



Ending Violence Against Children in Nigeria



Priority Actions: Lagos State

**A multi-sectoral response to the 2014
Nigeria Violence Against Children Survey**

Ending Violence Against Children in Nigeria

Priority Actions: Lagos State

A multi-sectoral response to the 2014
Nigeria Violence Against Children Survey

US Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention



The findings cited in this document are drawn from “ National Population Commission of Nigeria, UNICEF Nigeria, and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nigeria Violence Against Children Survey: Findings from a National Survey, 2014. Abuja, Nigeria: UNICEF, 2016”

The findings, conclusions and recommendations of this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of UNICEF.

Any policy recommendations contained within this document with regard to budget allocations or statutory changes are the recommendations of the Government of Nigeria and do not reflect an endorsement of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the U.S. Government.

Cover photo: UNICEF/Abraham T. Achirga/2015
Lagos, February 2016



Table of Contents

Foreword	iv
List of Key Acronyms	vi
Overview of the National Survey on Violence Against Children and Key Findings	1
Implications for Prevention and Response Strategies and Programming	3
It's Time to Take Action - Ending Violence Against Children in Lagos State	5
Overview of Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children in Lagos	6
Priority Actions: Lagos State	8

Foreword

The Lagos State Government recognizes the priority of children's issues in its political and socio-economic agenda and embraces its duties and responsibilities towards ensuring the well-being of all its children.

The Lagos State Government congratulates President and Commander in Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR for the launch of the 'Year of Action to End Violence Against Children in Nigeria' on 15th September 2015. Not only did the launch draw widespread attention to the plight of millions of children in Nigeria who suffer violence every year, but also elevated the need to address this issue to a national priority. During the launch, every State in Nigeria was called upon to launch their own campaigns to end violence against children. Lagos State is proud to be the first State to respond to this call by launching its own campaign and priority actions to more effectively prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children.

The Year of Action to End Violence Against Children was launched in response to the findings of the groundbreaking research on Violence against Children (VACS) in 2014 by the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the National Population Commission (and supported technical and financially by UNICEF Nigeria, technically by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and financially by the US president's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), with additional financial support from the European Union). The survey provides comprehensive and nationally representative findings, covering every State in Nigeria including Lagos State. Its findings are shocking. The prevalence of physical, sexual and emotional violence against children is high in Nigeria. Most children never tell anyone what has happened to them and few children ever get the help they need to recover. Violence during childhood has long lasting negative effects on mental and physical health and perpetuates the cycle of violence, with victims more likely to become perpetrators themselves.

Informed by the Nigeria VACS, 2014 findings and the National Priority Actions, also launched on the 15th September 2015, the Lagos State Technical Working Group (TWG) on Violence against Children, convened and chaired by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, collaborated to develop State specific Priority Actions across all key sectors relevant to child protection, bringing together NGOs and religious and traditional groups, as well as government ministries and agencies. The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Poverty Alleviation would like to express its gratitude to all stakeholders, who contributed to the development of this State Priority Actions, which included representatives from key State Ministries, Departments and Agencies - Education, Health, Justice, Social Welfare, Judiciary, Office of the Public Defender, Legislature - civil society, non-governmental organisations and faith-based organisations, for their unwavering commitment, energy and passion. I would like to also thank UNICEF and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) for their technical and



financial support to the Technical Working Group.

The State Priority Actions set out the short-term and long-term strategies to be implemented in Lagos State in response to the findings of the VACS to more effectively prevent and respond to violence against children. All participating sectors will regularly and collectively monitor progress against these commitments.

My Ministry renews its commitment to take action to end violence against children. However, no single Ministry or Agency can succeed alone in this fight. I take this opportunity to call upon State and Local Government level actors, civil society, religious and traditional leaders, faith based organisations, community based organisations, the private sector, the media, families and communities in Lagos to join the Lagos State 'End Violence Against Children Campaign' to ensure all of our children are able to grow up free from violence.

It's time to take action!
Together, let's end violence against children.

Hon. Mrs. Lola Akande
Commissioner

List of Key Acronyms

ANCOPPS	All Nigerian Confederation of Principals of Secondary Schools
AYFS	Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services
CDA	Community Development Association
CORPS	Community Owned Resource Persons
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CPMIS	Child Protection Management Information System
CPN	Child Protection Network
CRA	Child's Rights Act 2003
CRL	Child's Rights Law 2007
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEC	Information Education and Communication
IP	Implementing Partners
LGA	Local Government Authority
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MOE	Lagos State Ministry of Education
MOJ	Lagos State Ministry of Justice
MWASD	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
MYSD	Lagos State Ministry of Youth and Social Development
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NPA	National Priority Agenda for Vulnerable Children 2013–2020

NPS	Nigerian Prison Service
OPD	Office of the Public Defender
PEP	Post Exposure Prophylaxis
PEPFAR	The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PHC	Primary Health Care
PSS	Psychosocial Support Services
SBMC	School Based Management Committee
SOPs	Standard-Operating Procedures
SUBEB	Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board
VAC	Violence Against Children
VACS	Violence Against Children Survey
VAPP	Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act
VC	Vulnerable Children
WAPA	Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation
WHO	World Health Organisation

1. Overview of the National Survey on Violence Against Children and Key Findings

Led by the National Population Commission (NPoPC) of the Federal Government of Nigeria, Nigeria is the first country in West Africa to undertake a national survey on violence against children. The Nigeria Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) continues the successful partnership between United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) and the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEFPAR), as well as members of the Together for Girls Initiative to assist countries worldwide in conducting national surveys on violence against children. The Nigeria 2014 VACS follows and builds on the methodology of the surveys completed in Swaziland, Tanzania, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Haiti, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Malawi.

NPoPC authored the Nigeria VACS report. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and UNICEF provided technical support to NPoPC throughout the development and implementation of the survey.

The Nigeria VACS was commissioned between May and July 2014. The survey consisted of a cross-sectional household survey of females and males aged 13 to 24, designed to produce national-level estimates of experiences of violence.

What is Violence against Children?

For the purpose of the Nigeria 2014 VACS:

Emotional violence was defined as being ridiculed or put down by a parent, adult caregiver, or adult relative, being told by them they were unloved or did not deserve to be loved, or that they wished they were dead or had never been born.

Physical violence was defined as physical acts of violence such as punching (hitting with a fist), kicking, whipping, beating with an object, choking, smothering, trying to drown, burning intentionally, or using or threatening to use a gun, knife or other weapon, regardless of whether or not it resulted in obvious physical or mental injury. It is not focused on acts of discipline, although many of those perpetrating the violence may be doing so in the name of 'discipline'.

Sexual violence was used to describe all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation. This encompasses a range of acts, including unwanted completed sex acts (i.e., rape), attempted non-consensual sex acts, abusive sexual contact (i.e., unwanted touching), and pressured sex (such as through threats or tricks), by any person regardless of their relationship to the child experiencing the violence, in any setting. While some of the analyses focused on acts that may be narrowly defined as 'sexual abuse', the Summary Report of the VACS used the broad term 'sexual violence' throughout.

There is a high prevalence of violence against children in Nigeria

Before the age of 18 years:

- Approximately 6 out of every 10 children experienced some form of violence
- Half of all children experienced physical violence
- One in four girls and one in ten boys experienced sexual violence
- One in six girls and one in five boys experienced emotional violence by a parent, caregiver, or adult relative

Violence is rarely an isolated incident

- The majority of children who experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence in childhood reported multiple incidents
- Girls were significantly more likely to experience both sexual violence and physical violence than other combinations of violence. Boys were significantly more likely to experience both physical and emotional violence, than other combinations of violence

Violence starts at a young age

- Over half of children first experienced physical violence between the ages of 6 and 11. Approximately 1 in 10 children's first experience is under the age of 5
- A third of girls and nearly 1 in 6 boys experienced their first incident of sexual violence between 14 and 15, while almost a third of boys and approximately 1 in 5 girls experience their first incident of sexual violence at 13 years and younger
- Approximately half of children first experienced emotional violence before the age of 12

Perpetrators are overwhelmingly people whom children know

- A parent or adult relative was the most common perpetrator of physical violence in childhood
- Amongst adults in the neighborhood who perpetrate physical violence, male teachers were the most frequent perpetrators of the first incident of physical violence
- Girls' first experience of sexual violence was most commonly by a romantic partner, followed by a friend, neighbor, classmate and stranger. Boys' first experience of sexual violence was most commonly by a classmate or a neighbor
- Children were most likely to experience sexual violence in the perpetrator's home, followed by their own home, at school, at someone else's home and on a road
- Amongst adult caregiver or relative perpetrators of emotional violence, parents/step parents, followed by uncles/aunts, were the most common perpetrators of first incident of emotional violence

Children are not speaking out, seeking or receiving services

- Less than half of all respondents who experienced physical violence told someone about it. Respondents who experienced sexual violence had even lower rates of disclosure
- Children who told someone were much more likely to tell a friend or relative than a

- service provider or authority figure
- Children had a low awareness of people or services from which they can seek help. Boys have a significantly higher awareness than girls of where to seek help
- Of those who experienced sexual or physical violence, no more than 6% sought help and less than 5% receive help

Violence has serious impacts on girls' and boys' lives and future

Compared to persons who have never experienced childhood violence:

- Physical violence is associated with higher rates of mental distress, thoughts of suicide, and symptoms or diagnosis of a sexually transmitted infection (STI) among females and with mental distress, thoughts of suicide, and substance use among males
- Sexual violence is associated with higher risk for symptoms or diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections, mental distress and thoughts of suicide among females and with mental distress among males. 15% of females reported getting pregnant as a result of unwanted completed sex.
- Emotional violence is associated with higher levels of mental distress and thoughts of suicide amongst females and higher levels of mental distress and drinking amongst males

2. Implications for Prevention and Response Strategies and Programming

Effective programming to prevent and respond to violence against children must be rooted in robust data and evidence. The Nigeria VACS 2014 represented an important step – for the first time Nigeria published comprehensive information on the prevalence, characteristics, location, perpetrators and impact of violence against children, providing findings that are critical for strategy development and programming for Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), NGOs, Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and development partners in Nigeria, including that:

- Violence against children is a significant problem in Nigeria affecting millions of children every year
- Children start experiencing violence at a young age
- Perpetrators of violence against children are overwhelmingly people that children know
- Children are also perpetrators of violence against children
- Violence most commonly happens where children should be safe – in their own homes, in neighbours' homes, in school and to and from school
- Children are not speaking out about what is happening to them
- Children do not know where to go for help and even when they know, they do not try to access help. When they do try to access help, they do not always receive support services. This means that children are not receiving the support they need to recover.
- The fact that children are not reporting violence, also means that perpetrators can continue committing acts of violence

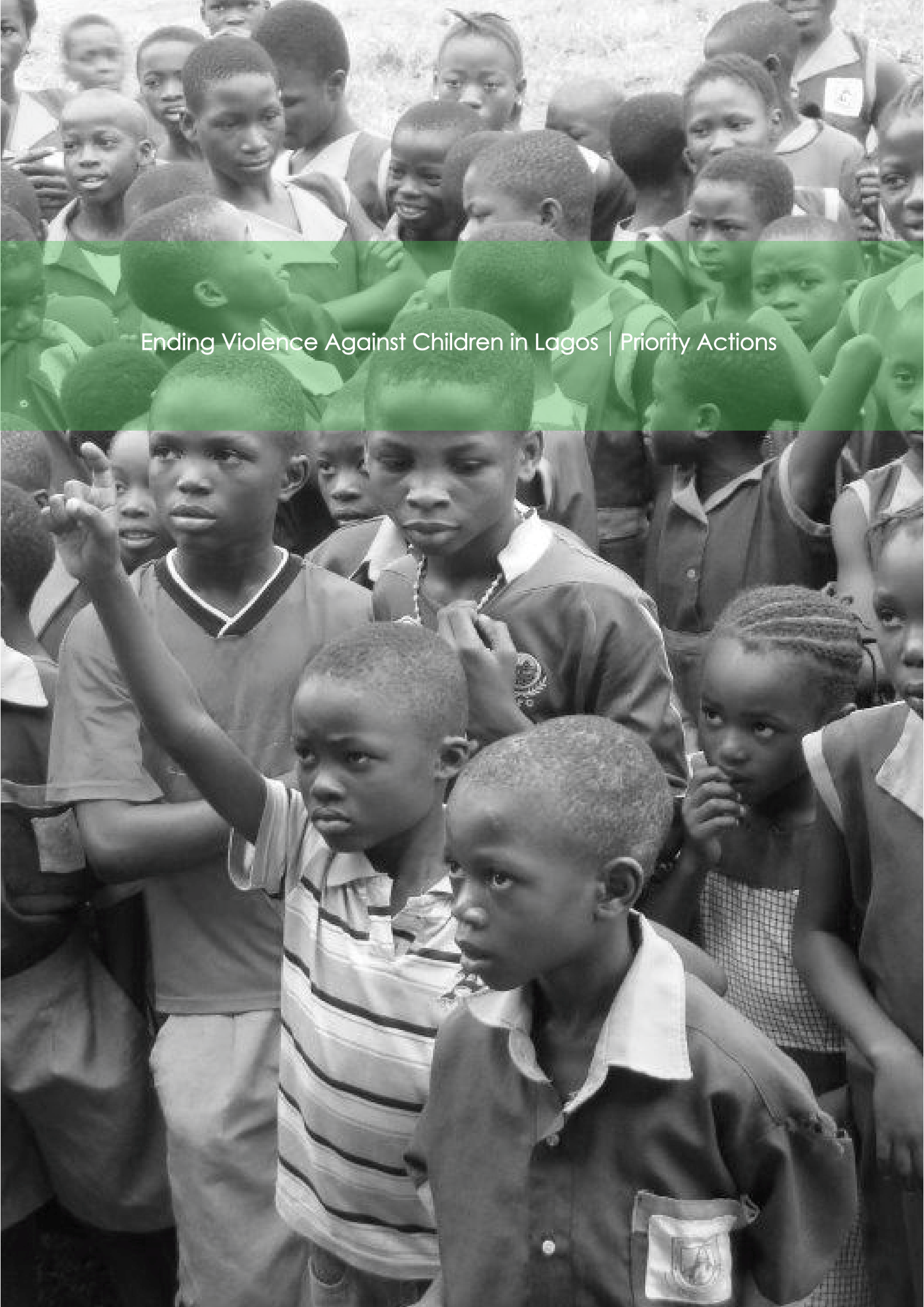
- The fact that most children who keep silent do so because they do not think what they experienced was problematic suggests a normalization of violence and low awareness of the harm that can be caused by violence, including the emotional and psychological impact. The fact that children fear that they will get into trouble or bring shame on themselves or their families suggests that social pressures and social norms are hampering children getting the help that they need
- Violence is not just a child protection issue. Violence causes children to miss school. Violence is also linked to poorer mental and physical health outcomes for girls and boys
- Experiencing childhood in violence makes it more likely that s/he will become a perpetrator of violence against children in childhood and adulthood
- Girls and boys experiences of violence are different and prevention and response programming must take this into account

The Impact of VAC on Nigeria's Sustainable Development

Violence Against Children (VAC) is not 'just' a child protection or child rights issue and a moral imperative. Failure to invest in tackling violence against children leads to substantial social and economic losses (estimated at 2-8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)). There is also a growing evidence base to demonstrate that preventing violence can promote economic growth.

For the first time, in 2013, the prevention of and effective response to violence against children was linked to the sustainable development of Nigeria as a nation: "All children are safe from abuse, violence, exploitation, and neglect" is one of the six commitments of the National Priority Agenda for Vulnerable Children 2013–2020 (NPA). These six core commitments of Nigeria's government will, if fulfilled, contribute to the achievement of the strategic objectives of Nigeria's Vision 20:2020. This elevated the importance of tackling violence against children, recognizing that reducing children's vulnerability to violence, and thereby improving their wellbeing, will positively and directly impact Nigeria's economic and social well-being and development.

Such a recognition by Nigeria is timely – the elimination of all forms of violence against children formed a key target of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted at a Summit at the United Nations in New York in September 2015.



Ending Violence Against Children in Lagos | Priority Actions

3. It's Time to Take Action

– Ending Violence Against Children in Lagos State

The release of the Nigeria VACS findings provided a unique opportunity to mobilise Nigerians to take action. Consequently, on 15th September 2015, His Excellency, Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, President of the Republic of Nigeria, launched the Year of Action to End Violence Against Children, calling upon Government, civil society, religious and traditional leaders, faith based organisations, the private sector, the media, families and communities to join together to ensure that all children can grow up free from violence. Every State in Nigeria was called upon to develop their own specific action plans to address violence against children.

Lagos State was the first State to respond to this call to take action. The Lagos State Technical Working Group (TWG) on Violence against Children was convened by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA) to develop State specific Priority Actions across all key sectors relevant to child protection, bringing together NGOs and religious and traditional groups, the media, as well as government ministries and agencies, including Education, Health, Justice, Social Welfare, Judiciary and Office of the Public Defender. The development of the Lagos State Priority Actions were informed by the Nigeria VACS findings and guided by the multi-sectoral, comprehensive and holistic framework of the National Priority Actions, also launched on the 15th September 2015, which focused on:

- adopting and implementing laws and policies that prevent and respond to violence;
- enhancing and scaling up efforts to prevent violence through:
 - creating a protective environment for children;
 - changing perceptions of violence;
 - empowering children and young people;
- enhancing the response to violence through:
 - encouraging children to speak out and enhancing access to services;
 - improving availability and quality of services and enhancing the capacity of professionals working with children;
 - strengthening efforts to hold perpetrators accountable;
- increasing investment in child protection;
- strengthening research, monitoring and evaluation on violence against children.

The TWG developed short-term and long-term State specific priority actions under this framework, recognizing the significant steps that have already been taken by many sectors in Lagos State to enhance prevention and response to violence against children.

Sectors will convene on a regular basis to review progress on implementing the priority actions set out in this document and the impact of these actions in preventing violence against children and ensuring that an effective response is in place for children suffering or at risk of suffering violence.

4. Overview of Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children in Lagos

Legislation and policy

Lagos State passed the Child's Rights Law (CRL) in 2007, domesticating the national Child's Rights Act (CRA) 2003. The law sets out the right of every child to be free from physical, mental or emotional injury, abuse, neglect or maltreatment, including sexual abuse and provides a robust framework for the child protection system. The CRL places responsibility on the state government to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by providing a range of services to families and children, including identifying and responding to children in need of protection.

Lagos State also enacted the Protection against Domestic Violence Law in 2007 which makes provision for protection orders for victims of domestic violence, including children.

Services

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation and the Ministry of Youth and Social Development (MYSD) hold the main responsibilities for child and family welfare issues in Lagos.

Services under the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation have primarily been response focused including child rescue and legal prosecution of perpetrators. Services include helplines for reporting cases of sexual harassment, rape, child labour, child trafficking and child neglect, three shelters and an Ikeja (Local Government Area) based rescue team.¹

The Ministry of Youth and Social Development is responsible for 18 Family Service Units across the state focusing on providing support to families including counselling to couples, but also handles child protection cases.

Non-government and faith-based organizations play an important role in the provision of preventive and responsive services for children and families in Lagos, especially by providing the majority of prevention services at the local level.²

However, there is a need to scale up local services and ensure that services are available across the state and to ensure that specific prevention services for families and children in relation to abuse, violence, exploitation and neglect become more readily available.³

¹Child Frontiers, "Assessment of the Lagos State Child and Family Welfare System", May 2013, p. xiii.

²Child Frontiers, "Assessment of the Lagos State Child and Family Welfare System", May 2013, p. xiii.

³Child Frontiers, "Assessment of the Lagos State Child and Family Welfare System", May 2013, p. xiii.

Prevention campaigns

Since early 2012, WAPA has led the Yellow Card to Prevent Child Abuse Campaign. The Campaign aims to spread the message of zero-tolerance towards child abuse and also provides information on women's and children's rights.

The Steering Committee on the Child's Rights Law, set up as a statutory body under the CRL, has also been promoting a campaign in schools to raise awareness about child protection since 2012. The campaign has involved setting up boxes in schools through which pupils may report problems. Issues around child protection are also being integrated to the school curriculum.

Response - Justice

Studies in Lagos have found that the majority of cases where a child is exposed to violence or abuse are addressed within the family or extended family rather than through the formal justice system.⁴ Cases of sexual abuse often go unreported.⁵ Reasons given for this by victims and families includes structural and procedural barriers as poverty, delays in court proceedings, the cost of transportation to court on hearing dates etc.⁶ However, there is also reluctance to report abuse due to the fear of stigma affecting the victim or his or her family, problems arising from prosecuting and potentially imprisoning the main family breadwinner and risk of tensions in the community as a result.⁷

Response - Services

The Mirabel Centre, the first of its kind in Nigeria, provides a one-stop service centre for victims of sexual abuse including emergency medical treatment, forensic medical examinations and counselling.⁸

In mid- 2015 the Mirabel Centre reported that it had handled over 700 cases of rape since its establishment in 2013. However, at the same time the family court (magistrate) in Ikeja Local Government Area, had only 30 cases pending, some from 2014. This shows a gap between incidences of sexual violence and the number of cases taken to court.⁹

⁴Child Frontiers, "Assessment of the Lagos State Child and Family Welfare System", May 2013, p. 77.

⁵Child Frontiers, "Assessment of the Lagos State Child and Family Welfare System", May 2013, p. 77.

⁶Augustine Mamedu, "Nigeria: Child Justice Bottleneck Analysis: Making children count: Applying MoRES to improve Child Justice in Nigeria and strengthen accountability", July 2015, UNICEF Nigeria, p. 17.

⁷Augustine Mamedu, "Nigeria: Child Justice Bottleneck Analysis: Making children count: Applying MoRES to improve Child Justice in Nigeria and strengthen accountability", July 2015, UNICEF Nigeria, p. 17. & Child Frontiers, "Assessment of the Lagos State Child and Family Welfare System", May 2013, p. 81.

⁸Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada "Nigeria: Domestic violence, including Lagos State; legislation, recourse, state protection and services available to victims (2011-October 2014)", 10 November 2014, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/548168e14.html> (accessed 22 January 2016)

⁹"Nigeria: Child Justice Bottleneck Analysis: Making children count: Applying MoRES to improve Child Justice in Nigeria and strengthen accountability", July 2015, UNICEF Nigeria, p. 17.

5. Priority Actions: Lagos State

5.1. Implementing Laws and Policies to Prevent and Respond to Violence

It is essential that State laws clearly prohibit all forms of violence against children and explicitly identify the bodies mandated to prevent and respond to violence. Adopting, implementing and enforcing laws that protect children from all forms of violence sends a strong message to society that violence is not acceptable.

The Lagos Child's Rights Law (CRL) 2007 was a significant step in the protection of children from violence. The CRL provides the basis for a comprehensive child protection system to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. However, operationalization of the CRL needs to be strengthened.

Policies need to articulate the goals for ending violence against children and the steps for implementation, including the establishment of an effective child protection system.

Priorities for WAPA and MYSD

- Identify gaps in the CRL for review by the Ministry of Justice
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, develop regulations for the operationalization of the CRL (e.g. on Family Courts)
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, advocate for the domestication of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act
- Advocate for the domestication of the Professionalization of Social Welfare Workforce Act, once adopted at national level
- Develop and implement a Child Protection Policy and finalize and implement the Child Safeguarding Policy

Priority for the Ministry of Education

- Advocate for the review of the 2005 Teachers' code of conduct to ensure that it contains specific articles related to child protection

Priorities for the Ministry of Health

- Incorporate violence against children in the guideline for integration of Adolescent Youth Friendly Health Services in Primary Health Care and scale up implementation
- Formulate and implement a plan of action by the Ministry of Health to address violence against children in line with WHO Resolution (A67/A/CONF./1/Rev.1 - strengthening the role of the health system in addressing violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children)

Priorities for the Ministry of Justice

- In collaboration with WAPA, develop regulations for the operationalization of the CRL (e.g. on Family Courts)
- Review and propose amendments to strengthen the CRL
- Advocate for the domestication of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act

Priorities for civil society

- Advocate for and support the implementation of the Lagos CRL
- Advocate for the finalization of the Child Safeguarding Policy for Lagos State
- Advocate for and support the development and effective implementation of the State Child Protection Policy
- Support the Ministry of Health to develop a sector specific plan of action to more effectively respond to VAC
- Facilitate access to relevant copies of the CRL for duty bearers and right holders, including child friendly versions of the CRL
- Support Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to develop/adapt a child protection policy and safeguarding policy in their respective organizations
- Advocate for the compulsory application of the child protection policy in all schools

Priority for the media

- Advocate for the implementation of the CRL in Lagos State and policies that promote the prevention of and effective response to VAC

Priority for faith-based organizations and religious leaders

- Ensure members are aware of laws and regulations for the prevention of violence against children

5.2. Escalating Efforts to Prevent Violence

5.2.1. Creating a Protective Environment for Children

The importance of creating a protective environment for children at home, in schools, and in the community, in which children enjoy safe, stable and nurturing environments and relationships with their parents and caregivers is fundamental to the prevention of violence against children.

Priorities for WAPA and MYSD

- Adapt the National Care Givers Training Manual to include children's protection from violence and promote parenting education programmes (WAPA and IP)
- Promote and establish community care centres that are standardized, regulated and affordable for parents using the National Guidelines for the Establishment and Management of Care Centres in Lagos (WAPA, MYSD and IP)
- Provide complaints/ suggestion boxes in all shelters and care centres in Lagos state (WAPA and MYSD)
- Establish additional Child Protection Networks (CPNs) at Local Government Authority (LGA) level and Child Protection Committees (CPCs) at ward level to

monitor VAC (WAPA and MYSD)

- Strengthen and expand social protection through Household Economic Strengthening Programmes to support vulnerable families and their children (WAPA and MYSD)

Priority for the Ministry of Health

- Develop and disseminate a parent-child communication training manual on sexuality and the health implications of VAC

Priorities for the Ministry of Education

- Sensitize the All Nigerian Confederation of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPPS) and head teachers of both private and public schools on adopting zero tolerance to VAC
- Implement the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) policy and programmes in every school, including full licensing and inspection
- Promote sensitisation and awareness of VAC in all schools, targeting school based management committees (SBMCs), teachers, parents and the surrounding community
- Empower SBMCs, Parent Forums and Community Development Associations (CDAs) to monitor and report child abuse, neglect and exploitation to enable follow up by social welfare officers
- Collect and analyse pupil attendance, through class registers, to identify cases of constant absenteeism, to enable rapid follow up with families
- Train school counsellors and teachers on approaches for prevention of violence against children
- Advocate for additional social workers to be deployed to schools to complement the work of school counsellors
- Target support for out of school children
- Advocate for the establishment of more special schools and special teachers to ensure that children with disabilities can attend schools that are able to meet their needs

Priorities for the Justice Sector and Nigerian Prison Service

- Provide legal assistance to all children in detention (Office of the Public Defender)
- In collaboration with WAPA, ensure that children who are in need of care and protection are not processed by the justice system and are not detained
- In collaboration with WAPA, advocate for separate juvenile facilities from adult prisons
- Upgrade facilities for children to avoid mixing of children with adults (Nigerian Prison Service)
- In collaboration with WAPA, establish and /or strengthen complaints mechanisms in detention facilities (Nigerian Prison Service)

Priority for the National Human Rights Commission

- Undertake regular inspection visits of all places of detention holding children

Priorities for civil society

- Strengthen community structures that promote child protection e.g. Community Development Associations (CDAs), CPCs and SBMCs
- Strengthen the capacity of caregivers to prevent and respond to violence against children
- Advocate for and ensure that the State creates budget lines and assigns resources to strengthen social protection programmes in Lagos to support vulnerable families to care for and protect their children

Priorities for faith-based organizations and religious leaders

- Strengthen faith-based advocacy strategies to prevent VAC
- Support parents in the upbringing of their children, especially the care and protection of particularly vulnerable children such as those with disabilities, and promote non violent methods of discipline

Priority for non traditional child protection sectors (e.g. WASH and polio sectors)

- Promote provision of access to water sources and sanitation facilities in safe areas for use by children, so that children are not exposed to the risk of sexual and physical violence

5.2.2. Changing Perceptions of Violence

Changing the attitudes and social norms that normalize and hide violence is vital in preventing violence from occurring in the first place. As revealed by the Nigeria VACS, differences in gender behaviors and roles can create unequal power relations between females and males. This increases the vulnerability of girls and young women to violence by males. At the same time, the particular stigma around violence against boys must be challenged so that they are also protected from violence and can seek and receive services and support if they are harmed.

The priorities set out below highlight the urgent need for a State wide campaign and targeted programs that both raise awareness on violence against children and challenge negative social norms. To have the greatest impact, the initiatives proposed by Ministries and non state actors should be coordinated.

Priority for WAPA and MYSD

- Develop and implement a VAC and GBV campaign to promote women's and children's rights

Priority for the Ministry of Education

- Run school based activities that allow pupils to discuss VAC and address social norms that perpetuate VAC

Priorities for the Ministry of Health

- Develop public health messages on VAC and implement a public Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign to raise awareness on the negative impact of violence on children's health.
- Engage with community leaders, and existing Community Owned Resource Persons (CORPS) to disseminate IEC materials and key messages on ending VAC

Priority for civil society

- Design and implement sensitization and awareness campaigns and programmes on child rights, awareness, welfare and protection, which engage communities, school children and caregivers

Priorities for faith-based organizations and religious leaders

- Thoroughly examine the Holy books to develop key messages that address social norms which promote or condone VAC
- Employ the medium of worship and traditional events to create awareness on actions that congregations/members can take to prevent VAC
- Institute a code of conduct in all places of worship and religious institutions that prevent VAC
- Educate all segments of the membership on what constitutes VAC

Priority for non traditional child protection sectors

- Awareness on VAC raised at local level through Water, Sanitation and Health community based structures

Priorities for the media

- Build the capacity of media professionals to report on VAC
- Raise public awareness by reporting incidents of VAC
- Identify and report on good practices on the prevention of VAC
- Disseminate messages to challenge harmful practices and promote social norms that care for and protect children from VAC
- Disseminate orientation packages on the prevention of VAC to the public
- Use print, audio and social media to disseminate information on children's rights and the prevention of VAC

5.2.3. Empowering Children and Young People

Giving children and adolescents the skills to cope and manage risks and challenges without the use of violence and to seek appropriate support when violence does occur is crucial for reducing violence at home, in schools and communities.

Priority for the Ministry of Education

- Implement gender-sensitive child participation activities in all primary and secondary schools, empowering children to know their rights, including through school clubs

Priorities for civil society

- Provide Life Skills Education for in and out of school adolescents
- Mainstream Life Skills Education as a co-curriculum activity at all levels (schools, communities, and religious/social institutions)

5.3. Enhancing the Response to Violence

The Nigeria VACS revealed that children were reluctant to disclose experiences of violence, had low rates of reporting violence and had low awareness of where to seek help. Children who did disclose were more likely to tell a friend or relative about an experience of violence than a service provider or authority figure. Further, not all children who sought help received it. This results in children not receiving the help that they need to recover. In addition, perpetrators are not being brought to justice or being prevented from continuing to perpetuate these crimes against children.

5.3.1. Encouraging Children to Speak Out and Enhancing Access to Services

Encouraging children to seek high-quality professional support and report incidents of violence helps them to better cope with and resolve experiences of violence.

Priorities for WAPA and MYSD

- Enhance coverage of, awareness of and access to helplines to increase access by children exposed to violence
- Monitor the use of the Mandated Reporters manual in the communities, shelters and care centres
- Initiate a mapping of child protection services in Lagos and develop and disseminate a service directory
- Promote awareness of available child protection services to children, families and communities (WAPA, MYSD and IPs).

Priorities for the Ministry of Education

- Strengthen Guidance and Counselling Units in all primary and secondary schools to support children on issues related to violence
- Increase capacity of Guidance and Counselling Units to make referrals to available services to support children experiencing or at risk of suffering VAC
- Increase awareness of the role of Guidance and Counselling Units amongst teachers, pupils and parents
- Monitor the use of the Mandated Reporters manual in schools
- Provide complaints/ suggestion boxes in all primary and secondary schools in Lagos state and ensure complaints are follow up

Priorities for the Ministry of Health

- Strengthen implementation of school health programmes and services to address issues of VAC through the existing programmes and initiatives using the national guideline for promoting access of young people to Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services in the Primary Healthcare
- In collaboration with WAPA, incorporate VAC into the existing school health programme and school health promotion initiative and implement peer to peer youth education on VAC
- Integrate free VAC related health services (counselling, post rape care etc.) for victims of VAC under the PHC component of the National Health Insurance Scheme
- Adopt a protocol for accessing PEP kits
- Strengthen the home visitation and home-based care support programmes for children suffering or at risk of suffering violence

Priorities for the Justice Sector and Police

- Implement a communications campaign to encourage reporting of VAC to the Police
- Strengthen the capacity and coverage of the emergency line for the Police to allow reporting of cases of VAC, and for children to receive immediate assistance (uniform national number).

Priorities for civil society

- Create and promote safe spaces and platforms (children's clubs, youth clubs, and child parliaments) to encourage children to speak out about their experiences
- Develop and implement strategies to increase knowledge and awareness on VC services
- Promote awareness on existing police services and facilities for children
- Support children to access justice and throughout their case
- Map services for vulnerable children (VC) and the disseminate VC Service Providers' Directory in communities
- Support the establishment of legal clinics in various accessible locations (market, schools, etc) to assist children who have suffered or are suffering violence to obtain support and advice

Priority for faith-based organizations and religious leaders

- Institute and strengthen gender friendly counselling services for children and adolescents provided by faith based organisations, in order to facilitate the reporting of abuse and increase access to support services

Priorities for the media

- Develop messages to create awareness on available social welfare and child protection services
- Create awareness on existing helplines and short codes to report VAC

5.3.2. Improving Availability and Quality of Services and Enhancing the Capacity of Professionals Working with Children

To ensure that services are child-friendly and that reports of violence can be acted upon effectively, it is essential that the work force, institutions, and networks charged with the responsibility of addressing violence against children have the capacity to fulfil their mandate. An increase in the numbers of social welfare officers and an enhancement of their skills will contribute to a more effective response to VAC. It is also necessary to build the capacity of other professionals who have contact with children, such as teachers, health workers, as well as caregivers, to ensure they have a basic knowledge of and skills in child protection and of how and to whom to refer child protection concerns.

Priorities for WAPA and MYSD

- Increase the numbers of Social Welfare Officers and Assistants at State and LGA level
- Build the capacity of Social Welfare Officers and Assistants to handle cases of VAC
- Strengthen social welfare services, especially community care centres, child care services, parent education and the provision of emergency and alternative care (e.g. foster care)
- Ensure a system is in place to monitor children who are at risk of harm and engage with caregivers to mitigate against the risk of harm
- Strengthen the State Monitoring Team to ensure children of school age on the street are identified, rescued and provided with support to reintegrate into communities
- Strengthen the coordination role of WAPA/ MYSD on VAC including working with traditional leaders and CSOs to enhance identification of child protection cases and access to support services

Priorities for the Ministry of Health

- In collaboration with WAPA and MYSD, establish One Stop Centers for effective VAC (and GBV) service provision and case management in hospitals and health facilities, which includes social welfare officers and police officers
- Strengthen the mental health system and psycho-social support services to be able to better respond to cases of VAC and help children to recover
- Incorporate VAC into the curriculum of health institutions, ensuring that health personnel are trained to handle cases of violence, especially sexual and physical violence against children (and women)
- Preposition HIV test kits and PEP kits in hospitals and health facilities

Priorities for the Ministry of Justice, Justice Sector and Police

- Equip frontline workers (including those assisting children through the justice sector/family court process) with the skills and capacity to handle children's cases
- Develop a working protocol (referral pathway) between police, justice, health and social welfare on handling children's cases (building on existing protocols/ harmonizing existing protocols between the sectors)

Priority for the Nigerian Prison Service

- In collaboration with WAPA, provide capacity building of all detention centre personnel to ensure children are protected from violence

Priorities for civil society

- Support the implementation and institutionalization of the child protection case management system
- Strengthen capacity building for health workers to provide child friendly health services
- Advocate for regular training of police staff on child rights and on providing child friendly services
- Create awareness of and encourage the utilization of police services
- Provide community based psychosocial support to children who have experienced violence and their care givers
- Ensure effective use of existing youth centers for child friendly activities and support their establishment where children and young people do not currently have access to these centers
- Strengthen technical and organizational capacities of CSOs and their networks in integrated case management process, monitoring and reporting
- Support and enhance quality of VC programme delivery at state and community levels
- Establish/ strengthen community level child protection systems to prevent and respond to VAC

Priority for non traditional child protection sectors

- Train Environmental Health Clubs in schools to build inter-personal skills on how to identify and report cases of violence

5.3.3. Strengthening Efforts to Hold Perpetrators Accountable

To establish norms of acceptable and unacceptable behavior in a society and create safe and peaceful societies, it is necessary to enforce legislation on crime and violence. This should include strengthening institutional mechanisms and resources and increasing the human capacity needed to ensure enacted legislation protects people from violence and holds perpetrators to account.ⁱ

Priority for the Ministry of Health

- Strengthen the capacity of health workers to collect forensic evidence for cases of sexual violence involving children to give evidence in court cases

ⁱWorld Health Organization (2014). Global status report on violence prevention 2014. Geneva: WHO, p. ix.

Priorities for the Ministry of Justice, Justice Sector and Nigeria Police Force

- Establish a specialist unit for VAC/child protection in the Ministry of Justice under the citizens' rights department and the Office of the Public Defender
- Establish a specialization at each stage of the justice system to ensure a child friendly and effective response for all cases of violence against children
 - Establish specialist desks for children in every police station, staffed by trained officers with nationally harmonised operating guidelines
 - Establish a specialist prosecutors desk dedicated to violence against children
- Train prosecutors on handling children cases
- Establish a procedure for the Family Courts to expedite VAC cases (Chief Judge)
- Strengthen the existing 10 family courts in Lagos State and establish additional family courts to ensure that children cases are heard in child friendly environments
- In collaboration with WAPA, ensure that Family Court Assessors are trained and available to sit in Family Courts
- Strengthen capacity of specialist courts, including Family Courts, by building the capacity of judicial officers/ adjudicators and workers
- Strengthen the registry for perpetrators of sexual violence and establish a system of background checks to ensure that perpetrators/ sex offenders are not able to work with children

Priority for civil society

- Advocate for the strengthening of the child specialized police units for effective service delivery

Priority for faith-based organizations and religious leaders

- Provide sustained support to parents of abused children who cases to hold perpetrators accountable through the justice system

Priorities for the media

- Actively seek out reported cases and issues of VAC and appropriately follow up to promote justice for children
- Ensure that cases are reported in a manner that respects the privacy of the child

5.4. Increasing Investment in Child Protection

Resource allocation for child protection is inadequate to meet the needs in Lagos. The VACS provides an opportunity to advocate for additional resources to prevent and respond to violence against children. This needs to be backed up by a costing of the system, an analysis of current allocation and monitoring of allocation.

Priorities for WAPA and MYSD

- Undertake a Social Welfare Service costing exercise in order to accurately budget for the social welfare system in Lagos (WAPA and MYSD)

- Develop budget guidelines to allocate resources for child protection and advocate for the allocation of additional resources for prevention and response activities, as well as to strengthen the institutional capacity of WAPA and MYSD to implement their mandate under the CRL
- Advocate for and ensure that Lagos State creates budget lines and assigns resources to strengthen Social Protection programmes in Lagos to support vulnerable families to care for and protect their children

Priority for civil society

- Advocate and hold the State accountable for increased resource allocation for child protection and social protection

5.5. Improving Research, Monitoring and Evaluation on Violence against Children

There is no system in place for the continuous monitoring of the prevalence of and response to violence through State collection, collation and analysis of data from different sectors handling children's cases. Carrying out data collection and research is essential to planning and designing intervention strategies, to setting numerical and time-bound targets to monitor progress and end violence and to evaluate progress of programs and initiatives to prevent and respond to violence against children. There is also a need to delve deeper into the findings of the Lagos specific data in the VACS to understand the drivers of violence, how violence may affect different groups of children and the barriers that prevent children in Lagos from speaking out and seeking support in order to strengthen programming, and ensure that interventions respond to the specific needs of children and current service gaps in Lagos state.

Priorities for WAPA and MYSD

- Commission a gender focused study on the drivers of violence against children in Lagos
- Review and adapt the National Orphans and Vulnerable Children Management Information System to include child protection indicators and develop the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS)

Priority for the Nigeria Police Force

- Develop a police case management system on VAC (and GBV) linked with the CPIMS.

Priorities for civil society

- Monitor the implementation of the CRL and child protection policy
- Effective monitoring of the operation of Family Courts
- Analyse child protection trends through data captured in the CPIMS

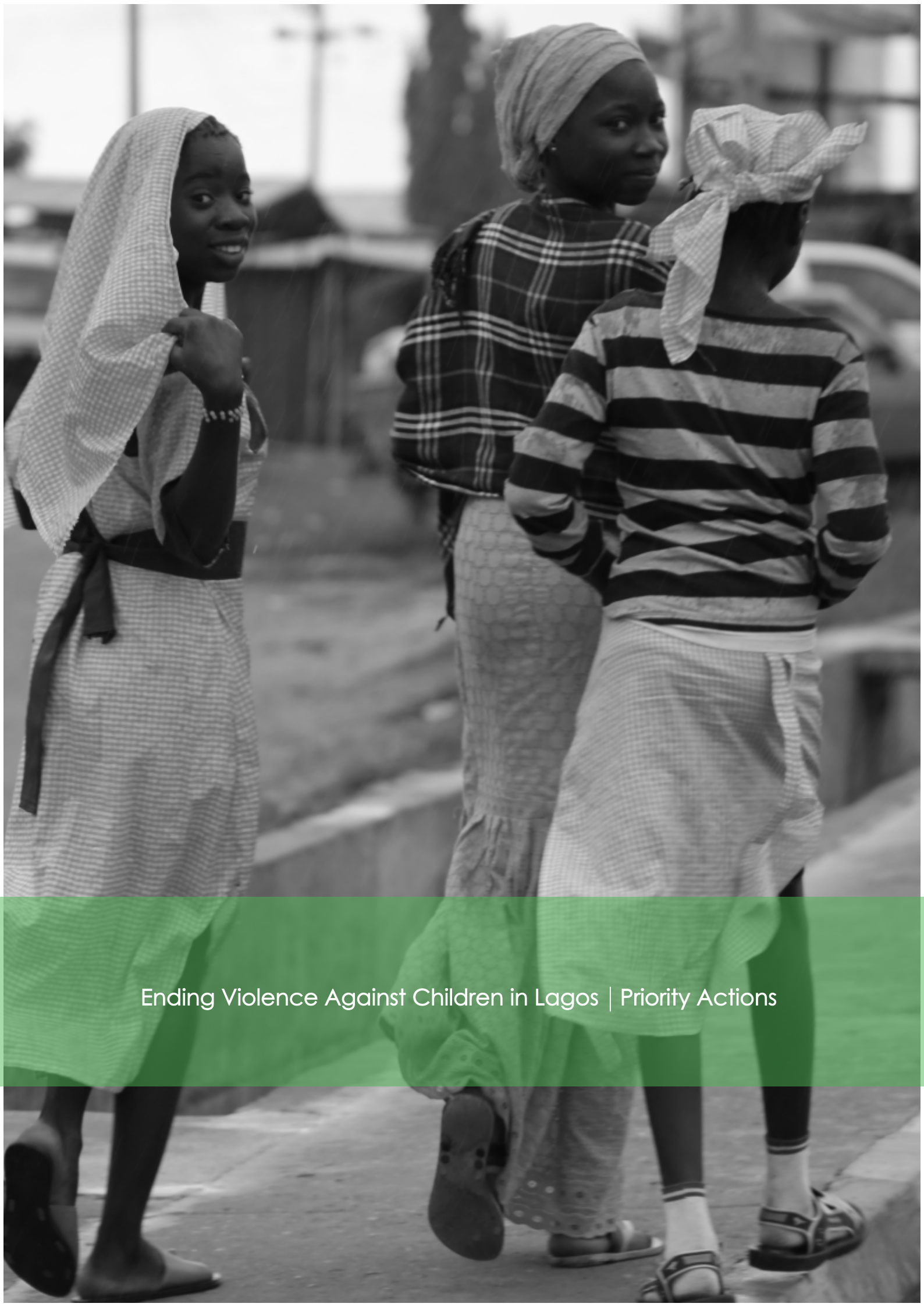
5.6. Modelling the Child Protection System

Lagos State is one of the nine State participating in the child protection systems modelling programme.

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MWASD) is spearheading a programme to support States nationwide to operationalize their CRLs and establish an effective child protection system. Nine States – Lagos plus Benue, Cross River, Edo, Federal Capital Territory, Gombe, Kano, Kaduna and Plateau – are participating in the programme. The group of nine State and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, which comprise the Child Protection System Learning Group, was inaugurated in June 2015. Over the next two years, this group will collectively develop a harmonized vision and model for the child protection system, with agreed essential and desirable components. The purpose of this groundbreaking initiative is to produce minimum standards for child protection country wide and a standard set of tools and guidance to support the operationalization of the child protection model nationwide (in both States that have and have not domesticated the CRA). The purpose is not to insist the same approach is taken in each State, but to have an agreed core child protection system that can be adjusted for the realities of each State.

This initiative is being supported by UNICEF, USAID, CDC and the European Union.


In Lagos State, WAPA is leading this modelling process, in collaboration with MYSD and the State Child Rights Implementation Committee, and with the involvement of education, health, justice and non traditional child protection sectors, as well as civil society, FBOs and the media. The model child protection system will be established in two LGAs. In those two LGAs, all the essential components of a child protection system will be put in place or strengthened to ensure a comprehensive system of prevention and response for violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children. State, ward and community level child protection mechanisms will be established/strengthened to prevent, identify, refer and respond to child protection concerns. Front line workers, including social welfare officers/assistants, the police, health workers and school counsellors/teachers, as well as members of the community child protection committees will be trained on how to handle child protection cases. Working protocols will be established to govern case management and referral between social welfare, health, justice and education actors. Coordination mechanisms between state and non state bodies will also be strengthened. It is envisaged that specialist police desks, specialist prosecutors and Family Courts will be in place to hold perpetrators accountable. Social norms campaigns will be implemented in the two LGAs through media, religious and traditional leaders and groups and CSOs. The Child Protection Management Information System will be established and utilised to monitor the impact of the child protection model.



Ending Violence Against Children in Lagos | Priority Actions

#EndVACNgr



 [NGEndviolenceagainstchildren](#)

 [@end_VAC](#)

 [TWGonVAC Nigeria](#)