

Supporting Uganda's child domestic workers experiencing violence

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POLICY BRIEF

November 2017

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Executive Statement

A large number of Ugandan children are employed as domestic workers in households i.e. work in households other than their own undertaking domestic duties such as child care, domestic chores, and looking after livestock. Due to informal working relationship and the prevalence of live-in arrangements, domestic workers in Uganda have traditionally experienced discrimination and exploitation and children are most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. They are exposed to exploitation through little pay or payment in kind as well as long working hours. In addition, they are exposed to seclusion, dependency, corporal punishment and sexual abuse.

Extent of child domestic workers.

A large number of Ugandan children are employed as domestic workers in households. Based on the 2015 National Service Delivery Survey (NSDS), about half a million children were classified as domestic employees (i.e. servants or domestic workers).¹ Girls constitute the vast majority of child domestic workers. Figure 1 shows the distribution of child domestic workers across Uganda's geographical regions by gender and indicates that, on average 57 percent of child domestic workers (aged 10-17 years old) are girls.

The brief is based on a study titled "Window on the World of Violence Against Children Outside of Family Care in Uganda: Pushing the Limits of Child Participation in Research and Policy-Making through Youth-Driven Participatory Action Research" undertaken in Kampala and surrounding districts during 2015/2016.² The study qualitatively examined how domestic workers experience and respond to violence under live-in arrangements. Thirty five children aged 12-17 years were interviewed to capture experiences of violence while working as domestic workers. The survey supplemented the 2015 Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) that assessed lifetime prevalence of exposure to sexual, physical, and verbal violence among 13-24-year-olds.

Figure 1: Estimated number of child domestic workers in Uganda, 10-17 years (2015)



Source: 2015 National Service Delivery Survey

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