

RAISING VOICES

Annual Report 2016



 Raising Voices



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OVERVIEW

In 2016, Raising Voices continued to grow and consolidate our work. In all three areas of our work

Practice, Learning and Influencing

we made substantial progress in moving towards our overall goal and objectives articulated in the Organizational Strategic Plan.

We made significant choices about staffing, about the kind of funding partnerships we should seek, and established new policies that embody our values and will continue to support our growth as a vibrant and thriving organization. We strengthened our operational systems and the team by recruiting senior and highly skilled staff, created space for thoughtful decision making, and towards the end of the year, invested in a significant process of values clarification.



In the *Practice* area of our work, we accompanied a large number of partners and colleagues by providing assistance and tools to help them refine and execute their work. In the course of that work, we also recognized the need for and invested in developing new adaptations of our own methodologies, and helping partners adapt, scale and implement our ideas in their contexts, including:

- We accompanied more than 80 organizations in 25 countries to continue to use and adapt our methodologies effectively.
- Through our flagship program of the Violence Prevention Learning Center (VPLC) we offered courses and technical support (on site, in person, by phone and online) to those partners who were implementing SASA! and the *Good School Toolkit*.
- We helped broker funding partnerships for those that were using our methodologies and connection to others who were grappling with similar ideas and challenges.
- Development, publication and launch of *SASA! Faith with Trocaire* and a draft and testing of the *Good School Toolkit for Secondary Schools* with London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

In essence we continued to build a community of practitioners who adopt a holistic approach to violence prevention.

In the *Learning* area of our work, we engaged with a talented team of external Consultants to articulate and clarify our own narrative of what we mean by a “learning culture” and what it means to be a “learning organization.” We invested in more than 50 internal reflection processes to deepen our learning from one another as well as external colleagues and published materials. We also operationalized an organization-wide Monitoring and Learning system that we had spent a substantial part of 2015 and early 2016 developing in partnership with International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). We engaged in formal learning activities that involved us taking a leadership role in conceptualizing research, gathering data, writing and publication of what we were learning or wanted to know. We invested in a diverse range of activities including:

- A substantive Midline Study of 1000 Schools Project.
- Six program learning initiatives (PLI) where we explored in more detail a specific aspect of a programmatic intervention.
- Undertaking original analysis of the data from randomized trial we had conducted in 2015 to explore implication for an emerging area of interest (children’s resilience).
- A study on intersection of Violence against Women (VAW) and Violence against Children (VAC) within families and where the opportunities might be for developing linked interventions.
- Launch of a three year study on how SASA! is being adapted in multiple contexts it is being used in.
- Investment in experiments based on behavioral economics theory (in partnership with Ideas42) with a view to designing micro-innovations to leverage interventions within SASA!

The underlying aim of all these activities was *to clarify for ourselves what our work was amounting to, where we needed to focus on efficiency and where the opportunities were.*

In the *Influencing* part of our work, we allocated our efforts across carefully selected national (Uganda), regional (sub-Saharan Africa) and global policy processes. In the earlier part of the year we had spent substantial organizational time developing priorities and tools to identify where we wanted to exert influence, leading to investments in the following areas:

- In Uganda, we participated in major civil society forums and commented on all major policy initiatives that affected women and children (e.g. Children Act Amendment, statistics for gender equality, etc).
- The GBV Prevention Network continued to flourish with several high profile activities including coordinating the annual 16 Days of Activism Campaign in our region, social media based engagements for popularizing feminist analysis (#withoutpatriarchy) through twitter chats and blog posts, developing compelling and much acclaimed communication materials (see example on page 25) and coordinating Sister-to- Sister exchanges that linked and fostered relationships between established female activists.
- Global engagement in multiple processes through meetings, publications, conferences and relationship building to ensure that our perspectives were being included in synthesis publications (our work was highlighted in more than 10 global publications) and policy directions.
- Co-authored 10 papers in peer reviewed journals with a further 14 currently under review.

The underlying aim of all these activities was *to influence the shape of the dialogue and to inform the practice* it leads to, in the work of preventing violence against women and children.

In the following pages we present curated details of some of these achievements and include analysis of what we learned from our experiences in 2016. We also present details of how we have strengthened our operational infrastructure, and what resources we expended. We are proud of the achievements and move forward into 2017, ready to build an additional layer of nuance onto this work.



PRACTICE

The **Practice** area of our work strives to **implement, inspire** and **strengthen** community activism to prevent violence against women and children. We do this through local, institutional and multi-media activism.

This year, the Practice team at Raising Voices collaborated with communities, schools, organizations and groups to strengthen their ability to do quality prevention work. We also created multimedia tools and methodologies to strengthen the ability of partners to effectively address VAW and VAC.





Milestones

In 2016, the Practice team celebrated the following milestones:

Quality Technical Support on Successful Methodologies

The number of organizations that are using the *SASA! Activist Kit* and *Good School Toolkit* continues to grow; subsequently, the request for technical support is on the increase. Currently over 60 organizations in more than 20 countries are now using *SASA!* while over 750 schools from diverse regions of Uganda are using the *Good School Toolkit*. In order to ensure success of these diverse groups, Raising Voices has developed several strategies to support organizations implementing our methodologies, including:

Violence against Children Prevention Centers

In 2016, Raising Voices supported six VAC Prevention Centers across three districts in Uganda to continue the roll out the *Good School Toolkit* in 360 schools, to respond to VAC cases in schools and communities, and to conduct local activism and local government advocacy. Through local activism, the partners reported conducting 44 community dialogues in total reaching approximately 4,400 community members. In addition, Raising Voices helped to connect these centers with external funding sources to enhance the sustainability of their work.

Violence against Women Prevention Learning Center

In 2016 Raising Voices continued to support organizations to strengthen VAW prevention programming in their different contexts through courses and learning center visits that engaged 43 organizations worldwide. Long-term technical assistance (TA) on *SASA!*—including onsite visits, Skype calls, in person meetings, email support and document review—enabled 11 partners to transition to the Awareness phase and 9 partners to move into the Support phase of *SASA!* this year. Raising Voices staff conducted 10 onsite TA visits to *SASA!* partners. These visits were instrumental in providing tailored support to partners and enabled us to gain better insights of *SASA!* implementation in various contexts. In addition, the Learning Center included a new course (“Principles of Prevention”) to strengthen violence against women prevention programming among organizations not using *SASA!* Finally, there was a short course on quality TA provision given to 7 non-staff technical support providers who can offer support in their countries or elsewhere if Raising Voices staff are unavailable. This is an exciting South-South technical assistance program. In addition, Beyond Borders in Haiti has become an additional technical support hub, partnering with 8 Haitian organizations engaged in the long-term implementation of *SASA!*, using the Haitian adaptation of *SASA!*

Adaptation and Scale-Up of Successful Methodologies

In 2016, we observed a substantial expansion of SASA! across the globe, including significant adaptations and translations of the *SASA! Activist Kit*. Major adaptations are underway in Honduras and Uruguay (with governments), Timor-Leste (with Nabilan), Papua New Guinea (with UNWomen/Pacific Women), Democratic Republic of Congo (with The Global Fund), Pakistan (with Trócaire), and Iraq (with Norwegian Refugee Council). Also, in Haiti, the *SASA!* inspired *Power to Girls* was completed by Beyond Borders in 2016. This extensive program for girls uses the essentials of *SASA!* on the critical issue of girl's empowerment and prevention of violence. Finally, the *Good School Toolkit* is also undergoing expansion; organizations in Lesotho, Uganda and Mongolia continued to adapt components of the methodology for their contexts.



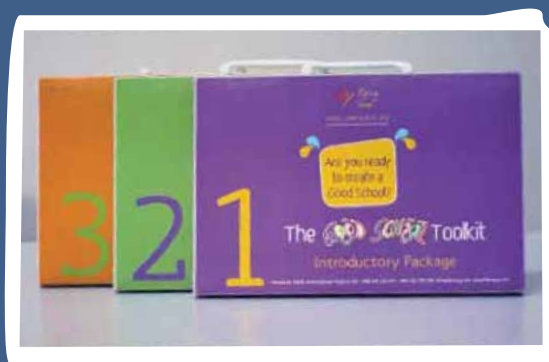
Map of global SASA! adaptations

Also this year, Raising Voices undertook two major adaptations of our own: *Good School Secondary School Toolkit* and *SASA! Faith*. These innovations, while consistent with the core structure and program elements in GST and *SASA!*, have been substantively adapted to spark transformation and change in secondary schools and faith-based communities (see Box 1).

Box 1: Adaptations: responding to emerging needs

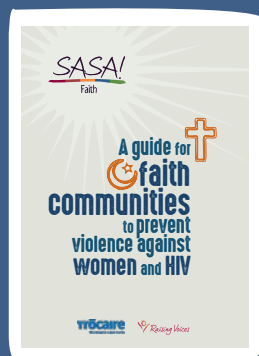
Good School Toolkit for Secondary Schools

In 2016, Raising Voices in collaboration with London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, adapted the *Good School Toolkit* for secondary schools. This required a structured process to identify different patterns in the manifestations of school violence within the secondary school setting. Based on exploratory research and iterative experimentation and testing, the secondary school adaptation required development of new content and includes a stronger focus on peer violence, sexual violence and gender inequalities. We will pilot the *Good School Secondary School Toolkit* in two schools in 2017.



SASA! Faith

In 2016, the VAW Practice team and the Irish NGO Trócaire launched the *SASA! Faith* an adaptation of SASA! specifically for Muslim and Christian faith-based communities. The adaptation includes the *SASA! Faith* Guide, Training Manual, print-ready materials on CD, supplemental online materials, and guides for proposal and budget writing. Most of these tools are now available online for use by faith communities worldwide. Emerging from the challenges faith communities encountered while using SASA!, we hope this adaptation will allow organizations and institutions around the world to meaningfully address the sensitive issues of power, rights and violence within their faith communities. The first *SASA! Faith* course will be held in Quarter 1, 2017.



Engagement of millions of Ugandans through media

For the past three years, the VAC Practice team has engaged millions of Ugandans in conversations about preventing VAC. This included launching activities during significant events such as the Day of the African Child, creating films and communication materials, regular engagements on talk shows on 9 radio stations, and supporting programming by partners on 25 radio stations and 5 TV stations. In addition, in 2016, Raising Voices sponsored a week-long children's camp and children's participation in a two-day National Children's Convention and Learning Event. Our staff made regular appearances on national media to keep the issue of violence against children an active discussion among Ugandans.

Creative VAC Prevention Campaigns

2016 also brought two successful campaigns to increase dialogue on VAC—the *Boda-Boda* campaign and SMS campaign within schools. In collaboration with the Uganda Police Force in 2016, Raising Voices distributed 10,000 reflector jackets and helmet stickers to public transport motorcycle drivers (*Boda-Boda*) in Uganda, branded with a heart-shaped sticker asking: *What are you doing to prevent violence against children?* This campaign provided an effective hook for motorcycle drivers to spark a dialogue with passengers on topics related to violence against children. The campaign launch received strong media attention, including 8 TV stations, 7 radio stations, 4 newspapers, and 1 online news platform. In addition, an SMS campaign engaged 740 teachers for a sustained period of three months from, March to June. The campaign was meant to promote dialogue with teachers about the *Good School Toolkit* ideas and prevention of violence against children in schools.



“[The VAC Prevention Center] empowered us as community members. It created awareness toward violence. We are alert towards what happens in our community. We developed a passion to help others. Before [the VAC Prevention Center], we didn't know we had such ability and potential to help anything in our community.”

(Community Member, Wakiso District)

Challenges & Strategic Directions for 2017

Growing interest in Raising Voices methodologies within our region and far beyond has been a humbling and challenging experience. We are engaging with groups across the world and helping organizations localize *SASA!* and *Good School Toolkit* in very different contexts. Two key challenges within Practice arise from this experience:

Navigating the tension between scale and quality. In both Practice and Learning we are currently trying to address the tension between making *SASA!* and *Good Schools Toolkit* available to as many organizations as possible, while providing the support and structure necessary to maintain quality—and the potential for meaningful impact. Our current challenge is to determine what level of support is sufficient and how it can be delivered most effectively. We are learning that technical support and adaptations require a high level of staff capacity and also clear organizational partnerships, which protect the intellectual property of Raising Voices while preserving accessibility and encouraging innovation. In addition, we realize the importance of maintaining fidelity to the core programming components that make the approaches successful—and helping others do the same

- **New direction for 2017:** In addition to developing further guidance notes to inform scaling both *SASA!* and the *Good School Toolkit*, we intend to experiment with new platforms for delivering support to partners and sharing lessons learned. For example, the VAW Practice team, aims to further refine our Webinar structure (piloted in 2016), create country-level “communities of practice” with *SASA!* partners, and expand regional technical support hubs—building off the model in Haiti and Papua New Guinea. The VAC Practice team also intends to expand its partnership strategy within Uganda to enhance school and community level VAC prevention and response; in 2016, we established 6 community-level partnerships and hope to add four more by end of 2017.

Discerning mutually beneficial partnerships. Raising Voices works with many partners, as a technical support provider as well as recipient of grant funds. Some of these partnerships are mutually beneficial, and help Raising Voices toward its mission of violence prevention while others divert us from our mission. The importance of recognizing the difference between the two, and willingness to end partnerships that are not strategic, was a major lesson of 2016. For example, Raising Voices decided to withdraw from one major funding partnership during the year, realizing that limitations it imposed meant it was compromising our ability to do quality programming. This has implications on our funding, programming and partners yet it is an important expression of our autonomy and values as an organization.

- **New direction for 2017:**
 - a) Development of clear memorandums of understanding for any partnership that involves Raising Voices’ work, resources, or time; b) Clear, documented discussions at management level for any new partnership with an eye to assessing implications on organizational culture and quality of work possible.

Other Practice priorities for 2017 include:

- Scaling the *Good School Toolkit* to 1000 schools by 2020; this means reaching out to 160 new schools each year until the end of 2020. As part of the strategy to achieve this, in 2017 the media and communications team within VAC Practice will focus their attention on VAC within schools and promoting endorsement of the *Toolkit* and its ideas nationally. It is a particularly opportune time for this conversation in Uganda, given the passing of the Children (Amendment) Act in March 2016, which prohibits the use of corporal punishment in schools.
- Establish an arm of community-based practice within the VAW team in order to ground Raising Voices staff in the realities of VAW prevention. Having an arm of practice in Kampala in 2017 will provide space for learning and contribute to the quality technical assistance being provided to our partners.

Practice milestones in 2016: achievements in numbers

20 **long-term partners** from 13 countries trained in the next phase of *SASA!*

360 **schools** reached out to a neighboring school to support usage of the *Good School Toolkit* to make more than **600 schools** introduced to the *Toolkit* ideas in 2016.

11 **new VAW organizations** receiving technical assistance and tools on *SASA!*

10 **organizations** receiving onsite technical support visits to strengthen *SASA!* programming.

8 **global *SASA!* adaptations** underway

10,000 **Boda-Boda- riders** engaged their clients in discussions about VAC

2,500 **commuter taxis** carried messages on VAC prevention

2 **major adaptations** of Raising Voices methodologies: *SASA! Faith* and *Good Schools for Secondary Schools*

10 **VAC Prevention Centers** engaging schools and communities

The **Learning** area of work is dedicated to nurturing a culture of **reflection, synthesis** and **action** in order to strengthen our VAWC prevention practice at Raising Voices and our influence within the violence prevention field.

We pursue this aim via two complementary streams: (1) reflective processes, where we create intentional spaces to distil and synthesize our learning from practice; and (2) formal research, where we collaborate to assess impact, investigate our programming in progress, and address key knowledge gaps highlighted through our work. Across all our learning engagements, Raising Voices strives to *integrate findings* as well as to *elevate the visibility of practice-based learning* by sharing our insights and experiences.



Milestones

In 2016, the learning team continued to expand its scope and experiment with new ideas. We celebrate the following milestones:

Looking inward to build cohesion and clarity

Early in the year, the Learning Team worked with a new partner from Rwanda—Resonate—to better articulate our story as a learning organization. This participatory process set in motion a subtle yet foundational shift, which allowed us to work more effectively as a team in 2016 and work more intentionally towards our strategic objectives. We also took some time to reflect on our collective vision, and define a set of core ideas related to our work (see Box 2).

Box 2: Defining Core Learning Concepts

We understand a learning culture as . . .

A collectively constructed organizational framework through which individuals and teams ask (and answer!) incisive questions about their work and intentionally seek out new perspectives. This multi-dimensional learning is a constantly evolving process that facilitates the flow of ideas, helps identify best practices, and nurtures collective discoveries.

We understand practice-based learning as . . .

The cumulative knowledge acquired from designing and implementing ideas and methodologies over a sustained timeframe, including insights gained from observation, direct experiences, and program monitoring.

Deeper Learning with Program Learning Initiatives (PLIs)

This past year we launched our PLIs intended to complement our routine monitoring with a deeper dive into salient questions emerging from our work. PLIs are designed to be relatively brief assessments that can provide timely feedback, inform strategic decision making and build analytic skills across the organization. In previous years, this work was described as “micro-studies” or “rapid assessments”—however the PLI structure has brought more clarity and rigor to these engagements. In 2016 we completed 6 PLIs with 2 more in progress – see Box 3 for a snapshot of results.

Midline Assessment of 1000 Schools Project

In partnership with Research World International we completed a robust midline assessment of the 1000 Schools Project across five districts. Our results were encouraging, suggesting that the 1000 Schools approach—implementing GST through our VAC Prevention Centre partners—was linked to positive shifts in girls’ attitudes about violence and corporal punishment; their educational aspirations; and perceived safety within the school (when compared to girls attending school in control districts).

Box 3: PLIs Snapshot

Effective VAW Prevention Course Review

Purpose: To review our Violence Prevention Learning Centre (VPLC) to assess quality of course delivery, analyze how/if course content was being integrated into programming, and examine gaps in skills and knowledge that future courses could address.

Approach: We interviewed past course participants, the Executive Directors of their organizations, key technical experts in the VAW prevention field, and partners who were aware of the course but did not apply.

What we found: EVAW courses are widely considered useful, and individual level learning through the courses is high. However integrating new information into to programing at an organizational level is often a challenge. The review highlighted useful recommendations for how to better support partners in this process and these ideas will be incorporated into 2017 programming.

Boda Boda Campaign Assessment

Purpose: To assess the reach and ability of the VAC team’s Boda-Boda (motorcycle taxi) Campaign to spark dialogue about VAC prevention between boda drivers and their passengers.

Approach: We interviewed 600 boda-boda passengers through a rapid assessment survey administered before and after the campaign, and also held focus groups with boda drivers across Kampala.

What we found: The Boda-Boda Campaign is a useful tool for message exposure (out of 600 respondents, nearly 77% recognized the heart image) and generating conversations about VAC in Kampala. Boda drivers described feeling a great deal of pride wearing the jackets. Findings further suggest that addressing language barriers and providing more orientation for drivers could make the campaign even more effective.

VAC Prevention Center Review

Purpose: To better understand the story of key partner organizations serving as VAC Prevention Centers in their community, the relationships they have with Good Schools and the surrounding communities, and the ongoing support needed to take the model to scale.

Approach: We interviewed Center staff, community members, key stakeholders, teachers and students across four districts in Uganda through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

What we found: The VAC Prevention Center model is an efficient model for coordinating VAC prevention efforts in schools and communities. The model can be strengthened by supporting Centers to engage more deeply in community outreach to take Good School ideas to the village level.

Deepening our research expertise to generate new learning

In 2016 we intensified our research engagement and took on a leadership role in writing and publication of our work.

- With support from UNTF, we launched a 3-year “Learning from SASA! Adaptations Project” in partnership with Beyond Borders (Haiti); IRC (Kenya); Women’s Promotion Center (Tanzania); and University of California, San Diego (U.S.). While scale-up of violence prevention methodologies is gaining traction globally, there is little practical guidance on how such efforts can maintain fidelity, contextual relevance, and transformative potential. We hope this collaboration will address this knowledge gap by distilling key learnings around what it takes to effectively adapt SASA! for different contexts and developing tools to guide future efforts.
- Completion of a year-long “Intersections Research” project (supported by the SVRI and MRC, South Africa) to investigate the connections between VAW and VAC within the family. This multi-component project, carried out in partnership with Columbia University, had a broad objective of identifying opportunities for integrated programming to promote peaceful, healthy, and loving relationships within the family. We synthesized findings in 3 academic papers, 1 learning paper and published a blog describing the motivation for this work. [Refer](#) here.
- A study of resilience using data collected during the Good Schools Study (completed 2014 in partnership with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Makerere University). In this study, children’s experience of violence perpetrated by teachers, caregivers, and peers were analyzed—as well as their exposure to IPV against female caregivers at home linked to their resilience, defined as the ability to maintain wellbeing and positive functioning in spite of significant adversity.
- An expanded partnership with Ideas42 to design micro-innovations—based on behavioral economics theory—to boost SASA!’s ability to build intimacy and skills within intimate relationships. We look forward to using our “Happy Chat” game and training sessions on Cognitive Behavior Therapy techniques with Community Activists and community members in 2017.

Full implementation of our organizational Monitoring and Learning system

Finally, we stepped up our efforts to create a simple yet informative organizational M&E system within Raising Voices. Back in 2015, we had developed a learning framework from each team that linked short and long-term benchmarks to larger conceptual questions prioritized for each area of work. This year we fully implemented the system, including ongoing, team-by-team tracking of a comprehensive set of indicators. Importantly we instituted a quarterly review process to discuss any surprises, questions, or challenges suggested by the data, and with each review session teams honed their ability to use data to spark meaningful conversations, including identifying ways to strengthen the work in the next quarter. Some of the monitoring outputs appear throughout this report, providing more support and credibility for our overall 2016 assessment.

Challenges & Strategic Directions for 2017

An aspect of the learning culture we are working towards at Raising Voices is to embrace risk and even failure, provided we learn from these experiences in a way that propels us forward. Reflecting on 2016, we note some challenges within learning—and springboard off these moments to establish priorities for the year ahead.

Timely synthesis and sharing of our learning, particularly around scale. Over the past several years, an emphasis on scaling violence prevention programs is gaining momentum, though there exist few documented lessons or practical guidance to support these efforts. While Raising Voices has been thinking deeply about scale and, at the same time, garnered substantial expertise in adapting and scaling both *SASA!* and the Good School Toolkit to new contexts, we had not concisely or collectively articulated our organizational perspective. Recognizing this gap, we organized an internal ‘thematic working group’ of senior staff within the organization to hold strategic discussions about scale: what it means to us, how our understanding aligns or differs from other players, the key lessons learned from our practice, our main concerns, and potential areas for influencing. In addition, we co-authored a paper on the topic with ICRW, see *Influencing*, pg. 27.

- **New Direction for 2017:** Continue scrutinizing our experiences around scale to distill key insights, building from the learning from the *SASA! Adaptations Project* and testing of the *Good School Toolkit for Secondary Schools*. In addition, to amplify our practice-based learning within the broader field, we aim to write another policy-focused paper and proactively engage in various high-level events (including the 2017 SVRI Forum).

Finding a comfortable balance with our reflective processes. We are still working to find our sweet spot, where we can prioritize critical reflection about our work—and yet avoid an unhelpful cycle where such processes generate far more action steps that we can put into practice. In 2016 Raising Voices staff were involved in 56 reflective processes, which encompasses staff development sessions, team and all-staff retreats, thematic working groups, ‘unpacking research’ discussions, and more. Taken together, this accounts for a substantial amount of staff time—which we feel brings value to our work and signals our commitment to being a learning organization. However it’s important that we continue to take an honest look at this commitment, and we have taken a few steps to streamline processes when possible.

- **New Directions for 2017:** Experiment with a new structure for our staff development sessions, where each team facilitates one process per month on a rotating basis, with topics aligned to the most frequently mentioned gaps that emerged from our 2016 staff survey.

Other learning priorities for 2017 include:

- Deepen our exploration of children’s experience witnessing IPV against women in the home, experimenting with participatory methodologies that can meaningfully draw children into these conversations.
- Develop simple tools to monitor GST implementation, that can be accessible to any organization implementing GST while—at the same time—providing an indication of whether intended outcomes are emerging at the school level.
- Continue to expand our [*Learning from Practice*](#) series to ensure our research remains grounded and relevant to other activist organizations. We also plan to integrate a more deliberate dissemination strategy (see *Influencing*, pg 26) in order to better assess whether this investment in energy and time pays dividends in terms of infusing the existing evidence base with a practice-informed perspective.

Learning milestones in 2016: achievements in numbers

56

Reflective Processes including **29 in-depth reflections** (all-staff or team retreats; learning reviews, thematic team meetings, ‘unpacking research’, etc.), **23 staff development sessions**, and **4 discussions** facilitated by external colleagues.

6

Program Learning Initiatives to deepen learning about our work in progress

10

popular papers published, with another 3 currently under review

Data collected via **62** in-depth interviews

48

focus group discussions

600

in-person surveys and

31

online questionnaires to inform our PLIs



INFLUENCING

The **Influencing** area of work at Raising Voices is dedicated to strengthening **analysis** and **action** in the fields of preventing violence against women and children. In 2016, Raising Voices helped shape the dialogue in the field on VAW and VAC prevention on three main levels:

- In Uganda through public media and dissemination of *Good School Toolkit* trial results;
- In the Horn, East and Southern Africa through the GBV Prevention Network; and,
- Globally, through active engagement of key VAW/C ideas and evidence-based methodologies.



Government of Uganda preventing VAC with the Good School Toolkit

In 2016, local governments of 3 districts (Lira, Luwero and Kabarole) in Uganda worked with VAC Prevention Centers on implementing *Good School* activities in schools and communities. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Sports and National Curriculum Development Center are currently integrating ideas from the *Good School Toolkit* into music, dance and drama lessons in 1,605 schools in 13 districts; this is an approach to get a positive school climate into the classroom and woven into the thematic curriculum. Further, in 2016, results of the *Good School* study were presented at numerous national and international events, as well as published in a series of articles, and shared across Ugandan media through a variety of channels.

New ways of communicating a feminist analysis

GBV Prevention Network's social media campaigns in 2016 widened opportunities for influencing how the extensive membership analyzes and articulates VAW issues. The dynamic and provocative campaigns, like #withoutpatriarchy, used creative design and well-known African feminists to lead Twitter chats and blog discussions with followers on Facebook and Twitter increasing followers by 61% and 70% respectively in 2016. Contributing to a shared regional analysis on VAW, the campaigns generated discussions how VAW is a systemic problem; it encouraged members to imagine new realities where women and men are valued and treated equally. This new platform for reaching members was warmly welcome by members—as reflected in the jump in participation. We feel hopeful about the potential of continued social media engagement in 2017.



Social media campaigns were also partially responsible for the 50% increase in Network members engaging in the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence against Women campaign this year, using materials provided by the Network to generate discussion in their communities about girls' education. Aligning the Network theme with the global theme made it easier for members to be connected to the global campaign.

Cross-country mentoring through the Sister-to-Sister initiative

After completion of the content and design of this cross-country feminist mentoring program, in 2016 the Network selected 12 'sister' pairs from Kenya; Tanzania; Uganda; Rwanda; Zimbabwe; Zambia; Mozambique; South Africa; Mali; Ghana; Ethiopia; Sudan; Malawi; CAR and Somalia. This structured 9-month program based on the *Get Moving!* methodology, facilitates issue-specific dialogues between 'sisters' and personal reflection to deepen a feminist analysis of violence against women. As one sister said, *"We . . . have come to realize that some of our challenges and experiences are not unique [and] as such we have been able to talk them through and become reinvigorated to pursue [our] activism."*

Participation in global discourse

Raising Voices capitalized on many opportunities for sharing key ideas about VAW/C prevention in 2016. Raising Voices co-authored 8 papers and first authored 2 in peer-review journals (1 still under review). This continued presence in academic literature is an important strategy to ensure that feminist, practice-informed approaches are visible in the literature. Further, Raising Voices' work was highlighted in more than 10 global publications including the WHO's 7 strategies for preventing violence against children, USAID's AIDS Free Technical Brief on community platforms for addressing gender norms, and DFID's Guidance Note on changing social norms, among others.

Staff also presented Raising Voices programming and perspectives in global events focused on VAW/C prevention in 2016 including the Commission on the Status of Women, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and GENDERNET's Biannual Conference, KnowViolence, the Violence Prevention Alliance and AusAid and UN Women's Violence Prevention in the South Pacific Conference and as key note speaker at the National Clearinghouse on Domestic Violence in New Zealand. Through these forums, Raising Voices is able to advocate for quality VAW/C prevention and a feminist frame for violence against women efforts. Finally, we were thrilled to add our voices to the African Feminist Forum, the Black Feminist Forum and the AWID Forum – all energizing activist spaces!

Shaping global priorities through strategic partnerships:

Raising Voices engaged with various partners in 2016 to further our influencing goals. Critical among these were:

- **The Coalition of Feminists for Social Change (COFEM).** This group was formed after a convening meeting in New York in March 2016 where along with a small group of 15 women's rights activists, academics and practitioners discussed and analyzed shared concerns in working on women's equality, empowerment, and safety. Through this initiative, two critical analysis papers were developed and disseminated looking at the causes and implications of shrinking humanitarian and development space for programming focusing on women and girls. Our involvement with COFEM will continue in 2017.

- **Communities of Practice.** Raising Voices collaborated with key partners to conceptualize two global influencing communities of practice/reference groups in 2016. The VAC prevention team, in collaboration with Apolitical and a donor agency, is gathering a reference group on exploring the concept of resilience and how it could inform the work of violence prevention which will meet in Q1 of 2017. The VAW prevention team, in collaboration with the Salamander Trust is creating a community of practice called Community for Understanding Scale Up (CUSP) that focuses on what it takes to meaningfully take social norm change approaches to scale.
- **International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).** The multi-year partnership with ICRW switched gears this year from our organization-wide monitoring and evaluation framework to collaboration on a publication about scale, *Revising the Script: Taking community mobilization to scale for gender equality*. This publication, which features several groups engaged in scaling up their approaches tied in well to our internal processes to deepening our thinking and clarifying our analysis on what it means to do more complex social justice work at scale.

Challenges & Strategic Directions for 2017

Increase leadership in Influencing. The Influencing area of work at Raising Voices remains the most uneven. There are strong directions for the VAC national level advocacy in Uganda, clear strategic priorities and programming at the regional level through the vibrant GBV Prevention Network and considerable engagement with the broader fields of VAW and VAC prevention globally. Yet these efforts at a global level remain more reactive than proactive and at times although we are participating in important global events and processes, we lag behind in organizing, planning and leading strategic engagements.

Influencing work by its nature can be reactive – events happen, dialogues unfold, invitations emerge – this can add strength and dynamism to our work. Yet often when the influx is so large, one can forget the importance of proactive, organization-led influencing. This year, Raising Voices took some steps to strengthen our forward thinking with our leadership in the communities of practice as well as around scale. For example, with scale, our considerable experience in this is recognized by many partners and colleagues in the field and this year, we were invited to several important meetings on the issue—yet our own internal thinking was still scattered and not formally articulated. To rectify this, our internal working group (see Learning, pg 20) distilled a key set of talking points based on Raising Voices experiences and approach to scale. This made our engagement in other processes more impactful. It also inspired the development of new initiatives where Raising Voices will play an active leadership role in convening, shaping and contributing to global discourse on scaling social change creating programs.

- **New Direction for 2017:** Take greater leadership in more of the influencing pieces of work while remaining responsive to opportunities. For example, Raising Voices will proactively co-convene the CUSP group, submit ideas for workshops and panels at SVRI, and publish at least 2 papers that define Raising Voices' thinking about critical VAWC prevention issues.

Disseminating our Learning from Practice papers and other learning outputs. Over the past several years, Raising Voices has invested substantial time and effort in developing both academic and activist publications. However dissemination has been largely ad hoc, and it remains to be seen how much real visibility these efforts will attract, and the extent to which they lead to real influence on programming and policy decisions.

- **New Direction for 2017:** Strengthen our dissemination strategy in order to undertake an honest assessment at the end of the 2017, carefully weighing the rewards and trade-offs. Towards this end, we have added a new aspect to our partnership with ICRW to become more focused about our audiences and identify creative outlets to reach them effectively.

Other Influencing priorities for 2017 include:

- A focus on strengthening a feminist analysis on VAW and building solidarity within the GBV Prevention Network through collaboration with others working on movement building.
- Collaboration with leading activists to co-host high level in-country forums on VAW prevention.

Influencing milestones in 2016: achievements in numbers

64

advocacy events where Raising Voices presented or participated to impact thought and practice on VAW/C prevention

1,605

schools integrating ideas from the *Toolkit* into music, dance and drama lessons through the Ministry of Education and Sports

320

activists applied for and received regional 16 Days Action and Advocacy Kits, up from 152 in 2015

637,000

Twitter engagements from the GBV Prevention Network social media efforts

740

teachers in Uganda engaged via SMS campaigns

12

sister pairs from the GBV Prevention Network's Sister-to-Sister initiative

10

key publications written and disseminated on VAW/C prevention

5

strategic document reviews to shape existing guidance in the field



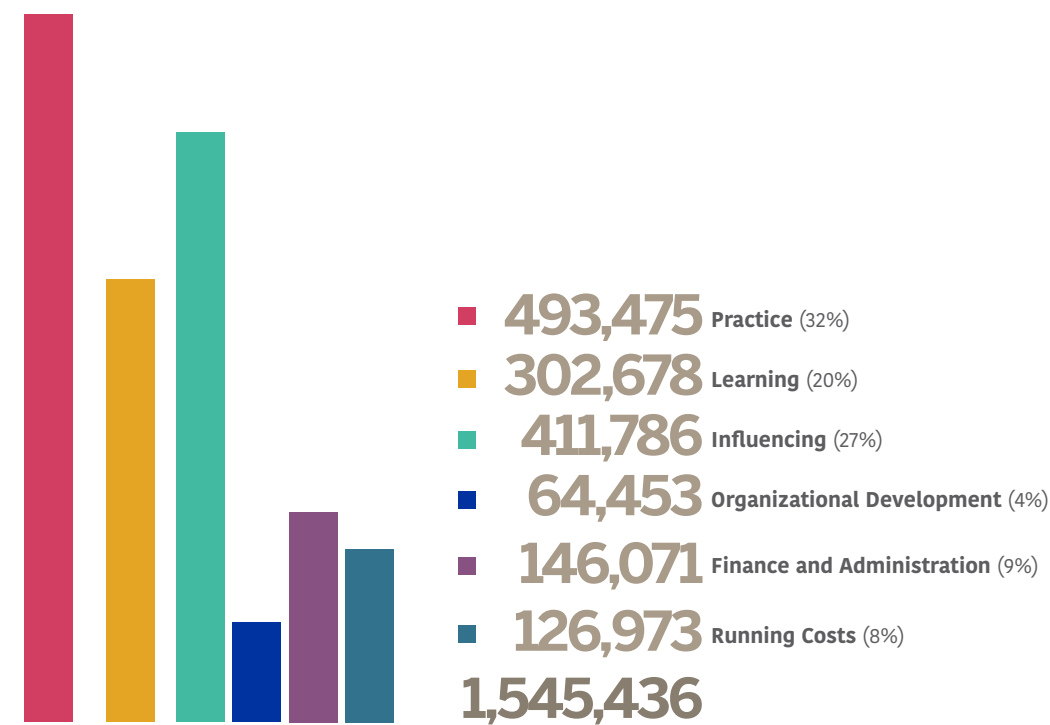


2016 was busy year for the Finance and Administration team. It involved breaking new ground as Raising Voices embarked on a journey to strengthen its systems and procedures. Some of the major highlights of the year are:

- **Updating our policies:** this involved review, update and enactment of the Procurement and Human Resource manuals, as well as various forms and guidelines. Review of the Finance and Accounting Manual was also initiated and this will be concluded in 2017.
- **Refining our systems and procedures:** This year we reviewed the various work processes, tools, and associated documentation. The result was an improved work flow and streamlined and simplified documentation. We procured a more sophisticated accounting software which is expected to ease and expedite the accounting processes including integration of payroll function. We reviewed our chart of accounts and developed a new one that will be used with effect from January 2017. It will make budgeting and reporting on expenditure much more streamlined. We also conducted a prequalification exercise aimed at reducing administrative processes.
- **Improving our infrastructure:** To maintain a working environment conducive to creative thinking, productivity and staff wellbeing, we renovated the server room, stores, the roof, meeting spaces, and general repainting of Raising Voices premises. In addition, we procured a new standby power generator to replace the old one which was extremely noisy and not generating enough power to service all equipment. The new set is much more silent and generates enough power for the office complex.
- **Growing our team:** As part of our ongoing organizational development, we reviewed our structure and established the need for a senior HR and Admin Officer. This position is expected to strengthen the HR and Admin functions in the organization. Recruitment was conducted in the last quarter of 2016 and the selected candidate is expected to start work in April 2017.
- **Supporting project management:** We successfully closed the DFID project, and launched the United Nations Trust Fund project, as well as continued to support ongoing programs to ensure optimum performance.

In terms of funding, a total of US\$ 2,725,465 was available to Raising Voices in the course of the year of which US\$ 1,545,436 was expended in 2016.

The infographic below provides a breakdown of how the expenditure was distributed.



A balance of **US\$ 1,180,029** was carried forward into 2017 for purposes of implementing the activities that crossed over from 2016.

This was a demanding year that brought to the forefront some of the places where we need to strengthen our management systems. The new Accounting software will go a long way to ease this exercise. It also brought to the forefront the need to clearly spell out for ourselves the implication of our rhetoric; where exactly do we draw the line between being vigorously transparent and accountable and yet remaining versatile and not weighed down by bureaucracy, as a mid-sized organization.

Finance and Admin priorities for 2017 are:

- Deploy the new accounting software in order to improve the financial management and reporting functions.
- Complete the review of the Finance Manual and have it adopted.
- Review the Board Manual and other key policies and guidelines.
- Migrate to Office 365 in order to streamline the organization's IT systems.
- Orient the new Senior Admin and Human Resources Manager.



REFLECTIONS



Autonomy is essential

A substantial portion of Raising Voices' emotional and practical energy was consumed in managing the withdrawal from the Girls Education Challenge collaboration in 2016. This process was painful in many aspects: from the financial loss, the discussions with partners, the uncertainty of the future of the Good School program, and the energy it took to gracefully manage a complex situation that felt unjust. It was not an easy process or year. Yet emerging from it we feel proud that we prioritized our autonomy and remained faithful to our values. A strong lesson was learned for the future – that for Raising Voices, our ability to make decisions in the best interest of the work we envision – is what defines us as an organization. Without the autonomy to be responsive, agile and actually live our values (as opposed to just having them hang on our walls) we would lose the core of who we are. We begin 2017 with clarity of purpose and principles and feel evermore committed to them.

Remembering our whole selves

Working for social justice is a personal commitment. Most of us at Raising Voices see our work as more than a 9am-5pm job. We see it as a way to express our personal beliefs and as a platform for our own activism. This can come at a cost as often the work is prioritized over oneself and over time, this can deplete energy, personal resources and one's well-being. With the support of our funders and our Board of Directors, the Co-Directors each took a (staggered) sabbatical in 2016. This benefit of a sabbatical is now available to all staff who have been with Raising Voices for 7 years or longer and meet the criteria set out in the policy. Rather than just talking about self-care, we aim to enable this for dedicated, long-term staff.

Balancing strength with versatility

In 2016 we undertook a substantial revision of our finance, admin and human resource policies and procedures. While Raising Voices has received clean audits since our inception, there were areas in which we could bring our procedures more in line with international standards and closing some loopholes and areas of weakness. This process is ongoing. It is challenging for staff who need to learn and follow new procedures, and also for Raising Voices as an organization to figure out the happy medium of meeting good practice while remaining flexible and non-bureaucratic. The management team and senior staff are actively engaged in identifying a sweet spot in 2017, a middle ground that enables us to be versatile yet also accountable.



Final Word

In the preceding pages we have presented details of our key achievements and some of the challenges we faced en-route. As we reflect back on the year, the entire team feels proud of what we were able to achieve and inspired by that realization.

It speaks to our resilience and single minded commitment to achieve the goals outlined on our overall vision. We are not naïve about challenges facing us in the uncertain reality of 2017, with its radically transformed global priorities and larger forces being unleashed at societal level. However in our corner of this global landscape, we remain clear about one thing: now is not the time to slow down or lose focus. In fact we are convinced that it is time to double-down on our commitment. That is the guiding thought and the resolve with which we emerge into 2017.

With warmest appreciation to . . .

All the women and children, schools and communities, we seek to serve.

All of our partner organizations (too many to name here!)

Our Board of Directors

Our funding partners:

American Jewish World Service, An Anonymous Donor,

Foundation for a Just Society, Hivos,

Irish Aid, NoVo Foundation, Oak Foundation

Sexual Violence Research Initiative / Medical Research Foundation (South Africa),

Sigrid Rausing Trust, Stephen Lewis Foundation,

United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women



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