

REPORT FROM THE 'KICK-OFF' MEETING OF THE GLOBAL EVAC KNOWLEDGE NETWORK: A FORUM FOR USERS AND PRODUCERS OF EVIDENCE

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Acknowledgements/list of contributors

This report

This report presents a summary of key issues discussed at the meeting and a vision for the future of the EVAC Knowledge Network. It forms the basis of a consultative document for meeting attendees, as well as a summary report to be shared with wider stakeholders.

The report was prepared by Catherine Maternowska, Global Partnership to End Violence against Children (GPEVAC); Ramya Subrahmanian, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti; Sumaira Chowdhury, UNICEF; and Sarah Morton, Matter of Focus.

Organizing group

The meeting was organized by a group coordinated by UNICEF, the Office of the Special Representative to the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children (SRSG-VAC) and GPEVAC. Over several months, the organizing team met virtually and took the lead on developing the agenda and detailing different sessions. Members of the organizing group included: Stephanie Burrows (WHO), Claudia Cappa, Ramya Subrahmanian, Stephen Blight and Sumaira Chowdhury (UNICEF), Andrew Claypole (UNSRSG-VAC), Christophe Cornu (UNESCO), Camilla Lewis (DfID), Begona Fernandez and Daniela Ligiero (Together for Girls), Greta Massetti (CDC) and Catherine Maternowska and Sabine Rakotomalala (GPEVAC).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development contains a bold and ambitious call to end violence against children. Agenda 2030 also underscores the importance of “quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data... to enable the measurement of progress and to ensure no one is left behind”. To develop evidence-based policies and programmes, Governments need robust, disaggregated data and evidence to understand the magnitude and nature of violence against children in their respective countries, and to measure progress towards its elimination. Quality research is also needed to understand the underlying factors that perpetuate its existence, as well as to identify promising strategies and interventions on prevention and response. Evaluations to assess programmes are an equally important component to measure impact and learn lessons.

“To develop evidence-based policies and programmes, Governments need robust, disaggregated data and evidence to understand the magnitude and nature of violence against children in their respective countries, and to measure progress towards its elimination.”

In 2017, the Executive Committee of the Global Partnership tasked a Working Group, chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and UNICEF, to explore the formation of a multi-stakeholder platform forum on data and evidence as a platform for technical discussions. The goal was to bring together stakeholders to discuss and build consensus on how to address challenges on data and evidence relating to violence against children. Critical to the work of the forum is ensuring that UN-mandated SDG monitoring processes are complemented by other VAC data, and monitoring, evaluation and research initiatives, with the aim to discuss and share findings, strengthen methodology and build consensus.

With the aim of developing focus areas, priority issues and ultimately a dedicated work plan for such a forum, a kick-off meeting was convened at the UNICEF Office of Research Innocenti in March 2019. It brought together more than 40 experts from the UN system, civil society and academia to identify priority topics for the forum to focus on.

Participants at the meeting endorsed the newly named *Global EVAC Knowledge Network: A Forum for Users and Producers of Data* (the Network); they were unanimous on the importance of establishing the Network and putting it on a formal basis.

This report captures initial presentations and discussions around the data and evidence resources needed to support countries working to end violence against children; tools currently being used across agencies/places to collect data; gaps in data, evidence and learning; and the current state of resources/platforms offering information and knowledge on VAC. The report also provides ideas on how to move the agenda forward as the community of practice works collectively to build the evidence architecture and subsequent actions to end violence.

It was agreed that the Network should continue to be chaired by members of the End Violence Executive Committee and convened by the End Violence secretariat. The End Violence website, launched in Q3 2019, will serve as a virtual point bridging existing platforms, networks and knowledge sources while also serving as home to products delivered by Forum members. Three initial products will be generated in 2019: *a Methods Menu*—offering a selection of rigorous approaches for establishing baselines and monitoring data; *an Evidence Gap Map* for future research planning; and *a Resource Pack: Child participation in VAC research*.

INTRODUCTION

In April 2017, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (OSRSG-VAC) at the Executive Committee of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children (GPEVAC) identified a need to collectively “overcome the frequent disconnect between data and action, and between statistical offices and policymakers.” In 2018, OSRSG-VAC, UNICEF and the Secretariat of GPEVAC convened a number of stakeholders to develop a Concept Note on a vision for such a group, proposing that its purpose would be “to create a bridge between the UN Statistical Commission mandated work of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Violence Against Children (IAEG-VAC)¹ and the data and research activities of various national and international actors, as well as the entities responsible for programme implementation.”

A ‘Multi-stakeholder Forum’ was proposed as a platform for technical discussions on data and evidence. It could present and discuss, from a programmatic learning perspective, the work of the IAEG-VAC and findings from various data, monitoring, evaluation and research studies. A potential role for the Forum could also be to explore the possibility of developing a common research agenda with an associated action plan and resource mobilization strategy. These discussions could also allow for the development of a framework for National Plans of Action (NPA) and an exchange between stakeholders on national approaches. This would require commitment from all partners to share programme strategies and develop common understandings of the support to be provided to NPAs. In addition, such a Forum could link discussions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) reporting processes.

“The two-day event brought together 40 experts in data and evidence on ending violence against children at the UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti in Florence, Italy.”

March 2019 saw the ‘kick-off and first consultative event’ for the Forum, renamed the **Global EVAC Knowledge Network: A Forum for Evidence Producers and Users (the EVAC Network)**². The two-day event brought together 40 experts in data and evidence on ending violence against children at the UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti in Florence, Italy. They discussed and explored how to develop the field and ensure that

¹ The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) is tasked with working toward identifying nationally relevant and human rights-sensitive indicators and targets, as well as establishing baseline data.

² Participants at the meeting proposed the need for a new name for the ‘Multi-stakeholder Forum’. The new name identified by the organizing group is the Global EVAC Knowledge Network: A Forum for Users and Producers of Data and Evidence, which is used in this Report.

countries taking action to end violence against children have the data and evidence they need, as well as access to expert and technical support and advice. The meeting focused on conversation and consensus building around crucial issues in the field including:

- What data and evidence resources are needed to support countries taking action to end violence against children? How should the evidence community work together to achieve this?
- What tools are currently being used across agencies and places to collect data? How can this be streamlined to assure quality and greater standardization?
- What are the gaps in data, evidence and learning, and how can the evidence community work together to address them?
- How can current resources and platforms be linked and enhanced to create a dynamic, useful resource and avoid duplication?
- What actions should be taken to keep this agenda moving forward? What types of agreement or approach could help strengthen the evidence architecture on ending violence against children?

In the initial session, participants were asked to articulate what success would look like for the EVAC Network. Responses fell into the following categories:

A PLAN FOR THE EVAC NETWORK

- Shared priorities
- An action plan/workplan
- Vision and values
- Next steps
- A punchy name

A STRATEGY FOR ACCELERATED ACTION

- Common understanding of approaches and gaps of evidence and how to address them
- A clear commitment and plan for developing evidence architecture
- How organizations will take forward the work together and separately

A CLEAR APPROACH TO DATA AND EVIDENCE

- Improve links between research, policy and practice
- More support for research from the Global South
- Clear links with how action can be taken on the ground

KEY DISCUSSIONS AT THE EVAC KNOWLEDGE NETWORK MEETING

Over the two-day meeting, participants took part in a number of thematic sessions and discussion groups. A brief summary offering highlights of the sessions below followed the Welcome and Introductions session (Session 1).

Session 2:

The policy and advocacy landscape for evidence on ending violence against children

The panellists of the opening session placed the agenda of the EVAC Network in the context of the SDGs, specifically as regards to the targets related to violence against children – and the challenges in reporting against it. The availability (or lack thereof) of regularly collected data and evidence based on strong ethical foundations was highlighted as a key challenge. However, the speakers also highlighted the progress made across sectors and by various stakeholders, including the development of *INSPIRE: Seven Strategies to End Violence Technical Resource Pack*. As Daniela Ligiero, Chair of the Executive Committee of GPEVAC, put it, paraphrasing Alice Paul, this movement for improved data and evidence ‘is a sort of mosaic’ where everyone brings their piece but, equally, there is a need to step back to see the full picture to identify gaps and priorities that need concerted attention and action.

Session 3:

A methods menu: Review of sources, surveys, services and systems across sectors

A first step in preventing violence is to develop a better understanding of its magnitude, nature and consequences. Many governments and partners, particularly those wanting to join GPEVAC as Pathfinding Countries, still require baselines on violence against children. Although several methods and options are available to countries for developing statistical baselines, a better consolidation of the different options available is still needed to guide stakeholders in picking the methods that best suit their requirements and resource envelopes. Importantly, as the field of violence prevention for children has developed, it has become clear that data collection in isolation is an ineffective way to

tackle the issue of physical, emotional and sexual violence. Both the approach and the process are crucial to build the skills and capacity need to understand the complexity of violence prevention and violence reduction.

Alongside this engaged discussion, participants agreed that while baseline surveys demonstrating the magnitude of the problem are crucial, so too is the ongoing monitoring of cases of violence reported through strong administrative data, reflecting service uptake. The request for a continued focus on work systems that are supported by administrative data was clearly articulated.

At the meeting, a draft 'methods menu' was presented as a showcasing of the variety of approaches currently available, including the Centers for Disease Control Violence Against Children Survey/Together for Girls (CDC VACS/TfG), the International Center for Appropriate and Sustainable Technology (ICAST) surveys developed under the aegis of IPSCAN, the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) survey and secondary analyses of existing data, including the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) and others. On the Menu, each method is described, assessed for its pros and cons and its costs. The Methods Menu was compiled as a joint exercise by GPEVAC, the World Health Organization (WHO), CDC/TfG, and several academics who have designed, implemented and used baseline surveys on violence against children. Group discussions focused on the strengths, limitations and gaps across each of the methods.

The plenary discussion focused on acknowledging a consensus on the methods menu, identifying missing approaches that need to be added, agreeing on adding a relevant INSPIRE indicator column to build an alignment of the measures and discussing ways of taking the work forward.

The general consensus was that the Methods Menu tool is useful and a positive step forward. Suggestions for Phase II of the tool included:

- Guidance on where/how to access each methodological approach
- More comprehensive listing of:
 - Instruments (e.g. MICS and admin data)
 - Key groups that each method captures (e.g. children living in institutions, on the streets or in humanitarian situations) and age groups
- Detailed analysis of contents of each instrument identifying common/complementary elements (e.g. similar underlying constructs, INSPIRE indicators or SDG indicators)
- Identifying the purpose of each tool, the capacity required to implement, how the tools complement each other and who/what agency to contact for more information (including other countries with experience applying the methods)

The Methods Menu revised and updated to reflect the session inputs will be one of three global goods proposed to be produced in 2019 under the EVAC Network.

Session 4:

Measurement challenges action groups: What is working well and what can be improved?

As a field, our understanding of the causes and consequences of violence depends on accurately defining and measuring the constructs we study. Yet, violence is an extremely diffuse phenomenon that is complex to operationalize. Notions of what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of behaviours and what constitutes harm are culturally influenced and constantly under review as values and social norms evolve. In the field of public health, the challenge is to operationalize violence in such a way that it effectively represents the range of perpetrated acts and the subjective experiences of victims, without becoming so broad that it loses meaning. Ensuring that the methods used to capture this meaning and to build indicators can be confusing as the field struggles to define divergent findings from different data sources.

Although the methods used most often in violence research have led to a wealth of important findings, the field is ripe for both reflection and innovation. Here is a summary of the key issues discussed in Session 4, recognizing prioritized actions moving forward.

Definitions of violence in research were recognized not only as a technical issue but also social and political. Numerous sub-communities in the field of violence prevention and response – online, offline and humanitarian – contributes to the lack of common definitions, each influenced by contextual realities of the environments. Working group members discussed how the ‘ambiguity’ could be harnessed as a useful concept allowing for broader buy-in by all of the sub-fields, acknowledging that there will always be disagreements about what does and does not qualify as violence. Participants also agreed that although country ownership of definitions is important, it is important not to sideline the technical expertise needed to build a cohesive argument in the field writ large.

Actions forward:

- | A landscape analysis of definitions across divergent communities, mapping points of commonalities (for example, against INSPIRE) and working to identify strategic, common areas of interest.
- | Ensuring interviews with stakeholders, local champions and power holders to make meaning of definitions of violence.
- | Consensus building to help determine the boundaries of definitions (i.e. what should be included or excluded from the process).

Indicators are a reflection of how well the field can translate data onto effective policy and programmes. Several key issues identified included recognition of the gaps between policymakers and researchers and the need for meaningful translation of findings for more seamless (and less siloed) research and data functions. Related to this is the fact that global priorities (donors) and local realities (national stakeholders) are often mismatched, making indicators highly political and contextual. Building better political will around a pragmatic, applied approach to data and indicators will likely serve the violence prevention community well.

Actions forward:

- | Funders should prioritize the translation of data to program/policy building in the importance of agreed-upon indicators.
- | Increased collaboration between policymakers and researchers starting from research design incorporating strong feedback loops.

Types of data collection much like the issues of definitions and indicators above, tend to be biased by focusing on 'high quality' data and thus excluding important findings and sources from systematic reviews, particularly in the Global South where there may be a lack of primary data. This bias provides a pool of limited evidence on what works and why. Gaps in the types of data available are many, including costing data (notably methodologies for calculating social and economic returns on investments), as well as policy relevant and plain language information. Layering data types (trends, hot spots and gaps) while building collaboration between different types of data was seen as a priority.

Actions forward:

- | Plain language translations of results with actionable data, with the end-user in mind.
- | Support for evidence portals to easy access to reliable data.
- | Build the capacity of end-users to interpret and use data effectively.

Ethical issues in violence research poses specific challenges that require particular considerations, namely different legal frameworks that shape research procedures and affect disclosure of experiences of violence; the special training of interviewers allowing them to give assistance to participants after disclosure and the need of ongoing support to interviewers. Such issues have been addressed by WHO, resulting in the development of a set of recommendations to address the complex safety and ethical issues associated with researching, monitoring and documenting violence in different contexts, yet more needs to be done. Children's participation in violence research is important but different approaches have different ethical implications.

Actions forward:

- | Consider the formulation of a Forum Ethics sub-group.
- | Curate existing resources on ethics regarding children, building on ERIC (Ethical Research Involving Children on the Innocenti website).
- | Tailor existing resources to ensure continued building of good ethical practice for local review boards.

Disaggregation and equality issues are important to violence research as we endeavour to capture the experiences of all children everywhere. Collective or aggregate data broken down by gender, urban/rural location, income status, language, ethnic background or age produces disaggregated data. Disaggregated data is crucial to violence research, exposing trends, identifying especially vulnerable populations or by establishing the scope of the problem for particular populations. Gathering such data requires strategic sampling as well as contextual or very targeted data collection design that must be inclusive from the start. The exclusion of hard-to-reach populations under the age of 18 years is a particularly big challenge to the field.

Actions forward:

- | Regular brainstorming of tools the field should use a 'predictive' lens on the field—that is, anticipating what is needed.
- | Remembering that the most missed populations are often the most important.
- | Continued emphasis on the current methods used to ensure that they are sensitive enough to capture populations in need.

Session 5:

Mapping the evidence on interventions to reduce violence against children in low- and middle-income countries

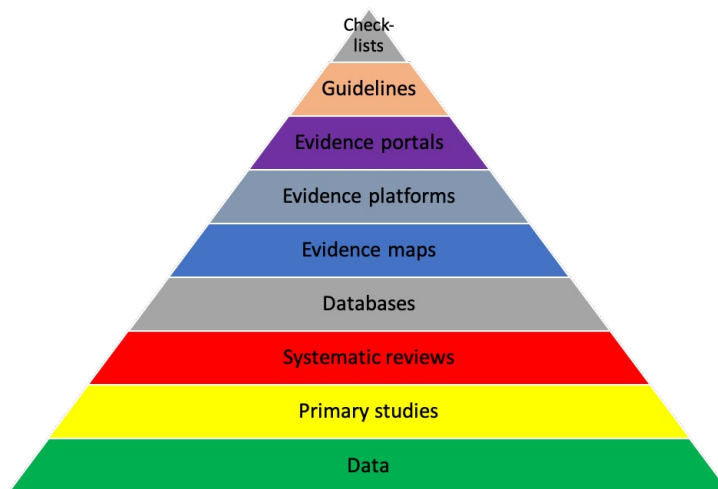
In this session, Dr. Howard White and Dr. Ashrita Saran, Campbell Collaboration, presented an early draft of an evidence and gap map (EGM)³ that is currently being produced with UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti. They presented key highlights of work on evidence synthesis relating to children and SDG areas, including ending violence against children, and introduced the idea of the evidence architecture. Key highlights from their presentation included:

- The importance of evidence synthesis: Most interventions are not evaluated; when they are evaluated, most are not used or are not discoverable and people

³ 'Interventions for reducing violence against children: An evidence and gap map in low and middle-income countries', Campbell Collaboration and UNICEF-Innocenti, forthcoming, 2019.

often are not aware that these resources are available.

- Emerging findings from the ongoing evidence review:
 - Of 102 studies (52 systematic reviews and 50 impact evaluations reviewed so far), most are on education and life skills, and only a few on law and crime; gaps include studies on strategies related to the law and safe environments.
 - No studies show a cost-benefit analysis.
 - Studies on homeless and street children are also lacking. Most evidence was on interpersonal violence, few on polyvictimisation. In terms of fine-grained analysis, there is more evidence on parent, child and caregiver support but less on maternal and paternal mental health, and scarce evidence on child labour and trafficking. Regional distribution of evidence shows that most evidence was on sub-Saharan Africa (mostly on female genital mutilation) and less on South, East and Central Asia.
- The components of evidence architecture were presented as a pyramid (see Figure 1 below). As we move up the pyramid, evidence is more heavily translated (from data to guidelines and checklists), and EGMs are important building blocks in the evidence architecture. Guidelines and checklists (at the top of the pyramid) cannot be developed without foundational primary studies and the steps that support synthesis and translation of evidence from primary studies to checklists, to not only guide further research but also programmes.



Source: Presentation: Evidence and Gap Maps (EGMs), Howard White and Ashrita Saran, Florence, 18 March 2019.

The presenters suggested that the EVAC field has some way to go to build sufficient architecture in this area.

The panel discussion that followed highlighted the following key points:

- There is a need to increase skills to do local research in countries (capacity building), and these skills needs to more widespread (e.g. not solely at PhD level).

However, some research and evaluation does require high-level skills, so there is a need to engage local researchers (PhD students and academics from local and national universities).

- There is a need for partnerships between policymakers, practitioners and researchers. These partnerships are critical, as most theory and intervention testing is initiated by academics; therefore, there is a need for civil society partners to scale up interventions and a need for academics to listen to civil society to determine what to test.
- EVAC is a universal agenda in both low- and high-income countries. In some cases, there is more information in low-income than high-income countries, which must be kept in mind.

The participants agreed that there was a significant opportunity to link the technical work with political opportunities and that the EVAC Network could play a key role in making those links. The EGM will be a key resource to be shared through the EVAC network to wider networks, including donors, to inform the global evidence agenda and identify priorities that need to be addressed.

The EGM will be completed over the next few months and shared with participants.

Session 6: Keynote Address

Four Challenges that Global Networks Face: Considerations for Violence Against Children

*Professor Jeremy Shiffman,
Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Global Health Policy,
Johns Hopkins University*

Global development networks, webs of individuals and organizations with a shared concern for a particular development problem have proliferated over the past quarter century. They differ in their effectiveness, a factor that may help explain why resource allocations vary across problems and do not correspond closely with their severity. Drawing on findings from studies of eight networks, Professor Shiffman identified four challenges that networks commonly face in generating attention and resources for the issues that concern them. The first is problem definition: generating consensus on what the problem is and how it should be addressed. The second is positioning: portraying the issue in ways that inspire external audiences to act. The third is coalition-building: forging alliances with these external actors. The fourth is governance: establishing institutions to facilitate collective action.⁴

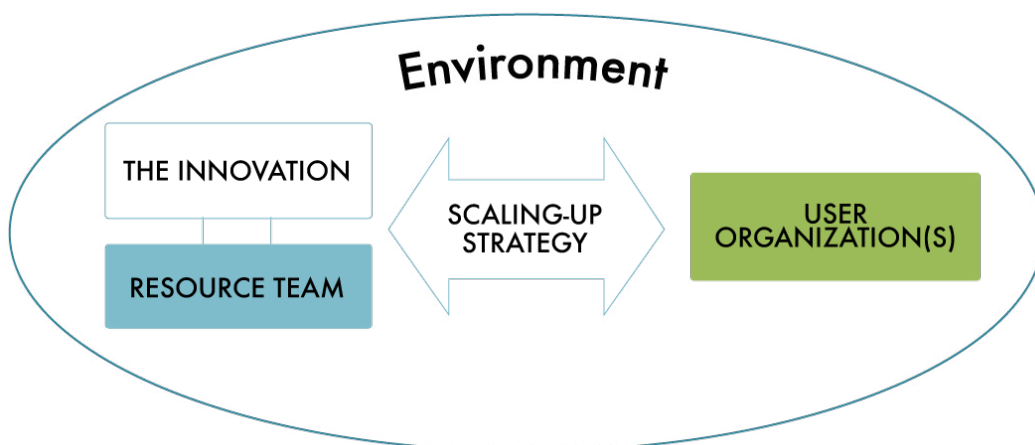
Session 7: Adaptation and scaling up challenges: Learning from INSPIRE, moving forward

Although INSPIRE and related violence-prevention strategies have increased the importance of scaling up successful interventions, understanding the role of adaptation in scaling up and sustaining outcomes lags behind as an area of study. Adaptation, defined as intentional, strategic decisions and actions to modify an intervention to facilitate implementation and optimize sustainable impact, is critical to the field's success. Successful scale-up requires adaptive management approaches which apply rapid, iterative learning at all organizational levels. These approaches also entail building mechanisms for ongoing reflection, facilitating participatory processes at all levels, including front line workers, and often require modifying the hierarchical culture of organizations. Adaptive management is particularly important for violence prevention interventions, which typically require multiple components to address complex norms within rapidly changing environments.

⁴ Professor Shiffman is currently conducting a study into the EVAC Network and further findings from his study will be shared when available.

A panel of research practitioners, with hands-on experience and representing several contexts for implementation from the United States, Zimbabwe, Uganda and the Philippines, presented and responded to challenging questions around readiness for adaptation, degrees of adaptation (how much and when the adaptation becomes an entirely new intervention), common challenges encountered during adaptation for scale-up and reasons for success. Key issues raised by panellists included:

- The importance of following implementation research steps to inform decisions: for example, paying attention to the setting and system of the original intervention was designed in and how it differs from the setting for adaptation and keeping all key stakeholders involved in defining the core principles of the intervention through informed consensus.
- The need to remain attentive to all levels of the local environment and of the ecosystem, including reviewing the theory of change, assessing costs to the organization, understanding capacities needed on the front line of implementation – focusing on the whole system is a time-consuming commitment that requires testing of different intervention components under different conditions.



- Challenges include:
 - The wider context such as political instability and shifting priorities within changing governments;
 - Adaptation to very different institutional contexts; as well as the local context, where social norms are likely to vary considerably.
- Success includes:
 - Designing for scale-up.
 - Collecting and using diverse quality data including qualitative and quantitative methods.
 - Careful exploration and application of social norm interventions among all groups indicated in the programme.

Session 8:

Engaging children: How should children participate in research related to child protection?

This session brought together experts in involving children for a 'fireside chat' complete with roaring flames on the screen! There was great enthusiasm in the discussion session for ensuring that children are included appropriately and ethically in research. Key questions addressed by the panellists included:

1. What are the benefits of children's participation in child protection violence research (particularly mixed methods)?
2. How can we avoid taking a tokenistic approach to children's participation?
3. What do we mean by meaningful/relevant participation of children in child protection research?
4. What do we mean by meaningful/relevant participation of children in child protection research?
5. How do we engage children in violence prevention more broadly beyond research? What are some of the challenges?
6. What are some of the challenges to meaningful participation of children in research/programming? How can we reframe the perceived tension between children's participation and their protection?
7. Are there particular gaps in knowledge from research and practice on children's participation in violence prevention that you think should be addressed as priorities?

Panellists agreed that children not only have a right to participate, but they also have a particular perspective that can result in programmes and policies that are more relevant for meeting their needs when they are consulted. Panellists also felt that research quality improves when children are engaged. However, engaging children and young people requires time, resources and skills and, sometimes, one or all three requirements may be inadequate or not planned for. There is a need to overcome the view that child participation is too difficult or too expensive and to remove barriers to equitable participation of all children (affluent children are sometimes consulted to save time or resource costs).

There is also a need for greater clarity about the purpose of engaging children and to avoid tokenism. There are many approaches that address different degrees of participation that is desired, from consultation to collaboration to more child-directed approach (e.g. children documenting the issue and researching it by videoing their lives). The conditions in which children participate needs to be addressed as well, whether there is a child-friendly environment, addressing issues about confidentiality, private space, whether staff are effective in engaging children (may be useful to include adolescents rather than older adults) and whether they have the skills to communicate and can make the consultation fun. Accountability to children is also a key principle,

as are age-appropriate methodologies. It is important to give some feedback to the children after their participation about the results and outcomes, as reporting results in a way that children cannot easily understand can be “like taking an exam and not getting your result”.

It is also important to ensure that children really understand the concepts they are being asked to engage with, including jargon busting. There are many examples of good practice that can strengthen children’s ownership of research questions and understanding of the processes involved. Barriers of policymakers to meaningfully listen to children also need to be addressed, including involving children in presenting research findings. Researchers understand that a piece of research may not make an immediate policy difference but there is a need to be clear about expectations with children.

Participants agreed that it is crucial to build a strong base of skills and knowledge on child participation in research to equip researchers, policymakers and practitioners with knowledge on children’s rights, principles and ethics for children’s participation and how to work with them in research. Participants found important to continue focus on the theme of children’s engagement in research throughout the future work of the EVAC Network.

Session 9: **Building and applied learning agenda for violence against children: Knowledge partnerships and platforms**

One of the most important components of knowledge sharing is the development of effective knowledge hubs or platforms. Done well, knowledge platforms can help seekers and providers of solutions — and in the case of the EVAC Network, users and producers of evidence — to come together around specific issues. Knowledge sharing networks are key to enrich conversations and to connect policymakers, practitioners and other stakeholders, providing opportunities to interact and engage and improve practice in the field of violence prevention.

Drawing lessons from current knowledge platforms, this session reviewed the activities of The Evaluation Fund, the CPC Learning Network, Joining Forces and the field’s most recent newcomer the Prevention Collaborative. Each of these networks is primarily geared towards researchers and practitioners of research and implementation. The Global Partnership to End Violence also participated in the panel to table the need for a platform that would not be duplicative but inclusive of multiple voices and experiences while maintaining a focus on data and evidence. One challenge ahead will be the proactive involvement of the Partnership’s many stakeholders, including, but not limited to, national and municipal governments, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, the United Nations, civil society, academics and children.

As GPEVAC envisions its role in harnessing knowledge, information and a platform for exchange, the following key discussion points were noted:

- Reaching out to new audiences, including all Partnership stakeholders.
- Evaluating what is currently being accessed most on existing knowledge platforms in the field of violence prevention.
- Ensuring that donors use and participate in the knowledge exchange, taking a proactive view towards their engagement and ultimately engagement with the field (funding and advocacy).
- Focusing on ensuring that capacity building—for all intended audiences—is central.
- Serving as a broker of/linkage to existing knowledge platforms or a 'platform of platforms'.

Session 10: A vision for success

The final two sessions of the meeting allowed for an exploration of the role of the EVAC Network, its relevance and priorities.

The subsequent discussion and post-meeting feedback confirmed that while the majority of the participants felt that such a group was indeed warranted, they equally felt that more work was required to define the purpose of the group, its added value and next steps. In the meantime, the group proposed a number of forward-looking recommendations and actions.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

A core recommendation was that the EVAC Network continues to work to improve the evidence architecture⁵ for violence prevention, including, but not limited to:

- a. Becoming a place to make links between research, policy and practice, including taking forward discussions to agree on definitions, indicators and instruments; and to continue and expand work to include children in research and evidence gathering;
- b. Becoming a forum for those working on evidence for EVAC to influence the wider agenda around the field and around measuring the SDGs;
- c. Enhancing links with other forums, platforms and initiatives in this area, including in the field of violence against women;
- d. Linking data and evidence products to the INSPIRE Framework, especially

⁵ See Figure 1 on page 11.

INSPIRE indicators, where possible;

- e. Adopting a working model to convene members of the EVAC Network on a regular basis and also perhaps annually around a theme, as well as virtually through webinars etc;
- f. Expanding the participation in the organizing group to include more regional representation and to bring in other stakeholders⁶; and
- g. Formulating a governance mechanism for regular interaction, resource mobilization and a clear action plan to ensure momentum is sustained under the overall umbrella of GPEVAC.

2. SPECIFIC FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING

- a. The discussions and agreements at the meeting of the EVAC Network should be tabled with the Executive Committee of GPEVAC, chaired by Daniela Ligiero who attended the first day of the meeting. This action was completed at the meeting of the Committee on 1–2 May in London (see Appendix 1 for the one-page summary that was tabled).
- b. Careful planning should be built around the GPEVAC website’s knowledge platform launch in Q3 2019; the platform will be a virtual point bridging existing platforms, networks and knowledge sources, and a ‘home’ for the EVAC Network and its outputs.
- c. Follow up on a few key products over 2019 that were discussed at the meeting:
 - i. **A Methods Menu**—offering a selection of rigorous approaches for baselines and surveillance (led by GPEVAC). There was general agreement that the methods menu provided a useful tool and should be developed. In particular, the following recommendations were made:
 - Specific comments on different methods be reviewed and added to the menu where appropriate. Further work could be done to show how methods complement each other (perhaps with some case studies of how this has been done).
 - There could be a ‘guide’ to help support people through a process of deciding which methods to use.
 - ii. An EGM for future research planning (led by UNICEF-Innocenti and Campbell Collaboration). There was agreement that this work was valuable to the field and that:

⁶ Some of the groups identified by participants included the Adolescent Health Monitoring Group, Child Health Monitoring Group, Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI), International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA; PIRLS, TIMSS), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Global Partnership to End School-Related gender-based violence (led by UNGEI/ UNICEF/ UNESCO). Other stakeholders included regional research programmes, research programmes on violence against women, governments, implementation researchers, impact evaluators, country level administrative data producers and potential and existing donors of work on violence against children.

- Once completed, it should be shared with the meeting participants; and
 - The EGM could form a useful basis for further collaboration and working together in this area, by identifying overlaps and potential areas for new research, for example.
- iii. A Resource Pack: Child Participation in Violence Against Children Research and Resources on Ethics in Research with Children (Save the Children and UNICEF-Innocenti). Involving and engaging children and youth surfaced is a consistent concern that requires a shift in practice in order that principles and suggested actions, including the participation of children in research, be seen as the norm in this sector.
- It was suggested that the EVAC Network collates and curates existing resources, including training on involving children in research.
 - Curate resources on Ethics on Children by providing training and capacity building on ethical issues to assist the board review.

3. SUMMARY TABLE OF PROPOSED ACTIONS, FOCAL POINTS AND TIME FRAME

Proposed action points

*indicates lead

Action Point	People	Timeframe
Revise Methods Menu based on feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More work on methods—what, how, why—the sensitivity of methods on sensitive issues. 	GPEVAC*, UNICEF, WHO	Q4
Curate guidance and related resources on Ethical approaches to research with children on violence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training/ capacity building on ethical issues to assist board review. 	UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti	Q3
Curate resource pack on methods for child participation in VAC research.	Save the Children*	
Build the capacity of end users (practitioners, technical people, policy makers) to be able to analyse and interpret data.	CDC, CPC Learning Network	TBD
Publication of an Evidence and gap map on interventions to prevent VAC in low and middle income countries” and identification of follow up steps to strengthen evidence.	UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti	Q3

Action Point	People	Timeframe
Produce special issue on acceleration and scaling.	GPEVAC	2020
Curate platform of platforms knowledge portal.	GPEVAC	Q4
Network map.	WHO*	Q3

4. NEXT STEPS

The organizing group met briefly following the consultation to map the potential outcomes for the EVAC Network (see Annex 2). Following the tabling of the meeting discussion with the Executive Committee of GPEVAC, next steps will be determined by GPEVAC in terms of a mechanism to continue the work of the EVAC Network and to take forward the priorities recommended by the group as recorded in this report.

Appendices

THE GLOBAL EVAC KNOWLEDGE NETWORK: A FORUM FOR USERS AND PRODUCERS OF EVIDENCE

Formerly: *The Multi-Sectoral Forum on Data and Evidence to End Violence Against Children*

WHAT?

2017-2018: A Multi-Stakeholder Forum (the Forum) was proposed as a platform for technical discussions relating to data and evidence. ToRs were drawn with OSRSG-VAC, TfG, UNICEF and GP EVAC as the convener.

2019: A kick-off consultation held at UNICEF Innocenti in March highlighted key areas of action around data, evidence and learning with recommended steps forward.

HOW?

Representatives from OSRSG-VAC, UNICEF, CDC, TfG, GPEVAC, WHO, UNESCO and DFID formed a core working group both prior and post-consultation.

During the consultation, over 40 participants joined by a host of VAC academics and Joining Forces (representing INGOs), **unanimously agreed on the importance of the Forum and its continued activities.** It was also agreed that the:

- Forum continue to be chaired by Ex Comm members and hosted and convened by GPEVAC.
- GPEVAC will be home to an online platform for knowledge networking.

WHY?

The Forum allows for UN-mandated SDG monitoring processes to be discussed alongside findings from other VAC data, monitoring, evaluation and research initiatives, with the aim to discuss and share findings, strengthen methodology and build consensus.

Critical questions considered for VAC prevention:

- What data and evidence resources are needed to support countries working to end violence against children?
- What tools are currently being used across agencies/places to collect data? How can this be streamlined to assure quality and better standardization?
- What are the gaps in data, evidence and learning?
- How can current resources/platforms be linked and enhanced to create a dynamic and useful resource and avoid duplication?
- How should the evidence community work together to achieve these goals and keep the agenda moving forward?
- What kind of agreement or approach could help strengthen the evidence architecture for ending violence against children?



| KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM

The GPEVAC website, launched in Q3 2019, will serve as a virtual point bridging existing platforms, networks and knowledge sources while also serving as home to products delivered by Forum members. Recommendations for the Forum, including a work plan are underway.

Three products will be generated in 2019:

- **A Methods Menu**—offering a selection of rigorous approaches for baselines and surveillance.
- **An Evidence Gap Map** for future research planning.
- **A Resource Pack** on **child participation in VAC research**.

| GOOD PRACTICE

As a Forum designed to develop the field and ensure that countries taking action to end violence against children have the data and evidence they need, good practice will be essential to all future activities.

Good practice for VAC prevention:

- Share understanding of approaches and gaps in evidence and how to address them.
- A clear commitment and plan for developing the evidence architecture.
- Demonstrating how organizations take forward the work both together and separately.
- Making the links that reflect stated unmet needs of in country actors.
- More support for research from the Global South.
- Wider diversity of stakeholders across all SDGs.

Appendix 2: Outcome map for the Global EVAC Knowledge Network

This outcome map was produced by Matter of Focus with members of the organizing group, in a follow-up planning meeting, to identify the broad outcomes to which the EVAC Network should be focused.

WHAT WE DO	WHO WITH	HOW THEY FEEL	WHAT THEY LEARN AND GAIN	WHAT THEY DO DIFFERENTLY	WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THIS MAKE?
Bring people together to discuss issues on VAC data and evidence.	Research communities and data producers.	EVAC is an important issue that we can tackle/prioritise.	Better understanding of the problem of VAC informed by evidence.	People use data and evidence to tackle VAC.	Policy and practice on EVAC is informed by research and evidence.
Create a 'methods menu' and make available widely.			Understand the evidence they need to inform action.		
Complete an evidence gap map and share widely.	Policy-makers at national, regional and global levels.	Evidence producers feel supported and included.		Better investment in VAC evidence architecture.	Interventions are improved by being evidence-informed.
Inform the research/evidence agenda and set priorities to fill gaps.	Research and monitoring/evaluation practitioners.	Policy makers feel confident about the data and evidence generated.	Know where to go to get the evidence they need.		
Build a child-centred approach to evidence generation.			More capacity to generate quality data research and evidence on VAC.	More research on VAC is generated to fill the gaps.	Donors support evidence-based practice.
Build on and curate existing knowledge resources esp INSPIRE indicators.	Donors	Donors feel the forum is strengthening the evidence architecture.	Strong links between VAC research, policy and practice nationally, regionally and globally.	Children participate meaningfully in research.	Violence against children is reduced.

Appendix 3: Participants and roles

PARTICIPANT	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
J. Lawrence Aber	Willner Family Professor in Psychology and Public Policy University Professor, NYU, Steinhardt	la39@nyu.edu
Kerry Albright	Chief RFKM, UNICEF Florence	kalbright@unicef.org
Katharina Anton-Erxleben	VAC prevention Coordinator, Raising Voices, Kampala	katharina@raisingvoices.org
Shivit Bakrania	UNICEF Florence	sbakrania@unicef.org
Sara Bensaude De Castro Freire	Program Manager, Network of European Foundations (NEF), Brussels	sara.bensaude@nef-europe.org
Erika Bernacchi	Researcher Istituto Degli Innocenti, Florence	bernacchi@istitutodeglinnocenti.it
Stephen Blight	Senior Adviser Child Protection UNICEF NYHQ	sblight@unicef.org
Jake Broadhurst	University of Edinburgh	jake.broadhurst@ed.ac.uk
Stephanie Burrows	Technical Officer, WHO, Geneva	burrowss@who.int
Mark Canavera	Associate Director CPC Learning Network Columbia University, NY	mc3718@cumc.columbia.edu
Tendai Chakarisa	Lecturer, Women's University of Africa, Harare	tendai.chakarisa@uct.ac.za
Cirenia Chavez	Consultant, Education, UNICEF Florence	cchavez@unicef.org
Sumaira Chowdhury	Senior Adviser Child Protection UNICEF NYHQ	sachowdhury@unicef.org

PARTICIPANT	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Yekaterina Chzhen	UNICEF Florence	ychzhen@unicef.org
Don Cipriani	Ignite, Rome	don@ignitephilanthropy.org
Andrew Claypole	Senior Adviser Special Rep. Secretary-General Violence against Children (SRSG-VAC)	claypole@un.org
Christophe Cornu	Health & Education Team Leader UNESCO, Paris	c.cornu@unesco.org
Rocio Aznar Daban	Child Protection Specialist UNICEF NYHQ	raznardaban@unicef.org
Helena Duch	Programme Officer Oak Foundation, Geneva	helena.duch@oakfnd.ch
Clare Feinstein	Deputy Director, Child Protection Global Theme (CP GT) Save the Children Amsterdam	clare.feinstein@savethechildren.org
Begoña Fernandez	Senior Technical Officer, Together 4 Girls, Washington DC	begona@togetherforgirls.org
Debi Fry	Senior Lecturer CP, University Edinburgh	debi.fry@ed.ac.uk
Retta Gatachew Demisse	Programme Manager, African Child Policy Forum, Ethiopia	getachew@africanchildforum.org
Alessandra Guedes	Regional Adviser on Family Violence, PAHO, Washington DC	guedesal@paho.org
Priscilla Idele	Director a.i. UNICEF Florence	pidele@unicef.org
Lucy Jamieson	Senior Researcher, Children's Institute, Cape Town	lucy.jamieson@uct.ac.za
Triona Lenihan	Adv. & Comms Manager Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, London	triona@endcorporalpunishment.org

PARTICIPANT	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Daniela Ligiero	Executive Director, Together 4 Girls, Washington DC	daniela@togetherforgirls.org
Rebecka Lundgren	Principal Investigator, Gender Roles Equality and Transformation (GREAT), USA	rebecka.lundgren@georgetown.edu
Bernadette Madrid	Director of CPU, University Philippines, Manila	berniemadrid18@yahoo.com
Nicolas Makharashvili	CPC Learning Network, Colombia University	onm2003@cumc.columbia.edu
Siobhan Malone	Sr. Prog. Officer Global Development Gates Foundation, Seattle	siobhan.malone@gatesfoundation.org
Greta M. Massetti	Senior Scientist Div. Violence Prevention (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) Atlanta	ghz6@cdc.gov
Catherine Maternowska	Data, Evidence & Learning, GPVAC, Geneva	catherine.maternowska@end-violence.org
Ersilia Menesini	Professor Development Psychology University of Florence	ersilia.menesini@unifi.it
Sarah Morton	Facilitator	sarah@matter-of-focus.com
Raffaella Pregliasco	Researcher & Honorary Judge, Juvenile Court Istituto Degli Innocenti, Florence	pregliasco@istitutodeglinnocenti.it
Lorraine Radford	School of Social Work, Care & Community, Univ. Central Lancashire, UK	lradford@uclan.ac.uk
Sabine Rakotomalala	Senior Advisor WHO GPVAC	sabine@who.int
Dominic Richardson	Education Specialist	drichardson@unicef.org
Krista Ridley	Washington	kriddley@wpfund.org

PARTICIPANT	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Ashrita Saran	Evidence Synthesis Specialist The Campbell Collaboration, UK	asaran@campbellcollaboration.org
Lorraine Sherr	Head of Health Psychology Unit, UCL, London	l.sherr@ucl.ac.uk
Jeremy Shiffman	John Hopkins University, USA	jeremy.shiffman@jhu.edu
Ramya Subrahmanian	Chief, Research on Child Rights and Protection, UNICEF Florence	rsubrahmanian@unicef.org
Howard White	Chief Executive Officer, The Campbell Collaboration, UK	hwhite@campbellcollaboration.org
Daniel Kardefelt Winther	UNICEF Florence	dkardefeltwinther@unicef.org