The Violence Prevention Research Process: VIET NAM

Department of Child Care and Protection, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs

Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Forum 2015
Special Session II
17 September 2015
Overview of VAC in Viet Nam

Physical abuse (Young Lives 2013, 2015)
- Adult males perpetrate violence to instill dominant, aggressive masculinity perpetuating the cycle of violence and power:
  -- Physical discipline is widely accepted with boys 5-9 years old most at risk
- Over 50% of Vietnamese children suffer from some form of corporal punishment in schools typically physical bullying—this shows a negative effective on math, verbal and self esteem scores by age 12.

Emotional abuse
- High prevalence rates of mental illness (including high rates of suicide) notably among school going youth, age 10-16) but under-resourcing of services (Survey Assessment of VN Youth).
- Girls suffer from emotional bullying (Young Lives 2015).

Sexual abuse
- More common among girls (64%) but remains under-estimated due to cultural norms of virginity and family prestige (Ministry of Public Security, 2005).
Factors leading to Viet Nam’s involvement in the ‘drivers’ research process

- Viet Nam’s history, has always had a strong investment in family but with a lack of evidence to create a priority issue:
  - **Parents**: Children are valuable and seen as savings/security and as ‘property’ for elders (*con cai la cua de danh*)
  - **Government**: Investment in the future generation via child care, education, health and abundant laws and policies.
- New types of VaC since Doi Moi (Renovation) with rapidly the transforming process of urbanization and modernization.
- Untapped longitudinal data addressing the marginality of research with children and young people that considers family, schools, self esteem and optimism
  - Young Lives (infancy to 19 years)
  - Survey Assessment of Vietnamese Youth (two waves 2003 and 2008).
Lessons learned in Viet Nam by the end of Stage 1

- Multi-level factors simultaneously contribute to VaC which implies a multi-sectoral/leveled response:
  - **Structural**: rapid social change, migration, poverty (and unemployment)
  - **Institutional**: a national child protection system with laws and policies for VAC, system of professional child protection services Community: family crises and changes in traditional values—yet there is strong evidence of a policy to implementation gap
  - **Interpersonal**: peer pressure, increasing social pressures to perform well, conflict with parents
  - **Individual**: disability, skills, age and gender make all children different.

- Segmentation of the population is critical—girls and boys suffer different types of violence at different points in their lives; policy and programmes need to reflect this better.
Changes created by the ‘drivers’ process in Viet Nam thus far

- Evidence-based dialogue has moved violence prevention to the front of the *National Program 267 (2011-2015)*, led by MOLISA with line ministries and agencies.

- Communication interventions have focused only on awareness raising—not behaviour change; the Gov’t is addressing this deficit through a social norms approach, financed through current action plan.

- Government of Vietnam’s ‘Behaviour Change Strategy’ underway:
  - #ENDviolence campaign messaging is under critical evaluation
  - The new *Program on Child Protection 2016-2020* and other polices will be informed by the national report.

- Vietnam’s existing research—synthesized, analyzed and interpreted—has effectively mobilized government producing concrete on-the-ground action:
  - Mental Health study; Study on early marriage; Assessment of child online violence.
The Context of VAC in Viet Nam

• The broader political economy of Viet Nam, within the last two and half decades since Doi Moi (Renovation), has seen rapid economic development.
• Viet Nam is an emerging middle income country (MIC) focused on poverty reduction. However, there is:
  – Disparity between rural and urban areas with an increase of migration;
  – Changing family structure which burdens young couples with child care, rearing and development without support from extended families
  – An increasingly large generation gap in terms of skills, aspirations and worldview
• There is widespread acceptance of physical discipline by society
• National Laws and Policies have significant gaps and violence prevention and response are not adequate