TOR for the CSO Forum to End Violence Against Children
Draft revision 2020.v2

Name
Civil Society Forum to End Violence Against Children

Purpose
The CSO Forum convenes a diverse and open group of member organizations\(^1\) to facilitate inclusive and effective CSO engagement to end violence against children, with its main focus at the global level\(^2\).

Background
In 2015, world leaders made a commitment to end all forms of violence against children by 2030, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The commitments outlined in SDG 16.2 and related goals and targets present a historic opportunity to unite the world behind a global, national and local movement to promote and uphold the right of children to live free from violence. This commitment built on the important foundations created by the 2005 World Report on Violence Against Children and the subsequent mandating of the role of a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence Against Children.

CSOs joined with UNICEF, WHO and others to establish the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (henceforward ‘End Violence’) to support and encourage governments and others to achieve this ambitious commitment. As in many similar partnerships, a CSO Forum was then established to coordinate collective and coordinated CSO engagement in the various activities of the partnership, including its governance. Since its establishment the CSO Forum has widened its remit to include engagement with other global bodies such as the SRSG VAC as well as other global processes such as the High Level Political Forum.

As a sector, Civil Society Organizations play a crucial role in efforts to end violence against children. In the most challenging contexts – such as in conflict or after natural disasters - civil society organizations are present on the ground able to ensure a continuum of care by offering children protection from violence. Around the world, civil society organizations fill gaps in the support offered to children affected by violence in the home, school, workplace and institutions. They develop, adapt and establish effective evidence-based approaches to solving complex problems in ending violence against children. Through collective advocacy and campaigning CSOs help shape national policy and public opinion around particular issues affecting children’s rights to protection. CSO support and often partner with governments to innovate and to be more accountable for their efforts to protect children from violence. CSOs bring experience in empowering citizens to understand their rights and hold their governments

\(^1\) CSO member organizations include [add updated list](2020).
\(^2\) Insert UNICEF definition
to account and have special experience in supporting the inclusive and meaningful participation of children.

**Added Value of the CSO Forum**

The CSO Forum exists to maximize the influence and impact of the CSO community on global efforts to end violence against children, with a particular focus on the achievement of SDG target 16.2. It does this by leveraging the collective voice of CSOs in advocacy, policy dialogue and knowledge sharing at the global level. This includes acting as the principal CSO contact point with the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children [‘End Violence’] in support of coordinated and effective CSO engagement with the partnership.\(^3\)

**Goals of the CSO Forum**

- To promote awareness and use of the knowledge, skills and experience of CSOs as a key constituency in efforts to end violence against children
- To carry out collective CSO advocacy, policy research and other actions to highlight solutions and address gaps in ending violence against children\(^4\), including the importance of support to children’s own engagement in achieving this goal.
- To facilitate a broad based, inclusive, effective and coordinated engagement from civil society in the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.
  - To ensure an effective CSO voice in the governance and decision-making of End Violence
  - To promote national level CSO engagement in End Violence’s Pathfinding countries
  - To contribute to building an evidence base on effective strategies and interventions to end violence against children
- To engage with, and influence, other key actors working at the global level to end violence against children (e.g. the UN SRSG on VAC, WHO, UN permanent missions, UN General Assembly, and UNICEF) by coordinating and promoting CSO perspectives

**Key values**

The CSO Forum is:

- Respectful - valuing of CSO diversity in size, capacity and reach and support equal opportunities of engagement.
- Representative – of geographies, CSO diversity, specific issues, and the interests of other sectors in violence against children.
- Independent - from the Global Partnership and willing to speak out and use its voice and influence to help it achieve the Forum’s purpose.

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3 Note that it is not intended that the CSO Forum will be the exclusive channel to CSO engagement with the Global Partnership but will aim to facilitate and support that engagement in a coordinated way.
4 CSO Forum EVAC Strategy (2017), available in Dropbox here: [insert link]
• Transparent and accountable – ensuring that participants in the Forum are informed, clear about processes and able to hold the leadership of the Forum to account.
• Promotes meaningful and inclusive participation of children in the global, national and regional decision-making processes and efforts to end violence against children.

Working Approaches
In order to achieve its objectives the CSO Forum realizes collective efforts by various means including:
• Carrying out joint global advocacy on ending violence against children at strategic moments (e.g. the UN General Assembly’s HLPF).
• Sharing information and facilitate communication among civil society at the global, regional and national levels on the joint initiatives and opportunities presented by End Violence and other global bodies (e.g. End Violence’s Solution Summits)
• Interacting with CSO Focal Points or broad CSO groups in Pathfinding countries of End Violence to promote and accelerate coordinated CSO action at the national level to end violence against children.\(^5\)
• Promoting the meaningful and inclusive participation of children and civil society in the work of End Violence and others at national, regional and global levels.
• Facilitating the selection of, and effective support to, CSO representatives in End Violence governance structures, commenting on End Violence’s policies and plans and engage and deliver parts of End Violence’s business plan.
• Engaging in joint advocacy with End Violence, the SRSG-VAC and others on the importance of ending violence against children
• Promoting the INSPIRE strategies in global level advocacy, including through the Forum’s representative to the INSPIRE Working Group and in collaboration with the CPC Learning Network.

Activities of the CSO Forum EVAC
In recent years, the work of the CSO Forum has included:
• developing and promoting 6 advocacy asks\(^6\) to accelerate actions to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 to end violence against children
• supporting children’s participation in End Violence’s first Solution Summit
• publishing a CSO Call to Action for the Voluntary National Reviews that serve as the basis for the regular reviews of SDG progress by the high-level political forum (HLPF)
• delivering four regional capacity building webinars for CSOs on EVAC
• supporting the development of End Violence’s safeguarding policies and procedures

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\(^5\) Support to national CSO networks may also include strengthening CSO platforms; encouraging engagement in national multi-stakeholder platforms; promoting INSPIRE strategies and interventions at national level; providing guidance and templates for coordinated national level CSO advocacy; supporting engagement with global processes such as the HLPF; and participation in the Solutions Summit.

\(^6\) [insert link]
• channeling funding to support national level CSO coordination in pathfinding countries of End Violence
• partnering with End Violence to pilot CSO Focal Points in six Pathfinding Countries.
• Influencing End Violence’s country engagement strategy and Business Model Review

Please see further background in the CSO Forum EVAC Annual Reports, Strategy Paper and TORs.

Membership
The CSO Forum EVAC is growing as a broad coalition of more than 20 member organizations. Members of the CSO Forum are international, regional and national Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organisations with experience, capacity and commitment to end violence against children. Membership in the CSO Forum is voluntary and open to civil society organizations committed to working together to end violence against children. Interested organizations may contact the CSO Forum through the online form [insert link] to receive more information, indicating their interest and expected level of engagement, and to sign up to receive emails from the CSO Forum Coordinator. National CSOs may also indicate interest to be connected to the CSO group(s) active in their country working on EVAC.

Members need to be committed to:
- acting collectively with other CSOs to end violence against children, including collaboration on advocacy and other activities
- supporting the aims and objectives of End Violence and the UNSRSG VAC and seek constructive engagement in their development and delivery
- engaging their organizations in the CSO Forum at the highest possible level and committing human and financial resources and time to engage in the Partnership.

Members are also actively encouraged to become CSO members of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children [insert link].

Through its members, the CSO Forum is able to connect with more than 112 CSO contacts in more than 26 Pathfinding countries and countries in discussion. The establishment of the CSO Forum EVAC webpage on the End Violence website [insert link] and contact form [insert link] is one way in which this occurs. In total, the members of the Forum have the potential to reach

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7 This was an exceptional occurrence resulting from an unsolicited approach by a donor – the CSO Forum does not engage in fundraising activities beyond its own needs and does not have the capacity to advise or support fundraising by others.
8 The six focus Pathfinding Countries as identified by the End Violence Executive Committee November 2019 include: Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Cote d’Ivoire, Philippines, Uganda.
9 CSO Forum EVAC Strategy (2017) and CSO Forum EVAC Terms of Reference (2017) are available in Dropbox here: [insert link]
10 High, medium, and low-income countries, as well as long-term development and emergency contexts.
11 CSO Forum EVAC members are not automatically members of the GPEVAC. CSO membership in both groups is encouraged, but not required.
out to their partners, members and other civil society groups at national level, as well through the nearly 400 national offices of global INGOs.

**Tiered participation of CSO Forum members**
The CSO Forum recognizes different levels of interest and capacities of CSOs in participating in its activities. It therefore offers three levels of engagement by its members:

A. **Core engagement group:** members of this group lead conversations, generate content, plan, coordinate, and carry out activities on behalf of the CSO Forum. Each member of the core group coordinates at least one significant/priority activity per year in the agreed workplan. They take responsibility for fundraising and liaising with End Violence’s Secretariat and Governance Bodies. They coordinate the engagement with their national level counterparts. They meet regularly every two weeks.

B. **Active engagement group:** members involved in this group give feedback on what is generated by the core group, share intelligence, and support specific activities. Active engagement offers the opportunity to increase the capacity of individuals and organizations by working with colleagues at the core level on specific issues, themes, coordination, advocacy, etc. Members meet virtually on a monthly basis. They receive the notes from the meetings of the core group and a monthly written update.

C. **Light engagement group:** CSO members are interested in being informed about the activities of the CSO Forum, End Violence and other global processes and events. They are invited to regular calls on a quarterly basis and receive a monthly written update.

**Governance**
The CSO Forum has adopted a ‘light’ governance structure to enable it to devote more time and resources to its core activities. The Core Engagement Members will act as the *de facto* CSO Forum Coordinating Committee. The Core Engagement Members will have a membership between a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8. The CSO Forum Core Engagement Members will be the main interlocutors for the Global Partnership’s secretariat and Governing bodies. It will be responsible for steering the CSO Forum and engaging the broad membership in it.

The Coordinating Committee will be accountable to the overall Membership of the CSO Forum and will ensure regular communication back to all members on its work and developments with strategic partners.

Working groups may be formed by members to follow and influence specific streams of work (e.g. Solutions Summit, children’s participation, financing EVAC, etc.). Each working group will

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12 Engagement in the governance and other activities of End Violence is currently led through two representatives on the End Violence Executive Committee, one representative to the End Violence Board, a representative to the Safe to Learn Technical Group, and a representative on the INSPIRE Working Group. Going forward the Forum may also have representative(s) in working group(s) of the Office of the SRSG-VAC.
select a coordinator to connect to the overall Forum.\textsuperscript{13}

In situations where a formal decision is needed (e.g. on nominations to the End Violence Board and ExCom) each member organisation of the CSO Forum has one vote (irrespective of the number of its active participants in the Forum).

The CSO Forum adopts a yearly workplan that identifies its activity priorities and distribute roles for their implementation across its membership.

\textbf{The CSO Forum Secretariat}

Members will secure funds to sustain a secretariat function for the CSO Forum through a position to be hosted by one of the members. The secretariat will be responsible for:

- Preparing invitations, agendas and papers for meetings of the CSO Forum
- Liaising regularly with the secretariat of End Violence
- Identifying and supporting CSO Focal Points in Pathfinding Countries and communicating with national CSO platforms committed to ending violence against children
- Collecting and sharing information from and between members of the CSO Forum
- Organising the selection and/or nomination of CSO Forum representatives to End Violence governance bodies as well as their selection for other ad hoc events and processes where a CSO Forum representative has been invited

- Other?

\textsuperscript{13} For example, a member organization of the Working Group on Safe to Learn represents the CSO Forum EVAC on the Global Partnership’s Technical Group on Safe to Learn.