Violence Against Children Survey (VACS): Providing knowledge to protect children in Uganda

[George Aluzimbi | MPH, Epidemiologist]
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention–Uganda

[CPC Learning Network Biennial meeting]
[21.06.2016 | CPC Learning Network, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health]
Presentation outline

1. VACS goals
2. VACS process
3. Population selection criteria
4. VACS Uganda status
5. Current VACS activity plan
6. VACS implementing partners
7. Acknowledgement
VACS goals

• Provide accurate, generalizable information on:
  – The prevalence of sexual, physical and emotional violence against children, including vulnerable subpopulations of children in Uganda
  – Factors that protect some children from violence and that put other children at higher risk for violence
  – The effects that different forms of violence have on children
  – Knowledge and utilization of services for children who have experienced violence, and barriers to accessing those services

• This data will be used to:
  – Provide information to guide strategies to identify, respond to, and prevent violence against children
  – Build capacity of local, national and international agencies
Stage 1
- VACS Orientation
- Protocol Finalization & IRB

Stage 2
- Pilot test
- VACS partners ready

Stage 3
- Study implementation (September-October 2015)
- Fieldwork & data management

Stage 4
- Weighting, Q/A, & Reporting
- Dissemination
- Program & Policy change

VACS Process
Survey strategy

• Data collection took place immediately after end of school break
  – Students in boarding schools were not eligible
  – Interviewers conducted interviews during weekends, and before and after school during the school week
  – We avoided conducting interviews during school holidays because many students may not have been at home with parents/guardians during this time

• Questionnaire was adapted from a core questionnaire that had undergone cognitive testing and refined through VACS in other countries
Population selection criteria

• All female and males between 13-24 years in Uganda

• Informed consent were provided by participant (and parent if participant is 13-17)

• Rationale for Targeting 13-24 year olds
  - Old enough to provide consent and understand survey
  - Young enough to reduce the likelihood of recall bias (24 years)

☐ Participation Criteria

• Speak language approved by survey design
• Physically and mentally capable of participating
VACS Uganda status

• Partner agencies have been working since 2013
  – Partner agency roles and responsibilities have been decided
  – Protocol, questionnaires, budget, MOU, data sharing agreement, sampling plan, and response plan for participants who need assistance completed
  – The VACS team has secured $500,000 from DREAMS to oversample 4 clusters with high HIV prevalence for 15-24 for girls and young women and UNICEF has provided $200,000 for boys and young men in the same regions.

☐ Even without a regional-analysis sample size, this will still be the first national study of the type in Uganda
Current VACS activity plan

- **June – July 2016 activities**
  - Data weighting analysis – CDC and UBOS
  - Data writing workshop – including all VACS partners interested in manuscript writing
  - Preliminary report
- **August 2016**
  - Data to action workshop
VACS Implementing partners

- Implementing Partners
  - Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (MGLSD)
  - Multi-sectoral Task Force or Steering Committee (Government, Non-governmental, bilateral & multilateral organization)
  - Coordinating Agency (UNICEF)
  - Implementing Agency (Makarere University School of Public Health through ChildFund/AfriChild)
  - CDC – Division of Violence Prevention
  - PEPFAR Uganda (CDC, USAID and other USG agencies)
  - Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS)
THANK YOU