

ESA0025 Report for calendar year 2007

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Regional advocacy to end violence (pilot), African Child Policy Forum (2007)

The activities under this project were part of a wider program implemented by the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), but the project was particularly intended to pilot follow-up on the UN Study on Violence Against Children (UN VAC2006). This report is intended to highlight the activities carried out in the during phase one, which would constitute the basis for activities in the subsequent years of collaboration between Plan and ACPF.

To what degree are the programmes (countries, region, theme) implemented as planned, and what are the most significant results achieved during the framework agreement period.

Follow-up to the International Policy Conference (IPC) and the 2006 UN Report on Violence against Children.

Based on a study carried out in nineteen Eastern and Southern African countries, ACPF presented a technical paper on harmonisation of national laws with the UNCRC and the ACRWC during the Second Pan-African Forum on the Declaration and Plan of Action of the Africa Common Position on Children. This study is the first of its kind. The key issues covered include the right to protection from violence, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; economic exploitation; and sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking; as well as examining harmonization of laws against the right to appropriate justice procedures.

At the Cairo Plus Five – African Common Position on Children – ‘Africa Fit for Children’ meeting, the ACPF presented a paper that calls for the issue of violence against children to be put on the summit agenda of Heads of States and Governments and for the appointment of a special envoy on violence against children.

The ACPF made presentations in a regional meeting for East and Central Africa which was organised by Save the Children Sweden East and Central Africa Regional Office on the follow-up to the UN study on violence against children. National Plans of Action were drafted and Task Forces responsible to finalize and put into practice the plans of action were formed. On the ticket of Ethiopia Task Force, ACPF also participated in the follow up capacity building workshop that was held in Nairobi from November 23-24, 2007 with a focus on child positive discipline.

ACPF also made inputs into strengthening the Draft Communication to the AU on ‘Promoting Positive Discipline and Ending Corporal and Humiliating Punishment of Children’, initiated by the Southern African Network to End Violence Against Children. ACPF’s notable contribution was on the need for the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to adopt the Africa Declaration on Violence against Children and urged the AU to: “Include Violence against Children in the Agenda of the AU Summit; and appoint a Special Envoy on Violence against Children”.

Mapping and capacity analysis of partners in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda

ACPF conducted capacity analysis and also compiled a catalogue of the institutional capacities of child rights organizations working in the area of violence against children in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. The aim of the assessment was to gauge the level of energy that is already being invested into addressing violence against children and identify challenges faced with a view to developing a capacity building strategy and enhance collaboration. Response rate was low. Out of 120 child rights organizations targeted (40 each from Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda), only 57 (17 from Ethiopia, 21 from Uganda and 29 from Kenya) responded. However, the exercise is

highlighting very useful opportunities and challenges which will continue to be a focus as the collaboration continues.

Documentation of policy legislation relating to violence against children in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda

ACPF desires to help project a clear picture of the policy and legislative situation relating to violence against children; and the gaps and weaknesses in each of the above countries. During the reporting period, the existing policies and legislations of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda were reviewed in terms of how and to what extent they address the issue of violence against children in their respective countries. The analysis shows that countries are at different levels and face different challenges. It also points to the need for a deeper analysis in order to generate a regional picture, towards harmonisation across the region. Below are highlights from the report:

Ratification and domestication of international instruments

What emerges from the studies is that all the countries have made considerable efforts to domesticate several international laws into national laws; particularly reflecting concerns of the CRC in the national constitutions. However, in the case of Kenya, the constitution is yet to explicitly bring out issues of children. It also emerges that Kenya and Uganda have 'Children Acts' that cater for many issues for safeguarding the rights of children including protection against violence. In Ethiopia, the international instruments are yet to be domesticated; and are yet to be published in the Federal Negarit Gazette, which is mandatory for a law to be nationally binding. In addition Ethiopia is yet to develop a comprehensive law for children. However, in all countries, laws require harmonization as they are developed in piecemeal form.

Policies aimed at curbing violence against children

The general picture is that there are commendable efforts being made. Uganda, for example, has a policy for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children, accompanied by a Plan of Action—the National Strategic Programme Plan of Interventions 2005/6-2009/10, a Child Labour Policy and has issued directives to stop violence in the school system among other initiatives. Ethiopia has in place the Developmental and Social Welfare Policy, the National Action Plan for Children and the National Plan of Action for the Establishment and Development of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems. Kenya is still in the process developing policies that aim at responding to the specific needs of children. Resourcing, especially funding and staffing are among the greatest constraints.

Recommendations and way forward

There is an urgent need to address the mismatch between availability of laws and policies on one hand, and their lack of implementation on the other. Advocacy efforts should target prioritization of increased funding for child protection units in the justice system including, family and children courts, police child protection units and other key departments. Awareness of laws for protection of children's rights among duty bearers including law enforcement agencies is an issue of great priority. Governments need demonstrate greater commitment by adequately resourcing the structures that promote and protect children's rights. There is also need for long term interventions for protecting children against child labour and juvenile delinquency, including investment in strengthening parenting skills, strengthening family livelihoods as well as ensuring access to quality social services among community members.

Production of a documentary on violence against children with a special focus on girls in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Uganda

A 26 minutes long video documentary - 'Born to High Risk: Violence against Children in Africa' - has been developed with a view to using it as an advocacy tool. The idea arose as a follow-up action on the proposal forwarded at the International Policy Conference on the African Child that was organised by the ACPF in May 2006. The filming was carried out in four African countries, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Uganda. Three organisations - Girl Child Network in Kenya,

Uganda Youth Development Link in Uganda and Plan Sierra Leone – were chosen as local partners for coordinating the filming with the Forum. The ACPF has already received 500 DVD copies of the English version as well as 200 DVD copies each with French, Swahili and Amharic subtitles. Besides, a five-minute conference piece has been produced. This version of the documentary will be posted on the ACPF website and will be shown on various meetings and workshops that will be organised by the ACPF and its partners.¹

Features

- In Ethiopia, a retrospective interview was conducted with one female participant, aged nineteen years. The participant had experienced violence of a sexual nature. The President of the First Instance Court and a Social Worker at the Child-Friendly Bench were interviewed. Interviews were also held with Dr. Assefa Bequele, the Executive Director of the African Child Policy Forum and Ms. Etta Tadesse, UNFPA Representative to the AU and ECA.
- In Kenya, a focus group of 12 school girls was conducted through the Girl Child Network. The theme of this focus group discussion was violence in schools. Some of these girls either experienced or witnessed violence; some were raped and as a result they have already contracted HIV. A Government expert responsible for child protection and the Executive Director of Child Life Trust were also interviewed.
- In Sierra Leone, violent experiences of children forced into rebel groups are portrayed through the interview with the young survivor, a young adult who is an ex-soldier. Plan Sierra Leone also features as a best practice example in supporting of children involved in conflict situations.
- In Uganda, retrospective interviews were conducted with two participants, one female and one male, aged over eighteen years who experienced violence while living and working on the street as children. The girl is a survivor of child trafficking and child sexual exploitation while the young man had run away from domestic violence and further suffered physical violence while living on the street. The filming was done in partnership with the Uganda Youth Development Link. A Police Officer from the Police Children's Protection Unit in Kampala was also interviewed.

The Children's Legal Protection Centre (CLPC) Focused Component

The Children's Legal Protection Centre provides legal counselling for children and families; legal representation and psychological support for children; training for law enforcement bodies and NGOs; and makes referrals to other organisations for psychosocial support that are not available at the Centre. The following activities have been undertaken to strengthen the Centre.

Assessment of complementary psychosocial service providers in Ethiopia; and development of a directory.

A total of 145 psycho-social service providers participated in the assessment. According to the assessment, organizations providing child focused services are overwhelmed with many challenges and problems that made them less effective in the delivery of support and services to disadvantaged children. The most prominent challenges and gaps articulated by many of them are the following:

- There is no effective enforcement of existing laws with respect to right violations and inflictions of violence on children. Penalties are not commensurable to the deed.
- The awareness of the public on the fundamental rights of children and on national laws as well as on the effects of violence on children is low.
- A complete lack of mechanism for reporting violations of rights has resulted in the perpetuation of the suffering of many children. There is no independent government body that responds promptly to child rights violations.

¹ The following are the key messages that are reflected by the film: Violence against children in Africa is widespread, but most of it is unnoticed and unaddressed; Girls in Africa are particularly vulnerable to violence. But boys too are now becoming increasingly vulnerable, especially to sexual abuse; A call for zero tolerance for violence; and Reflections points

- The low level of participation in and ownership of projects by both the community and government is another important gap that needs to be addressed for effective implementation of projects and programmes dealing with child rights. Such lack of ownership is attributable to low level of awareness on the part of the community; low level of involvement of government institutions; and lack of transparency in introducing the concepts, implementation modalities and budget of projects on the part of implementing organizations.
- There are no nationally enforceable standards to regulate and guide the quality of support and services provided to children in need. As a result, government authorities are unable to monitor standards and inspect facilities that are meant to provide services to children.
- Human and financial resource capacities are inadequate.
- Networking and referral systems amongst the psycho-social service providers are weak and completely absent in some cases.

Based on the findings, recommendations that are believed to improve the effectiveness of child focused interventions were forwarded as summarised below:

- *Capacity building:* Child focused organizations should establish resource centres and organize various staff training sessions tailored to address their own specific needs. The internal capacity building initiative could serve not only as an indication of the organisations' commitment to revitalise their competence and serve children better, but it could also attract external support from potential partners interested in promoting and protecting child rights.
- *Awareness raising:* To enhance effectiveness and sustainability of achievements in the longer term, stronger advocacy efforts should be made together with awareness raising on UNCRC and the African Charter tailored to staff of partner organizations, law enforcement agencies, health institutions, schools, parents and children themselves. In addition to promoting child rights, the focus of the awareness raising campaign should be familiarisation with the revised family law, child friendly structures, rights based approaches and child protection policies.
- *Ensure active participation of children as right-holders:* Child focused projects and programmes have often failed to actively engage children as right-holders. Interventions that are meant to serve children must be participatory as well as being responsive to the needs and interests of children. Ownership and sustainability of child focused interventions will only be ensured by listening to and respecting children's views and actively involving key players including parents and community leaders at all implementation stages.
- *Set up a strong network of child focused organisations:* In order to mitigate fragmentation of efforts and ensure collective efficiency among child focused organizations catering for the different needs of children, it is highly recommended that a strong multi-sectoral networking and referral system be established at national level. In terms of its organisational structure and characteristics, it is absolutely important for the networking and referral system to be all-inclusive; have its own central fund and legally enforceable system of governance with clearly spelt out duties and responsibilities of members; easily accessible case reporting mechanism; and enjoy a certain degree of neutrality and autonomy in its relationships with members of the network that created it. Further more the referral system should be based on functional systems and structures, rather than personal relationships. The networking and referral system should be equipped with computerised child help-lines to facilitate reporting, information sharing and monitoring.

Documentation of good practices of the Children's Legal Protection Centre and other similar centres in Africa

The documentation of good practices of the Children's Legal Protection Centre and other similar centres in Africa will ensure the dissemination of good practices to other interested parties, providing them with the opportunity to establish similar services. Accordingly, the Forum conducted a study of good practices of nine children legal protection centres in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America².

² The centres documented in the report include: The Children's Legal Protection Centre of the African Child Policy Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; CRADLE - The Children's Foundation in Nairobi, Kenya; Children's Legal Action Network (CLAN)

The report points out that lack of awareness of child rights amongst the government and other duty-bearers as the key constraint affecting their work. Judges, civil servants and parliamentarians are often perceived as innately conservative and culturally unreceptive to shifting their attitudes and perceptions regarding children. Other challenges pointed out include the high risk of burn out since working with violence against children is both intellectually and emotionally taxing. The risk of losing highly specialised and experienced staff even before their individual skills are transformed into institutional capacity is equally high.

In case predefined goals were not reached, please name what factors (internal and/ or external) were hindrances.

There was a delay in the completion of documentary on violence against children because of the complexity of the bidding process as well as the identification and selection of the respondents within the documentary. Secondly the political situation in Sierra Leone delayed the start of filming. Consequently, media campaign to disseminate the documentary and the research findings to key decision makers and child rights activists has been deferred due to

Although there was no specific baseline study carried out at the beginning of the project, there was sufficient background information from both by ACPF and Plan thereby enabling the project to build on the work already being done. The information used included the studies that were conducted on violence against children in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda; the regional consultative meetings that were organised as contributions to the UN Study on Violence against Children; the International Policy Conference on the African Child organised by The African Child Policy Forum, whose theme was violence against girls in Africa. In addition to Plan's studies and work on issues of violence against children in Africa, and Plan's Strategic Framework for Africa.

The principle of best interest of the child also requires child participation to be reinforced. However, ACPF being a regional organisation finds it practically difficult to integrate child participation at the highest level e.g. constituting a child/youth advisory board. The greatest constraint is logistical and financial. However, conscious efforts are made to ensure that children are consulted and enabled to participate whenever it is feasible.

What has the organisation's value- added been? Summarize what the organisation's contribution to the partner was, in addition to the financial assistance.

A Quality Assurance Team (QAT) was established to monitor the implementation and progress of the project. In addition to receiving progress reports, a meeting of the team was scheduled at the end of the first phase of the project. The review meeting assessed the performance, achievements and lessons learnt during the first phase; which would inform the way forward for the second phase. Plan Norway is participates in the QAT and the joint review meetings. These meetings facilitate skills transference and connecting ACPF to resources. Plan too has learned from engaging with ACPF and that knowledge is informing other aspects of programming at different levels.

The Children's Legal Protection Centre in collaboration with the ACPF carried out capacity building activities to partner organisations. An aspect of the training included awareness on the UNCRC and ACRWC (Convention on the Right of the Child and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children) as well as on the Revised Family Code.

in Nairobi, Kenya; The Centre for Child Law, University of Pretoria, South Africa; University of Western Cape in South Africa; Child Helpline in Cameroon; HAQ: Centre for Child Rights in Delhi, India; The Children's Legal Centre, University of Essex in the UK; and CECODAP in Venezuela

Special capacity building activities were carried out, targeting law enforcement bodies to ensure that law enforcement officials are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to successfully protect children from violence and to take legal measures against perpetrators. The areas that stood out as demanding top priority for immediate capacity building training included: application of international laws in Ethiopia; treatment of victim children under the Ethiopian legal system; juvenile justice administration and the juvenile justice system; child labour exploitation; and investigation skills. Participants included judges, public prosecutors and police officers in five selected towns of Ethiopia; Addis Ababa, Adama, Awassa, Bahir Dar and Jimma from mid November 2007 to mid December 2007. A total of 207 participants (87 judges and 79 police officers and 41 public prosecutors) attended this capacity building training.

A compilation of a directory was also compiled for 145 service organizations whose services are complementary to the goal of this project. The Directory will be a useful document for the Children's Legal Protection Centre, other psychosocial service providers and relevant government institutions in the country in broadening their outreach within a supportive referral system.

Also a national consultative meeting on the provision of psycho-social services to abused and neglected children was held in December 2007 in which a total of 26 representatives were drawn from selected child rights organizations that participated in the assessment. The findings of the assessment were discussed and participants identified a few additional gaps and challenges to those presented in the draft assessment report. Ideas and experience were also shared concerning a referral network to better address the needs of abused, neglected and disadvantaged children in the country. The African Child Policy Forum/CLPC was mandated to coordinate the formation of a national referral system at national level that would help to better address the needs of Ethiopian children whose rights are violated.

To what degree was the programme carried out in cooperation with other donors, national or local? To what extent did they follow plans of the local authorities?

The ACPF and Plan are members of a number of networks in Africa. At the meetings of the networks, the programmes and projects of both organisations were shared to inform partners. Likewise the partners also shared their programmes and projects. This sharing of information enabled the ACPF and Plan to know what activities other partners were implementing. It was confirmed that the project was complementary to the work of other organisations.

Also as one of the outputs of this project, a directory of psychosocial providers was produced. This will be shared with all stakeholders, so that the work of each organisation can be known – to avoid duplication, but also to inform partners the kind of services being provided.

Outline briefly how the programmes have contributed to strengthen civil society.

The capacity building of law enforcement officers will ensure that they have the required skills to continue offering child friendly services. The production of a directory of complementary psychosocial providers will provide information of what kinds of services exist and where they can be received. The documentation of both the laws relating violence against children and good practices will provide valuable information to similar institutions of existing legal frameworks as well as examples of good practice to support the continuity of their work. However, the advocacy and awareness aspects of the project would still need continued funding, if they are to continue being effective.

What are the most important lessons learnt from the running of the programme, and what parts should be changed and/ or adjusted before any new agreement is entered into?

Despite a number of efforts by various stakeholders, violence against children is still prevalent and it must be addressed. The documentary assists in highlighting some of the violence faced by children and what can be done.

Children need to be equipped with life skills that would enable them to deal and cope with the consequences of violence. Under the project a limited number (30 girls) received training in self-defence. Similar courses need to be availed to more children.

Documentation on good practices of legal and psychosocial services to children is limited. The documentation of the work of selected Children's Legal Protection Centres is a start of similar reports that can be produced. The production of a directory of complementary service providers is also an effort to share the work and services of similar organisations.

Networking between similar service providers needs to be enhanced in order to learn and access the services that are being provided. More networking opportunities need to be availed.

Capacity building of law enforcement bodies is critical to ensure that child-friendly services are provided and that children are protected. Whereas some training was provided under the project, only a limited number of law enforcement officers could be trained.

A Quality Assurance Team (QAT) was established to provide technical support to the ACPF in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project. Members of the QAT include; Plan Norway, Plan Finland, Plan Ethiopia, Plan Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa, Plan Pan-African Advocacy Office, and the ACPF. Also, joint project and partnership meetings facilitate learning and reduction of risks.

The ACPF exists to promote and protect the rights of the child as outlined in the CRC as well as the ACRWA. In addition to raising general awareness, specific attention is drawn to the vulnerability of girls and women. On this account, the ACPF works with Child Legal Protection Centre (CLPC) to address cases of violations within Ethiopia where ACPF is head-quartered. The CLPC so far has served as a model which organisations seek to scale up both within Ethiopia as well as in other countries. This commitment is further demonstrated in such initiatives as the study on 'violence against girls in Africa' and training in life skills for self-defence for girls.

Overview of planned versus actual achievement with notes

Activity (include descriptions of tasks involved(if needed))	Quantity completed	Variance from plans
Strategies and interventions to lobby African States to adapt the declaration and for the AU to appoint a Special Envoy to address issues of violence against children in Africa	<p>A paper that calls for the issue of violence against children to be put on the summit agenda of Heads of States and Governments and for the appointment of a special envoy on violence against children presented at Cairo Plus Five Meeting</p> <p>Larissa Award that gives recognition and encouragement to exemplary initiatives towards the rights and well-being of children in Africa was presented to an organization called Kembatti Mntii Gezima(KMG) that registered a remarkable job in fighting against FGM in Kambatta Zone</p> <p>An update was prepared on the current and future activities of the ACPF geared towards ending violence against children as an input to the UN Progress Report on Violence</p>	Done as per the plan

	against Children.	
Production and dissemination of a catalogue of partners/duty bearers addressing issues related to violence against children by July 2007	Profile of Child Rights Organizations has been posted in the ACPF's Info Hub	Done as per the plan
Status report on the policy legislation relating to violence against children in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia	A synthesis report on the review of the policies and legislations of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda produced.	Done as per the plan
Production of documentary with consideration given to child participation, protection and gender equality by September 2007	A 26 minute documentary filmed in Ethiopia, Kenya Sierra Leone and Uganda produced with a total of 1100 DVD copies(500 English only, 200 Amharic subtitled, 200 French and 200 Swahili subtitled).	Done as per the plan but time
Dissemination of documentary at fora like AU-EU summit, UN 3rd Committee Meeting, Mid Term Review of 'World Fit for Children' and 16 Day's of Activism to end violence Against Women	Postponed to 2008	Postponed ³ to 2008
Development of directory of complementary psychosocial service providers in Ethiopia by December 2007	A Directory with profiles of 145 child-focused service providing organizations in eight towns of Ethiopia produced	Done as per the plan
Improved provision of complementary psycho-social services such as the temporary shelter, medical care and food to children seeking legal advice at the CLPC	A two days capacity building training was offered for 17 staff of five psychosocial service providers, 240 abused children received additional education support	Done and will continue in 2008

³ Production took much longer time than planned (due to complexity of the bidding process, identification of interviewees, and political unrest in Freetown, Sierra Leone)