

THE MULTI-COUNTRY STUDY ON THE DRIVERS OF VIOLENCE AFFECTING
CHILDREN

The Violence Prevention Research Process: VIET NAM

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

Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Forum 2015

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Overview of VAC in Viet Nam

Physical abuse (Young Lives 2013, 2015)

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

Emotional abuse

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

Sexual abuse

- More common among girls (64%) but remains underestimated due to cultural norms of virginity and family prestige (Ministry of Public Security, 2005).

Factors leading to Viet Nam's involvement in the 'drivers' research process

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

Lessons learned in Viet Nam by the end of Stage 1

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

Changes created by the 'drivers' process in Viet Nam thus far

- Evidence-based dialogue has moved violence prevention to the front of the *National Program 267 (2011-2015)*, led by MOLISA with line ministries and agencies.
- Communication interventions have focused only on awareness raising--not behaviour change; the Gov't is addressing this deficit through a social norms approach, financed through current action plan.
- Government of Vietnam's 'Behaviour Change Strategy' underway:
 - #ENDviolence campaign messaging is under critical evaluation
 - The new *Program on Child Protection 2016-2020* and other policies will be informed by the national report.
- Vietnam's existing research—synthesized, analyzed and interpreted—has effectively mobilized government producing concrete on-the-ground action:
 - Mental Health study; Study on early marriage; Assessment of child online violence.

The Context of VAC in Viet Nam

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