



Economic strengthening activities in child protection interventions: an adapted systematic review

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AFC	Action for Children
APON	Adolescent Peer Organised Network
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CAMP	Child Abuse Mitigation Project
CCF	Christian Children's Fund
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEDPA	Centre for Development and Population Activities
CEPA	UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration
CHSRF	Canadian Health Services Research Foundation
COSMO	Community Support and Mentoring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
CWC	Child Welfare Committees
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ELA	Employment and Livelihoods for Adolescents
FOCUS	Families, Orphans and Children Under Stress
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
FLASCO	Latin American Institute of Social Sciences
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
ICS	International Child Support
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IDS	Institute of Development Studies

IEC	Information, Education and Communication
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MMAT	Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PICO	Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcomes
PRECISE	Prevention of Child Injuries through Social Intervention and Education
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SAS	Small Arms Survey
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SR	Systematic Review
TAHEA	Tanzania Home Economics Association
TANESA	Tanzania-Netherlands Project to Support HIV/AIDS Control in Mwanza Region
TRY	Tap and Reposition Youth
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development

UYDEL	Uganda Youth Development Link
WHO	World Health Organization
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YRTEP	Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace

1 Introduction to and overview of the study

The past two decades have seen a growing focus on both poverty reduction and promoting children's rights. In children's rights, the right to protection from exploitation, abuse and violence has often been a 'Cinderella' area; it is considered to affect relatively few children, and as a specialist area of social welfare outside the remit of 'mainstream' anti-poverty activities. In recent years, the recognition that economic deprivation underlies some (but by no means all) violations of children's protection rights has meant some child protection programmes have started to include anti-poverty components.

Outside the field of emergencies, where some reviews have considered the effectiveness of economic strengthening in promoting children's right to protection (e.g. Child Protection in Crisis Network, 2011; Sheahan, 2011; Thompson, 2012), the impacts of anti-poverty programmes on child protection outcomes have been little examined. A recent study (Barrientos et al., 2013) considers the record of cash transfer programmes in improving child protection outcomes. However, there has been little analysis of two other main areas of activity: the growing integration of child protection and social protection systems in Latin America; or the large number of relatively small-scale programmes that aim to improve child protection outcomes. While this paper does include some large-scale programmes (such as Mexico's Estancias and Jordan's Better Parenting Programme), the focus is mostly on what can be learnt from small- to medium-scale initiatives. As such, by examining how far child protection programmes involve economic strengthening components, and how effective these are in improving child protection outcomes, it examines the 'other side of the coin' to that examined by Barrientos et al.¹

This paper is part of a broader research and networking programme that aims to strengthen linkages between action on poverty, development and child protection. It reports on an adapted systematic review that examines the contribution of anti-poverty programmes to child protection interventions in four areas – child marriage, sexual violence, physical violence and inadequate care² – in low- and middle-income countries.³ In addition, it adapts a systematic review methodology to increase its applicability to policy areas where much of the evidence is qualitative and/or based on grey literature. The review was carried out over the period February 2012 to March 2013, with approximately half the time spent on searching and coding papers and half spent on analysis.

The review focuses on two questions:

- To what extent do child protection interventions (in our four focal areas) have an anti-poverty focus?
- What contribution do anti-poverty components make to improving the quality of child protection interventions?

1 Like Barrientos et al, this study examines some cash transfer programmes where there is evidence of impact on the four focal areas of child protection chosen for this study.

2 These four areas were selected to reflect the Oak Foundation's areas of interest and the Overseas Development Institute's (ODI's) areas of prior expertise.

3 Our study used the World Bank's classification of low- and middle-income countries: <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications/country-and-lending-groups>

In order to answer these questions, we looked at a wide range of child protection activities, both those with explicit anti-poverty components and those without.⁴ While the review is grounded in a broad conceptualisation of poverty as multidimensional, our operational definition of anti-poverty programmes was those that aimed to strengthen individuals' or household's economic security – their income, consumption or assets. This focus was selected both to fill the gap outlined earlier in knowledge about the impact of economic strengthening activities on child protection outcomes, and because focusing on one type of anti-poverty activity would enable comparisons with other activities intended to address a broader conception of poverty (including lack of access to information, powerlessness etc.).

Because the review was intended to investigate the relative importance of economic strengthening compared with other activities contributing to better child protection outcomes, we examined and present evidence on a range of activities intended to reduce the risk of children's protection rights being violated. These include education and awareness-raising activities; child protection system strengthening activities; activities to improve access to services; and mentoring/support programmes for children and young people. Many of the programmes examined had multiple components, with 43% of programmes involving economic strengthening components. Not all the programmes examined were described or conceptualised as child protection programmes; however, all those examined were included because evaluations or analyses of them documented their impacts on one or more child protection outcomes of interest to this review.

1.1 Sources

The review draws on studies employing both qualitative and quantitative data. All studies included described their methodology sufficiently rigorously to be assessed as credible sources using the Mixed Methods Assessment Tool (see Section 2). This means that – unusually for a review based on systematic principles – qualitative and quantitative evidence are given equal weight. It also means that analysis of particular interventions may draw entirely on qualitative sources, and thus findings cannot always be quantified. Overall, 37% of the papers used a quantitative methodology,⁵ 37% used qualitative data and 26% mixed qualitative and quantitative data. At its best, this has meant that findings concerning the numerical significance or scale of impact of interventions are complemented with insights on what these changes have meant in individuals' lives. More commonly, however, insights are derived from either a rigorous quantitative or a rigorous qualitative research process.

1.2 Definitions

The review team recognise the multi-dimensionality of the causes, experience and consequences of poverty. It became apparent early on in preparatory work for this project that there was a lack of clarity on the extent to which reducing economic deprivation is associated with improved protection of children, and the circumstances in which it is most effective in doing so.⁶ In this review, we therefore define anti-poverty measures as those that directly improve economic wellbeing (i.e. are intended to lead to greater income, assets or consumption). We primarily use the term 'economic strengthening' to refer to these activities. These include cash and in-kind transfers, vocational training, entrepreneurship training, microfinance (including savings, loans and insurance) and assistance in job searching/matching.

Children and youth. Consistent with international standards, such as those embodied in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), a child is defined as a person under the age of 18. However, many of the projects and programmes we examined are focused on youth, broadly defined as those aged 10-24 years, and thus some of our analysis concerns young people aged over 18.

We have principally drawn on standard international definitions of child protection violations. (See Annex 5 for further definitions.) In each of the four thematic sections, we briefly outline the definitions and scope of the issues we discuss.

4 Within each focal area, we focused on child protection violations where there was evidence that economic deprivation played an exacerbating role. Thus, for example, we did not examine anti-foeticide interventions, as most evidence suggests this practice is more common among wealthier groups (e.g. Bhalotra and Cochrane, 2010).

5 17% of quantitative papers used an experimental design, including randomised control trials.

6 This was particularly the case with respect to sexual violence, physical violence and inadequate care. There is a growing body of analysis of the role and limitations of economic strengthening programmes in preventing early marriage (much of which is summarised in Malhotra et al., 2011).

Child marriage is defined as marriage below 18 years of age, in accordance with the UNCRC and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Sexual violence is understood as encompassing sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and sexual harassment. Sexual abuse is the use of child for adult sexual gratification; sexual exploitation is abuse involving financial gain for child or perpetrator; and sexual harassment is unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Physical violence against children is understood to incorporate corporal punishment, other physical violence (both fatal and non-fatal), such as violence sustained in conflict or gang activity, foeticide and infanticide.

Inadequate care is understood as care that does not meet children's developmental needs, including their nutrition, health and safety, or provide for their, emotional, social and cognitive development.

1.3 Navigating this report

This document is intended to be a background report that presents full details of the methodology used and the papers examined. In keeping with one of the principles of systematic reviews – transparency – we aim to provide full details of our search and analytical strategies, of each of the papers examined and of how they were used in the analysis. Inevitably, this means the report is very long.

Sections 2-5 present the methodology used and the conceptual framework for the study, and an overview of the papers examined. Sections 6-9 focus on the four thematic areas examined in the review: child marriage, sexual violence, physical violence and inadequate care. Each of these thematic sections starts with a key findings box, presents details of the papers examined and then discusses the main intervention strategies used (economic strengthening, awareness raising etc.), giving details of each of the programmes examined. This is followed with a discussion of the evidence of which groups these programmes benefited or failed to benefit, and of other factors influencing programme impact. Each of the thematic sections then concludes with a discussion of evidence concerning the extent to which the child protection activities incorporated an economic strengthening focus and the extent to which anti-poverty components appeared to improve their impact, or, conversely, their absence undermined their impact. Section 10 draws together insights on the extent of economic strengthening activities and their impact across the four thematic areas. For readers with a strong interest in the role of economic strengthening activities in child protection programmes, the conclusions to each thematic section and Section 10 are likely to be of most interest.

1.4 Related outputs

Findings from this research, a literature review examining the relationship between poverty and child protection violations and field research undertaken in Ethiopia, Uganda and Vietnam will be developed in short policy briefings that draw out the main insights in each of the thematic areas. These will be available in 2014.

A summary paper, based on findings from this adapted systematic review and from the literature review concerning the relationship between poverty and child protection violations is available from ODI. All these papers summarise key insights without going into methodological detail. Their focus is on policy and practice implications.

1.5 Conceptual framework

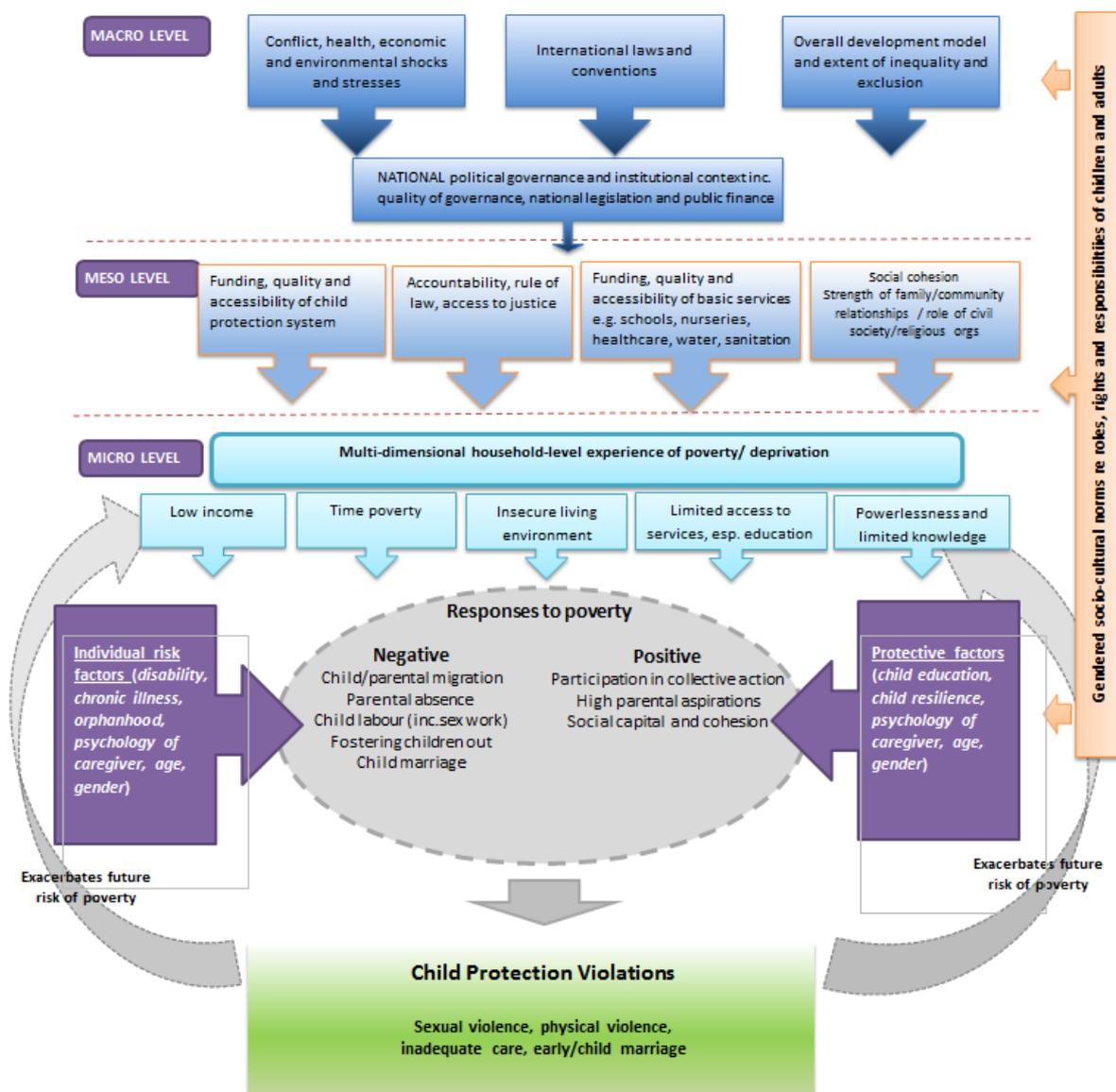
Figure 1 summarises the conceptual framework developed for this study. It outlines factors at macro, meso and micro levels that influence children's risk of sexual and physical violence, child marriage or inadequate care. It aims to illustrate the pathways through which economic deprivation can contribute to violations of children's rights to protection. It situates these in the wider context of other important factors that influence child protection outcomes.

The interventions examined in this review fall into two main groups: those that focus at the meso level (particularly those aimed at strengthening the child protection system) and those that focus at the micro level. This set of interventions:

- Aims to change norms and practices through awareness raising (usually at a local level);
- Responds to factors that exacerbate the risk of child protection violations, e.g. by providing transfers or strengthening capacity to generate income or assets, or to compensate for limited education via vocational training;
- Reduces the risk of parents’ and carers’ livelihood strategies leading to child protection violations, e.g. by providing safe care for working parents.

In each thematic area, we present a summary diagram that outlines the theory of change for interventions.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework – relationship between economic deprivation and child protection violations



2 Methodology

2.1 Background

Systematic reviews (SRs) are a rigorous and transparent form of literature review. Described by Petrosino and Lavenberg as ‘the most reliable and comprehensive statement about what works’, (Petrosino and Lavenberg, 2007:1) SRs involve identifying, synthesising and assessing the available evidence in order to generate a robust answer to a research question (Hagen-Zanker et al., 2012). An SR is best viewed as a research process, differing from a standard literature review because it uses a rigorous and transparent methodology to provide an unbiased assessment of what works through the systematic identification of relevant studies, assessment of validity of papers/studies and synthesis of evidence (Hagen-Zanker et al., 2011a; Petticrew and Roberts, 2006).

Developed initially in the health sciences, SRs have expanded into social and behavioral science disciplines. Social scientific reviews have frequently broadened the types of evidence included and involve broader expert input. In international development, SRs are increasingly seen as a tool to increase evidence-informed decision making. They are considered to assist policymakers to make decisions by providing a rigorous overview of what works, offering transparency and therefore accountability and replicability. A number of donors, notably the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid) are focusing attention and resources on testing the appropriateness of SRs in assessing the impacts of development and humanitarian interventions (Hagen-Zanker et al., 2012).

2.2 Study design

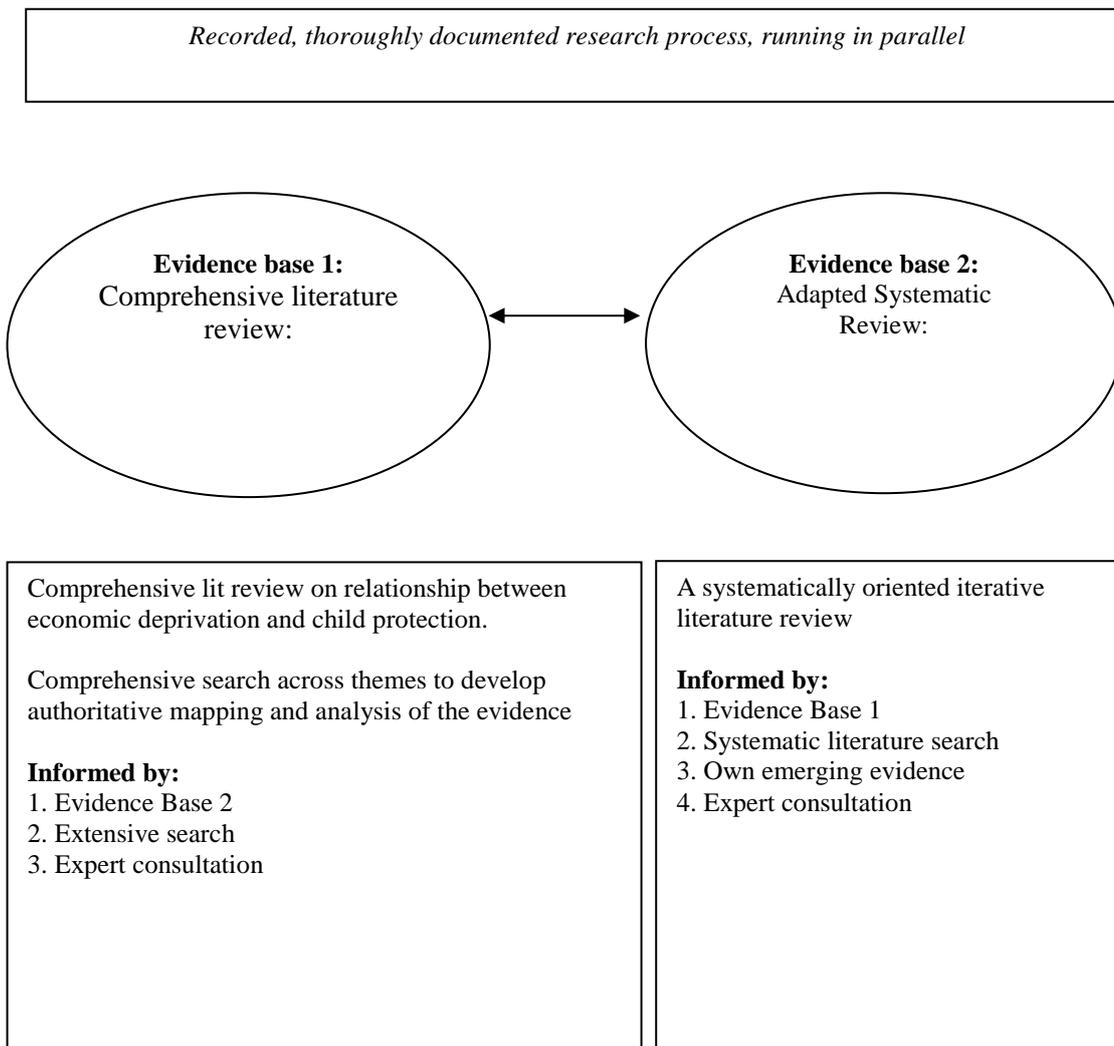
The challenge of this review was to develop a methodology appropriate for an area where the evidence was likely to be fragmented, and mainly in the grey literature. We expected to find quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods studies and wanted to find an approach that would assess this evidence on equal terms without introducing a quantitative bias. We expected that, given the sensitive nature of the issues under consideration, qualitative analyses would form a significant subset of our evidence base.

To achieve this in our literature search, our review borrowed methods from traditional SR approaches and the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) for the literature search phase, and then drew on realist synthesis ideas and methods for data analysis and synthesis. Section 4.1 explores in more depth how we adapted realist synthesis approaches.

The CHSRF approach is a more flexible approach designed to inform a policy audience or process (Culyer and Lomas, 2006). It can include a phase of assessing academic literature (e.g. through a literature review), a phase of iteratively receiving formal submissions from an expert panel and a phase of systematically incorporating non-expert views – all of which may be governed by a research committee or steering group. For this review, an expert panel was formed and consulted for literature recommendations and reference lists; input was also received from partner organisations and from a range of experts at a public event held during the search process.

The review also draws on evidence generated during the research process for the companion study (Marcus, 2013), with relevant sources shared between the research teams. An initial scoping study informed both papers and was design to build an initial overview of the literature and inform the SR search process and keywords to be used.

Figure 2: Review evidence bases



The review itself was undertaken in a number of stages, described fully below, including first the identification of studies, then quality assessment and exclusion based on title abstract and full text, then further screening before the included papers were analysed and conclusions drawn.

The review does not aim to be a complete listing of all the research published on child protection interventions. Rather, it includes papers that both were relevant to the study questions and met quality assessment criteria. It excluded papers from high-income contexts.

The search was guided by a focus on child protection outcomes for each of the themes included in the review, rather than looking at how far anti-poverty interventions take child protection issues into account, which would have constituted a major, but different, piece of work.

Annex 1 illustrates the review process diagrammatically.

Box 1: Review stages

Review stages

- Define scope of review and research question
- Transparent Search Process and incorporation of literature from experts, scoping paper and evidence mapping
- Researcher sorts results for relevance to the review (reliant on researchers undertaking the review to keep the themes and broader research questions in mind)
- Application of inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Included sources uploaded into reference management software
- Descriptive Coding applied
- Quality assessed blind by two researchers
- Quality assessment codes reconciled
- Exclusion in quality and/or relevance
- Data extraction
- Exclusion on relevance
- Synthesis

2.3 Search strategy

The search strategy aimed to locate academic and grey literature across disciplines. To achieve this, we applied a combination of techniques: database and internet searching was combined with hand searching of institutional websites, snowballing and citation searching and input from experts.

A team of four researchers conducted the initial search process over a period of four and a half months. Each researcher focused on one thematic area for the search period and one member of the team coordinated the process in addition to conducting the search. An additional search took place in late 2012 and early 2013 in order to address gaps in the literature that the research team highlighted following an initial assessment of the evidence.

In addition to literature found through this searching process, we included literature sourced for a companion report that examined the relationship between economic deprivation and child protection violations. All the papers uploaded to the database were subjected to the inclusion/exclusion criteria described in Section 3.1.

2.3.1 Electronic searching

A broad search strategy was applied; searches were conducted in Google, Google Scholar, Web of Knowledge and Pub Med, as well as on the websites of relevant journals identified by the research team: *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *The Lancet* and *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*.

To search using Google and academic databases, a set of key words was developed for each of the thematic areas; additional terms were developed and adapted as necessary. The researchers applied these applied flexibly, rather than as specified search streams. This was in order to facilitate cross-disciplinary searching and to allow researchers to be responsive to the emerging evidence and able to change tack in order to locate the most relevant results. Annex 3 presents the key words and how they were grouped. The research team specifically did not search for programmes by name, except where the expert team drew attention to them. This was to retain the broad focus of the search and avoid researcher bias and bias towards better-known programmes.

The keywords combined sub-areas in each theme, terms identified in the scoping paper and terms designed to cut down the amount of situational analysis and similar research found. Terms included 'evidence', 'impact', 'trial', 'experience', 'project', 'programme', 'intervention', 'report', 'outcome' and 'assessment'. Strategies for

excluding results from the US and other OECD countries were also developed and adapted as the search progressed.

2.3.2 Hand searching institutional websites

In order to locate relevant grey literature, the hand searching of institutional websites was a central part of the search strategy, and sources found here made up a substantial proportion of the studies included. A list of organisations known by the research team to undertake child protection work was compiled. To this we added organisations that emerged during the electronic search process (see Annex 2).

Where a search function was available on institutional websites, researchers applied a simplified set of keywords⁷ in flexible combinations to locate the most relevant literature. In many cases, we found that search function on these websites did not perform well, and in each case the researcher also browsed the site. We focused on resources and publication sections where these were available, although we encountered problems with broken links, poor website navigation and search functions that did not enable terms to be combined.

2.3.3 Expert-identified literature

Informed by the CHSRF approach to SR, a panel of experts was established to provide input and literature suggestions and reference lists for the review.⁸ Experts from varied institutions and disciplinary backgrounds contributed recommendations, which complemented and extended literature found through other search processes, and in many cases acted as a starting point for citation searching. This strategy resulted in some very useful sources that had not been located during the search process. We also found it helpful when literature recommendations the experts made were found to be already included in the review database, confirming that we were looking in the right areas.

2.3.4 Snowballing and citation searching

All included sources were snowballed from so we could find relevant papers in their references. Academic papers were also subjected to citation searching, using Google Scholar. This process allowed us to reach much deeper into the literature for each theme than would have been possible with electronic, database and institutional searching, and was particularly useful where these search methods returned a large number of policy and advocacy documents.

2.4 Inclusion of papers into the review

2.4.1 Criteria

The research team applied inclusion and exclusion criteria at the point of search, and papers excluded at this point were not tracked. This approach was applied as the majority of our searching took place outside of academic database sites, and skills in scanning results and adjusting search terms were more central to the review process than recording all of the sources the team encountered.

Researchers were able to make initial and obvious exclusions based on criteria without getting involved in the time-consuming process of uploading and recording bibliographic information. A transparent set of criteria based on PICO considerations⁹ was applied. No criteria were placed on the publication date of sources, as we wanted to be as inclusive as possible in the search process and value older research. Table 1 gives the criteria the research team used.

7 Key words used were ‘child/youth/adolescent’, ‘protection’, ‘maltreatment’, ‘violence’, ‘care’, ‘exploitation’, ‘marriage’, ‘abuse’, ‘neglect’, ‘childcare/child care’.

8 Literature recommendations were received from Virginia Morrow (Young Lives), Monica Ruiz-Casares (McGill University), David Gordon (Bristol University), Joachim Theis (UNICEF), Michael Feigelson (Bernard van Leer Foundation), Annabel Erulkar (Population Council), Naana Otoo-Oyortey (FORWARD), Karen Moore (Plan International), Emily Delap (EveryChild International) Laura Boone (IRC), Lorraine Van Blerk (University of Dundee), David Stewart (UNICEF Uganda), Josh Chaffin (Child Protection in Crisis Network), Mattias Lundberg (World Bank), Keetie Roelen (IDS), Faisal Maryam and Blain Tektekel (Oak Ethiopia).

9 PICO criteria consider population, exposure or intervention, study design, outcomes, countries, time and language.

Table 1: Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Is the study in English?	If not exclude but store in EPPI-Reviewer and label with language. Code for possible consideration depending on human resource capacity in the programme for reviewing foreign language literature
Does the source respond to at least one of the research questions?	If not exclude
Does the study include a discussion/measure on the impact on children?	If not exclude
Does the study refer to at least one low- or middle-income country?	If not exclude
Is the focus of the study <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Female genital mutilation/cutting?• Juvenile justice systems?• Birth registration?	Exclude if yes

For studies that fulfilled all the criteria, the paper was uploaded into EPPI-Reviewer and coded. Studies were screened based on title/abstract/full text as appropriate, and, where available, the full text was uploaded into EPPI-Reviewer. The process was reliant on the researchers keeping in mind the research questions and themes at all times as they searched. When the research team encountered literature in languages other than English, they uploaded it into the database. However, because of the volume of literature involved in the review we were unable to consider these sources.

The focus through the search process was on locating papers that gave child protection outcomes. This focus on outcomes rather than on the type of intervention enabled us to look across disciplines and gain an understanding of how and where anti-poverty featured in the design of these interventions.

A total of 1,341 papers were included in the review and uploaded to the database from the combined search techniques.

2.4.2 Uploading and coding method

Uploaded sources were coded as they were uploaded into EPPI-Reviewer 4 based on the full text. Two levels of coding were operated. An initial level of coding was applied to every uploaded source, capturing where the source had been found, the type of source¹⁰ and which theme it was relevant for. A more in-depth 'data extraction tool' captured information from papers that contained primary evidence and were potentially relevant to our analysis and would also undergo quality assessment. This coding aimed to signal which issues of relevance to the review were present in the document, as well as the intervention's aims, outcomes and target group. The team coded 381 papers using the data extraction tool.

The data extraction tool captured:

- Stated aim of the intervention;
- Country;
- Group of children;
- Target group;
- Activities;
- Type of child protection violation;
- Policy mechanism;
- Length of intervention;
- Intervention site;

¹⁰ Papers were classified as either primary source dealing with one intervention; primary source dealing with multiple interventions; or secondary source.

-
- Outcome;
 - Disciplinary background of authors.

2.4.3 Quality assessment

Quality assessment aims to answer the question, ‘Is this study good enough to provide some evidence that will contribute to the synthesis?’ (Pawson, 2006:88). For our purposes, we considered the quality of the reporting. Once coded, uploaded sources were interrogated with a quality assessment scale that focused on the clarity with which the methodology was described. As discussed above, the research team did not apply the scale to policy, advocacy and other types of sources that were clearly not based on original research. Quality considerations played no role in the initial decision to include a paper in the review or not.

During an initial period of experimentation with the methodology, it became clear that we were finding more mixed methods research designs than anticipated and we adapted the quality assessment process accordingly to take the specific consideration of the application of a mixed methods approach.

With this in mind we chose to apply the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), developed by Pluye et al. (2011), which is designed to deal with quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research within the same scale. The scale goes from 0, awarded where the methodology is unclear or not explained, to ****, which shows a high quality of reporting of the research methods. The MMAT tool is a relatively new instrument designed by researchers working in health sciences, and has been applied in relatively few published studies. Pace et al. (2012) found that it offered a high level of reliability, and disagreements between researchers were easy to resolve.

The MMAT tool takes the researcher through a series of questions about the research, and a record of their judgements is recorded in a table, which increases transparency. Quality assessment was completed blind¹¹ and was conducted independently by two researchers on each included paper – any disagreements in the score applied were reconciled through discussion in order to reach the final code, which was recorded in EPPI-Reviewer. Annex 4 shows the full assessment table.

For the purpose of our analysis, papers that scored 0 or * were excluded, as we felt the quality of reporting was not strong enough to act as reliable evidence. A total of 369 papers were quality assessed; 203 of these were excluded based on the quality criteria.

Pluye et al. (2011) suggest that, where the relevant methodological information is not given in the text, the authors be contacted for further information. At this point in our study, we have been unable to do this, and question the practicalities of doing this for a review that includes a large number of grey literature evaluations rather than academic work.

It is beyond the scope of the review to assess the quality or efficiency of the methods used and their fitness for the research question in each case. Rather, we are looking for a quality safeguard that the methodology used is adequately explained and justified. Researchers asked themselves, ‘Does this research method make sense for the question?’, but beyond this our team did not have the expertise to assess all of the research designs.

2.5 Data analysis and synthesis

2.5.1 Synthesis approach

Our synthesis approach adopted a combination of narrative synthesis and realist synthesis adapted for the broad scope of this review.¹² Narrative synthesis is based on a textual analysis of the evidence and presents a summarised picture of the impact of interventions’ success based on a range of studies and examining their similarities and differences (Boaz et al., 2002).

Realist synthesis is a more theory-driven approach, which works well for mixed methods reviews where qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research are treated with equal weight (Greenhalgh et al., 2011).

¹¹ When assessing included papers using the MMAT tool, each researcher coded the source independently and had no knowledge of the scoring other researchers applied.

¹² Both realist synthesis and narrative approaches are able to deal with qualitative and quantitative data.

Realist synthesis is an emerging approach to conducting SRs. The realist approach aims to cut through complexity by focusing on the ‘theories’ that underlie complex social interventions and provide an analysis of ‘what works, how, for whom, in what circumstances and to what extent’ (Pawson et al., 2004) by developing an understanding of the link between programme design and outcome and the mechanism by which successful (or not) child protection outcomes are achieved (Greenhalgh et al., 2005). There is no attempt to produce a single measure of an intervention’s impact, and information derived from the included studies is not analysed statistically; given the range of themes and outcomes we are dealing with in this literature this kind of measure is not very useful – we are more concerned with identifying what matters about particular contexts or characteristics.

2.5.2 Synthesis process

In order to get to the root of ‘what works, for whom and in what circumstances’, realist synthesis examines the programme mechanisms that bring about or trigger change and the circumstances in which they succeed or fail (White, 2009). To carry out our analysis, we began by using the initial scoping paper commissioned for this project to identify the programme mechanisms we expected to find in the included papers. As the search team uploaded included sources and applied the descriptive coding, information about the programme mechanisms involved in the intervention was captured.

Capturing this information enabled us to group together the included papers and to consider how and with what impact these mechanisms had been deployed. Once the search process was complete and all papers had been fully coded, the coded information was extracted into a set of tables for analysis, and descriptive statistics were compiled for the frequency of mechanisms, methodological approach, scale of programme and disciplinary approach (see Annex 6 for a breakdown of the papers). This information is presented in detail for each of the four thematic foci in Sections 6-9. The synthesis process took approximately six person-months.

Pawson (2006) suggests that applying the realist synthesis approach can be enhanced by the inclusion of different kinds of documentation about an intervention – project documents and internal data and evaluations, for example – to provide a fuller picture of the working and development of an intervention. Within the constraints of this review process, obtaining additional information about interventions was not possible. However, our search strategy has meant we have included a wide variety of types of papers and evaluation in the analysis. The inclusion of multiple papers dealing with different aspects of an intervention and research conducted at different points in time can add depth to the analysis so, where possible, we included such papers.

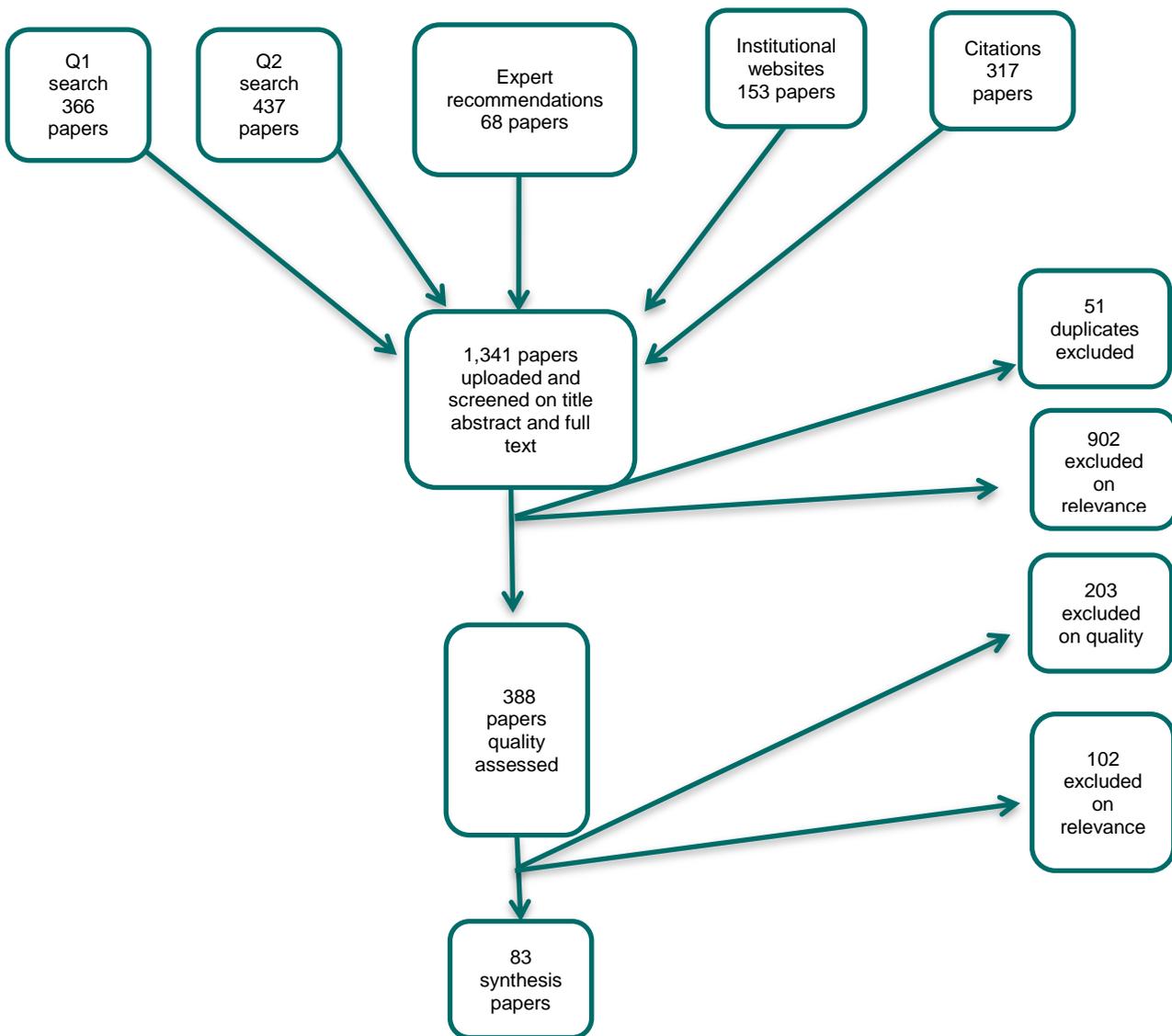
A key element of realist synthesis is analysing whom particular interventions work for, and whom they do not benefit. Only some of the papers reviewed discussed this systematically. This may be a consequence partially of the research designs of evaluations included here, which often include a matched control group and are focused on a comparison between treatment and control groups. It also reflects a failure of some qualitative analyses to examine issues of social exclusion.

We contextualised our analysis of the findings with reference to wider literature on interventions aiming to address child protection violations in our four focal areas, and on the relationship between child protection and anti-poverty programmes more generally. Some of this wider literature draws on SRs, such as Malhotra et al.’s (2011) SR of early marriage interventions. Others draw on rigorous analysis of a number of interventions, but do not call themselves systematic or adapted systematic reviews, such as Barrientos et al. (2013).

3 Overview of papers

A total of 83 papers were included in the synthesis for this review. Figure 3 illustrates the process of narrowing the included evidence down based on quality and relevance at various stages throughout the review.

Figure 3: Review process flowchart



We successfully included papers from grey and academic literature, and the search process located working papers, unpublished work, publications from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations and some papers that show negative or ambiguous results. The majority of the papers, however, indicate positive results and impacts. In the synthesis, 59 of the included papers were from the grey literature and 24 were classified as academic. It was in the inadequate care them that the most academic literature was found, with 10 out of 22 papers (45%). The other themes had a higher proportion of grey literature, with the sexual violence theme taking up the highest number of such papers (85%).

Table 2: Type of literature

	In all themes		Child marriage		Sexual violence		Physical violence		Inadequate care	
Grey	59	71%	22	81%	23	85%	10	59%	12	55%
Academic	24	29%	5	19%	4	15%	7	41%	10	45%

In terms of research design, the papers included in the synthesis comprised 26% using mixed methods, 37% using qualitative data and 37% using quantitative data, 17% of which were experimental designs including randomised control trials. This mix of research designs illustrates the success of our research methodology in locating literature across disciplines and research traditions. Annex 6 includes a more complete breakdown of the documents found. Few papers achieved a **** MMAT score; ** was the most common.

Table 3: MMAT scores of papers included

MMAT score	All papers		Child marriage		Sexual violence		Physical violence		Inadequate care	
**	43	52%	13	48%	16	59%	7	41%	13	59%
***	33	40%	10	37%	10	37%	8	47%	8	36%
****	7	8%	4	15%	1	4%	2	12%	1	5%

The synthesis papers showed some regional diversity, although over half of the included papers dealt with Sub-Saharan Africa, as Table 4 illustrates. Papers dealing with Sub-Saharan Africa are particularly strongly represented in the sexual violence theme, comprising 21 of 27 papers included in the synthesis.¹³

Table 4: Regional breakdown of papers included

	In all themes		Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
Sub-Saharan Africa	43	52%	11	21	5	9
Asia	21	25%	13	2	1	5
Middle East and North Africa	5	6%	1	1	4	2
Americas	13	16%	2	2	6	6
Europe	1	1%	0	1	1	0

¹³ Note that some papers appear in more than one theme, hence there is a discrepancy between the total number of programmes examined and the total numbers for each theme.

4 Study strengths and limitations

The design of this adapted SR was successful in that it took in literature from a range of disciplines, including grey literature, and a range of study designs. The design of the review also led to the inclusion of a high number of papers in our final synthesis,¹⁴ which indicates that we undertook a comprehensive literature search across the review's themes.

The literature included in the synthesis for the review is prominently grey, at 71%. This may reflect some obstacles in the research team's ability to view academic sources, as we were not able to access all the journal articles found during the search process. For example, articles in journals such as *AIDS Care* often appeared in searches but the team was not able to access the full text. The broad nature of the outcomes in the included papers and the scope of the review meant developing a clear coding structure and relevance criteria was challenging, and these were adapted through the review process. The team would have benefited from additional experience in conducting adapted SRs here, as well as tighter relevance definitions.

The MMAT tool allowed us to score each study design in a way that facilitated cross-comparison to judge each piece of research on its own merits and with equal weight to qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research, and there is no bias towards randomised control trials. The use of the MMAT tool in this study was limited to a consideration of the research methods as reported in the papers. The tool is designed to 'appraise the methodological quality of the studies retained for a systematic mixed studies review, not the quality of their reporting (writing)' or analysis (Pluye et al., 2011:1). Good research may be poorly presented, and this may particularly be the case in the grey literature, where the audience may be less concerned with methodology. Likewise, some methodologically and analytically sound papers do not 'waste words' on very detailed methodological description, particularly in journal articles with tight word limits. The research team was not able to assess the relevance of a particular research design in each case, or to contact researchers for further details of the methods used. The team would have benefited from more experience in research methodology, particularly quantitative methodology, and a broader base of methodological knowledge.

The analysis presented in the review was subject to a number of limitations. The broad nature of the research question, varied outcomes and multiple methods of assessment led to a degree of lack of comparability. Although a high number of papers are included in the review as a whole, each thematic area contains a smaller number of papers, and in some cases papers are concerned with multiple themes. The research team found that information about the context of an evaluation, its design and its theory of change was often absent from the evaluation and research papers located in our literature search. This limited our ability to apply realist synthesis methods, particularly as it was beyond the scope of the review to search for and acquire project papers and institutional reviews that may have dealt with programme development. The scope of the review was also limited by our inclusion of only those papers written in English, which may particularly have affected the inclusion of papers and evaluations from Latin America.

The SR emphasis on evaluations based on original data (either primary evidence or evidence from analysis of existing datasets) led to a bias towards projects and programmes rather than policies. Although programmes are often the means by which policies are implemented – particularly in the anti-poverty field – our search captured few large-scale government programmes. Three of these were cash transfer programmes (in Mexico, Pakistan and Peru) and one was a subsidised child care programme in Peru. Our search processes also captured several large-scale NGO programmes, such as those run by BRAC in Bangladesh and PRACHAR in India.

14 For example Hagen-Zanker et al. (2011b) included 37 studies in their synthesis. Kristjansson et al. (2007) included 18 studies reported in 29 articles.

Our requirement that, for inclusion in the review, studies must provide evidence related to measurable outcomes, also contributed to this bias, and meant that many more discursive papers without such evidence of outcomes were excluded. This means that few papers discussing inter-linkages between social protection and child protection systems have been included in the review, as these tend to be descriptive rather than evaluating outcomes for specific child protection measures (Sherr and Mueller, 2009). For example, although Chile Solidario is increasingly recognised as an example of a programme combining financial support with other activities that may have an impact on child protection outcomes, such as support around intra-household dynamics (Vadapalli, 2009), we did not find any papers that discussed specific outcomes in our four focal areas. These broader papers have, however, informed the analysis, which, as noted above, draws selectively on relevant wider literature as well as the studies included in the review.

5 Findings

5.1 Types of programmes included

Table 5 provides an overview of the types of programmes included for each theme. Across the sample of 71 programmes, NGOs implemented 59%, government 25% (frequently supported by international organisations) and academia 15%. The latter were typically short-term, experimental programmes set up to test particular approaches. While academic institutions coordinated them, it was often government (or, more rarely, NGO) staff who implemented them. They are classified as academic-run programmes here because of their experimental nature. Programmes of this type were particularly common in the inadequate care theme, as all the programmes aiming to reduce accidental injury and most of those aiming to promote more sensitive parenting were of this type.

NGOs run a high proportion of programmes aiming to reduce early marriage and physical violence. The lower figure for sexual violence masks the fact that several of the programmes considered in this theme were funded by international agencies in programmes that worked with governments but subcontracted NGOs, and thus the actual level of service delivery by NGOs was somewhat higher, and on a par with the figures for early marriage and physical violence. The lower representation of NGOs in the inadequate care theme reflects the greater significance of government programmes providing day care and/or educating parents on child development and care issues. The NGO programmes considered here were all orphan support programmes.

Table 5: Programmes included by implementing agency

Implementing agency	Total		Child marriage		Sexual violence		Physical violence		Inadequate care	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
NGO	42	60%	14	74%	14	54%	11	69%	7	35%
Academic	11	15%	1	5%	4	15%	3	19%	5	25%
Government/international agency*	18	25%	4	21%	8	31%	2	12%	8	32%
Total	71		19		26		16		20	

Note: * These are considered together as the majority of government programmes considered were financially supported by international agencies.

Some programmes addressed multiple themes and are considered in more than one paper, hence there is a discrepancy between the total number of programmes examined, and the total numbers for each theme. The total number of programmes when broken down by each thematic focus adds up to 79.

5.2 How far do child protection programmes involve anti-poverty components?

This section provides a quantitative overview of approaches taken by the projects and programmes examined. Table 6 outlines the main programme approaches found in each theme. It is apparent that the most common approach taken in this sample of programmes and projects is education and awareness raising among children and young people. This set of programmes includes information and communication programmes (particularly around HIV/AIDS and protecting oneself from transactional sexual exploitation, and on safe age of marriage), life skills, including negotiating skills and children/young people's legal rights, and non-formal education programmes, some of which were designed to act as bridges to formal education.

The interventions examined involved an equal number of economic strengthening activities, and activities aimed at raising adults' (mostly parents') awareness of children's rights, child development, child protection and alternatives to violent discipline. Economic strengthening activities were most common in early marriage programmes – 68% of these had economic strengthening components, compared with 33-35% of programmes addressing sexual violence, physical violence and inadequate care of children. Among the sexual violence programmes, economic strengthening components were concentrated among those aiming to reduce transactional or commercial sexual exploitation, including trafficking for sexual exploitation; among physical violence programmes, economic strengthening components were concentrated in those aiming to reduce neighbourhood or gang violence. Of the programmes promoting better care, it was primarily those supporting care of orphans that included economic strengthening activities.

Table 6: Programme mechanisms across study themes

Mechanism	Child marriage (n=19)		Sexual violence (n=26)		Physical violence (n=16)		Inadequate care (n=20)		Overall occurrence of each component	Overall % of programmes with this component
	No. of interventions with this component	%	No. of interventions with this component	%	No. of interventions with this component	%	No. of interventions with this component	%		
Economic strengthening	13	68	9	35	5	31	7	35	34	43
Education/ awareness raising/ life skills (children)	10	56	13	50	6	38	1	5	30	38
Education/ awareness raising (adults)	9	50	8	31	12	75	9	45	38	48
Improving access to or quality of services (mostly education/day care)	5	28	0	0	0	0	3	15	8	10
Child protection system strengthening	2	11	10	38	4	25	1	5	17	21
Mentoring/ social Support	7	35	8	22	3	19	4	20	22	28

Note: Percentages must be treated with caution as the numbers concerned are small.

Given that economic deprivation is one of a number of factors underlying child protection violations, we would expect programmes to more commonly include anti-poverty activities as one of several components, rather than as the sole programme mechanism. Table 7 bears this out. Economic strengthening occurs as a sole programme mechanism eight times, and in combination thirty-six times – more than four times as often.

The most common approach among single-activity interventions was adult awareness raising. This reflects the relatively large number of programmes included that provided training to parents in better care of children and alternatives to physical violence. By contrast, programmes aiming to change adults' attitudes to early marriage and sexual abuse and exploitation were generally part of broader child protection system strengthening interventions (sexual violence) or community-level child marriage eradicating strategies.

Among the single-activity programmes, economic strengthening is the second most common activity, with just over a quarter of single activity programmes involving economic strengthening. This reflects the inclusion in this review of several cash transfer programmes. This is, however, somewhat misleading, in that the majority of cash transfer programmes concerned were conditional on school attendance, and so many of these ‘single-activity’ programmes in fact combined two mechanisms – reducing economic stress and promoting access to formal education.

Non-formal education and other direct activities with children and young people were rarely carried out alone, but normally formed part of integrated programmes, often with multiple components.

Table 7: Occurrence of programme mechanisms as sole mechanism and in combination

Mechanism	Child marriage		Sexual violence		Physical violence		Inadequate care		Total occurrence as single mechanism	As % of single mechanism interventions	Total occurrence in combination	% combined mechanism with this component
	Alone	In combination	Alone	In combination	Alone	In combination	Alone	In combination				
Economic strengthening	1	12	1	8	2	3	4	3	8	20%	26	25%
Awareness raising/ education/ life skills (children/ youth)	1	10	5	5	0	6	0	1	6	15%	22	22%
Awareness raising (adults)	2	8	1	6	5	5	8	1	16	39%	20	20%
Child protection system strengthening	1	1	2	8	1	2	0	2	4	10%	13	13%
Improving access to services (education/day care/health care)	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	4	10%	4	4%
Mentoring/social support*	0	7	0	8	0	3	3	1	3	7%	21	21%
Totals\	8	36	9	35	8	19	17	9	41		106	

Note: * None of the physical violence interventions explicitly aimed to provide mentoring support. However, this kind of support evolved through these programmes and became an important element of them. Most of the projects involving life skills/non-formal education worked through groups – these groups either were explicitly intended or became social support structures for participants.

5.2.1 Economic strengthening activities in combination

Table 8 shows that economic strengthening activities were most commonly combined with activities aiming to educate adults or children, often to raise awareness or change attitudes concerning certain issues, and to provide fora for helping children or young people at risk of protection violations to develop stronger social support networks. These are all activities undertaken primarily face to face with children/youth or adults.

The relatively low number of programmes that combined economic strengthening activities with enhancing access to formal education reflects the fact that, as discussed above, conditional cash transfer programmes that ostensibly involve only one activity – provision of cash – are conditioned on school attendance, but are considered a single activity, even though they act through two pathways (reducing financial constraints and increasing educational attendance). The low number of programmes that combined economic strengthening, strengthened laws and improved access to reproductive health services reflects the overall low numbers of the latter two programme mechanisms in the programmes examined.

By contrast, relatively few programmes combined economic strengthening and child protection system strengthening activities, probably because these activities involve different participants and take place at the meso, rather than the micro, level: child protection system strengthening activities often involve institutional change, legal change and/or training of child protection system staff, that is, rather than work with children and young people at risk, or who have suffered protection violations. Economic strengthening activities, by contrast, are usually carried out directly with children/young people and sometimes their parents or carers.

Table 8: Combinations of economic strengthening and other activities

Mechanism combination: Economic strengthening AND	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care	Total
Access to formal education	4	0	0	1	5
Non-formal education/life skills	7	5	2	1	15
Awareness raising (adults)	6	3	1	3	13
Social support	5	4	3	2	14
Child protection system strengthening	1	4	0	2	7
Access to reproductive health services	2	0	0	0	2
Strengthened laws	0	1	0	0	1

5.2.2 Types of economic strengthening activities

Turning to the types of economic strengthening activities carried out in the interventions examined, Table 9 shows that vocational training was the most common approach across the sample as a whole, and in all areas except promoting better care. Microfinance was the next most common approach, and was concentrated in early marriage and anti-sexual violence interventions. The majority of these programmes provided loans to children and young people who had taken part in vocational training; however, almost without exception, savings programmes were more popular.

In-kind transfers made up 20% of economic strengthening activities. The nature of these transfers varied, and included school supplies, subsidised uniforms and donations of food, mattresses and housing materials. While the school supplies and uniforms were provided mainly to encourage continued school attendance and discourage early marriage, food and household items were largely distributed in programmes supporting care of orphans. The latter type of transfer is better considered poverty alleviation rather than economic strengthening, as the small material transfers made helped children and families meet some of their most pressing needs but did not provide assets of any kind that could be used as a springboard out of poverty or help families meet orphans' needs over the longer term.

Cash transfers made up 13% of economic strengthening interventions and were most common in programmes aiming to reduce early marriage and to promote better care of children. These transfers were primarily conditional, although one programme provided both conditional and unconditional transfers (Zomba in Malawi) and one provided means-tested but unconditional transfers to carers of orphans (ACF Uganda).

Remaining unmarried or engaging in specific child care practices was not a direct condition of any of these programmes, which instead were conditional on school attendance (Malawi, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru) and/or attendance at health clinics, where health education information was provided.

Entrepreneurship training was rare, and was reported only in programmes aiming to reduce transactional and commercial sexual exploitation. Where it was provided, it increased the effectiveness of vocational training and use of microfinance. Assistance with finding employment was also rare, with only two examples across the programmes studied.

Table 9: Overview of economic strengthening mechanisms in interventions examined

Type of intervention	Occurrence in interventions examined				Total	As % of economic strengthening activities	Concentrated in which thematic areas?
	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care			
Cash transfers	3	1	0	2	6	13%	Child marriage, inadequate care
In-kind transfers	2	1	0	3	9	20%	Better care, child marriage
Vocational skills training	4	4	5	1	14	31%	Child marriage, sexual violence, physical violence
Entrepreneurship training/support	0	3	0	0	3	7%	Sexual violence
Microfinance	5	3	1	1	10	22%	Child marriage, sexual violence
Job search information/job matching	2		1		3	7%	Child marriage, physical violence

6 Child marriage

Box 2: Key points – child marriage

Of the 19 programmes examined, only 4 (in Bangladesh, India, Mexico and Pakistan) reached over 100,000 children. The rest were small or medium scale. NGOs implemented 75% of programmes.

A total of 68% of programmes assessing impacts on child marriage involved an economic strengthening component.

Cash transfers and/or subsidies have proved effective in helping girls remain in school and delay marriage in Kenya, Malawi, Mexico and Pakistan. The Kenya uniform subsidy has also reduced rates of early marriage among boys. It appears that the impacts of cash transfers arise primarily by keeping girls in school, and thus they are perceived as too young for marriage; both conditional and unconditional transfers have been effective in this regard. One study (Baird et al., 2010b) finds unconditional transfers have a greater impact on early marriage rates and disproportionately benefit girls at greatest risk of school dropout.

The effectiveness of skills training programmes varies, with some evaluated too soon after project end to assess impacts. The most successful programmes were those participants considered to have increased their bargaining power and helped them negotiate delays in the age of marriage.

In areas with high levels of marriage under age 15, awareness-raising programmes with adults have helped shift the average age of girls' marriage upwards to 15 or over, but marriage rates among 15-19 year olds remain high (around 75% in parts of Senegal). The most effective programmes have engaged community and religious leaders, and have included parents as well as girls.

Life skills programmes have often been effective in raising awareness of the legal age of marriage and the health consequences of early marriage and childbearing. In about half the programmes examined had girls felt empowered to negotiate with their parents concerning the age at which they would get married.

6.1 Overview of included papers

Table A.1 (Annex 7) provides an overview of the papers that were included in the review for this theme and outlines the study and programme design and main findings.

In comparison with the three other focal areas for this study, we found more papers on early marriage that pertained to the same intervention. Thus, among the 27 papers included, we examine 19 different interventions. Of the papers that examined the same intervention, only one set (Duflo et al., 2006; 2011) examined change over time. The others report on studies carried out in different locations (BRAC and PRACHAR) or look at different aspects of the programme (BRAC and Berhane Hewan).

6.1.1 Extent of focus on child marriage

In four of the interventions examined, reducing child marriage was a primary focus. In the other 15, it was one of several foci (see Table A.1, Annex 7).

6.1.2 Grey versus published academic literature

The majority of the papers included in this section are grey literature; either published internal evaluations or external assessments of programme impact. Six were published academic papers.¹⁵

6.1.3 Research designs

A range of research designs are represented in the included papers. Fifteen are based only on quantitative data, and of these fourteen involve an experimental or quasi-experimental design with a control group.¹⁶ Seven papers use mixed qualitative and quantitative methods.¹⁷ Five use only qualitative approaches.¹⁸

6.1.4 Disciplinary perspectives

The main disciplinary perspectives in the early marriage papers were medical science/public health (10 papers),¹⁹ general development studies (7 papers)²⁰ and economics (8 papers).²¹

6.1.5 Regional breakdown

As might be expected, the papers included report interventions in countries and social contexts with high levels of child marriage: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Yemen. Senegal is the only West African country where papers on early marriage interventions were found, despite the very high levels of child and early marriage in the Sahel. Two papers analyse the Oportunidades programme in Mexico, and are the only papers in the review addressing early marriage issues in Latin America.

6.1.6 Scale of programmes

Information on the size of programmes was available for only 10 of the interventions evaluated (Table 10). Most of the programmes examined are medium in scale but only four – BRAC’s ELA Centres in Bangladesh, PRACHAR in India, Oportunidades in Mexico and the Punjab Secondary Stipend Programme in Pakistan – could be called large scale. These four programmes reached over 100,000 children or young people. As Table 11 indicates, most were moderate-sized projects or programmes taking place in multiple communities, but not national-level programmes.

Table 10: Children reached in programmes with impact on child marriage

Number of children reached	Number of programmes
Under 100	
100-500	1
501-1,000	1
1,001-1500	1
1501-2000	
2,000+	8

Table 11: Scale of programmes with impact on child marriage

Scale of programme	Number of interventions examined
One community	2
Multiple communities	18
National level	2
Regional or multi-country	0

15 Baird et al. (2010a; 2010b); Daniel et al. (2008); Erulkar and Muthengi (2009); Jensen (2012); Mekbib and Molla (2010).

16 Baird et al. (2010a; 2010b); Duflo et al. (2006) and Jensen (2012) use experimental designs; Ara and Das (2010); Behrman et al. (2005); Daniel et al. (2008); Erulkar and Muthengi (2007; 2009), Kanesathasan et al. (2008); Mathur et al. (2004); Mensch et al. (2004); Wilder et al. (2005), World Bank (2011).

17 Duflo et al. (2006); Kabir et al. (2007); Kanesathasan et al. (2008); Mathur et al. (2004); Mekbib and Molla (2010); Shahnaz and Karim (2008); UNICEF (2008).

18 Columbia Group for Children in Adversity (2011); Diop et al. (2008); Gandhi and Krijnen (2006); Pedersen et al. (2008); Rashid et al. (2009).

19 Daniel et al. (2008); CEDPA (2001); Erulkar and Muthengi (2007; 2009); Kanesathasan et al. (2008); Mathur et al. (2004); Mekbib and Molla (2010); Mensch et al. (2004); UNICEF (2008); Wilder et al. (2005).

20 Ara and Das (2010); Diop et al. (2008); Gage (2009); Gandhi and Krijnen (2006); Kabir et al. (2007); Pedersen et al. (2008); Shahnaz and Karim (2008).

21 Baird et al. (2010a; 2010b); Behrman et al. (2005); Duflo et al. (2006; 2012); Gulemetova-Swan (2009); Jensen (2012); World Bank (2011).

6.1.7 Outcomes assessed

The papers assessed three main sets of outcomes in relation to child marriage: changes in knowledge, changes in attitudes and actually occurring changes in the age of marriage. A total of 13 papers assessed changes in the age of marriage,²² 7 assessed changes in attitudes towards early marriage²³ and 4 assessed changes in knowledge concerning the legal age of marriage.²⁴

6.2 Findings

Findings are discussed grouped by the main programme mechanism. The majority of programmes involved multiple activities, and the different components of interventions that involved more than one component are discussed separately so that some interventions (such as Berhane Hewan) appear in four sub-sections.

Table 12: Programme mechanisms in interventions with impact on child marriage

Programme mechanism	As single mechanism	In combination	Proportion of interventions Including this mechanism (n=19)
Increasing access to formal education	2	4	32%
Informal education, information provision or social support for children/young people	1	10	58%
Education and awareness raising among adults	2	8	53%
Economic strengthening	1	12	68%
Child protection system strengthening	1	1	11%

As Table 12 shows, taking primary and secondary programme mechanisms together, six interventions involved components to reduce early marriage by encouraging girls to stay in education/go back to school. Ten involved non-formal education, often via reproductive health education programmes. Another group of interventions (10 in all) focused on educating parents and other adults (e.g. religious leaders) on the risks associated with early marriage; 3 of these programmes also targeted communications to young people. Thirteen sought to reduce economic stresses leading to early marriage. Finally, two interventions affected the incidence of child marriage through strengthening community-based child protection structures.

There is low representation of papers dealing with legal approaches to reducing child marriage, with only one reporting on a campaign to increase the legal age of marriage (Pedersen et al., 2008). One other intervention, in Ethiopia, was reported to have increased the frequency of planned child marriages being referred to the police and thus to have led to greater law enforcement (Gage, 2009). This relative dearth is probably because implementation of laws is not often evaluated in ways that produce the kind of child protection outcomes that would have enabled us to include the corresponding papers in this review.

Many programmes involved multiple mechanisms (only six were single-activity interventions). Of these, three were cash transfers (Oportunidades, Punjab Female Secondary Stipend, Zomba), one was a job-matching service (Jensen, 2012) and two involved awareness raising with adults (Tostan in Senegal, Oxfam's public information campaign in Yemen).²⁵ Furthermore, although cash transfer programmes involved only one activity, their impacts arguably arise through two mechanisms: alleviating economic motivations for early marriage and helping girls continue in education. As such, they should not really be considered single-mechanism programmes.

22 Baird et al. (2009); Behrman et al. (2005); CEDPA (2001); Daniel E; Masilamani R, Rahman M (2008); Duflo et al. (2006; 2011); Erulkar and Muthengi (2009); Gage (2009); Gandhi and Krijven (2006); Gulmetova-Swan (2009); Kanesathan et al. (2008); Mathur et al. (2004); World Bank (2011). One additional qualitative paper (Ray, 2006) reported community perceptions of reduced incidence of child marriage, rather than providing quantitative evidence.

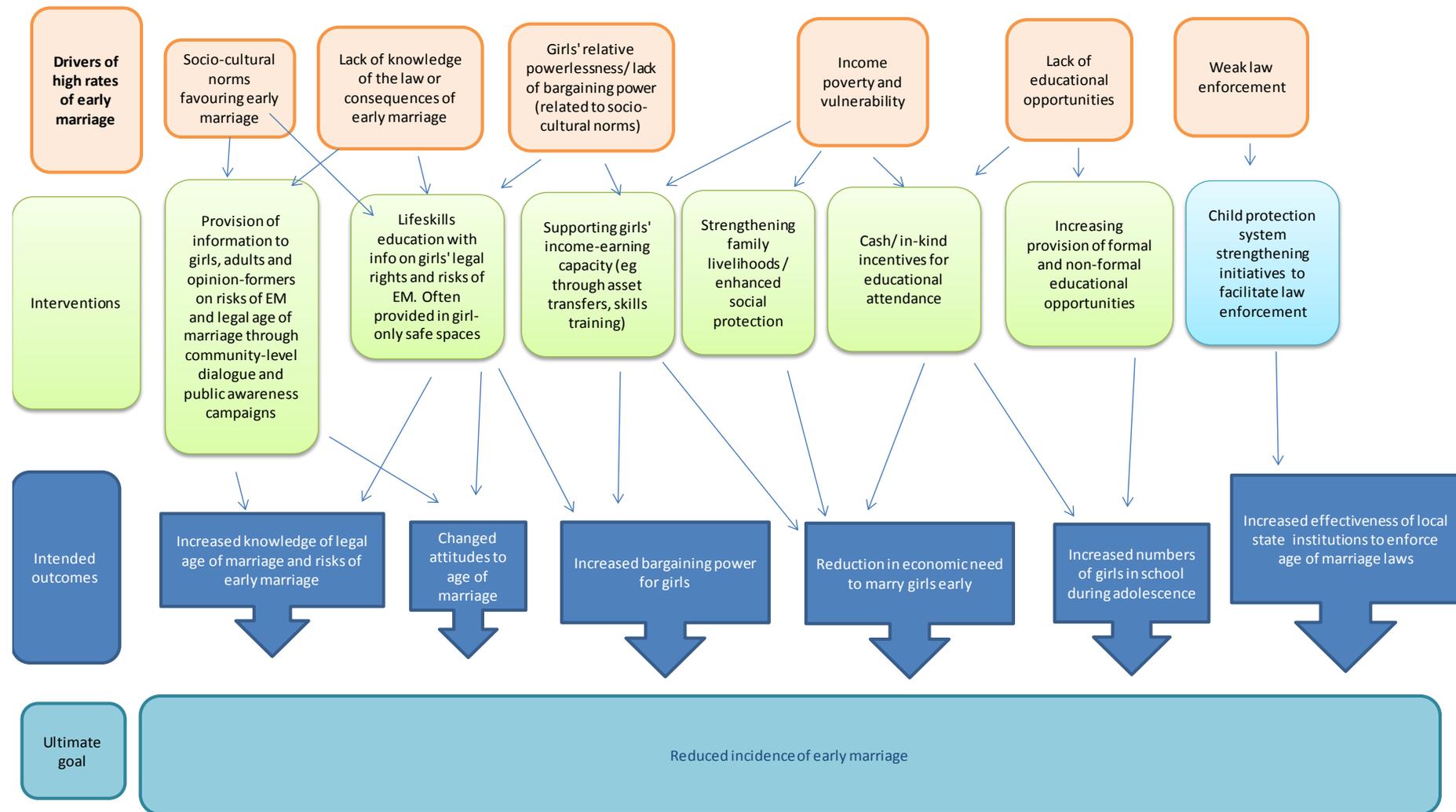
23 Kabir et al. (2007); Ara and Das (2010); Gage (2009); Kanesathan (2008); Pedersen et al. (2008); Shahnaz and Karim (2008).

24 Ara and Das (2010); Gage (2009); Kanesathan et al. (2008); Pedersen et al. (2008).

25 This is treated as a single-mechanism intervention, as the other components of the project were not linked to communication activities on the age of marriage.

Figure 4 summarises diagrammatically the main drivers of child marriage that the programmes examined aimed to address, the main types of interventions undertaken and the intended outcomes.

Figure 4: Intervention pathways – child marriage



6.2.1 Enhancing access to formal education

Recognising that girls not attending school are much more likely to be married in adolescence than those attending school (Brown, 2012; Malhotra et al., 2011), 17 papers examined interventions that facilitated girls' access to education. Five of the interventions promoted girls' enrolment in or aimed to reduced dropout from formal primary and secondary education, while ten entailed non-formal 'catch-up' curricula and vocational livelihoods and life skills education (discussed in Section 6.2.2). Two others aimed to raise young people's awareness on specific reproductive health issues rather than presenting a broader curriculum.

Although a significant number of cash transfer programmes worldwide aim to increase poor children's secondary school enrolment, only a small number of these assess their impact on preventing early marriage. Nonetheless, we found three evaluations of cash transfer programmes (Zomba in Malawi, Oportunidades in Mexico, Punjab Female Secondary Stipend Programme in Pakistan) and two of in-kind transfers (Berhane Hewan in Ethiopia, ICS in Kenya) that examined their impact on early marriage.²⁶

Cash incentives

Pakistan's Punjab Female Secondary Stipend Programme pays quarterly subsidies of approximately \$10²⁷ to parents with girl children in either middle or high school. It focuses on the 15 most educationally disadvantaged districts in Punjab province, and by 2007 covered 245,000 middle school girls.²⁸ The evaluation suggests receiving a stipend raised girls' enrolment and retention in middle school by between 11% and 32%, and older recipient were are more likely to enter and complete high school. The effects were greatest for girls in urban areas and those whose parents had completed primary school. There is also suggestive evidence that girls in stipend-recipient districts marry about 1.2-1.5 years later and have fewer births by age 19 than those in non-recipient districts. No adverse effects on boys' education were noted.

The **Zomba Cash Transfer Programme in Malawi** provided incentives (in the form of school fees and cash transfers) to current secondary school girl pupils and recent dropouts to stay in or return to school. The programme offered approximately \$10 per month conditional on school attendance on at least 80% of the days the girl's school was in session – plus direct payment of secondary school fees. After a year of operation, beneficiaries were three to four times more likely than the control group to be in school, and the dropout rate was 35% lower among participants than among the control group.

For programme beneficiaries who were out of school at baseline, the probability of getting married and becoming pregnant declined by more than 40% and 30%, respectively (Baird et al., 2010a). There was no impact on the (relatively low) levels of marriage among girls attending school at the start of the project, which remained at 4.7% among both the control group and transfer recipients. Baird et al. hypothesise that the key mechanism through which this project worked was enabling girls to continue in school and thus keeping them out of the marriage market. Reviewing other studies of marriage and childbearing among young women in Sub-Saharan Africa, they suggest that most girls attempt to delay pregnancy until they have completed their desired level of education. Because marriage and school attendance are generally seen as incompatible, girls who are in school are protected from pressures to get married and thus to start bearing children.

A second arm of the programme offered unconditional transfers, and Baird et al. (2010b) assessed the relative impact of conditional and unconditional cash transfers on both education and marriage outcomes. They found that conditional cash transfers were more effective in keeping teenage girls in school, but less effective than unconditional cash transfers in reducing teenage marriage and childbearing. While conditional cash transfers had little impact on teenage marriage rates, unconditional transfers reduced child marriage by 48% and teenage childbearing by 23%. They argue that their evidence would support conditional cash

26 We did not find papers that met MMAT standards of clarity on methodology for some well-known cash transfers programmes. For example, for Kishori Abhijan, a programme for adolescent girls in Bangladesh that includes cash transfers, we were able to find only policy briefs, rather than more detailed evaluations, and were therefore unable to include these. Similarly, we were not able to find any papers on Bangladesh's Female Secondary Stipend Programme that met MMAT criteria for clarity of methodological description, or that provided sufficient evidence for outcomes. One paper considered for inclusion (Khandker et al., 2003) states in a footnote 'there has been a marked decline in the proportion of girls marrying at early age' but provides no evidence of the magnitude of this decline. In a paper that provided detailed quantitative data on other impacts, we considered this insufficiently clear evidence of outcomes.

27 These cost \$7.3 million in total for stipends to girls in Grades 6-8 in 2007.

28 Data on the number of high school girls covered were not available.

transfers that keep young adolescent girls in school, followed by unconditional transfers at a certain age or on achievement of a certain school grade, since these have the greatest impact on early marriage and a continued positive impact on education.

Two evaluations of **Oportunidades (Mexico)** find evidence of delays in marriage among transfer recipients. Oportunidades provides cash grants to poor families conditional on their children's regular attendance at school and visits to health clinics (Behrman et al., 2005). Drawing on longitudinal evaluation data, Behrman et al. found that both boys and girls whose families had received transfers were less likely than control participants to be married at follow-up (six years later), although differences were statistically significant only at the 10% level. The impact was particularly strong for boys who had already completed seven years of education at the time of the first survey, who were 25% less likely to be married, as compared with boys with four years' education at that point, among whom marriage rates had declined by 13%. Gulmetova-Swan (2009), also employing econometric analysis, finds that Oportunidades has led to delays in the age of marriage (and childbearing) for young women, with the greatest effects for the girls who were youngest when offered the programme and with the longest exposure to it.

In-kind incentives

Two of the programmes included in this review provided an in-kind transfer: school uniforms in Kenya (Duflo et al., 2006; 2011) and school materials and small livestock in Ethiopia (Erulkar and Muthengi, 2009; Mekbib and Molla, 2010). Both these were multi-component programmes; all these studies also examined the relative impact of these transfers and other programme components.

Duflo et al. (2006; 2011) discuss an intervention organised by **International Child Support (ICS) in Kenya** that compared the relative impact of providing school uniforms (worth approximately \$6) to upper primary school boys and girls (in Grades 6-8) and HIV/AIDS information in reducing rates of teenage childbearing and marriage. The programme provided uniforms only to one group, training to teachers to improve delivery of the government HIV/AIDS education curriculum to another and both to a third group; a control group received neither uniforms nor teacher training. In all, 300 schools took part. In the group of children who received uniforms, two free uniforms were provided per child over a three-year period.

Duflo et al. (2006) found that uniforms helped reduce dropout rates by 15% for both girls and boys. Girls in schools providing uniforms were 1.5 percentage points or 14% less likely to have started childbearing and 1.4 percentage points or 12% less likely to be married than their counterparts in the control group. Boys in schools providing uniforms were 0.8 percentage points or 40% less likely to be married. By contrast, teacher training had no impact on rates of childbearing, although girls with children in schools that received teacher training were 4.6% more likely to be married to the father, possibly reflecting the emphasis on marriage in the government HIV/AIDS curriculum.

Duflo et al.'s subsequent analysis (2011) found that girls in schools providing free uniforms were now 2.6 percentage points or 20% less likely to be married, while the difference between the participant and control group in the proportion of girls who had started childbearing was 4.4 percentage points, suggesting that the effect was sustained beyond the end of the programme. Their analysis suggests the subsidy averted dropout and thus reduced the risk of marriage and childbearing for girls at significant risk of dropout, and teen marriage and childbearing.

Berhane Hewan – a programme run by the **Ethiopian** government with the support of the Population Council and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) – aims to protect unmarried girls from forced marriage in adolescence and provide support for married adolescent girls through a combination of activities identified in a participatory manner. It is implemented in Amhara region, where rates of child marriage are particularly high: 50% of girls are married by age 15 and 80% by age 18. It involves sensitisation of adults and young people to the health risks associated with child marriage through 'community conversations' (a participatory dialogue approach), formation of groups of girls aged 10-19 for non-formal education, provision of life skills training and social support and material incentives (school supplies worth approximately \$4 for girls who are in school and those who wish to return, and a goat on completion of the non-formal education programme). In this section, we concentrate on Berhane Hewan's impacts on girls' retention in formal education as a route to preventing child marriage; other components are discussed in the relevant sections below.

Evaluation of the pilot phase indicated the intervention was particularly effective among girls aged 10-14. Those exposed to the programme were three times more likely than those in the control area to be in school at the endline survey, and were less likely to have ever been married (odds ratio 0.1). However, participant girls aged 15-19 were more likely to be married than those in the control group (odds ratio 2.4) (Erulkar and Muthengi, 2009).

Mekbib and Molla (2010) examined participating families'²⁹ views on the importance of different components in reducing early marriage. They found provision of school supplies and livestock and community conversations were viewed as most helpful in keeping girls in school, while community conversation mobilisation of girls' groups and house-to-house visits by mentors played the most important role in delaying girls' marriages. By contrast, material incentives such as livestock and school supplies were mentioned by only 6% and 4% of respondents, respectively, as important in delaying girls' marriages.

Mobilising school attendance and making schools more girl-friendly

Gage (2009) compared **US Agency for International Development (USAID) programmes** that integrated an early marriage prevention component and those that did not in Amhara region of **Ethiopia**. These were wide-ranging programmes, with different emphases in different areas. Some were education-focused, including setting up girls' advisory committees in schools to support girls in education, and school development agents who promote girls' education through community discussions and house-to-house visits, and may intervene if girls are at risk of dropping out of school because of early marriage. A third education-focused component was the provision of scholarships to encourage poor girls to stay in school. Others integrated early marriage prevention activities into reproductive health programmes, through focused awareness-raising activities at community level and with religious leaders. USAID also supported Berhane Hewan, so some of Berhane Hewan's activities are included in this evaluation. The impacts of education-focused activities on early marriage are not evaluated separately, so findings on these USAID projects are discussed in Sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.5.

6.2.2 Informal education: information, life skills and vocational skills training

The single most common approach among the interventions examined was informal education for out-of-school children and young people that provided information and training in life skills, and vocational skills. These programmes typically aim to change young people's attitudes to early marriage and to increase their knowledge of their rights and of the risks associated with early marriage. Those that include vocational skills are also intended to increase girls' economic value to their families, and reduce the economic pressures that can result in early marriages. Here, we examine nine programmes in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Ethiopia that provided informal education to children and young people with the aim of reducing early marriage.

DISHA's programme in 176 villages in **rural Bihar and Jarkhand, two of India's poorest states**, convened almost 600 youth groups and 30 youth resource centres (Kanesathasan et al., 2008). These provided young people with information on sexual and reproductive health and the opportunity to learn vocational skills. DISHA-supported NGOs initially carried out mass communication activities, such as street plays, mural painting, thematic fairs, rallies, mobile health clinics and sporting events – to sensitise and orient the whole community on issues such as the consequences of early marriage and youth reproductive health needs, including contraception. They subsequently provided more focused discussion and communication fora with particular groups: youth groups, separate adult male and female discussion groups and joint youth and parent groups intended to help solve intergenerational conflicts.³⁰ Overall, this programme was highly effective in increasing knowledge, changing attitudes and contributing to reductions in early marriage.

Knowledge of the legal age at marriage increased by 30 percentage points for both young men and young women (to 73% and 63%, respectively) between baseline and endline surveys, while the proportion of young people who believed girls should marry at 18 or older increased by 28 and 27 percentage points, respectively,

²⁹ They interviewed the parents of unmarried girls and the husbands of married girls.

³⁰ The programme also had other components, such as increasing young people's access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services. We do not discuss these here as they are outside the scope of our analysis, which focuses on activities directly focused on delaying the age of marriage.

for young women and men. These changes reflect a broader process of social change and increased knowledge, of which DISHA activities represent only a part. Although these increases are significant, when participants are compared with matched non-participants the differences are considerably smaller. For example, youth exposed to DISHA activities were only 4% more likely than matched youth not exposed to the intervention to think the ideal age at marriage for girls was 18 or older.

Both adults and young people exposed to DISHA were more likely to know the legal age at marriage for girls than non-exposed youth (14%), and parents were 7% more likely than adults not exposed to DISHA to agree that girls should marry at age 18 or over (Kanesathan et al., 2008). DISHA was also somewhat successful in changing norms regarding certain dimensions of empowerment, mainly spousal communication, self-efficacy within the context of marriage and mobility, but less so regarding young people's ability to communicate with elders about marriage decisions (ibid.). The mean age of marriage of project participants went up by two years, from 15.9 to 17.9, between the baseline and endline surveys. The proportion of girls married below age 18 decreased by 20 percentage points from 60% to 40% during the DISHA programme (ibid.).

Pathfinder International's PRACHAR programme, also in India's rural Bihar, took a similar approach. It provided both general information on reproductive health issues, including early marriage, to the community as a whole and targeted information to specific groups, including married and unmarried adolescents. This was a relatively large-scale programme, which reached over 90,000 adolescents and 100,000 parents (Wilder et al., 2005) in areas of Bihar where around 80% of the population were poor and/or members of 'backward' or 'scheduled' castes. Daniel et al. (2008) found that PRACHAR was effective in raising the mean age of marriage for girls by 1.5 years (from 19.4 to 20.9 years) and for boys by a year to 22.3 years. The programme also delayed girls' and young women's mean age at first birth by two years. This was an intensive programme involving multiple communication components. A later phase will examine whether similar results could be achieved in a simpler and thus less costly fashion (Daniel et al., 2008).

Mensch et al. (2004) **evaluate a small experimental programme for 14-19-year-old girls in the slums of Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India** that provided reproductive health information, vocational counselling and training and assistance with opening savings accounts. They found the project had only a minimal impact on girls' desired age of marriage. This reflected the short timespan of the project and the fact it did not specifically provide information on the legal age of marriage or benefits of delayed marriage and childbearing. It is therefore not surprising it had an insignificant effect on early marriage rates. Furthermore, the programme worked directly with adolescent girls, rather than engaging with their parents. As Mensch et al. conclude, as adolescent girls have only limited control over decision making over issues such as marriage, engaging with parents is essential to change attitudes and behaviour.

The **Centre for Development and Population Activities' (CEDPA's) Better Life Options programme** for adolescent girls in **India** was implemented by partner NGOs and trained 10,000 adolescent girls and young women between 1989 and 1999 in vocational and life skills. It also worked with parents and other community members to change attitudes and increase girls' opportunities to make decisions about their own lives. The 2001 evaluation of this programme focused on three locations: Delhi, rural Madhya Pradesh and rural Gujarat. It found that a significantly higher proportion of participants in the programme married at a legal age (18 or older) compared with the control group (37% versus 26%); in some locations, such as rural Madhya Pradesh, the difference was more marked, with 27% of participants versus 7% of controls marrying at a legal age. Alumnae were 261% more likely than control group girls to be involved in decision making concerning the timing of their marriages, with 25% of alumnae and only 7% of control girls having a say in such decisions.

The evaluation does not discuss which aspects of its programme had the most significant effects on changes in attitudes to early marriage and early marriage practices. It is thus not clear, for example, whether the primary mechanism was the programme's effect on school completion, its effect on girls' employment skills and economic empowerment or its effect in terms of changing the attitudes of parents and other family members.

BRAC's Adolescent Development Programme in Bangladesh is evaluated in three of the papers included: Ara and Das (2010); Kabir et al. (2007) and Rashid et al. (1999). It educates young people on issues related to early marriage as part of a broader reproductive health and life skills curriculum. Some of the girls³¹ who had taken part in the programme felt more able to discuss with their parents and other decision makers in their family matters relating to their marriage, but were resigned to the fact that they had little influence over marriage decisions. This evaluation implies that a more comprehensive approach would be necessary to change the attitudes of older family and community members who exert social pressure on parents to get their daughters married, particularly in the very conservative and poor rural district where the study took place.

Kabir et al. (2007) evaluate the Adolescent Peer Organised Network (APON) component of BRAC's Adolescent Development Programme in Bangladesh, which provides training in life skills to adolescent boys and girls (aged 11-19), including on issues of early marriage. This takes place at adolescent non-formal education centres. As of 2007, over 234,000 young people were participating. Kabir et al. found that APON participants were more aware of the legal age of marriage than other adolescents. Although awareness levels for both groups were high (99% and 91%, respectively, said girls should not get married until they were 18), this difference was statistically significant. While they had internalised this 'official' information, both participating and non-participating adolescents considered that an appropriate minimum marriage could be younger, but here there were significant differences between the two groups: participating adolescents felt 15-16 was an appropriate minimum marriage age for girls, while non-participating adolescents saw 10 as an appropriate age.

They also found that participating adolescents were more likely than either out-of-school young people or those attending secondary school to say that they had influenced decisions concerning their marriages.³² The degree of influence often reflected the composition of their families: girls without adolescent brothers reported greater decision-making opportunities.

Ara and Das (2010) evaluate the impact of BRAC's Adolescent Development Programme in six areas on Bangladesh's borders. These were particularly deprived areas with no other NGO activity. The programme differed in a few important ways from the programme assessed by Kabir et al. (2007) and Shahaz and Karim (2008), in that it provided only life skills and not livelihood training, and involved a wider communication strategy with more audio-visual materials on gender equality and training of master trainers. They found that, although knowledge on the legal age of marriage increased more among participating adolescents than among non-participating adolescents, the differences between them were statistically insignificant. Levels of knowledge of the legal age of marriage for girls were much higher than they were for boys.³³

Mathur et al.'s (2004) evaluation of an **International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and EngenderHealth Youth Reproductive Health programme in Nepal** was one of the few awareness-raising and life skills programmes to examine changes in actual age of marriage, rather than changes in knowledge and attitudes. This project took place in two relatively developed villages close to the Indian border (i.e. with relatively good infrastructure) and two middle-class suburbs of Kathmandu. In one pair of rural and urban sites, project activities were developed and implemented in a participatory manner, with young people involved in the planning and implementation, which led to an extensive range of interventions including action on livelihoods (support for job searching and microfinance); at the other (control) sites, a more limited package of reproductive health activities were implemented, following a standard programme design focused on provision of information, peer counselling and youth-friendly reproductive health services.

Mathur et al. found a significant reduction between the baseline and endline surveys (three years apart) in the proportion of urban 14-21-year-old girls and young women who were married, from 44.4% to 20.8%. There was also a decline in the urban control group, but this was not as steep (from 31.1% to 16.5%). In the rural programme areas, only a small decrease in the proportion of females married at age 14-21 was registered;

31 The numbers concerned are not given as these comments draw on the qualitative element of a mixed methods evaluation.

32 A total of 23% of youth (not gender-disaggregated) attending BRAC's APON programme claimed to have influenced a decision over their marriage, as compared with 19% of secondary school girls, 3% of secondary school boys and 7% of out-of-school boys. The authors do not indicate whether these differences are statistically significant.

33 In Bangladesh, the legal age of marriage for girls is 18 and for boys 21 (Ara and Das, 2010).

however, when set against a significant increase in early marriage in the control site, the evaluators view this as evidence of positive impacts.

USAID programmes in Ethiopia evaluated by Gage (2009) also involved provision of information to young people on the legal age of marriage and risks associated with early marriage. Gage found significant differences between young people's understanding of the appropriate age of marriage between programme and non-programme areas. These were universally higher in non-programme areas, although differences were not always statistically significant. Widespread dissemination of information on early marriage avoidance by other organisations, both in areas involved in USAID programmes and in non-programme areas, may account for the limited differences between these groups. As might be expected, the more sources of information on the legal age of marriage young people and their carers had been exposed to, the higher their response on the appropriate age of marriage. Nonetheless, even those exposed to over 10 sources still believed the appropriate age of marriage was below 18, in both programme and non-programme areas.

The USAID programmes may have contributed to reducing early marriage in rural areas, where rates of marriage of girls under 19 were 2 percentage points lower in programme than in non-programme areas. However, among urban girls, early marriage rates were 1 percentage point higher in programme than in non-programme areas.

Berhane Hewan's (Ethiopia) non-formal education component involves separate groups for married girls and unmarried girls, both of which teach life and livelihood skills (particularly related to agriculture, care of poultry and construction of household items), while the married girls' group has an additional focus on reproductive health issues (Erulkar and Muthengi, 2007, 2009). The girls' group curriculum is aligned with the government's non-formal education curriculum to enable girls to return to formal education. The unmarried girls' groups meet five times a week for several hours; the married girls' groups generally meet once a week. Both programmes also aim to increase girls' social support networks. As noted above, girls who remain unmarried throughout the programme and have good attendance receive a goat on graduation (Erulkar and Muthengi, 2009).

Overall, these programmes appear to have contributed to girls' self-confidence and ability to challenge and/or participate in decision-making concerning their marriages. Mekbib and Molla (2010) (Ethiopia), Shahnaz and Karim (2008) (Bangladesh) and CEDPA (2001) and Kanesathasan et al. (2008) (India) all observe girls' greater sense of empowerment and ability to influence decision making over their marriages. However, evaluations of other programmes, such as by Kabir et al. (2007) (Bangladesh) and Kanesthasan et al. (2008) and Mensch et al. (2004) (India) suggest they had little impact on girls' ability to influence marriage decisions. Where pro-early marriage norms are entrenched, especially in more conservative, often rural, areas, reaching a wider set of stakeholders is vital. The next section discusses this experience.

6.2.3 Awareness raising among adults

Recognising that, in many of the contexts of these interventions, girls have relatively limited influence on decision making concerning marriage, three interventions (Oxfam in Afghanistan and Yemen, Tostan in Senegal) worked principally with adults to change their attitudes. Four other projects worked with both adults and young people (PRACHAR, DISHA, Berhane Hewan, USAID in Ethiopia). These were described fully above and the description is not repeated here, although we discuss impacts on adults' view of early marriage here where data are available – despite programme or project aims of changing parental attitudes, this is assessed rigorously in surprisingly few cases (e.g. DISHA in Gage, 2009). Most of these projects were integrated into either reproductive health or broader community development programmes. The 'stand-alone' communication activities on early marriage in Yemen examined by Pedersen et al (2008) form an exception.

Gandhi and Krijnen (2006) evaluate an **Oxfam-supported community development programme in Afghanistan**, one component of which aimed to reduce early marriage. The principal mechanism for this was organisation of women's *shuras* (groups) that met once or twice monthly to discuss issues of concern and where the project provided information on health, hygiene and the importance of education. Women participating in the *shuras* felt they had increased voice in decisions about children's marriages. This programme also had a substantial livelihoods component; however, this was not linked to the women's *shura*

activities. The evaluation does not discuss whether participants considered that changes in livelihoods had affected economic drivers of early marriage.

Pedersen et al. (2008) discuss a **public information programme in Yemen** designed to raise the age of marriage by strengthening knowledge and awareness of the health risks of early marriage and childbearing. This NGO project involved information and awareness-raising sessions on the risks associated with early marriage and childbearing, targeted at grandparents, parents and male and female youth. As the project progressed, participating NGOs also provided awareness-raising sessions on early marriage at schools and on public radio. The project took place in two governorates with high levels of child marriage. The key role of community acceptance of the message is a strong lesson from this intervention. Internal workshops modified the campaign message from 'early marriage' to 'safe age of marriage', which seems to have enhanced the acceptability of the campaign in target communities. Efforts were made to deliver activities in a culturally acceptable manner – for example by holding separate workshops for men and women. However, the impact was undermined by failing to engage from the start with religious leaders, some of whom spoke out against the campaign messages. It was also undermined by a lack of educational opportunities for girls – in the areas where girls' secondary schooling was available Pedersen et al found a greater change in practice.

Tostain's programme in Senegal also focuses principally on adults (Diop et al., 2008; UNICEF, 2008) and mobilises them to change attitudes to early marriage via an education programme that stresses the health risks. Originally, the education programme was devoted entirely to reproductive health; over time, as communities have become more involved in service design, this has evolved into more of a basic education programme. Alongside this programme, and following advocacy work with chiefs and community leaders, villages hold public declarations banning female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and early marriage. Although girls in communities where this programme has been implemented still get married relatively young, the evaluation identifies a trend towards declining prevalence of marriage below age 15 and between ages 15 and 19. Intervention villages had experienced a 49% decrease in the proportion of women married before the age of 15 compared with a 33% drop in control villages. This may be attributed to a number of factors, including the spread of education and greater awareness of the law as well as awareness-raising interventions such as Tostan's. Overall, there has been little change in overall rates of marriage between 15 and 18, suggesting the main impact of the intervention is to delay marriage of the youngest girls (UNICEF, 2008). Greater impact has been seen in the eradication of FGM/C – the intervention's central focus.

In parallel with its work with adolescents, **Pathfinder International's PRACHAR programme in Bihar, India**, provided information on sexual and reproductive health to parents, grandparents and in-laws of adolescents and to other community members, the latter through public meetings, murals and puppet theatre shows. The programme had a strong emphasis on educating parents and parents-in-law on the benefits of delayed childbearing, and on helping married and unmarried young people develop negotiation skills. It also provided information on protecting oneself from HIV/AIDS. Although the programme raised mean ages of marriage for both girls and boys, the extent to which it changed adult attitudes to early marriage is not reported.

Likewise, DISHA in India, working with both parents and young people, convened 352 adult groups (alongside 595 youth groups). DISHA had a significant impact on adult attitudes to early marriage, with adults surveyed 73% more likely to believe that 18 or older was an appropriate age of marriage at endline than at baseline. The impact was much stronger for adults who participated in targeted communication activities (such as adult groups) than for those who participated in generalised community awareness activities (Kanesathasan et al., 2008).³⁴

Berhane Hewan's adult awareness-raising component in **Ethiopia** involves bi-monthly community meetings (community conversations) to discuss a range of health and social issues, including child marriage, identified through a participatory process. Mekbib and Molla (2010) asked fathers, mothers and husbands of girls participating in girls' groups which components of the intervention had contributed most to the delay in the age of marriage. As noted in Section 6.2.1, these adult-focused awareness-raising activities were considered to have had the greatest impact.

³⁴ Compared with baseline figures, participants in targeted activities were 2.5 times more likely to believe that 18 or older was an appropriate age of marriage and those who participated in generalised activities were 1.5 times more likely (Kanesathasan et al., 2008).

Gage (2009) examined knowledge of the law on early marriage among caretakers (of children) in **Ethiopia**. They found limited difference between **USAID programme** and non-programme areas in knowledge of the early marriage law. The extent of knowledge depended largely on the number of sources to which caretakers had been exposed: 22% of those exposed to one to three information sources were aware of the legal minimum age of marriage, as were 55% of those exposed to over ten sources.

6.2.4 Economic strengthening

While reducing economic motivations for early marriage was the primary focus of only two of the interventions, seven others had economic strengthening components as part of broader adolescent development programmes and/or community development programmes. These components aimed to contribute to delaying girls' marriages by enabling them to acquire marketable skills, to initiate businesses and/or by increasing their value to and bargaining power within their families, or by providing an incentive for girls to remain unmarried. Furthermore, as discussed in Section 6.2.1, cash transfers and incentives intended to delay marriage by enabling girls to continue in or return to education may also have reduced economic stress on the household and thus reduced economic motivations for early marriage.

Increasing employment opportunities

Jensen (2012) reports a randomised control trial of a **programme providing information and support for educated girls and young women to obtain employment in the Indian business process outsourcing industry** in villages up to 1.5 hours' travel time from Delhi. Jensen evaluated how far the increased access to employment opportunities in areas such as call centres, data processing etc. contributed to delayed marriage among adolescent girls and young women. He found that, although few women in the intervention villages had the required skills to gain immediate employment, young women in treatment villages (i.e. those participating in the intervention) aged 15-21 at baseline were 5-6 percentage points less likely to get married or to have given birth over the three-year period of our intervention than those in control villages. Younger girls were also likely more be at school and had a higher body mass index, reflecting increased investment in girls in these communities in anticipation of their future labour market opportunities.

This experience is particularly interesting because, like unconditional cash transfers, the key mechanism seems to be economic. While norms on issues such as desired age of marriage are entrenched, and many NGO interventions emphasise the importance of changing attitudes, this experience (and that of unconditional cash transfers) indicates that – at least under certain conditions – cultural norms can shift quite rapidly. Typically, these include contexts where there is relatively well-paid employment in office-based work or manufacturing, in industries that are often gender-segregated or where there is a reasonable expectation of being able to access higher-paid jobs through completing secondary education. This experience is similar to that observed in Bangladesh's garment sector (Amin et al., 1998 cited in Bajracharya and Amin, 2010)

Vocational skills training

The effectiveness of vocational skills components of adolescent informal education programmes has been variable.

Shahnaz and Karim (2008) evaluate **BRAC's Employment and Livelihoods for Adolescents (ELA) programme**. Participants in ELA Centres have a place to socialise with other young people, access books and magazines to maintain their literacy skills and also receive education on life skills. They are also eligible to participate in weekly savings and credit meetings and to receive small loans. This programme is targeted at adolescent girls and young women aged 10-24. The evaluation does not isolate the role of the microfinance component as compared with life skill components in affecting views and practices on early marriage. However, it found that the programme had led to a 27% increase in girls borrowing and investing loans, and a 15.8% increase in girls earning income. Their qualitative analysis indicated that some girls were using loans to invest in small businesses to finance their education,³⁵ and thus the microfinance component was contributing to delaying their marriages until they had completed secondary education. This was

35 The numbers of girls who had done so is not specified.

relatively uncommon, with more girls expressing a concern that getting involved in income-generating activities would hamper their studies.

Participant girls said they were now confident to negotiate over marriage-related matters, and many reported turning down marriage proposals³⁶ they had received before they were 18. However, marriage was the reason for 55% of girls' attrition from the centre. Thus, findings are biased towards socioeconomic groups less likely to engage in early marriage for economic or social reasons.

CEDPA's (2001) evaluation found that the inclusion of a **vocational skills** component in a broader **life skills programme in India** helped convince parents to allow their daughters to participate. This component appeared to be very effective: 99% of alumnae compared with 22% of controls had learnt a vocational skill, and alumnae were 39% more likely than controls to be earning and four times more likely to be employed or self-employed. They were also more likely to make decisions over the use of their income. CEDPA's programme was effective in reducing early marriage rates (37% of alumnae versus 26% of controls married at or above the legal age). Unfortunately, the evaluation did not examine the relative effectiveness of different components.

The livelihoods component of **DISHA's programme in Bihar and Jarkhand, India**, involved technical skills training, linked, where possible, to microfinance activities. Livelihood activities were selected with regard to their potential for sustainability, a viable buyer base, the availability of supplies and the market environment. Some livelihood examples include training youth to make products such as pottery, candles and bangles for market; training in tailoring; vegetable cultivation; and puffed rice production. By the end of the project implementation period, 69 livelihoods groups engaged 676 youth (Kanesathasan et al., 2008). This was a small proportion of total youth participating in the programme, reflecting greater difficulties establishing this component because of partner organisations' relative lack of experience in livelihood activities.

Interviews with young people who took part in livelihoods skills training suggest they felt more empowered as individuals with skills and capacities, in their ability to communicate and make decisions for themselves and in their freedom of movement inside and outside their village, which opened new doors for some girls. Some 65% of participants in the livelihoods component launched individual or group businesses. The evaluation was conducted too soon after the end of these activities to be able to assess their long-term sustainability in very poor rural areas where disposable incomes are very limited, or how far livelihood activities contributed to overall project outcomes. As noted in Section 6.2.2, this project achieved impressive reductions in child marriage, with the proportion of girls married below age 18 decreasing by 20 percentage points, from 60% to 40%, during the DISHA programme (Kanesathasan et al., 2008). It is likely that livelihood activities played a role in this decline.

Mensch et al.'s (2004) evaluation of a small experimental programme financed by CARE in the slums of Allahabad, India was also conducted too soon after the intervention had started to properly assess the longer-term impacts of livelihood activities. It found that the vocational training component increased the programme's acceptability to parents. However, overall, both this and the educational component had little impact on the age at which girls hoped to marry.

Three other programmes – BRAC's Adolescent Reproductive Health Programme in Bangladesh, PRACHAR in India and ICRW and EngenderHealth in Nepal – also involved economic strengthening components. There is limited information on these activities in the evaluations, but they appear to be relatively minor components of programmes of broader reproductive health programmes.

In-kind incentives to remain unmarried

Berhane Hewan in Ethiopia was the only programme examined offering a financial incentive for girls to remain unmarried. Girls who completed the two-year informal education programme with 80% attendance or above, and who remained unmarried throughout this period, were offered a goat (worth approximately \$20)

36 Again, the numbers are not specified as this finding draws on the qualitative analysis element of the evaluation.

on graduation. As noted earlier, this incentive was not believed to be as important as raising adult awareness of the risks associated with early marriage (Mekbib and Molla, 2010).

6.2.5 Child protection system strengthening

Two of the programmes examined – one run by Plan International in Malawi (Ray, 2006) and the other by USAID in Amhara region of Ethiopia (Gage, 2009) – aimed to reduce child marriage by strengthening protective structures at community level. In the Plan programme, this involved the development of community child protection committees that referred instances of child marriage and abuse to the authorities. In the USAID programme, school development agents, who were tasked with mobilising communities to send their children to school, also became more actively involved in informing the district or village administration of planned marriages, and thus contributed to stopping them. Girls' clubs, designed initially to make schools more girl-friendly, also contributed to greater awareness among girls and teachers of early marriage issues and led to teachers becoming more involved in reporting planned marriages.

Overall, Gage (2009) found planned marriages of girls under 18 were stopped more frequently (by friends, relatives or the police) in programme area than in non-programme areas, with statistically significant differences between programme areas for all marriages and between urban programme and non-programme areas. Marriages of girls' club members were most likely to be stopped, those of girls with only primary education or double orphans least likely. This may indicate greater economic necessity among these groups.

6.3 Discussion

In keeping with our use of realist synthesis as an approach to analysis, we now discuss insights from the papers examined as to who benefits most from the early marriage programmes reviewed, who does not and the key factors that influence the effectiveness of different approaches.

6.3.1 Who benefits, who does not?

From the evidence presented in the included papers, it is possible to assess the differential social impacts of the programmes to only a limited extent.

Age

Relatively few of the papers examined differentiated impacts by age. The two analyses that did – Erulkar and Muthengi (2009) examining Berhane Hewan in Ethiopia and UNICEF (2008) examining Tostan in Senegal – both found the programme successfully reduced marriage rates among 10-14 year olds. Erulkar and Muthengi found that rates of marriage among 15-19 year olds were higher than in the control group, suggesting participant girls postponed marriage until completing the programme. While high marriage rates among older adolescents are a concern, this does not invalidate the clear success in lowering marriage rates among the youngest girls. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2008) found little impact on marriage rates on 15-18 year olds in Tostan's programme areas.

Gender

Few of these analyses examine the impact of early marriage prevention programmes on boys, although several (e.g. Ara and Das, 2010; Gage, 2009; Kabir et al., 2007) compare boys and young men's views and knowledge on the legal and safe age of marriage with that of girls and young women. The lack of attention to impacts on boys and young men reflects both the differential impact of early marriage on girls and the fact that many of these programmes, particularly those providing non-formal education or vocational training, focus only on girls. Only four of the programmes examined included boys and young men as target groups: PRACHAR and DISHA, which carried out communication activities with a wide range of audiences, BRAC's ELA programme, which is open to all adolescents, and the ICS programme in Kenya, which provided school uniforms to both boys and girls. Duflo et al. (2006; 2011) specifically analysed the impact of the ICS programme on boys and girls and found that a greater percentage reduction in early marriage among boys (40% vs. 12% for girls), although the actual numbers marrying early declined more for girls (1.4 percentage points compared with 0.8 percentage points).

Socioeconomic status

The papers analysed the differential impact of the programmes examined on children and young people of different socioeconomic groups less than might be expected. In part, this reflects that most programmes or projects were working in disadvantaged communities (with the exception of the ICRW and EngenderHealth project in Nepal, which selected relatively developed rural and urban communities to work in). However, it may also reflect a tendency among some NGOs, in particular, to assume they are meeting the needs of all disadvantaged groups and not to inquire into whether any groups are systematically excluded.

Evaluations of two life skills programmes – DISHA and BRAC’s Adolescent Development Programme – observed that the sample of adolescents who remained in the programme may be biased towards better-off adolescents who have not been pushed into marriage out of economic necessity and thus dropped out of the programme (Kabir et al., 2007; Kanesathasan et al., 2008).

Location

Disaggregation of impacts by location was more common among the papers examined. Although individual papers found a difference by location, there were no systematic differences across the sample. For example, while ICRW and EngenderHealth’s project in Nepal registered a greater impact in their urban sites, Gage (2009) reports a greater impact of USAID activities in Ethiopia on early marriage rates in rural areas.

6.3.2 Other key factors affecting impact

Issues of attribution

The interventions examined were not necessarily the only early marriage-focused interventions to which participants were exposed. In the parts of Ethiopia Gage (2009) examined, the parts of Senegal UNICEF (2008) examined and the parts of Bangladesh where Kabir et al.’s (2007) evaluation took place, even ‘control’ groups had been exposed to government and NGO communications on early marriage. Moreover, growing acceptance of girls’ education and widening economic opportunities for girls in some contexts were combining to change attitudes. This means the impacts observed were not necessarily all attributable to the interventions examined. Not all the analyses examined were able to control for such factors.

Intensity of exposure

Generally, as might be expected, the longer-established programmes had greater reach. Thus, the Punjab female stipend had a greater impact on younger girls who were eligible to take part for longer.

The intensity of young people’s exposure to information and life skills activities appears, unsurprisingly, to be an important influence on the effectiveness of these programmes in changing attitudes and behaviour. For example, young men who were exposed to DISHA’s ‘individualised’ (youth-focused) activities were almost twice as likely as those with generalised (broad community-focused) exposure to consider age 18 or older as the ideal age for girls to marry. Girls and young women with similar exposure were almost four times as likely to believe 18 or older was the ideal marriage age. Shahnaz and Karim (2008) report that girls who spent longer at adolescent development centres, such as those run by BRAC, were more likely to marry later and to spend longer in secondary education.

Combined versus single-mechanism approach

Intuitively, one would expect a combined approach to be more effective, since it could address multiple drivers of child marriage simultaneously. Among the programmes examined here are examples of both effective single-intervention programmes, such as the two cash transfer programmes and the programme facilitating young women’s access to white collar work in India, and effective multi-activity programmes, such as the awareness-raising and livelihood programmes of organisations such as DISHA, CEDPA and BRAC. The evidence examined here does not permit firm conclusions on which type of approach is more effective.

Only two of the papers examined evaluate the distinctive effects of particular components. Duflo et al. (2006) found that free school uniforms (equivalent to a cash transfer of \$6) had a much greater effect on

early marriage rates than did improving the quality of teaching on HIV/AIDS issues.³⁷ Mekbib and Molla (2010), by contrast, found economic incentives to be of minor importance in reducing child marriage rates compared with awareness raising among adults. This difference may reflect the fact that the programme Duflo et al. examined trained teachers to improve their delivery of the HIV/AIDS education curriculum, rather than directly conducting awareness-raising activities, unlike Berhane Hewane, which worked directly with girls, their families and other community members. In other words, this finding probably says more about the directness of the educational/awareness-raising activities concerned than it does about the relative importance of economic strengthening activities.

It is notable that some complex, multi-activity programmes (such as that of PRACHAR) are now seeking to slim down their activities to find a minimum package of the most cost-effective interventions. Some multi-component programmes, such as Berhane Hewan,³⁸ are also being rigorously evaluated to assess which components play the greatest role in leading to change. This is thus an area where more evidence is likely to be forthcoming in the next few years.

6.4 Conclusions: how important are economic strengthening elements in programmes affecting early marriage outcomes?

Given the diversity of programmes and of the contexts in which they are operating, and the small numbers of each type of programme reviewed, conclusions must necessarily be somewhat tentative. Furthermore, although many of the papers examined quantify programme impact, they employ several different measures. Thus, some papers express impacts in terms of percentage decline in child marriage, others in percentage point decline and others in terms of changes in the mean age of marriage. Some do not give the baseline or endline figures and just provide the percentage change; few papers give the complete data on which these measures are based, so it is impossible to compare quantitative data on the level of change meaningfully. We therefore do not base our analysis of programme effectiveness on these quantitative measures.

All but one of the interventions examined led to some change, although four – USAID in Ethiopia, Berhane Hewan in Ethiopia, Tostan in Senegal, Oxfam in Yemen – recorded small changes, or change not in the desired direction on some indicators. These were interventions with no economic strengthening component or only a small such component (Berhane Hewane). All the programmes involving economic strengthening led to positive changes, barring the small CARE project in India.³⁹ This suggests that economic strengthening – whether by skills training, facilitating employment or direct transfers – can make an important contribution to reducing child marriage.

Although livelihood and vocational skills programmes are generally considered hard to run well, with particular difficulties in translating skills learnt into effective employment and self-employment, at least two programmes (CEDPA, 2001; Jensen, 2012) had led to graduates developing marketable skills and increased employment and incomes, which evaluators linked to reduced rates of early marriage. Kanethasan et al. (2008) raise concerns as to participants' likelihood of being able to sustain small businesses in rural Bihar, where very high poverty levels mean other community members have little disposable income. Sustaining small businesses may be slightly easier in urban areas, so long as training programmes do not lead to gluts of particular skills.

While some programmes (CEDPA, BRAC ELA Centres, DISHA) also made microfinance services available to participants, these appear to have been less important than the training received in helping girls obtain employment or start businesses. Some girls in the BRAC ELA Centres were reluctant to take microcredits, feeling that engaging in business activity would undermine their studies.⁴⁰ Others found that access to credit improved their bargaining position at home, including in relation to proposed marriages, as girls were now a conduit to a valued resource.

37 Their later study (Duflo et al., 2011) found that, among students whose teachers received training in delivering the HIV/AIDS curriculum, the effect of the free uniforms was lessened. They attribute this to the emphasis in the government's HIV/AIDS curriculum on marriage, suggesting girls who became pregnant may have been more likely to marry after receiving strong pro-marriage messages.

38 http://www.popcouncil.org/projects/100_BerhaneHewanEthiopia.asp, accessed 19 February 2013.

39 This evaluation suffered from problems of small sample size, of a short period of operation and of the evaluation taking place too soon after the end of the project to assess longer-term change.

40 See also Erulkar et al. (2006) in [Section 7.2.1](#), who found that younger girls were much less successful in using microcredit.

Most programmes that provide a conditional cash transfer or an education subsidy work principally through enabling girls to stay in school, where they are seen as children and not of marriageable age. Programmes providing training in vocational or life skills can have a similar effect, as participating girls are often seen as still studying, and thus not ready for marriage. It may also be the case that the extra income from cash transfers, reduction in schooling costs or girls' economic contributions to their households reduce pressures on poor parents to marry daughters off, but there is no clear evidence to confirm or refute this – although it is notable that the unconditional element of Malawi's Zomba cash transfer project also reduced early marriage among girls not attending school, indicating that alleviating economic constraints can be highly effective. Nor is there evidence concerning a threshold level of transfer below which the incentives to educate a daughter or keep her unmarried are insufficient.

Cash transfer programmes have achieved notable reductions in child marriage through a single mechanism – provision of cash, subsidies or goods – indicating that, in some contexts, complex interventions involving awareness raising and addressing economic causes may be unnecessary. They seem to play a particular role where educational and employment opportunities for young women exist and/or are expanding, in which context they may catalyse changes in attitudes that are already underway. Evidence from a wider sample of interventions would be needed to confirm this, and whether cash transfers could have a greater impact if combined with awareness-raising activities.

Where attitudes favouring early marriage are more entrenched (possibly in more rural areas, where girls' other options are limited), communications to change cultural attitudes have an important role to play. Two key lessons related to communication activities emerge from this review.

First, the interventions that appear to have been the most successful ensured they worked with both adolescents and with parents and community and/or religious leaders who either made marriage decisions or influenced social norms. Das Gupta et al. (2008), who examined 58 programmes in India (10 in depth), came to similar conclusions, as did Malhotra et al. (2011). No evaluations have rigorously assessed the relative impacts of programmes that targeted only adolescents compared with those working with broader groups.

Second, the impact of communication activities seems to be enhanced when they are combined with programmes that enhance girls' capacity to negotiate key life decisions, such as when to marry. This may be via life skills training, formal education or vocational skills training, all of which can contribute to girls' self-confidence in negotiating the timing of marriage, and can also lead to their being perceived differently by their families – increasing their bargaining power. Economic strengthening components can also increase parents' willingness to let their daughters participate in life skills training (as in the cases of DISHA and CARE in India). IRCW's systematic review⁴¹ of interventions to prevent child marriage found the strongest results from such programmes (Malhotra et al., 2011). However, they can be hard to scale up.

In summary:

- Both conditional and unconditional cash or in-kind transfers appear to have a strong effect on reducing child marriage, largely because they facilitate girls continuing in or returning to formal education. There is also some evidence that, among girls not attending school, a cash transfer can contribute to delays in marriage.
- Programmes facilitating employment through vocational skills training and/or job matching have been successful in reducing child marriage. It is likely that both their effects on household economies and the fact that they give girls an alternative 'occupation' or identity underlie their contribution.
- Life skills and other non-formal education can also help empower girls to take part in decision making about the timing of marriage, particularly when they are part of programmes that also involve communications intended to change attitudes targeted at parents and community or religious leaders.

⁴¹ This review examined 23 interventions, mostly in Asia.

7 Sexual violence

Box 3: Key points – sexual violence

Of the 27 programmes examined, 22 took place in Africa. All nine of the programmes for which data were available were small in scale. Very few evaluations disaggregated impacts by socioeconomic groups.

A third of programmes had economic strengthening components – mostly vocational skills and entrepreneurship training programmes, some of which also offered loans. Two programmes offered savings activities.

The most successful skills training programmes also provided training in entrepreneurship, and were well linked to local employers and master craftspeople. These programmes helped adolescent girls reduce involvement in transactional sex.

Programmes offering vocational skills training and/or cash transfers were much less successful in reducing trafficking. This principally reflects flaws with programme design, rather than constituting evidence that economic strengthening activities are inherently ineffective at combating trafficking.

Life skills and awareness-raising programmes led to significant changes in adolescents' capacity to negotiate around sexual relationships and reduced their vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Where boys were included, this helped change boys' attitudes towards sexual harassment of girls.

Although definitions of what constitutes sexual abuse varies cross-culturally, in most cultures rape of children is agreed to constitute child abuse. As compared with the other child protection violations examined, child protection system strengthening activities have generally had greater resonance and impact with respect to sexual abuse.

Child protection system strengthening activities have included training of professionals (e.g. police) and setting-up or strengthening local protective structures. Some development of new child protection structures has duplicated existing mechanisms; other interventions have proved unsustainable when external funding has dried up; however, in some cases, new ways of working have been institutionalised.

Evaluations of child protection system strengthening activities are rarely linked to economic strengthening activities; the extent to which household poverty and under-financing of public services undermine child protection activities is stressed in many of these evaluations. This indicates that more sustained attention to poverty issues in child protection system strengthening initiatives would be valuable.

7.1 Overview of papers included

A total of 27 papers reporting 26 different interventions to prevent sexual violence are discussed here (see Annex 7 for an overview).

7.1.1 Regional breakdown

A total of 22 of the 26 interventions examined took place in Sub-Saharan Africa, two in Asia, one in the Middle East, one in the Caucasus and two in Latin America and the Caribbean. The strong bias towards Africa reflects the fact that preventing sexual exploitation and abuse is often a goal of broader HIV/AIDS programmes, which are disproportionately concentrated in Africa.

7.1.2 Nature of the literature

A total of 23 papers were grey literature, produced by development organisations, either internally or by external evaluators; 5 were published academic papers.⁴²

7.1.3 Disciplinary perspectives

Fifteen studies were based on a general development studies tradition,⁴³ seven came from a public health perspective (including psychological approaches),⁴⁴ two came from a social work perspective,⁴⁵ two drew on economic analysis⁴⁶ and one took an anthropological approach⁴⁷

Twelve studies drew on qualitative data,⁴⁸ four drew on quantitative data⁴⁹ and eight used mixed qualitative and quantitative data.⁵⁰ Three used an experimental design⁵¹ and two a quasi-experimental design.⁵²

7.1.4 Thematic foci

The papers included fall into three main groups:

- **Programmes aimed primarily at reducing transactional or commercial sexual exploitation:** These typically involved a combination of economic strengthening activities and life skills education.
- **Programmes aiming to reduce any forms of sexual violence against children:** The main approaches taken by these programmes were awareness raising and child protection system strengthening.
- **Anti-trafficking programmes:** We only considered anti-trafficking interventions that were at least partially trafficking of children under 18 for sexual exploitation. Reflecting the larger problem of labour trafficking, all these programmes had a wider remit than sexual exploitation, but included some discussion of sexual exploitation or provided support to girls who had been sexually exploited while abroad.⁵³ We expected to find more papers on this theme, but many did not describe their methodology or present data in such a way that they could be included in the review. Furthermore, we also did not find any reviews comparing evidence on different anti-trafficking strategies, although we found several papers that described different strategies, often drawing on both programmatic experience and research evidence.⁵⁴ It is notable that economic strengthening activities were generally relatively minor components of both the programmes included in this review and programmes that did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the review, whether their primary focus was prevention of trafficking or reintegration of trafficked children. Awareness raising and legal/child protection system strengthening were the most prominent components, both in the papers we included and in other overviews (e.g. Dottridge, 2008; USAID, 2009).

7.1.5 Degree of focus on sexual violence

Preventing sexual abuse or exploitation was the primary focus of 16 of the interventions (see Table A.2, Annex 7). In the others, it was one of several objectives. These were typically child protection system strengthening interventions that were concerned with any forms of maltreatment of children.

42 Chamroonsawasdi et al. (2010); Fiscian et al. (2009); Lee et al. (2002); Mgalla et al. (1998); Ssewamala et al. (2012).

43 CARE International (2006); Fafo (2006); Guga (2010); Hamakawa and Randall (2009); IOM (1999; 2011); Jones and Brown (2008); Kashaija (2011); Kolokosso et al. (2007); Ray (2006); Russon (2000); Silver and Weeks (2003); Villar (2007); War Child (2010); Witter et al. (2004).

44 Chamroonsawasdi et al. (2010); Erulkar et al. (2006); Fiscian et al. (2009); Mgalla et al. (1998); Oki et al. (2009); Ssewamala et al. (2012); UNICEF (2009).

45 Singhal and Dura (2008); Ssendendo (2007).

46 Bandiera et al. (2012); Dupas (2006).

47 Columbia Group for Children in Adversity (2011).

48 CARE International (2006); Columbia Group for Children in Adversity (2011); Fafo (2006); IOM (2011); Kashaija (2011); Kolokosso et al. (2007); Oki et al. (2009); Ray (2006); Ssendendo (2007); Singhal and Dura (2008); Villar (2007); War Child (2010).

49 Bandiera et al (2012); Chamroonsawasdi et al. (2010); Dupas (2006); Ssewamala et al. (2012).

50 Erulkar et al. (2006); Fiscian et al. (2009); Guga (2010); Hamakawa and Randall (2008); IOM (1999); Jones and Brown (2008); Mgalla et al. (1998); Russon (2000); Silver and Weeks (2003); UNICEF (2009).

51 Bandiera et al. (2012); Dupas (2006); Ssewamala et al. (2012).

52 Chamroonsawasdi et al. (2010); Fiscian et al. (2009).

53 All these programmes were concerned with cross-border rather than internal trafficking.

54 Examples include Dottridge (2004; 2006) and ILO (2008; 2009).

7.1.6 Outcomes assessed

Nine of the papers assessed or reported on changes in the incidence of sexual violence against children.⁵⁵ Nine reported in changed attitudes or sense of efficacy to resist sexual coercion⁵⁶. Eleven papers reported on increased institutional capacity (e.g. legal change or capacity of public officials or communities) to address sexual violence.⁵⁷ Several papers discussed more than one type of outcome.

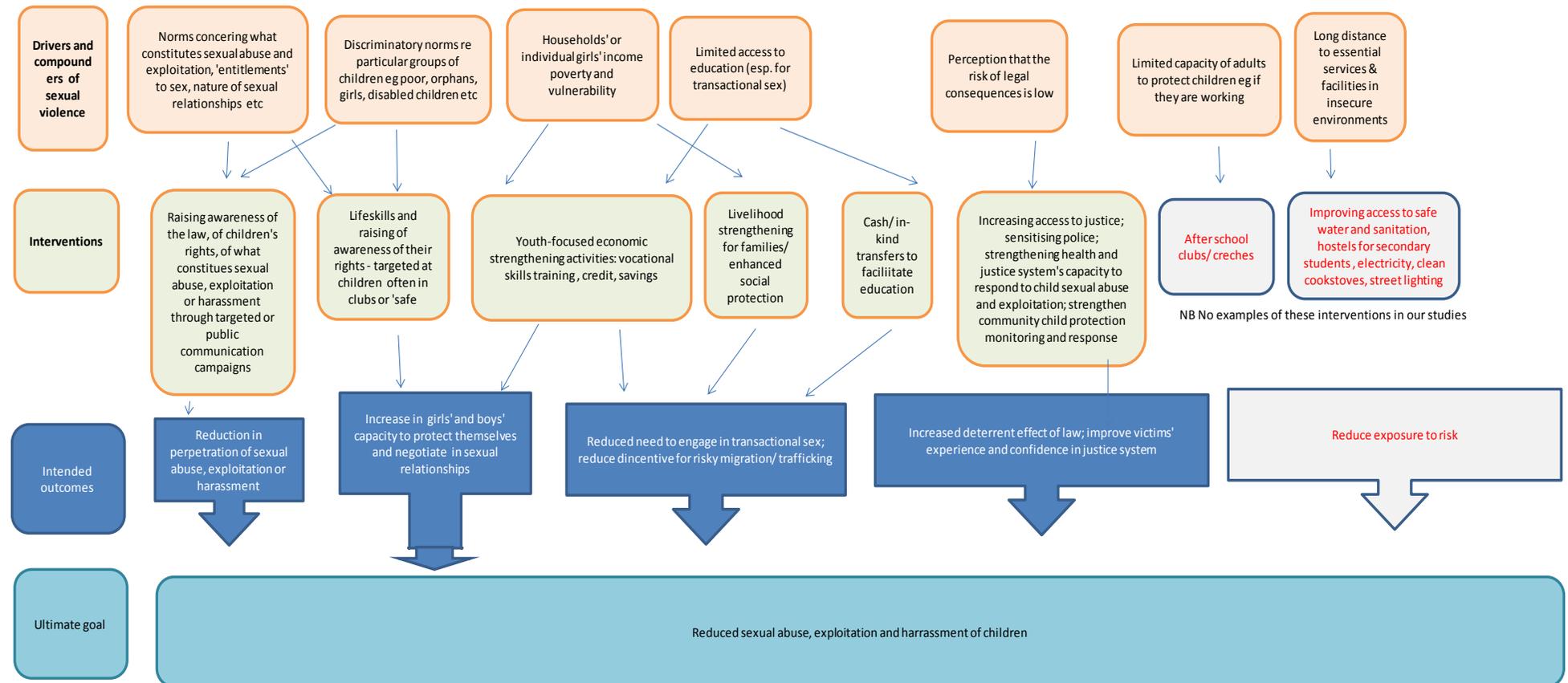
55 Bandiera et al. (2012); CARE International (2006); Fafo (2006); Guga (2010); Hamakawa and Randall (2008); IOM (2011); Mgalla et al. (1998); Ray (2006); Singhal and Dura (2008).

56 Chamroonsawasdi et al. (2010); Erulkar et al. (2006); Fiscian et al. (2009); Ssewamala et al. (2012).

57 CARE International (2006); Columbia Group on Children in Adversity (2011); Guga (2010); Jones and Brown (2008); Kashaija (2011); Kolokosso et al. (2007); Mgalla et al. (1998); Ssendendo (2007); Villar, (2007); War Child (2010); Witter et al. (2004).

Figure 5 summarises diagrammatically the main drivers and compounding factors leading to sexual violence that the programmes examined aimed to address, the main types of interventions undertaken and the intended outcomes.

Figure 5: Intervention pathways for programmes examined – sexual violence against children



7.2 Findings

Three central programme mechanisms were identified in the anti-sexual violence interventions: economic strengthening; awareness raising and education; and strengthening child protection systems. As Table 13 indicates, most programmes used more than one approach to achieve change. Single approach programmes were rare; all of them were awareness-raising programmes.

Reflecting a general consensus about the greater relationship between poverty and sexual exploitation than sexual abuse, only programmes aiming to reduce adolescents' involvement in commercial or transactional sex included economic strengthening components. In all cases but one, the economic strengthening programmes examined here were parts of broader programmes that provided life skills training and social support and often aimed to strengthen child protection systems. Those aiming to reduce sexual abuse generally focused on changing attitudes and children's capacity to protect themselves through awareness raising and life skills education, and on strengthening child protection systems.

Table 13: Programme mechanisms in anti-sexual violence interventions

Programme mechanism	As a single mechanism	In combination	Total	% of interventions with this mechanism (n=27)
Economic strengthening	1	8	9	33 %
Awareness raising and education	3	13	16	59%
Strengthening child protection systems	2	8	10	37%

Table 14: Scale of programmes with impact on sexual violence

Scale of programme	Number
One community	2
Multiple communities	15
National level	1
Regional or multi-country	6

Table 15: Children reached in programmes with impact on sexual violence

Number of children reached	Number of programmes
Under 100	2
100-500	4
501-1,000	
1,001-1500	1
1501-2000	
2,000+	3

Only nine of the twenty-seven programmes reported the approximate number of children reached. As Table 15 indicates, many of the programmes examined were very small, typically working in a few locations for a time-bound period of project funding.

The papers included cover six regional or multi-country programmes. These are anti-trafficking programmes, plus a regional communication programme educating girls on the risks of sexual exploitation and helping them build skills to protect themselves. As discussed further in Section 7.3, there is limited specific attention to sexual violence against boys, although they are implicitly included in system strengthening approaches.

7.2.1 Economic strengthening

Nine papers are included in this section. These consider interventions that aimed to strengthen livelihoods through vocational and business management training, sometimes with microfinance, and thus offer an alternative to transactional or commercial sex or to facilitated migration, with the associated risk of trafficking. Many of these programmes also involved broader life skills components, key insights from which are outlined in Section 7.2.2.

Among other activities, discussed in Sections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3, **Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL)'s integrated programme** (Ssengendo, 2007) provides apprenticeships and training to child survivors of and those at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation. The majority of the children are trained at different UYDEL centres; others are trained by local artisans within their communities. On completion of training, children are given start-up kits depending on the trade in which training is provided. At the time of the evaluation, 260 children had received training, in welding, electronics, vehicle and motorbike repair, plumbing, carpentry, tailoring, catering and hairdressing.

The evaluation indicates that some of the children have been able to find employment or start a business using their new skills, enabling them to earn an income (it does not discuss what proportion were able to do so or whether these were sustainable in the long run). Some of the children said the training was too short to enable them to master all the skills they needed for their trade. However, one of the girls quoted explicitly viewed her tailoring business as a viable alternative to commercial sex work; it is not clear how widespread this was, although Ssengendo suggests it played an important role in reducing vulnerable children's risk of sexual abuse and exploitation. As with the other integrated programmes, the relative significance of livelihoods, education and child protection system strengthening components is not examined.

Singhal and Dura (2009) evaluate a **life skills and business support programme** with 500 vulnerable girls and young women in **northern Uganda**, which aimed to assist in their reintegration after involvement in the Lord's Resistance Army. Of these girls, 40% were formerly abducted child mothers, and the other 60% either vulnerable young mothers or orphaned heads of household looking after siblings. This programme identified factors that could support vulnerable young women to prevent them engaging in transactional sex and constructed its programme around these. Participants received training in business, income generation and how to plan, manage and evaluate business initiatives and provide customer care. They also learned ways to manage finances and save their earnings. It also provided training in some vocational skills (not specified); counselling support to girls engaging in anti-social behaviour; and a safe space for girls to socialise.

This participatory evaluation found the project had been successful in supporting many girls to develop successful businesses and/or to farm or garden more effectively. Some of the girls taking part noted that they had stopped engaging in commercial or transactional sex as a result.

Bandiera et al. (2012) evaluate a BRAC programme in **Uganda – Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA)**. This involved organising girls aged 14-20 into adolescent clubs (these were not school-based so were open to both school- and non-school-going girls). Adolescent clubs provided both vocational skills training and life skills training. Vocational training courses included hairdressing, tailoring, computing, agriculture, poultry rearing and small trades operation, and was carried out by entrepreneurs professionally engaged in particular trades, or by BRAC staff. Life skills training focused on sexual and reproductive health, protection from HIV, management skills, conflict resolution and women's and girls' legal rights related to marriage, and was carried out by female mentors – young women BRAC had trained. The clubs were open five days a week, timed so school-going girls could attend. In addition to vocational and life skills training, the clubs also hosted popular recreational activities such as reading, drama, singing, dancing and playing games. As such, the clubs served as a local space in which adolescent girls could meet and socialise.

The evaluation did not distinguish the effects of the life skills and vocational training components. However, the combined programme had a significant effect on girls' risk of sexual violence. The proportion of girls reporting having recently had sex unwillingly declined from 21% at the start of the project to 4% at the time of the evaluation, indicating that participant girls were now significantly more empowered to negotiate over sex. Bandiera et al. attribute this to the life skills education sessions on rape and legal rights.

Hamakawa and Randall (2008), examining **a project to support reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces in Côte d'Ivoire**, concluded 'The qualitative data provides isolated examples of success stories from income-generation activities and anecdotes about girls beginning to support themselves through petty commerce rather than having to turn to prostitution. However, a great deal of the qualitative data from the girls themselves points to a frustration with the income-generation activities of the project.' (Hamakawa and Randall, 2008: 33) Although the evaluation did not find evidence of either increased or reduced involvement in commercial or transactional sex, it observed that many girls faced extremely challenging economic circumstances and appeared to be at risk of engaging in commercial sex work. At the same time, by taking girls 'off the street', and reducing their exposure to drugs and alcohol, the project was seen by community members as contributing to reducing the incidence of rape.

Evaluations of two combined economic strengthening and broader life skills and social support programmes examined the effects on adolescents' likelihood of engaging in risk sexual activity (including transactional or commercial sex) or on their capacity to refuse unwanted sexual activity.

Tap and Reposition Youth (TRY), a pilot project in two of the poorest areas in **Nairobi, Kenya**, aimed to adapt group lending to adolescent girls aged 16 and 22. The intervention combined group formation, life skills education, mentoring and microfinance. At endline, only one third of girls remained active in the programme, and girls aged under 18 were significantly more likely to drop out than older girls. This reflected a concern about the security of their savings, particularly in groups where some members were defaulting on their loans, or because they needed emergency access to their savings, which were locked up as group collateral. Young savers' clubs, delinked from a microfinance programme, were subsequently initiated and proved much more popular.

There were positive and statistically significant impacts on the ability to negotiate sexual relationships: TRY participants were more than 1.7 times more likely to be able to refuse to have sex with their partners and nearly three times more likely to be able to insist on condom use, compared with control girls.⁵⁸ By endline, TRY girls had more than doubled their savings, and the mean savings they had accrued was significantly larger than that of the control group. They were also more likely to save in a bank.

The evaluation does not explore how far economic empowerment contributed to girls' broader empowerment, such as their increased ability to negotiate the terms of sexual relationships. Given that TRY involved life skills, social support and mentoring, as well as savings opportunities, changes are likely to reflect the combined impact of these different components.

Ssewamala et al.'s (2012) **experimental programme with school-going orphans in Uganda, SUUBI**, aimed to test the relative importance of health education and economic support in reducing sexual risk taking among adolescents. The programme worked with adolescent orphans in 15 schools, who were randomly assigned to a control or treatment group. Orphans in both treatment and control groups received counselling and school supplies. The treatment group also received matched savings accounts (i.e. children's savings were matched by the project in a 2:1 ratio up to a cap of \$10 per month), 12 one- to two-hour workshops on asset building and financial planning and a monthly mentoring programme with peer mentors on future planning. The two groups were compared after 10 months of intervention. Ssewamala et al. found that, after control for socio-demographic factors, child-caregiver/parental communication and peer pressure, adolescents in the economic intervention group reported a significant reduction in sexual risk-taking intentions compared with control adolescents. Although the study did not directly explore attitudes to transactional sex, the strong relationship between economic deprivation and transactional sex suggests that economic improvements could reduce adolescents' engagement in exploitative sexual relationships.

Three interventions to reduce children's risk of being trafficked for sexual exploitation involved economic strengthening elements. In these programmes, economic strengthening components were one of several approaches being used simultaneously. These programmes did not have a specific focus on trafficking for sexual exploitation, as they aimed to prevent child trafficking for any purpose.

58 Erulkar et al. (2006) point out that the relatively low response rate in the endline survey (68%) means these statistics must be viewed with some caution.

Kolokosso et al. (2007) evaluates an **International Labour Organization International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) funded regional programme that took place in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Mali and Togo and aimed to prevent child trafficking and rehabilitate trafficked children.** This multi-component programme aimed to strengthen government capacity to prevent child trafficking, and to raise awareness at community level of the risks involved in 'facilitated migration' of children. It also supported small business start-up projects to reduce the poverty-related push factors behind much child migration in West and Central Africa. This business support programme involved technical training, initial materials and business advice and guidance. Business areas chosen by parents included textile painting, sewing, producing toiletries (powder soap, soaps in blocs, ointments and shampoos), jewellery making and cake and pastry shops.

The authors concluded that 'although poverty reduction through income-generating activities to the benefit of parents of child trafficking victims or potential victims is important', a small NGO or project, such as the one implementing the programme they evaluated, may not be best placed to do so, because of its small budget and lack of technical capacity. Thus, many of the businesses set up by parents failed to generate income beyond subsistence levels. This reflects inadequate support by NGOs, whose experience was more in the fields of community mobilisation and advocacy, and which lack specialised microenterprise support skills, rather than constituting a problem of with an income generation approach *per se*.

The evaluation of this programme observed a general perception that it had contributed to a reduction in the number of children being trafficked. However, statistical evidence of changes was not available; improving statistical monitoring capacity was one of the evaluation's recommendations.

In UNICEF's Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)-funded **anti-trafficking programme in Nigeria** (Fafo, 2006), vocational and life skills training was made available to adolescents between 15 and 18 who showed evidence of neglect, victims of trafficking and vulnerable children. Other interested youth were also eligible to participate in the programme. It supported centre-based training in two cities (Benin City and Sapele), which was both costly and somewhat isolated from local workplaces, which limited trainees' opportunities to develop employment-related social networks, and may have led to an oversupply of certain skills. Fafo concluded that an apprenticeship programme with local employers may have been a more sustainable and effective approach to help young people develop skills in demand in the community, and recommended centre-based training in non-traditional skills that would enable young people to access external markets. No data were available on the extent to which graduates had secured long-term employment after completing their studies.

The programme also offered small loans at one of the two centres. However, uptake from young people was low, as they were concerned about their ability to repay loans. In Burkina Faso and Mali, UNICEF's programme combined livelihood support to trafficked children and their families, and an 'interception and return programme' designed to reintegrate trafficked children in their home communities. As in Nigeria, the evaluation raised concern that vocational training components were leading to an oversupply of certain skills, which would not only be ineffective in helping young people reintegrate or preventing trafficking but also undermine existing businesses and, could, perversely, lead to greater poverty. As in Nigeria, they recommended a stronger focus on developing skills that could enable disadvantaged youth and their families to tap broader markets.

An IOM **anti-trafficking programme in Cambodia and Thailand** (IOM, 2009) aimed to help trafficked women and children return home easily, and to offer flexible reintegration assistance to encourage them to resist new offers from traffickers. It was not focused specifically on people who had been involved in commercial sex work or otherwise sexually exploited, but on any children IOM had repatriated from Thailand. In practice, it was intended to include vocational training, micro enterprise training, provision of small loans to start up a micro enterprise, formal school education for children and financial assistance and counselling for families of returning children. However, only the financial assistance and education components had been implemented at the time of this evaluation. The education component involves provision of school supplies and liaison with schools to ensure children are attending and have not been re-trafficked. Financial assistance varies from \$10 to \$30 per month, depending on family need, and parents are advised to use it for their children's education or to invest in their businesses. Assistance starts only once

programme implementers feel confident the family will not re-traffick the child. Financial support is contingent on the child not being re-trafficked, and attending school. However, some staff view the level of financial assistance as an incentive to re-traffick children, to be able to claim payments again.

This project was also hampered by being located in an area well known for trafficking recruitment, which made re-trafficking more likely. A total of 41% of returned children were re-trafficked, and 24% could not be traced, meaning only 35% could be confirmed to have successfully reintegrated.

The ILO and IOM anti-trafficking programmes were notable in that they targeted economic strengthening activities at parents rather than, or as well as, children, with the intention of reducing the pressures on families that lead to children being trafficked. Activities with parents are also mentioned in the overview of the UNICEF anti-trafficking programme in Burkina Faso and Mali, but they are not discussed in the narrative, so it is unclear how effective they were. As compared with the programmes in South-east Europe discussed by Dottridge (2006), there was a stronger emphasis here on integrated prevention activities with young people and their families, that is, on addressing the supply side rather than the demand side. Dottridge's review of interventions in South-east Europe found a greater emphasis on deterring traffickers.

7.2.2 Education and awareness raising

Sixteen of the programmes examined involved awareness raising and education on children's rights and life skills. While some interventions aimed to provide children with information or to help them develop life skills they could use to protect themselves, others focused more on raising awareness among adults of the risk of sexual abuse or exploitation, and/ or of the harm sexual violence can cause. Awareness-raising activities were often integrated with child protection system strengthening activities. In this section, we discuss programmes that ran for a time-bound period, and/ or involved putting information in the public sphere, rather than those where learning was undertaken through new or strengthened structures to protect children from abuse. Section 7.2.3 discusses the latter group of interventions.

School-based programmes

Four time-bound life skills programmes aiming to change adolescents' attitudes and practices were delivered through schools. Chamroonsawasdi et al. (2010) evaluated a pilot **life skills programme focusing on prevention of physical and sexual violence in two schools in Thailand**. Learning took place once a week over an 11-week period and involved the whole school, including teachers as well as students. They found the programme was effective in helping change gender attitudes and attitudes towards sexual violence.

Fiscian et al. (2009), in an **experimental education, life skills and vocational skills programme in a church school Ghana**, found that participant girls felt more able to discuss sex with both boys and men after taking part, which may enable them to resist attempts at sexual coercion. The evaluation took place on completion, and so could not assess any longer-term impacts on sexual practices. This programme provided information on protecting yourself from HIV and negotiating in the context of a sexual relationship. It took two days, was delivered over five consecutive days and also involved training in tie-dyeing. In this case, skills training may have enhanced the appeal of the programme, but was an 'add-on' rather than integral to it.

My Future, My Choice was a peer education programme that ran as an after-school club in Namibian secondary schools. It was intended principally as an HIV/AIDS education programme, but included discussion on sexual violence and coercion. The quantitative element of the evaluation did not measure changes of direct relevance to this study, but the qualitative element found some notable changes in behaviour and reported attitudes. For example, one boy said he had learnt from the programme how girls feel when they are sexually harassed, and had stopped harassing them. Some of the young women interviewed also reported that they or their friends had stopped transactional sex. For example, one stated,

'I was drinking and dating a sugar daddy for financial needs but when I joined this programme I decided not to do it. Because I learnt the negative consequences that will affect my life'
(UNICEF, 2009: 49).

It is notable that the information this young woman received through My Future, My Choice, was enough to motivate her to stop engaging in transactional sex, even though her economic situation had apparently not improved.

Dupas (2006) reports a randomised experiment **related to provision of information to teenage Kenyan girls** about the higher relative risk of contracting HIV from sex with an older man compared with sex with a peer. The girls were in Grade 8 at primary school, and were a subset of a larger group of girls supported by ICS Kenya in different ways. Dupas found a 65% decrease in the incidence of pregnancies between teenage girls and adult men, suggesting a reduction in transactional sex with ‘sugar daddies’. There was no corresponding increase in pregnancies between teenage girls and teenage boys. By contrast, more generalised HIV awareness education had no impact on incidence of pregnancy among the same sample of girls, indicating that the more specific information provided about the risks of ‘sugar daddies’ compared with peers had a greater effect on motivating behaviour change.

The first two programmes discussed indicate a change in attitudes only. My Future, My Choice and ICS Kenya’s programme also appear to have led to changes in behaviour, which are consistent with a reduction in girls’ exposure to sexual exploitation. It is notable that these changes have occurred purely through information provision without an economic strengthening component.

Non-formal education and life skills programmes

In contrast with these school-based programmes, the majority of the non-formal education programmes discussed below involved an economic strengthening component. As Section 7.2.1 has already outlined the detail of these programmes, we do not repeat this here. None of these evaluations explicitly examined the relative contributions of non-formal education or economic strengthening components as factors leading to changes in sexual violence-related issues. However, the qualitative comments and discussion often indicate participants’ or evaluators’ views on their relative significance.

Thus, for example, in the **Save the Children programme in Côte d’Ivoire to reintegrate girls formerly associated with armed forces** (Hamakawa and Randall, 2008), many girls saw the opportunity to obtain basic education as the single aspect that had transformed their lives the most. This programme provided an accelerated learning curriculum four mornings a week.⁵⁹

By contrast, in **BRAC’s Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescents programme in Uganda**, (Bandiera et al., 2012), it appears that the life skills sessions on girls’ and women’s rights had the greatest effect on reducing sexual coercion.

Rather than providing information to a target group through schools, clubs or non-formal education programmes, the **Sara Communication Initiative** put ‘**edutainment**’ materials on aspects of life skills and the risks of transactional sex in the public sphere, through the media and through dissemination of posters and comic books, in **Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda**.

Information is given through radio programmes, a comic book, poster and video, and in some cases followed up in peer group discussions. Each episode tells a different story in which Sara, the central character, faces a range of challenges related to safe sexual behaviour and HIV/AIDS avoidance. Thus, for example, Episode 2 focused on children’s right to protection from sexual exploitation and violence, and Episode 4 on the risk of sugar daddies. The quantitative element of the evaluation (conducted in Tanzania) found a high level of awareness of Sara: 32% of the surveyed girls could identify a picture of Sara; more girls had most commonly been exposed to the Sara stories through comic books rather than through posters, radio or video.

The qualitative evidence presented indicates that girls and boys identify with the Sara and Juma characters, and that girls feel empowered to apply the life skills demonstrated by Sara in their own lives, as the following example from Uganda illustrates:

⁵⁹ This was a broader reintegration programme, rather than one focused on eradicating sexual violence. As a result, the girls participating in the evaluation were probably assessing the overall changes in their lives as a result of the project. They were not asked the significance of different components in contributing to their education, health, sexual wellbeing etc. This comment therefore cannot be taken as evidence that the non-formal education component had the greatest impact on sexual violence.

'I was approached by a man for sex. Can you imagine somebody coming to you for the first time and claims that he loves you! Anyway, I told the man that I am not opposed to his love, but that he should come and tell my parents how he loves me. I could tell that the man hated me [...] I encourage the girls to use the same tricks in order to beat off such men and save their lives like what I did. And I had learned that from the story of Sara' (Russon, 2000: 20).

In other examples, also from Uganda, girls related how they had used skills learnt from watching Sara to repel the advances of boys and teachers. However, only 5% of girls surveyed (in Tanzania) were able to correctly identify the message behind their favourite episode, suggesting that these materials would have been more effective if they had been shown in peer education settings, and discussed afterwards.

A USAID HIV/AIDS prevention project in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania evaluated by Oki et al. (2010), aimed to reduce sexual coercion and violence and bring down transactional and cross-generational sex as part of a broader education and behaviour change programme implemented by NGOs and faith-based organisations.

Most programmes addressed these issues through peer education programmes teaching life skills and negotiating skills, which they hoped would help young people resist sexual coercion. Programmes directly addressing sexual coercion, cross-generational sex and transactional sex were few and limited. Those that addressed these issues typically included them in community dialogues, often as part of broader curricula on gender issues. Oki et al. were unable to determine whether these (relatively few programmes) had helped reduce sexual coercion and violence. Some partners were introducing economic strengthening components to help reduce incentives for transactional sex, but these initiatives were at too early a stage to be included in the evaluation. It is notable that several of the sub-programmes that made up this programme had found an education-only approach to be insufficient and were moving to address economic constraints in parallel.

Education and awareness raising for adults

This subsection discusses stand-alone communication programmes, or programme components aiming to change adults' knowledge, attitudes or behaviour about sexual abuse and exploitation of children. In some cases, these activities were aimed equally at adults and children (e.g. the Ashtar popular theatre performances in the Occupied Palestinian Territories), in others principally at adults, to motivate changes in their behaviour. Where such programmes were part of broader child protection system strengthening activities, and/or professional training, this is discussed in Section 7.2.3.

UNICEF's Sida-funded anti-trafficking programme in Burkina Faso involved a significant communication component (29% of the budget) (Fafo, 2006). The lack of a baseline study hampered assessment of effectiveness. Some respondents felt this was excessive, that there was limited evidence of change related to public communications and that more funds should have been channelled into support for child victims

Silver and Weeks (2003) evaluated **a popular theatre project in the Occupied Palestinian Territories that aimed to increase awareness of school violence**. A Palestinian theatre company, Ashtar, performed plays about school violence (both physical and sexual) in various locations across the West Bank. Some performance took place in public community settings, others in schools. The authors found that participants/audiences had mostly understood and internalised the main messages, and in some cases had started to act on them. See Section 8 for further discussion.

7.2.3 Strengthening child protection systems

Three main approaches were identified among the ten interventions examined: community- or school-based child protection structures; strengthening state capacity (e.g. of police, social workers, health workers) to address child abuse sensitively; and promoting legal change. It is notable that none of these programmes involved fomenting linkages between children (or families) at risk of child protection violations and anti-poverty or social welfare systems. The majority involved action at community and district levels; relatively few were national in scope. Given the nascent state of social protection systems in many of the countries involved, this lack of linkage may reflect that there were no clear programmes or entitlements these programmes could link with.

In only one programme (UYDEL in Uganda) did child protection structures develop economic strengthening components: here, some parent support groups set up savings schemes for their members. One evaluation (Witter et al., 2004) recommended that community-based child protection structures be supported to develop income-generating activities to give them operational budgets. However, while this may be the only feasible approach in contexts where there is no realistic prospect of their being provided with funds, such activities could serve as a distraction from child protection awareness-raising and reporting activities.

Strengthening community-based child protection structures

Six programmes either strengthened existing community-based child protection structures, for example by convening meetings of all actors with a child protection mandate (Guga, 2010; War Child, 2010), or set up new structures. Often, these were grassroots committees that reported abuse or planned trafficking to the local authorities (e.g. Fafo, 2006; Guga, 2010; Kashaija, 2011; Kolokosso et al., 2007; Ray, 2006; Ssegendo, 2007).

War Child's (2010) evaluation of its work in **Northern and North-eastern Uganda** found that **support to village-level structures and awareness raising on child abuse and protection issues** had led to a reduction in abuse of children in the areas where they were active. It has helped children avoid risky situations and has also led to increased reporting of abuse, since children are now more aware of how to do so. Guga (2010) found that **a child protection capacity-strengthening project in Morogoro, Tanzania**, had led to increased cooperation between police, magistrates and health workers and more effective referral in child abuse cases. In both cases, these projects involved awareness-raising work, and raising the profile of child abuse on the agendas of existing committees and agencies.

While there is often a presumption in the literature against creating new child protection structures, where these fill a gap by bringing cases to the attention of village or other local authorities they can play an important role in helping reduce abuse of children. Sustainability concerns – which are a key issue – are discussed in Section 7.3. Here, we discuss evidence of their effectiveness.

Plan International's Child Protection System Strengthening Project in Malawi developed two sets of community level structures:

- *Village and area child protection committees* formed of local men and women who monitor children's rights and report violations to the district authorities. These committee members received basic training in children's rights, with one member receiving more intensive training as a paracivic educator. Paracivic educators and committee members conduct parenting classes and facilitate the mediation of less serious child abuse cases. They also help children and families access the police, health services and courts, and work in collaboration with the traditional authorities, police and schools.
- *Children's advocacy groups at village, area and district levels* raise awareness about children's rights issues and refer cases of child maltreatment or abuse to the abovementioned child protection committees. Children can take issues that have not been adequately resolved at community level to the district authorities, by requesting a children's forum. These groups are facilitated by teachers and paracivic educators.

Although the children's committees have been able to raise issues of abuse with the village and area child protection committees, they have been constrained in raising issues of abuse by relatives 'otherwise the child will be driven out of the house'. (Ray, 2006: 27) Overall, the evaluation suggests there has been a reduction in early marriage and in violent sexual abuse cases (Ray, 2006).

Kolokosso et al. (2007) found that the **village vigilance committees set up to prevent trafficking in source areas in West Africa** were effective. The project did not set up similar structures in destination areas, but doing so would have strengthened the network of protective structures and could have helped improve detection and rehabilitation of trafficked children. In one instance (in Cameroon), monitoring cells were set up in destination areas, with regular communication between destination and source area groups.

Village surveillance committees to prevent trafficking, known as 'relay committees', were also established in **UNICEF's anti-trafficking programme in West Africa** (Fafo, 2006). These appeared to be effective in

informing law enforcement agents and/or government social action offices of trafficking that was taking place. The project also put in place coordinating committees among government representatives, but these appeared unnecessary, as the 'relay committees' usually bypassed them. More fundamentally, they question the focus on surveillance and interception of children, rather than traffickers. Confusion between genuine trafficking and child labour migration has meant voluntary child labour migrants are being systematically intercepted and sent home without consultation, implying a need for more effective orientation and awareness raising among grassroots committees and law enforcement agents.

UYDEL facilitated the development of **parent support groups in Uganda** (32 across the three districts where it works) (Kashaija, 2011)). These have encouraged open discussion about child protection and child sexual abuse issues at community level, and provided a forum for counselling-type support for children and their families and referral to other services. They have also been instrumental in sensitising fellow parents through community meetings about child rights, child protection issues and positive parenting skills (Ssendendo, 2007). Information, education and communication (IEC) materials developed for these and other sensitisation efforts (e.g. child link and out-of-school children's clubs) and disseminated within participating communities have been important tools. Parent support groups have started to report cases of sexual abuse and other abuses considered serious (such as severe beatings) to the police. Kashaija recommends they be more formally linked into the child protection system and as such given recognition and greater status.

Approximately a third of these parent support groups have also initiated savings groups, indicating that, as well as raising awareness and acting as a link to formal child protection structures, they are also helping reduce one of the exacerbating factors for some forms of sexual abuse and exploitation. Some parents had used these savings to revive businesses and initiate businesses together (Kashaija, 2011).

In parallel with child rights clubs in schools, UYDEL has **trained out-of-school children in Uganda in peer education** on children rights, life skills and child protection issues. The children have also founded two clubs for out-of-school children, in which these and other issues can be discussed (Ssendendo, 2007). By 2011, this had extended to a network of 180 peer educators on child abuse issues (Kashaija, 2011). In addition to regular activities at clubs, they have organised singing and drama and other public performances to sensitise both children and adults on child abuse issues, using IEC materials developed by UYDEL (Kashaija, 2011).

While the examples discussed above seem to have filled a genuine gap in the institutional structures for protecting children, there is also evidence of duplication with and/or undermining of traditional or government structures (Columbia Group for Children in Adversity; Fafo, 2006; War Child, 2010), in which case they are less likely to be effective or sustainable. This is further discussed in Section 7.3.

Strengthening protective structures in schools

Four projects in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda initiated child rights' clubs in schools. These both raised children's awareness of their rights and sensitised teachers and school administrators on issues related to child abuse (physical and sexual), its prevention and how to respond. Evaluations suggest these clubs⁶⁰ helped create significantly greater awareness of the risks of abuse and led to greater action to tackle abuse in schools, such as disciplining teachers who abuse pupils (Guga, 2010; Kashaija, 2011; Ray, 2006; Ssendendo, 2007; War Child, 2010). With the issue now much higher profile, children and staff are more likely to take action if abuse occurs, including reporting abuses to the police (Ssendendo, 2007). Furthermore, information discussed at school child rights clubs has also helped children protect themselves, such as advice on ways of avoiding situations where they might be liable to sexual abuse or exploitation (Ssendendo, 2007; War Child, 2010). In addition to regular meetings, some clubs have organised activities such as debates, essay competitions etc. to raise the profile of child abuse issues (Kashaija, 2011).

Another approach piloted by the Tanzania –Netherlands Project to Support HIV/AIDS Control in Mwanza (TANESA) programme in **185 schools in Tanzania** involved the **development of a guardian programme**

⁶⁰ By 2007, UYDEL had supported the development of 24 child link clubs in school (Ssendendo, 2007); Faraja Trust had supported the development of 6 child rights clubs in schools in Morogoro, Tanzania (Guga, 2010); the numbers supported by War Child in Northern and North-east Uganda were not given in the evaluation (War Child, 2010).

whereby school teachers were trained to act as counsellors on sexual and reproductive health matters and to respond when children disclosed sexual violence or harassment to them (Mgalla et al., 1998). This innovative programme has been particularly effective with respect to teacher harassment: no girl in a school without a guardian said they would go to a woman teacher, while 52% of girls in schools with guardians said they would consult the guardian. However, in these schools, teacher harassment was felt to be a smaller problem than harassment by boys: 59% of those consulting a guardian had done so over harassment by peers, compared with only 9% who reported teacher harassment.

Guardians were able to report abuses mentioned by girls to the school district authorities, resulting in the transfer of teachers involved in abuse; they also reported criminal cases, such as rape, to the police and local authorities. Where they were able to link with village governance structures, they had helped change community attitudes towards sexual abuse; some village councils enacted new rules to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation and increased vigilance and acted more swiftly when concerns were raised.

The programme was somewhat limited by use of corporal punishment in schools, the usual fate of girls (and boys) caught in sexual activity (other than coerced sex with adults), which reduced girls' willingness to speak to guardians. Its effectiveness in protecting adolescents engaging in sexual activity (rather than attempting to prevent all adolescent sexual activity) could also be increased by encouraging guardians to provide correct information on reproductive health matters, rather than simply advising girls not to have sex.

An **IOM project to strengthen the prevention of trafficking in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia** involved development of curriculum materials and training of secondary school teachers to use these. The evaluation found the materials well received by young people, who now felt empowered with the knowledge to stay safe if they decided to work abroad. The curriculum materials the project developed had been adopted by the Armenian Ministry of Education; it was unclear at the time of the evaluation if they would also be adopted in Georgia and Azerbaijan (IOM, 2011).

Strengthening community leaders' and professionals' capacity to protect children

Beyond programmes with teachers, four of the projects examined aimed to strengthen other professionals' or community leaders' capacity to protect children.

In an initial phase, **UYDEL worked with the Child and Family Protection Unit of the Uganda police force** to train 61 officers in 3 districts (Ssengendo, 2007). In a second phase, 180 more officers were trained (Kashaija, 2011). This was perceived to have led to the police handling child abuse cases (particularly sexual abuse) more sensitively and increased community confidence in the police's capacity to respond, and thus to increased reporting (Ssengendo, 2007). The police officers interviewed also felt the project had increased their knowledge of how to address both child abuse and other issues relating to children sensitively, so that children received counselling and were treated as victims rather than potential suspects (Kashaija, 2011). The project also developed a standardised referral form, which helped improve coordination between different agencies and record keeping. However, the project was unable to address more structural constraints, such as insufficient police operational budgets, which limited their capacity to fully investigate child abuse cases, and as a result led to some cases being dropped (Kashaija, 2011).

Many of the trained staff were transferred to new duties in other districts, to which they will have brought their new skills related to child abuse prevention – but this also highlights the need to factor ongoing training of new staff and refresher courses for already trained staff into professional capacity-strengthening activities of this kind (Ssengendo, 2007).

A Save the Children project in **Rakai, Southern Uganda**, aimed to strengthen child protection capacity by **supporting government probation and social welfare officers to become 'pro-active defenders of children's rights'** (Witter et al., 2004: 23). However, without operational budgets, analysis seven years after the end of the project found staff were unable to follow cases up, and had become 'desk officers'. This project also trained child volunteer advocates to assist probation and social welfare officers in identifying and reporting child abuse cases. These were trusted by community members, including children, and, if they were unable to resolve issues locally, would refer them upwards to the local authorities and police. Again,

without operational budgets, and in particular an ability to travel to investigate and support cases, their effectiveness had become limited.

The **Child Abuse Mitigation Project (CAMP) at Bustamante Hospital in Jamaica** also aimed to reduce abuse of children through improving the knowledge of professional staff and strengthening follow-up of children seen at the hospital for violent injuries. The majority of children supported had experienced physical violence, and so this project is discussed in more detail in Section 8. However, around 28% of the children seen by Bustamante staff had symptoms of sexual abuse. The follow-up visits by hospital social workers were appreciated by many families whose children had been abused, as they provided concrete advice on how to support sexually abused children and ways of preventing abuse recurring. Staff trained by the project reported that they would have appreciated more in-depth training on sexual abuse.

A CARE International project in and around camps for **Angolan refugees in Zambia** provided **training on sexual and gender-based violence** to a broad range of actors, including community leaders and women's groups in the refugee camps, teachers and police. Community participants stated that they found the training useful and now knew how to report instances of abuse and felt that the number of incidents of sexual and gender-based violence had declined.

The police in the area had noted reduced incidence of crimes such as defilement; they had dedicated staff for sexual and gender-based violence cases, all police in the area had attended sexual and gender-based violence training. A pilot mobile court, which could address sexual and gender-based violence cases among others, was seen as an effective initiative breaking down some of the barriers to accessing justice.

Strengthening higher-level structures

One regional programme aimed to strengthen anti-trafficking laws and bilateral cooperation over trafficking (ILO-IPEC West Africa); another worked on collaboration between agencies in different South American countries charged with reducing commercial sexual exploitation (ILO-IPEC South America).

The ILO-IPEC programme in West Africa led to **adoption of strengthened anti-trafficking laws in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Senegal and Benin**. It also led to strengthened bilateral cooperation between Mali and Côte d'Ivoire, Benin and Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Mali, Guinea and Mali and Mali and Senegal (Kolokosso et al., 2007). At this point in the project, further activities to ensure the implementation of these laws had not been undertaken, but they were recommended in the evaluation. These included translation of key points into local languages and training of different branches of the law enforcement system (courts, police etc.) in provisions of these new and amended laws.

An ILO-IPEC programme in **four South American countries aimed to improve linkages between professionals engaged with combating domestic child labour and sexual exploitation** to strengthen national efforts to address these issues strategically. Villar's (2007) evaluation found some evidence of sharing of approaches across countries. However, overall, the project was more effective in developing effective approaches at national level, particularly in Chile and Colombia, where 'the institutional conditions, the adequate selection of strategic allies, the political will of the state (especially in the case of Chile) and the implementation of an adequate national strategy, have played a decisive role in an improved position for both issues [domestic child labour and commercial sexual exploitation of children] on the political agenda' (p. 20).

Villar (2007) also points to frustrations among some of the local authorities and NGOs implementing anti-sexual exploitation activities, that, although the institutional capacity of different organisations to respond to or prevent sexual exploitation has been strengthened, it has not been possible to develop viable alternatives at community level. Similarly, some of the respondents in the evaluation felt the project should have had a stronger anti-poverty focus from the outset.

7.3 Discussion

The strength of the data on which these evaluations are based varied significantly. In particular, some of the analyses of system strengthening projects drew on rapid overviews and key informant interviews, and

generally provide less clear evidence of change than in analyses on the projects focused on behaviour or attitudinal change. In some cases, this reflects a failure to use data generated by the projects. For example, the two anti-trafficking projects in West Africa both involved the development of databases/information systems on trafficking, but these were not being used. Neither evaluation was therefore able to assess the extent to which the projects were effective in reducing trafficking. As with the other thematic areas, the small number of interventions of each type means conclusions are necessarily tentative.

7.3.1 Who benefits, who is left out?

As with the other three thematic areas, the papers discussing interventions to reduce sexual violence do not systematically analyse who benefited and who does not. Here, we summarise what can be gleaned from the papers examined as to whom these interventions have worked for.

Gender

Although girls constitute the majority of children affected by sexual violence, sexual abuse and exploitation of boys is under-recognised (Frederick, 2010; Marcus, 2013). Most of the programmes working directly with children and adolescents targeted girls only. The two exceptions were UYDEL's multifaceted programme in Uganda, which recognised that both boys and girls are at risk of sexual exploitation and made its programme available to both genders, and SUUBI, which enrolled both boys and girls in its savings programme.⁶¹ One of the evaluations raised community concerns that a sole focus on girls was inequitable, in that boys and young men would value and benefit from the vocational training skills girls were offered (Singhal and Dura, 2008). In a global sense boys and young men may have better access to educational opportunities, but in particular localities this may not be the case, and goals of promoting gender equality and reduced sexual violence may be better served by programmes that do not fuel male resentment by appearing to favour females.

While victims of trafficking are often assumed to be female, girls comprised only one-third of the children assisted by the IOM reintegration project in Cambodia (IOM, 1999). It is not clear whether this represents a bias against girls or gender skewing for other reasons in a relatively small sample of children. The gender breakdown of children supported by the other anti-trafficking programmes was not clear.

All but one of the education programmes (Fiscian et al., 2009) were delivered to both boys and girls. Although empowering girls to negotiate in sexual relationships is important, the limited evidence from this review suggests that, where adolescent boys have been included in life skills training, as in Namibia and Thailand, modules on sexual violence and coercion have often led them to change their attitudes. This could potentially have important effects both on their girl peers but also, as they get older, on their attitude to sexual relationships with younger women and girls.

Age

Very few of the evaluations examined looked at the ways differences in children's age influenced programme effectiveness. Erulkar et al. (2006) found that Tap and Reposition Youth's (TRY) microfinance programme was much less effective with younger girls than with older girls, and, even among the older girls,

'The "rigorous" ie conventional microfinance programme initially piloted was only appropriate for only a small subset of the most capable and least vulnerable girls and young women' (p.3).

These girls already had the building blocks in terms of maturity, skills, experience and social contacts to make use of entrepreneurship and microfinance services. This echoes findings from projects aiming to reduce girls' vulnerability to early marriage discussed in Section 6 above (e.g. Shahnaz and Karim, 2007).

Socioeconomic exclusion

Several programmes targeted poor children by working in disadvantaged areas. Thus TAP, UYDEL and the Faraja Trust all ran programmes in urban slums (and, in the case of UYDEL, also in rural areas). While none of the programmes examined used socioeconomic criteria to select participants, some were fully or partially

61 Data on any gender differences in uptake of UYDEL's programme were not available.

directed to groups with higher-than-average levels of poverty, such as orphans (Ssewamala et al., 2012) and girl mothers (Hamakawa and Randall, 2008; Singhal and Dura, 2008).

Very few programmes systematically examined the extent to which programmes benefited socio-economically disadvantaged groups. UNICEF (2009) notes that more marginalised children, such as those with greater work or caring responsibilities, may have been unable to attend My Future, My Choice after-school programme in Namibia, and thus would have been less able than other young people to access the information and skills training on negotiating sexual relationships it provided.

Oki et al. (2010) found that USAID's HIV prevention programme (which also aimed to reduce transactional and cross-generational sex and sexual coercion) had been less successful at targeting out-of-school youth, who are likely to be poorer and face different risks to young people attending school.

Geographical

Because most of the programmes examined were very small and worked in a few defined communities, issues of geographical coverage are not much considered in these evaluations. However, in their evaluation of an anti-trafficking programme in West Africa, Fafo (2006) found that adolescents from remote villages were generally unable to access vocational training programmes intended to reduce the risk of trafficking, since they could not afford to board in the towns where training took place. Two evaluations of relatively small programmes in Uganda also comment on the relative under-serving of the more remote districts in their project areas (Ssengendo, 2007; Witter et al., 2004).

Socially excluded groups

None of the interventions examined specifically aim to tackle sexual abuse in institutions. This may be because, in many countries, the population of children living in institutional care is small; it is notable that the one intervention that included this group at all (pilot materials on safe migration) was in the South Caucasus, where rates of institutionalisation of children are high in global terms. Children living in institutions are at significantly greater risk of sexual exploitation than other children, and so this is a significant omission.

None of the programmes working directly with children reported data on the children reached disaggregated by ethnicity or linguistic group. It is therefore impossible to assess how far these programmes reached disadvantaged minorities. Some programmes (e.g. War Child, 2010) were based in geographically marginalised areas that were home to ethnic groups that faced discrimination, and to this extent could be said to be supporting socially excluded groups.

The only programme that addressed the issue of language was the IOM programme in the South Caucasus, which had translated anti-trafficking materials such as student books, and some parent books and teachers manuals, into languages other than the primary national language (IOM, 2011).

Tight categorical targeting

Given that most of the programmes examined were small NGO programmes with limited resources, it is not surprising that many focused on tightly defined target groups. However, this had led to jealousy among community members who had not received any 'special' treatment, particularly where support was directed to outsiders (such as refugees) or people who had in some way broken local moral codes, such as former child combatants. In the project Singhal and Dura (2008) evaluated, community members suggested participants be partnered with an ineligible girl from the community and/or provide mentoring support to small groups of girls. CARE International (2006) had responded to local communities' concerns by expanding its programme in the villages surrounding the refugee camps where its programme had started.

7.3.2 Other factors affecting programme effectiveness

Promoting behaviour change among potential perpetrators as well as potential victims

Comments from qualitative evaluations indicate the importance of sensitising both potential victims and potential perpetrators. For example, the evaluation of My Future, My Choice in Namibia (UNICEF, 2009)

highlighted the example of a boy who had stopped sexually harassing girls once he understood why they disliked it. Young people who took part in CARE International's awareness-raising sessions on sexual and gender-based violence felt it was important for teachers to receive the same training as many of them were perpetrators (CARE International, 2006). None of the papers in this reviewed examined the differential impact of sensitising potential victims and potential perpetrators quantitatively.

Extremely limited staff capacity in formal child protection systems

Several of the papers raised this issue. Columbia Group for Children in Adversity (2011) notes that, in Sierra Leone, some of the villages in their study had not seen a social worker for over a year, despite one being assigned to each parish. In Southern Uganda, once external resources had been withdrawn, child protection staff had no operational budget and were unable to travel to investigate cases or support children (Witter et al., 2004). In some contexts, such as Sierra Leone, lack of past action on criminal acts of abuse meant communities had very limited trust in the likelihood of the police following up accusations, which decreased their inclination to use the formal system. In some areas of Uganda – those that had received the least orientation in children's rights – Witter et al. (2004) found a strong preference for resolving conflicts and cases of child abuse locally, rather than reporting them to the authorities, particularly given the severity of criminal penalties. This was common to many of the child protection system strengthening papers, particularly for cases such as incest, where the victims were also economically dependent on their abusers (e.g. CARE International, 2006; Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, 2011).

Sustainability

Sustainability concerns emerge most clearly from the set of papers concerned with strengthening child protection systems. This reflects concerns that externally driven child protection structures (particularly at community level) often duplicate existing traditional or government structures (Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, 2011) and thus are likely to be of limited relevance, or can compound a problem of committee proliferation, where multiple development actors set up village-level committees for different issues (Kolokosso et al., 2007). Some of the papers reviewed also indicate that lack of operational budgets and/or official recognition of the work being carried out by local child protection committees can lead to disenchantment and undermine their sustainability (e.g. Kolokosso et al., 2007; War Child, 2010). Equally, the committees set up by Plan International in Malawi appear to have been sustained beyond initial project inputs without further financial inputs. However, as members move away and need to be replaced, ongoing training is needed (Ray, 2006).

7.4 Conclusions: how important is economic strengthening to reducing sexual violence against children?

It is widely recognised that poverty is a significant factor, underlying commercial and transactional sex, and, in some regions, also in trafficking (see Marcus, 2013 for an overview of evidence). There is also slowly emerging recognition that poor environmental conditions and limited access to services can increase vulnerability to sexual violence (e.g. Lennon, 2011). The evidence is less clear on whether, and if so in what circumstances, poverty increases children's risk of sexual abuse.

A third of the interventions examined had an economic strengthening component. Almost all of these projects involved training in vocational skills and/or business management, and in some cases also start-up grants or loans.⁶² Where these provided good-quality training and support that enabled young people either to produce their own food or to engage in profitable businesses filling gaps in local markets, or accessing external markets, they proved effective in reducing adolescents' need to engage in transactional or commercial sex (e.g. Singhal and Dura, 2008). As TAP's experience in Nairobi indicates, economic strengthening programmes need to be tailored carefully to the needs of the target group, which may vary considerably with age, skills and level of social and economic vulnerability. Three evaluations of economic strengthening activities found them moderately effective but recommended improvements to increase their long-term effectiveness, including extending the length of training (Ssengendo, 2007), greater integration

62 The one exception was TAP's savings programme in Nairobi (Erulkar et al., 2006).

with apprenticeship providers (Fafo, 2006), efforts to extend the range of skills taught to avoid oversupply (Fafo, 2006) and activities being carried out by specialists (Kolokosso et al., 2007).

We found **no evaluations that explicitly examined the effects of cash transfers on sexual violence**.⁶³ Two papers examining one intervention (Baird et al., 2010a and 2010b) examined the effect of cash transfers on rates of teen childbearing, but this could not distinguish between pregnancies resulting from forced or consensual sex, or from relationships between peers and ‘sugar daddies’.⁶⁴ Given that Baird et al. found a reduction in overall sexual activity among transfer recipient schoolgirls, this suggests cash transfers could have potential in reducing the pull of transactional or commercial sex among adolescent girls.

Very few programmes appear to have supported parents of children at risk, as well as adolescents, with livelihood activities. Those that did were anti-trafficking programmes, and one programme (SUUBI) that included training for parents on financial management and microfinance.⁶⁵ However, so little detail about these is given that it is hard to assess their effectiveness. Given the generally limited effectiveness of the livelihood activities in the two West African anti-trafficking programmes examined, it is likely that those with adults were no more successful than those with adolescents. It is important to stress that this reflects on the specific livelihood programmes undertaken, rather than being a comment on the general effectiveness of economic strengthening of parents as a preventative approach. We return to the limited attention to strengthening family livelihoods – rather than those of adolescents – in the conclusion (Section 10).

Only three of the programmes report on support provided to survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation. Two were anti-trafficking programmes that provided transit centres for returned adolescents (IOM in Cambodia, UNICEF in West Africa). Fafo (2006) found that, in practice, there was very little effective support to returned victims of trafficking, and, although the project was to provide medical care and psychosocial support, there was very little evidence of such support being given. UYDEL in Uganda provided more extensive support, including psychological support/counselling, shelter, legal advice, facilitating witnesses to take part in court cases and life skills and vocational training. All three of these programmes provided some form of economic support as part of ‘rehabilitation’ programmes: in IOM’s Cambodia programme, this took the form of cash transfers; in UNICEF’s West Africa programme and UYDEL’s programme in Uganda, formerly trafficked or sexually abused and exploited young people were given access to vocational and life skills training programmes (Kashajja, 2011).

School-based education programmes do seem to lead to change in attitudes and practices even when they are without economic strengthening components. This may be because sexual attitudes and behaviour reflect social norms and knowledge and are amenable to change independently of people’s economic circumstances. It may also be because young people – particularly girls – in school have a strong incentive to avoid risk sexual behaviour so they can complete their education. It may also be because the poorest young people – those for whom transactional or commercial sex work may have the greatest pull – are less likely to be in school and thus are not captured by data on changed attitudes and practices.

Programmes focusing on out-of-school youth much more commonly combine non-formal education (typically in life skills, sometimes in numeracy and literacy) and economic strengthening activities. Bandiera et al. (2012) suggest that,

‘Combined interventions might be more effective among adolescent girls than single-pronged interventions aiming to change risky behaviors solely through related education programmes, or to improve labor market outcomes solely through vocational training’. (p.1)

In principle, Bandiera et al. are likely to be correct: given that a number of factors, including economic need and social norms concerning masculinity and sexual and gender relations, affect children’s and adolescents’

63 The IOM (2009) programme in Cambodia offered financial assistance to families conditional on their remaining in school and not being re-trafficked. In that rates of re-trafficking were significant, this could indicate that the transfer was an insufficient incentive to remain in Cambodia; however, issues related to implementation (e.g. informing parents of the potential transfer depended on staff assessment of the likelihood of the child being re-trafficked) limit learning from this programme with respect to the potential for cash transfers.

64 The paper measures the extent to which sexually active girls reported engaging in sex with a partner a year or more older. Because boys one year older would be likely to be peers rather than ‘sugar daddies’, we considered that for our review this did not constitute useable evidence related to transactional sexual activity.

65 Thanks to Fred Ssewamala for clarifying details concerning SUUBI.

risk of sexual violence, combined programmes would appear to be more likely to reduce the risk of sexual violence for the greatest number of children. However, none of the evaluations of combined non-formal education and economic strengthening programmes assesses the relative effectiveness of these activities in reducing sexual violence, and Bandiera et al.'s own evidence suggests that, in the case of BRAC's ELA programme in Uganda, the life skills component of BRAC's programme had a greater effect in terms of reducing sexual coercion than the economic strengthening component.

Several papers discussing child protection system strengthening interventions point out the extent to which these activities have been undermined by ongoing poverty. For example, War Child (2010) points out that, in contexts such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with very widespread poverty, the extremely difficult material conditions most children faced led them to adopt coping mechanisms that increased their risk of abuse and exploitation, such as engaging in transactional sex. Witter et al. (2004) and Kashaija (2011) note that, even where police and courts have been encouraged to treat sexually abused and exploited children more sensitively, the costs of court fees, medical examinations etc. can be prohibitive and a barrier to accessing justice, as can corruption within the police and court system. This indicates that, while system strengthening efforts are an important part of the overall 'child protection jigsaw', parallel efforts to reduce poverty and corruption are often required. In addition to extending professional staff's knowledge and skills, a key constraint is the lack of operational and travel budgets for front-line staff such as police and social workers, which fundamentally constrains their operation in many poor countries. These more systemic issues point to the necessity of addressing the chronic underfunding of social welfare ministries and front-line agencies, which can be resolved only at national or state level,

While acknowledging the role of economic deprivation, **it is equally important not to overestimate the role economic strengthening interventions can play.** As the following quote highlights, for very vulnerable young women, economic strengthening activities are most effective in the context of broader social support:

'The most vulnerable girls need a place apart from their families for dialogue, support, crisis intervention, the protection of savings and the development of rudimentary livelihood skills. Only when such fundamental elements of social capital are in place will girls be able to take advantage of economic options' (Erulkar et al., 2006: 3-4).

Taken together, the evaluations discussed here indicate that a combination of activities, addressing economic, social and institutional factors, is most likely to successfully reduce sexual violence against children. We return to the question of how formal linkages between economic strengthening and broader child protection activities need to be in the conclusion (Section 10).

8 Physical violence

Box 4: Key issues – physical violence

Sixteen interventions were examined. Most were very small, with 500 beneficiaries or fewer, and two-thirds were implemented by NGOs.

A third had economic strengthening components. These were all programmes aiming to prevent young people's involvement in gang violence (in Latin America and the Caribbean) or to promote the reintegration of war-affected youth, including child soldiers in Africa.

The three Latin American skills training programme were effective in helping young people at risk of involvement in gangs find employment or self-employment. These programmes provided training in information and communication technology skills, which were in high demand. A combination of mentoring and the opportunities for socialising that these programmes provided helped young people develop social networks beyond gangs and develop a sense of being valued members of society.

A skills training programme in Sierra Leone was similarly successful in helping former child soldiers reintegrate – a third of former child soldiers said they would have returned to fighting without this programme.

Four of the five programmes educating parents appear to have been successful in reducing corporal punishment. These were primarily aimed at low-income parents but did not involve economic strengthening components, indicating that changes in attitudes and knowledge of alternatives alone can significantly reduce this form of violence against children.

In two programmes (one parenting education programme, one youth reintegration programme), household poverty was identified as an obstacle to greater impacts.

8.1 Overview of included papers

Seventeen papers are included in this section, all but two (Al-Hassan, 2009; Al-Hassan and Landsford, 2011) discussing different interventions. Preventing physical violence was the primary focus of 15 of these 17 papers, a significantly higher proportion than for sexual violence. See Table A.3 in Appendix 7 for an overview of programme and research design and key findings.

8.1.1 Thematic foci

The papers and interventions examined relate to three main types of physical violence: physical abuse, including severe corporal punishment at home and/or school; children's and young people's involvement in gang violence; and children and young people's involvement in armed conflict.⁶⁶

8.1.2 Regional distribution

The papers included in this review demonstrate a regional spread across Africa (five interventions), Latin America and the Caribbean (six), the Middle East (four), Western Asia (one) and Europe (one). All the youth violence interventions took place in Latin America and the Caribbean, while all those relating to integration

⁶⁶ No papers discussing interventions to reduce violence at work, violence on the way to school, infanticide or foeticide (all issues discussed in the companion paper (Marcus, 2013)) were found in our searches.

of youth in post-conflict contexts took place in Africa. Papers on the other main type of intervention – educating parents and teachers in non-violent discipline – are spread across different regions.

8.1.3 Nature of the literature

Seven of the included papers are academic papers,⁶⁷ while the other ten are grey literature, mostly comprising internal or external evaluations of programmes by NGOs or by international organisations, including the World Bank (on gang violence prevention) and UNICEF (on better parenting).⁶⁸

Social work or sociology (six papers)⁶⁹ and development studies (five)⁷⁰ were the two main disciplinary orientations of the papers discussing interventions to combat physical violence. Two papers drew on a psychological or psychiatric tradition,⁷¹ two on anthropological approaches⁷² and one on a medical or epidemiological tradition. This was the thematic area where social work orientations were strongest, which may reflect social workers' mandate to prevent and respond to physical abuse. Five papers were based on qualitative research.⁷³ There were four quantitative papers (all of which had experimental design or quasi-experimental designs)⁷⁴ and eight mixed methods papers.⁷⁵

8.1.4 Outcomes examined

Twelve papers measured or reported on reductions in violence against children.⁷⁶ The others measured changes in attitudes or in institutional capacity to prevent or respond to violence against children.

8.2 Findings

Four main programme mechanisms emerged in the studies on physical violence included in this review: educating/raising awareness among adults, life skills or non-formal education for children/young people, economic strengthening and strengthening child protection systems (see Table 16).

Table 16: Programme mechanisms found in physical violence interventions

Mechanism	Alone	In combination	Total
Education and awareness raising among adults	5	5	12
Life skills/non-formal education for children/young people	0	6	6
Economic strengthening	2	3	5
Child protection system strengthening	1	2	4

The following sections discuss the implementation of the programmes examined and their impacts. Interventions are grouped in relation to their primary mechanism. As Table 16 shows, many of the interventions involve more than one mechanism; in these cases, papers appear in more than one sub-section.

As Table 17 shows, the majority of the programmes examined were small in scale, and were implemented either in one community or in a small number of communities, mostly in one area of a city, or region. Very few papers reported the number of children affected by the interventions – given the small size of these

67 Akello et al. (2006), Al-Hassan and Lansford (2011); [Fayyad et al. \(2010\)](#); Oveisi et al. (2010); Wessells and Monteiro (2006); Wint and Brown (1988); Winton (2004).

68 Al Hassan (2009); Bailey and Ngwenyama (2010); Columbia Group for Children in Adversity (2011); Frix et al. (2009); [Fauth and Daniels \(2001\)](#); Guerra et al. (2010); Guga (2010); Jones and Brown (2008) Kotowski (2002); Silver and Weeks (2003) .

69 Bailey and Ngwenyama (2010); Guerra et al. (2010); Jones and Brown (2008); Wessells and Monteiro (2006); Wint and Jones (1998); Winton (2004).

70 Fauth and Daniels (2001); Guga (2010); Kotowski (2002); Ray (2006); Silver and Weeks (2003) .

71 Al-Hassan (2009); Al-Hassan and Lansford (2011); [Fayyad et al. \(2010\)](#); Oveisi et al. (2010).

72 Akello et al. (2006); Columbia Group for Children in Adversity (2011)

73 Akello et al. (2006); Bailey and Ngwenyama (2010); Columbia Group for Children in Adversity (2011); Frix et al. (2009); Winton (2004).

74 Guerra et al. (2010); [Fayyad et al. \(2010\)](#); Oveisi et al. (2010); Wint and Brown (1998).

75 Al Hassan (2009); Al-Hassan and Lansford (2011); Fauth and Daniels (2001); Guga (2010); Jones and Brown (2008); Kotowski (2002); Silver and Weeks (2003); Wessells and Monteiro (2006).

76 Akello et al. (2006); Bailey and Ngwenyama (2010); Fauth and Daniels (2001); [Fayyad et al. \(2010\)](#); Frix et al. (2009); Guerra et al. (2010); Guga (2010); Jones and Brown (2008); Kotowski (2002); Oveisi et al. (2010); Wint and Brown (1998); Winton (2004).

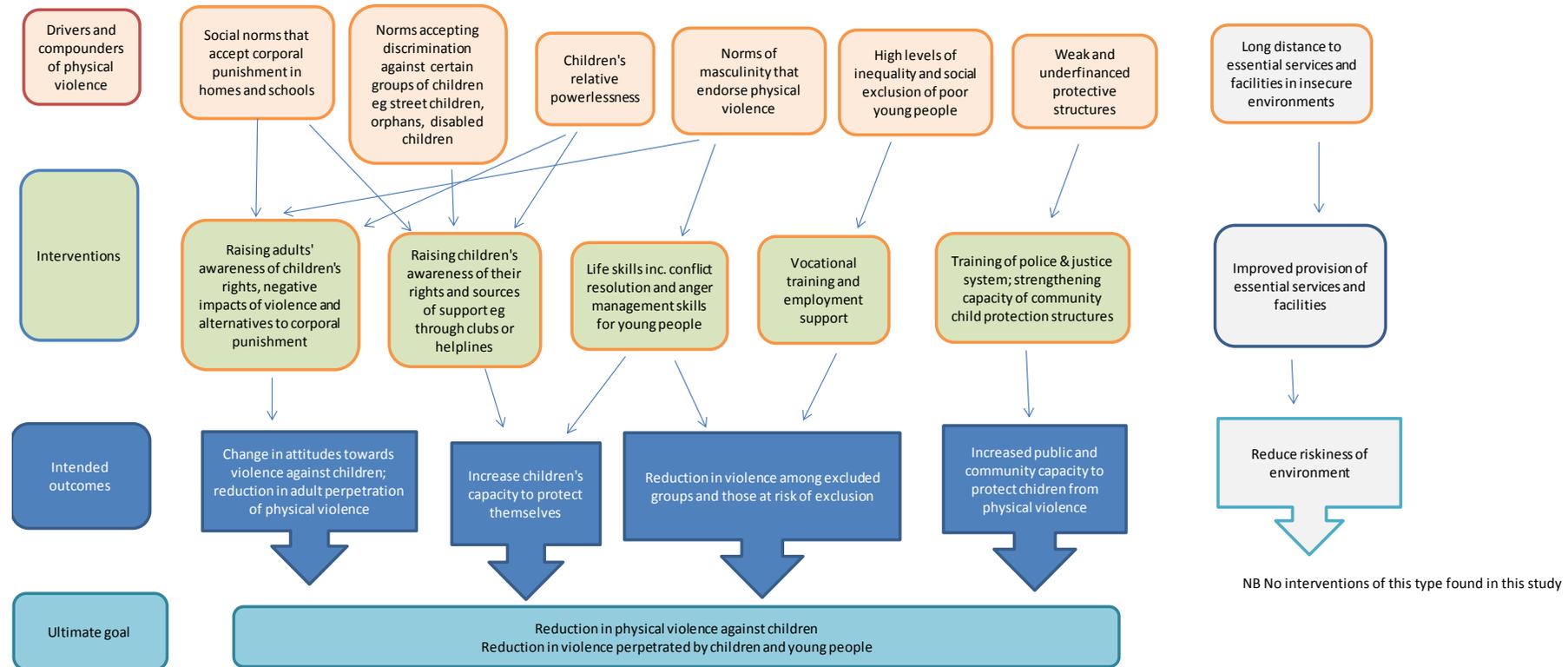
projects, this is likely to be under 500 in most cases. The only exception is Jordan’s Better Parenting Programme (Al-Hassan, 2009), which has national coverage.

Table 17: Scale of anti-physical violence programmes

Scale of programme	Number of interventions
One community	6
Multiple communities	8
National	1

Figure 6 summarises the main drivers of physical violence against children that the programmes examined aimed to address, the main types of interventions undertaken and the intended outcomes.

Figure 6: Intervention pathways for programmes examined – physical violence against children



8.2.1 Awareness raising/sensitisation

Most of the programmes examined focused on sensitising adults to the harmful effects of corporal punishment and on helping them develop alternative ways of disciplining their children. They were largely led by health professionals, social workers or child development specialists, and emphasised the negative consequences of violence for children's development.

Two programmes (in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Tanzania) also educated children as to their right to freedom from physical violence, and how they could respond if they experienced physical violence.

Reducing corporal punishment of children in their families

The **Child Abuse Mitigation Project (CAMP) at Bustamante Hospital in Jamaica**, evaluated by Jones and Brown (2008), was a pilot hospital-based programme that aimed to prevent child abuse recurring. This multi-component project aimed to improve hospitals' management of abused children and develop a model of community-level prevention and support activities. It worked with children attending the hospital because of physical abuse-related injuries, gunshot wounds or sexual abuse, and their families, over the period 2004-2008 and aimed to stop any further violence-related hospital attendance.

The project aimed to educate parents on what constituted child abuse. This element involved social worker visits to children with violence-related injuries, and advice to parents on how to prevent such instances recurring and what the consequences could be if they did recur. Some of the parents concerned emphasised the value of the extended follow-up – often by telephone and through counselling support – the social workers provided. Parents were also offered education/training sessions at parenting forums that included alternatives to corporal punishment. These were attended by fewer than 50% of the invited parents. Interviews conducted with those who attended suggested they felt they had been able to implement what they had learnt. However, transport costs were an important barrier, as were the timing of sessions and the low prioritisation given to parenting education by many of the parents.

In addition, CAMP had a wide outreach programme, including supporting church-based parenting education, engaging drama students in producing dramas about child abuse that they performed in different locations and producing publicity materials for children, parents and professionals. The CAMP programme also facilitated access to summer schools, which provided recreational programmes for abused children. These were highly appreciated by the children and their parents. However, as with the parenting classes, travel costs were a barrier to attendance (even though they were to be reimbursed at the end of the programme). Other components are discussed in Section 8.2.3 and in Section 9.2.1.

Jones and Brown found the number of violence-related injuries reduced over the four-year operation period; rates of children re-attending the hospital because of further abuse also reduced. Although the evaluation was unable to determine how far CAMP contributed to this reduction, interviews with other professionals engaged in responding to child abuse (e.g. social workers) felt CAMP had played an important role.

Also in **Jamaica**, Wint and Brown (1988) evaluated an **experimental programme with 80 parents in 2 low-income communities** in Kingston that aimed to increase parents' understanding of child development, generate more realistic expectations of age-appropriate behaviour and thereby reduce the use of physical punishment in children under five. They found the programme was effective; participating mothers reported beating their children less frequently (a reduction from once-three times a week to less than once a week).

Fayyad et al. (2010) **evaluated an experimental programme run by government health and social workers in Beirut and South Lebanon**. This involved teaching mothers of 6-12 year olds with mild to moderate behavioural problems (as rated by their mothers) about alternatives to corporal punishment. Participant mothers attended a weekly session of 60-90 minutes at their health or social services centre for eight weeks. Before attending these sessions, 40.2% of mothers reported hitting their children and using severe corporal punishment; only 6.1% reported doing so after attending classes. Additionally, before, 57.3% of mothers thought shouting was a good strategy to reduce misbehaviour; after the intervention only 9.8% thought so. A third of participant mothers said their husbands had adopted these new parenting skills too.

Oveisi et al. (2010) report on a similar **experimental programme with 108 mothers of two to six year olds attending health centres in Qazvin city, near Tehran, Iran**. These mothers received two two-hour education sessions on parenting spread over two weeks, with the aim of reducing physical and emotional abuse. Oveisi et al. examined changes in these mothers' reported approaches to parenting from a pre-course baseline and a post-test questionnaire completed eight weeks after the end of the project. They found a statistically significant decline in the proportion of participating parents who reported using approaches considered abusive to control children's misbehaviour, and a significant increase in those using positive disciplinary approaches. Minimal changes were observed in the control group.

Jordan's Better Parenting Programme, evaluated by Al-Hassan (2009) and Al-Hassan and Lansford (2011), is the only example included in this review of a national-level programme aiming to reduce corporal punishment of children. This is one of a number of foci of the programme; Section 9 discusses its broader impacts on the care of children. The Better Parenting Programme is delivered in 2,000 centres throughout the country, and, as of 2009, 130,000 parents and caregivers of those under eight had taken part. It involves a 16-hour course on aspects of early childhood development, delivered by government health and social workers and NGO staff.

In the pilot phase of the programme, in which 900 mothers participated, the proportion of mothers who said they would hit a child if they misbehaved decreased from 68% to 2%. Al-Hassan's evaluation of the broader programme found the proportion of parents who said they beat misbehaving children decreased significantly.⁷⁷ However, a similar decrease was also noted among the control group. Al-Hassan attributes the change among control groups to the possibility that they 'learnt the right answers' through filling out the pre-test questionnaire, and this may thus not reflect their real attitudes and practices, or that the controls were also motivated to improve their child care practices. One area where participants improved significantly compared with controls was on explaining to a child what they had done wrong.⁷⁸ Given ambiguities around how genuine the control group's responses were, it is not clear how successful this programme was in changing parental attitudes and practices to corporal punishment. Section 9 discusses impacts on wider aspects of child care.

Four of the five programmes educating parents appear to have been successful in reducing corporal punishment, indicating that changes in attitudes and knowledge of alternatives can significantly reduce this form of violence against children. This is consistent with research that indicates that social norms condoning corporal punishment are the critical reason for its persistence, and that where acceptance of corporal punishment is widespread, there is very little variation across socio-economic groups. However, where corporal punishment is less widespread, there is some evidence to suggest that poorer children are at greater risk of both more frequent and more severe punishment.⁷⁹

Although several of these programme focused on low-income families, either by design (e.g. Fayyad et al., Lebanon; Wint and Brown, Jamaica) or in terms of uptake (e.g. Jordan's Better Parenting Programme), none appears to attempt to link families with existing anti-poverty or social protection programmes. There is therefore no evidence to assess whether improving disadvantaged families' economic circumstances in tandem with parenting programmes could contribute to a greater reduction in corporal punishment.

Reducing physical punishment in schools

Three of the programmes examined aimed to reduce corporal punishment in schools. In all cases, this was one of several child protection or child rights issues with which the programme was concerned, rather than a sole focus.

Kotowski (2002) evaluated a pilot programme run by **CARE Germany in Kosovo** that aimed to **educate teachers in alternatives to corporal punishment**. This was part of a broader programme of activities

⁷⁷ Results are reported as mean scores on a four-point scale, rather than as percentages, with 4 indicating that parents would always use corporal punishment in a particular situation and 1 indicating that they would never do so. The mean score for beating a misbehaving child declined from 2.6 to 2.2 among both participants and controls. When asked if they would beat a child who misbehaved at a neighbour's house, the mean score declined from 3.0 to 1.7 for participants and from 3.1 to 1.8 for controls.

⁷⁸ Participants' mean score on this issue increased from 3.6 to 3.8, while controls' remained at 3.6.

⁷⁹ This evidence is summarised in Marcus (2013).

designed to improve the care of children suffering from post-traumatic stress following the war, and took place in 12 villages in the Prizren area of Southern Kosovo. The teacher training workshops provided by the programme covered a number of issues related to child-centred learning and alternatives to physical punishment, including conflict resolution.

The evaluation found that, following the training workshops, teachers used more innovative and effective teaching methods, which led to greater learning and reduced the use of corporal punishment (observed by 91%). In addition, almost two-thirds of children felt their learning on how to solve small conflicts with their peers was useful. Kotowski attributes some of the reduction in corporal punishment to a general reduction in stress following the end of the war, as well as to the specific learning programmes. She notes that this general reduction in tensions also led to parents feeling less stressed and beating their children less.

Silver and Weeks (2003) evaluate a **popular theatre project in Palestine that aimed to increase awareness of school violence**. A Palestinian theatre company, Ashtar, performed plays about school violence in various locations across the West Bank. Some performances took place in public community settings, others in schools. They found that participants/audiences had mostly understood and internalised the main messages, and in some cases had started to act on them. However, understanding of the key messages was not perfect, particularly among younger adolescents; repeated exposure to the play increased both children and adults' understanding of the messages. Some participants in the evaluation felt the play would have had greater impact if there were follow-up activities by teachers or social workers in the communities where it was performed. Limited funding for the project meant many requests for performances had to be refused, which thus limited its reach.

Guga's (2010) evaluation of a **programme for street children** run by the Faraja Trust Fund **in urban Morogoro, Tanzania**, found that children's clubs (run in six schools) had been effective in providing children with knowledge about their rights and what they could do if they faced physical, sexual or other forms of abuse (e.g. overwork). Participant children felt empowered to challenge cases of abuse they saw in their communities. There is anecdotal evidence that some teachers had also been sensitised to children's rights through the existence of children's rights clubs in schools. This project also involved strengthening linkages between different community-level and official structures to prevent and respond to abuse of children. However, Guga concludes that, although children and adults have become more knowledgeable about child abuse, there is no evidence that its incidence has reduced.

Use of corporal punishment in schools primarily reflects accepted values and practices, rather than the economic circumstances of schools.⁸⁰ Thus, it is not surprising that these projects concentrated on changing attitudes. It is possible that attitudinal and behavioural change among teachers could be reinforced through more systemic changes that increase classroom resources and reduce class size, or by increasing teachers' pay, but no evidence was found addressing this issue. Other motivational measures could include awards for schools that do well on respecting children's rights – both to freedom from violence in school and to other child protection measures. For example, Guga (2010) suggests that awards be presented to schools on the Day of the African Child to reinforce awareness of child rights issues.

8.2.2 Non-formal education and economic strengthening

We discuss non-formal education and economic strengthening together because, in all but one of the programmes examined, training in vocational skills was an element of broader non-formal education programmes. Overall, five interventions involved an economic strengthening component. These were intended to help reduce adolescents' or young people's likelihood of engaging in criminal, gang or other violence in their communities, or re-recruitment into armed forces. Young men aged 15-24 are at the greatest risk of death from violence worldwide, and there is growing interest in effective approaches to reduce the likelihood of violence among this group.

Reducing the risk of youth involvement in gangs and neighbourhood violence

⁸⁰ There is no clear evidence of a link between under-resourcing of schools and corporal punishment, although in overcrowded classrooms some teachers view it as the only effective way to keep order (Marcus, 2013).

The **Kingston Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Youth Development Programme in Jamaica**, provides **low-income 14-17-year-old boys with intensive remedial education, social skills training and personal development support** over three to four years (Guerra et al., 2010). These boys are not attending regular schools because of academic or social problems and typically aggressive or defiant behaviour. They attend the YMCA programme daily and catch up on the government curriculum, so they can re-enter mainstream schooling,⁸¹ as well as learning vocational skills and life skills, including managing aggression and conflict.

Guerra et al.'s evaluation suggested that programme graduates were less likely to engage in aggressive acts and had a lower propensity to be aggressive than young men who were still engaged in the programme or those in a matched control group. Young men enrolled in the programme had a lower propensity to behave aggressively than matched controls. Furthermore, the programme's effects appear to be long-lasting: graduates were considerably less likely to engage in aggressive acts several years after graduating than young men never exposed to the programme.

Two interventions provided **safe spaces for young people in violence-affected urban communities to socialise and learn information, communication and technology (ICT) skills, one in Jamaica** (Bailey and Ngwenyama, 2010) and one **in Brazil and Guatemala** (Frix et al., 2009).

The **Jamaican telecentres** provided a place to do homework and learn ICT and skills. They were intended as places that young people – principally adolescent boys and young men – could socialise with others safely, and children's safe access was negotiated with 'area leaders/dons'. Bailey and Ngwenyama (2010) found they increased young men's sense of social inclusion and were likely to contribute to violence prevention by a number of routes. Attending telecentres with young people of 'rival' communities helped break down divisions and make new friendships, which in turn helped reduce the 'demonisation' of the other community. Some of the young people who had attended the telecentres were subsequently employed by them, or used their skills to set up private businesses; some felt they had a stake in society for the first time, and applied for birth certificates and taxpayer registration numbers – that is, they started to consider themselves more as citizens. Some young men started frequenting the streets less and were thus less susceptible to being drawn into violence. Mentors in the telecentres played an important role in suggesting alternatives to criminal activity. Bailey and Ngwenyama also found that, over time, the telecentres were taking on more of a community mediation role.

The **Guatemalan centres** examined by Frix et al. (2009) were run by an NGO, Grupo Ceiba, which provided education in English language, graphic design, robotics, business management, computer repair and maintenance and call centre operation through a job training programme known as Empresa Educativa. The **Brazilian centres** were also run by an NGO, Oxigenio, and provided different training courses in different locations. One of the centres examined focused on computer repair, the other in music and arts training.

Participants in the Brazilian and Guatemalan centres reported a sense of empowerment through learning computer skills. In addition to learning marketable skills, attendance at ICT training centres helped young people build social networks that could help them find work. These centres and their courses helped young people develop a sense of self-worth and a perception that they could have a future outside criminal and gang activity. In the words of one young man in Guatemala,

'Before I knew about [the computer course], I was all about being in the gangs. I thought I didn't have a future, I thought that someone would just end up killing me and my life would be over. But it's not like that [...] I love knowing how to run a computer' (Raul, former computer student, in Frix et al., 2009: 3).

As with the Jamaican telecentres examined by Bailey and Ngweymana (2010), they offered a safe space for socialisation for young people whose mobility is severely restricted by gang violence.

81 Boys continue at the YMCA programme until they have passed the Grade 9 achievement test, which permits entry into high school or equivalent-level educational institutions.

Winton (2004) compared two communities in **Guatemala** – one without an effective youth organisation, one with – and found that rates of gang violence were widely reported to be much lower in the community with an effective youth organisation. The project she studied – **Jovenes Adelante** – involved weekly meetings for young people, with regular training workshops on themes such as teaching, community organisation, family and community relationships and technical skills. Young people who complete a three-year training programme have the opportunity to become paid coordinators to extend the programme to other groups of young people. Winton suggests part of the success of **Jovenes Adelante** is that it is not targeted only at gang members, but is committed to serving all young people in the community, and thus reduces potential stigma.

As with the Jamaican, Brazilian and other Guatemalan programmes examined, in addition to helping young people develop marketable skills, and life skills that could help them mediate conflicts, this youth-focused initiative helped create a sense of belonging among the young people, who were all from socially excluded low-income communities. It gave them a safe space to socialise with other young people and to find solutions to their problems together.

It is clear from these papers that the economic strengthening component played an important role. All three projects with vocational skills training helped young people gain skills that gave them an entry point into better-paid and more prestigious jobs or self-employment than were usually available to poor young school dropouts, particularly those from stigmatised neighbourhoods or who were ‘tainted’ by association with gangs. Given the degree of social exclusion these young people face, this is a significant achievement. However, the broader ‘package’ of support seems another crucial element: the mentoring by young people who have found a way to avoid involvement in violence, the life skills education, and the opportunity to socialise safely with other young people, and to break down barriers between rival neighbourhoods.

This analysis is consistent with findings from a Latin American Institute of Social Sciences (FLASCO) study of the most effective approaches to youth violence prevention, cited by Winton (2004). FLASCO found the most effective programmes had a ‘human component’, aimed at creating a positive collective and individual identity through workshops and activities; an academic component, providing financial assistance to those who cannot afford to continue in or return to school; a ‘labour component providing job training; and a recreational component. This suggests it is the multifaceted nature of youth violence programmes that makes them effective, and that to isolate only the economic strengthening component would be a mistake.

Reducing youth involvement in violence in a post-war context

Fauth and Daniels (2001) found the USAID-supported **Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace (YRTEP) programme in Sierra Leone** effective in reducing the likelihood of recruitment or re-recruitment into armed groups, with 33% of former fighters saying the training programme had reduced their likelihood of re-recruitment.⁸² This was a relatively large-scale programme (40,000 intended participants), which provided non-formal education related to reintegration; life skills; vocational skills in agriculture and other labour-intensive sectors with good likelihood of employment opportunities; health issues; civic issues; and functional literacy and numeracy. It was part of the government’s Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programme and was open to both former combatants and non-combatants.

A total of 99% of participants felt the training had improved their conflict management skills, with 81% of these feeling their conflict management skills had improved ‘a lot’. Some 75% felt they were a lot better at managing stress and 65% felt a lot better at problem solving after taking part in the training. Participants also reported gains in their active listening skills and in respect for other members of society, which they felt would reduce their likelihood of violence in the future, and had engaged in community reconstruction.

Many of the participants had missed out on formal schooling as a consequence of the war. YRTEP provided ‘catch-up’ literacy and numeracy education. Some 98% of participants felt their literacy skills had improved, with 58% stating they had improved a lot; 99% felt their numeracy skills had improved, 68% a lot.

Participants generally felt the vocational training component had been helpful in their reintegration: 83% felt better able to support themselves and/or their family, with 53% reporting being a lot more able to do so; 65%

⁸² Another 56% said they would not return to fighting because they were anti-war.

had planted crops, 40% had started a business and 33% had become an apprentice to learn a skill or trade. Over 70% of participants who had engaged in these livelihood activities said they would not have done so without attending YRTEP training.

Comments from participants (in Fauth and Daniels, 2001) illustrate the role this programme played in violence prevention:

'I was almost going to be a rebel but with the help of my parents and finally this training, I have completely forgotten about that, and knowing this I can make my home very peaceful.' (p.16)

'It was because I didn't know what to do was one of the reasons I was engaged in killing innocent people. But with this programme I promise not ever to go fighting again.' (p.16)

'With this training we are now mingling cordially with the RUF [Revolutionary United Front] who are just next door.' (p.18)

This experience suggests that – as with the neighbourhood violence prevention activities discussed above – a combination of relevant technical training and life skills education can make a significant contribution to reducing young people's involvement in violence in post-conflict contexts.⁸³ However, this is only one project, and a broader set of programmes would be needed to draw more robust conclusions.

Wesells and Monteiro (2006) examined a **youth-focused post-war development programme** implemented by the Christian Children's Fund (CCF) **in Luanda and five other provinces of Angola**. Many children and young people in these provinces had been involved in the armed forces, or had been traumatised by witnessing violence and by the loss of family and friends. The high level of young people's involvement in armed forces had led to considerable suspicion of young people, thus promoting better understanding of young people was seen as critical to supporting their reintegration and reducing the likelihood of tensions in the community leading to violence.

This project involved, awareness raising among adults and training young people in life skills and conflict management, and other issues identified through a participatory process of youth seminars. It also involved construction of community infrastructure, in which young people played a leading role in supplying labour, and other programmes identified by young people as priorities. These included participatory education on HIV/AIDS, vocational skills training and savings and credit programmes and recreational activities such as football and dancing.

Both adults and young people felt that the youth-focused dialogues and dialogues between communities facilitated by the project had helped young people develop non-violent means of resolving disagreements with peers, siblings and other family members. The economic strengthening component of this programme was undermined by high inflation and by parents often being unable to afford their children's savings contributions or to support their children's businesses. It therefore played a limited role in promoting integration of young people in their communities.

Although this is only one project, CCF's experience in Angola indicates that much can be achieved in reducing the risk of children and young people's involvement in violence through education and awareness raising. The participatory nature of this project may have contributed to its positive outcomes, and increased ownership of new knowledge and attitudes. The provision of community infrastructure may have been another contributing factor, since it led to tangible benefits.

The very limited evidence base (two projects)⁸⁴ examined here means conclusions about the role of economic strengthening in post-war reintegration of youth and physical violence prevention are necessarily tentative.

83 Although we found many projects promoting the reintegration of children and young people associated with armed forces, this was the only one where the impact on involvement in physical violence was assessed. The others had to be excluded from the analysis because they lacked evidence on violence-related outcomes, and concentrated instead on feelings of social integration and economic wellbeing.

84 One other paper discussing reintegration of former child soldiers met the criteria for inclusion in this review. The approach taken in this intervention was based on a Western model of psychosocial care, based on 'talking therapy' to encourage children to process their experiences as combatants. The analysts considered this approach ineffective, as it did not help children come to terms with what they had done (as traditional

While this review did not obtain sufficient rigorous studies to discuss this issue systematically, there is anecdotal evidence that joint productive projects (such as community garden plots) can help with post-war reintegration of youth.⁸⁵ As discussed in Section 6, there is also some evidence of economic strengthening projects reducing sexual exploitation among young women formerly involved with armed forces.

8.2.3 Strengthening child protection systems

Only one of the programmes examined explicitly aimed to build or strengthen protective structures that would help reduce physical abuse of children. Two other child protection strengthening programmes or approaches, the evaluations or analyses of which noted effects on physical abuse, are also included here. Other programmes that strengthened child protection structures more broadly, and that may therefore have affected physical abuse, have already been discussed, in Section 7.

The aim of **CAMP at Bustamante Hospital in Jamaica** was to prevent child abuse (whether physical or sexual). The parent education component has already been described (Section 7.2.1). One of the project's three main objectives was to develop a rapid hospital-based response to suspected child abuse, by identifying and treating children up to 12 years of age who attended the hospital for injuries sustained as a consequence of violence – in other words to strengthen the hospital's capacity to address child abuse effectively. Children identified as at risk of abuse would be referred for social worker intervention and/or to relevant support agencies, who would provide training in parenting, social support for children etc.

The follow-up of referred children was rather slower than planned, with only 32% of children identified as at risk of abuse seen within a month. The evaluation found that, while CAMP Bustamante had improved in its referral of cases to other agencies, there was still very little inter-agency coordination. Other agencies, for example the Child Development Agency, social workers etc., felt the hospital-based programme was filling an important gap, in that it improved identification and reports of children at risk, reduced the caseload of other agencies and had helped prevent repeat abuse. CAMP also sought to strengthen capacity by providing informal on-the-job training to hospital staff on issues related to child abuse.

Guga (2010) concludes that the **Faraja Trust Fund project in Morogoro, Tanzania, to build the capacity of NGOs and local government in child protection** has generally been effective. This project started off by developing a multi-stakeholder committee, composed of 'government representatives, education authorities, community leaders, police, magistrates, people from the media, religious institutions (Christians and Muslims), and organisations working with street children, people from the community and street children' (p.2). This committee was trained in participatory needs assessment, which it carried out at the start of the project. The project aimed to train mothers and other caregivers and set up child welfare committees, which would refer cases of child abuse to the formal child protection system. It is not clear from the evaluation how these committees are functioning in practice.

Police officers, health officials, local leaders and magistrates have formed a child protection referral system that assists in processing cases of child abuse. This is viewed as an outcome of the project, but functions independently of it. As noted in Section 8.2.1, with improved awareness of child abuse issues, and structures for addressing it, there is now increased reporting of child abuse of different kinds. However, at the time of evaluation there had been no observed reduction in levels of abuse, and corporal punishment remained a significant problem identified by children, both at home and at school.

Rather than examining a specific system strengthening initiative, the Columbia Group on Children in Adversity (2011) examines **the operation of the government's formal child protection system in Sierra Leone**, which has been partially supported by international NGOs. They found that,

'Overwhelmingly, people respond to child protection risks not through CWCs [Child Welfare Committees] and the formal system but through traditional mechanisms involving the extended family, the Chiefs, and customary laws and practices... Village people had well defined family

healing ceremonies have generally been effective in doing), nor did it promote their acceptance by other community members. Some of the former child soldiers (the paper does not state what proportion) thus returned to armed conflict (Akello et al., 2006).

85 <http://grassrootsgroup.org/>, accessed 1 March 2013.

and community mechanisms for handling harms to children, and they felt comfortable using these'. (p.19)

They also faced financial and logistical obstacles to using the formal child protection system, and were sceptical of the state's capacity to prosecute criminal cases and to obtain justice.

More importantly, the different social norms embodied by child rights discourse and by the formal child protection system were critical barriers to its use, particularly in relation to physical violence.⁸⁶ While the villagers in this study agreed that some of the most severe forms of physical punishment (such as burning a girl's hands as a punishment for touching a soup that was being cooked for a guest) were abuse and should be dealt with through the criminal justice system, adults generally did not consider severe beating abusive, although children often had a different view. Children's awareness of their right to freedom from violence and the existence of human rights workers to whom children or their families could turn was seen by adults as interfering with effective, traditional approaches to child rearing. The researchers found that, although corporal punishment was widely practised in the communities they studied, awareness of the law (and the risk of a fine) was leading some parents to withhold food from their children instead of beating them, thus substituting one form of physical abuse with another.

This experience underlines the importance of introducing ideas of child rights and protection in a culturally sensitive manner. The Columbia Group for Children in Adversity (2011) suggests an over-emphasis on what parents are doing wrong, and a failure to support them with alternatives, has resulted in a serious backlash against child rights and limits the potential of formal or traditional structures to protect children from physical abuse.

8.3 Discussion

In this section, we have considered a range of programmes aiming to reduce physical violence against children and young people. The parent education programmes discussed principally involve a single activity (a training course on child care/positive discipline), and four of the five examined led to a reduction in reported corporal punishment of children.

The programmes aiming to reduce children and young people's involvement or risk of involvement in violence were multifaceted, involving life skills and/or other non-formal education, and in all but one cases a vocational training component. The evaluations of these programmes do not analyse the impacts of different components separately. Thus it is not possible to assess the relative impact of life skills training as compared with vocational skills, for example.

Of the programmes examined, only two were initiated by or involved government or formal services as co-developers and implementers (CAMP Bustamante and Jordan's Better Parenting Programme). Two others were partially implemented by government health and/or social workers (the parent education programmes in Iran and Lebanon). CARE's programme in Kosovo was largely implemented in public schools. There is limited evidence of government engagement in any of the papers discussing post-war contexts, neighbourhood violence or gang members, except in one project in Jamaica (Bailey and Ngwenyama, 2010), where police stations carried out some activities.

Economic strengthening components all involved vocational skills. Although large-scale cash transfer programmes, such as Bolsa Família (Brazil), Oportunidades (Mexico) and the Child Support Grant (South Africa), reach families in low-income urban areas, none of the evaluations of these programmes has examined impacts on adolescents' and young people's involvement in violence.

It is also notable that no interventions promoting a more sensitive approach on the part of the police were found. This reflects the evaluation design of these kinds of interventions, which tend to consider reach rather than the child protection outcomes that we were looking for in this project.

⁸⁶ The study found more evidence of the formal child protection system being used in cases of sexual violence, agreed to be serious criminal acts, such as rape of children. Even so, as discussed in Section 7, other forms of sexual violence were dealt with outside the formal child protection system.

A notable gap in the papers analysed is any evidence of efforts to strengthen child protection systems with an impact on physical violence against children. Given that corporal punishment is widely accepted in many contexts, this may reflect reluctance to use newly strengthened child protection systems to address instances of physical violence. The exceptions were cases of ‘unusual’ or ‘extreme’ violence, such as burning a child’s hands (Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, 2011).

8.3.1 Who benefited, who was left out?

Few of these evaluations consider systematically who benefited and who was left out. Here we summarise what can be gleaned from the papers on this issue.

Gender

Some of the youth violence prevention initiatives targeted only boys and young men (e.g. YMCA Jamaica) or were used principally by young men (e.g. Jamaican telecentres). By contrast, *Jovenes Adelante* in Guatemala both welcomed girls and young women and had a strong emphasis on gender issues in its life skills programme. Nonetheless, some adolescent girls and young women felt the programme was targeted principally at male youth and this reduced female participation. The youth-focused community development programme evaluated by Wessells and Monteiro (2006) was also biased towards boys, in part because girls could contribute less to the heavy construction activities, and in part because girls’ participation was constrained by heavier domestic work burdens.

Some of the adult awareness-raising programmes targeted mothers only (e.g. Fayyad et al., 2010 Wint and Brown, 1988). The CAMP Bustamante parenting education sessions were disproportionately attended by mothers (Jones and Brown, 2008). Wint and Brown (1988) found that, although they did not consciously plan to work only with mothers, all but two of their trainees were women. However, men often watched from the sidelines, particularly in participatory drama sessions. Likewise, 95% of participants in Jordan’s Better Parenting Programme were mothers (Al-Hassan, 2009). This suggests stronger efforts are needed to involve fathers.

Financial barriers to participation

Jones and Brown (2008) in Jamaica found that inability to afford bus fares was one of the barriers both to parents’ participation in parenting classes and to children’s participation in summer camps and Saturday activities. Fayyad et al. (2010) also found that logistical reasons and economic problems were key reasons for participants in their parent education programme dropping out (87 of 126 mothers who started attending sessions completed the course).

By contrast, the majority of the participants in Jordan’s Better Parenting Programme were from lower-income groups, with almost two-thirds having an income of 300 dinars or below (Al-Hassan, 2009).

Limited funding for the Ashtar popular theatre programme in Palestine limited the number of locations in which it could be performed. Because the process of obtaining permission from the Ministry of Education for performances in government schools was lengthy, the play was shown in private and in UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools, rather than in government schools, and thus may have disproportionately benefited better-off adolescents.

8.3.2 Other factors affecting programme effectiveness

Participation and ownership

It is hard to draw systematic conclusions on this from the limited set of papers that consider this issue. In Jamaica, Wint and Brown (1988) tested whether a participatory learning approach would have a greater impact on parents’ learning of alternatives to physical punishment than a traditional lecture-based course. They found little difference between the two learning methods. The qualitative evaluation of Ashtar’s popular theatre programme in Palestine indicates that audiences found this style of delivering a message – through drama, with audience involvement and dialogue – memorable. For example, one participant commented,

'I saw a show in Ramallah about six years ago and I never forgot it' (Silver and Weeks, 2003: 9).

More broadly, participatory approaches seem to play an important role in increasing the acceptability and ownership of community-based interventions, as in Jovenes Adelante and the CCF project in Angola.

8.4 Conclusions: how important is economic strengthening in reducing physical violence against children?

As noted above, our conclusions are constrained by small numbers of projects taking particular approaches, and by evaluations that examine the overall impact of a project rather than its different components.

Corporal punishment is driven more by cultural factors than by economic stress (see evidence reviewed in Marcus, 2013), although there is some evidence from OECD countries that economic stress is associated with more severe or frequent punishment. Hence, the main approach in the interventions examined here is education and awareness raising – principally among parents, among two cases among teachers and in two programmes also among children, so they are better placed to stand up for their rights. Most of the parent- and teacher-focused programmes have led to a reduction in corporal punishment. The child-focused programmes have increased children's awareness of their rights, and access to protective structures, but there is limited evidence of this leading to a reduction in corporal punishment. This underlines the importance of focusing behaviour change efforts on those with power – in this case, principally parents and teachers. Attitudinal change among these key stakeholders might also strengthen the (currently limited) effectiveness of child protection systems in reducing physical abuse of children, as formal systems and the criminalisation of certain types of violence might gain legitimacy if there is wider acceptance that corporal punishment can constitute abuse of children.

There may be some mileage in cross-referral among clients of parenting education on physical violence so that participants in such programmes are made aware of their entitlements via national social protections systems, or other development initiatives that could reduce livelihood stress, but there is an insufficient evidence base to assess this. However, it appears that cultural change is more critical and thus a priority focus if resources are limited.⁸⁷

With respect to **reducing children and adolescents' vulnerability to neighbourhood violence**, and especially the risk of being drawn into gang or other criminal violence, economic strengthening seems to have an important role to play. In the programmes examined, it was appreciated by recipients and, in some cases, had led to graduates finding better-paid employment than was usually available to socially excluded young people who had dropped out of school. Such programmes are typically very small in scale, and provide life skills and/or catch-up formal education, as well as vocational skills. Some also offer support in job searching. Critically, they provide a safe space for adolescents to socialise, something often lacking in violence-affected neighbourhoods, and can help break down neighbourhood rivalries, as young people get to know others from 'rival' areas or gangs. They also provide stable support and mentoring, often from slightly older young men from similar backgrounds, which can fill gaps for advice and support in the lives of adolescents from deprived urban areas. A review of 75 violence prevention projects in Latin America, cited by Winton (2004), indicates that successful projects generally combine both employment-focused elements and broader life skills, mentoring and promotion of alternative (non-violent) identities. It is likely that multi-component programmes such as these can play an important role in reducing youth violence in post-conflict contexts, as indicated by experiences in Sierra Leone and Angola, but the sample of two projects is too small to draw stronger conclusions.

None of the evaluations examined the relative importance of different components in helping reduce young people's risk of involvement in violence. This may reflect the fact that these evaluations are mostly descriptive, as well as difficulties in isolating the role of individual components in multifaceted

⁸⁷ One project in Burundi, which could unfortunately not be included in the review because it scored only * on MMAT, provides evidence in support of this conclusion. Bundervoet et al. (2012) found that, while child wellbeing scores (aggregate scores that included a reduction in corporal punishment) increased by 6% in households that took part in savings and loans activities, they increased by 20% in households participating both in microfinance and in parenting discussion modules.

interventions. However, participants are likely to have views on the aspects of programmes they value most. If evaluations of such programmes explored these issues more systematically, this would be helpful in working out the most effective packages for scaling up these effective but small activities.

Most of these evaluations reflect on small-scale programmes, and it is outside their scope to consider the wider societal changes that might help reduce children and young people's exposure to violence. However, the successes of these programmes in helping adolescents catch up on missed formal education or acquire other marketable skills suggests stronger emphasis on ensuring disadvantaged young people's access to formal education, and greater support with the transition to employment, could play a significant role in giving low-income urban adolescents a more meaningful stake in society and reducing the pull of violence. Given that economic deprivation and poor housing conditions often underpin family stress, more effective poverty reduction programmes could also strengthen social cohesion and reduce the attraction of gangs as an alternative support structure for young people.

However, given that violence is now endemic in many poor urban areas, focusing on structural factors alone is likely to be insufficient. The evidence from the programmes we examined, and from reviews such as World Bank (2012), indicates it is often face-face mentoring and support of young people, and programmes that help young people manage anger, solve conflicts and reduce the acceptability of violence, that lead to changes in behaviour and help reduce physical violence. Both approaches are complementary and, reflecting the multiple factors underlying physical violence at different levels, it is likely that effective strategies will involve both preventative – poverty reduction activities – and direct work with children and young people and their families involved in, or at risk of, involvement in violence.

9 Inadequate care

Box 5: Key issues – inadequate care

Twenty interventions were examined. This theme had the highest proportion of programmes implemented by government or international organisations working with government (40%). Two programmes had national or large-scale coverage (Jordan and Mexico).

Just over a third of interventions included economic strengthening components; these were either orphan support programmes or broader livelihoods programmes that measured impacts on the care of children. One evaluation of a cash transfer recorded impacts on children's care arrangements, although this was not a specific objective of the programme.

The orphan support programmes were generally felt to have increased households' capacity to care for vulnerable children. However, with one exception, which involved skills training for parents/carers, these programmes provided cash or in-kind hand-outs provided by NGOs. The sustainability of these projects, and their potential to strengthen livelihoods in the longer term, is therefore questionable.

Three programmes provided subsidised or free day care. While not classed as economic strengthening programmes, they enabled parents, particularly single parents, to obtain better-paying or more stable jobs (Mexico, Guatemala). One also reduced the incidence of accidents among preschool children (Bangladesh).

The other main programme approaches were education of parents (in accident prevention) and child care and development, and mentoring/psychosocial support to orphans and their carers.

Parent education programmes proved effective in reducing children's exposure to hazards and incidence of accidents; they were also effective in helping parents develop more age-appropriate expectations of their children.

Evaluations of both orphan support programmes and accident prevention programmes suggested household poverty undermined effectiveness and sustainability. Poor households could not afford to make some of the safety adjustments programme recommended, while expectations on mentors of orphans to contribute financially to mentees' upkeep were unsustainable and off-putting for some mentors. An evaluation of a local authority-run orphan support programme in Tanzania found that orphans and vulnerable children were considered a priority for very limited village resources.

9.1 Overview of papers

Given that a large number of factors underpin the quality of care, in this section we aim to focus on aspects of care where this review could contribute to filling evidence gaps. The role of economic strengthening programmes – particularly cash transfers – in improving children's education and nutritional outcomes is well documented (Barrientos et al., 2013) and we do not repeat this evidence here. In this section, we therefore focus on some of the aspects of care where the role that economic strengthening programmes can play is less clear. In particular, we focus on keeping children safe (especially from accidental injuries), and on programmes that support family-based care of orphans and children separated from their families (for example, by war). Despite extensive searching, we did not find examples of programmes aiming to prevent

institutionalisation of children that could be included in the review; nor did we find examples of programmes supporting the care of children left behind by parents migrating for work.⁸⁸

The programmes examined in this section fall into four groups: programmes aiming to address economic constraints to good care; programmes educating parents so they are able to care for their children more effectively and safely; programmes that provide free or subsidised day care for low-income working parents; and mentoring and support programmes for orphans and vulnerable children. With respect to day care programmes, we have only included those where evaluations examined either the relationship between care provision and facilitating parental employment (in itself an anti-poverty strategy), or preventing children being left unattended or with an unsuitable carer. We did not include early childhood development programmes that only discussed outcomes in terms of children's educational or nutritional wellbeing, as the developmental benefits of such programmes are already well established (Naudeau et al., 2010).

A total of 22 papers, discussing 20 interventions, were included in this section (see Table A.4, Appendix 7, for an overview). Two papers (Al Hassan, 2009; Al Hassan and Lansford, 2011) discuss Jordan's Better Parenting Programme, and Odendaal et al. (2009) and Swart et al. (2008) discuss different phases of the same accidental injury prevention programme in South Africa.

9.1.1 Nature of evidence

The papers included in this review show an even split between academic and grey literature, with 10 academic papers⁸⁹ and 12 grey papers included.⁹⁰ The academic papers are mostly analyses of experimental parenting or accident prevention programmes published in medical or specialist accident prevention journals, with three reporting on orphan support programmes or wider parenting programmes. The grey literature includes working papers of academic rigour, detailed mixed methods evaluations of NGO programmes and more descriptive qualitative analyses. Overall, 10 evaluations use quantitative,⁹¹ 6 qualitative⁹² and 6 mixed methods.⁹³ Six papers used experimental designs and five quasi-experimental designs.⁹⁴

9.1.2 Disciplinary perspectives

Nine papers – all examining parent education or accident prevention programmes – draw on medical/psychological traditions,⁹⁵ four draw on sociological or social work traditions⁹⁶ and the remaining nine reflect a broader development studies scope of analysis.⁹⁷

9.1.3 Outcomes measured

Because of the varied aspects of care we considered, the papers examined discuss a wide range of outcomes. As with the other themes, the parent education programmes measure changes in knowledge or attitudes, practices or both, with seven papers discussing changes in knowledge or attitudes⁹⁸ and six discussing changes in aspects of child care practices.⁹⁹ Some examine user satisfaction (day care and mentoring programmes)¹⁰⁰ and two reports on participants' assessment of changes in their economic wellbeing.¹⁰¹ Some

88 For example, we found some descriptions of interesting pilot projects in Georgia where cash transfers were used to help avoid poor families resorting to placing children in institutional care (EveryChild, 2011a). However, we could not include these, as they did not meet MMAT standards for methodological clarity. Most papers addressing institutional care were advocacy documents or dealt with a large number of countries or institutions without the depth required for inclusion in this review.

89 Al Hassan and Lansford (2011); Cooper et al. (2009); Lee et al. (2002); Mock et al. (2003); Odendaal et al. (2009); Rahman et al. (2008a); Rehmani and Le Blanc (2010); Roby and Shaw (2008); Swart et al. (2008); Wint and Brown (1998).

90 Abdullahi et al. (2002); Al-Hassan (2009); Jones and Brown (2008); Lavin et al. (2010); Mhamba (2004); Mwaipopo (2005); Paolisso et al. (2001); Perezniето and Campos (2010); Rahman et al. (2008b); Ruel et al. (2002); Sparling and Gordan (2011); Valente (2010).

91 Al-Hassan and Lansford (2011); Cooper et al. (2009); Lavin et al. (2010); Mock et al. (2003); Odendaal et al. (2009); Rahman et al. (2008a); Rehmani and Le Blanc (2010); Roby and Shaw (2008); Swart et al. (2008); Wint and Brown (1998).

92 Abdullahi et al. (2002); Lee et al. (2002); Mhamba (2004); Mwaipopo (2005); Perezniето and Campos (2010); Valente (2010).

93 Al Hassan (2009); Jones and Brown (2008); Paolisso et al. (2001); Rahman et al. (2008b); Ruel et al. (2002); Sparling and Gordan (2011).

94 Experimental designs: Al-Hassan and Lansford (2011); Cooper et al. (2009); Odendaal et al. (2009); Rahman et al. (2008a); Rehmani and Le Blanc (2010); Swart et al. (2008). Quasi-experimental designs: Mock et al. (2003); Paolisso et al. (2001); Rahman et al. (2008b); Sparling and Gordan (2011); Wint and Brown (1998).

95 Al-Hassan and Lansford (2011); Cooper et al. (2009); Lee et al. (2002); Mock et al. (2003); Odendaal et al. (2009); Rahman et al. (2008a; 2008b); Swart et al. (2008).

96 Abdullahi et al. (2002); Al-Hassan (2009); Mwaipopo (2005); Wint and Brown (1998).

97 Jones and Brown (2008); Kotowski (2002); Lavin et al. (2010); Mhamba (2004); Paolisso et al. (2001); Perezniето and Campos (2010); Ruel et al. (2002); Sparling and Gordan (2011); Valente (2010).

98 Al-Hassan (2009); Al Hassan and Lansford (2011); Rahman et al. (2008a; 2008b); Rehmani and Le Blanc (2010); Wint and Brown (1998).

99 Cooper et al. (2009); Mock et al. (2003); Odendaal et al. (2009); Rahman et al. (2008b); Rehmani and Le Blanc (2010); Swart et al. (2008).

¹⁰⁰ Lavin et al. (2010); Mwaipopo (2005); Perezniето and Campos (2010); Roby and Shaw (2008); Ruel et al. (2002).

of the orphan support programmes also assess changes in orphans' feelings of emotional wellbeing. Three papers¹⁰² measured changes in child care arrangements.

9.1.4 Regional breakdown

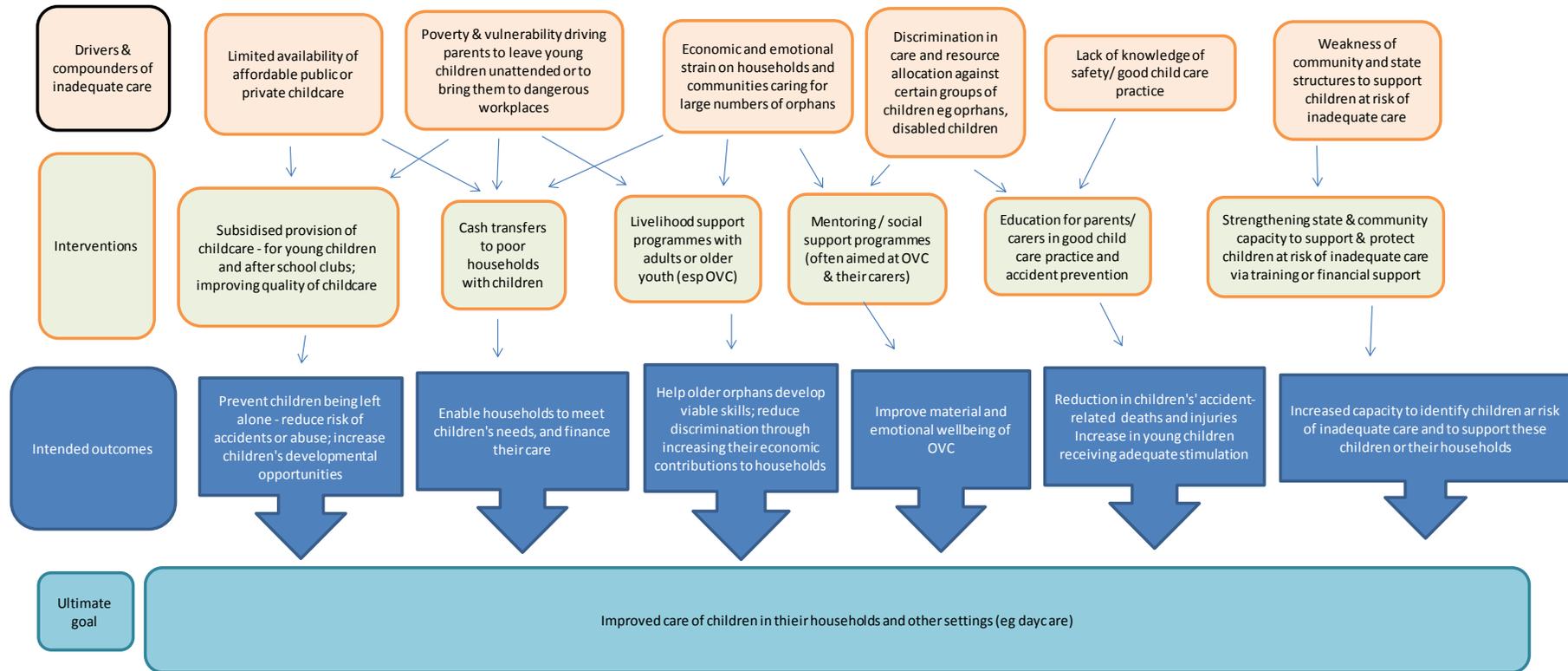
The regional breakdown of the papers was as follows: Sub-Saharan Africa: 12, Asia: 4, Middle East 2 and Latin America and the Caribbean 6.

101 Lavin et al.(2010); Roby and Shaw (2008).

102 Paolisso et al. (2001); Ruel et al. (1998); Sparling and Gordan (2011). Valente (2010) also observed changes in child care practices in passing.

Figure 7 summarises diagrammatically the main factors underlying inadequate care of children, the main types of interventions undertaken and the intended outcomes.

Figure 7: Intervention pathways – programmes examined aiming to improve care of children



9.2 Findings

Five programme mechanisms emerge in the interventions discussed in this set of papers (see Table 18). Of these, educating parents on how to take better care of their children and to prevent accidents was the most common; only one programme also engaged children in accidental injury prevention. Economic strengthening was the next most common mechanism.

Table 18: Promoting better care – programme mechanisms

Programme mechanism	Alone	In combination	Total	Percentage interventions with this component (n=20)
Economic strengthening	4	3	7	35
Provide or improve services	2	1	3	15
Education and awareness raising for adults or children	8	1	9	45
Psychosocial care and social support for children	0	4	4	20

Table 19: Scale and reach of programmes promoting better care of children

Scale of programme	Number in sample (n=20)
One community	4
Multiple communities	12
National	3
Regional or multi-country	1

As Table 20 shows, the majority of programmes were relatively small in scale, generally taking place in several communities, but often all within a single district. The exceptions were two large programmes in Latin America (Estancias and Juntos) and Jordan's Better Parenting Programme. The single-community programmes were mostly experimental evaluations of parenting or accident prevention programmes.

Table 20: Children reached by interventions promoting better care of children

Numbers reached	Number of interventions
Under 100	1
100-500	5
501-1,000	2
1,001-1,500	2
1,501-2,000	0
2,000+	7
Not clear	3

The following sections discuss how these interventions were implemented and their impacts.

9.2.1 Education and awareness raising

The majority of interventions described in the papers included in this section contained an element of education and awareness raising. Four of these focused on accident prevention, and five aimed to improve the quality of care more broadly by increasing parents' knowledge and understanding of child development and good child care practices. Two of the latter programmes involved alternatives to violent discipline techniques and thus there is some overlap with the physical violence theme.

Improving knowledge of child development and sensitivity of parenting

The papers that deal with interventions with the aim of improving parenting skills all show positive impacts on parent knowledge and behaviour.

Two programmes focused on parents of infants. Rahman et al. (2008a) evaluate a project in rural **Pakistan**, in which **community health workers were trained to provide mothers with information on infant development and the importance of play and stimulation**. Mothers attended an initial half-day workshop, at which they were given a calendar outlining children's development, and then received visits from the trained health workers every two weeks. Mothers were also encouraged to form groups with other programme participants. Their knowledge of infant development was assessed while they were pregnant, and when their babies were three months old, at the end of the intervention. The evaluation found that the project increased participating mothers' knowledge of infant development, while a control group registered no increase. It did not assess whether mothers translated this knowledge into more sensitive care of their infants.

Cooper et al. (2009) report on a **child development training programme in Khayelitsha, a peri-urban area in South Africa**, which, like the intervention in Rahman et al. (2008a), recruited pregnant women and assessed them before the intervention, after the intervention and 12 and 18 months after giving birth. Four mothers from Khayelitsha received training in child development, facilitation skills and counselling over a four-month period, and mother–infant interaction, based on a programme developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). The women in the intervention group were visited by these trained facilitators twice ante-natally (if possible), weekly for the first eight weeks after birth, fortnightly for a further two months and then monthly for two months (that is, sixteen sessions in total, ending at five months after birth). Cooper et al. found that, at both 12 and 18 months after birth, mothers in the intervention group were rated as interacting with their children in a significantly more sensitive and less intrusive manner, indicating the success of this intensive programme in improving mother–child interactions. Given that insensitive and intrusive parenting may be associated with children's later involvement in violence, programmes such as these may also have a role to play in reducing violence against children.

Two programmes focused on parents of preschool or primary school-age children. Section 8 described both these – Jordan's Better Parenting Programme and an experimental programme in Jamaica conducted by Wint and Brown (1988); to avoid repetition we simply summarise key features of these programmes here.

Jordan's Better Parenting Programme, a national programme evaluated by Al-Hassan (2009) and Al-Hassan and Lansford (2011), provides a 16-hour course on aspects of early childhood development to parents and caregivers of children aged up to eight years, and is delivered by government health and social workers and NGO staff at health centres or other public buildings.

After participating in the programme, mothers (who constituted 94% of participants) were significantly more likely than control group mothers to spend time playing and reading stories with their children (Al-Hassan, 2009). The proportion of parents who considered leaving a child alone at home, or having someone underage take care of the child, as neglectful also increased among the group participating in the programme, although the differences between participants and the control group were not statistically significant (Al-Hassan and Lansford, 2011).

The **experimental programme in Jamaica** discussed by Wint and Brown (1988) aimed to **increase participants' knowledge of preschool children's development and how different approaches to parenting can affect this**. Training in changing parenting behaviour had two components: reducing corporal punishment (discussed in Section 8) and improving the quality of children's environment for learning at home. Participants attended six sessions, five based on different stages of children's development from birth to five and one on toy making from easily available 'junk' materials. Wint and Brown found a significant difference post-programme in participants' understanding of age-appropriate expectations for 3.5–4.25 year olds. They also found greater understanding post-programme of the role parents could play in supporting young children's play, and its role in children's educational as well as social development. The programme was evaluated soon after it ended. It is therefore not clear how far changes were sustained.

CAMP Bustamante's parenting classes and advice from social workers (also in Jamaica) – while aimed principally at preventing physical and sexual abuse – set these issues in a broader context of positive parenting. This included encouraging children and listening and talking more with them. It also had a

component on preventing accidental injuries. Many of the parents interviewed recalled specific safety and/or broader care advice they had received (Jones and Brown, 2008).

Reducing risk of accidents

The papers focused on prevention of accidental injuries mostly employ an experimental design with intervention and control groups assessed pre- and post-intervention. Odendaal et al. (2009) and Swart et al. (2008) both report randomised control trials of **home visitor programmes in low-income peri-urban areas of South Africa**, with Swart et al. examining an earlier phase of the programme. Both programmes trained local community members to deliver information as ‘paraprofessional educators’ through a series of four home visits to households with children aged under ten. In the earlier phase of the programme, visits took place every two weeks. In the later phase, they were spread over a three-month period. In both phases, the programme provided safety equipment as well as information – in the earlier phase, these were child-proof locks and safety caps for paraffin; in the later phase, they were bags for storing poisonous substances. The latter were not much used by participants as the majority already stored poisons out of children’s reach. However, where they were used, they led to a reduction in poisonings (Odendaal et al., 2009).

Swart et al. (2008) found statistically significant improvements only in burn safety practices, and smaller reductions in poisoning and burn injuries. However, Odendaal et al.’s (2009) study, conducted a year later, found that the risk of burns and of poisoning had reduced among the intervention group, although some practices that put children at risk of burn injuries continued, reflecting financial barriers to purchasing safer stoves and overcrowding, which makes keeping young children away from stoves impractical. They suggest that the greater effectiveness of the programme in its later phase may reflect improved communication materials, and/or more effective home visitors. The mixed overall results of this programme are consistent with other findings about accident prevention through home-visiting programmes – they can be useful but are no panacea. Among other recommendations, Odendaal et al. suggest exploring the potential for integrating programmes of this kind with anti-poverty programmes.

Rehmani and Le Blanc (2010) found statistically significant reductions in hazards related to falls and ingestion (poisoning and choking) from **a home visitation programme in Karachi, Pakistan**. This was available to parents with children under three years old, and consisted of an initial visit, after which families were advised on hazards in their homes and how they could be reduced, a follow-up phone call after three months, in which families were asked about safety modifications they had made, and then a final visit six months later, where safety-related changes were assessed. The mean number of fall hazards decreased from 3.1 to 2.4 and of ingestion hazards from 2.3 to 1.9.

Mock et al. (2003) likewise found improvements in child safety practices after an **education programme for parents in Mexico**. This programme was differentiated to target people of different socioeconomic groups, with higher socioeconomic groups recruited at private clinics, middle groups at state clinics and the lowest groups at subsidised clinics. The information activities were also differentiated, with high- and middle-income groups receiving information through lectures and some clinic-based counselling and low-income groups receiving a series of home visits. These education sessions were effective in increasing parents’ knowledge of injury prevention practices in all groups, and particularly for children aged between one and nine. Although use of protective safety devices increased, it remained low, particularly among the poorest socioeconomic group, with a mean score of 19%, as compared with 55% among the highest socioeconomic group. This may reflect the high costs and limited availability of some devices such as smoke detectors and child safety seats for cars.

Only one of the programmes in this sample provided information or training to children as well as to adults: the Prevention of Child Injuries through Social Intervention and Education (PRECISE) programme to prevent childhood injury in Bangladesh (Rahman et al., 2008b). This three-year programme, implemented in two rural and two urban areas, involved home, school and community safety elements. The home safety component was implemented by trained paid community promoters or by government health workers, with the area with community promoters designated as ‘high intensity’ and receiving more sustained input than medium-intensity areas. Promoters made home visits, identified hazards and advised householders on how to reduce hazards. The school safety programme involved provision of textbooks on injury prevention, training

of teachers in recognising and removing hazards and classroom sessions on safety. Over 27,000 children were also taught to swim to prevent drowning (a leading cause of child death in Bangladesh). The community safety programme involved a community crèche to keep children safe while parents were working, fencing of ponds and community sensitisation meetings, which combined discussion with video and interactive theatre. Community volunteers were also trained in first response. Activities were coordinated and overseen by village injury prevention committees, which were also responsible for encouraging villagers to participate in injury prevention activities.

The combined impact of these interventions was a 28% reduction in accidental injury-related deaths among 0-17 year olds and a 51% reduction in the high-intensity intervention area. Fatal drowning among 0-17 year olds declined by 44%.

The evaluators found that community crèches (*anchals*) appeared effective in keeping those aged up to four safe; there were no deaths of such children while attending *anchals*, but accidental injury and drowning deaths occurred among those not attending *anchals*. Injury rates among *anchal*-attending children were also lower. Swim training proved to be a safe and effective way of preventing drowning; no children drowned during swim training, while some died during the course of ‘naturally acquired’ swimming skills (i.e. learning from playing in water with older children). Mothers’ knowledge of injury prevention also increased as a result of this programme (as compared with no change in the control group). Children who had learnt about injury prevention at school could convince their families to implement at least one injury prevention measure.

Many of these evaluations observe financial barriers to implementing safety measures. Mock et al. (2003) note that some safety devices are unaffordable; Odendaal et al. (2009) observe that reducing fall hazards by levelling floors, or cooking hazards by replacing floor-based paraffin stoves with electric stoves, is too costly for many participants. Rahman et al. (2008b) likewise note that many respondents cited economic factors as reasons for non-implementation of injury prevention measures.

9.2.2 Economic strengthening

The papers included in this section fall into three main groups: cash transfers; in-kind transfers given to children or their households with the aim of improving the care they receive; and income generation or livelihood interventions with carers. This section, unusually, contains evaluations of two development programmes (one a post-disaster rehabilitation programme and one an agricultural development programme), which assess their impact on care of young children.

Cash and in-kind transfers

Valente’s (2010) evaluation of **Juntos, a conditional cash transfer programme in Peru**, found that some participants had been able to improve the care they gave their children as a result.¹⁰³ They also noted a change in gender roles, particularly among younger couples, with men getting more involved in child care. This was particularly when women attend Juntos meetings, which are a compulsory element of the programme, although older children and particularly girls continue to play an important child care role. It appears changes have been driven partly by information mothers received during attendance at health centres with young children (a condition of receiving the income transfer) and partly by compulsory attendance at sexual and reproductive health education sessions. However, in that participation in the programme is significantly motivated by the offer of approximately \$33 per month, the economic strengthening component is likely to have played an important indirect role in these changes.

Mixed cash/in-kind transfers and livelihoods support

Four orphan support programmes examined provide material assistance as part of broader mentoring and social support. Three were organised by NGOs (ACF in Rwanda, CARE International in Uganda, FOCUS in Zimbabwe) and a fourth by local government in Tanzania. Two of these also involved programmes to strengthen carers’ livelihoods.

103 This was a qualitative analysis; the numbers concerned are not quantified. These changes are reported as insights from three focus groups – one with men and two with women.

These programmes generally provided small sums of money or housing assistance (e.g. roofing sheets) (Rwanda, Uganda) or assistance in kind (e.g. food, blankets) (Zimbabwe) to help alleviate the acute poverty child-headed households (in Rwanda) and households absorbing orphans (Zimbabwe and Uganda) face. The Families, Orphans and Children Under Stress (FOCUS) programme (Zimbabwe) also supported self-help projects, through training in specific technical skills, and project management, in some cases by small grants; the Action for Children (AFC) programme in Uganda also had a micro loan component, and provided seedlings and some training in vegetable gardening to help improve households' food security. The intention of the income generation component in the Zimbabwe programme was both to raise funds that could be used to provide material assistance at community level and to teach children skills they could use to be self-sufficient.

The economic strengthening component of AFC's programme in Uganda provided both in-kind transfers to meet basic needs and training and small loans to help families caring for orphans and other vulnerable children start businesses (Roby and Shaw, 2008). The cash or in-kind transfers included food for families unable to grow their own, payment of school fees and provision of school materials. Other assistance included seedlings and training in vegetable gardening. Some participants received small sums of money to help with household expenses; they were more likely to report that the sums were too small to be much help as compared with food and educational assistance or microfinance. A total of 230 households received small loans, which most recipients considered helpful (78%). While the evaluation does not compare children's wellbeing before and after participating in the intervention, it concludes that the support received strengthened participating families' capacity to care for children. Both carers and the children in their care expected to remain with these families till adulthood, and the children interviewed reported being happy and well adjusted in their current family environments, with no significant difference between children who lived with their biological parents and others.

CARE International's Community Support and Mentoring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (COSMO) in Rwanda aimed to provide protection, care and support to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) by establishing and strengthening family and community-based support structures and to ensure access to essential services for OVC. It is not clear from the programme description how the economic strengthening component operated, but material support appears to have been financed by CARE and distributed by *nkundabana* volunteers (mentors).

Lavin et al. (2010) found that participants' children had significantly greater levels of personal and household assets than those of non-participants, indicating that the programme had helped alleviate some of the extreme poverty they faced. Mentored children also reported having lower levels of unmet needs (related to household material needs, housing, educational materials, legal assistance) as compared with non-mentored children. They also had lower levels of need on other issues, such as financial assistance or health care, but the differences were not statistically significant,¹⁰⁴ and levels of unmet need on some indicators, such as financial assistance, were still high.

The economic strengthening component of **FOCUS's programme in Zimbabwe** was relatively minor: this was principally a programme of mentoring and psychosocial support to orphans and their carers, so the main impacts of this programme are discussed elsewhere. In-kind transfers given a few times a year – in order not to build dependency on FOCUS – include seeds and blankets. In areas where chiefs have designated a field for communal production, which is used to support orphans, FOCUS volunteers are more able to support vulnerable children and their households with food as well as psychologically. FOCUS also pays orphans' school levies, which may amount to a relatively significant transfer in contexts where poverty levels are so high. The overall impact of these components on orphans' wellbeing is unclear.

Mhamba (2004) evaluates a government-implemented programme to **support the most vulnerable children in rural Musoma, Tanzania**. Like the NGO orphan support programmes discussed above, this was intended to provide a range of support for vulnerable children, including distribution of school uniforms, fee waivers for health care assistance, clothing and other material support, broader livelihood strengthening support, legal assistance, life skills education and psychosocial support.

104 The authors suggest this is a result of small sample sizes, given observable differences in the wellbeing of the two groups.

In practice, few of these ambitious provisions were implemented. Although in one of the villages in the sample evaluated children identified as ‘most vulnerable’ had been given free access to health care and 18 had been provided with soap or money towards secondary school fees, none had been part of other activities, such as psychosocial support and economic strengthening activities. The only widespread activity across the villages examined was provision of pens and exercise books, which had been financed by UNICEF rather than from local funds.

This limited activity reflects under-financing of the programme. Only identification of the most vulnerable children and community dialogue was externally funded. Funds to support other activities were to be mobilised at community level, but in many villages people considered themselves too poor to contribute to the project, particularly if they were not going to benefit themselves. This was exacerbated by village governments’ demanding contributions for other developmental activities. Furthermore, in some cases funds collected for this programme were diverted to other uses the village council considered more pressing, such as paying for water licences. Mhamba concludes that more effective economic strengthening activities might help finance community structures such as the most vulnerable children committees more sustainably.

A Save the Children programme of **support to separated children in a refugee camp in Sierra Leone also involved some vocational skills training**. Abdullai et al.’s (2002) evaluation indicates that this training was not particularly successful in helping older adolescents develop sustainable livelihoods. This may in part be because the programme did not involve any financial support to set up businesses, and many people could not afford to do so. Further, as with other vocational training programmes examined in this review, the training was principally in skills with which the local market was already saturated. The authors observe that many of the girls who had participated in the programme still had no alternative to sex work.

In summary, few of the programmes discussed here helped households or adolescents acquire marketable skills or build effective businesses. Most gave small hand-outs of material goods that alleviated immediate poverty but did not help improve their situation in the longer term. The contribution they made to improving the care of poor children was thus limited.

Broader economic strengthening programmes assessing impact on child care

Unlike the programmes discussed above, the following two programmes were not set up with the goal of improving child care. It is encouraging that programmes with other goals are measuring impacts on child care, as this helps expand the body of evidence concerning the best ways to help parents and carers meet the competing demands of generating income and looking after children.

Paolisso et al. (2001) look **at the impact of a project supporting farmers to commercialise their crop production on time and quality of time spent with children in Nepal**. They found the intervention had a positive impact on the amount of time spent with children only in households with two or more pre-schoolers: women spent four minutes more a day with children in households with two pre-schoolers; and for households with three preschoolers there was an increase of eighty-five minutes in care time for children under five years. All men and women in households with one child of preschool age also spent less time with them following the project. There was no measurement of whether children were experiencing any increased risk as a result of the reduction in time available to care for them.

Equally concerned with the possibility that increased parental engagement in economic activities could reduce the time available to care for young children, Sparling and Gordan (2011) assess the impact of post-tsunami **livelihood reconstruction programmes in Indonesia and Sri Lanka on the extent of child care by siblings**. These livelihood programmes involved a combination of cash for work, microfinance, asset replacement, job training and skills development. Sparling and Gordan did not find any relationship between participation in a livelihoods programme and sibling-provided child care, or the other child wellbeing measures they examined. They suggest this was because the specific programmes they studied were not very effective in improving livelihoods, and thus posed no risk in terms of displacing adult time.

9.2.3 Subsidised day care for working parents

Recognition is slowly growing that lack of safe, affordable child care is a key problem for low-income working parents, and can lead to children’s safety and wellbeing being jeopardised as parents are forced to

leave children alone or with incompetent carers (Heymann, 2006). Two papers examined programmes – both in Latin America – that provided subsidised day care to working parents. This kept children safe while parents were working, and/or enabled parents who would not otherwise have been able to work, to do so. The community crèches (*anchals*) of the PRECISE programme in Bangladesh, discussed in the previous section, played a similar role. Given our focus on child protection, rather than education, we only included papers with some analysis of nurseries' or preschools' roles in keeping children safe and/or reducing the incidence of children being left at home alone or with an underage carer.

Pereznieto and Campos (2010) examined **Mexico's Estancias Infantiles para Apoyar a Madres Trabajadoras (Child Care Services for Working Mothers)**. This is a subsidised child care services programme targeted at mothers in poor households (below a threshold of poverty of 1.5 minimum wages per household member) who work, are looking for work or are studying and do not have access to formal social security-provided child care. It operates in all of Mexico's 32 states, although it does not yet have full coverage, and has expanded to target poor, single fathers who are responsible for the care of their children. Children aged one to three are eligible to attend; children aged four can attend state-run preschools.

Pereznieto and Campos find that many beneficiaries have started to work outside the home as a result of the programme; others have been able to access more stable and less precarious jobs as a result of having access to a dependable and stable form of child care. Single parents have particularly benefited. The programme has also had a positive impact on early childhood development, particularly since the poorest children would have been least likely to benefit from such services. The *estancias* are thus contributing to reducing poverty, protecting children from harm and providing early education. As such, they are a potentially important example of a programme integrating anti-poverty, child protection and other goals.

Ruel et al. (1998) examined the impact of **Guatemala's Hogares Comunitarios**, a government-sponsored pilot programme to facilitate low-income parents working while improving the quality of care their children received. Rather than developing child care centres, as in the *Estancias* programme, in *Hogares Comunitarios* care for up to 10 children under 7 is provided by a neighbourhood woman in her own home. The government provides training, supplies, a food budget and a small incentive payment; parents also pay \$5 per child per month and are expected to contribute supplies such as toilet paper, sugar, toothpaste etc.

Participant households used sibling care (by 7-15 year olds) very much less than control households did, suggesting the programme was also effective in reducing the risks to older children's education and wellbeing that caring for younger siblings can pose. None of the participant parents reported leaving their children without any supervision, as compared with 1.9% of the control group.

Ruel et al. found the quality of services caretakers provided with respect to hygiene and safety and their interaction with children were good overall but varied significantly between *hogares*. Child carers often failed to allocate the required amount of time to educational activities, largely because of time constraints, but also because they did not feel adequately trained, motivated and remunerated. Delays in transferring the food allowance also limited caretakers' capacity to provide adequate and healthy meals. Despite this, the nutritional status of participants' children was considerably higher than that of control group children.

Beneficiary parents were extremely positive about the programme, which they found affordable. Low coverage (only 3% of working mothers in Ruel et al.'s survey) seems to result from lack of supply rather than low demand. Participant parents recommended the programme be extended to provide care on Saturdays, as they face high child care costs on these days when the *hogares* were not open.

Despite these positive effects, the evaluation found some child protection concerns. The evaluators observed children being left alone in more than half the *hogares* if carers had to go out to purchase food for them, for periods averaging one hour. They also observed a third of carers yelling at children and 13% hitting children, and recommended improved training for carers. They also recommended educational activities be conducted by visiting teachers, since the caretakers had neither the time nor skills to undertake these.

9.2.4 Provision of social support and/or psychosocial care to children

Four programmes supported orphans and vulnerable children and youth through mentoring. These evaluations vary in emphasis, with Lee et al. (2002) focusing on sustainability and future directions, while

Mwaipopo (2005), Lavin et al. (2010) and Roby and Shaw (2008) pay more attention to the impacts on orphans and issues of mentor training.

Lavin et al. (2010) evaluate a **community care and support programme for orphans and vulnerable children and youth in Rwanda**, in which adult volunteer mentors provide support and guidance for vulnerable children and particularly children living in child-headed households. They found that, on some measures, children receiving mentoring support were less socially marginalised – for example, fewer mentored children felt people made fun of their situation as compared with those who did not receive mentoring support.¹⁰⁵ They were also more likely to report presence of a supportive adult in their life they could trust to offer advice and guidance. Nonetheless, levels of reported marginalisation generally remained high among beneficiaries and were corroborated by surveyed mentors, about half of whom indicated that the community rejects orphans. Most of the orphans greatly appreciated their mentors; however, 32% of children stated that they felt that the mentor was in a rush to leave appointments. Furthermore, the mentors reported feeling overstretched, both by the number of children in their care and because they lacked the skills needed to help the young people they serve.

As discussed in Section 9.2.2, children reported lower levels of unmet economic needs than those not receiving mentoring support, although differences between the groups were relatively small. Some mentors felt a weakness of the programme was that they were not able to offer the children and young people sufficient material support (they were given bed-nets, shoes and some assets, such as livestock). This implies that linking the programme with one providing reducing poverty and food insecurity levels among both children, their mentors and the broader community might have increased its effectiveness. Lavin et al. warn that the type of income-generating projects often supported among such children are hard to scale up and could result in market saturation. They therefore recommend more strategic analysis of how livelihoods could be developed in such a way as to take advantage of broader market opportunities within East Africa.

The overstressing of mentors is also discussed in Mwaipopo's (2005) of an NGO **orphan mentoring programme in rural Iringa, Tanzania**. Initial volunteers (*mama mkubwa*) were recruited from the community and received a week's training in emotional care and support of orphans and how to advise mentees on avoidance of HIV. They also receive some orientation in children's rights, including not shouting at or hitting children and not using them as unpaid household help. The programme did not plan for refresher training, or training of new volunteers, though the need for this has become apparent with significant volunteer turnover.

Mama mkubwa are also encouraged to make small material gifts to the children they mentor, such as soap or school materials. Despite these increased financial responsibilities, *mama mkubwa* do not receive training that might help them meet them generate additional income. While *mama mkubwa* receive some financial and in-kind support from the NGO organising the programme (Tanzania Home Economics Association, TAHEA), this has not always been sufficient, particularly for mentors supporting a large number of children. In some villages, the large number of orphans mentors are expected to support proves too much of a burden, leading to them feeling stressed or resigning, as found also in Lavin et al. (2010) in Rwanda.

Despite these problems, Mwaipopo (2005) observed a range of positive outcomes from the programme, related to children's emotional wellbeing, strength of attachment to *mama mkubwa*, more consistent school attendance and improved guidance to older adolescents in making life decisions. However, many of the *mama mkubwa* felt they struggled with guiding older children and helping them avoid activities such as heavy drinking, unsafe sex or missing school in order to work. In one village, male mentors had been recruited to help with guiding and advising older adolescent boys. Mwaipopo's evaluation suggests the programme could be more effective and sustainable if it were better integrated into district anti-poverty plans, if it came under the district social welfare administration and if *mama mkubwas* were represented on local committees, such as school committees.

THE FOCUS programme in Zimbabwe evaluated by Lee et al. (2002) used a slightly different model of orphan support, which focused more on volunteers providing practical help to families (e.g. cleaning, bathing children, taking sick children to clinics), although volunteers also provided emotional support to orphans.

105 On some measures, such as people speaking badly of them, there was no significant difference.

This model aimed to avoid undermining the role of orphans' main carers, a problem encountered in the *mama mkubwa* programme in Tanzania, where some mentors reported that they were expected to meet all of their mentees' needs. While this approach appears to have been effective from this perspective, it may have limited the extent to which volunteers could advise and support orphans facing abuse or exploitation. Lee et al. note, for example, that, while some volunteers have counselled girls facing sexual abuse, much more could be done. However, this can be difficult in the context of a home visiting programme.

Abdullahi et al. (2002) discuss a set of activities in **a refugee camp in Sierra Leone** that aimed to **improve the care, protection and quality of life of children, many of whom had been separated from their families**. Protective structures include child welfare committees, which monitor children's rights abuses under the authority of the camp management, and girls and boys' clubs, which act as a first point of contact for children facing abuse. A concerned carers group – foster carers who act as peer supporters to other foster carers and also report exploitation and abuse – developed organically in the camp (without external intervention) is another key element of the network of protective structures.

Abdullahi et al. suggest these protective structures are moderately effective, but that considerable exploitation and mistreatment of fostered children continues. In particular, fostered children often have higher workloads and are not treated equally to other children in the household. Furthermore, few of the carers or children interviewed said they would turn to these structures if they had a problem, reiterating findings from other papers that formal structures tend to be a last point of call if people cannot resolve child protection issues among themselves. Their evaluation also points to the extensive role children and young people themselves play – as boys and girls' club members and as block advocates (young people who do outreach work from the boys and girls' clubs) – in attempting to resolve issues such as forced marriage, exploitation and abuse.

9.3 Discussion

9.3.1 Who benefits, who does not?

As with the other thematic areas, very few of these papers discuss systematically who benefited and who did not. We summarise what can be gleaned about who they have been most effective for, and what factors influenced effectiveness. In part, this lack of discussion reflects that many of the parenting education and accidental injury prevention papers are based on evaluations using an experimental design, often with matched control groups. Mock et al. (2003) assessed an accidental injury prevention programme in Mexico tailored to different socioeconomic groups, and thus could analyse socioeconomic differences more centrally – but this is an exception.

Gender

There appear to be no systematic differences in the extent to which girls and boys benefit from the programmes examined in this section.

However, across all the parenting education and accident prevention programmes, a significantly higher proportion of participants were mothers than fathers. Men who attended Jordan the programme generally scored higher than women on obtaining and retaining knowledge about child rearing and parenting skills. However, as only 18 men participated, these figures need to be treated with caution (Al-Hassan, 2009).

In two of the orphan mentoring programmes, the majority of mentors were female. In these cases, the NGOs concerned or mentors themselves had tried to recruit more male mentors, in order to better support adolescent boys. By contrast, in CARE's programme in Rwanda mentors are male (Lavin et al., 2010). This may affect the quality of support given to adolescent girls.

Age

Younger children have been key beneficiaries of parent education programmes, both those with a broad child development focus and accident prevention programmes. They are also the main beneficiaries of programmes providing subsidised day care, although these can also reduce older children's caring responsibilities.

Two evaluations of orphan support programmes raise concerns that younger children are bypassed. Mhamba (2004) reports that under fives are bypassed by programmes that concentrate essentially on school support. Also discussing an orphan mentoring programme, Mwaipopo (2005) claims preschool age children need more focused and intensive support than they are currently given, since they are much more dependent on mentors than older children, who also receive social and emotional support at school and from a wider range of adults in the community.

Socioeconomic group

The majority of the programmes examined either targeted low-income households directly or took place in areas with high concentrations of people living on low incomes or in food-insecure households. Thus, relatively few evaluations discussed how far these programmes benefited different socioeconomic groups. We present here such information as can be gleaned.

Pereznieta and Campos (2010) show that most *estancias* in Mexico are located in areas well supplied with services, and very few in communities with high levels of marginalisation (i.e. exclusion from mainstream services). This does not mean they are biased towards better-off people (because only people on low incomes can obtain places), but they are not yet serving the most deprived communities.

Ruel et al. (2002) found that the users of *hogares comunitarios* in Guatemala City were disproportionately disadvantaged – more likely to live in a room as opposed to a flat or house, to be less educated and to be single parents. However, they were also more likely to work in the formal sector, with health and social security benefits, and their income was 30% higher than that of control households. This suggests that, by providing reliable child care for 12 hours a day, the programme was enabling low-income mothers to engage in better-paid work with better conditions.

As discussed in Section 8, Jordan's Better Care Programme disproportionately benefited low-income parents.

The experimental programme in Mexico was the only programme to differentiate activities on the basis of income. Mock et al. (2003) found that, although tailored recruitment and education strategies were all effective, financial constraints limited the extent to which low-income participants could implement the safety strategies they had learnt.

Tight categorical targeting

Lavin et al. (2011) raise an issue that appears in many of the papers, particularly those discussing interventions that provide financial or material support to narrowly targeted groups. They note that the mentored children in their study experienced greater levels of jealousy from others in the community as compared with the non-mentored children, implying the programme may be contributing to unintended divisions between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

As one of the mentors interviewed also noted, an exclusive focus on orphans and child-headed households is not necessarily appropriate given patterns of vulnerability to poor care and abuse:

'Only orphans and vulnerable children and youth in child-headed households were enrolled in the programme yet there were those with very sick, mentally unstable, alcoholic and abusing parents/adults whose conditions are worse and need a good mentor' (Lavin et al., 2010: 23).

Likewise, FOCUS in Zimbabwe has moved from an exclusive focus on supporting better care of orphans to including a wider set of vulnerable children (Lee et al., 2002). In a similar vein, Mwaipopo (2005) recommends that efforts to improve the economic situation of mentors of orphans be couched within wider economic strengthening programmes open to all women in the area.

This appears to be less of an issue with interventions that do not provide material support, as with educational programmes. None of the papers reporting on day care programmes discusses this issue.

9.3.2 Other factors affecting impact and effectiveness

Mentoring burn-out

The two evaluations of mentoring programmes that examined mentors' experience in most detail identified a significant problem of mentors feeling overwhelmed and burnt out. Most mentors in CARE's COSMO programme in Rwanda said they felt helpless meeting material needs (86%) and solving mentees' problems (67%). Nearly half (46%) reported getting overwhelmed with their responsibilities as a mentor (Lavin et al., 2010). Mwaipopo (2005) reported similar, though not quantified, findings. Part of the problem lies with expectations on the part of carers and orphans that mentors will meet the vast majority of mentees' needs. The practice of giving small gifts, encouraged in TAHEA's programme in Tanzania, may have encouraged this; the FOCUS programme in Zimbabwe has limited distribution of material goods as a way of avoiding dependency and has also emphasised the role of volunteers in supporting the whole household rather than only specific orphans.

Sustainability

The orphan support programmes examined here were unusual across the sample in that they were the only programmes with regular provision of in-kind support. Some of this appears to have been externally financed, and some is dependent on contributions from mentors and/ or village funds. Two examples from Tanzania (Mhamba, 2004; Mwaipopo, 2005) indicate that, even where village funds are supposed to be used to support orphans and other vulnerable children, there is no guarantee this will take place; the many demands on village governments have tended to mean OVC are seen as a low priority, particularly where they are considered no poorer or more deserving of assistance than other children in the village. Although all of these projects represented commendable efforts to develop low-cost models for meeting children's basic needs, none of them was sustainable. This indicates the need either for much more effective economic strengthening programmes to be integrated into orphan support programmes, or for broader social protection programmes that would encompass support to poor households caring for orphans.

Social sensitivities

Lee et al. (2002) observe that FOCUS in Zimbabwe has been unable to effectively address issues of sexual abuse faced by orphans, reflecting social taboos on discussing issues of this kind, even though the children interviewed indicated that it was a widespread problem. Rather than expecting mentors to support mentees on all possible issues, it may be more effective to address problems of this kind through broader life skills education programmes as discussed in Section 8. However, with better training, mentors might be better able to negotiate the social sensitivities involved in discussing issues of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Child participation

Few of these programmes were designed in a participatory manner, although evaluations often used insights from talking with children to recommend changes. Only one of the accident prevention programmes – PRECISE in Bangladesh – worked with children as well as adults, which may help explain its significant impact. The programme that involved children in the most sustained way was the Save the Children programme of support to fostered children in Sierra Leone. Here, adolescents played an important role in disseminating knowledge of children's rights, bringing cases of abuse and exploitation to the attention of child welfare committees and attempting to resolve them themselves.

9.4 Conclusions: how important is economic strengthening to improved care of children?

As with papers examined in other sections, the design of the evaluations examined mean it is not possible to separate out the relative impacts of different parts of the intervention.

Economic strengthening activities are found in seven of the twenty interventions included in this section. These papers cover a disparate set of activities, meaning conclusions are somewhat tentative. In two of the programmes, economic strengthening activities are integrated into wider programmes supporting orphans (Roby and Shaw, 2008) or separated children (Abdullahi et al., 2002). Where these combine vocational skills

and some financial support for new businesses, these appear to have been moderately effective (Roby and Shaw, 2008); where they have not, they appear to have made little difference to the risks of abuse and exploitation adolescents and young people face, as graduates of vocational training programmes have not been able to afford to set themselves up in business (Abdullahi et al., 2002).

Only one of the papers – Valente’s (2010) analysis of the Juntos programme in Peru – evaluated the impact of provision of a cash transfer on the care children received. In this case, the transfer was conditional on mothers’ participation in periodic meetings on health care and family planning, and it appears it was the absence of mothers from their families that led to some men taking on more child care responsibilities. In that the mothers may not have attended these meetings without the incentive of the cash transfer, the role of the cash transfer was indirect.¹⁰⁶

The two papers that evaluated the impact of broader economic strengthening programmes on care of children either found none (Sparling and Gordan, 2011) or found mixed impacts (a reduction of care in households with one preschooler but increased parental time spent on care in households with more preschoolers) and are thus inconclusive.

Education and awareness raising is the most common mechanism to promote better care in the papers examined, and these papers show strong positive outcomes in terms of improving parenting and preventing accidents. The parenting and accident prevention education programmes were generally stand-alone activities and appear – like many of the education and awareness-raising programmes discussed in previous sections – to have a significant impact without being supported by other complementary activities.

The three programmes that provided day care for working parents – whether formally employed, as in Mexico and Guatemala, or busy with own account production, as in Bangladesh – also appear to have been effective in keeping children safe and enabling parents to work. The crèche programme in Bangladesh was evaluated separately from other components of a broader accident prevention programme, and so the specific and positive impact of this provision on young children’s risk of accidental injury and death is clear. As such, these programmes effectively serve a dual purpose of keeping children safe and contributing to economic strengthening through greater labour market or other productive activity.

As we found with the child protection strengthening programmes discussed in Section 8, some of the evaluations examined here indicated that high levels of poverty were undermining the intervention. Thus Mock et al. (2003), Odendaal et al. (2009) and Rahman et al. (2008b) all observe that, although knowledge levels among participants in accident prevention programmes increased as a result of the intervention, economic constraints were a significant barrier to their implementing some safety measures. For example, in the two South African studies (Odendaal et al., 2009; Swart et al., 2008), stove burns hazards could be reduced by only a limited extent as families could not afford electric cookers (that were off ground level and thus posed less danger to young children).

Three of the five evaluations of orphan support programmes highlighted how widespread poverty was affecting them. The majority of these programmes provided some material support (food, school supplies, housing repairs, mattresses, blankets) to households with orphans. However, the externally financed component of this support was often limited, and mentors were frequently attempting to support orphans from their own resources. This was often impossible, as they were often poor themselves (Lavin et al., 2010), and all the more difficult if they had a large caseload. While orphans appreciated the psychosocial support, they also flagged problems related to severe poverty as major issues in their lives. Only one of the orphan support programmes provided training and small grants or loans to orphans’ carers to help strengthen their livelihoods (Roby and Shaw, 2008).

Several papers (e.g. Lee et al., 2002; Mhamba, 2004) suggest greater efforts to support disadvantaged households to develop stronger and more sustainable livelihoods might increase the effectiveness of orphan support projects. However, any such programmes must be carefully designed to help newly established

¹⁰⁶ One other paper included in the database but ultimately excluded provides suggestive evidence of an unconditional cash transfer – South Africa’s Child Support Grant – increasing children’s access in preschool (Delany et al., 2008). This paper does not examine other outcomes associated with preschool attendance but, given generally strong evidence of positive impacts of preschool attendance on children’s developmental outcomes, this may be taken as indicative evidence of a cash transfer contributing to improved care.

business access wider markets, rather than adding to the pool of entrepreneurs trying to make a living in already crowded local markets (Lavin et al., 2010).

In summary, the evidence presented in this section suggests that, while substantial gains in improved care of children – and particularly of disadvantaged children – can be made through education programmes, deeper and more widespread improvements require addressing economic constraints. In some contexts, support for entrepreneurship has significant potential, so long as providers are experienced and take a strategic perspective concerning business opportunities. In others – both rural and urban – provision of high-quality, flexible and subsidised child care while parents/carers are working can both ensure young children are safe and enable adults to generate an income.

10 Conclusions

Box 6: Key points – conclusions

Integration of economic strengthening components across the programmes examined varies, from around a third for sexual and physical violence and better care interventions to 68% for early marriage prevention programmes.

Cash transfers have proved effective ‘stand-alone’ approaches to reducing early marriage. Skills training and microfinance programmes appear to have greatest impact on child protection outcomes when embedded in non-formal education and life skills programmes.

Both awareness-raising programmes for adults and education/life skills programmes for adolescents have resulted in notable changes in child protection outcomes. Empowerment-focused initiatives have generally been most successful when they have involved communication activities aimed at people who influence social norms (e.g. religious or community leaders) or make decisions about young people’s futures (e.g. parents and grandparents).

Small *ad hoc* transfers in orphan support programmes have had limited impacts. Such programmes also appear unsustainable as they have relied either on mentors, who are also poor, providing support from their own resources, or on external NGO funding. The larger transfers and skills training provided by one orphan support programme appeared more effective in enabling households to increase their capacity to support vulnerable children.

Child protection system strengthening activities rarely involve economic strengthening components. A lack of attention to high levels of poverty is frequently identified as a barrier to use of formal child protection systems. Further innovation is needed to adapt models developed in institutionally developed middle-income contexts to lower-income settings.

In this section we return to the two questions this review was designed to answer:

1. To what extent do child protection interventions have an anti-poverty focus?
2. What contribution do anti-poverty components make to improving the quality of child protection interventions?

We also discuss our findings related to a third question encapsulated in the realist synthesis approach:

3. Which groups of children have the interventions reviewed benefited most, and in what contexts? Which children have these interventions not worked for, and why?

Throughout this review, we have considered economic strengthening activities (e.g. cash transfers, vocational training, entrepreneurship support, microfinance) as a proxy for anti-poverty activities.

10.1 How far do child protection interventions have economic strengthening components?

As our companion review (Marcus, 2013) indicates, the extent to which economic deprivation underlies or exacerbates the risk of child protection violations varies considerably across the four themes we have considered, and across contexts. In brief, while economic deprivation is never the only factor underlying

child protection violations, it is often an important factor exacerbating the risk of early marriage, commercial and transactional sexual exploitation, involvement in gang or neighbourhood violence, children being left alone without adequate care while parents/carers are working and children's entry into institutional care.

The majority of evidence suggests poverty is not a particularly significant factor underlying corporal punishment and social norms condoning corporal punishment play bigger role, although in some contexts the risk of frequent and severe punishment is higher in poor households (UNICEF, 2010b). There is also no quantitative evidence to suggest sexual abuse of children occurs more frequently in lower-income households (Marcus, 2013). Thus we would expect both the extent of economic strengthening activities and their impact to vary between different types of child protection violation.

10.1.1 Extent to which child protection programmes involve an economic strengthening component

While 43% of programmes examined had economic strengthening components, the significance of these varies across our four thematic areas. Between 33% and 35%¹⁰⁷ of the sexual violence, physical violence and better care interventions involved economic strengthening activities; the proportion was 68% for early marriage programmes.¹⁰⁸ The most common mechanisms were life skills/non-formal education/awareness raising with children and young people, education/awareness raising among adults, facilitating access to services (particularly education, in part by cash transfers) and child protection system strengthening. There was also a cluster of support programmes for orphans involving mentoring.

As Table 7 (Section 5.2) indicates, economic strengthening is rarely the sole mechanism employed – only in one programme combating early marriage and one aimed at reducing sexual violence. It is the sole mechanism for three programmes that affect the quality or quantity of care young children receive, but in all of these the impact on children is a secondary benefit rather than the focus of the programme.

The majority of child protection programmes with an economic strengthening component involve multiple activities and have a reasonable degree of integration between them (typically children/young people who took part in economic strengthening components were also attending life skills or vocational skills classes).

10.1.2 Focus of interventions: micro or meso levels?

Most of the programmes examined involved direct activities with children and young people or their families, to prevent violation of protection rights or support children whose rights had been violated. Thus, most economic strengthening is implemented at the micro level: they aim to raise poor households' income directly (e.g. through cash transfers) or by strengthening young people's capacity to make a living. Likewise, most education, life skills or awareness-raising programmes involve direct activities at community level.

A total of 21% of programmes aim to strengthen child protection systems, but these are much less commonly linked with economic strengthening programmes. This may be because these child protection system strengthening activities generally involve less direct contact with children. Rather, they are building the capacity of professionals, and thus are less likely to address household economic deprivation. In a similar vein, other programmes that focus at the meso level, for example improving the quality of public services through teacher training, are less likely to also involve economic strengthening components.

10.1.3 Extent of linking between child protection programmes and other anti-poverty programmes

We found no programmes that formally linked participants or users to existing public social protection or other anti-poverty programmes. This probably reflects that, in most of the countries where the evaluated programmes took place, formal social protection systems are nascent – and are geographically limited or otherwise inaccessible (e.g. transfers too small to be worthwhile, bribes needed etc.). Also, a high proportion of the programmes we examined (ranging from 35% for better care interventions to 65% for physical violence interventions) were NGO programmes that operated in parallel with or in any areas not served by state programmes. These were often pilot or experimental programmes designed to test a particular approach.

¹⁰⁷ These percentages must be treated with caution as the number of programmes is small.

¹⁰⁸ This percentage would be higher still if programmes that provided financial support to enable girls to stay in school and thus delay marriage were classified as 'economic strengthening' programmes. Because the key factor appears to be that girls are in school, and thus are not perceived as marriageable, these programmes have been classified as 'enhancing access to education'.

This was particularly the case for vocational and life skills programmes, and for the majority of the programmes aiming to raise adults' awareness and change attitudes and behaviour. By contrast, the child protection strengthening interventions engaged much more directly with formal state structures.

It is not always clear from the evaluations examined how far NGO economic strengthening programmes are linked to state or private sector activities, and there is a diversity of approaches across the programmes examined. The three large-scale cash transfer programmes were government-run; small-scale cash transfers appear to have been administrated and provided by NGOs (with the exception of one very poorly funded local authority scheme in Tanzania). Most vocational skills training programmes were also NGO-run; those that were judged successful had typically developed strong linkages with private sector employers or brought in training from experienced entrepreneurs. That this sort of linkage is relatively rare suggests the impact of vocational and entrepreneurship training on reducing children's risk of protection violations could be strengthened through more systematic linkage with potential employers and established entrepreneurs.

10.2 How far do economic strengthening components improve the effectiveness of child protection interventions?

10.2.1 Data issues

Most evaluations of programmes with more than one component do not distinguish the effects of the different components, instead considering the overall impact of the programme. In most cases, there is no counterfactual evidence, and few interventions are designed with a control group, meaning the added value of economic strengthening components is hard to assess. It is perhaps surprising that so few of the qualitative analyses probed participants' views on which parts of programmes they had found most effective; doing so would help expand the evidence base on this issue.

With this caveat in mind, we now summarise findings concerning the role economic strengthening components play in the child protection programmes examined.

10.2.2 How far do economic strengthening programmes reduce risk of child protection violations?

Across the four themes, very few programmes (13%) provided cash transfers.¹⁰⁹ We found no examples of cash transfer programmes that contributed to reducing sexual or physical violence. While they may have the potential to do so, this has not been evaluated. We also found no quantified evidence of impacts on better care, although the evaluations examined indicated impacts qualitatively (e.g. Valente, 2010). However, some analysis considers the impact of cash transfers on early marriage. Thus, Baird et al. (2010a) found in Malawi that an average \$10/month cash transfer plus payment of school fees reduced early marriage rates by 40%; Duflo et al. (2006) in Kenya found provision of school uniforms (approximately \$6 in value) reduced early marriage by 12% for girls and 40% for boys. The World Bank's (2011) analysis of the Punjab School Stipend Programme projected a mean delay in age of marriage by 1.5 years based on the programme's effect on secondary school retention. Behrman et al. (2005) and Gulemetova-Swan (2009) also found delays in age of marriage among young people whose households received transfers under Oportunidades in Mexico.

A total of 20% of programmes – principally orphan support programmes and also one anti-early marriage programme – provide in-kind support. Berhane Hewan in Ethiopia provides school supplies to encourage young adolescent girls to stay in school or return to school and thus avoid marriage; TANESA in Tanzania has likewise provided schooling materials to orphans. Orphan support programmes in Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe all provide some cash or in-kind transfers to meet some of orphans' most pressing financial or material needs. Such programmes alleviate some of the most pressing consequences of poverty but are not economic strengthening programmes in the sense of increasing households' capacity to meet their economic needs.

Vocational and entrepreneurship skills are the single most common type of economic strengthening programme (38% of economic strengthening programmes involve a vocational/entrepreneurship training component). They are particularly common in programmes aiming to raise the age of marriage, reduce vulnerability to sexual exploitation and reduce children and young people's engagement in physical violence.

¹⁰⁹ This reflects that few of the many cash transfer programmes in existence monitor impacts on the child protection issues of concern to us, a conclusion echoed by Barrientos et al. (2013).

The most successful programmes, such as that of Save the Children in Northern Uganda (Singhal and Dura, 2008), have enabled young women to build up effective businesses, often in non-traditional activities, and reduced their engagement in transactional sex; CEDPA's entrepreneurship programme in India led to a significant reduction in early marriage. Other successful skills training programmes include ICT training in Brazil, Guatemala and Jamaica that has increased young people's opportunities of finding lucrative employment and/or self-employment (e.g. Bailey and Ngwenyama, 2010; Frix et al., 2009). They were least successful where training was too short, where it was not properly linked to local labour market opportunities, where it saturated the market or where training was provided by organisations lacking sufficient expertise in vocational skills and entrepreneurship development. In just over a quarter of programmes, it was not possible to draw firm conclusions about the effectiveness of skills training programmes, as they were evaluated too soon after the end of the project or impacts were not adequately reported.

These programmes are almost exclusively aimed at adolescents and young people: despite the fact that it is often household poverty that leads children and young people into coping strategies where they are at increased risk of exploitation and abuse, only four programmes explicitly aim to strengthen parents or carers' livelihoods. (Two of these are anti-trafficking programmes and one an orphan support programme.)¹¹⁰ While there are good reasons for a partial focus on young people – particularly since many of the most vulnerable are not living with their families – a more equal balance between activities aimed at strengthening household livelihoods and supporting young people to acquire skills might be an effective way of reducing some of the economic pressures that lead to child protection violations.

A total of 22% of the economic strengthening programmes included a **microfinance** component, and of those that did so savings were considerably more popular than loans among adolescents; there is some evidence of young people using them or intending to use them to finance staying in education (e.g. Erulkar et al., 2006; Ssewamala et al. 2010) (a protective factor for both early marriage and sexual violence). While some girls participating in BRAC's Adolescent Development Programme in Bangladesh were able to use micro loans to fund small businesses that enabled them to stay in education and delay marriage, the majority feared that developing small businesses might jeopardise their studies. In other programmes, such as TAP in Kenya, only the oldest adolescents were able to manage loans successfully. There is thus limited indication from these studies of microfinance playing a strong role in helping protect children and young people from abuse, exploitation or neglect, and, within microfinance, savings appear to have been more highly valued.

One other economic strengthening programme that deserves mention here is an experimental programme in India **that provided young women with information about employment opportunities in office-based work** for which completed secondary education was required. This led to a 5-6 percentage point reduction in marriage among 15-21 year olds (Jensen, 2012) and is consistent with evidence from Bangladesh concerning changing social norms about female education and desired age of marriage in contexts where employment opportunities for educated young women are expanded.

Programmes providing safe child care are not generally classed as economic strengthening programmes, but have a direct effect on households' capacity to generate income. Thus, both Mexico's *estancias* and Guatemala's *hogares comunitarios* have helped low-income households obtain paid work (Pereznieta and Campos, 2010; Ruel et al., 2002). In the case of the *hogares*, there is evidence they have helped low-income mothers obtain or stay in higher-paying formal sector work with better conditions; single parents (mostly mothers) who lack other child care support have particularly benefited. Given other positive effects (keeping children safe, increasing their cognitive development opportunities), the (albeit limited) evidence reviewed in this programme suggests day care programmes should be given greater attention as combined economic strengthening, child protection and educational interventions. Good training and adequate remuneration of staff is, however, critical to ensure risks related to poor supervision, lack of attention or any form of violence do not arise.

¹¹⁰ The other – SUUBI – provided information on financial management to parents of young people as part of a programme intended to reduce sexual risk taking through provision of assets.

10.2.3 Are integrated interventions more effective than single-mechanism interventions?

Based on the limited evidence reviewed here, it is difficult to draw clear conclusions on this issue. As noted above, very few evaluations disaggregate the impact of different components. Two tendencies seem to be apparent.

On the one hand, a number of evaluations point out the extreme social (as well as economic) vulnerability of many children and young people at risk of sexual and physical abuse and early marriage. As the evaluations of programmes with young people at risk of involvement in gang or neighbourhood violence (e.g. Bailey and Ngwenyama, Frix et al., 2009; 2010; Winton, 2004) or of sexual exploitation (Erulkar et al., 2006) show, that these programmes offer a safe space to meet, and a source of social support from peers or adult mentors, is often one of their most critical contributions. By giving troubled young people social acceptance and visions of an alternative to their immediate reality, these programmes lay the foundation on which young people can then lay vocational skills and life skills, find employment and become more socially integrated. As Erulkar et al. (2006) found, only the oldest, least vulnerable of the girls they worked with in Nairobi were able to make use of microfinance: the others needed substantial social support and basic skills before they could do so.

Some of the apparently most effective community-based programmes (e.g. DISHA in India on early marriage, UYDEL in Uganda on sexual and physical abuse) have had multiple components, and have helped address economic constraints, raised awareness among adults and young people, and – in UYDEL’s case – also strengthened the child protection system so police engage with children and adolescents more sensitively. Some analysts, such as Malhotra et al. (2011), argue that comprehensive community-based programmes of this kind have been most effective in reducing early marriage.

On the other hand, some single mechanism interventions have had a major effect in terms of reducing child marriage, risk of sexual exploitation and children’s vulnerability to physical violence and inadequate care. The areas where single-mechanism interventions seem most effective is in increasing access to services (either education or day care) and information and life skills programmes. The programmes reviewed primarily increased access to education through removal of cost barriers (e.g. Zomba cash transfers in Malawi, the Punjab Female Stipend, ICS Kenya). As such, they could be considered economic strengthening programmes. However, it seems from the early marriage interventions that it is principally because these programmes keep girls in (or help them return to) school and thus helps them be perceived as too young for marriage that they contribute to reduced early marriage rates. Interestingly, however, unconditional cash transfers (i.e. those without any linkage to education) were much more effective in reducing rates of early marriage and childbearing among older out-of-school girls in Malawi than were conditional cash transfers, indicating the importance of differentiating strategies for different groups of children and young people. At the other end of the age range considered here, the three programmes we examined that provided day care for young children reduced their risk of being left alone or in the care of siblings and of accidents. They also contributed to reducing poverty by enabling parents to work knowing young children were cared for.

The more comprehensive programmes reviewed were generally NGO-run community-based programmes on a relatively small scale (exceptions include large-scale programmes in India and Bangladesh run by NGOs). Some, such as PRACHAR in India, are exploring ways in which the complexity of their programmes could be reduced in order to facilitate scale-up (Daniel et al., 2008). In summary, it appears that, while cash transfers alone can be effective at reducing early marriage rates, skills training tends to have a greater impact when embedded within education and awareness-raising programmes.

10.2.4 Effectiveness of other types of programmes

Many education and life skills programmes appear to be effective in changing attitudes and behaviour without additional components that address poverty or other structural stresses in both adults’ and children’s lives. This reflects that most behaviour that can lead to violations of children’s protection rights is motivated by a range of factors, such as knowledge and social norms, even in the absence of economic stress. Thus, some parenting programmes and accident prevention programmes have led to significant reductions in physical violence against children and exposure of children to risk of injury, purely through education (e.g. Fayyad et al, 2010.; Odendaal et al., 2009; Rahman et al., 2008b; Rehmani and LeBlanc, 2010; Wint and Brown, 1988). Similarly, some education or life skills programmes have led to notable changes in young

people's attitudes and behaviour and ability to protect themselves from abuse (e.g. IOM, 2011; Russon, 2000; UNICEF, 2009).

Evaluations of child protection system strengthening initiatives typically record mixed results. There are some positive examples of increasing police capacity to respond sensitively to abused children, and of enhanced levels of activity among community-level child protection committees, which have led to more action when cases of sexual or physical abuse or planned child marriages occur. Our analysis of the evaluations indicates that child protection system strengthening initiatives have been most effective in relation to sexual violence, particularly incest and rape of young children by strangers, where there is clear consensus across communities and state structures that these are criminal acts of abuse (e.g. Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, 2011; War Child, 2010). Where norms are starting to change, whether as a result of awareness raising campaigns or more organic processes of social change, it also appears that planned child marriages are seen as illegal and undesirable and local child protection structures have been able to intervene.

Where local social norms are at odds with those embodied by child protection system, system strengthening initiatives appear to have been less successful in promoting better protection of children. Thus, for example, cases of sexual assault or exploitation of older girls are often resolved through arranging the girls' marriage through informal social institutions outside state justice or mediation structures, regardless of whether this accords with the girls' wishes (Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, 2011; Kashaija, 2011). Physical violence against children is often not seen as abuse unless it is exceptionally severe by local standards, thus the programmes examined rarely report impacts of child protection system strengthening initiatives here.

10.2.5 Empowerment

Across the four themes, empowerment was articulated as an objective most clearly in the programmes focusing on early marriage and on sexual exploitation. Typically, these programmes aimed to empower girls to participate in decision making about the timing of their marriages, by equipping them, and often their families and wider community, with knowledge of the legal age of marriage and the health consequences of early marriage and childbearing. Programmes aiming to empower girls to avoid sexually exploitative relationships provided information on health-related risks and the law concerning sexual violence. Some also trained participants in negotiation skills.

As discussed in Sections 7 and 8, these programmes commonly integrate economic strengthening components. Where successful, these have the potential to contribute to girls' empowerment by reducing their dependence on sexually exploitative relationships. They may also help increase girls' bargaining power within their families.

Our analysis suggests mixed impacts of empowerment programmes. With respect to early marriage, only in about half the awareness-raising and life skills programmes where girls' capacity to influence decision making about their marriages was analysed did girls feel empowered to challenge decisions or to have an equal voice in decisions about their marriages. How successful these programmes were in increasing girls' influence over marriage decision making depended largely on how effectively programmes had engaged with other key decision makers in the community: parents, adult or adolescent brothers, grandparents and religious leaders. In relation to sexually exploitative relationships, it appears from the evaluations of programmes that included both economic strengthening and awareness-raising or life skills components that enhancing knowledge and life skills has played a greater role than economic strengthening activities (Bandiera et al., 2012; Erulkar et al., 2006). This said, good-quality economic strengthening programmes can also reduce sexual exploitation through economic empowerment (e.g. Baird et al., 2010b; Singhal and Dura, 2008; Ssewamala et al., 2010).

Both non-formal or life skills education and economic strengthening programmes also appear to have contributed to empowerment among young people at risk of involvement in physical violence. In these programmes, the young people concerned often conceptualised empowerment in terms of social integration – being able to obtain a job or successfully run a business – and in terms of a sense of having a future other than unemployment and likely early death.

Finally, some evaluations indicated that participants found awareness raising or education classes for adults (e.g. in child development, or alternatives to corporal punishment) empowering in that they provided participants with new skills and ways of addressing problems in their lives (e.g. Al-Hassan, 2009; Fayyad et al., 2010; Jones and Brown, 2008; Wint and Brown, 1988). None of these programmes involved economic strengthening components; as with life skills programmes for adolescents, their empowering effects were achieved through education.

10.2.6 When do poverty-related drivers undermine child protection interventions?

At the outset, the strategy this review adopted was to examine both child protection interventions with economic strengthening components and those without that met our criteria of relevance and clarity concerning methodological approach. This proved a valuable approach as it meant papers that critically appraised the absence of economic strengthening components were included.

Child protection system strengthening interventions were the group of programmes where household poverty was most often recognised as an ongoing barrier to effectiveness. For example, War Child (2010) stresses how the desperate poverty of many children and young people in DRC drives them to adopt coping strategies that put them at greater risk of sexual exploitation and abuse, and of physical violence. CARE International (2006), Columbia Group for Children in Adversity (2011), Kashaaja (2011) and Witter et al. (2004) all point out how financial obstacles continue to undermine poor families' access to the formal child protection system – and to justice, since they frequently cannot afford transport to police stations to report child abuse-related crimes (particularly sexual violence or severe physical abuse), fees for medical examinations or court fees.¹¹¹

These evaluations also highlight the impact of under-resourcing in the formal child protection system, which leaves police and social workers unable to travel to investigate cases (Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, 2011; Witter et al., 2004). It also creates an environment in which corruption can flourish and thus – in the small proportion of child abuse cases that come to court – perpetrators can escape justice (Kashaaja, 2011). This in turn reduces public confidence in the formal child protection system and increases the likelihood of child abuse cases being settled through traditional resolution mechanisms. While traditional resolution mechanisms have cultural resonance, one danger is that the interests of children may be sidelined, as for example when sexually abused girls are forced to marry their abuser.

Evaluations of community-based mentoring programmes for OVC also frequently raised concerns about programmes' inability to meet the pressing material needs of the children they were supporting, such as school expenses, clothes or food. Where children and young people identified financial support as their most pressing priority, mentors felt they were failing; in an evaluation of a mentoring programme in Rwanda, Lavin et al. (2010) found that over half the mentors were food-insecure themselves, and, though many tried to support their mentees financially when they could, they were too stretched to do so.

The other main group of interventions where poverty was frequently mentioned as a factor undermining activities was in accident prevention programmes. Although all the programmes examined led to increased knowledge of accident prevention, or reduced rates of accidental injury, economic constraints emerged as a major factor explaining why rates of uptake had not been higher (e.g. Mock et al., 2003; Odendaal et al., 2009; Rahman et al., 2008b).

These concerns raise the question of whether and how system strengthening initiatives can best engage with poverty-related drivers of child protection violations.

As noted above, none of the 83 papers included in this review examined programmes that integrate the formal child protection system and financial assistance, even where they come under the auspices of the same government department at local level. A few such programmes do exist in middle-income countries – mostly in Latin America – and are outlined in Barrientos et al. (2013). It may also be that, because building synergies between (financial) social protection and child protection systems is a relatively new concern in

¹¹¹ Some of the evaluations also highlight other barriers to use of formal child protection systems, most importantly a disconnect between the values that are seen to be embodied by these systems and local values and structures that undermine or are seen as duplicative of pre-existing structures for resolving child protection issues (Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, 2011; War Child, 2010).

international development, examples of greater integration exist but have not been evaluated and thus have not been picked up in a review that included only programmes with some evidence of impact.

Where there is little likelihood of social protection systems being extended in the short to medium term, what is the best way to reduce economic drivers of child marriage, exploitation, abuse and neglect? How much formal integration between economic strengthening and child protection programmes is necessary?

From the evidence in this review, we can partially answer the first question. Cash transfers have proven effective in keeping girls in school, and thus reducing the risk of early marriage. In that there is some evidence (e.g. Baird et al., 2010) that girls in receipt of cash transfers or uniform subsidies are less likely to engage in sexual activity, this is likely to mean they are at less risk of sexual exploitation (e.g. transactional sex) or abuse from peers or adults. However, the evidence presented in the papers examined does not disaggregate between coerced and consensual sexual activity. Vocational training, though its record is mixed, can play a very important role in reducing vulnerable children and young people's risk of sexual exploitation, early marriage and involvement in violence. Although we have evidence from only one programme that facilitated access to employment (Jensen, 2012), taken together with evidence from Bangladesh (such as Amin, 1998) there is a growing case that expanding young women's employment opportunities can play an important role in reducing early marriage.

More broadly, and moving up from the level of programmes to policies, stimulating employment clearly has a critical role to play in reducing economic drivers of child protection violations. To prevent this leading to young children being left with inadequate care, increased formal day care provision may be necessary. These actions would complement more focused action aiming to eradicate child protection violations through behaviour change and through strengthening protective structures.

The evidence examined in this review does not allow us to answer the second question. We can surmise that the impact of economic strengthening programmes on child protection outcomes is likely to be greater if people with a child protection mandate are informed about anti-poverty programmes existing in the locality, and if referral systems between anti-poverty activities and child protection systems are strengthened.¹¹² We are not aware of any research that has tested this proposition.

10.3 Which groups of children benefit most from the interventions reviewed?

The majority of economic strengthening activities aiming to reduce early marriage and sexual exploitation focus on adolescent girls. It is clear that loan programmes are most effective for older girls, who are best placed to make use of them and have greater business experience. Savings activities were valued by younger participants too, with qualitative evidence suggesting that young people viewed savings as enabling them either to stay in school or to avoid sexually exploitative relationships (e.g. Erulkar et al., 2006; Ssewamala et al, 2010). The impacts of vocational training programmes were generally not disaggregated by age, but it is likely that older adolescents are best placed to make use of them, and thus that they are most likely to help provide an alternative to sexually exploitative relationships or to early marriage for older adolescents. Where economic strengthening activities were targeted only at girls (or certain groups, e.g. refugees, former child soldiers), this led to some resentment among other young people who were often equally poor and had no access to programmes of this kind, indicating the importance of more inclusive services.

Programmes aiming to reducing young people's involvement in or vulnerability to physical violence disproportionately benefited boys. In one case, this was because only adolescent boys were eligible, but more often it reflected a perception that these programmes were intended for boys and young men. In one case, even where the programme made strenuous efforts to promote gender sensitivity in vocational training curricula and in the operation of the programme, girls and young women still perceived the programmes as intended principally for boys.

Turning to other types of programmes, systematic social differentiation in impact appears to be a consequence of programme or evaluation design, rather than being intrinsic to particular types of

¹¹² Our electronic survey of 258 respondents indicated that lack of knowledge on the part of both child protection and poverty reduction professionals of the others' fields was perceived to be a key barrier to greater integration.

programmes. Thus, for example, if programmes targeted girls only, stronger impacts on girls would be expected; likewise, programmes focused on changing parents' views of the appropriate age of marriage for girls often report impacts on girls only. There appears to be little gender differentiation in the impact of orphan support programmes or subsidised day care on children. It is likely that the child protection system strengthening initiatives examined had a greater impact on girls, since the most positive impacts were recorded in relation to sexual violence and early marriage. The papers on parental awareness raising to reduce physical punishment or promote better care do not report impacts on children by gender. In that boys are at greater risk of severe physical punishment (see summary of evidence in Marcus, 2013), it is possible that they benefit disproportionately from such programmes, but the evaluations examined do not provide evidence to confirm or refute this.

Adolescent-focused life skills and education programmes are typically targeted at teenagers. Few evaluations discussed any differentiation in how far young people were able to practise the life skills they had learnt. One evaluation from Palestine, however, noted that younger participants had sometimes misunderstood messages (Silver and Weeks, 2003). As noted above, how far girls are able to use the information and life skills they have learnt to negotiate age of marriage depends on a number of factors, including the strength of traditional social norms within their households.

10.4 Evidence gaps

The adapted SR methodology used in this study worked well in generating a considerable volume of reliable insights from diverse contexts on the effectiveness of different approaches to protecting children from early marriage, sexual abuse and exploitation, physical violence and some forms of inadequate care. In this section, we summarise the main gaps in the materials reviewed.

- **Trafficking.** We found very few evaluations of anti-child trafficking programmes that had a clearly described methodology or evidence of outcomes. Although our searches returned a number of overview documents, few of these referred in sufficient detail to the studies on which they were based for us to be able to include them.
- **Sexual exploitation of boys.** We found very little evidence of the effectiveness of programmes in addressing the sexual exploitation of boys, largely because most programmes focus on and measure impacts on girls only. Conclusions concerning effective approaches to reducing the sexual exploitation of girls may not necessarily be directly transferable to boys, as patterns of sexual exploitation differ by gender and cultural context.
- **The impact of large-scale cash transfer programmes on child protection outcomes.** Only three evaluations measured impacts on early marriage rates; one qualitative evaluation examined impacts on the quality of care received by young children. Obtaining such evidence could, however, be achieved relatively easily, in some cases through analysis of existing datasets, in others through addition of child protection measures into evaluation designs.
- **Integrated social protection and child protection programmes.** Because of our review criteria of clear evidence of outcomes and English language papers, we found no papers discussing integration between social protection and child protection programmes. In Latin America, there is increasing integration between social and child protection programmes (as in Brazil, Chile and Argentina) (Barrientos et al., 2013), and there may well be lessons applicable to poorer and less institutionally developed contexts. One such example is the integration of social welfare and benefits system in Moldova (EveryChild, 2011b).
- **Preventing institutionalisation.** Our searches found very few papers discussing programmes aiming to prevent the institutionalisation of children. None of those found met MMAT standards of methodological clarity, and so none was included in the review.
- **Relative effectiveness of individual elements of multi-component programmes.** While some multi-component programmes are starting to address this issue in evaluations, evidence remains weak.
- **Streamlining integrated programmes to facilitate going to scale.** There is some experimentation with streamlining programmes to focus on the most effective elements, but little evidence concerning the relative gains and losses from such streamlining.

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- **Long-term sustainability of impacts.** Very few of the programmes examined analysed the long-term impacts of different approaches, often because the programmes concerned had not been in operation for more than a few years, or because the evaluations were conducted relatively soon after the end of a project. It is therefore not clear whether there are differences in long-term impacts of different approaches. In particular, it would be instructive to examine whether there are differences in the long-term impacts on child protection outcomes of awareness-raising/life skills programmes compared with economic strengthening programmes.
 - **Political economy of successful scaling-up.** While most of the programmes examined were small-scale initiatives in a few communities or districts, six programmes were either national in scope or reached over 100,000 people. Further examination of what factors have facilitated these programmes going to scale would be instructive. All the large-scale programmes had broader goals, such as increasing adolescent girls' school attendance, reducing poverty or promoting reproductive health. Two NGO programmes were explicitly designed to promote improved child protection outcomes. It may be that embedding child protection activities in broader programmes is more effective in reaching large numbers than are programmes specifically focused on child protection goals. However, the sample of programmes examined is too small to draw firm conclusions on this issue.

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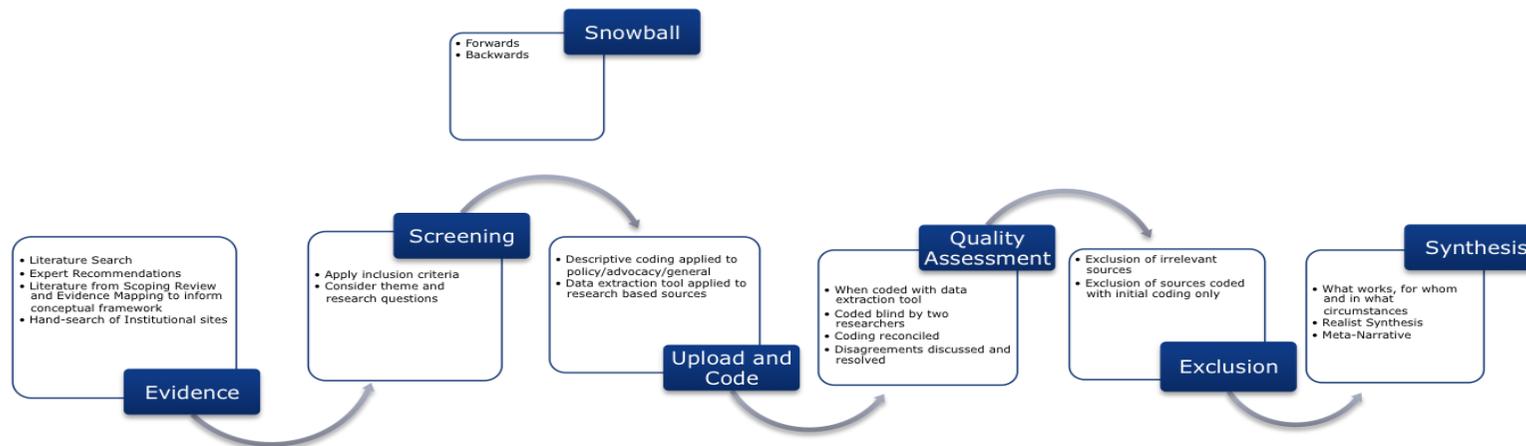
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Annex

Annex 1: Systematic review progress diagram

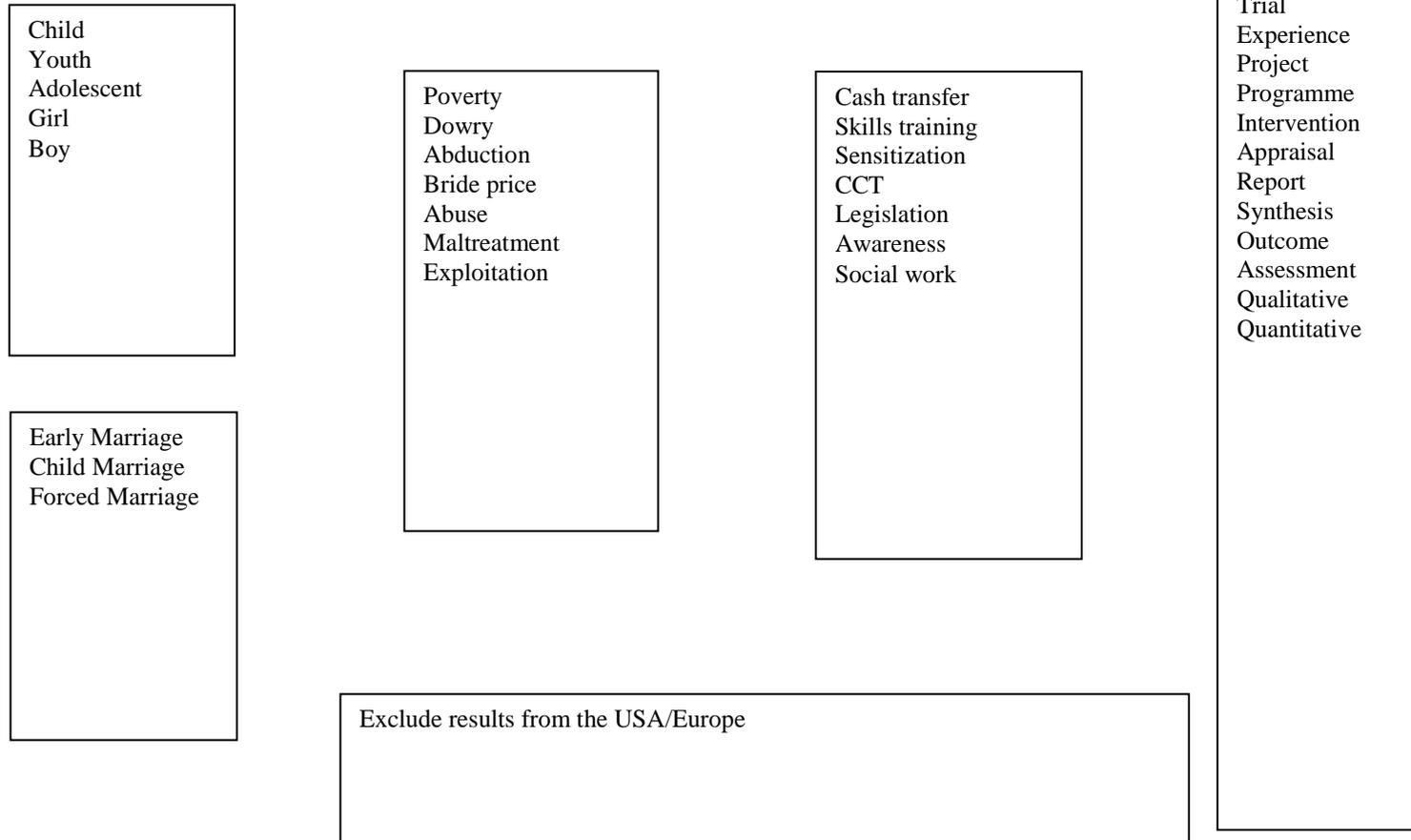


Annex 2: List of institutional website hand searched

UNHCR
WHO
UNODC
UNFPA
UNICEF
UNICEF – Americas and Caribbean Regional Office
UNICEF – East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office
UNICEF – Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
UNICEF – South East Asia Regional Office
UNICEF – South Asia Regional Office
UNICEF Evaluation Database
UN Women
UNDP
Innocenti
ASEAN
OAS
CARICOM
World Bank – social development/early childhood development
OECD Development Centre
IADB
IOM
ICRW
Population Council
CARE International
CARE International Evaluation Database
Plan International
Plan UK
World Vision
FORWARD
ICRC
IRC
Sexual Violence Research Initiative
Save the Children UK
Save the Children Child Protection Resource Centre
ECPAT
International Alert
Poverty Action Lab
BRAC
Safer World
Young Lives
Eldis
CRIN
Better Care Network
ISPCAN
Human Security Gateway
Childwatch
Child Migration Network
African Child Information Hub

Annex 3: Keyword clouds

Child marriage



Sexual violence

Child
Youth
Adolescent
Girl
Boy

Sexual Exploitation
Sexual Abuse

Transaction Sex
Sexual Abuse
Commercial Sex
Trafficking
Ritual/Ritualized Abuse
Street Children
Abuse in institutions
Ritual/Ritualized exploitation

Cash transfer
Skills training
Sensitization
CCT
Legislation
Awareness
Social work
Rescue
Care
Psychosocial care
Protection

Exclude results from the USA/Europe

Evidence
Impact
Trial
Experience
Project
Programme
Intervention
Appraisal
Report
Synthesis
Outcome
Assessment
Qualitative
Quantitative

Physical violence

Child
Youth
Adolescent
Girl
Boy

School
Home
Community
Conflict
Post- conflict

Physical punishment
Workplace violence
Violence at school
Violence on the way to school
Honour Killings
Infanticide
Foeticide
Gangs
Community Violence
Conflict
Child Soldier

Exclude results from the USA/Europe

Cash transfer
Skills training
Sensitization
CCT
Legislation
Awareness
Social work
Rescue
Care
Psychosocial care
Protection
DDR
Adjustment

Evidence
Impact
Trial
Experience
Project
Programme
Intervention
Appraisal
Report
Synthesis
Outcome
Assessment
Qualitative
Quantitative

Inadequate care

Child
Youth
Adolescent
Girl
Boy

Health/medical care
Safety

Caregivers
Inadequate care
Inadequate supervision
Child Headed Household
Neglect
Parental work
Migration
Orphans
Absorption of Orphans into
other households
Institutional Care
Care
Maltreatment
Sibling care

Cash transfer
Skills training
Sensitization
CCT
Legislation
Awareness
Social work
Rescue
Care
Psychosocial care
Protection

Evidence
Impact
Trial
Experience
Project
Programme
Intervention
Appraisal
Report
Synthesis
Outcome
Assessment
Qualitative
Quantitative

Exclude results from the USA/Europe

Additional search

Nicola Jones
Maxine Molyneux
Paola Pereznieto

Children/child
Mother
Adolescent

Child Migration
Violence
Physical violence
transactional sex”
AIDS/HIV
Vulnerability
Sexual violence
Commercial sexual
exploitation
Early marriage
Child Marriage
Prostitution
Inadequate care
Transactional sex
“alternatives to
institutional care
Child abuse
Child neglect

Life skills training
Microfinance
Cash transfer
Preschool
Kindergarten
Juntos
Economic
Social protection
Poverty
Anti-Poverty
Child protection

Impact
Evaluation
Programme
Intervention
Response
Prevention
Statistical analysis
Economic
analysis
Data set
Empirical
Quantitative
SPSS
Strata
Support
Networks

Annex 4: MMAT tool

PART I. MMAT criteria & one-page template (to be included in appraisal forms)

Types of mixed methods study components or primary studies	Methodological quality criteria (see tutorial for definitions and examples)	Responses			
		Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there clear qualitative and quantitative research questions (or objectives*), or a clear mixed methods question (or objective*)? Do the collected data allow address the research question (objective)? E.g., consider whether the follow-up period is long enough for the outcome to occur (for longitudinal studies or study components). 				
	<i>Further appraisal may be not feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.</i>				
1. Qualitative	1.1. Are the sources of qualitative data (archives, documents, informants, observations) relevant to address the research question (objective)?				
	1.2. Is the process for analyzing qualitative data relevant to address the research question (objective)?				
	1.3. Is appropriate consideration given to how findings relate to the context, e.g., the setting, in which the data were collected?				
	1.4. Is appropriate consideration given to how findings relate to researchers' influence, e.g., through their interactions with participants?				
2. Quantitative randomized controlled (trials)	2.1. Is there a clear description of the randomization (or an appropriate sequence generation)?				
	2.2. Is there a clear description of the allocation concealment (or blinding when applicable)?				
	2.3. Are there complete outcome data (80% or above)?				
	2.4. Is there low withdrawal/drop-out (below 20%)?				
3. Quantitative non-randomized	3.1. Are participants (organizations) recruited in a way that minimizes selection bias?				
	3.2. Are measurements appropriate (clear origin, or validity known, or standard instrument; and absence of contamination between groups when appropriate) regarding the exposure/intervention and outcomes?				
	3.3. In the groups being compared (exposed vs. non-exposed; with intervention vs. without; cases vs. controls), are the participants comparable, or do researchers take into account (control for) the difference between these groups?				
	3.4. Are there complete outcome data (80% or above), and, when applicable, an acceptable response rate (60% or above), or an acceptable follow-up rate for cohort studies (depending on the duration of follow-up)?				
4. Quantitative descriptive	4.1. Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the quantitative research question (quantitative aspect of the mixed methods question)?				
	4.2. Is the sample representative of the population under study?				
	4.3. Are measurements appropriate (clear origin, or validity known, or standard instrument)?				
	4.4. Is there an acceptable response rate (60% or above)?				
5. Mixed methods	5.1. Is the mixed methods research design relevant to address the qualitative and quantitative research questions (or objectives), or the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the mixed methods question (or objective)?				
	5.2. Is the integration of qualitative and quantitative data (or results*) relevant to address the research question (objective)?				
	5.3. Is appropriate consideration given to the limitations associated with this integration, e.g., the divergence of qualitative and quantitative data (or results*) in a triangulation design?				
<i>Criteria for the qualitative component (1.1 to 1.4), and appropriate criteria for the quantitative component (2.1 to 2.4, or 3.1 to 3.4, or 4.1 to 4.4), must be also applied.</i>					

*These two items are not considered as double-barreled items since in mixed methods research, (1) there may be research questions (quantitative research) or research objectives (qualitative research), and (2) data may be integrated, and/or qualitative findings and quantitative results can be integrated.

Annex 5: Definitions

General terms	
Poverty	We recognise a multidimensional conceptualisation of poverty. However, in this paper we focus on the economic deprivation aspects of poverty.
Child maltreatment	Generally used to mean physical (sometimes emotional) and sexual abuse and neglect (proxying for inadequate care but not exactly the same thing). We can expand definition to include early marriage.
Child abuse	All forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (WHO and ISPCAN, 2006).
Child	Persons under 18 as per UNCRC definition, but recognising that programmes often include young adults, so in practice we look at interventions focused at children and youth.
Child protection	Programmes aiming to protect children from abuse, exploitation or inadequate care/neglect. May be preventative, or responses to abuse, or both, and we need to examine all three types.
Community	A group of interacting people, living in some proximity (i.e. in space, time, or relationship). Community usually refers to a social unit larger than a household that shares common values and has social cohesion.
Thematic terms	
Child marriage	Marriage before 18 years
Sexual violence (abuse, exploitation and harassment)	Sexual abuse is use of a child for adult sexual gratification; sexual exploitation is abuse involving financial gain for child or perpetrator. Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/whatish.pdf , accessed 23 September 2013).
Violence against children	Corporal punishment at home or school; homicide, infanticide, foeticide.
Inadequate care	Care that doesn't meet children's basic developmental needs (nutritional, health, emotional, safety).
Poverty reduction measures	Measures that improve the economic security of children/their households (i.e. cash transfers, skills training, agricultural support, minimum wages etc.). Other types of interventions will be covered separately.
Effective(ness)	More likely to achieve their goals of preventing child maltreatment (either from occurring initially or from re-occurring).
Groups of children	
Orphans	Any child who has lost one parent is an orphan. In this approach, a <i>maternal orphan</i> is a child whose mother has died; a <i>paternal orphan</i> is a child whose father has died; and a <i>double orphan</i> has lost both parents (http://www.unicef.org/media/media_45279.html , accessed 15 April 2013).
Disabled children	Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others ((Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).
Ethnic minorities	Code as this when explicitly mentioned in the article.
Girls	Female children.
Boys	Male children.
Young children	Children up to the age of 8.
Older children	Children aged 9-14.
Youth	Children aged 15+.
Adolescents	Children aged 10-17.
Poor children	Children defined as poor in the study being considered.
Non-wanted children	Code as this where explicitly mentioned in the article.
Street children	UNICEF defines the concept as boys and girls aged under 18 for whom 'the street' (including unoccupied dwellings and wasteland) has become home and/or their source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected or supervised.
Child soldiers	UNICEF defines a 'child soldier' as any child – boy or girl – under 18 years of age, who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including, but not limited to, cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups other than family members. It includes girls and boys recruited for forced sexual purposes and/or forced marriage. The definition, therefore, does not only refer to a child who is carrying, or has carried, weapons (www.unicef.org/emerg/files/Cape_Town_Principles(1).pdf accessed 15 April 2013).

Children without care	Children without an adult caregiver. Including unaccompanied and abandoned children
Early childbearing	Child bearing before 18 years of age
Types of abuse	
Sexual abuse	Engaging in sexual activities with a child where use is made of coercion, force or threats; abuse is made of a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the child, including within the family; or abuse is made of a particularly vulnerable situation of the child, notably because of a mental or physical disability or a situation of dependence. This definition is not intended to cover consensual sexual activities between children under 18 (Frederick, 2010). An alternative, simpler, definition is using a child for the sexual gratification of an adult (Krug et al., 2002).
Commercial sex	'The exchange of money or goods for sexual services, either regularly or occasionally, involving female, male, and transgender adults, young people and children where the sex worker may or may not consciously define such activity as income-generating' (UNAIDS, 2002). Encompasses transaction sex.
Child trafficking	Any person under 18 who is recruited, transported, transferred, harboured or received for the purpose of exploitation, either within or outside a country, is said to have been trafficked (UNICEF, 2006).
Corporal/physical punishment (home)	Punishment of a physical nature within families. This includes hitting the child with the hand or with an object (such as a cane, belt, whip, shoe etc.); kicking, shaking or throwing the child; pinching or pulling their hair; forcing a child to stay in uncomfortable or undignified positions, or to take excessive physical exercise; and burning or scarring the child.
Corporal punishment (school)	Punishment of a physical nature, within schools. This includes hitting the child with the hand or with an object (such as a cane, belt, whip, shoe, etc); kicking, shaking, or throwing the child, pinching or pulling their hair; forcing a child to stay in uncomfortable or undignified positions, or to take excessive physical exercise; and burning or scarring the child.
Community violence	This comprises youth violence, assaults by strangers, violence related to property crimes and violence in workplaces and other institutions (UNICEF, 2006).
Gangs	Code as gangs where the paper discusses gang membership – the definition is controversial, a consensus definition of a street gang 'any durable, street-orientated youth group whose identity includes involvement in illegal activity' (SAS, 2010). Most papers use working definitions that are context-based.
Honour killing	Also described as killings in the name of honour, crimes of tradition or crimes of honour. Honour crimes are acts of violence, usually murder, committed by male family members against female family members who are perceived to have brought dishonour on the family (HRW, 2001).
Foeticide	The act of killing a foetus.
Infanticide	Family members control whether a child survives, either through killing or through neglect that leads to death (OHCHR et al., 2011).
Forced marriage	A marriage where one or both people do not (or in the case of some people with learning or physical disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used (www.gov.uk/forced-marriage accessed 15 April 2013).
Related terms	
Sexual exploitation	Usually defined legally as the use of children in prostitution or pornography (Frederick, 2010), the solicitation of children for sexual purposes or compelling children to watch sexual acts without being forced to participate. In practice, it is often extended to mean abuse of children that involves financial gain, for either the child or the perpetrator.
Sexual violence	Sexual violence is any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone's will. Sexual violence encompasses a range of offenses, including a completed non-consensual sex act (i.e. rape), attempted non-consensual sex acts, abusive sexual contact (i.e. unwanted touching) and non-contact sexual abuse (e.g. threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment) (UNICEF, 2011).
Child neglect	Failure of a parent or a caregiver in a parenting role to provide adequate supervision, safety, medical care, education or other necessities to the child (Stith et al., 2009).
Family violence	This comprises child maltreatment, intimate partner violence and elder abuse (Krug et al., 2002).
Collective violence	Violence committed by large groups of people, typically in the context of armed conflict or genocide (Krug et al., 2002). All forms of violence against children living under the care of the state including children living in institutions and children in detention and penal facilities.
Economic exploitation	The use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour.
Interventions	
Sensitisation	Providing information and working with people to help them accept a new viewpoint/practice, often one which challenges their previous way of seeing/doing things.
Social mobilisation	Similar to sensitisation but with the connotation of organising/stimulating a movement of people in favour of change.
Anti-poverty interventions	Work to strengthen livelihoods, social protection, housing programmes, microfinance/small business support, agricultural extension and development programmes, micro-insurance, skills training.

Economic incentives	Conditional or unconditional cash transfers, food/cash for work, in-kind transfers (e.g. livestock), education or health subsidies/waivers.
Empowerment	Work to shift balances of power, to give more voice and power to less powerful groups. Often used in combination with sensitisation and social mobilisation.
Legislation	Can involve promulgation, ratification and implementation of laws.
Rehabilitation	General term for support to maltreated children, usually after they are no longer in the abusive situation.
Rescue	Removal of children from abusive situation, e.g. brothels, hazardous labour.
Alternative care	Accepted term for care outside birth family, including in foster care or in residential institutions. Generally not applied to shelters for street children (these tend to be seen as 'rehabilitation').
Psychosocial care	Counselling, emotional/psychological support for maltreated children. May be provided through drop-in centres, street workers, helplines.
Community child protection committees	Keep a watch on potential/actual maltreatment; tasked to intervene often through customary approaches. Forms part of child protection system.
Child protection system	Set of formal and informal structures designed to protect children from maltreatment and violation of their rights.
Social work	Support from professionals with a mandate to protect children from maltreatment. May involve home visiting, support and advice. May also involve seeking alternative care if maltreatment continues.
Early childhood development	Centre- or home-based education. For our review, centre-based early childhood development and/or day care are most relevant as responses to inadequate care.
Content of the intervention	
Support group	Support groups are made up of individuals who have an experience in common. They meet in person or with a facilitator to provide information and emotional support.
Life skills	Learning that enables learners to acquire knowledge and to develop attitudes and skills that support the adoption of healthy behaviours (http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/ accessed 15 April 2013). The skills themselves include interpersonal skills, critical thinking and financial literacy, among many others.
Peer educators	Peer educators are typically the same age or slightly older than those in the group with whom they are working. They may work alongside the teacher, run educational activities on their own or actually take the lead in organising and implementing school-based activities.
Vocational skills training	Education that prepares the trainee for a particular trade or occupation from a craft, trade or professional position – can also be referred to as a technical education.
Train the trainer	Training programmes developed to enable the recipient to take the information gained back into their own community. May include a package of materials, and a commitment to give a certain number of further workshops.
Capacity building	Refers to strengthening the skills, competencies and abilities of people and communities with an understanding of the obstacles. Capacity building can take place on a number of levels (CEPA, 2006): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual level: requires the development of conditions that allow individual participants to build and enhance existing knowledge and skills. It also calls for the establishment of conditions that will allow individuals to engage in the 'process of learning and adapting to change'. • Institutional level: should involve aiding pre-existing institutions in developing countries. It should not involve creating new institutions, rather modernising existing institutions and supporting them in forming sound policies, organisational structures and effective methods of management and revenue control. • Societal level: should support the establishment of a more 'interactive public administration that learns equally from its actions and from feedback it receives from the population at large'. Capacity building must be used to develop public administrators that are responsive and accountable.

Annex 6: Overviews of papers

Paper numbers by theme

	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
Total number of papers	127	340	436	509
Relevant for the review	116	281	352	363
Quality assessed	69	86	140	130
Included in synthesis	27	27	17	22

Disciplinary background: authors of synthesis papers

	In all themes	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
Medical science/epidemiology/public health	25	9	7	1	8
Anthropology/ethnography	2	1	1	1	0
Economics	10	8	2	0	0
Social work/sociology	11	0	2	6	5
Development studies	31	9	15	5	8
Psychology/psychotherapy	4	0	0	4	1
Other	1	0	0	1	0

Note: Wessells and Monteiro (2006) is coded with 'social work/sociology' and 'psychology' as an interdisciplinary paper.

Type of literature

	In all themes	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
Grey	59	22	23	10	12
Academic	24	5	4	7	10

Methods breakdown

	In all papers	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
Mixed methods	21	7	8	4	7
Qualitative	31	5	15	8	6
Quantitative	31	15	4	5	9

Regional breakdown (by paper)

	In all themes	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
Sub-Saharan Africa	43	11	21	5	9
Asia	21	13	2	1	5
Middle East and North Africa	5	1	1	4	2
Americas	13	2	2	6	6
Europe	1	0	1	1	0

Regional breakdown (by programme)

	In all themes	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
Sub-Saharan Africa	36	8	21	5	9
Asia	19	9	2	1	5
Middle East and North Africa	5	1	1	4	2
Americas	12	1	2	6	6
Europe	1	0	1	1	0

MMAT * rating breakdown

	All papers	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
**	43	13	16	7	13
***	33	10	10	8	8
****	7	4	1	2	1

Paper design breakdown

	All papers	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
Experimental	14	4	3	2	6
Quasi experimental	18	10	2	2	5
Other	51	13	22	13	11

Type of programme (by paper)

	Total	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
NGO-implemented	48	19	14	11	7
Academic	14	1	4	3	7
Government/international agency	21	7	7	3	8

Type of programme (by programme)

	Total	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
NGO-implemented	42	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
Academic	11	1	4	3	5
Government/international agency	18	4	8	2	8

Annex 7: Table of Paper Design, Mechanisms and Outcomes

A table is available, for each thematic area, which gives an overview of the papers that were included in the review for this theme and outlines the study and programme design and main findings. The table also gives the MMAT quality scores for each included paper.

Available on request from ODI



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