UNICEF Office of Research—Innocenti
Terms of Reference for Institutional Contract

Multi Country Study on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children (VaC)

1. Background:

Child protection from violence is a key priority for UNICEF and its partners around the world. To that end, since 2007 and working closely with national Governments and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), UNICEF has championed implementation of the first ever comparative and global baseline studies on incidence and prevalence of violence among children in over a dozen sub-Saharan, Caribbean and Asian countries. This data combined with specialized other studies exploring the nexus of violence and HIV, and longitudinal studies following children for nearly 15 years, are collectively contributing to improved understanding of how violence manifests in children’s lives. A critical component of UNICEF’s work is to continue making the effects of violence visible, while also strengthening evidence of viable responses to emotional, physical and sexual violence, keeping in mind the post-2015 development agenda.

What is known about scope and scale is grim: violence against children takes place in all societies. In sub-Saharan African countries where violence against children surveys have recently been completed, for example, on average, one in three girls and one in five boys suffer some form of sexual violence before the age of 18.2,3,4 Levels of physical and emotional violence are even higher with nearly three-quarters children surveyed having been beaten, kicked or punched. Well under one quarter of children who are sexually abused seek services to redress these violations. In Zimbabwe, just over 2% of children who sought support ever received care and treatment.5 Violence studies now emerging from Asia are showing similar patterns but with physical and sexual violence against boys higher or equal to that of girls.6 In Vietnam, nearly one third of children have suffered from physical and emotional violence, including having witnessed a parent physically abuse another parent; nearly 8% of respondents reported having experienced unsafe touching of private body parts in their childhood.7

While the prevention of physical, emotional and sexual violence against girls and boys is a significant protection, public health and child development issue, violence against children still lacks traction on the public policy agenda. Confronted with growing global evidence on the incidence and prevalence of violence, government officials and policy makers worldwide are asking: What drives violence affecting

---

1 Young Lives
6 UNICEF EAPRO (2012), Systematic Review of Child Maltreatment
In children and what can be done to address it? Identifying and analysing how structural factors interact to affect everyday violence in children’s homes and communities will help in identifying causal pathways to better inform national strategies and interventions for violence prevention. Unpacking the determinants of violence—focusing on girls and boys at different stages of the life course, from the very young to older adolescents—will contribute to comparative global and national evidence bases on why and how change happens.

**UNICEF: The Office of Research-Innocenti**

UNICEF’s Office of Research—Innocenti (OoR), working with Regional and Country Offices is dedicated to building a robust evidence base for the field of Child Protection that is linked to improved policy and practice. The OoR deploys a model for combining research and intervention in violence prevention. This model is an iterative process that involves understanding the drivers of the issue the programme seeks to address (in this case, interpersonal violence), developing a theory (or multiple theories) of change, designing interventions on the basis of these theories, implementing the interventions, and measuring their impact on the drivers of violence, thus beginning the cycle again, adjusting to improved understanding, results and changing conditions.

**The Multi-Country Study**

The Multi-Country Study on the Drivers Affecting Children is premised on the understanding that violence-related vulnerability evolves in complex socio-economic and cultural contexts, and so to effectively address and ultimately reduce violence against girls and boys, programmes must be multi-levelled, engaging a cast of siblings, peers, parents, caregivers, the wider community, professionals and authorities. Findings from the study will contribute to comparative global and national evidence bases on why and how change happens. The core participating countries are Peru, Zimbabwe, Vietnam and Italy.

Using a socio-ecological perspective, the multi-country study on the drivers of violence affecting children will begin with a focus on the systemic and foundational contextual factors that render children vulnerable to violence. The ensuing multi-level analysis will build a framework for directing interventions. It will demonstrate how critical protective and/or risk factors for violence interact at the household, community, institutional and national levels, thus illuminating in a non-linear yet scientific manner what is needed to reduce violence. In doing this, the research will explore the interaction of family/group and community level characteristics with children. While the literature reviews and mappings will necessarily cover children and violence throughout the lifespan (0-18 years) the country and global review will focus on the very young adolescent (10-14 years) within national country definitions.

The multi-country study is led by the OoR—Innocenti, with advice provided by a technical Global Advisory Board. The study is divided into three stages, each generating programme and policy information.

In **Stage 1: Grounding the Programme** secondary analyses of relevant existing national data sets nested within a qualitative and quantitative literature review and interventions mapping will provide an overview of VaC prevalence and incidence along with a discussion of current understandings of what drives national rates of physical, emotional and sexual violence. This stage of the research will seek to identify the etiology of violence and in turn understand what interventions have worked (or not) and why. Initial hypotheses on the drivers or determinants of violence generated will be used to guide national discussions on priority areas or ‘determinants of focus’ for further research. Each country will produce a national report and these will be combined, with reference to global understandings of the structural determinants and drivers of violence, to produce a global Stage 1 report.
A multi-country stakeholder meeting following Stage 1 and prior to Stage 2 will synthesize understanding of both national and global findings among participating countries and prepare, to the extent possible, for comparative field research.

In **Stage 2: Applied Research and Intervention Development** nationally-agreed upon and hypothesized drivers of violence, generated through analysis followed by national consensus at the end of stage 1, such as poverty, gender and social inequality and/or power relations, will be explored through mixed methods research to understand how the social and structural forces that drive VaC operationalize in the family and communities where children and adults live. Social norms research will help identify points of potential behavioral change. These hypotheses will be field tested, as components of potential interventions, developing preliminary theories of change on what triggers violence and how best to prevent it.

Findings from Stages 1 and 2 will be used to develop both universal (global) and context specific (national) understandings on the drivers of violence and will produce recommendations for small and large-scale intervention testing in Stage 3.

In **Stage 3: Intervention Research and Evaluation** emerging theories of change generated from stages 1 and 2 will be tested through the design of new interventions (or revision of existing interventions) on both small and large scales to build evidence for change thus laying the groundwork for improved prevention programming.\(^8\)

Stage 3 represents the core business of UNICEF and national partners and is designed to enhance understandings of how to build improved rigour and implementation science and likewise how to support improved policy and practice to protect children with sound evidence.

2. **Objective(s):**

In line with research activities proposed during Stage 1 (see above) and in preparation for Stage 2 and 3, the Institution will provide technical and research planning expertise to the Office of Research -Innocenti (OoR). The Institution will work in consultation with relevant UNICEF regional and country offices and Child Protection directors/managers in the development of the research project, under the overall supervision of the OoR-Innocenti.

Subject to mutual agreement, it is envisaged that the Institution will develop appropriate methodologies during all stages of the project. During Stage 1, the Institution will ensure the completion of four national reviews and one cumulative global review of existing information on violence prevention and response and related issues.

**At the national level,** this includes:

a) Systematic national literature review that frame the nature and scope of child maltreatment;
b) A secondary analysis of national data bases that meet criteria of rigour and relevant content; and
c) Interventions mapping at the national level including a review of evaluations that have been completed on any prevention and response issues that address some aspect of violence against children.

---

\(^8\)“Testing” is used here in its broadest sense with community-based randomized control trials being the gold standard. Actual intervention design and evaluation will be largely dependent on country context and funding.
Each national programme of work includes review of academic research, grey literature, and studies produced in English and relevant languages (Vietnamese, Spanish and Italian), as well as reports and findings from international and local NGOs, in order to provide a national picture of the reliable research which presently exists, to be presented in a national report of publishable quality. In each case the Institution will help in the selection of and partner with national counterparts (members of national research teams in each country) to provide academic expertise; national teams will play a critical role in facilitating the transfer of knowledge from Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Peru and Italy to the Institution. The division of tasks will be largely dependent on local capacity and may vary between countries or depending on national data use agreements.

The Institution will be responsible for supervising this work and ensuring the overall quality of the outputs and outcomes, in tandem with the OoR. These will culminate in four national reports produced by the respective national counterparts and one combined global report on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children by the Institution.

At the global level this includes:

a) A meta-analysis of regional and/or global studies and systematic reviews that have analysed levels of abuse (prevalence and incidence);

b) A grounded international understanding of the determinants on what we know and using this to examine factors contributing to violence globally with specific reference to issues of relevance in each country of study;

c) An analytic synthesis of key global violence and abuse prevention and response interventions (whether with adult or child populations) that have a primary goal of reducing boys’ and girls’ exposure to sexual, physical and emotional abuse or neglect in childhood;

d) The integration of findings from Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Peru and Italy, this placed within a global context drawing on evidence of interventions used, lessons learned from promising programmes and issues that need to be considered in adaptation of effective programmes for lower income settings;

e) Delineation of research gaps and priorities, practice and policy recommendations with specific reference to the study sites.

The Institution will be responsible for producing this global report.

To accomplish these activities at the national and global levels, the Institution will ensure continuity between UNICEF country offices and the OoR in the areas that follow.

Specifically, the Institution will oversee all aspects of quality assurance and manage the production of

1. Technical leadership in the design and implementation of work plans and research methodologies for all stages of the project. The Institution will:
   • Develop final protocols for each country’s national review and for the combined global review; all protocols are subject to review and approval by OoR.
   • Oversee and provide technical guidance and/or assistance as required for national secondary data analyses and national literature reviews.
   • Ensure that all research processes during Stage 1 are in full compliance with international standards for ethical research on emotional, physical and sexual violence involving children.

2. Close coordination with and technical assistance provided to national consultants, experts, academic institutions and organizations in Vietnam, Peru, Zimbabwe and Italy.
• Ensure the reviews conducted in Viet Nam, Peru, Zimbabwe and Italy are according to the methods specified in the approved protocol and oversee methodological rigour and quality assurance (for the literature review, secondary analysis and interventions mapping).
• Work with national consultants in Vietnam, Peru, Zimbabwe and Italy to triangulate data from the statistical secondary analysis with the literature review and oversee the submission of each country’s final country specific report for stage 1.
• Prepare with each country a draft report for peer review, as well as supporting materials: a power point presentation and separate policy brief), overseeing the quality and production of these reports with study partners.

3. Overall guidance and/or skills building for national researchers.
• Advise in the selection of and be primarily responsible for building capacity of national research teams to collect necessary data for the research, including ensuring a common understanding of the aim and methodology of the study across the participating countries.
• Recommend national stakeholders for any appropriate training courses.

4. Preparation and participation in a Multi Country Workshop (MCW) planned for the end of Stage 1. The Institution will assist in the
• Development of an agenda for the MCW Research;
• Identification of expertise needed for the MCW training;
• Participation in the facilitation of the workshop.

5. Production and publication of
• A publication plan;
• Four national reports in tandem with national research teams;
• One global report, highlighting the study sites, drawing on similarities and differences between and among countries with the goal of producing a final global multi-country review. The report may be prepared as a manuscript in collaboration with all partners intended for peer review publication;
• An outline for a Multi Country Study Toolkit that includes all three Stages of research activities with the overall objectives of providing a comprehensive step-by-step guide to conducting research on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children, replicating the larger study’s methodology;
• A completed guide for Stage 1 (and related activities in this contract) to take readers through each step required to implement activities in any other country.

6. Remain conversant with research on violence related to each country particularly with regard to the development of Stages 2 and 3 accordingly.

3. Specific activities to be competed to achieve the objectives
The Institution, under the supervision of the Office of Research, will provide project management and research expertise during Stage 1 of the proposed research, while planning for Stages 2 and 3 of the study. Specifically,

1. Where not yet identified, participate in the selection of national research teams under the guidance of the Office of Research;
2. Attend technical research meetings and/or if required provide technical assistance and play a lead role guiding research plans and processes with national teams;
3. Support partners and country teams in the development of detailed plans for literature reviews and for planned hypothesis (and intervention) testing as required during Stages 2 & 3;

4. Oversee the completion of the national country reports through the provision of technical assistance, oversee productivity at the national level and assist in the integration of data (from the secondary analyses) into the literature reviews while editing all documents; producing a power point presentation and a policy brief by country.

5. Co-author the final combined global report for Stage 1 of the research in collaboration with the OoR-Innocenti.

   Assist in the development and implementation of the Multi Country Workshop at the end of Stage 1 and provide guidance for early planning and implementation of Stage 2.

6. Provide full documentation of the research process providing a step by step guide to conducting research on the drivers of violence while also consolidating the study’s research tools and materials to share widely.

7. Based on findings from the national reports and meetings, develop the full study protocol inclusive of Stages 1, 2 and 3.

8. Co-author reports and manuscripts for peer review journal publications as detailed in the publication plan produced.

4. **Specific outputs/products/results with specific delivery dates:**

   - Submission of the first draft of the systematic lit review report
     - Vietnam 31 November 2014
     - Peru 28 December 2014
     - Zimbabwe 28 December 2014
     - Italy 28 December 2014

   - Incorporation of the statistical analysis (raw/secondary) findings
     - Viet Nam 31 January 2014
     - Zimbabwe 31 January 2014
     - Peru 31 January 2014
     - Italy 31 January 2014

   - Plan for multi country workshop developed and submitted 31 December 2014

   - Submission of the final review country reports incorporating both the literature review and statistical findings and any peer review feedback
     - Viet Nam 30 February 2015
     - Zimbabwe 30 February 2015
     - Peru 30 February 2015
     - Italy 30 February 2015
Policy brief and power point presentation for National Stakeholders Meeting edited

- Viet Nam 27 March 2015
- Zimbabwe 27 March 2015
- Peru 27 March 2015
- Italy 27 March 2015

Multi Country Workshop implemented with OoR 31 March 2015

Submission of first draft of the global review (combined country report), with peer review 15 April 2015

Submission of final global review (combined country/global report) 30 April 2015

Provide guidance for field work preparation/ implementation of Stage 2

- All countries (on-going) 1 April – 30 October 2015

Publication preparation, submission based on developed publication plan

- All countries (and globally) ongoing 1 Apr – 31 December 2015

5. **Qualifications and/or specialized knowledge/experience required and desirable for undertaking the assignment:**

1. Experience in conducting systematic reviews on social welfare issues, preferably relating to child welfare and/or maltreatment
2. Advanced knowledge of statistical analysis
3. Sound knowledge of research methodologies, quantitative and qualitative required
4. Good understanding of children’s issues globally, especially in relation to child protection
5. Strong ability to link with academic networks
6. Excellent communication skills with fluency in English
7. Strong English writing skills and a track record of producing high quality reports and publications
8. Institutional lead should have advanced university degree—PhD or Masters—and minimum of 10 years field expertise in the Social Sciences, preferably relating to child welfare or public health; academic practitioners encouraged to apply

6. **Duration of the institutional contract:**

The consultancy is for 12 months, during the period starting 15 September 2014 and concluding on 31 December 2015. This period accounts for days that will be required by the OoR-Innocenti/lead academic team and the project advisory board to review, comment and approve the report drafts and the final report.

7. **Supervision and work arrangements:**

The assignment will be carried out under the overall supervision of Catherine Maternowska, Office of Research—Innocenti and in collaboration with Chiefs of Child Protection in all three country offices. All
deliverables will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Office of Research and before final submission to ensure that they conform to UNICEF standards.

This work will be led by a designated focal point at the institution contracted. Frequent contact with the national consultants via email and phone is required. All submissions will be made electronically unless other means are needed (e.g. voluminous documents, technical problems).

8. **Special instructions**: Based on funding availability, field conditions and agreement with the selected institution, the contract end date may be extended.