



ADVANCING PROTECTION AND CARE FOR
CHILDREN IN ADVERSITY

A Whole of U.S. Government Interagency Commitment

APCCA Newsletter

Volume 2

AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF YOUTH

Dear Colleagues,

With the change of seasons comes the time to generate fresh ideas and explore new approaches for tackling some of our most complex issues. In that vein, this newsletter edition explores how Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (APCCA) Partners have engaged young changemakers and amplified youth voices to put the APCCA Strategic Objectives into action.

Our lead story focuses on the U.S. Government's (USG's) collaboration

with the Government of Colombia to develop a national action plan based on the findings of the Violence Against Children Survey (VACS), an evidence-based data collection tool that relies on one-on-one interviews with youth ages 13 –24 to determine when, where, and how children experience violence. With support from APCCA Partners, the Government of Colombia has been tackling these systemic issues in a manner that is replicable and scalable for other countries. The article is followed by a companion story that turns the tables on one of the VACS interviewers, asking him to describe his experience of visiting youth and the impact their stories had on him. Another story highlights a successful program in the Dominican Republic creating At-Risk Youth Networks to engage youth in shaping their own communities. Additionally, we're excited to announce USAID's new Care Leaders Council and Digital Youth Council, which will provide young people with an active role in developing solutions to issues that personally impact them. These initiatives have the power to affect real change by giving youth a seat at the table.

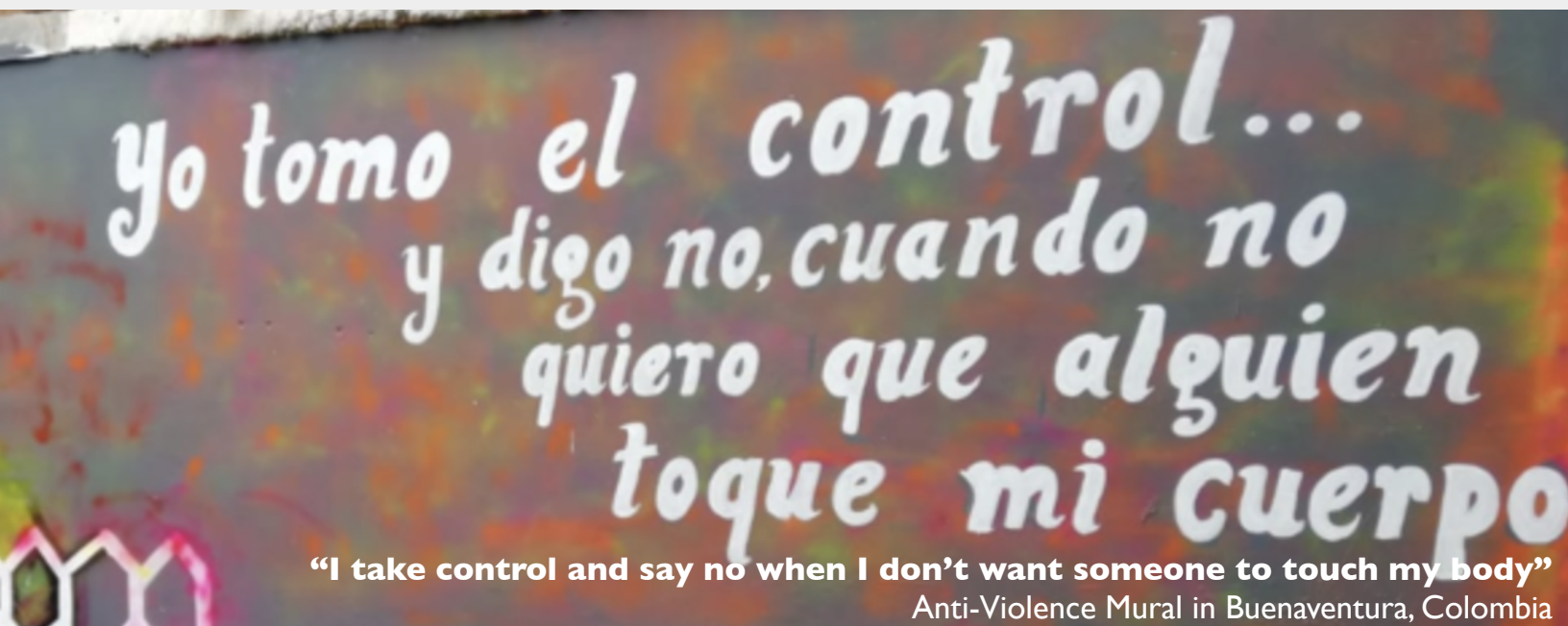
The USG recognizes that promoting efforts to support the holistic well-being of children, youth, and families is a fundamental component to achieving development goals across all sectors. As we continue to highlight the stories of APCCA collaboration in this and future editions of the newsletter, we hope you'll find the work informative and inspiring.

Warm Regards,
Rebecca Levy
Acting U.S. Government Special Advisor for Children in Adversity



Credit: International Organization for Migration/Colombia

HIGHLIGHTING OUR WORK



Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) in Colombia: A Model for Impact and Action

When the recently published Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) for Colombia revealed that two out of five of the country's youth had experienced violence before the age of 18, two things became very clear: immediate action had to be taken, and the Government of Colombia could not tackle it alone. Thus began a well-coordinated international effort, personally supported by the First Lady of Colombia Maria Juliana Ruiz to bring together multiple agencies in developing a plan to protect Colombia's children from further harm. [Read More](#)

APCCA IN ACTION



On the Road with VACS: Interview with an Enumerator

Manuel is no stranger to violence. As a former lieutenant in the Colombian police force, he has experienced more violent encounters with drug traffickers and gangs than he'd care to admit. But as an enumerator or surveyor for Colombia's Violence Against Children Surveys (VACS) Manuel saw violence through a very different lens as he sought out and listened to the personal stories of Colombian children and youth. [Read More](#)



Dominican Youth Tackle Gender-Based Violence

In the Dominican Republic, around 20 percent of women have had at least one child before the age of 18, making the Dominican Republic one of the countries with the highest rates of teen pregnancy in Latin America. High levels of femicide, sexual assault, and intrafamily violence impact young women across the country. Young people in the country represented more than 40 percent of homicide victims in 2018. With a \$25 million investment, USAID's At-Risk Youth Initiative has impacted the lives of more than 145,000 young people in more than 500 vulnerable neighborhoods across the Dominican Republic. [Read More](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity Report to Congress

In case you missed it, the 2020 APCCA Report to Congress, which highlights interagency results from Fiscal Year 2019, is available on our website. This report includes two appendices that feature USG activities to prevent and respond to the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children, and outlines our monitoring and evaluation approach. [Read More](#)



Handing the Mic to Young Leaders: USAID Launches New Youth Councils

Practicing positive youth development has long been a priority for USAID and APCCA-funded programs. After speaking with young leaders, members of the APCCA Secretariat recognized the need to go further than engaging these changemakers at the programmatic level, and to actively involve young leaders in advising USAID on the implementation of the APCCA Strategy and the newly launched Digital USAID Strategy. [Read More](#)

RESOURCES, EVENTS , AND READING

Child Protection and COVID-19: How Child Protection Programming Can Prevent and Mitigate COVID-19 Impacts

1:30pm - 2:00pm

Noncommunicable Disease and Injury

Lightning Technical Session

Panel



Rebecca Levy

Acting USG Special Advisor for Children in Adversity



Susan Hillis

Senior Technical Advisor, CDC



Gretchen Bachman

Senior Technical Advisor for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, USAID and Department of State



Philip Goldman

Founder and President, Maestral International



Lucie Cluver

Professor of Child and Family Social Work, University of Oxford and University of Cape Town

Panel Discussion: How Child Protection Programming Can Prevent and Mitigate COVID-19 Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused serious risks to the safety and well-being of children, including increased risk of violence, child abuse, exploitation, and neglect; inadequate care; and psychosocial distress and trauma, all with lifelong effects. Gretchen Bachman, Lucie Cluver, Philip Goldman, Rebecca Levy, and Susan Hillis discussed how preventing and responding to risks related to child protection helps prevent and mitigate COVID-19 impacts, thus improving outcomes for children and leading to better health outcomes and economic recovery.

Panelists also identified priority areas to be considered, including integrating child protection interventions in health and other COVID-19 responses, strengthening family and caregiving environments, and strengthening existing child protection and social welfare systems, with focus on children at risk of family separation or those living outside of protective family care.

RESOURCES, EVENTS , AND READING



Video: Do's and Don'ts of Care Leaver Engagement

In this video on the Do's and Don'ts of Care Leaver Engagement, developed by the Better Care Network in February 2021, Ruth Wacuka discusses what makes engagement meaningful for Care Leavers and what makes it tokenistic, or in the worst cases, exploitative. Ruth makes a number of concrete suggestions throughout the video of practices organizations should encourage and those they should avoid. This covers a range of aspects of engagement including agenda setting, agreements, use of images and identity. Access the video [here](#).

Youth Programming Assessment Tool

This Youth Programming Assessment Tool (YPAT) tool, developed by FHI 360, helps youth-serving civil society organizations (YSOs) reflect upon their own internal programming and institutional practices and identify areas for improvement. Organizations that piloted the YPAT found that it helped them consider meaningful improvements to support their youth, including: improving skills instruction, developing youth councils, and building organizational capacity with an eye towards youth. Read more [here](#).

