis was used throughout the process to examine information and data from stakeholder consultations and document and literature review. The purpose was to examine findings across different countries and/or themes; comparative analysis was also used to identify best practices and lessons learned.
- *Gap analysis:* Whenever possible, actual performance was compared against the potential or desired performance (as indicated in targets associated with performance indicators, etc.). Findings on gaps as well as strengths are based on triangulation from multiple sources.

⁴⁰ See Annex 9 for a sample of the desk survey form.

⁴¹ See Annex 9 for a sample of the online survey form.

- *Most Significant Change*: Information derived from key informant interviews and focus group discussions helped identify any significant changes that may have occurred in processes, outputs or outcomes, especially at the country level. Respondents shared the most significant successes and challenges.⁴² The use of such a methodology has been particularly helpful in identifying concrete achievements.
- *Quantitative/Statistical analysis*: Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Multivariate analysis was not performed as the evaluation did not gather quantitative data through a field survey.

Qualitative findings were analysed using the software tool ATLAS.ti⁴³, allowing the systematic compiling of information to ensure that important data were not overlooked. Data entered into the software included write-ups from field investigations as well as a wide range of secondary materials. Each piece of relevant information was coded to link thematically to EQs and sub-questions included as sort criteria in ATLAS.ti. A sample of the coding system used for the country case studies and desk review countries is included in Annex 5. Using the ATLAS.ti software for qualitative analysis, data sheets were generated and analysed to identify the key findings.

Online survey data were first tabulated using Survey Monkey, with additional analysis within Excel to determine frequencies. Some additional analysis was carried out in SPSS to conduct a rudimentary comparative analysis of the 72 countries included in the online survey. This additional analysis determined whether there were any specific differences among categories of countries.

For the desk review countries, the team collected documentation directly from the 14 UNICEF country offices. The team also conducted online web searches for additional information where the provided country information was insufficient to answer the EQs. An in-depth cross verification (triangulation) was then conducted between the narrative desk survey responses and country documentation. Much of the documentation focused on overall child protection work, with far less information related specifically to VAC. The ATLAS.ti software was used for extensive analysis of narrative, online forms and country-provided data. Throughout the analysis, Most Significant Change, comparative analysis, and strengths and gaps analysis were conducted to generate reliable, valid and concrete evidence as relevant to the data source.⁴⁴

The collected data and analysis thus provided the necessary evidence to answer the evaluation questions.

⁴² Although this method usually involves collecting stories, after the first few focus groups in the first case study country, the team found that the method could not be followed in this manner due to time constraints. An adapted method was used by asking the key informants and focus groups to list the most significant changes (successes) as well as the challenges faced and ranking them.

⁴³ ATLAS.ti, 2014, <<http://atlasti.com>>, accessed June 2014.

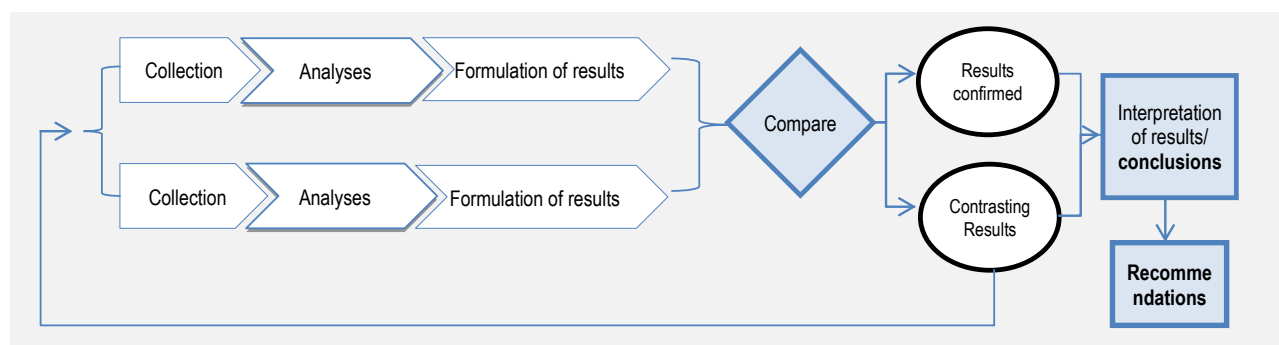
⁴⁴ Specifically, questions were asked to indicate the major successes resulting in significant changes as well as challenges that were encountered.

2.2.5 Data triangulation

Data was triangulated using several methods. These included methodological triangulation consisting of gathering and analysing different types of data, i.e., interviews, focus group discussions, observations, questionnaires and documents. Specifically:

- Secondary data was collected through document analysis and validated through interviews.
- Unclear data was also validated/clarified during the field visits.
- Quality data from interviews and direct observation was analysed in a comparative way, using only the most frequent or common findings as global evidence;
- Investigator triangulation was also used, consisting of cross-verification of notes among the national and international evaluation team members. Involvement of national consultants in discussions helped ensure a good understanding of findings in the local context. Investigator triangulation among the international consultants, who have different complementary backgrounds, strengthened the interpretation of the data from various points of view.
- When inconsistencies arose, the evaluation team discussed possible explanations for these inconsistencies. If the reasons for the inconsistencies were not clear, the team re-analysed the available quantitative and qualitative data and discussed again. In a few cases where the reasons for the inconsistencies were still not clear, additional information was collected so as to try to explain the inconsistencies.

Figure 4: Data triangulation process



2.2.6 Synthesis report preparation

The report was prepared based on the systematic analysis of data and information obtained from a range of sources including the desk study report and four case study reports. Materials assembly and review took place from the beginning of the evaluation, and continued through the analysis phase. The evaluation also adopted a gender and human rights responsive and culturally sensitive approach together with a forward-looking perspective to maximize its usefulness for its intended users. Consultations took place at the global, regional, country and local levels, with the evaluation consultants conducting fieldwork in four countries, and holding

regional meetings and meetings at Headquarters. These consultations and evaluation activities were specifically intended to inform the Synthesis Report.

Chapters 3 through 7 provide findings against key evaluation questions. For each chapter, key conclusions, principal strengths and areas for improvement are summed up in a textbox. The intent is to provide a snapshot of the more detailed descriptions of findings that follow in the body text. Both the snapshot and the body text draw on findings from the four case study countries, the desk review and survey, and other information sources.

2.2.7 Evaluation limitations

The evaluation faced a few challenges and limitations, which have been successfully tackled:

- **Countries' specificities versus overall trends:** Considering that four case study countries were included for in-depth analysis and 14 countries were included in the desk review, the analysis has necessarily been influenced by the specificities of the selected countries. However, the selection of the 18 evaluation countries was found to be very well balanced. In addition, the coding system used by the team and the willingness shown by the countries to provide additional information when needed further enriched the information base. The online survey and broader documentation review were also helpful in this regard as they helped ensure the correct interpretation of country findings.
- **Self-reported versus independent documentation:** Available documentation consists largely of documents produced by UNICEF offices. This includes annual reports and mid-term reviews of UNICEF's country programmes. However, these documents were complemented by various types of information and data that the evaluation team gathered independently through interviews and field visits. In addition, recent evaluations of UNICEF's work were also reviewed. The findings of this evaluation are thus based on a mix of self-reported and independently gathered information.
- **Online survey categories and variations:** The online survey included 70 responses. Consequently, the sub-sample sizes of the online survey responses across the seven UNICEF regions were too small to make meaningful comparisons across regions. Clear overall trends were, however, discernible and it was possible to draw important conclusions from the online survey.
- **Lack of baseline:** Though there is data on VAC in some countries, there is insufficient baseline and/or high quality information, particularly at the local level. This limitation was also identified in the synthesis review of evaluations on VAC, in a recent analysis of available quantitative studies on VAC as well as in other reports.⁴⁵ The lack of data, endline and impact surveys affected the team's capacity to fully evaluate country results. For

⁴⁵ United Nations Children's Fund Evaluation Office (2012), *Protecting Children from Violence: A synthesis of evaluation findings*, UNICEF, New York, 2012, p. 168; UNICEF, Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group, *Measuring Violence against Children: Inventory and assessment of quantitative studies*, UNICEF, Division of Data, Research and Policy, New York; Bray, Rachel, *Expert Consultation on Family and Parenting Support*, United Nations Children's Fund Office of Research - Innocenti, Florence, 26-27 May 2014.

example, among the desk review countries, only two evaluations were included and there were no endline or impact surveys.

- **Time and staff constraints:** The evaluation was successfully completed despite some unexpected changes in the composition of the evaluation team, which resulted in delays. Country field visits would have benefitted from a longer allocated timeframe (e.g. three weeks instead of two).

3 Relevance and coherence of programming on violence against children

This section considers the following two evaluation questions:

EQ 1: How relevant, appropriate and coherent is UNICEF's global CP Strategy (2008) and the related strategies and results proposed in the MTSP (2006-2013) with respect to protecting children against violence?

EQ 2: How relevant and coherent is the Theory of Change (or programme logic) of the global and regional strategies and plans? And of the country programmes?

Relevance is defined as the extent to which objectives are consistent with global priorities, country needs, and partners' and donors' policies – the extent to which the approach is strategic. Coherence is defined as the extent to which strategies and country programmes are logical and consistent at each level. This section specifically covers the extent to which UNICEF global strategies are pertinent to reducing VAC and whether country programmes are aligned with the global strategies. It also discusses the extent to which VAC components in country programmes are aligned with actual country context (rights holders' needs, national policies and plans). Finally, it reviews the extent to which the overall programme logic is adequate with respect to addressing VAC in the post-2015 world, given donor demands, the SDG agenda and UNICEF's corporate priorities.

Snapshot on Relevance, Appropriateness and Coherence

Main conclusions:

1. The global objectives on VAC in the CP Strategy (2008) and MTSP (2006-2013) were largely internally coherent and consistent with country needs. Country programming *logic* on VAC, however, is in many cases not fully clear and coherent and not properly evidenced.
2. The alignment of the country programme with the national context on VAC was generally adequate with respect to national plans and priorities. However, focused mapping exercises to inform VAC programming were often lacking.
3. While improvements were introduced in the SP (2014-2017), UNICEF's work to respond to and prevent VAC is still not sufficiently broad-based and multi-sectoral to match expectations related to SDG 16.2 and UNICEF's advocacy focus on VAC.
4. Global measurement of results on reduction of VAC using commonly agreed core indicators is lacking.

Principal strengths (findings):

1. Overall findings suggest that the CP Strategy (2008) and MTSP (2006-2013) were largely pertinent as a framework within which to address VAC at the country level over the evaluation period.
2. UNICEF's work on VAC is designed to contribute to results in critical human rights and gender areas, in line with international conventions and national policies and strategies.
3. Among regional initiatives, the West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) has recently developed a regional child protection strategy that includes attention to VAC, and EAPRO has been working on developing core indicators for measuring systems strengthening, including on VAC.

4. There is evidence of some, albeit limited, progress towards multi-sectoral approaches, such as of child protection with education and communications, to reduce VAC over the evaluation period.
5. The VAC strategies of the country programmes considered under this evaluation were found to be largely well aligned with country needs, particularly with regard to the implementation of national strategies supportive of child rights objectives. The evaluation also found that UNICEF has contributed regularly to the refinement of national plans and priorities in relation to child protection rights.

Areas for improvement (findings):

1. The MTSP indicators are not very clear as they do not sufficiently consider the range of issues that need to be addressed in each VAC-relevant KRA.
2. Global measurements of results on reduction of VAC using commonly agreed core indicators is lacking. This leads to difficulties in comparative analysis and informed planning.
3. The SP indicators do not sufficiently reflect a cross-sectoral coordinated approach to addressing VAC.
4. VAC is currently one of UNICEF's global advocacy priorities. Despite this, there is little coordination in programme planning (and implementation) across different levels and sectors in UNICEF for VAC.
5. In most countries, the programming logic on VAC is not sufficiently elaborated and evidenced, and the coherence of VAC-related activities is sometimes weak.
6. The evaluation found that country offices had to rely on inadequate evidence when designing country programme activities of relevance to VAC.
7. Most country offices had not conducted sufficiently in-depth mapping exercises to inform VAC country programming. This is especially problematic because VAC programme implementation often relies on strengthening weak institutions.
8. It should be added that while several country programme designs group child marriage and child labour together as VAC, these can also be considered as contexts within which VAC occurs. This nuance is insufficiently considered in design and collaboration across sectors and with diverse partners.

3.1 Relevance of UNICEF global and regional strategies

3.1.1 Global strategy relevance

The CP Strategy (2008) and MTSP (2006-2013) objectives on VAC were largely coherent *within* Focus Area 4 and were generally consistent with country needs. The inter-relationship between KRA 1, 2 and 4 is, according to key informants, evident, because system strengthening (KRA1), social norms (KRA2) and research and use of data on VAC, monitoring and evaluation (KRA4) all intersect to bring about change. Countries included in the evaluation also indicated that these three areas are relevant, if not always sufficient, to addressing VAC in their own contexts.

The MTSP indicators were not very clear as they did not sufficiently consider the range of elements that need to be considered in each VAC-relevant KRA. In the case of social norms (KRA 2), country programmes interpreted this as a need to focus on harmful traditional practices while considering other forms of VAC to a limited extent. Indicators have improved for the SP (2014-2017) and include an improved consideration of the breadth of country contexts. It should be added that the CP Strategy (2008) and the MTSP (2006-2013) do clearly mention cross-

cutting elements including global leadership, advocacy, equity, participation and gender equality.

The evaluation notes that, since the adoption of the CP Strategy (2008), UNICEF's work to address VAC has been growing in scope and maturing in depth and breadth. The KRAs of the MTSP (2006-2009) Focus Area 4 were officially reformulated in 2009 and again in 2013. A review of the KRAs as reformulated in 2009 showed improved clarity regarding the scope of the child protection objectives, including VAC.

An overarching programming logic on VAC is not, however, found within either the CP Strategy (2008) or the MTSP (2006-2013). Neither includes attention to VAC in other relevant focus areas, such as education, children in emergencies and HIV. While there is coherence among the elements within Focus Area 4 on VAC, coherence on VAC across the other focus areas is limited. Each reference to VAC in the other focus areas appears as a stand-alone point with the result that coherence in the global strategy is less evident if assessed with respect to the other focus areas. A key shortcoming is thus that the elements on VAC cited in other focus areas are not explicitly integrated into a single overall and synergistic approach to prevent and respond to VAC.

Despite overall coherence within Focus Area 4, elements on systems strengthening, social norms change, and country-level monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data on VAC were too general to effectively guide country programming development. Country offices are significantly behind in conducting in-depth mapping exercises and other action research to inform planning. Gaps, particularly with respect to such needed knowledge on effective systems strengthening approaches, meant that countries did not have sufficient information to strengthen such systems at the beginning of the MTSP period. With time, this has improved as countries reported on their experiences and a knowledge base started to develop, which could be used to inform effective planning in the future.

Table 3 outlines how the formulation of key results areas related to VAC has shifted over time within the MTSP period (2006-2013).

Table 3: Evolution in the formulation of the KRAs for the MTSP Focus Area 4 in child protection thematic reports 2008-2013⁴⁶

MTSP – KRA Formulation until 2008	MTSP – KRA Formulation 2009-2012 ⁴⁷	MTSP – KRA Formulation 2013
KRA 1: Government decisions are influenced by increased awareness of child protection rights and improved data and analysis on child protection.	KRA 1: Better national laws, policies, regulations and services across sectors to improve child protection outcomes, in particular justice for children, social protection systems, and services in place to protect, reach and serve all children, notably those identified as vulnerable to harm, marginalized, or in contact with the law.	KRA 1: Protection systems that include national laws, policies and services across sectors, in particular social justice and social protection, to protect all children from violence, exploitation and abuse.
KRA 2: Ensure effective legislative and enforcement systems and improved protection and response capacity to protect children from violence, exploitation and abuse, including exploitative child labour.	KRA 2: Support development and implementation of social conventions, norms and values that favour the prevention of violence, exploitation, abuse and unnecessary separation for all children, while ensuring respect for their views and building on young people's resilience.	KRA 2: Dialogue stimulated on social networks and nationally that reinforces <i>social conventions, norms and values</i> that favour the prevention of violence, exploitation, abuse and unnecessary separation for all children and lead to questioning of child rights' violations, including harmful conventions and practices, while ensuring respect for the views of children and strengthening of young people's resilience.
KRA 3: Better protection of children from the impact of armed conflict and natural disasters, as per CCCs.	KRA 3: Better protection of children from the immediate and long-term impact of armed conflict and natural disasters.	KRA 3: Better protection of children from the immediate and long-term impact of armed conflict and humanitarian crises.
KRA 4: Children are better served by justice systems which ensure greater protection for them as victims, witnesses and offenders.	KRA 4: Government decisions are influenced by increased awareness of child protection rights and improved monitoring, data and analysis on child protection.	KRA 4: Improved country-level monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data on child protection.
KRA 5: Children and families identified as vulnerable are reached by key community and government services aimed at reducing their marginalization.		

⁴⁶ United Nations Children's Fund, Thematic Report 2008: Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse, UNICEF, New York, 2008; United Nations Children's Fund, Thematic Report 2009: Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse, UNICEF, New York, 2009; United Nations Children's Fund, Thematic Report 2010: Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse, UNICEF, New York, 2010; United Nations Children's Fund, Thematic Report 2011: Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse, UNICEF, New York, 2011; United Nations Children's Fund, Thematic Report 2012: Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse, UNICEF, New York, 2012; United Nations Children's Fund, Thematic Report 2013: Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

⁴⁷ Slight differences are observable in this period, i.e., in 2010 and 2012, KRA1 was defined as "Protection systems that include national laws, policies and services across sectors, in particular justice and social protection, to protect all children from violence, exploitation, and abuse", while in 2011 and 2012, KRA4 was defined as "Improved country level monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data on child protection".

As shown in the table above, the major patterns of progress include:

- An increased focus on the quality and relevance of laws, policies, resources, functions, data and services on child protection, and, more generally, on a systems strengthening approach in order to fully include prevention, social protection services and justice for children. Such a system would mobilize and coordinate all sectors (especially social protection, education, health, security and justice) to reduce and mitigate the risks and vulnerability of children by facilitating both prevention and effective response to violence, thus reinforcing children's resilience, rights and well-being.
- Clearer objectives regarding social norms, including a focus on combating traditional harmful norms and practices as well as reinforcing the positive ones.
- The focus on equity was included transversally across the different KRAs in an explicit and comprehensive manner. This reflects UNICEF's recently increased emphasis on equity, also shown by the introduction of the MoRES tool for mapping service delivery and analysing bottlenecks.
- An increased importance of the role of research in addressing child protection issues, in particular with respect to VAC, and of the role of country-level monitoring and subsequent use of data.

The SP (2014-2017) is clearer with better-articulated outcomes and outputs and greater consistency with country needs on VAC.⁴⁸ This is due, at least in part, to the greater participation of countries in formulating the SP (2014-2017) as compared to the MTSP (2006-2013). Annex 1 to the SP (2014-2017)⁴⁹ identifies a series of outcome indicators for child protection on prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children. Some are directly linked to VAC prevalence in countries (specifically on child marriage, FGM/C, sexual violence, violent disciplinary practices), while others are linked more to the development of child protection systems (reducing the number of children in residential care, children in detention, increasing birth registration rates) and to emergency situations, armed conflicts and strengthening child protection components in humanitarian action. Annex 1 of the SP (2014-2017) also identifies specific and measurable output indicators that are more concrete with a focus on what actually needs to be achieved to reduce VAC. This includes a focus on increasing political commitment and accountability and capacities at different levels to prevent and respond to VAC.

With respect to rights holders such as children with disabilities, the global strategies do not make sufficient reference to VAC within these special groups, which are particularly vulnerable to VAC. While there is a reference to children with disabilities in the areas of cooperation to achieve KRA 1, the phrasing does not directly link to the need to address VAC.⁵⁰ Similarly, there

⁴⁸ The SP (2014–2017) was developed following a review of results and lessons from the MTSP (2006–2013), a series of situation assessments, and a consultative process with communities, country governments and civil societies, UNICEF staff and the Member States of the Executive Board. Mechanisms for country input were direct to UNICEF Headquarters but also through the regional offices and in international meetings. The evaluation found that, according to key informants, countries could see their input reflected in the contents.

⁴⁹ United Nations Children's Fund, The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 (2013), E/ICEF/2013/21, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

⁵⁰ The MTSP (2006 – 2013) states, "Care and support for children with disabilities to ensure full access to services, helping them reach full potential without stigma or discrimination."

are no specific references to other groups of rights holders, such as children who live and work on the street.

There is a need for greater synchronization of the messages that global bodies on child protection and VAC issue, particularly with respect to developing an integrated approach to reducing VAC across focus areas.⁵¹ External stakeholders do point out the growing importance of global communication channels such as the Human Rights Council annual meetings and side events, including the Universal Periodic Reports (UPR) submitted to the Council; the CRC Committee; the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015); regional councils as well as national councils.

Very important to note is the increased partner and donor focus⁵² as reflected in the addition of a specific SDG 16.2⁵³ for the post-2015 development agenda which states, “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children”. In line with this emphasis, UNICEF has made ‘End violence against children’ its number one of ten advocacy priority points for the post-2015 period.⁵⁴ UNICEF is thus well placed to act on SDG 16.2, although, as will be evidenced in this report, relevance and impact would be increased if an integrated approach is emphasized in forward looking programming.

3.1.2 Regional strategies

The evaluation finds that efforts to develop regional strategies can be very useful as they facilitate the concrete participation of the countries within a region, thus helping ensure relevance. The evaluation noted that there is, in fact, growing attention to the development of regional strategies and/or approaches, at least in part due to UNICEF’s advocacy efforts. During discussions to reach joint agreements, partnerships are forged and commitment to reducing VAC is developed. Regional strategies also help to strengthen cross-border initiatives to reduce VAC with respect to VAC within trafficking and in emergencies.

A few specific strategies on VAC have been developed. For example, WCARO finalized a regional child protection strategy in 2014, which includes attention to VAC and addresses region-specific needs.⁵⁵ The strategy appears relevant to the realities in West Africa although, since it has only recently been developed and WCARO was not among the regional offices selected to be visited, the evaluation could not assess it in detail. Likewise, in EAPRO, efforts are underway to improve regional efforts through greater collaboration to identify mechanisms to

⁵¹ Including education, health, water and sanitation (as children are vulnerable to VAC where there is inadequate access to water and sanitation), and others.

⁵² A review of main discussion points and issues being raised to ensure VAC receives the needed global priority focus can be found in: Save the Children (2015), An Update on Violence Against Children and the Post 2015 Process. Available from: <www.google.ch/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=8&ved=0CEgQFJAHAhUKEwjKq72AqMvFAhUCDiwKHSoEADo&url=http%3A%2F%2Fresourcecentre.savethechildren.se%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fdocuments%2Fvac_post_2015_february_2015_update.pdf&ei=wt1ZVeTCN4KcsAGqilDQAw&usq=AFQjCNFVC0Bzh2mEo7WisN5aWP_9Hbj1Ww&sig2=59EN9hkQmFnx1jyVKZuWCw&bvm=bv.93564037,d.bGg&cad=rja>, accessed 14 May 2015.

⁵³ Sustainable Development Platform (2015), Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals. Available from <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal.html>>, accessed 15 May 2015.

⁵⁴ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘A Post-2015 World Fit for Children: An agenda for #Everychild 2015’, PDF, UNICEF, New York, 2015.

⁵⁵ United Nations Children’s Fund West Africa Regional Office, Regional Child Protection Strategy 2014-2017, UNICEF WCARO, Dakar, 2014.

prevent and respond to VAC.⁵⁶ It should be noted, however, that UNICEF inter-regional collaboration, sharing of good practices and lessons learned is still very limited. Given the number of regional organizations⁵⁷ and partnerships and the potential of regional strategies to have an impact, especially in advocacy terms, on country-level planning, it is important to address this gap. Mutual technical support could be streamlined using a social networking platform to facilitate exchange and joint input to improve strategies and implementation across regions and countries.

3.1.3 Alignment of country programmes with global cross-cutting strategies

The global issues of human rights, gender equality, cultural sensitivity and equity were reflected in the design and implementation of programmes on VAC but were less apparent in monitoring and reporting tools and products. In some country offices, the systems approach is still not clearly understood and thus is not properly applied in programming on VAC. Programming did not clearly integrate funding for specific VAC activities into the wider child protection systems strengthening approach.

While an emphasis on both prevention and response – core elements of UNICEF’s global strategy to combat VAC – is necessary in all countries, the evaluators found that it is not easy to assess the extent to which there is a ‘right’ balance between prevention and response in programming design. As indicated in evaluation interviews at all levels,⁵⁸ specialists recognize that the balance can vary in accordance with local realities. There is a broad range of logical and acceptable reasoning for whichever balance between prevention and response is decided upon in a country. Where existing harmful traditional practices account for a large proportion of VAC, prevention through supporting social norms change needs high emphasis. Simultaneously, however, services need to be well functioning and thus strengthened to respond to identified cases. It is important to note that UNICEF does not have sole decision-making power over the level of emphasis and balance accorded to prevention and response. Programmes of cooperation are designed together with other stakeholders, most importantly government, but also civil society organizations and other development partners.

The analysis of the expected results of all the evaluation countries⁵⁹ clearly indicated that the global strategies were appropriate to the national contexts. As illustrated in the four country case study-specific evaluation frameworks, all countries have very clear country results areas that correspond to the MTSP (2006-2013) KRAs on systems strengthening, social norms

⁵⁶ ECPAT International, Plan International, Save the Children, United Nations Children’s Fund and World Vision, *National Child Protection Systems in the East Asia and Pacific Region: A review and analysis of mappings and assessments*, ECPAT International, Bangkok, 2014.

⁵⁷ In Africa alone there are eight economic platforms of importance which also increasingly address social issues, i.e., Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC). EAC, for example: “aims at widening and deepening co-operation among the Partner States in, among others, political, economic and social fields for their mutual benefit” EAC (2015), Available from <www.eac.int/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=53>, accessed 25 March 2015.

⁵⁸ Including from UNICEF Headquarters, regional offices and country offices.

⁵⁹ Where the report states ‘evaluation countries’, this refers to the 18 countries comprised of 4 case study countries and 14 desk review countries. Where ‘online survey countries’ is indicated, it refers to the 70 countries that responded to the online survey.

change and improved monitoring and evaluation. Likewise, the desk review countries also have outcomes and outputs that are organized around the three VAC-relevant KRAs.⁶⁰

With respect to the online survey with the 70 countries, the majority of the countries had engaged in at least some work in all three VAC-relevant KRAs and on cross-cutting elements.

3.2 Alignment with country needs: Strategies, policies and human rights/gender obligations

In general, the VAC components in country child protection programmes are adequately aligned with national plans and priorities and have contributed to improving these during implementation. High alignment was found for awareness raising, explicitly mentioned by 13 of the 18 evaluation countries; for institution and/or capacity strengthening components, mentioned by 17 of the 18 evaluation countries; and for support to strengthen service delivery, mentioned by 17 of the 18 evaluation countries. UNICEF country offices reported that participatory meetings with a range of stakeholders at the country level were conducted to inform programme design.⁶¹ It should be noted, however, that the evaluation found little evidence of the explicit participation of rights holders from vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities, children living and/or working on the street, and survivors of the most serious forms of VAC.⁶²

The major challenges to aligning VAC programme design with country contexts in the 18 evaluation countries include:

- Lack of statistically generalizable quantitative data on various forms of VAC. Of the 14 desk review countries, 6 lack data on prevalence of VAC in the home and 5 lack information on VAC among peers.⁶³ Two of the case study countries likewise lack this information (Mexico, Bangladesh). Crucially, only one of the desk review countries and one of the case study countries has data on male sexual violence⁶⁴ and six lack quality and/or comprehensive data on sexual abuse of girls.
- Lack of data on prevalence of VAC, related knowledge, attitudes and practices.
- Lack of good indicators to measure change and generation of evidence to inform programme planning and design.

UNICEF officers reported that they did review and use the available country-level data to inform programme design, even though such data was usually very limited in quantity and quality. Based on this mostly qualitative data, all 18 evaluation country offices did indicate the prevalence of the same principal types of VAC in their countries. As global studies have shown,

⁶⁰ Examples of relevant outcomes include those on systems strengthening from the Ivory Coast: "Number of inter-agency plans and programmes in favour of non-violence towards children and adolescents". In Morocco a social norms-related outcome is "Risks threatening children, especially the most vulnerable to abuse, violence, and exploitation are mitigated by strengthening the protective role of families and the local community." In India, an outcome on KRA on monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data is "No. of states with improved knowledge management systems which feed into government and partner programmes."

⁶¹ For online survey countries, specific data on *how* decisions were made to ensure alignment with country needs was not available to the evaluators as this was not included directly in the questions asked.

⁶² As most children experience VAC, it would have been useful to also explicitly include the voice of children exposed to the most serious forms of VAC, e.g., VAC leaving permanent physical damage such as burning, breaking bones, rape, incest, other forms of severe abuse.

⁶³ Information summarized from *Hidden in Plain Sight*.

⁶⁴ Uganda and Tanzania

some types of VAC are nearly universal. These include physical abuse such as corporal punishment, beatings and fighting; sexual abuse;⁶⁵ and mental abuse.⁶⁶

A growing recognition that baseline and endline studies are important to inform programming design is evident as the Bangladesh, Ghana, Mexico and Tanzania country offices all plan to increase such studies.⁶⁷ Six of the desk review countries also specifically recommended improved approaches to using data for planning purposes.

The evaluation found that baselines specific to assessing results and subsequent impacts over time in VAC programming were rare in the countries included in the evaluation. The absence of baseline data meant that results reporting in the medium term and impact assessment in the long term are problematic. In some cases, small-scale studies were conducted that focused on VAC, or larger studies were conducted within which VAC was partially covered. However, as was reported in *Hidden in Plain Sight*, information on the methods employed was often not sufficient to judge whether qualitative studies were carried out with sufficient rigour to serve as quantitative baselines. Qualitative studies were also reported to be of mixed quality.

Country offices also cited types of VAC that were unique to their countries and required further attention. These included aggression towards children with albinism (Tanzania), children in the context of drug crimes (Mexico), acid attacks (Bangladesh), “treating children as objects” (India), virginity tests (Tajikistan, Zimbabwe) and FGM/C. FGM/C is common to varying degrees in at least 6 of the 18 evaluation countries (Ghana, Ivory Coast, Indonesia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda).

Physical violence was sometimes reduced to corporal punishment in country-level programme planning. In contrast, stakeholders in various countries pointed out that physical violence was also carried out outside the context of punishment, e.g., in schools where children may fight, but also in homes or the community where beatings may take place.

The evaluation found that country-level factors, such as legal and policy framework needs, have generally been well considered to ensure relevance of design and implementation of strategies on VAC (to ensure immediate, intermediate and long-term impact and sustainability). However, the programmes could have been better aligned with the specific needs arising from the prevalence of different types of VAC and socio-cultural contexts. For example, none of the 70 UNICEF country offices indicated that their country was significantly countering harmful traditional practices. Though programmes do address such practices, this is still insufficiently stressed in programme design.

In addition, the requirements of specific groups of rights-holders were not sufficiently considered in much of the programme planning, for example, the needs of children with disabilities and in the context of sexual abuse of boys. In programme design documents across the 18 evaluation

⁶⁵ “Any sexual activities imposed by an adult on a child against which the child is entitled to protection by criminal law”, from *Hidden in Plain Sight*, p 4.

⁶⁶ “Psychological maltreatment, mental abuse, verbal abuse and emotional abuse or neglect”, from *Hidden in Plain Sight*, p. 4.

⁶⁷ Some baselines have already been implemented but will be increased.

countries, there was no evidence of special attention to children with disabilities and the special needs of boys with respect to sexual abuse.

Most of the countries also address issues such as child marriage and child labour in their programme design and implementation, though they rarely address the issue of VAC actually occurring *within* these contexts. This is a gap in programme design. Almost all efforts in these cases were focused on the prevention of child marriage, prevention and withdrawal from child labour, and prevention of trafficking, as opposed to combatting VAC if a child is already in these situations and has not (yet) been withdrawn. A married child does not visibly figure in the efforts of 12 of the desk review country office Child Protection Sections to reduce VAC.

Of course, a child may be withdrawn from child labour and thus the risk of VAC may be reduced. The evaluation identified this situation in the four case study countries. Similarly, if working conditions for older children are improved⁶⁸ they may legally work in most countries and the risk of VAC may also be reduced. In the case of agricultural workers or those doing domestic work, for example, if the number of hours is limited and occupational safety is considered, older children may work.⁶⁹ Evaluations of child labour projects and actions⁷⁰ indicate, however, that improving working conditions and empowering such older children by educating them on their rights tend to receive less attention than prevention and withdrawal in programming design.⁷¹

The evaluation found that legislation and policy frameworks have often been inspired by legislation from other countries and do not necessarily reflect the culture and aspirations of the children, families and communities they are supposed to serve. There is thus room for UNICEF to facilitate the development of legislation and policy frameworks that specifically address the drivers of VAC in individual countries.

Country annual reports and mid-term reviews⁷² show that programme activities commonly extend beyond what is measured and reported, in particular when considered against logframe indicators. This is in part because, as country office staff in case study countries pointed out, the indicators are not sufficiently comprehensive to cover the range of activities implemented. This finding is in line with the related finding that monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data remains challenging in many of the countries (see Section 4.3).

3.3 Programming logic to address VAC

While all countries studied have introduced some level of programme logic to address VAC, eight desk review and three case study countries have already developed some type of theory of change with respect to addressing VAC. Another three countries are in the process of developing a theory of change while three countries do not have any theory of change.

⁶⁸ Usually above the ages of 14, 15 or 16, depending on the country.

⁶⁹ Including, no exposure to pesticides or dangerous cleaning products, children do not live with their employers and only work during daylight hours.

⁷⁰ Including over 15 evaluations of child labour projects by one of the VAC evaluation team members.

⁷¹ United Nations Children's Fund, *Child Labour and UNICEF in Action: Children at the Centre*, UNICEF, New York, 2014.

⁷² In those countries with mid-term reviews

In most cases the programme logic⁷³ on VAC is somewhat explicit in programme documentation, although it is not always fully clear and coherent and properly evidenced. The extent to which the child protection system offers a coherent response to the real problems facing children who are victims of violence is still weak. As per the online survey, only 6 per cent of the 70 countries reported having substantial coherence. For the remainder, 67 per cent had moderate coherence and 23 per cent had only a minor level of coherence.

The evaluation in many instances found a lack of coherence across targets, indicators, activities and areas of cooperation across United Nations Agencies and with implementing partners⁷⁴.

Evaluation interviewees and desk review data revealed that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (or the United Nations Development Assistance Plan in Delivering as One countries) logical framework does not always allow for the fine-tuning and explicit detail required to address the complex issues surrounding VAC. As a result, inherent vertical and horizontal programming logic is not always evident in the different logical frameworks of the evaluation countries, and monitoring does not serve to improve this situation.

A review of the actions carried out indicated that more than half of the countries implemented actions on VAC over and beyond those needed to meet their explicitly stated framework indicators. Several evaluation countries were able to implement ad hoc actions not explicitly planned for in any logical framework. This indicates that programme designs and implementation are sufficiently flexible, innovative and responsive to needs in national and specific contexts with respect to VAC, and therefore should be periodically updated, including with new indicators as appropriate. However, emerging actions should be tracked and assessed.

Some adaptations/adjustments in response to on-going changes in national and specific contexts are evident. For example, a programme to develop a community-based foster parent programme was included for emergency care of children affected by VAC in Tanzania, which helped ensure that children at particular risk were placed in safe homes. In Mexico, UNICEF supported innovative preventive activities with street children developed by a Mexican non-governmental organization, Junto Con Los Niños (JUCONI), which helped reduce the vulnerability of these children to a range of violence.⁷⁵

⁷³ Programming logic: how change comes about, its evolution and use.

⁷⁴ The UNICEF MTSP (2006–2013) uses the term 'Areas of Cooperation' to indicate the type of activities planned to reach the key results. United Nations Children's Fund, 2006-2009 MTSP Updated and Extended to 2013; Version 1 to 2009: United Nations Children's Fund, The UNICEF Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP), 2006-2009: Investing in children – the UNICEF contribution to poverty reduction and the Millennium Summit Agenda, E/ICEF/2005/11, UNICEF, New York, 2005. New version valid to 2013: United Nations Children's Fund, 'Revised Annexes to Medium Term Strategic Plan: Annex 1 – Results Framework by Focus Area', UNICEF, New York, 2012.

⁷⁵ The model includes activities such as fostering positive relationships and using Montessori action based learning methods with children and other means to reduce their vulnerability. JUCONI Foundation website, 2015, <www.juconi.org.mx/en/about-us/history.html>, accessed 25 February 2015.

4 Effectiveness of systems strengthening; social norms change; and monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data

This chapter considers the following evaluation question:

EQ 3: How effective have UNICEF-supported country child protection programmes been in terms of implementation processes and programme results with regard to VAC?

Accordingly, the focus of this chapter is on the three MTSP (2006–2013) KRAs of systems strengthening, social norms, and monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data.

As per the Terms of Reference, the definition of effectiveness has been adapted specifically from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)⁷⁶ criteria. **Effectiveness and progress towards reducing VAC** is defined as the extent to which the objectives were achieved – or are expected to be achieved – taking into account their relative importance.

The results with respect to the achievement of MTSP KRAs relevant to VAC in Focus Area 4 were found to be variable. Although progress has been made in some countries, there remains a great deal of work to be done to have a real impact on the reduction of VAC. The evaluation results were largely in line with the results reported in the UNICEF **MTSP Specific Monitoring Questions and Management Indicators Results 2013**⁷⁷ as indicated in the following table.

Table 4: Overview of achievement of MTSP KRAs relevant to VAC in Focus Area 4

KRA 1: Better child protection systems that include national laws, policies and services across sectors, in particular justice and social protection, to protect all children from violence, exploitation and abuse.	
Organizational target: At least 60 programme countries have identified areas through mapping that require strengthening of the national child protection systems.	Results have been partially achieved. According to the current evaluation findings, 50 of the 70 countries included had conducted some type of mapping or gap analysis on systems strengthening that includes addressing VAC. Only 20 of these had conducted ‘ <i>substantial</i> ’ mapping or gap analysis. According to the MTSP Specific Monitoring Questions and Management Indicators Results: ⁷⁸ 105 out of 156 countries had identified the areas requiring strengthening in the national child protection systems. ⁷⁹
Organizational target: At least 60 programme countries, including emergency-	Results have been partially achieved. 32 countries out of 70 countries included in the current evaluation state that they have achieved at least moderate progress on

⁷⁶ Development Assistance Committee, ‘Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management’, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, 2002, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/54/35336188.pdf>>, accessed 25 May 2014.

⁷⁷ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘MTSP Specific Monitoring Questions and Management Indicators Results’, UNICEF, New York, 2014.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ It should be added that such identification can be done through any means, ranging from holding meetings to a comprehensive mapping exercise.

affected countries, have improved systems and implemented programmes to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation and abuse.	<p>developing both legal and policy frameworks, providing a coherent response to VAC while also reaching children in need and developing tools for systems strengthening. All 70 countries had engaged in some systems strengthening in at least one area, but this has not been sufficient to improve systems.</p> <p>55 out of the 70 evaluation countries had achieved at least moderate legal framework improvement, 54 achieved at least moderate policy framework improvement, 47 had at least a moderately coherent response, while 36 had at least a moderate result for the extent to which they could reach all children in need. None of the countries included in the evaluation had achieved a fully-fledged functioning system to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation and abuse at the end of the MTSP period. Where systems were improved, this tended to happen at (pilot) regional or district level and needed scaling up.</p>
<p>KRA 2: Dialogue stimulated on social networks and nationally that reinforces social conventions, norms and values that favour the prevention of violence, exploitation, abuse and unnecessary separation for all children and lead to questioning of child rights' violations, including harmful conventions and practices, while ensuring respect for the views of children and building on young people's resilience.</p>	
<p>Organizational target:</p> <p>Reduce social acceptance of practices harmful to children.</p>	<p>Results have not yet been adequately achieved.</p> <p>The current evaluation found that no countries had achieved substantial change in addressing harmful traditional norms and practices: only 40 out of 70 countries were moderately countering them while the remainder were not able to counter them (yet). According to the MTSP Specific Monitoring Questions and Management Indicators Results 2013:⁸⁰ 31 of the 69 countries responding said "the country explicitly addresses social norms in programmes aimed at elimination of traditional practices such as FGM". Figures on addressing other forms of VAC, such as programming on the elimination of sexual abuse and exploitation, are similarly low, with only 60 out of 149 countries reporting explicitly addressing this.</p> <p>Behaviour changes on FGM⁸¹ are not yet observable in most countries according to the thematic evaluation on FGM.</p>
<p>KRA 4: Improved country-level monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data on child protection.</p>	
<p>Organizational target:</p> <p>At least 75 countries incorporate disaggregated baseline data on child protection indicators in national development plans and reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.</p>	<p>Results have not yet been adequately achieved.</p> <p>Exact figures are not available across the 70 countries, but only half of the 18 countries included in the case study and desk review had reported to the Committee on the Rights of the Child using disaggregated indicators on child protection indicators. According to the MTSP Specific Monitoring Questions and Management 2013 Indicators Results:⁸² 72 out of 150 countries reported on this to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in</p>

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, *UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change 2008-2012*, Vol 1-2, UNFPA-UNICEF, New York, 2013; United Nations Children's Fund, *Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies: Synthesis Report*, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

⁸² MTSP Specific Monitoring Questions and Management Indicators Results.

	<p>2013. The figure is still very low, however, and the current evaluation likewise found that reporting to the Committee specifically on VAC was low.⁸³</p> <p>Progress on other aspects of monitoring, research and data is discussed in the section on KRA 4 (section 4.4)</p>
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In line with the Evaluation Framework, Chapter 4 focuses on the extent to which prevention and response to VAC is effective within protective environments. This is translated into an assessment of the effectiveness of systems strengthening, social norms, and monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data. For systems strengthening, this includes special attention to legal and policy frameworks, and institution and capacity strengthening at the national, sub-national and community levels. It also covers response services to cases of VAC. The elements on social norms and monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data, which are also components of a well-functioning child protection system with attention to VAC, are covered in Sections 4.3 and 4.4.

Since the KRAs on systems strengthening, social norms change, and monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data are separated in the MTSP, they are discussed individually in the report. It should be noted, however, that the evaluation team considers them to be integrated. In fact, social norms change to reduce VAC, and monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data efforts are integral elements of a well-functioning systems approach.

It is important to note that none of the case study or desk review countries had carried out detailed independent impact analyses of efforts to strengthen child protection systems. Measuring how the performance of a child protection system changes as a consequence of an intervention remains very difficult because of the complexity of child protection systems and the lack of an agreed methodology to measure the performance of these systems. This lack of independent and other assessments as well as research in general is a serious limitation of the evaluation. The evaluation team was, however, able to draw some common conclusions on effectiveness as detailed later on in Chapter 4.

4.1 Balance between prevention and response during implementation

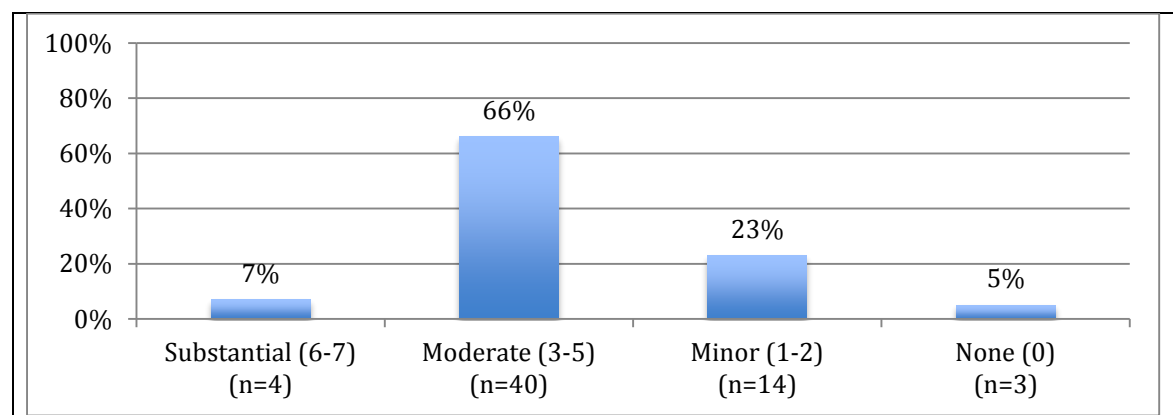
In all 18 evaluation countries, both prevention and response are considered to varying degrees in programming implementation. Challenges appear with respect to UNICEF's contribution to achieving a balance between response to and prevention of VAC during implementation of national programming. While 13 countries made a substantial effort (rated 6 or 7) to reach a good balance between response and prevention, only 4 countries indicated that they had substantial success in *achieving* balance. The country case studies confirm this finding where the balance between prevention and response is often a difficult target, due to the fragmentation of systems and the difficulty in coordination of actors and stakeholders. Nonetheless, 38 of the

⁸³ Exact figures are not available across the 70 countries, but only half of the 18 countries included in the case study and desk review had reported to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on this.

70 online survey countries indicate having a system that 'moderately' includes a good balance, whereas 29 of the country offices are putting at least a moderate effort into achieving this.

During the evaluation period, Tanzania placed greater focus on strengthening response to VAC to ensure that functioning services are in place to receive identified cases of VAC. The reasoning was that, if there is no functioning response system in place, the very prevention methods could be called into question as children and their families find themselves without proper support when reporting a case. In Ghana, a two-year process was implemented to fully develop a framework for a combined prevention and response approach. In Bangladesh, a stronger focus was placed on prevention using a range of community-based and media approaches though response was also being strengthened. In Mexico, the government has response services in place. As a result, the UNICEF country office focus is on identifying gaps and adding value by strengthening these services while also concentrating on prevention.

Figure 5: Extent to which national programmes on VAC include a good balance of response and prevention in VAC actions



N=61

4.2 Systems strengthening

This sub-section covers KRA1 on systems strengthening to protect all children from violence, exploitation and abuse. Specific issues discussed include the principal types of systems strengthening found in evaluation countries, the effectiveness of advocacy on legal and policy frameworks, enforcement of laws/regulations and ethical standards, and results achieved at the level of national institutions, sub-national institutions and community structures.

Snapshot on Effectiveness (Systems Strengthening)

Detailed conclusions:

1. Some signs of systems change are visible in strengthened enabling environments and capacities. Successful advocacy for improved legal and policy frameworks is the strongest area of success identified in the evaluation. Institutions in many countries show increased capacities with respect to designing and implementing systems to prevent and respond to VAC. UNICEF is widely perceived as a catalyst for institutional and capacity strengthening. Social norms programming to address VAC is not yet adequately integrated into the systems approach.
2. Success is, however, still only partial since important gaps remain in terms of:
 - limited geographic coverage;
 - reaching all children in need with VAC initiatives in pilot localities already targeted for systems strengthening;
 - underfunding of relevant ministries, which impedes the rate and coverage of efforts to prevent and respond to VAC, especially at the sub-national level;
 - enforcement and implementation of legal and policy frameworks;
 - achieving a fully functioning system of national institutions that both prevents and responds to VAC; and
 - measuring actual improvements in the functioning of systems and the outcomes for children and families.
3. Some UNICEF-supported pilot VAC response actions to strengthen the capacity of service providers at the community level are promising, though coverage is limited. Linkages between formal and informal structures to prevent and respond to VAC are frequently weak.

Principal strengths (findings):

1. The available evidence suggests that there is a growing understanding of, commitment to, and ownership of a systems strengthening approach in UNICEF child protection programming. This is visible at the global level in terms of UNICEF's visible advocacy and increased discussion on VAC among key stakeholders.
2. At the regional level, discussion on strengthening programming on VAC has likewise increased as evidenced by the greater focus on technical support to develop programming logic and associated indicators.
3. UNICEF's advocacy and technical support have resulted in measurable changes in legal and policy frameworks under certain conditions. These conditions include government receptivity and streamlining of administrative procedures to adopt laws and policies.
4. The mapping and analysis of child protection systems have also provided a good basis for planning for and implementing change at the national and sub-national levels.

5. In locations evaluated, some changes in services and service delivery mechanisms, human resources, coordination and collaboration on child protection, and data are identifiable and appropriately address VAC.
6. UNICEF is widely perceived as a catalyst for institutional and capacity strengthening. The quality of UNICEF-supported training packages and tools to strengthen service provision and prevention of VAC, and capacity strengthening of local structures is reported to be generally good.
7. UNICEF's support to strengthening and involving informal development committees with attention to VAC has been shown to be crucial to effective response in the countries evaluated.

Areas for improvement (findings):

1. Stakeholders across the evaluation countries see the shift from the programme approach to a systems approach on VAC as a challenging paradigm change despite broad acceptance of the shift.
2. The systems approach is not very clearly understood and is thus not well planned for in programming design and implementation on VAC in some country offices. Progress on systems strengthening in terms of VAC programming is still limited and uneven, at least in part due to these challenges.
3. There is a serious lack of independent research and other assessments of child protection programming with attention to VAC to inform systems development. While there is an increasing recognition of the dynamic nature of systems, feedback to incorporate learning and adaptation is not yet systematically implemented in most countries covered by the evaluation.
4. The impact of systems strengthening on the prevention of and response to VAC is still difficult to measure, as programmes are not yet sufficiently mature.
5. While there have been substantial results in institution and capacity strengthening, relevant ministries at the country level are usually highly underfunded. This is particularly problematic at the sub-national level because lack of funding impedes the rate and coverage of efforts to prevent and respond to VAC. Expansion of coverage in particular is hampered.
6. Coordination amongst all of the actors engaged in strengthening national child protection systems as relevant to VAC is only somewhat functional and needs improvement in most countries.
7. Fragmentation of laws and policies continues to exist and there is a need for harmonization in most countries. Awareness of national laws among all duty bearers, rights holders and the public in general remains limited. Enforcement of laws and regulations is likewise still very problematic. This is partly due to the limited capacities of police, health and other service providers to deliver a comprehensive response to children affected by violence and the perpetrators of such violence.
8. Social norms programming to address VAC is not yet adequately integrated into the systems approach, as a key element rather than a completely separate programme.
9. Social norms limiting willingness to report also pose challenges to response.
10. Systematic linkages of national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with the government child protection system on VAC need improvement at the sub-national level.
11. The quality of inter-linkages between the formal and informal community groups is variable in the case study countries and needs strengthening and scaling up.
12. Ethical protocols and guidelines to support VAC research, prevention and response activities exist, but need further implementation across different settings.
13. Services to identify, refer, protect and support victims is limited to United Nations programming locations and varies markedly in coverage both among and within the 18 evaluation countries. Even within identified localities, not all children in need are reached.
14. At the national level, cross-sectoral collaboration is weak and coordinated VAC referral systems among service providers are not yet sufficiently in place across countries.

A well-developed national child protection system addressing VAC is composed of interlinking elements at different levels of society – starting with the child and family to community, sub-national and national levels.⁸⁴ At each level, UNICEF provides support to developing approaches to address various child protection issues, including VAC, through stakeholder participation, ranging from informal⁸⁵ to formal. The evaluation recognizes that treating formal and informal stakeholders as entirely separate groups is not ideal as there are different degrees of formality as opposed to a complete dichotomy between the two.

All elements in a successful child protection system need to be comprehensive and integrated to reduce violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect, injury and social exclusion of children. Such a system mobilizes and coordinates all sectors (especially social protection, education, health, security and justice) to reduce and mitigate risks and vulnerability of the child. Under such a system, and pertinent sub-systems, the resilience, rights and protection of children from VAC would be reinforced.

The 2012 Global Conference Report on child protection systems strengthening builds on the 2010⁸⁶ UNICEF document on the systems approach to child protection. The evolution in thinking incorporates several elements. This includes increased recognition of the need to analyse how a system is structured and that its stage of development depends on several contextual factors.⁸⁷ At the country level, systems are comprised of sub-systems of various types including government administrative structures, but also informal structures, all of which can contribute to the efficacy of the overall system. These include the prevalence and understanding of different child protection risks, the strength of the economy, the quality of governance, the effectiveness of the legal system, the prevalence of natural disasters, conflict situations and the presence of refugees or displaced populations.⁸⁸ An important element of any system is the fact that it is not a closed entity, but rather is adaptable based on various inputs.

4.2.1. Overview of systems strengthening results

The available evidence from most significant change analysis suggests that there is increased understanding of, commitment to and ownership of the need to strengthen systems to improve the prevention and response to VAC in the 18 evaluation countries. In the four case study countries, the evaluation found that governments at both national and sub-national levels understood and were committed to using a strengthened systems approach. Given that the evaluation team did not visit the desk review countries and no independent evaluations were

⁸⁴ Wulczyn F., et. al., *Adapting a Systems Approach to Child Protection: Key Concepts and Considerations*, UNICEF, New York, 2010; UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children, World Vision, 'Conference Report: A Better Way to Protect All Children, the Theory and Practice of Child Protection Systems', 13-16 November, 2012, UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children, World Vision, New Delhi, 2012.

⁸⁵ Informal approaches are usually community-based and include actions to address issues through informal networks consisting of local groups, informal leaders, extended families and other means.

⁸⁶ Wulczyn F., et. al., *Adapting a Systems Approach to Child Protection*.

⁸⁷ 'A Better Way to Protect All Children'

⁸⁸ This type of analysis was conducted for the four case study and desk review countries. Key findings are summarized in the sub-sections using comparative analysis, most significant change, and strengths and gaps analysis to generate concrete evidence. Also see World Vision, p. 4-5; 'A Better Way to Protect All Children'.

available to consult on this subject, it was not possible to fully assess the level of understanding of country governments of the systems approach. Nevertheless, the 18 evaluation countries are visibly implementing systems strengthening to some extent and, as discussed in Chapter 7 on sustainability, there are some increased budget allocations.

The evaluation findings indicate, however, that actual *progress towards results* on systems strengthening on VAC is limited and uneven in the evaluation countries. In some countries where financing was provided for specific actions, such as to support children living and/or working on the street, there were situations where such projects were not yet sufficiently linked to national/sub-national and community-level systems/sub-systems. The evaluation did find, however, that countries like Ghana,⁸⁹ Mexico and Tanzania are now consciously designing newly funded actions to fit into the larger systems approach.⁹⁰ Social norms programming to address VAC is not yet adequately integrated into the systems approach, as a key element rather than a completely separate programme.

In the case of Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States, more formal elements of systems to prevent and address VAC are often already largely in place, even if not functioning ideally. In most countries in Africa, with the notable exception of South Africa, more formal elements of child protection systems are extremely weak. Strengthening is focused on the informal or community-based systems elements and their linkages with the more formal elements, though there is great variation among all African countries. In Asia, there are also major differences among the countries. These differences – as well as the lack of baseline/endline/impact studies and evaluations – make it difficult for the evaluation to draw conclusions regarding UNICEF's effectiveness on systems strengthening with respect to VAC.

To what extent have UNICEF efforts contributed to systems strengthening?

Country offices place a major focus on systems strengthening, which also receives the higher share of annual budgets within child protection programmes. The online survey conducted for this evaluation asked the country offices to rate both the current level of maturity of their national systems with regard to addressing VAC in comparison with the different focus areas of KRA1, and the perceived contribution of UNICEF to the change process.

Important patterns emerge from the online survey among the 70 UNICEF country offices that responded to the survey. Statistical calculations using cross tabulation indicate that **the greater UNICEF's perceived involvement in systems strengthening, the more the perceived impact**. When a CO indicates that it has provided a substantial level of effort, the findings suggest that this has either yielded substantial or at least a moderate results. Where UNICEF has indicated that it has provided a moderate level of support, any change tends to be rated only as moderate or less than moderate. It would follow that when UNICEF puts greater focus on and investment in an issue, the impact is wider.

When reviewing the specific areas of UNICEF focus within systems strengthening, this pattern is almost always confirmed. Evidence suggests, for example, that many UNICEF country offices choose to support

⁸⁹ Ghana has, for example, received funding to address child marriage but has extended the scope of the actions to ensure that all activities are well linked to the improved system approach to be implemented as a result of the adoption of the 2015 Family and Child Welfare act.

⁹⁰ The evaluation lacked information on new project proposals from the desk review countries to ascertain if this was also the case for desk review countries or online survey countries.

legal and policy development and institutional and capacity strengthening. When country offices do so, they tend to have results that are proportionate to the level of effort. This applies, for example, to 10 of the 12 countries which indicated that a well improved legal system is in place in terms of *preventing* VAC (rated as substantial). Similarly, out of the nine countries indicating that they have a legal environment that is *responding* well to VAC (rated as 'substantial'), six have put substantial effort into this and the other three a moderate contribution.

This finding is even stronger when determining the extent to which support to legal and policy framework development and implementation was a good use of UNICEF funding: a positive perception is confirmed by almost all countries (55 out of 60 respondents), with 30 country offices rating the level of worthiness of expenditure as moderate (ratings 3 to 5) and 25 as substantial (6 to 7). All CP also contributed moderately (27 country offices) to substantially (30 country offices) to well-targeted funding.

In the area of systems mapping and gap assessments, the 33 country offices that invested substantial effort in these areas reported that outcomes were mostly substantial (19 countries) or at least moderate (14 countries).

The analysis of data from UNICEF Country Office Annual Reports (COARs) on the countries' identification of elements of national child protection systems that require strengthening (including through mapping exercises), indicates that there has been a very high increase of mapping exercises between 2008 and 2009 – growing from 91 to 108 countries. This suggests that the publication of the CP Strategy (2008) increased awareness in countries about the gaps in their existing child protection systems. The gaps themselves continue to exist, with 105 countries indicating in 2013 a need for strengthening weak elements in child protection systems. The evaluation found similar situations in the 18 case study and desk review countries and the online survey.

4.2.2. Measuring progress on systems strengthening

In evaluation interviews at the country and regional levels, UNICEF staff indicated that they have been unsuccessful in developing core indicators that would adequately measure systems strengthening for child protection in general, and VAC specifically. EAPRO in Bangkok is developing indicators, but they are constrained by the wide-ranging contexts and differences in the stages of systems development among the countries. Despite these challenges, EAPRO continues to try to develop and test core indicators to measure systems strengthening including on prevention and response to VAC in the region. It is evident that a range of potential indicators needs to be tested in different settings to determine their validity across situations and contexts in different parts of the world.

Examples of challenges to developing core indicators are varied. Certain measures, such as the number of laws and policies adopted, are straightforward to assess. The success of such measures, however, is dependent on many factors. A core measure on number of laws and policies adopted could, for example, easily be misinterpreted. The adopted laws and policies may be inappropriate to the local context and impossible to implement. A country with a relatively higher number of existing laws and policies against VAC may not need to adopt new ones during a given period. A country with no or few laws and policies on VAC but adopting several new ones could superficially appear to have done better than other countries unless the

specific situation of the country with existing laws is considered. Such a situation would apply, for example, to India, where laws and policies on VAC were already more common as compared to Tanzania, where few existed at the start of the evaluation period.

Other measures, such as increases in reporting of VAC cases, can have different causes and their meaning can be challenging to infer. This was also pointed out in the case study countries. Due to the implementation of a better overall systems approach at all levels of society, there may be an increase in the number of cases that are referred. There is, however, no way of being certain how many such cases represent an increased willingness and ability to report or whether the actual number of cases of VAC have (also) increased. Experience in other countries, including Australia, does indicate an increase in reporting as awareness grows. In the case study country of Tanzania, there were also indications of increased reporting in the districts where UNICEF was supporting more prevention and response to VAC.⁹¹

To assess the quality of a VAC component in child protection systems, other measures, though even more difficult to interpret, also need to be evaluated. These include changes in knowledge and attitudes as well as changes in the status of traditionally low power stakeholders in decision-making on how to prevent and respond to VAC-relevant issues.

Assessing the real impact of strengthening a child protection systems approach to address VAC takes time. At the country level, even in Tanzania where formal systems strengthening has progressed further than in the other case study countries, it is too early to measure the impact on actual VAC reduction. In the case of Mexico, the country's existing child protection system was more developed than those in the other case study countries, even if not functioning optimally. The Mexico office focuses on advocacy and on developing models for the country to strengthen its system. The impact of the UNICEF country office on improving the overall functioning of the system in Mexico is difficult to measure. Despite this difficulty, however, the evaluation does note that there has been progress as evidenced in increased adoption of laws and policies, more focus on institution and capacity strengthening, and development of prevention methods and response services.

4.2.3. Principal types of systems strengthening approaches in evaluation countries

In line with the different contexts, the evaluation team was able to discern three primary approaches to systems strengthening in the case study countries. Unfortunately, without going to the desk review countries to assess how the programmes are actually being implemented in practice, it is not possible to determine with certitude if similar approaches are being carried out in the desk review countries.⁹² The team does note, however, that documentation review from different sources indicates that the approach illustrated in Figure 7 is common in Latin America. The approaches illustrated in Figures 6 and 8 vary across regional offices.

⁹¹ Increases were not high but still noteworthy. In Temeke district, monitoring information shared with the evaluation team indicated an increase from 54 reported cases of VAC in 2011 to 200 in 2013.

⁹² Likewise, the available data does not allow the evaluation to draw conclusions from the online survey. See Annex 9 for the survey form.

Many low and lower-middle income countries are following a similar path to that in Tanzania and Ghana where an integrated systems support methodology is being developed and implemented. Where programme logic is visible, especially in the form of a sound theory of change, more synergistic models are being developed. UNICEF provides support across different levels to develop every aspect of the system to prevent and respond to VAC. This also includes developing information feedback mechanisms to improve the system. The evaluation concludes that this overall approach is well adapted to the needs and contexts of these countries. In Tanzania, there are already linkages among all the different components indicated in the pyramid in Figure 6. Downstream work at the district level is, however, still limited to some districts although the country is in the process of scaling up efforts. In the case of Ghana, linkages are planned and starting to be carried out as the newly adopted Child and Family Welfare Policy starts being implemented.

UNICEF/Ghana is committed to a systems strengthening approach to child protection, as it considers such a focus to be the most effective programming strategy. Evaluation evidence suggests strong support from a wide range of stakeholders among other development partners, within government and among civil society organizations. In part, this reflects a considered focus on building a coalition around systems strengthening, and broad agreement that child protection systems involve a range of more formal and less formal actors. In a society where respect for traditional authorities remains high and where government has carefully balanced traditional and state authority, this approach has resonated. Further, with levels of physical violence against children at over 90 per cent, and in a situation where much of what is violent is considered to be appropriate discipline (at home, in schools, and in public), it is evident that less formal systems are instrumental in effecting a change in attitudes and practices.

Figure 6: UNICEF-supported systems strengthening to address VAC in Tanzania and Ghana (low and lower-middle income countries)

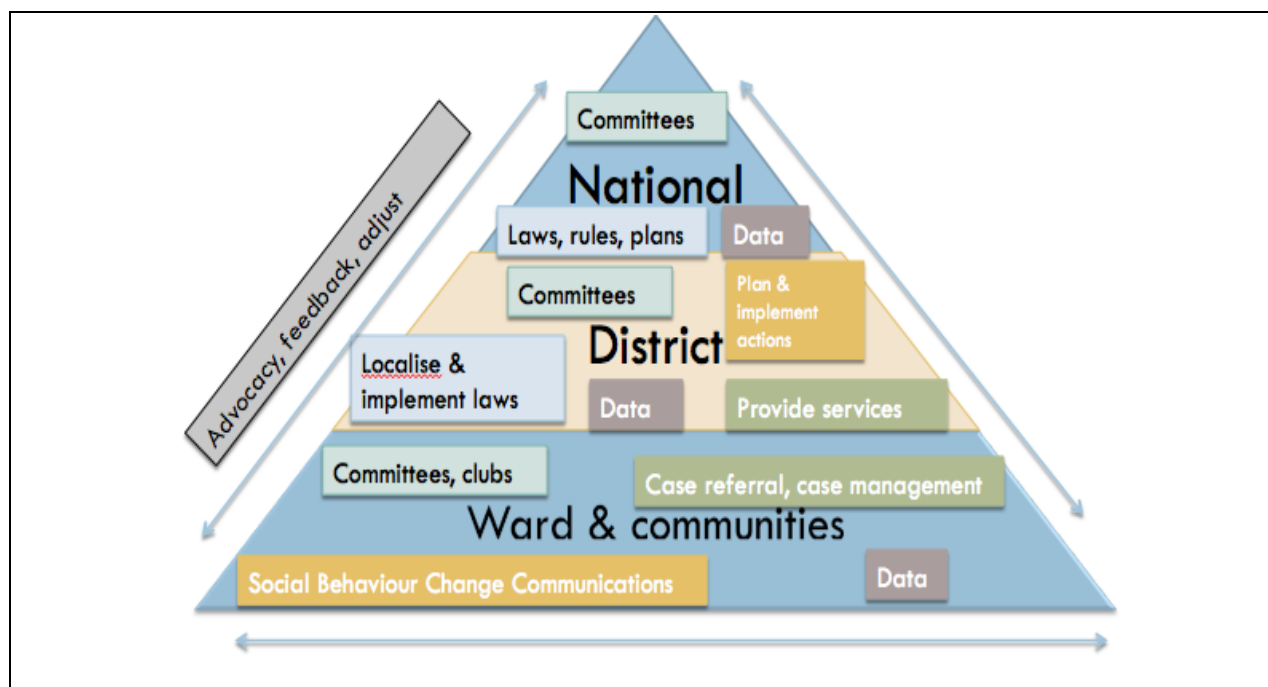


Figure 6 was prepared by the team on the basis of the evaluation findings.

In Mexico, which already has a social welfare system in place to address VAC, the UNICEF country office provides input at different stages and for different parts of the system, in accordance with identified gaps. While the country office works at all levels, it is more oriented to addressing the particular elements of the system that need strengthening. This approach is appropriate for many middle-income countries as well as for others that already have more developed systems in place. The Mexico model is also in line with the fact that UNICEF funding and human resources in such countries tend to be more limited so targeting of support needs to be very well in line with the specific needs of the existing system.

Figure 7: UNICEF-supported systems strengthening to address VAC in Mexico (middle-income country)

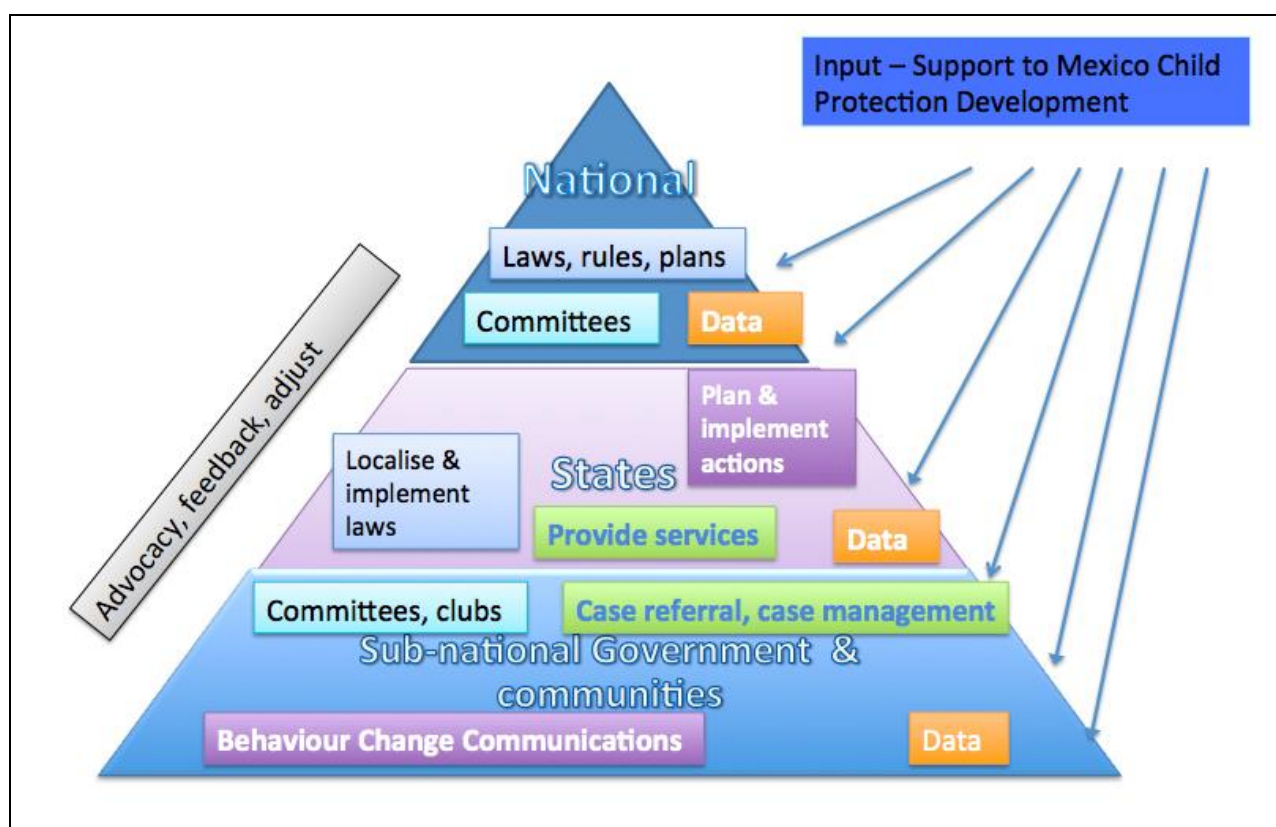


Figure 7 was prepared by the team on the basis of the evaluation findings.

In Bangladesh, UNICEF has been working on using several different approaches to strengthen the system, but many of the actions take place on specific subjects, which need further integration into an encompassing structure. As illustrated in Figure 8, such approaches include working on development of laws, supporting actions with street children, facilitating conditional cash transfers for vulnerable children, and life skills training in after-school clubs. These various elements have not yet been drawn together into a more integrated and overall systemic approach. This is partly due to the complexity of the context, including the involvement of many ministries and other entities. In Bangladesh, there is an urgent need to develop a more structured approach linking and coordinating actors across the system.

Figure 8: UNICEF-supported systems strengthening to address VAC in Bangladesh (nascent system)

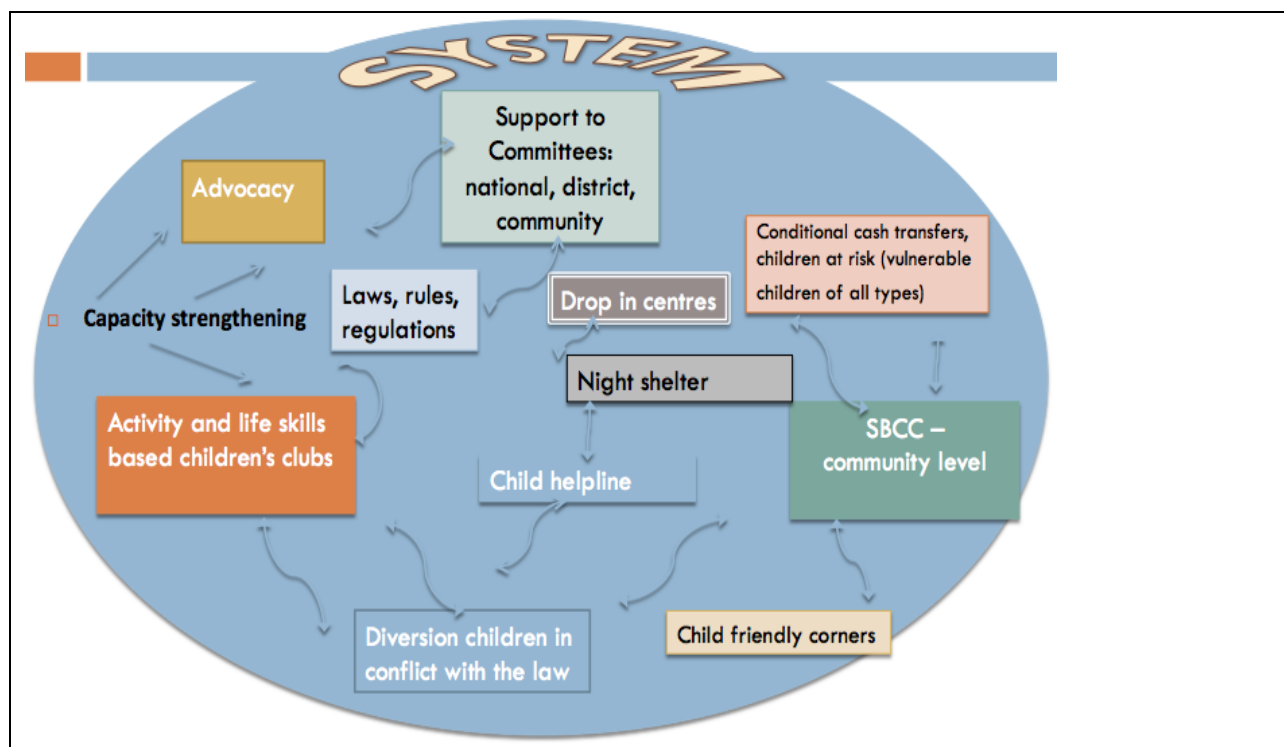


Figure 8 was prepared by the team on the basis of the evaluation findings.

4.2.4 Advocacy and results on legal and policy frameworks regarding VAC

In line with the evaluation framework (Figure 1), the evaluation analysed the extent to which justice for children is improved. This section thus discusses the case study and desk review countries as well as the online survey results indicating the degree to which UNICEF contributed to legal and policy framework development. As the recent UNICEF global document, which delineates six key strategies to reduce VAC states, the implementation and enforcement of laws and policies that protect children sends a strong message to society that violence is unacceptable and will be punished.⁹³

Among the 18 case study and desk review countries, some of the main challenges hampering effectiveness of implementation and/or enforcement include:

- lack of and incoherence of laws and policies;
- lack of coordination among stakeholders working to reduce VAC, as well as a lack of accountability;

⁹³ United Nations Children's Fund, *Ending Violence Against Children: Six Strategies for Action #ENDviolence*, UNICEF, New York, 2014. The World Health Organization *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention* (2014) likewise states: "The enactment and enforcement of legislation on crime and violence are critical for establishing norms of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and creating safe and peaceful societies." World Health Organization (WHO) (2014), *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014*, WHO, Geneva, 2014.

- low budget allocations to strengthen systems and services to prevent and respond to VAC;
- low institutional and capacity levels of planners and service providers; and
- low levels of stakeholder commitment to address VAC and sensitivity of the issue.

The 2014 Global Status Report⁹⁴ on Violence Prevention indicates that progress is being made – 157 countries now have laws in place prohibiting violence against children⁹⁵ – though enforcement of laws is still quite problematic. As UNICEF’s annual report covering the year 2013 states, the organization contributed to the fact that 123 countries now penalize all forms of sexual violence against boys and girls.⁹⁶ Of the laws against all types of violence cited, the Global Status Report states that adequate enforcement of almost all such laws only occurs in about half of the countries that have passed them. With respect to national action plans on child maltreatment, 71 per cent of countries around the world already had national action plans in 2014.⁹⁷

In all of the case study countries, UNICEF has provided financial and technical support for the development of legal and/or policy child protection frameworks with significant components on VAC. The evaluation found that UNICEF’s efforts to strengthen national child protection policies and implementation systems to prevent and respond to VAC have resulted in measurable changes in legal and policy frameworks under certain conditions. These include government receptivity and streamlining of administrative procedures to adopt laws and policies.

Determining the exact level of impact that UNICEF advocacy had on strengthening national legal and planning frameworks as compared to other development partners is challenging.⁹⁸ In all countries there are other stakeholders that have also contributed to legal and policy framework development. There is no method to accurately weigh the respective contributions of the different organizations. As the remainder of the section will indicate, however, UNICEF provided substantial advocacy and technical support for the development and adoption of legal and policy frameworks.

Government stakeholders in all four case study countries stressed the high value of the advocacy and other support that UNICEF provided for strengthening the legal and policy environment on VAC. Similarly, in the desk review countries, advocacy and technical support for developing and strengthening national legal and policy/planning frameworks and protocols on VAC received a great deal of focus. All desk review countries reported engaging in advocacy in these subject areas. The online survey, likewise, also indicated an important role for UNICEF in legal and policy framework development. See also the chapter on efficiency (Chapter 6) for a discussion on increased financial investment to support advocacy.

⁹⁴ World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014*, WHO, Geneva, 2014.

⁹⁵ United Nations Children’s Fund, *Annual Report 2013*, UNICEF, New York, 2014.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014*. National action planning is underway in many countries.

⁹⁸ As noted in subsequent sections, advocacy was also used for other purposes, including the promotion of institution and capacity strengthening, and focus on the implementation of effective prevention and response to VAC.

In Tanzania, the evaluation found that the national VAC survey, conducted on the advice of UNICEF and Together for Girls, was a vital and useful advocacy tool.⁹⁹ Advocacy was well planned and integrated from the time of the VAC survey design. Government and other stakeholder involvement in survey design and implementation helped ensure ownership and relevance of the content of the survey. A series of advocacy and information meetings with decision-makers were held prior to finalizing the results. These meetings helped ensure that the data would be recognized as representing national realities. This series of steps did lead to a full acceptance of the results, with government stakeholders informing the evaluators that the findings had shocked them into action. Based on this awareness, government officials took ownership of the situation, moving concretely to 1) improve legal and policy frameworks; and 2) adopt an overall systems approach to preventing and responding to VAC.

Four of the desk review countries – Ecuador, Mongolia, Morocco and Zambia – also noted that having good data on the prevalence of different types of VAC was very useful for successful advocacy. A specialist from the ESARO office pointed out, however, that using good data as an advocacy tool does not guarantee the success of the advocacy effort. If a country refuses to accept the results of the surveys, the advocacy will be less likely to have real impact on legal and policy framework development.

UNICEF technical support in the form of training, guidelines, data and other information on relevant VAC-related subjects was also provided to improve the legal and policy frameworks.

In all four case study countries, adoption of frameworks has occurred during the evaluation period or will occur within the next few months. Almost all desk review countries had adopted legal and/or policy frameworks during the evaluation period (see Table 4). The online survey also indicated substantial improvements in this area (see Figures 9 and 10).

Table 5: Examples of laws and policy documents adopted

<p>Examples of laws and policy documents adopted in case study countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tanzania: Law of the Child Act (2009) with accompanying regulations and rules; the Children's Act (2011) (Zanzibar); and the Guidelines to the Child Protection Regulations (2013) • Mexico: Federal Child Protection Law (2014); General Law on Girls', Boys' and Adolescents' Rights (2014) • Ghana: Child and Family Welfare Policy (2015) • Bangladesh: Children's Act (2013) <p>Examples and types of relevant legal and policy frameworks adopted in desk review countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree, law or regulation, code of conduct on combating sexual abuse (Dominican Republic, Indonesia, India, Mongolia) • National action plan on VAC or general planning documents with VAC component (Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Serbia)
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⁹⁹ UNICEF, Division of Violence Prevention, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (2011), *Violence Against Children in Tanzania: Findings from a National Survey, 2009; Report on the Prevalence of Sexual, Physical and Emotional Violence, Context of Sexual Violence, and Health and Behavioural Consequences of Violence Experience in Childhood*, Multi Sector Task Force on Violence Against Children, Dar es Salaam.

- Child protection system policies/plans with VAC components and implementation of case management (Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Mongolia, Serbia, Zambia)
- Child rights laws (with) VAC reduction laws and/or protocols components (Ecuador, Jordan, Nigeria, Serbia, Zambia)
- Programme on community-based child protection systems (Ivory Coast)
- Reduction of corporal punishment, juvenile justice or laws on other specific forms of VAC (Dominican Republic, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Mongolia, Morocco, Uganda)
- Statements on child rights including protection against VAC added to the constitution (Morocco).

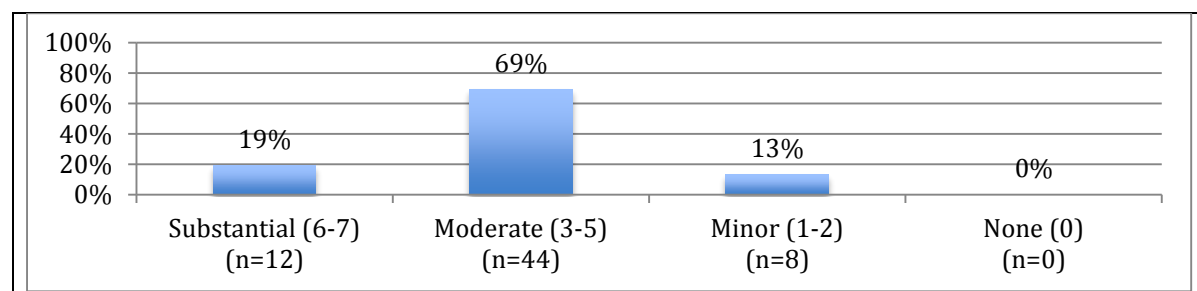
In Mexico, the adoption of the General Law on Girls', Boys' and Adolescents' Rights (2014) has transformed the national scenario for child protection. UNICEF/Mexico was instrumental throughout the development process, and played a particular role immediately prior to the law's passage. Many of the lessons learned from the piloting of models at the sub-national level in the 2009–2013 period were directly absorbed into nationally applicable standards. The new legal framework should also overcome the previous fragmentation of different laws for every different aspect of child protection in each of the 32 states. The entire UNICEF office is now engaged in supporting the roll-out of the law, with intense advocacy and dialogue at the sub-national level to ensure that all 32 state legislations implement it by the deadline of June 2015.

Unfortunately, given that most of these laws, policies and plans were adopted late in the evaluation period, the evaluation was unable to independently assess the extent to which they have had a significant direct *impact* on reducing VAC in the 18 evaluation countries. This is also partly due to other challenges that impede their implementation.

The online survey indicated that most UNICEF country offices considered that the legal environment for preventing VAC in their respective countries had improved during the evaluation period. The respondents felt that UNICEF's contribution was important in this regard, with one-third of the online survey countries indicating that UNICEF country offices had made substantial¹⁰⁰ contributions to the development and adoption of frameworks to prevent VAC.

It should be noted that progress might have been less noteworthy in some countries because reasonably good frameworks already exist.

Figure 9: Extent to which the legal environment in the country is preventing VAC



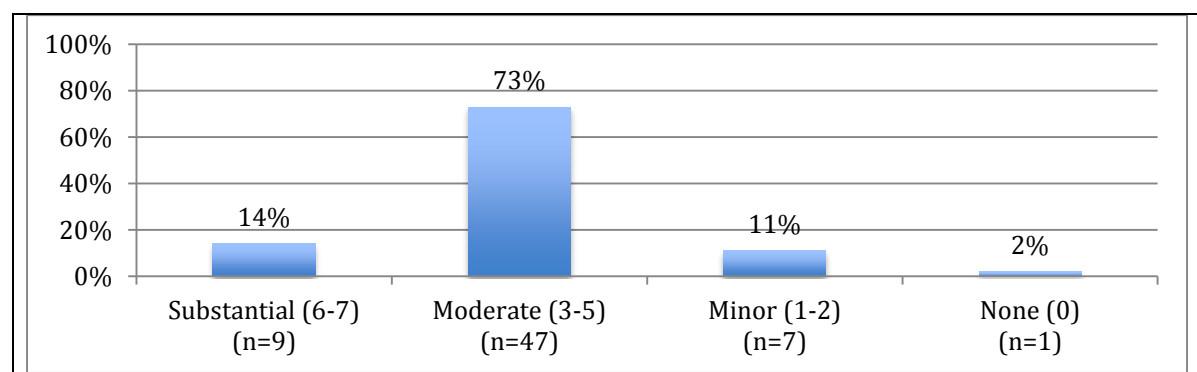
N=64

¹⁰⁰ On a scale of 1-7, substantial is equivalent to a score of 6-7.

Similarly, the online survey indicated that four-fifths (56) of the countries felt that they had made some or substantial progress on strengthening the legal environment to prevent VAC. UNICEF's contribution in this regard was felt to have been important to a majority of country offices with over four-fifths also indicating that it had made some or a substantial contribution to improvements.

With respect to the extent to which the legal environment is responding to VAC, countries do indicate that response is moderately covered in over three-fourths (47) of the countries. Substantial progress on response to VAC was found in slightly over 1 in 10 countries, though UNICEF's contribution to reaching this level was assessed as high for one-third (22) of the country offices.

Figure 10: Extent to which the legal environment in the country is responding to VAC



N= 64

At the national level, in 2014, over two-thirds of all countries that participated in the online survey had national action plans on child maltreatment.¹⁰¹ With respect to policy development in the online survey countries, the majority had made at least some progress on the development of national child protection policies with one-fifth (14) having made substantial progress. UNICEF's role was felt to have been important in this regard with one-third of the countries reporting that UNICEF's role was substantial in reaching higher levels of progress on policy development.

When comparing these online survey results to the country case study and desk review country findings, UNICEF appears conservative regarding the progress that was made in many countries. A review of the many laws, regulations, policies and plans that were adopted in the countries shows that there has been general improvement in the legal and policy framework development. However, much work remains to be done. Many existing laws need improvement. Fragmentation of laws and policies continues to exist and much effort is needed to harmonize them. Examples include discrepancies on the minimum age of children for marriage, which, as already discussed in previous sections, places children at higher risk of VAC. Most of all,

¹⁰¹ *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014*. National action planning is underway in many countries.

however, the frameworks need to be implemented and, in the case of legal frameworks, they must be enforced.

4.2.5 Enforcement of laws and regulations and ethical standards

In line with the 2014 Global Status Report on Violence, the enforcement of laws and regulations was cited as very problematic in all 4 case study countries and in all 14 desk review countries. Challenges to enforcement that were typically mentioned included lack of capacities of service providers and other duty bearers; socio-cultural norms preventing reporting and prosecuting of cases of VAC; and lack of budgets to identify and track cases and provide follow up in all countries. In several countries where laws have been adopted, a lack of implementation measures and regulations was identified. As will be discussed in the remaining sub-sections of Chapter 4, UNICEF has been contributing to addressing these challenges although gap analysis indicates that much work remains to be done.

The evaluation found that overall, ethical and quality standards to prevent VAC through UNICEF-supported interventions in the case study countries exist but need further implementation across different settings. This includes locations where UNICEF or its implementing partners are not working. Documentation of how ethical and protocol guidelines are implemented is necessary.

For the desk review countries, the evaluation found it more challenging to determine the existence of ethical and quality standards as only general information on adopted legal and policy frameworks and some short descriptions in documentation were available.¹⁰² An overall conclusion can be drawn, however, that ethical and quality standards need to be well defined and disseminated within countries. Such dissemination may also help stress the need to enforce the adopted laws and regulations.

4.2.6 National institutions

Coordination and institution strengthening

The evaluation found evidence¹⁰³ that UNICEF provides technical support for institution strengthening through support for the establishment and/or strengthening of mechanisms at different levels in the evaluation countries. This is often combined with capacity strengthening of individuals within these institutions. Institution strengthening on VAC in the child protection context is aimed at developing effective frameworks and approaches to prevent and reduce VAC through strong, well-coordinated and collaborative institutions at all levels. To strengthen coordination, UNICEF provides support for and stimulates the holding of consultative meetings, provides capacity strengthening, and advocates for collaboration among institutions. At meetings, UNICEF provides technical input and promotes effective networking among participants.

¹⁰² Due to limitations with respect to the length of the form, the online survey did not include questions on this subject.

¹⁰³ From the case study countries and the desk survey forms as well as reports the desk review countries provided.

The evaluation found that – in addition to the adoption of relevant legal and policy frameworks – the most positive result of UNICEF’s contribution through advocacy and institution strengthening is the growing recognition that a coordinated systems approach is needed for child protection in general and to reduce VAC in particular. This finding held across the case study countries and the desk review countries. Coordination is needed at the national level among ministries and national agencies as well as at the sub-national to community levels. Along with effective coordinating mechanisms, the involvement of CSOs and other institutions is essential.

Given the need for flexibility in the system and sub-systems to effectively deal with changing contexts and needs over time, having adaptable institutions is very important.

At the national level, coordination efforts focus on developing legal, policy and planning frameworks as well as on reviewing incoming data to improve the system over time. At the sub-national level, planning, as well as development of by-laws and monitoring, also needs to include representatives from different sectors. The cross-cutting nature of services to prevent and respond to VAC in a range of settings including households, schools and communities means that specialists from different subject areas need to be involved. This implies that the areas of social welfare, community development,¹⁰⁴ education, justice, women and children development, health and others need to coordinate and collaborate.

All case study and almost all desk review countries have several ministries working on issues related to VAC. These usually include the ministries and agencies on planning, justice, social welfare, gender, family welfare, health and education.¹⁰⁵ Some countries, such as Serbia, have a single entity responsible for coordination on child rights including VAC (the National Council for Child Rights), which facilitates but does not fully solve the problems around coordination. It is, therefore, no surprise when coordination on the issues of VAC is challenging though the adoption of legal policy frameworks does indicate that there is a level of success resulting from coordination.

All case study countries and 13 of the 14 desk review countries noted that there are lingering gaps that affect coordination. These same challenges also impede the ability of UNICEF to provide ideal support on institution building and related coordination on VAC as the agency does not have full control over the circumstances that affect such coordination. The following list cites examples of challenges from the case study and desk review countries:

- lack of clear roles and responsibilities, and budget allocations on VAC;¹⁰⁶
- lack of a single entity responsible for child protection and VAC;¹⁰⁷
- lack of interest in, and resistance to change on the part of government officials;¹⁰⁸
- competing priorities, conflicts between entities, overlap of tasks;¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Frequently, such offices are in separate ministries, e.g., as in Tanzania.

¹⁰⁵ In many cases ministries will be combined, for example, Ministry of Family and Social Welfare.

¹⁰⁶ Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Tajikistan, Uganda and all four case study countries.

¹⁰⁷ Indonesia, Nigeria, Tajikistan and all four case study countries.

¹⁰⁸ Jordan, Nigeria, Serbia

¹⁰⁹ India, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Serbia, Zambia and all four case study countries.

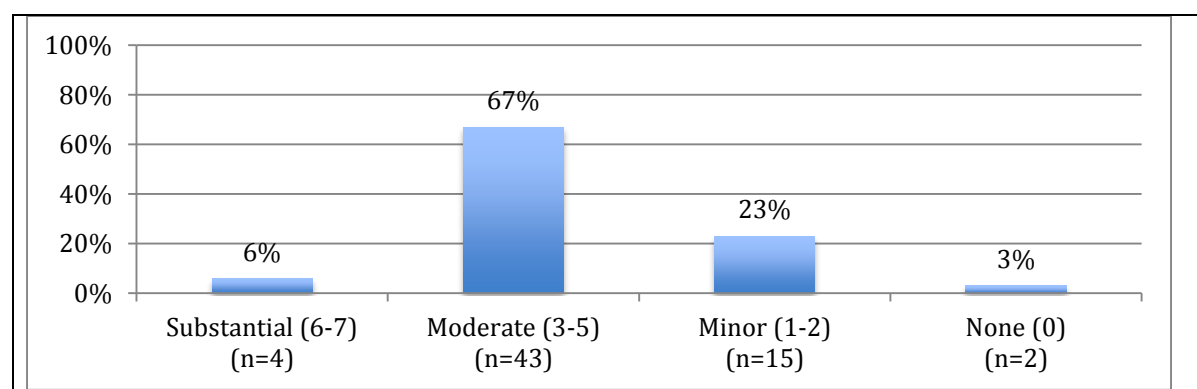
- irregular holding of meetings;¹¹⁰
- changing focal points, government and CSO representatives in committees;¹¹¹
- lack of coordinating mechanisms;¹¹² and
- bureaucracy, slow processes to organize coordination.¹¹³

Gap analysis conducted as part of the evaluation consequently identified a need to further strengthen the *quality* of coordination to address VAC among government ministries and other partner entities in all the case study and at least 13 of the desk review countries.¹¹⁴

System coherence (findings from the online survey)

Results from the online survey suggest that there is mixed progress in terms of coherence within the child protection system to respond to the real needs and problems of children with respect to VAC. Coherence is defined here as the extent to which strategies and actions are logical and consistent at each level. Of the 70 countries, only a small number (4) stated that there was substantial coherence and 43 reported moderate coherence (see figure 11, below). Of these, 12 country offices reported that UNICEF had substantially contributed to improving coherence. Further analysis indicates that UNICEF contributed most to improving coherence on VAC approaches in the low Human Development Index countries. This is understandable given that the issues facing these countries are greater and the need for UNICEF to provide support in these countries is consequently also greater.

Figure 11: Extent to which the child protection system offers a coherent response to the real problems facing children victims of violence



N= 64

Capacity strengthening

Capacity strengthening of key actors in accordance with identified capacity needs of formal and less formal structures is key to ensuring a well functioning system to address VAC. The

¹¹⁰ Serbia, Tajikistan and all four case study countries.

¹¹¹ Jordan, Mongolia, Morocco Nigeria

¹¹² Ivory Coast

¹¹³ Jordan and Bangladesh

¹¹⁴ As evidenced in the list of countries in the preceding footnotes.

evaluation found that UNICEF-supported capacity strengthening in the case study countries on VAC-related issues is useful.

UNICEF uses a range of approaches to support capacity strengthening with government institutions and CSOs at the national level. At the sub-national level, the focus is on providing capacity strengthening for improved service delivery down to community level groups. The extent of such capacity strengthening varies greatly by country but usually includes the development of training modules, protocols and guidelines on responding to cases of VAC, and/or tools for social behaviour change communication (SBCC). UNICEF staff also provides direct technical guidance in the form of inputs as described in previous sections.

EAPRO has developed and is promoting a child protection programme strategy development toolkit¹¹⁵ for its region. The evaluation found the toolkit to be well detailed and clear, although it would need to be adapted and tested to be useful in other regions. The toolkit is an example of the type of information that could be shared on a knowledge sharing platform. As a matter of fact, a web-based knowledge sharing platform would have provided a very good resource to collaboratively develop such a tool for global use with input from UNICEF regional and country offices across the world.

The evaluation found that capacity strengthening in the case study countries is generally provided in line with needs. Subject areas include child rights as related to VAC, referral, SBCC methods, and monitoring and evaluation. In some countries, specific training is also provided on aspects such as developing budgets on child protection and VAC specifically (e.g. Tanzania and Mexico). The effectiveness of capacity strengthening could only be assessed in the case study countries and through the 70 countries included in the online survey.¹¹⁶ It should be noted that all of the desk review countries were included in the online survey.

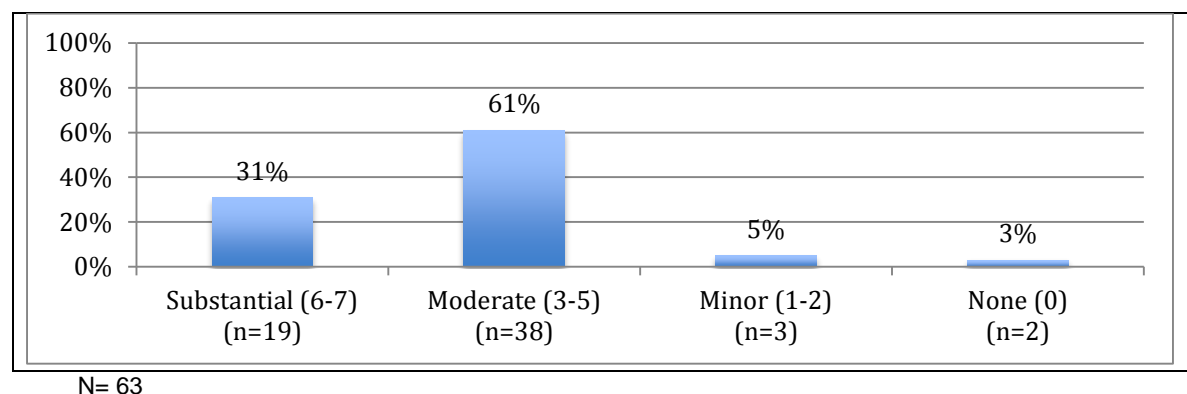
Guidelines and training manuals are well structured and clear according to the government and other stakeholders in the case study countries. In some countries, implementation of the training packages on systems strengthening of services is as yet limited. This was the case in Bangladesh. However, at the time of the fieldwork for the evaluation, officials in the Ministry of Social Welfare did indicate that they very much appreciated the content and found it to be appropriate. In other countries, such as Tanzania, the main request was the need to scale up the training across the country.

As indicated in Figure 12, the majority of the UNICEF country offices participating in the online survey indicated that investing in materials for training on VAC was a substantial (19 countries) or moderately good (38 countries) investment. This indicates the importance attached to developing such materials and their perceived usefulness in addressing issues related to VAC.

¹¹⁵ United Nations Children's Fund, East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Child Protection Programme Strategy Toolkit, UNICEF EAPRO, Bangkok, 2014, country offices, <http://www.unicef.org/eapro/about_16332.html>, accessed 24 May 2014.

¹¹⁶ The desk review countries also participated in the online survey.

Figure 12: Extent to which investments in training tools, guides and manuals overall were a good use of UNICEF funding compared to alternative expenditures



4.2.7 Sub-national institutions

At the sub-national level, the evaluation found that UNICEF's advocacy and technical support were similar across most of the country and desk review countries and include:

- establishment and/or strengthening of sub-national coordination and implementation entities (13 out of 18 countries evaluated); and
- strengthening the referral system through training of service providers¹¹⁷ and other duty bearers such as the police; case management improvement; and helping to develop local guidelines and protocols for service provision (16 out of 18 countries evaluated).

Despite the efforts undertaken so far, however, the gap analysis found that there are at least two important concerns that need to be addressed. The first is the extremely limited budget allocations for all work on the prevention and response to VAC from the sub-national to community level within the evaluation countries. The second gap is the limited coverage of child protection systems models with attention to the prevention and response to VAC within countries.

In the case of the four case study countries, the evaluation found that ministries responsible for implementing VAC activities at the community level, such as ministries of social welfare, are seriously underfunded.¹¹⁸ This impedes their effectiveness as their low budgets – many of which are oriented more to managing pensions and other social security activities – also mean that their status as compared to some other ministries¹¹⁹ is perceived as less important. In Bangladesh, Ghana and Tanzania, for example, evaluation key informants in such ministries reported that they lack the power to sufficiently influence budget allocations to adequately address VAC at the sub-national level. This appears to be a vicious circle, as such ministries have low budgets and relatively weak authority. They find it difficult to make themselves heard, which in turn leads to low budget allocations. UNICEF's efforts to have an impact on prevention

¹¹⁷ Service providers include social welfare workers, police, medical personnel and CSO staff.

¹¹⁸ As case study country interviewees reiterated in all four countries and several other international key stakeholders also noted.

¹¹⁹ Especially education and health.

and response services within a programme period are affected by the low available funding of such partner ministries.

Evaluation gap analysis found that UNICEF country offices and their implementing partners did engage in advocacy to help promote more and well targeted financial allocations (see Chapter 7 on sustainability for details). The evaluation also found that these efforts were beginning to have an impact on the increase of budgets, but that this was still far from sufficient.

As evidenced in the case study countries, documentation and desk review survey, the evaluation found that at the sub-national level, UNICEF tends to work only in particular areas of the country, typically, in localities identified as priority areas in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Countrywide coverage has not yet been attained in any of the countries evaluated. Even reaching all children in need with VAC initiatives in already targeted localities remains problematic as UNICEF funding is too limited to expand coverage. Models for coordination and capacity strengthening are piloted and demonstrated with government and CSO partners. Governments are then expected to scale up the models in accordance with needs. Much work, and higher budget allocations, will still be needed in the countries well into the future to ensure that all areas are covered with functioning institutions working to prevent and respond to VAC.

Given that UNICEF is not in a position to cover entire countries, the need to pilot and disseminate good practices and advocate for the allocation of government budgets for community work is evident. To have substantial results, significant additional resources will need to be allocated to develop, provide and disseminate technical support for successful adaptation of models to local contexts. As further discussed in Chapter 7 on sustainability, government recognition of the importance of investing in the reduction of VAC is thus a key issue.

Two other points to consider are the linkages of government with NGOs and types of decentralization. To improve effectiveness and efficiency, the evaluation also found that systematic linkages of national NGOs with the government child protection system on VAC need improvement at the sub-national level. This was noticed in all four case study countries although more progress was made in this area in Bangladesh, which has a strong NGO culture. It should be added, however, that there are increasing restrictions on NGOs in Bangladesh.¹²⁰

The level of decentralization in a country affects the level and type of institution strengthening that needs to be implemented. In countries such as Mexico and Indonesia (one of the desk review countries), which are highly decentralized, a strong focus on the sub-national level is essential. Efforts being carried out at the national level need to be replicated in detail at the provincial level, including the development of laws and policies. The Mexico and Indonesia

¹²⁰ Global Human Rights Defence, 'Shrinking space for Non-governmental Organisations: Bangladesh and its Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act', 2014, <<http://www.ghrd.org/news/article/news/detail/News/shrinking-space-for-non-governmental-organisations-bangladesh-and-its-foreign-donations-voluntary>>, accessed 15 March 2015.

country offices, therefore, indicate that the cost of providing the needed advocacy and technical support within decentralized countries is high.

4.2.8 Community structures for prevention and response to VAC

At the global level, UNICEF recognizes the importance of strengthening child protection systems to well integrate their formal and less formal aspects.¹²¹ Although in previous years the formal and informal structures were seen as opposing elements, current understanding correctly reflects the view that they can form a continuum from formal to informal. The whole range of types of structures should be strongly interwoven into the larger system. The discussion in the current section will thus focus on an analysis of the integration of the formal and informal structures at the community level to achieve results on VAC.

Formal government social welfare and community development officers, health officers, police, teachers and other service providers who may be called upon to support a case of VAC can be based in a community or cover several communities at a time. Such individuals usually form the first line of contact for a case of VAC or they may be involved in implementing prevention activities in the community. Some countries also formally recognize traditional structures of leadership.¹²² In other cases, traditional structures may be informal but carry a great deal of authority. Additional informal structures can be specially composed committees on child protection, including attention to VAC. In most cases, local traditional leaders join with teachers and available government officials in informal committees. In some countries, such as Bangladesh, informal committees are in the process of being formalized as officially recognized entities. As such, it is apparent that there are many types of structures that can all be associated and integrated in the efforts to reduce VAC.

Bangladesh's Ministry of Social Welfare, with technical support from UNICEF/Bangladesh and implementation by Aparajeyo Bangladesh, has been implementing a Child Helpline intervention since 2011 in selected areas of urban Old Dhaka. Child Helpline is an emergency telecommunications and outreach service for children in need of care and protection. Callers can ring a toll free number from any phone in the country at any time and reach a trained officer from Aparajeyo Bangladesh. This service provider offers information and referral advice, counselling over the phone, and emergency outreach services in particular cases. The pilot was evaluated in 2014. Evaluation findings highlighted the need for strong referral services, careful training of Helpline officers, expanded advocacy and networking activities, better integration of Child Helpline services into the broader child protection system, and the roll-out of the programme to other locations.

The effectiveness of local structures, whether traditional or specially formed committees, depends very much on the context. In a country such as the case study country of Ghana, where traditional structures include a strong role for women referred to as 'queen mothers', they

¹²¹ The formal and informal are not separate dimensions but integral to the whole. United Nations Children's Fund, UNHCR, Save the Children, World Vision, 'Conference Report: A Better Way to Protect All Children, the Theory and Practice of Child Protection Systems', 13-16 November, 2012, UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children, World Vision, New Delhi, 2012.

¹²² For example, chiefs, queen mothers as in Ghana, chiefs in Malawi and Zambia.

can play a useful role. In others, traditional structures may have a strong gender bias and do not easily keep the best interests of the child at their core.¹²³

The evaluation further determined that where collaboration between the formal and informal structures is strong and well-integrated, examples of effective results could be identified. Local stakeholders in Tanzania, Bangladesh, Mexico and Ghana all strongly urged greater support for community structures and strong inter-linkages with formal structures for real impact on VAC reduction. The evaluation team met with members of several informal structures in UNICEF model districts visited in Tanzania, Mexico, Bangladesh and Ghana. In the case of Tanzania, a longer and more intensive period of interaction and capacity strengthening was evident in the relatively good level of commitment to and understanding of the need to prevent and report VAC.¹²⁴ Ghana is in the process of launching new approaches to working with informal structures so it was not possible to assess them yet. Nevertheless, the necessity of expanding reach to cover more communities and work more intensively with informal committees was evident in all case study countries.

Work specifically with traditional informal structures in the desk review countries is limited, although some countries conduct awareness raising with traditional and religious leaders so that they, in turn, also conduct awareness raising.

Strengthening community structures

In the case study countries, UNICEF has provided support for work with a variety of types of structures, ranging from the formal to the loosely organized local groups in model development locations. UNICEF has worked with existing community groups in targeted locations, which include various types of both traditional and informal leaders. Work with such community groups was found to be effective in the case study countries if sufficient and quality linkages with formal sector service providers exist who provide technical support on VAC-related subjects. The main challenge is that the formal sector service providers often work under low budget circumstances.

The cost of implementing institution and capacity strengthening at the community level is high. Key challenges to improved referral and case management identified in the country case studies and desk study countries are all centred on the lack of human and financial resources to stimulate, train, monitor and provide on-going support to the committees. Scaling up coverage of the committees is thus likewise dependent on resources of various types.

The evaluation also found that UNICEF has supported model development / strengthening of community structures in at least 10 of the desk review countries. Among the desk review countries, a few examples illustrate the breadth of the work UNICEF undertakes with local structures. In India, UNICEF has supported the establishment of 12,000 child protection committees, while in Indonesia a community-based identification, referral and service delivery mechanism is being piloted. In Nigeria, some states have community committees, and in four of

¹²³ As the Convention on the Rights of the Child states, actions should be in the best interest of the child.

¹²⁴ Among the committees that the evaluation team visited.

these states UNICEF supports the development of child protection interventions including strengthening linkages between formal state and local structures. In Serbia, formalized community committees are being established although they initially cover only 15–20 per cent of the communities. In Tajikistan, there are village committees dealing with daily issues, including on children's rights, but they still need to define standards on addressing VAC.

4.2.9 Response services at the community level

Worldwide there are many more incidents of violence against women and children than are actually reported. For this reason the often dispersed, fragmented and poorly resourced services to respond to VAC need to be strengthened.¹²⁵ One of the six major global strategies that UNICEF and its partners have identified to respond to VAC is the promotion and provision of support services for children.¹²⁶ An important aspect of the strategy is encouraging children to seek quality professional support and report incidents of violence to help them to better cope with and resolve experiences of violence. A strong and well-functioning formal system to provide support to reported cases of VAC is important in all countries. Community-based networks to provide support to victims of VAC are also important, particularly as existing formal systems are often not yet able to provide the required support.

Response to VAC at the community level can take one of three forms: (1) the community handles the case without special knowledge and/or consideration of child rights in which case, the child's case may be handled without necessarily considering his/her best interests;¹²⁷ (2) the child's case is referred to the formal system (i.e., health and police sector staff); and (3) the child's case is handled at the community level through informed local structures. As also confirmed in the evaluation case study countries, children and their families may fail to report VAC cases due to a lack of information about existing services, the low perceived or real quality of the services, shame, and concerns about reprisal.¹²⁸

Service delivery to victims of VAC depends very much on the case and the type of service provider to whom the case has first been referred. From first identification in the home, school or community, a child victim may then be referred to health services, the police, social welfare or community development officers. Ideally, the child may need to be seen by different service providers if her/his case warrants it.¹²⁹ Coordination and interaction among the service providers is needed to ensure the child receives the needed services and that her/his case is followed up adequately. Given the multitude of actors and UNICEF's role in capacity strengthening, attribution of results on service delivery to UNICEF is constrained.

¹²⁵ World Health Organisation, *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014*, WHO, Geneva, 2014.

¹²⁶ United Nations Children's Fund, *Ending Violence Against Children: Six Strategies for Action #ENDviolence*, UNICEF, New York, 2014.

¹²⁷ International NGO Council on Violence Against Children, *Violating children's rights: Harmful practices based on tradition, culture, religion or superstition*, publication location not cited, International NGO Council on Violence Against Children, 2012.

¹²⁸ *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014*.

¹²⁹ If there has been a criminal offence and the victim/family agree to press a case, if the violence perpetrated results in a need for medical care and/or psycho-social counselling.

The evaluation found that, in the case study countries, the involvement of informal development committees with attention to VAC is crucial to effective response. This recognition is central to strengthening an effective system of child protection that reaches the vast majority of children in need, and builds necessary links between actors involved in child protection. This holds true even in middle-income countries such as Mexico, where indigenous societies are less engaged with formal systems. Awareness needs to be raised among traditional structures and informal child protection/development committees on prevention of VAC. Capacity strengthening of such entities to respond effectively to VAC is, likewise, key to addressing VAC.

Knowledge about where to refer identified cases of VAC is still limited and needs to be more widely disseminated in the evaluation countries. In Tanzania, UNICEF-supported efforts to lower the barrier to reporting appear to be having results. Children in Tanzania included in the evaluation stated having reported cases of rape, burning and beating by other children. In Tanzania also, the evaluation found that awareness raising and availability of practical VAC reporting locations – such as specially recognized neighbourhood/village leaders – are helpful and represent a good practice for replication.¹³⁰

At the community level, also, most of the desk review countries had developed some pilot projects or other actions to demonstrate how to prevent and respond to VAC. Some of these pilot projects are very promising as they are often successful in involving the local population in actions to prevent and respond to VAC. The primary challenge is, however, that these efforts are being implemented in only a few areas in each country and need substantial scaling up into the future. There is a concern that the pilot projects will remain only examples as there continues to be resistance and a need for high budgetary investments to realize effective community work.

In the four case study countries, UNICEF is supporting the development of referral and case management guidelines and tools for service providers. In Tanzania and Bangladesh, government stakeholders specifically noted the importance of widely disseminating and providing training to service providers using these guidelines and tools.

Record keeping of referred cases across different service providers is challenging as they tend to report to different line ministries or offices. More coordinated record keeping of victims of VAC in the case study countries is under development with the support of UNICEF,¹³¹ but not yet sufficiently comprehensive. Budget allocations and the quality of implementation of referrals, on-going case management, prosecution and follow up with both children and perpetrators after prosecution still need substantial scaling up. A coordinated referral system among service providers on VAC is not yet sufficiently in place across countries.

¹³⁰ The evaluation team met with focus groups that consistently stressed the importance of ensuring that children and families know convenient and trustworthy individuals to whom they can report.

¹³¹ As indicated in the case study countries and in the information the desk review countries provided.

4.3 Social norms change

This sub-section covers KRA2 on global, regional and national dialogue for social norms change. It includes a discussion on drivers of violence against children.

Snapshot on Effectiveness (Social Norms Change)

Main conclusions:

1. While numerous initiatives to change social norms to prevent and respond to VAC are being developed and/or implemented, many gaps remain. These include the scope of issues addressed, geographic coverage, and determining the actual impact of methods to bring about behavioural change.
2. There is a lack of differentiation between socially accepted and non-socially accepted VAC. While the focus on traditional harmful practices is high, it is limited on other forms of VAC.
3. Aligning the specific needs of different populations with regard to the types of VAC prevalent within different socio-cultural contexts falls short. This is partly due to a lack of mapping and VAC prevalence data and to limited sharing of relevant information among different UNICEF offices which hampers planning.

Principal strengths (findings):

1. There are indications of increased awareness on VAC in the evaluated countries.
2. Community-level actions to prevent and respond to VAC are being mobilized, with UNICEF support, in evaluation countries. Social dialogue on the role of the family and communities, including greater public education, has been stimulated.
3. Examples of wide-ranging – from global to national to community specific – interesting and innovative Communications for Development (C4D) methods to prevent VAC have been or are being developed. These are, however, usually small-scale and geographically limited. Country offices in the evaluation noted that assessment of C4D intervention results was lacking and needed attention.

Areas for improvement (findings):

1. There is a lack of differentiation between socially accepted and non-socially accepted VAC. While much VAC is due to social norms, some is not – e.g. child rape, incest and severely debilitating physical abuse – and is almost universally forbidden across cultures. Prevention of such VAC does not receive sufficient focus as compared to VAC related to harmful traditional practices.
2. There is a tendency to limit discussion of harmful social norms to ‘traditional norms’ whereas as societal changes occur, new forms of VAC emerge, such as digitally-based VAC.
3. There is limited attention to using positive social norms to develop preventive actions in most countries.
4. Community-based prevention mechanisms that can contribute to reducing VAC cover only small areas within countries. Even within areas targeted for interventions, many children in need of protection are excluded from prevention and response actions.
5. There is limited attention to measuring the effectiveness and impact of methods used to bring about behavioural changes to prevent VAC and ensure cases are reported. This is problematic as it is important to learn from experience so as to improve methods to bring about behavioural change.

6. There is often a reluctance to press legal action even if a case is reported due to pressures from community members, perpetrators and families. This is coupled with weak justice systems and limited victim and witness protection programmes.
7. UNICEF is providing support to the actions on social norms, but this needs to be vastly scaled up and linked more coherently to the overall systems strengthening approach.

Under the MTSP KRA2, strategies at all levels were expected to stimulate dialogue on social networks and nationally reinforce *social conventions, norms and values* that favour the prevention of violence, exploitation, abuse of children and lead to questioning of child rights' violations, including harmful conventions and practices.

Social norms are the rules and regulations that groups live by and cover the accepted standards of behaviour within a group.¹³² Many social norms are learned during informal interaction with other people and are passed from generation to generation¹³³ though new norms may also develop in a group. A social norm is commonly held in place by the reciprocal expectations of the people within a group, also called a reference network.¹³⁴ Existing social norms may be stiffly resistant to change because of the expectations and interdependence of group members.¹³⁵ In fact, 10 of the 18 countries included in the evaluation indicated initiating dialogue on social norms and the slow pace of change in social norms as among their major challenges. There is an acceptance of some forms of violence, either because of genuine approval or because of a lack of confidence/empowerment to reject them, and an absence of local and national discussion questioning the violence.¹³⁶

According to the MTSP Specific Monitoring Questions and Management Indicators Results 2013,¹³⁷ only 31 of the 69 countries responding indicated that "the country explicitly addresses social norms in programmes aimed at elimination of traditional practices such as FGM". Behaviour changes on FGM¹³⁸ are not yet observable in most countries according to the thematic evaluation on FGM. Figures on addressing other forms of VAC such as programming on the elimination of sexual abuse and exploitation are similarly low, with only 60 out of 149 countries reporting explicitly addressing this.

It is important to state that work on social norms and on mobilizing local actions is not just about prevention of VAC but also about response. Social norms impact the effectiveness of response, particularly with respect to resistance to reporting and managing reported VAC cases.

¹³² Sociology Guide, Social Norms, 2015, <www.sociologyguide.com/basic-concepts/Social-Norms.php>, accessed 15 March 2015.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Mackie, Gerry, et al., 'What are Social Norms? How are they measured?', Project Cooperation Agreement, Working Paper, UNICEF/UVSD Centre on Global Justice, San Diego, 2012.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ United Nations Children's Fund West and Central Africa Regional Office, Regional Child Protection Strategy 2014-2017, UNICEF WCARO, Dakar, 2014.

¹³⁷ United Nations Children's Fund, 'MTSP Specific Monitoring Questions and Management Indicators Results', UNICEF, New York, 2014.

¹³⁸ United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, *UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change 2008-2012*, Vol 1-2, UNFPA-UNICEF, New York; United Nations Children's Fund, *Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies: Synthesis Report*, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

To what extent have UNICEF efforts contributed to a significant change in national dialogue on social norms (KRA2)?

KRA2 on social norms has been increasingly recognized as important and has progressively received greater focus during the evaluation period. There are indications that there is increased awareness on VAC in the evaluated countries.

Results of the online survey done by 70 country offices (and confirmed by the desk review and country case studies) suggest that **outcomes have started to be visible, even if in a more nuanced way than under KRA1**. Statistical cross tabulation patterns suggest that under KRA2, greater UNICEF effort is needed to reach at least moderate results, i.e., **substantial UNICEF contribution is more likely to lead to moderate outcomes rather than to substantial ones**. This confirms the need for a cross-sector and partnership approach and long-lasting engagement to show results as also evidenced in country case studies.

This finding holds strongly, for example, for the assessment of the extent to which UNICEF country office-supported actions are countering harmful traditional norms and practices. Patterns suggest that a moderate UNICEF contribution leads to a moderate change in most cases (rated between 3 and 5). However, even a substantial contribution is more likely to lead to moderate outcomes. Thus, having a substantial impact is difficult even when country offices put in a great deal of effort.

4.3.1 Global and regional dialogue on social norms change

At the global and regional levels, UNICEF contributed to dialogue about issues such as the reduction of harmful practices,¹³⁹ facilitated dialogue on social norms to reduce VAC in general, and developed tools and guidelines on changing social norms. See Section 4.5 on UNICEF's leadership and partnerships for details.

Quality research on good practices and lessons learned to influence social norms change has been published and disseminated to help regions and countries improve their efforts to reduce VAC.¹⁴⁰ Wide-ranging – from global to national to community specific – interesting and innovative SBCC methods have been or are being developed to prevent VAC. SBCC goes beyond individual behaviour change goals to analyse personal, societal, and environmental factors and develop the most effective approaches to sustainable societal change.¹⁴¹ The evaluation confirms that SBCC is an important approach to help influence social norms to decrease and respond more openly to VAC. The 2014 Global Status Report on Violence Prevention states, however, that although countries are investing in prevention of violence, it is not yet on a level commensurate with the scale and severity of the problem.

An important example of a global SBCC approach implemented is the #Endviolence¹⁴² initiative. The initiative is organized through a global social media platform and is aimed at promoting changes in attitudes and practices regarding VAC. UNICEF works with country governments to

¹³⁹ For example, among many others: *Violating children's rights: harmful practices based on tradition, culture, religion or superstition*.

¹⁴⁰ There are many documents, not all of which can be cited here. United Nations Children's Fund, *Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse: Thematic Report 2013*, UNICEF, New York, 2013; *Hidden in Plain Sight, Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014*.

¹⁴¹ USAID and C-Change Communication for Change, C-Modules: A Learning Package for Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC), Communication for Change (C-Change) Project Version 3, C-Change/FHI 360, Washington, DC, 2012.

¹⁴² United Nations Children's Fund, End Violence Campaign, 2014, <www.unicef.org/endviolence/UNICEF>, accessed 10 June 2014.

maximize the impact of the campaign but in the countries visited, the current evaluation did not observe any concrete actions in this regard. The #Endviolence initiative is implemented through a variety of means, including the Communications for Development (C4D) approach. C4D is UNICEF's "systematic, planned and evidence-based strategic process to promote positive and measurable individual behaviour and social norms that is an integral part of development programmes, policy advocacy and humanitarian work".¹⁴³ Some countries, such as in the Caribbean, have used a C4D approach to raise awareness and prevent sexual abuse even before the #Endviolence campaign was initiated. Some country offices participating in the #Endviolence initiative received funds to support their work more directly, for example, to prevent violence in schools (Jordan for example), while others received funds for capacity strengthening and training of service providers.

A draft report¹⁴⁴ on initial progress on the #Endviolence initiative was launched in July 2014 and only initial results can be identified.¹⁴⁵ In 2014, around 41 countries throughout all regions had already carried out communication and social media initiatives related to the campaign. Most initiatives stemmed from regional/country launches of the #Endviolence campaign and included communication through traditional and 'new' media on violence prevention and response, and were often supported by important government and civil society representatives.¹⁴⁶ While in 2014 the draft report cites positive changes in many countries in legal and policy frameworks and capacity strengthening methodologies, among other elements, it is not possible to ascertain the extent to which the #Endviolence initiative, as opposed to other UNICEF initiatives, including with other development partners, had an impact. Impact of the #Endviolence initiative on actual behaviour change of individuals, families, and communities with respect to VAC is yet to be measured. Nevertheless, the evaluation concludes that #Endviolence is an important initiative that, in combination with other SBCC activities at local levels, has the potential to contribute to behaviour change to prevent and respond to VAC.

4.3.2 Country-level social norms change

In 2013, UNICEF programme investment in social norms was largest in the area of violence prevention and response within child protection, with 123 UNICEF country offices supporting governments and civil society to address physical and sexual violence against children.¹⁴⁷

UNICEF-supported programmes focus on raising awareness on the impact of violence and on working with parents, teachers, health professionals and communities to prevent and respond to VAC. In the case study countries, community-based campaigns, peer education, radio programmes, information kits, discussion groups, sessions with government staff using

¹⁴³ United Nations Children's Fund, Communication for Development (C4D), 2012, <www.unicef.org/cbsc/index_42329.html>, accessed June 2014.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Draft Report: End Violence Against Children Initiative (#Endviolence Initiative)', UNICEF, New York, 2015.

¹⁴⁵ It should also be noted that the scope of the current evaluation is primarily focused on results of the period of the MTSP (2006–2013).

¹⁴⁶ Initiatives included online games to teach children about sexual abuse; short movies and video series; animated clips, music videos and songs; applications ('apps') promoting non-violence; billboard and mural campaigns featured on public transport among other places; radio programming.

¹⁴⁷ United Nations Children's Fund, *Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse: Thematic Report 2013*, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

communications tools, family visits and many other methods were identified. As some children in Tanzania stated, it is necessary to “educate people about preventing VAC and help emotionally support children who are affected by it.” While many efforts are undertaken, there is still much that needs to be done because, as children in two focus groups in Bangladesh indicated, “We do talk about in our club when members report that they were beaten. We do not report it though because it is part of raising the children, the parents do it for a good reason. It has been done this way for generations.”

In most of the countries the evaluation found that the focus on social norms change with respect to VAC is strongly oriented towards issues such as the reduction of corporal punishment, and other types of harmful traditional practices. Corporal punishment is cited as the primary and most frequent type of VAC in the case study and most of the desk review countries. Stakeholders in the case study countries note that corporal punishment can be quite severe before the community will consider it to be excessive and intervene.

UNICEF works with its partners on reducing corporal punishment and other forms of VAC through SBCC/C4D. In some cases, this is implemented through active national participation in a broad worldwide campaign such as the #Endviolence campaign (e.g. India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Mongolia). Countries also implement a wide range of other methods to promote social norms change. These include promoting dialogue in communities using communications tools such as radio, information kits, meetings and family visits. Serbia implements a social media campaign to stop digitally-based violence.

A range of stakeholders in all four case study countries noted that, to produce real change on VAC and due to its pervasive and persistent nature, intensive and long-term SBCC is needed using strong dialogue/participation among all stakeholders. Likewise, among the desk review countries, a focus on social norms is included in actions and four countries explicitly referred to challenges in changing social norms.

Unfortunately, as is the case with other direct actions on VAC, there are no comprehensive impact¹⁴⁸ assessments in the case study or desk review countries that provide proof of the effectiveness of UNICEF’s efforts in this area. Country offices in all four case study countries confirmed that assessing the results of C4D and other behaviour change interventions on VAC was lacking and needed attention. In the case study countries, Tanzania and Mexico had engaged in some SBCC on VAC, Bangladesh primarily used life skills training, and Ghana was in the process of pilot testing methodologies after a period of slowdown to develop improved approaches. With respect to the desk review countries, only one impact study could be identified, and as it covered only one region in the country, it was not sufficiently comprehensive to draw overall conclusions.¹⁴⁹

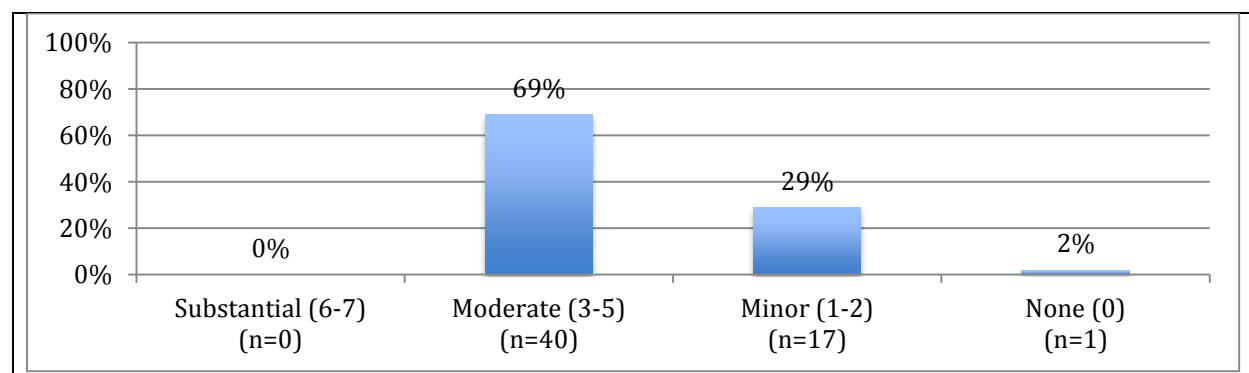
¹⁴⁸ There were two evaluation reports, one dating to 2009, among all the documentation from the desk review countries that were provided to the evaluation team.

¹⁴⁹ *Rapport d'évaluation externe de l'animation communautaire en protection de l'enfant basée sur le diagnostic communautaire dans 27 localités de la région du Bas-Sassandra* Clarisse, BUONO, Cote d'Ivoire, 8 février 2014.

Monitoring on behaviour change was also limited and as only a few knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) and/or endline studies had been carried out, there wasn't much material for the evaluation team to review. In Tanzania, under the new development programme launched in 2014 with the support of UNICEF, KAP studies are being carried out in new model districts, which will eventually serve as baseline information for later KAP impact surveys. The lack of information made it very difficult for the evaluation to analyse the effectiveness of SBCC and other related approaches in bringing about actual behaviour change. There is a great need to identify which methods will bring about the most significant change and in which conditions. This lack of information and the need for more data with respect to social norms and behaviour change in general reconfirms the important evaluation finding also discussed in other sections, that a much greater emphasis on the collection, analysis and use of data is necessary. Interestingly, the *Joint Evaluation of UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)*¹⁵⁰ likewise noted the absence of data/knowledge on social norms and, thus, the consequent need for investing in research. The evaluation emphasized the existence of important knowledge and evidence gaps concerning the transition from changes in social norms to visible changes in actual individual and collective behaviours leading to a decrease in FGM/C prevalence.

The online survey did request the country offices to report on their perception of how effectively their countries are countering harmful traditional norms/practices. While this is based on self-reporting, the evaluation does nevertheless identify some important trends. Forty of the 58 online survey country offices that responded to the question noted that their country had been moderately effective in this regard, but tellingly, none reported 'substantial' progress. Most of the remainder (17) stated that there had only been minor progress, while 12 countries reported that insufficient information was available to be able to respond to the question. These findings indicate that a great deal of effort is still required to reduce VAC resulting from harmful traditional norms/practices. Where change had occurred, however, country offices reported that UNICEF had played an important role (39). Findings on the extent to which countries are tackling harmful traditional practices are indicated in the following figure:

Figure 13: Extent to which national actions tackling harmful traditional norms and practices are countering them



N= 58

¹⁵⁰ UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): Accelerating Change.

Most of the desk review countries address issues such as child marriage and child labour, though they mostly do not address the issue of VAC actually occurring within these contexts. Almost all efforts in these cases were focused on the prevention of child marriage, prevention and withdrawal from child labour, and prevention of trafficking as opposed to combatting VAC if a child is already in these situations and has not (yet) been withdrawn. A married child does not visibly figure in the efforts of 12 of the desk review country office Child Protection Sections to reduce VAC. Some country offices are associating their work with efforts on gender-based violence that are being stimulated by other United Nations Agencies such as UNFPA and by different government departments. These countries include the Ivory Coast, Jordan and Zimbabwe.¹⁵¹

The evaluation noted a tendency in the case study and desk review countries to limit the discussion of social norms to 'traditional' norms whereas as societal changes occur, new forms of VAC emerge. This includes digitally-based VAC such as online bullying and exposure online to excessive violence.¹⁵² Another example is that the commercial sexual exploitation of children is being increasingly accepted as normal in some communities.¹⁵³ In Tanzania, for example, two rural community committees indicated that children are affected by pornography seen on mobile phones, which they then imitate, including with even younger children. The desk review country of Serbia implements a social media campaign to stop digitally-based violence.

4.3.3 Addressing drivers of VAC

The drivers of VAC are complex and not just limited to cultural attitudes towards corporal punishment and harmful traditional practices. An approach highly focused on social dialogue and norms change ignores the key factor that rape, incest, bullying, permanent physical injury and inflicting severe emotional suffering on children are rarely socially sanctioned acts.¹⁵⁴ Corporal punishment can spiral into unacceptable violence. Not all physical violence against children is corporal punishment. It can also take place in the framework of wider domestic abuse in the home as one example. Reporting of VAC may be limited by social constructs, but the causes of non-socially sanctioned acts of VAC may reside, for example, in alcohol and drug abuse. VAC may also be caused by the perpetrator's psychological issues including lack of self-control, excessive household burdens causing great stress, mental instability or other challenges. Thus, actions focusing on social norms, while essential to reducing VAC, also need to consider causes of VAC that are not as easily addressed. As the World Health Organization

¹⁵¹ Zimbabwe, not a desk review country, provided separate information on their work in this subject area.

¹⁵² Many very violent acts can now easily be viewed over the Internet. Access to the Internet via mobile phones is now reaching children even in remote areas. Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, *Toward a World Free from Violence: Global Survey on Violence Against Children*, SRSG, New York, 2013, p 24: discussion of importance of digital technologies – both challenges and opportunities; Moestue, Helen and Muggah, Robert, 'Digitally Enhanced Child Protection: How new technology can prevent violence against children in the Global South', Strategic Paper 10, IGARAPe Institute, Rio de Janeiro, November 2014. Mobile phones and other digital technology can be used to report and track cases of VAC.

¹⁵³ ECPAT International, *The Commercial Exploitation of Children in Africa: Developments, progress, challenges and recommended strategies*, ECPAT International, Bangkok, 2014. Progress is being made, however, such as parents resisting traffickers: United Nations Children's Fund Indonesia, 'Children in Indonesia: Sexual Exploitation Fact Sheet', UNICEF Indonesia, Jakarta, 2010.

¹⁵⁴ With few exceptions in highly specific cultural contexts where young women are kidnapped and raped, though most such cultural practices have been abandoned in recent years. Olubanjo Buntu, Amani, *Rape, Rage and Culture: African Men and Cultural Conditions for Justification of, and Sanctions Against Rape*, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2012.

indicates, many approaches need to be considered including focusing on reducing alcohol and drug abuse.¹⁵⁵ There is thus a gap in UNICEF's strategies, which, though rightly include a high focus on social dialogue and norms change, still need to be expanded to more strongly address and reduce all types of VAC.

Positive parenting training

Focusing on social norms change without considering other drivers of VAC will not significantly reduce its incidence. Educating caregivers, including parents, on positive disciplining methods can reduce the risk of violence within the home.¹⁵⁶ UNICEF is, for example, supporting positive parenting training in the case study countries of Tanzania and Bangladesh and similar training is also planned for Ghana. This is, however, only one aspect that will help reduce such non-socially sanctioned types of VAC. UNICEF-supported positive parenting clubs and training as well as training for teachers on positive discipline are common in most of the desk review countries. In Indonesia, Jordan and Serbia, for example, positive parenting training is being implemented in some localities. It should be noted that little analysis has yet been conducted on the actual extent of impact of parenting education programmes on the reduction of VAC.¹⁵⁷ As a result, the evaluation cannot assess the quality of UNICEF's support to implement actions such as positive parenting.

No evaluation countries actually cited supporting actions to bring about more structural change, such as supporting efforts to decrease alcohol and drug abuse. At present, no proof exists that decreasing women's work burden will decrease VAC. However, easing their work burden can result in less stress in the household environment and a more emotionally stable environment. Mechanisms such as provision of labour saving devices for women may thus help. While efforts such as labour saving devices are not necessarily within the mandate of UNICEF, collaboration with other agencies that promote access to potable water, fuel-saving cooking stoves, etc. may all be beneficial. While UNICEF does not necessarily have the mandate to directly work in this area, in the context of the Delivering as One United Nations¹⁵⁸ and other inter-agency collaborations, there is potential to create synergies to address such issues.

Evaluation gap analysis indicates that few of the countries focused substantially on stimulating existing positive traditional social norms to protect children from violence, though most cited the existence in their country of such positive norms. Country office representatives in the evaluation countries mentioned the existence of positive social norms such as religious and cultural community support mechanisms that protect children and address issues of violation of children, viewing children as a benediction to the community, and the extended family support networks. Across the case study and desk review countries, the evaluation found only six examples of efforts to use positive social norms to address VAC even if still limited in scope.¹⁵⁹ In the case of Ghana, strong dialogue has been conducted at the national level on how to

¹⁵⁵ World Health Organization, 'How Can Violence Against Children be Prevented?' 2014, <www.who.int/features/qa/44/en>, accessed 1 October 2014.

¹⁵⁶ Ending Violence Against Children: Six Strategies for Action #EndViolence.

¹⁵⁷ Landers, Cassie, *Integrating Early Childhood Development and Violence Prevention*, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, 2014; Bray, Rachel, *Expert Consultation on Family and Parenting Support*, UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, Florence, May 2014.

¹⁵⁸ In Delivering as One countries, United Nations development support is organized through a single, coherent business plan for all United Nations funds, programmes and agencies.

¹⁵⁹ Ecuador, Ghana, India, Jordan, Morocco, Zambia

capitalize on positive social norms to reduce VAC. This is expected to be translated into community-based actions during 2015.

4.4 Improved research and use of data on VAC, monitoring, evaluation

This sub-section covers KRA4 on monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data, with specific consideration of country-level information collection and use in VAC programming, and more generally in terms of child protection programming. Issues include research, evidenced-based programme planning and implementation, monitoring of programme activities and results, evaluation, and the use of information of relevance to VAC.

Snapshot on Effectiveness (Monitoring/Research/Evaluation/Use of Data)

Main conclusions:

1. There has been progress during the evaluation period on data collection and use, although the amount and quality of data often falls short of requirements. Weaknesses in data collection on service provision and in results monitoring are also notable in many countries and will need considerable attention into the future.
2. The lack of a common and agreed upon definition of VAC with a sufficiently comprehensive analysis of prioritized types of VAC and their drivers impedes effectiveness and measurement of results.
3. Strong ethical protocols are in place, but methodological rigour is variable, resulting in challenges with respect to data quality and comparability of findings.

Principal strengths (findings):

1. There has been progress during the evaluation period in the collection and use of information for programme development and implementation, and there is growing commitment to evidencing country programme design.
2. Most UNICEF-commissioned research, even if limited, was well used.

Areas for improvement (findings):

1. Basic data to inform evidence-based planning and implementation is often lacking. This includes baseline, midline and endline surveys, and evaluability assessments.
2. A particular gap was identified with respect to results monitoring for VAC with respect to measuring higher level impacts, such as policy innovation and legal developments.
3. Global-level data aggregation reflects significant gaps in VAC programme monitoring and reporting.
4. At the regional level, though attempts are being made through increasing targeted technical support to countries on indicator identification, monitoring and reporting, important gaps remain.
5. Even when reports are provided, they do not consistently contain information that is easily comparable across countries, or is relevant to understanding trends in VAC.
6. The lack of a common and agreed upon definition of VAC for programme planning, implementation and results monitoring affects the quality of global data. Currently, planners and researchers interpret VAC differently and, therefore, measure different things, making comparisons challenging.
7. Strong ethical protocols are in place but methodological protocols are variable.

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| 8. At the operational level, monitoring of activities implemented by programme partners is often weak. |
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4.4.1 Global contribution to informing VAC

The 2013 Global Thematic Report on child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse¹⁶⁰ highlighted deficiencies in evidence generation in several child protection areas, including VAC, but notes that progress has been made since 2006. Triangulation with information collected during the current evaluation substantiates this assertion. UNICEF country office annual reports include child protection and violence, abuse and exploitation and report on activities and progress towards country programme objectives. UNICEF's contribution is described, as well as the contributions of other actors including government and international NGOs active in child protection.

The 2013 Global Thematic Report on child protection noted that investment in monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data amounted to 7.3 per cent of total investment in child protection (excluding funds allocated across sector and therefore captured elsewhere), and that this was expected to grow under the SP (2014–2017). Almost half of the funds were allocated to 'strengthen data collection and use, information systems, and rapid assessment'.

The UNICEF-supported report *Hidden in Plain Sight* elaborates the role that data from different sources can play in understanding the situation in each country, including government monitoring data when children come into contact with service providers (medical, juvenile justice, other). The narrative that sometimes accompanies these monitoring data describes data utility and limitations, vital statistics, focused studies and survey data. It also describes how these data can be considered together, both in terms of country-level planning and monitoring and in trend analysis at the regional and global levels.

The *Hidden in Plain Sight* report offers a review of available data on VAC, considering sources, quality of data, and promising research. Research on the prevalence and characteristics of VAC is still limited, however, in terms of quality and coverage of subjects and areas within countries. The *Hidden in Plain Sight* report found that the quality of several studies had been compromised by a lack of clearly-defined conceptual frameworks, limited adaptation of the surveys designed for developed countries that were being used in developing countries, and inadequate reporting on survey design and implementation procedures to an extent that the generalizability and utility of several of the surveys was questionable.

The *Hidden in Plain Sight* report also noted that definitions of VAC varied, with little commonality across the 38 studies. The evaluation likewise found that there is no common and agreed upon definition of VAC in relation to child protection work across the 18 evaluation countries and UNICEF regions. The fact that there is not yet any substantial agreement on what VAC encompasses hinders both research and basic monitoring work. Virtually all of the studies

¹⁶⁰ United Nations Children's Fund, *Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse: Thematic Report 2013*, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

referred to in the *Hidden in Plain Sight* report were conducted only once, highlighting a particular constraint facing even those countries that had conducted detailed, high quality surveys as no changes over time can be assessed. Some of the studies referred to in the report did not devote sufficient attention to ethical issues while conducting their research and reporting findings. Similarly, other recent reports note that the average quality of studies is poor for several reasons including the lack of agreed to protocols for data collection and lack of due consideration of ethical issues.¹⁶¹

These and other methodological challenges have meant that VAC research has been limited in reach and utility. While a growing consensus is emerging on the importance of developing relevant standardized tools that can be adapted and used across developing countries (along the lines of what is now the case in violence against women studies), this will take both time and focused attention, with UNICEF needing to provide guidance and ensure momentum. The Global Status Report on Violence Prevention¹⁶² noted that survey data were especially important because most violence was not reported, while even survey data was limited in topics covered and quality of data.

The results of several key informant interviews conducted during the evaluation concur with these findings. There is some interest in designing and managing complex surveys that would assess the prevalence and characteristics of VAC. These surveys could then be used to inform global programming and employed to consider programme impacts over time at the country level. In recent years, more robust national VAC surveys have been conducted. For example, the statistically generalizable sample surveys conducted in Cambodia, Haiti, Kenya, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe that were published in 2014.¹⁶³ These surveys were designed to support advocacy, inform programming, provide baseline data and inform globally. This is not, however, the norm. Data that were collected in the current evaluation countries of Bangladesh, Serbia and Ghana were, for example, more focused on specific programme design and implementation needs and were not very useful for broader baseline and global information purposes.

4.4.2 Demonstrating change – recognition of the need for evidence-based results reporting

In recent years, there has been considerable discussion among child rights and protection advocates about how best to demonstrate change in programme effectiveness on VAC and other issues. The Chair of the Committee of Experts for the African Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child noted that weak data systems meant that it was difficult to get VAC on the public policy agenda.¹⁶⁴ An indicator was included in the UNICEF SP (2014–2017) tracking the number of countries that collect and publish routine administrative data on violence,

¹⁶¹ For example, CPMERG, Information Brief, Introduction to the Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (CP MERG), September 2013.

¹⁶² World Health Organization, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and United Nations Development Programme, *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014*, WHO/UNODC/UNDP, New York, 2014.

¹⁶³ The only countries where comprehensive Violence Against Children Surveys (VACS) had been completed at the time of the evaluation fieldwork were Cambodia, Haiti, Kenya, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Together for Girls, data and sources, 2015, <www.togetherforgirls.org/data-and-resources>, accessed 10 January 2015.

¹⁶⁴ Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse: Thematic Report 2013.

exploitation and abuse, including violent deaths and injuries. This was linked to strengthening other types of data, including situation analyses and evaluations. There has been particular progress in East Asia, where in the past few years the UNICEF regional office has endeavoured to focus more attention on systems strengthening, including the effective collection and use of information to support systems strengthening.¹⁶⁵

Country office information is consolidated at regional offices and reported based on regionally relevant indicators, as possible aligned with international information needs, and this information is provided at the global level. However, VAC data to report on the MTSP is not commonly reported in full and is not consistent across countries, and as a result reporting on progress in this regard at the global level has not been possible. There is currently no place, except in the child protection thematic reports, where country experiences are described, and these reports are not exhaustive with respect to VAC-related issues and actions. The evaluation team obtained access to a UNICEF HQ database based on the country office annual report system.¹⁶⁶ While the contents were interesting, there were some inconsistencies across the years with respect to information on child protection with VAC-related issues. The number of laws in the responding countries increased, then decreased, and then increased again between 2009–2013. The reasons for these inconsistencies were not clear.

4.4.3 Research and data collection activities at the country level

The evaluation did find some documentation on the nature of violence against children and drivers of violence in all case study and desk review countries at the time of data collection (2014). However, the coverage of these studies varied significantly. Some focused on a particular part of a country (e.g., priority programming districts, areas reached by programme implementing partners), while a few were national-level studies (e.g. Tanzania).

Lack of baseline data was commonly mentioned across the case study countries, and was also mentioned by the three desk review countries of India, Indonesia and Serbia. Relevant national indicators on VAC were noted to be increasingly available, especially in cases where an improved legal and policy environment drove improved indicator development and information management. However, three of the desk review countries noted that the problem of relevant national indicators was a serious constraint.¹⁶⁷ Weak government data collection systems, noted in Bangladesh and Ghana but not a serious problem in Mexico, was also mentioned by six of the desk review countries.¹⁶⁸ Resource challenges were also commonly noted, including by the desk review countries of Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Tajikistan.

¹⁶⁵ This has included country and multi-country studies on a range of child protection issues, including some attention to VAC, the commissioning of several regional studies on, for example, trafficking, the impacts of alternative care on child academic performance, and child friendly budgeting, and specialist investigations on how to measure the effectiveness of child protection systems strengthening. See United Nations Children's Fund, *Measuring and Monitoring Child Protection Systems: A Better Way to Protect All Children. The Theory and Practice of Child Protection Systems*, PowerPoint presentation prepared by D. Swales, East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, Bangkok, 2012.

¹⁶⁶ Though unfortunately this was late in the evaluation process.

¹⁶⁷ Indonesia, Morocco and Nigeria

¹⁶⁸ Dominican Republic, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Nigeria, Tajikistan and Uganda.

There were particular challenges associated with data collection around violence that was not culturally perceived to be violent. Many 'disciplinary' measures, as defined by the World Health Organization, are widely viewed as appropriate disciplinary actions consistent with effective childcare. In the case study countries, many key informants noted that these actions were not consistently viewed as needing attention or punishment of perpetrators. This also tended to hold for violence that occurred within the home, unless levels of violence were so egregious¹⁶⁹ that they required external intervention.

Within a cultural context where violence against a child was seen to be a violation of the family and not just the child, justice for the child was often lacking. Virtually none of this is tracked and reported on, save what enters the formal child justice system. Even in the formal system, countries do not consistently track the information on a particular case across service providers. A child who has been raped may be seen by a health service provider and the police, but each service provider registers the information separately. In the case study country of Tanzania, comprehensive management information systems to track and follow up on cases of VAC across service providers are being tested. At the time of the fieldwork, the system was already in the second stage of testing during which lessons learned from the first phase were being implemented. In Bangladesh and Ghana, such management information systems are also starting to be developed and implemented with first steps being designed.¹⁷⁰

Virtually all desk review countries indicated that research had been conducted on VAC, but this was often small-scale and very focused, or was a small component of larger investigations on child protection issues and did not yield sufficient information to provide baseline data on VAC. This was the case even though each country programme covered various aspects of physical violence, sexual violence and emotional violence. An issue to consider when designing a data collection methodology is that actions that are regarded as violent in some areas may not be classified as violent in others (early marriage in Central Asia and the Middle East), or actions that are common in some areas (female genital mutilation in the Middle East and parts of West Africa) are not common in others (most of southern Africa and Latin America). Coverage of such diverse 'traditional harmful practices', or of emergent common practices (e.g., corporal punishment in schools), can be accommodated in broader VAC surveys with a common core. However, a current limitation is that the common core questions have not been adequately refined, for example, to the extent that they have been in the violence against women surveys.

Even when not more broadly comparable, in cases where research has been commissioned with the intent to inform child protection programming, and specifically VAC programming, the research was well used and appropriate for country programming needs. The national VAC surveys conducted in Cambodia, Kenya, Tanzania, Swaziland and Zimbabwe are being used in different ways to inform programming. Similarly, in Ghana, two studies were conducted as part of a broader refocusing of child protection programming on systems strengthening that proved

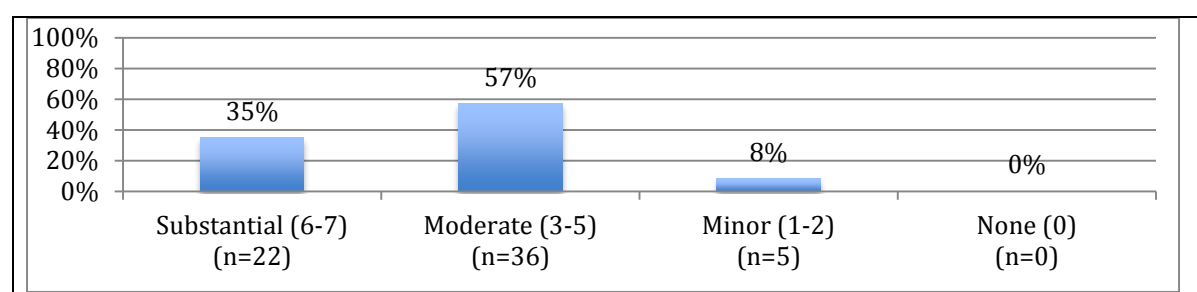
¹⁶⁹ Usually interpreted as potentially leaving permanent physical marks.

¹⁷⁰ In Bangladesh, some districts are further along in planning than others and in Cox's Bazaar there was some informal sharing using a handwritten system where a child-friendly police facility shared case management information with a social welfare officer. The evaluation does not have sufficiently detailed information from the desk review and online survey respondents to state the details of coordinated management information systems in other countries.

to be especially valuable for programme decision-making.¹⁷¹ This was the case despite the survey report noting that data on prevalence was not statistically generalizable. This utility also held for Mexico, where high capacity within the Mexican entity responsible for coordinating government research coupled with UNICEF/Mexico's strategic support to this entity on data collection for child protection yielded regular national and sub-national studies (from situation analyses to thematic surveys), which were used to influence policymaking and programming.

Utility of locally designed investigations was also felt to be high for the online survey countries, as shown in the following figure:

Figure 14: Extent to which the evidence base, including applied research, MICS or situations analysis, studies on VAC, informed VAC programming design



N= 63

For those countries where studies have been conducted, respondents to the online survey reported moderate to high levels of use of the information for programme development and implementation, with only 5 of the 63 countries arguing that the information was not very useful. This is consistent with findings from the Tanzania and Ghana case studies as well as various studies related to violence in Mexico, and was also found among the desk review countries. The online survey found that most country offices used available data to a high degree, and that this was felt to inform further VAC programming with most of these countries reviewing and/or analysing VAC-related programming. The thematic report on child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse¹⁷² noted that the number of countries that have disaggregated data on child protection indicators grew from 20 in 2008 to 38 in 2013.

As data is very limited, it is not surprising to note that disaggregated baseline data on child protection indicators have not yet been incorporated in national development plans and reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Tanzania has incorporated baseline data from their VAC national survey in the newly adopted policy as has Ghana, although the information from the latter is not country-wide. Tanzania has reported to the Committee on the Rights of the Child to this effect while for Ghana, Bangladesh and Mexico, this is not yet the case.

¹⁷¹ Casey, S., Report on the Mapping and Analysis of Ghana's Child Protection System, UNICEF/Ghana, Accra, Ghana, 2012; It Takes a Village to Raise a Child: National Child Protection Study, GoG/UNICEF Ghana, 2014; Quantitative and Qualitative Research Towards the Strengthening of Child Protection in Ghana, prepared by Participatory Development Associates on behalf of the Government of Ghana and UNICEF/Ghana, Accra, Ghana.

¹⁷² Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse: Thematic Report 2013.

The evaluation found very few evaluation reports, including mid-term reviews,¹⁷³ from the desk review and case study countries. For many of the country reports, two findings were evident:

- evaluations tended to be narrow and focused on particular components of broader programming; and
- overall programme assessments tended to be led in-house, whether or not facilitated by external consultants, as part of country programme planning (whether mid-term or endline).

In the former case, this is in part a function of financing mechanisms, where particular donors have funded particular activities. This is the case for the Child Helpline project in Bangladesh, as well as programmes aimed at better reaching indigenous populations in Mexico.

Nevertheless, in Mexico as well as in most other countries included in the evaluation, there was a perception that evaluations were not sufficiently resourced and provided with sufficient evidence to accurately inform overall programming, including in VAC. Partner evaluation systems were noted to be especially weak, mentioned by three of the four case study countries (the exception being Mexico, although even in Mexico gaps were noted), as well as by six of the desk review countries.¹⁷⁴ It was also noted by several UNICEF country officers, who mentioned their own limitations in being able to resource and oversee evaluations. Some countries mentioned data gaps that meant that evaluations could not be based on established progress towards intended outputs and outcomes. Of interest is that none mentioned the possible need to routinize evaluability assessments. Instead, evaluations tended to be short-term, obligatory and related to minimum information requirements due to stipulations in financing agreements, rather than viewed as opportunities to advance overall programming. This was less the case for UNICEF programme reviews, which were felt to be important internal exercises that helped personnel assess where they were in terms of the country programme.

4.4.4 Planning, monitoring and evaluation at the country level

Theory of Change, programming logic and measuring results

An increased interest in applying a theory of change (ToC) approach has evolved within the organization over the past few years. Neither the reading of the CP Strategy (2008) nor of the MTSP (2006–2013), however, reveals an explicit reference to theory of change, so the current evaluation is focused on the logical framework approach that was still being implemented during the evaluation period. The adoption of a theory of change approach will require the collection of evidence regarding the complex relationships that help determine VAC outcomes.

Specifically, theory of change is a “model that explains how an intervention is expected to lead to intended or observed impacts. The theory illustrates, generally in graphical form, the series of assumptions and links underpinning the presumed causal relationship between inputs outputs, outcomes and impacts at various levels. Many other factors may be incorporated into the model,

¹⁷³Only half of the 14 desk review countries provided mid-term review reports and only two provided minor independent evaluation reports with VAC elements. Similarly, in the case study countries, very few independent evaluations were available and none comprehensively on any VAC activities.

¹⁷⁴ Dominican Republic, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Nigeria, Tajikistan and Uganda.

including 'impact drivers', 'assumptions' and 'intermediate states' between core steps in the model (e.g., between outputs and outcomes)".¹⁷⁵ The theory of change is context and subject driven and developed specifically to each situation. Furthermore, it can be well linked to a systems approach to child protection with attention to VAC. As in the case of a systems approach, information is gathered and fed back into the theory of change to make adjustments as needed. It also allows for flexibility and adaptation of processes as information is used to explain bottlenecks to achieving results and making necessary adjustments for improved planning, implementation and subsequent feedback into the system.

There is a concern about the often ambitious information requirements associated with theories of change. In cases where even basic results monitoring is inadequate, collecting data to test hypotheses is sometimes felt to be daunting. Nevertheless, there are some good examples that suggest room for optimism. For example, in late 2014, UNICEF/Bangladesh developed an overall theory of change for child protection, working with a range of stakeholders and exploring opportunities to accessing data. In the process of doing so, gaps in results monitoring that need attention were identified, which are now more likely to receive due attention. UNICEF/Ghana has also developed a provisional theory of change for child protection, and has included in its programming the continued testing of hypotheses associated with the theory as implementation proceeds. The country office recognizes that this will require careful results monitoring as implementation proceeds. This is especially important for Ghana, where child protection programming has recognized the key role of less formal actors in child protection (traditional leaders, community-based organizations, educators, etc.).

Four case study countries and 8 of the 14 desk review countries had developed theories of change to varied extents as an approach to support programme design and implementation, and two more desk review countries (Indonesia and Serbia) were in the process of doing so. Jordan's comment in this regard is typical of the findings from many of these countries: 'the theory of change has helped the Jordan CP Section ensure that its activities are grounded in clear expectations surrounding the causal relationship between activities and outcomes'. Only 4 of the 14 desk study countries had no theory of change and no current plans to develop one. In interviews in the four case study countries, the main rationale for adopting the theory of change approach was that it was felt to better elaborate programme assumptions, and helped identify information gaps that would need to be filled to improve programme planning.

Even where attention has been devoted to theory of change development, gap and quality analysis indicates that there are untested assumptions that will require consideration as implementation proceeds. For programme planning purposes, it would have been more efficient to gather as much evidence as possible, even if that evidence came from other countries. But, for many child protection sections, this would have strained already limited resources, even where the requisite skills were available.

The information requirements under a more robust evidenced-based approach have helped to drive the collection of additional data on VAC, including through Multiple Indicator Cluster

¹⁷⁵ United Nations Evaluation Group, *Impact Evaluation in UN Agency Evaluation Systems: Guidance, Selection, Planning and Management*, August 2013, p. 15.

Surveys (MICS), supported by UNICEF, and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) supported by USAID. The MICS surveys, for instance, have included data on child discipline since 2005.¹⁷⁶ The evaluation did not fully assess the use of MICS data at the country level and this is an area for future consideration. There is also increasing data on VAC available from Global School-based Student Health Surveys, supported by the World Health Organization and covering well over 100 countries in the past decade. How these data sets were used for advocacy and programming is an exciting question in going forward.

Mixed quality of indicators to measure progress on VAC

A review of the country indicators shows that all four case study countries and the 14 desk review countries have some indicators related to addressing VAC. Of these 18, 12 have somewhat good and measurable indicators on VAC, but not necessarily relevant to the range of VAC activities needed in a country. The remaining six countries have either very general or, alternatively, only a single area indicator such as on VAC in juvenile justice. Such specific indicators can, however, also be helpful, for example, in keeping children in conflict with the law out of dangerous places of incarceration. Clear horizontal and vertical logic regarding how they will contribute to preventing and responding to VAC needs improvement in most of the countries. In most instances, expected results are stand-alone elements without clear inter-linkages. This is partly due to the lack of clear and differentiated well-deduced targets on VAC.

Virtually all countries in the evaluation noted that monitoring of programme activities took place against logframes detailed as part of overall country programming, and updated on an as-needed basis. This held for the four case study countries, all 14 desk review countries, and the majority of the online survey countries. Nevertheless, these countries also reported deficiencies in terms of country monitoring. Problems include difficulty in securing monitoring data from partner organizations in-country (including both government and civil society), a focus on activity monitoring rather than results monitoring, and a mismatch between information collected and information required for reporting. The result was a focus on activity reporting in annual reports and often descriptions of activities rather than reach, data gaps across several indicators, and in particular a lack of trend data. With regard to this last point, the absence of baseline VAC data was especially problematic in results monitoring at impact level.

Mongolia, for example, reported particular problems associated with trend monitoring, Ecuador highlighted the lack of administrative data on case management, and Indonesia noted weaknesses in the indicators themselves. Some countries also mentioned misdirection of indicators, meaning that what was to be measured was not felt to adequately capture what they wanted to measure. This was one weakness noted by Indonesia. Ivory Coast noted that extensive prevention work was not complemented by an assessment of the results of, for example C4D activities; this was also mentioned in Bangladesh.

With the exception of Mexico, there were information gaps on formal child protection service delivery in the case study countries. In Mexico, gaps were identified in terms of demand for these services compared to supply, but the system itself was felt to be largely robust. In

¹⁷⁶ Cappa, Claudia, 'Collecting data on violence against children: review of ethical and methodological issues', findings from the work of the CP MERG Technical Working Group on Violence Against Children, PowerPoint presentation, UNICEF, New York, 2012.

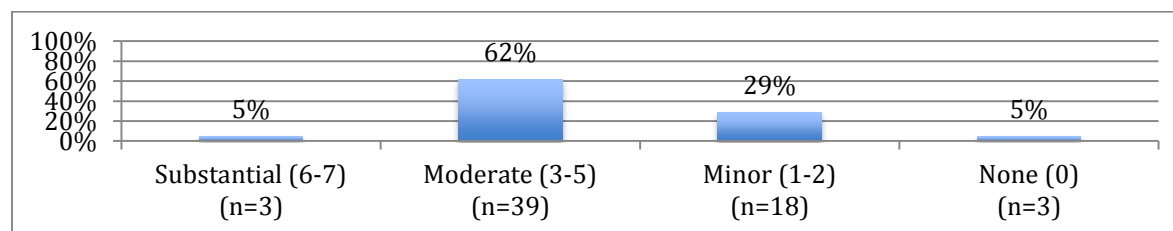
Bangladesh and Tanzania, considerable attention had been devoted to improving case management and referral monitoring for children in need of protection, with uneven results in Bangladesh. The establishment of Child Welfare Boards, supported by UNICEF/Bangladesh, was in part intended to improve case tracking. For Ghana, government staff turnover and institutional constraints meant that monitoring data were not always provided in a timely manner.

In part, these advances in providing evidence have resulted from critiques of the processes of developing and monitoring progress against logical frameworks. Lack of evidence increases the risk of oversimplifying the causal relationships impacting on VAC. For example, Bangladesh identified this as a constraint to child protection programming. Extensive information gaps existed in the logical framework that had been used under the existing country programme, and this tended to yield isolated activities without considering the larger systems strengthening issues. As a result, in late 2014, UNICEF/Bangladesh used MoRES to develop and evidence a Theory of Change for child protection that included VAC. Workshops involved a range of stakeholders, helping to strengthen commitment to the emergent strategy.

Despite these weaknesses, both case study and desk review country offices indicated that child protection monitoring systems were more robust now than a few years ago. In interviews in three of the four case study countries where data collection was felt to have been severely limited in the past (the exception being Mexico), country offices pointed to increased expectations from UNICEF to track programme progress. These expectations were generally welcomed by the country offices. The child protection and monitoring and evaluation officers themselves tended to feel that additional information was needed for effective programming. This held even for Mexico, where sub-national gaps had been identified, particularly in locations with large indigenous populations..

Online survey countries felt that monitoring systems were moderately able to report on VAC progress in-country, as shown in the following figure:

Figure 15: Extent to which national VAC monitoring adequately captures activities in the country



N= 63

In spite of these gains, serious gaps remain in terms of results monitoring. At the country office level, the sections responsible for assembling country office-level data do focus attention on results monitoring, and often mine various reports to be able to do so. But field findings suggested that child protection sections either recognize serious constraints in terms of child protection results monitoring, or believe they are doing sufficient work in this regard even when

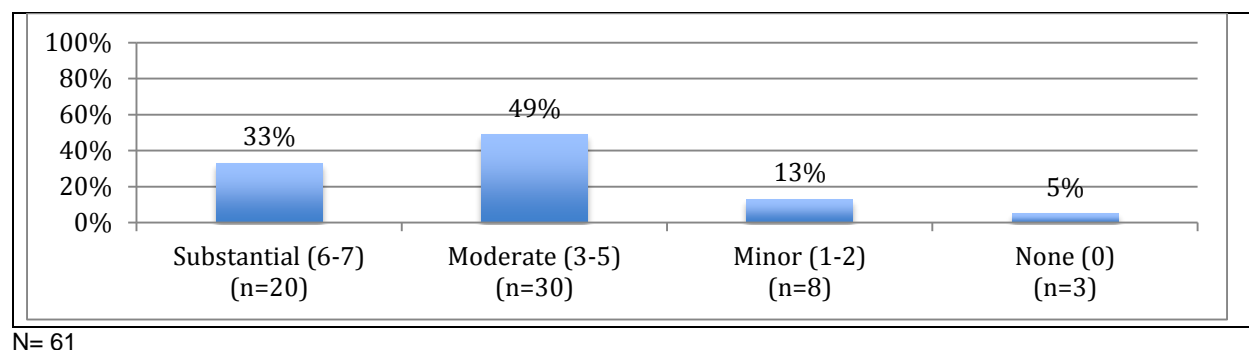
serious gaps remain. In part, the problem is that there is lack of clarity about what results monitoring is, and a perception that activities themselves yield results as generally observed rather than measured. At the activity level, specific activity outputs are sometimes described in reports as accomplishments that are equated with results, rather than activities. There are also gaps in results monitoring in terms of higher order measures in terms of policy, legal and similar developments. Even qualitative monitoring of the latter is problematic, except in countries with high resource allocation to regular monitoring of child protection measures (e.g., much of Latin America).

Using mapping data to inform prevention and response to VAC

The online survey, including the 14 desk review and 2 of the case study countries, indicated that one-third (20) of all responding countries (61) had conducted substantially¹⁷⁷ appropriate systems mapping¹⁷⁸ or gap analysis during implementation on prevention and response to VAC.¹⁷⁹ The mapping exercises were oriented to obtain a clear picture of the strengths and gaps in the child protection systems, including with attention to VAC. Mapping or gap analysis in these contexts consisted of determining the existing methods, roles and responsibilities, and gaps to implementing effective and efficient approaches to child protection issues, including VAC. The evaluation determined that this is important progress towards strengthening the overall systems approach.

Over half of the countries that implemented such studies indicated that UNICEF had substantially contributed to the analyses.¹⁸⁰

Figure 16: Extent to which appropriate systems mapping and gap assessments were conducted over the 2009–2014 period



¹⁷⁷ Respondents to the online survey were asked to rate answers on a 7-point scale ranging from no to substantial for every question. See Annex 9 for the sample of the form.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations Children's Fund, *Child Protection System Mapping and Assessment Toolkit*, 2015, <www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58020.html>, accessed 25 February 2015.

¹⁷⁹ Score of between medium and high on appropriateness of conducting some type of mapping exercise.

¹⁸⁰ Twenty-two countries gave the highest possible rating of 7 on the scale indicating the extent to which UNICEF had contributed to such studies.

To what extent have UNICEF efforts contributed to a significant improvement in VAC data development and use, with specific focus on monitoring systems?

Improved country-level monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data on child protection is key to the success of child protection (and to the achievement of MTSP and CP Strategy targets), and it has been given substantial attention by UNICEF over the past years. It should also be noted that KRA4 receives the smallest budget share under MTSP Focus Area 4 on child protection (less than 10 per cent). The online survey specifically analysed UNICEF's contribution to the quality of national monitoring on VAC, and to what extent monitoring systems are able to adequately capture activities addressing VAC at the country level.

When country offices contribute to monitoring in a moderate way, they tend to have proportionately moderate impacts (29 out of 35 country offices). However, similar to what was observed under KRA2, **having a substantial impact on national monitoring systems is difficult even when country offices put in a great deal of effort.** There is a continued absence or weakness of monitoring systems in some countries. Though 14 UNICEF country offices state contributing substantially to improving national monitoring, this is not yet sufficient as only three report that VAC is substantially captured in national monitoring systems. Unfortunately, a substantial UNICEF contribution is more likely to lead to moderate outcomes. This may be, at least in part, because there is a great need for more data development and use overall. Monitoring is only part of this process and can only be effective if developed in a sound knowledge base. There is a need to invest more in advocacy and technical support to develop the necessary knowledge on VAC prevalence and conditions to lead, in turn, to effective national monitoring systems strengthening.

4.5 UNICEF's leadership and partnership roles

This section considers the EQ on how effective UNICEF's advocacy, leadership, leveraging, convening and partnership roles have been at the global, regional and country levels in protecting children from violence.

Snapshot on Effectiveness (Advocacy, Leadership and Partnerships)

Main conclusions:

1. UNICEF is well placed to be a leader and to leverage its potential to address VAC due to its mandate, capacity and reputation. Governments and other implementing partners recognize UNICEF's advocacy and leadership on VAC.
2. UNICEF is seen as actively engaged in the development and review of appropriate actions on VAC although inter-sectoral collaboration can be improved.
3. The aligning of UNICEF efforts with those of other organizations working on VAC-related issues remains limited.

Principal strengths (findings):

1. Because of its perceived leadership role in the area of child protection, UNICEF has contributed to the development of partnerships at the global, regional and country levels. UNICEF leadership on VAC-related issues is well recognized among international and national development partners, including government agencies and CSOs.
2. UNICEF has effectively leveraged its partnership networks to contribute to initiatives, interventions and results addressing VAC at the global, regional and country levels.

3. Particularly noteworthy is UNICEF's partnership with the Office of the Secretary General's Special Representative for Violence Against Children (SRSG VAC), which has the mandate to raise the profile of VAC as a human rights issue. UNICEF's partnership with SRSG-VAC has been very relevant to moving the global agenda on child protection forward, including contributions to national-level capacity development with special attention to VAC. UNICEF has also partnered with the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Special Rapporteurs on Sexual Violence, Sexual Exploitation, the Population Council and various international NGOs. Special mention should be made of UNICEF's partnership with WHO on the adoption of the resolution entitled 'Strengthening the role of the health system in addressing violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children', on 24 May 2014, during the 67th World Health Assembly (WHA)
4. Global work on establishing normative frameworks as well as new approaches to addressing VAC and setting standards are recognized as useful initiatives.
5. At the regional level, some regions have made progress in advocating and supporting regional initiatives to combat VAC. In addition, there are a few examples of evolving inter-agency collaboration.

Areas for improvement (findings):

1. UNICEF's corporate positioning as broker rather than implementer and the *expectations* of governments at the country level for UNICEF to play a major role in responding to VAC has led to tensions. Countries increasingly see VAC as an important issue and they expect support, especially for the enabling environment, but UNICEF's corresponding resource allocations are too limited to fully respond to the expectations.
2. Stakeholders noted that VAC is not only a child protection issue and that more attention is required to address VAC within a range of contexts. This includes aligning efforts with other organizations working on issues such as domestic violence and occupational safety and health.
3. The lack of clear, context specific advocacy strategies in some regions is a clear gap.
4. There is still a large unmet demand for sharing information on good practices and lessons learned across countries.

Within the current evaluation, leadership is defined as a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal.¹⁸¹

Partnership is defined as the organization of parties, known as partners, in a relationship of cooperation to advance their mutual interests.

4.5.1 UNICEF's role on advocacy at global levels

Advocacy is well integrated in all of UNICEF's work at global levels and is a very important component of UNICEF's work to reduce VAC.¹⁸² Global advocacy with other development partners has produced results on a range of topics. One key result is the inclusion of SG 16.2 to "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children".¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Kruse, Kevin, 'What is leadership?', 2015, <www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2013/04/09/what-is-leadership>, accessed 25 March 2015.

¹⁸² United Nations Children's Fund, *Annual Report 2013*, UNICEF, New York, 2014.

¹⁸³ See also Section 3. Sustainable Development Platform, Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals, 2015, <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal.html>>, accessed 15 May 2015.

Other elements are development of global strategies, the review of available research on VAC¹⁸⁴ to influence decision making at international and country levels and the development of practical tools to reduce VAC.¹⁸⁵ In one example of the results of advocacy work, the Commission on the Status of Women at its 57th session on the elimination and prevention of violence against women and girls, stressed the importance of using a life-cycle approach to end discrimination and violence against women and children, the adoption of positive child-rearing and parenting practices and the recognition of the protective roles of the family to prevent violence.¹⁸⁶

Global research reports produced on VAC have also served as important and effective advocacy tools.¹⁸⁷ Special materials have also recently been developed to ensure high focus on key issues such as a recent global advocacy document citing six vital strategies for ending VAC.¹⁸⁸ These six strategies are well aligned with the overall findings of the current evaluation.

Other results include the various specific advocacy tools that have been developed and applied during the evaluation period under review (i.e. 2008–2013), which are of direct or indirect relevance to the evaluation of UNICEF's global strategic approach to protecting children from violence. An important output of these efforts is the UNICEF *Advocacy Toolkit* launched in 2010.¹⁸⁹ The toolkit provides guidance on strengthening the foundation of advocacy; developing an advocacy strategy; developing and implementing advocacy monitoring and evaluation indicators; managing knowledge and risks in advocacy; strengthening relationships and securing partnerships; and working with children and young people in advocacy.¹⁹⁰

The evaluation found only limited evidence of the actual implementation of strategies and tools resulting from inter-agency collaboration on VAC. While key stakeholders who have attended conferences¹⁹¹ may be aware of inter-agency international strategies, there was little evidence of concrete translation at the national level of such collaborative strategies. The evaluation team also did not find much information on the actual implementation of the advocacy and other toolkits in countries and their usefulness. Some countries, such as the case study country of Tanzania and the desk review country of India, do report using the advocacy toolkit to increase understanding of advocacy as a development tool. The actual impact of the toolkit is not measured, however.

¹⁸⁴ *Hidden in Plain Sight*.

¹⁸⁵ As reflected in, for example, reports on conferences such as the *Conference Report: A Better Way to Protect All Children, the Theory and Practice of Child Protection Systems*. Also, the African Child Policy Forum, *The African Report on Violence Against Children*, The African Child Policy forum, Addis Ababa, 2014.

¹⁸⁶ Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse: Thematic Report 2013.

¹⁸⁷ For global analysis of research used for advocacy, for example, *Hidden in Plain Sight*. Further examples of potential advocacy tools are the *Statistical Snapshots* that the UNICEF HQ Statistics and Monitoring Section/Division of Policy and Practice compiled.

¹⁸⁸ *Ending Violence Against Children: Six Strategies for Action #ENDviolence*: Supporting parents, caregivers and families; helping children and adolescents manage risks and challenges; changing attitudes and social norms that encourage violence and discrimination; promoting and providing support services for children; implementing laws and policies that protect children; carrying out data collection and research.

¹⁸⁹ See <www.unicef.org/progressforchildren>; see also United Nations Children's Fund, 'Child Protection Issues – Global Statistics', 2013, which provides an updated overview of data sources on child protection indicators covered in the Progress Reports.

¹⁹⁰ United Nations Children's Fund, *Advocacy Toolkit, A guide to influencing decisions that improve children's lives*, 2010. The evaluation team notes that the toolkit was produced with participation of various divisions in UNICEF Headquarters.

¹⁹¹ Or if UNICEF country office staff informed them.

Concrete planning in the form of global **road maps** that go beyond formulating and promoting strategies and the development of tools is thus found to be missing. One key related point is that, if UNICEF's priority on advocacy¹⁹² is the reduction of VAC, the level of resources attributed to actually realizing this reduction is much too limited. At the regional level, some regions are using advocacy to promote the development and dissemination of a regional strategy, regional tools and indicators (EAPRO) or a regional road map (LCARO). The absence of similar strategies in other regions is a clear gap given the level of integration of economic and social development zones in different regions. Additionally, there are few examples of inter-agency collaboration to implement strategies and use tools in different country-level actions.

4.5.2 Global partnerships

UNICEF's corporate positioning as broker rather than implementer and the *expectations* of governments at the country level for UNICEF to play a major role in responding to VAC has led to tensions. Countries increasingly see VAC as an important issue and they expect support, especially for the enabling environment, but UNICEF's corresponding resource allocations are too limited to fully respond to the expectations. Stakeholders noted that VAC is not only a child protection issue and that more attention is required to address VAC within a range of contexts including by aligning efforts with other organizations working on issues such as domestic violence and occupational safety and health.

The importance that UNICEF accords to strengthening partnerships, global strategic alliances and networks at the regional and country levels is clearly reflected in the MTSP (2006–2013) and SP (2014–2017). The 2012 Report to the Executive Board on implementing the strategic framework for partnerships and collaborative relationships details this further.¹⁹³ At all levels and from different types of data sources – from documentation to interviews at all levels and in different countries – the evaluation repeatedly found evidence of a recognition of UNICEF's leadership, advocacy and convening abilities.¹⁹⁴

The key informants and the literature¹⁹⁵ on child protection indicated that the *2006 World Report on Violence Against Children* marked a turning point for the United Nations System, prompting a more systematic approach to the prevention of and response to VAC.¹⁹⁶ UNICEF was one of the three United Nations agencies¹⁹⁷ that supported the office of the UN Secretary General with regard to the study. Among the compelling reasons why the *2006 World Report* achieved a galvanizing effect is the scope of the consultation process and the inclusion of children's voices.

¹⁹² See Section 3.1.1

¹⁹³ United Nations Children's Fund, *Report on the implementation of the strategic framework for partnerships and collaborative relationships*, Executive Board, Second Regular Sessions 11-14 September 2012, Item 4 of the provision agenda, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ Through interviews at the global level with agencies such as representatives of the SGSR, UN Women and The Oak Foundation. At the country level with many other United Nations agencies and international NGOs in the case study countries. Documents such as *Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse: Thematic Report 2013*.

¹⁹⁵ Hart, Stuart H., Yanghee Lee and Marie Wernham, 'A new age for child protection – General comment 13: Why it is important how it was constructed and what it intends?', *International Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect*, 35, 2011, pp. 970-978; see also Svevo-Cianci, Kimberly A., et al., 'The new UN CRC General Comment 13: 'The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence' – Changing how the world conceptualizes child protection', *International Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect*, 35, 2011, pp. 979-989.

¹⁹⁶ Sérgio Pinheiro, Paulo, *World Report on Violence Against Children*, 2006, <<http://unviolencestudy.org>>

¹⁹⁷ The others were the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR)

This participatory engagement and research process included regional, sub-regional and national consultations, expert thematic meetings and field visits.

The Secretary General in 2006 appointed a Special Representative for Violence Against Children (SRSG-VAC) with the mandate to raise the profile of VAC as a human rights issue. The role of the Special Representative is to advocate with governments and citizens to implement the full breadth of recommendations emerging from the *2006 World Report*. The SRSG-VAC chairs the United Nations Inter Agency Working Group on Violence against Children, which includes UNICEF. UNICEF's partnership with the SRSG-VAC has been very relevant to moving the global agenda on child protection forward with special attention to VAC. UNICEF also acts as the secretariat for the SRSG-VAC. UNICEF has collaborated with SRSG-VAC on the pertinent Optional Protocols of the CRC and a range of advocacy efforts with regard to the prevention and response to VAC. The SRSG-VAC also provides important input to UNICEF on its child protection programming with particular attention to VAC. Such intensive partnership work has led to global and regional advocacy and capacity enhancement to accelerate progress in child protection with attention to VAC.

At the global level, UNICEF has been partnering with several entities on advocacy linked to child protection. Evaluation interviews with global partners such as representatives of UN Women, Together for Girls, and the Oak Foundation confirm the important global role of UNICEF with respect to VAC. This includes the Together for Girls initiative supported by United Nations agencies, the Government of the United States¹⁹⁸ and the private sector.¹⁹⁹ The initiative supports the collection of nationally representative data on VAC with respect to both girls and boys. The initiative further promotes disseminating information on the magnitude of VAC for evidence-based action with a focus on sexual violence. UNICEF has also partnered with the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Special Rapporteurs on Sexual Violence, Sexual Exploitation, the Population Council, and various international NGOs.²⁰⁰

Among other results, UNICEF partnerships have helped develop mechanisms and tools relevant to child protection, including attention to VAC:

- UNICEF, the International Rescue Committee and Save the Children have been working together since 2005 on developing and implementing the Interagency Child Protection Information Management System (IACPIMS).

¹⁹⁸ Notably working with the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

¹⁹⁹ See 'Together for Girls We can End Violence Against Children', <www.togetherforgirls.org>. UN partners – UNAIDS, UNFPA, UN WOMEN, WHO – are led by UNICEF. The US government is represented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Violence Prevention (CDC/DVP); the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and its partners; USAID; and the Department of State's Office of Global Women's Issues. Private sector partners include Grupo ABC, BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), the CDC Foundation and the Nduna Foundation. Global advocacy campaigns for child protection supported by UNICEF, ratification of the CRC Optional Protocols; and the campaign on the Paris Principles to protect children from unlawful recruitment in armed forces or armed groups.

²⁰⁰ Including End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT), Save the Children, Plan International.

- The Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (CPMERG), initiated jointly in 2008 by UNICEF and Save the Children, aims to collaborate, coordinate and guide child protection monitoring and evaluation across agencies.²⁰¹
- UNICEF coordinates the CP MERG's Technical Working Group on Data Collection on VAC, which discusses important issues such as the ethical principles to consider when collecting data on VAC.²⁰²
- UNICEF and Save the Children jointly developed and launched Tool For Business: Children's Rights in Policies and Codes of Conduct in 2013.²⁰³ The Tool for Business has three main components: global advocacy, programme strengthening (including toolkit/results framework) and data on tracking child rights change and impact.

To assess the results of these mechanisms and tools would require in-depth investigation among the partner agencies and entities that have used these mechanisms and tools. Unfortunately, this was beyond the scope of the current evaluation.

National government representatives attended some global-level meetings to share their progress and learn more about the strategies and actions of other countries. In one recent example of a UNICEF-supported meeting, over 180 individuals from 20 countries, including teams of government, civil society, development partners and international experts from all sectors came together for the Global Violence Against Children Meeting held in 2014 in Swaziland.²⁰⁴ A senior government official and other specialists from the case study country of Tanzania also attended the meeting and subsequently told the evaluation team that the sharing of information was a useful result of the meeting as countries try to identify the most effective ways of preventing and responding to VAC. The desire to scale up such exchanges and increase their frequency is hampered by the high cost. As mentioned in other parts of the report, a knowledge sharing networking platform could provide an avenue for more frequent and useful exchanges on good practices and lessons learned.

4.5.3 Regional partnerships

At the regional level, UNICEF has been active in a wide range of partnerships. These partnerships have played an important role in improving advocacy, developing useful strategies, and in the exchange of good practices and lessons learned among member nations of the United Nations and international agencies.

²⁰¹ See CPMERG Information Brief, September 2013. Apart from UNICEF, there are currently 11 core members involved: Child Fund, DFAID, MACRO International DHS, Oak Foundation, Plan, Save the Children, UNHCR, USAID, Watchlist and World Vision.

²⁰² United Nations Children's Fund, *Ethical Principles, Dilemmas and Risks in Collecting Data on Violence against Children*, UNICEF, 2012.

A review of available literature. UNICEF, Statistics and Monitoring Section/Division of Policy and Strategy, New York.

²⁰³ United Nations Children's Fund/Save the Children, *Children's Rights in Policies and Codes of Conduct, A Tool for Companies*, 2013.

²⁰⁴ Together for Girls, 'Global Violence Against Children Meeting', 2014, <www.togetherforgirls.org/global-vac-meeting>, accessed December 2014.

Examples of partnerships at the regional level include:

- ROSA: The South Asian Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children and Women.
- ROSA: The South Asian Coordinating group of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC), a regional pioneer initiative driven by the commitment of the following South Asian governments: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Supported by UNICEF and other United Nations agencies, it strongly engages a wide-range of stakeholders including governments, children, international NGOs and CSOs.²⁰⁵ UNICEF was on the Executive Board of SAIEVAC at inception.
- ESARO: In Africa, the UNICEF Liaison Office to the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa collaborate on many issues, including VAC. UNICEF also partners with the Inter-African Committee on the elimination of harmful traditional practices.
- LACRO: UNICEF collaborates with the Latin American and Caribbean Chapter of the Global Movement for Children in Latin America. In Latin America and other regions of the world, UNICEF has established diverse partnerships including with the international media to draw attention to VAC.

Despite these partnerships, and despite UNICEF's high advocacy priority to address VAC, there were few UNICEF VAC mitigation strategies at the regional level. Given the number of regional organizations and partnerships, as well as the potential of regional strategies to have an impact on country-level planning, this is a significant gap.

4.5.4 Country-level partnerships

At the country level, UNICEF contributed positively to partnerships and mobilization to respond to VAC in the case study countries. Most importantly, UNICEF worked to strengthen its partnerships to develop country systems to address VAC with government and non-state actors – i.e., national NGOs and other CSOs, academia and the private sector. UNICEF works with other United Nations agencies to implement joint actions, though especially intensively in the Delivering as One countries.

In Tanzania for example, evaluation key informants indicated that government, international NGOs, national NGOs and other United Nations agencies all clearly attribute a strong leadership role and impact to UNICEF in bringing about results in the area of VAC. The evaluation also found that in Tanzania, UNICEF has successfully promoted the implementation of ethical approaches to addressing child protection with attention to VAC. Standards for addressing VAC are still under development, but much headway has been made through rules and regulations development. UNICEF's credibility and personal interactions with lawmakers and other government decision makers were cited as key elements contributing to success in other countries also. In Bangladesh, key informants and government and civil society

²⁰⁵ SAIEVAC, 'South Asia Follow-Up Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence Against Children', Colombo, Sri Lanka, 20-28 May 2012, <www.srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/.../SAIEVAC_FURC_report_2012.pdf>

counterparts likewise highlighted that UNICEF plays an important role in bringing together key actors involved in child protection. In Mexico, evaluation key informants also indicated that UNICEF is a key player in bringing VAC into the open in Mexico and is a key driver of its prevention and response. UNICEF was reported to have taken a lead role in Mexico in broadening the type of actors rising to the challenge of combatting VAC and strengthening alliances. In Ghana, likewise, UNICEF has played a strong role in supporting the coordination of efforts to prevent and respond to VAC.

Using projects and/or targeted donor funding to strengthen child protection systems with attention to VAC

UNICEF Ghana has engaged in a very useful approach using targeted donor funding – provided through a partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) – to integrate actions on child marriage into efforts to strengthen Ghana’s systems approach. The funded actions on child marriage are nestled into the UNICEF-supported systems strengthening efforts for the effective implementation of the recently adopted Child and Family Welfare Act. The funding is thus being used to develop action models on child marriage and related issues – including inter-personal violence – and links them to systems components that need further development. This approach is a useful example of using targeted donor funding in a specific subject area to fit into and strengthen the overall child protection systems.

The annual reports and mid-term reviews as well as the desk review forms and interviews indicate a general positive contribution of UNICEF’s leadership in the area of VAC. This is particularly noteworthy in the area of legal and policy framework development and adoption (see Section 4.1). Some country offices, such as Indonesia and Serbia, report being asked frequently to provide support and technical expertise, which is an indication of trust in the quality of such inputs. The Nigeria and Zambia country offices report that the government expresses appreciation for the UNICEF technical support and that rapport is good.

In sum, while progress has been made in systems development, social norms change, and research and use of data on VAC, monitoring, evaluation, much remains to be done. Slow take-off of initiatives, in part due to low funding levels, impeded attaining sufficient impact.

5 Findings on cross-cutting issues

This chapter considers the following EQ:

EQ4: How effectively have the VAC-related country child protection programmes integrated key cross-cutting themes and implementation modalities, including gender equality, disabilities, other human rights and equity considerations, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and feedback into policy and decisions?

Snapshot on Cross-Cutting Issues

Main conclusions:

- While UNICEF includes a human rights and equity focus in programming to prevent and respond to VAC – including attention to gender issues in programme design and implementation, particularly with respect to violence against girls – in practice there is room for much improvement.
- Design and implementation of programming at the country level on gender and equity is still limited and underfunded, including with regard to:
 - abuse of boys and the social norms related to boys' masculinity;
 - children with disabilities and other especially vulnerable groups;
 - children in conflict with the law;
 - vulnerability of children in all socio-economic groups to violence; and
 - integrating gender issues and adopting cross-sectoral approaches to addressing VAC.
- Children are able to express their opinions on how to address VAC, but feel that they lack the power to effectively influence decision-making and social norms change. Children are included in UNICEF VAC activities but not sufficiently.

Principal strengths (findings):

1. Legal and policy development documents adopted at the country level during the evaluation period generally take gender issues in VAC into account.
2. UNICEF's approach to gender equality was integrated into country child protection work on VAC.
3. Countries do disaggregate data on VAC by sex and in some cases by age in research and case management. As a result, it is possible to derive guidance information for planning and implementation, but only where the quality and quantity of collected data is adequate.
4. Countries in the evaluation are making progress on the prevention of VAC with certain types of vulnerable children, such as children who live and/or work on the street.
5. Regardless of whether children have been trained on participation with support from UNICEF, the evaluation found that children are very skilled at providing input/ideas on how to address VAC. Their comments show remarkable insights.

Areas for improvement (findings):

1. The issue of abuse of boys is not sufficiently addressed. Social norms and economic constraints place boys at particular risk of certain forms of physical abuse,²⁰⁶ such as sexual abuse; UNICEF's programming does not sufficiently recognize boys' vulnerability to sexual abuse.
2. Boys' masculinity roles also impede their willingness to report VAC.

²⁰⁶ Fighting and extreme corporal punishment.

3. The distinct needs and vulnerabilities of children, including those with disabilities, were only considered in VAC programme design and implementation to varying degrees. While country offices recognized the particular VAC problems facing especially vulnerable children, programmatic responses were either still project-based and not integrated in a systems approach, or did not accommodate these children. This is, in part, due to insufficient human resources in most UNICEF country office Child Protection Sections.
4. All children are vulnerable to violence, regardless of socio-economic category, which is insufficiently considered. Stakeholders consistently noted that children in non-poor households also need consideration in programming on VAC.
5. There is a potential tension between UNICEF's corporate focus on equity and the nature of the problem, i.e., VAC, which is pervasive even if it affects some groups more than others.
6. Methods to prevent and respond to child perpetrators of VAC, including perpetrators of bullying, physical and sexual VAC and digitally-based VAC, are insufficiently considered in planning and implementation.
7. Though types of VAC and the type of perpetrator tend to vary in accordance with the age of the child, little explicit differentiation with respect to age is made in programming design on prevention and response to VAC.
8. The evaluation noted that children are included in UNICEF activities on VAC but not sufficiently so.
9. The evaluation found that children emphasize that they lack the power to:
 - influence decision-making on VAC at all levels within their countries; and
 - have a strong impact on social norms change since adults do not always listen to them due to existing social norms.

5.1 Human rights, gender and equity issues

A human rights-based approach with respect to VAC entails the implementation of several different elements. These include explicit attention to the child's rights as indicated in the CRC, non-discrimination with respect to gender and vulnerabilities, focusing on the best interests of the child, ensuring the child's right to survival and development, the indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, and accountability and respect for the voice of the child reflected in the actions to address VAC.²⁰⁷ All these elements of a human rights-based approach are discussed in the current section. Findings from the document review as well as key informant interviews with a range of UNICEF personnel indicate that, at the global and regional levels, UNICEF is placing a strong focus on human rights approaches to the prevention and response to VAC, though implementation can be improved at the country level.²⁰⁸

5.1.1 Gender

Gender is a social construction; it is used to understand and explain how a society establishes differences between men and women.²⁰⁹ Gender "refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men.

²⁰⁷ United Nations Children's Fund, Human Rights-based Approach to Programming, 2014, <www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights>, accessed 1 July 2014.

²⁰⁸ See Annexes for a list of interviewees.

²⁰⁹ United Nations Evaluation Group, *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*. UNEG, New York, 2014.

These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes.”²¹⁰

At the global and regional levels, gender is discussed and integrated in documents and strategies as part of UNICEF’s human rights approach. Data at the global, regional and country levels is disaggregated by sex, confirming a general recognition of the importance of doing so. At the country level, in documents reviewed for the evaluation, data is disaggregated by sex in studies on VAC as well as in on-going assessments and monitoring. As the Ivory Coast country office (one of the desk review countries) pointed out, “having data on VAC that is disaggregated by sex (and age) helps provide the evidence base for gender sensitive VAC programming in the future”.

In addition, analysis indicates UNICEF support for the life-cycle approach²¹¹ to understanding VAC within the evaluated countries. Women are vulnerable to violence at all stages of the life cycle, from infancy through old age. All UNICEF-supported global documents on VAC recognize the challenges facing girls, particularly at different stages of early life from infancy to adulthood, but several also mention the special challenges facing boys. Reference is also made to the high levels of physical violence towards boys and the often unrecognized sexual abuse of boys.²¹² The *Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies*²¹³ also identified the sexual abuse of boys as an under-highlighted issue though the report does stress that girls are much more vulnerable to sexual abuse in emergencies than boys.

The evaluation results from the country case studies likewise indicate that sexual violence is not limited to girls and that boys are even less likely to report sexual violence than girls. This finding was also identified in research from other countries, which concluded that it can be difficult for boys to report sexual violence due to the common cultural definition of boys being strong and self-reliant or fears of being labelled a homosexual if the perpetrator is male.²¹⁴ As children in an evaluation focus group in Bangladesh stated, “Boys are really in a difficult situation as there is such shame that they are not in a position to share what happened to them.”

The evaluation found that in all four case study countries, the situation of girls was adequately considered in the *design* of the programme, and that the special situation of boys had been considered, but to a lesser extent. Government stakeholders in the case study countries recognized the role of UNICEF’s advocacy in heightening consideration of girls’ vulnerability in planning. It should be added, however, that other agencies also stress the vulnerability of girls and it is therefore not possible to accurately determine UNICEF’s contribution to raising awareness on this issue as compared to other organizations. Seven of the desk review countries reported not sufficiently considering gender in their programme design. In some cases, the focus on gender has increased over the last few years, as in the case of Serbia,

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Heise, L. L., J. Pitanguy and A. Germain, *The Hidden Burden Health*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1994.

²¹² As indicated in several documents, including in *Hidden in Plain Sight*.

²¹³ United Nations Children’s Fund, *Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies: Synthesis Report*, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

²¹⁴ *Hidden in Plain Sight*.

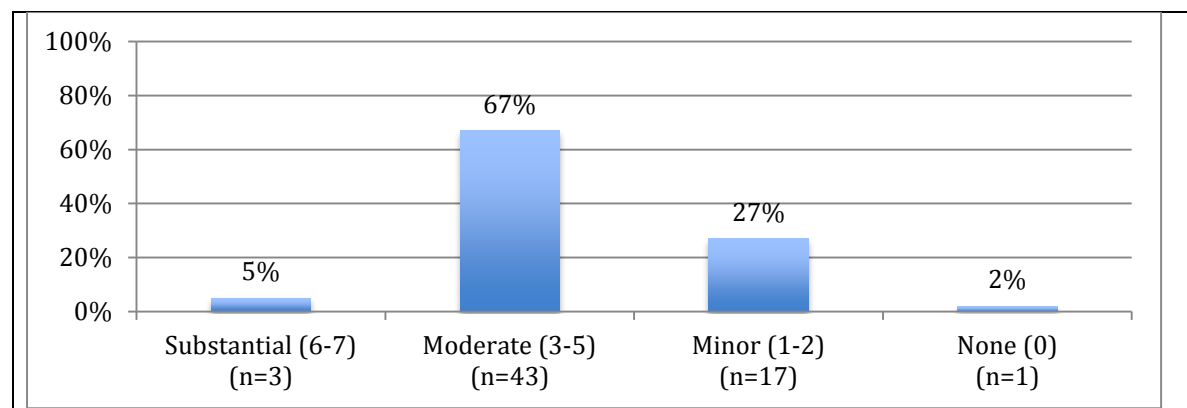
which reported being “gender blind” until recently. Similarly, in Nigeria, attention to the needs of girls in planning increased only recently.

During *implementation*, all four of the case study countries included attention to both boys and girls. Key informants in case study countries indicated that the level of attention to girls in actions on VAC was adequate during implementation and in line with their high vulnerability. In the case study countries of Bangladesh, Mexico and Tanzania, however, the evaluation also found that several implementation actions proved challenging with respect to boys and merited more attention. At least in part due to the sensitivity of the subject of sexual abuse of boys, prevention efforts did not adequately highlight this issue. It should be added, however, that the evaluation found that actions to address VAC in the desk review countries are often oriented to boys and girls separately, especially in the case of discussions concerning sexual abuse and empowerment.

Due to lack of impact survey data, *results* on how well such attention differentially actually improved the situation of girls and boys with respect to VAC was difficult to assess. Systematic and integrated country monitoring of cases of VAC was still nascent in the case study countries.

Online survey respondents were, likewise, not very positive about *results* with respect to the extent to which UNICEF-supported national programmes are successful in addressing the specific needs of boys and girls. Based on the findings from the case study and desk review countries, this is in part because countries recognize that gender approaches have focused mostly on ensuring that girls receive attention. The issue of boys and lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) is also considered when answering the question on gender. Of the 64 country offices that were able to answer the question, only three indicated that national programmes on VAC *substantially* address the different needs of boys and girls. A little over two-thirds of the country offices indicated that national programmes moderately address the needs of boys and girls. UNICEF was reported, however, to provide *substantial* support to addressing the different needs of boys and girls for 10 countries.

Figure 17: Extent to which national programmes to address VAC are responsive to the different needs of boys and girls



N= 64

With respect to response to VAC, the evaluation found that in all four case study countries, while there are a variety of reasons behind the reluctance to report sexual and other abuse, shame was mentioned as a common factor for boys and girls. Developing an appropriate response to sexual abuse of boys is quite challenging given the lower level of experience in this subject. In the case of the desk review countries, though sexual abuse is more common among girls, VAC among boys was also identified. Both in terms of peer violence among boys in schools, but also with respect to sexual abuse. There is a need to improve the understanding of masculinity and evolving gender roles as related to VAC. As the Jordan country office further noted, “a stronger gender analysis and gender-sensitive response is still needed to address the specific needs of boys and girls.” The evaluation concludes that this situation impedes the effectiveness of UNICEF-supported actions in attaining results on prevention and response to sexual abuse of boys.

5.1.2 Human rights and equity

Consideration of needs of children with disabilities

Children with disabilities and other vulnerabilities form a core group of focus for UNICEF. At the global level, UNICEF’s report on *The State of the World’s Children* (2013),²¹⁵ which focuses on children with disabilities, is evidence of the importance UNICEF attaches to such children. The report also includes a special chapter on violence against children with disabilities. Further evidence is UNICEF’s establishment of a special section to address the issues concerning children with disabilities two years ago.

One of the key areas of focus for the UNICEF Headquarters disabilities section is managing the risk of violence against children with disabilities. Across the world, children with disabilities are on average 3.7 times more likely to be victims of violence, including sexual abuse, than those with no disabilities.²¹⁶ VAC can also result in many kinds of disabilities among children, including mental illness.²¹⁷ UNICEF’s agenda, as detailed in *The State of the World’s Children* report, is very concrete and includes nine different strategies. The evaluation notes that several of these overlap with strategies also used in the context of preventing and responding to VAC. These include the coordination of services to support the child and including children in decision-making.

Given the fact the increased focus on children with disabilities is fairly recent, the evaluation could not assess the strengths or shortcomings of these strategies. The evaluation gap analysis did, however, find that there is a major gap with respect to the prevention and response to violence against children with disabilities.

At the country level, a striking evaluation finding is that, among the desk review countries, only one specifically considered the needs of children with disabilities in programming related to

²¹⁵ United Nations Children’s Fund, *State of the World’s Children 2013, Children with Disabilities*, UNICEF, New York.

²¹⁶ Ibid.; World Health Organization and World Bank, *World Report on Disability*, WHO, Geneva, 2011.

²¹⁷ Ribeiro, Wagner S., et al., ‘Exposure to violence and mental health problems in low and middle-income countries: a literature review’. *Rev. Bras. Psiquiatr.*, vol.31 supl.2, São Paulo, October 2009, <www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S1516-44462009000600003&script=sci_arttext&tlng=en>, accessed 25 January 2015.

VAC, i.e., Serbia. Many stakeholders in the four country case studies indicated that there was a need to place greater focus on children with disabilities in programming on VAC. The *Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies*²¹⁸ also stressed that inadequate attention was paid to the issues of children with disabilities. Government representatives, international and national NGO interviewees as well as children themselves often raised the subject of linkages between disabilities and VAC. Throughout the evaluation, two main elements were cited as needing more attention: 1) the need to increase attention on the prevention of violence against children with disabilities using specifically adapted SBCC methodologies; and 2) the need to improve response with specialized referral and case management methods. In Ghana, youth representatives also indicated the importance of increasing the voice of children with disabilities in participatory structures, such as the National Youth Assembly.

As stakeholders in Tanzania pointed out, a general systems approach to respond to violence against children with disabilities does not ensure that their special needs will be considered. Specific support is still needed as the Agenda included in the *State of the World's Children* report also indicates. To illustrate this point, at the community level in Tanzania, two local committees pointed out that children who are deaf or who have cognitive challenges can have difficulties in expressing themselves when sharing their experiences of incidents such as rape or deliberate neglect. For this reason, attention to VAC within child protection systems needs to incorporate capacity strengthening of service providers to identify and respond to cases of violence against children with disabilities.

Consideration of needs of children with other vulnerabilities

Consideration of children with other vulnerabilities is included in the 18 evaluation countries. All of the case study countries include programming on some forms of violence against children who live and/or work in the street, indigenous children and/or children from extremely poor households.

The actual effectiveness of programming to prevent and respond to violence against vulnerable children is difficult to measure. Activities to support such vulnerable children are usually composed of a package of elements. In Bangladesh, for example, it may consist of conditional cash transfers combined with after school activities and life skills training. Such training includes components on VAC but also many other topics. Exposure to VAC, as per the definition used in the current evaluation,²¹⁹ is not one of the selection criteria for inclusion in such conditional cash transfer programmes. Nor are baselines conducted to determine the exposure of beneficiary family children to VAC. This means that the evaluation cannot determine the actual extent to which such actions result in a decrease in VAC. There is thus a supposition that such programmes have an impact on the prevention of VAC but whether this is the case has not yet been sufficiently proven.

²¹⁸ United Nations Children's Fund, *Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies: Synthesis Report*, UNICEF, New York, 2013

²¹⁹ See Chapter 2 for definition.

Despite this situation, there are clear programme actions in several countries with a direct link to the prevention and reduction of VAC. In the three case study countries of Tanzania, Mexico and Bangladesh, there are actions with children living and/or working on the street. In Mexico, there are actions with migrant children. All of these children are especially vulnerable to violence. Similar activities could be identified in four of the desk review countries. In Nigeria, UNICEF is placing special focus on children in the north-east where insurgencies are taking place. In the Dominican Republic, attention is placed on assisting children who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation. In Ecuador, deinstitutionalizing children aged 0-3 is an important subject area with special attention to including violence prevention when reinserting children into families. In Mongolia, attention is paid to nomadic children who go to boarding schools where peer and other violence are common. In all these cases, however, decreases in VAC cannot be clearly ascertained for the reasons outlined in previous paragraphs.

Evaluation gap analysis indicates that there are several types of vulnerable children who are not yet sufficiently considered in programming on VAC. With respect to children affected by HIV, for example, several issues require consideration. In South Africa it was found that children who are affected by HIV, either because their caregiver lives with HIV or they themselves live with HIV, are more likely to be victims of VAC.²²⁰ While there is little data indicating that the same situation applies to other countries, children affected by HIV are generally vulnerable and vulnerability is a common factor putting children at higher risk of VAC. Child victims of sexual violence may also be put at risk of acquiring HIV.

There is little data on VAC in specific situations such as within the settings of child labour²²¹ and child marriage. While there has been considerable research on child labour in general, including on commercial sexual exploitation of children, data are not comprehensive nor do they help provide solutions. The abuse (including sexual abuse) of domestic workers is often raised, but its prevalence is not clear. This lack of information is partly due to the paucity of studies but also because of the “hidden nature of the phenomenon, the formulation of appropriate and understandable questions, the type of respondents, and the fear of reprisals for giving information”.²²² With respect to the child, there are few studies focussing on the specificities of VAC once the child is married. Most studies on gender-based violence do not single out the situation of married children below the age of 18, though some data does show that a married child is at higher risk of violence than an adult.

Most online survey countries reported limitations in terms of how well national VAC programming responded to the needs of the range of children in need, with 27 out of 63 countries noting that the extent was ‘minor’. Only one reported that programming was substantially reaching children in need. When progress had been made, UNICEF was felt to

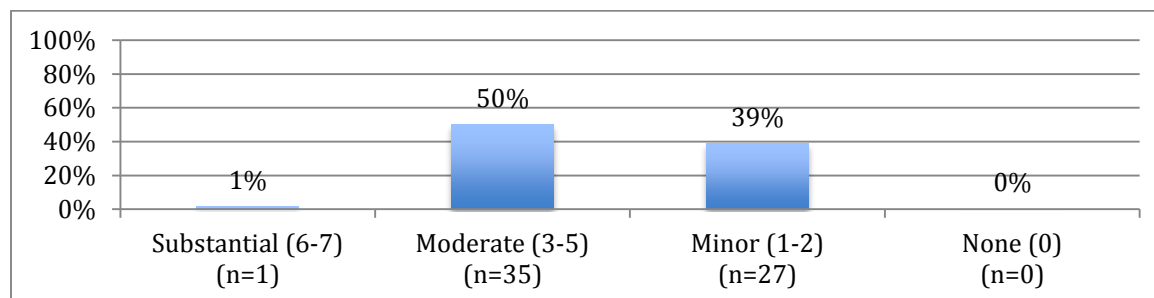
²²⁰ Cluver, Lucy, et al., ‘Suicide and AIDS-affected Children in South Africa: A prospective national study’, 2014, <www.slideserve.com/michel/a-prospective-national-study-lucie-cluver-lorraine-sherr-mark-orkin-mark-boyce>, accessed November 2014. A UNICEF study in Ukraine (not yet published at the time of the writing of the current report) likewise indicated that children in residential care who experience VAC drive their risk of HIV infection.

²²¹ United Nations Children’s Fund, *Child Labour and UNICEF in Action: Children at the Centre*, UNICEF, New York, 2014.

²²² Ibid.

have played an important role, with nine country offices reporting substantial efforts to reach all children in need and 32 indicating playing a moderate role.

Figure 18: Extent to which national programmes on VAC are able to reach all children



N= 63

Children in conflict with the law

UNICEF is engaged in actions to improve juvenile justice. Violence against children in conflict with the law in communities, on arrest, and during incarceration is a common occurrence.²²³ On a global level, 67 states have not prohibited violent punishment of children in penal institutions.²²⁴ At the global level, UNICEF is active in international discussions such as with the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, which includes a focus on violence against children who have been incarcerated.

At the country level, the child protection sections in the case study countries include various actions to reduce violence against children in conflict with the law. Unfortunately, as with other types of vulnerable children, due to the lack of evaluations and/or impact studies, it is not possible to assess the effectiveness of such efforts. Nevertheless, it useful to mention some of the efforts undertaken in the case study countries. In Tanzania, for example, a Five-year Strategy for Progressive Child Justice Reform was initiated with support from UNICEF and which includes attention to reducing violence against children who are in conflict with the law. In Bangladesh, there has been important progress in the area of juvenile justice, supported by UNICEF. Concentrating on 20 districts, UNICEF has been able to work with police services, child welfare services, and others to strengthen the ability of these service providers to respond to the needs of children in contact with the law, including reducing VAC. Efforts were undertaken to pull children out of incarceration and involve them in community service and skills training instead, thus taking them out of high risk for VAC settings. In some locations, child friendly facilities have been established at police stations, and officers have been trained in working with children and family members. Despite these developments, key informants report that most children who come into conflict with the law do not receive these services.

²²³ SOS Children's Villages International and University of Bedfordshire, *From a Whisper to a Shout: A Call to End Violence Against Children in Alternative Care*, SOS Children's Villages International, Insbruck, University of Bedfordshire, Luton, 2014. Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 'Cruel, inhuman and degrading: ending corporal punishment in penal systems for children', Report, Association for the Protection of All Children, APPROACH Ltd., London, 2015.

²²⁴ Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 'Cruel, inhuman and degrading: ending corporal punishment in penal systems for children', Report, Association for the Protection of All Children, APPROACH Ltd., London, 2015.

Child Welfare Boards, which also focus on the prevention and response to VAC in Bangladesh, are a new development, and it is too early to tell whether they will be effective. In Mexico, UNICEF supported the development of protocols for restorative justice of juvenile delinquents and managing children and adolescents involved in gangs. In Ghana, UNICEF supports the Legal Aid Scheme, an agency providing assistance to individuals in conflict with the law. The Legal Aid Scheme also participated with UNICEF in discussions on children in conflict with the law during the development of legal and policy frameworks.

With respect to the desk review countries, four of the countries²²⁵ reported engaging in special actions to support children in conflict with the law so as to decrease their vulnerability to violence.

One issue, however, that was raised repeatedly across the country case studies, including by children, and which has received insufficient attention is child perpetrators of VAC. While bullying is an issue that has been raised in global studies²²⁶ and in the case study countries, adults and children expressed the need to pay more attention to prevention of and response to other forms of VAC by child perpetrators. Physical violence, including fighting, was an issue, but a greater concern was expressed about sexual abuse of very young children by older children or among adolescents. Focus group members in Tanzania, for example, expressed particular worries about the need to address issues surrounding online pornography, which was subsequently forcibly acted out on younger children. In fact, the SBCC materials reviewed in the case study countries indicate that most of the attention is on reducing VAC perpetrated by adults.

Vulnerability across socio-economic groups

One other gap the evaluation identified was the fact that children across socio-economic groups are vulnerable to VAC. Children in non-poor households also need to be considered in programming on VAC. There is thus a tension between UNICEF's corporate focus on equity and the nature of the problem, i.e., VAC.

This point was repeatedly raised among a range of stakeholders interviewed in all four case study countries. Interestingly, even children in remote areas of Bangladesh and Tanzania²²⁷ pointed out that "not only the poor children suffer from VAC". As a matter of fact, in both of these countries, low-income children indicated that they felt that there was almost a discriminatory assumption that only poor children are affected by VAC. In Ghana, children interviewed in one school likewise stated, "All children are vulnerable to violence, whether rich or poor." Among the desk review countries, the India country office also raised this point as a challenge without being prompted to do so. At the regional level, a UNICEF specialist likewise pointed out, "The more you have a private world, the more you can hide what is happening to your children." Adults from government and CSOs in all four case study countries likewise made comments such as "all children are vulnerable to VAC". Due to the important and correct UNICEF focus on

²²⁵ Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Morocco and Nigeria.

²²⁶ *Hidden in Plain Sight*.

²²⁷ These comments were raised spontaneously in focus groups.

vulnerable children, however, little attention is paid to preventing and responding to VAC among higher income groups. Activities are rarely focused on private schools or wealthier neighbourhoods. The only approach that country offices in case study countries could mention that specifically reached higher income groups is UNICEF's worldwide #Endviolence initiative.

VAC and children in different age categories

As children grow, their cognitive, physical and moral development evolves through a series of life stages with different risk contexts for VAC.²²⁸ All forms of VAC can be found in every age category, but some forms predominate in particular age categories. In early childhood, children tend to be most at risk of violence from primary caregivers, including in the context of domestic violence. As they approach middle childhood, corporal punishment and VAC in school and in the community increases. Though younger children are also sexually abused, it is more common as children enter adolescence.

At the global and regional levels, the strategies against VAC do not make strong distinctions with respect to age categories. At the country level, with the exception of Mexico, country programme strategies to prevent and respond to VAC are not always very well delineated by age. As a result, the evaluation could not easily identify measurable results and overall outcomes on VAC in relation to children at various stages of the life cycle.

Prevention materials focus more on the type of VAC as opposed to the age categories that mark them most. Countries do, however, develop some specific approaches that are more commonly applied to particular age groups so that there is an implicit attention to age categories. Parenting skills training is most commonly provided to parents of younger children, though not exclusively so. Life skills training – such as that provided in Bangladesh and Mexico – which is intended to help empower children to prevent VAC and report it if it occurs, is primarily provided to children from middle childhood onwards. In Tanzania, children form peer support, advocacy and awareness raising clubs separately in primary and secondary schools. Some country offices have also developed linkages between the child protection section and the education section in order to reach children in Early Childhood Development programmes. In Tanzania, for example, UNICEF supported the development of regulations on the management of day care crèches and Early Childhood Education Centres. The regulation covers issues such as the need for caretakers to recognize signs of abuse in young children.

5.2 Child participation

Child participation is one of the core elements of the CP Strategy (2008) and continues to have a very important focus in new strategies, including the SP (2014–2017). Child participation in this context refers to the right of children as indicated in Article 12 of the CRC, which states that children have the right to participate in decision-making processes that may be relevant in their

²²⁸ *Hidden in Plain Sight*; Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, *Toward a World Free from Violence: Global Survey on Violence Against Children*, SRSG, New York, 2013.

lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard – within the family, the school or the community.²²⁹ Child participation goes beyond their involvement in actions such as awareness raising on VAC and includes the right of the child to be heard and to actually have her/his opinions taken into account.

The evaluation took a look at whether children participated at the global, regional, national and local levels in VAC-related activities. Such activities included discussions on planning and awareness raising with respect to the prevention and response to VAC. Importantly, the evaluation also analysed the extent to which children's views were integrated in decision making and improvement of approaches to reducing VAC.

At the global and regional levels, children do participate in international conferences and are increasingly recognized as good ambassadors for the defence of their own rights. There is also a growing focus in global discussion on the importance of enhancing the skills of children to effectively advocate with decision makers and create change within their communities and countries.

The evaluation team found that in all case study countries, children were well able to express themselves regarding their rights and about what needs to be done to reduce VAC. Children in case study country projects supported by UNICEF are active in awareness raising activities. This included children in school-based children's clubs in Tanzania who are directly involved in referral of cases of VAC to community leaders.²³⁰ Representatives of such clubs were included in various district and even national level discussions on child protection, including on VAC. Children in clubs in Bangladesh learn about life skills but are not yet very directly involved in awareness raising, though some are also members of local child protection committees. A few children formerly living and/or working on the street in Bangladesh had been involved in higher level discussions. In Mexico, likewise, children's groups are vocal in their opinions about their rights as the evaluation team noted in meetings. In Ghana, youth are very active in different awareness raising methods on VAC such as through their own radio station and as members of the National Youth Board. An EAPRO evaluation interviewee mentioned, for example, the good participation of children in the child parliament in Timor-Leste, but added that child participation needs to be institutionalized to a much greater extent across the region.

In all case study countries, however, many children expressed frustration about several issues with regard to their participation. Children in focus groups consistently noted that they want to see their advice more concretely reflected in planning documents and formal decisions.²³¹ With the exception of Tanzania, children in the case study countries could not point with certainty to instances where they felt that their opinion had really been included in decision-making. So, while children and youth confirmed their participation in meetings and conferences, they had received little feedback about whether or how their ideas had been integrated in decision-making and strategies. Mechanisms for integrating the views of children and reporting back to

²²⁹ United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990, <www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>, accessed 20 May 2014.

²³⁰ Either to community child protection committees, designated teachers and neighbourhood leaders as well as other local leaders.

²³¹ Decisions made at the community, ward and district up to national level.

them about the results on the development and implementation of country-level VAC-related activities were thus not very clear. Another issue that children wanted to see addressed is that children and youth across their countries should be organized, aware and able to contribute to the prevention and response to VAC. At the time of the evaluation, child participation on VAC was primarily limited to those localities/districts where UNICEF and its partners were developing intervention models.

Children in three of the four case study countries stated that they lacked power within their culture to change social norms and ensure that people listened to them on VAC issues. Examples of children's statements in this regard included, "People do not listen to us because we are children" and "Elders do not listen to us." Children's inability to influence policy and programming underlines the constraining social norms that limit children's influence despite UNICEF country office efforts.

Findings from the desk review countries suggest that the situation is the same as in the case study countries. Child participation in the 14 desk review countries was reportedly still fairly weak overall. In the case of contribution to the development of legal and planning frameworks, only two countries comprehensively included children and seriously considered their input in decision-making.²³² In seven other countries, there was some limited participation of children. Children in the desk review countries are more actively involved in awareness raising in their communities though this also varies greatly by country. Three of the 14 countries have intensive involvement of children in their awareness raising actions on VAC, while the remainder include some children in some activities. Country offices need to develop specific strategies for ensuring child participation in determining strategies and action plans on VAC, and for ensuring that these inputs are really taken on board in decision-making processes.

Child participation in Ghana

In Ghana, children and youth, some as young as 11 years old, plan and produce programmes for their radio station 'Curious Minds'.²³³ In 2013, UNICEF/Ghana negotiated for free weekly airtime to discuss various issues, including various aspects of VAC. A total of 60 shows were aired in 2013 and continue to be implemented. The radio programmes are in part based on youth's action research in communities consisting of collecting information on specific realities. The youth then broadcast stories and raise awareness on the issues. The evaluation team met with the youth from the 'Curious Minds' station and found them to be enthusiastic about their roles and well informed on VAC issues.

²³² India and Indonesia

²³³ United Nations Children's Fund/Ghana, *Country Office Annual Report 2012*, UNICEF/Ghana, Accra, Ghana, 2012. The evaluation team also visited and interviewed the youth who head the radio station during the Ghana country case study field evaluation.

6 Efficiency in programme implementation on VAC and obtaining results

This chapter discusses the following evaluation question:

EQ 6 - How efficient have UNICEF's organizational policies, strategies and country programme management practices been in obtaining results with regard to VAC at the country level?

Efficiency is defined in this context as focusing on how economic resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results and measured.²³⁴ The section includes an analysis of the availability and use of resources and UNICEF internal coordination.

Snapshot on Efficiency

Main conclusions:

1. From the countries visited, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that management of resources on VAC programming has been efficient, compared to results achieved, especially considering the extremely limited funding available. In particular, this is evident in KRA4 on monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data. For real impact, much more investment is needed.
2. Although attempts are being made through increasing regional-level targeted technical support to countries on indicator identification, monitoring and reporting, important gaps remain. The human resources allocated at the regional level to strengthen these are inadequate to effect substantial improvements in these areas at the country level.
3. Although VAC is UNICEF's top advocacy priority,²³⁵ there are insufficient funds to support this priority, especially with a view to “*end* abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children” as indicated in SDG 16.2. Major efforts are needed to mobilise more funds and ensure allocation of resource to all sectors working to address VAC.

Principal strengths (findings):

1. In the case study countries, although very limited, funds were well utilized within available budgets across strategies and interventions. There are good examples where cost-effective solutions have been identified and applied for human resource and financial management.

Areas for improvement (findings):

1. Globally speaking, funding challenges appear prominently, including across KRA4 (monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data), though evaluation findings indicate that it is key to achieving outcomes across all other KRAs.
2. Of note is that assessing the cost effectiveness and efficiency of programmes was challenging at the country programme level as activities, outputs and outcomes are often disconnected in programming and reporting, and financial allocations for VAC are not earmarked.
3. The related lack of reporting on concrete core indicators, which do not yet exist, may have affected the capacity of UNICEF to attract funds for child protection.

²³⁴ Development Assistance Committee, 'Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, 2002. <www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/54/35336188.pdf>, accessed 25 May 2014.

²³⁵ United Nations Children's Fund, 'A Post-2015 World Fit for Children: An agenda for #Everychild 2015', PDF, UNICEF, New York, 2015.

4. With respect to cross-sectoral collaboration, work on VAC across UNICEF country office sections is still variable. Government, United Nations and other agencies are not yet working on common approaches to VAC. Instances of collaboration to address VAC within child marriage by partnering with agencies focusing on gender-based violence, for instance, were limited.

6.1 Availability and use of resources: Financial and human resource allocations

Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse, Focus Area 4 of the MTSP (2006–2013), only accounts for around one-tenth of UNICEF's programme expenditure. Part of this budget concerns child protection actions other than those addressing VAC, UNICEF's response to children's needs in situations of humanitarian crisis and conflict (KRA3).

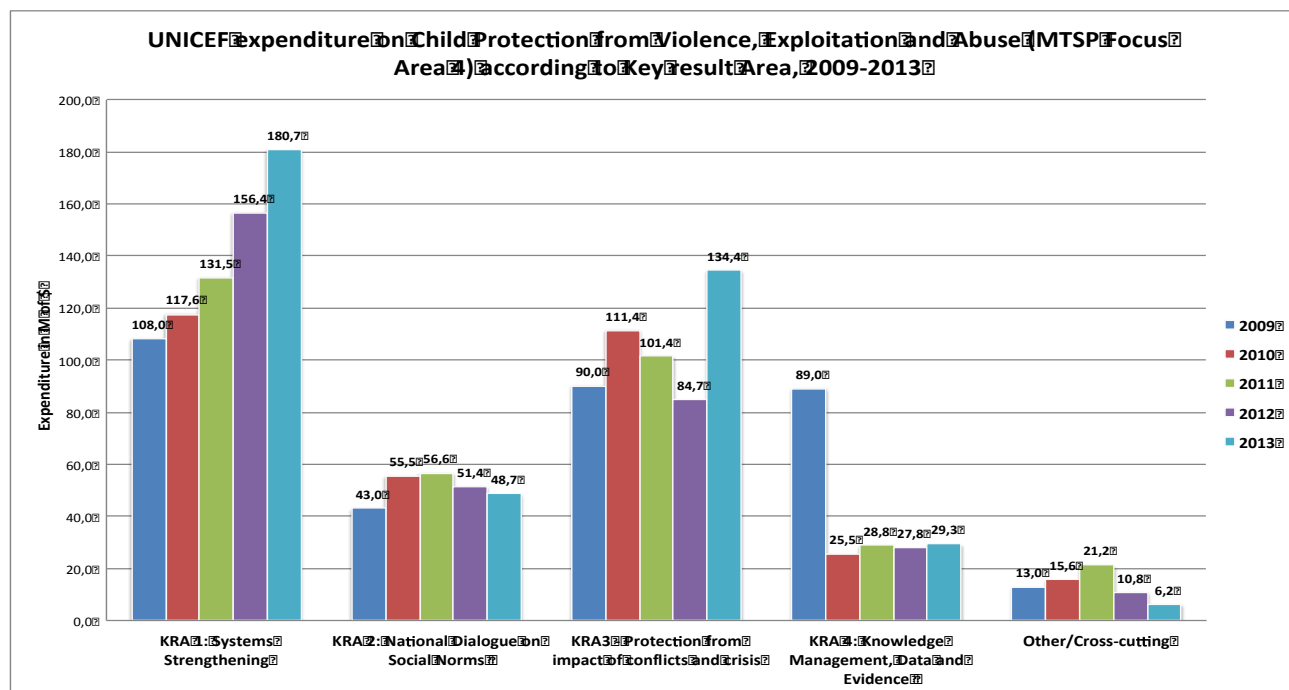
In terms of dollars spent, the allocation to addressing VAC has remained relatively stable over the period 2009–2013, despite a drop in overall programme assistance expenditure in 2012 compared to the previous two years. 2013 marked the highest allocation of the examined period, with a total of US\$399 million (please see Annex 11 for detailed financial flows).

This picture is confirmed at the regional level, where relatively stable shares are allocated to all regions for work to prevent and respond to VAC. Exceptions are ESARO and the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO), where in 2013 the allocation for this Focus Area increased by 26 per cent and 142 per cent respectively, compared to the previous year, whereas the average increase/decrease of resources has stayed at less than 10 per cent yearly for all other regions and years of reference.

Within the child protection Focus Area, investment has been greatest, and increasing steadily, in activities addressing the establishment of systems and services. Figure 20 provides evidence of UNICEF's efforts to promote child protection systems. Interventions aimed at bringing about changes in social norms have received markedly less programme assistance (between 12 per cent and 17 per cent of the programme funding). Despite the importance accorded to developing an evidence-base for combating VAC, allocation of funds to knowledge management, data and evidence (KRA4) appears very small: after a concerted investment in 2009, expenditure on KRA4 has fallen to relatively low levels – it was 26 per cent in 2009 and fell to 7–8 per cent in the following years.²³⁶

²³⁶ It may be that the 2009 level reflects a previous classification of actions addressing justice systems as KRA5.

Figure 19: UNICEF expenditures on child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse by key results area, 2009-2013²³⁷



Source: UNICEF Thematic Reports on Child Protection Against Violence, Exploitation and Abuse

In terms of **sources of funding**, regular resources represent a low share of the total funding for addressing VAC, varying from 22 per cent to 25 per cent between 2009 and 2013 (please see Annex 11 for a detailed analysis of financial flows). This means that child protection can count only to a small extent on predictable resources, granting the possibility of multi-year programming. ‘Other resources’ include the raising of ‘thematic funding’²³⁸, considered to be the second best option for predictability. Fundraising for child protection appears to be challenging: in 2013, child protection accounted for only 5 per cent of the total thematic contributions, with a 6 per cent decline relative to the 2012 contribution.

Interestingly, the recent *Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies*²³⁹ lists amongst the reasons identified for funding limitations the lack of data and indicators to demonstrate the impact of child protection interventions in the long term. This is confirmed by the findings of the current evaluation, with particular reference to KRA1 and KRA4. Indeed, there is considerable need for UNICEF to mobilise and invest funds in system

²³⁷ KRA3 is also included in the graph to compare proportions.

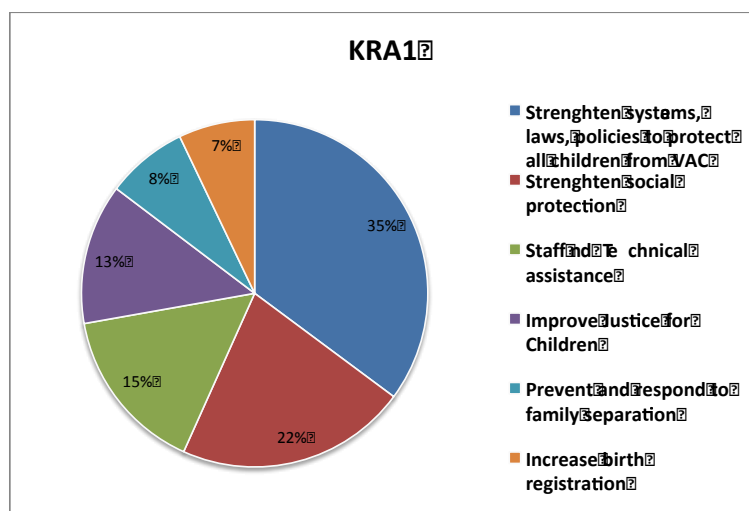
²³⁸ Thematic funding was created after the adoption of the UNICEF MTSP (2001–2005) as an opportunity for resource partners to support the goals and objectives of the MTSP and to allow for longer-term planning and sustainability of programmes. While regular resources continue to be UNICEF’s preferred type of funding, thematic contributions are the next best option because they have fewer restrictions on their use than traditional ‘other resources’. *Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse: Thematic Report 2013*.

²³⁹ United Nations Children’s Fund, *Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies: Synthesis Report*, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

strengthening and to show results through systematic VAC data collection/analysis and results monitoring.

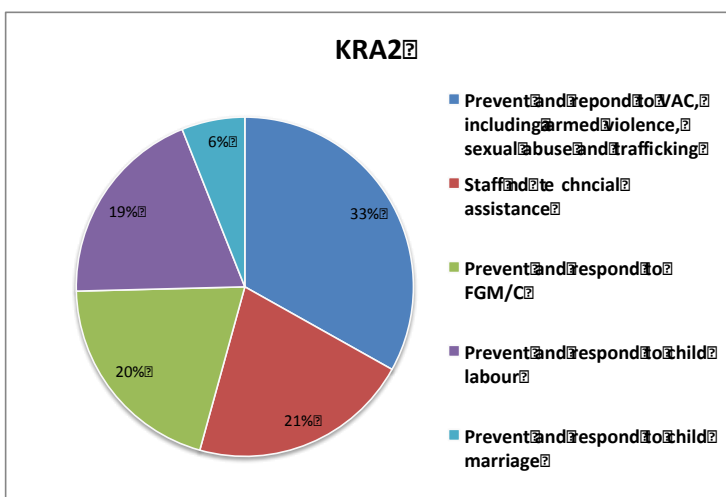
6.2 Budget allocation to VAC and efficient use of financial, technical and human resources

Analysis of the latest available data for allocations across the KRAs (2013) shows that substantial effort in terms of investment has been made to prevent and respond to VAC. In fact, actions aimed directly at preventing and responding to VAC represent 35 per cent and 33 per cent of total allocations to KRAs 1 and 2, respectively. The online survey found that almost two-thirds of the countries directly contributed to supporting legal and policy framework development and implementation through financial and human resources support, and the rest did so in at least a moderate way.

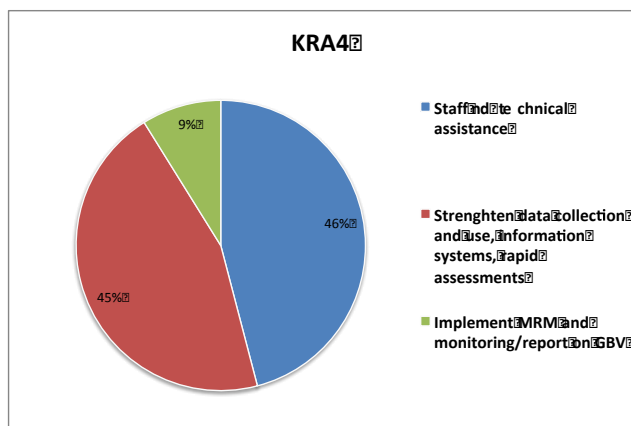


Under KRA2, actions preventing and responding to violence – typically, awareness raising on the impact of violence and working with families, communities, teachers, etc. on prevention and response to violence in a number of settings – received the highest share. Notably, 123

countries specifically worked on addressing physical and sexual VAC.



Though challenges appear in terms of adequate financing under KRA4, almost one half of the KRA4 share goes to strengthening data collection and use, a key area of strengthening identified as a priority to be addressed by the 2013 Global Survey on VAC.²⁴⁰



At the country office level, it is rare for budgets allocated to be specifically earmarked for VAC. Available budgets in the case study countries on VAC are, thus, difficult to distinguish from broader child protection funding. In Tanzania, however, calculations were conducted to try to assess the approximate allocation for VAC-related actions within the child

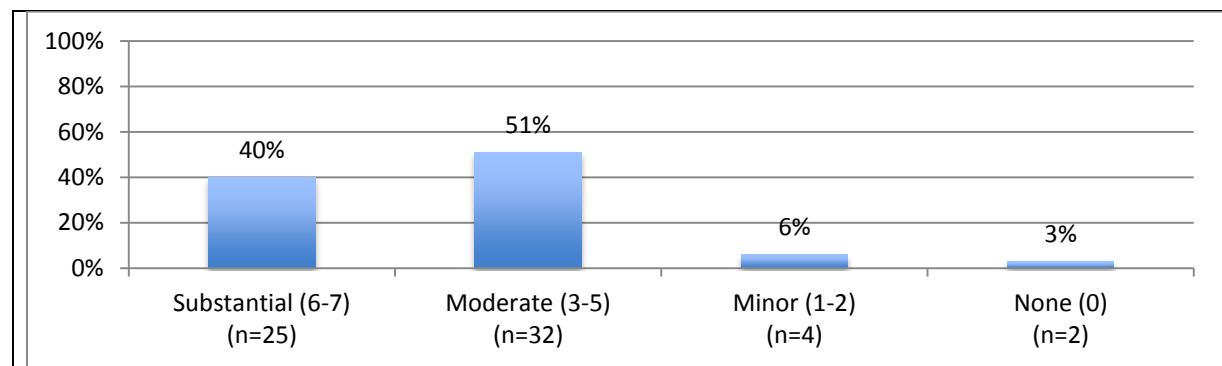
protection programme – despite the difficulties of such an exercise. This is a valuable approach supporting cost-consideration in future programming.

As far as can be discerned within the broader child protection context, however, funding for VAC appears quite limited. It was observed in the case study countries that country offices have, nevertheless, been able to use flexible approaches to programming to limit the impact of scarce funding. These include maximizing impact by selecting and focusing on specific geographic areas. Others included practical steps such as reducing the number of field visits to monitor and provide support fieldwork by organizing them around addressing several issues at once instead of making repeated field visits.

In all the country case studies of the current evaluation, the staff was able to cope with the lack of specifically allocated budget challenges while keeping a focus on results. In Bangladesh, where human and financial resources appear to have been handled in an efficient way – the country team was able to develop proposals and obtain funding from a variety of sources for key identified priorities consistent with UNICEF programming. In Ghana, emphasis on the most deprived regions coupled with the recognition that each section needs to focus additional attention on other regions, has allowed the country office to keep the focus on results. In Tanzania the child protection team is expertly coordinated with good team allocation of skills to maximize effectiveness and efficiency.

²⁴⁰ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, *Toward a World Free from Violence: Global Survey on Violence Against Children*, SRSG, New York, 2013.

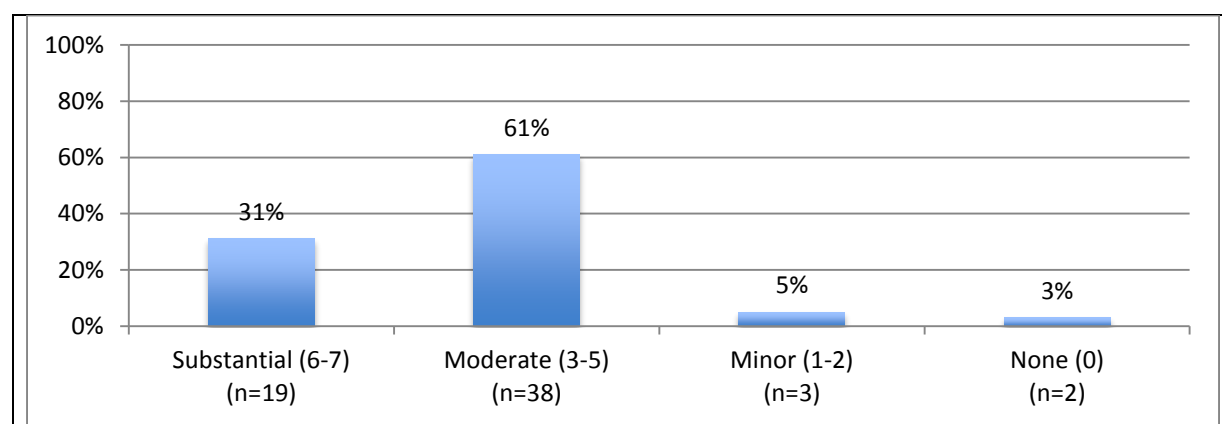
Figure 20: Extent to which support to legal and policy framework development and implementation was a good use of UNICEF funding compared to possible alternatives



N= 63

The same positive perceptions of UNICEF country offices appear with respect to the development of tools, guides and manuals. Figure 22 indicates that the vast majority of the country offices – 57 of 63 respondents – reported that this was a good use of UNICEF funding compared to alternatives from a moderate to substantial way.

Figure 21: Extent to which investments in training tools, guides and manuals overall were a good use of UNICEF funding compared to alternative expenditures



N= 63

In Mexico, the child protection team is making good use of scarce funding through low-cost approaches such as training of trainer workshops, online courses to strengthen human resource capacity and partnering with well-resourced CSOs.

Challenges regarding the availability and stability of qualified human resources are a common finding from all the 18 evaluation countries – though to a variable extent. In several cases, child protection teams have used a flexible approach to cope with staff shortages, succeeding in effectively managing the human resources available and coping with the difficulties experienced in replacing vacancies.

Some good examples in dealing with the scarcity of human resources have been observed, such as sharing child protection experts across different countries instead of recruiting full time experts for each country office.

6.3 Child protection and multi-sectoral collaboration to addressing VAC

In most cases, collaboration was between only two different types of subject areas such as health and child protection, education and child protection, or communications and child protection. Other than strategy development, more integrated collaboration and joint action to address VAC was limited from the global to national levels. Even such two-way collaboration was frequently limited, however. Instances of collaboration to address VAC within child marriage through partnering with agencies focusing on gender-based violence were, for example, limited. Within the area of gender-based violence there is often already an integrated approach to addressing violence using cross-sectoral approaches in different countries. For example in the desk review country of Morocco, there is collaboration across several different sectors to address gender-based violence, including with UNICEF. A recent report (2015)²⁴¹ prepared jointly with UNFPA explores the linkages between violence against women and VAC in the South Pacific.²⁴²

Examples of partnerships for building a protective environment on VAC at the regional level

1. *Strengthening national protection systems* through
 - joint development and application of tools (EAPRO, VAC in schools)
 - school teacher training on VAC (WCARO)
 - advocacy for legislative change (CEECIS, LACRO, MENARO)
2. *Supporting social change* through
 - concerted regional advocacy (ESARO)
 - partnerships with United Nations agencies, international NGOs, CSOs and governments (all regions)
 - mobilizing communities to change social norms (all regions)
 - combating child marriage (EAPRO, ESARO, ROSA, WCARO)
 - mobilizing youth (ROSA)
 - tackling gang violence, violence and access to small arms (LACRO)
 - identifying and consolidating 'child maltreatment' (EAPRO)
 - overcoming knowledge gaps on VAC (ESARO)
 - application of C4D in addressing child trafficking (EAPRO)
 - combating child labour (ESARO, ROSA)
 - identifying child sexual abuse and its link with HIV/AIDS (LACRO)
 - health-related protection, education and non-VAC concerns (CEECIS, EAPRO, ROSA).

At the country level, though there was evidence of joint discussions to develop legal and policy frameworks in committees composed of representatives of different areas of development

²⁴¹ United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, *Intersections of links between violence against women and violence against children in the South Pacific*, UNICEF, New York, 2015.

²⁴² The main focus of the report is to use the life cycle approach to VAC and violence against women, i.e., to analyse the continuous effect of violence on females from childhood to adulthood. It does not yet explore in depth how the agencies could collaborate to address these issues in an integrated manner.

(education, health, judicial), joint actions involving several sectors to prevent and respond to VAC were limited. Tanzania, in particular, was an exception as there was evidence of active collaboration in model districts to integrate response services across health, education, judicial and social welfare services to identified cases of VAC. Tanzania was also in the process of improving integration of prevention using a cross-sectoral approach at the time of the field work for the evaluation.

There was evidence of some collaboration within the UNICEF office and the support of different government departments in other case study countries. The child protection sections in 10 of the 18 countries work on reducing violence in schools in collaboration with education specialists within UNICEF. Despite these efforts, however, gap analysis indicates that all four of the case study countries and five of the desk review country offices indicated that improving multi-sectoral collaboration is a priority area needing improvement. The evaluation identified inter-agency disagreements on approaches and field actions among development agencies in the case study countries as well as among the national entities. In the desk review countries, challenges in collaboration among national entities were also common.

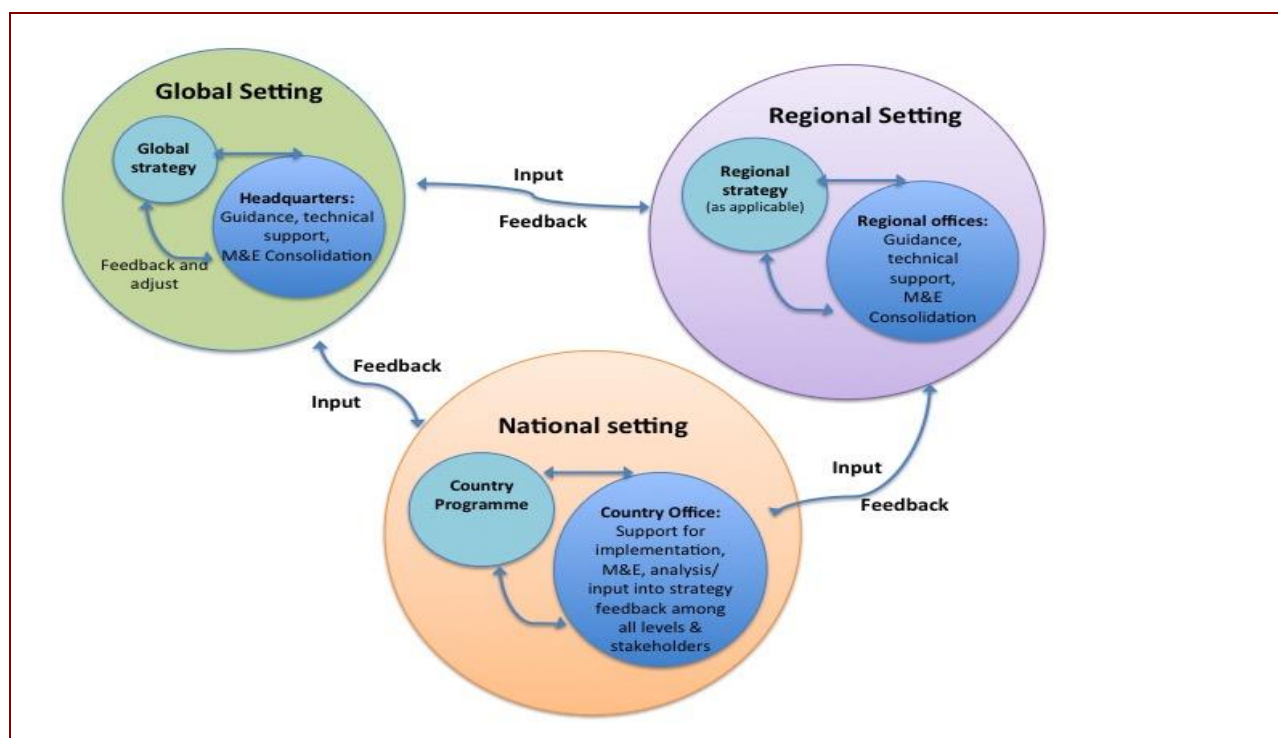
While country governments are increasingly recognizing that VAC is a multi-sectoral issue, this will need much more attention in future to ensure improved coordination. Specifically, this would be the case for India, Ivory Coast, Serbia, and Uganda to increase cross-sector collaboration on VAC and incorporate VAC strategies into sector work, i.e. in health, system strengthening, education and early childhood development (ECD), security/justice sector reform.

6.4 Internal UNICEF coordination

UNICEF's coordination system among the HQ, regional office and country office levels is functional, though actual guidance provided to country offices was not very intensive during the early stages of the MTSP. Since 2010, HQ and regional offices have increasingly met UNICEF country office needs with regard to developing the knowledge base on good practices and lessons learned, enhancing country-level leadership, and advocacy and response regarding VAC. Still, a high demand and need for guidance, coordination and technical support is evident in all 18 evaluation countries, with a special focus on building tools and mechanisms for knowledge and best practice sharing.

UNICEF's overall system of coordination on VAC is shown in Figure 23. The figure illustrates the connections within and between the different UNICEF levels. The global, regional and country levels all interact with each other with feedback and support. Two-way feedback continually provides input to strengthen the national systems to address VAC. So, while UNICEF provides support to reinforce systems to reduce VAC in countries, it also uses a systems approach internally.

Figure 22: UNICEF coordination system



Source: Developed by the Evaluation Team based on documentary evidence and triangulation

At the global, and to some extent, regional level,²⁴³ UNICEF participates in discussions on systems approaches and disseminates country experiences to help improve the development and implementation of child protection systems approaches to reducing VAC. Data on systems approaches is collected, consolidated and used to develop and improve strategies. Regional offices are striving to provide consolidated technical support based on country best practices and lessons learned.

Although attempts are being made through increasing UNICEF regional level targeted technical support to countries on indicator identification, monitoring and reporting, important gaps remain. As indicated in previous sections, the human resources allocated at the regional level are still too limited to substantially improve the quality of indicators and overall programming logic at the country level. Countries indicate that they would like to receive further support, which also needs to be more timely and in the target language.

Monitoring and evaluation exercises have served to help articulate regional strategies addressing child protection in regions such as CEE/CIS²⁴⁴ and ESARO,²⁴⁵ WCARO has in 2010

²⁴³ As also detailed in Chapter 4 in the section on UNICEF leadership.

²⁴⁴ Luzot, Anne-Claire (UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional M&E advisor), 'Strengthening collaboration on CP and M&E based on learning from recent initiatives; CEE/CIS perspective', PowerPoint presentation, UNICEF CEE/CIS, no date.

²⁴⁵ Maternowska, Catherine, 'Strategies Addressing Violence Against Children (VAC) Across the East and Southern African Region', presentation to the SGBV Network Meeting, UNICEF ESARO, Lusaka, Zambia, 7 February 2010; UNICEF ESARO, 'Strengthening M&E of Child protection in ESARO: Opportunities and challenges', PowerPoint presentation, no date; UNICEF ESARO, *Social Protection in Eastern and Southern Africa: A Framework and Strategy for UNICEF*, 2008.

developed a regional child protection framework,²⁴⁶ building on lessons from child protection mapping exercises in the region; and EAPRO has built on research in the region.²⁴⁷

Both regional offices visited — i.e. EAPRO and ESARO — noted that it would be useful to increase direct collaboration among the regional offices on systems strengthening and VAC as opposed to passing such collaboration through Headquarters. Regional offices are developing interesting methodologies and collecting useful information, but they are not necessarily aware of what the other regional offices are doing. As suggested by two country offices, the development of a social networking platform that facilitates knowledge sharing and incorporates the experiences of countries on systems strengthening with particular attention to VAC could be a powerful tool in this regard. Global, regional and country offices as well as other important stakeholders could shape and improve their strategies and actions on VAC through such a mechanism.

At the programme level, both EAPRO and ESARO stated that they collected input from countries and participated in the debates for the SP (2014–2017). Two of the case study countries noted that their participation in the development of the SP was recognizable in the SP, particularly with respect to increased clarity on what countries need to do to reduce VAC. This was attributed mostly to improvements in the collection of good practices and lessons learned. Case study countries also indicated that support on enhancing country-level leadership, advocacy and child protection response on VAC increasingly met UNICEF country office needs.

The information country offices provide on progress, good practices and lessons learned with respect to the KRAs related to VAC²⁴⁸ is vital to the ability of the regional offices and HQ to fulfil their own roles. Rather than seeing themselves as being guided, country offices also perceive themselves as guides to regional offices and HQ. Conversely, the evaluation notes that in several areas, guidance from HQ and regional offices is still vital to ensure progress and coherence with regard to VAC action: e.g. with respect to country monitoring and indicators, and definition of VAC. Notwithstanding progress made, an overall common definition of VAC is still lacking.²⁴⁹

Regional offices are also playing an increasingly important role as a sounding board for countries to share challenges faced and explore solutions. Having staff specialists who know the region was considered helpful, especially when country office staff take the initiative to maintain direct relations with regional office staff. Webinars on specific subjects, conferences and workshops were cited as useful methods to support country offices. Staff in two of the case study countries indicated that they regularly pick up the phone/call on Skype when they need input and to share ideas to solve problems they face. As one stated, “They act in a very

²⁴⁶ United Nations Children’s Fund, West and Central Africa Regional Office, *Child Protection Framework for West and Central Africa*, 2010.

²⁴⁷ United Nations Children’s Fund, East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, ‘Research on Violence Against Children: Building on Evidence’, PowerPoint presentation, no date.

²⁴⁸ KRA 1, 2 and 4 from the MTSP (2006–2013).

²⁴⁹ See, for instance, Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group, *Measuring Violence against Children: Inventory and assessment of quantitative studies*, Division of Data, Research and Policy, UNICEF, New York, 2014. Among the key findings, it found that in studies on VAC across the world, key terms (such as ‘violence’ and ‘abuse’) were often defined on an ad-hoc basis that was unique to each study.

supportive and useful way.” Nevertheless, as new methodologies are being developed, such as case management information systems, sometimes responses come too late to be directly useful. Case study country offices are requesting more guidance on emergent issues and on how to integrate the work of different sections to address VAC.

The focus on the systems approach has led UNICEF country offices to put great effort into establishing and strengthening coordination mechanisms with government structures, NGOs and community-based organizations. Likewise, country offices have made efforts to develop mechanisms to improve the capacity of systems to prevent and respond to VAC. Challenges commonly found in the desk review countries are linked to the high number of entities responsible for child protection and VAC (Indonesia, Nigeria, Tajikistan), competing priorities, conflicts between entities, overlap of tasks (India, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Serbia, Zambia) and, notably, the lack of clear roles and responsibilities, and budget allocations on VAC (Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Tajikistan, Uganda). The evaluation found that in almost all evaluation countries (17 over 18), several ministries are in charge of VAC activities, and that, in all case study countries, they are also severely underfunded. Their status is perceived as less important as compared to other ministries (please see section 4.2.7 for details). This might have had – or will have in the future – a negative impact on UNICEF’s efforts to achieve efficient coordination on VAC in these countries.

Countries that are large and have high levels of decentralization (i.e. Indonesia, Mexico) reported additional challenges in coordinating at the sub-national level. Models for coordination are piloted and demonstrated in specific decentralized areas. Although much work will still be needed to ensure that all areas of the countries are covered with functioning institutions working to prevent and respond to VAC, the evaluation found that UNICEF succeeded in strengthening sub-national coordination and implementation committees in 13 of the 18 evaluation countries.²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ All four case study countries and the desk review countries of Dominican Republic, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Mongolia, Morocco, Nigeria and Serbia.

7 Sustainability and scaling up of results on VAC

This chapter discusses the following evaluation question:

EQ 7: To what extent are VAC programme implementation processes and results sustainable and can they be scaled up over the immediate, medium and long term?

The definition of sustainability and scalability covers the extent to which strategies make a significant contribution to broader, long-term, sustainable development changes. It is also related to the likelihood that results of an intervention are durable and can be maintained and scaled up and replicated by implementing partners.²⁵¹ This chapter thus covers an analysis of the sustainability of global, regional and country efforts and achievements. It includes the sustainability of strengthened institutions and capacities as well as evidence of national ownership. It further covers the extent to which financial sustainability and related scalability are likely.

Snapshot on Sustainability

Main conclusion:

1. Some results achieved with respect to systems strengthening at the national levels are likely to be sustainable. Progress has been made towards strengthening institutions, capacities and ownership. Concerted planning and attribution of roles and responsibilities across sectors to prevent and respond to VAC are, however, limited at the global and regional levels.
2. Without an increase in the available national and donor budgets, scaling up of all actions to ensure coverage within countries will be limited. Mid- and long-term sustainability are especially unlikely unless resources are allocated.

Principal strengths (findings):

1. Global and regional coordination, national partnerships and advocacy efforts will likely continue into the future and may also be scaled up as recognition of the necessity to address VAC increases.
2. Results with respect to systems strengthening at the national level are likely sustainable over the medium and long term. This includes the sustainability of developed laws and policies within countries to the extent that they are implemented and enforced.
3. There is evidence of increased national ownership and recognition of the need to reduce VAC, which makes sustained funding more likely.
4. The use of guidelines and tools developed for duty bearers are likely to be sustainable and scalable if resources allow.

Areas for improvement (findings):

1. There is a lack of concrete planning in the form of global and regional road maps to increase effectiveness, coverage and sustainability. That is, global or regional road maps that go beyond the stating of strategies and the development of tools and include details on accompanying implementation actions, roles and responsibilities of implementers.

²⁵¹ Development Assistance Committee, 'Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, 2002, <www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/54/35336188.pdf>, accessed 25 May 2014.

2. Non-enforcement and continued fragmentation of legal and policy frameworks can hamper the sustainability and the scaling up of UNICEF-supported results within countries over the short, medium and long term.
3. Strengthening the capacity of service providers and advocacy to fully enforce legal and policy frameworks has been insufficient.
4. In countries where project-supported activities are not well linked with systems strengthening, the sustainability of project activities is limited.
5. While the evaluation saw evidence in the case study countries²⁵² that government budget allocations to prevent and respond to VAC are increasing, the level of such allocations is still low.

7.1 Sustainability of global achievements

At the global level, coordination and partnerships with a range of organizations is generally adequate and likely sustainable as the growing number of global strategies, conferences and research summaries indicates. Partners seem committed to working together to prevent and respond to VAC. This includes global and regional advocacy to influence countries to seriously address VAC within their national boundaries. Despite these achievements, however, the level of multi-sectoral, well-integrated efforts at the global level is still very limited, with only a few examples worth mentioning that are likely to be expanded and/or sustained.

One such example is the #Endviolence initiative (see Section 4.3.1) which is likely sustainable as campaigns become increasingly integrated in national efforts, as was noted in Tanzania and Bangladesh. Over the last few years, there has been increased attention to VAC in the international media, partly due to UNICEF partnerships, with is likely to result in the scaling up of global and regional efforts. The current global attention on VAC – including through the SDGs,²⁵³ UNICEF's current advocacy priorities – may help the sustainability of actions addressing VAC by keeping attention to VAC high on the agenda.

The results of these partnerships and global advocacy initiatives will need to be tracked, however, in order to determine their impact. To date, the influence of global and regional coordination and partnerships have not been assessed. It should be added that singling out the influence of global and regional partnerships as compared to national partnerships and other efforts at the country level would prove challenging.

7.2 Sustainability of country-level efforts with respect to systems development

There is evidence that UNICEF-supported actions on VAC will continue to be implemented into the future in the case study countries, though several contextual factors can impede long-term sustainability. Likely sustainable efforts include the legal and policy frameworks, institution and capacity strengthening and the models developed in pilot programming localities.

²⁵² The evaluation was not able to reliably assess budget increases in other countries due to lack of information. It should be noted that budget allocations are sometimes provided at a decentralized level, making it difficult to fully report on this information.

²⁵³ Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and, specifically, Goal 16 (i.e., promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) and its target 16.2, which reads “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children”. United Nations, Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal.html>>

In countries where project-supported activities are not (yet) well-linked with systems strengthening, the potential for expansion and sustainability of project activities may be limited. This is, at least in part, because developing an enabling environment through systems strengthening is conducive to the sustainability of project actions to reduce VAC.

Evidence of increased national ownership and recognition of the need to reduce VAC was identified in the case study countries, including through adoption of legal and policy frameworks and at least some increased budget allocations. In the desk review countries, UNICEF has overcome quite a few challenges to work with partners to obtain clear results on legal and policy/planning frameworks. Institutions and capacities have been strengthened, which contributes to sustainability. Results have been achieved with respect to the development of guidelines and tools to prevent and respond to VAC. Research has been conducted to increase the evidence base, though much more is needed. Without independent verification, however, it is not possible for the evaluation to assess the level of ownership of governments and other national stakeholders to address VAC.

Laws and policies as well as various guidelines and tools developed by governments and CSOs with the support of UNICEF are likely to contribute to sustaining the progress achieved in system strengthening. There is, however, evidence of non-enforcement and continued fragmentation of legal and policy frameworks, which can hamper sustainability and scaling up within countries. Harmonizing laws and policies, as well as improved enforcement, will be important to achieve full, comprehensive sustainability. Other practical contextual aspects can also interfere with sustainability. One example is the frequent reassignment of officials whose capacities have been strengthened. As coverage of prevention and response actions increases within countries, however, the knowledge and skills of reassigned officials will still be useful. Political instability can also, of course, interfere with the sustainability of all efforts.

Both sustainability and scalability are influenced by the sufficient allocation of government budgets to prevent and respond to VAC. Where budgets are increased, scalability in terms of coverage within countries is more likely. While there are some indications that government budget allocations to prevent and respond to VAC are increasing, as discussed in Chapter 6, the level of such allocations is still extremely low. The role of UNICEF at the global, regional and country levels to advocate intensively for funding to prevent and respond to VAC thus remains very important. While funding from within countries is essential as countries own and implement laws, policies and local models to prevent and respond to VAC, increased funding from donor agencies will continue to be key. Given the current focus on addressing VAC, allocation of funding should be commensurate with the emphasis placed on the issue of VAC.

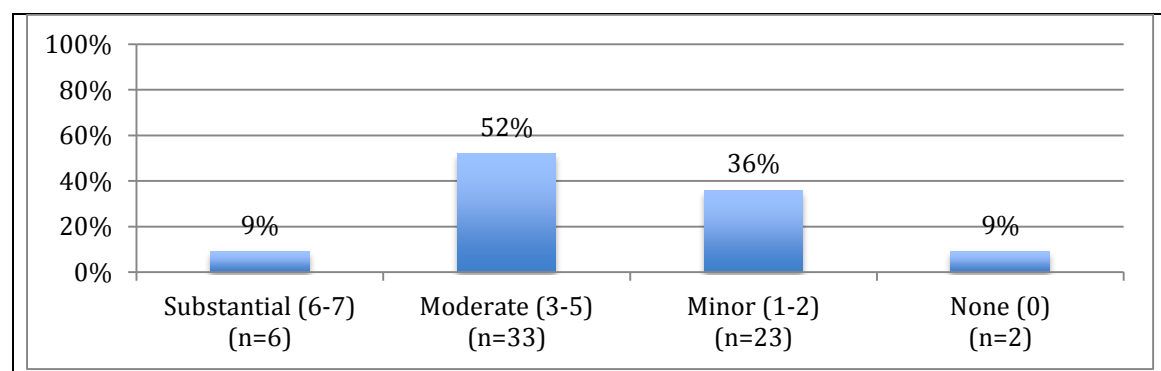
As indicated throughout the report, a particular area in which increased donor funding will be essential is monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data. Systems to address VAC can only be effective and improve their functioning if planning is well informed and good practices and lessons learned are used to further improve the system.

The evaluation identified a consistent need for scaling up to attain deeper, more effective, and wider country coverage of the models developed with the support of UNICEF. In Tanzania, for example, small increases in local budgets to address VAC issues were identified. In other cases, such as Bangladesh, it is more difficult to identify budget increases as there is no separate budget on child protection issues. Rather, in Bangladesh, increases can be allocated within ministries on specific subjects without being comprehensively identifiable. In Ghana, the advocacy efforts of UNICEF and many government and CSO stakeholders are yet to result in budgetary increases. It is hoped that, with the passage of the Child and Family Welfare Policy in 2015, accompanying increases in budget allocations to address VAC will be provided. In Mexico, with the recent passage of the 2014 General Law on Girls', Boys' and Adolescents' Rights, advocacy to ensure budget allocations to implement the law is underway with the support of UNICEF.

In Tanzania and Mexico, UNICEF provided support to conduct analyses on budgetary needs for child protection, which are useful mechanisms to improve budget allocations, including on VAC. In Tanzania, this took the form of a costed plan, which the government adopted, although actual significant budget allocations to fund the costed plan still need to materialize. In Mexico, UNICEF supported an expenditure analysis resulting in an officially identified line in the federal budget for spending on children – a step towards improving targeting and budgetary allocations. These are important first steps as they indicate a willingness of these governments to at least determine the need to allocate funding in these areas. The real test is, of course, in actual increases in allocations.

Only six of the online survey countries reported that there was a substantial chance that existing national programmes on VAC could be sustained into the future without external financing, i.e. from UNICEF or other donors. Another 33 countries noted that this would be moderately possible while over one-third indicated that sustainability was not likely. The need for continued funding is, therefore quite evident.

Figure 23: Extent to which national programmes on VAC can be sustained into the future without external financing

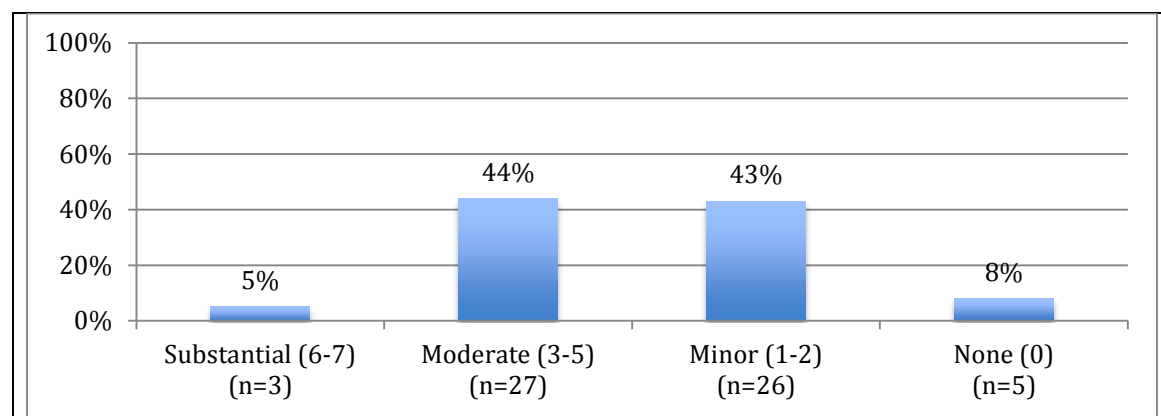


Number of countries that responded to the question: 64

Results from the online survey were also not very encouraging with respect to the sustainability of change in social norms. Only 3 of the 61 countries that responded to the question believed

that social norms change is more than somewhat sustainable without external support, including from UNICEF. Clearly, the work on social norms change is just beginning in a majority of countries and will need much more focus into the future both in terms of financing as well as intensive technical support to develop effective methods to bring about behaviour change.

Figure 24: Extent to which social norms change to reduce VAC is sustainable without external support



Number of countries that responded to the question: 61

It is imperative to continue to develop the systems approach in countries as sustainable results are likely to increase exponentially with improved harmonization of efforts, greater awareness and understanding of good practices on preventing and reducing VAC. Improved knowledge management will be key to gathering sufficient information on current VAC prevalence, what works and what does not and then feeding the information back into the system to improve it.

Country-led institution and capacity strengthening in formal and less formal structures to effectively engage in prevention, service delivery, enforcement of laws and data collection/analysis will need to be sufficiently comprehensive to bring about consistent change on VAC. Though VAC is an advocacy priority²⁵⁴ for UNICEF, resources to “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children”, as indicated in SDG 16.2, remain limited.

²⁵⁴ ‘A Post-2015 World Fit for Children: An Agenda for #Everychild 2015’.

8 Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Conclusions

This section presents conclusions based on the findings regarding UNICEF's strategies and programme performance in addressing VAC. They are organized around the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria. For effectiveness, the conclusions are organized around the three VAC-related key results areas (KRAs) derived from the MTSP (2006–2013):

- strengthening of child protection systems to better prevent and respond to VAC including advocacy;
- social norms change to prevent and encourage effective responses to cases of VAC; and
- monitoring and evaluation, research and use of data to inform systems strengthening and social norms change to prevent and respond to VAC.

Cross-cutting issues including gender and equity, child participation, leadership and partnerships are also considered.

- 1) **Relevance, appropriateness, and coherence** of UNICEF's global child protection strategy and the related strategies and results proposed in the MTSP (2006–2013) with respect to protecting children against violence.

Key conclusion: Results on systems strengthening have been partially achieved.

- The global objectives on VAC in the CP Strategy (2008) and MTSP (2006-2013) were largely internally coherent and consistent with country needs. Country programming *logic* on VAC, however, is in many cases not fully clear and coherent and not properly evidenced.
- The alignment of the country programme with the national context on VAC was generally adequate with respect to national plans and priorities. However, focused mapping exercises to inform VAC programming were often lacking.
- While improvements were introduced in the SP (2014-2017), UNICEF's work to respond to and prevent VAC is still not sufficiently broad-based and multi-sectoral to match expectations related to SDG 16.2 and UNICEF's advocacy focus on VAC.
- Global measurement of results on reduction of VAC using commonly agreed core indicators is lacking.

2) Effectiveness of UNICEF-supported country child protection programmes in terms of a *systems strengthening* focus with regard to implementation processes and programme results on VAC.

Key conclusion: Results on systems strengthening have been partially achieved.

- Some signs of systems change are visible in strengthened enabling environments and capacities. Successful advocacy for improved legal and policy frameworks is the strongest area of success identified in the evaluation. Institutions in many countries show increased capacities with respect to designing and implementing systems to prevent and respond to VAC. UNICEF is widely perceived as a catalyst for institutional and capacity strengthening. Social norms programming to address VAC is not yet adequately integrated into the systems approach.
- Success is, however, still only partial since important gaps remain in terms of:
 - limited geographic coverage;
 - reaching all children in need with VAC initiatives in pilot localities already targeted for systems strengthening;
 - underfunding of relevant ministries, which impedes the rate and coverage of efforts to prevent and respond to VAC, especially at the sub-national level;
 - enforcement and implementation of legal and policy frameworks;
 - achieving a fully functioning system of national institutions that both prevents and responds to VAC; and
 - measuring actual improvements in the functioning of systems and the outcomes for children and families.
- Some UNICEF-supported pilot VAC response actions to strengthen the capacity of service providers at the community level are promising, though coverage is limited. Linkages between formal and informal structures to prevent and respond to VAC are frequently weak.

3) Effectiveness of UNICEF-supported country child protection programmes in terms of *social norms* focus with regard to implementation processes and programme results on VAC.

Key conclusion: Results on social norms change have not yet been adequately achieved.

- While numerous initiatives to change social norms to prevent and respond to VAC are being developed and/or implemented, many gaps remain. These include the scope of issues

addressed, geographic coverage, and determining the actual impact of methods to bring about behavioural change.

- There is a lack of differentiation between socially accepted and non-socially accepted VAC. While the focus on traditional harmful practices is high, it is limited on other forms of VAC.
- Aligning the specific needs of different populations with regard to the types of VAC prevalent within different socio-cultural contexts falls short. This is partly due to a lack of mapping and VAC prevalence data and to limited sharing of relevant information among different UNICEF offices which hampers planning.

4) Effectiveness of UNICEF-supported country child protection programmes in terms of *country level monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data* in implementation processes and for programme results on VAC.

Key conclusion: Results on monitoring/research/evaluation/use of data have not yet been adequately achieved.

- There has been progress during the evaluation period on data collection and use, although the amount and quality of data often falls short of requirements. Weaknesses in data collection on service provision and in results monitoring are also notable in many countries and will need considerable attention into the future.
- The lack of a common and agreed upon definition of VAC with a sufficiently comprehensive analysis of prioritized types of VAC and their drivers impedes effectiveness and measurement of results.
- Strong ethical protocols are in place, but methodological rigour is variable, resulting in challenges with respect to data quality and comparability of findings.

5) Effectiveness of UNICEF's advocacy, leadership, leveraging, convening and partnership roles at the global, regional and country levels in protecting children from violence.

Key conclusion: Overall performance on advocacy, leadership and partnership is strong, but there is scope for improvement, especially in some regions.

- UNICEF is well placed to be a leader and to leverage its potential to address VAC due to its mandate, capacity and reputation. Governments and other implementing partners recognize UNICEF's advocacy and leadership on VAC.
- UNICEF is seen as actively engaged in the development and review of appropriate actions on VAC although inter-sectoral collaboration can be improved.
- The aligning of UNICEF efforts with those of other organizations working on VAC-related issues remains limited.

6) Effectiveness of VAC-related country child protection programmes with respect to the integration of key cross-cutting themes and implementation modalities, including child participation, gender equality, disabilities, and other human rights and equity considerations.

Key conclusion: Performance on cross-cutting themes and implementation modalities is mixed with some good examples on targeting girls. Weak implementation is a key issue.

- While UNICEF includes a human rights and equity focus in programming to prevent and respond to VAC – including attention to gender issues in programme design and implementation, particularly with respect to VAC against girls – in practice there is room for much improvement.
- Design and implementation of programming at the country level on gender and equity is still limited and underfunded, including with regard to:
 - abuse of boys and the social norms related to boys' masculinity;
 - children with disabilities and other especially vulnerable groups;
 - children in conflict with the law;
 - vulnerability of children in all socio-economic groups to VAC; and
 - integrating gender issues and adopting cross-sectoral approaches to addressing VAC.
- Children are able to express their opinions on how to address VAC, but feel that they lack the power to effectively influence decision-making and social norms change. Children are included in UNICEF VAC activities but not sufficiently.

7) Efficiency of VAC's financial and human resource management practices in obtaining results with regard to VAC at the country level.

Key conclusion: Performance in terms of efficiency has been generally adequate, within the limits of resources available. Staff capacity remains a concern in some situations.

- From the countries visited, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that management of resources on VAC programming has been efficient, compared to results achieved, especially considering the extremely limited funding available. In particular, this is evident in KRA4 on monitoring, research, evaluation and use of data. For real impact, much more investment is needed.
- Although attempts are being made through increasing regional-level targeted technical support to countries on indicator identification, monitoring and reporting, important gaps remain. The human resources allocated at the regional level to strengthen these are inadequate to effect substantial improvements in these areas at the country level.
- Although VAC is UNICEF's top advocacy priority,²⁵⁵ there are insufficient funds to support this priority, especially with a view to “*end* abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children” as indicated in SDG 16.2. Major efforts are needed to mobilise more funds and ensure allocation of resource to all sectors working to address VAC.

8) Extent to which VAC programme implementation processes and results are sustainable and can be scaled up over the immediate, medium and long term.

Key conclusion: Sustainability and further expansion of VAC prevention and response efforts are likely to be hampered by limited budgets, limited partner capacities and lack of coherence in global planning and standard setting.

- Some results achieved with respect to systems strengthening at the national levels are likely to be sustainable. Progress has been made towards strengthening institutions, capacities and ownership. Concerted planning and attribution of roles and responsibilities across sectors to prevent and respond to VAC are, however, limited at the global and regional levels.
- Without an increase in the available national and donor budgets, scaling up of all actions to ensure coverage within countries will be limited. Mid- and long-term sustainability are especially unlikely unless resources are allocated.

²⁵⁵ United Nations Children's Fund, 'A Post-2015 World Fit for Children: An agenda for #Everychild 2015', PDF, UNICEF, New York, 2015.

8.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluation puts forward the following recommendations. It is to be noted that the recommendations are not stand-alone but are inter-linked and should be implemented as such.

Overarching strategic recommendations

1. Revision of the CP Strategy and/or mid-term review of the SP should make VAC an organization-wide multi-sectoral priority with strong involvement at the regional level, coordinated by the Programme Division in NYHQ. Review efforts should emphasise (a) the development of an overarching Theory of Change for addressing VAC and (b) agreement on core indicators for measuring VAC prevention and response actions.

Developing a Theory of Change should involve a wide range of stakeholders and may be integrated with the road map development (Recommendation 2). The resulting Theory of Change should have the needed flexibility and depth to respond to variations and changes in context and to integrate learning. The selection of core indicators for VAC prevention and response should be based on consultations with existing expert groups as well as with in-house specialists at all levels of the organization. It should emphasise indicators for which there is a comparable means of verification.

Priority: Very high

Key responsible entities: Deputy Executive Director, Programme; Director - Programme Division; Director - Division of Research and Policy; Regional Directors

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

Implementation of this recommendation should include

- focusing on institution and capacity strengthening, down to the service provision level;
- increasing UNICEF's financial and human resources to achieve outcomes on VAC;
- addressing gaps in strategies to ensure that all children, especially children with specific vulnerabilities to VAC, are receiving the support they need;
- at the regional level, translating the road map on reducing VAC to regional road maps corresponding to region-specific needs and contexts;
- at the country level, adapting the road map to national contexts and priorities, while emphasising evidence base development and capacity strengthening of national systems to prevent and respond to VAC.

Priority: Very high

Key responsible entities: Director - Programme Division; Regional Directors

3. Strengthen context-specific advocacy and resource mobilization, including at the regional and global levels – on the basis of bolstered evidence and use of data (see recommendation 7) – commensurate with higher expectations for UNICEF action in light of SDG 16.2.

Implementation of this recommendation should include the formulation/revision of regional-level advocacy strategies on VAC. It would encompass ensuring that information gaps are systematically addressed and making a business case highlighting the human, social and economic impact of VAC. This may require further research and assessment.

Priority: High

Key responsible entities: Director - Programme Division; Director - Division of Communication; Director - Division of Research and Policy; Director - Office of Research/Innocenti; Regional Directors

Detailed recommendations: Operationalizing the systems approach

The following recommendations provide further detail. Some can be implemented as part of the “overarching recommendations”, others are additional.

4. Accelerate the roll-out of the systems strengthening approach to preventing and responding to VAC.

Implementation of this recommendation should include revamping the systems approach so as to: a) strengthen the enabling environment including laws, policies, institutions and capacities; b) improve coordination across planning and implementation entities within the organization and with partners; c) include programming for specific vulnerable populations with the involvement of formal and less formal actors; d) strengthen service delivery across sectors; and e) improve integration of social norms programming to address VAC in the systems approach.

The revamping of systems strengthening must be

- based on a common understanding of VAC;
- equity, human rights and gender responsive;
- well-resourced;
- accompanied by consolidation, analysis and sharing of information on VAC situations and programme responses, including multi-sectoral progress;
- supplemented by accelerated capacity building initiatives for staff and partners, insisting on the common understanding of VAC and the systems approach.

Priority: Very high

Key responsible entities: Director - Programme Division; Regional Directors; Country Representatives (through the Field Results Group)

5. Renew the focus on preventing violence, including through fostering supportive social norms, addressing harmful social norms, strengthening structural change for equality and equity and reducing drivers at the personal level that may lead to VAC.

Implementation of this recommendation should include

- more emphasis on structural change that would support prevention, such as challenging gender norms, increasing positive parenting training, supporting local economic development, adopting labour-saving tools, and developing programmes to address alcohol and drug abuse by caregivers;
- increased attention to preventing forms of violence that are not socially sanctioned such as rape, incest and other serious abuse;
- greater efforts to identify and integrate local supportive social norms in the prevention and response to VAC;
- integrating prevention more firmly into the systems approach through collaboration with governments and CSOs to design and implement actions.

Priority: High

Key responsible entities: Director - Programme Division; Regional Directors; Country Representatives (through the Field Results Group)

6. Improve the focus on gender and equity approaches and interventions within the overall systems approach, including through child participation in the prevention and response to VAC and through stronger targeting of boys and children living with disabilities.

Implementation of this recommendation should include

- increasing the focus on addressing VAC in different child population groups;
- specifically increasing attention on the abuse of boys and children with disabilities;
- considering how to reach children subject to violence across socio-economic groupings;
- increasing participation of children, from global to community levels, in discussions, decision-making and actions to prevent and respond to VAC.

Priority: Very high

Key responsible entities: Director - Programme Division; Director - Division of Research and Policy; Regional Directors; Country Representatives (through the Field Results Group)

Detailed recommendations: Data, knowledge base development and use

7. Institutionalise child protection systems mapping and assessment exercises and strategically plan for follow-up research and data initiatives. Promote and support the use of practical protocols to aid measurement of results on VAC, so as to inform future programme planning and provide an evidence-base for advocacy and resource mobilization.

Implementation of this recommendation should include

- supporting development of a common definition, highlighting which types of VAC are prioritized, for use in UNICEF research and monitoring;
- conducting comprehensive VAC surveys (as done in Tanzania) or similar analyses of the various types of VAC and their drivers in different national settings;
- encouraging consistent adoption of UNICEF ethical protocols. Strengthening national VAC monitoring and evaluation systems;
- supporting capacity building with regard to child protection evidence generation and use;
- using information to feed back into and improve systems functioning by embedding a culture of evaluation in all child protection work.

Priority: Very high

Key responsible entities: Director - Programme Division; Director - Division of Research and Policy; Director - Office of Research/Innocenti; Regional Directors; Country Representatives (through the Field Results Group)

8. Develop a web-based knowledge networking platform that facilitates information sharing and incorporates the experiences (good practices, lessons learned) of countries on child protection systems strengthening overall with particular attention to VAC.

Implementation of this recommendation should include

- involving all key stakeholders at global to sub-national levels, including development agencies, government representatives, civil society groups and other non-state actors;
- linking the platform to the #Endviolence campaign site;
- using the platform to develop greater coherence and clarity on VAC issues and strategies as well as improve the effectiveness and efficiency of actions undertaken.

Priority: High

Key responsible entities: Director - Programme Division; Director - Division of Communication; Director - Division of Research and Policy

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