

WCC shining light on the response to Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, through members and partners

Project Report by Frederique Seidel with project partners, WCC staff and consultant support



In partnership with



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1. Introduction/Executive Summary

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is grateful for the grant from Ignite Philanthropy, which enabled us to raise awareness on the findings and recommendations of The Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) Index "*Out of the shadows: Shining light on the response to child sexual abuse and exploitation*", and translate these into actions by churches and partners.

Our project, "*WCC shining light on the response to Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and exploitation, through members and partners*" prioritised capacity-building in five pilot countries: two in Africa and three in Asia. It hinged on securing individuals able to "champion" the findings and recommendations, in order to catalyse actions. It required partnerships at international, regional and national levels, as well as the development of solid communications materials, organising multi-stakeholder meetings to integrate feedback and gain support, and ensuring the follow-up so that the materials are disseminated and used in an impactful way.

The regional ecumenical partner organisations of the WCC, the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) expressed interest in galvanizing the churches in their regions around specific efforts to end sexual violence against children, as part of Commitment 1 of the [Churches' Commitments to Children](#), even before learning about the Out of the Shadows Index through the WCC. It was therefore agreed that each would dedicate specific capacity-building efforts for churches in their regions on this project. In addition, working with UNICEF and Child Helpline International led to strong collaborations at national, regional and international levels.

Through the materials adapted to churches, the WCC provided guidance on how to integrate Out of the Shadows actions into all relevant activities of the Churches' Commitments to Children initiative. The materials link to the [INSPIRE](#) evidence-based approaches and core message that child sexual abuse and exploitation are preventable.

The WCC also seized multiple opportunities around the 30-year anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC 30) to connect efforts to end sexual violence against children through the Out of the Shadows Index, across faith-based actors, governments, private sector and civil society, by supporting coordination across organisational and sectoral efforts.

This report documents project outcomes, capacity-building and awareness raising undertaken and how it is expected to impact on the lives of children. Based on achievements of the project to date, we have also identified future opportunities for WCC action and the wider sector to use the Out of the Shadows Index for action to end CSA.

Acknowledgments

Deep gratitude goes to all those who allowed for or collaborated in the development, implementation and reporting on this project through UNICEF, the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT), the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), the All African Conference of Churches (AACC), Child Helplines International & national child helplines, ECPAT International (hereafter ECPAT) and the WCC. The achievements would not have been possible without the personal engagement and support by Grace Agcaoili, Olabisi Ajayi-Kayode, Rev. Nicole Ashwood, Patricia Bruschweiler, Doug Chial, Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, Maud Droogleever Fortuijn, Elayne Dykes, Marianne Ejdersten, Jienna Foster, Rachel Harvey, Mark Johnson, Masimba Kuchera, Rev. Doug Leonard, Dr. John Lingu, Rev. Joseph Malaya, John Mapesa, Rev. Dr. Moses Matonya, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, Itanisa Mbise, Virág Kinga Mezei, Thomas Müller, Valter Muniz, Rev. Dr. Lydia Mwaniki, Clotilda Ndezi, Rev. Dr. Nyambura Njoroge, Rev. Gerardo Oberman, Dr. Olasunbo Odebode, Richard Ombono, Christine

Onyango, Dr. Prof. Isabel Apawo Phiri, Peter Prove, Rosiana Purnomo, Roshan Rajaratne, Rev. Dr. Mikie Roberts, Laura Sandoval Merritt, Sara Speicher, Hannelore Schmidt, Caterina Tino, Ndekirwa Gabriel Urio, Dr. Horacio Vivares, Elder Mrs. Juliana Williams, and Rev. Dr Yusuf Wushishi.

Special thanks go to Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, former WCC General Secretary and Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca Ioan Sauca, Interim WCC General Secretary, for their leadership, and for raising awareness about the Out of the Shadows Index across WCC's constituency and among partners.

2. Development of the “Out of the Shadows” Toolkit

One of the key elements in the WCC project was the development of a robust toolkit containing key information from the Out of the Shadows Index, practical information to prevent and report abuse, and materials for churches to discuss and address this issue in the context of church activities.

2.1 Goals, objectives and results achieved

The project aimed to ensure that culturally sensitive information is available across church congregations and among partners to ensure that confidential support mechanisms for victims or potential offenders are widely known.

A toolkit was therefore developed to adapt the findings of the Out of the Shadows Index to the target audience, in coordination with the regional ecumenical organisations in Asia and Africa (CCA and AACC), UNICEF, Child Helpline International and ECPAT.

The kit also includes church-sensitive advocacy materials and posters to raise awareness about the toll-free child helpline numbers. The goal of the kit is to promote actions to address child sexual abuse and exploitation effectively.

The toolkit was refined on the basis of feedback and discussions during the capacity building workshops held in Asia and Africa in the autumn of 2019.

The result was a comprehensive [toolkit with communication materials, spiritual life resources and suggestions for campaigning](#). The toolkit contains a wealth of resources for churches to popularise the findings and recommendations of the Out of the Shadows Index across this constituency and disseminate information about existing support for prevention and response.

The toolkit promotes help to overcome the barriers related to silence, stigma and gender through materials specifically adapted to church communities, on the importance to acknowledge that sexual violence against children exists. This includes practical support through awareness raising on confidential, safe support available, in collaboration with Child Helpline International.

While draft elements of the toolkit were used and circulated amongst all those involved in the project between August 2019 and March 2020, the [final version of the toolkit](#) was launched on 30 April 2020.

The toolkit was also sent to the heads of all 350 member churches of the WCC in 120 countries, and to the members of the WCC Central Committee, with a [letter from Rev. Dr Prof. Ioan Sauca, Interim General Secretary of the WCC](#), encouraging them to use the toolkit in their churches and within their ministry and to share it with others. In it, he underlined that as spiritual leaders, they are best placed to lead this initiative. He also invited them to consider these resources as additional to their existing experience and materials, and as an incentive to develop new ones specific to the main challenges in their own context.

The final toolkit includes the following materials:

- 1.) **Leaflets** summarising key messages of the Out of the Shadows Index and linking these to existing resources to implement Churches' Commitments to Children 1a&b, INSPIRE strategies related to ending sexual violence against children and existing tools for prevention and responses:
 - One [global](#) leaflet to support worldwide advocacy
 - Two regional leaflets: one specific to the [Asian](#) context, one specific to the [African](#) context
 - Five national leaflets: one for each of the pilot countries (India, Indonesia, Philippines, Tanzania, Nigeria) (see section 3 for links to the country-specific materials)
- 2.) **Posters** with the toll-free numbers of the national helplines for each of the five focus countries developed in consultation with National Councils of Churches, the national helplines and with advice from UNICEF in these countries (see section 3 for links to the country-specific materials)
- 3.) A **"Spiritual Life" booklet** with a selection of Bible studies, songs and prayers supporting church engagement on ending sexual violence against children. *This booklet includes two songs which were specifically composed for the "Out of the Shadows" campaign by Rev. Gerardo Oberman (Reformed Church Argentina) and Dr. Horacio Vivares (Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina).*
- 4.) A **one-page document** with suggestions on how to link Out of the Shadows activities with the WCC's **Thursdays in Black campaign**. These suggestions were developed because the [Thursdays in Black](#) campaign is very familiar to many of our churches, and a very popular initiative. Connecting the two is conducive to leveraging Out of the Shadows materials across church communities.

Draft materials were already translated into Bahasa Indonesian after the consultation in Asia (see section 3.3 below). The leaflet information was also recently [translated into Swahili](#).

Through the [Churches' Commitments to Children network](#), over 1350 supporters received links to the materials as well. The online platform flyer can be found [here](#). These supporters are well placed to promote the materials further amongst church leaders, decision-makers, teachers and parents in church congregations, also in INSPIRE pathfinding countries.

2.2 Challenges encountered/lessons learned

It was an ambitious project that aimed to build on a number of fruitful partnerships, develop and disseminate materials with a large number of key counterparts in five pilot countries, at regional and global levels. The main challenge was therefore time. Coordinating the development of the materials and re-working them to include input and feedback from the different partners took more time than expected. Furthermore, after the WCC asked for an extension to finalise the materials for dissemination at the beginning of 2020, each of the countries involved in the project began experiencing lockdowns due to COVID-19, which required adapting the dissemination of the toolkit to the COVID-19 context and identifying the most effective online distribution approaches.

3. Capacity-building workshops

3.1 Goals, objectives and results achieved

One goal was that by January 2020, 60 national and regional champions/influential leaders of churches in target regions/countries understand the key recommendations of the Out of the Shadows Index for

their countries and know how to promote related advocacy across their congregations. The WCC brought together influential leaders and partners together to analyse what the Out of the Shadows Index data expresses, to urge for an effective response to these findings and develop actions in culturally sensitive ways to achieve results through implementation by churches and inter-religious partners.

Lists of the national and regional champions who were trained and on-boarded in the campaign can be found, some in the detailed reports of the workshops, some in links below.

The workshops were planned in a way that promotes ownership by churches. They brought key influencers/champions together to discuss the best ways to promote awareness about the Out of the Shadows Index findings and recommendations across their networks and spheres of influence. All workshops were held within the original timeline (autumn 2019). The participation of UNICEF and other key partners was greatly appreciated in all workshops. The consultations helped to foster closer collaboration between local church representatives and organisations like UNICEF, ECPAT and Child Helpline International.

In the project proposal, a number of challenges had been identified. These included:

Barrier 1 - Stigma and lack of open discussion about the threats of sexual violence against children, social norms and attitudes toward gender.

Barrier 2 - The absence of protective relationships and environments are factors that are often predictive of sexual violence against children across cultures (importance of family connectedness and adult supervision as protective lines of defence for children and youth).

Barrier 3 - For several Out of the Shadows Index countries, government and civil society programs to prevent prospective offenders from committing a sexual offence against a child, or support services for those at risk of reoffending, do not exist.

Barrier 4 - Only 17 countries in the index have guidelines published by a leading journalist association for the ethical reporting of sexual violence against children.

These challenges were extensively discussed during all of the consultations. Responses and solutions for confronting these barriers are included in the links below.

3.2 Activities implemented in Africa

Two capacity-building workshops were held in Africa at the end of September 2019. These focused on the Out of the Shadows Index and the goal to engage in national action plans, in addition to discussing the toolkit materials being developed by the WCC. Both workshop involved high level governmental representatives and demonstrated how churches can help and hold accountable governments in prioritizing on efforts to combat sexual violence against children. Photos from these consultations can be found [here](#).

3.2.1 Nigeria

The national capacity-building workshop for champions in Nigerian churches, partners and journalists was held on September 24, 2019 in Abuja, Nigeria. This event included specific components designed to discuss the Out of the Shadows Index as well as how the communications materials should be designed and disseminated.

Results achieved

The outcomes of the workshop were extremely encouraging. An action plan for the Out of the Shadows campaign was formed, and includes efforts on implementation of the code of conduct on End Violence against Children developed by the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), establishing a department on child welfare, capacity-building on issues of sexual violence against children, sharing posters and leaflets in public spaces, and media and outreach. Further information can be found in the [full report](#). The full list of participants can be found in Annex 5 of that report.

The final versions of the documents prepared for dissemination by Nigerian churches and partners and for focus group discussion within congregations are available [here](#) (in pdf and the in-design versions), including:

- Two posters: child-friendly version and adult version
- The national leaflet

Challenges encountered/lessons learned

As mentioned before, time seemed to be the main challenge in such an ambitious project. The materials were disseminated in April 2020 to CCN, however, due to lockdowns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, distribution is currently focusing on online channels only. Furthermore, while the action plan developed during the workshop contains excellent ideas, these now need to be adapted to the specific risks facing children in the COVID-19 context. Churches are still heavily affected by closures and the pandemic.

3.2.2 Tanzania

The “Workshop on the Churches’ Commitments to Children Focused on a Childhood Free of Sexual Violence in Tanzania” was held on September 27, 2019 in Dar-es-Salaam. Like with the workshop in Nigeria, in addition to the national partner the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT), local and international NGOs participated along with the local Child Helpline International partner, church representatives and faith-based organisations.

Results achieved

The workshop included specific presentations on the Churches’ Commitments to Children related to sexual violence, as well as an animated and interactive session on opportunities to engage around findings and recommendations in Tanzania. A report on recommendations and actions was issued after the workshop. The full report from the consultation in Tanzania can be found [here](#). The full list of participants for the workshop can be found [here](#).

The CCT also disseminated a comprehensive media statement (see Annex 2 at the end of that report), which includes specific recommendations that came out of the working groups, and which were informed by findings from the Out of the Shadows Index.

The final versions of the following toolkit materials for Tanzania are available [here](#):

- Two posters: child-friendly versions and adult version
- The national leaflet

Challenges encountered/lessons learned

As mentioned above, the limited timeframe within which the project was to occur, coupled with the additional complications of the COVID-19 crisis, was the main challenge.

3.3 Activities implemented in Asia

3.3.1 Regional Consultation and Countries

As part of its advocacy efforts, the CCA, through its Asia Advocacy Network on Dignity and Rights of Children (AANDRoC) organised an Asia Regional Consultation with focus on 'Child Rights Protection and Advocacy to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation', in collaboration with the WCC in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from October 13-16 2019. This event brought together child rights advocates from its member constituencies and UN related bodies including UNICEF.

The consultation aimed to identify the role of the church and other faith-based organisations in strengthening the advocacy against child sexual abuse and exploitation. It was also to sensitise and remind CCA and WCC constituencies about the significance of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) and the significance of commemorating the 30th anniversary of its promulgation.

Thirty-eight people from 13 different countries across Asia attended the consultation. They came from CCA member churches and councils, and had experiences and/or were currently working in a context involving child abuse. WCC facilitated the participation by representatives from UNICEF and ECPAT. The consultation also included regional and national bodies such as Voice of the Children Malaysia, Salinlahi Alliance for Children's Concerns and the Association for the rights of Children in South East Asia (ARCSEA).

Results achieved

During the 4-day meeting, presentations made by all partners focused on the importance of recognising and providing solutions to child sexual abuse in the region. At the end of the consultation, the participants came up with action plans and a communique in which the participants recognised that the dignity and rights of children, as guaranteed by international and regional conventions and national laws, had not been implemented to the fullest. Children's rights have not been viewed as an important factor that needs to be safeguarded in parallel with a nation's development. The participants also called all churches to actions. They urged for the Out of the Shadows campaign posters and leaflets to be disseminated to all CCA member churches and councils as a call to combat child sexual abuse and exploitation.

The full final report from the consultation can be found [here](#). The full participants list can be found [here](#), while those from the countries targeted for the Out of the Shadows campaign can be found [here](#).

The final versions of each of the Asian documents developed for the campaign are available [here](#), including:

- three national leaflets
- the regional leaflet
- the 6 posters (child-friendly and adult versions for India, Indonesia and Philippines)

Further information on regional efforts to draw attention to child rights can be found [here](#).

The materials have thus far proven useful across the region. In Indonesia, the national council of churches (PGI) recently hosted a webinar on their child-friendly church initiative and featured the Out of the Shadows campaign. A report from this event has not yet been made available.

Challenges encountered/lessons learned

Overall, the materials were very well received by the participants during this meeting. In terms of challenges, the CCA noted the difficulty of finding a reliable media partner. As a result, there was no media uptake from this event. In the future, earlier contact with the media might help.

4. Global & regional advocacy initiatives

Another objective of the project was to raise global awareness about the Out of the Shadows Index and related existing solutions to address child sexual abuse and exploitation among churches and partners through global influential initiatives and events.

As a global faith-based agency, and through its membership in relevant bodies, the WCC used its influence to help connect government agencies, local faith groups and civil society to keep children from falling through the gaps.

Coordination with other grantees and organisations supported by Ignite Philanthropy at global level strengthened strategic outreach, and led to exploring possible engagement by WCC member churches in capacity-building measures by UNICEF in South Africa.

Results achieved

Throughout July 2019 -June 2020 WCC used all appropriate opportunities at global and regional levels to raise awareness about the Out of the Shadows Index findings and recommendations.

4.1 Integration with the Thursdays in Black campaign

In addition to the [Thursdays in Black one-page document](#) in the toolkit, reaching churches already engaged in the [Thursdays in Black](#) (TiB) campaign, the campaign coordinator now supports cross-fertilisation between Out of the Shadows and TiB.

4.2 CRC@30 Initiatives

The 30th anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) was a major milestone for the WCC, its member churches and all organizations working on child rights. A [letter](#) was sent in July 2019 by the WCC General Secretary Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, encouraging all churches to mark the day and access the tools provided by the WCC and partners. The celebration of this convention took place all year long, culminating in World Children's Day on November 20, 2019. The WCC participated in several global and regional initiatives throughout the year, and used these opportunities to raise awareness on the Out of the Shadows Index, related solutions and support materials being developed.

- The WCC Senior Advisor on Child Rights, Frederique Seidel, served as a representative in the UNICEF-led Stakeholder Advisory Group for CRC 30. As part of this group, which offered advice and practical recommendations on advocacy and communications strategies, civil society mobilisation and multi-sectoral events planning throughout 2019, she included information on the Out of the Shadows Index where potential synergies were identified.
- The [CRC 30 celebration at the WCC's Executive Committee](#) was a high-level opportunity to celebrate the achievements and future plans of the Churches' Commitments to Children together with UNICEF. Media information around this event can be found [here](#).
- A [celebratory event for the CRC 30th anniversary](#) was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on November 18-20, 2019. The WCC Senior Advisor on Child Rights participated in this event and included information about the Out of the Shadows Index in several working groups and in plenary discussions during the 3-day meeting.

- Launch of a [CRC study](#) led by Arigatou International, in which the WCC Senior Advisor collaborated, and Geneva-based event with intervention by WCC General Secretary.

4.3 Regional awareness raising by the All African Conference on Churches (AACC)

In an effort to disseminate recommendations and findings of Out of the shadows Index throughout the continent, as well as to encourage churches to make deliberate efforts to protect children from abuse, especially during the forced quarantine period as a result of Covid-19 pandemic, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, wrote a [letter to church leaders](#) on 31 March, 2020 in which he stated that, “Churches are well placed to raise awareness of threats of child sexual abuse, put in place preventive measures, and support victims, especially among the most vulnerable, now and beyond the current situation.” The regional leaflet containing the Out of the Shadows findings, and resources that churches can use for child protection was attached. Churches were encouraged to adapt the leaflet or develop their own with preferred helpline numbers. The leaflet was uploaded on the AACC website through the above link as well.

Furthermore, as a result of the media reports on the surging adolescent/teenage pregnancies on the continent during the quarantine period, AACC is initiating conversations with religious leaders to address the issue during and post COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the AACC, World Vision and the Side by Side Faith Movement for Gender Justice have together organised an online advocacy training of religious leaders to enhance Gender Justice and child protection in West and Central Africa in July 2020, which will hopefully be replicated in other parts of the continent. These will also be opportunities to create awareness around the Out of the Shadows Index.

In addition Dr. Mwaniki promoted awareness on the Out of the Shadows Index during the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence (GBV) from November 25 - December 10, 2019. During the launch of the campaign at the AACC on November 25, and in her speeches and sermons in churches throughout that period, she drew attention to the forms of GBV against children including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), rape and child marriage, and she called for concerted efforts to protect children from the family level. She will continue to create awareness during the 16 Days of Activism, 2020 and beyond.

Another regional awareness raising opportunity was seized by Rev. Dr. Lydia Mwaniki through the AACC’s participation and intervention in the 10th Regional Consultation of Child Helplines in Africa and MENA in Zanzibar, Tanzania from November 5-8, 2019. The event was hosted by C-SEMA, the organization that runs the Child Helpline service in Tanzania. The focus of the consultation was “Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: A call to Action on Preventing and Responding to online CSEA in Africa”.

Rev. Dr. Mwaniki presented the churches’ efforts related to the Out of the Shadows Index recommendations and findings, and urged children’s organisations to collaborate with religious organisations. During the consultation, the group of over 90 participants from organisations like ECPAT, UNFPA, UNICEF and others engaged in activities around the theme, including visiting the regional child helpline service. The consultation provided an opportunity for learning and connecting with partners, and fostering the needed partnerships to increase the communication efforts around the Out of the Shadows Index. Her full report on participating in this consultation can be found [here](#).

4.4 WCC Just Community of Women and Men in Collaboration with Orthodox Women and other partners

From October 17-22, 2019, the WCC participated in a full-day training during the global meeting of orthodox women around the theme: “Do not be afraid...Go and tell (Mt. 28:10): Orthodox women and their mission in the 21st century”. The target audience was Orthodox representatives from churches

in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. The goal was awareness raising and methods for accompaniment of children who have been victims/survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

The WCC Programme Executive for a Just Community of Women and Men, Rev. Nicole Ashwood, spearheaded WCC participation in this event, during which Orthodox women were encouraged to identify their country's status within the Out of the Shadows Index and determine how to engage the Index as civil society/faith based organizations for risk assessment and support. The Out of the Shadows campaign was discussed fully during this consultation, and recommendations were made – particularly by members who have been working with children in difficult situations for a long time. The outcomes of that meeting are part of a broader conversation on addressing root causes and effects of sexual and gender based violence (mental, psychosocial, cultural and ecclesiastic). The full report from the event can be found [here](#).

Rev. Ashwood also presented the Out of the Shadows Index throughout the year in various fora in which she is actively engaged. For example, she shared drafts of the WCC leaflet for church communities at the International Fellowship of the Least Coin meeting, held in Ghana in October 2019. The regional advocacy work led by AACC through Rev. Dr. Lydia Mwaniki had already aided in awareness of the campaign. Several participants of this global workshop indicated that they had already heard about the WCC campaign through her, and expressed interest in supporting the campaign once the materials would be ready. Please see section 5 on Future opportunities for more information.

4.5 Awareness raising at influential meetings

The Out of the Shadows campaign materials were shared by Rev. Douglas Leonard, WCC Executive of the Ecumenical United Nations Office and WCC Representative to the United Nations in New York during the [Commission of the Churches on International Affairs \(CCIA\)](#) meeting in February 2020 as part of the WCC's child rights work. The CCIA is a group of 35 high-level commissioners who advise the WCC on public policy and advocacy as well as programmatic directions and analyses of systemic issues that underlie injustice and social transformation within the church.

In July 2019, the WCC Senior Advisor on Child Rights, Frederique Seidel, spoke about the Out of the Shadows Index, as well as its findings and recommendations, with key counterparts during the [“Safe to Learn” Leaders Event](#) in New York City. She also included information about the Out of the Shadows Index in her participation in the [Annual Kofi Annan Faith Briefings](#) held on the same date, also in New York.

4.6 Support by WCC EHAIA staff

Kenya-based WCC staff of the [Ecumenical HIV/Aids Initiatives and Advocacy \(EHAIA\)](#) programme, which was launched in 2002 in response to a call from Christians and churches in Africa to overcome the HIV pandemic, now also make good use of the synergies between the two campaigns throughout sub-Saharan Africa as the WCC continues to reach out to church-owned schools and other institutions.

4.7 Guidelines for implementation of the CRC Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

The [Guidelines](#) for implementation of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography were finalised toward the end of 2019. The WCC collaborated in the development of the guidelines as an International Working Group (IWG) member. The WCC Senior Advisor on Child Rights proposed to ensure a linkage to the Out of the Shadows Index in the guidelines and implementation handbook.

The WCC also participated in the launch event in Geneva, where the new the guidelines for implementation of the CRC Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography on September 26, 2019. During the event F. Seidel raised awareness among key stakeholders and partner organisations about the Out of the Shadows Index and its synergies for the implementation of the CRC Optional Protocol Guidelines.

4.8 Strengthening of child safeguarding measures across programme activities

In addition to its child safeguarding policy and measures, as well as to accompany activities linked to the Out of the Shadows campaign, in 2019 the WCC produced a [Child Safeguarding Policy pocket-sized card](#) for all staff.

4.9 Integration into COVID-19 response

The WCC's Out of the Shadows toolkit materials were shared among the WCC's [COVID-19 support team](#) and promoted among churches and partners through a dedicated [COVID-19 Q&A](#) on how churches can support vulnerable persons from abuse and violence - raising awareness on the risks and responses in confinement, including online risks.

4.10 Global Status Report on violence against children - solutions

On 26 June 2020, the WCC was invited to speak in an online panel discussion for the civil society launch of the [global status report on violence against children](#), released by UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children and the End Violence Partnership, of which WCC is a member. During the intervention and in follow up communications, the Out of the Shadows campaign was presented as [one of the responses](#) to the challenges described in the report.

Challenges encountered/lessons learned

In addition to the above-mentioned lessons learned from our experiences so far, it is clear that there is a strong uptake by WCC member churches and partners. There are many opportunities to build on the momentum and scale up the efforts around the campaign, to combat sexual violence against children and make a lasting impact on the lives of children.

During the current global pandemic, health professionals everywhere are reporting increases in domestic violence. Now more than ever, we need to promote campaigns like "Out of the Shadows" – focusing on solutions.

In the coming year, if we are able to continue our collaboration with Ignite Philanthropy, we aim to build on the achievements so far and seize future opportunities for WCC action raising awareness on the Out of the Shadows Index findings and recommendations.

5. Future opportunities for WCC action and/or the wider sector to use the Out of the Shadows Index for action to end child sexual abuse

Building on ongoing successful efforts, the toolkit and campaign materials have great potential to raise further awareness through WCC programmes and existing partnerships, also with regards to particularly vulnerable children.

5.1 Scaling up the Clewer Initiative - combatting child modern slavery

Since February 2020, the WCC has been working on a plan with the Church of England to scale up to an international level an initiative that has been very successful in church communities across the UK: The [Clewer Initiative - combatting child modern slavery](#). The development of pilot projects through the

Churches' Commitments to Children is currently being discussed for Tanzania, Ghana and Italy. An online meeting held on July 4, 2020 with the General Secretary of the CCT and his team confirmed that it would be very useful to further strengthen the Out of the Shadows action plan under way in Tanzania through a Clewer Initiative project that would specifically address the risks faced by children in modern slavery. It is envisaged to address in particular risks related to child labour, early marriage, sexual exploitation and other forms of modern slavery, in collaboration with Out of the Shadows partners in Tanzania, building on the collaboration with UNICEF and the national child helpline.

5.2 Thursdays in Black Campaign – synergies moving forward

Exchanges have been made between the campaign coordinators to continue efforts to link the Out of the Shadows campaign with sexual and gender-based violence and the Thursdays in Black campaign. One idea was to introduce those participating in Out of the Shadows to the Thursdays in Black tapestry, the "Waterfall of Solidarity and Resistance" and encouraged to [submit their own quilt patches](#). Depending on funding, a video could be produced with reflections from those who have used the Out of the Shadows materials. They would be asked to convey how it has made a difference in their own context and how they work against sexual and gender-based violence as cross-promotion of the campaigns.

5.3 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Curriculum Project

The WCC has taken a multi-faceted approach to combatting SGBV, making this both a programmatic priority through the Just Community of Women and Men as well as a global campaign with member churches, ecumenical partners and persons of goodwill. It is with this in mind that the Rev. Nicole Ashwood, WCC Programme Executive, is leading the development of a proposed church school curriculum 'I am God's friend, Affirming my Worth in Christ'. The curriculum seeks to affirm children's value in Christ using the principles of the WCC Child safeguarding policy in negating behaviours and ideas, which may realise and perpetuate abuse at home, school, church and play. It has been proposed to integrate the Out of the Shadows campaign into this curriculum.

5.4 Ecumenical Kirchentag (12-16 Mai 2021)

The Kirchentag is a prominent place for joint Christian witness in Germany, demonstrating – across all denominational boundaries – that what unites Christians in their faith is stronger and more important than what divides. The aim of the Kirchentag is to engage in sustainable stewardship of creation and to resolutely take up the cause of those on the margins of society. We could apply for a plenary session till 15 August 2020 at the International Center, to raise awareness about the Out of the Shadows campaign.

5.5 Collaboration with the WCC-led Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN)

The campaign could be further expanded through collaboration with [EDAN](#), building on initial exchanges with the EDAN programme coordinator. It could be explored how to further adapt the campaign to the specific risks faced by children with disabilities.

5.6 Faith and Positive Change for Children Initiative (FPCC)

[Faith and Positive Change for Children](#) is an initiative led by UNICEF with JLI and Religions for Peace to support engagement by faith-based communities to improve the wellbeing of children, youth, women and families, particularly the most marginalized. The WCC is part of the FPCC Advisory Group and could propose to integrate the Out of the Shadows Index and WCC campaign into activities being planned for 2021 and beyond.

5.7 Global Partnership to End Violence against Children (GPEVAC)

[The Global Partnership to End Violence against Children](#) engages over 420 partners across the world. on SDG 16.2: ending all forms of violence against children (VAC) by 2030. The participation of faith-based actors in the national Civil Society Organisations' Forums of pathfinding countries is essential. WCC is actively involved in the GPEVAC, in which its General Secretary is a [Board member](#). WCC also links its member churches to the GPEVAC through collaboration in the [End Violence Civil Society Forum](#). Awareness raising about the Out of the Shadows Index and the WCC-produced campaign could be proposed for future events, and in support the engagement of faith-based actors in the implementation of national plans of action.

5.8 INSPIRE

INSPIRE serves as a technical package for selecting, implementing and monitoring effective policies, programmes and services to prevent and respond to violence against children. The WCC is part of the INSPIRE [Advisory Team](#), and could further suggest the integration of Out of the Shadows awareness raising into INSPIRE activities.

5.9 World Without Orphans Initiative

The WCC supports the [World Without Orphans](#) and could suggest to raise awareness about the new WCC Out of the Shadows campaign and toolkit through WWO and its partners.

5.10 Faith Action for Children on the Move initiative

The WCC supports this initiative, which helps to strengthen the efforts of faith based organisations and communities in their efforts for migrant children through three approaches: spiritual support for children and their caregivers; creating a continuum of protection for children on the move; and building peaceful societies. More information can be found [here](#). The Out of the Shadows campaign could be useful in this context.

5.11 Campaign with the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (ECAR)

A campaign to combat xenophobia in Europe is under consideration with UNICEF: "From Faith to Action: Inter-religious engagement to safeguard and protect the rights of children affected by migration". Given the particular risks faced by children on the move, the Out of the Shadows toolkit could be suggested for inclusion in the related tools.

5.12 Child Rights Connect Working Group on Children and Violence

The WCC participates in the regular meetings of the [Child Rights Connect Working Group on Children and Violence](#) and could propose a briefing to the group about Out of the Shadows in the context of the WCC campaign. Additional work could be done with the [Child Rights Connect Working Group on Ending the Sexual Exploitation of Children](#).

5.13 Identification of synergies with other grantees

Early in 2020, the WCC was in touch with UNICEF South Africa to discuss possibilities for collaboration, since UNICEF South Africa is working on mobilising South African religious leaders to address child protection issues in the community. Now that the toolkit is finalised, the WCC could support further collaboration with its member churches in South Africa.

5.14 Integrating global warming response measures into all "Out of the Shadows" activities

The [Child Flourishing Index](#) launched in February 2010 by the Lancet, UNICEF and WHO illustrates that wealthy countries threaten every child's future through climate change.

A large number of studies document the impact of global warming on children across the world in various forms. According to a [UNICEF report](#), as a result of the floodings in Bangladesh caused by climate change, an increasing number of children forced into sex trafficking or marriage was documented. A report by the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#) shows that unstable conditions, exacerbated by climate change, often lead to resorting to migrant smugglers, which in turn makes children vulnerable to trafficking and associated forms of exploitation and abuse.

WCC proposes to build on the Out of the Shadows findings and recommendations whilst tackling the root causes of climate change with all key child rights partners. If we care about children, we need to work with contractors who are climate-safe. This is as important as the child safeguarding measures for any organisation working for and with children. WCC's Out of the Shadows partners are encouraged to check if their bank is on the "[banking on climate change](#)" report, and urge their bank to [align](#) with Paris accords.

Many religious leaders divest from fossil fuel as a moral imperative, for example through the [Operation Noah](#).

5.15 Collaboration with the private sector

Some corporate social responsibility (CSR) partners could be well placed to collaborate in spreading prevention and protection messages that build on Out of the Shadows findings and recommendations and support the campaign. This could also be explored in collaboration with the [World Business Council for Sustainable Development](#), Christian CEOs and [FaithInvest](#). Based on some findings described in the [A future for the world's children?](#) report launched by UNICEF, The Lancet and WHO in 2020, an analysis could also be undertaken on messages vehicled by the private sector's marketing and advertisement strategies.

5.16 New strategies for confidential support to children

In France, the organisation "L'enfant bleu" developed during the COVID-19 confinement period, a [new version of the game "Fortnite"](#), in which child victims of abuse can seek help confidentially by signaling a situation to one of the avatar characters, who is actually a channel to the helpline. This new initiative could be assessed by specialists in view to consider expansion to other countries, possibly as a practical tool supporting the Out of the Shadows campaign (depending on the outcome of an evidence-based assessment).

6. Publications and media reports generated as a result of the project

In addition to articles on the WCC website indicated below, the consultations experienced some press pickup, particularly in Nigeria. More information can be found [here](#):

[Workshops Support African Churches in Fighting Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children](#)

[Thailand Consultation Highlights Need to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children](#)

[WCC Shares Tools to Protect Children against Sexual Violence](#)

7. List of all intellectual property and assets purchased or created with the Grant

Two separate images, one for the Asia-focused materials and one for the Africa-focused materials, were purchased for the covers of the WCC-produced Out of the Shadows campaign: one from [123rf.com](#) and one from [vectorstock.com](#).

Consent was obtained from Hope Publishing to use the songs in the Spiritual Life booklet; and from Joel Dingess and Genevieve James, whose public writings on the one story in the Bible focusing on rape within the family, the story about Tamar and her half-brother Amnon, were adapted for the booklet.

8. Certification

All World Council of Churches activities conducted with the Grant funds were and are consistent with charitable purposes as set forth in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and World Council of Churches complied with all provisions and restrictions contained in this Agreement, including, for example and without limitation, those provisions relating to lobbying and political activity.

9. Material produced under the grant

You can find the following resources in this link:

<https://seafile.ecucenter.org/d/e46ccc62ed1249faaaf1/>

- Toolkit with communication materials, spiritual life resources and suggestions for campaigning.
- Leaflets summarising key messages of the Out of the Shadows Index and linking these to existing resources to implement Churches' Commitments to Children 1a&b, INSPIRE strategies related to ending sexual violence against children and existing tools for prevention and responses:
 - One global leaflet to support worldwide advocacy
 - Two regional leaflets: one specific to the Asian context, one specific to the African context
- “Spiritual Life” booklet with a selection of Bible studies, songs and prayers supporting church engagement on ending sexual violence against children.
- One-page document with suggestions on how to link Out of the Shadows activities with the WCC’s Thursdays in Black campaign.