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National Baseline Study on
Violence against Children: Philippines

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Council for
the Welfare
of Children

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**National Baseline Study on Violence against Children:
Philippines**

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October 2016

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Preface

Violence Against Children (VAC) is a global problem; confronting every country in the world. Children are exposed to the threat of violence in all spheres of life; at home, in school and the community, the workplace and in institutions. In all of these settings children are exposed to various forms of violence, including physical, emotional and sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as neglect. New/emerging forms of violence include online exploitation, where easy access to internet and the hidden nature of crimes committed in cyberspace leave children particularly vulnerable.

The physical and emotional harm to children resulting from the experience of violence is devastating. The affect and impact on children creates lasting emotional and psychological scars, as well as physical pain and suffering; the damage can last a lifetime. Victims may themselves become perpetrators of violence as a result of their experiences. The burden of violence to society is enormous; the costs of health care, child welfare support services, as well as the increased costs to the criminal justice system when child victims are at an increased risk of becoming children in conflict with the law. Finally, society also loses when abused children are less able to contribute and become productive members of their community.

In The Philippines thousands of children are robbed of their childhood, and suffer lifelong developmental challenges, as a result of violence. Impacts include both mental and physical health disorders, including anxiety, depression, cardiovascular disease, as well as health-risk behaviours including smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse and engagement in high risk sexual activity.

Since 2007 – when Swaziland conducted the first Violence against Children Survey (VACS) – more than 20 countries, including the Philippines, have undertaken national surveys on VAC, thus contributing greater evidence and thus global and regional understanding of VAC research.

The Philippine’s commitment in 2010 to undertake its own national study – the first country in the region to begin this process – follows the country’s recognition as an active regional leader in the VAC movement. In general, recently enacted laws and policies in the Philippines have been crafted to better protect children, and adhere to international standards, and are thus held up as positive examples for the region. However, in spite of these laws, a dearth of national data and a lack of reporting mechanisms have rendered many less effective than intended. Consequently, initiatives taken by national institutions and international organizations are often insufficient, and at times even irrelevant and inappropriate. Additionally, prosecutions and convictions of those who perpetrate VAC have remained disproportionately low, with little change over the years.

The completion of the NBS-VAC marks a watershed moment in addressing these challenges and is widely recognized as a vital undertaking that will lead to a clearer and more accurate picture about the extent and magnitude of violence against Filipino children and youth.

*From the “The Philippine National Baseline Study on Violence against Children:
The Story Behind the Research”*

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank all the children and their parents/guardians as well as the Local Government Units (LGUs) from the 172 municipalities, cities and barangays all over the country for participating in this study. We appreciate all your support and assistance in making this endeavour a success;

To our VAC partners (GO's, NGO's, academia), for being with us throughout the years of planning and preparation, and for making sure that all these efforts will be translated into action- for the well-being of the children, their families and communities in the Philippines.

To UNICEF, Consuelo Zobel Algiers Foundation and the Institute of Health Policy-National Institutes of Health, UP Manila for their generosity and commitment to make this country a live able place for children.

To all our field supervisors and field assistants who endured physical and emotional challenges in the field, and exerted so much effort to conduct this study in a timely, efficient, effective and ethical manner.

To our administrative staff, for spending many long days preparing materials, including shipping questionnaires, and fulfilling numerous other administrative tasks to ensure the timely and effective completion of the survey.

To the members of the central research team, for doing the work to the utmost of their ability, and for the team work and commitment.

Thank you everyone. Let us join hands in ensuring the health and safety of the Filipino children. As Jose Rizal, our national hero said, they are the hope of our Fatherland (Motherland).

National Steering Committee

National Baseline Study on Violence against Children

List of Acronyms

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experiences
AO	Administrative Order
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BCPC	Barangay Council for the Protection of Children
CC	Component Cities
CALABARZON	Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon
CAR	Cordillera Administrative Region
CNSP	Children in Need of Special Protection
CCPC	City Council for the Welfare of Children
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CWC	Council for the Welfare of Children
DRDF	Demographic Research and Development Foundation Inc.
DepEd	Department of Education
DOH	Department of Health
DOJ	Department of Justice
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
EO	Executive Order
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Virus
HUC	Highly Urbanized Cities
ICC	Independent Component Cities
LCPC	Local Council for the Protection of Children
MCPC	Municipal Council for the Welfare of Children
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MSWD	Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office
MIMAROPA	Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan
NBS-VAC	National Baseline Study-Violence against Children
NCR	National Capital Region
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPAC	National Plan of Action for Children
NSC on NBS-VACS	National Steering Committee on National Baseline Study on Violence against Children Study
NSCB	National Statistical Coordinating Board
NSO	National Statistics Office
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
PO	People's Organizations
RA	Republic Act
SOCCSKSARGEN	South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani General Santos
UN	United Nations
UPM	University of the Philippines Manila
UNCRC	United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UP-PGH	University of the Philippines- Philippine General Hospital
VAC	Violence Against Children
WCPU	Women and Child Protection Units
YAFS	Young Adult and Fertility Survey

Definitions

Violence Against Children	According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 'violence against children' refers to "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse."
Respondents	<p>Young people aged 13-24 years who have resided in the randomly sampled barangays (villages) for at least six months, have the capability to answer the questions and have given their consent/assent to participate in the study.</p> <p>The respondents were classified by sex (male/female) and by age group (13- <18 years and 18-24 years).</p>
Children	Respondents aged 13 to below 18 years are considered "children". In this study, the age of the respondents was based on their age "as of last birthday".
Child Physical Violence	<p>Defined as acts that include bodily or physical harm.</p> <p>In this study, when respondents were asked about severity in parts of the questionnaire, the following indicators were used:</p> <p><i>Mild:</i> Spanking with bare hands, rolled magazine or small stick, pulling the hair, pinching, pushing, grabbing or twisting of ears.;</p> <p><i>Moderate:</i> Slapping the face, kicking, hitting or beating with a belt, paddle, hard wood, or other hard objects.</p> <p><i>Severe:</i> Choking, smothering, putting hot chili or peppers in the mouth, locking up in a small place, tying or chaining to something, make to stand in one position holding a heavy load or another burden, kneeling for a long time on mongo seeds, pebbles or any rough surface, made to do exercise as punishment.</p> <p><i>Most severe:</i> Harm that required hospitalization.</p> <p>Severity of abusive behaviors was identified through the conduct of key informant interviews and focus group discussions with professionals, parents and children through culturally relevant methods and appropriate procedures.</p> <p>All these acts must have occurred before age 18 years.</p>

Child Psychological violence	<p>Refers to “acts causing or likely to cause mental or emotional suffering of the victim.</p> <p>In this study, the indicators of psychological violence were: verbal abuse (belittling, humiliating, cursing, saying bad words, shouting, calling names, (embarrassing in front of other people); threats of being harmed; and feelings of or actual abandonment.</p> <p>All these acts must have occurred before age 18 years.</p>
Child Sexual Violence	<p>Defined as an act which is sexual in nature that is committed against a child without her consent.</p> <p>In this study, sexual violence was indicated by the following: taking photos or sex videos of being naked or engaging in sexual activities, unwanted touch, forced attempted sex, and forced consummated sex. All these acts must have occurred before age 18 years.</p>
Forced consummated sex	<p>A term that is synonymous to forced sex or forced sexual intercourse or forced penetrative sex used in other studies but to distinguish it from other forms of sexual activities, “consummated” was included to emphasize that there was penetration. It includes oral, anal and vaginal sex.</p>
Peer violence/ Bullying	<p>Peer violence in the form of bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance It makes use of force, threats, or coercion to abuse, intimidate, or aggressively dominate others. The behavior is often repeated and habitual.</p> <p>In this study, bullying acts included: physical and verbal harm, sexual molestations, being laughed at, catcalling, avoidance of one’s company, gossiping about, stalking, and taking or hiding one’s personal properties.</p>
Child cyberviolence	<p>An online behavior that constitutes or leads to assault against the well-being (physical, psychological, emotional) of an individual or group. In this study, the following indicators were used: verbally abused over the internet or cellphone; was shown other people’s sex videos and photos over the internet or cellphone; was sent sex messages or words over the internet or cellphone; had own nude body or own sexual activities, whether true or not, shown in the internet or cellphone.</p>
School-related violence	<p>All these acts must have occurred before age 18 years.</p> <p>Refers to physical, psychological and sexual violence that happened in the school setting where the perpetrators are the teachers or any adult in school.</p> <p>In this study, school-related violence was operationally defined as: physical harm, verbal abuse, sexual harassment and attempted sex, and forced consummated sex by a teacher or an adult in the school.</p>

Work-related violence	<p>Refers to physical, psychological and sexual violence that happened in the work setting where the perpetrators are the superiors or any adult in the workplace.</p> <p>In this study, work-related violence was operationally defined as: physical harm, verbal abuse, sexual harassment and attempted sex, and forced consummated sex by an employer or an adult in the workplace.</p>
Collective violence	<p>Two indicators of collective violence were used in this study: experience of any form of demolition or deliberate destruction of the home; and experience of living in a place where you have seen people being shot, bombs going on, people fighting, or rioting.</p>
Casual sex	<p>Casual sex is a certain type of sexual activity outside of romantic relationships that imply an absence of commitment, emotional attachment, or familiarity between sexual partners.</p>
Neglect	<p>Neglect is a deficit in meeting a child's basic needs.</p> <p>In this study, psychological neglect was operationalized in terms of: not feeling special or given importance by parents/guardian. feeling unloved by parents/guardian, and feelings that child's fears and anxieties are misunderstood by parents/guardian.</p> <p>For physical neglect, three indicators were used: not given food even if food was available; not been taken care of or brought to the doctor when needed; not sent to school even if parents can afford or because parents did not take care of the child's school needs.</p>
Witnessing violence in the home	<p>Defined as causing or allowing a child to witness the physical, sexual or psychological abuse of a member of the family to which the victim belongs. It can take two forms: physical and psychological.</p> <p>In this study, witnessing psychological violence in the home includes "being yelled at, screamed at, sworn at, insulted, humiliated, ridiculed, called names, cursed or being said bad words".</p> <p>Witnessing a household member "being slapped, kicked, punched, shoved over, hit with an object, or beaten up" and "being cut with a bottle or knife, or threatened or actually shot with a gun" were the indicators for witnessing physical violence in the home.</p>
Dating violence	<p>In this study, dating violence was indicated as: physical harm, verbal abuse, attempted sex, and forced sex by a partner during dating.</p>
Lifetime prevalence	<p>Percent of occurrence of any given form of violence at some point before the age of 18.</p>
Current prevalence	<p>Occurrence of any given form of violence in the past 12 months.</p>



Introduction

This study was a nation-wide research using quantitative and qualitative designs that aimed to gather national epidemiological data on violence against children experienced in a range of situations and locations. It also included a stakeholders' qualitative analysis that sought to identify the factors that facilitate or impede a more effective implementation of VAC programs in the local level and under a devolved setting. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Estimate the national prevalence of violence against children (VAC) in various forms and settings;
2. Enumerate the social and health consequences of VAC;
3. Assess children's awareness and utilization of health, legal and welfare services related to VAC;
4. Obtain stakeholders' views about VAC including the perceived reasons why VAC persist in the communities, adequacy/inadequacy of existing services, type of resources and services still needed, their readiness to implement VAC services` as well as their capacity-building needs.

This study is the first ever national study on violence against children in the Philippines. The results can be used as scientific benchmarks in developing proactive interventions to prevent violence against children, and to help child-victims overcome their very difficult experiences.

The prevalence survey was conducted in 172 randomly selected barangays (villages) in the 17 regions of the country. In each barangay, 25 households were systematically sampled, and in each household, one eligible child was selected as the final respondent using the KISH method.¹ Different sets of barangays were assigned to males and females.

Three thousand and eight hundred and sixty-six (3,866) children participated in the study, giving an overall response rate of 89.85 percent (males = 90.7%; females = 89.0%). Data-collection was mostly self-administered. Ethical considerations were prioritized through the research design and methods, the appropriate training of field interviewers, and the use of a response protocol.

The initial results were peer reviewed by six subject matter experts. This included three Filipino academics; experts on epidemiological methods and on child protection. International experts on VAC also reviewed the results, including those who have provided extensive technical support and guidance to other similar VAC surveys, including in Asia. The final statistics, discussions, and recommendations incorporated the results of the peer review and the NBS VAC Steering Committee' comments and inputs.

¹ A procedure for objective respondent selection within the household. It uses a pre-assigned table of random numbers to find the person to be interviewed.



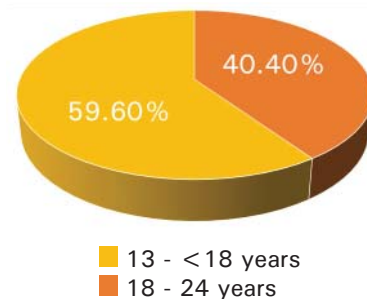
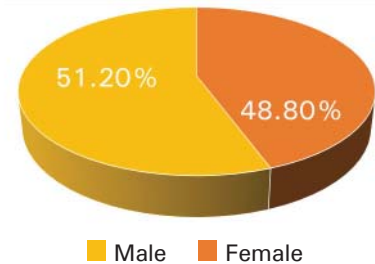
The Epidemiological Survey

Profile of respondents

Overall, 3,866 children and youth aged 13-24 years from 172 barangays in 17 regions of the country, participated in this survey. Among them, 1,979 were males and 1,887 were females. About 2,303 belonged to the 13- <18 years age group where 1,090 are males and 1,113 are females. The average age for males and females in all age groups was 18.38 years. Children aged 13-<18 years had a mean age of 15 years.

A majority of the children who participated were from the economic middle class; 55.6 percent came from rural areas and 44.4 percent from urban areas. About 99.3 percent of the 3,866 respondents had attended school. The majority of respondents were in high school or in college at the time of survey. Eight in every ten among the females and nine in every ten males were reportedly single. An estimated 53.6 percent had experienced wage labour, although this was less among the younger group.

The ethnolinguistic origin of the respondents includes an estimated 25% Tagalog speaking, followed by the Cebuanos, Ilokanos and Ilonggos. About 12.3 percent of the respondents were indigenous people.



Total percentage of respondents with experience of violence

Eighty percent (80%) of the 3,866 respondents aged 13-24 years had experienced some form of violence in their lifetime, whether in the home, school, workplace, community or during dating. The estimated total prevalence of violence against children among males was 81.5 percent and 78.4 percent among females. About 78.8 percent of children aged 13-<18 years encountered these experiences of violence compared to 80.9 percent among the older group.

The following table shows the lifetime and current prevalence of various forms of violence during childhood.

TYPE OF VIOLENCE DURING CHILDHOOD	LIFETIME PREVALENCE DURING CHILDHOOD		
	Both	M	F
Physical neglect	10.1	11	9.1
Psychological neglect	25.5	25	26
Witnessing physical violence in the home	41.4	39.7	43
Witnessing psychological violence in the home	63.0	59.8	66.3
Overall child and youth physical violence	66.3	66.6	62.5
Overall child and youth psychological violence	62.8	65.2	60.4
Overall child and youth sexual violence	21.5	24.7	18.2
Severe physical violence	2.3	2.8	1.9
Severe psychological violence	7.9	7.9	8.0
Severe sexual violence during childhood	3.2	4.1	2.3
Peer violence/ Bullying	65.0	70.5	59.8
Cyber violence	43.8	45.3	42.2
Collective violence	7.8	8.6	7.0

Physical violence

Overall physical violence

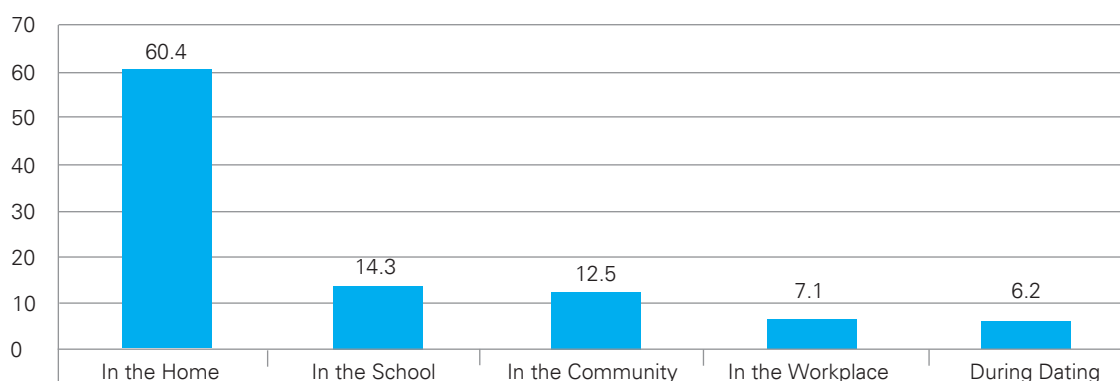
About 3 in 5 respondents (66.3%) experienced any form of physical violence during childhood. More than half (60%) of these cases happened in the home. In particular, one in two (54.5%) received corporal punishments in the home such as spanking with a bare hand, rolled paper or small stick, and pulling the hair, pinching or twisting of ears, while a third (30.3%) suffered from more severe forms of abuse such as slapping, kicking, smothering, tying, drowning, burning, About 4.6 percent were physically harmed in the home which harm that required hospitalization. More males experienced physical violence in the home than females (males = 66.6%, females = 62.5%). Mothers, followed by the fathers, brothers and sisters (in this order) were the most commonly mentioned perpetrators of any form of physical violence in the home. Fathers, however, were deemed responsible for most severe physical violence.

About 14.3 percent of those who attended school experienced physical violence in school. Pinching (32.5%), being hit with an eraser or chalk (31.5%), twisting ears (25.8%) as well as spanking with a bare hand, rolled paper or small stick (23.5%) by a teacher or an adult in the school were the most common forms of physical violence in school.

Of the children who had ever worked, 7.1 percent of children received any form of physical violence in the workplace during childhood. About 2 percent of children with romantic partners reported experiencing any form of physical violence during dating. More males (5.7%) claimed to have been physically harmed by their partners than females (3.1%).

Physical violence in the community was reported by 12.5 percent of children. The majority of these (10.6%) were reports of “milder” forms of corporal punishment such as being smothered, tied up or chained, made to stand with a heavy object or made to stand on mongo seeds or pebbles.

Prevalence of physical violence during childhood, by settings



Severe physical violence during childhood

Overall, the lifetime prevalence of severe physical violence (i.e., requiring hospitalization) during childhood in all settings was 2.3 percent (males = 2.8%, females = 1.9%). For current prevalence, less than one percent (0.8%) reported to have experienced severe physical violence that necessitated medical treatment in the past 12 months. Significantly more males (1.1%) than females (0.4%) aged 13- < 18 years claimed to have suffered from severe physical harm in the home during the past 12 months. Fathers, mothers and brothers were mentioned as perpetrators of severe physical violence. Severe physical violence in the community was mostly perpetrated by neighbors and strangers.

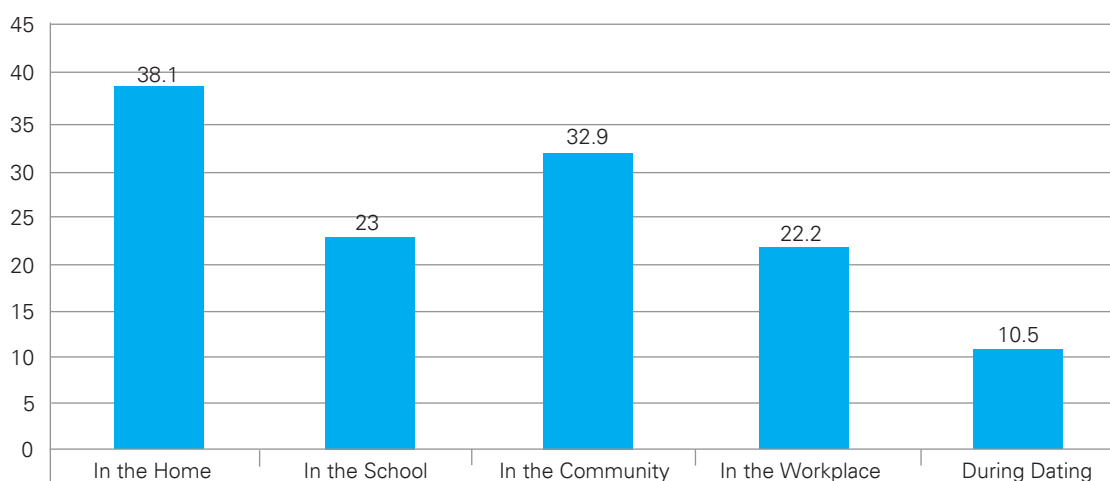
Psychological violence

Overall psychological violence

The lifetime prevalence of psychological violence during childhood was estimated at 59.2 percent. This indicates that almost 3 out of 5 children have been verbally abused, threatened and/or abandoned by their parents or guardian. A third (33.0%) of the children aged 13- < 18 years reported to have experienced psychological violence in the past 12 months.

About a third experienced psychological violence in their homes, in school, and in the workplace while one in four in the community had such experiences. About 13.5 percent were verbally abused and/or threatened while dating with their partners.

Prevalence of overall psychological violence during childhood



Severe psychological violence during childhood

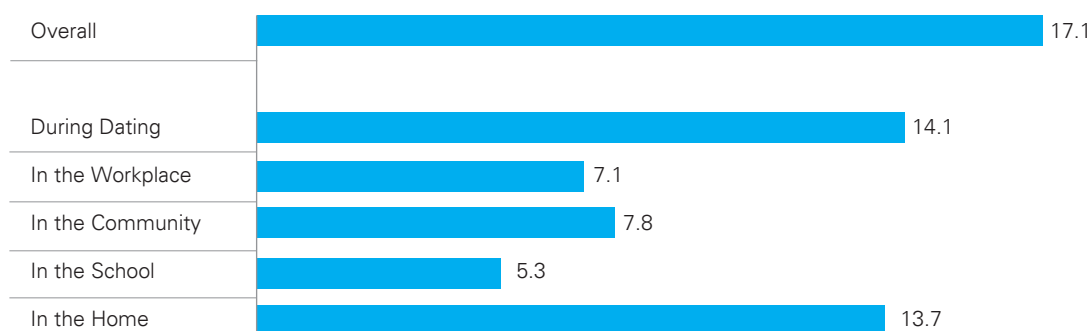
Lifetime prevalence of severe psychological violence during childhood was indicated by felt or actual abandonment by parents or guardian, hence it was only measured in the home setting. The lifetime prevalence of severe psychological violence during childhood is at 7.9 percent. No significant differences in prevalence estimates were found between boys (7.9%) and girls (8%). For current prevalence, 3.3 percent of children aged 13- < 18 years felt or were actually abandoned in the past 12 months. The perpetrators of felt or actual abandonment were mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters.

Sexual violence

Overall sexual violence

About 17.1 percent of children aged 13- < 18 years experienced any form of sexual violence while growing up. A prevalence of 1.6 percent was noted in the past 12 months. More males claimed to have such experiences.

Prevalence of overall sexual violence during childhood, by setting



Lifetime prevalence of overall sexual violence in the home was 13.7 percent. Among children aged 13- < 18 years, 13.7 percent experienced sexual abuse in the home. Of these, three percent experienced unwanted touching (males = 3.6%, females = 2.5%), 1.3 percent have had their sex videos or photos taken without their consent (males = 1.5%, females = 1.0%), 1.9 percent reported forced attempted sex (males = 1.6%, females = 2.4%) and 1.6 percent experienced forced consummated sex, whether oral, anal or vaginal (males = 1.6, females = 1.6). The commonly cited perpetrators of overall sexual violence in the home were: brothers and cousins. Among boys, mentioned most frequently were cousins, father and brother, while among girls, the brother, stepbrother, sister/steppister and stepmother were mostly reported to be the perpetrators of overall sexual violence.

The prevalence of overall sexual violence in the school was 5.3 percent. About 3.3 percent mentioned that the incident of sexual violence happened when they were 6 to 9 years old, 9.9 percent when they were between 10-12 years of age, 22 percent at the time they were 13-15 years old, and 27.5 percent when they reached 16 to 18 years.

About 7.1 percent of the respondents experienced sexual violence in the workplace. About 4.2 percent reported being sexually harassed while 2.2 percent had forced sex with a superior or an adult in the workplace. One in ten had such experience during the past 12 months.

The prevalence of overall sexual violence in the community was 7.8 percent. Unwanted sexual touching was the most common form of sexual violence in the community. Perpetrators of overall sexual violence in the community were neighbors, strangers, gangsters/addicts and others (adult men, chatmate/text mate, female friend, and brother’s friends). The most commonly cited methods used by the perpetrators were verbal in nature although giving gifts and favors, being drugged or given alcohol, physical assault, and threats were also common. With unwanted sexual touching, sudden attacks (without warning) as when in the mall or riding in public vehicles, were also mentioned. The highest prevalence of childhood overall sexual violence occurred during dating (14.1%). Verbal insistence, “sweet-talking”, and verbal deception were the usual methods used.

Forms of sexual coercion the first time it occurred while dating	Percent
Sweet talked (<i>lambing</i>)	28.5
Verbal insistence (<i>kulit</i>)	22.0
Verbal blackmail (e.g, if you really love me, you should give yourself to me)	19.5
Verbal deception (<i>binola</i>)	12.4
Gave favors and gifts (bribery)	6.2
Drugged or given alcohol	5.8
Threatened to leave me or break up with me	4.8
Did not want to talk to me	4.4
Slapped, kicked, hit with a fist or did physical harm	2.1
Threatened to tell my secrets or put me on shame	1.6
Threatened with a weapon	1.0
Threatened my family or friends	0.4
Others (pulled me into the room, entered the room without consent)	3.3

Severe sexual violence (forced consummated sex)

About 3.2 percent of children and youth experienced forced consummated sex (anal, oral, and/or vaginal) during childhood. The prevalence for males was 4.1 percent, significantly higher than the 2.3 percent among females who experienced forced consummated sex. However, the lifetime prevalence estimate of forced consummated sex among males was double the prevalence of females in the school setting (2.1% compared with 1.1%, respectively).

A current prevalence of 1.2 percent was noted. More males in the 13-<18 years group (1.5%) claimed to have such experience in the past 12 months compared with females (1%). More males had experienced forced consummated sex in almost all settings except in the home.

Methods of sexual coercion used by perpetrators during Incidents of forced consummated sex in the community	Percent
Verbal insistence	33.9
Sweet talked	30.4
Verbal deception	23.2
Gave favors and gifts (bribery)	17.9
Threatened to tell my secrets or put me on shame	17.9
Drugged or given alcohol	14.3
Slapped,kicked,hit with a fist or did physical harm	10.7
Threatened with a weapon	5.4
Was sold or given as a gift by my parents/relatives to the perpetrator	3.6
Verbal bribery (if you really love me, you should give yourself to me)	1.8

Peer violence

Three in five respondents reported to have ever experienced peer violence or bullying during childhood. The prevalence was higher among females (70.5%) than males (59.8%). About 35.4 percent experienced bullying in the past 12 months.

The common triggers for bullying were physical appearance, status in life and skin color. The majority of the bullied respondents were verbally abused, laughed at or given made-faces and menacing gestures, experienced being gossiped about or were ignored. Almost half of the bullying was perpetrated by schoolmates and close friends. For many of the respondents, bullying was part of the “fun” among friends.

Cyber violence

About 43.8 percent of children aged 13-<18 years ever experienced cyber violence. The prevalence for males was 45.3 percent while females had a prevalence of 42.2 percent. About a third of the types of cyber violence were in the form of verbal abuse over the internet or cellphone while a fourth were sent sexual messages. An estimated 2.5 percent had their own nude body or own sexual activities shown in the internet or cellphone, including both real and falsified images. More females received sex messages or words over the internet or cellphone (males = 22.8%; females = 25.5%). There were no significant difference between males and females on being shown other people’s sex videos and photos over the internet or cellphone (males = 15%; females = 14.1%). There were more males who reported having their own nude body or own sexual activities, whether true or not, shown in the internet or cellphone (males = 3.2%; females = 1.8%).

Collective violence

The overall prevalence of collective violence during childhood was 7.8 percent where significantly more males aged 13-<18 years had these kinds of experiences than females (8.6% compared with 7.0%, respectively). About 6.7 percent experienced any form of demolition or deliberate destruction of their homes. About 9 percent lived in a place where they have seen people being shot, bombs going off, people fighting, or rioting.

Polyvictimization

Fifteen percent (15.2%) of children and youth experienced all forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence in their lifetime. However, half encountered both physical and psychological violence while 1 in 4 respondents experienced either a combination of physical and sexual violence or psychological and sexual violence. In all types of multiple abuse, a higher proportion of males reported these experiences.

Among children aged 13-<18 years, almost half (48.2%) encountered multiple abuse in the form of physical and psychological harm, and only 12.5 percent had all three types of polyvictimization, namely, physical, psychological, and sexual violence.

Prevalence data by Socio Economic Status (SES), residence location, and gender

No significant differences were found among the lower, middle and upper classes with regard to physical, psychological and sexual violence based on percentages noting that majority of the respondents are from the middle class.

Prevalence of violence against children in all forms, by socio-economic class, (N = 3,794) (in percent)

Type of VAC	Lower Class (n = 468)	Middle Class (n = 3265)	Upper Class (n = 61)
Physical	62.2	64.7	66.2
Psychological	69.1	61.9	65.8
Sexual	27.4	25.3	28.9

A nearly equal proportion of children who experienced physical, psychological and sexual violence came from urban locations, as compared to children from rural areas based on percentages noting that there were more respondents from the rural areas.

Prevalence of violence against children in all forms, by residence location (in percent)

Type of VAC	Rural (n = 2150)	Urban (n = 1716)
Physical	61.3	68.7
Psychological	60.4	65.9
Sexual	24.1	28.0

About eight of ten LGBT respondents reported physical or psychological abuse. More than a third reported that they were sexually violated.

Prevalence of violence against children in all forms, by gender (in percent)

GENDER	Physical Violence	Psychological Violence	Sexual Violence
HETEROSEXUAL (straight) MALE (n = 1,822)	65.9	63.7	28.8
HETEROSEXUAL (straight) FEMALE (n = 1,820)	61.8	60.0	21.4
LGBT (n = 171)	75.0	78.5	33.8
Gay (65)	82.0	85.1	36.7
Lesbian (46)	70.2	75.8	23.0
Bisexual (57)	71.3	72.0	35.8
Transgender (2)	50.0	100.0	100.0
Transexual (1)	100.0	100.0	100.0

Respondents as perpetrators of violence

Of those children aged 13 to <18 years who participated in this study, about two in five (39.5%) reported that they committed some form of physical violence against another child (Figure 19). More males (42.7%) indicated that they were perpetrators of physical violence (females = 36.3%). For psychological violence, 38.2 percent of the respondents reported that they shouted, insulted, threatened, humiliated, or used verbal abuse and derogatory language (males = 40.5%, females = 35.8%).

About 2.0 percent of the respondents aged 13 to <18 years reported that they had made sexual advances to another person; about three in four (75.0%) of those who reported such behavior were males. More males (2.8%) than females (1.2%) reported to be perpetrators of sexual violence.

Among the respondents aged 13-<18 years, 41.4 percent had reportedly bullied others. This occurred more among males (45.3%) than females (37.7%).

Children in need of special protection

Children in conflict with the law

Among children aged 13-<18 years, 1.2 percent mentioned that they had been charged or arrested for a crime, but that their case was later resolved in the barangay. Vagrancy and physical assault were the most common offenses reported. The majority of the offenses were committed when they were 15-19 years old (44.1%). Among respondents aged 13- <18 years, about 0.5 percent were arrested and brought to the police. All of these reported that they were first offenders. Physical assault was the most common reason for the arrests.

Less than one percent claimed that they had been imprisoned, "once or twice" for the reported offenses. The reasons for the imprisonment included drug abuse and physical assault. The average duration of imprisonment was 7.9 days.



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Children affected by armed conflict and displacement

About 2.6 percent of the 2,303 respondents aged 13- < 18 years had been forced to live in another place because of war, ethnic conflicts, organized crimes, terrorism or other similar incidents. Among these children who experienced armed conflict, 3.5 percent lost a parent, sibling or close family member. About 1.6 percent were personally injured or beaten, while 2 out of 30 (0.7%) admitted that they were combatants or warriors in a war or community violence, or assisted older warriors in their fight against their enemies.

Children as victims of disasters

About 94.6 percent of the children and youth claimed to have suffered from natural and man-made disasters in the past two years. About 31 percent of them, with almost an equal proportion of males and females, were affected by Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan). About 30.9 percent of those affected by Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) were children aged 13- < 18 years. The worst consequences of the super typhoon that came to the Philippines in 2014 were damaged homes, physical sickness, and wiped-out communities.

At the time of the survey, a fourth of the children and youth claimed to have already coped, with more than half still suffering from the trauma or undergoing the healing process. Coping with the consequences of Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) was mostly spiritual, getting support from friends, help of the government, local NGOs and international organizations.

Children with early pregnancy

About 43.0 percent (n = 589) of the 1,371 respondents aged 13-24 years who had engaged in sexual intercourse reported to have experienced pregnancy. Among males, 23.1 percent of the 589 respondents claimed to have impregnated someone. Among the females, 76.9 percent had experienced pregnancy. More than half (60.8%) of these pregnancies occurred when they were 15-19 years old.

Consequences of VAC

Responses on the consequences of VAC according to the respondents reveal the influence of social norms and values that accept or condone some forms of violence, particularly corporal punishment, which is seen to be “necessary” and even perceived to be “helpful” to children. This acceptance and tolerance is why physical punishment is the most common form of violence experienced by children in the Philippines.

More than half of the respondents (57.4%) claimed that they became “more resilient and strong” because of their experience of some form of violence. They reported that they subsequently strove to finish their studies, had more friends, became closer to their family, and became more religious or spiritual. About 8.9 percent reported that the abusive behavior had no effect on them.

These are worrisome responses, noting that all forms of violence have a negative impact on children’s development, and are discouraged based on research evidence that shows the long term negative effects of violence on children’s mental, emotional and physical development. However, these seemingly positive responses can be expected noting the high prevalence of mild corporal punishment and verbal abuse, which are both considered “normal” and “even necessary” in Philippine child-rearing practices.

Children reported negative effects as a result of violence including; having to stop their schooling, developing low self-esteem, feeling sad, fearful and anxious, being stigmatized and ostracized for life, and avoiding interacting with other people. There were three respondents who reported that they tested positive for HIV following an incidence of sexual violence.

Disclosure, reporting and utilization of VAC services

Disclosures

There is low overall disclosure of physical, psychological and sexual violence. Ten percent of the 2,495 respondents aged 13-24 years who reported physical violence, disclosed their experiences to someone prior to this survey. In total, 7.3 percent disclosed physical maltreatment before this survey. They most commonly disclosed their experience to their friends, followed by their mothers and fathers.

Among the 2,429 respondents who experienced psychological violence, 11.8 percent disclosed their experiences of psychological abuse prior to this survey. Among the 1,290 males, 10.1 percent disclosed it to someone, while 13.7 percent did so among the 1,139 females who were psychologically abused. About 9 percent of these were aged 13-<18 years.

Among children and young people who experienced any form of sexual abuse, 11.9 per cent disclosed the incident to someone. Among these, 11.3 percent (n=67) are males and 12.8 percent (n=52) are females. About 2.6 percent of the children aged 13-<18 years also made these disclosures prior to this survey. The majority revealed their experiences of violence to friends and mothers.

Reporting of VAC cases

An estimated 78 percent of children and young people stated that they would report an abuse case to the authorities if the abused person was a relative or a close friend. A little less (68.8%) said that they would report the abuse to authorities even if the abused person was not personally close to them. Among the types of abuse, sexual abuse was considered more reportable, with psychological violence, the least.

Awareness and seeking professional help

Only 29.2 percent of children were aware of the services that they could utilize for their needs (males=25.7%, females=33.0%). About 30.5 % of those who were aware of child protection services have utilized Child Protection Units or Woman Child Protection Units in their province or region (males=37%, females=25%). About 69.6 percent have attended orientation seminars, trainings, awareness programs and other services on child protection and child welfare conducted by the government for young people.

About 45.4 percent of the child respondents reported to have ever sought help from a professional for any of their concerns. Among these 53.5% were males and 46.5% were females. The children mainly consulted teachers (40.7%) and guidance counselors (14.2%). Signifying the importance of the school in child protection. A few disclosed to religious people (8.2%) and barangay officials (6.9%). It must be noted that while severe abuse necessitated consulting with health professionals, none mentioned disclosing to physicians and nurses.

Among those who did not consult at all, the reasons for not seeking help were (in order): do not see what happened as a problem (males=50.4%, females=44.2%), being shy or afraid to consult (males=23.6%, females=22.6%), regard their problem as something solvable by them (males=21.4%, females=17.5%), and they have someone to consult with aside from these professionals and these are mostly friends, family members and other relatives (males=19.2%, females=39.7%). Other reasons cited were: don't want more trouble, no time to consult, person might not believe, not comfortable with them, afraid of being blamed (*binabaliktad lang kami*), do not personally know them, cannot trust them, and perpetrator makes threats.

Community Stakeholders Study

Stakeholders' perceptions of VAC

Community leaders and other stakeholders recognized the importance of protecting children from all forms of violence but varied in their views on how child rights should be instilled vis-à-vis Filipino cultural norms. In particular, there were ambivalent attitudes about the use of corporal punishment in child discipline both at home and in school.

Structure

The Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) is the primary local structure that formulates policies and implements child protection programs in cities, municipalities and barangays. As noted, many local government units have either no LCPC or have non-functional LCPCs. The organization of LCPCs at all levels depended mainly on the initiative and support of the local chief executives (mayor, barangay chairman). The LGUs' attitudes toward LCPC depended on a number of factors that include number of reported cases, priority of the local executive and availability of funds.

There was no or minimal collaboration or team work among LCPC members. This is evidenced by the absence of a unified program of action among many LCPCs. Also, some LCPCs do not have their own budget, but use budgets that are allocated to each partner agency.

Policies and programs

There were few proactive child protection programs in most communities visited by the research team. Some LGUs provided VAC prevention lectures to school children. Parenting seminars were also conducted in few LGUs. Otherwise, LGUs only act when there are cases of VAC in the community. Most of the ordinances passed by the LGUs centered on establishing curfew hours for minor children, banning children from internet cafes and videoke bars, banning the sale of liquors and cigarettes to children and anti-drug abuse policies. Others included feeding programs, parenting seminars, seminars on child rights and national government programs for children and youth.

Budget

Local governments have been generally compliant in their allocation and appropriation of the 1% IRA budget provided for programs and services for children. However, this 1% budget is generally appropriated to a wide range of activities that concern children, including anti-drug abuse activities, immunization, and feeding programs. Only areas vying for the Child-Friendly Municipality/City provided special funds for child protection, and had innovative programs for child welfare and safety.

NGOs/POs

The presence of NGOs/PO's and other civic organizations that supplement and complement the programs and services of the local governments have been a game-changer in the way responses and assistance are provided to children in need of special protection. Unfortunately, these institutions operate mainly in urban centers and only a small number work in geographically isolated and disadvantaged communities.

Training of direct service providers in the child protection

The majority of the direct service providers in the child protection field were either not well-trained or are adequately trained but need continuing capacity building activities to further enhance their skills.

Prevention readiness

In terms of prevention readiness, the cities were found to be more prepared in terms of providing programs and services in child protection compared to both poor and rich municipalities, where most are in the preplanning and preparation stages for implementing child protection. The problem, however, with large cities is the large percentage of the population who are children, thus the need and demand for services is much greater than the capacity.



Discussion of Results

High overall prevalence of violence against children

The prevalence survey shows a high overall prevalence of violence against Filipino children with three out of five children being physically and psychologically abused, and bullied, and almost one in five children being sexually violated.

These findings were similar to previous studies where high prevalence among Filipino children and youth were noted (BSNOH, 2000, Lansford et.al. 2012, Runyan et.al., 2010, Lomperio and Engelbrecht, 2012). The study also shows that poly-victimization is common among children who experience violence. This means that experiencing one form of violence places the child at risk to experience other forms of violence. Prevention and intervention services cannot focus only on one type of violence.

Corporal punishment is the most common form of violence experienced by children

According to the study those who experienced spanking with bare hands, rolled paper or small stick, pulling the hair, pinching or twisting of ears (54.55%) happened in the home in the context of corporal punishment. More severe forms of punishment such as slapping, kicking, smothering, tying, drowning, burning was inflicted in 30.3% of children. This underscores the widely spread practice and acceptance of corporal punishment.

Results of earlier studies and this prevalence study confirms that indeed, corporal punishment is common among Filipinos (Hassan, et al., 2004; Save the Children Philippines, 2005; Lansford, et al., 2010; BSNOH, 2000). Many Filipinos tend to view corporal punishment as a manifestation of parents' love and concern and is culturally considered a "normal and even necessary" disciplinary technique (Madrid et al., 2013). These views were also noted in this VAC study where community leaders and teachers alike expressed their concerns that children may become "disrespectful and unruly" because of the absence of physical discipline in schools. In some studies, corporal punishment was even regarded by children as "acceptable", more than the degree of acceptability of parents and professionals (Santos Ocampo et al., 2000, PLAN Philippines, 2006).

The issue of corporal punishment and other forms of violence in the home also reflects a well-known and researched **pattern of violence that is intergenerational** – parents who were victims of violence and experienced corporal punishment at home as children, continue to practice violent discipline with their own children as this is what they learned. The Systematic Literature Review on the Drivers Affecting Children noted that according to the Parenting across Cultures Study, "Beliefs in the normalcy and necessity of corporal punishment predict both mother's and father's use of corporal punishment." The data in this study indicates a high likelihood that these children may also use corporal punishment with their future children, perpetuating intergenerational violence against children.

High prevalence of VAC among both boys and girls

Perhaps, the most glaring results of this study is the high prevalence of violence experienced by both boys and girls, with the estimated total prevalence for males at 81.5 percent and 78.4 percent among females. In this study, there is a slight margin between girls experiencing violence (48.33%) at home compared to boys (47.33%). However, males experienced higher levels of severe physical violence (4.0%) as compared to females (2.2%) that required hospitalization. For psychological abuse, there was no significant differences found between males and females, including among those that experienced severe psychological violence (Males = 7.9%; Females = 8.0%). More males (24.7%) experienced sexual violence overall compared to females (18.2%).² There were significantly more males who were sexually abused in the school (Males = 6.7%; Females = 4.5%) and the community (Males = 12.8%; Females = 6.4%). However, there is no significant difference on the incidence prevalence of severe sexual violence or forced consummated sex in the home with females at 1.8% and males 1.4%. On sexual violence during childhood in the schools, there were significantly more males (2.1%) who claimed to have experienced forced consummated sex in school than females (1.1%) for a total over-all prevalence of 1.6 percent.

There is a general belief that girl-children are more at-risk especially to sexual violence. However, past Philippine studies have shown that males are as vulnerable to different forms of abuse especially sexual and physical abuse with high reported numbers (BSNOH, 2000, Plan, 2010, Ramiro, 2003). This is seen as well in the NBS VAC as results from other Asian countries which showed the same trend (Hutt, 2015, Pembaruan, 2014, Canave, 2013). The evidence underscores the importance of developing response and support programs, interventions, and advocacy strategies that are appropriate for boys and girls.

LGBT children and youth's high prevalence violence in all forms

The proportion of physical violence was highest (75%) among the LGBTs compared to heterosexual males (65.9%) and females (61.8%). The responses of LGBT boys who self-identified as homosexuals on experiencing psychological violence are higher than LGBT girls who self-identified as lesbians. (85.1% and 75.8%, respectively). It is in line with the prevalence on sexual violence at LGBT boys (homosexuals) at 36.7% and LGBT girls (lesbians) at 23.0%.

The Systematic Literature Review on Violence affecting Children³(2016) (SLR) states that "Grey literature has also highlighted that LGBT youth may be particularly at risk of sexual violence at school – often from peers." Also, the SLR underscored that LGBT children are also at higher risk of physical and psychological bullying at school. The SLR also stressed that there is limited research on LGBT children and their experiences. (University of the Philippines Manila, The University of Edinburgh, Child Protection Network Foundation & UNICEF Philippines, 2016)

² Indicators for sexual violence are taking photos or sex videos of being naked or engaging in sexual activities, unwanted touch, forced attempted sex, and forced consummated sex, was found to be 21.5 percent

³ The SLR on VAC is a study that was conducted to support the results of the National Baseline Survey on VAC.

Low disclosures and reporting despite the high prevalence

Despite the high prevalence of experiences of violence among both boys and girls, disclosures are low at 10% overall. Most disclosed to their friends and to some extent, mothers. They rarely disclosed the violence they experienced to professionals but when they did, teachers were the most common persons they disclosed to and sought help from. Teachers may be the ones that children often approach because based on the community stakeholders' study, schools conduct seminars on child rights and children spend most of their time in school. However, this study revealed, that a number of teachers do not have appreciation and understanding of children's rights. According to respondents, when children become aware of their rights, "*Lalong tumitigas ang ulo*" (they become more unruly) and some children (and parents) would even "threaten the teachers of being reported to the Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD)." Statistics from the Women and Child Protection Units also show that teachers report the least among professionals (Child Protection Network Annual Report 2015).

It is interesting to note that despite low disclosures and reports, 78% of the respondents stated that they would report cases of abuse and violence against another person to the authorities. However, there is low awareness and utilization of child protection services (29.2%). Of those that are aware of the services, 37% males and 25% females consulted or utilized the services of the Child Protection Unit or Woman Child Protection Unit in their province or region. Prevalence of children and youth attending awareness programs is high at 69.6% with more females (71.1%) than males (67.8%) participating. There are a few interesting points that the data tells. The study also shows that awareness programs are not enough to increase reports. Children and youth would rather talk to friends. Even if boys are aware of the services, they participate less in awareness raising programs. However, they would report experiences of violence directly to hospitals through CPUs/WCPUs,

LGUs generally have low capacity to prevent and respond to VAC

The main responsibility to create a protective environment for children is with the local governments of the Philippines and the Local Councils for the Protection of Children (LCPC) as embodied in the Local Government Code and "Protecting Filipino Children from Abuse, Exploitation and Violence: A Comprehensive Programme on Child Protection, 2006-2010, Building a Protective and Caring Environment for Filipino Children" produced by the Special Committee for the Protection of Children. However, in almost all areas visited by the research team, the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) and its grassroots counterpart (Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) are not in place, or if ever, they are not fully functional. The Local Social Welfare and Development Offices (LSWDOs) often face inadequate human resources, as the municipal or city social worker is expected to manage the social work and development office, implement programs such as 4Ps⁴ and similar programs, respond to the needs of senior citizens, manage and monitor the cases of children and women victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and conduct home visits. The availability of funds has also always been mentioned as a hindrance to the implementation of child protection programs. The 1% internal revenue allotment (IRA) for children is mostly spent for purposes other than to combat child abuse and neglect.

⁴ Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (English: Bridging Program for the Filipino Family), also known as 4Ps is a human development measure of the national government under the Department of Social Welfare and Development. It provides conditional cash grants to the poorest of the poor, to improve the health, nutrition, and the education of children aged 0-18. It is patterned after the conditional cash transfer (CCT) schemes in Latin American and African countries, which have lifted millions of people around the world from poverty. (Available at: <http://www.gov.ph/programs/conditional-cash-transfer/>)

LGUs' child protection programs are mostly reactive as the LSWDO and law enforcement only address reported cases of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Although there are Philippines standards on multi-disciplinary teams responding to abuse cases, this does not often happen in the field as social workers, police, and health professionals all work independently with little coordination. Prevention programs are limited to awareness raising activities that are not well planned or strategic.

There is, indeed, a need to look at the law that mandates the institution of LCPCs in local governments, in terms of membership and functionality. There is also a need for national implementing agencies to consistently monitor and provide technical assistance to LGUs. The idea of "Most Child-Friendly Cities/Municipalities" is a good example of a motivator for many, but this is not enough. It needs good local governance together with national policies that will encourage implementation of child protection programs. One example is a Philhealth⁵ insurance package for primary prevention programs as well as for survivors of violence.

Social norms: the acceptance and justification of violence against women and children

The prevailing social norms including the acceptance and justification of violence against women and children contribute significantly to the current prevalence of violence against children and increases the likelihood of continued violence against children. At present: 34.3 % (37.6 % males; 30.9 % females) of 13-24-year-olds think that corporal punishment is necessary in order to properly raise or discipline a child and 38.2% (42.2% males; 34.2% females) agree that parents should spank their child if he/she misbehaves. Beliefs in the normalcy and necessity of corporal punishment suggest both the mother and father are not trained on positive parenting skills or are adequately trained but need guidance on norms and beliefs around corporal punishment that could lead to preventing violence against children (University of the Philippines Manila, The University of Edinburgh, Child Protection Network Foundation & UNICEF Philippines, 2016)

Overall, 55.5% of males and 51.6% of females aged X agree that that a man can hit his wife if she does not take care of their children. The SLR on VAC shows that "adults who experienced family violence justify the use of intimate partner violence more than those who have not grown up in violent family environments." (University of the Philippines Manila, The University of Edinburgh, Child Protection Network Foundation & UNICEF Philippines, 2016, p. 48) In addition, "witnessing parental violence is a driver of subsequent violence in a variety of relationships for both males and females... Parental gender roles are also significant in the use and experience of family violence in that witnessing their father perpetrate violence was significant for males and witnessing their mother perpetrate was significant for females for both their own use and experience of subsequent family violence (Mandal & Hindin, 2015 as stated in University of the Philippines Manila, The University of Edinburgh, Child Protection Network Foundation & UNICEF Philippines, 2016)

⁵ The National Health Insurance Program or PhilHealth was established to provide health insurance coverage and ensure affordable, acceptable, available and accessible health care services for all citizens of the Philippines. It shall serve as the means for the healthy to help pay for the care of the sick and for those who can afford medical care to subsidize those who cannot. (Available at: https://www.philhealth.gov.ph/about_us/mandate.html)

Children's previous experiences of violence, especially in the home, are risk factors for bullying behavior in schools. (University of the Philippines Manila, The University of Edinburgh, Child Protection Network Foundation & UNICEF Philippines, 2016) Violence and neglect in the home are risk factors for children becoming street involved, including experiences of physical violence due to a parent's misuse of alcohol or extreme corporal punishment; and witnessing sexual violence of another child by a parent or a guardian; or actual experience of sexual violence from a parent or guardian. (University of the Philippines Manila, The University of Edinburgh, Child Protection Network Foundation & UNICEF Philippines, 2016, p. 58)

It is therefore important and strategic to change social norms that support and justify the use of violence against children and violence against women to prevent violence in the home, at school and in the community. According to the SLR on VAC, while many children accept physical punishment and verbal attacks from adults as a normal part of school life, they readily identified these acts as something that "they did not like in school" because it made them "unhappy" (UNICEF, PLAN International & CWC, 2009 as stated in University of the Philippines Manila, The University of Edinburgh, Child Protection Network Foundation & UNICEF Philippines, 2016). From the qualitative interviews and focus groups, children stated that they prefer a more positive form of discipline such as being talked to and corrected or guided/counseled in response to offenses or violations committed in school (UNICEF, PLAN International & CWC, 2009).

Addressing needs of children in need of special protection

Children affected by disasters

During disasters children separated from their parents and families are at increased risk of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect in an emergency. Children who experienced stressful situations will initially show changes in social relations, behaviour, physical reactions, and emotions. Prolonged displacement further exacerbates this problem. Vulnerable households, including single parent households may require caregivers to work overtime leaving children unattended for long periods of time. Children, particularly adolescent boys and girls, may also be asked to work and 'help more' within and outside of the household, and thus may be involved in hazardous labor that includes being taken out of school. Adolescent girls and boys are often at a greater risk to gender based violence, exploitation, trafficking, labour, and unwanted pregnancies during this period with limited, if any support or access to services. Noting the significant impact of natural disasters on children and families in the Philippines, more research is needed to better understand how disasters increase the threat/risk of violence and what preventative measures can be taken to reduce this risk and better protect children in future.

Increasing early pregnancies

Adolescent fertility has more than doubled in the past ten years in the Philippines.⁶ (YAFS 2013) This is attributed to an increase in the percentage of teenagers who are sexually active, and an apparent lack of access to reproductive health/family planning information to effectively prevent unwanted pregnancies. While most countries in the world are currently reporting decreases in adolescent fertility, the Philippines has an opposite trend. Social norms, policies and laws that limit access to information on sexuality and reproductive health as well as services for young people are compounding the challenge of increasing teen pregnancies.

Children in Conflict with the Law

Before the passage of the amendatory law, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its 2009 Concluding Observations, had expressed concern at the slow pace of implementation of the JJWA. In particular, it noted the high number of detained children and that such children did not have enough legal safeguards as well as access to medical care. The Committee also expressed concern over the limited use of diversion and the alleged widespread practice of detaining children before trial. Diversion is the alternative, child-appropriate process of determining the responsibility and treatment of a child in conflict with the law on the basis of his/her social, cultural, economic, psychological or educational background without resorting to formal court proceedings. It appears that diversion is not widely accepted nor practiced even though the law allows for diversion to be applied at the level of the police, prosecutors and even judges. There is a need to increase use of community-based mechanisms to flesh out the ideals of the law's restorative justice framework.

The NBS-VAC supports earlier researches that children in contact with the law usually commit physical offenses, property crimes and drugs. Most CICL are boys and most of these offenses are committed by adolescents aged 15 to below 18. There is no available evidence that putting children in jail will contribute to improving security and decreasing criminality in society. But rather, there is evidence on the reasons that propel children into the juvenile justice system such as violence at home, risk-taking behaviour of children at a certain age, poverty, exposure to violence in the community, to name a few. These are drivers that needs to be addressed to ensure effective prevention against violence in all settings, including criminality.

⁶ "Among the sexual behaviors tracked by the YAFS series is early sexual initiation, defined as beginning sexual activity before age 18. Sexual initiation signals the start of the exposure to the risk of reproduction and childbearing as well of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The results of the three YAFS rounds indicate an increasing proportion of youth who have begun sexual activity before age 18, from 13 per cent in 1994 to 23 per cent in 2013 for both males and females. Among males, this proportion increased from 13.8 per cent in 1994 to 25.1 per cent in 2013 while for females the increase was from 12 per cent in 1994 to 22 per cent two decades later." (Available at: https://www.drdf.org.ph/yafs4/key_findings#sec-5)



National Baseline Study on Violence against Children Philippines

- Implementing agency : Council for the Welfare of Children
National Steering Committee on National Baseline Study on Violence
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