



Child Protection in Crisis

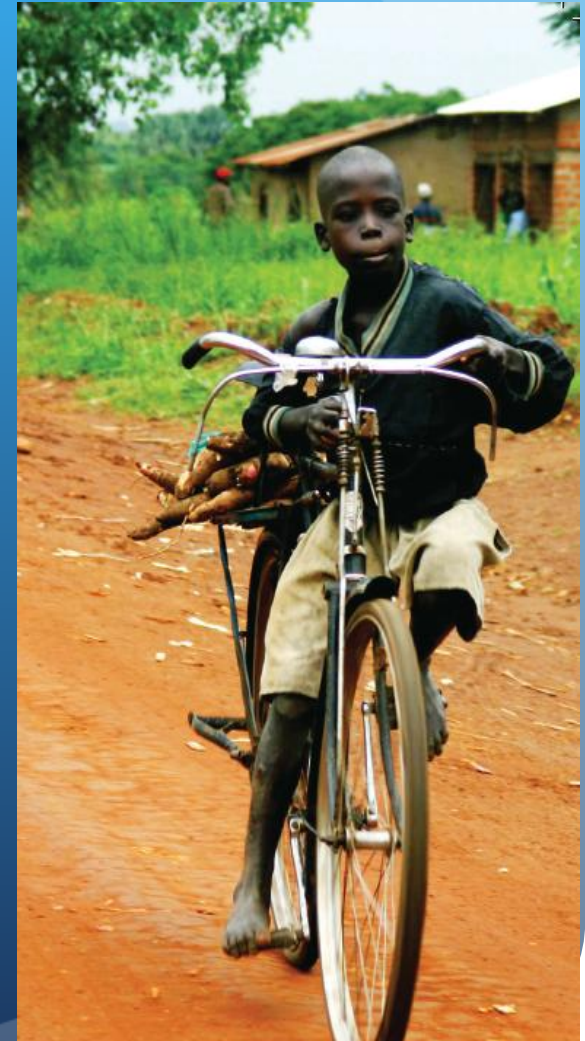
Network for Research, Learning & Action

Child Protection Learning: A Global Perspective
Neil Boothby Columbia University

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Children Living in Adversity Global Perspective

- 17.8 million children have lost both parents
- 1.8 million children are victims of sex trafficking or in pornography
- 1.1 million children are trafficked for forced labor
- Close to half of the 1.4 billion people who live in income poverty are children
- In lower and middle income countries, about 200 million children under five are not attaining their developmental potential



Effects of adverse childhood experiences: interplay of risks and protective factors

- Risks can be mitigated by sustained care in a protective family or access to family reunification/adoption/*kafala*
- Children who are abandoned, abused, or severely neglected can face significant life cycle risks that are costly to society
- Investments in early childhood, have been associated with a reduction in infant and child mortality, grade repetition, future criminal activity, drug abuse, pregnancy, and use of social services
- Investments in early childhood are extremely cost-effective



Moving from Silos to Systems

- Child vulnerabilities are multi-dimensional, yet global programs are fragmented
- Child protection is a sector in its own right, but to protect children effectively, it must be closely linked with other sectors
- There is a opportunity to build on burgeoning country efforts, with a recent but rapidly spreading country focus on child protection systems development in numerous low to middle income countries



The state of the evidence-base: We know what we don't know

- We lack basic, formative data in most LMICs:
- Living Standards Measurement Surveys, Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), and Multiple Indicators Cluster Surveys (MICS) do not yield information relevant to children outside of the household unless they are specifically designed to do so
- Promising measurement and investigative initiatives are emerging:
 - Bucharest Early Intervention Project
 - UNICEF/CDC and Columbia University/CDC studies on violence against children
 - Government lead Childhood Prevalence Surveys in Tanzania, Indonesia and Uganda (proposed)
- There is a need for studies with better comparison groups and larger sample sizes produced through more rigorous power size calculation in order to verify that the differences in sub-groups of vulnerable children can rightly be attributed to a true variation rather than random chance.

The state of the evidence-base: Investing in learning

- Only small proportion of funding for programs for children in adversity is devoted to research
- A lack of sufficient funding for research and development contributes to the shortage of empirical evidence
- Assuming that there is agreement that a stronger base needs to be developed, a fundamental question that follows is:

What percentage of global and national assistance targeted to children growing up in adversity should go directly to project beneficiaries vs. research to measure impact or to help develop the design of future programs?



The state of the evidence-base: Developing an appropriate research framework

- Various methods of assessing quality of evidence regarding effectiveness of interventions exist
- US National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators has a 6-level system for assessing evidence based practice:
 1. well supported, efficacious practice,
 2. supported and probably efficacious practice,
 3. supported and acceptable practice,
 4. promising and acceptable practice,
 5. innovative or novel practice, and
 6. concerning practice.
- A similar system could be applied to interventions for children in adversity to clarify if what is being proposed to meet a need fits into the state of evidence.



The state of the evidence-base: Developing an appropriate research framework

- Longer-term effects of interventions are poorly documented
- Challenges include how to determine if a project has potential to advance knowledge and how to sustain effective interventions
- These challenges should become goals and priorities for child protection research and learning



The state of the evidence-base: Developing an appropriate research framework

- Researchers have described a cumulative risk model, in which the number of risk factors are most predictive of outcomes
- The more research can map risk factors and developmental assets, the closer it will come to providing guidance for programs and policies
- Child Protection Learning in Uganda might focus accordingly



Capacity development and knowledge transfer

- A capacity building approach:
 - Trains and mentors national researchers
 - Develops internal capacities for intervention research,
 - Institutionalizes the resulting learning, and
 - Enables long-term, sustainable approaches that improves the well-being of children living outside family care.
- An important part of capacity building is to engage children and young people as researchers



Capacity development and knowledge transfer

- Engagement of universities and national researchers in low and middle income countries is a key component of an integrated knowledge transfer model
- Supporting the participation of national researchers in operational research and enhancing their research capacities is a further priority activity
- The development of university program curriculums to enhance the knowledge and skill sets of current and future practitioners is also required

Final Thought

- During this retreat, it would be important to consider how current operational contexts, collaborative relationships and learning-knowledge can be united.
- The strategy to be refined as a result of this Learning Retreat could be the learning arm of a Uganda leadership initiative

