



# THE PHILIPPINES

## AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN



**endviolence**

global partnership to end violence against children

Discussion Paper  
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# Contents

<b>Key Findings .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>One   Ending Violence Against Children in the Philippines .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction .....	4
International Context.....	5
National Context .....	5
National Baseline Survey on Violence Against Children .....	6
An Historic Opportunity .....	7
<b>Two   Towards a New Plan to End Violence .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Developing National Action Plans.....	8
A Global Model for Ending Violence .....	9
<b>Three   From Research to Action .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Becoming a Pathfinder.....	16
Opportunities and Next Steps.....	17
<b>Endnotes .....</b>	<b>21</b>

## Key Findings

- **Commitment.** The Philippines is committed to ending all forms of violence and has signed up to new targets to end violence as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is also implementing the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children.
- **Urgency.** The government has recently completed a National Baseline Survey on Violence Against Children. This provides the first national picture of the nature and scale of the violence that children face. In response, the government has called for “strong action to prevent violence against children, respond to and rescue victims, and prosecute the perpetrators.”
- **Opportunity.** Work will soon start on the development of an action plan for preventing and responding to violence against children. Stakeholders from all sectors will participate in the development of the plan, which will be launched in October 2016 to coincide with publication of the final report from the survey. The new plan offers an historic opportunity to begin the work of delivering significant, sustained, and measurable reductions in violence against children.
- **Best practice.** Global best practice suggests that national action plans should be integrated, multi-sectoral, developed through a participatory process, and based on the best available evidence. The prevention of violence must be a priority. A new global package of seven strategies for ending violence is currently under development and will soon be published. The Philippines could draw on this model, using international evidence to strengthen existing work in areas such as parenting, household economic strengthening, response services, legal protections, values and norms, education and life skills, and safe environments.
- **Political will.** To seize this opportunity for children, partners in the Philippines could explore how to build political will to end violence, ensuring that targets for ending violence are integrated into the development plans of the next government. It could also identify ‘headline’ commitments that capture the ambition of the new plan and that can be used to ensure that the important priorities are delivered at scale.
- **Co-ordination.** The new plan will create increased pressure on existing interagency co-ordination mechanisms and structures. These are already fragmented in a way that makes it hard for senior decision makers to focus on strategic and implementation challenges. One option would be to return the Council for the Welfare of Children to the Office of the President or to create a Commission for the Child. An Ombudsman could provide an independent voice for children.
- **Movement.** Outreach and advocacy will be needed both before, during, and after the launch of the survey and action plan. The aim should be to build a powerful movement for ending violence against children in the Philippines, with children playing a full role. By becoming a ‘pathfinder’ for the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, the Philippines could take its place at the forefront of the global movement for ending violence.



**End violence against children...**

- 16.2** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children
- 5.2** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking, and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3** Eliminate all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation
- 8.7** Elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including slavery, human trafficking, and recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms
- 4.a** Provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all
- 4.7** Ensure that all learners acquire knowledge... [for] promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence

**...reduce the impact of violence in families, communities and all settings...**

- 16.1** Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 11** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

**...and ensure access to fair and effective institutions and to justice for all**

- 16.3** Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all
- 16.9** Provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
- 16.a** Strengthen relevant institutions... to prevent violence

# One | Ending Violence Against Children in the Philippines

## Introduction

In 1996 and 2006, the United Nations Secretary-General submitted landmark reports on children and conflict and ending violence against children to the General Assembly.<sup>1</sup> These reports set an agenda that has been taken forward by the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, and for Children and Armed Conflict, and by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.<sup>2</sup>

Agenda 2030 provides a focus for renewed ambition (see page 3). It recognises that peace and sustainable development are interlinked, and sets targets to end all forms of violence against children. The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children provides a platform for national governments, civil society, faith-based groups, academics, the private sector, international organisations and other partners to work together to deliver these targets.

The partnership's zero based strategy was published in September 2015. It sets out three objectives:

- 1. Build political will to end violence against children**, by making violence prevention a global policy priority.
- 2. Work with countries to accelerate action to tackle the violence children face**, by supporting 'pathfinder countries' to prevent and respond to violence.
- 3. Help countries to work together to tackle violence against children**, by combating transnational threats and creating a platform for sharing knowledge about what works to end violence.<sup>3</sup>

The Partnership was invited to make a technical support and learning visit to the Philippines (11-15 April 2016). Meetings were held with government and non-governmental partners with the aim of sharing and discussing experience of the Philippines and other countries in preventing and addressing violence against children.

As well as bilateral meetings with government and non-government stakeholders, the visit included:

- A technical workshop with the steering committee overseeing the National Baseline Study on Violence against Children in the Philippines. The committee is composed of 27 governmental and non-governmental partners.
- A field visit to the municipality of Silang, Cavite, which was organised by Save the Children and ZOTO, a network of 646 local urban poor organisations. This included meetings with local leaders and service providers who are working to end violence; and a consultation with children who are part of the Active Youth Movement – a local children and youth led advocacy organisation.
- A de-briefing workshop at which a group of government and civil society stakeholders reflected on the visit and discussed next steps.

The Partnership agreed to submit a discussion paper summarising observations and findings from the visit. A preliminary draft of this paper was shared ahead of the first meeting of the working group that is planning for a new multi-sectoral action plan for addressing and preventing violence against children, held on 21 April 2016.

## International Context

In line with Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights standards, the Government of the Philippines is committed to ending all forms of violence against children.

The government is also committed to delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes ambitious targets for ending violence, as part of a broader vision of “a world which invests in its children and in which every child grows up free from violence and exploitation.”<sup>4</sup>

The government is also strongly committed to the delivery of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children 2016-2025.<sup>5</sup> The plan includes priority actions for the next five years in the following areas: prevention; protection, response and support services; legal framework, data collection, co-ordination and monitoring and evaluation; and partnership.

The Department of Health, meanwhile, is beginning to explore its role in delivering the global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system in addressing violence, especially against women and girls.<sup>6</sup> This plan is expected to be adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2016 and aims to strengthen health system leadership, governance, and capacity for preventing and responding to violence, and its use of information and evidence.

## National Context

The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines urges the government to defend the right of children “to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development.”<sup>7</sup>

The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 led to the introduction of the Philippine Plan of Action of Children (1990-2002) (PPAC), and the Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children (2000-2025) or Child 21.<sup>8</sup>

Building on the PPAC’s rights-based approach, Child 21 introduced a life cycle approach to child development planning. To translate the vision of Child 21 into a clear, actionable and time-bound plan that was fully aligned with the Millennium Development Goals and the World Fit for Children goals, the National Plan of Action for Children 2005-2010 (NPAC) was developed.<sup>9</sup> This was succeeded by the Second National Plan of Action for Children 2011-2016 (Second NPAC).<sup>10</sup>

### Child 21 Vision for Filipino Children

- Born healthy and well with an inherent right to life, endowed with human dignity
- Happy, loved and nurtured by a strong, stable and God-loving family
- Living in a peaceful, progressive, gender-fair and child-friendly society
- Growing safe in a healthy environment and ecology
- Free and protected by a responsible and enabling government
- Reaching full potential with the right opportunities and accessible resources
- Imbued with Filipino values steeped in his/her indigenous cultural heritage
- Assertive of his/her rights as well as those of others
- Actively participating in decision-making and governance, in harmony and in solidarity with others in sustaining the Filipino nation

Multiple legal frameworks underpin both the national plans for children, including the 1974 Child and Youth Welfare Code and the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act, enacted in 1992. They also build on existing frameworks and policies including those on child protection, child participation, children involved in armed conflict, trafficking, sexual exploitation and child labour.<sup>11</sup>

Following the introduction of the National Strategic Framework for Action to End Violence Against Children in 2008 and its corresponding 3-year Plan of Action 2010-2012, ending violence against children was formally recognised as a goal in the Second NPAC: MDG+ on the safety and protection of children from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Developed by the multi-stakeholder National Network to End Violence Against Children, the Framework aimed: “to protect all children, especially those at risk, from violence, ensure the recovery and reintegration of victim-survivors to their families and communities, and facilitate the rehabilitation of perpetrators of violence.”<sup>12</sup>

### **National Baseline Survey on Violence Against Children**

One of the priorities of the Second National Plan of Action was to develop a clear understanding of the scale and nature of the threat posed by violence to children in the Philippines:

*The survey/study aims to determine the prevalence of, potential risks and protective factors, assess knowledge and utilization of health, legal and welfare services available, and make recommendations to improve and enhance interventions for children victims of violence and maltreatment.*<sup>13</sup>

In response to this recommendation, the government recently undertook a National Baseline Survey on Violence Against Children (NBS-VAC) to measure the prevalence of violence against children aged 13 to 24. The survey was implemented by the Council for the Welfare of Children, the national focal agency on violence against children, and the NBS-VAC Steering Committee, which includes members from the National Network as well as representatives from international organisations, statistical agencies and academic and research institutes.<sup>14</sup> The survey was based on the global methodology developed by Together for Girls partners.<sup>15</sup>

#### **NBS-VAC Methodology**

##### **Prevalence Survey (Quantitative)**

- National household survey – households across the 17 regions were selected randomly
- 3,866 children aged 13 to 24 participated – 50% girls and 50% boys
- Included two instruments: a household questionnaire and a child respondent questionnaire

##### **Community Stakeholders Study (Qualitative)**

- Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were held across 20 rural municipalities and 15 cities
- Participants included local officials, members of the Local Council for the Protection of Children and other professionals working with and for children

Initial findings were presented at a two-day research forum ‘Boys and Girls at Risk’ in early April 2016. These suggest that three in five Filipino children experience physical violence, especially at home, and that “boys can be twice more likely to experience severe physical violence.”<sup>16</sup> Nearly one in four also experience some form of sexual violence. Perpetrators vary according to the setting – with children most at risk of being hurt by family members at home, and by teachers at school.<sup>17</sup> As a platform to discuss ongoing research on violence against children in the Philippines, the forum underscored the need for more research in the future, especially on how changes in the local culture and context affect policy and programme development as well as advocacy.

At this forum, Department of Social Welfare and Development Secretary, Corazon Juliano-Soliman committed the government to leading intensified action to end violence against children:

*From this point on, steps will be taken to renew our conviction to transform the Philippines into a safer and more nurturing environment for children. This is both about improving policies and connecting the policies with implementation at the community level.*

*Violence against children happens everywhere, across all social groups; and with the most violent acts carried out by people that children know or should be able to trust. The government has called for strong action to prevent Violence against Children, respond to and rescue victims, and prosecute the perpetrators.*<sup>18</sup>

### **An Historic Opportunity**

Participants at the research forum pledged to use the preliminary results as the impetus for “a strong prevention and response plan to stop violence against Children in the Philippines.”<sup>19</sup>

The 200+ researchers, academics, advocates and professionals recommended improved public investment to increase capacity building for law enforcement professionals, a review of existing policies and legislation, action to strengthen child protection systems, and renewed advocacy to better educate parents, schools, and other members of the community.

The final version of the National Baseline Survey will be officially launched in October 2016, with the aim of simultaneously launching a strong response plan to enable the government and other stakeholders to act on the findings. The NBS-VAC steering committee reinforced this commitment in the technical workshop during the visit (see page 4) and has set out a timeline for taking the work forward. An initial exchange of views on how the plan might be developed was held during the technical and learning visit while further food for thought is contributed in this paper.

With the general elections scheduled in May 2016, this is an historic opportunity for the next President and his or her government to prioritise ending violence against children as part of:

- A renewed **vision** for the future of children in the Philippines.
- Clear **commitments** to investing in children and protecting them from all forms of violence in the next National Development Plan (which will be prepared after the election).
- A **holistic** approach to delivering **Agenda 2030** to children, including SDG16.2 and other targets for ending violence.
- Its commitment to implementing priority actions from the **ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Ending Violence Against Children**.



## Two | Towards a New Plan to End Violence

### Developing National Action Plans

The **2006 study on violence against children** recommended that to strengthen national and local commitment and action:

*A national strategy, policy or plan of action on violence against children with realistic and time-bound targets, coordinated by an agency with the capacity to involve multiple sectors in a broad-based implementation strategy, should be formulated.*<sup>20</sup>

Promoting this recommendation has been one of the key priorities within the Special Representative on Violence Against Children's broader mandate.<sup>21</sup> A review of countries' progress on preventing and eliminating violence against children published in 2013 indicated that only 16% of participating countries had a comprehensive policy on violence against children in place, while another 54% had a partial policy in place.<sup>22</sup>

In 2015, Together for Girls reviewed experience in developing comprehensive national action plans. This study underlined that there can be no template for an action plan, but that a number of principles are important for effective planning:<sup>\*</sup>

- Violence against children is multi-dimensional, demanding an **integrated and holistic response**. This is why the new package of strategies encourages governments and other partners to avoid a haphazard approach by implementing a group of evidence-based interventions that work together.<sup>23</sup>
- **Cross-sectoral cooperation** is essential, across departments, between all levels of government, and between government and non-state actors. The Philippines already has engagement of key national departments and agencies in the planning process, but faces challenges due to the country's diversity and devolution. It must harness the strengths of civil society, the faith community, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders.
- The process for developing the plan must be **participatory**, ensuring ownership by all stakeholders. The role of children is essential, an imperative that was underlined by the consultation with children during the Partnership's technical and learning visit to the Philippines.
- Action must be grounded in **evidence, research and data**. The combination of the national baseline survey and other recent studies including the systematic review of the drivers of violence affecting children, and on online abuse and exploitation, offer the Philippines a strong foundation which can be bolstered by accessing the global evidence on the new package of strategies.<sup>24</sup>
- **Prevention** must be a priority. While an active and effective response to violence is essential, the ultimate aim is to steeply reduce the prevalence of violence. The NBS-VAC survey provides a baseline against which to demonstrate a significant, sustained, and measurable reduction in levels of all forms of violence.

<sup>\*</sup> This section relies primarily on the Together for Girls study (which, it should be underlined, covers plans for both girls and boys). Readers should also refer to the full version of the TfG guidance. This has been supplemented by findings from the Partnership's visit to the Philippines, and those to potential pathfinder countries.

Some guiding questions are suggested for the development of the plan:

- 1 What practical steps are needed to ensure **all sectors** – from government and beyond – play a full role in the development of the plan? In particular, how can children be meaningfully involved in the plan’s development? Will some stakeholders require support if their voices are to be heard?
- 2 What are the **roles and responsibilities** of each Ministry, sector, and professional group in ending violence? What resources and capacity do they currently have to deliver these responsibilities, and which standards inform their work? What are the barriers to them working effectively with others?
- 3 What **current laws, policies, services, and programmes** aim to prevent and respond to violence? How could they be strengthened and improved in response to gaps identified in the baseline survey?
- 4 What’s the vision? What **priority commitments** should we make and how will we meet them? Who should lead on each commitment?
- 5 What is the **time frame** for action? How many children, parents, schools, etc. do we aim to reach in that time frame with a particular intervention? How do we design interventions so that they can be run at scale, and in light of financial and human resource constraints?
- 6 What are the **budgetary implications** of proposed major commitments? Can unit costs be reduced to increase affordability? What strategy is needed to mobilise adequate resources over time?
- 7 How will results be **monitored and evaluated**, including tying results to national development frameworks and to international standards, such as the SDG indicators?

### **A Global Model for Ending Violence**

The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children will act as a platform for the implementation of a package of evidence-based interventions for preventing and responding to violence against children.

The development of this package is being led by WHO, with the participation of UNICEF, UNODC, the World Bank, the Pan-American Health Organization, Together for Girls, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It will help unify the collective efforts of ordinary citizens, policymakers, faith-based organisations, the private sector, governments and international organisations in raising awareness that violence against children is everywhere, and encourage deeper engagement to prevent it and to treat the harmful consequences when it does occur.

The package also provides a guide for countries who are developing new plans for ending violence against children. The seven strategies included draw on quality research of what has worked to end violence around world, and that their implementation in country is consistent with the principle that implementation should be “informed by the best available scientific evidence while tailoring interventions to each context.”<sup>25</sup>

The package is currently in draft and will be finalised and launched in July 2016. The global partners will then begin preparing guidance and support for implementation. An overview of the draft package can be found on the following page.



## Training for parents

**Objective:** Reduce harsh parenting practices, while creating positive parent-child relationships.



## Household economic security

**Objective:** Improve families' economic security and stability, reduce intimate partner violence and child maltreatment, increase household economic status



## Response services

**Objective:** Provide appropriate clinical, therapeutic, and criminal justice support services for all children who need them – including for reporting violence – to reduce the long-term impact of violence



## Introduce and implement laws

**Objective:** Ensure the enactment and implementation of laws to prevent violent practices, reduce excessive alcohol use, and limit youth access to firearms and other weapons



## Values and social norms change

**Objective:** Strengthen values and norms that assure safe, respectful, nurturing, positive and equitable relationships for all children and youth



## Education and life skills

**Objective:** Promote social-emotional learning and life-skills training, and increase school enrolment and attendance among children and youth



## Safe environments

**Objective:** Create and sustain safe streets and other environments where children and youth gather and spend time

The Partnership recommends that the Philippines uses the package as the starting point for work on its national plan, and this was discussed with government and non-government stakeholders during the technical and learning visit.

In order to begin the discussion on how the package might be used, the following tables set out some preliminary observations for each strategy. They summarise what is known to work based on the best available evidence, current practice in the Philippines (focusing on major interventions only), and provide some initial thinking on the implications for the new action plan to end violence, based on meetings and discussions held during the technical support and learning visit.



## Training for parents

*Reduce harsh parenting practices, while creating positive parent-child relationships*

### What works

- Parenting training for low income families as part of a comprehensive package of family, support, pre-school education, child care and health services, or as a standalone intervention delivered in groups in community settings.
- Home visit programmes, especially those targeting vulnerable families.

### Philippines overview

The Philippines has the world's largest conditional cash transfer programme (the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program – or the 4Ps), which reaches over 4.3 million families with an income equal to or below the provincial poverty threshold.<sup>26</sup> Attendance at Family Development Sessions is one of five conditions for the cash transfer.

An evaluation has found positive impacts on health, education, nutrition, investment in children, and access to social services. The impact of the Family Development Services on parenting practices and parent-child relationships has not yet been evaluated.

A broader review on the convergence of social protection and child protection in the Philippines in 2016 recommended that child protection messaging within the programme is strengthened to enhance good parenting initiatives.

Civil society is also active in the delivery of parenting training programmes. The Healthy Start Program of Home Visits has also been implemented by the Consuelo Foundation, with some local government support.

### Potential for the future

- Ensure that all parents eligible for the 4Ps receive parenting training that meets international standards, incorporating messaging on child protection that highlights the importance of birth registration, and especially the impact of violence against children.
- Introduce one or more revised parenting training models within the 4Ps and test them rigorously for their impact on violence against children.
- Explore the potential to regularly monitor and review the Family Development Sessions, to measure impact.
- Explore the potential for an expanded role for civil society in delivering parenting training.
- Review and evaluate the impact of the Modified Conditional Cash transfer, which focuses on a subset of the most vulnerable families.
- Capitalise on the Regional Meeting on Good Parenting, to be hosted by the Philippines in June 2016, to showcase and exchange best practices – especially on research and innovation in programme implementation.



## Household economic security

*Improve families' economic security and stability, reduce intimate partner violence and child maltreatment, increase household economic status*

### What works

- Cash transfers, especially for women and girls.
- Microfinance, and group savings and loans associations combined with gender norm/equity training.

### Philippines overview

See 4Ps cash transfer programme discussed in Training for Parents (above). This programme has been demonstrated to have positive impacts on household economy security and is an important priority for the government.

### Potential for the future

- Explore the potential to introduce the prevention of violence against children as a formal objective of the 4Ps programme.



## Response services

*Provide appropriate clinical, therapeutic, and criminal justice support services for all children who need them – including for reporting violence – to reduce the long-term impact of violence*

### What works

- Counselling and therapeutic approaches, especially cognitive behavioural therapy.
- Screening combined with interventions for all children, including treatment programmes, such as counselling and skills training, for juvenile offenders in the criminal justice system.
- Foster care interventions involving social welfare service.

### Philippines overview

The Child Protection Network was established in 2002, introducing six child protection units that ensured abused children could access services with the highest standard of care. By 2016, this had scaled up to 78 Women and Child Protection Units (WCPUs) in 43 provinces.<sup>27</sup> Partnering with government and non-government organisations, the network aims to bring together medical professionals, social workers, police and lawyers in WCPUs in each of the country's 81 provinces.<sup>28</sup> Evidence is positive for the performance of the network, although access remains problematic for those not living in the city centres.<sup>29</sup> Women and Children's Protection Desks (WCPD) and Social Welfare offices provide alternative local reporting options but have insufficient capacity and resources to respond adequately.<sup>30</sup>

Reporting, however, remains low despite increased public awareness and mandatory reporting for teachers and medical professionals. The lack of a national helpline, inconsistent response to reports, and cultural norms are factors that may explain the poor reporting rate.<sup>31</sup>

### Potential for the future

- Continue to complete the network of WCPUs across the country and promote these as the key referral centres for any and all reports of child abuse.
- Set a target for reducing under-reporting of violence in order to make full use of the network of WCPUs.
- Explore the potential to strengthen collaboration between the WCPUs and more localised Women and Children's Protection Desks and Social Welfare offices to increase reporting by improving their resources and capacity.
- Explore the potential to introduce a single helpline or to develop a single repository for the existing helplines as part of a range of strategies for increasing reporting.



## Introduce and implement laws

*Ensure the enactment and implementation of laws to prevent violent practices, reduce excessive alcohol use, and limit youth access to firearms and other weapons*

### What works

- Laws that (i) ban violent punishment of children by parents, teachers or caregivers; (ii) prohibit the sexual abuse and exploitation of children; (iii) limit access to and misuse of alcohol; and (iv) limit youth access to firearms and other weapons.

### Philippines overview

In 1992, the Philippines introduced the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act. More recently, the government has made a commitment to banning corporal punishment in all settings.<sup>32</sup> A positive discipline bill was passed by the House of Representatives in 2014, but has not been passed by the Senate.<sup>33</sup> With growing recognition of the new threats posed by online interaction, the Cybercrime Prevention Act was passed in 2012, and work on a national strategic plan to tackle and prevent abuse and exploitation of children online is ongoing.

Other child protection legislation includes: the Anti-Child Labor Law (2003), the Anti-trafficking in Persons Act (2003), the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act (2004), the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act (2006), the Anti-Child Pornography Act (2009), and the Anti-Bullying Act (2013). A bill on the Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Act has also been passed by the House of Representatives.<sup>34</sup>

Enforcing legislation remains a challenge, with long delays in the legal process and a very low rate of convictions.<sup>35</sup>

### Potential for the future

- Reintroduce the positive discipline bill.
- Set a target for increasing successful prosecutions (for both offline and online cases).



## Values and social norms change

*Strengthen values and norms that assure safe, respectful, nurturing, positive and equitable relationships for all children and youth*

### What works

- Small group or community mobilisation programmes
- Bystander interventions aimed at changing adherence to restrictive and harmful gender and social norms.

### Philippines overview

The initial findings from the NBS-VAC suggest that physical discipline is still socially tolerated, and potentially aggravated by the strongly embedded value of family obedience. This social acceptability may be linked to children perpetrating violence themselves as they fight with other children. There is also evidence to suggest that online sexual exploitation is facilitated by local norms that assume this form of exploitation is 'harmless' as there is no actual contact.<sup>36</sup>

The passing of the Anti-Bullying Law indicate the government's move towards prioritising positive social norms. The Department for Health has developed relevant expertise in health promotion campaigns in areas such as anti-smoking. There are also local child-led movements such as the Active Youth movement that focus strongly on promoting positive discipline by campaigning in their communities.<sup>37</sup>

Another positive development is the recent participation by the government and national researchers in a capacity-building training on social norms and violence against children.<sup>38</sup>

### Potential for the future

- Explore the potential for an integrated campaign at national and local levels for a priority issue – e.g. anti-bullying – bringing together government and non-government actors, including children.
- Utilise the forthcoming national study on child online protection (expected mid-2016), to inform both policy and programme design for the broader work on violence against children.
- Explore the potential to develop more training and support by drawing on the NBS-VAC as well as the systematic reviews.



## Education and life skills

*Promote social-emotional learning and life-skills training, and increase school enrolment and attendance among children and youth*

### What works

- Increase enrolment in pre-school, primary and secondary schools, that provide a safe and enabling school environment.
- Introduce programmes that improve children’s knowledge about sexual abuse, how to protect themselves against it, and that focus on adolescent intimate partner violence prevention.
- Introduce life and social skills training.

### Philippines overview

There is a zero tolerance policy for any act of child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, bullying and other related offences in schools. Corporal punishment is specifically prohibited by the Department of Education (DoE).

The DoE’s approach includes providing training on the Child Protection Policy to teachers and child protection professionals, and ensuring schools (i) establish a Child Protecting Committee; (ii) implement the Anti-Bullying Act; and (iii) abide by the Guidelines on Children-at-Risk and Children in Conflict with the Law, as well as to recognise and protect the rights of children in armed conflict.<sup>39</sup>

The DoE has also developed a prevention-focused curriculum, and is in the process of testing the effectiveness of school-based interventions for the prevention of child sexual abuse.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the zero tolerance policy, children continue to report that they are exposed to physical and humiliating punishment and other abuses in schools.

### Potential for the future

- Collect survey data from children on a regular basis to track infractions of the zero tolerance policy on physical and humiliating punishment (in line with SDG 16.2.1).
- Explore the potential of an anti-bullying campaign (see *Values and social norms* above)



## Safe environments

*Create and sustain safe streets and other environments where children and youth gather and spend time*

### What works

- Reducing violence by addressing ‘hotspots’ and improving the built environment.
- Secure safe environments in fragile settings.

### Philippines overview

Since 1999, the Philippines has issued an annual Presidential Award for Child-Friendly Municipalities and Cities. Initiated by the Council for the Welfare of Children, the award aims to “institutionalise child-friendly environment and governance in promoting and protecting children’s right to survival, development, protection and participation, and to recognise deserving local government units for their vital role in the promotion and protection of children’s rights and ensuring child-friendly governance at the local level.”<sup>41</sup>

Since 2014, local government units (LGUs) can be awarded the Seal of Child-friendly Local Governance award by the Department of the Interior and Local Government. LGUs are audited on 12 indicators on health and nutrition, education, protection, and child participation. The protection indicators include an assessment of the number of child labour cases, the presence of safety measures in communities and schools, the number of child victims of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and whether or not an ordinance establishing Barangay Violence against Women and Children desks has been introduced.<sup>42</sup> The Second National Plan of Action for Children also stipulated that 30% of the local government budget had to be allocated to low performing child development goals and child protection for the unit to be eligible.<sup>43</sup>

### Potential for the future

- Consider an impact evaluation of child-friendly municipalities and cities.
- Explore the potential to work with former award winners as pathfinders for the new national plan, working to strengthened indicators in line with the plan (e.g. by introducing an assessment of online safety measures) and which draw on international best practice for safe environments.

The package also includes two overarching components to ensure that countries have the tools and resources needed, which include: (i) systems for ensuring multi-sectoral coordination and delivery of evidence-based prevention programmes and services; and (ii) surveillance, monitoring and evaluation. The need for strengthened coordination mechanisms and systems, for better data and evidence, is discussed further below.

Further important issues must also be addressed at an early stage in the development of the plan:

- The **gender perspective**. The seven strategies will need to be applied in ways that are sensitive to the differential experience of violence for girls and boys, especially given that preliminary findings from the baseline survey indicate that boys may be more vulnerable to certain forms of violence.
- **Most vulnerable children**. It will be essential to explore how each strategy can meet the needs of the most vulnerable children, in line with the Agenda 2030 commitment to leave no child behind. In particular, the needs of children involved in armed conflict must be recognised.
- **Online child sexual exploitation and abuse**. It will be important to integrate work on each strategy with other ongoing initiatives that are designed to protect children, in particular the national strategic plan that is currently being developed to prevent violence. Similar work will be needed for well-established strategies in areas such as trafficking.



## Three | From Research to Action

### Becoming a Pathfinder

The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children is currently working with a group of potential 'pathfinder' countries who want to step up for children and who are committed to accelerating efforts to make children safe. Strong political will is essential to becoming a pathfinder country, with the first wave of pathfinders represented at a senior level at the Partnership's Global Call to Action at the High-level Political Forum in 2016.

In each pathfinder country, the aim is to build on the progress countries have already made to prevent and address violence, and provide a platform for renewed ambition. There is an opportunity to align national commitments with the ambitions of Agenda 2030 to end all forms of violence against children (SDG16.2) and related targets. The package of prevention strategies can be used to increase commitment to and resources for prevention, based on the best available evidence. The Partnership will support pathfinder countries by helping bring together potential in-country partners, providing technical assistance and funding (for an overview of the benefits, see below).

#### Pathfinder Benefits

- Join other countries at the head of a global movement to end violence against children
- Be supported to develop the initial stakeholder consultation
- Be supported to develop a national partnership that brings together all sectors to produce and implement a roadmap for action
- Access a dynamic costing model to help build the financial case for prevention and mobilise resources within government, private sector and foundations
- Access information on new approaches, models and methods for preventing violence
- Be supported technically in implementing the package of prevention strategies and developing robust monitoring and evaluation practices
- Receive funding for pilots and experimental ideas where resources are a constraint
- Share experience with other pathfinders, and partners and have success celebrated internationally

The Partnership has published a guidance document for potential pathfinder countries to provide information on the steps that countries will have to take.<sup>44</sup> During the Partnership's technical support and learning visit to the Philippines, partners agreed on:

- The **opportunity** to take action to end violence against children onto the next level, using SDG16.2 and other violence prevention targets to provide common strategic direction and to strengthen the national partnership to end violence. This would be in line with the government's commitment to the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action.
- The **potential** for pathfinder status to help reinforce the work that is being undertaken, providing a catalyst for greater ambition, urgency and coherence, and for international partners to support national action through the provision of expertise, evidence, and other resources.

No final decision has been taken to work towards pathfinder status, but the government will continue to explore this with the Partnership, considering whether it is prepared to make commitments at the Global Call to Action in July, or later in the year.

This discussion paper therefore concludes with some action points that could help the Philippines with the development of its national action plan and which would also support the process of becoming a pathfinder, if appropriate. Again, it should be underlined that these are for discussion by partners, not a set of firm recommendations for implementation.

## **Opportunities and Next Steps**

### **1. Build political will to end violence.**

*Given the impending election, the most urgent priority is to build political will, ensuring that the movement has strong political leadership from the next President and government. This is essential to support the delivery of an ambitious action plan that aims to deliver significant, sustained and measurable reductions in levels of violence. Potential actions could include:*

- Building a network of champions – senior figures from all sectors – who are prepared to advocate ending violence and other priorities for children.
- Aiming to ensure a high level commitment to ending violence and investing in children in the President's first State of the Union address (25 July 2016).
- Op-eds and other media opportunities to underline the urgency of acting to end violence.
- Field visits for those likely to take senior positions in the new government, including decision makers in areas such as planning and finance.

### **2. Embed action to end violence within a broader vision for children in the Philippines.**

*The election offers an opportunity to reinvigorate the national vision for the future of children in Philippines, making a compelling case for investing in children and recognising the urgency of acting to end violence. One possibility would be for a number of child-focused actors to adopt a 'manifesto for children.' This could be used to launch a 'national conversation' among decision makers with the power to change children's lives, ensuring debate goes beyond the usual suspects and maximising momentum in the first 100 days of the new government. Potential actions include:*

- Hold a workshop or series of workshops to create the manifesto for children.
- Provide an opportunity for organisations, individuals and children to endorse the vision and manifesto, strengthening the alliance for children.
- Brief key decision makers on the vision before its release.
- Publish ahead of the State of the Union address, with media support and a mini-campaign.

### **3. Integrate targets to end violence and to invest in children into the new government's development plans.**

*Work will start on the new Philippine Development Plan immediately after the election. The government will also continue to deepen its plans for delivering Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. It is essential that the action plan for ending violence, and the broader vision for children are 'anchored' in these planning frameworks. This will increase political commitment and be important for resource mobilisation from both national and international sources.*

- Open a dialogue with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on its timetables and methodologies for the formulation of new policies and plans during the next government's term.
- Prepare a discussion paper, or other input, for the Philippine Development Plan.
- Explore with NEDA existing and future work on Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. Provide input into this process as appropriate.

### **4. Develop analysis to underpin the development of a national action plan for ending violence.**

*Rapid action will be needed to ensure the new action plan is ready for launch in October. Progress will be accelerated by research and analysis that underpins and supports the planning process. Materials will need to be produced rapidly and in a format that will inform stakeholders and enable them to work effectively together. Potential actions could include:*

- Rapid review of the potential for each of the seven strategies from the global package, building on and expanding the preliminary analysis presented in this paper.
- Request for support from the global partners developing the package to run a seminar or series of webinars on how the Philippines can make best use of the package.
- Paper setting out options for the role that children can play in ending violence.
- Identification of risk factors for violence against children in Philippines, drawing on existing evidence and resources.
- Develop initial investment case, including the costs of inaction, and an analysis of potential sources of finance and targets for increasing investment, again drawing on existing international research and models.
- Discussion paper on data and indicators, drawing on (i) international best practice; (ii) work to develop global indicators for the violence prevention package and best practice on results frameworks for monitoring progress to reduce violence; and (iii) an analysis of Filipino data systems, including administrative data, and capacity for the generation of data and evidence.

### **5. Identify priority actions for ending violence.**

*An important first step for the plan would be to identify a small set of headline commitments that encapsulate the scope and ambition of the new plan. These will help focus the planning process on the most important priorities, while feeding into the dialogue with policymakers, especially on resource mobilisation. They would also provide the basis for the Philippines to announce commitments as a pathfinder for the Global Partnership to End Violence Against*

*Children. Based on discussions during the technical support and learning visit, priority commitments could be explored in the following areas among others:*

- **Parenting and Household Economic Security:** a new approach to ensuring that, during the course of the plan, all parents receiving conditional cash transfers through the 4Ps receive parenting training that is expected to lead to measurable improvements in parent-child relationships and a reduction in harsh parenting practices.
- **Response services:** a target for reducing cases of underreported violence and abuse, using the network of WCPUs to ensure victims receive appropriate services.
- **Introduce and implement laws:** reintroduction of the positive discipline bill.
- **Values and norms:** a major campaign (e.g. on bullying).
- **Education and lifeskills:** a series of concrete commitments to expand work on safe schools, combined with efforts to ensure full compliance with the zero tolerance policy on violence in schools.
- **Safe environments:** political leaders of municipalities and cities prepared to lead on implementation at local levels.

## **6. Develop a dynamic action plan for ending all forms of violence.**

*Across the world, governments are exploring approaches to planning that are better suited to driving ambitious processes of change. This new generation of approaches emphasises stronger prioritisation and political leadership, a more rigorous approach to delivery, smarter use of performance data, and more open and transparent performance management. The Philippines should learn from international experience in creating national action plans for ending violence (discussed in this paper), but should also look to delivery approaches from other sectors. Possible actions include:*

- Review international experience and models, especially those that respond to the challenges of devolution and geographic diversity.
- Hold a seminar for the Multi-Sectoral Planning Committee to explore these models and to set parameters and expectations for the national action plan for ending violence.
- Explore the potential for holding a residential 'lab' to develop the first version of the action plan, building on a model being developed in Tanzania.
- Identify the structures and data that will be needed to monitor the plan on a regular basis.
- Explore the potential of piloting new approaches in 'pathfinder' local government units – potentially in those that have won multiple Presidential Awards for Child-Friendly Municipalities and Cities.

## **7. Create a coordination structure with the authority and capacity to implement the plan.**

*Coordination structures in the Philippines are currently fragmented, a pattern that is common in many countries. This creates duplication and, more importantly, makes it less likely that senior decision makers will focus on strategic and implementation challenges. A new and more ambitious plan will increase the demands for co-ordination and political support. Potential actions include:*

- Review models for co-ordination from other countries.
- Explore the potential for returning the Council for the Welfare of Children to the Office of the President, or upgrading it into a Commission for the Child, with leadership at cabinet rank.
- Promote an executive order or legislative reform to bring together various other interagency committees.
- Explore the potential for an Ombudsman to provide an independent voice and support for children.
- Make decisions about how to include children in all levels of the development and implementation of the new plan, while ensuring a strong role for civil society, faith leaders, the private sector and other non-governmental actors.

## **8. Use outreach and advocacy to continue to build momentum for ending violence in the run up to and after the launch of the new action plan.**

*The October launch of both the baseline survey and the action plan present a huge opportunity to make ending violence a central priority for the Philippines. Effective advocacy will be essential in the run up to and after the launch, building a powerful national movement for ending violence against children in the Philippines. Potential actions include:*

- Announce commitments to end violence at the Global Call to Action for the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children in July 2016.
- Engage professional editorial and design support to ensure that the National Baseline Survey has a powerful narrative, clear messages for policymakers, and compelling infographics.
- Explore the potential for a Day or Week of Action in National Children's Month in November 2016.
- Identify areas where the Philippines believes it can contribute expertise to other countries working to end violence (e.g. tackling online sexual exploitation) and areas where it wishes to learn from others.

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