

FELLOWSHIP REPORT

END VIOLENCE LAB LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

“The content was very appropriate to the current times of Covid-19.
The course has totally changed my approach to the new normal.”

Implementation

Doesn't get the glory it should
Heartful work for kids

Celebration now

Your commitment applauded
Together we can
#ENDViolence

- Haikus written by Apolitical co-founder Lisa Witter, for the fellows



End Violence
Against Children



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

apolitical

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Highlights

1. The programme supported **22 policymakers from 5 countries** – Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, the Philippines, and Uganda – in 10 weeks of bite-sized, peer-supported, virtual learning to end violence against children.
2. **71%** of fellows reported having fewer resources and attention to tackle violence during the pandemic. **60%** were looking for new skills, **27%** wanted new policy ideas and **13%** wanted to network with global peers.
3. The top three skills that fellows wanted to include were cross-agency collaboration, using evidence in policymaking and data analysis.
4. **63%** of fellows engaged with the fellowship on a regular basis (compared to 10-20% completion rate for a traditional online course).
5. **100%** of fellows would recommend the experience to a colleague. **44%** had already applied what they had learnt in the fellowship to their job, while the other **56%** intended to.

What We Set Out To Do

“ To participate in the End Violence Leadership Development Programme was a meaningful experience. It helped me to better understand the INSPIRE model and how to apply it in my context.”

Co-created with the End Violence Lab at the University of Edinburgh, the Leadership Development Programme was an interactive, fully online programme focusing on 21st century skills for an exclusive cohort of public servants committed to ending violence against children.*

In this report, we share the co-design process, impact and lessons learnt from the fellowship experience. Our goal was to support leaders from five Pathfinding Countries – Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, the Philippines and Uganda – in 10 weeks of bite-sized, peer-supported virtual learning to:

- Keep National Action Plans vital and relevant during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond
- Gain expertise in critical skills from using implementation research to inform evidence-based policy, to inclusive leadership
- Clearly and effectively communicate the importance of violence prevention

Overall, 100% of fellows were 'very satisfied with the experience and would recommend the fellowship to a colleague.' This suggests that the fellowship delivered against each of these objectives.

But the work does not end here. We consider this pilot as a learning experience which we can build upon for the future. A political looks forward to ongoing collaboration with the End Violence Lab – together delivering quality learning for leaders working to end violence against children.

**The Leadership Development Programme was funded by the University of Edinburgh Global Challenges Theme Development Fund and the End Violence Partnership.*

The Violence Prevention Challenge

2020 was a year of significant challenges for leaders around the world. Our goal was to bring a like-minded cohort of peers together to share common challenges and create innovative solutions to violence prevention during COVID.

When we asked if rates of violence against women and children increased, decreased or stayed the same since Covid-19 began, every country reported an increase in abuse and exploitation during the pandemic. Violence prevention, during COVID restrictions, remains a preoccupation for political leaders in all countries.

According to course participants, the Philippines saw a 100% increase in referrals of online child sexual exploitation as compared to the period prior to lockdown; in Canada, one in 10 women reported to be very or extremely concerned about the possibility of violence in the home during the pandemic. Each country reported new challenges in grappling with the pandemic: underreporting of cases to helplines, finding new mechanisms to gather data, and understanding the disparate impact on rural and marginalised communities.

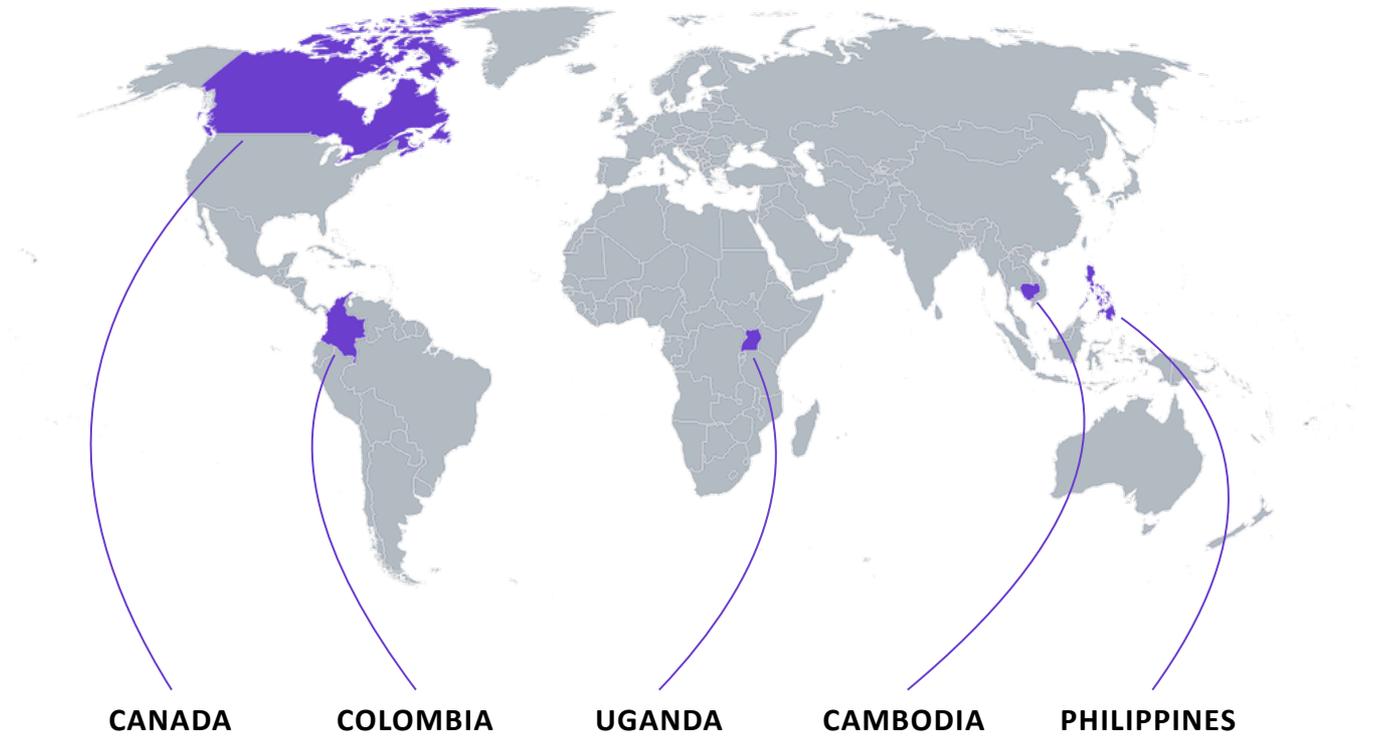
At the same time, fellows were able to share bright spots regarding how they were monitoring evidence and responding to increased violence. For example, Colombian women survivors can ask for help or report in grocery stores. In the Philippines, an Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking developed social media cards to encourage reporting of abuse.

Preventing violence – especially amongst vulnerable populations – is critical in ordinary times, and the extraordinary circumstances created by the pandemic highlighted the urgency.

The LDP set out to support the practitioners act on SDG 4 and 16, (4a; Creating safe, nonviolent and inclusive learning environments; 16a and 16b; Ending violence against children by 2030) and contribute to measurable improvements in other related SDG goals (SDG1; No Poverty; SDG 3; Good Health and Well Being for All; SDG 4; Equitable and Quality Education; SDG 5; Gender Equality, SDG 16; Sustainable Cities and Communities and SDG 17; Partnership to Support the Goals).

Cohort

The cohort of fellows included 22 policymakers from 5 countries. Meet them [here](#).



Meet the Fellows



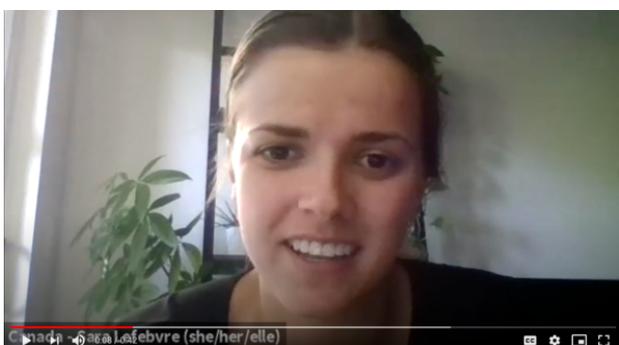
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SOCHETRA NHEAN

*Director General for Social Development, Ministry of Women's Affairs, **Cambodia***

Get in touch with the fellows, see their contact information and their full responses to the pre-survey [here](#).

Course Approach

This week, we'll explore **the art of storytelling and communication to end violence against children**. Today's lesson just arrived in your email. ✉️

 **Required:** Read "Eight Tips for Communicating Ideas to Busy Policymakers" (10-minute read)

 **WhatsApp Discussion Question:** What is one tip in this week's article that can help you communicate about violence against children within your government?

 You can complete this week's lesson on your own time, but before next Wednesday!

Warmly,
Sean and the End Violence Lab Team

14:01

The course consisted of three components:

- **A 10-minute reading or video** related to the week's skill focus, delivered every Wednesday via email and WhatsApp
- **A discussion question** to answer in a dedicated WhatsApp group for fellows, delivered every Wednesday
- **Live webinars** to encourage peer and expert learning, delivered three times and facilitated by Apolitical's co-founder

Webinars



We hosted three webinars as part of the learning experience: a kick-off, group project and graduation.

The kick-off and graduation served as opening and capstone experiences, respectively, while the group project gave fellows an opportunity for peer instruction.

One of the greatest challenges for governments tackling violence prevention is cross-sectoral collaboration. For the group project, each country team prepared a presentation based on the following prompt: *In 5 minutes, tell a story about a time when you were trying to do your work but it seemed to overlap with another ministry, sector, jurisdiction, or stakeholder. What happened? What went well? What challenges remain?* Country teams were then matched with another country, which served as a review partner, and each team received expert feedback from the End Violence Lab. We are currently working with the speakers to publish op-eds on the Apolitical platform for our global policymaking audience. For example, Colombia's story is published on Apolitical as **When working across government silos becomes a matter of life and death.**

Lesson plan

Using a pre-survey, Apolitical and the End Violence Lab were able to build a curriculum of 10 lessons. Below we include each lesson alongside a quote of what a different learner wanted to gain from the fellowship.

1. How to use evidence in policymaking

- a. "[My main challenge is to] develop an evidence-based and costed national action plan that sets commitments for three to five years." – Colombia

2. Communications and storytelling in government

- a. "I would like to improve my abilities to tell a narrative that engages others on these issues." – Canada

3. How to be strategic in government

- a. "I hope to learn how to better the implementation of our Philippine Plan of Action to End VAC and strategically engage agencies with a mandate to implement the different Key Result areas." – Philippines

4. How to be adaptive and agile in changing landscapes

- a. "[My main challenge is] time constraints and internet accessibility during COVID-19" – Cambodia

5. How to collaborate across agencies and boundaries

- a. "[I want to] collaborate among stakeholders, professionals and significant individuals and gain their best practices in managing and dealing with violence." – Philippines

6. How to be more inclusive of women, indigenous and marginalised voices

- a. "One of the biggest challenges is jurisdictional issues as federal and provincial jurisdiction issues can contribute to gaps in service delivery for Indigenous women and youth." – Canada

7. How to use data in policymaking

- a. "[I want to] analyse data of violence against children and find a good solution for ending it." – Cambodia

8. How to tackle violence at home (especially during Covid-19)

- a. "I hope to gain insight as to how to better coordinate within my Department and among Government Departments, on issues related to children and families, including family violence." – Canada

9. How to tackle gender-based violence in schools

- b. "I hope that I can learn...about best practices on the coordination with the multi-sectors to take action on intervention and respond to gender-based violence against women and children." – Cambodia

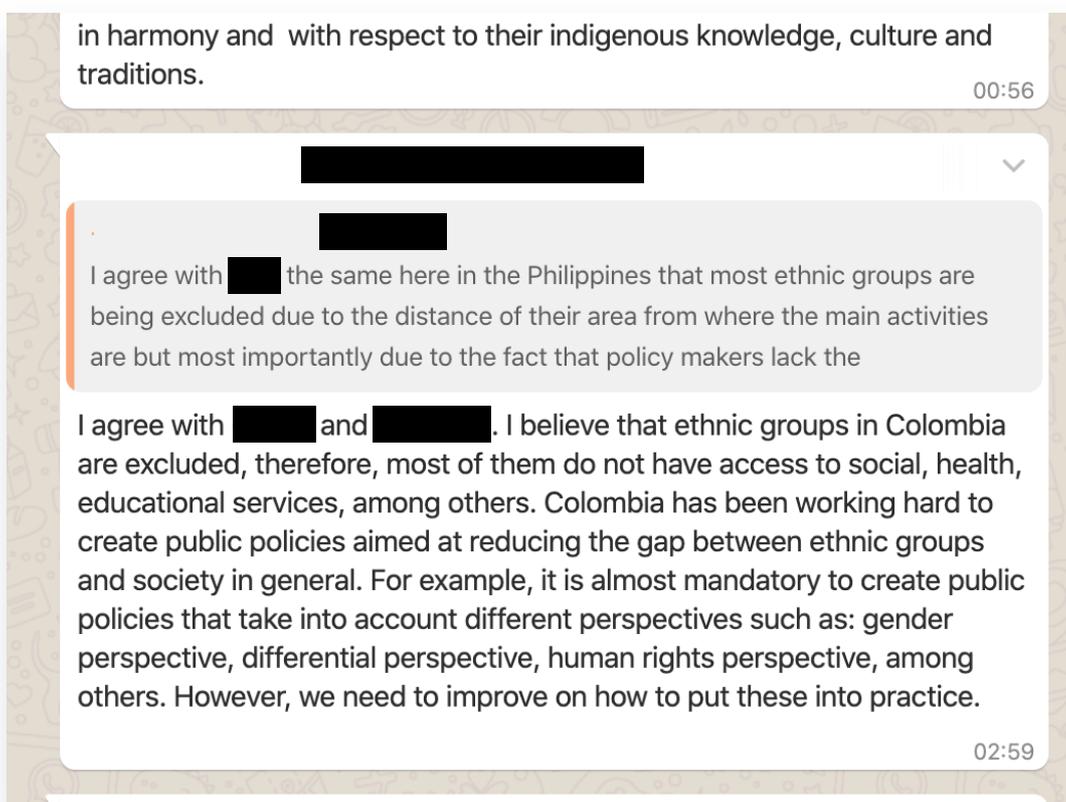
10. How to build safer cities

- a. "[I want to gain] good practices of safer-school, safer community, positive parenting, and data usage to create more programs or policies to end violence against the children." – Cambodia

Discussion questions

Each week included a discussion question for fellows to answer in a dedicated WhatsApp group. Fellows were encouraged to respond to each other's responses. Questions included:

- If you had to choose a package of three INSPIRE strategies that could most influence policy and practice in your country, what would they be?
- What is one new way of working that you would like to see (in your team or government) after the pandemic?
- Have rates of violence against women and children increased, decreased or stayed the same since Covid-19 began? How is your country monitoring this problem and collecting evidence?
- What is your big goal over the next 6 months?



Learnings & Engagement

Polling

During the webinars, we polled fellows on a number of topics to gauge their interests and overall satisfaction with the course.

What is the top reason why you are here?

- A. Learn new skills relevant to my work (60%)**
- B. Get new policy ideas (27%)
- C. Network with peers around the world (13%)

What has been the impact of COVID-19 on the resources and attention you have to tackle violence against children?

- A. We have less resources and attention now (71%)**
- B. We have more resources and attention now (14%)
- C. We have the same amount of resources and attention as before (14%)

What's the one skill where you have the most superpower?

- A. Verbal communications and storytelling (18%)**
- B. Strategic thinking (18%)**
- C. Influencing others (18%)**
- D. Getting the most out of others (18%)**
- E. Problem-solving (12%)
- F. Using evidence in policymaking (12%)
- G. Crisis management (6%)
- H. Data analysis (6%)
- I. Understanding technology and its impacts (0%)
- J. Written communications and storytelling (0%)

What's the one skill where you have the most desire to improve?

- A. Using evidence in policymaking (22%)**
- B. Data analysis (17%)
- C. Strategic thinking (11%)
- D. Influencing others (11%)
- E. Getting the most out of others (11%)
- F. Understanding technology and its impacts (11%)
- G. Verbal communications and storytelling (6%)
- H. Written communications and storytelling (6%)
- I. Crisis management (6%)
- J. Problem-solving (0%)

How advanced and supported is the development and implementation of evidence-based policies on VAC in your government today? 10 as most advanced; 1 as least advanced

- A. 9 (13%)
- B. 8 (33%)
- C. 7 (33%)
- D. 6 (7%)
- E. 5 (13%)

What method would you prefer for ongoing support from the End Violence Lab to help you achieve your goals?

- A. Via structured email follow-up communication with the End Violence Lab (50%)
- B. Through a couple of follow-up calls over the 6 months with Kati and Debi (38%)
- C. Through informal Whatsapp communication (as and when I need it) with the End Violence Lab team (13%)
- D. Thank you but we don't need it (0%)

Platform engagement

Fellows engaged with a wide range of policy content on the Apolitical platform. The top five pieces of content were:

1. Field Guide: Ending Child Sexual Violence
2. Article: Covid-19 is giving bad habits and old ways of working a comeback
3. Sector Page: Gender and Inequality
4. Field Guide: Safer Schools
5. Article: How to think strategically about your goals

WhatsApp engagement

Overall, there was high engagement on our WhatsApp collaboration platform (~20 posts per week), with the exception of Weeks 5–9 when fellows were working on group projects.



Real-Time Evaluation

We engaged in real-time evaluation to ensure that course participants were getting what they needed. As much as possible, Apolitical and the End Violence Lab worked together to deliver a relevant course.

We also paid close attention to what could be improved. During the webinars, we polled fellows on a number of topics to gauge their interests and overall satisfaction with the course.

As this is a pilot, we wanted to find areas to improve the fellowship in a future iteration. Through our feedback survey, we have identified one primary area for growth:

Fellows told us repeatedly that they want **more face-to-face interaction** with each other.

Even three webinars was not enough! A majority (58%) of fellows were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the connections they made with other government officials, a number we would target to improve in a future fellowship.

While the WhatsApp group helped fellows to engage deeply with the content on a weekly basis and answer discussion questions, we can offer more informal opportunities for peer interaction. This would allow fellows to not only engage in a structured discussion with a moderator or expert, but also to learn more directly with peers. In future, we might explore:

- A **virtual coworking** or coffee session every other week
- Greater use of **breakout rooms**
- WhatsApp discussion questions **chosen and introduced by the fellows themselves**
- An **additional project** that groups fellows with peers outside their own country team

Overall, we were encouraged by the hunger for this peer learning and look forward to supporting fellows with deeper peer interaction in a future cohort.

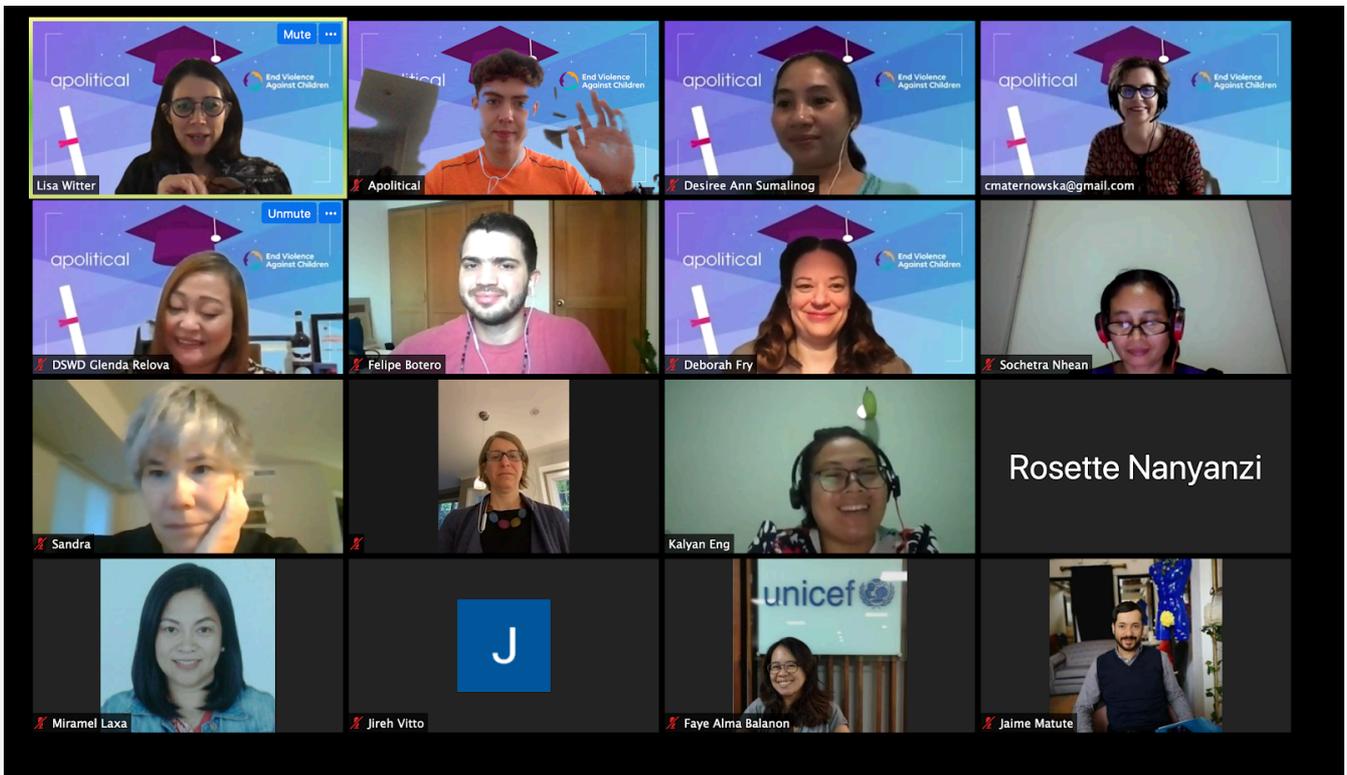
Outcomes

“The fellowship helped me to strengthen leadership and practical skills and it gave me the opportunity to build an international network among people involved in strategic roles regarding VAC prevention.”

Overall, we were extremely pleased with engagement and impact – and fellows have even given direct feedback for how we can improve going forward.

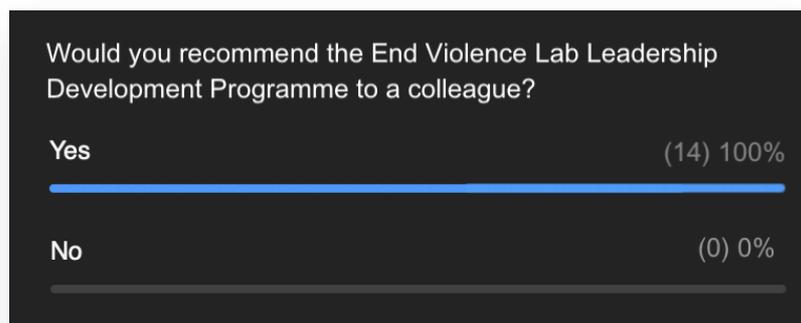
Engagement

A majority (63%) of fellows were engaged on a regular basis with the fellowship. This is much higher than the 10-20% completion rate one might expect from a traditional online course where learners do not pay for the course themselves. Moreover, we found that the fellowship not only engaged but also delivered impact to this cohort.



100% of fellows would recommend the course to a colleague, and we also received granular feedback during a post-fellowship survey:

- 100% were “very satisfied” with the fellowship
- 100% were “very satisfied” with the content they received on a weekly basis
- 100% were satisfied with the WhatsApp collaboration platform for learning and interacting (50% were “very satisfied”)
- 44% had already applied what they had learnt in the fellowship in their job, while 56% intended to



Soft skills gained

Through the LDP, we aimed to upskill fellows on soft skills including communications and storytelling, influencing others and strategic thinking. Given Covid-19, there was an added emphasis on how to learn soft skills in a virtual setting.

The different communication platforms (WhatsApp, Zoom) and types of interaction (breakout rooms, group presentations) allowed fellows to flex their ‘learning muscles’ in both written and verbal, informal and formal settings.

One week's discussion question asked fellows to identify one new way of working that they would like to see in their team or government after the pandemic. Overall, fellows would like to see:

- A. A culture of trust, agility and flexibility
- B. Fewer meetings and more strategic use of in-person interactions
- C. A more technologically-advanced workplace
- D. A more happy and confident team
- E. More control given to indigenous communities
- F. More co-creation

Country	New ways of working in their organisation
Cambodia	"After the pandemic, governments will have fostered a culture of agility and flexibility that helps people feel psychologically safe ."
Colombia	"A new way of working I would like to see in my organization after the pandemic, is co-creation . In my organization, this reality has brought new dynamics, as more discussions and less emails and letters, and also the collective design of outcomes in relatively short periods."
Canada	"During the pandemic, Indigenous communities had to provide receipts for how they were using federal funds to support their members but the specific items could vary, and we saw rates of investments in areas that we would not have anticipated such as community security officers, food security and mental health."
Philippines	"The one new way of working that I would like to see my government to be working on is to ' sustain the new '. The past months proved that we can do transactions and facilitate things even without physical presence. The management was able to find innovative ways to maintain its full operational capacity given the limited workforce and resources. Transactions are paperless, faceless and fast."
Uganda	"I have personally witnessed some traditional way of doing things changing in my institution where the chief executive directs that if it is an urgent issue concerning children in the field, we don't have to wait for his approval . I believe, if organisations can adapt to this new normal, then we can be able to see change in the public sector."

Practical skills

The fellowship taught us many lessons about virtual learning and how to make it great. New to working virtually themselves, Colombian colleagues have adapted the Apolitical-End Violence Lab pedagogy of bite-sized, peer learning. Elements of the pedagogy are even being used to deliver their INSPIRE Coordination Course. They described the process and approach as "efficient", "flexible and pertinent", "clear" and "defined".

Topical skills

Covid-19 presented fellows with both new and exacerbated challenges as they worked to prevent violence in their countries. Through our global cohort, we were able to see cross-country trends in responses to weekly discussion questions. Below are three examples.

Discussion question: If you had to choose a package of three INSPIRE strategies that could most influence policy and practice in your country, what would they be?

1. Parent and caregiver support
2. Implementation and enforcement of laws
3. Education and life skills

Responses showed a clear shift towards prevention, with an overwhelming number of countries pointing to an implementation challenge: 'while a number of laws and policies against violence are now in place, implementation is still lagging behind'.

Discussion question: What is one obstacle you face in your work to end violence against children, and how might you overcome it?

1. Multi sectoral coordination challenges, such as:
 - a. Lack of financial support from the national budget
 - b. Lack of a national action plan for violence against children
 - c. Key sectoral ministries have varying levels of technical expertise
 - d. Trouble coordinating across jurisdictions
 - e. Lack of a child protection structure at the local government level
2. Complications from Covid-19
3. Overcoming established systems

Discussion question: What is your big goal over the next 6 months?

Country	6-Month Goal
Cambodia	To disseminate the 7 INSPIRE strategies to end violence against children to government and non government partners
Colombia	Implementing a National Action Plan to End Violence against Children and Adolescents Include VAC theory and good practices into our violence prevention strategy
Canada	Contribute to the development of the Government of Canada’s National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence
Philippines	Design an evidence-based result of the status implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan Share (through Technical Sharing Session) the learning and insights gained from this Leadership Development Programme Revisit the National Action Plan incorporating interventions for the new normal Popularize the 7 INSPIRE strategies among all actors in the protection of children Review the provincial Action Plan on prevention of Early Child Marriage and advocate for the scaling up of this action plan to another province
Uganda	Implement the recommendations of the safe to learn diagnostic study conducted in Uganda in 2019 Put into action the different concepts and ideas shared by members especially those aimed at creating a multi-sectoral approach

And finally...in fellows’ own words

To wrap up our report, these quotes were shared in our anonymous feedback survey at the end of the programme.

“ To participate in the End Violence Leadership Development Programme was a **meaningful experience**. It helped me to **better understand the Inspire model** and how to **apply it in my context**.”

“ **Keep this program** so that many could be helped like us :)”

“ **The programme is a rich venue to capacitate government personnel** and officials on how to effectively communicate strategies to end VAC as well as learning from other context/ countries’ experiences that can be possibly replicated.”

“ Joining this leadership training is a testament that no matter how busy one is if he /she is passionate enough to learn and improve one will find time to do so. I'm grateful for the additional readings, and sharing of experiences as well as best practices of different policy makers from 5 different countries. The commonalities of the problems faced by each country and the different strategies being employed are beneficial to validate existing policies. **I found this journey very productive and helpful to end gender based violence.**”

Thank you.

Notes:

There is an additional appendix with granular WhatsApp responses, which for privacy purposes is stored with the End Violence Lab. Please get in touch with the End Violence Lab for further information.

See also the three real-time learning documents created for the End Violence Knowledge Platform [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).