The Role of Media in Child Protection: Challenges and Opportunities in Uganda

"Baseline Survey Report on Media and Child Protection in Uganda"

Panos Eastern Africa
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"Baseline Survey Report on Media and Child Protection in Uganda"
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Child Protection in Uganda: The Media’s Share
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FOREWORD

This baseline is part of a series of four baseline studies commissioned by Panos Eastern Africa to benchmark the implementation of the project “Strengthening Media agency for Child Protection”, the other countries are Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

The baseline examines three areas in relation to child protection. The policy and legal environment; the media coverage of child protection issues and the relationship between civil society organizations, government and media.

It is the first study of its kind, it therefore presents challenges as well as opportunities that we as actors can build on to address the various issues of Child Protection in Uganda. It is our considered view that you find it useful.

Yours

Okubal Peter James Ejokuo
Executive Director
Panos Eastern Africa
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LIST ACRONYMS

CPLG: Child Protection Learning Group
NSPPI: National Strategic Programme Plan of Interventions for Orphans and other Vulnerable
        Children
OVC: Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a content analysis on selected Media Houses on how they cover child protection issues (Violence, Exploitation and Abuse) in Uganda. It also presents findings on the relationship between the Media and child protection Agencies in Uganda.

The Purpose of this study was to:

- d) Provide baseline information needed for effective monitoring and evaluation, of the 24 months project, “Strengthening Media Agency for Child Protection”, funded by Oak Foundation
- e) Provide insights on key partners and actors to be involved and targeted in the project
- f) Make recommendations aimed at strengthening media coverage and engagement with policy makers and Child protection agencies.
- g) Use the findings as a basis for follow up with media, policy makers and child protection agencies, so as to improve on the quality and quantity of media coverage of Child Protection issues in Uganda.

Chapter One shows the contemporary international perspectives delving into an examination of child protection at the local level. It explores the romance with the system approach to child protection, the imperative of giving voice to children and child participation. It further looks at texts that relate to child abuse, exploitation and protection. Chapter Two gives the legal and policy framework on which child protection jurisdiction is premised. In Chapters Three, Four and Five findings are presented to give a basis for clear recommendations. Chapter Six discusses key issues arising out of the policy environment that shape debate on child protection, while Chapter Seven makes an analysis of communication practices among stakeholders. Chapter Eight comes up with conclusions and recommendations.

The exercise was largely of a qualitative nature. It involved participative and extensive consultations with key stakeholders at different levels. The stakeholders included but not limited to Print Media: Two English language dailies The Monitor and the New Vision were selected because of their national coverage, and daily frequency, Broadcast Media: Thirty broadcast stations including 24 radios and six television stations were sampled out of the 240 radios and 40 television stations broadcasting in Uganda. The sampling frame had to include stations representative of regions, private ownership, community ownership, faith-based ownership, public service broadcaster and language representation and Child Protection Agencies: These included two organisations that PEA indicated it would partner with, some international organisations and several local organisations. A pre-exercise meeting was held between Panos and UMDF to agree on the methodology and work out a plan for the exercise. The key documents that were reviewed include PEA project documents, national policy and the legal national frameworks on children.

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The findings indicate that:

a) Whereas there are rich legal and policy frameworks for child protection in Uganda, two major obstacles exist: First, the fragmentation of actors coupled with poor coordination of the different stakeholders. Secondly, not enough efforts have been invested in getting laws and policies implemented.

b) This rich legal and policy environment is largely unknown to most media workers and as such, the journalistic output on child protection is limited in breadth and depth. The level of journalists’ appreciation of child protection is generally low.

c) Coverage of child protection by media is still stuck in the traditional format of news reporting: event based, and reported with a sense of detached objectivity which does not easily accommodate advocacy work.

d) There is a lot of potential for media to take part in child protection through partnerships with other actors based on shared responsibilities, mutual respect and understanding.

e) CSOs working on child protection do not have standard performance measures; rather each organisation operates on standards laid down by its funders. Thus there is no standardized approach for this sector to relate with media.

f) Both CSOs and media still have challenges in promoting child participation and in allowing children a voice to speak on matters affecting them. Media often prefers adults to speak on behalf of children under their care. Voices of CSO officials dominate interviews where these officials frame the reports from angles that are favourable to their side.

g) A growing yet disturbing perception in some media circles is that cases of child abuse and exploitation have become too frequent in media to remain ‘unusual, and newsworthy.’ Many media managers agree that the abuse stories no longer have the shock effect, the punch power to make impact. New strategies and approaches will be needed to rethink the way the child protection stories are told and packaged in order to achieve impact.

h) Funding is an ongoing challenge to media institutions especially broadcast stations. This leads to minimal investment by the stations in sourcing and following up stories. Furthermore, this weak financial situation at media institutions tends to make managers look at child protection agencies with a business perspective (not only potential partners for a noble cause, but also as a source of advertising).

i) Some child protection actors express reservation at engaging media as a partner out of fear of misrepresentation and associated risks. These perceptions are informed either by past experience, fear of the unknown or guidelines from international funding partners.
j) Government agencies and some CSOs lack appropriate media literacy and do not operate according to the media logic. Likewise many media workers also do not fully understand either the way government systems work or the culture in CSOs. They do not speak ‘each other’s language.

k) Irrespective of the type of ownership of media, there are observed gaps within media towards child protection: these include skills levels, internal structures, funding base are all weak. However, media managers’ responses point into a positive direction where media can avail free platforms for use by child protection actors.

**Key Recommendations**

(i) There is need to explore more opportunities among child protection actors for dialogue, sharing information, sharing of values, skills, experiences and competences. Interviews with representatives of these stakeholders indicate there is no profound reason preventing such interaction

(ii) Media, child protection CSO officials and government officials should engage in more partnerships on child protection. Information should also be provided on how stakeholders can enter into partnerships

(iii) In addition to literature that government provides, important basic information should be generated as guiding material on policy and good practice in the child protection sector. This may include basic information and media kits provided by CSOs and government for media as well as basic concepts and principles in child protection.

(iv) CSOs and government departments dealing with children should enter into long-term arrangements with media organisations as allies in child protection whereby the media undertakes to carry information on child protection promptly, accurately and at no cost as a national responsibility

(v) The Child Protection NGO Network and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Makerere University Department of Journalism and Communication and the Makerere AfriChild Centre should design a plan to support media houses set up children desks, staffed with personnel specially trained in the field. Journalists reporting on child protection should also set up a network to allow for a development of a consistent body of specialists that stakeholders can deal with on a regular basis.
(vi) Media institutions, being corporate citizens, must also undertake a public service role to willingly invest resources and time into supporting journalists’ projects while they negotiate funding partnerships with stakeholders.

(vii) There should be certified tailor-made courses to skill and retool journalists to enable them ethically report on child protection. Similar trainings are needed for CSOs and government officials in media literacy and media engagement.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Background and Review of Literature

1.1 Introduction

This report presents the findings from a media content analysis on selected media houses on how they cover child protection issues (Violence, Exploitation and Abuse) in Uganda.

This report looks at the involvement of media, child protection agencies and government institutions in child protection. It identifies and analyzes the communication practices and links between the media, child protection agencies and government institutions on child protection. The report also assesses content and approaches of media’s coverage of child protection.

Sourced from local and international literature, this background explores the romance with the system approach to child protection, the imperative of giving voice to children and child participation. It further looks at texts that relate to child abuse, exploitation and protection. This background also examines studies done on the effects of media coverage of child abuse and child protection and the effects of such coverage over the last three decades. It ends by setting the stage for an examination of a compendium of laws and policies that relate to children in Uganda.

1.2 International Perspective

At the international level there is increased interest in the study of how best to approach the problem of violence, exploitation and abuse of children. A broad consensus is emerging for a shift in approach from focusing on single issues to entire systems within which child protection occurs. In the course of this media scan, efforts were made to consider aspects of the child protection systems in Uganda, with specific regard to key issues of violence, exploitation and abuse of children.

Neil Boothby of Columbia University gives an insight into the global perspective on the state of children and child protection in a presentation to the Uganda PLG Learning Retreat in 2012. The global statistics concerning violence, exploitation and abuse were summarised as follows:

- 1.8 million children are victims of sex trafficking or in pornography
- 1.1 million children are trafficked for forced labor

Perhaps the most important insight is the call to move from silos to systems in child protection. And Boothby posits that child protection is multi-sectoral (it applies to homes, schools, health units etc) yet international response is fragmented, issue specific. However, this approach is changing in many

developing countries in favour of adopting a systems approach. “Child protection is a sector in its own right, but to protect children effectively, it must be closely linked with other sectors.” (Boothby, 2012)

Fred Wulczyn, Deborah Daro et al. (2010)² submit that focusing on issues in the absence of an understanding of how they relate to the overall system, and to an endless list of risks and assets, can result in ineffective programming. These scholars, advocated for a systems approach in a study sponsored by UNESCO.

They reported that already major international agencies including UNESCO, Save the Children and the UNHCR, were employing a system approach to strengthen child protection as guided by the Convention on Rights of Children (CRC). Their study outlined key components that must exist in an effective child protection system. Their objective was to highlight these components with a view to encourage stakeholders to enter into serious debate on how the presence or absence of these components impacts on child protection.

The appreciation of a systems approach to child protection is significant for both CSOs and especially media in that they can look beyond single issues to broaden their understanding of the subject, and subsequently engage it with a wider perspective.

1.3 Uganda Perspective on violence, exploitation and abuse

Child Abuse is a very big threat to the wellbeing of children in Uganda. Statistics from Police showed that a total of 12,760 child abuse cases were reported to the police during the year 2009 up from 12,341 cases the previous year. This is an increase of 419 cases.

Generally, child neglect, desertion, indecent assault, torture, abortion, kidnap, infanticide, trafficking and child sacrifice increased from 3,760 in 2008 to 4,821 cases in 2009; there was an increase of offences against children by a total of 1,061 cases as the children were the direct targets/victims of crime. The volume of the cases in 2009 indicates an increase of child abuse by 12.3%. The cases were reported to the police and investigated.

Child abuse in all forms continues at alarming rates in Uganda. The Police Annual Crime Reports for the past three years give high figures especially for cases of sexual abuses especially defilement. The 2011 Annual Report for instance 7690 cases of defilement were reported to Police but in less than 4000 were suspects arrested. Nearly 50% of cases were dropped or were never followed up. Other forms of abuse, especially physical violence are also prevalent.

At the national level in Uganda, children make the biggest share of the population. Uganda’s population is estimated to be 30million (POPSEC, 2008). The population is largely youthful with almost half of the population (49.3%) below the age 15 years (2002 Uganda Population Census). Children define the present, as they grow and, they are the future leaders. Given this important role, it is the responsibility of adults to protect them and ensure that they get the best opportunities in life. Unfortunately this is not always the case because there are many factors that militate against proper child protection. These factors, indeed, necessitate looking at some point at the child protection system in Uganda.


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Within the context of this study, such a consideration will provide users of the study findings to look at issues of violence, exploitation and abuse of children in a wider perspective.

Deogratias Yiga\(^3\) brings the systems approach to the Uganda case in a study that considered the move from projects to systems in child protection. His main submissions in this regard are as follows. That:

- Uganda has an impressive record of domesticating international conventions on child protection and that the country has a sound framework where child protection system can operate.
- There is a range of laws and policies in place for formal child care and protection, which can be amended and improved.
- Uganda has a wide network of informal care systems based on family and clans, which are very useful in many ways but are resource-constrained because of their voluntary nature.
- There is often an overlap between the formal and informal systems.
- There is a danger of over-glorifying the role of informal systems leading to a possible under-investment in formal child care systems.
- There is a problem with managing the three sub-systems: child care and protection, law and order, and social service delivery. There is no central control over this fragmented system complicated child protection efforts.
- There is a serious problem of referrals with most cases reporting and ending at LC1 levels, where records are rarely kept.
- There is an absence of quality assurance mechanism and standards in child care and protection, with every agency actor determining own standards.

For purposes of this media scan, Yiga’s insights will help in locating cases of violence, exploitation and abuse in wider context. These insights also provide investigative potential for journalists interested to report on child protection beyond mere breaking stories and exposures.

A 2004 Government Sectoral Report\(^4\) on a study in child labour in Uganda noted that the proportion of child labourers in the urban informal sector was incredibly high. This implied that nearly all working children in the sector are doing work which is incompatible with their status or work which affects them in one way or the other in respect of their age, capacities, health requirements, exposure to risks, injuries and sicknesses, exploitation and denial of any other rights the children are entitled to. It recommended extended free education to all and to secondary school level, more vocational training opportunities and more tailor-made programs.

The report also emphasized the need for mass education of the citizenry about labour rights and laws and policies to target employers, community leaders and civil society including media.

UNICEF estimates that the child labour statistics for Uganda between 2000 and 2009 stood at 25% of

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children between 5-12 years. The Government of Uganda has designed a *National Action Plan for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour*.\(^5\) The plan identifies the following as worst manifestations of child labour:

- Child Trafficking
- Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)
- Children in Domestic work (CDW)
- Children in Commercial Agriculture
- Children in the Informal Sector
- Children affected by Armed Conflict

The rationale for the action plan to prevent these forms of child exploitation is because it not only prevents the country from achieving the millennium development goals but also because child labour affects the long-term national economic and social development goals of sustainable employment, productivity and decent work for adults by creating cycles of inter-generational poverty.

The Action Plan spells out important statistics about child labour and lays out timelines, activities and objectives for reduction of these worst forms of child labour by 2017.

The Action Plan is significant for media workers reporting on Child Protection in that it expands the understanding of child labour and its manifestations, and allows for increased areas of coverage by media. It also provides a framework for media to monitor the progress in the implementation of the Action Plan.

### 1.4 Media and child protection agencies

What lessons have been learned elsewhere that can inform a better understanding of media coverage of child protection issues in Uganda in particular issues of violence, exploitation and abuse?

This background considers it pertinent to explore some lessons learned over the last decades in media coverage of child protection and the emerging issues. Patrick Ayre (2001) makes important insights into the impact of media coverage of child abuse on various stakeholder constituencies in England and Wales between 1970 and 2000. The article titled *Child Protection and Media Lessons from the Last Three Decades*;\(^6\) Ayre outlines several concerns related with media coverage especially the creation of a climate of **fear, blame and mistrust** that became endemic with child protection in the UK and several other countries. Below are some salient points:

- More media coverage over child abuse, especially sexual abuse, has increased the climate of fear among the public, but it is more of fear associated with the ‘stranger’ than someone close to the child.
- Fear is not limited to the public but also to policy makers and social workers. Things are either done or not done because officials fear being splashed in daily newspapers.

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\(^5\) Regional Workshop for the Dissemination of the National Action Plan for Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour, Mbale 2012

• Drama and conflict are big news values in the media, but when they are played in the field of child protection, they dwell on the work ways and on inter and intra-organisation rivalries which are then amplified to create a climate of distrust. The public confidence in public institutions and service providers is compromised; mistrust grows between organisations, between individuals working in child protection; between government and social service providers.

• Over the last three to four decades, a climate of fear has come to characterize child protection services (in England and Wales particularly, but also elsewhere). It is part of a discourse which centres on the responsibility of professionals for the child abuses they are attempting to prevent. Media is singled out for initiating and perpetuating this discourse.

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Child abuse stories used to be presented as crime stories in the news genre following this formula: discovery of abuse, arrest and charge, trial, conviction and sentence. Now this trend started changing over the last two decades. Media introduced another concluding element of finding blame, faulting someone in the system. “How was this allowed to happen? Who did not do their part?”

As Ayre submits, those working with child protection are quick to blame news media, news biases and often news agendas that media are presumed to serve. But he adds that some scrutiny of the child protection agencies themselves might be appropriate.

For purposes of this study, it will be of interest to examine how Ayre’s findings resonate with the Uganda case in the findings of this scan of the Uganda media coverage of violence, exploitation and abuse of children.

The findings of Ayre’s study that recommend a reform in the working relations between child protection agencies and the media are instructive to both constituencies in Uganda where fault-lines are not uncommon. His study will greatly benefit initiatives to improve cooperation with child protection agencies on one side, and between them and the media on the other.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Child Protection Legal and Policy Environment

2.1 Introduction

This report gives the legal and policy environment that exist in Uganda for child protection. It outlines the international conventions that Uganda has ratified and domesticated and relevant national laws including the Constitutional provisions. The report also mentions key policy instruments and frameworks that serve to protect the wellbeing of children.

2.2 Legal framework


This is the basic international convention, which Uganda ratified and domesticated for child protection. The convention contains key clauses particularly the following:

- Article 1 that defines a child as a person below the age of 18 years.
- Article 2 that prohibits the discrimination of a child on any grounds.
- Article 3 that demands that in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private, social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities, legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
- And Article 4 that calls on nations to ensure that rights of children are respected and guaranteed.

2.2.2 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

This came into force on November 29, 1999. Uganda ratified this Charter and also domesticated it.

2.2.3 The Uganda Constitution, 1995

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda is the supreme law of the country. Under this Constitution, issues of human rights and particularly child rights are provided for under Chapter Four Article 34. The Article states that:

- Subject to laws enacted in their best interests, children shall have the right to know and be cared for by their parents or those entitled by law to bring them up.
- A child is entitled to basic education which shall be the responsibility of the State and the parents of the child.
- No child shall be deprived by any person of medical treatment, education or any other social or economic benefit by reason of religious or other beliefs.
- Children are entitled to be protected from social or economic exploitation and shall not be employed in or required to perform work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with
their education or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

2.2.4 The Children Act 2000

This is the most important law for child protection and development in Uganda. It is an Act that aspires to reform and consolidate the law relating to children; to provide for the care, protection and maintenance of children; to provide for local authority support for children; to establish a family and children court; to make provision for children charged with offences and for other connected purposes.

Under this Act, a child is defined as a person below the age of eighteen years. As evidenced above, it is clear that Uganda to a large extent has a favourable legal policy environment for the full realisation of the rights of children. In addition, there exists a number of favourable laws, policies and programs that could create improvements in the lives of vulnerable children. Important references are given to 12 national laws that have a bearing on children. These include:

- The Domestic Violence Act 3, 2010
- The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 7, of 2009
- The Education Act 2008
- The Employment Act
- The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act 5, 2010
- The Penal Code Act Cap 120
- The Births and Deaths Registration Act-Chapter 309
- The National Council for Children Act –Chapter 60
- The Prisons Act 2006
- The Uganda Peoples Defense Forces Act 2005
- Local Governments Act, Chapter 243
- The Succession Act Cap 162
- The Witchcraft Act, 1957

2.2.5 Policies related to child protection

There also exists an elaborate policy environment for child protection with 13 policy guidelines relating to different line ministries that offer guidelines for ensuring child protection. These policies are listed below:

- The Child Labour Policy, 2006
- The Orphans and Vulnerable Children Policy, 2004
- The National Health Policy
- The Uganda Gender Policy 2007
- The Education Policy
- The National Youth Policy 2011
- The Uganda National Land Policy
- The National Child Participation Guide
Uganda as a country has both a political commitment and an established framework to work with different stakeholders to protect children. From the legal and policy framework, it can be observed that Uganda has various laws and policies on child protection, and has made considerable efforts to domesticate several international laws into national laws particularly reflecting concerns of the Convention on the Rights of Children in national constitution and the Children Act in Uganda covering areas such as care, protection and maintenance of children, and support by local authorities. Nevertheless, the main challenges to the effective implementation of child related policies and law enforcement include lack of adequate resources, accountability, information sharing and coordination, and an inadequate institutional coordination framework to effect these positive efforts.

2.3 Conclusion

When this compendium of laws and policies is viewed in the context of media coverage of child protection issues, it empowers media professionals to locate the news events on violence, exploitation and abuse of children in legal and policy frameworks to strengthen their news stories. Something more, knowledge of the breadth and depth of the legal and policy frameworks expands the scope of coverage of child protection issues and provides a rich background for more advanced writing beyond mere news reportage, such as analyses, in-depth feature reports and documentaries.
3.0 Scan of print media stories and analysis

3.1 General information about scanned newspapers

A total of 201 stories were scanned from both The New Vision and The Daily Monitor, including their weekend editions. The two newspapers are daily, national in character and circulation and are published in English. The study examined online editions of each newspaper published in 2012. Using search words ‘child abuse, child protection, child exploitation’ the researchers identified and selected all stories, including pictures where applicable. The figure 201 is generated from the total of about 700 newspaper online editions for the two newspapers. In some cases reference was made to specific e-paper editions especially to appreciate the positioning of a story or picture on a page. The e-paper is an exact digital duplicate of a hard copy newspaper.

The New Vision is published by the Vision Group, which has majority government shareholding. It was previously fully owned by the government as a corporation governed by an Act of Parliament. The paper is the flagship of the now multimedia group that also owns several titles in three major local languages, six radio stations four television stations and magazines. It also commands the largest circulation in Uganda.
The Daily Monitor is the leading independent newspaper published by the Monitor Group, which is part of the Nation Media Group, the largest in East and Central Africa. The Daily Monitor was established in 1992 by a group of journalists. The Nation Media Group later acquired a controlling stake in it. The Monitor Group is also a multimedia institution owning several publications and two radio stations.

Both newspapers have a countrywide network of correspondents, who provide wide coverage of local news and events. They have well developed archives that made them the best choice for this exercise. The print media scan sought to capture key aspects of the stories related to child abuse and child protection under variables discussed in the subsequent sections.

3.2 Comparative strengths and weaknesses of both newspapers

The New Vision is shown to have had more coverage overall. It had a balanced mix of news and features, meaning that often stories about child protection were followed up with regular features. The paper carried few opinions on the subject and even fewer supplements.

The Daily Monitor was stronger on news coverage but it published far less features than news stories. The findings did not show evidence of opinions or supplements. This is striking because overall, the Daily Monitor is usually much stronger than The New Vision on opinions, while the latter is generally stronger on news coverage. Strength here refers to the amount newspaper space dedicated to the
particular genre. The figure below illustrates the comparative strengths of both newspapers.

**Figure 1 Distribution of story category by newspaper**

![Bar chart showing distribution of story category by newspaper]

**Figure 2 Distribution of stories by day of week**

![Bar chart showing distribution of stories by day of week]
In terms of coverage per day of the week, (Fig 2) there were stories about child protection on each day of the week on average. However, *The New Vision’s* coverage peaked on Saturdays, as a result of dedicated space the newspaper has allocated to the child protection campaign. Saturday editions usually carry extended reports and features on the subject. *The Daily Monitor* peaked on Tuesdays largely because of more news pages and on Sundays because of the Sunday Life magazine.

### 3.3 Genre of the story

The figure below summarises the formats (genres) in which scanned stories appeared.

**Figure 3 The genre of stories**

The bulk of articles on child abuse were presented as news stories, contributing to just two thirds of all stories. Features were another big segment contributing about a third of all stories. Features provide more detailed information, analyses and context. There were very few articles (2%) presented as opinions on the subject. The shortage of informed opinions either by the newspapers in editorial columns, or by individuals is striking.

### 3.4 Prominence of the stories

The illustration below (Table 1) details how prominently stories on child abuse and child protection were placed on the page. The tradition in newspaper journalism is that *the placement and packaging of the story reflects the importance the editors attribute to it*.

The data shows that there were more stories on child abuse used as leads on a page than those used as other full stories. There were no stories on this theme that were used as one paragraph briefs. Also less than 2% of stories were displayed as paid for advertisements. This implies that the two newspapers gave serious treatment to the stories in terms of display.
Table 1 Prominence of story on page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other full story on page</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>99.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid advert</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>201</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Sources

The survey considered the sources of information from which journalists get stories on child abuse. The figure below shows that civil society organisations were the biggest single source mentioned in stories on child abuse. Of these, local children CSOs and foreign CSOs were the most prominent. It should be noted here that ANNPCAN, which featured prominently was categorized as a foreign CSO. Police, private individuals and government officials as categories contributed less than 20% of sources for the media.

This finding highlights the important role CSOs particularly those dealing with children play in providing information to the media.

Figure 4 The distribution of story sources

According to these findings, media sourced half the stories from CSOs. The context in which journalists got the information from these CSOs is explained in the next illustration.

3.6 Story context

The study also explored the context in which the journalists got the information from the sources provided. Two figures that follow show, first, the distribution of context, and secondly the context in
Journalists from the two newspapers used interviews most to get their stories. This was the context for about a third of stories examined. In the interview context, a journalist follows the story by interviewing the main sources and subjects to piece the story into a coherent form. They are not at-the-scene type. But they often provide deeper insights into an issue from the persons interviewed.

The second biggest context was that of attending the actual event. In this context, the journalist is often invited to cover an event, often the release of a report, or when police wants to parade an arrested suspected child abuser. This context often leads to information skewed in favour of the host if the journalists do not critically examine the whole issue.

The findings show a growing trend to move away from the traditional press release and press conference. Although CSOs, as mentioned earlier were sources of more than half of stories examined, only 9% of these stories were sourced from press releases and only 3% from press conferences. One prominent foreign CSO is frequently mentioned as a source of these press releases.
Press releases provide opportunity for CSOs, indeed for any source, to pitch what is deemed important for the media. Increasingly, however, editors across newsrooms treat press releases with much less importance than before. One of the reasons is that most press releases are not written in a user friendly way. With regard to press conferences, newspaper editors also tend to treat them with less enthusiasm because stories from press conferences lack exclusivity.

According to the findings, stories sourced using public relations tools like pitching events, one-on-one interviews, briefings and attending official meetings, find more space in newspapers than those sourced from press releases or press conferences.

Table 2 shows the contexts in which the different sources provided information to print journalists. The rows and boxes highlighted signal some significant trends. For instance, CSOs employed interviews as a key method of disseminating information. So is the case with government officials, who also used actual events and official meetings to provide information related to the subject under study.

The Police used briefings more than any other method to disseminate information. The reading of stories indicated that the Family and Child Protection Units of the Police invite journalists for briefings especially when cases are reported to them.
Also significant is the contribution of regular columnists in The New Vision who authored articles on various aspects of child abuse. Religious leaders were the least mentioned sources and they used press releases mainly.

### 3.7 Theme Abuse

The study also examined how the two newspapers treated/highlighted the different types of abuse against children. Figure 6 below illustrated the distribution of cases of abuse reported in the two newspapers.

**Figure 6: Distribution of incidences of abuse reported**

Sexual abuse featured most as a single category amounting to nearly a third of stories examined. Physical violence on children and psychological abuse also featured prominently each contributing just under a quarter of stories. The psychological abuse is particularly significant because in many cases other types of abuse also inflict psychological abuse on children.

In a few instances stories talked about child abuse in general terms without specifically referring to any form of violence. In this case these were recorded as ‘case does not apply.’

An analysis of how different sources reported on types of abuse on children indicates that local and foreign civil society organisations dealing with children were the most prominent sources on sexual and physical abuse followed by the Police.

### 3.8 Theme Protection

The study examined whether the stories indicated the form of protection sought or provided to abused children. Figure 7 below reveals that almost all stories mentioned some form of protection.

Police protection was either provided or sought in 27% of stories examined. In 22% of the cases, legal protection was sought in courts of law or pleas to Parliament to provide for tougher punishments for offenders. CSOs and child care homes were mentioned as providing protection in about 20% of cases each.

The protection by CSOs is significant in that it involved also referrals to Police and to legal institutions...
to take action on offenders and provide a more secure environment for children.

Figure 7 Distribution of types of protection sought or provided

![Pie chart showing types of protection]

To a lesser extent, protection was sought in refugee camps especially in the case of refugees fleeing fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

3.9 Theme exploitation

This study also scanned stories for cases of child exploitation and other closely related abuses. A quarter of the stories examined did not contain abuses related to child exploitation. However, as Figure 8 below illustrates, where the stories contained this type of abuse, child prostitution and child neglect were the most prevalent cases.

Figure 8 Distribution of abuses related to child exploitation

![Pie chart showing types of abuses]

Child labour, trafficking and child sacrifice featured less prominently at less than 10% each. It is significant to note that in the previous five years, cases of child sacrifices had been widely reported.
but following much publicized case of tycoon Kato Kajubi, sentenced to death for ordering ritual killing of a boy in Masaka, reportage of child sacrifices dropped significantly in the English newspapers.

Also significant is the small percentage of stories on child trafficking during the period under study. In the previous five years, a scan of stories from both newspapers indicated a much higher frequency of reportage of such stories.

Stories on child prostitution were closely related to sexual violence reported earlier. The high incidence was also affected by the widely publicized case of a Turkish sex tourist arrested and jailed for sexually abusing over 30 girls.

### 3.10 Agents of Abuse

This section presents the distribution of agents of abuse as reported in the stories examined. It also presents the relationship between agents of abuse and the types of abuses.

**Figure 9 Distribution of agents of abuse**

The data shows that persons not in any way related to children were the biggest single category of offenders, especially in cases of sexual violence. Both parents as a group featured prominently in a quarter of stories examined. This was in relation to cases of child neglect, psychological and emotional abuses. Teachers were also a significant category of offenders featuring in 12% of stories. Teachers were often cited in cases of physical violence and sexual violence. Individual parents also featured in cases of physical violence with mothers offending more frequently than even stepmothers.

### 3.11 Location of abuse

As Table 3 below shows, almost half (48.8%) of cases of abuse were committed in a home environment. Schools also featured prominently at 17.9% of cases as places where abuse took place. About a third of cases happened in a variety of other places. The figures are indicative of the need for stakeholders,
media inclusive, to focus more on homes and schools as key locations of abuse.

**Table 3 Location of abuse**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other places</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.12 Type of message in story**

The survey also examined story content to look out for the thrust of the message contained therein. Figure 10 presents the distribution of key categories of messages in stories.

**Figure 10 Type of Message**

In nearly half of stories (46%) the key message was a call for action to be taken. Such actions ranged from tougher punishment for offenders, more protection for children, improving the legal regime and others. In a third of the stories, the key message was to expose wrong doing. It should be noted that many of the stories that mainly exposed wrongdoing also contained calls for action to be taken. In fewer cases, however, some stories were either just critical of an incident, or simply explained a situation related to an abuse. In 10% of stories, the key message was to support an activity aimed at protecting children against abuse. This was particularly common with stories that featured activities of particular CSOs arising out of journalists’ interviews.
Ronald Kanamwanje at Naguru Hospital, Kampala on Wednesday last week. Inset is his mother, Margaret Namukwaya. PHOTO BY REBECCA VASSIE

The tortured boy shows scars sustained as a result of being burnt with a motorcycle tyre by his father. The suspect has pleaded guilty to the offence. PHOTO BY ENID NINSIIMA
The pupil shows the tooth he lost during administration of corporal punishment at his school. (PHOTO BY Patience Ahimbisibwe (Monitor))

A police officer at Entebbe Police Station shows Angel Nalubega’s wounds inflicted on her by her mother. Photo by Martin Ssebuyira
An analysis of the relationship between type of message and story sources shows that nearly all sources sought to expose wrongdoing and at the same time called for action to be taken (Appendix 1). This finding illustrates a common element cutting across stakeholders and one that provides an opportunity for future collaboration in pursuit of child protection.

### 3.13 Target of message

The types of messages in the stories were directed at different categories of people and institutions. Figure 11 represents the summaries of targets of messages. Table 4 that follows shows how specific messages were distributed to different targets, most often in direct appeals.

The general public and government were the main targets of messages with each group being targeted by about a third (34% and 33% respectively) of the messages in stories. 22% of messages were directed at parents. The messages targeting other categories like the Police, line ministries, child protection CSOs and the international community were significantly low.

**Figure 11 Target of Message in story**

![Target of Message in story](image)

Again this finding highlights the people’s expectations that government has a key role to play in strengthening child protection. It also emphasises the need for government to mainstream partnerships with media and other stakeholders to promote and consolidate child protection.
3.14 Use of pictures

‘A picture is worth a thousand words,’ is a traditional journalistic maxim. A picture well used adds a lot of value to a story. This study explored how the newspapers exploited the power of pictures to tell the stories of child abuse. This section deals with the type of pictures used, the details of abuse exposed and how specifically victims of sexual abuse were portrayed in pictures used.

3.14.1 Type of picture used

Figure 12 Distribution of pictures

The data provides an important trend. In 40% of stories, no accompanying picture was used at all. In nearly a fifth (18%) of stories pictures used did not specifically depict either the victim or the offender. In some of these cases, newspapers used a related picture, often from syndicated illustrations or downloaded from the internet to illustrate the story.

However, pictures of the abused children were used in 16% of cases. Pictures of offenders featured in 10% of the stories and in a much less frequency, newspapers presented pictures of the victim and the offender. In 9% of cases, victims were pictured with a child protection officer from either the Police or from a children’s CSO.

This finding illustrates the wide gap among media and stakeholders to exploit the power of pictures in combating child abuse. Cases where pictures of abused children accompanied stories made a more appealing presentation package. Again this presents a clear case where collaboration between media, CSOs, Police and other stakeholders can increase opportunity for media to use more pictorial coverage of child abuse to influence action. This is also a direct challenge to both newspapers, which have strong photo desks.
3.14.2 Details of child images published

This section sought to explore two things. First, it wanted to examine the impact of pictures in telling the story of child abuse. Secondly, it wanted to examine how newspapers adhered to ethics of child photography.

Table 4 Picture details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of picture</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picture shows extent of abuse</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture shows face(s) of victim(s) blurred</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No picture used/Case doesn’t apply</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>75.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Image of a child]

In a majority of cases either no picture was used, as mentioned above, or the picture did not contain exposure of abuse. However, in 16% of cases, pictures showed the extent of abuse especially in cases of physical abuse. In 8% of cases, pictures showed faces of victims blurred.

Indeed where the pictures showed details of abuse, they were impactful and strengthened the story. The pictures generally show that newspapers refrained from irresponsible and unnecessary exposure of the identities of victims.

3.14.3 Pictures of sexual abuse victims

Newspapers generally avoided use of pictures of sexual abuse victims and where these were used, the identities of victims were not exposed. In the rare cases where the identities were given, the victims, now adults voluntarily recounted sexual abuse suffered when they were minors.

3.15 Voices of children, relatives and community

In majority of stories scanned, the voices heard were those of the main adult sources who spoke to journalists. These included Police, representatives of children’s civil society organisations and government officials.

The voices of children did not come out evidently. This is perhaps because the journalists did not delve deep into interviewing the children. It is also because the journalistic ethics discourage the interviewing of minors, especially those in traumatizing conditions.
Voices of parents came out especially in cases of abuse where the offender had been arrested and questioned. It is important to note that in stories sourced from interviews, the journalists gave most attention to the story as told by the adult interviewees, reflecting the story angles that they wanted to highlight.

Voices of the community where abuses were committed were often captured, especially calling on authorities to take action on offenders.

These observations expose the adult-centred mindset of journalists reporting on children and the paucity of children's voices. They also highlight the tendency of CSOs to speak for the children and what they do instead of giving voice to the children. This is another gap that must be addressed.

**3.16 Leveraging key events for children.**

The international calendar provides for special days to reflect on children. These include the International day of the African Child (16 June), International Children’s Day (1 June), International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression (4 June), World Day against child labour (12 June and Child Protection Week (28 May to 3 June 2007).

The scan, however, did not show significant efforts by both newspapers to take advantage of these days to focus on specific aspects of child protection themed on those days. The exception was in *The New Vision* where, ahead of the June Child Protection week, the newspaper published a series of features highlighting the efforts of organisations and individuals that strive to make a difference in the plight of vulnerable and abused children. It should be noted, however, that these series are tagged to the annual Tumaini Awards festival where these individual and organizational actors are recognized and rewarded. As such there is publicity and public relations function to this coverage. An examination of the structure of these stories reveals that the CSO executives are the main sources; the stories rotate around their efforts and achievements, and do not contain children’s voices or evidence of child participation. These stories often appeared as features, written with considerable depth.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Finding and analysis of stories from the survey of broadcast stations

4.1 Introduction

This chapter gives findings from the survey of 17 radio and five television stations whose senior managers, either program editors or stations managers, responded to the questionnaire soliciting views on a wide range of issues related to child protection. The sample included private, community, faith based and public service broadcasters. Irrespective of the type of licence, each of these stations to varying degrees also operated as commercial entities, which largely blurred the distinction. The summaries and analysis of responses to issues raised are discussed in the following sections.

4.2 Do stations have children’s programs?

All stations, except KFM radio reported having children’s programs on their schedules. Most of the program names reflect a child centred approach. The programs are distributed in the following formats: magazine, talk show, chat show, drama, inspirational tips, live shows and feature. The number of programs per station ranges from one to four. Figure 13 below shows the distribution of program formats.

Figure 13 Distribution of children program formats

Magazine, talk show, features and live shows are the most popular formats in that order. The type of format brings unique strengths to a program. The variety of formats also indicates the breadth of opportunities available for stations to engage issues of child protection.
4.2.1 Formats and Children Voices

The magazine format allows the producer to tackle different aspects of children’s issues in one program. Given the many facets to child protection, the magazine format becomes quite ideal, hence the most common at stations. Many of these magazine programs have segments for listeners to call in and comment.

The talk show format allows engagement of mostly adults to discuss issues to do with child protection. One weakness with this format is that it is not common to include children in talk shows that involve adults. Some stations, however, mainly in northern Ugandan have talk shows that involve only children to discuss their issues. These stations were part of the Youth Radio Project supported by War Child Project.

The feature format allows the producer and presenter focus in depth on one single issue. Its strength lies in the richness of information about that one aspect. Sound bites, especially of children voices, enrich the feature programs on child protection.

Live shows are most dramatic in bringing out children voices since they capture the real moments in time of children’s expressive moods. Some stations have also developed other creative ways of engaging children through unique formats like CBS’s chat show.

4.3 How editors understand issues of child abuse and child protection

Respondents expressed varying degrees of awareness to key issues on child protection. All expressed awareness of child abuse with 64% saying they were fully aware while 36% said they were moderately aware.

With regard to child exploitation, 45% of managers said they were moderately aware while 36% expressed full awareness of what child exploitation entails. 18%, however, said they did not understand what it involved.

Just over half (55%) of managers reported they were moderately aware of child protection, 27% were fully aware and a similar percentage not aware at all.

Table 5 Editor awareness of key child protection issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>MODERATELY AWARE</th>
<th>FULLY AWARE</th>
<th>NOT AWARE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Abuse</td>
<td>8 (36%)</td>
<td>14 (64%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Exploitation</td>
<td>10 (45%)</td>
<td>8 (36%)</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>12 (55%)</td>
<td>6 (27%)</td>
<td>6 (27%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inquiry into awareness by managers was important because it impacts on the way stations treat stories about child abuse and protection: the allocation of resources including personnel, funds, time and airtime. It is also a reflection on how managers can see a role for their stations in the campaign to promote child protection in general.
The findings indicate the need for sensitization of broadcast stations management teams on the whole range of child protection issues before even engaging the lower cadres. Even for those who reported full awareness, such sensitization is still needed.

4.4 Do stations have policies on child protection?

Only three out of the 24 stations reported having a policy on child protection. These stations happen to have big institutional ownership. Policies of the three stations all spell out the importance of protecting rights (and identities where need applies) of minors in stories of both radio and television

- NEW VISION Group (Bukedde FM and Bukedde TV) New policy contains section on child protection particularly on the sensitivity for child privacy when reporting on minors.
- CBS: Protection of children rights with due consideration that identity of minors is protected.
- UBC: Policy on protection of minors in both radio and TV reporting.

This finding points at a clear disconnect between the levels of awareness among station managers and the way that awareness is applied. At majority of stations, the awareness of children protection issues has not led to institution of policies to follow when reporting on children. This is a gap that the project needs to address. Earlier studies have shown that broadcast stations in general lack written down policies (editorial policies, ethics guidelines, financial reporting policies or even human resource policies). The child policy gap should be understood in this wider context.

4.5 How often do child abuse issues come up in news bulletins?

The managers at stations were asked to estimate from their experience how often stories on aspects of child abuse featured in news bulletins on a weekly basis. This inquiry was a follow up on the queries into the managers’ awareness of child protection and existence of a policy in their media houses. Table 6 below gives the distribution of editors’ responses to cases of abuses.

The most frequent response (48%) was that abuses featured rarely. However, 40% of responses indicated incidences of abuse reported at least once in news bulletins.
Table 6  How editors estimate the frequency of reported abuses in news on weekly basis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>ONCE</th>
<th>TWICE</th>
<th>THRICE</th>
<th>MORE THAN THRICE</th>
<th>RARELY</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>14 (63%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Abuse</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15 (68%)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>12 (54%)</td>
<td>6 (27%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Neglect</td>
<td>10 (45%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11 (50%)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Exploitation</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19 (86%)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child labour</td>
<td>15 (68%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (27%)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal punishment at school</td>
<td>6 (27%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15 (68%)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>63 (40%)</td>
<td>14 (9%)</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>2 (1.2%)</td>
<td>74 (48%)</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The picture becomes clearer when specific cases of abuse are considered. Of the abuses said to feature at least once a week according to editors, child labour was cited by 68% of editors, followed by cases of physical abuse cited by 63% of editors. Sexual abuse followed with 54% mentions, child neglect attracted 45% mentions; corporal punishment at school was cited by 27% of editors and emotional abuse followed with 18% mentions. Although 81% of editors had earlier indicated some level of awareness about child exploitation, only 9% said cases of sexual exploitation featured at least once in their news bulletins.

Sexual abuse featured prominently (27% mentions) among abuses said to feature twice a week in news bulletins. Fewer editors reported the same abuses featuring twice or more a week.

86% of editors said sexual exploitation was rare, 68% also mentioned emotional abuse and corporal punishment at school also featured rarely. Half of them reported that stories on child labour were also rare in their news bulletins.

These findings indicate that the abuses in general do not feature as frequently as they should in news bulletins. One reason could be that journalists do not easily access the information, or that there are some internal dynamics in newsrooms that limit the frequency of reportage of these abuses.

An editor with WBS TV made an insightful remark repeated later in this study. He said,  

“Often these abuses, especially sexual abuse, become too frequent and they cease to be news. News must be new. But when you get repeated cases of rape and defilement, like we do, then it ceases to be news. You ask how differently you can report the same type of story with some impact. You wonder how that story can compete with other news within the limited airtime available.”
4.6 How stations relate with child protection agencies

With the exception of KFM radio, all other station managers reported working with at least two civil society organisations engaged in child protection. Some of these CSO operate in most parts of the country, others work in selected regions. The following CSOs featured prominently in the responses given by the managers/editors.

Table 7  CSO that relate with broadcast stations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANISATION</th>
<th>AREA OF OPERATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANPPCAN</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda Youth Development Link</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save the Children</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Restoration Outreach (CRO)</td>
<td>North, East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing Hope---to the Family</td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FXB</td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind Initiative Uganda</td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Diocesan Family Desk</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Aid</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Child</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Fund</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of Orphans</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invisible Children</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Concern</td>
<td>West Nile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Welfare and Adoption Society</td>
<td>Central/Kampala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nsambya Babies Home</td>
<td>Kampala/ Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurinet</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxfam</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katalemwa Chesire Homes</td>
<td>Kampala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation for Human Rights Initiative</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPO Uganda</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Children In Vulnerable Situations</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Vision</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising Voices</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6.1 Government agencies that work with stations on child protection

Among the government agencies that stations often work with, the editors mentioned the Police Family and Child Protection Unit; The Office for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and the National Council for Children both in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Services; the Uganda Human Right Commission, Parliamentary Committee on Children, Kampala Capital City Authority and the Ministries of Internal Affairs, and of Education and Sports.

Stations in the north and east also identified local council women and children officials as people they also normally relate with on child protection. UNICEF was the only United Nations agency mentioned.

4.6.2 Nature of relationship between stations and CSOs

The editors were asked to explain the way their stations related with these CSOs and government agencies. A set of contexts was provided for them to choose from. Table 8 below gives the distribution of responses to each context.

Table 8 How broadcast stations engage with CSOs and govt agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context of Relationship</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sourcing stories</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosschecking facts in stories submitted</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soliciting interviews with officials</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending media briefings</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When invited to cover an event</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular email contact</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To solicit for paid advertisement</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No relation at all</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses indicate that most stations considered for this study interface with child protection organisations and agencies to crosscheck facts in stories before they are aired; to look for story ideas and also to cover events when invited. Just over half of managers reported interaction at the level of soliciting interviews with officials and a similar percentage (55%) for soliciting advertising business. A slightly higher percentage (59%) of stations also sends journalists to attend media briefings by these CSOs and agencies. It is significant to note that at only few stations (23%) did managers and journalists maintain regular email contact with CSOs and government agencies.

This shows that already there is a level of interaction upon which improvements can be made like developing more email contacts that can prove vital in the dissemination of information.

The next section examines the media managers’ assessment of quality of information service from the CSOs and government agencies involved in child protection.
4.6.3 How stations rate the quality of feedback from CSOs and government agencies

Table 9 Quality of Information Delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Indicator</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information is timely and easy to use</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information flow is slow and long turn-around time</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs and Agencies volunteer information</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information is available but too technical</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information provided only on demand</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs and agencies impose many restrictions on info use</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 40% of broadcast station managers rated the information from CSOs and government agencies as timely and easy to use. Even fewer managers (31%) thought that these organisations volunteered information to their stations. On the other hand, half of the managers said that information flow from these organisations was slow and they took long to respond to queries. A slightly higher percentage (55%) of managers reported that CSOs provided information only on demand. 40% expressed belief that CSOs and government agencies imposed many restrictions on the way stations should use the information.

These findings paint a grim picture of the quality of information services rendered to broadcast stations on matters of child protection. It points at possible shortage of trust between these organisations and the media, and exposes gaps that need to be addressed. These findings should be counterbalanced with views of the CSOs and government agencies on challenges they face when dealing with media. This is addressed later in this study.

4.7 Do stations have dedicated staff for children affairs?

Although all but one station broadcast children’s programs, no station has staff dedicated to issues of child protection. The programs teams handle several other programs and tasks. This means that programming for children does not necessarily have to mainstream issues of child protection. One manager included this note on the response form:

“Our focus is to address children as an audience, as consumers of children's content, but not necessarily to use the programs as an advocacy platform for child protection.”

Indeed these children programs often provide a voice to children, but the content of that voice must carefully planned to empower children with knowledge about their rights and what they should expect society to do to protect them.
These findings point at opportunities that CSOs and government agencies can exploit to harness the existing spaces on broadcast stations (children’s programs) through improved cooperation, better information flow and sensitizing media in order to exploit media power to promote child protection issues. Other possible areas of cooperation could involve stakeholders support stations to build and sustain, on a pilot phase, specialized children desks where child protection programs and campaigns can be rolled out.

4.8 Do editors consider child protection a national issue?

All managers responded that they considered child protection a national issue and a priority one.

4.9 Factors that hinder proper coverage of Child Protection Issues

The broadcast station managers listed a catalogue of issues they said hindered proper coverage of child protection at their stations. These have been grouped in three broad categories: those attributable to communities including parents and victims; those associated with government agencies and issues that are within their own media houses.

4.9.1 Factors from within communities

   a) Ignorance of community members on what constitutes child abuse.
   b) Community members of victim children conceal vital information on abuses children
   c) Some community members do not consider child abuse issues a priority
   d) Parents sometimes also conceal information on their abused children and resort to private settlements with abusers and their families.
   e) Ignorance of the law and available remedies by victims leading to concealment of information.
   f) Intimidation of victims by offenders
   g) Social attitudes and fear of stigmatization of sexually abused children lead to denials and thus complicate reportage of these sexual abuses.
   h) Some school heads cover-up abuses by teachers.

4.9.2 Factors attributed to government agencies

   a) Bureaucracy in government agencies: few people are authorized to comment
   b) Political interference where abuses involve relatives of powerful people
   c) Tough conditions on child related stories from government agencies
   d) Bureaucracy at police
   e) Corruption which makes most cases to be ‘killed’ at lower levels
4.9.3 Factors within the media institutions

a) Skills shortage: reporters often do not have skills in child protection reporting
b) Resource constraints: shortage of equipment, underfunding by media houses for journalists travel expenses
c) Motivation: journalists are not motivated enough to cover this sector
d) Many areas are hard to reach given the resource limitations

The third category of factors inherent to the stations attracts most attention. The shortage of skills, shortage of resources and journalistic motivation stand out as issues where urgent interventions are needed. These interventions should include:

- A program to skill media workers (including editors) in a range of issues to do with child protection and how to report it.
- Support to media houses to acquire necessary resources including equipment for reporting child protection. Previous interventions by a range of partners including Panos on other schemes undertaken with radio stations can provide frameworks to operationalise this.
- The partner support should also be accompanied by willingness by the stations to make some level of counterpart investment in child protection initiatives.
- Interventions made with stations should be designed to make child protection reporting grow into a major area of coverage in order to professionally motivate the journalists involved. Motivation is here understood in the context of professional growth.

4.10 Way forward

The editors provided the following suggestions to move forward collaboration with other stakeholders on child protection.

1. Regular communication and information sharing e.g. through stakeholders dialogues as part of confidence building.
2. Having special reporters trained and dedicated to child rights issues
3. Providing free platforms on air to stakeholders to discuss child protection issues.
4. Media should be shown the success stories in child protection so that they do not only dwell on the sad part of the issue.
5. Collaborating with stakeholders to initiate media campaigns for child protection. This includes sensitisation of the public on laws and rights.
6. Media organisations going beyond news reporting to support advocacy for child protection.
7. CSOs, government and media working on joint projects
8. Political commitment in handling children issues

9. CSOs, government and media should consider mutually rewarding partnerships such as funding children programs to support the business side of media

10. Media initiating outreach activities together with CSOs to liaise with communities on issues of child abuse, exploitation and protection.
5.0 Observations from editors and child protection agencies

5.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the views of officials from child protection organisations contacted for this study. These were the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) and the Trans-cultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO Uganda). The study probed the officials for their views on the magnitude of the child protection problems vis-à-vis media reportage, the quality of reporting, the working relations of their organisation with media, and with other stakeholders, and their communication structures and policies.

The purpose of this inquiry was to understand the challenges these organisations face in dealing with media and to establish possible areas of improvement in the way the media handle child protection issues.

5.2 The magnitude of the problem vs. reportage

5.2.1 ANPPCAN.

A pan-African organisation has had most visibility in Uganda media. It follows issues of child abuse all over Uganda and takes up many cases of abuse with the Police, government, schools and parents.

ANPPCAN runs several programs in the line of child protection. These include advocating against child labour, promoting child participation in the protection and promotion of child rights especially of orphans and other vulnerable children, promoting rights of children to be protected from abuse and fighting child trafficking.

Mr. Marlon Agaba, Senior Program Officer in charge of policy and advocacy says that the problem of child abuse, especially sexual abuse is far more widespread than is reported in the media. “We record a catalogue of cases of abuses, especially sexual abuse and child labour from all over the country. We always follow them up. We refer others to Police, and other agencies. Of course what is reported is far less than what happens. It could be better.”

Agaba highlights some pertinent issues to do with media.

a) Most contact is through press conferences and press releases. (This is also reflected in the print media scan.

b) They maintain a contact list of media people they work with

c) Journalists’ story angles often skewed to the negative

d) Stories lack follow up. They dwell on the immediate happening and then die thereafter.

e) Stories are in the normal news paradigm, they do not give the big picture.
f) Stories in media lack depth and often not backed by enough research.

g) Media are important partners, but they need training in child protection issues.

h) Because of their rich resource base and cases, ANPPCAN can provide a lot of raw material for media use in different platforms and genres (documentaries, features, etc)

i) ANPPCAN has ongoing campaigns that may interest media for coverage: Safety in School; Ending corporal punishment in schools, and inspection of private schools to ensure they create a child friendly living environment.

ANPPCAN has an office dedicated to advocacy and communication and has established a tradition of engaging media. However the context is often through press conferences and press releases and this does not reflect a sustainable form of media cooperation.

5.2.2 TPO's program on child protection takes a different approach.

It combines an upstream policy and institutional support as well as directly delivering services that protect and promote the rights of the child. TPO has a well-developed training program to build capacity in child protection at various levels including courses at university, an AfriChild Centre of Excellence at Makerere University and short courses in child protection supported by international partners.

Specific comments on TPO and media by Francis Alumai, Training Coordinator.

a) TPO has not had a lot of engagement with media except a partnership with the Uganda Media Development Foundation on a project in northern Uganda to examine how children are portrayed in media. The Youth Radio Project involved 12 radio stations in the greater north and West Nile.

b) TPO does not have an organizational policy on media engagement and does not have a specific office for media relations.

c) Fear of misreporting also keeps TPO away from media exposure.

d) From TPO's experience in the north with the Youth Radio Project, TPO notes that a lot of stories on child abuse and child protection go unreported. There is scanty information on child protection.

e) Also observed was that there is a lot of distortion and negativity in issues to do with children.

f) The reporting is often flat, lacking in context, background and follow-up.

gh) Training of journalists in child protection is very critical especially to skill them in depth reporting and in principles of child protection.

h) TPO suggested a deliberate platform where media reporting on children can be monitored, and a common framework for media/CSO collaboration to eliminate suspicion.

i) TPO was of the view that child protection actors must accept media as major stakeholders and design mechanisms for meaningful engagement.
5.3 Observations from selected editors

This section summarizes observations made by a selection of editors from both print and broadcast on child protection. The observations relate to how these media houses see the problem and what can be done to promote child protection.

a) Cathy Mwesigwa Kizza, Deputy Editor, The New Vision Newspaper Division.

‘The problem of child abuse is huge. We consider it our duty to create systems, policies and structures that promote child protection. The New Vision has a dedicated staff to deal with child protection. We have for the last two years dedicated space in the newspaper to highlight this problem. We feature both stories of occurrences; we follow them up with features; we also focus on those who are trying to give a smile to children. We give elaborate coverage to those organisations making a difference to the lives of children ahead of the June Tumaini Awards.

The New Vision recently unveiled its set of policies, where child protection features prominently. The policies were developed and endorsed by all staff.

b) Abbey Mukiibi, Programs Manager, CBS Radio

‘We consider child protection a national issue. Cases of abuse feature a lot on radio stations. There is a skills gap among journalists on issues of child protection and training in this area is indeed essential. We shall need trained journalists to develop dedicated desks that specialize in issues of children beyond what we offer now.”

c) John Baptist Imokola, News Editor, WBS Television.

“It is a sad affair that cases of child abuse continue to feature every day. We and other media try our best to report them, but of course not all of them. But we have to face the reality that media business deals with news. When cases of abuse become an everyday issue, then they cease to be news. We have to think of how differently we can report these abuses with impact. For now media can only do so much. When it comes to programming for children, we consider what will interest the children as an audience. Media has not been in the business of advocacy for child protection, but this needs to change.”

d) Sr. Denis Samanya, Station Manager, Radio Sapientia

“This is a very serious issue which we, as a Christian radio station have to come out and support. Indeed there is a feeling that there isn’t enough political commitment to enforce laws and policies that dwell on child protection. More must be done. We have challenges like when sources close to abused children conceal information. But we can do our bit.

We can for instance offer free airtime to programs related to child protection, we can offer for free announcements related to children in distress. We also think as a station we can be more positive and sponsor annual holiday camps for children, where issues of child protection can feature on the program.”

e) Kobusinge Sarah Mijumbi, Manager, Kyenjojo FM
“We can consider giving more airtime to programs for children to include segments on child protection. We can also consider developing a specialized desk for children affairs instead of just doing a program or two to entertain children. The task is big and challenges many but we can start with simple steps.”

f) Alberto Eisman Torres – Director, Radio Wa

“We try to factor children issues in some adult programs like in women’s programs or those that deal with human rights. We should not limit ourselves to addressing these important issues of child protection in children’s programs. However, as a station there are other on-air and off-air activities we can do. I can mention a few:

- Giving free airtime on Radio to address child protection issues
- Organising music, dance and drama on child protection issues in primary schools
- Awarding certificates to schools which champion protection of children’s rights through extra-curricular activities.
- Encouraging children to speak out and making follow up to monitor their issues with them and authorities responsible.
CHAPTER SIX

6.0 Findings from scan of policy environment and key actors

6.1 Introduction

This section discusses the findings from the scan of the policy environment for child protection. It also identifies key stakeholders in the field of child protection and their level of engagement.

As outlined in Chapter 2, there is an elaborate policy environment, whereby at least 13 policies exist, covering different sectors of government. In addition there are several legal provisions located in a dozen laws that seek to protect children under different circumstances.

6.2 Major ongoing initiatives informing debate on child protection

a) Increased focus on public awareness activities at all levels by various actors (Governmental and non-governmental)
b) Intensification of child protection training programs for professionals and non-professionals.
c) Limited research initiatives on various child protection issues
d) Advocacy activities for policies and resources for child protection
e) Legal reform initiatives (Children’s Act)
f) Justice for children initiative by the Justice, Law and Order sector (Justice for children program)
g) OVC interventions within the framework of the NSSPI are being rolled out.

6.3 Effectiveness of the policy environment

Leading policy makers and experts from the child protection agencies agree on the limited success of the child protection policy environment. Their analysis points to a gap between policy and practice. “Despite the institution of progressive laws and policies, Uganda still faces challenges in ensuring adequate protection for all vulnerable children in light of the varied violations and abuse that they are exposed to. Evidence points to the existence of substantial barriers that ought to be addressed before a comprehensive, accessible, functional and sustainable child protection system can be realized,” according to Kaboggoza Sembatya, Assistant Commissioner for Children Affairs, in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.”

The scan of print stories in (3.3) also revealed that many stories contained appeals to government agencies, especially Police, Parliament and the judiciary to do more to enforce laws for child protection.

The same message resonated from a cross section of broadcast media managers, who also said that government needed to show more political will to protect children through enforcement of laws, and implementation of policies laid down. The major challenges to an effective child protection system include the following:

- Poor linkage of the three sub-systems: Child care and protection, justice law and order, and social service delivery
- Poor linkage between the informal and formal child protection system whereby the informal system is more active but they are resource constrained.
- The sub-components are fragmented between sectors and actors, and there is no standardized approach. This lack of quality assurance was pronounced in discussions with both policy makers and civil society actors.

### 6.4 Major stakeholders in child protection

a) In the Government of Uganda, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) coordinates much of the child protection work together with the Child Protection Working Group, which is representative of key sectors responsible for children. The main actors in the MGLSD include the following:

- The National Council for Children
- The office of the Commissioner for Children
- The office of the Commissioner for Youth
- The office for Orphans and Vulnerable Children

b) Civil Society Organisations and International Agencies

There are numerous CSOs involved in different aspects of child protection. The major actors here include local and international organisations and international agencies.

- The African Network for the Protection and Prevention against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN)
- The Transcultural, Psycho-social Organisation Uganda (TPO)
- Child Protection in Crisis Network (CPCN)
- InterAid Uganda
- War Child Uganda
- Cheshire Homes, Katalemwa
- Parliamentary Committee for Children
- World Vision, Uganda
• Save the Children, Uganda
• Oxfam
• Uganda Child Rights NGO Network
• UNICEF

c) Media

In the print media, the two mainstream daily newspapers: The New Vision and the Daily Monitor give regular coverage to child protection.

Many radio stations and some TV stations also have programs for children although, as the broadcast media scan shows, there has been no cautious campaign for child protection at most of these stations.

6.5 Key policy debates and processes in child protection.

a) Debate on strengthening laws against sexual abuse of children especially in home and school environment

b) Campaign to eliminate physical abuse of children both at home and at school.

c) Campaign to eliminate child labour and to keep children in school

d) Amending the laws to better deal with children in conflict with the law (juvenile justice)

e) Process of expanding education to all children under the Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education. Debate here now focuses on the quality of education and the high drop out of school rate.

f) Management of child care institutions.

g) Process of developing quality assurance in child protection for all stakeholders

h) Debate on increased government funding for child protection sectors.

i) Process of strengthening public awareness in child protection especially engaging media as major stakeholder.

j) Major debate on strengthening the Witchcraft Act and other laws to contain the menace of child sacrifice and trade in human organs.

k) Ongoing debate on media coverage of children affairs, especially in tabloids, especially the extent to which media adheres to the ethics of children reporting.
CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0 Analysis of communication practices and links between stakeholders

7.1 Introduction.

This section presents the findings of an analysis of the communication practices and links between civil society organisations, media and government. In particular it brings out the trends, strengths and weaknesses of each stakeholder.

7.2 The Government of Uganda and its agencies

For a long time, there was no organized structure for government to communicate child protection issues to media. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development admits in a preamble to its Communication Strategy 2011 that government had put CSOs at the forefront of child protection response while it concentrated on building institutions, policy development and coordination. The decline in international resource mobilization forced government to rethink its approach and to develop a robust advocacy and communication strategy.

The MGLSD now has a communication and advocacy strategy, which aims at supporting the government response to child protection and to improve coordination with CSOs. The findings from the print media scan indicated that government officials largely communicate through press conferences when there is a burning issue and also took advantage of actual events. This type of communication is incidental and is not sufficient to respond to the increased demand for information in the 24-hour news age. In addition, this type of communication does not cater for different media platforms and audiences.

Indeed this argument is reinforced by the views of the broadcast station managers, where only a minority (6.6.4) rated the quality of information from government as timely and easy to use.

It should be noted that government possesses huge amounts of information on issues to do with children, but the problem lies in how to process that information for use by intended beneficiaries. The MGLSD new OVC communication and advocacy strategy 2011, if implemented, will address those challenges.

7.3 Child Protection Civil Society Organisations

The communication practices of CSOs differ according to organizational size and resources. The international organisations tend to have comparatively more resourced communication offices, backed by information packages and templates developed from overseas. These materials are essential reading but are a one way channel where information is pushed to media and other stakeholders, but with little or no feedback provision from the recipients.

The local CSOs often communicate through press conferences and issuing statements whenever there is a major development. CSOs also take advantage of the special children’s days to communicate.
The case of TPO Uganda, which does not have a communication office, is common to many local CSOs that are cautious of engaging media out of fear of the unknown. Local CSOs, largely funded by foreign organisations, tend to be extremely careful with what they say to media and as such do not command enough visibility in media. The communication is also designed in such a way that the CSOs give their preferred position, control the structure of information, and often speak for children instead of giving voice to the children.

Findings from scans of both the print and broadcast media point in this direction. The broadcast managers in particular also made a conservative rating of CSOs’ quality of information and feedback.

Despite all points raised above, CSOs remain the biggest source of information for media about child protection. In many respects too, they are the biggest source of data for government agencies in this respect.

7.4 Media

The media analysed in this study is by no means exhaustive but the findings point to general trends that inform understanding of media performance.

**Print Media:** Analysis of the two newspapers provides interesting insights into how they communicate with CSOs and government agencies. Journalists interact with both government and CSOs most in sourcing and crosschecking stories. They also tend to liaise more with CSOs than with government in this regard. The other point of interaction is during press conferences or attending actual events, or when called for briefings. Broadcast media is not very different either with the contexts of interaction largely at the level of sourcing or crosschecking stories.

The media is, to a large extent, still operating from a distance, from the traditional model of detached objectivity. Advocacy for any cause is not part of the media tradition, and this throw some light on the intricate nature of linkages between media and the other stakeholders. For both government and CSOs, child protection issues need to be supported by considerable public sensitisation programs, conducted through advocacy campaigns.

The media is one of those important potential partners with effective tools to use in sensitisation campaigns. Yet for media institutions advocacy does not fit in the news paradigm, it erodes objectivity. It tips the story onto one side.

Interviews with managers of both print and broadcast indicated that they consider child protection a national issue, and there is need for media to get more involved, more informed, more skilled in child protection and how to mediate it.

Interviews with media managers and with leaders of CSOs engaged in child protection reported a subtle climate of fear, mistrust and limited sharing of research findings and good practices.
7.5 Media Understanding of Child Protection Issues

Overall, the analysis of findings paints a picture of low levels for journalists’ understanding of child protection issues.

7.5.1 Broadcast Media:

The broadcaster managers, on their word, expressed high levels of awareness of child protection issues, either fully or partially. The reality on the ground, however, presented a slightly different impression.

- At most broadcast stations, there are no policies in place for child protection.
- There is no cautious promotion of child protection issues in stories and programs
- Almost all stations have children’s programs but no dedicated person to deal with mediation of child protection issues.
- There is no link between children desks, programs and child protection within newsroom.
- Editors reported that major challenges include acute skills gaps among journalists for child protection issues.

7.5.2 Print Media

Analysis here is based on the concentration of coverage, sourcing, follow-up mechanisms and packaging of stories in the newspapers. The analysis makes the following observations on journalists’ level of understanding of child protection issues.

- Most news is routine events, reported in the traditional news format. The trend: suspicion of crime, arrest, charge, trial, conviction and sentence. The journalists report what actually happens and do not need to know more, to manifest more insights before the story is published.
- Features tend to focus more on CSOs and what they do and the extent of their involvement.
- Stories do not go beyond the news paradigm, they do neither find fault nor attribute blame.
- Stories on child protection do not make reference to relevant policies or even laws. The stories are not broad enough in this respect.
- With regard to packing of the stories on a page, it is noted that the majority of stories do not have accompanying pictures. Where the pictures exist, often they are for illustrative purposes and not directly linked to persons in the story. This limited use of photojournalism to bring about impactful coverage reveals a shortage of skills in this area.
- The policy environment and the legal regime for child protection provide far more instances for journalists to pick tips for stories, for follow-ups and for investigations than what media currently offers.
7.6 **Assessment of media content on child Protection**

The content of print media coverage has been discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The following observations, however, can be singled out.

a) All key stakeholders are not leveraging the special children’s days to maximize publicity of child protection.

b) Newspapers do not carry enough informed opinion articles on child protection.

c) Stories are generally negative, focusing on the problematic and offering little or no solution.

d) The media employs CSOs as sources, and also to crosscheck facts picked from elsewhere.

e) There is much less use of graphic presentation, including photographs, in newspapers.

f) The child protection issues that are often picked up by media include the following: Child labour, sexual abuse of children, UPE, physical abuse.

g) Topics least mentioned include: policy dialogues, law and order subsystem, photographic reporting and child neglect.

7.7 **Assessment of how the media works.**

The following are trends identified in the media coverage.

a. Key days on the children’s calendar are crowded in one month. This is to the disadvantage of media since no media unit can spend a month reporting on one thing. This might explain why these big and special days, all falling in June, do not seem to attract considerably more coverage.

b. Media does not cautiously bring out children voices especially in the print media. Most times, it is adults speaking for the children.

c. Both print and broadcast media scanned attempted to respect the journalism ethics for children—of doing no harm, not exposing identities of children who are abused or in conflict with the law. Both newspapers carefully edited pictures of minors to cut out parts that could reveal the identity of children.

7.8 **Summary of issues on child protection issues that merit more public debate.**

a) Weaknesses in enforcing the laws related to child protection.

b) Examination of the underlying causes of child abductions and child sacrifice.

c) The absence of quality assurance and of uniformity. Each CSO has its own standards.

d) Moving stories beyond mere reporting to put the question “how was this allowed to happen?” Media needs to hold someone accountable.
e) UPE: the expansion of the program is commendable but focus now shifts to the quality of education and the high drop-out rate.

f) More is needed about the complexities of dealing with children who are in conflict with the law.

g) More needs to be done to bring child participation on to the media agenda.

h) More robust debate is also needed to make use of media platforms to address issues of child vulnerability especially orphans and child mothers.
CHAPTER EIGHT

8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This section presents the conclusions drawn from analysis of findings from scans and interviews with different respondents. It also gives a summary of recommendations that seek to promote the mediation of child protection and strengthening of links between stakeholders.

8.1 Conclusions

i. There are rich legal and policy frameworks for child protection in Uganda, two major obstacles undermining these frameworks exist: First, the fragmentation of actors coupled with poor coordination of the different stakeholders. Secondly, not enough efforts have been invested in getting laws and policies implemented.

ii. This rich legal and policy environment is largely unknown to most media workers and as such, the journalistic output on child protection is limited in breadth and depth. The level of journalists’ appreciation of child protection is generally low.

iii. Coverage of child protection by media is still stuck in the traditional format of news reporting: event based, and reported with a sense of detached objectivity, which does not easily accommodate advocacy work.

iv. There is a lot of potential for media to take part in child protection through partnerships with other actors based on shared responsibilities, mutual respect and understanding.

v. CSOs working on child protection do not have standard performance measures; rather each organisation operates on standards laid down by its funders. Thus there is no standardized approach for this sector to relate with media.

vi. Both CSOs and media still have challenges in promoting child participation and in allowing children a voice to speak on matters affecting them. Media often prefers adults to speak on behalf of children under their care. Voices of CSO officials dominate interviews where these officials frame the reports from angles that are favourable to their side.

vii. A growing yet disturbing perception in some media circles is that cases of child abuse and exploitation have become too frequent in media to remain ‘unusual, and newsworthy.’ Many media managers agree that the abuse stories no longer have the shock effect, the punch power to make impact. New strategies and approaches will be needed to rethink the way the child protection stories are told and packaged in order to achieve impact.

viii. Funding is an ongoing challenge to media institutions especially broadcast stations. This leads to minimal investment by the stations in sourcing and following up stories. Furthermore, this weak financial situation at media institutions tends to make managers look at child protection agencies with a business perspective (not only potential partners for a noble cause, but also as a source of advertising).
ix. Some child protection actors express reservation at engaging media as a partner out of fear of misrepresentation and associated risks. These perceptions are informed either by past experience, fear of the unknown or guidelines from international funding partners.

x. Government agencies and some CSOs lack appropriate media literacy and do not operate according to the media logic. Likewise many media workers also do not fully understand the way government systems work or the culture in CSOs. They do not speak ‘each other’s language.’

xi. Irrespective of the type of ownership of media, there are observed gaps within media towards child protection: these include skills levels, internal structures, funding base are all weak. However, media managers’ responses point into a positive direction where media can avail free platforms for use by child protection actors.

8.2 Recommendations

(i) There is need to explore more opportunities among child protection actors for dialogue, sharing information, sharing of values, skills, experiences and competences. Interviews with representatives of these stakeholders indicate there is no profound reason preventing such interaction.

(ii) Media, child protection CSO officials and government officials should engage in more partnerships on child protection. Information should also be provided on how stakeholders can enter into partnerships.

(iii) In addition to literature that government provides, important basic information should be generated as guiding material on policy and good practice in the child protection sector. This may include basic information and media kits provided by CSOs and government for media as well as basic concepts and principles in child protection.

(iv) CSOs and government departments dealing with children should enter into long-term arrangements with media organization as allies in child protection whereby the media undertakes to carry information on child protection promptly, accurately and at no cost as a national responsibility.

(v) The Child Protection NGO Network and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Makerere University Department of Journalism and Communication and the Makerere AfriChild Centre should design a plan to support media houses set up children desks, staffed with personnel specially trained in the field. Journalists reporting on child protection should also set up a network to allow for a development of a consistent body of specialists that stakeholders can deal with on a regular basis.

(vi) Media institutions, being corporate citizens, must also undertake a public service role to willingly invest resources and time into supporting journalists’ projects while they negotiate funding partnerships with stakeholders.

(vii) There should be certified tailor-made courses to skill and retool journalists to enable them report ethically on child protection. Similar trainings are needed for CSOs and government officials in media literacy and media engagement.
ix. Some child protection actors express reservation at engaging media as a partner out of fear of misrepresentation and associated risks. These perceptions are informed either by past experience, fear of the unknown or guidelines from international funding partners.

x. Government agencies and some CSOs lack appropriate media literacy and do not operate according to the media logic. Likewise many media workers also do not fully understand the way government systems work or the culture in CSOs. They do not speak ‘each other’s language.’

xi. Irrespective of the type of ownership of media, there are observed gaps within the media industry towards child protection: these include skills levels, internal structures, funding base are all weak. However, media managers’ responses point into a positive direction where media can avail free platforms for use by child protection actors.
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