MRC LID Studentships: 2023-24 Research Project

St George's University of London	LONDON SCHOOL of HYGIENE &TROPICAL MEDICINE	

TITLE OF PROJECT		
How do childhood contexts affect violence against young people as they grow up? A quantitative, longitudinal and intersectional analysis of cohort data in Uganda		
SUPERVISORY TEAM		
Supervisor	Dr Amiya Bhatia Email: amiya.bhatia@lshtm.ac.uk	LSHTM
Co-Supervisor	Daniel Carter Email: daniel.carter1@lshtm.ac.uk	LSHTM
Co-Supervisor	Professor Karen Devries Email: karen.devries@lshtm.ac.uk	LSHTM
PROJECT SUMMARY		
Project summary	Globally, 1 billion children experience violence every year (Hillis et al, 2016). Interpersonal violence is caused by a range of intersecting individual and contextual factors at the home, school and neighbourhood level, which often additionally – and unfairly – affects marginalised young people. Contexts do not affect all children the same way -- girls, children with disabilities and poor children experience different and often more forms of violence and may not benefit the same way from protective contexts. Although homes, schools and neighbourhoods are key sites for violence prevention, the importance of contexts is often theorised, but not operationalised in quantitative research on violence against children, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Very little research from outside high-income settings has explored how the contexts in which children grow up intersect to increase risk of violence, nor explored the causal pathways between these early life contexts and later life violence. This project is an opportunity to develop your own specific quantitative research questions related to understanding early life contexts and their impacts on violence as children grow up, and on the intergenerational transmission of violence. And, to work with a team of researchers in Uganda and in the UK working to prevent violence against children. Drawing on theory from social epidemiology and using data from over 2500 adolescents in three waves of the Contexts of Violence in Adolescence Cohort (CoVAC) Study conducted	

	between 2014 and 2022, the PhD student will design and conduct quantitative analyses on violence through a theory-driven approach. CoVAC is the largest cohort study of its kind from a low-income country, and provides linked data from adolescents, school staff, caregivers and peers in Uganda. CoVAC is conducted in collaboration with Raising Voices, an award-winning Ugandan NGO which develops violence prevention interventions. The student will have the opportunity to work closely with a team of violence researchers and practitioners in the UK and Uganda throughout the project. Techniques: Alongside theoretical training in social epidemiology, quantitative methods used may include longitudinal causal analyses, mediation analysis, equity analysis, and other methods.
Project key words	Social epidemiology Violence against children Causal inference Intersectionality Inequality
MRC LID themes	Global Health Health Data Science
MRC Core Skills developed through this project	Quantitative skills Interdisciplinary skills
Skills we expect a student to develop/acquire whilst pursuing this project	• Understanding of theory and methods for measuring and modelling both adverse and protective contexts and experiences of violence in childhood, adolescence and early adulthood • Experience in conducting intersectional analyses • Ability to develop and apply a conceptual framework • Understanding of complex data management and linkage in cohort studies • Understanding and practice of using complex causal statistical methods to analyse cohort data • Advanced coding in R or Stata • Transferable academic skills, including managing and delivering a substantial project, literature reviewing, writing, presenting to academic and non-academic audiences • Experience of being part of a larger project team, including epidemiologists, statisticians, qualitative researchers and practitioners, from Uganda and the UK • Practice engaging with non-academic audiences and communicating results to people who develop interventions and do advocacy work on violence

Is this project available for students applying for the	Route	1+4 = Yes +4 = Yes

1+4 route? And possible Master's options identified by supervisory team	Suitable Master's programmes	LSHTM - MSc Epidemiology LSHTM - MSc Medical Statistics
Particular <u>prior</u> educational requirements for a student undertaking this project	MSc in Medical Statistics or Epidemiology, or MSc in Public Health or Social Sciences with a significant quantitative component; or equivalent	

PROJECT IN MORE DETAIL

Scientific description of this research project	AIMS To examine how adverse and protective childhood contexts affect the risk of violence later in life among young people in Uganda. To explore how the effects of contexts on violence vary by gender, disability, poverty, and their intersections. RATIONALE Globally, 1 billion children experience violence every year (Hillis et al, 2016). Interpersonal violence is caused by a range of intersecting individual and contextual factors at the home, school and neighbourhood level, which often additionally – and unfairly – affects marginalised young people. Contexts do not affect all children the same way -- girls, children with disabilities and poor children experience different and often more forms of violence and may not benefit the same way from protective contexts. Although homes, schools and neighbourhoods are key sites for violence prevention, the importance of contexts is often theorised, but not operationalised in quantitative research on violence against children, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. To design effective violence prevention interventions for children and young people, we need to explore the following questions, to which this project will contribute: 1) What is the effect of adverse childhood contexts on physical and sexual violence victimisation and perpetration later in life (e.g., late childhood, adolescence, early adulthood) and intergenerational violence? 2) Do the relationships between contexts and later in life violence differ by gender, disability, and socioeconomic position? OBJECTIVES The project has three sequential objectives: 1) Develop a conceptual framework for how childhood contexts affect later in life violence with attention to intersectionality; 2) Design and conduct causal and longitudinal quantitative analyses to measure and examine how childhood contexts affect experiences of violence in adolescence and early adulthood, including intergenerational transmission of violence;

	3) Explore how the relationships between contexts and later in life violence differ by gender, disability, and socioeconomic position. Based on these overarching aims and objectives, the PhD student will develop their own research questions. AVAILABILITY OF DATA Using secondary data from over 2500 adolescents in three waves of the Contexts of Violence in Adolescence Cohort (CoVAC) Study conducted between 2014 and 2022, the PhD student will develop a project on contexts and violence. CoVAC is the largest cohort study of its kind from a low-income country, and provides linked data from adolescents, school staff, caregivers and peers in Uganda. CoVAC also includes measures of the intergenerational transmission of violence. CoVAC is conducted in collaboration with Raising Voices, an award winning Ugandan NGO which develops violence prevention interventions. TECHNIQUES Quantitative methods may include longitudinal causal analyses, mediation and moderation analyses, equity analysis, multivariate measurement models (e.g. latent class analysis), and other methods. RISK MITIGATION There are no risks regarding data access as Prof Devries is the PI of the cohort study and a supervisor and a mentor for this project. There are no risks related to COVID-19 and data collection as the project is based on secondary data. The student will have access to courses at LSHTM that will support all the aims and analyses proposed in this project.
Further reading (Relevant preprints and/or open access articles)	https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7654-8
	https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.06.007
Additional information from the supervisory team	The supervisory team has provided a recording for prospective applicants who are interested in their project. This recording should be watched before any discussions begin with the supervisory team. To access the recording please see MRC LID Project – Bhatia & Carter & Devries.