RESEARCH
A study on the Effects of Covid-19 on Child well-being

The AfriChild Centre is currently undertaking a study to generate empirical evidence on the effect of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of children in Uganda, with a view of informing child protection policy and practice during this and similar future pandemics. The study seeks to document the nature and perpetrators of the cases of violence against children (VAC) in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda and assess the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on children’s access to and utilization of violence against children preventive and response services in Uganda.

National Survey on Violence within the Family
The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development have invited AfriChild to play a central role in the 2020 National Survey on Violence within the Family. This survey will form a module within the Uganda National Household Survey. It presents us with an opportunity to respond to some of the gaps in the data that was collected for the VACS. The implications of this for AfriChild are the need to secure funding for this opportunity.

Strengthening Education Outcomes for Children in Uganda
AfriChild in partnership with the department of Social Work and Social Administration is designing a pilot study that is intended to improve educational outcomes for children in schools in Uganda. The pilot study seeks to identify the social emotional and mental health barriers that impede school completion and achievement for learners in Ugandan schools. We anticipate to use the ensuing evidence to develop and try models that can support school retention for children from low income families. The idea is to conduct a collaborative study that will engage all relevant stakeholders.

Evaluation of INSPIRE strategies for violence prevention
AfriChild in partnership with the Evaluation Fund to conduct an impact evaluation for the Empowering Communities to Protect Children project that is implemented by ChildFund International in Kitgum. This evaluation is part of a global effort to generate evidence that can be used to augment prevention of violence against children.

Research Fellowship with CDC and Together for Girls
AfriChild in partnership with Together for Girls is undertaking a research fellowship that focuses on strengthening individual and institutional in-country research capacity to generate and utilize evidence for policy and programming for prevention and improved response to violence against children. We hope to use this support to illuminate the drivers and protective factors for sexual violence against children in Uganda and inform specific and targeted interventions both at national and subnational levels. The research shall focus on the relationship between household economic status, sexual violence and utilization of services among adolescents aged 13 – 17 years in Uganda using the Uganda VACS data.

CHILD- GLOBAL Research Fellowship
AfriChild is on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the CHILD-GLOBAL Research Fellowship, a new training program funded by the Fogarty International Center and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development within the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The program is part of the growing research training portfolio at the International Center for Child Health and Development, at Washington University in St. Louis in the United States, in collaboration of Chair of the Department of Psychiatry in the School of Medicine at Makerere University in Uganda. This training Programme will build capacity for scholars from Uganda, to conduct research in low resource settings.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Inter-University Child Focused Research Training Program. AfriChild has embarked on the journey of recruiting the second cohort of her Interuniversity Child focused research methods training. This training brings together mid-level researchers from seven universities in Uganda including; Makerere, Kyambogo, Uganda Martyrs, Uganda Christian, Gulu, Muni and, Nsamizi Institute of Social Development who are trained in rigorous child focused research methodology. The centre finalized signing of MOUs with the listed universities, received applications and is currently selecting the candidates that will participate. This is a follow up program from the first training that the Centre successfully concluded in 2019.

Scientific Writing Workshop
In her effort to train the next generation of researchers, AfriChild is working to increase research publication of children issues. Of recent, the Centre rolled out its first scholarly writing training for the trainees of her first cohort of interuniversity research methods and Research Associates. The aim of this training is to increase well written publications and manuscripts on children issues to build the evidence base for policy and programming for their wellbeing. The first phase of this training was successful conducted via ZOOM in early September 2020 while the next phase will be in October 2020. Each trainee is expected to write a publication that will be peer reviewed.

Training of policy makers and practitioners on utilization of research evidence (PURE)
The centre is working to recruit the second cohort of its brand training (PURE). To bridge the gap between research availability and utilization, AfriChild initiated training for policy makers and programmers to utilize research evidence for improved wellbeing of children. The academia and Research institutions continually generate research; however there is a significant gap in its utilization which cripples children wellbeing. On this basis, AfriChild undertakes training of policy makers and programmers to utilize research evidence for better programming and policy making. The second cohort like the first will draw participants from different child focused Non-government organizations and government ministries including; Gender and Labour and social development, Health and education.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN
AfriChild is undertaking a media campaign to create public awareness on the risks that the current The COVID-19 situation poses towards children, as well as providing recommendations on what can be
done to mitigate these risks. Our strategy is to use mass media as a channel to disseminate findings from our research work that help reinforce messages directed towards the prevention of violence against children during this crisis. As such, we are running specific tailored messages on both TV and radio stations.

**Webinar Series**
Together with Child Protection and Care (CPC) AfriChild has organized webinar series to disseminate critical work for improving the wellbeing of children. Her first webinar titled; Violence at Home, Violence on the Streets. Who Will Protect Street Connected Children? Are We Doing Enough? was held on 21st May 2020. In July 20, the Centre had, *Building the next generation of researchers* webinar to share about her interuniversity and PURE programs. On 17th September AfriChild will have; *the missing Link Children in Residential care institution* webinar to highlight life of children in child care institutions.

**THE PREVIOUS YEAR 2019**

**RESEARCH**

**Men's Active Positive Presence in Children’s lives study**
AfriChild Centre in partnership with Heart lines Centre, South Africa conducted a formative research study to generate evidence on the nature of father involvement, the enablers and barriers to father involvement including the influence of community attitudes and beliefs around fatherhood. The findings of this study were intended for the development of edutainment messages on fatherhood and strengthening active participation of men/fathers in the lives of children. The study was conducted between June and December 2019.

**Good schools toolkit, a pilot trial in eight secondary schools**
In May 2019, the AfriChild Centre together with Raising Voices and The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine commenced the implementation of a study on the Good School Toolkit for secondary schools. The Good School Toolkit for secondary schools is a program developed by Raising Voices to improve the environment in secondary schools, prevent violence and promote young people’s wellbeing. The overall aim of this pilot trial is to determine whether progression to a phase 3 cluster randomized controlled trial to deliver the Good School Toolkit-Secondary Schools intervention to prevent violence in Kampala/Wakiso District, Uganda, is justified in terms of pre-specified acceptability and feasibility criteria.

**Randomized Control Trial (RCT) of Child Friendly Space interventions for girls and boys affected by conflict and displacement**
AfriChild continued with implementation of research on Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) in Emergencies jointly with Columbia University, (Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health, Mailman School of Public Health), World Vision International. This particular study commenced in September 2018. The RCT involves a three-armed design (basic, enhanced and waitlist/control CFS packages) provided to a
randomized set of children for each of those arms. This study is undertaken in Omugo Refugee Settlement in west Nile.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Staff capacity building
To enhance her capacity, AfriChild heavily invests in training of her staff. In 2019 April, AfriChild conducted a communication training for staff. The training was to build their capacity in dissemination of research finding using the different social media. They got firsthand knowledge and skills in communication of research finding and use of different social media including; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Canva to disseminate research findings.

Training of journalists
AfriChild is aware of the critical role media plays in covering and projecting key societal issues. AfriChild therefore undertook an initiative to train Journalist on covering and reporting children issues. We reached out to different Ugandan media houses which nominated eleven journalists whom we trained on reporting children related issues. We also provided them seed grants to develop well researched stories that stakeholders could use to increase public awareness and disseminate research findings.

Inter-University Child Focused Research Training Program.
AfriChild successfully completed the two year first Interuniversity Child focused research methods training for seven universities. This training brought together mid-level researchers from seven universities in Uganda including; Makerere, Kyambogo, Uganda Martyrs, Uganda Christian, Gulu, Muni and, Nsamizi Institute of Social Development who we re trained in rigorous child focused research methodology. The journey involved three face to face trainings hosted in Uganda Christian University, ongoing mentorship and finally the each university was given funding( seed grants) to complete a child focused study. These universities finally disseminated their work in National dissemination conference that the Centre organized May 2020.

Training of policy makers and practitioners on utilization of research evidence (PURE)
Between November 12th and 15th 2019, AfriChild hosted the second phase of her first cohort of training for policy makers and practitioners on utilizing research findings. This training brought together 35 participants selected from child focused Non-government organizations and government ministries including; Gender and Labour and social development, Health and education. They got hands on skilling in sourcing for evidence, grading of the evidence and finally knowledge on utilizing in this evidence in their work.
AfriChild in partnership with the Evaluation Fund is conducting an impact evaluation for the Empowering Communities to Protect Children project that is implemented by ChildFund International in Kitgum (Northern Uganda). This evaluation is part of a global effort to generate evidence that can be used to augment prevention of violence against children. The impact evaluation is planned to respond to asset of questions including; Does equipping child protection structures with knowledge, skills, financial and material resources on case management improve access to child protection services?; Does legislation and dissemination of relevant child protection laws lead to improved implementation and enforcement for prevention of violence against children?; Does equipping children with knowledge and skills in child protection, make them indispensable change agents for addressing violence against children? Of recent in this month of October 2020, the centre has finalized the first phase of data collection which data is being analysed. The findings from the study will be used to inform policy makers and practitioners on role of community based approaches in prevention of violence against children.