This Newsletter highlights recent developments in the UN Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Children. As the Study moves into the second and final year of the process, the emphasis is on building the momentum and strengthening coalitions in the lead up to the release of the final report during the General Assembly, 2006, in New York. The previous newsletter (see website http://www.violencestudy.org/IMG/pdf/2nd_Newsletter_European_format.pdf) highlighted partner plans and activities of 2005 and beyond. The focus of this Newsletter is on activities, commitments and priorities of the three UN supporting agencies of the Study: OHCHR, UNICEF, and WHO.

The Newsletter is distributed widely and also available on the Study web-site (www.violencestudy.org). If you would like to add an address to the distribution list send an email to: secretariat@sgsvac.org.

NEWSLETTER

NEWSFLASH FROM THE STUDY SECRETARIAT

⇒ Launch of Study Report at the GA 2006
The Secretariat awaits confirmation of exact dates, but the launch is confirmed for the 2006 session of the General Assembly. The communications strategy envisages events in multiple sites across the regions, and involving all partners. Further information will follow soon…

⇒ Regional follow-up meetings in 2006 – are planned by most regions to focus on implementing follow up actions, and to provide feedback on the draft recommendations of the Study Report.

⇒ National launches of the Study Report – following the international launch of the Study Report at the end of 2006, the independent expert is encouraging all countries to conduct local launches to reflect the priorities of the Study report through highlighting local plans and responses. UN and NGO partners are invited to support governments in this process.

⇒ Follow-up children’s meeting, planned for New York, May 2006 – The purpose of this small meeting is: (i) to review the draft Study recommendations; (ii) to consult children on the format for the child-friendly version of the Study Report; and (iii) to meet with Missions in New York and discuss key issues reflected in the Study Report.

⇒ First Inter-Agency Group Meeting on VAC, New York, March 2006, convened by UNICEF – to bring together key UN partners to provide feedback on the draft recommendations, to review the communications plan for the launch of the Study, and to facilitate coordination of follow up actions.

⇒ 125 government questionnaires received (see website http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/study.htm) – a summary of questionnaires received will be provided during the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva early in 2006.

For further information on these and other items, please see the website: www.violencestudy.org

Highlights from the three core supporting agencies: OHCHR, UNICEF, and WHO follow...

OHCHR

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has demonstrated strong commitment to the Study throughout and has provided very specific support and guidance on the implementation of human rights standards for children. Some of the key activities in support of the Study include:

The Committee on the Rights of the Child
A central platform for the work of OHCHR on protecting children from violence continues to be the important

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achievements of the Committee. Working in two chambers of nine members since January 2006, the Committee continues to highlight the global issue of violence against children in its review of the reports of the States parties to the Convention and the Optional Protocols. It also continues to provide guidance on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention through its General Comments. The Committee’s work on specific thematic issues, such as juvenile justice and corporal punishment, progressed considerably during the 41st session in January 2006. A General Comment on corporal punishment is being prepared and is expected to be presented at the 42nd session of the Committee in May-June 2006.

The Committee has also initiated a series of workshops to follow up on concluding observations. For example, the very successful follow-up workshop in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 28 to 30 November 2005, involved over 150 people from ten South American countries, including Government representatives, members of parliaments, national human rights institutions, international and grass-root NGOs, journalists, UN agencies, and UN experts. The recommendations adopted at the end of the seminar reflect the discussions that took place in the five working groups. The working group on violence, led by Prof. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, recommended, among other issues, the establishment of coordination mechanisms in the preparation and elaboration of the Study on Violence Against Children and the Study on Violence Against Women. For further information, please see OHCHR’s web site at http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/index.htm.

The Committee holds a Day of General Discussion each year. The focus for 2005 was on children without parental care and the recommendations from this very well attended event included an emphasis on the importance of following up on the recommendations of the Study on Violence Against Children. The next Day of General Discussion focuses on one of the general principles of the Convention, “The Right of the Child to be Heard”. This Day of General Discussion will be held in Geneva on 15 September 2006 in anticipation of a General comment from the Committee on this topic in early 2007. A tentative programme and an outline will be posted on OHCHR’s web site at http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/index.htm soon.

Looking ahead

In April 2006, an Expert meeting on “mechanisms” convened by OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), in collaboration with the Council of Europe, will focus on mechanisms to address violence against children and violence against women. Further information on this meeting will be posted on the OHCHR website (http://www.ohchr.org).

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UNICEF Headquarters and its Regional and Country Offices have been fully engaged and actively supporting the Study process. This support has taken many forms, including the organization of nine regional consultations, several national consultations and facilitating field visits. UNICEF is also represented on the Study’s Editorial Board. UNICEF’s Regional Office in Eastern and Southern Africa led the drafting of inputs on violence in schools for the Study. Expert meetings were convened in Nairobi and Tunis, bringing together academics, representatives from NGOs and UN agencies, including UNESCO.

For 2006, UNICEF will support a follow up meeting in May in collaboration with Save the Children, where children will review the Study’s recommendations and consider the format for the child-friendly version of the Study Report. UNICEF will also organize the first inter-agency meeting on violence against children and its follow-up where plans for the release of the Report in the regions and countries will also be discussed. UNICEF’s Executive Director, Ms. Ann Veneman, has asked all UNICEF Regional Directors for regular updates about activities in connection with the Study.

As the Study has found, there is an overall lack of data for most forms of violence against children. UNICEF has been working with partners such as the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN— http://www.ispcan.org) to develop research and measurement tools on violence against children. This includes the development of a Participatory Assessment Tool designed for non specialists using participative techniques like story telling, body mapping, focus group discussions, and role plays. The tool enables the user to gather information from children about the incidence of violence in their lives and to discuss alternatives and coping mechanisms.

At the same time, global core indicators on Violence against Children at Home and in Schools (http://www.childrensociety.org.sg/downloadpapers/papersfiles/Balagopal,%20Gopalan%20AND%20Engelhardt,%20Kay.pdf) were developed. The process included extensive desk research, the presentation at various international congresses - including the ISPCAN World Congresses in Brisbane and Singapore - and Regional Consultations of the Violence Study, as well as discussions with UNICEF child protection officers in various regions. The indicators will be field-tested in 2006, and the research tools published prior to the presentation of the Study to the General Assembly as part of the efforts to improve data collection in the future.

UNICEF and the Body Shop International are engaged in a new partnership to highlight the impact of domestic violence on children. This partnership is part of the Body Shop’s global ‘Stop Violence in the Home’ campaign and part of UNICEF’s broader work in support of the UN study which will include advocacy efforts from UNICEF’s
WHO's violence prevention activities focus upon supporting the establishment of national and regional policies, systems, programmes and services to prevent violence and address its root causes, and to provide quality care to victims of violence. Within this framework WHO provides technical guidance and support specific to a range of types of violence against children. These activities are structured around the nine recommendations of the World Report on Violence and Health, which inform the World Health Assembly Resolution 56.24 on the prevention of violence and a number of other global and regional policy documents. The World Report on Violence and Health has provided the Study with a strong model, and the experience of WHO in producing their reports has been invaluable to the overall Study process.

Recent WHO activities

A historic discussion on violence and injury prevention took place in the context of the 55th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (http://www.euro.who.int/RC), the annual meeting of European Ministers of Health, in Bucharest from 12-15 September 2005. Delegates from many Member States emphasized their strong support for elevating the profile of violence and injury prevention in the region, and endorsed resolution EUR/RC55/R9 on the topic.

On 19 October 2005, WHO and the California Wellness Foundation co-hosted the Second Milestones in a Global Campaign on Violence Prevention Meeting (http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/events/19_10_2005/en/index.html) in San Francisco, USA. The meeting aimed at describing country-level achievements in the implementation of the recommendations of the World Report on Violence and Health (WRVH) and planning next steps.

In November 2005 WHO launched the WHO Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence (http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/en/index.html). The report includes data from interviews with 24,000 women in ten countries. The report shows that violence against women, including sexual abuse of girls, is widespread with far-reaching health consequences for their children also.


Future directions

WHO will continue to focus upon increasing the number of countries that are implementing the WRVH recommendations, and on providing ongoing support for model violence prevention programmes. The UN Study on Violence against Children is a key element which complements the work of WHO in this area. WHO violence prevention activities include: (a) Enhancing capacity for collecting data on violence; (b) Research on causes, consequences, costs and prevention of violence; (c) Promoting primary prevention; (d) Strengthening services for victims of violence; and (e) National plans of action.

Looking ahead

WHO’s document Preventing HIV/AIDS/STI and Related Discrimination: An Important Responsibility of a Health-Promoting School has been updated and will be available in the first quarter of 2006.

The series of World Conferences on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion has become a major scientific platform for building the global violence and injury prevention field. It is timely and appropriate that the 8th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion takes place in Africa, where rates of injury related deaths and disability are particularly high. This Conference will be the opportunity to strengthen research and data collection, prevention, policy making and advocacy. It will be the opportunity to organize the First Global Meeting of Ministry of Health Focal Points for Injuries and Violence Prevention (http://www.safety2006.info/). The conference patron is Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the conference takes place from 2-5 April 2006 in Durban, South Africa.

During the meeting of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) in York (UK), WHO and ISPCAN will launch a joint publication provisionally titled “Preventing child maltreatment by parents and caregivers: a framework for evidence-generating action” (September 2006).
Calendar 2006-2007
N.B. Events and dates are subject to change
The Secretariat welcomes any new information on events planned for 2006-2007

January 2006
9-27  41st Session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Geneva.
23-27  20th Annual International San Diego Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment, San Diego, California, USA
24  ISPCAN Global Institute 2006, San Diego, California, USA

February 2006
2-3  International Conference on Child Rights, “Child Rights, the Role of Families and Alternative Care Policies”, Bucharest, Romania
12-16  Third International Conference on the Impact of Global Issues on Women and Children, Dhaka, Bangladesh
20  Children First: Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People Living with HIV, Workshop, Manchester, UK

March 2006
TBC  First UN inter-agency on VAC, UNICEF to convene
TBC  Keeping Children Safe Launch, Save the Children, London, UK
TBC  Study presents a Progress Report to the Commission on Human Rights
23-24  6th Editorial Board Meeting, Geneva

April 2006
TBC  OHCHR with DAW to host a meeting on mechanisms to address violence against children and violence against women

May 2006
TBC  WCRP, prepcom for faith-based organisations campaign on violence against children, Spain
7  Save the Children Alliance, Annual Meeting, Stockholm, Sweden—Prof. Pinheiro will attend
18-19  International Interdisciplinary Conference on Child Rights, at Child Rights Centre, Ghent University
TBC  CRC Committee will consider a General Comment on corporal punishment
23-25  Follow up meeting of children (New York) to work on the child-friendly version of the Study Report and provide feedback on the draft recommendations for the Study

June 2006
16  Day of the African Child

August 2006
TBC  The Body Shop and UNICEF launch campaign on the impact of domestic violence on children
25-29  World Conference of Religions for Peace World Assembly, Kyoto, Japan—Launch of faith-based organisations campaign on violence against children

September 2006
3-6  XVth ISPCAN Intl Congress, York, UK—IPU World Assembly
15  CRC Day of Discussion, (theme:The Right of the Child to be heard)

October 2006
Final Study Report to General Assembly
Multi-site launches of the Study Report and child friendly version, roll out of regional launches of the Study Report into 2007

November 2006
Nov  16 Days of Activism – focus on girls and violence
19  World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse

December 2006
10  Human Rights Day

February 2007
Roll out of national launches of the Study Report