
REPORT

**DIALOGUE FORUM ON THE USE OF EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMES TO PREVENT
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

25 NOVEMBER 2015

INTRODUCTION

This short report offers an overview of the proceedings of the dialogue forum held on 25 November 2015 at Ten Bompas Hotel, Johannesburg. The meeting was hosted by UNICEF and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and facilitated by Dr Chandre Gould (ISS) and Sinah Moruane (UNICEF).

The participants were representatives from government departments, civil society (NGOs), researchers and academics working in the field of violence prevention. (A detailed list of all the participants is attached as Annexure 'A'). The participants did not represent all relevant government departments, NGOs or academic institutions but were individuals, or institutional representatives who are working directly to develop and implement primary violence prevention programmes and who have relevant knowledge and experience. Other role players, some of whom were unable to attend this first meeting (such as the Department of Women), will be invited to future meetings. This first dialogue sought to establish whether there was an agreed need for the forum, and if so, to begin to determine future agendas for such a forum and lastly to create a trusted space for information sharing and collaboration.

The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain the need for a forum to share information and knowledge about South African violence prevention programmes that have been tested and been shown to be effective in addressing the risk factors for violence. The meeting also sought to establish agreement on the terms of reference for the forum including who should participate, what should be discussed, and how to avoid duplication with other structures. Intensive deliberations took place and the need for a second meeting was identified.

The facilitators noted that although the dialogue forum had been referred to as an "Advisory Council" in correspondence leading up to the meeting, the use of this name was regrettable. It was never the intention of the organisers to second guess or replicate existing structures or interventions, nor to assume that they had the authority to establish a Council. Apologies for the inappropriate terminology were expressed and it was noted that the term dialogue forum would be used in the interim to refer to the structure.

This report does not constitute minutes of the meeting.

CONTEXT

Violence remains a significant challenge in South Africa, particularly gender-based violence and violence against children. The primary objective of the dialogue forum was to provide a platform for government, civil society, researchers and academics to share knowledge and experience in the development and implementation of evidence-based programmes to prevent gender-based violence and violence against children; and to discuss how the use of such programmes can be promoted and enabled in the best interests of South Africans.

There exists a significant body of research in South Africa and internationally that informs programming on prevention and early interventions to prevent violence. The organisers own focus, knowledge and experience informed a focus in this meeting on South African parenting programmes that have been or are being tested for effectiveness through randomised controlled trials (RCT).

The meeting was structured to allow for interactive engagement, sharing of ideas and establishing connections and relationships.

INFORMATION SHARING ABOUT EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMES

Chandre Gould provided a brief presentation about the importance of using evidence to inform programming and what constitutes evidence of effect. Participants who were involved in the testing of primary prevention programmes, and those who were implementing such programmes were invited to share their experience and programmes with the forum. It was noted that a huge amount of work is already being done to test programmes in South Africa and that overall the preliminary results are promising. There was insufficient time to discuss all the interventions in detail, and it was proposed that in the follow-up meeting additional time be set aside for this to allow participants to share experiences and identify areas of alignment and collaboration as well as joint learning in more depth.

Below is a brief summary of the programmes discussed.

The Parent Centre home visiting programme for pregnant women and new mothers

The Parent Centre, a Cape Town-based NGO, offers a range of programmes to parents including amongst others counselling, moms' circles, ante-natal classes, teen parenting, positive parents and father training. Venecia Barrios, Director of the Parent Centre, spoke specifically about an evidence-based home visiting programme for pregnant women and new mothers that the Centre has been delivering for over ten years.

The programme is aimed at women who are at high risk for ante-natal and post-natal depression, child neglect, abuse and abandonment and is implemented in communities with a high prevalence of violence. The programme is currently being delivered to 440 mothers in 10 communities in the Cape metropole. The programme consists of 17 sessions carried out over a nine month period. There are ongoing reviews of the programme to ensure relevance. Primary challenges to roll-out have been funding related. Venecia indicated that the Centre needs the partnerships they have developed with academic institutions to enable the testing of their programmes.

Sinovuyo Caring Families Project (2-9)

Inge Wessels from the University of Cape Town (UCT) is the programme manager for the RCT of the Sinovuyo Caring Families programme for parents of 2 – 9 year olds. She spoke about the programme and the RCT. The programme started in 2012 to facilitate and support positive parenting and has reported positive results in improved parenting for those who have enjoyed the benefit of the

intervention in 2014. The participants of the programme also reported improved child behaviour and social support.

The programme is delivered over 12 weeks, with one session being offered each week. The programme was delivered to high risk families (i.e. low income families affected by HIV and AIDS or intimate partner violence). It aims to help parents and caregivers develop nurturing relationships with their children while dealing with stresses related to violence, poverty and HIV and AIDS.

Sinovuyo Teens (10-17)

Lindokuhle (Lulu) Ngcobo, Director of the NGO Clowns without Borders said that aim of the programme is to reduce the risk of violence against children aged 10-17. The programme and its testing has been supported by multiple stakeholders including UNICEF, the Universities of Oxford and Cape Town, the National Association of Child and Youth Care Workers (NACCW) and the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development. The programme has been delivered through RCT and has shown preliminary success. Despite the RCT not yet being completed, based on the initial success and informed by the needs of donors and others, including beneficiaries of the programme, the programme is being scaled up in the Eastern Cape. Given that this is multi-stakeholder intervention, a challenge identified was the different ways the collaborating institution operate.

Skhokho Supporting Success

Nwabisa Shai of the Medical Research Council spoke about the Skhokho school-based programme. This programme aims to prevent intimate partner violence among young teenagers. The participants in the programme are grade 8 high school learners, educators, parents and caregivers. The programme is currently being evaluated within Gauteng and the results of the RCT will be available in 2016. The pilot testing has reported positive outcomes in training and support (high rate of programme acceptance and attendance in parent and educator workshops).

Challenges included finding suitable NGOs to work with as well as funding.

The Granny Programme (Joburg Child Welfare)

The Johannesburg Child Welfare runs several orphanages and manages adoptions, and has done this for many years. Carol Bows said that that some years ago Child Welfare noticed that many children who had spent time in orphanages and who were then adopted had great difficulty in their teenage years in their relationships with others, particularly their adoptive parents. The literature suggested that this had to do with the children not having had an opportunity to form a warm, loving bond with an adult. As attested to be research, this is a risk factor that affects emotional development and can later manifest in low level of empathy and remorsefulness. They started a programme in which 'grannies' would spend time with infants in the orphanages, developing such bonds with individual children. These children were found to be much better adjusted as they grew up and had healthier relations with others.

Sonke Gender Justice One Man Can Programme

Wessel van de Berg of Sonke Gender Justice spoke about the Men Care programme that engages men as caregivers, fathers, programme participants in fathers' groups and community activists. Currently the One Man Can programme is being tested through RCT in Diepsloot. The programme aims to engage men to confront negative forms of masculinity and to address gender-based violence and HIV and AIDs with the objective of achieving gender equality. The research trial is funded by the UK's Department for International Development through the What Works to Prevent Violence Consortium.

It is implemented by Sonke Gender Justice and the RCT is being undertaken in partnership between the Wits School of Public Health and Sonke. The RCT will take place over 2 years (ending March 2018) and is a cluster randomised control trial.

GROUP DISCUSSION: MOVING FORWARD

The participants agreed that sharing information about the process to develop evidence of effect for violence prevention programmes was helpful and necessary. They also agreed that the forum provided a unique space for such sharing and learning. Moreover participants agreed that it was critical that the designers, testers and the implementers of programmes and the government departments that could benefit from the process be included in the dialogue forum to enable alignment in tackling the issues.

Participants discussed the challenges that might arise in relation to ‘turf’ and ownership of programmes, and the challenges associated with ensuring that programmes that are scaled-up retain quality and fidelity (i.e. they are delivered in the way in which they have been shown to work).

Participants suggested the need for a database of programmes for which there is evidence of positive effect.

Five questions were posed to participants regarding the establishment of a collaborative integrated forum to tackle issues of VAW and VAC.

They were the following:

- What is our vision for the group?
- What principles should guide the group?
- How should we determine participation?
- What would we like to see on the agenda for the next meeting?
- What would we like the forum to be called?

Robust and lengthy engagement was held and the following issues raised:

The vision for the forum

- A forum for information sharing and dissemination: Given the large number of violence prevention programmes that have been developed and are being tested in South Africa it was agreed that there is a necessity for on-going information sharing about these programmes and their status. There is a need for more discussion about what we regard as evidence, and what kind of evidence is sufficient and/or necessary before programmes are rolled out at scale. It was also agreed that the evidence needs to be presented in an accessible and understandable way to policy makers.
- Relationship building: Participants agreed that it is critical to build relationships between all the key stakeholders (government, NGOs, government policy makers and implementers, researchers and programme developers) towards taking evidence-based programmes to scale.
- Establishment of a central repository for information about evidence-based programmes: The majority of participants supported the expressed need for information about evidence-based programmes to be shared through a central repository or database. It was proposed that developing such a database or repository could be undertaken by members of the forum.
- It was suggested that the role of the forum should be to inform the scale-up of evidence-based violence prevention programmes.

- It was agreed that the objective of the forum should be to provide and/or facilitate an integrated approach to address VAW and VAC.
- It was agreed that there is more discussion needed about how we define ‘prevention’ and what kinds of programmes would be considered to be prevention programme. It was also noted that there is a need to ensure that prevention programming does not take the place of treatment programmes, for example for victims of GBV.
- It was agreed that the forum should not replicate existing structures and forums and we should guard against meeting fatigue and overburdening service providers.
- It was agreed that the forum should not limit itself to discussing parenting programmes, but should expand its focus to all violence prevention programmes.
- The possibility was mooted of using the forum as an advisory mechanism to support DSD to realise its policies in relation to violence prevention.

Participation

- Aside from the current participants, it was suggested that National Treasury be invited to participate as they have a direct interest in evidence-based programmes. It was also noted that discussions should be informed by the diagnostic review undertaken by KPMG as contracted by DPME, to see what works, what doesn’t and what must be done to improve and strengthen interventions.
- The business sector and organised labour were also identified as critical stakeholders and the suggestion was made to include representatives from Nedlac.

NEXT STEPS

- There was limited time for a discussion about the name of the forum, and it was agreed that this should be discussed further at the next meeting
- It was proposed that the next meeting be held over 2 days to allow sufficient time for dialogue and information sharing.
- The meeting concluded with agreement that a core team would develop a concept paper to be distributed to the participants. This would form the basis for preparation for the next meeting. The core team of volunteers, led by UNICEF and ISS includes Lisa Vetten; Dr Nwabisa Shai and Dr Shanaaz Mathews.

Recommendation

- Considering the central role of government in addressing violence against women and children, it is proposed that government officials, especially at policy level, be included in the development of this concept document.