Reducing Violence Against Children in Low Income Settings Through Economic Strengthening and Caregiver Support

BACKGROUND

Children in extreme poverty are at higher risk of violence, deprivation and stress, which can negatively impact children’s well-being and development. Conditions of extreme poverty also undermine caregivers’ ability to mitigate risk factors, while also contributing to tensions that can lead to abuse within households.

In a pilot study in Burkina Faso, 44% of children in extremely poor households reported experiencing physical abuse and 58% emotional abuse at home.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

A combination of a household economic strengthening intervention and caregiver support consisting of sensitization and coaching on child well-being led to a number of positive outcomes for children in extremely poor households in Burkina Faso. The economic intervention served to create an enabling environment, including improved women’s empowerment and financial well-being. However, impacts on children were greater when combined with the caregiver support and sensitization component.

CAREGIVER DISCIPLINE AND ATTITUDES

In households that received the sensitization and coaching, combined with the economic intervention, caregivers reported improvements in parental attitudes, reduction in the use of harsh discipline practices, and improvement in relationships with their children.

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

With the combined intervention, children were less likely to be abused while working or performing household chores and had 58% less risk of physical or emotional violence at home.

CHILD MENTAL HEALTH

With the combined intervention, children reported lower symptoms of depression and trauma and improved self-esteem.

ISSUES ADDRESSED

VAC = Violence Against Children
VAW = Violence Against Women
MH = Mental Health
EP = Extreme Poverty

DURATION

2 years

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October 2014 – November 2016

LOCATION

Yatenga province, Burkina Faso

BENEFICIARIES


STUDY DETAILS

A three-arm cluster-randomized controlled trial with 360 households. Data collected at baseline, 12 month, and 24 months.

COST

Approximate per-household direct cost of economic strengthening intervention: US$208 for 2-year program. With addition of caregiver sensitization component: US$228

**KEY LESSONS**

- Income and economic strengthening is important to provide the conditions to address risk factors faced by children in extremely poor households. With a specific focus on child well-being, many benefits do also trickle down to children.

- The addition of a sensitization component for households significantly improved outcomes for children, and can be integrated into the economic strengthening intervention for a low cost.

- It is important to engage all household members in sensitization activities and form solidarity groups for dissemination of information and mutual support among women.

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**PROGRAM DETAILS**

Income and economic strengthening was based on the “Graduation” approach, which combines integration into savings groups, training and livelihood planning, provision of a grant of approximately US$100 to jumpstart livelihood activities, and monthly coaching for 2 years.

**Parent and caregiver support** consisted of culturally tailored, family-focused sensitization and coaching on child well-being and children’s rights for 5 months. This component was designed to address normative beliefs related to protection of children from violence and exploitation and to raise the awareness about context-specific child protection risks. The curriculum was developed by the Burkina Faso Ministry of Social Action.

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**PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH**


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**KEY PARTIES**

**ORGANISATION**

- Trickle Up - West Africa
- Aide aux Enfants et aux Familles Démunies, Burkina Faso
- University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration, USA
- The University of California, Los Angeles Luskin School of Public Affairs, USA
- Scientific Committee of the Burkina Faso Program Learning Group on Child Protection

**ROLE**

- Local coordinator
- Local implementing partner
- Researchers
- Researchers
- Strategic advisor
- Technical advisor

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**CONTACT**

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**The results are a source of inspiration for those involved in promoting and protecting children’s rights.**

Yvette Dembélé
State Secretary for Social Affairs, Disability and Inclusion, representing the Minister for Women, National Solidarity and the Family.