

INAUGURAL MEETING: LEARNING INITIATIVE ON NORMS, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

30 March – 1 April, 2015
Windsor, UK

Meeting Report
December 2015
Gender Violence and Health Centre
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Rebecca Meiksin, Michelle Moore, Dr. Lori Heise and Dr. Ana Maria Buller
Contact email: linea@lshtm.ac.uk



LINEA Project
LEARNING INITIATIVE ON NORMS, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

LONDON
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MEDICINE



Inaugural Meeting: Learning Initiative on Norms, Exploitation and Abuse

Meeting Report

Meeting Overview

In 2014, the Gender Violence and Health Centre at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine launched a new initiative known as LINEA—the Learning Initiative on Norms, Exploitation and Abuse. As part of this initiative, the Centre created the LINEA Network, which brings together partners working on sexual exploitation and abuse of children to investigate norms and structural factors that drive vulnerability.

The LINEA Network held its first face-to-face meeting from 30 March – 1 April 2015. Hosted at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor, UK, the meeting aimed to:

- Foster a sense of community among those working on sexual exploitation of children (SEC)
- Create an opportunity for members to network
- Provide a forum for sharing insights on preventing SEC
- Build momentum, skills and enthusiasm around primary prevention strategies.

The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss conceptual issues around different definitions of SEC and their implications for research and practice.



Agenda

Monday, 30 March 2015

Welcome, Goals of the Meeting & Introductions

(Lori Heise, LINEA Principal Investigator, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

Overview of the LINEA Project and Network

(Ana Maria Buller, LINEA Co-PI and Coordinator, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

State of the Evidence on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation of Children

(Lorraine Radford, University of Central Lancashire)

Case Studies of Research on Sexual Exploitation of Children

- Growing Up on the Streets: Girls' Experiences of Sexual Exploitation
(Lorraine van Blerk, University of Dundee)
- Learning about Children in Urban Slums: Findings from a Rapid Ethnographic Study of Two Urban Slums in Mombasa
(Kathleen Kostelny, The Columbia Group for Children in Adversity)
- 'On the Right Track': Intervention with Truck Drivers in Brazil
(Anna Flora Werneck, Childhood Brasil)

Lightening Talks: Thoughts on Prevention

- 'We Protect Children' – Programme for Child Abuse Prevention and Certification of the Institutions complying with the Standards for Child Protection
(Katarzyna Makurak, Nobody's Children Foundation)
- Thoughts on Sexual Violence Prevention from the 'Our Voices' Youth Advisors
(Claire Cody, University of Bedfordshire)
- Involvement of Young People at Risk in Prevention of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
(Maia Rusakova, Stellit)
- The C.H.I.L.D. Protection Hub for South East Europe – a Creative Hub for Interactive Learning and Development
(Sedrine Constant, Terre des Hommes)

Tuesday, 31 March 2015

Social Norm Theory and Social Change

- Overview of Norm Theory
(Lori Heise, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)
- Discriminatory Social Norms and Institutions, Adolescent Girls and Gender Justice
(Caroline Harper, Overseas Development Institute)
- Applied Examples and Deducing Norms from Qualitative Data
(Ben Cislighi, Tostan)

Transactional Sex: Boundaries between Agency and Exploitation

- Understanding and Conceptualising Transactional Sex in sub-Saharan Africa
(Kirsten Stoebenau, International Centre for Research on Women)
- Emerging Findings from Tanzania Study on Social Norms and Transactional Sex
(Joyce Wamoyi, National Medical Research Institute of Tanzania)
- Cross-generational and Transactional Sexual Relations in Uganda: Income Poverty as a Risk Factor for Adolescents
(Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo, Makerere University)

Panel: Defining Exploitation

- Defining Sexual Exploitation: The Need for Common Language
(Clara Sommarin, UNICEF)
- Competing Paradigms on the Sexual Exploitation of Children, and a Draft Conceptual Model
(Rebecca Meiksin and Ana Maria Buller, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)
- Complexities of Working with Older Adolescents
(Joanna Busza, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

Overview of Protocols for Tomorrow's Discussions

- Social Norms and Child Sexual Exploitation by Men: Protocol for Piloting an Exploratory Field Study
(Patti Petesch, Independent Researcher)
- Social Norms and Sexual Exploitation in Brazil: Draft of a Study in Four Communities in Rio
(Vanessa Fonseca and Giovanna Lauro, Promundo)

Wednesday, 1 April 2015**Competing Notions of Childhood**

(Afua Twum-Danso Imoh, Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield)

Panel on Child Domestic Labour and Sexual Exploitation

- Introduction to Vulnerabilities of Child Domestic Workers; Resilience in Child Domestic Workers Facing Sexual Exploitation
(Helen Veitch, Children Unite & Oak Foundation)
- Child Domestic Labour and Sexual Exploitation in Ethiopia: The Role of Brokers
(Hanan Nourhussein, Population Council – Ethiopia)
- Observations from the Field: Young Female Domestic Workers' Health and Wellbeing in Delhi
(Jenny Svensson, PhD candidate at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

Parallel Sessions on Methods

- **Exploring Methods to Measure/Track Social Norms**
Session leaders: Julian Barr and Emeka Nwankwo (*Voices for Change*), Nancy Glass (*Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing*)
- **Ethics in Research with Children**
Session leaders: Mark Capaldi (*ECPAT International*), Nambusi Kyegombe (*London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine*)
- **Participatory Methods for Data Collection**
Session leaders: Lorraine van Blerk (*University of Dundee*) and Helen Veitch (*Children Unite & Oak Foundation*)

Plenary

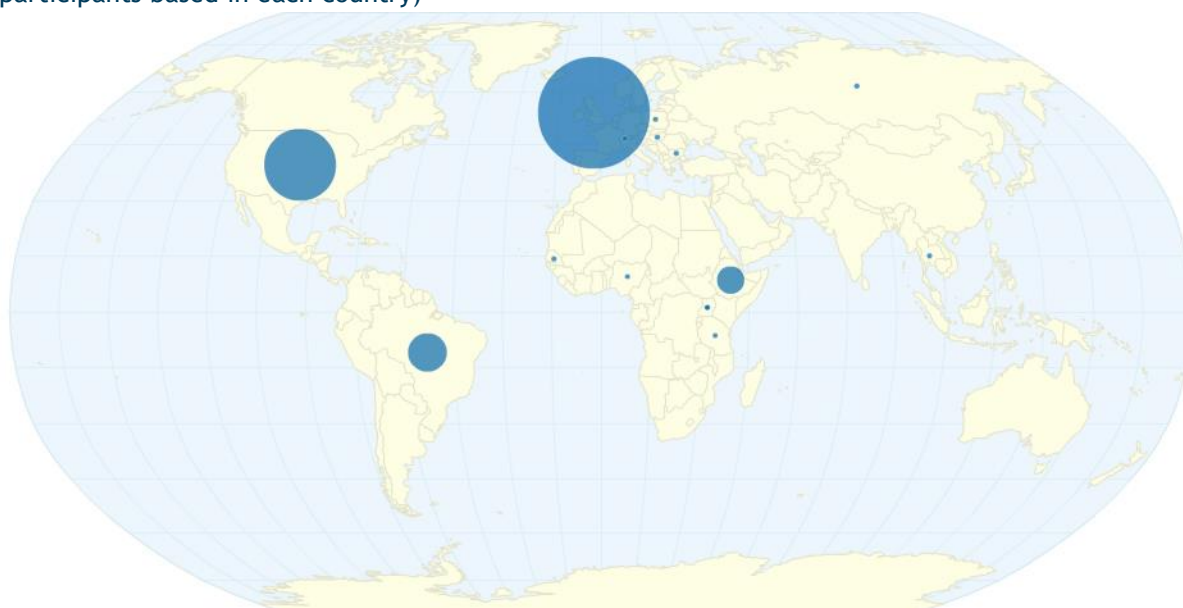
Open floor to discuss the following topics:

1. Important next steps for researching sexual exploitation
2. What do we need/want from the LINEA Network?
3. Topics for skills development, methodological research, and/or webinars

Meeting Participants

During the course of the meeting, 42 participants attended from 16 different countries.

Countries where meeting participants are based (size of circles represent the number of meeting participants based in each country)



Meeting Participants

<p>Organisers Dr. Lori Heise, LSHTM Dr. Ana Maria Buller, LSHTM Rebecca Meiksin, LSHTM Annie Holmes, LSHTM Michelle Moore, LSHTM Michael Naranjo, LSHTM</p>	<p>Dr. Philly Desai, Voices for Change Vanessa do Nascimento Fonseca, Promundo Dr. Nancy Glass, Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing and Bloomberg School of Public Health Maureen Greenwood-Basken, Wellspring Advisors Audrey Guichon, The Freedom Fund Dr. Caroline Harper, ODI Dr. Kathleen Kostelny, The Columbia Group for Children in Adversity Tanya Kovacheva, Oak Foundation Dr. Nambusi Kyegombe, LSHTM Dr. Giovanna Lauro, Promundo-US Katarzyna Makaruk, Nobody's Children Foundation Jody Myrum, NoVo Foundation</p>	<p>Hanan Saleh Nourhussein, Population Council - Ethiopia Emeka Nwankwo, DFID Voices for Change Patti Petesch, Independent Consultant Professor Lorraine Radford, University of Central Lancashire Dr. Maia Rusakova, Stellit Rodrigo Santini, Childhood Brasil Clara Sommarin, UNICEF Dr. Kirsten Stoebenau, International Center for Research on Women Jenny Svensson, LSHTM Dr. Afua Twum-Danso Imoh, The University of Sheffield Helen Veitch, Children Unite / Oak Foundation Dr. Joyce Wamoyi, National Institute for Medical Research Anna Flora Werneck, Childhood Brasil Professor Charlotte Watts, LSHTM</p>
<p>Participants Dr. Loraine Bacchus, LSHTM Prof Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo, Makerere University School of Women and Gender Studies Julian Barr, Itad Ltd. Dr. Lorraine van Blerk, University of Dundee Florence Bruce, Oak Foundation Joanna Busza, LSHTM Mark Capaldi, ECPAT International Dr. Ben Cislighi, Tostan Claire Cody, University of Bedfordshire Sendrine Constant, Terre des Hommes Regional Office for Central & South East Europe</p>		



Day 1

Welcome, Goals of the Meeting and Introduction

Dr. Lori Heise, Director of the Gender Violence and Health Centre, welcomed participants and set the stage for the meeting's focus on preventing the sexual exploitation of children (SEC). She gave an overview of the prevention response continuum, discussing primary prevention (stopping violence or exploitation before it starts), secondary prevention (reducing repeat violence or exploitation among those previously victimised), and tertiary prevention (addressing the needs of survivors to prevent future long-term consequences). Heise highlighted the importance of shifting towards primary prevention of SEC by identifying and addressing its root causes. She explained that one of LINEA's objectives is to better understand, through research, the role norms play in sustaining SEC and to explore the potential of norms-based strategies to help reduce sexual exploitation and abuse of children.

"This meeting is a learning process and a discussion space. The idea is to create a place where we can explore the work of preventing SEC together."

– Dr. Lori Heise

Overview of the LINEA Project and Network

LINEA Co-PI and coordinator Dr. Ana Maria Buller gave a comprehensive overview of LINEA. She highlighted LINEA's three-pronged strategy to address SEC prevention. The strategy includes desk-based research to gain conceptual clarity on SEC and its structural drivers; field research on social norms and SEC; and fostering a community of practice that brings together partners working towards SEC prevention.

"In our literature review, we repeatedly encountered different definitions of child sexual exploitation. The meeting today is our first face-to-face interaction with the wider child protection community and we wanted to ensure we were all on the same page."

– Dr. Ana Maria Buller

State of the Evidence on Preventing and Responding to the Sexual Exploitation of Children



(Click image to watch Professor Lorraine Radford’s presentation)

Professor Lorraine Radford of University of Central Lancashire in England presented findings from her review of evidence on preventing and responding to SEC and child sexual abuse (CSA), highlighting that the literature is “poor, but improving.” She noted that synthesising evidence across studies is difficult because different sources use different definitions of SEC. Most of the studies suggest that SEC is less prevalent than CSA, but that experiences of SEC and CSA can and do overlap.

“A lack of evidence is no excuse for inaction. We do need responses for mapping and monitoring and a child-focused theory of change. We must challenge the deficit model of risk.”

– Professor Lorraine Radford

Presenting prevalence data from the Baltic Sea study and selected Violence Against Children Surveys, Radford showed that reported SEC prevalence ranged from 0% (among boys in Tanzania) to 25% (among boys in Poland), whereas reported CSA prevalence ranged from 4% (among girls in Cambodia) to 56% (among girls in Sweden). She cautioned that most studies used household surveys, which may exclude sexually exploited children living on the street, and that social desirability bias may impact how respondents answer in surveys.

In terms of successful interventions to prevent SEC and CSA, Radford highlighted that some of the most rigorously-designed studies are found in the primary prevention literature, although much of this is biased toward high income countries. Very little information is available on the effectiveness of national, system level responses to SEC or CSA.

Radford noted that there has been a welcome change in recent years from exclusive focus on one type of abuse (e.g. CSA, corporal punishment), toward a more holistic approach to violence against children and creating an enabling environment for social change. Promising interventions exist in three areas: shifting social norms that perpetuate violence; addressing situational risk factors for abuse (e.g. monitoring offenders, designing camps to limit exposure to potential abuse); and tackling structural sources of disadvantage. Programmes directed at harmful masculinities (such as IMAGES) and addressing harmful attitudes and norms (such as Soul City and Soul Buddyz) have shown interesting findings, although the literature has not yet demonstrated much in terms of behavioural outcomes.

In her review, Radford noted that the child protection field has largely been a-theoretical and could benefit from a more theory-driven approach to programming. She also noted a lack of literature on boys who experience sexual violence.

“Applying an adult view to children’s experiences may not fit. We need to broaden our conceptual thinking on child abuse. We know more about what does not work than what does work. A theory-driven approach would be more helpful.”

– Professor Lorraine Radford

In the discussion following the presentation, participants raised questions about which outcomes to measure and how to best capture social change. Dr. Heise noted that it is important to acknowledge the cumulative effects of violence and victimisation over the life course when we plan and design our research.

“We know that children who experience one type of abuse are at increased risk of experiencing other overlapping types of abuse and that abuse experienced in childhood predisposes individuals to enhanced risk later in life.”

– Dr. Lori Heise

Case Studies of Research on Sexual Exploitation of Children

Growing up on the Streets: Girls’ Experiences of Sexual Exploitation



Girls experience and sexual exploitation in Bukavu, DRC.



(Click image to watch Dr. Lorraine van Blerk’s presentation)

Dr. Lorraine van Blerk, Reader at the University of Dundee in Scotland, presented the preliminary findings of her qualitative longitudinal study on street children’s experience of sexual exploitation in Ghana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zimbabwe. She highlighted the significance of having chosen a participatory approach for this study because it allowed the research to focus on aspects of life that were most important to street children.

“Despite policy changes, street children are consistently failed in their rights. They are out of place and they lack agency because of their age.”

– Dr. Lorraine van Blerk

Among the study’s findings were that agency is interwoven with exploitation, and this nexus requires more exploration. While girls on the street display agency, Van Blerk says the concept of “thin agency” is important – making choices in the context of constrained choice. She concluded that exploitation is often carried out by people who the street children know, and it is often hidden. She shared findings

that notions of “work” and “abuse” are blurred; that sex for street girls is not always easily categorised as abuse, exploitation or work.

Learning about Children in Urban Slums: Findings from a Rapid Ethnographic Study of Two Urban Slums in Mombasa

Dr. Kathleen Kostelny, Senior Research Associate at The Columbia Group for Children in Adversity in the United States, shared findings from a rapid ethnographic study of two urban slums in Mombasa, Kenya. She highlighted how national-level researchers took the role of learners in the communities and each spent at least one month living and working in the community under study. This learning approach encouraged listening and gathering knowledge of local beliefs.

Kostelny found a disconnect between local constructions of childhood and international child rights standards. According to local informants, children are characterised as generally below 10 years of age, are dependent on their parents, do not know right from wrong and are sexually naïve. Older children are often expected to “meet their own needs” and help support the household. At times this extends to tacit acceptance of sexual activity by children in return for financial assistance. In general, concerns about protecting family honour and avoiding shame are prioritised over the well-being of girl survivors of sexual abuse.

Among the findings of this research is that multiple harms to children are often linked. For instance, SEC might result in early pregnancy, which could lead to leaving school and beginning to sell sex. Family members are sometimes complicit in such abuse. For example, informants noted numerous examples where mothers either actively exposed young children to abuse (e.g., by using girls to attract customers to local chang’aa dens or selling them to customers) or tacitly ignored evidence of exploitation (not asking when children show up with unexplained money or food).

On the Right Track: Intervention with Truck Drivers in Brazil



(Click image to watch Anna Flora Werneck’s presentation)

In her presentation, Anna Flora Werneck, Programme Coordinator at Childhood Brasil, stressed that trafficking and SEC occur at alarming rates on highways in Brazil. She described “On the Right Track,” an intervention that focuses on changing social norms among truck drivers to encourage them to act as protectors of children. Responding to earlier research profiling truck drivers in Brazil, an essential strategy of the intervention is first addressing truck drivers’ rights as part of transforming them into protection agents.

Lightening Talks: Thoughts on Prevention

The next panel was structured as short “Lightening Talks” that gave participants 5-7 minutes to share a key insight from their ongoing work.

‘We protect Children’ – Programme for Child Abuse Prevention and Certification of the Institutions Complying with the Standards for Child Protection

Katarzyna Makurak, Research Specialist from Nobody’s Children Foundation in Poland, gave a brief overview of their programme and insights from their work. The programme aims to improve the competence of staff and parents to protect children from abuse, educate children about risks and how to seek help in difficult situations, promote a strategic approach to child protection and award quality certificates to care and educational institutions deemed safe for children. To date, some lessons learned include the importance of a participatory process, whereby stakeholders are involved in every stage of the project, and working with locally available resources to promote cost-effectiveness.

Thoughts on Sexual Violence Prevention from the ‘Our Voices’ Youth Advisors

Claire Cody, Research Fellow from University of Bedfordshire in England, spoke about consultations and participatory workshops conducted with young people to promote their involvement in preventing sexual violence. The young people were asked about barriers and challenges they face in reporting sexual violence, what needs to change and how they would like to be involved. Young people reported that “nobody talks about sex in families, it is taboo” and said there is a lot of embarrassment and stigma around these issues. Cody found that young people want to be involved in preventing sexual violence, and she shared principles young people recommended for involving them in this work.

“Importantly, we need to know how to engage [children] in a safe and ethical way.”
– Claire Cody

Involvement of Young People at Risk into Activities on Prevention of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

Dr. Maia Rusakova, Director of Stellit in Russia, discussed Stellit’s youth volunteer programme “Do You Know the Way? Do it Your Own Way...” The programme began in 2009, initiated by young people considered at risk who asked for Stellit’s support to conduct peer-led activities. Since then, 319 volunteers have conducted 500 activities aimed at preventing CSA and trafficking. Sharing photos of group trainings, a theatre performance and other activities, Rusakova highlighted that 22,000 people have taken part in these activities since the programme began.

“They don’t have money, good education, realistic ideas about their futures, or skills to be successful. They do have stigma, bad experiences, criminal experiences, and experiences of being beaten by the system, so they don’t trust most adults. Peer influence could be very positive.”
– Dr. Maia Rusakova

The CHILD Protection Hub for South-East Europe – A Creative Hub for Interactive Learning and Development

Sendrine Constant, Delegate at Terre des Hommes Regional Office for Central and South East Europe, gave an overview of a new online resource called The Child Protection Hub. Bringing together professionals from around South-East Europe, the hub is a platform for exchanging experience and knowledge to help protect children from abuse in the region. Sharing a case study of a young boy in Albania who was abused, Constant illustrated shortfalls of the child protection system and the need to support professionals and strengthen systems in the region.

“There is real fragmentation of the evidence, practice and policy that could come together, but remain in very separate areas. The Child Protection Hub plans to bring all of those people together through an online platform and offline events, trainings and network opportunities.”

– Sendrine Constant

Key Themes, Day 1

Presentations on the first day of the meeting generated a lot of discussion and debate. Key themes from the day are highlighted below.

- In order to work with vulnerable populations, we must first address their basic needs
- The field needs better conceptual clarity about the boundaries distinguishing CSA and SEC
- There is a need for more theoretically-driven interventions to address SEC
- We need better, comparable, up-to-date data on both SEC and CSA
- There is a profound gap between how child protection and children’s rights advocates conceptualise childhood and how childhood is understood by local actors
- A key contribution that the LINEA Network can make is to build bridges between the worlds of academia, advocacy and donors interested in protecting children



Day 2

Social Norm Theory and Social Change

Overview of Norm Theory



(Click image to watch Lori Heise’s presentation)

Dr. Lori Heise opened the second day of the meeting with an overview of norm theory, presenting the basic concepts of social norms as they relate to SEC. The presentation reflected her own thoughts and those of other thinkers in the field. While noting that individual and structural factors can also influence behaviour, Heise focused on role that social norms play.

People use the term “norms” in many different ways. Speaking from the perspective of social norm theory, Heise explained social norms as “a set of social expectations shared within a valued reference group.” A reference group are those individuals whose opinions matter to you and shape your behaviour. Frequently, social sanctions play a role in aligning behaviour with established social norms. Social norm theory distinguishes between descriptive norms (what you think others are doing) and injunctive norms (what you think others expect of you). A very important characteristic of social norms is that they are “interdependent”—that is they are essentially “social” in nature. By contrast, attitudes and personal beliefs are held by an individual.

*“We have certain scripts which are ideals that have been patterned overtime.”
– Dr. Lori Heise*

Heise highlighted that “not all behaviours are driven by norms,” so it is important to diagnose the extent to which norms are at play in sustaining a specific harmful practice. To dislodge harmful norms one must be very attentive to their dynamics.

*“Be really clear on the reference group – what do people fear? Is it gossip? Loss of belonging? Loss of standing? What is the sanction? Who do we need to be working with in order to see shifts over time?”
– Dr. Lori Heise*

Heise also discussed the implications of programming based on norm theory. She gave examples of campaigns that reshaped established norms and created positive alternatives. Citing the “On the Right Track” intervention presented on Day 1 as an example, she noted, “It is often easier to create a new positive norm than to dismantle an existing problematic one.”

Discriminatory Social Norms and Institutions, Adolescent Girls and Gender Justice

Dr. Caroline Harper, Senior Research Fellow at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London, outlined different approaches to thinking about social norms. Summarising definitions and interpretations by theorists including Marx, Bourdieu, Mackie and Bicchieri, among others, she noted that each have their limitations. Harper emphasised the need to draw on a range of theoretical perspectives to understand and challenge discriminatory norms. In her words, “The challenge is to identify the most effective pathway to change in a particular context.”

Harper also presented conceptual models of forces that contribute to maintaining and changing gender norms and practices. She demonstrated these forces in the case of early marriage, outlining its motivations. For example, her research has found that early marriage is often seen by parents as a strategy for economic survival, perceived as a way to protect girls in unsafe environments and underpinned by son bias and sociocultural norms. Harper emphasised that there are multiple pathways to changing discriminatory norms and that the challenge is to identify the most effective pathway based on a sound diagnosis of each individual context.

“The social norms debate is full of people coming from different traditions. These approaches can complement each other but they have their limitations, which can help us understand what we are missing. It takes many, many years to change embedded gender bias and there are many reversals in gains achieved along the way. But attitudes do change through multiple actions, and with greater appreciation of effective change pathways much can be done to protect children.”

– Dr. Caroline Harper

Applied Examples and Deducing Norms from Qualitative Data

Dr. Ben Cislighi, Director of Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning at Tostan in Senegal, demonstrated methods for exploring and measuring norms. Exploring norms involves understanding the reference group, members’ beliefs on the “typicality” of the practices associated with the group (i.e., how common they are), and members’ beliefs on the “appropriateness” of the practices (i.e., the extent to which those practices are correct). Cislighi recommended qualitative work for initial exploration, a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods for measuring beliefs and other factors associated with norms, and subsequent qualitative work to help interpret quantitative findings.

Drawing on Tostan’s community-based work in Senegal to end female genital mutilation and child marriage, Cislighi shared examples of questions used to measure norms and norm changes. He demonstrated how to interpret responses and discussed potential pitfalls in analysing this type of data, using real examples from Tostan’s work.

Transactional Sex: Boundaries between Agency and Exploitation

Understanding and conceptualising Transactional Sex in sub-Saharan Africa

Dr. Kirsten Stoebenau, Social and Behavioural Scientist at the International Center for Research on Women in the United States, highlighted work on transactional sex that is coming out of the STRIVE

consortium. [STRIVE](#) is a 5 year, DFID funded research initiative designed to tackle the structural drivers of HIV, including gender inequality, stigma, insecure livelihoods and harmful drinking norms. Stoebenau provided an overview of different conceptual definitions of transactional sex and traced the historical evolution of the term.

STRIVE working definition: Transactional sex refers to *noncommercial, nonmarital sexual relationships structured by the implicit assumption that sex will be exchanged for material support or other benefits.*

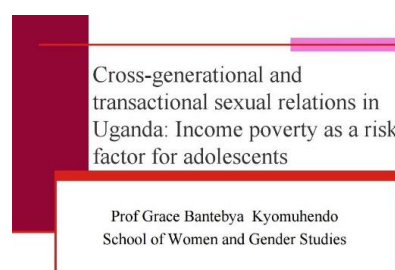
Stoebenau’s presentation focused on three different ways in which transactional sex has been portrayed in the literature: the “vulnerable victim” paradigm; the “upwardly mobile sexual agent” paradigm; and the “demonstration of love” paradigm. She stressed that we must “think carefully about how we approach people and how they see themselves. If we approach a young women who perceives herself as bold, it won’t register for her that it is undermining her”.

She also shared a conceptual model that maps drivers of transactional sex, ranging from individual (e.g., socio-demographics and gendered beliefs) to structural (e.g., poverty and women’s status in society). Notably, the literature suggests that within the context of patriarchal notions of gender roles, money can be a language of love in relationships.

Understanding Adolescent Vulnerability: Transactional Sex & Sexual Exploitation

Dr. Joyce Wamoyi, Social/Behavioural Research Scientist at the National Institute for Medical Research in Tanzania, presented preliminary findings from the LINEA research she is leading on adolescents and transactional sex in Tanzania. She stressed that transactional sex is very common in young people’s sexual behaviour, particularly due to economic hardships. Preliminary findings, based on interviews with young girls, indicate a mutual understanding that men should provide gifts and women should reciprocate with sex. This expectation, she said, builds on cultural traditions of reciprocity. She has also found varying interpretations of transactional sex; some women “have said that men are the ones that are being exploited and not them.” Peer pressure and consumer culture were identified as key drivers, and relationships with older men were not socially approved but were tolerated.

Cross-generational and Transactional Sexual Relations in Uganda: Income Poverty as a Risk Factor for Adolescents



(Click image to watch Professor Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo’s presentation)

Professor Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo of Makerere University in Uganda shared findings from her study of cross-generational and transactional sex in Uganda. She said “it was common for girls (below

18) to go with men (over 40 years old) for cross-generational sex” and identified social norms supporting the practice.

“Social norms exist behind cross-generational sex. There is a notion among men ‘the younger, the better. You will feel more power.’”
– Professor Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo

Bantebya Kyomuhendo emphasised the need for integrated programmes that address social norms, poverty and other structural issues to make sure that child rights are upheld.

Participatory Exercise: Considering Scenarios

In the afternoon, Dr. Heise facilitated a participatory exercise to help surface different notions and ideas about the boundaries between SEC and CSA. The group was asked to classify several scenarios, moving to different parts of the room to show whether each was SEC, CSA or neither/unsure. Often participants disagreed, were unsure how to classify the scenario or thought it was neither SEC nor CSA. The exercise demonstrated that participants conceptualise SEC and CSA in a variety of different ways, which led into the next panel on defining exploitation.



Panel: Defining Exploitation

Defining Sexual Exploitation: The Need for Common Language

UNICEF Child Protection Specialist Clara Sommarin asked in her presentation, “Is there a need for common language?” Sommarin provided an overview of SEC definitions from international legal frameworks designed to protect children’s rights. She also unpacked the challenge of balancing a child’s right to protection with the right to respect for their “evolving capacities” recognised in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She discussed the need to move from a fragmented approach to towards a more comprehensive approach to child protection, noting that few studies comprehensively cover all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation. She highlighted the pressing need for a common language and set of definitions that allow us to compare data, track trends over time and ensure that different sectors and disciplines understand each other.

Competing Paradigms on the Sexual Exploitation of Children, and a Draft Conceptual Model

Rebecca Meiksin and Dr. Ana Maria Buller presented LINEA’s desk review of the evolving conceptualisations of SEC. Stressing the broad range of definitions used by stakeholders and lack of clarity on distinctions between SEC and CSA, Meiksin questioned, “When the lines gets blurred, is it important to have a distinction?” She also highlighted concerns raised in the literature that dominant SEC discourses focus on individual victimhood and perpetration, often ignoring the broader structural drivers of SEC.

Buller provided an overview of perspectives from the field of moral philosophy on what constitutes exploitation. Presenting a draft conceptual model of SEC that draws on perspectives from moral philosophy, international legal frameworks and SEC literature, Buller invited discussion and input from the group.

At the core of the draft model, SEC occurs when CSA intersects with sexual exchange (where someone profits, monetarily or otherwise, from a sexual encounter with someone under 18 years old). Mapping individual and structural factors driving vulnerability, Buller also suggested an approach that avoids portraying vulnerable young people as “agentless and disempowered by default.”

Complexities of Working with Older Adolescents

Joanna Busza, Senior Lecturer at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and based in Ethiopia, discussed the complexities of working with young women who sell sex and tensions between harm reduction/empowerment and rescue/rehabilitation approaches. Drawing on her work in Cambodia, Ukraine and Zimbabwe, Busza gave examples of interventions that harmed the young people they were meant to protect. Busza urged against “one size fits all” solutions, emphasising the need to consider individual circumstances and consult with the young people involved.

“I worry sometimes that universal declarations and universal language try to pack us all into the same sausage casing. There is no one solution...Broad definitions pigeonhole us.”

– Joanna Busza

Small Group Discussions

Participants broke into small groups to discuss their perspectives on current conceptualisations of SEC, explore thoughts on how important it is (or isn't) to distinguish between SEC and CSA, and reflect on the draft conceptual model that was presented.

Insights from Group work

- Participants agreed on the need to better define the boundaries between abuse and exploitation. The current lack of conceptual clarity makes it difficult to establish prevalence, monitor trends over time and intervene effectively.
- Blurred lines between CSA and SEC also makes it more difficult to convey ideas to the wider society.
- Age, agency, constraint and choice are all ascribed different meanings by individuals working from different perspectives (e.g. child rights advocates, HIV practitioners, child protection agents).
- Different fields and sectors frequently use different language to describe the same phenomenon, e.g. those outside of public health are unfamiliar with the language of “transactional sex,” which is a term widely understood and embraced by those working in the HIV field.
- Context matters, or at least makes a difference in perceptions of what is acceptable and not (e.g., with respect to child marriage).
- Some participants voiced concern that respect for local understandings of childhood can be taken too far. A young person under 18 deserves protection from abuse even if they may not be considered a child in that context (e.g., because they are married or already sexually active). The question becomes *how* they should be protected.
- Young people need to inform primary prevention; we need to start with how they view themselves, account for their context, work with them and offer an alternative.
- Though we come from different perspectives, we all want the same thing – to protect young people from harm.



Day 3

Competing Notions of Childhood

“We seem to think we know what children require or when they are deprived. These assumptions of roles of children in society are found all over the world. We feel it is the same regardless of society.”

– Dr. Afua Twum-Danso Imoh

Dr. Afua Twum-Danso Imoh, Lecturer at the University of Sheffield in England, provided an overview of constructions of childhood in different societies and their implications. Twum-Danso Imoh contrasted the dominant image of childhood, based on notions from Western Europe beginning in the 17th century, to past and present examples from sub-Saharan Africa. For example, traditionally the end of childhood in Zaire [now the Democratic Republic of the Congo] was determined by economic independence and adult work. Drawing from her research on constructions of childhood and attitudes towards physical punishment in Ghana, Twum-Danso Imoh demonstrated that while there are contrasts between global norms and local perspectives, globalising discourses on child rights are beginning to permeate and influence local constructions of childhood.

Twum-Danso Imoh identified monogamy, Christianity, urbanisation, mobility, education, media and technology as the main drivers of changing constructions of childhood and family dynamics. She also discussed intergenerational tensions arising as the younger generations become more educated. Despite these conflicts, Twum-Danso Imoh emphasised that there are small groups of people that recognise that things can be different, and engaging communities in open dialogue can create a middle ground and an opportunity for discussion of children’s rights.



Panel on Child Domestic Labour and Sexual Exploitation

Introduction to Vulnerabilities of Child Domestic Workers; Resilience in Child Domestic Workers Facing Sexual Exploitation

Helen Veitch, UK-based Director of Children Unite and an Oak Fellow, began by offering an overview of the links between child domestic work and sexual exploitation and abuse. For example, it is not uncommon for a child domestic worker abused by a member of the family that employs her to become pregnant and then thrown out on the street, where she may sell sex to survive. Veitch said NGOs find it difficult to support child domestic workers as they are behind the closed doors of their employers.

Following this introduction, Veitch shared findings from the Bamboo Research Initiative in Nepal. Through focus groups and life story interviews, the study explored resilience factors in the lives of child domestic workers. Findings centred on five themes supporting resilience: someone to confide in; hope; a positive attitude and self-confidence; the ability to assess the situation and develop a protection strategy; and participation in festivals. Veitch shared a case study from the research, demonstrating how some of these themes manifested in the experience of one child domestic worker who displayed resilience in coping with sexual abuse.

“There is no international agreement on the definition of resilience. But it encompasses growth and coping in the face of adversity. It is never absolute.”
– Helen Veitch

Child Domestic Labour and Sexual Exploitation in Ethiopia: The Role of Brokers

Hanan Nourhussein, Program Officer at the Population Council in Ethiopia, shared preliminary findings from interviews conducted with brokers as part of an ongoing study on out-of-school girls in Ethiopia. Brokers, she explained, find work for job-seekers – many of whom are girls migrating from rural to urban areas for economic opportunities. Nourhussein outlined differences between legal brokers (who are licensed by the government) and illegal brokers, both of whom employ underage girls.

Using excerpts from the interviews, Nourhussein showed that it is common for brokers to sleep with girls who are looking for jobs. Nourhussein suggested that brokers can also be allies, sharing the story of a broker who helped a girl escape an abusive employer by finding her a new job.

Observations from the Field: Young Female Domestic Workers’ Health and Wellbeing in Delhi

Jenny Svensson, PhD candidate at LSHTM, shared early observations from her ongoing PhD research exploring young female domestic workers’ experiences, health and well-being in India. Noting that health in this context is under-researched, she described factors affecting girls’ work-related health and well-being. Demonstrating with case examples, Svensson shared insights on structural factors and social norms that support child domestic work in India and associated exploitation, including the use of servants to signify status and the notion of work as a component of children’s informal education.

Protocol Workshops

In this 70-minute session, participants broke into two groups to discuss and offer input into studies under development. Patti Petesch, an independent researcher, led discussion on a multi-country study to be piloted as part of LINEA to explore social norms that may underpin the practice of men buying sex from girls. Promundo’s Vanessa Foseca and Giovanna Lauro led discussion about a study on social norms that enable the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



Parallel Sessions on Methods

During this session, each participant attended one of three parallel workshops on research methods. The session ran for an hour and a half, each group discussing one of the following topics:

- “Exploring Methods to Measure/Track Social Norms,” workshop led by
 - Julian Barr, Results Director on DFID’s Voices for Change Nigeria
 - Emeka Nwankwo, Technical Lead on Measurement and Evaluation on DFID’s Voices for Change Nigeria
 - Professor Nancy Glass of Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing
- “Ethics in Research with Children,” workshop led by
 - Mark Capaldi, Head of Research and Policy at ECPAT International
 - Dr. Nambusi Kyegombe, Lecturer at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- “Participatory Methods for Data Collection,” workshop led by
 - Dr. Lorraine van Blerk, Reader at University of Dundee
 - Helen Veitch, Director at Children Unite and Fellow at the Oak Foundation

The Way Forward

Before closing the meeting, Dr. Buller and Dr. Heise facilitated a plenary discussion on the way forward. Participants shared ideas of how LINEA could take shape, ways to continue collaboration and what contributions from LINEA would be helpful in supporting their work. Key ideas and suggestions for future plans are highlighted below.

- Continue to convene and expand stakeholders working on SEC
- Facilitate collaboration and maintain momentum by forming subgroups that meet in person to work on different topics during the year and present their progress at annual meetings
- Catalyse studies and interventions
 - Do multi-country studies and interventions using similar measures and methodologies to generate comparable data across regions. This helps drive policy initiatives.
 - Develop areas ripe for expanded research (especially child domestic labour and working with truck drivers)
 - Study how children themselves conceptualise SEC and CSA
 - Focus on sexually exploited boys as well
 - Consider looking at the question of religion, in post-Soviet countries especially
- Continue to refine the conceptual framework and advance thinking on definitional clarity
- Map which types of SEC are most amenable to the social norms approach
- Incorporate children's voices into LINEA's work, not only as research subjects but as active participants
- Hold webinars to showcase LINEA Network members' work
- Advance thinking on how to balance agency and protection in research and programming on SEC

