Final Evaluation

Reducing violence in school and home for 5601 children in 22 schools (4 districts) in Upper East and Upper West Regions (Ghana), thereby increasing enrolment, retention and educational performance *(GPAF-INN-046)*

Abbreviations & acronyms

APRRM – Annual Performance Review and Reflection Meetings
BECE – Basic Education Certificate Examination
CBO – Community-Based Organisation
CHRAJ - Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CPN – Child Protection Network
DfID – Department for International Development
FGD – Focus Group Discussion
FGM/C – Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GES – Ghana Education Service
HDI – Human Development Index
HII – Key Informant Interview
JHS – Junior High School
KN – Kassena Nankana (District of UER)
KNW - Kassena Nankana West (District of UER)
OPHI – Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
PMIS – Project Management Information Systems
PTA – Parent Teacher Association
SHS – Senior High School
SMC – School Management Committee
SPIP – School Performance Improvement Plan
SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
The ICT – The International Children's Trust
ToR – Terms of Reference
UER – Upper East Region (of Ghana)
UWR – Upper West Region (of Ghana)
VAC – Violence against children

Project title: Reducing violence in school and home for 5601 children in 22 schools (4 districts) in Upper East and Upper West Regions (Ghana), thereby increasing enrolment, retention and educational performance.

Grantee NGO: The International Children's Trust (ICT)

GPAF no.: INN 046

Country: Ghana

Local partner: Youth Alive

Evaluator: Simon Godziek (sgodziek@aol.com)

Evaluation period: Contract signed 20/10.2016; field work dates 14-25/11/2016; draft report submitted 20/12/2016

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Executive Summary
The headline finding is that Youth Alive and the International Children's Trust (the ICT) have in partnership run a project that has largely met all its objectives.

The project target areas were as follows:

Region	District	Community
Upper East	KN	Vunania, Biu, Sensaa, Gaani, Janania, Tampola,Kapania
	KNW	Kayoro (Wuro, Baliu), Katiu-Saa, Abulu
Upper West	Jirapa	Baazu, Tizaa-Mwofor
	Lawra	Domwine, Babile

With its focus on reducing violence against children at school and at home, and the connection between that and enrolment, retention and attainment in education, this was a contained and well-devised project, which was unambiguous and realistic about its scope and goals. The main task of this evaluation was to assess the extent to which the project's outcome and four outputs were achieved, and all have been to at least a satisfactory level, which is reflected in the outcome and output scoring below.

In addition, there are some outstanding features of the project, the two Child Protection Networks, and the peer educator component (which the field project coordinator considers to be the component that has contributed most to project achievements). In summary, Youth Alive as implementers and the ICT as the

partner have succeeded in achieving substantial and worthwhile gains, which began with changing attitudes towards violence against children, and continued through training of key stakeholder groups to the point at which the prospects for project sustainability are excellent.

The project has performed strongly in the areas of capacity building and gender (that is, the empowerment of girls and women). It is noteworthy that the project has engendered very positive collaboration between stakeholders as diverse as traditional Chiefs and local government duty-bearers, with the pivotal actors being community citizens in whom new knowledge and skills reside, which will be the key to sustainability.

Due to the absence of any other similar interventions in the project area – either by governmental or non-governmental agencies, it may be concluded that all the project gains can reasonably be attributed to UK Aid Direct support – that is, without it, there is no reason to expect the changes brought about by this project to have occurred.

With the funding round theme of poverty reduction in relation to MDG 1, although the impact cannot be seen immediately either within the project life span or shortly after it, it is all but universally accepted that education offers a gateway out of poverty. Therefore, by reducing one of the major barriers to educational attendance and attainment – violence experienced by children – the project may fairly be characterised as one contributing to meeting MDG 1 goals.

It is possible that Ghana is often not thought of as a country suffering extreme poverty. As shown below, the two regions that were this project's target areas do, and therefore this project may conclusively be said to have brought about improvements in the lives of poor, vulnerable, and marginalised people. This is especially commendable given the shift that has occurred in attitudes in the relatively short period of three years. Reviewing the evidence from the different sources of data strongly suggests that the final six months of the project saw the culmination of all the work that had been done previously.

The project is regarded as having offered good value for money in the broad sense of examining the inputs needed to achieve the results, but also, within that, an analysis of individual cost elements shows that they also conform to DfID requirements.

I would like to express my thanks to Youth Alive's Director, Agnes Chiravira; Youth Alive staff Peter Tanga, Paciencia Yuorpor Augustina Achigibah, and Constantine Nanguo; independent consultant, Nancy Drost; current ICT Director, Wahiba Kiared; former ICT Director, David Christie; former ICT Programme Officer, Ben Francis; and the citizens, chiefs, and local government duty-bearers in all the places visited during the field work.

Evaluator's note subsequent to feedback from the UK Aid Direct fund manager, MannionDaniels about the draft report submitted to the ICT.
Please note that this report has been amended from the originally submitted draft according to the required format to be found in the "Independent Final Evaluations: overview for UK Aid Direct grantees" document. The preferred report format specified in the terms of reference (TOR) differed from this (see Annex 1), and I have tried to adapt and augment the information gathered to meet the terms of the original TOR to meet the *ex post facto* requirements. I will state below where information is lacking, or where meeting the new requirements is rendered difficult by the evaluation methodology having been developed for the original TOR.

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Introduction

• Purpose of the evaluation
According to the TOR received, these were:
(to)

- Identify the impact of the project.
- Allow the International Children's Trust and Youth Alive to learn about what has been achieved through the project and the challenges encountered in implementation.
- Allow the International Children's Trust and Youth Alive to share lessons learned to internal and external stakeholders
- Allow the International Children's Trust and Youth Alive to account to local stakeholders and funders for the project's achievements.
- Ascertain whether funds were used effectively and efficiently to deliver results (though the evaluator will not conduct a full audit).

However, with reference to guidance provided by the Mannion Daniels document, "*The evaluation has two explicit objectives that are explained below:*
1 To independently verify (and supplement where necessary), grantees' record of achievement as reported through its Annual Reports and defined in the project logframe;
2 To assess the extent to which the project was good value for money, which includes considering:
• How well the project met its objectives;
• How well the project applied value for money principles of effectiveness, economy, efficiency in relation to delivery of its outcome;
• What has happened because of DFID funding that wouldn't have otherwise happened; and
• How well the project aligns with DFID's goals of supporting the delivery of the MDGs."
while some of these points were covered explicitly in various sections of the TOR, others were not, and the evaluator will therefore in this report adopt an interpretive approach to some of the information gathered so that these evaluation objectives will be achieved more fully.

• Organisation context

The International Children's Trust (the ICT) was founded as the International Boys Town Trust in 1967 and went through several organisational identities before becoming the organisation it is today. In 1990, the ICT underwent a radical transformation both organisationally and programmatically, with work intending to employ best practice models of social work delivery and accountability to statutory donors.

The ICT now is an international development non-governmental organisation, based in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, with a staff establishment at the time of the evaluation of two full-time staff, and one volunteer. Its work focuses on children and young people who are made vulnerable and at risk through poverty.

The ICT places great emphasis on individual child development and works with street-involved children, those in, and vulnerable to labour, child domestic workers, trafficked children, school drop-outs and children living with mental and physical disabilities or whose development is otherwise challenged and who are subsequently deprived of education and a future. Among the methods used are family therapy, child psychology, educational rehabilitation, community mobilisation and self-help, and rights awareness and advocacy.

Working through the partnership model of establishing long-term and supportive relationships with local organisations in Ghana, Mexico, Ecuador, India, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines, the ICT seeks to strengthen their capacity to deliver highly effective services to the most disadvantaged and marginalised children, their families and communities.

When the relevant UK Aid Funding (at the time The Global Poverty Action Fund) round opened, the ICT saw a natural fit between their expertise and experience, and the round's theme, with Ghana being the logical choice of intervention country as their local partner, Youth Alive, has since 1995 been working with vulnerable children.

As noted below, although the ICT has undergone many changes in personnel during the project, but there is no evidence that there has been any material adverse effect of this on the organisation's ability to support its local partner in the project's implementation.

• Logic and assumptions of the evaluation

The logic of the evaluation flowed from the TOR provided by the ICT, which, even though they were not those stipulated by MannionDaniels, conformed to UK Aid Direct priorities in terms of a focus on outputs. It was assumed that the evaluation should seek to collect and analyse data directly connected to the instruments favoured by UK Aid Direct, namely and principally, the project log frame. The document review undertaken prior to beginning the field work therefore drew extensively on the log frame (especially the outputs and indicators), which provided the rationale for the choice of methods (see below), with a firm concentration on collecting data that would measure the extent to which those had been met.

The possible weakness of this logic, however, was that such a narrow focus on output-level results could result in missing information about variables not included in them that may have had an impact on project results (both positive and negative), and so question frameworks were designed to elicit some external and extraneous information in addition to that to meet the questions posed in the TOR.

Because the project appears contained (both in its ambitions and geographical spread), methodological assumptions were made regarding the likelihood of recurring findings (such as in school operations), which provided the rationale for the selection of the project areas.

• Overview of UK Aid Direct funded activities
Formerly known as the Global Poverty Action Fund (GPAF), the fund was relaunched in 2014 as UK Aid Direct, which is DFID's central funding mechanism for awarding grants to small and medium-sized UK and international civil society organisations working to reduce poverty overseas. From 4 January 2016, the Fund Manager for UK Aid Direct has been MannionDaniels, working in consortium with Oxford Policy Management (OPM), Education Development Trust, Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) and Royal Tropical Institute (KIT).

The priorities of UK Aid Direct reflect the UK Department for International Development (DFID)'s wider strategic objectives:

1. Strengthening global peace, security and governance
2. Strengthening resilience and response to crisis
3. Promoting global prosperity
4. Tackling extreme poverty and helping the world's most vulnerable

The countries that are eligible for organisations to implement their UK Aid Direct-funded projects in are:

- the lowest 50 countries in the UN Human Development Index (HDI)
- the countries the UK Department for International Development (DFID) considers to be of high or moderate fragility

UK Aid Direct operates two funding streams:

Community Partnership grants (up to £250,000) are small grants for initiatives focused on delivering results at a smaller scale, piloting new or innovative approaches, or focusing on the most marginalised, working at the community level.

Impact grants (£250,001 - £4,000,000) are larger grants for initiatives focused on bringing tangible change to the lives of the poorest and most marginalised on a larger scale.

The theme of UK Aid Direct's most recent funding round was the Sustainable Development Goals/Global Goals, while that of the round in which this grant was

awarded was to address MDG1 through projects to do with employment, employability, and livelihoods initiatives generally which had a *direct line of sight to poverty reduction.* There is evidence that this objective was interpreted fairly broadly (but within the 'clear line of sight' stricture): for example, one grant in this round was awarded to Disability and Development Partners with local partners Disabled Human Right Centre – Nepal for the purpose of reducing poverty among disabled people by, among other things, promoting their inclusion in mainstream poverty community development programmes.

In 2015, the Netherlands-registered NGO, Afrikids, was awarded an Impact Grant for a project in Ghana's Upper East Region, one of the two regions in which the project under discussion was located called 'Empowering women and girls to make their own sexual and reproductive health choices in the Upper East Region of Ghana', which indicates a UK Aid Direct commitment to the country and its poorest regions.

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Evaluation Methodology

• Evaluation plan

The evaluator's strategy is to select methods appropriate to the needs and contexts of each assignment, rather than use a generic approach. In this case, it seemed clear, given the evaluation objectives and the nature of the substance of the intervention, that mixed methods were called for. A range of documentation was examined to provide quantitative evidence: verification and analysis of PMIS, school records, project group records etc., and the bulk of the qualitative data were gleaned from KIIs and FGDs.

Similarly, that leads to the mixed use of primary and secondary data, in which the latter (desk review of documentation prior to undertaking field work, and PMIS held by both partners) was used as the starting point to check the accuracy of grantee reporting. The checking procedure involved the use of primary collection methods (FGDs and KIIs) to verify both the numbers of for example, training attendees as well as to exercise quality control by assessing through the same methods its central components here:

- how well the training had been conducted,
- how well its lessons had been internalised by participants,
- how those lessons were being implemented by them,
- and what change(s) had brought about as a result.

The evaluation methodology did not use some of the standard "tools", such as questionnaires and surveys, although PMIS analysis does include questionnaire data (which should be repeated before the end of the grant period, with final analysis in the end-of-grant report). The reason for this was the prospect of a very low response rate to the former (given that adult literacy is estimated to be between 5 and 10% in both regions), and there being too many unknowns regarding the latter, which would have rendered the findings open to considerable doubt.

The methods used, therefore, comprised: document review, PMIS analysis, flistening and observing, ocus group discussions, key informant interviews, document review, observation, and participant observation (1). The TOR contained guidance as to the ICT's preference for the duration of the field work, on which basis (together with the assumptions mentioned above) the decision was made to visit a selection of communities in both regions (UER: Abulu, Katiu-Saa, Biu-Sensaa, Yampola, and Ghani; UWR: Babile, Domwine, Tizza-Mwofor, and Bazzu) and spend longer in each to try to gather more sophisticated information, rather than try to cover all the project locations and spend what was felt would be an inadequate time in each (2). These locations were selected randomly to enable a sampled but statistically significant proportion of the whole project area to be visited and analysed.

The methods were selected because they were felt to be those most appropriate to answering the evaluation questions posed in the (original) TOR. Repeated FGD and KII exercises were believed to be the methods with the greatest potential for demonstrating validity, in a context in which it was believed that a more "technocratic" approach would not be appropriate (the evaluator has and uses SPSS in other assignments, but would not use it for the sake of using it). However, a variety of types of FGD and KII were employed: structured, semi-structured and unstructured; with interviews ranging between unstructured and relatively conversational to in-depth, and that variety was employed between representatives of different stakeholder groups for the purpose of triangulation.

Finally, due to the ethos of the ICT and the evaluator's preference, the methodology was participatory at all times: although the nature of participatory methods naturally varies according to the location within the project cycle, the evaluation made sure to seek out and value all voices and opinions, regardless of how powerful, marginalised or vulnerable the respondent; the evaluator always explained his purpose, sought permission, respected local people and their culture, expressed gratitude, and will disseminate findings openly and honestly.

• **Strengths and weaknesses of selected design and research methods**
The principal strength of the approach was felt to be that confidence in the validity of the findings would be high, due to both the repetition of methods and questions among stakeholder groups in different locations, and the variety mentioned immediately above, which it is felt maximised the potential for triangulation. It is these considerations that lead to the relatively unequivocal nature of the assertions regarding the project's successes and gains to be found in this report.

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1 It would be useful for the end-of-grant report to contain at last one case study from each region, and compare and contrast them in order to draw out differences which may be of interest.
2 Please see Annex 3 – Evaluation Schedule and People Met

A further strength of the overall methodology was that it was believed to be appropriate to the local culture in that it was largely personal (rather than anonymous) as it was very largely comprised of direct interactions.

Regarding the specific methods, it was certainly beneficial to be able to interact directly with local stakeholders in FGDs and KIIs to enable judgments to be made on non-verbal communication; and that those interactions were conducted mostly in English, thus obviating the possibility of mediated communication producing ambiguity or misconception. The methods chosen were intended to be contained and able to lead directly to the conclusions required to meet the TOR.

Against this, an undoubted weakness was the inability to achieve full coverage of the project's target areas in person. This, combined with the limitations expressed above regarding questionnaires and surveys, means that the methods selected were pragmatic, in the sense that they were chosen to accommodate the external constraints of time and local conditions, rather than to achieve a fuller spectrum of methods.

• Summary of problems and issues encountered
No problems of any significance were encountered, and certainly none that adversely affected the objectives of the field work. The biggest problem was the initial reluctance of a small number of groups of children to overcome natural shyness and talk openly. However, on the case of only one group did this persist to the extent where the whole exercise became of limited utility.

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Findings

• Overall Results
(Evaluator note: the content of this section is necessarily governed by the TOR, which, because they focused on output level results, meant that data were collected based on outputs and their indicators – please see "Logic and assumptions of the evaluation" above).
(From the original TOR, which asked for data regarding results))
Based on the evidence you have collected and analysed, to what extent have each of the outputs been delivered and targets/milestones reached as envisaged?

What were the results of the individual outputs? What change was brought about?

Output 1: *Improved governance procedures (including recording of discipline and violence), knowledge and practices for protection in school in the target locations.*

(*Indicators are school action plans, child protection policies, and training for parents and teachers in positive discipline and protection*).

There is clear evidence that this output has been fully achieved (despite reservations about the indicators - see below). Every school records disciplinary measures in a "Punishment Book", examination of which reveals the painstaking inscription of information regarding the offence and the sanction imposed. No instance of a punishment which could be classified as violence against a child was observed in examination of the books.

School Action Plans, which are known as School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIPs), are intended to complement the syllabus, containing timetable plans and information about extra-curricular activities such as PTA/SMC meetings and recreational activities. Evidence gathered from the Circuit Supervisor for the Jirapa East Circuit (in UWR) indicates that the existence of these in the first place and their operational utility are dependent on the attitude and conscientiousness of the relevant Circuit Supervisor.

In the 28 schools in the target areas, the picture is mixed: in UER, for example, two schools have no plan at all, while three more schools appear to have Action Plans but no SPIPs, while in UWR the circuit Supervisor told me that "most" of his schools have an SPIP. The end-of-grant field work would benefit from conducting a school-by-school exercise in both regions to determine the status of Plans.

Provisions for child protection at school are contained in Head Teachers' Handbooks. These are GES publications (and therefore not within the capacity of the project to control), in which child protection provisions are contained, rather than there being discrete child protection policy documents. These provisions contain a description of the process by which a complaint can be made in a way designed to ensure fairness to both sides. The GES district directorates decided against developing separate policies as they felt the provisions in the Handbooks to be more than sufficient, and that to do so would amount to nothing more than needless duplication. As there is every indication that violence in schools has been greatly reduced, it was sensible not to pursue this with GES, as the objective has been met without interference in the autonomy of GES, even if it is not possible to discern the contribution to the overall achievement attributable to the Handbooks' child protection provisions.

The "Punishment Books" and Head Teachers' Handbooks are freely available to project stakeholders (e.g. PTA/SMC members) for inspection, although the effectiveness of this in terms of grassroots ownership is limited by adult literacy rates locally (see below).

Training for teachers and parents

Targets were 72 teachers, and 360 parents.

Table 1: No. of teachers trained

Men	68	63%
Women	40	37%
Total	**108**	**100%**

As table 1 shows, the target of 72 teachers was exceeded by 36 (=50%)

Table 2: No. of parents trained

Men	257	47%
Women	285	53%
Total	**542**	**100%**

As table 2 shows, the target of 360 parents was exceeded by 182 (=51%) (3)

The original target of 432 has therefore been exceeded by 218 (or 50.5%), which is a significant and worthwhile increase, judged by the clear evidence that the training has produced the intended effects.

The training is comprised of a total of 13 sessions. The average number of sessions attended by teachers was eight, and 8.5 for parents (no marked disparity between women and men in either case). While it would have been preferable for all training participants to attend every session, local factors such as the location of some of the training and its timing militated against that, and under these circumstances, the averages are satisfactory.

The result of this output is manifested is the extent to which schools have become greatly strengthened not only in their newly-found ability to use forms of discipline that are not violent, but also in the capacity of all the direct stakeholders in the school environment (teachers, Heads, parents, and, most of all, children) to understand the detrimental effects of violence against children, and therefore to have greatly reduced it in the 28 target schools. This change that has been brought due to the shift in thinking from the *status quo ante* in which violence against children was normal and deemed quite proper to now, when violence against children is largely understood to be and is accepted as wrong.

Output 2: *Additional support is provided to children at risk of dropping out from school in the target schools*.

(*Indicators are numbers of children attending and being satisfied with after-school clubs' workshops, and the number of schools with teachers actively identifying children at risk of dropping out of school)*

This output has been achieved.

The target for attendance at after-school clubs was 600.

Table 3: No. of children attending after-school clubs

Boys	566	65%
Girls	302	35%
Total	**868**	**100%**

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3 These figures are derived from the PMIS. The end-of-grant report submitted to the fund manager/UK Aid Direct should confirm the final collated figures.

As table 3 shows, the target was exceeded by 268 (=45%).

However, it is more difficult to measure satisfaction with after-school clubs from the PMIS, as the methodology is known to be problematic. Interactions with pupils (four groups, two in each region) during the evaluation field work led to the conclusion that satisfaction levels are at least as targeted, and PMIS data show that the target of 300 children has been exceeded by 40 (of the 340 children, 79 girls = 23% and 221 boys = 77%). These gender breakdowns do not conform to project expectations at the outset, which were that girls would form the majority, but reflect the grassroots reality that boys are more likely to experience violence.

It is clear that the training component of equipping teachers with the skills needed to identify children at risk of dropping out of school was effective: all 12 teachers consulted were able to name the specific methods they employ for identification (e.g. listlessness, inattentiveness, fatigue). The target of 28 teachers means one per school, but evidence from a focus group comprising three teachers all from the same school implies that there will be more than one teacher in each of the 28 schools actively seeking to identify at-risk children.

The result of this output is manifested in the reduced drop-out rate throughout the 28 schools. Although the picture varies between schools and between years (4), the collated data show the drop-out rate to be approximately 10-15% (measured by failure to complete nine years, rather than an analysis of year-by-year transitions). Two reasons for the impossibility of producing a definitive drop-out percentage are (1) that raw figures rather than percentages are recorded; and (2) that a small but significant number of children are withdrawn from state education provision and placed in fee-paying private schools – they therefore have not dropped out of education, but are missing from the year-on-year enrolment figures that would be expected.

Output 3: *Increased awareness and understanding of a child's rights to education and protection from violence in target locations.*

(Indicators are numbers of community fora and traditional authorities' participation, and radio broadcasts)

Judging the achievement of this output is not entirely straightforward as, while on the one hand there is no doubt at all that there is broad and widespread acceptance that children should be educated and be free from violence in the target locations, the extent to which this is conceived of in terms of rights is not clear. Data from a survey

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4The nine years of "free" and compulsory education comprise six years of primary education (P1-P6, and three years of Junior High School (JHS1-3). One might expect a graphical representation of the drop-out rate to show a steady incline over the nine years, but this does not seem to be the case, with elevated drop-out rates between, for instance, P3 and P4 in some schools. It was not possible to determine the reasons for this, which may be purely local and temporary in nature, or connected to transfer to fee-paying schools (see above).

taken among community members in April 2016 in UWR show that 99% (5) agree that children should be educated and free from violence, but perhaps 55% understood that these are children's rights.

This is contradicted by questionnaire data from parents showing the nearly 93% of parents (*n = 110)* reported that inappropriate discipline violates the rights of the child. Among every stakeholder group consulted, the picture was mixed: for example, in one focus group of peer educators and after-school club members (in Biu, UER), participants spoke without prompting of rights (mentioning by name the Juvenile Justice Act and the Children's Act), whereas in another (in Domwine, UWR) there appeared to be considerably less understanding of child rights (6).

The community fora targets of nine (in UER) and six (in UWR) have been met, and probably exceeded if one counts all types of forum, and *durbars* (the name given to festivals in West Africa), in which case the totals will be 12 in each region (24 in all).

Evidence gained during observation of one durbar at Tizaa-Mwofor (UWR) of the success of this output was manifest: with 142 participants (78f = 55%), a troupe of peer educators performed with remarkable confidence and brio a drama they had written themselves exemplifying some of the problems the project is tackling (early marriage, school drop-out etc.), which was led by a general discussion about what the project objectives had been, the extent to which they had been achieved, and how the work would be sustained.

The target for the number of radio broadcasts of nine in UER and eight in UWR has also been exceeded, with the total being 12 in each region (24 in all). Although community radio broadcasts are a staple of development for very good reasons, their impact is notoriously difficult to gauge where listenership figures are not gathered and qualitative exercises run into practical difficulties (such as a dispersed population and low literacy rates). During the evaluation field work, the main stakeholder groups (children, parents, teachers, local statutory duty-bearers (e.g. education and social welfare local government officials), and community citizens) were asked whether they had listened to the broadcasts and, if so, whether they were able to recall the subjects under discussion.

Among every group except children and duty-bearers, the reception for and take-up of the broadcasts was encouraging. In particular, in two meetings with Development Committees (in Abulu in UER and Babile in UWR) the majority of participants had listened to at least some of the broadcasts (11 of 12 people in the latter), and all were able to name discussion topics (e.g. early marriage and domestic violence). What it is not possible to assess is the impact these broadcasts may have had outside the immediate project area, although that information would undoubtedly be interesting. It may be inferred that that there was less enthusiasm for the broadcasts among the duty-bearers because the broadcasts served to hold them to account in a

5 The survey population is not known.
6 Nothing should be read into the fact that the examples given show rights awareness in UER but not UWR; the picture was similarly variable within the two regions.

very public way, although this inference is at odds with the findings for output 4 below.

The result of this output is manifest in the degree to which community citizens (especially), including parents, recognise how their own thinking has changed. Time and time again, without prompting, people in individual interviews and group settings acknowledged and described what they used to think (in relation to VAC) and what they think now. Moreover, they are also able to ascribe the profound change in what they have learned to activities run by Youth Alive. Therein lies the proof of the effectiveness of the project's awareness raising initiatives, which may be considered the single most important element in bringing about the overall changes found.

Output 4: *Strengthened capacity of local authorities and NGOs in the target locations to tackle violence at home and in school.*

(Indicators are mechanisms for data collection, dissemination of lessons learned, and the coordination and effectiveness of children's networks to do with education and VAC)

Not only has this output been achieved, it is also one of the outstanding features of the project and one of the most significant contributors to its overall success.

To deal firstly with the targets, that for the first indicator is: "Regular coordination and greater availability of data among all relevant authorities", which is met fully, and which also has developed into a model which other interventions would benefit from adopting (related data sources include the "Punishment Books" referred to above and PTA/SMC meeting minutes, among others).

The second indicator's target is for all information to be available to NGOs and, to this end, a "lessons learned" document was commissioned from a consultant, Nancy Drost. I am grateful to Ms Drost and Youth Alive for sight of the draft of this document, which will provide an exemplary synopsis of what has worked particularly well in the project, and will also provide a very useful guide for any (I)NGO wishing to undertake similar work in these regions. In fact, there is potential to duplicate some of Ms Drost's work in this evaluation, which it is hoped will be avoided.

It is recommended that information about this will be included in the final report to UK Aid Direct by the ICT. The third milestone is (the): "Establishment of annual NGO network forum on education and anti-violence". During interviews with local government officials for community development in the relevant districts of both UER and UWR, they stated that there are effectively no other NGOs working locally who might participate in a forum such as was envisaged. For instance, in UER, the Assistant Development Planning Officer stated that he oversees 30 NGOs, of which in his estimation 15 are effective, none of which are involved in VAC and/or education.

However, recognising the dearth of relevant NGOs with which to collaborate, Youth Alive and the ICT adapted their thinking and replaced the foreseen NGO forum with annual regional performance review and reflection meetings (APRRMs). The evaluation field work took in observation of both regions' final year APRRM, which

were extremely well organised, and composed of representatives of all the key stakeholder groups. At each meeting, attendees were divided into groups (e.g. peer educators and teachers) and asked to consider and then present to the meeting their findings on (1) what has changed as a result of the project; (2) what problems were encountered: and (3) means for sustainability/the way forward.

The differences in the findings between UER and UWR were striking: in the former, the two changes most frequently mentioned by the groups were reductions in early marriage and early pregnancy, with better academic attainment a close third. However, in UWR, the most frequently mentioned changes were the reduction in domestic violence and elopement, with school enrolment and attendance prominently mentioned. Regarding problems, UER's consensus was that the greatest were poverty and the lack of water, while UWR chose to focus on not having enough time or resources. In neither was there any real consensus about sustainability, and a disparate selection of issues was aired.

The result of this output is manifest, however, in the Child Protection Network (CPN). This is a second example of in-project creative adaptive thinking, and this structure is arguably the project's greatest output-level achievement. A CPN has been established by YA in both of the regions' target areas, and its members are representatives of all of the local government departments relevant to the project's main objective (reducing VAC at school at in the home), that is, CHRAJ, the Department for Social Welfare, GES officials, the Municipal Gender Officer, Planning Department, Health Department, members of the Assembly (elected politicians), Unit Committee Chairs (7), the police, and YA staff.

The CPNs meet quarterly (with up to 32 participants – Kassena Nankana District) as a minimum (8) but, more importantly, are ready to mobilise instantly when an incidence of violence against a child occurs. Interviews with a range of CPN members in both regions were included in the field work, and these consistently told the same story: that while, before the YA project began, all of these departments acted independently in a piecemeal fashion, they now act in a coordinated manner. All members know how to respond to the various types of VAC they encounter, and to whom to refer cases.

Without exception, interviewees were unstinting in their praise for the project work in establishing and supporting the CPN. Several also pointed out the much improved liaison with communities, in which they have developed confidence that reporting will take place when an incident occurs – this is especially true of relationships between the communities in both regions and the police forces. It can be concluded that awareness raising at the community level has melded with the establishment and effective operation of the CPN to create a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts.

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7 Unit Committees are the smallest structure in the local government system
8 The Jirapa District (UWR) Development Officer told me that the CPN there meets fortnightly

Moreover, it was evident that the CPN group dynamic and mutual reinforcement stimulate individual members to strive to achieve the consensually-agreed goal. It is greatly to the credit of the ICT and YA that the CPNs are operating so effectively, and with such obvious satisfaction expressed by members.

Taken together, to what extent did the outputs achieve the desired outcome?

The desired project outcome is: "Boys and girls in targeted schools experience violence less often at home and in school".

This is of course the nub of the project's impact, and it is possible conclusively to say that it has been achieved.

The baseline study says:" The study revealed evidence of the widespread nature of VAC in schools and communities although statistical evidence was difficult to find due to cover up and poor data collection, documentation and management practices" (p3). While this is no doubt true, the absence of quantitative data at the outset is obviously a constraint when trying to measure reduction. Data subsequently available, however, is potentially contradictory. Questionnaires among children and young adult peer educators and after-school club attendees completed by group leaders or YA staff in April 2016 show that 43.2% (n = 95) were subject to "physical hitting" as punishment, and data from parents' questionnaires in UWR shows that 45% ($n = 80)$ believed it to be acceptable to use "physical harm" as punishment.

At the same time, questionnaire data from UER paint a much different picture: only 18.2% (n = 91) of children were subject to "physical hitting" as punishment, and just 7.3% of parents (n = 120) believed it to be acceptable to use "physical harm" as punishment. This difference between the two regions is clearly very marked, and may well be accounted for by the fact that YA were established and had begun work in UER before this project began.

To these contradictory quantitative data from April 2016, however, this evaluation can add qualitative data gathered during the field work seven months later. A good example of this is the information gathered by the CPNs. This shows, firstly, that there is a seasonal pattern to the reporting of cases of VAC (9): more cases are reported when it is not farming season. In Jirapa Districts (UWR), the reason given by CPN members was that people are less busy at this time, and so have more time available to report cases.

It may be true that incidents go unreported during the farming season (the rainy season is July to September), but under all circumstances, the greatest number of incidences of VAC at home reported in any one week there was three, when in the past (before the project began) it was not uncommon for the number of incidents to

9 It is not possible to know with complete certainty whether all cases are reported

be in double figures. Many weeks go by without a single case being reported. The CHRAJ Director in Navrongo (UER), using the widest imaginable definition of VAC, stated that the number of reported cases of which he was aware as a CPN member had declined dramatically to just a handful (he was no more specific than that).

It must be acknowledged that the limitations noted in the baseline study may endure: that VAC persists, but is unreported, and the possibility even exists that, in creating an atmosphere in which VAC is subject to community disapproval and sanction, reporting could actually be discouraged. This appears to be very unlikely due to the structures and processes that have been set up and strengthened by the project in order to the means to record and report cases, such as the Development Committees, which make it their business to know about cases of VAC and to tackle them.

The same is true of the PTAs/SMCs, which do not confine their activities to the boundaries of schools. Similarly, in discussions with the four groups of pupils during the field work here was no question that all knew not only what constitutes violence against them (both at home and in schools), and how and to whom to report it if it happens to them or if they become aware of it happening to a peer, but also none of the discussion participants stated that they had been the victim of violence. Teachers are also (as stated above) on the look-out for children who are victims of domestic violence, and, for all these reasons, it is not considered likely that there is a large hidden seam of VAC at home.

In the schools, the Punishment Books are a useful source, but suffer the same potential problem of un(der)reporting, against which the same structures and process as mentioned above should be relied upon to militate.

It is possible to conclude (as stated above in the Executive Summary) that a great deal of the change the project has brought about has taken place in its latter stages, most particularly in UWR, which, having been a new area to YA at the project start, may fairly be assumed to have "caught up" in the project's latter stages, and this would explain the discrepancy between the UWR April 2016 quantitative data and the November 2016 qualitative and quantitative data.

The repeated testimony of children, parents, teachers, and community members that all forms of VAC in schools have been much reduced is convincing: the evaluation field work finding is near zero tolerance to violence at home, and that stakeholders from Chiefs to children are more likely to report it when it is known to have occurred.

We ought at outcome level to be concerned not only with identifying what has changed, but also with trying to find out why it has changed (without wishing too much to stray into the 'lessons learned' territory). What came through very clearly from interactions with a range of target groups is that the outputs did indeed combine well to being about the outcome and that, in turn, project activities were very effective in producing the outputs.

The types of violence most often cited by community participants as having been prevalent in the past (that is, before this project began) were physical punishment

(beating); early and forced marriage; early pregnancy; food deprivation; and being driven from the family home.

The field work attempted to test baseline findings as to why in the past VAC was the norm, socially accepted, practiced, and validated, the better to be able to understand the changes that the project has brought about. Answers to this question were obviously dependent on the type of violence but a broad consensus emerged that such practices were embedded in communities and handed down from generation to generation without question (10). The former YA Programme Manager also made the very good point that communities in the past were more insular and not subject to influence from outside through the media and contact with other communities. It is also likely that no social authority (e.g. traditional leaders – Chiefs – and religious leaders) spoke against such practices.

In the case of physical punishment, this had been seen as the best way to correct children and to put them on the path to upstanding citizenship when they grew up. Community members stated that in extremely rare cases, girls had been forced to marry at 12 years of age, and that 14 was not uncommon. In an interesting exercise different groups were asked (peer educators, Development Committee members etc.) what did they think is the ideal age for marriage and childbirth for both girls/women and boys/men. No-one gave an answer that was below 18 years of age, with the average being about 22.

A further crucial element is the Chiefs, whose role in bringing about the changes would be hard to exaggerate. The project benefitted from their consent for it to be implemented in their communities but also from much more than this – their active participation as champions of project objectives.

As "thought leaders" the Chiefs hold great sway in governing community consciousness, and that the project has made the breakthroughs it has is due in no small part to the influence exerted by the Chiefs in their roles as authorities deemed by community members to be traditional, legal, and charismatic – the full set of Weber's tripartite classification of types of authority. There is no space here to say more about this. However, it was a very useful component of project design to bring the Chiefs front and centre, and to involve them so closely as stakeholders.

Returning to activities, clearly the training programmes for peer educators, parents, and teachers were very effective, the evidence being the readiness of all groups of training participants to name what they learned, and to describe how that learning has enabled them to contribute to meeting project objectives. Other activities (such as radio broadcasts and after-school-clubs) have played their part, but the most significant and productive activity was the broad sweep of awareness raising, be it through training, community fora, or the initial set-up meetings.

The evidence for this is simply the recognition and willingness to express explicitly throughout the stakeholder groups that, to put it simply, "they didn't know" – they

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10 Although in one community (Katiu, UER) it was stated that FGM/C had been used as a punishment in the past, but was no longer, and had not been for some 20 years.

didn't know that VAC in general and in its specific types was "wrong" in that the reasons underpinning it were mistaken and that it may be said to be unethical and in contradiction of children's rights; and they didn't know of the harm VAC can cause, broadly, but also specifically as regards education.

In fact, that clarity and capacity for reflection among community members is noteworthy: such an awareness at the grassroots of what has changed in their communities, and why is generally held not to be common in an intervention of three years' duration. This reflects very well on YA and the ICT for their adeptness in understanding what would be needed to produce the desired changes, and them implementing activities with great effectiveness.

• **Assessment of accuracy of reported results**
For the reasons given above (in "Logic and assumptions of the evaluation" and "methodology"), the results are presented with considerable confidence in their accuracy, with the caveats given in certain areas in the text. The main pragmatic reason for this assessment is that the same views, sentiments, and opinions were given time and again in almost all locations by diverse stakeholders (although not in the same terms) such that the sheer weight of qualitative evidence became convincing. This, combined with quantitative evidence gathered from different sources (but often from PMIS) leads inexorably to the conclusion that the results are valid.

• **Relevance**
The project may be judged relevant by more than one criterion. Firstly, it fits well within the MDG 1 objective of the UK Aid Direct funding round. The link between violence against children and their education outcomes is manifest, and the substantial reduction in VAC will lead to better educational enrolment, attendance, retention, and attainment among children in the project area. This in turn may confidently be predicted to lead to greater income and reduced poverty among them than if this project had not happened. Repeated testimony from a range of stakeholders confirmed that this in fact is already happening, and that reduced violence in homes and at school is felt by children to be considerably less of a barrier to schooling than in the past. Of course, it would have been beneficial for this project's work to have been accompanied by a livelihoods scheme for the very poorest parents – for whom family poverty may also act as a deterrent to their children's education, but the budget limit of £250,000 prevented this.

Similarly, it was a project very relevant to the needs of the intervention area: repeated testimony from community members is evidence that it was a project the urgent need for which was felt locally as soon as change began to happen. More broadly, the project contributes to the objectives of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and domestic Ghanaian statutes regarding VAC.

As to whether the project reached "…marginalised and poor people…"., here it is important to correct any misconception about the relative poverty status of the project's target groups. According to the United Nations Human Development Index

(HDI), Ghana is classified as a medium income country. In the human development "league table" for 2015, Ghana is ranked 140th most developed of 188 countries. The HDI, however, may be considered a blunt instrument for measuring development, let alone poverty, and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative's (OPHI) work in multidimensional poverty may paint a more accurate picture.

OPHI data show that 54.3% of the population of UWR and 61.6% of the population of UER live in poverty (11), and their respective poverty ratings of .0259 and .0289 are more like those one would find in regions of countries like Ethiopia and Mozambique, respectively 174th and 180th of the 188 countries in the 2015 HDI.

Despite Ghana not generally being considered as one of the world's poorest countries, its overall wealth masks vast disparities between its 10 regions. The three poorest regions are in the north of the country, with UWR being the very poorest, and UER being the third poorest, according to the Ghana Living Standards Survey (12.) 44.4% of the population of UER and 70.7% of the population of UWR live on less than the accepted poverty measure of $1.83 a day, and when we reduce this figure to the absolute poverty standard of $1.10, we find the figures to be 21.3% and 45.1% respectively.

One indicator of this poverty observed in November 2016 was a proliferation of bush fires. Upon asking why this was so, the answer was that, when food is scarce, the bush is set alight to kill and roast the bush meat – to wit, rats and bandicoots.

Regarding mainstreaming gender equality: (1) evidence was found in group discussions of a shift in thinking about gender parenting roles. While in the past it was often the case that fathers parented boys, and mothers girls, and that less was expected from fathers, it is now more the case that fathers are accepting their responsibilities more. This is something of a generalisation, and poverty will understandably militate against an ideal parenting environment, but the gender dimension of parenting has been understood. (2) Certainly, the project has tackled gender inequality in communities by promoting not only the participation but also the leadership of girls and women in mixed sex structures and processes, e.g. among peer educators and in Development Committees. (3) This is more of an inference, but grassroots gender inequality has been understood and tackled by the very fact of the visibility of strong female role models in YA. Not only is YA's National Director a women, but also the two present Regional project leaders are women. The effect at the grassroots in women community leaders resulting from seeing these women leading an effective community development intervention is not likely to be coincidental.

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11 http://www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/global-mpi-2016/

Viewed 11/12.2016
12 http://statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/glss5_report.pdf
Viewed 11/12.2016

Here, responses to the original TOR are relevant:

Has the project:

a. Understood the perspectives of men and women and how they differ?
Yes. Thanks to the work YA were doing in UER before this project, and because local people were employed as staff in both regions, project implementation started with a deep understanding on differing gender perspectives, which informed implementation through the project's span in an effective way.

b. Developed strategies to ensure women's participation?
Yes. This is especially true when the composition of project structures (e.g. Development Committees) was under discussion.   It was also noticeable that women in community meetings I attended and the two APRRMs were just as vocal as men.

c. Included strategies to address gender inequality?
Yes, in the sense of promoting girls' education as being of equal important and an equal right to boys'. However, it would have been well beyond this project's scope to address gender inequality in its many manifestations.

d. Included strategies to address women's empowerment?
Yes. As written above, women were empowered to become leaders (as opposed to just members) of groups, although women's empowerment might well have been the subject of greater focus if the budget could have been greater (see recommendations).

e. Built capacity within partner organisations to address gender?
Probably, through participation in this project. The ICT seem already to be very strong in the area of gender, and it is very well mainstreamed throughout their portfolio. Please also see the comments above about YA's leadership.

Regarding how well the project met the needs of target beneficiaries, according to the proposal approved by UK Aid Direct, the target groups were to be as follows: 600 school children (400 boys & (200 girls) in 22 (primary and junior high) schools in four districts
- 360 parents of the above children
- 72 teachers in the above schools
- 120 peer educators (former/current pupils between 15 – 18) – final total trained 129 (51m = 39.5%, 78f = 60.5%)
- 250 children from vulnerable families that will receive a grant from the school/GES

The school children were those identified as being at special risk of dropping out of education, and benefitted by being retained in school and completing the nine years of education. The end-of-grant report should provide the final analysis of whether the target of 90% of them completing has been achieved.

Parents' needs were met primarily through training, which included awareness raising about the detrimental effects of VAC on their education and child rights, as well as in positive discipline. Interaction with parents during the evaluation field work

repeatedly evidenced the effectiveness of this training as parents were able to describe the alternatives to the former punishments they now employ. Some parents benefitted additionally through being members of the PTAs/SMCs and/or Development Committees, which gave them a greater role in the community policing of VAC.

Teachers similarly benefitted through training, including in positive discipline, which has produced the dividend of classrooms more conducive to learning.

Peer educators' needs were met through training in child rights, referral mechanisms etc. and were then given the task of cascading what they had learnt to their peers at the after-school clubs. This was observed to have elevated their status, but, in the cases of some peer educators (but by no means all, perhaps 50%), a very noticeable benefit was the confidence they exhibited in talking to their peers in group sessions, and also to the evaluator.

The children in receipt of grants benefitted through their families' poverty acting less as a reason for them to drop out of school. That is, the grants, known as capitation grants and paid at the rate of 20 Ghanaian Cedis per child (about $5), were used to provide books, pens, pencils, uniforms etc. beyond the financial means of parents. In fact, time and again poverty was mentioned by the full range of adult stakeholders as just about the principal reason for children's education being suspended or halted altogether.

Finally, the project was relevant to the experience and skills of both partners, and equally relevant for their separate and combined learning and potential for similar programmes in the future.

• **Effectiveness**
That the project was effective in achieving its objectives is borne out by the results. Within this, the project design was extremely effective. Although superficially simple, all the elements were in place in the design to achieve the outputs and therefore the intended changes. Both the structures and the processes proved effective: in the case of the former, the community groups (especially the CPNs) were very effective means to promote local agents of change, and in the case of the latter, the training, by both quantitative and qualitative measures, was shown to be effective.

Youth Alive showed themselves to be very able and effective implementers, which may be judged not only by the results, but also by the goodwill to the organisation's field staff that was very evident in every project location visited (which could be measured by the ease and comfort of communication between staff and stakeholders). In evaluation exercises in each region, the evaluator asked the local field worker to lead a session (both of them community meetings) in order to gauge capacity, and relations between the implementing agency and the local people in the implementation area. In both cases the field workers, both yo9ung women, performed very effectively, and their interactions with community members were both professional and cordial.
Value for money (VfM)

Economy: this is a project with minimal capital expenditure, but three quotations were sought for the motorbikes that were purchased. Staff costs account for about one-third of the budget, but this is a staff-intensive initiative by definition, and a clear view has been formed that the FTEs were pared to the bone. In fact, it speaks volumes about the quality of the staff team that so much has been achieved with so few staff, and so little staff time (no one staff member is at .1FTE).

Efficiency: project activities account for 40.8% of the project budget, and a helpful criterion for assessing how well that percentage was used is the over-shooting of targets for activities, e.g. radio broadcasts. At the same time, costs have been minimised as far as possible through planning of field work in communities in remote, rural areas, that is, transport costs and staff time have been used with the utmost efficiency and without wastage.

Effectiveness: in the broad sweep of comparing achievements to inputs the project can be said to have been exceptionally effective. My overall assessment of the project's VfM is that substantial, meaningful, and worthwhile change has taken place in the target areas, with a substantial reduction in VAC and the consequent improvements for children in their experience of education. To have achieved this within budget, and with certain constraints imposed by DfID's systems (see below), is commendable. In brief, this project by any measure has achieved very good value for money.

As to "**What has happened because of DFID funding that wouldn't have otherwise happened?**", the evaluation has found no cause to believe that VAC would have been reduced by other means. In the absence of any other NGO or statutory initiatives in the target area, and with the finding that the project's awareness raising component was crucial in bringing about the changes, it may fairly be concluded that all the results discussed above have resulted from DFID funding.

The evidence the evaluation found that the project "**…used learning to improve delivery**" includes adaptation by both partners that served to go a long way towards remedying a potential weakness. Questionnaires developed for use in the final year among children and parents have greatly assisted in this evaluation's ability to provide crucial measurements of the project's key output and outcome achievements (that is, without them, data collection for the purpose of the evaluation would have been much more difficult). Moreover the learning and adaptation relating to the APPRMs and CPNs mentioned above are good examples of how in-project learning helped to shape and improve delivery.

Drivers and Barriers
Drivers

- Very high-quality YA field staff
- Open-minded communities not resistant to change.
- Extremely supportive and constructive local government duty-bearers.
- Forward thinking Chiefs, who give every indication of genuinely wanting what's best for their communities.
- Very good relationship between the ICT and YA.
- Effective implementation support by the ICT.

- Foreknowledge of the local culture (by YA), meaning that the project worked with and within the local culture, so that change occurred from the inside.

Barriers

- UK Aid Direct's/DfID's policies (also see below in Recommendations)
- Very low literacy rates among adult beneficiary participants.
- Logistical problems during the rainy season.
- The continuance of child labour seasonally and at the markets held every three days.
- Extreme poverty among beneficiary participants.
- Lack of access to water in many project locations.
- Budget limitations meant that not as many communities were able to be served as were in need of this project (which perhaps hampered implementation and achievement in some communities particularly proximate to others not included) .
- Three elements of discontinuity: staff turnover in YA and the ICT, and change in fund management from Tripleline to MannionDaniels during the project lifetime.

• Efficiency

In addition to assessing whether the project represented value for money (see above), analysis of the project design and implementation shows an efficient use of time and other resources. It cannot be said that the project was over-staffed, and it is therefore likely to be true that the staff worked efficiently to deliver the results. There is no evidence of unnecessary activities, or that time was spent on them in excess of that needed to achieve the results.

However, although the results were delivered within the project budget, it cannot be said that they were achieved according to the project timetable. Project documentation provided by the ICT indicates that the pace of progress started slowly, and gathered in the final year. Because eventually the objectives were achieved within the overall timeframe of three years, it is felt that this is not a major failing, and that weaknesses in YA planning can easily be tackled as part of an organisational development strategy.

Regarding **cost drivers,** the breakdown of the budget above indicates that these were well enough understood and managed in relation to performance requirements. However, given that the overall budget was relatively modest, and that no single budget head accounted for a vast proportion of the budget, prioritising cost drivers ahead of regarding inputs as factors of achievement would have risked inverting what may be thought of as the correct approach to the relationship between inputs and outputs, in which the former ought not to assume a life of its own.

• Sustainability

Although little evidence was found that "**the project (has) leveraged additional resources (financial and in-kind) from other sources**", otherwise, this is a real

strength of the project design. The sustainability strategy comprises several strands, which combine together to generate confidence that the project's gains will endure. The key to the strategy has been embedding skills and knowledge in the community. Time taken on the awareness raising work as a *sine qua non* of the capacity building that produces sustainability was time very well spent.

The communities – in the forms of structures either set up or strengthened through the project, i.e. Development Committees and PTAs/SMCs – are endowed with not only the knowledge, but also the determination to consolidate and extend the project's benefits. Arguably the single most important component will be the Development Committees – especially those reconstituted as CBOs – which, typically with 25 members selected by the community, and each member having their own "patch" – have been and will continue to be responsible for cascading what they have learned through training, and will continue to monitor school attendance, cases of VAC etc.

There is no identifiable need for any recurring inputs that have a financial implication, and it is also very encouraging to see that schools' PTAs are building up savings finds through parental contributions (please see Annex 6, the minutes of the Vunania school (UER) PTA meeting, which evidences this). Moreover, project activities from the outset have sought to engage statutory duty-bearers as participants, which is a far better approach than adversarial advocacy in seeking to accept and uphold their statutory responsibilities. Having said that, of course, they too run up against resource constraints such that, for example, schools that have no chalk or text books.

The additional resources that are identifiable exist primarily in terms of time: time given voluntarily by stakeholders (parents, teachers etc) to attend training and other project activities, and especially by CPN members in the execution of their child protection duties.

• Impact

If activities effectively undertaken produced the intended outputs, which in combination led to the achievement of the desired outcome, then did that "Contribute to increased enrolment and educational performance of vulnerable children in project locations in Upper West (UW) and Upper East (UE) regions" (the log frame's impact statement)? In short, yes, it did.

Examination of the available documentation shows that enrolment, retention, and attainment in education in the target areas have all increased. At the time of the baseline study, "The data for the UER show that 54% are currently in school leaving as much as 46% out of school. Of those who have never attended school 39% are male and 52% female while for those aged 6+ currently in school 61% and 48% are male and female, respectively. In the UWR, an even higher rate of 48% have never attended school, of which 48% and 52% are male and female, respectively. For both regions, therefore, the regional averages and within sex group averages are worse than the national averages".

While as noted above data regarding enrolment are not without problems, enrolment now is likely to be over 90% throughout the whole project area, and attendance at least 80% (and probably closer to 85%) (13). Analysis is further hindered, however, by the problems noted above regarding the recording of figures rather than percentages: as with drop-out data, enrolment figures show an initially puzzling tendency to raise and fall in schools between years.

A good example is Tampola JHS IN UER:

Enrolment in 2013-14: 89
Enrolment in 2014-15: 98
Increase of 10% between 2013-14 and 2014-5

Enrolment in 2015-16: 95
Decrease of 3% between 2014-15 and 2015-16

Enrolment in 2016-17: 112
Increase of 18% between 2015-16 and 2016-17

These rises and falls are a noticeable trend throughout the project's schools), and the relocation of some pupils from state education provision to fee-paying private schools. It is recommended that the end-of-grant report to try to derive data for all types of enrolment as a percentage of the school-age population.

The criterion judged best for attainment is the BECE result, which is logical as it is the major transition point in pupils' education, between JHS and SHS. Evidence here is not clear-cut: anecdotal assertions from teachers and GES officials are difficult to verify as a school-by-school analysis of BECE results through the project show marked variations, not only between schools, but also between years (that is, falls as well as rises in the pass rate). No trend emerges, although some analysis of the available data shows that the 2016 school pass rates in UWR range from 0 to 75%.

The mean (not necessarily a helpful measure as it is biased by the zeros) is 29% compared to that given in the baseline study for 2013 of 26%, and the 2016 median (which may here be more relevant) is 37.5%. It may therefore provisionally be concluded that improvement has taken place.

BECE data for UER and the nationwide rankings (which were the log frame targets) have not yet been released by GES, and so these should be included in the end-of-grant report.

Regarding **the building of capacity in civil society**, the following has been identified:

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13 It should be pointed out that attendance was frequently claimed to be in excess of 90%, but that was not borne out by the documentation seen.

Parents: the training approach has undoubtedly worked well, building parents' capacity to understand the nature and causes of the problem being tackled (VAC and its effect on education), and then building their capacity to tackle it, both in their own homes with their children, and in their roles in schools (PTA membership and so on).

Children: Through the peer educator training and the use of after-school clubs for the wider dissemination of information, the capacity of children and young adults to help themselves and their peers has been strengthened. There is also a discernible effect on the relationships between children and adults, in which children are more confident in themselves and with adults such that, for example, it was often said heard that pupils are no longer frightened of teachers. The training approach and after-school club idea may therefore be said to have worked well.

Teachers: As with parents, training has been the key approach to capacity building in teachers' own work in their classrooms and the reduction of VAC there, and also in building teachers' capacity to understand how and why VAC has a detrimental effect on children's education. Furthermore, teachers' capacity has been built to pre-empt and prevent problems through early identification of at-risk children.

The wider community: As stated above, capacity building through awareness raising has been a very successful approach, which has enabled community members gradually to lead the drive towards the elimination of VAC.

CPN members: the stand-out capacity building element, the approach of forming the CPNs as bodies to promote liaison and coordination between the different agencies has built the capacity both individually and collectively of their members.

YA & the ICT: The partnership approach in which the project has been run has worked well. There is no discernible power imbalance, and this must have served to enable both partners to build their respective capacities in work of this nature in communities of this type. The ICT will certainly have developed their understanding of the socio-cultural-economic context in UER and UWR, which will stand them in good stead should they wish to embark on further work there. For YA, the project inevitably has been an excellent capacity building and learning opportunity for staff members, not least the two women who lead at the regional level, capacity and learning which one hopes will be employed for the future benefit of poor and vulnerable people.

Regarding YA, one other interesting factor is that, while the teams in UER and UWR have achieved more-or-less the same results, it appears that they have done so through slightly different approaches. While UWR appears to have more closely followed project documentation and planning, UER gives the impression of having focussed very heavily on awareness raising, from which the project gains have stemmed. This may be due to YA's longer standing in UER, but whatever the truth of it, once again it becomes evident that there is no one correct way to undertake development.

The answer to the question "**How many people are receiving support from the project that otherwise would not have received support**?" is the same as that for

"What has happened because of DFID funding that wouldn't have otherwise happened?" (see above). To reiterate, this was a contained project in which, despite intense efforts, no external variables could be found that might have been said to affect the project results. Therefore, all the beneficiaries – and indeed the wider communities – may be said to have received support from the project, and would not have without this project.

The extent to which and how has the project affected people in ways that were not originally intended may be answered by three examples:
1. A sizeable reduction in domestic violence (wife beating was the example almost universally given during the field work). With the project focus on VAC, it was understood by the partnership between the ICT and YA that the example given in homes of violence perpetrated by men against their wives may well create a sense in which violence would be perceived by children as "normal" (even possibly normative). This was tackled by including domestic violence in the training curricula for adults with the result that it was frequently mentioned in interactions with community groups. It is possible that this consequence was intended, but there does not appear to be any reference to it in proposal documents. Similarly, testimony from a KII with a parent, Anthony, in Abulu (UER) shows that the project has served to equalise the perception of the important of education for girls and boys, and in general terms has improved men's attitudes towards women, an FGD participant in Ghani (UER) saying that, to paraphrase, to educate a girl is to educate a whole family.
2. Local community by-laws. As evidence that the project was embraced by Chiefs (see above), some have developed and enforced by-laws in their domains, which create rules and regulations which the population in the Chiefdom must obey. In Domwine community (UWR), for example, the Chief imposed by-laws to do with teenage pregnancy/elopement, phones in schools (pupils'), and dances (which are widely thought to be the cause of moral turpitude). The by-law document is included at Annex 5.
3. The registration of five Development Committees as CBOs. This is a very positive development in establishing the Development Committees set up by the project more formally. There is an obvious benefit in this for sustainability (see below), and it is further evidence of the effectiveness of project structures and processes.

Conclusions

• **Summary of achievements against evaluation questions**
Because, as stated above, the evaluation approach was geared towards the TOR received, and because they focused on the project outputs, this question can be answered only with reference to them:

Improved governance procedures (including recording of discipline and violence), knowledge and practices for protection in school in the target locations..

Additional support is provided to children at risk of dropping out from school in the target schools.

Increased awareness and understanding of a child's rights to education and protection from violence in target locations

Strengthened capacity of local authorities and NGOs in the target locations to tackle violence at home and in school.

and the achievements may be summarised through scoring:

Outcome and Output scoring

Outcome: Boys and girls in targeted schools experience violence less often at home and in school	**A**
Output 1: Improved governance procedures (including recording of discipline and violence), knowledge and practices for protection in school in the target locations	**A**
Output 2: Additional support is provided to children at risk of dropping out from school in the target schools	**A**
Output 3: Increased awareness and understanding of a child's rights to education and protection from violence in target locations	**A+**
Output 4: Strengthened capacity of local authorities and NGOs in the target locations to tackle violence at home and in school	**A++**

• Summary of achievements against rationale for UK Aid Direct funding
This is understood to refer to the theme of the funding round, that is, MDG 1, and therefore may be treated differently from the section immediately above. To some degree this question has been answered above (in "Relevance"), but, in the broad sweep of DFID's four strategic objectives listed above (in" Overview of UK Aid Direct funded activities"), certainly this project contributes to a greater or lesser degree to numbers 2,3, and 4. Among those, the project most closely aligns with number 4, "Tackling extreme poverty and helping the world's most vulnerable".

Although clearly the project's gains will take some time to unfold and feed through into meeting this objective, thanks to the community-wide change in mindsets and practices, and the project's sustainability strategy, the project has certainly laid sold foundations.

• Overall impact and value for money of UK Aid Direct funded activities
(Please see below in "Recommendations")
In addition to exposure to UK Aid Direct funded activities through this evaluation assignment, the evaluator has experience as a practitioner. In what is necessarily a subjective perspective, it is felt that, as one of the three most substantial donors in the UK sector (with the BIG Lottery Fund and Comic Relief), that UK Aid Direct's impact is substantial, and is experienced where it is most needed. However, it is also felt that the impact could be greater still if certain processes and operating procedures were reviewed: one example is that the ceiling for grants and three-year

limit under the Community Partnership funding stream may well limit impact, and a ceiling of £500,000 and a five-year limit would address this.

Regarding value for money, the same comment regarding UK Aid Direct policies apply: the evaluator has personal experience of local organisations feeling under pressure to "burn" unspent funds at the end of a project year, due to the near impossibility of carrying funds forward between project years (the same is true of US Aid funding). In the case in question, this should not be interpreted as poor planning, but, as all parties will no doubt be aware, local agencies can be subject to circumstances entirely beyond their control, which, even with the best ri8sk minimisation and mitigation strategy, can lead to implementation delays.

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Recommendations

1. **To UK Aid Direct/DfID and/or Mannion Daniels**: (a) Quarterly funds transfers. The "advance payments" funds transfer system means that it is not possible for the local implementing partner to receive the funds for a given quarter until more than halfway through that quarter.   This creates difficulties for small NGOs without access to reserves of funds, such as YA on whom the system impacted adversely in delayed activities and salary payments, especially when carrying unspent funds forward from year to year is all but impossible. It is recommended that Mannion Daniels and DfID engage in dialogue about this with the result that the system can be changed.
(b) Inflation rates. DfID's policy is that year-on-year budget inflation increases must be those forecast to be the UK's deflator, that is, the predicted UK inflation rate has to be applied to local costs. When inflation in developing countries runs ahead of that in the UK, local staff dependent for their salary on a DfID-funded project will become poorer as the years go by. In the case of this project, inflation rates in the budget were 1.9%, 1.8%, and 1.7%, when the actual Ghanaian inflation rates were between 14 and 16% in the period. This project's finances were rescued by "favourable" exchange rates, but that really was just a matter of sheer luck. It is therefore recommended that, as a matter of fairness, predicted local inflation rates be applied to local costs**.**

2. **To the ICT & YA governance (and any other potential UK-based YA partners):** It is recommended that an investment be made in an organisational development programme for YA. This should include strengthening through training in monitoring, evaluation, adaptation, accountability, and learning, as well as a needs assessment of governance, future leadership, and leadership support. Further, some strengthening of a small number of aspects of implementation is recommended, e.g. disability inclusion (see below).   It is also recommended to partners other than YA that a presence in UER and UWR (and not just Tamale in the Northern Region) would be beneficial.

3. **To YA and/or any agency wishing to undertake similar work in a similar location: (1)** this project would have benefitted greatly from additional

elements of livelihoods and water. In any future programme similar to this, livelihoods especially really would complement other components, particularly if women were the beneficiary participants. It is appreciated that there was no scope in this project due to the budget limitation, but as a variable that profoundly affects education, poverty alleviation through a livelihoods programme (would could be implemented at low cost) would help to remove one of the outstanding causes of dropping out of school, as well as promoting women's empowerment, and poverty reduction community-wide.

Similarly any future programme may consider working more closely with local governance (not the statutory duty-bearers) in the form of the Unit Councils, the smallest unit of local governance. Ghana has about 16,000 Unit Councils for a population of 24 million, meaning that each Unit Council covers approximately 1,500 people (although of course this will vary by population density). Working with the Councils to strengthen them could act as an effective entry point with consequent benefits in sustainability and government policy. On a similar note, it would be worth exploring close collaboration with the Chiefs' Assembly, as they were such key actors in this project.

4. **To YA:** A few project-specific recommendations are: (a) If girls are found to be falling behind because they are more required to be at home for domestic chores, and this is identified as a drop-out risk, after-school tutorials may help ameliorate the problem. (b) At 32, the number of members of a CPN may be unwieldly, and a smaller number may aid efficiency. However, as the CPNs are clearly effective, and possibly all the members do not attend all the meetings, perhaps there is actually no problem to be solved. (c) YA would benefit from disability mainstreaming or inclusion in their work. Of all the people trained in this project, no parents or peer educators were disabled, and only three teachers were disabled people. Some training in this may be useful. (d) A field office in UWR is recommended if future projects are to take place there, as is a better located office in UER. (e) When teacher training is a component, some system for giving teachers time to attend it would be beneficial, e.g. specified training days allocated by Heads.

5. **To all parties:** All available means should be used to share the lessons of this project and to describe its successes as far and wide as possible. YA should investigate domestic channels of dissemination, and collaborate with the ICT in looking at social media for dissemination. When Nancy Drost's"lessons learned" publication is finalised, maximum use ought to be made of it.

6. **To the ICT:** the body of this report contains some recommendations for the end-of-grant report. To summarise, these are (1) conduct a school-by-school analysis of the 28 schools' SPIPs; (2) conduct a concluding exercise to assess the level of child rights awareness, and the extent to which it has contributed towards violence reduction; (3) incorporate findings from the "lessons learned" document; (4) work with YA to establish the percentage of the school-age children in each community enrolled in school and attending regularly; (5) obtain and include the final BECE rankings; (6) finalise and

report against the school retention and completion targets; (7) work with YA to use for a final time the parents and children questionnaire methodology to provide solid and conclusive quantitative evidence for the final report. Additionally, the report process would benefit from tallying independently the final training beneficiary numbers, and compiling some case studies

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Annexes (attached separately)

• Annex 1 - Independent final evaluation terms of reference

• Annex 2 - Evaluation schedule and people met.