

A photograph of four children sitting on a thick tree branch. Three are wearing green shirts and one is wearing an orange shirt. They are holding water bottles. The background is a bright, overcast sky.

Understanding Social Norms

to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children
in Uganda

Dr. Richard Wotti Wamimbi; Centres for Child Protection and Learning (CPL)
Kampala, Uganda

June 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
ACRONYMS.....	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	7
CHAPTER ONE.....	17
1.1 BACKGROUND.....	17
1.2 THEORY UNDERPINNING THE STUDY	18
1.3 STUDY PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES	19
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	20
CHAPTER TWO : METHODOLOGY	22
2.1 RESEARCH TECHNIQUE	22
2.2 SELECTION OF THE RESEARCH SITE.....	22
2.3 SAMPLING OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS	22
2.4 RESEARCH METHODS	24
2.5 FIELD TESTING OF INSTRUMENTS.....	27
2.6 PROCEDURES FOR ENHANCING STUDY VALIDITY	27
2.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	27
2.8 DATA ANALYSIS	28
CHAPTER THREE : RESULTS	30
3.1 CHILD MARRIAGE.....	30
3.1.1 CULTURAL BELIEFS AND SOCIAL NORMS ON CHILD MARRIAGE.....	30
3.1.2 OTHER DRIVERS/PUSH FACTORS FOR CHILD MARRIAGE.....	33
3.1.3 REFERENCE GROUPS/NETWORKS FOR CHILD MARRIAGE	36
3.1.4 WAYS OF SHARING INFORMATION THAT SHAPES BELIEFS ON CHILD MARRIAGE.....	38
3.1.5 CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD MARRIAGE.....	39
3.2 CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.....	40
3.2.1 SOCIAL NORMS ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	41
3.2.2 OTHER DRIVERS/ PUSH FACTORS FOR CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	42
3.2.3 SUGGESTED ACTIONS TO REDUCE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	45
3.2.4 REFERENCE GROUPS/NETWORKS THAT APPROVE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	46
3.2.5 REFERENCE GROUPS/NETWORKS THAT DISAPPROVE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	46
3.2.6 CHANNELS OF PASSING INFORMATION THAT SHAPE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	46
3.2.7 ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF CHILD DISCIPLINE.....	46
3.2.8 CONSEQUENCES OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.....	47

3.2.9 RECENT TRAJECTORIES IN CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	48
3.3 CHILD SEXUAL HARASSMENT	50
3.3.1 SOCIAL NORMS AND BELIEFS ON CHILD SEXUAL HARASSMENT	51
3.3.2 REFERENCE GROUPS/NETWORKS FOR CHILD SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....	54
3.3.3 MECHANISMS BY WHICH CHILD SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS SHAPED.....	55
3.3.4 CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....	55
3.3.5 SOCIAL CHANGES IN CHILD SEXUAL HARASSMENT	55
3.3.6 PEOPLE/GROUPS OF INFLUENCE TO CAUSE CHANGE IN CHILD SEXUAL HARASSMENT	57
CHAPTER FOUR	59
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	59
4.1 CONCLUSION	59
4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	60
REFERENCES	64

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is grateful to all the individuals and agencies for generously sharing their experiences and technical insights to inform this study. My special thanks go to the leadership and staff from the AfriChild Centre at Makerere University and Forum for African Women Educationist (FAWE-U) who were the collaborating partners for their technical and financial support towards this study. I am especially grateful to all the respondents both adults and children from Apac, Bundibugyo, Mityana and Tororo for generously sharing their wealth of experiences, knowledge and exploring the complexities of social norms and violence against children to inform the development of this report. I acknowledge the Research Advisory Technical Team for their thoughtful guidance and insights towards the successful completion of this research. The Research Advisory Technical Team included: Stella Ogwang and Lucy Otto - Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Robinson Nsamba Lyazi- Ministry of Education, Deo Yiga - Impact Innovation and Development Centre, Agnes Wasikye-National Coordinator Child Protection Working Group, Julius Tukesiga -Forum for Women Educationists Uganda Chapter , Joyce Wanican - AfriChild Centre Makerere University and Dr Ben Cislaghi - London school of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Dr. Richard Wamimbi - Principle Investigator

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
ANPPCAN	African Network for Prevention and Protection of Children Against Abuse and Neglect
CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MoESTS	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports
PI	Principal Investigator
PLA	Participatory and Learning Action
SN	Social Norms
SRGBV	School-Related Gender-Based Violence
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TSK	Traditional Social Knowledge
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education
VAC	Violence Against Children



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Violence Against children (VAC) has been recognized globally and in the East African region as a serious health and social development problem with adverse effects on the wellbeing of children. Despite the remarkable efforts of prevention and intervention, school violence goes beyond school borders and has become a larger concern that must be dealt with, not only by the school management but also by parents, policy makers and the community at large.

Uganda, the leading country worldwide with the highest population of children aged 18 years and below, standing at 52% (Winsor consult Ltd, 2011) face several adverse and harmful traditional practices that affect her children. These include: child marriages, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), child sacrifice/ murder for ritual purposes, corporal punishment, child labour, sexual abuse, defilement, child trafficking and child neglect.

Given that VAC is multifaceted and manifests in multiple forms as described by Pinheiro (2006), addressing the risk and protective factors of VAC should be based on the social ecological perspective of a child that examines the developing individual (indo), the environmental context and the interaction between the person and the environment. The environment may include the family setting (microsystem), relations between settings (mesosystems), broader social system settings (exosystems), and/or societal norms and ideology (macrosystems). Social norms are a key aspect of the social ecology that can either prevent or perpetuate violence in childhood (Boyce, S., Zeledón, P., Tellez, E., & Barrington, C. 2016)

Social norms are shared beliefs about what is typical and appropriate behaviour in a valued reference group. They can be defined as a rule of behavior that people in a group conform to because they believe: (a) most other people in the group do conform to it; and (b) most other people in the group believe they ought to conform to it. The reference group are people that matter to an individual's choices (Alexander-Scott, M., Bell, E., & Holden, J., 2016).

There is not much research and evidence on how social norms can perpetuate or can be transformed to prevent violence against children in schools and communities, particularly in Africa. Additionally, there is not much clarity and guidance on which programming approaches and steps may be applied or adopted in enhancing positive social norms and transforming harmful social norms in different contexts, to prevent violence against children.

The purpose of this research was to better understand the role of social norm construct in preventing and responding to violence against children in and around schools. The findings

would further provide practical guidance steps and approaches to support intervention programme designers and practitioners in developing grounded programmes to address social norms and beliefs so as to prevent violence against children in at family, school and community environments. The research focused on three forms of violence: child marriage, corporal punishment and child sexual harassment.

This study adopted the '**Social Convention Theory**' which, at the basic level, focuses on understanding the factors that perpetuate harmful social practices, and how these factors interact with processes. The theory explains how certain harmful social practices are self-enforcing social conventions, why they are universal in a community, why they are strongly resistant to change and how to organize the rapid mass abandonment of a convention (Mackie, G., Moneti, F., Denny, E., & Shakya, H. 2012)

Methodology

A qualitative Participatory Research methodology of social inquiry that produces unique, in-depth, multi- faceted investigation of phenomena and allows for knowledge integration and personal understanding of individuals and society was applied. Study participants were purposefully sampled from FAWE operational districts from northern (Apac), central (Mityana), western (Bundibugyo) and eastern (Tororo) regions of Uganda, based on the unique and different characteristics such as culture and customs, social norms and beliefs, as well as other social and economic contexts of these areas.

Participants consisted of 240 learners (30 boys and 30 girls per district) aged 12-18 years and 64 teachers (34 males and 30 females); out-of-school youth were 40 (10 per district); 160 parents (40 per district) and 32 stakeholders (police, community workers, faith leaders, traditional leaders and representatives from non-government organizations).

The specific methods used included focus group discussions for adults and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) workshops for children.

Findings

Harmful social norms that underpin and perpetuate violence against children in and around schools were found to exist. There were, also, positive social norms aiding the mitigation of violence. Social norms were found to be driven by deeply rooted values of protection, honour and pride; and reinforced mainly by household poverty, especially for child marriage and sexual harassment.

Social norms were found to be the most pronounced factor in driving and sustaining or mitigating behaviour that contributes to child marriage, corporal punishment and child sexual harassment.

Social norms that perpetrated child marriage:

Child marriage has its roots in two sets of beliefs and norms: (i) cultural beliefs rooted in moral concepts of “honour” (doing the right thing for your child), closely tied to the value of “being a responsible parent and (ii) underlying socio-economic factors e.g. related to dowry or bride price, which socially united families, strengthening social networks and brought economic advantage to families.

- a) Parents who marry off their daughters early are honoured by the community
- b) Girls who marry off early achieve high status among their peers
- c) A girl does not menstruate or get her first menstrual periods in her parents’ house because it brings misfortune to the family.
- d) A girl should not get pregnant while in her father’s house because it brings dishonour and shame to the family
- e) Respectable girls get married before they are 18 year of age.

Norms that protected children from child marriages

From the study, there was evidence that fewer norms were protective of child marriages in all the communities where the study was conducted. Overall, the protective norms were similar across the different study communities. There were two sets of norms which emerged as protective of children which attracted positive social sanctions that included family honour, respect and unrighteousness.

- a) A girl who is educated brings more honour to the family than one who is not. They should therefore be supported to complete their education.
- b) Girls who marry off after attaining 18 years are seen as ready to handle marriage responsibilities
- c) A girl should get married when they are still a virgin. It brings honour to the family and shows that the family is upright.

Change in child marriage social norms: While the basic value that parents want what is best for their children and this basic value motivates a parent’s decision to participate in practices like child marriage remains, the mechanisms of achieving that have changed, as have the social norms. For instance, the social norm that child marriage is prestigious is shifting to a new one that marrying off children is shameful. The socio-economic factor underlying child marriage is gradually changing from marrying off a child to receive a dowry, to investing in a child’s education to secure a better economic future.

Social norms do not operate in isolation. Along with them, were other factors found interacting with social norms to drive child marriage, corporal punishment and sexual harassment. No single factor independently pushed any form of violence; rather, there was both interaction and cross-reinforcement among them. While there were a few that were unique to each form of violence, quite a number cut across the three forms of violence. The common factors included economic/financial position, education levels, alcohol/drug use, religion, culture, domestic violence and mistreatment at home and at school. Household poverty or a family's economic situation was the second most mentioned driving factor after social norms, and was most pronounced in Apac District of northern Uganda. The mentioned factors were said to drive adults to marry off children.

Other common factors for child marriage and sexual harassment consisted of puberty and adolescence; peer influence, interaction with information and communication technology; foreign or 'Western' culture influence and lack of parental guidance. All these factors were said to expose children to making decision to get into marriage.

Besides a few differences, **reference groups** were crosscutting for all the three forms of violence; the reference groups in both approval and disapproval of the practices constituted of children's caretakers (parents, teachers and other care providers), leaders (cultural, religious, opinion, etc.) and other community members. Parents emerged as the strongest reference group in support of child marriage and corporal punishment. Peers were a strong reference for adolescent children in the fuelling of child marriage and sexual harassment. Within the school environment, teachers were identified for the three forms of violence, with male teachers specifically featuring for child marriage and sexual harassment.

The study gauged **the trend in social norms change** over a period of 50 years. There has been progressive change in social norms, from harmful ones to protective ones. New social norms are being created and built. The change in social norms has been largely driven by factors including education, mass sensitisation, civil society advocacy efforts, as well as the institution and enforcement of a child protection legal framework. The introduction, ratification and enactment of the Children's Act (1990), coupled with efforts to enforce and educate the masses about it, especially by civil society organisations, and has been very instrumental in bringing this change. With education, the generations of younger parents have a different perspective of children and are more respectful of their education and other rights.

Key drivers of changes in social norms pertaining to child marriage consisted of a shift in culture due to child rights that have caused a shift in power relations between a caregiver and children and, thus, empowered children to make choices such as education over marriage; education that has enlightened masses, broadened choices and provided opportunity for children to secure a fruitful future. This has been fuelled by the voice of civil society, policy, legal and enforcement frameworks, and mass sensitisation.

Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment was said to occur in families and schools in all the districts surveyed, although at reduced levels compared to the past. The practice was said to be more prevalent at family level and was reported to have reduced especially in government aided schools.

Harmful Norms Perpetrating Corporal Punishment: While corporal punishment is a harmful practice, those who approved it, especially parents, said this was being done in the best interests of their children. This practice was rooted in six sets of beliefs

- respect for teachers and parents
- instilling discipline and positive behaviour
- way of improving school performance
- way of passing on knowledge and values
- religious beliefs
- individual past experiences of teachers and parents

The norms frequently mentioned were:

- a) Teachers who hit children are respected at school and as such pupils obey and understand them quickly
- b) Parents who do not punish their children are lazy and are not respected in the community

The change in social norms around corporal punishment was reported to be gradually infusing into the communities of the study. This is reflected in the recognition of children's own agency, negative sanctions for conforming to the practice, adoption of alternative means of disciplining children and subsequent reduction in the practice. The modification in social norms towards disciplining children to create a safer environment for children, is attributed to various factors – civil society intervention, government efforts to sensitize communities, existence and enforcement of strict by-laws, a realization that children can understand given messages through dialogue, introduction of alternative punishment, availability of documented guiding information, spiritual development in the community and a more civilized society that is increasingly abandoning corporal punishment and adopting alternative disciplinary means. **Child sexual harassment**

All children (babies, infants and adolescents) faced the risk of sexual harassment. Girls were found to be much more affected by the vice, although boys are affected too, in a few cases. Men, including fathers and teachers, were the main perpetrators. Although recognised by both adults and children; children gave the most responses regarding sexual harassment and few communities reported reduced prevalence. Adolescents were reported to participate in or invite sexual harassment. A lot of sexual harassment cases go unreported, especially for those committed by parents and other household members and

relatives, because of the relationship between the child and the perpetrator.

Prevailing social norms that drove sexual harassment: From the findings, the practice of sexual harassment is deeply rooted in four sets of beliefs.

- (i) proof of manhood,
- (ii) sexual satisfaction and pride
- (iii) girl child powerlessness and blame
- (iv) sexual maturity

In most cases there were more individual beliefs that drove people into sexual harassment than social norms by a particular reference group. There were two sets of social norms identified that supported the practice of sexual harassment.

1. Having sex with girls is a test of manhood and proves you are a real man

2. Men who engage in sex with girls are respected by men in their peer group

Sexual harassment was found to be on the rise as there is creation of new harmful social norms such as those that hold girls responsible for being harassed. However, despite the rise in child sexual harassment, the social norms in support of the vice have met much resistance, as reflected in the harshness of the actions for conforming to sexual harassment, including being castrated and even exclusion from the community.

There were other push factors responsible for child sexual harassment. These included children's unguided exposure to information and communication technology, emphasis of children's rights and neglect of responsibilities that accompany rights, children's exposure to social places, influence of foreign culture, peer influence, parental negligence, substance abuse and war effects for northern Uganda.

Recommendations

There were common factors driving the three forms of violence against children in and around schools. To prevent and respond to violence, it is necessary to tackle the factors and the complex relationships among the factors. An integrated response would be essential in addressing all the three forms of violence under study while considering unique interventions for each form of violence. Building upon ongoing efforts is necessary to foster appreciation and buy-in for all the proposed actions although they may not be conclusive.

I. Facilitate a shift in social norms through collective and multiple responses

Building upon existing efforts, uphold existing positive social norms and facilitate creation of new ones through education, sensitisation and role modelling at various levels - national,

community and family.

Agencies that plan to design and implement social norm interventions should start with social norms formative assessment and diagnosis to understand the norms and beliefs that sustain and mitigate VAC in schools and communities in order to inform effective programme design and measurement.

Continuous stakeholder mapping and scoping using participatory methodologies will be important to understand the reference groups and those who have influence over particular norms so as to create social norms change.

a. National level

- (i) Create public awareness and social norms marketing campaigns aimed at weakening the negative norms and beliefs while promoting the positive social norms to allow for social change at different levels
- (ii) Promote public debate around the norms to enable public and mutual participation and accountability.
- (iii) Establish and strengthen reporting and referral mechanisms nationwide to manage and respond to cases that are already affected by the negative social norms
- (iv) Utilize ICT through SMS and other social platforms like Whatsapp, and Facebook to promote positive norms particularly between peers and parents who are a reference group that perpetuate these norms

b. Community level

- (i) Employ community dialogues to enable communities to change together or collectively abandon harmful social norms and uphold existing good ones, as well as create new good ones.
- (ii) Continuous stakeholder mapping and scoping using participatory methodologies will be important to understand the reference groups and those who have influence over particular norms so as to create social norms change
- (iii) Mainstream social norms change interventions in parenting and caregiver strategies at multiple levels while emphasizing positive and alternate norms that could replace negative norms often embedded and shared among parents and caregivers to perpetuate VAC.
- (iv) Facilitators should be mindful about use of terminologies and should have a deeper understanding of local violence prevention knowledge for meaningful community dialogue that can lead to social norm change.

C. School-level

- (i) Facilitate conversations or dialogue via various avenues, including debates, drama and the school curriculum to build healthy norms in children.
- (ii) Integrate positive social norms within the education and life skills interventions to dispel negative norms and beliefs and empower children as leaders and champions to create social change and build resilience to prevent violence against children
- (iii) As much as children are being educated about their rights, it is necessary to build in them awareness about their responsibilities, too. This will not only assure them of protection but inculcate in them a sense of responsibility and self-protection, as well.

d. Family-level intervention

- (i) Parent education and dialogue – to help them to cope with change, drop harmful social norms and maintain a grip on parenting with appropriate parenting knowledge and skills.
- (ii) Encourage intergenerational dialogue involving children to facilitate an understanding between parents and children.
- (iii) Support families with incomes and economic initiative that address the negative norms that are often rooted in economic benefits and rewards e.g. dowry and bride price among poor households. Economic empowerment will present an alternative to norms that underpin VAC especially among girls

II. Specialised adolescent programmes

- (i) Adolescents present a category of children who require unique attention as they transit into adulthood. Programmes should be designed to support them through the challenging phase. In addition to adolescents, all children must participate in child protection such as through being trained in self-protection and other life skills.

III. Engage key stakeholders

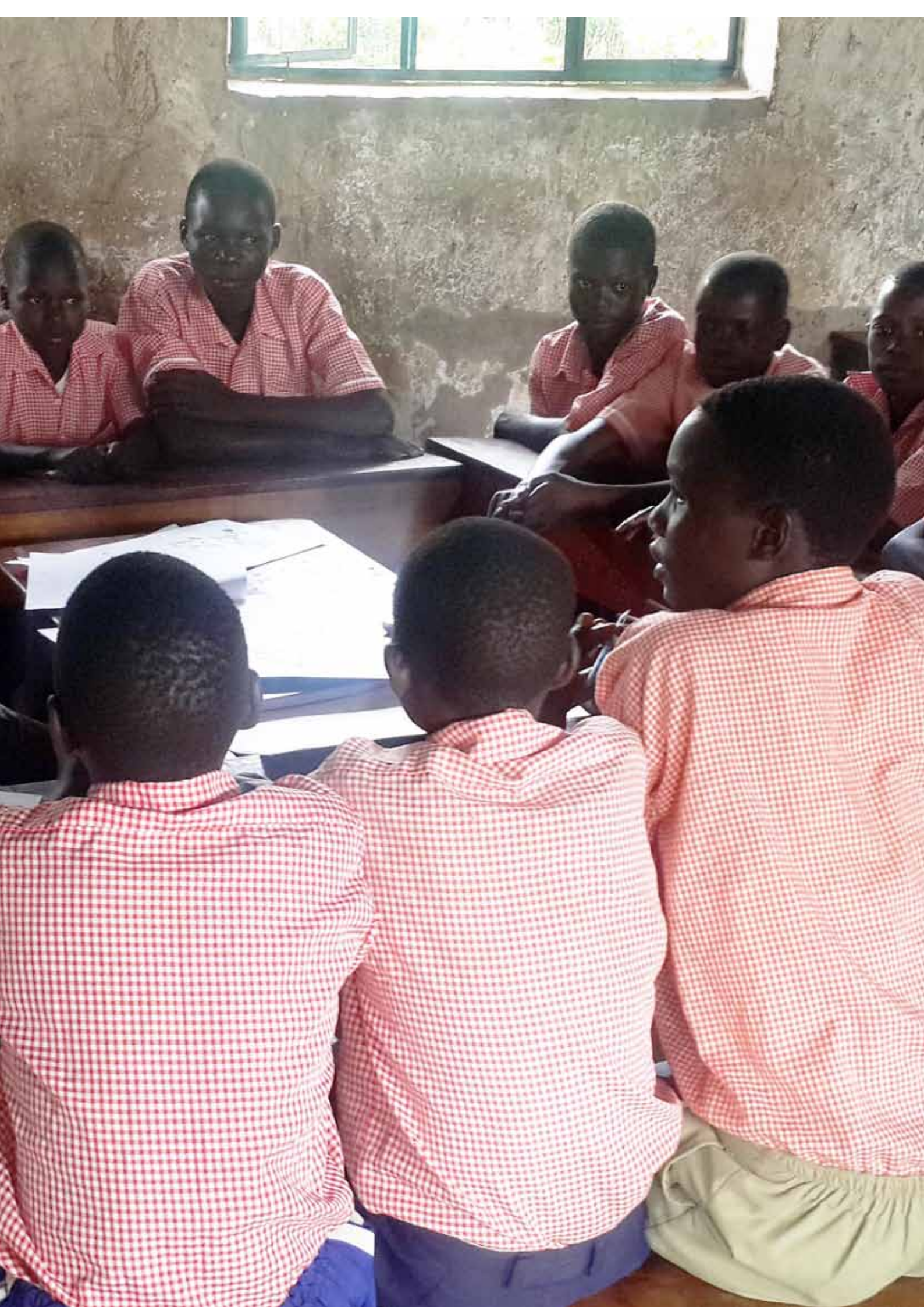
- a) Both national and local level stakeholders should be brought aboard. Reference groups for and against each form of VAC, influential groups with more focus on the groups and individuals who perpetrate violence.
- b) Identify and support role models in the country and use them as reference groups for promoting and diffusing positive norms that can prevent VAC at all levels
- c) Identify the positive sanctions and reward those individuals and reference groups that act as voices for change in preventing VAC in the schools and communities

IV. Communication and information dissemination

Discussions were held on the ways by which information on VAC is shared among perpetrators. Some of them include social media, peer-to-peer, community gatherings, drinking points, television and radio. To stop the vices as well as shift the pertaining social norms, the community's mentioned ways should be targeted to disseminate transformative messages.

V. Strengthen VAC reporting and case management

Although reporting mechanisms continue to be improved, the study showed that a lot of violence against children still goes unreported, especially when it is committed by people who are not only close to the children but also meet their basic needs. Children need to be assured of protection, provision and justice to help them to gain the confidence to report such violence. Therefore, mechanisms for reporting child abuse should be strengthened and brought to the notice of all people in the children's circle of care. Establish a network of specialized institutions that can provide care, support and restoration to those children already under harm by particular sets of norms and practices



CHAPTER ONE

1.1 BACKGROUND

Violence Against children (VAC) has been recognized globally and in the East African region, in particular, as a serious health and social development problem with adverse effects on the wellbeing of children. Despite the remarkable efforts of research, prevention and intervention, school violence goes beyond the school borders and has become a larger concern that must be dealt with not only by school management, but also by parents, policy makers and the community at large.

Violence against children is understood to mean all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse committed against children. Article 19 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child directs “States Parties to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.” States Parties are further directed to pursue legislative, administrative, social and educational measures deemed appropriate, including the development of social programmes, to support children and those who care for them. Finally, Article 19 goes on to call for other forms of prevention as well as procedures for “identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment, and follow-up of instances of children maltreatment.” (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child; General Comment No. 13 2011).

Uganda is the leading country worldwide with the highest population of children aged 18 years and below standing at 52% (17.7million). There are several adverse and harmful traditional practices that affect children in Uganda. These include: child marriages, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), child sacrifice/ murder for ritual purposes, corporal punishment, child labour, sexual abuse, defilement, child trafficking and child neglect.

In a 2013 study conducted in Uganda by the Ministry of Education/UNICEF, 81% of children aged 10-18 years depicted numerous forms of violence they had experienced at school. Some 77.7% of primary and 82% of secondary school students reported having experienced some form of abuse. At least 67% of students sampled reported to have been sexually abused by a male teacher and 74.3% of children interviewed reported having been caned by an adult at school. In the Devries et al., (2014a) study, 93.3% of boys and 94.2% of girls attending primary school reported a lifetime experience of physical violence from a school staff member, with 52% of respondents reporting the violence in the last week. The 2011 ANPPCAN study found that 73% of all physical violence reported by children was perpetrated by teachers, 15% by fellow students, and 12% by parents/guardians. Among school staff, 80.6% of male staff and 75.7% of female staff reported ever using physical violence against students (Devries et al., 2014a).

Given that VAC is multifaceted and manifests in multiple forms as described by Pinheiro (2006), addressing the risk and protective factors of VAC should be based on the social ecological perspective of a child that examines the developing individual (individual), the environmental context, and the interaction between the person and the environment. The environment may include the family setting (microsystem), relations between settings (mesosystems), broader social system settings (exosystems), and/or societal norms and ideology (macrosystems).

Social norms are a key aspect of the social ecology that can either prevent or perpetuate violence in childhood (Bhatla, Achyut, Khan, & Walia, 2015; Boyce, Zeledón, Tellez, & Barrington, 2016; Carlson et al., 2015 as cited in Lilleston et al. (2017)).

There is growing evidence from research and practice recognizing harmful practices as being a result of social conventions and norms: which, when practised, individuals and families acquire social status and respect. Social norms, particularly harmful social practices, have been identified as influencing the survival, development and protection of children; and, at the same time, known to influence the fulfilment of human rights - 'a human right is fulfilled when it is a social norm' (Cristina Bicchieri. 2013 cited in Alexander-Scott, M. Bell, E. & Holden, K. 2016).

However, there is not much research and evidence on how social norms can perpetuate or can be transformed to prevent violence against children in and around schools particularly in Africa. Additionally, there is not much clarity and guidance on which programming approaches and steps may be applied or adopted in enhancing positive social norms and transform harmful social norms in different contexts, to prevent violence against children. The purpose of this research was to better understand the role of social norm construct in preventing and responding to violence against children in and around schools. The findings would further provide practical guidance steps and approaches to support programme designers and practitioners in developing grounded programmes to address violence against children in different contexts.

1.2 THEORY UNDERPINNING THE STUDY

This study adopted the '**Social Convention Theory**', which at the basic level, focuses on understanding the factors that perpetuate harmful social practices, and how these factors interact with processes. Based on studies on female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), evidence shows that parents want what is best for their children and this basic value motivates a parent's decision to perform the mutilation/cutting and participate in other harmful practices like early or forced marriages, since failure to comply with the social convention brings shame and social exclusion to girls and their families. Once an alternative to the social convention becomes possible within a community and people realize that the community might be better off jointly abandoning the practice, it is this most basic value

– to do what is best for their children - that also motivates communities to abandon the harmful practice. This has birthed the ‘Social Convention theory’, which has registered some progress on addressing Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting. The Social Convention theory explains how certain harmful social practices are self-enforcing social conventions, why they are universal in a community and why they are strongly resistant to change. The theory further explains how to organize the rapid mass abandonment of a convention (Gerry .M, 2009; ECPAT International, Plan International 2015; Ahmed Samira, 2009).

A tested model in the application of the social convention theory is documented on Sudan by Ahmed Samira (2009). The author’s working paper describes how social norms on FGM/C in Sudan changed when a new understanding and appreciation of communities’ traditions and values were introduced. The working paper highlights four key factors that promote collective abandonment of the practice as: community dialogue, human rights deliberation, community-led activities, and the powerful force of local rewards and punishment. Overall the Sudan experience demonstrates that a major shift can occur at community level and widespread abandonment of FGM/C can be envisioned (Ahmed Samira, 2009; Dagne, Haile Gabriel, 2009).

However, even with the progress made on the FGM/C front, field observations suggest that further attention must be paid to the role of social and moral norms in the continuation and abandonment of the practice, and to the power of transformative human rights deliberation in bringing about an end to the practice (ECPAT International, Plan International, 2015; Dagne, Haile Gabriel, 2009).

1.3 STUDY PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The general research objective of the study was to understand the role of social norms in preventing violence against children in and around schools.

The specific objectives were to:

- (i) Establish the existing social norms that underpin and perpetuate violence in and around schools for girls and boys
- (ii) Investigate the role of social norms in driving, sustaining and mitigating behaviour that contributes to violence against children in and around schools
- (iii) Explore the existing reference groups (networks) and their role in influencing social norm change in and around schools
- (iv) Examine to what extent social norm change has embedded itself within the community, sufficient to change children’s lived experience in preventing and responding to violence against children
- (v) Explore how social norms change has impacted children’s lived experiences, including

enhancing positive socio-cultural capital, supporting child safety and well-being

(vi) Find out the key drivers of social norms change in creating a safer school environment for children to thrive.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a) What social norms exist, underpin and perpetuate violence against girls and boys in and around schools?
- b) What is the role of social norms and beliefs (positive and negative) in driving, sustaining and mitigating behaviour that contributes to violence against children in and around schools?
- c) What are the existing reference groups (networks and their role in influencing social norm change in and around schools?
- d) To what extent has social norms change embedded itself within the community, sufficient to change children's lived experience in preventing and responding to violence against children
- e) In what ways have social norms, pertaining to VAC changed, in the target communities?
- f) What are the key drivers of changes in social norms in creating a safer school environment for children to thrive?



CHAPTER TWO : METHODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCH TECHNIQUE

To achieve the study purpose, a qualitative Participatory Research methodology of social inquiry was employed. This is because it produces unique, in-depth, multi-faceted investigation of phenomena and allows for knowledge integration and personal understanding of individuals and society. Participatory Research empowers the participants who create and control the production of knowledge; as well as become more aware of their social reality and of their own resources and mobilize them for social transformation. Participatory research allows for mutual learning that leads to project ownership.

2.2 SELECTION OF THE RESEARCH SITE

The study was undertaken in Uganda, specifically in districts where FAWE Uganda is implementing or is in the process of implementing social norm-related approaches to prevent and respond to VAC in and around schools.

2.3 SAMPLING OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Study participants were purposefully sampled from FAWE operational districts from northern (Apac), central (Mityana), western (Bundibugyo) and eastern (Tororo) regions of Uganda, based on the unique and differencing characteristics such as culture and customs, social norms and beliefs as well as other social and economic context of these areas.

A total of eight schools (two per district - four primary and four secondary) participated; providing 240 learners (30 boys and 30 girls per district) aged 12-18 years and 64 teachers – 34 males and 30 females. The out-of-school youth were 40 (10 per district), while parents made a total of 160 (40 per district). Stakeholders included the Police, community workers, faith leaders, traditional leaders and representatives from non-government organizations were 32. The table below summarizes the selection:

Table Summarizing the Selection of Research Participants

Category	No. per district	Total
Secondary schools	2	8
Primary schools	2	8
School-going children	60	240
Out-of-school youth	10	40
Teachers	16	64
Parents	40	160
Other Stakeholders	8	32

School Selection Procedure

To select the schools, predetermined criteria based on the founding bodies of the schools as indicated in the Education Management Information System (EMIS) were generated. The bodies included Catholic, Anglican, Islamic, private (entrepreneur), military and government founding bodies. All schools in the four districts were randomized, based on EMIS number (only schools where FAWE is working - both primary and secondary - were selected). The selection was done by going down the randomized list until the eight schools were obtained.

Sampling of Pupils

The study was conducted among 240 pupils (both male and female) in the age range of 12 to 18 years. This age group was chosen because it is the period in which most forms of abuse and violence happen to children; and children in this age category are often influenced by their peers through social norms and beliefs. For a qualitative study, this sample size was reasonable enough to enable the research to reach data saturation, capture in-depth diversity of views and perspectives as well as meaning and knowledge integration. The selection was based on age, gender, vulnerability and exposure to different forms of violence.

The pupil sample was selected only from those children who were permitted by parents to participate in the study. To ensure that orphans and disabled children were included in the study, head teachers were encouraged to take special care in mobilizing the guardians of orphans and disabled children.

Members of the research team took parents through the translated copies of the consent forms and given a chance to ask questions before they decided to give their consent. Children whose parents gave consent were considered eligible for inclusion in the sample and their names were listed along with their age, grade, sex and disability or orphan status to form the sampling frames. The frames were organized according to the required strata - namely, age group (12-14 and 15-18) and gender - giving a total of four sampling frames in accordance with the age groups and genders. The names of the children were not used on any data collection forms or included in the facilitator notes. A numerical code assigned to each learner was used for cross-referencing.

A skip number sampling interval was selected by dividing the total number of eligible pupils present in the class by the number of pupils required for each class. Then, a random start number between one and the sampling interval determined according to a table of random numbers was used to identify the starting point. After selecting the first pupil, the remaining pupils were selected by counting down the list using the skip count number. When the end of the list was reached, the team supervisors were circled back to the top of the list and continued counting until the required sample was attained plus four replacements—two

boys and two girls—per age group. The sample included at least two orphans (one boy and one girl) and at least two pupils with disabilities (including one boy and one girl) in each age group.

Sampling of teachers to participate in the focus group discussions (FGD)

The research team, with the assistance of the head teachers, generated a list of all male and female teachers for P5-P7 and S1-S6 for each of the eight schools. After ascertaining the number of teachers present, a sampling interval was computed by dividing the total number of teachers present with the number of participants required by gender. The sampling interval was rounded off to the nearest integer. A random start number was selected between one and the sampling interval using the table of random numbers. Using the list of teachers, the teacher whose name fell on the random start number was selected. Then the teacher whose name landed on the sampling interval was chosen until the required number of teachers was reached. In instances where the last number on the list was reached before the required sample of teachers was attained, data collectors kept returning to the beginning of the list until the sample size was obtained.

Through the above procedure, five female and five male teachers were randomly selected to form two FGD groups including a Senior Male Teacher and a Senior Female Teacher (from those schools that have these two positions).

2.4 RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted a diversity of data collection methods for children and adults for six varying major purposes:

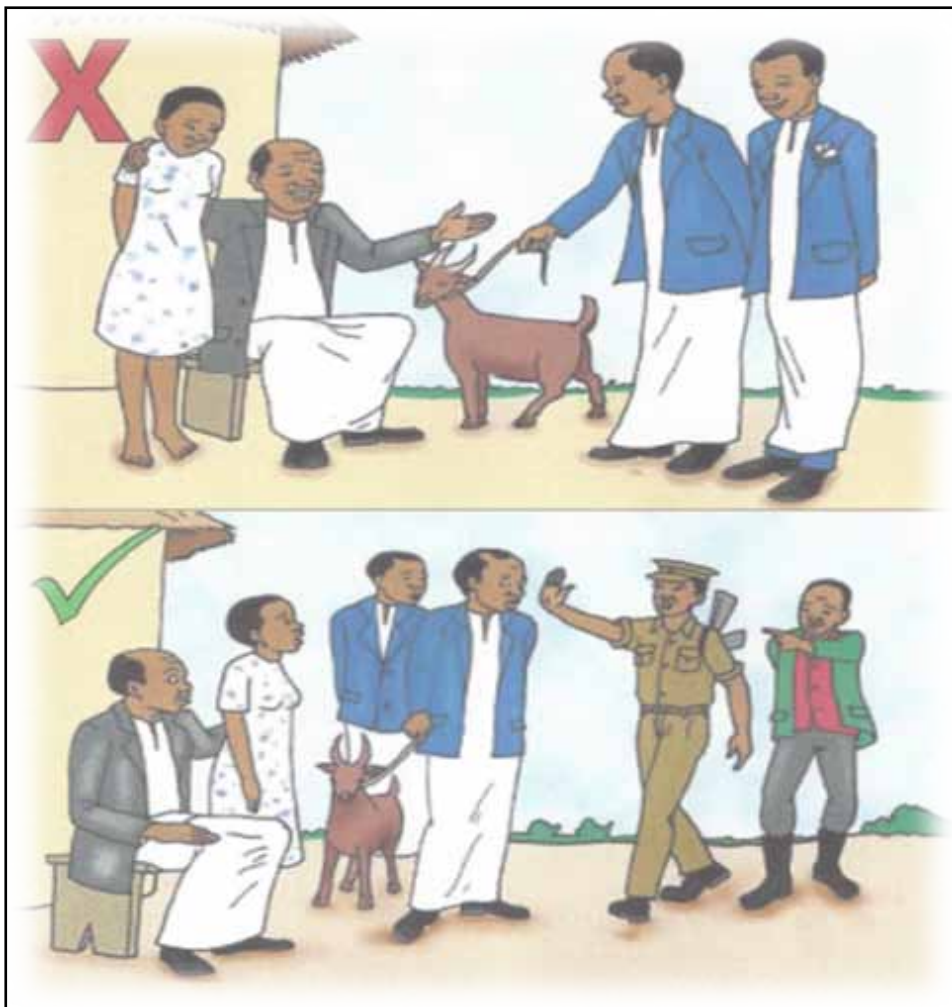
- a) Assessing multiple reference groups and ecological understanding of social norms, utilised focus group discussions (FGD) for care givers, umbrella of care for children and Venn diagrams
- b) Assessing reciprocal expectations in relation to social norms employed focus groups
- c) Assessing Traditional Social Knowledge (TSK) and the role of traditional local values shaping concepts of protection and wellbeing (also exploring how these values may have changed) utilized focus groups
- d) Children’s perspectives on personal and collective agency in relation to social norms—Participatory Learning Action (PLA) with children
- e) Intergenerational dialogue on the capabilities and opportunities for children and key adults to partner in changing harmful social norms and leverage helpful social norms, used focus groups with children and adults, and
- f) Applying a gendered lens in relation to gender, social norms and violence against children employed PLA workshops with girls and boys.

Participatory and Learning Action (PLA) Workshop

The sampled pupils participated in PLA workshops. The workshops took place in a private venue within the school, with separate sessions for boys and girls in the two different age groups (12-14 and 15-17). The PLA workshops were held in same-sex format in two separate age groups. Each workshop included 15 pupils of the same sex, three facilitators (a lead facilitator, note-taker and a supervisor – same sex as the group) and a professional child counsellor (same sex as the group).

The PLA workshop included the following activities: Introductions and ice-breaker; and the use of the visual arts to facilitate discussions among small groups of children such as balloon game, cage trap, spider diagram, the umbrella of care, a net to keep me safe, risk mapping, validating and prioritizing issues), Venn diagrams and a protection tool (for positive closure).

The ice-breaker session had small story scenarios about an incidence of VAC (e.g. bullying, harsh punishment or humiliation and sexual harassment) were presented to the children, followed by a general discussion. The pictures below were used for the purpose:





Prior to the PLA activities, child participants were informed of the importance of not naming children, teachers, community members or school staff during the PLA. The children were informed that the researchers would remind them about this rule during the activity. Where this was difficult to control, the transcribers redacted names during the transcription process (converting audio into written text) before data was provided to the analysts.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were conducted with selected participants from the following population groups: (1) teachers (2) parents/caregivers (3) mixed group of local leaders, duty bearers and service providers. Conducted separately for males and females and facilitated by researchers of the same sex as the ground, they took place in private settings to allow confidentiality and free expression.

Each focus group had a moderator, a note-taker and an observer. The observer was responsible for tape recording the sessions. Participants were discouraged from disclosing personal experiences of VAC or experiences of violence that they had heard about or witnessed. Each session took approximately one to two hours.

All participants had access to a professional counsellor of the same sex, who was on the research team to immediately respond to their needs. The facilitator made it known that participants were free to opt out at any time.

Finally, all identifying information and materials were disposed of immediately after the study, to ensure that no link could be established between the collected data and those who were interviewed.

2.5 FIELD TESTING OF INSTRUMENTS

Before fieldwork, the tools were field-tested in one school with a handful of pupils, parents, and other intended research participants. The consenting and assenting procedures were followed for the field testing. This allowed the Principle Investigator (PI) and Co-Investigators to determine what efficiencies could be introduced and what improvements should be made to the protocol, assessment tools and consent and assent forms. Following the testing of these tools, the PI made necessary adjustments, which were tracked and highlighted. They were shared with IRB for the final check and approval. Only after this step did data collection commence.

2.6 PROCEDURES FOR ENHANCING STUDY VALIDITY

The lead consultant assumed primary responsibility for the organization and co-ordination of the study to ensure delivery of emerging findings, conclusions and recommendations, as well as a comprehensive final report which meets the study standards within the contracted timeframe/specifications. AfriChild was accountable for management responsibilities related to contract management, cost control, cash flow and invoice management and further levels of internal quality assurance.

The research team used several techniques to maximize the validity of this study, including: expert peer review, negotiated validity and debriefing by study participants.

2.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It was critical that ethical principles were applied throughout the research process. The research was conducted in a “manner designed to ensure that the benefits to participants outweighed any costs or unintended harm, and that the research process embedded the ethical principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, beneficence, non-maleficence, and the best interests of the child” (Ennew, 2009). The following principles adapted from Ennew (2009) were kept with the research team, to protect everyone involved in the research.

- (i) Protect participants from harm
- (ii) All participation must be voluntary
- (iii) Respect cultural traditions, knowledge and customs
- (IV) Establish as much equality as possible
- (vi) Avoid raising unrealistic expectations
- (vii) Reciprocity
- (viii) Respect privacy

(ix) Ensure confidentiality

(x) Develop and agree on behaviour protocols

INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS

To ensure informed consent, all participants were briefed about the study, its goals, activities, risks and benefits of participation. They were also given opportunity to ask questions, both in a group and as individuals. In the briefing sessions and during the individual consenting processes, the individuals learned about the potential risks of (1) breach of confidentiality and (2) requirements of reporting to authorities when a child was deemed to be in danger and what protocols would be used for reporting and protection of such cases.

Consent was sought for all participants, including minors in school, minors out of school, with emphasized consideration for orphans and children with disabilities; and all adults. Minors were accompanied by parents or other caregivers. One copy of the form was retained by the participant and the other by the research team.

2.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data from the interviews was transcribed to start identifying the emerging themes. The NVivo- Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) was utilized to analyse the data as well as manage, organize and develop coherence across the data. Data cleaning and verification was conducted to allow for accuracy and reliability. To determine the natural “meaning units” as expressed by the respondents, the researchers read and reread the transcripts and identified areas of the responses that highlighted the participant experience in relation to the phenomenon of social norm change and VAC. Central themes emerged based on each of the research questions as data was put to each question in a systematic manner and essential descriptive statements were made to create meaning. The data coders were mindful to thematically code the data based on the differences and similarities within and across the categories of respondents, based on gender, age, location and the lived experiences. The study report was subsequently generated.



CHAPTER THREE : RESULTS

The research findings are discussed in three segments: (i) child marriage (ii) corporal punishment and (iii) sexual harassment. Each form of violence is relayed by sub-themes of existing social norms, reference groups, impact, sanctions, other drivers/push factors, and social changes in each form of violence, actions for change and influential individuals/groups to effect the change.

3.1 CHILD MARRIAGE

Child marriage, also known as early marriage, is defined as “any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years, before the girl or boy is physically, physiologically and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing. This is the minimum legal age provided for by Uganda’s Constitution. To establish social norms sustaining child marriage, the study began by studying the meaning that people attached to child marriage, and the extent to which they reported the practice existed in their communities. Overall all the participants (children and adults) from the four study districts reported that child marriage exists in their communities. The Practice was common among girls aged 13 to 17 years. Child marriage was said to happen frequently during prolonged dry seasons, when the farming season is down and families are facing income and food shortage. Take, for instance, what a woman said in the parents’ focus group, when they reflected on the parents’ motivations for marrying off their children.

It happens especially during seasons of prolonged dry spells and there is no food for people at home, so the parents end up giving away their girls in marriage so that they get something to support the family. (FGD Female)

3.1.1 Cultural Beliefs and Social Norms on Child Marriage

These constitute the beliefs that people hold, that alleviate or perpetrate child marriage. From the findings, there were both harmful and protective social norms regarding the practice.

Harmful social norms that perpetrate child marriage

Child marriage has its roots in two sets of beliefs and norms: (i) cultural beliefs rooted in moral concepts of “honour” (doing the right thing for your child), closely tied to the value of “being a responsible parent and (ii) a related set of beliefs reflected underlying socio-economic factors e.g. related to dowry or bride price, which socially united families, strengthening social networks and brought economic advantage to families.

(i) Parents who marry off their daughters early are honored by the community

Giving away children in marriage was said to bring honour and prestige to both the family

and child, as marriage largely determines a woman's social status in the communities of study. This was reflected in all group discussions as such as the male parents' group:

They believe it's a prestigious thing when a child gets married especially for the parents who have girls in their homes. Even the children see marriage as a prestigious thing; they can leave school and get married just because a peer has done it. (FGD male)

(ii) Girls who marry off early achieve high status among their peers

Some girls were said to be influenced by their peers getting into marriage. They viewed marriage as prestigious and, as such, would drop out of school to get married as well. This was narrated by both adults and children as seen in some of the focus group discussions:

They think that girls will receive honour from their family and the community. Parents always worry about the marriage of their daughters. (FGD Children)

(iii) A girl does not menstruate or get her first menstrual periods in her parents' house because it brings misfortune to the family.

Menstruation can happen as early as at eight years of age. Some religions, to which some parents strongly and unquestioningly subscribe, create the belief that when a girl child begins to menstruate, she should never stay in her parents' home but preferably get married. Such parents also believed that the child is mature and should get married quickly otherwise she risks remaining pregnant out of wedlock. This compels the parents who approve of this to give their daughters in marriage at the onset of menstruation. Take for instance what two teachers said during a focus group discussion:

Some religions teach that a girl should never menstruate and stay in her parents' home. By this, the followers marry off the girls with little regard to the health and future of the girl and, most times, against her wishes. (FGD Teachers).

Related to menstruation there was a belief that girls who get married when they are young are more stable in marriage and this still brings honour to the family.

iv) A girl should not get pregnant while in her father's house because it brings dishonour and shame to the family

Getting pregnant while in the parents' home was said to bring shame to the family. To avoid the shame, parents were said to marry off their daughters when they attained puberty or as soon as a girl is noticed to be pregnant. The man responsible for the pregnancy is compelled to marry the girl. The participants added that it was done to protect the other girls in the home from following the same path. This was said to happen in all the study districts and was cited by all categories of participants.

Sometimes they do this because they have discovered that the girl is pregnant before marriage and do not want to feel ashamed especially if people get to know about it. They marry her off immediately to the man who is responsible for the pregnancy. (FGD teacher)

V) Respectable girls get married before they are 18 year of age.

Majority of the parents of the parents who approved of child marriages believed that their children would be respected in the community if they got married before 18 years of age. This brings honour to both their children and themselves in the community. Girls who were above 18 years were thought of not getting good husbands as compared to those who were below 18 years of age. To alleviate this, parents worked very hard to assist their girls to get a man when she was is still young and this further caused matching of boys and girls from different families when they were still very young. Some girls also had the same belief among the peers that they will be respected among their fellow peers if they married before 18 years of age. Those who got married encouraged others to do so. For instance one man in a focus group discussion had this to say:

A girl who grows above 18 years of age will not get a good husband because she is damaged. The parents must help her to get a man when she is still young enough. (FGD male)

Norms that protected children from child marriages

From the study, there was evidence that fewer norms were protective of child marriages in all the communities where the study was conducted. Overall, the protective norms were similar across the different study communities and were found to be rooted in:

- a) honour, respect and integrity for the family
- b) advantages of education
- c) care for self and family
- d) securing a fruitful future

There were two sets of norms which emerged as protective of children which attracted positive social sanctions that included family honour, respect and unrighteousness.

A girl who is educated brings honour to the family than one who is not. They should therefore be supported to complete their education.

While education of girls brings benefits to the child and family as well, it has the social positive sanction of honour and it has therefore become a social norm beyond an individual belief in most of the communities that opposed education of the girls child. Families with educated girls were seen to support their parents and their children were as such perceived as role models in the community. Educated girls were seen to support their parents in old

age, during times of discomfort and distress e.g. sickness. For instance during the focus group discussions with the parents, this is what they had to say:

A family is righteous and upright if it brings up its children and marry them off when they have fully grown and completed their education. That family has a blessing of God .
(Female parent)

Families with educated girls are respected because they can provide well for themselves and their parents in old age. So parents should keep their girls in school than get them married at an early age. (Male parent)

Girls who marry off after attaining 18 years are seen as ready to handle marriage responsibilities

In this social norm, girls under 18 years of age are believed to be too emotionally and mentally immature to handle marriage responsibilities. They have yet to master family and home chores and responsibilities. The proponents add that the child's body is not fully developed to manage child bearing. This was reiterated by boys' focus groups of Mityana and Apac Districts:

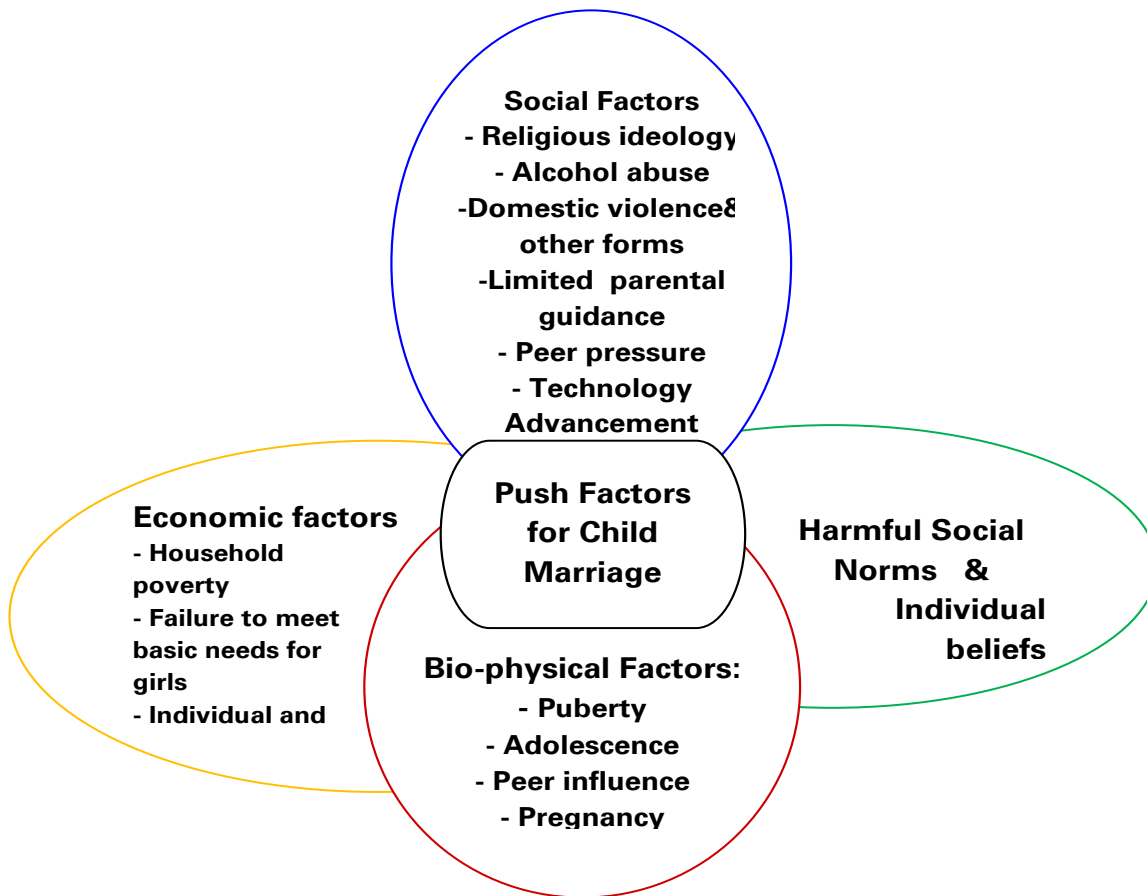
A girl who is below 18 years of age is too small to handle home issues like cooking and making up the home. Besides, her body is not fully developed for child bearing. So she is better married off above 18 years of age. (FGD Parent)

3.1.2 Other Drivers/Push Factors for Child Marriage

In Uganda, children find themselves in marriage because they are forced by caretakers – parents, guardians and/or elders. In other instances, they choose to get into marriage without anyone's influence. In addition to the social norms, this section elaborates other aspects and factors that interact to contribute to the incidences of child marriage. While some of the factors drive parents to give children away, others drive children to get into marriage on their own. These factors were found to be a mix of socio-cultural, economic, bio-physio and advancement in information and communication technology. No single factor independently drove child marriage as there was a cross-reinforcement among them. For instance, social factors such as norms reinforced economic factors and the reverse was true. As a major factor, social norms were found to easily give way to other factors. For instance, the beliefs/norms that a girl child is destined solely for marriage and is a source of income made it easy for parents to marry off the girls to alleviate income poverty; and the norm that a girl should never menstruate in her parents' home paved way for marrying off a pregnant girl.

The various factors are illustrated in the figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Push Factors for Child Marriage



Social-cultural factors: This cluster took on education, religion, alcohol abuse, domestic violence and the other forms of violence against children, lack of parental guidance as well as peer pressure.

Economic Factors – Household poverty formed the second most listed push factor after social norms, and was most pronounced by participants from Apac District. High levels of poverty were found to compel parents and other caretakers to marry off children to earn income to keep the family going.

“A child is a source for loan repayment”

I'm Jane and I'm 15 years old. My mother got a financial loan but when she failed to pay back, she started accusing me of sleeping around with boys and could beat me too bad. One time she saw me greeting a neighbour and she said I was sleeping with the man. She first beat me and later told the boy to give her two million shillings and marry me or else report him to police. Her intention was to get money to pay back the loan. One evening, the police came and they arrested my mother because of failure to pay back the loan. She left me home with my younger brothers and sisters. I tried to call our village for support but the phones were not available. I became confused and thought of going to sell myself on the street called "Kisangani". What I did was to get the youngest child and we went begging on street for food. We got helped some people who gave us some money and we got what to eat for four days. Life got so hard and I got married for one week because the boy was our neighbour and my mother was in prison. I did this because I wanted to feed my young brothers and sisters. When my mother was released from prison, I went back to start staying at home and came back to school. Life is still not fine because there is no money.

Bio-physio Factors: These aspects are associated with the period in which a child transitions into adulthood. They include puberty, adolescence, love for adventure, peer pressure and possible pregnancies.

The child rights movement as a factor: People who marry off their children below 18 years of age are viewed to be abusing children and violating their rights. The onset of the child rights movement has caused awareness raising in the communities in regard to child rights and responsibilities. The practice of child marriage was viewed by many as child abuse, since children are usually forced into marriage thereby violating their freedom of choice and right to education. There are individual beliefs once children are forced into marriage, they will often not enjoy their marriage. The proponents of this belief acknowledge gender equity and assert that both girls and boys deserve to be educated. And, thus, marrying children at an early age deprived them of their opportunities for education.

Social sanctions on Child Marriage

The research investigated what social sanctions existed in the community for those who approved and supported child marriages. There was a feeling in the community and among the reference groups about what other people thought about them if they did not practise child marriage. In the circle of those conforming to child marriage, the social sanctions were associated with honour and prestige and protecting the integrity of the family. Additionally if a girl got pregnant or had her first menstruation at home, it attracted shame and misfortune to the family members.

3.1.3 Reference Groups/Networks for Child Marriage

The reference group are people that matter to an individual's choices. This research wanted to know the reference group for child marriage decisions among the study communities. By understanding the reference groups, we can then be in position to design programmes that specifically target this group to bring about social norm change in the community. Parents emerged as the strongest reference group in support of child marriages because of what other people think about them. Parents were so influential in making decision about their children's marriage with the belief that they are protecting and doing what is right for their children. They were also protection their families from shame and bringing honour to their families.

Traditionally in Uganda, especially the central region, paternal Aunts commonly referred to as " Sengas" had the moral obligation and responsibility bestowed up them by the clan to shape the destiny of the girls in their kinship or clan. They provide counselling to the nieces born of their brothers as they prepare them for marriage. In some instances, they help them to obtain suitors. In this study, participants revealed that relatives, especially the paternal aunt, connive with their brothers (fathers to the nieces), get men for the girls and force them into marriage. They also receive a share of the dowry. During the focus group discussions this is what two women had to say:

Relatives like aunties get men for the children and connive with their fathers and the man after being given some money and they force the child to get married to the man. They also support the parents by not reporting child marriage practices within their homes and communities." (FGD Parent)

"Aunties (Sengas) support because they want to get dowry and dresses. They sometimes support the girls with some few basic needs and connect the girls to the men to marry them. They even ask those who do not support this, ' are you the one going to marry her?'"(FGD Boys)

Therefore targeting import kinship ties and relationships that shape social norms will be import in achieving social change.

Peers were also mentioned as a strong reference group among young adolescents in promoting child marriage. Peers from the same age group believed that a girl is respected and attains family honour if they marry before they reach 18 years of age. Children and their peers were said to be another reference that approved and promoted the practice of child marriage. Respondents noted that the children participate in their own or their peers' marriages in many ways. For instance, they accept to enter marriage with or without the consent of their parents - some run away from home to get married. Even when they can, they do not report marriage intentions or incidences; they make connections between the girl and the man because they are promised money, gifts and other favours; they participate

in the ceremony's activities - doing the music, being matrons and maids and doing wedding showers. The recognition of children as a reference group was made by most participant as cited below:

Peers approve because they act as 'go-betweens' for the girl and the old man who gives them some money and gifts. They will tell the girl that 'you have got a very rich man' and the girl will be excited. (FGD male parent)

Peers/friends are supportive of the practice because they want to participate as maids and matrons and, as such, put unnecessary pressure and tension on the girl to marry secretly. (FGD boys)

Understanding and targeting peer influence will be important to progressively shifting from harmful to protective social norms.

While teachers played a significant role of protecting children for different harmful practices like children marriages, they were also mentioned as a reference group that supported child marriages. Male teachers secretly encouraged other teachers to marry their students. In few circumstances, police officers were mentioned to influence the practise of child marriages because they not taking action against those who promoted child marriages yet they have a state mandate and duty to secure the protection of all children in the community. In limited circumstances, religious leaders were cited as another reference group that supported child marriage. They influenced members of their congregations to believe that a girl must not have her first menstruation in her father's house or else it brings shame and misfortune to the family. In one instance, this is what one teacher had to say:

Some religions don't allow pregnancy before marriage so they wed off any pregnant child to the responsible male (FGD Teachers)

Elderly relatives and more so the grandparents, were also mentioned as a reference group that influenced young parents and children to engage in the practice of child marriage. They claim to want to see the grandchildren's suitors and children before they die. As were with other relatives, they receive a portion of the dowry. Being in support of child marriage, such relatives do not report child marriage incidences within communities. One female teacher for instance has this to say:

Grandparents also support [the vice] with a view of getting sugar, bread, money and getting great grandchildren to be named after them. (FGD teacher)

Other relatives mentioned included step parents with the notion that they do not love the children who are biologically not theirs and, thus, consider them as a burden. Individuals in Local Councils were identified as an important reference group in promoting child marriages. Local council structures constitute the closest leadership structures in the

community. Although they are aware of the law against child marriage, for financial gain, some of the members accept bribes and endorse child marriages. They mobilize communities to attend the ceremonies and even attend them. As such, they do not arrest wrong doers or even report these cases to police. This is what a one boy had to say about corruption among the leaders:

LCI leaders who are bribed support child marriage because they were given money or they will be given money when the marriage is successful; that is why they do not arrest or report to the police. (FGD boys)

Cultural leaders were said support child marriages for various beliefs and motives. Some cultures hold the belief that a woman is meant for marriage, having children and taking care of families. Respondents added that elders demanded for descendants from their children for the sake of prestige and continuity. Besides, they see no value in education and when the children are married off, the elders receive a share of the dowry. For instance this is what one woman had to say:

Cultural leaders still hold the notion that a girl/woman is meant to get married, give birth to children and take care of the family and husband. (FGD Women)

The study found out that there were also reference groups that disapproved of child marriage and would positively influence communities by diffusing protective norms that can bring about social change. These reference groups disapproved the practice of child marriages and were influence by factors such as honour, respect and integrity for the family, advantages of education, care for self and family, being community role models, economic benefits to the family, securing a fruitful future for their children and the child rights movement. Members of this reference group included parents who influence fellow parents and their children not to engage in child marriages, religious leaders did influence parents and girls through associations such as mothers union groups to marry off their children after attaining a good education and gainful employment. Female teachers were mentioned to be encouraging girls to complete their education and they presented themselves as role models in the community.

3.1.4 Ways of sharing information that Shapes beliefs on Child Marriage

These formed the mechanisms used by the reference group that supported child marriages to communicate the child marriage practice to different information consumers. They consisted of passing on information secretly, talks at drinking points, using letters, social media, telephone calls and meetings. These channels of transferring information that shapes social norms and beliefs are important to understand so as to design mechanisms to utilize then to pass on norms and beliefs that are protective of children in schools, families and communities.

3.1.5 Consequences of Child Marriage

In examining the outcomes of child marriage, participants identified large and unplanned families, school drop-outs and increase in uneducated human capital; all of which contributed to poverty. They added unwanted pregnancies, child and maternal mortality; infections; shame, stigma and loss of respect; and domestic violence. The most affected person was cited to be the child, who enters marriage at the premature age.

Dropping out of school after marriage

There is a 14yr old girl who was married off in Aporywe village and she was studying in P6. The parents organised the function and never invited any one and many people did not know. People in the village realised that the girl was getting married when they saw some people coming to the home with some cows. Because they did not want anyone to know about it, no body was invited to the function. There was no music and only a few family members attended. The boy's family brought only two cows for the marriage and the girl was later taken away to go and live in her husband's home. She is now married living with her husband and she has never come back to their home.

Recent trajectories in child marriage, their causes and key actions and actors to influence abandonment of child marriage

The study tracked any modifications that have taken course regarding child marriage over the past 40 years, the causes for the changes and the key actors. The findings indicate a host of changes, including how marriage is organized, the meaning of child marriage and increasing divorce owing to increased freedoms and choices. Participants reported that finding marriage partners for the children was no longer a parents' responsibility, as children find partners on their own and that, with these factors, generally, child marriage had reduced.

The social changes in child marriage observed in the study areas were attributed to two major factors: the institution of human and child rights as well as education, which were said to have facilitated a shift in culture.

The actions to facilitate abandonment of child marriage were cited to constitute measures that the respondents felt, if put in place, would eliminate the practise of child marriage. They comprised of community participation, sensitisation and education, improvement in reporting mechanisms, strengthening law enforcement and child protection structures, parental guidance, adolescence/pubescence attention, support to economically vulnerable children, diversification of income by parents and engagement of influential individuals and role models.

Influential people - individuals, groups, structures or networks - were identified to cause the

required change. The cluster consisted of parents, local councils, cultural leaders, religious leaders, community members, the police, human right activists, NGOs/CBOs, government, political leaders, health workers, village health teams, teachers and children.

3.2 CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Child discipline is an integral part of child-rearing that teaches children self-control and acceptable behaviour. All too often, however, children are raised using methods that rely on physical force or verbal intimidation to punish unwanted behaviours and encourage desired ones. The Committee on the Rights of the Child in the General Comment No. 8 defines 'corporal' or 'physical' punishment as, "any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting ("smacking", "slapping", "spanking") children, with the hand or with an implement. Generally boys suffered and experienced different forms of corporal punishment than their counterparts the girls.

Existence of and community meaning of corporal punishment

Corporal punishment was found to occur at the three levels of a child's socio-ecological environment including community, school and family. At the community level, corporal punishment was said to occur in all the districts surveyed, although at reduced levels compared to the past. The belief that supported this practice was to instil good behaviour and good performance among children. At family level, corporal punishment was said to be highly prevalent as witnessed in all districts of the survey. The practice entailed beating, cutting body parts and stabbing, among others. This led to child death in some instances. In schools, corporal punishment was reported to have reduced, owing to civil society and Ministry of Education efforts. Moreover, teachers expressed fears of employment termination if they meted out corporal punishment upon children. This was particularly observed in government-owned schools.

The practice of corporal punishment was however reported to have reduced in the recent years as compared to the past. This was attributed to increased awareness on the alternative discipline, enactment of the law that prohibits corporal punishment in schools. This was cited during the focus group discussions by both children and adults.

It is but not very common nowadays. There have been incidences but not highly pronounced in the area like it used to be in the past years. I think it has greatly reduced because there has been a lot of sensitization and awareness in schools and communities, on radios by Raising voices and some other NGOs (FGD parents)

This is common in some homes especially in the homes of drunkards... I mean the people who take alcohol. Many times this influences their minds to beat their child so badly because the alcohol that they drink (FGD parents)

3.2.1 Social Norms on Corporal Punishment

These constitute the beliefs that people have that alleviate or perpetrate corporal punishment. From the findings, there were both harmful and protective social norms regarding the practice.

Harmful Norms Perpetrating Corporal Punishment

While corporal punishment is a harmful practice, those who approved it, especially parents, said this was being done in the best interests of their children. This practice was rooted in six sets of beliefs:

- respect for teachers and parents
- instilling discipline and positive behaviour
- way of improving school performance
- way of passing on knowledge and values
- religious beliefs
- individual past experiences of teachers and parents

The norms frequently mentioned were:

- a) **Teachers who hit children are respected at school and as such pupils obey and understand them quickly**

It was clear from the teachers that they sought approval and respect from fellow teachers and the pupils they taught if they punished the children. In homes parents who punished said that their children obeyed them as compared to those families whose children were not being punished. To support this, one teacher said:

A child who is beaten will understand, fear and respect whoever is subjecting them to punishment for example at school they respect the teachers and parents at home (FGD teachers)

- b) **Parents who do not punish their children are lazy and are not respected in the community**

Related to the above, some parents punished their children because other parents would think that they are lazy and as such attracted a negative social sanction of disrespect from other parents in the same community. So parents wanted to be seen as brave and fully in control of their families. '

‘We are better people because our parents beat us’

I think punishing children is good, this teaches them other than pampering children. There was a child I gave a punishment to dig out a tree stump. This child refused to do the punishment and he went and called his father who came and dug out the tree root instead of the pupil who should have done the punishment.

Because of this light treatment from the father, the child did not even complete school and he is now nonsense in the community. I believe if the father had let the child do his punishment he would have learnt a lesson and even been a better person today unlike what he has become now. Beating or punishing children is okay and it helps them. This is Africa and not Europe where children learn by being talked to. Our children understand after receiving a cane, we also grew up and became better people today because our parents beat us. That is why we have to beat these children to enable them be better people in future.

Individual beliefs that mitigated corporal punishment

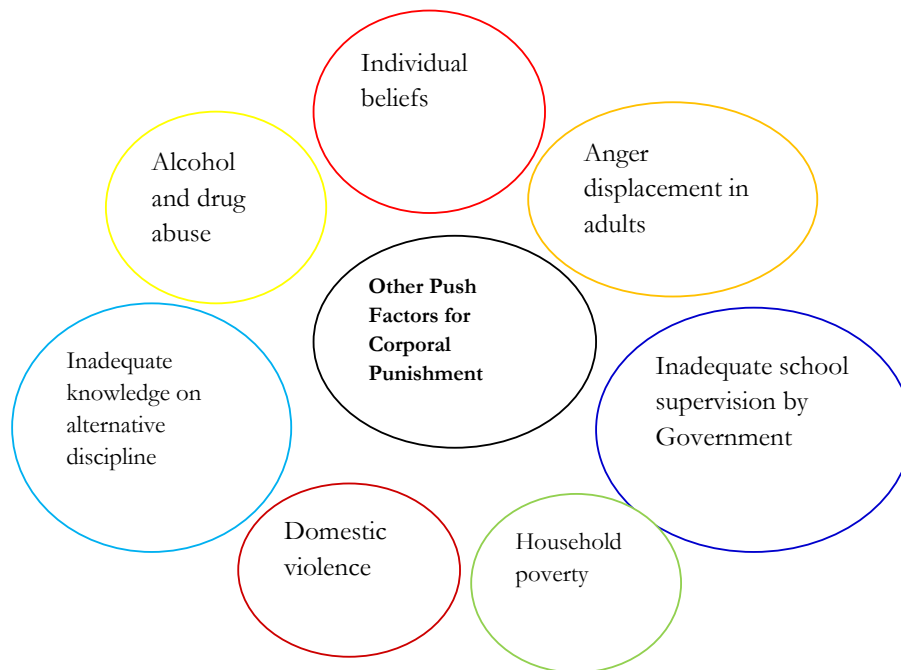
The non-approvers of corporal punishment think of it as an unhealthy disciplining mechanism that results in injuries and/or death in some circumstances. It also leads to school drop-out. Non-approvers believed that children could understand better when talked to as opposed to applying corporal punishment. The respondents also stressed that disapprovers based their argument of non-compliance to corporal punishment on the outcomes that it inflicts on the children, including lowering self-esteem and academic performance; and widening the gap between the perpetrator and the child. Generally, the disapproval of corporal punishment is rooted in six sets of individual beliefs:

- believing in children’s own agency and understanding
- applying alternative ways of discipline
- creates negative and unintended behaviour
- lowers a child’s self esteem
- unintended outcomes such as school drop-out and death

3.2.2 Other Drivers/ Push Factors for Corporal Punishment

Couple punishment was not only attributed to the existence of social norms in the community. There were however other push factors that encouraged and supported the practise of corporal punishment. These included individual and religious beliefs, alcohol and drug use, poverty, errant behaviour in children, anger displacement by adults, lack of knowledge about alternative means of disciplining, alcoholism and drug abuse, poverty, domestic violence, the compulsion to carry on the practice through generations and

inadequate monitoring by Government.



Drinking alcohol and Violence

My brother punished his children so badly just because they had picked some of the rice that he had stored in the house for them to eat. He sent away his wife and only lives with his children. He drinks a lot of alcohol and each time he does not have money he picks some of the rice to sell to get money so as to go and drink alcohol or even give away the rice in exchange for alcohol.

That day he left the children at home with no food to eat. The children had taken days without food and they were so hungry. The eldest child decided to pick some rice and prepared for himself and his siblings to eat. But when their father returned he was so angry that he beat his children so badly because they had cooked some of the rice stored in the house.

He beat the children badly that we had to take him to the police and he was later charged in court. He is currently servicing his jail term in Morkatipe prison in Tororo. I am sure when he returns he will not do that again because he almost killed the children, yet as a parent, it is his responsibility to provide food for the children.

Individual beliefs

Children who are hit perform better in class and the school will be recognized for better performance

Parents believed that families whose children were performing well at school were being punished and they as such started to punish their own children. At the same time teachers too believed that in order for the children to improve their performance, they should punish their pupils. In one instance, this is what two teachers had to say:

African children can only learn from the cane if you do not beat them they never learn (FGD teacher)

The ears of the children are in the buttocks and the only way by which they listen is when they are beaten (FGD Teacher)

During the focus group discussions with religious leaders and parents it was found out that Religious beliefs contributed significantly the practice of corporal couple punishment as it was perceived that it was a means of correcting or admonishing a child to grow into positive behaviour and uprightly. Some religious leaders and parents had this to say:

It is biblically written that straighten the tree when it is still young so that it doesn't bend when it has grown. So canning helps to straighten the child to become a better person and obedient just like it is said spare the rod and spoils the child (FGD religious leaders)

They think a child's ears are on the buttocks so the child can only hear, listen and understand by the language of a stick when canded (FGD parents)

It was revealed that parents and teachers who did not support corporal punishment were guided by their individual beliefs. Some of these beliefs included continue communication and dialogue with children, and providing advice to children. One of the parents who disapproved of corporal punishment had this to say:

There are alternative ways of punishing children other than beating, like talking to the children each time they do something wrong, they can also be advised on how best they can improve or behave (FGD parents).

Below is a set of other individual beliefs cited by both children and adults during the study that perpetuated and supported the practice of corporal punishment in schools and families

- We are successful because our parents beat us, beating is good, and it teaches train children
- African children can only learn from the cane if you do not beat them they never learn, it is only the white children who listen when they are talked to
- Children of this generation are undisciplined and deserve beating to show them the right way
- The other means of disciplining children are slow and should not as such be adopted at school and homes. They encourage children to get spoiled.
- They say that they were also beaten when they were children and they managed to grow up as disciplined adults and so they are following the same example
- Some people beat their children and they do not want to be stopped because they think that it is their right to beat their own children and nobody should stop them"
- Children are subjected to corporal punishment because they are just too stubborn to listen to their parents, guardians and teachers. As such, these elders are provoked to act in a different and tough manner to instil submission and, truth be told, it has worked in most cases"
- We are Africans and we have our ways of behaviour .we still need a cane for disciplining children because that is the only way in which they understand...Children are beaten to change their bad behaviour of the children, if we don't punish them they get spoilt"
- There is a belief that an African child understands from behind through caning on the buttocks than speaking to them on their minds. Even us, we were at one time subjected to corporal punishment and our sense of understanding was awakened"
- They think a child's ears are on the buttocks so the child can only hear, listen and understand by the language of a stick when canned

3.2.3 Suggested actions to reduce Corporal Punishment

During the study the participants had personal perceptions about what actions should be undertaken to constrain individuals in the community that conformed to corporal punishment. The actions included arresting and prosecuting the perpetrators, reporting to relevant authorities, serving written warnings, sensitizing, penalizing and excommunicating perpetrators, shaming and them during community meetings. While some of these suggested action sounded severe and other simpler, there was no particularly consensus on which actions the communities were prepared to undertake to constrain conformity to corporal punishment. Various actions were mentioned to encourage individuals in the community that did not approve or conform to corporal punishment these included making them role models, and community change agents, awarding them with public recognition and according them special protection.

3.2.4 Reference groups/networks that approve of corporal punishment

Taken a disciplinary measure, corporal punishment was found to have major approvers as parents and teachers who assume that it is the only way to train up a child. The other people named were step parents, relatives, religious leaders who believe in the slogan 'spare the rod and spoil the child'; and survivors of corporal punishment.

The different groups in the reference groups were found to provide a reference for their peers when they wanted to make decision to practice corporal punishment upon children. For instance, parents practicing corporal punishment provide a reference for parents who wanted to decide on doing the same. The same was found to be the case for teachers and other groups.

Despite the Ministry of Education efforts to outlaw against corporal punishment, teachers, especially from private schools, were reported as the second major category of reference groups for this practice. The study participants attributed this to several factors, including inadequate training, anger displacement, eluding the government's policy and inadequate monitoring by the Ministry of Education.

3.2.5 Reference groups/networks that disapprove of corporal punishment

While parents, teachers and cultural leaders were mentioned among the approving reference groups for corporal punishment, they were also listed among the disapproving reference groups. Other disapproving groups and networks included child protection committees, civil society, government officials, religious leaders and medical practitioners.

3.2.6 Channels of passing information that shape the practice of corporal punishment

The mechanisms cited to be used by the perpetrators to communicate the corporal punishment vice to different information consumers included social gatherings, community meetings, telephones, face-to-face and the media. In some communities, it was reported that that the clan leadership would lash or inflict on him another form of corporal punishment during a community gathering to correct the errant behaviour.

3.2.7 Alternative Methods of Child Discipline

Discipline is about imparting knowledge and skills, as well as grooming behaviour in children. A range of disciplining strategies can be used. Overall the parents and teachers did not practice these alternative methods of disciplining their children. The parents and teachers had limited knowledge in regard to the alternative methods of corporal punishment. The alternative methods of disciplining children that few teachers and parents know included talking to children one-to-one, suspension from school, apology letters, assigning work, sending for parents, denial of privileges, and the use of a disciplinary book. Teachers express limited knowledge about the guidelines on alternative methods of discipline developed and disseminated by the Ministry of Education and sports. During the

research, the study team asked the school administration to provide to them copies of the government guidelines on alternative methods of discipline but these were absent.

When children commit offences at school, they are asked to bring along their parents. The aim was said to bring the offence to the parents' attention and enhance collective action. The respondents noted that with this method, children felt ashamed to face their parents during the discussion. While the method is intended to discipline the child, the intention of evoking shame may be detrimental to the child's emotional health.

3.2.8 Consequences of Corporal Punishment

All the participants reported that there were adverse impacts of corporal punishment on children's well being both at school and in the community. Respondents noted that children who are affected sometimes sustain permanent injuries or even die in the process of being punished. Some lose their self-esteem, perform poorly in school, while others reduce class attendance and eventually drop out of school, thereby increasing the uneducated population. Others run away from home for early marriage or to streets to escape the brutality. This has increased the numbers of street children and contributed to child marriage. Teachers have had their contracts terminated, thereby losing employment. In some homes, parents were said to disagree over meting corporal punishment, which led to domestic violence or parting ways.

The study participants during the focus group discussion presented several incidences and effects of corporal punishment at school, family and community. In several instances, this is what some children and adults had to say:

Increased non-attendance and School drop-out: Corporal punishment had culminated into fear among the children that they often thought they would be beaten for any error made at school and this had eventually prevented them from attending school regularly. Some of the children that have experienced beating were said to have reduce attendance at school and eventually dropped out of school.

Pupils have just decided to be away from school. For example, if a child expects to be caned because of arriving late at school, they absent themselves (FGD teacher)

Negatively affects the child's self esteem: Applying corporal punishment may lead the child to question his/her worth. It may eventually destroy the child's self-image and confidence. Destroys self-esteem in children because they may believe that they are always wrong.

Domestic violence and broken marriages: This was said to be happening in homes where step parents torture non-biological children with corporal punishment, which sometimes leads to disagreements, violence and parting of ways by spouses

In some cases, families have completely broken up where a step parent badly beats a step child. Few husbands have chased away the wife or the wife may decide to move out of the marriage for the sake of her child or children.” (FGD Teacher)

Permanent injuries or even death : Children who were severely beaten or punished using sharp objects or were beaten in delicate body areas, had likely sustain injuries, impairments and disabilities such as scarring, loss of vision, hearing impairment, lameness and damaged mental ability. In worse circumstances, participants reported that some children have silently passed away.

Some Children have sustained injuries and bruises, become lame or have sometimes died when they are hit with sharp objects, burnt with fire and hot substances like water or porridge (FGD Boys)

Early marriages: Corporal punishment had led to child marriage as some children had tried to run away from the violence at school or at home and ended up into the hands of men who promised to provide them with security and other basic needs. This effect demonstrates the inter-linkages between the consequences of the different forms of violence in the community.

Some of the girls get frustrated in the schools because of being beaten by teachers and seek for independence in marriage. (FGD teacher)

Increased in number of street children: Looking for relief, especially from the step parents' harsh treatment, children were said to have taken on to the streets, thereby increasing the number of street children in the community.

Some children have run to the streets where they have found a 'heaven' after leaving 'hell' in their parents/guardians' homes. This has increased in the number of street children. (FGD Stakeholders)

Creates gap between children and their perpetrators or even families: Corporal punishment builds resentment in the children towards their punishers. It may cause permanent hatred and physical/emotional separation between the child and the abuser and even between families in the case of children living with relatives; and tribes in the case of harsh teachers.

This brings about hatred because the children who were beaten by a certain teacher never forget that teacher even when they grow up. Even step parents that mistreated their step children cannot be forgotten by those children when they grow up. (FGD Teacher)

3.2.9 Recent trajectories in corporal punishment

This outline examines the social modifications that have taken course over the last four decades regarding corporal punishment and the causes of the changes. It also identifies the proposed actions and actors, by participants, to influence elimination of the practice.

Amidst the prevalence and negative impacts of corporal punishment over the last 40 years, positive changes have been registered in communities where the vice is practised. The positive ones consist of a disregard for the vice, its reduction as well as termination of job contracts for teachers. On the other hand, though, there is a thinking that negative changes, too, have occurred. These were said to include a reduction in the authority of parents and society to discipline children.

Overall, there was a general reduction in corporal punishment in the child's three-dimensional ecological environment of family, school and community. This modification in societal behaviour towards disciplining children was attributed to various factors and reasons – civil society intervention, government efforts to sensitize communities, existence and enforcement of strict by-laws, introduction of universal education (UPE/USE), a more civilized society, a realization that children can understand given messages through dialogue, introduction of alternative punishment, availability of documented guiding information and the spiritual development in the community.

Study participants proposed actions for individuals, groups and networks still applying corporal punishment to abandon the practice. These entailed mass sensitisation, addressing domestic violence, strengthening law enforcement, counselling and education to children, community-based child protection interventions, training children to report abuse and improving adult-child relationships.

Groups of Influence or to Cause Change in Corporal Punishment

The groups and individuals that were proposed by study participants to champion or steer the needed change in abandoning corporal punishment included parents, local councils, Police, children, civil society, religious leaders, opinion leaders, teachers, political leaders, Government, relatives and other members of community.

3.3 CHILD SEXUAL HARASSMENT

MGLSD/UNICEF (2012) define child sexual violence as any sexual act that is perpetrated against a child and encompasses a range of offenses, including a completed non-consensual sex act (i.e., rape), attempted non-consensual sex acts, abusive sexual contact (i.e. unwanted touching), and non-contact sexual abuse (e.g. threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment).

Existence of Child Sexual Harassment

In the districts of study, indeed, sexual harassment was found to exist within the core ecological environment of children that encompasses home, school and community. It was said to be a common practice, with men being the main perpetrators; and fathers and male teachers being among them. From babies and infants to adolescents, children from different age groups were prone to sexual harassment. Girls were found to be much more affected by the vice, although boys are affected too, in a few cases. Although recognised by both adults and children, children gave the most responses and few communities reported reduced prevalence.

The perpetrators, at community level, included all categories of men, ranging from influential people such as political leaders to boda- boda (motorcycle transport) riders/workers. It should be noted, too, that some girls were said to be interested in sexual relations to the extent of initiating relationships and even having more than one partner.

In homes, fathers and male relatives were cited to sexually harass children, although the cases went unreported. This was most voiced by children. They reported that it was very difficult for them to report their parents for the harassment because of the parent-child relationship and the threats from the father to deny the child of provision, to chase her away from home or to even kill her if she exposed the abuse. Moreover, it was difficult for people to believe that a parent could sexually abuse their own child. So, the child suffered the continuous torment in silence.

Sexual harassment at school was exclusively reported by teacher respondents. Among the abusers mentioned were teachers. There was a claim that even girls harassed both boys and male teachers by how they behaved and talked to[wards] them. As with the family and community spheres, much of the abuse at school was mentioned to go unreported.

Few communities, however, - two FGDs in Mityana and one FGD in Tororo Districts - mentioned that sexual harassment of children was not common. They attributed the low prevalence to increased awareness and strict leadership, as well as improved access to social services.

3.3.1 Social Norms and Beliefs on Child Sexual Harassment

In the districts of study, indeed, sexual harassment was found to exist within the core ecological environment of children that encompasses home, school and community. It was said to be a common practice, with men being the main perpetrators; and fathers and male teachers being among them. From babies and infants to adolescents, children from different age groups were prone to sexual harassment. Girls were found to be much more affected by the vice, although boys are affected too, in a few cases. Although recognised by both adults and children, children gave the most responses and few communities reported reduced prevalence.

3.3.1.a Prevailing social norms that drove sexual harassment

From the findings, the practice of sexual harassment is deeply rooted in four sets of beliefs.

- a) proof of manhood,
- b) sexual satisfaction and pride
- c) girl child powerlessness and blame
- d) sexual maturity

In most cases there were more individual beliefs that drove people into sexual harassment than social norms by a particular reference group. There were two sets of social norms identified that supported the practice of sexual harassment.

1. Having sex with girls is a test of manhood and proves you are a real man

For the perpetrators, having sex with girls was thought to test manhood and brought with it some form of male pride. It is thought to prove a man's potency and to help boys to test their future sexual ability for marriage. Having sexual relations with a girl by force was said to demonstrate a man's might and, particularly in rural communities as told by respondents, having sexual relations with a virgin girl, with or without her consent, was thought to fetch high scores for a man; being the first one with her. In several instances this was cited by both children and adults:

They believe that, the boy has proved his manhood by raping the girl, so he is man enough. (FGD-Male Parents)

Some of these men say that the man or boy is trying out his manhood and that is the right time to try it in preparation for adulthood. So, it is normal for men, especially among the Baganda. They will say 'era kekaseera ke ak'okugezesa emikisa gye oba anaasobola omukazi' meaning that it is the boy's time to test his chances if he will manage a woman in his life. (FGD parents)

Having sexual relations with a virgin is something to be proud of in the rural communities. It shows that he is the first man and girls believe that a man who takes her virginity is the man of her life (FGD boys).

2. Men who engage in sex with girls are respected by men in their peer group

During the group discussions, it was clear that some boys within the same age group were engaged in the practice of sexual harassment and would receive praises from members of the same peer group. A few incidences of sexual harassment were reported to have been planned by a group of boys in the community to prove their manhood. Other boys participated in this practice for fear of shame by member of the same reference group.

3.3.1.b Individual beliefs that perpetuate and sustain sexual harassment

Girls are blamed for inviting sexual harassment

Girls were mostly faulted for sexual harassment. Perpetrators think that girls intentionally call for sexual abuse in many ways, including skimpy dressing and accepting financial offers from men. They, thus, take advantage of them.

They think that girls dress indecently like wearing miniskirts that seduces them to rape or force them to have sex. (FGD Teachers)

The boys say that the girls deserve it. They are so seductive in the way they talk, walk and dress so that they are noticed. (FGD Boys)

Young girls offer a better sexual experience

With this belief, the perpetrators think that girl children are sexually better, having had few or no sexual encounters. We had several instances during the focus group discussions where boys and men in particular mentioned this.

They say girls are 'sweet and enjoyable' compared to women since they are still young and fresh. (FGD Boys).

They think girls are 'tight and warm', which makes a man gain a lot of desire and not finish very fast and they have a lot of sweetness (FGD Men)

They believe that the young ones are still 'tight' or virgins and can hold a man better compared to women (FGD Men)

After her first menstruation, a girl is ready for sex

Respondents, particularly from Mityana District, reported that it is believed that menstruation is a sign that a girl is ready for sex and marriage. As such, when a girl menstruates, she is initiated into cultural training to prepare her for sex in marriage. Perpetrators were said to

believe, also, that every girl above 13 years of age ought to have a partner to satisfy her sexually; for which men take advantage to sexually harass girls. For instance girls affirmed this during the focus group discussions:

Among the Baganda, if a girl starts menstruation, she is ready for a man. So, it is normal and they will say the girl functions well and she is ready for marriage. She will then be initiated to sexual cultural practice trainings by her aunt to ensure she learns and does everything required of her in preparation for marriage. (FGD Girls)

Girls are safe from sexually transmitted infections

Young girls are thought to be innocent and free from disease. Therefore, perpetrators desire to engage them in sexual relations.

Sexual relations with girls cleanses a man's blood

Perpetrators were cited to believe that sex with girls helps to cleanse the perpetrator's blood, especially if he carries a disease and to even bring immediate relief. This belief was mentioned by the adults and this what two men had to say during the group discussions

They believe they can rejuvenate or clean their blood by sleeping with girls; that is why they do this, many of these are usually old men who want to think they are still young. (FGD Teachers)

They think that they want to heal themselves. People see it as medicine when one feels sick in the community for example People say that it is a quick relief to immediate problem. (FGD Teachers)

Protective beliefs that mitigate sexual harassment

From the findings, there were individual beliefs that protected girls against sexual harassment which were found to be rooted in beliefs related to:

- honour, respect and integrity for the family
- knowledge of the law and child rights
- religion and fear of God

Delaying sex is respected as the human body is a house for God

The non-approvers of sexual harassment think that childhood is not the right time to engage in sex. The religious disapprovers of sexual harassment believe that God lives in the human body and, as such, the body should be respected to engage in sex at the right time with the right person. Engaging children in sexual acts is viewed as unacceptable and as contamination of the body.

Children who get sexually harassed are stigmatised by the community

Disapprovers were reported to think that when girls are sexually abused, they develop various feelings of shame, embarrassment and guilt. They may become isolated due to community gossip and finger pointing; and suffer from emotional trauma and torture. Their self-esteem drops.

Other Drivers/Push Factors of Child Sexual Harassment

In addition to harmful social norms, the research showed an array of other factors that drive child sexual abuse in the study districts. They included child marriage, poverty and child neglect; inadequate enforcement of laws, high male sexual drive, immodest dressing by children, alcohol abuse/influence and gender-based violence that involves male bullying, deliberate desire to spread disease and desire for revenge as discussed here in detail.

Community perceptions on actions to be taken against Child Sexual Harassment perpetrators

The study participants proposed very strict against the perpetrators of sexual harassment. These included: terminating the employment of the abusers, facing clan leadership disciplinary action, giving strokes of the cane, excommunicating the perpetrator from the community, heavy financial fines, isolation and castration of the perpetrator. These sanctions point to the intensity of disapproval for sexual violence towards children and the reality that many times, the law is not enforced and criminal justice is not affected upon the assaulters, which pushes communities to want to take such action. Three rewards were listed for those who openly opposed and worked against sexual harassment. These consisted of recognizing them publically, being given public leadership positions and being made community change agents. These actions were said to motivate the disapprovers to continue refuting this harmful practice.

3.3. 2 Reference Groups/Networks for Child Sexual Harassment

Both groups - those that approve and those that disapprove of child sexual violence - were identified as outlined in this segment. Although key groups in the children's circle of care were listed for disapproving of the practice, they were also listed among the cluster for approving of the practice.

Reference groups that approve of child sexual harassment: Similar to approving reference groups and individuals for child marriage, mentioned were the parents, teachers, peers, motorcycle riders (boda-boda), close relatives, family friends, the drunken and businessmen. The category of boda-boda (motorcycle riders) were said to be especially risky for children as they provide the cheapest and quickest form of transport. As they ferry children to school daily, they are most likely able to offer free rides and gifts to the girls, which they use to lure naïve children. Some were even said to ride children off to unknown places.

Reference groups that disapprove of child sexual harassment: Conversely, almost the same groups identified for approving of child sexual harassment were identified for disapproving the vice. This points to sub-clusters in a general group, who may behave differently depending on beliefs and attitudes. The stated individuals/groups included:

- (i) Parents
- (ii) Neighbours
- (iii) Police
- (iv) Local leaders
- (v) Traditional leaders
- (vi) Religious leaders
- (vii) Teachers
- (viii) Peers
- (ix) Civil society
- (x) Health workers
- (xi) Relatives

3.3.3 Mechanisms by which Child Sexual Harassment is Shaped

Perpetrators were found to be utilizing various means to communicate sexual harassment to different information consumers. They use technology, physical interface and gestures. The reported technology comprised radio, cell phones and social media. The physical interface comprised social gatherings – drinking joints, sports events, and dancehalls; home visits and meeting at water collection points. The gestures entailed giving gifts to girls.

3.3.4 Consequences of Child Sexual Harassment

The research examined the outcomes of sexual harassment in the selected Districts. Those cited included creation of enmity between families, stigma for the abused child and his/her family, school dropout, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies and child marriage.

3.3.5 Social Changes in Child Sexual Harassment

This section recounts the social norm modifications that have transpired in the last 50 years regarding beliefs on child sexual harassment, causes for the changes, actions to support abandonment of the practice and key actors for the processes.

While child marriage was seen to be reducing, child sexual harassment was reported to be on the rise. This was claimed to have begun in the 1990s with the introduction of children's freedoms and worsened in the 2000s. Lenient penalties for sexual harassment and modernisation that has degraded some good parenting practices driven by inadequate enforcement of laws, emphasis on rights and less on responsibilities as well as children's unguided exposure to information technology, constitute some of the changes contributing

to the trend.

We contend that while the legal age of a child has been raised to 18 years, the penalties of sexual harassment are lenient. In the past, up to the 1990s, although men married pubescent females under the age of 18 years, it was not illegal as the age of marriage had not been put at 18 years. However, participants stated that it was not allowed for a man to have sexual relations with such a person if they were not married. If a man harassed a girl, he would face severe consequences, including beatings and expulsion from the community. They observed that the definition of a child and the age of marriage have been raised, yet child sexual harassment is on the rise today with much more lenient penalties.

Traditional parental guidance has been replaced by modernisation: In the past, a child belonged to an entire village and all adult community members took responsibility to groom and discipline the child. Participants added that today, children get lovers and marriage partners without the knowledge of parents, which sometimes, in the parents' view, may expose children to wrong people who may sexually harass them. These behaviour was attributed peer pressure and Western culture influence.

Virginity is no longer upheld: According to the research respondents, female virginity was a source of honour in the past and if a girl got married as a virgin, the groom would bring gifts to her home, in appreciation of her parents. The situation has changed since the 1990s, with fewer girls marrying as virgins. The increase in sexual freedoms may account, in part, for these changes and for the increase in child sexual harassment.

The dress code is more revealing than in the past: It was noted that in the past, females used to wear clothes that were less revealing of their attractive and private parts. Today, with the change of times, pubescent girls and women dress skimpily, exposing a lot of their body parts, which the respondents said tempts men to lust after and even defile/rape them.

Advanced communication technology has exposed children to sexual harassment: Up to the 1990s, children had limited knowledge on relationships and sexual experiences as it was mainly parents who guided them to get into marriage. During the study discussions, it was claimed that with the advancement in technology, including television and social media, children could now watch and imitate a variety of stuff, a lot of which is said to come from foreign cultures.

During the discussions, it was revealed that the increase in sexual harassment over the years was attributed to several factors:

- (i) Children's unguided exposure to information and communication technology
- (ii) Emphasis of children's rights and neglect of responsibilities that accompany rights
- (iii) Children's exposure to social places
- (iv) Influence of foreign culture

- (v) Peer influence
- (vi) Parental negligence
- (vii) Substance abuse
- (viii) War effects

Respondents made suggestions towards reducing and/or ending harmful beliefs and child sexual harassment. They entailed community sensitisation, strengthening reporting response mechanisms, regulating time for social hang-outs and drinking, bringing perpetrators to book, putting in place bylaws to discourage child night movements, encouraging a less exposing dress code and introducing sex education at community level.

3.3.6 People/groups of influence to cause change in child sexual harassment

The influence groups and individuals suggested by study participants to cause change against sexual harassment, the harmful social norms that perpetrate the practice, along with other drivers were much the same as those for children marriage and corporal punishment. They consisted of:

- (i) The police
- (ii) Parents
- (iii) Teachers
- (iv) Health workers
- (v) Other Government structures
- (vi) Civil society and women activists
- (vii) Youth
- (viii) Children
- (ix) Leaders (local leaders, opinion leaders, community elders, religious leaders and political leaders)



CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the overall conclusions drawn from the findings and the recommendations derived from the analysis of the findings.

4.1 CONCLUSION

The study set out to understand the role of social norms in preventing and responding to violence against children in and around schools in Uganda.

From the findings, all three forms of violence were existing across the study districts, although child marriage seemed to be more common in Apac District in northern Uganda. Child sexual harassment seemed to be more common in communities that were more exposed to urban life and with higher access to modern information technology, as its misuse was noted to have facilitated the risk of exposure to the vice.

Observing the trend of the vices over the years, although still high, child marriage and corporal punishment were cited to have reduced, while sexual harassment was reported to be on the rise. The observed drop in child marriage and corporal punishment prevalence was attributed to institution of child rights along with national policy and legal frameworks and civil society efforts. In addition, formal education has largely led to the abandonment of the harmful norms, while contributing to the creation and adoption of healthy ones. Conversely, while harmful social norms hold, the rise in child sexual harassment was attributed to a more exposing modern culture, highly influenced by foreign culture.

The different forms of violence affected girls and boys differently. While boys were more affected by corporal punishment, girls suffered more with sexual harassment and child marriage.

Embedded in the belief and thinking system, social norms were found to be the primary determinants of violence against children; followed by income poverty. Regarding poverty, as much as families would desire to abandon child marriage and the associated norms, the dire income poverty was found to render them vulnerable to the practice.

Although they turn out to be harmful, social norms that perpetrate corporal punishment and child marriage are meant for the benefit of both the child and the family and form a fundamental part of the communities' traditions and values.

Reference groups for and against VAC were found involving people who were very close to children, including parents, relatives, teachers, local leaders, religious leaders and public workers, among others. Unlike sexual harassment, the practices of child marriage and corporal punishment were executed, most of the times, by the reference groups, in the

best interests of children.

From a deeper view, there are relationships and interactions among the three forms of VAC. In many instances, sexual harassment and corporal punishment were found to fuel child marriage and the converse was true as for sexual harassment, as it is fuelled by child marriage. Some driving factors cut across the violence. Harmful social norms, income poverty, domestic violence, child neglect, low or total lack of education, religion and alcohol abuse emerged as their common drivers. Moreover, there was inter-reinforcement of the drivers as they interact to increase violence. For instance, income poverty reinforces harmful social norms as those norms reinforce income poverty, as well. Social norms and poverty contribute to domestic violence, and the reverse is true. However, as much as there is interplay among the driving factors of violence against children, the greatest interaction is between income poverty and the negative social norms. As such, social norms are more likely to shift if income poverty is addressed. To realise the shift, thus, there must be deliberate efforts to alleviate income poverty among the groups that uphold and implement the norms.

The positive social norms that supported the mitigation of violence against children were mostly driven by education, child rights and policy and legal frameworks against child abuse.

Since social norms are collective beliefs for groups, indeed the social convention theory of collective abandonment would be a primary due measure to tackle the harmful social norms that underlie child sexual harassment, child marriage and corporal punishment. Upholding existing positive social norms as well as creating new positive social norms would aid in their collective adoption. Except for unique issues that require specific interventions, using integrated universal responses would aid in curbing the three forms of VAC. They could include transformative community education and dialogue, skilling parents in parenting for adolescents given the modern times, specialised adolescent programmes and tackling income poverty.

Building on the community's recommendations, sanctions for non-conformity, ways of passing information on violence and engaging reference groups for and against VAC along with other influential stakeholders would facilitate the much-needed change.

Building on ongoing efforts, it is vital to embed both preventive and responsive approaches and to focus interventions on the social ecological perspective of children entailing child-level (individual), the environmental context that may constitute family-level (microsystem), community-level (mesosystems) and national/societal-level (macrosystems) interventions.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

As seen through Chapter 4 and section 5.1, there were common factors driving the three forms of violence against children in and around schools. To address the violence, it is necessary to tackle the factors and the complex relationships among the factors. An integrated response would be essential in handling all the three forms. However, there are issues pertaining to specific forms of violence and require specific responses. It is important to note that in all proposed actions, building upon ongoing efforts is necessary to foster appreciation and buy-in.

I. Facilitate a shift in social norms through collective and multiple response

Building upon existing efforts, uphold existing positive social norms and facilitate creation of new positive social norms through education, sensitisation and role modelling at various levels - national, community and family.

Agencies that plan to design and implement social norm interventions should start with social norms formative assessment and diagnosis to understand the norms and beliefs that sustain and mitigate VAC in schools and communities in order to inform effective programme design and measurement

Continuous stakeholder mapping and scoping using participatory methodologies will be important to understand the reference groups and those who have influence over particular norms so as to create social norms change

a. National level

- (v) Create public awareness and social norms marketing campaigns aimed at weakening the negative norms and beliefs while promoting the positive social norms to allow for social change at different levels
- (vi) Promote public debate around the norms to enable public and mutual participation and accountability.
- (vii) Establish and strengthen reporting and referral mechanisms nationwide to manage and respond to cases that are already affected by the negative social norms
- (viii) Utilize ICT through SMS and other social platforms like whatsapp, and facebook to promote positive norms particularly between peers and parents who are a reference group that perpetuate these norms

b. Community level

- (v) Employ community dialogues to enable communities to change together or collectively abandon harmful social norms and uphold existing good ones, as well as create new good ones.
- (vi) Continuous stakeholder mapping and scoping using participatory methodologies will

be important to understand the reference groups and those who have influence over particular norms so as to create social norms change

- (vii) Mainstream social norms change interventions in parenting and caregiver strategies at multiple levels while emphasizing positive and alternate norms that could replace negative norms often embedded and shared among parents and caregivers to perpetuate VAC.
- (viii) Facilitators should be mindful about use of terminologies and should have a deeper understanding of local violence prevention knowledge for meaningful community dialogue that can lead to social norm change.

c. School-level

- (iv) Facilitate conversations or dialogue via various avenues, including debates, drama and the school curriculum to build healthy norms in children.
- (v) Integrate positive social norms within the education and life skills interventions to dispel negative norms and beliefs and empower children as leaders and champions to create social change and build resilience to prevent violence against children
- (vi) As much as children are being educated about their rights, it is necessary to build in them awareness about their responsibilities, too. This will not only assure them of protection but inculcate in them a sense of responsibility and self-protection, as well.

d. Family-level intervention

- (iv) Parent education and dialogue – to help them to cope with change, drop harmful social norms and maintain a grip on parenting with appropriate parenting knowledge and skills.
- (v) Encourage intergenerational dialogue involving children to facilitate an understanding between parents and children.
- (vi) Support families with incomes and economic initiative that address the negative norms that are often rooted in economic benefits and rewards e.g. dowry and bride price among poor households. Economic empowerment will present an alternative to norms that underpin VAC especially among girls.

II. Engage key stakeholders

- d) Both national and local level stakeholders should be brought aboard. Reference groups for and against each form of VAC, influential groups with more focus on the groups and individuals who perpetrate violence.
- e) Identify and support role models in the country and use them as reference group for promoting and diffusing positive norms that can prevent VAC at all levels
- f) Identify the positive sanctions and reward those individuals and reference groups that act as voices for change in preventing VAC in the schools and communities

IV. Communication and information dissemination

Sections 4.1.7, 4.2.6 and 4.3.7 discuss the ways by which information on VAC is shared among perpetrators. Some of them include social media, peer-to-peer, community gatherings, drinking points, television and radio. To stop the vices as well as shift the pertaining social norms, the community's mentioned ways should be targeted to disseminate transformative messages.

V. Address income poverty in families

Income poverty is a major factor that drives violence against children and reinforces harmful social norms that perpetrate the violence. There must be deliberate efforts to support families to improve their livelihoods to offset the constraint that compels parents to marry off children.

VI. Strengthen VAC reporting and case management

Although reporting mechanisms continue to be improved, the study showed that a lot of violence against children still goes unreported, especially when it is committed by people who are not only close to the children but also meet their basic needs. Children need to be assured of protection, provision and justice to help them to gain the confidence to report such violence. Therefore, mechanisms for reporting child abuse should strengthen and brought to the notice of all people in the children's circle of care.

Establish a network of specialized institutions that can provide care, support and restoration to those children already under harm by particular sets of norms and practices.

APPENDIX 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of relevant literature on social norm change and approaches is presented herein to define the social norm construct in regard to violence prevention and response by different experts and scholars.

Basic Understanding of a Social Norm

Violence against children lies within a broader social ecology, with risk factors existing at the individual, interpersonal, household, community and societal levels (Craig et al., 2009; Dunne & Salvi, 2014; Feldman- Jacobs & Clifton, 2014; UNICEF, 2014; Young & Hassan, 2016). Social norms are a key aspect of this social ecology that can either prevent or perpetuate violence against children (Bhatla, Achyut, Khan, & Walia, 2015; Boyce, Zeledón, Tellez, & Barrington, 2016; Carlson et al., 2015).

A norm is what is commonly done (normal) or commonly approved (socially sanctioned) by a people belonging to the same group. The group is typically referred to as a 'reference group' or reference network, and comprises people important to an individual when he or she is making a particular decision, irrespective of the location of the reference group from the individual. On the other hand, social norms refer to rules of behaviour within a social group and the norms constitute beliefs, attitudes and values. Social norms may or may not be based on accurate beliefs about attitudes and behaviours of others [Micheal Jon A-S etal 2016; Schaffer, 1983 as cited in Cialdini, Kallgren & Reno, 1991, p.2; Moneti (2012); Bichierri (2013)].

The concept of social norms is a blend of several elements, including standards, conventions, ideals, social or reference group; behaviour, practices, shared beliefs, values and attitudes. These elements can be explicit or implicit, formal or informal; operating at multiple levels. In drawing a distinction between behaviours and social norms, it is important to note that behaviours are what someone actually does, whereas social norms are beliefs about what other people do and what others think should be done. These can be summarized in two key reflective questions – what do I believe others really do? And what do I believe others think I should do? (Moneti 2012; Bicherri 2013; Alexander – Scott etal 2016; Javia Guillot 2013)

It is important to understand that social norms are shared beliefs about what is typical and appropriate behaviour in a valued reference group. They can be defined as a rule of behaviour that people in a social group conform to, because they believe most other people in the group do conform to it; and most other people in the group believe they ought to conform to it. A violent behaviour can be said to 'be a social norm' (or more accurately 'held in place by social norms'), when there are shared beliefs that the violent behaviour is both typical and appropriate, and consequent expectations in a reference group that the

behaviour will be adhered to. For example, there is a growing body of evidence about the role of social norms in sustaining FGM/C. In the case of FGM/C, if a family's daughters do not undergo the practice, there may be severe sanctions and even ostracism by the wider community, including a refusal to sanction a marriage (Alexander-Scott et al. 2016).

While social norms are widely held and practised, they are unique in the fact that they are unwritten codes of conduct which are socially negotiated and understood. Therefore, social norms understanding is predominantly through either people's perception about prevalent behaviour in their society or through understanding what other people expect them to do. The perception of prevalent behaviour is referred to as 'descriptive norms', while the understanding of what others ought to do is referred to as 'injunctive norms'. A violent behaviour can be said to be a social norm or held in place by social norms, when there are shared beliefs that the violent behaviour is both typical and appropriate, and consequent expectations in a reference group that the behaviour will be adhered to. A typical example of such behaviour is growing evidence on social norms leading to the upholding of Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (Adrienne et al 2016; Cialdini 1991, p.3; Gelfand et al 2016 p.1; MichealJon A-S et al., 2016).

Being a component of the social framework within which violence against children occurs, social norms affect children's well-being:

Social norms may be conducive or harmful to children's survival, development, protection and participation in matters affecting them. Because of these norms, children of different genders, castes, ethnic groups, with disabilities, etc. may have more or fewer opportunities than others to survive and develop. Social norms may condition children's access to health, education and social services and the quality of the service. They may even condition the degree and quality of care and protection that children receive within their households. They are particularly important for addressing situations of violence, exploitation and abuse, as these are primarily the result of social interactions. The relevant interactions are not just those with the child but also among the people that surround the child or whose actions affect the child, directly or indirectly (Moneti, 2012).

The social norms approach

The social norms approach examines how phenomena beyond the individual's personality and personal values are important determinants of behaviour, and offers information about how these influences can be changed. In addition to being particularly influenced under uncertainty, people are also especially influenced by those others who are similar to them (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007).

Social norms are motivated by values and form part of a community's traditions

It is argued that there are social motivations underlying social norms that hold certain

behaviours in place. Those basic values are a part of the communities' values and seen as appropriate. Studies on FGM/C indicate that parents want what is best for their children and this basic value motivates a parent's decision to perform the mutilation/cutting, since failure to comply with the social convention brings shame and social exclusion to girls and their families. In addressing FGM/C in Sudan through UNICEF-supported projects, one key step was to stop framing FGM/C as a problem, but rather recognize the practice as an integral part of a community's traditions and values. (Samira Ahmed et al, 2009). Alexander-Scott et al, (2016) observe that addressing social motivations aids in changing behaviour driven by social norms. Otherwise, social norms can act as a 'brake on social change'. This explains why changes in legal and material circumstances, or changes in individual knowledge and attitudes, may not lead to changes in levels of experience and perpetration of violence.

Social norms exist within reference groups

A 'reference group' or 'reference network' is the group of people important to an individual when he or she is making a particular decision (Bicheri 2015). A social reference group is one such key factor in influencing social norms maintenance, either through approval or disapproval. Where norms are violated within a reference group, this is often accompanied by sanctions/punishment; and where there is compliance to group norms, there are rewards. These beliefs have been proven to shape mutual expectations and appropriate behaviour within a social group, and in turn actual behaviour of individuals within a group, resulting in inter-dependent behaviour (Biccheri 2013; Micheal Jon A-S et al., 2016). An important note is that the reference group may be dispersed and distant, rather than concentrated and located in physical proximity to the individual making the decision (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016).

Social norms are based on perceptions of groups or others and may not necessarily reflect reality

"Social norms can be understood as either "what most people think and do" or, alternatively, "what individuals believe most people think and do." As such, these norms are about what's considered normal or ought to be normal in a given context and situation. Stated differently, norms reflect real or perceived majority opinion and behaviour." Because social norms do not necessarily reflect reality; members of a social group may think that a belief or behaviour is prevalent within their social group when, in actuality, it is not (Borsari & Carey, 2003).

What is commonly referred to as social norms can reflect behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and moral judgements about what behaviours are "right". Since social norms are a group phenomenon, they are linked to, but distinct from, both personal attitudes and individual behaviour. This can mean that an individual behaves in a way that adheres to what she or he believes others deem acceptable, even if this behaviour is inconsistent with her or his

own beliefs. (P. S. Lilleston et al., 2017).

The desire to avoid sanctions and to win group approval influences individuals to conform to and perpetuate social norms, whether they are harmful or positive

Acceptance and fear of isolation are human innate needs. Violation of social norms is likely to attract sanction or punishment by the group, whereas those who comply may be rewarded. Sanctions can range from direct punishment to loss of opportunities via ostracism [Elster (2007); Bicchieri (2015); Mackie et al (2014)]. The brain is said to suffer social and physical pain if a conformer were sanctioned for non-conformance. As such, sometimes people are driven to conform to social norms, even if they personally disagree with the dominant attitude or behaviour. (Bandura, 1986; Marcus & Harper, 2014). The desire, therefore, to conform to social expectations of a reference group, and the implicit or explicit threat of sanctions, means that social norms can be more persuasive and salient in some situations than other factors such as the threat of more formal punishment by the state. It also means that norms [meant] to comply with certain expected behaviours can override legal prohibitions (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016).

In essence, social norms are one way by which violence “transmits” within groups (Ransford & Slutkin, 2016). Through the fear of social sanctions, desire to win approval and internalization of normative behaviour, perceived social norms can influence people to perpetrate, condone, or challenge violence (Bandura, 2004; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977; Marcus & Harper, 2014). For these reasons, conformers are less likely to challenge or quit the social norms that perpetuate violent behaviour.

Change in social norms can embed itself within communities by diffusion or by tipping point

The tipping-point model is described as one where a series of small changes within a social system makes a moment of critical mass that becomes significant enough to make a real change in the system (Gladwell, 2000). The diffusion model entails an idea or a product gaining momentum and diffusing or spreading through a specific population or social system, over time; and people, as part of the social system, adopting a new idea, behaviour, or product (Rogers, 1962). While the former approach focuses on a static point that can be identified as change, the latter looks at gradual change.

It is important to acknowledge existing power dynamics between victims and perpetrators

Several authors note that among the forces that maintain violence against children, is the existing power dynamics, such as gender inequality and perceived lack of agency in children (Blanchet-Cohen & UNICEF, 2009; Paluck, Ball, Poynton, & Sieloff, 2010). Likewise, forces that drive change around violence in childhood include shifting power structures, such as giving children a voice (Blanchet-Cohen & UNICEF, 2009). It is vital, therefore, to acknowledge these dynamics and empower individuals with resources and opportunities to make their own decisions (Blanchet-Cohen & UNICEF, 2009; UNFPA, 2016).

Engaging children as an agency has been proven effective in shifting social norms

Engaging girls and boys to critically examine gender norms and stereotypes has been considered effective in addressing the gender dynamics that perpetuate violence against children. Achyut et al., (2015) cite the Gender Equity Movement in Schools project as a successful intervention which worked with students aged 12-14 years in Mumbai, India to shift their attitudes and beliefs related to gender-roles, violence, and health. The intervention is said to have improved students' attitudes towards equitable gender roles, physical violence, and sexual and reproductive health, which, in turn, shifted social norms among the school children in these areas.

The social norms approach is relatively new in social development programming but is attracting growing attention, including in child protection

The social norms approach was initially applied in public health and health promotion, but has grown into the field of international development, where social norms change has become a key methodology in interventions to change a community's knowledge, attitudes and practices concerning a particular subject. The approach has been used in child protection to tackle harmful traditional practice issues such as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) and Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) [UNICEF/Samira et al. 2009, Cook et al, 2016].

Social norms are, therefore, a critical driver of violence against children that should be an integral component of any comprehensive effort to mitigate this threat to human rights. People's perceptions, particularly regarding their own social groups, are a powerful force in shaping human behaviour. Understanding how these perceptions are shaped, propagated and can ultimately be altered through evidence and theory driven programming is crucial to preventing violence in childhood.

Recommended strategies and programming approaches to shift social norms

Literature reveals principles, key programming issues, programming approaches and limitations to consider for effective programming in tackling and shifting harmful social norms.

Guiding principles for social norm programming

Alexander – Scott et al (2016) presents important principles to observe for designing and implementing programmes that aid in shifting harmful social norms for violence against women and girls, which could be useful to addressing social norms that perpetuate violence against children, many of them being girls.

- i. Gender transformative
- ii. Rights-based
- iii. Inclusive, do no harm, context specific
- iv. Integrated and multi-sector approaches

- v. Realistic programme objectives and timelines as social norms take long to change
- vi. Balancing the need for a multi-sector and integrated approach with the need for a focused programme
- vii. Adaptive and flexible approaches; working with appropriate partners

A rights-based perspective is affirmed by several other authors (Blanchet-Cohen & UNICEF, 2009; and UNFPA, 2016) as it acknowledges existing power dynamics between victims and perpetrators while empowering individuals with resources and opportunities to make their own decisions.

Other principles include engaging girls and boys to critically examine gender norms and stereotypes to address the gender dynamics that perpetuate violence against children (Achyut et al., 2015) as well as interrupting violent conflict, identifying and treating people who are at highest risk for perpetrating violence, and mobilizing social groups to change the social norms that drive violence (Cure Violence, 2016).

Key programming issues

Suggested by Alexander-Scott et. Al., 2016, analysing these key issues helps to guide programming on effective pathways for shifting social norms.

- i. Drawing from formative research to understand if, and what, social norms underpin VAWG in a particular setting and what factors influence and undermine them
- ii. The formative research should include a social inclusion analysis to capture the experiences of marginalised groups
- iii. Conducting a stakeholder mapping to understand those who hold influence in maintaining as well as shifting social norms, who are impacted by norms and who respond to minimise risks as a result of social norms and social norms change
- iv. Seeking links with rights groups and other important local/national initiatives that could either undermine or improve the reach and relevance of your programme
- v. Conducting a risk assessment to understand the possible consequences, for the affected group, of efforts to shift norms as well as an actual shift in norms and putting mechanisms in place to minimise risk
- vi. Establishing existing mechanisms to respond to possible increases in reporting of violence as a result of the programme
- vii. Thinking through how to transform the social norms in question, and how this might inadvertently reinforce norms that could exacerbate violence against children

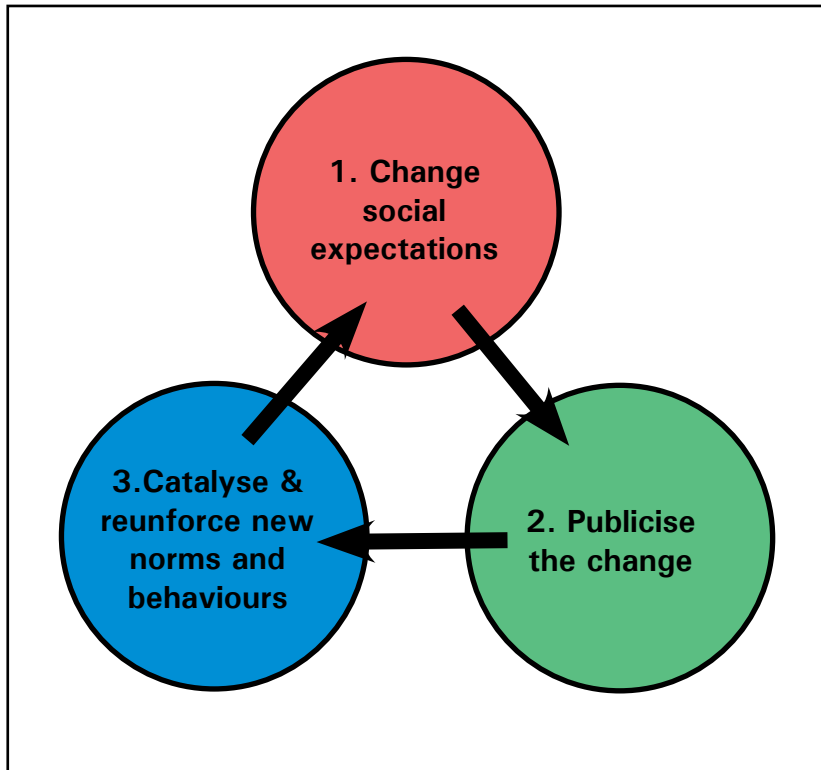
Programming Approaches

Experience from programmes that address violence against women and girls is providing evidence of approaches that may work to shift harmful social norms in different contexts (Alexander-Scott et. al., 2016).

One approach is to **make the harmful behaviour salient and highly visible**, although care should be taken to not reinforce the idea that the behaviour in question is 'normal', typical and appropriate.

A framework for changing norms

Alexander-Scott et. al., (2016) provides an additional three-stage framework drawing on both theory and evidence of successful approaches to shifting harmful social norms¹ that could be used to in-build a social norms approach in programming.



Programmes must **change social expectations** regarding the behaviour within the reference group. This can be achieved through raising awareness to dispel misconceptions in the case of pluralistic ignorance, shifting individual attitudes towards harmful behaviour by weakening existing norm, promoting public debate and deliberation around the norm, promoting a positive alternative norm and providing opportunities for public and collective change.

The **changes in attitudes, expectations and behaviour need to be publicized** through publicising role models and benefits of new behaviour, avoiding reinforcing the negative behaviour and developing a diffusion strategy to catalyse broader societal change.

New norms and behaviours need to be catalysed and reinforced through rewards, sanctions and opportunities to conform.

Further theory and practice augment the above approaches with the notion that human actions are interdependent and the choices of one individual inevitably affect the choices of others (Mackie, 1996, 2000; Schelling, 1980). Lilleston et al. 2017 observe, therefore, that interventions aimed at shifting social norms address the interconnected nature of social groups, while focusing on changing individuals' perceptions. And that this can be achieved in one of three ways: (1) by targeting social norms directly; (2) by changing attitudes and beliefs to shift social norms or; (3) by changing behaviours to shift social norms.

In **targeting social norms directly**, the aim is to shift people's perceptions of what others in their social group do and think through the presentation of alternative social norms (Carter, 2000). The interventions tend to be informed by a schema change approach in which countering evidence is provided to alter socially shared beliefs about a given issue (Rousseau, 2001).

Changing in beliefs and attitudes interventions seek to shift attitudes by introducing people to the harmful effects of a given behaviour and the benefits of avoiding that behaviour (Rosenstock, 1974). The theory behind these interventions is that if enough people within a social group shift their attitudes towards a given behaviour, eventually, the injunctive norms related to that behaviour will also change (P. S. Liljeston et al. 2017).

Changing behaviours to shift social norms is usually accomplished by structural interventions which seek to alter the structural context to make certain behaviours more or less easy to perform (Blankenship et al., 2006). The interventions may shift costs, policies or the built environment. This is based on the Nudge Theory that making small changes to the built environment can "nudge" people towards more desirable behaviours or that if enough people are "nudged" into a certain practice, it will eventually become a descriptive social norm (Leonard, 2008 as cited from Liljeston et al. 2017). Most evidentially successful interventions have been observed to operate at multiple levels and utilise multiple strategies (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016).

REFERENCES

- Achyut, P., Bhatla, N., & Verma, R. (2015). Questioning gender norms to promote sexual reproductive health among early adolescents: Evidence from a school-based program in Mumbai, India. **Gender-Based Violence**, 195–213. Springer.
- Ahmed, Samira, S. Al Hebshi and B.V. Nylund (2009), 'Sudan: An In-Depth Analysis of the Social Dynamics of Abandonment of FGM/C'. Special Series on Social Norms and Harmful Practices, **Innocenti Working Paper** No. 2009-08. Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
- Alexander-Scott, M. Bell, E. & Holden, K. (2016). **DFID guidance note: Shifting social norms to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG)**. London: DFID, VAWG Helpdesk.
- ANPPCAN, 2011A Situation Analysis of Child Abuse And Neglect In Uganda
- Bandura, A. (1986). **Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory**. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (2004). Social cognitive theory for personal and social change by enabling media. In A. Singhal, M. J. Cody, E. M. Rogers, & M. Sabido (Eds.), **Entertainment-education and social change: History, research, and practice** (pp. 75–96). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Bhatla, N., Achyut, P., Khan, N., Walia, S., & A. T. (2015). **Promoting equality and safety in schools**. Bangkok, Thailand: Plan International.
- Bicchieri, C. (2015) **Norms in the Wild: How to diagnose, measure and change social norms**. Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Bicchieri (2013) **What are Social Norms?** Lecture to UNICEF. <https://upenn.academia.edu/CristinaBicchieri/UNICEF-Lectures-on-NORMS>
- Blanchet-Cohen, N., & UNICEF (2009). **Children, agency and violence: In and beyond the United Nations study on violence against children**. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
- Blankenship, K. M., Friedman, S. R., Dworkin, S., & Mantell, J. E. (2006). Structural interventions: Concepts, challenges and opportunities for research. **Journal of Urban Health**, **83**, 59–72.
- Borsari, B., & Carey, K.B. (2003). Descriptive and injunctive norms in college drinking: a meta-analytic integration. **Journal of Studies on Alcohol**, **64**, 331–341.
- Boyce, S., Zeledón, P., Tellez, E., & Barrington, C. (2016). Gender-specific jealousy and infidelity norms as sources of sexual health risk and violence among young coupled nicaraguans. **American Journal of Public Health**, **106**, 625–632.
- Carlson, J., Casey, E., Edleson, J. L., Tolman, R. M., Walsh, T. B., & Kimball, E. (2015). Strategies to engage men and boys in violence prevention a global organizational perspective.
- Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. (2004). Social influence: Compliance and conformity. Annual Review of Psychology**, **55**, 591-621.
- Cialdini, R. B., Kallgren, C. A., & Reno, R. R. (1991). A focus theory of normative conduct: A theoretical refinement and evaluation of the role of norms in human behaviour.
- Cialdini, R. B., Reno, R. R., & Kallgren, C. A. (1990). A focus theory of normative conduct: Recycling the concept of norms to reduce littering in public places. **Journal of Personality and Social Psychology**, **58**, 1015–1026.

- Cook, P., Nelems, R., & Wessells. (2016). World Vision Social Norms Change Research: Protecting Children from the Harmful Traditional Practice of Early Marriage in Uganda and Nepal
- Craig, W., Harel-Fisch, Y., Fogel-Grinvald, H., Dostaler, S., Hetland, J., Simons-Morton, B. Pickett, W. (2009). A cross-national profile of bullying and victimization among adolescents in 40 countries. **International Journal of Public Health**, 54, 216–224.
- Cristina Bicchieri, 2013/UNICEF (2013): Social Norms Introduction Cure Violence. (2016). The cure violence health model. Retrieved from <http://cureviolence.org/>Dagne, Haile Gabriel (2009), 'Ethiopia: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Dynamics of Abandonment of Harmful Practices in Four Locations'. Special Series on Social Norms and Harmful Practices, **Innocenti Working Paper** No. 2009-07. Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
- Dunne & Salvi (2014) https://WWW.Unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/HIV_AIDS/pdf/SRGBV_UNESCO_Global_ReviewJan2014.pdf
- ECPAT International, Plan International (2015), Thematic Report: Unrecognized sexual abuse and exploitation of children in child, early and forced marriage.
- Elster, J. (2007) **Explaining Social Behaviour**. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Ennew (2009); Knowing Children: Black on White Publications; Unit 19/60 9th Floor, Sukhumvit suites; Bangkok 10110 Thailand.
- Charlotte **Feldman-Jacobs** and Donna **Clifton** (2014) ; Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Data and Trends Update. (Washington, DC: Population Reference)
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1977)**. Attitude-behaviour relations: A theoretical analysis and review of empirical research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 84(5), 888-918.
- Francesca Moneti (2012). Social norms: Programmatic innovation and insights from academic collaboration and analysis of experience.
- Gelfand, J. and Jackson J. (2016) From one mind to many: the emerging science of cultural norms <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.11.002> ; 2352-250/# 2015 Elsevier
- Gerry .M, 2009& LeJeune, J. (2009), 'Social Dynamics of Abandonment of Harmful Practices: A New Look at the Theory'. Special Series on Social Norms and Harmful Practices, **Innocenti Working Paper** No. 2009-06, Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
- Gibson. D. (2003). Role models in career development: New directions for theory and research. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*. 65 (134-156)
- Goldstein, N. J., & Cialdini, R. B. (2007). The spyglass self: A model of vicarious self-perception.
- Javia Guillot (2013), Tackling domestic violence with citizenship culture: an experience of social change in Barrancabermerja, Colombia.
- Leonard, T. C. (2008). Richard H. Thaler, Cass R. Sunstein, Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness. **Constitutional Political Economy**, 19, 356–360.
- Mackie et al (2014) 'What are social norms? How are they measured?' **UNICEF/UCSD Center on Global Justice Project Cooperation Agreement Working Paper 1**. October 2012. (Drawing on the lecture slides of Bicchieri's Penn-UNICEF social norms training)

- Mackie, G. (1996). Ending footbinding and infibulation: A convention account. **American Sociological Review**, **61**, 999–1017.
- Mackie, G. (2000). Female genital cutting: The beginning of the end. **Female” circumcision” in Africa: Culture, controversy, and change**. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner.
- Mackie, G., Moneti, F., Denny, E., & Shakya, H. (2012). **What are social norms? How are they measured?** University of California at San Diego-UNICEF Working Paper, San Diego.
- Marcus, R., & Harper, C. (2014). Gender justice and Social Norms—processes of change for adolescent girls: Towards a conceptual framework 2. Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Retrieved July 24, 2014, from <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinionfiles/8831Pdf.pdf>.
- MichealJon A-S, Emma Bell, Jenny Holde (2016). **Shifting Social norms to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls**.
- Francesca Moneti, F., (2012). **Social norms: Programmatic innovation and insights from academic collaboration and analysis of experience**.
- Naker, D., (2005) **Violence against Children: The Voices of Ugandan Children and Adults**. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda
- P. S. Lilleston, L. Goldmann, R. K. Verma & J. McCleary-Sills (2017) **Understanding social norms and violence in childhood: theoretical underpinnings and strategies for intervention**, *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, **22**:sup1, 122-134, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271954
- Paluck, E. and Ball, L. (2010) **Social norms marketing aimed at gender-based violence: A literature review and critical assessment**, New York: International Rescue Committee.
- Pinheiro, P.S. (2006). **UN Secretary General’s Study on Violence Against Children (UNVAC)**. World Report on Violence Against Children. New York, NY: United Nations.
- Rahman, M.A. (2008). Chapter 3: Some trends in the praxis of participatory action research. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Action Research* (2nd ed., pp.49- 61). London: Sage Publications.
- Ransford, C., & Slutkin, G. (2016). **Seeing and treating violence as a health issue**.
- Rogers, E. M., (1962). **Diffusion of Innovations**. New York NY, Free Press of Glencoe
- Rosenstock, I. M. (1974). The health belief model and preventive health behaviour. **Health Education & Behavior**, **2**, 354–386.
- Rousseau, D. M. (2001). Schema, promise and mutuality: The building blocks of the psychological contract. **Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology**, **74**, 511–541. Schaffer, 1983
- Schelling, T.C. (1980). **The strategy of conflict**. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- UNFPA. (2016). **The human rights-based approach**. Retrieved from <http://www.unfpa.org/humanrights-based-approach>
- UNICEF. (2014). **Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children**. New York, NY: UNICEF.
- United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011). **General Comment No. 13: Prevention of violence against children**. New York, NY: United Nations. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. **International Journal of Equity**
- United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2013). **Toward A World Free from Violence: Global Survey on Violence Against Children**. New York, NY: United Nations

- Walakira, E. J, and Ddumba I. N (2012) **Violence Against Children in Uganda: A decade of Research and Practice 2002-2012**. Kampala: Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development and UNICEF
- Whitmore, E. (2005); *Encyclopedia of Evaluation Participatory Action Research*; Sage Publications, Inc. Thousand Oaks Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412950558.n397>
- Whyte, F. W., Greenwood, D., & Lazes, P. (1991). Participatory Action Research: Through Practice to Science in Social Research. In W. Foote Whyte (Ed.), *Participatory action research* (pp. 20-54). London: Sage Publications
- Young, K. A., & Hassan, S. (2016). An assessment of the prevalence, perceived significance, and response to dowry solicitation and domestic violence in Bangladesh. **Journal of Interpersonal Violence**, [Epub ahead of print].