



**Children's Rights and
Violence Prevention Fund**

Ending Violence, Building Power



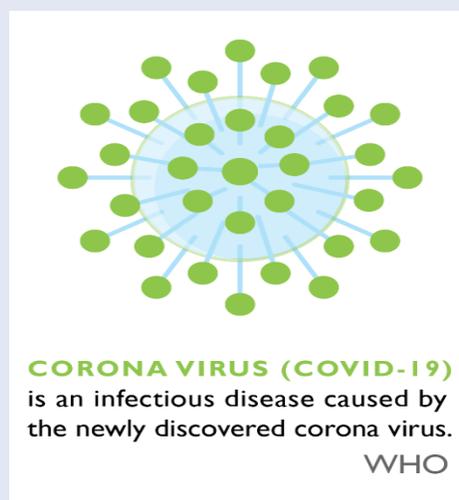
COVID-19 SURVEY REPORT SUMMARY

June 2020

Children's Rights and Violence Prevention Fund (CRVPF) The impact of COVID-19 on Community Organizations and local NGOs

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

COVID-19 has affected every aspect of life around the globe, from individual relationships to institutional operations and international collaborations. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Coronavirus (COVID-19) an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Since its outbreak, COVID-19 has disrupted global, social, economic, and political life. The preventive measures taken by national governments have affected many organizations that were not prepared for restrictions on movement and meetings including school closures, lockdowns, and cancelation of physical group interactions.



CRVPF previously developed WhatsApp groups for the two program partners and maintain communications. Using WhatsApp, CRVPF conducted a rapid assessment to understand the impact of COVID-19 on our partners especially the work with cluster members, and their work with children/Adolescent girls, families, and communities. The rapid assessment results revealed several partners'

challenges. Which included limited access to information, increased violence, and misconception of COVID 19.

- ❖ CRVPF conducted the survey from April 15-May 20, 2020 in the four countries (Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Kenya). A semi-structured questionnaire with open-ended questions was designed and shared online using Google Docs.
- ❖ The survey used a qualitative approach which required respondents to explain the situation of COVID19 in their communities and the effect on children and adolescent girls and their families.

II. TARGET POPULATION:

The target respondents included 71 CRVPF partners working directly with children, adolescent girls, parents, community leaders. Partners made calls to the respondents and recorded the responses which they later transcribed and sent online for analysis.

III. SAMPLE SIZE:

All partner organizations were considered as respondents whereby each organization would be represented by one staff preferably the Executive Director. Each organization would then identify at least, 3 children and adolescents, 3 parents, and 3 community leaders. At the end of the survey, 68 partners (Community Organizations and Local NGO's) have responded to the survey.

	Partner Organisations	Parents	Children/A dolescents	Community Leaders
Sample Size	74	222	222	222
Response Rate	85%	85%	88%	85%

IV. KEY FINDING OF THE SURVEY:

Partner's response:

- ❖ Partners informed difficulties working from home due to lack of laptops, internet connections and limited airtime for WhatsApp use. Despite the challenges cluster partners continue weekly communication and planning.
- ❖ Partners are worried that there may be less funding for civil society sector as the global economy shrinks and government more focuses on COVID-19 prevention work
- ❖ Partners informed many of their staff are community volunteers due to lack of program implementations they are not active. Some are engaged in other activities and may not return to work when the program operation resume.
- ❖ Partners and families indicated the increase on domestic work, child labor, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, child marriage and, child trafficking since many government structures and community formal leaders' focus, are on COVID-19 prevention work.
- ❖ The increased vulnerabilities of children, adolescent girls, boys, their families may be different from the situation before COVID-19. Partners worried that the new realities could be increase household poverty, more children exposed to domestic work, working on the streets, and even involved in sexual exploitation and child marriages. Partners indicated they may need different strategies from previous program interventions.
- ❖ Many partners from the four countries indicated their concern that a large number of children and adolescent girls may not return to school as a result of family poverty. They may choose to continue working in different informal income-generating activities to support their families.
- ❖ There is an increased reporting on child sexual abuse by family members, relatives, and neighbors during the lockdown in the four countries. The perpetrators use the opportunities that the police and community formal leaders more focuses on the implementation of government COVID-19 prevention measures.

Children and Adolescent girls Voice:

- ❖ A total 198 children and adolescent girls are interviewed and 89% indicated that they know children and adolescent girls exposed to verbal and physical abuse, engaged in domestic and street work involved in sexual exploitation, and forced into child marriage.
- ❖ Children indicated parents should provide time and space for children and adolescent girls to talk and listen to their concerns and ideas. Parents should be transparent and share their challenges openly instead of resorting to verbal, or physical abuse.
- ❖ Some children and adolescent girls indicated school closures enabled parents and children to have time and space to work together. Parental support children's increases during the lockdown.
- ❖ However, several children and families indicated the lack of space and privacy, and lack of money to purchase food and essential materials has increased stress leading to violence against women/wife, children, and adolescent girls.
- ❖ Staying home means children witness more of their parents' arguments which has increased due to household incomes reduction especially for daily income earners; most of the children witnessing conflicts within their own families due to small arguments on how to sustain the family.

My parents are very harsh; they yell all the time at us or to each other; I am very tired of listening to them. When I want to study my mother or father will give me work to do so I don't study and we get tired with water and firewood fetching. Boys are not doing this work."

CHILD/ADOLESCENTGIRL(KENYA)

- ❖ Children and adolescent girls indicated the need for "safe spaces" to have their places to share their issues in a safe environment and develop confidence. This process will assist in the long term to improve their involvement in public life as well.
- ❖ Children and adolescent girls indicated the importance of working with boys and men and ensure their support and collaboration to reduce violence, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation of children and adolescent girls.

"Boys are moving around the village and they at times attack us when sent to shop or walk with friends."

-ADOLESCENT GIRL (KENYA)

- ❖ Provide life skills training for adolescent girls and boys to empower and build their agencies and earning capacities.
- ❖ Children and adolescent girls indicated partners should work closely with schools and community formal and informal leaders to ensure children and adolescent girls returned to schools when schools open.
- ❖ Adolescent girls and boys who are not returning to schools and interested in work need to be supported by connecting them to private business owners and provide loans to start businesses individually or in groups.

- ❖ Governments, religious leaders, and community formal and informal leaders should intervene on issues of child marriage and allow pregnant girls to return to school after giving birth.

Voices of Community Leaders:

- ❖ Awareness raising on all forms of violence amongst the community members. According to a community leader in Kigamboni, *“The solution is for the organizations dealing with prevention of violence to collaborate with the government on providing education to the community members but also to implement family economic empowerment programs.”*
- ❖ Community leaders indicated many families are on the verge of starvation and advice partners to provide temporary cash or food support, hygiene products like masks, sanitizers, soap, and water to relieve the community and family financial burden.

“Many children are employed in domestic work to earn a living and to support their families.”

-ILEMELA COMMUNITY LEADER

(TANZANIA)

“Most boys and girls are engaged in child labor to earn money and others engages in risky behaviors like using drugs and alcohol.”

-COMMUNITY LEADERS (UGANDA)

- ❖ Girls should be enabled to obtain essential menstrual hygiene management products.
- ❖ Organize media campaigns emphasizing on good parenting, handling emotions, kitchen gardening, and savings
- ❖ Economic strengthening programs aimed at empowering youth and women which should include financial support like low-interest loans, and building capacity of the local income-generating structures e.g. SACCOs, VSLAs, etc.
- ❖ Community organizations and local NGOs to organize radio programs to raise awareness among children and parents to improve familial relationships and on the importance of sending children to schools.

V. PROPOSED INTERVENTION AREAS:

Children's Rights and Violence Prevention Fund (CRVPF) proposed the following immediate, intermediate and long term strategic interventions areas to build partners resilience to cope the challenges and respond to children, adolescent girls, and boy's needs, and support their families. The proposed strategies require further discussions with different stakeholders and required to strategically merge with the four years strategic plan. As indicated by partners understanding the increasing vulnerabilities of children, adolescent girls, boys, families, and developing appropriate strategies to understand the new normal/ realities is crucial.

Immediate strategies:

- ❖ Building partner's resilience to cope with the challenges of COVID-19 and continue the provision of services to children, adolescent girls, boys, and their families.
- ❖ Encourage partners to use community media and other media outlets and organize programs for children parents on, 1) The importance good parenting to improve child/parents relationship and reduce tensions 2) discuss violence prevention strategies at household and community levels and 3) discuss the importance of education and encouraging children and adolescent girls to return to schools to ensure their future development and preventing abuse and exploitation.
- ❖ Support the existing community formal structures to focus on children's and adolescent girls' and boy's safety in addition to managing the COVID-19 prevention measures.
- ❖ Partners engage in community media and public announcements and target families, communities, and formal structures to follow reported abuse cases and apprehend perpetrators by ensuring children anonymity.
- ❖ Partners to develop child, adolescent girls, and boy's friendly leaflets, and posters that indicate how and where to report abuse cases.
- ❖ Encourage partners to monitor children, adolescent girls, and boys statues in the community using (trained girls and boys) volunteers and document the information for further action.

Intermediate Strategies:

- ❖ Support partner's to, Work with schools, community formal leaders and children, adolescent girls, and boy's families and ensure their return to school when school opens.
- ❖ Continue their safe school program by establishing children's clubs to ensure the safeguarding of children and adolescent girls and boys. CRVPF safe school program focuses on the provision of quality education in a safe and violence-free environment by working with teachers, school administrators, children, and families.
- ❖ Develop strategies to support boys and girls not returned to school by contacting business owners to facilitate employment opportunities and working closely with Saving and Credit Cooperatives to ensure the availability of loans to develop their own business.

- ❖ Work with community formal leaders, social workers, community police to ensure prevention of violence against children, adolescent girls, and boys are prioritized as other community activities.
- ❖ Develop strategic collaboration with the child and community-focused research institution/s and support research to understand the vulnerabilities of children, adolescent girls, boys, and their families. The COVID-19 pandemic prevention measures such as lockdown, school closures, and other measures increase the vulnerabilities of children and their families and it's important to understand these new realities.

Long Term Strategies:

- ❖ CRVPF plans to review its four-year strategic plan and safeguarding policies and encourage partners to do the same to address the new normal/ realities of children, adolescent girls, boys, and their families.
- ❖ Focus on capacity development of community partners to ensure effective strategies that respond to the new normal/realities of children, adolescent girls, boys, and their families developed.
- ❖ Develop a partnership with the regional and global child and youth-focused organizations and share experiences on the role of civil society organizations and the required strategic shifts to address the vulnerabilities of children, adolescent girls, boys, and their families.
- ❖ Engage partner's leaders to work with community stakeholders and develop community movement to ensure children's, adolescent girls' and boys' rights and participation on issues affecting their lives. According to UNICEF, not enough children and young people are allowed to contribute to the work that directly affects them. This is a lost opportunity for them and their societies, particularly if we consider that half the population of the world's low-income countries are under the age of 18.
- ❖ Our experience working with community organizations and local NGOs indicated the need to work with children and young people because they are important community stakeholders, with specific views and needs. If we fail to do this, our projects will fail: 'there is a powerful body of evidence showing how prevailing attitudes towards children, based on the view that adults both know best and will act in their best interest, have failed many children.