



# Finland's Statement

Finland became a Pathfinding country in May of 2020. As part of the Together to #EndViolence Solutions Summit series, the Ministry of Family Affairs and Social Services has made commitments to end violence against children and issued a Leaders Statement.

Key highlights from the Leaders statement are as follows:

1. Implementation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence Against Children 2020-2025, comprising 93 actions and based on the INSPIRE framework.
2. Publication of a national action plan for the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention, including new measures to prevent online violence against children.
3. Commitment to ending all violence against children globally, with one of the highest proportions of Official Development Assistance budgets directed specifically to ending violence against children.



**Country Statement**

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# National Policy Dialogue: Country Statement: Finland

Ending violence towards children is a national priority for Finland. The Government of Finland recognises that the only way to achieve this goal is through collective efforts that create lasting change. This is why Finland has joined the network of Pathfinder countries, becoming the 30th Pathfinder country in May 2020.

In 2019, Finland launched [Non-Violent Childhoods](#), a National Action Plan for the prevention of violence against children in 2020–2025. The Action Plan is firmly based on WHO's Inspire strategies. It contains 93 pertinent, measurable actions for preventing violence against children (VAC) and youth under 18 years of age. Created in close collaboration between academic researchers, practitioners and policy makers, it has a solid foundation in children's rights, recent scientific findings and evidence-based practice. The actions focus on preventing all types of violence in different contexts and take into consideration children in vulnerable situations with regard to violence.

A broad group of experts from various organisations, ministries and NGOs has compiled the Action Plan as well as the adjacent implementation plan. A steering group nominated by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare is responsible for monitoring and directing the work. A mid-term review will be published in 2022.

Implementing the Action Plan's goals is a key national priority. Some examples of actions currently in place are:

## *Chapter 6. Multidisciplinary collaboration and exchange of information*

- *Action 3.* Special training in investigating crimes against children will be a permanent part of the continuing education offering of the Police University College. This action was already implemented in 2020, when special training in the investigation of crimes against children became a permanent part of the training of the Police University of Applied Sciences.

## *Chapter 8. Domestic violence in the family*

- *Action 1.* Child and family services (for example maternity and child health clinic services and schools) will systematically address the prerequisites for children's safe growth and growth environment and will identify risk factors for violence together with families. Services will take account of the needs for culturally sensitive information among parents from immigrant and refugee backgrounds and support for good parenting.
  - The *Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare* (THL) is responsible for distributing [the violence filter and mapping form](#), which is systematically used with both parents in maternity and child health care services. The introduction of the form is intensified in

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school health services. The implementation of other tools developed to address violence-related themes with children will be continued.

- The *Finnish National Agency for Education* is preparing an online portal to support work against bullying, violence and harassment, which will help to strengthen the competence of teaching staff and other staff in study care services in identifying various forms of violence and speaking up.
- *Action 5*. Primary-level services will provide families with psychosocial support and care without delay. For example, positive parenting practices and evidence-based parenting support programmes (e.g. Incredible Years, Strongest Families) will be promoted at the municipal level. The parties and operators responsible for this action are the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare, primary healthcare, specialised medical care, municipalities and NGOs.

After becoming a Pathfinder country, Finland launched a [National Child Strategy](#) in 2021. The strategy aims to strengthen the inclusion of children and young people. In the strategy, Finland emphasises the need for effective and multidisciplinary methods to prevent child abuse. The implementation plan, prepared during 2021, will take into account the content of the Non-Violent Childhoods Action Plan for 2020–2025.

Finland has *ratified the Lanzarote Convention* and will publish a national action plan for its implementation in 2021. Since an increasing proportion of sexual harassment and violence is taking place in the digital environment, new measures for preventing online crimes against children will be introduced. The fast-changing digital world creates new challenges for crime prevention and requires the development of innovative methods.

Addressing the fragmentation of service provision and ensuring an equal access to services for child victims of violence is an important challenge for Finland. Sustainable interagency measures to be applied by professionals from law enforcement, justice and the health and social sectors are the cornerstone of the Barnahus-model, which is gaining a stronger foothold in Finland through the national [Barnahus project \(2019–2023\)](#).

Finland already has a considerable knowledge base and data on VAC; for example, large-scale victim surveys have been collected since the 1980s. As part of the implementation of Non-Violent Childhoods, the database will be further extended by 2025. We will secure and harmonise the knowledge base on violence against and experienced by children and young people and compile information from different sources on a regular basis. Data is collected and used to inform policies and programmes in relation to poverty, violence, children with disabilities, minority and immigrant children and children deprived of a family. The responsible organisations are THL, the University of Helsinki Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy (Krimo) and the National Police Board (POHA).

The implementation of the 93 measures of Action Plan is, as a rule, promoted as part of the work of different organisations. Various programmes and projects and the calls for funding applications organised by ministries and different organisations also support the implementation.

Finally, Finland is committed to ending all violence towards children globally. The proportion of our Official Development Assistance directed specifically to ending violence against children is among the highest in the world, as stated in the most recent Counting Pennies 2 report. Finland acknowledges the importance of global efforts that promote children's wellbeing, protection and safety both now and in the future.

Minister of Family Affairs and Social Services



Krista Kiuru

