

Annual Report 2014



 Raising Voices



Working to
Prevent Violence
against Women and
Children



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1. Overview

// At Raising Voices I sometimes feel a bit daunted by the vision and expectations of the organization - but it is also that which fuels my commitment to strive higher, and to do my best work. When everyone around me believes we can and must prevent violence, I start believing it too. //

Raising Voices Staff Member



As Raising Voices reached the midpoint in our 2012-2016 Strategy, we asked ourselves searching questions about how faithful we were to the commitments articulated in this cycle of work. From each program area to every staff member; from operational systems to every thematic area of our work; we invested in reflection and analysis. We designed learning processes and extracted insights about where we were succeeding and where we can improve.

As we invested energy in interrogating each area of work, the **first** adjustment was to integrate our work across the historical binary of departments of the prevention of violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC). A new learning team, lead by senior staff and composed of team members from both the VAW and VAC departments, is now responsible for leading the learning across the organization with a view to assessing impact at the level of thematic areas of work (*Practice, Learning and Influencing*) rather than what, in the past, focused around specific program areas or even activities. It was a departure from the familiar - one that sparked new conversations, new collaborations and brought a new perspective to Raising Voices' organizational outlook.

Second, the investments in rigorous **learning** processes, particularly the randomized controlled trials for *SASA!* and the *Good Schools Toolkit* registered milestones with the *SASA!* results published and the data collection completed for the Good School Study. Further qualitative investigations, key question studies, learning papers and micro-studies helped us unpack and better understand the results of the trials to inform our programming. The overwhelming sense within the team was that the overall hypothesis of our work, that violence is preventable in a relatively short period of time with carefully designed intervention, was validated through this research. The organization-wide boost of energy this recognition provided is still palpable.

Third, in the **practice** area of our work, two innovations emerged. The VAW team launched the first in the series of 'Effective VAW Prevention' courses - a new initiative that grew out of experience with partners and our broader analysis of the regional context where many groups are struggling to implement impactful VAW prevention programs. Instead of teaching about our methodologies, we engaged organizations on core aspects of effective VAW prevention and how to make these a reality in their programming. The VAC team invested in ten violence prevention centers throughout Uganda experimenting with the idea that local organizations need to lead local activism on VAC prevention. Both innovations have already shown considerable success.

Finally, within the **influencing** area of work we began to disseminate our work to a diverse audience. We co-authored several papers in peer reviewed journals including one as a lead author in the *Lancet Series on Violence against Women*. We also published many popular format communication materials including a *Call to Action on VAW* that was translated in Spanish, French and Chinese. We produced five films, and communicated through media outlets to more than 2 million Ugandans per month on the prevention of VAC. We invested in communicating the trial results and ensuring that the voice of Raising Voices remains present as we take these findings to the broader world.

While the flavor of the entire year is difficult to characterize in a few words, the central theme for 2014 was *learning*. At times it was slow and there were moments of doubt and uncertainty but staff at every level engaged in this journey; stayed the course and as a result, discovered what it takes to learn meaningfully from our work. We were able to change things, both large and small scale, that weren't working, add new dimensions where needed and further strengthen what was found to be successful. This report details some of the major processes and impacts of our work in 2014.

2.

Thematic areas of work

// ...I used to dodge school because teachers used to cane us a lot but when the Good School program was introduced to our school, teachers reduced the caning. Even when they do, it is no longer many canes nor severe punishments. //

Pupil from St. Bonaventure
Mulajje, Luwero District



PRACTICE

implementing, inspiring and strengthening community activism to prevent violence against women and children


Practice is the lifeblood of our work. It keeps us real, anchored to reality and in accountable relationships with communities and partners we seek to serve. Our investments are aimed at developing knowledge, skills and an operational climate within communities and organizations to promote the prevention of violence against women and children. This year, we concentrated our efforts on creating more effective partnerships; 12 new partners for *SASA!* implementation within the region, and 10 VAC Prevention Centers in Uganda. Our capacity building work grew with outreach to more than 600 schools and hosting more than 80 VAW prevention activists from around the region at our new Learning Center. As our capacity grows, so does our scale. In this section we highlight a few of our key achievements in this thematic area of our work.¹

Ten new Violence against Children Prevention Centers open across Uganda. In collaboration with 10 partners, Raising Voices established 10 VAC Prevention Centers in five districts. These centers are local hubs of activism; they reach out to community members, schools and local leaders. They are a resource for children experiencing violence, a place to turn to when they need help. In partnership with these centers, we engaged in community-based

activism within more than 70 communities in Uganda, created over 170 murals in high traffic communal spaces and disseminated 240,000 learning materials. The aim was to bring new ideas to public imagination, discuss practical ways of integrating them in day-to-day life, and to create a public space to discuss the issue of violence against children. It was an opportunity for individuals to articulate questions and seek solutions from within their own community. With the help of skilled animators, radio personalities and local leaders, we created opportunities for learning, discussing, challenging and reflecting.

More than 600 schools using the *Good School Toolkit*. In 2014, the Good Schools program reached a key milestone. The randomized trial that tested the central hypothesis of the center-piece of this work reached its conclusion, validating the *Good School Toolkit* as an effective strategy for preventing violence against children. Funding to take it to 1000 schools arrived and the team grew to 8 core staff and more than 30 external resource persons. In 2014, we reached out to more than 600 schools, 1600 teachers and 4800 students directly to inspire a simple question in the minds of educators and students: what can the members of the school community do to enhance the experience of learning? That singular focus has begun generating hope amongst practitioners and a fragile belief that change is possible and can be leveraged within a relatively short period of time.

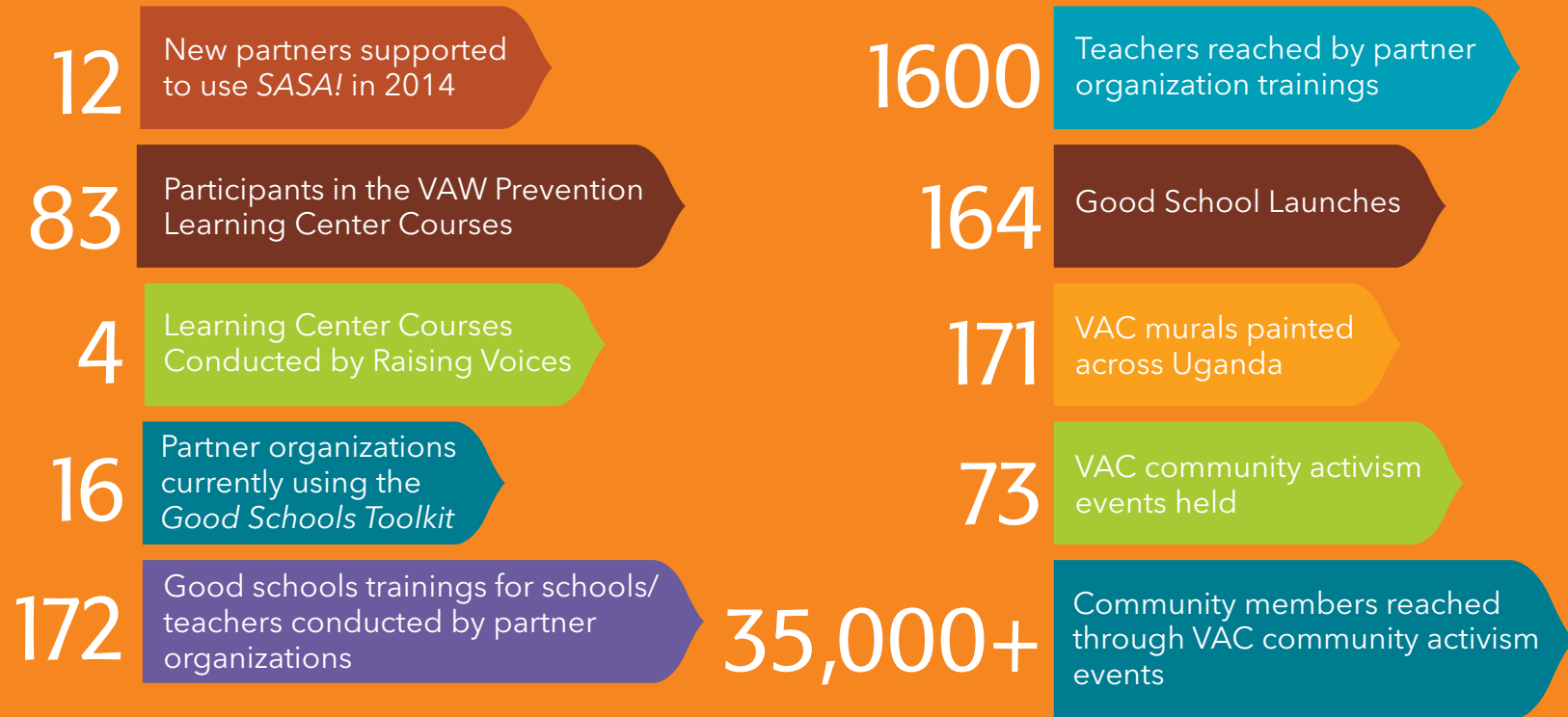
¹ For more detail about each program area please visit www.raisingvoices.org



Launching the VAW Prevention Learning Center. Four new courses were offered in 2014 bringing together practitioners from 13 countries throughout the region. The Center provided intensive, hands-on learning experiences and established collaborative relationships with organizations using the SASA! approach as well as those striving to implement more effective VAW prevention programming. Fresh content was created for all courses with an aim of being responsive to the needs and realities of VAW prevention efforts in the region. A diverse range of organizations from community-based groups to INGOs discussed new concepts, observed them in action in communities, practiced them and are now being supported to integrate the learning into their organizational work. Through the three open application courses and one 'by invitation only' technical advisors course, we had 38 organizations come through the Center - with 96% of these groups participating in ongoing technical support from Raising Voices.

SASA! expands with help from south-to-south technical assistance program. Interest in using the SASA! approach remains strong with many organizations applying for the SASA! course. We are now working with 18 SASA! partners from 11 countries (9 new and 9 from our first SASA! cohort). In addition, we are working closely with several groups who are doing in-depth adaptations of the SASA! approach. An important innovation is the new South-to-South Technical Advisors initiative where staff from partner organizations using SASA! have trained to become SASA! technical advisors (TAs) to some of the new partners. This provides an opportunity for professional development for TAs which deepens their learning and enables new partners to access highly relevant and practical support from colleagues who have implemented SASA! in a similar context. This decentralization of SASA! expertise is an important goal of Raising Voices with the ultimate aim of increasing the skill base in the region for effective VAW prevention programming.

PRACTICE INDICATORS



A photograph of a family of four walking on a dirt path in a rural village. The woman is wearing a floral dress and is smiling. The man is wearing a dark jacket over a white t-shirt and glasses. They are holding hands with two young children, a toddler in a red shirt and a slightly older child in a white shirt. The background shows simple wooden houses and trees under a warm, golden light.

// This [monitoring] is really exciting because we are able to document what we see and it is making our work simpler than the work of other projects. We have other projects but all we do is just to implement with no tools for capturing progress. This is even motivating us to do more. //

Partner Organization Staff

LEARNING

contributing ideas and evidence which strengthen the body of knowledge on preventing violence against women and children

As one of our core thematic areas of work, our *learning* is structured into two complementary streams: 1) *Formal research* to explore key issues and strengthen the evidence base around what works to prevent violence; and, 2) *Reflective Processes* to critically engage with tough questions, for example: Where are we most invested in our collective efforts? Which programs are having a real impact—and where are we falling short? What insights are we gaining along the way and what are we missing? How are we growing as an organization and as individuals within it? It is by creating this space for shared analysis and reflection that we are able to synthesize our research and experience into actionable positions. Given our long-term engagement, we believe this approach offers a credible, practice-informed perspective to the global knowledge base on preventing violence against women and children.

In 2014 we made important strides towards operationalizing our learning strategy and infusing the learning culture at Raising Voices with new vigor and direction. We brought together a team of creative individuals to lead the learning department and invested in systems to embolden our practice with greater rigor and consistency. In doing so we experimented with new ideas and took measured risks, challenging ourselves to balance big-picture reflection with the practical need to get things done. Notable highlights from the past year include the following.

Introducing the new interdisciplinary learning teams: In 2014 we took a concrete step toward unifying thinking and practice at Raising Voices. Under the leadership of the new Learning Coordinator, we launched four thematic teams, each committed to discussing, debating, and building consensus around a practical question underlying a key aspect of our work. For example, the influencing team set out to unpack the various layers of influence we strive for at Raising Voices, and clarify *who* we are aiming to reach through these efforts. The practice team opted for a more concrete output, developing a set of guiding principles for quality technical assistance (TA) that incorporated lessons learned within the VAC and the VAW departments. Staff met over 15 times over a six month period, enthusiastically engaging in a new structured process at Raising Voices. Feedback suggests that learning teams are effectively building more integration and solidarity across the organization, and proving to be fertile grounds for nurturing new ideas. We look forward to sustaining the momentum as the teams identify new questions for 2015.

Fostering space for learning from each other. Staff and invited guests were given space each week to teach their colleagues a wide range of skills such as meditation, hip-hop dancing or facilitating an extended discussion series on diverse topics—from feminism to brain science. In 2014 more than twenty hour long sessions were hosted by various staff members.

The Good School Toolkit (GST) is effective in preventing violence against children at school.

We leveraged more than a million dollars to learn whether the GST is effective in preventing physical violence at school. The randomized controlled trial accompanied by several nested studies and operations research culminated in the single most satisfying and unequivocal conclusion: that the methodology reduces VAC at school by more than 40%. For the team, this was the culmination of years of investment, problem solving and relationship building. Because of the high level of rigor, the main trial paper has been submitted for publication in a prestigious journal. The deep investment in process research, cost effectiveness analysis and follow up studies has yielded a mountain of data that will help us delineate pathways through which such an effect might be emerging. An entire team of highly skilled researchers at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and Raising Voices is now sifting through the data and we expect 2015 to generate a flurry of papers in peer reviewed journals.

Learning from Practice – a bold new series: One of the important commitments we made last year was to begin analyzing and expressing our learnings in a format that could more easily be shared with others in our activist community and beyond. Often we gain deep insight from our work, but fail to capture it fully, thus its potential to inspire and inform remains unfulfilled. And yet we are aware that developing papers and thought pieces require time that is not always available. So we decided to experiment with a new format, whereby staff share their expertise through interviews or short surveys and we assemble a smaller team to work through the writing process. This idea has given rise to the *Learning from Practice Series* – short papers that reflect on our experience, distill learnings, and recommend actions for others engaged in social justice activism. Our series intro—on fostering a transformative organizational culture—is scheduled to be published on our website in April 2015, with two additional papers well underway.

Innovating with monitoring and evaluation (M&E): The 1000 Schools project is complex, and supporting this work with a timely and flexible M&E system requires an equal dose of rigor. In order to measure the impact of the program, we are following a cohort of more than 1,500 girls across five districts, over a three year period. Such a project required development of a comprehensive M&E framework and involved data collection at multiple points throughout the implementation cycle. It also required solving vexing problems such as tracking attendance at school to designing an efficient, easily accessible data storage system. In thinking through the monitoring design, we attempted to balance the need to collect precise and meaningful information while at the same time respecting the importance of simplicity and pragmatism. In the end, we leaned on technology for assistance. For example during our baseline survey, we used mobile technology for data capture, which significantly eased the burden of cleaning and entering copious amounts of data. We also enlisted Vera Solutions—a data consultancy firm—to build a custom database using the Salesforce platform. With the system design nearly in place we are ready to launch, and eager to experiment with real-time information sharing to inform programming decision-making.

Learning from our GBV Prevention Network: Comprised of over 700 members, with more than 200 joining in 2014 alone, the GBV Prevention Network has become one of the largest regional coalitions working on VAW in the world. The Network engages in a wide and diffuse range of activities, from creating opportunities for skill building of members and our annual 16 Days of Activism Action and Advocacy Kits which now reaches over 100 organizations as well as less tangible inputs such as relationship building and fostering a sense of cohesion across diverse groups. As such, assessing the *cumulative* impact of the Network is a challenge that we will continue to grapple with in 2015. Nonetheless this past year we made real efforts to *listen* to our members—collecting more than 480 individual responses to online surveys across the region. We also undertook targeted assessments of specific Network activities, such as *Get Moving!* and *In Her Shoes*. These analyses reveal that powerful transformation *can* emerge from bringing activists together to reflect upon, debate, discuss, and share meaningful experiences.

LEARNING INDICATORS

480+

Respondents for GBV Prevention Network regional surveys

133

In-depth interviews conducted with children, teachers, parents in Luwero

4

Vox pops produced about SASA! impact

6

Positive VAC stories documented

4

Learning Papers initiated

20


Staff from 10 partner organizations received one-on-one technical support on M&E

3,879

Students and 828 parents interviewed for the GST evaluation

1,512

Girls, 1512 parents, and 252 teachers interviewed for 1000 schools baseline



“People have changed, we are a different organization. We are now trying much more to walk the talk. We didn't even ever think about it before, now we are really trying to live our beliefs.”

Get Moving! Participant

INFLUENCING

strengthening analysis and action in the fields of preventing violence against women and children

In 2014 we challenged ourselves to expand our *Influence* from our partners, schools and communities where we work to reach new audiences through new platforms. This year we wrote (as opposed to being written about) in peer reviewed journals. This was a leap that required new skills, considerable learning and more time than we imagined. We also expanded our outreach with social media and maintained an active presence in key advocacy processes in Uganda, the region and beyond. Raising Voices will continue to strive to play an active and meaningful role in the national dialogue in Uganda and at the regional and international level with individuals and agencies that are shaping the programs and policies affecting women and children in our region and around the world.

National dialogue on VAC reaching millions across Uganda. The national dialogue on violence against children continues through digital media-based communication, community-based activism and targeted engagement of key gatekeepers of change. With an estimated outreach to 2.5 million Ugandans per month through TV, radio and newspapers, mobile phone technology as well as other public media, most Ugandans by now have encountered an invitation to join the dialogue on violence against children. We collaborated with three Ugandan film makers and award winning South African film makers to make five films all telling a story about violence against children from the child's perspective. In 2014, we invested in developing the technical infrastructure for gathering views from an even broader constituency and for targeted outreach.

Engaging policymakers on Good Schools. In 2014, we continued to develop relationships with education policymakers. Our interventions in schools have been supported by local government officials in all the districts where the *Toolkit* is being used. In five of those districts, more than 100 senior officials have participated in learning processes, and endorsed our initiatives in schools in their area. The National Curriculum Development Center is currently undertaking a formal review of the *Toolkit*, a necessary first step in the process of integrating the approach into national policy. Senior members from within the education sector have been invited onto the Advisory Committee that will support Raising Voices' efforts at presenting the *Toolkit* at the 2015 Education Sector Review Meeting (a formal national policy making process for the education sector).

Growing our global influence. At a global level we continue to position Raising Voices as a knowledgeable voice on the prevention of violence against women and violence against children, particularly in schools. In 2014, we participated as active members in several influential processes including *Know Violence*, a global initiative to put the issue of VAC on the international policy maker's agenda and in advocacy with US government foreign policy leaders. We also presented our work in various forums such as Women Moving Millions Summit, two WHO regional meetings, the MenEngage Symposium, Irish Aid-Tanzania's Learning Forum, Solutions Summit on VAC prevention and the annual meeting of the Violence Prevention Alliance, among others. One of the Co-Directors also became a fellow of Without Violence, a group focused on articulating practical solutions for preventing VAC.

Advancing our influence through peer reviewed articles. Raising Voices had a significant presence in journals used by policy-makers, academics and researchers in 2014. The *SASA!* main results paper was published as were two additional articles (*SASA!* impact on HIV outcomes and a qualitative exploration of the impact of *SASA!*) Several papers were also published on VAC including: i) ethical concerns when researching VAC, ii) where children go for help when they experience violence, and iii) a study on VAC and disability. In addition to the articles on the two Raising Voices' trials, a Co-Director was lead author of an article in *The Lancet Series on Violence against Women* which discussed principles learned from the practice of VAW prevention. The paper, launched in London and Washington DC, further legitimized practice-based learning to a broader constituency.

Making research and knowledge accessible. Recognizing that what is published in peer reviewed journals often remains inaccessible, Raising Voices popularized the *Call to Action* that was included in the *Lancet Series* for activist audiences. This popularized version was translated into Spanish, French and Chinese and used across the world in presentations and events and for advocacy during the 16 Days of Activism and beyond. In the coming year, Raising Voices will work with GBV Prevention Network members on focused in-country advocacy for change on these areas of action. Further, the VAW prevention learning from practice article published by the *Lancet* was 'adapted' into modules for the Dimensions of Prevention course at the Learning Center. Bridging the divide between policy and programmers remains an important goal of Raising Voices, and one we are well placed to contribute toward.

Learning from activists across the Global South. Raising Voices listened to hundreds of activists across the Global South working on violence against women to try to understand their challenges, hopes, worries and aspirations. We asked activists to share with us their own journey, how they saw their own work, the VAW work in their community, country, region and in the Global South. This extensive consultation involved working with activists in more than 5 languages in every region of the world to learn from fellow activists about the dynamics, possibilities and interests of activists working across borders. We are digesting, understanding and analyzing results of this process in order to meaningfully reflect back some of these voices in 2015.

Reaching across the region through the GBV Prevention Network. Sustained for more than a decade, the GBV Prevention Network continues to play a critical role in bringing activists together and providing conceptual leadership across the region on the prevention of violence against women. Network materials continue to draw members and enrich their programming, from 10 new *Get Moving!* partners committed to focusing on the strength and culture of their organizations, to the over 115 groups using the 16 Days of Activism Action and Advocacy Kits, or the over 2000 people in the region who walked *In Her Shoes* this year. The Network is injecting innovative ideas, new ways of uncovering assumptions and creating more unity among members through personal connections and a shared analysis of violence against women.

INFLUENCE INDICATORS

11 International VAW advocacy events, 5 national VAC events

5 Academic publications

16 VAW and 4 VAC staff presentations at international conferences

39 Countries represented in the Global South VAW Movement Building consultations

300+ New members joining the GBV Prevention Network in 2014

17,309 Unique visitors to GBV Prevention Network website

930+ Network Twitter Followers and 1,280 Followers to Network Facebook page

117 16 Days of Activism Kits distributed in 14 countries

3,140 Individuals included in the Voices for Children database

25 Media houses partnering with Raising Voices, 24 Films screened on TV

22,800 Radio spots, 228 radio dramas, 304 radio magazine shows, 190 live talk shows, 4,320 VAC spots, 96 TV magazine shows

3. Administration and Finance

“The fact that many senior staff have chosen to stay, and some have come back after external forays, suggests that people see something of value and aspirational here [at Raising Voices]. I can see a significant number of staff who have become virtually different individuals as a result of being in this culture. Perhaps the greatest significance has been that we have managed to create an effective organization based on values rather than just strategy.”

Raising Voices Staff Member



The arrival of the new Operations Coordinator resulted in considerable growth in this area of our work. All the organizational policies were reviewed and five new ones added to the Operations Manual. As a result, we tightened quite a few potential areas of weaknesses in our systems including development of more robust Human Resource policies and a new Staff Orientation Manual.

This year we also invested in information management systems. In partnership with Vera Solutions, we developed an expandable system for managing and analyzing data based on the Salesforce platform. Internally, all our communication and electronic storage was centralized on a server and internal communication systems were refined to enhance efficiency. We also hired a dedicated technology management service that helped us assess our technology needs, upgraded our equipment and communication infrastructure, and provided on going technical support and data back-up service.

In 2014, we funded the work of several partners including 10 partner organizations to create violence prevention centers. The emergent fiduciary obligations stretched our financial and administrative systems and in the later part of the year, we out-sourced some of the compliance oversight of our partners to an independent consultancy firm.

In 2014, we also engaged in several internal and external reviews and audits of our operations system. Prior to approval of a 3 million dollar grant, DFID engaged Pricewaterhouse Coopers to assess mangement and operational systems and policies. With minor adjustments, we were able to fulfill all the stringent criteria for earning this approval. In 2014, both Uganda Revenue Authority and NSSF audited our compliance with statutory requirements. In both cases, no substantive issues emerged and URA issued Raising Voices a tax exemption certificate for 36 months.

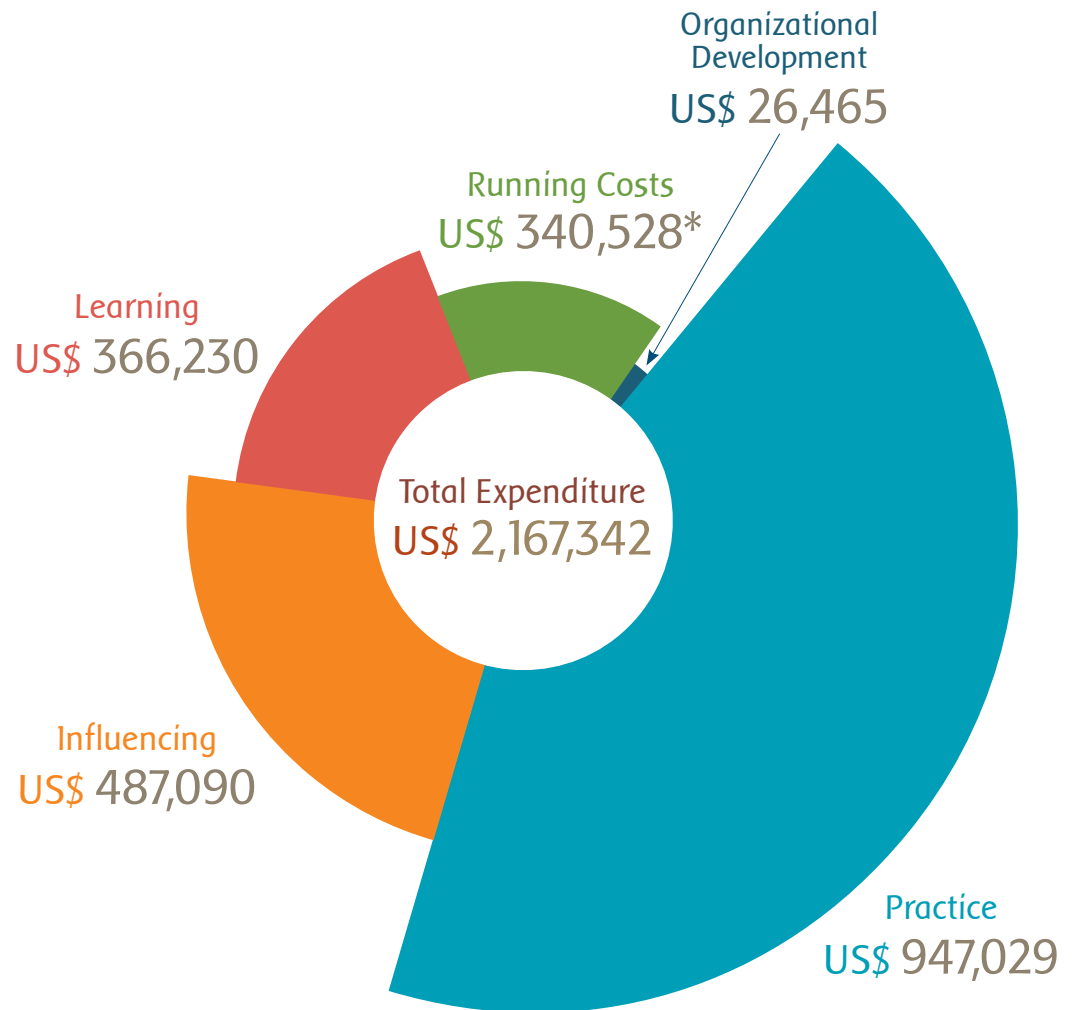
Financial Overview

In 2014, our income rose by 46% compared to the previous year to US\$ 3,762,174.

The expenditure rose by 24% to US\$ 2,167,342.

The fund balance as of 1st of January 2015 was US\$ 1,594,832.

2014 Expenditure by Program Area



* This cost was unusually high in 2014 due to execution of a 36 month rental agreement for office space and substantial investment in information management software.

For detailed breakdown of the financial income, expenditure and analysis see Audited Financial Report available upon request.

Special Spotlight

“I came to Raising Voices because there was nowhere else to go. My father is gone, my mother is gone and I am alone. I need to get my grandmother in the village. Thank you for helping me.”

9 year old girl

Urgent Action Fund

Prevention of violence against women and children is the core of our work. However, as a result of our public activities, women and children turn up at our door when they have nowhere else to go. Usually they are referred to us by the police, community leaders or other well-wishers when all community-based mechanisms have failed. In collaboration with our partner, the Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), we have reserved a small fund (approximately \$10,000 per year; \$5000 aimed at women and \$5000 for children) for such eventualities.

In the past four years, through this Urgent Action Fund program, Raising Voices has responded to and handled 513 cases of families experiencing violence. We have assisted more than 1000 children, 331 of them experiencing egregious violence. The average assistance was in the range of \$25 per case and involved paying for medical care, evacuation from a violent situation or just assistance with urgent basic needs. This fund is supported by friends of Raising Voices: individuals who wish their funds to help individuals directly.

4. Reflections

// Raising Voices has for me been a vehicle to explore, express and sustain a vision of what kind of world I would like to help create. It has been a source of meaning and affirmation that such a vision is possible to create, and that it does not have to be wishful words. //

Raising Voices Staff Member



At the midpoint of 2014, we reached the halfway mark of our five year plan. That psychological milestone focused minds and led to incisive questions about how faithful we have been to the five year vision and whether we have done justice to our commitments. We engaged in an investigation that involved seeking opportunities to learn through a diversified process, including:

Two retreats for all staff. In both these retreats, we asked ourselves where we had succeeded and where we could have done better. What ideas could we adopt to learn faster, or fail more intelligently? At least two of the ideas discussed below came from these processes.

Learning teams. We established four learning groups that investigated underlying assumptions and meanings we had associated with key ideas underpinning our work. Each group independently explored questions of key thematic value to the organization, such as what exactly we mean, and are trying to do, when we try to *influence*, and looped it back into the collective learning process.

Micro-studies. Small groups of staff, at their own discretion, developed a key question pertinent to their work (such as how do teachers decide to change their way of teaching?) which they explored with some focus. Staff could apply for discretionary funding to undertake small scale studies or engage an expert to guide the deliberations.

Learning papers: Senior staff collaborated with an external consultant to articulate a position on questions of key strategic interest to practitioners working to prevent violence such as: Why is fostering a positive organizational culture an essential foundation for social justice activism? and What does it mean for an activist organization to conduct a research trial? A series of learning papers are due for publication on our website in early 2015 as a result of this reflection.

Learning partnerships. With expertise from several partners, in 2014 we refined how we conceptualized progress and analyzed the mechanism through which it might be emerging. In partnership with the International Center for Research on Women, we engaged the entire organization to develop incisive indicators for tracking progress. What milestones should we strive for as an indication of 'success'? What information do we need to track along that journey? In partnership with LSHTM (that involved hosting two Fellows from LSHTM at Raising Voices) we are in the process of analyzing the implementation of our work in schools. In partnerships with Vera Solutions, we invested in a data management system that will allow us to access and analyze operational data and feed it back into programmatic design in real time. All these partnerships as well as other informal collaborations helped us refine our questions and develop practical strategies for navigating that terrain.



Feedback. Through survey-monkey technology, phone interviews and opportunistic consultations, we strived to discern external perceptions of our work, ideas and achievements. What questions did colleagues have, and how could we learn from those questions?

Through these variegated means we aimed to inspire each other to cut through the rhetoric, and look at the questions head on: Are we as effective as we could be? Where could we become more efficient? Where is growth needed? What we uncovered invigorated us, and below, we highlight four key insights that emerged:

First, we apprehended with the depth of earned experience that years of consistent focus on preventing violence can yield astounding results; it earned us a place at decision making tables and opened doors into influential policy discussions. It made our work and ideas visible at a far greater scale than we could have imagined. To be invited to write a synthesis of lessons learned from VAW prevention programming in a prestigious journal (*the Lancet*) does not happen by chance. To be invited to participate as part of the planning committee of an initiative whose core agenda is to influence the prominence of VAC on a global agenda (*Know Violence*) and has a buy-in of influential groups, does not happen by chance. For a small organization to attract larger scale funding also does not happen by

chance. They are earned privileges that emerge from years of staying the course, maintaining focus and resolve and earning the reputation.

Second, we learned that rhetoric alone is not enough to justify our position as a credible voice from the region. Such a position has to be cultivated, earned, leveraged, sustained and brokered by demonstrating practical achievements, incisive action and tangible results. In 2014 that involved a distinct investment in the management infrastructure to get things done. Two new senior staff and a whole team of external resource persons came on board, bringing with them a range of additional human capital. New administration and data management systems appeared, and our ability to engage systematically with information grew by an order of magnitude. It involved evolving new management architecture and roles that unleashed creative energies across the entire organization.

Third, the longer term investment in learning yielded immense dividends in two diverse arenas. They brought a measure of credibility and precision to our programmatic engagements with communities and leadership we worked with on the ground. Doors opened and discussions that were dismissed in the past as empty rhetoric, suddenly gained cachet and were treated with more respect. As impressive results from the *SASA!* trial began to circulate globally

(and those from the *Good School Toolkit* trial are hot on their heels), we began to emerge on the radar of a new constituency; the data-driven decision makers. That is a good place to arrive, when a full third of our programmatic energy in this Strategic Plan is committed to influencing the world of violence prevention.

Finally, at the core programmatic level, we began to articulate and infuse considerations of scale in all the activities we invested in. The Good School Program reached more than 600 schools, the SASA! roll-out engaged 18 international partners, the GBV Prevention Network surpassed a membership of 700 and more than two million Ugandans are tuning into our communications on violence against children on a monthly basis. This transition wasn't without its own challenges and internally we spent considerable energy asking ourselves what this means, if we are the right group to do this, and what are the costs. We engaged the Board and trusted friends of Raising Voices in this deliberation and are still delineating a clear position.

We also acknowledged there were things we could have done better. Here we highlight four key areas that we hope to strengthen in 2015:

First, our external communications could do with substantial investments. Our digital footprint on social media is faint and our commitment in leveraging our work in this arena would benefit from more strategic thinking. There were opportunities for us to articulate a leadership position on events at national level in Uganda and at a global level. In Uganda we side-stepped some controversial issues—including the teachers' strike—that could have positioned us better to influence the Teacher's Union in preventing VAC. At an international level, we could have spoken out with more immediacy on the issue of abduction of girls by Boko Haram or egregious public violence against women in India. The main reason for the silence was not lack of will or opinion, but a person whose primary role is to prioritize such public engagement. In 2015, we hope to invest in the position of a Communications Coordinator.

Second, as the senior leadership turns its attention on the issue of influencing a global constituency, there is a gap emerging at a layer of expertise that involves ensuring day-to-day management of the organization: adherence to policy, ensuring integrity of systems, prophylactic thinking on governance and the routine work of reporting and documenting. In 2015, we hope to invest in a senior leadership position to oversee all day-to-day work in Uganda.

Third, the mountain of data that emerged from collaborations with various partners is awaiting our attention. In 2014, we could have invested in bringing in experts to help us tell our story using this data, and create a tighter feedback loop into the program design. We could have assumed more control of the data instead of relying on outside expertise. We could have written more about what we were learning, and we could have been more expedient in feeding back to our community-based partners what we were learning. In 2015, we have already asked for such demarcation in our relationship with LSHTM and have developed new relationships with colleagues based at Columbia University and at Without Violence (based in Berlin) who will help us tell our story in our own words.

Finally, in 2014 we were so preoccupied with managing growth and excavating implications for the current strategic plan that we did not invest as much resource and energy in visioning the future. A key piece of thinking that we could have invested in was what to do with emerging opportunities. Should we have a satellite office outside Uganda? Should we re-conceptualize our mandate as an organization that develops practical solutions (methodologies) to interpersonal violence, or branch out into more movement building type of organization? Should we be laying the groundwork for our next strategy now, or should we first focus on consolidating and strengthening the infrastructure we need for our current work? None of these are simple questions and certainly do not have easy answers. In 2015 we hope to invest in gaining more clarity on them.

5.

Final Word

In the preceding pages and in the supplementary documents on our website (www.raisingvoices.org), we provide highlights of our efforts in 2014, and aim to distill the complexity of this work into a digestible narrative. While the measure of our work in 2014 is multi-faceted and there were coexisting successes and shortcomings, the overall picture left us energized. When all is said and done, 2014 saw tangible movement, spectacular returns on our investments, and a sense of satisfaction that we made visible progress. We look forward to building a great 2015 on these achievements.



Thank you!

We are immensely grateful to the donors who have committed to our work over the longer term. We are particularly grateful to the foundations that provided core support funding. It allows us to make creative and responsive investments.

In 2014, our work was funded by:

Sigrid Rausing Trust

The Novo Foundation

Anonymous Donor through AJWS

The Oak Foundation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Hivos

Open Society Institute

Irish Aid

DFID

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

International Rescue Committee

Foundation for Just Society

Individual Donors



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