ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN:
key messages & statistics

Full version

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

Half of the world's children experience violence every year. To truly end this epidemic, the global community has an opportunity to increase its collective impact and drive further action by presenting a more unified and reinforcing set of messages and statistics. This communications resource is designed to help us all do just that.

For each section, you will find statistics and messages that can be used as stand-alone messages or in conjunction with one another. This is a living document that will be continually updated to take account of the evolving external landscape, to take advantage of new opportunities or to address emerging challenges. Please send comments or new messages and statistics to Elissa Miolene at: elissa.miolene@end-violence.org, who will update the document regularly.

Please note: this document is not meant to be used in full. It is meant to be a resource for you and your organisations to extract key themes, statistics and messages for a particular purpose, and is by no means an exhaustive list. You can pull messages from each theme based on your communication need – for example, a speech on ending violence in schools, talking points on violence in humanitarian situations, a one-pager on online threats, to articulate core policy calls, and more.

This collection of statistics and messages was developed by the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, using information and research from our many partners.

What is violence against children?

According to the World Health Organisation, violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.

As such, violence against children refers to all forms of physical, sexual and emotional violence – including neglect, maltreatment, exploitation, harm and abuse – towards a child under the age of 18.

This violence takes a multitude of forms, including but not limited to child marriage, child labour, corporal punishment, sexual violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, bullying, gang-and conflict-related violence, and violence committed online, such as cyberbullying, sexual extortion and sexual exploitation and abuse.

Violence against children includes the:

- 6-year-old girl who is struck by her parents at home
- 13-year-old girl experiencing online bullying or sexual exploitation
- 14-year-old boy who is coerced into sexual favors for grades
- 15-year-old girl fleeing a war-zone who is sold to prevent her family from starving
- 12-year-old boy who joins an armed group because it offers the best worst option for the future
- 8-year-old boy forced into working on street to feed his siblings
- 10-year-old girl raped by her uncle while collecting drinking water for her family

Key messages: ending all forms of violence against children

I. Violence against children is prevalent and universal. However, every child has the right to grow up safe and secure in the places they live their lives.

Violence against children is a global – and often silent – epidemic.

Violence against children is unacceptable and must no longer be tolerated.

Violence against children happens in every country and every community, and across all cultural and socio-economic contexts.

One in two children experience violence every year, totalling one billion children across the globe.

Enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in pursuit of SDG 16.2 – among several other sustainable development goals – we are united by the vision of a world in which every child grows up safe and secure.

This will take collective action to end all forms of violence so that all children are safe at home, safe within their communities, safe in and around schools, safe online, and safe within their places of worship.

II. The scale and impact of violence devastate the lives of children, families and societies.

Every single incidence of violence against a child is a tragedy with lifelong consequences.

Violence affects the chemistry of a child's brain, inhibiting physical growth and decreasing children's ability to learn, thrive and contribute to society.

Those who experience violence in childhood are more likely to be re-victimised later in life. They are also more likely to perpetuate a cycle of violence onto the next generation.

Violence undermines every other investment in children. Without addressing violence, we will never capitalize on global efforts around education, health, and sustainable development – and we will never achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The global economic impacts and costs resulting from the consequences of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children can be as high as **$7 trillion**.[1] This massive cost is higher than the investment required to prevent much of that violence.

III. The solutions are known. Violence is preventable. And doing so is a smart investment.

We know more than ever before about the evidence-based, proven solutions to end all forms of violence against children, such as the ground-breaking INSPIRE package of seven evidence-based strategies. These strategies focus on the implementation and enforcement of laws, norms and values, safe environments, parent and caregiver support, income and economic strengthening, response and support services, and education and life skills.

Ending violence against children won't just protect children – it will also support families, strengthen communities, and increase the productivity of entire countries.

Investments to end violence against children will result in significantly improved returns for investments in education and health.

IV. There is a growing movement taking collective action and progress is already happening. Even so, progress is not taking place fast enough – more urgent action is needed.

SDG 16.2 places ending violence against children firmly on the global agenda, providing a critical multi-sectoral platform to end all forms of violence against children.

Despite progress in all corners of the world, the global response and investments are not in line with the magnitude and impact of the problem. Programmes addressing violence against children remain significantly underfunded. By 2015, less than 0.6 per cent of official development assistance was spent on child protection, yielding an average investment of just 65 cents per child per year.[2] This means that even less money was put toward ending violence against children, a small subset of the child protection field.

This amount is even smaller in humanitarian settings. According to a recent report from Save the Children, funding for child protection from 2010 to 2018 remains minimal, with an average share of only 0.5% of total humanitarian funding. [3]

Collectively, we must do more to invest in the solutions we know work and scale them up for national and global impact. This is not only about human and financial resources, but also about enhancing coordination and sharing evidence and documentation on what is working – and what is not.

We must partner with children as agents of change. We must listen to and involve children in the decisions and solutions that affect their lives.

V. It is time to act with and for children to end violence – and all of us have a role to play.

We must continue to strive for a world where every child grows up safe and secure, because every child – no matter where they grow up – has the right to be safe at home, at school, in their communities, and online.

Though progress is happening, we are far from a tipping point. The fight for justice for children remains, and the level of commitment and investment is far from the scale of violence across the world – and the impact such violence has on children and communities.

As practitioners, parents, friends, community members, faith leaders, policymakers and researchers, we must act with urgency, and strengthen our movement to do more for children.

Heads of state have committed to action to achieve SDG target 16.2 on ending all forms of violence against children by 2030. Even so, target 16.2 will not be met without drastic action to intensify and expand our collective, evidence-based efforts. Particular efforts are needed to clearly define leadership responsibilities in ways that will ensure accountability; identify why plans of action are not being fully funded and take steps to ensure that they become fully funded; develop national prevalence baselines and targets that will enable the monitoring of prevention effectiveness, and audit national support mechanisms against the evidence base for preventing violence against children so as to fill gaps and improve programme quality.

Collectively, we must work with and support each other's efforts — and invest in the solutions that we know work. We need to push for stronger political will, strengthen data and evidence, and better inform policy, strategy and investments across the world. We also need to work with one another to shift attitudes, changes behaviours, and influence corporations and governments.

We must break the silence. Perhaps our fiercest enemy and our greatest shame is silence. The silence of the neighbour who pretends she doesn't hear the noises from next door; the silence of the young boy too terrified to speak out about the sexual abuse he is suffering at home; the silence preventing open dialogue between parents and their children on often taboo subjects; the silence of the teacher who does not ask about the bruises covering one of his pupils. This is a collective silence that must be broken for the sake of victims, survivors, and society.

KEY POLICY CALLS

Prohibit all forms of violence in all settings. Governments should prohibit all forms of violence in all settings and ensure their national legislations are both aligned with international standards and effectively enforced.

Listen to and involve children. Governments, international agencies and partners must formalise and fund processes to ensure meaningful and active inclusion of children in ending violence against children.

Improve governance structures and management capacity. This should be demonstrated through effective institutional leadership within responsible agencies, multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms, fully funded national action plans, and the availability of nationally representative data with which to define prevention targets and monitor progress.

Invest in what works to prevent violence. We need to listen to one another, and learn from partners across the world, to adapt and implement evidence-based strategies like INSPIRE. Once we do so, we should scale up these solutions by integrating them into government action plans and providing clear policy guidance.

Position violence prevention as a priority, not an afterthought. Violence prevention should be an integral part of the systems like engage children, especially the education system. This relates to not just programme design but budget allocation, as dedicated funding for preventing violence needs to be earmarked as a priority.

Implement policies, laws and programmes consistent with what works. Decisionmakers should draw on the seven INSPIRE strategies to effectively prevent and respond to violence against children.

Increase funding to end violence against children. Governments must ensure child-centred budgets and allocate adequate funding in legal and child protection systems. They must also invest in the infrastructure to collect and share data on violence against children. Evidence-based solutions should be delivered through strong child protection systems — guided by policy solutions that mobilise multi-sectoral responses and backed by investments that enable their application at scale.

Strengthen accountability mechanisms. We need to ensure commitments made to end violence against children, especially through the SDGs and other international human rights instruments, are effectively monitored and tracked.

Listen to and involve children. Governments, international agencies and partners must formalise and fund processes to ensure meaningful and active inclusion of children in ending violence against children.

More effectively train teachers, health professionals, police and all those who interact with children to prevent violence. Our societies need the proper tools to prevent and end violence in all places where children interact. We need to invest in the right training and resources to increase our societies' ability to handle and prevent violence.

Leave no one behind. Efforts to end violence against children need to be inclusive. Age- and gender-responsive approaches must be incorporated into programming, along with initiatives that reflect the needs of the most vulnerable children — including those living in extreme poverty, children with disabilities, those who are affected by crisis, conflict or disaster, and others.

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN   statistics bank and key messages   **2020**

THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

Every year, at least **one billion children** experience violence – that's half of the world's children[4]

One in two children experience violence every year[5]

Every seven minutes, an adolescent dies as a result of violence[6]

Children with disabilities are almost **four times more likely** to experience violence than non-disabled children[7]

Over one million children are reported missing every year[8]

Globally, the cost of violence against children adds up to **US$7 trillion a year**[9]

Three out of four young children are regularly subjected to violent discipline by their caregivers[10]

One in every four children is living in a country affected by conflict or disaster[11]

Only 12 per cent of children are fully protected from corporal punishment – by law – across the world (or alternately: **88 per cent** of the world's children are not protected from corporal punishment by law[12]

Worldwide, close to 130 million (more than one in three) students from age 13-15 experience bullying[13]

PROGRESS

Children's involvement in child labour and hazardous work is declining. In 2000, there were more than **245 million children** engaged in child labour. By 2016, that number had nearly been **cut in half to 152 million.**[14]

Over the last decade, **25 million child marriages** were prevented due to accelerated progress from organisations, communities and governments across the world[15]

While only **five** countries had prohibited corporal punishment against children in 1989, as of January 2020, **58 states and 16 territories** have issued bans of their own.[16]

Is there any hope for ending violence against children?

Every form of violence is preventable, and for the first time in history, we're realising that doing so is possible. With the right set of resources, cohesive collaboration, and widespread will power, child abuse can become a thing of the past – and little by little, that dream is becoming a reality.

Tell me more.

Though violence against children is a global epidemic, it does not have to be this way. Violence is preventable, possible and already happening: governments from Canada to Cambodia have committed to preventing violence against children, and evidence-based, step-by-step approaches have been both developed and implemented across the globe.

Thirty years ago, the world's most widely ratified human rights treaty – the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – stated that every child has the right to be protected from violence.

The good news is that today we know more than ever about the solutions that work. Across the world, we've seen that when sectors come together to invest in these solutions — and when governments listen to and empower children — change can truly happen.

In 2016, ten agencies collaborated to develop INSPIRE, a technical package of seven key strategies to end violence against children. This technical package pulls together proven strategies which, in the past, have successfully reduced violence against children — and is currently being used in countries across the world.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE STATISTICS

Three out of four children between age 2 and 4 are regularly subjected to violent discipline by their caregivers[17]

One quarter of girls from age 15 to 19 have been affected by some form of physical violence since they turned 15[18]

Every seven minutes, an adolescent dies as a result of violence[19]

At age 2, **55-60 per cent** of girls and boys experience physical violence [20]

Across the world, **23 per cent** of children have been physically abused[21]

In 2015 alone, **82,000 adolescents** died as a result of voice[22]

In 2012, approximately 95,000 children and adolescents up to age 19 were victims of homicide[23]

Worldwide, **1 in 4 adults** were physically abused as children[24]

200 million girls and women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation[25]

On average, girls who experience female genital mutilation do so **before the age of 5**[26]

Three million more girls are at risk of female genital mutilation every year[27]

Children with disabilities are **3.7 times more likely** to be victims of physical violence than their non-disabled peers[28]

600 million children under the age of 5 live in countries where corporal punishment is legal in their homes[29]

Only 12 per cent of children are fully protected from corporal punishment — by law — across the world (or alternately: **88 per cent** of the world's children are not protected from corporal punishment by law[30]

 In some countries, **85 per cent of LGBTQI+ students** experience homophobic and transphobic violence at school[31]

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN MESSAGES

What is physical violence?

Physical violence is an intentional use of force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment. This can include being slapped, burned, cut, bruised or physically restrained, among several other forms of abuse. Often, physical violence occurs alongside other forms of violence, such as emotional and sexual

abuse. Related to physical violence is corporal punishment, which, according to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, is defined as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light.

Tell me more.

As of October 2019, 58 countries across the world have prohibited corporal punishment against children, among many other territories. Corporal – or violent – discipline is the most common form of violence experienced by children.

Schoolchildren of all ages are at risk of corporal punishment, which, when compared to parental corporal punishment, is more likely to involve the use of objects.[32]

Aside from the pain and humiliation corporal punishment can cause, violent discipline also impacts children's long-term health and well-being. Violence in the classroom can affect children's academic achievement, sometimes leading them to miss class or drop out of school entirely. They may also have difficulty with peer relationships and increase disruptive, violent or antisocial behaviours.

Children with disabilities are disproportionality subjected to corporal punishment. In the United States, for example, the Department of Education reported that although students with disabilities constitute 13.7 per cent of all public school students, they make up 18.8 per cent of those who are subjected to corporal punishment.[33]

Definitions – and perceptions – of physical violence against children vary from location to location, culture to culture, and from family to family. Even so, intentionally harming a child is never okay, and has the potential to affect a child for the rest of their lives.

Children with disabilities are at an increased risk of experiencing physical, sexual and emotional violence. According to the World Health Organisation, children with disabilities are often targeted because of stigma, discrimination and ignorance, as well as a lack of social support for those who care about them.

SEXUAL & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE STATISTICS

One in ten girls under the age of 20 have experienced sexual violence[34]

120 million girls under the age of 20 have experienced sexual violence[35]

1 in 5 women report having been sexually abused as children[36]

1 in 10 men report having been sexually abused as children[37]

Based on data from 30 countries, **only 1 per cent of adolescent girls** who have experienced forced sex reached out for professional help[38]

In 2017, **87,000 women were murdered.** More than half of those women were killed by intimate partners or family members[39]

Worldwide, **1 in 3 women** have experienced physical or sexual violence — mostly by an intimate partner[40]

Worldwide, **1 in 2 women killed** were killed by their partners or family in 2012. In contrast, **1 out of 20 of all men** killed were killed in such circumstances[41]

5,000 honour killings are committed each year, many of which are against female rape victims killed by their family's elders[42]

Girls who marry before the age of 15 are almost **50 per cent more likely** to experience physical or sexual violence from their partners than girls married after 18[43]

Up to 68 per cent of girls and 30 per cent of boys with intellectual or developmental disabilities will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday[44]

Children with disabilities are **2.9 times more likely** to be victims of sexual violence[45]

200 million girls and women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation[46]

On average, girls who experience female genital mutilation do so **before the age of 5**[47]

Three million more girls are at risk of female genital mutilation every year[48]

94 per cent of human trafficking victims for sexual exploitation are girls and women[49]

Children now account for **30 per cent** of those who are trafficked, with sexual exploitation being the main driver of human trafficking[50]

7 in 10 victims of sex trafficking were exploited in the Asia and Pacific Region[51]

Profits from forced sexual labour are estimated at **$99 billion worldwide**[52]

SEXUAL & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE MESSAGES

What is sexual and gender-based violence?

According to the World Health Organisation and as mentioned in the *INSPIRE: Seven Strategies* package, sexual violence is defined as any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic that are directed against a person's sexuality using coercion by anyone, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including at home and at work. Three forms of sexual violence are commonly distinguished: sexual violence involving intercourse (i.e. rape); contact sexual violence (for example, unwanted touching, but excluding intercourse); and non-contact sexual violence (for example, threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism and verbal sexual harassment).

Child sexual abuse is defined in a different way. According to the Lanzarote Convention, the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, child sexual abuse is defined as: (a) engaging in sexual activities with a child who, according to the relevant provisions of national law, has not reached the legal age for sexual activities;" and (b) engaging in sexual activities with a child where use is made of coercion, force or threats; or abuse is made of a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the child, including within the family; or abuse is made of a particularly vulnerable situation of the child, notably because of a mental or physical disability or a situation of dependence.

Tell me more.

Children who experience sexual abuse are more likely to be socially isolated, suffer from mental health problems, and attempt and commit suicide. They are also more likely to develop alcohol or drug dependencies. These outcomes impact every aspect of a child's life, including their ability to develop into productive adults.

Sexual violence against children can take a multitude of forms, including but not limited to sexual abuse, harassment, rape, sexual exploitation, prostitution or pornography. It can also occur in the places children should feel the safest: their homes, schools and communities.

During crisis, conflict and disaster, risks of sexual and gender-based violence increase.

Evidence shows that sexual violence raises children's risk of illness, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancy, psychological distress, stigma, discrimination, and difficulties in school.

Children with disabilities are at an increased risk of experiencing physical, sexual and emotional violence. According to the World Health Organisation, children with disabilities are often targeted because of stigma, discrimination and ignorance, as well as a lack of social support for those who care about them.

Child trafficking is the buying and selling of children (anyone under 18) for the purpose of exploitation. This comes in the form of labour trafficking, sex trafficking and forced marriages.

Tell me more.

Child trafficking happens in every country across the world. These children are often recruited by false promises to find themselves trapped in exploitative, dangerous conditions, often with no hope of escape.

Trafficked children might be forced to work in sweatshops, performing mind-numbing tasks over the course of 10, 11 or 12-day hour days. They might be brought to work inside someone's household, catering to every need of their sometimes-abusive employers. Or, they might be pushed onto the streets or inside brothels, forced into selling themselves for sex before they even hit puberty.

Poverty and discrimination put children at a higher risk of trafficking and exploitation.

The exploitation of children alone generates approximately $39 billion across the world every year. This industry operates like any other, filling gaps in cheap labour or commercial sex with the sale and profiting of children.

Though both boys and girls are affected by child trafficking, gender overwhelmingly plays a role in certain types of forced work – especially when it comes to sexual exploitation and forced marriage. In these forms of modern slavery, women and girls represent 99 and 84 per cent of total victims respectively. Because of this, ending trafficking requires addressing harmful social norms.

How do girls and women experience violence?

Violence against women and girls continues to be a global epidemic, one that kills, tortures and scars women both physically and psychologically, and has lasting impact on all areas of their lives.

Millions of women and girls experience violence in the home: more than half of women murdered in 2017 were killed by their partners or family members.

Social, gender and cultural norms are often used to justify and normalise harmful practices against girls, including female genital mutilation, child marriage and femicide.

Girls who are married early are at an even higher risk of physical and sexual violence. Across the world, child marriage is robbing girls of their childhood, pulling them out of school, tearing them from their peers, and ripping them from their families. Child marriage also forces girls to become mothers well before their bodies – and their minds – are ready.

As long as sexual violence against women and girls perpetuates, they will continue to suffer the physical and emotional effects of such abuse, including unintended pregnancies, induced – and sometimes dangerous – abortions, gynaecological problems, and sexually transmitted infections including HIV. These effects can follow survivors for decades, impacting their ability to succeed in school, in the workforce, and in life, making true gender equality an impossibility.

Today, one in ten girls under the age of 20 have experienced sexual violence. However, the true magnitude of sexual violence is impossibly larger, as most children and families do not report cases of abuse because of stigma, fear, or a lack of trust in the authorities.

Girls experience sexual violence at staggering rates – in a survey conducted by Together for Girls, more than one-fourth of girls' first sexual intercourse was physically forced or coerced. Boys experience sexual violence too, often perpetuated by those they trust the most.

Violence against women and girls stifles a country's development. According to UNDP, "in Chile, a study found that women's loss of salary as a result of domestic violence cost US $1.56 billion – more than 2 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product… In the United States, the cost of violence against women by an intimate partner exceeds $5.8 billion per year. In Canada, annual costs have been estimated at 684 million Canadian dollars for the criminal justice system, 187 million for police and 294 million for the cost of counselling and training, totalling more than 1 billion a year."[53]

To end violence against women and girls, we need to fight harder – everyone has the right to grow up and live free from violence.

Though men and boys are often the perpetrators of violence, they have the potential to drive the solution. Men and boys must be engaged in finding solutions. They should also be supported to reject harmful perspectives that breed further violence.

CHILD MARRIAGE STATISTICS

Every year, **12 million girls are married** before their 18th birthday[54]

1 in 5 girls are married by age 18 – and **1 in 20** before 15[55]

650 million girls and women around the world today were married as children[56]

115 million boys and men around the world were married as children. Of these, **one in five – or 23 million** – were married before the age of 15[57]

If nothing changes, by 2030, another **150 million girls** will marry before their eighteenth birthday[58]

Every minute, **23 girls** under the age of 18 are married. That's one girl every **two seconds**[59]

Girls who marry before the age of 15 are almost **50 per cent more likely** to experience physical or sexual violence from their partners than girls married after 18[60]

More than half of girls from the poorest families in the developing world are married as children[61]

CHILD MARRIAGE MESSAGES

What is child marriage?

Child marriage is any formal marriage – or informal union – where one or both of those involved are under 18 years of age.

Tell me more.

When girls and boys are married young, their childhoods are forced to a halt.

When girls are married at a young age, they are neither physically or emotionally ready to become wives and mothers. The younger they are, the higher risks they face during pregnancy and childbirth –

alongside ongoing risks of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, and domestic violence. Girls who are married young also often lose agency to control the decisions affecting them.

Often, child marriage increases during or after a conflict or a natural disaster. Families may feel they have no choice but to marry off their children to secure them — or their remaining family members — more food, more stability, and a better life.

Child marriage is a global problem. It occurs across countries, cultures, religions and ethnicities, often as a result of poverty, lack of education, cultural practices, and — above all — gender inequality.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE & NEGLECT STATISTICS

Worldwide, **67 per cent of children** aged 2 to 4 years of age experience emotional abuse or neglect[62]

EMOTIONAL ABUSE & NEGLECT MESSAGES

What are neglect and emotional abuse?

Neglect is a form of child abuse defined by a caregivers' failure to meet children's physical or psychological needs and protect them from danger.

Emotional abuse (or psychological abuse) is a pattern of behaviour that impairs a child's emotional development, self-esteem or sense of self-worth. This may come in the form of threats and yells, criticism or repeated rejection.

Tell me more.

When children are stripped of the opportunity to build deep, strong relationships with their caregivers, their mental and physical well-being often pay the price.

When confronted with a lack of responsiveness from a parent or guardian, children can experience toxic stress — the effects of which devastate the development of the brain.

Fear and anxiety, a common effect of neglect, affect the architecture of our brains. Many parts of our brains do not mature until later in our lives, making the effects of child abuse and neglect long-lasting and often, built into our very operating systems.

Studies have shown that neglect can result in cognitive delays, the stunting of physical growth, and disruptions in the body's stress response — among many other effects.

Neglect can also cause ripple effects in a child's educational outcomes. Children who experience neglect are more likely to have learning difficulties and earn poor grades at school, along with lower IQ scores, reading skills and rates of high school graduation.

ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE STATISTICS

More than **175,000 children** go online for the first time every day[63]

Every half second, a child goes online for the first time[64]

800 million children use social media[65]

One in three Internet users worldwide is a child[66]

At any one time, **750,000 individuals** are estimated to be looking to connect with children for sexual purposes[67]

There are currently more than **46 million** unique images or videos of child sexual abuse material in EUROPOL's repository[68]

84 per cent of detected child sexual abuse materials and 91 per cent of videos are reported only once[69]

Child sexual abuse material reports are growing exponentially: of the 23.4 million reports of child sexual abuse material, **40 per cent** occurred in 2017 alone. [70]

ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE MESSAGES

What is online sexual exploitation and abuse?

Child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) occurs when an individual or a group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity. This can occur through use of technology and is therefore often referred to as online CSEA, ICT-facilitated CSEA, or CSEA in digital environments.

Online sexual exploitation and abuse includes grooming, live streaming, consuming child sexual abuse material, and coercing and blackmailing children for sexual purposes.[71]

Tell me more.

Online child sexual exploitation and abuse is perhaps the worst manifestation of what can happen when children enter the digital world unprotected. Though online child sexual exploitation is a relatively new phenomenon, traditional forms of child sexual exploitation and abuse are not – and their impacts are well-documented.

Online child sexual exploitation and abuse comes in many forms. An adult may take photos or videos of sexual acts involving children, using them for self-pleasure, financial gain, or dissemination on online platforms. These materials can also be used to blackmail children, perpetuating a cycle of more sexual exploitation and abuse.

Often, child sexual exploitation and abuse occurs online though grooming – when an adult targets a child, gains their trust, and gains control over them. Once they do, it becomes easy to extract sexually explicit videos or images, which can then be used by the adult to intimidate the child into paying money, offering favours, sending more explicit content, or meeting in real-life.

Most children featured in online child sexual abuse materials are those who have not yet undergone puberty. In addition, younger children are more likely to suffer severe abuse, including torture, violent rape or sadism – including infants who are only days, weeks or a few months old.

The reporting of child sexual abuse material is growing exponentially. The ability of clearing houses to manually investigate each incident cannot scale to the near-constant growth of images – especially without automated prioritisation, labelling and clustering.

New child sexual abuse material content is constantly emerging. Eighty-four per cent of detected images and 91 per cent of videos are reported only once. The spectre of potential false negatives due to unknown abusive imagery requires moving from the existing, decades old blacklist-based approaches to algorithms that recognize the nature of child sexual abuse material content.

Protecting against child sexual abuse material requires coordinated, global action. Ten years ago, 70 per cent of child sexual abuse material reports reflected abuse in the Americas. Today, 68 per cent of reports relate to abuse in Asia, 19 per cent the Americas, 6 per cent Europe, and 7 per cent Africa.[72]

One trend that is widespread in the Philippines but appears to be emerging elsewhere is child sexual exploitation and abuse to order, including through live streaming technology. This occurs when a person in one location pays to view and instruct in real time the abuse of children at the hands of a local facilitator.

Online solicitation for sexual purposes or grooming occurs when an adult targets a child, gains their trust, and secures control over them. Once they do so, it becomes easy to extract sexually explicit videos or images from these children, which can then be used by the adult to intimidate the child into paying money, offering favours, sending more explicit content, or meeting in real-life.

Malicious or unintentional sharing of a child's sexual images can also take place between peers, especially if they are leaked to an unintended audience. These types of activities are usually referred to as sexting, sextortion, sexual harassment or revenge porn.

The expansion of the Dark Web, which is only accessible through specialised software, is another facilitator of online child sexual exploitation and abuse. Users of the Dark Web can remain anonymous and, for the most part, untraceable. Because of this, many of the worst forms of child abuse happen through the Dark Web. In 2018, 2.88 million accounts were registered globally across the 10 most harmful Dark Web sites focused on child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Universal Internet access is predicted by, at the very latest, 2050. That expansion will bring about unprecedented opportunities and incredible connections, leading to the development of communities across the globe. However, to truly harness the benefits of the Internet, we need to protect its most vulnerable users – children.

CYBERBULLYING STATISTICS

More than one-third of young people report being a victim of online bullying[73]

LGBTQI+ youth are nearly **three times as likely** as non-LGBTQI+ youth to be bullied or harassed online. They are also **twice as likely** to be bullied via text message[74]

1 in 3 LBGTQI+ youth has been bullied online because of their sexual orientation or gender expression[75]

42 per cent of young people experience harassment on Instagram, the highest proportion of any social media platform[76]

Girls are more likely than boys to be both victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying. According to one study, 15 per cent of teen girls have been the target of abusive online behaviours, as compared with 6 per cent of teen boys[77]

CYBERBULLYING MESSAGES

Online violence against children can take many forms, some illegal and some not, but all of them invariably harmful. Online violence includes exposure to violent content, incitement to self-harm, hate speech and racist or xenophobic messaging, incitement to commit acts of terrorism and cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying – the use of technology to harass, threaten, humiliate or abuse another person – has seeped into the lives of children across the world.

The Internet provides a protective shield to a cyberbully, often allowing them to remain anonymous while abusing someone else.

As progress is made towards 100 per cent Internet connectivity worldwide, children's safety and protection online are becoming ever more critical.

VIOLENCE IN AND AROUND SCHOOLS STATISTICS

Half of the world's teens experience peer violence in and around school[78]

Worldwide, close to 130 million (more than one in three) students from age 13-15 experience bullying[79]

One in three students from age 13-15 are involved in physical fights[80]

Violence in schools can affect not just academic performance, but attendance as well. Violence significantly affects student attendance, contributes to lower academic results, and leads to higher drop-out rates.[81]

In some countries, **85 per cent of LGBTQI+ students** experience homophobic and transphobic violence at school[82]

In some countries, up to **45 per cent of transgender students** drop out of school[83]

Two in three young people said they worry about violence in and around schools*[84]
* respondents to a UNICEF global poll of over 1 million young people across 160 countries

In 2017, the United Nations verified **396 attacks on schools** in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 26 on schools in South Sudan, 67 attacks in the Syrian Arab Republic, and 20 attacks in Yemen[85]

There have been at least **70 fatal school shootings** over the past 27 years[86]

Each year of education reduces the risk of conflict **by around 20 per cent.**[87]

VIOLENCE IN AND AROUND SCHOOLS MESSAGES

What is violence at school?

Schools should be a place of hope and opportunity, where children are safe to learn, develop and thrive to their full potentials. For far too many, however, schools feel anything but safe. Instead, they are places where physical, sexual and emotional violence can run rampant.

Violence comes in many different forms, from corporal punishment to attacks to bullying to sex for grades. Violence also prevents many children, especially girls and children from marginalised groups, from even attending school and accessing equal educational opportunities. No matter the type, violence in and around schools can leave a lasting mark on children, following them into adulthood and threatening their ability to become productive adults.

Tell me more.

Schools have the potential to be transformative in promoting positive social norms and gender equality. But for too many girls and boys around the world, school is a place of violence and fear.

Physical, sexual and psychological violence in and around schools, including online, affects children and young people everywhere.

Half of the world's teens experience peer violence in and around school. Without making schools safer for children, hundreds of thousands will continue missing out on opportunities to grow, learn and thrive.

Across the globe, children are staying home or dropping out of school to avoid violence, including bullying, sexual exploitation by other students or teachers, and armed attacks on schoolgrounds, among other forms of violence.

Violence impedes learning and is detrimental to children's well-being. It decreases self-esteem, reduces attendance, lowers grades, leads many children to drop out of school altogether and can result in serious health issues.

Children who are already marginalised are especially vulnerable to bullying. One-third of students across the world have experienced bullying, often because of being perceived as different because off disability, extreme poverty, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Violence in schools is a global issue. Over half of the world's children live in countries where violence in schools is not fully prohibited.

Schools offer an entry point for working with families and communities to end violence against children more broadly.

Ending violence in schools drives multiple wins. Safer schools will improve learning outcomes, better leverage education investments, shift norms and start to break the intergenerational cycle of violence.

Evidence shows what works to end violence in schools: implement and enforce laws and policies to keep schools free of violence, shift norms and values to reject violence in schools, create safe learning environments. Support teachers with positive discipline and teaching tools. And, respond when children disclose violence.

Many have already joined together to end violence against children in schools. There is already much being done at global, national and community levels. That experience, energy and evidence must be harnessed to inform coordinated action and build further evidence on what works.

CONFLICT AND CHILDREN ON THE MOVE STATISTICS

An unprecedented **70.8 million people around the world** have been forced from their home, over half of whom are under the age of 18[88]

By the end of 2017, nearly **31 million children** were forcibly displaced by conflict and violence, including 13 million child refugees and more than 17 million inside their own countries[89]

1 in 4 children live in countries affected by conflict or disaster[90]

420 million children are living in conflict zones.[91]

In 2018, more than **29 million babies** were born into conflict-affected areas[92]

Every two seconds, **one person is forced from their home** because of conflict or persecution[93]

Every day, **37,000** people are forced to flee their homes because of conflict or persecution[94]

90 per cent of children in Yemen, 70 per cent of children in Syria, and 60 per cent of children in Somalia were living in close proximity to **high-intensity conflict** in 2017[95]

In 2017, there were 10,677 UN-verified reports of **children being killed or maimed**, a rise of nearly six per cent from the year before. [96]

In one report, **88 per cent** of boys between ages 14 and 17 who migrated across the Mediterranean to Italy experienced physical violence, and **77 per cent** reported being held against their will[97]

In one report, **75 per cent** of child refugees and migrants who came to Italy from the Central Mediterranean route reported experiences that suggest trafficking or exploitation [98]

Children as young as **8 years old** have been recruited into armed groups across the world[99]

In 2020, **168 million people** will need humanitarian assistance and protection. That is **1 in 45 people in the world**, the highest figure in decades[100]

According to a recent report from Save the Children, funding for child protection from 2010 to 2018 remains minimal, with an average share of **only 0.5% of total humanitarian funding**.[101]

CONFLICT AND CHILDREN ON THE MOVE MESSAGES

How are children affected by conflict?

Today, an unprecedented 70.8 million people have been forced from their homes — the highest number of internally displaced people, refugees and asylum seekers in history. Over half of those are under the age of 18. On top of that, there are countless children who have not been able to leave conflict-ridden areas: according to UNICEF, one in four of the world's children are currently living in a conflict zone. This places children's risk of all forms of violence at an impossibly heightened state.

Tell me more.

Every child has a right to protection. But in countries throughout the world, conflict and warfare have shattered children's childhoods.

Hundreds of thousands of children are dying every year, not only because of the direct impact of conflict, but because of the indirect effects as well, including malnutrition, disease, improper sanitation systems, and the breakdown of health care. The repercussions of conflict also include family separation, sexual abuse, trafficking and trauma.

In conflict- or disaster-stricken settings, children can become targets of violence by those they trust — within their homes, schools and communities. Families experiencing conflict have higher levels of stress placed on their shoulders, increasing the likelihood that they strike out against a child.

Children on the move are at a higher risk of experiencing sexual abuse and exploitation, whether that be at borders and checkpoints, during random stops by armed groups, or while kidnapped, imprisoned or held in detention centres.

Children on the move are also often escaping violence at home. A study on adolescent boys migrating across the Mediterranean found that almost one in three left because of violence or problems among their families.[102]

In cities around the world, children's homes and schools have been placed on the frontlines of conflict — often leading to the abduction, recruitment and enslavement of children.

Study after study has illustrated conflict's long-term damage to children's mental health. Exposure to conflict, violence and insecurity can affect children throughout their lifetimes, especially if they experience prolonged toxic stress.

In some cases, child marriage is used to facilitate migration out of conflict-affected countries and refugee camps – and in others, it has been used by armed groups as a weapon of war.

Children – especially adolescent boys over the age of 10 – are vulnerable to being recruited by armed groups in conflict-stricken settings. According to the annual UN CAAC reports, there were nearly 50,000 verified cases of children recruited and used by armed forces and groups from 2005 to 2016 – though the true number may be much higher.

Studies have shown children are more at-risk of facial and head trauma during warfare because they are more likely to pick up unexploded ordnance. To make things worse, children with blast injuries are more likely than adults to die.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL DISASTERS STATISTICS

Nearly **160 million children** live in areas of high or extremely high drought severity[103]

Over half a billion children live in extremely high flood occurrence zones[104]

Over 20 million children living in areas of high or extremely high drought severity also live in fragile or conflict-affected contexts[105]

Over 6 million children living in extremely high flood occurrence zones also live in fragile or conflict-affected contexts[106]

Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause **250,000 more deaths** each year[107]

From 2014 to 2018, there has been a six-fold increase in the number of people internally displaced by storms and flooding in the Caribbean, including 761,000 children[108]

CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL DISASTERS MESSAGES

How do violence and climate change interact?

Climate change is exacerbating conditions in some of the most fragile contexts of the world. As droughts drain livelihoods, hurricanes destroy homes, and floods dismantle sanitation systems, climate-induced poverty has pushed children into marriage, the workforce, and other exploitative conditions, including trafficking for sexual purposes and commercial sexual exploitation.

Climate change has also placed a strain on already-fractured governments, compounding the risk of political, social and economic stability. Throughout the world, this has resulted in new or renewed conflict, of which children are always the worst-affected.

Though the link between violence against children and climate change is still emerging, there is no doubt that natural disasters and conflict can increase children's risks of violence.

Tell me more.

Vulnerable populations are made more vulnerable by displacement – a common side effect of natural disasters, conflict and crisis.

During or after natural disasters, women and children are at greater risk of violence, including rape, sexual exploitation and assault. This is often because disasters create conditions that intensify pre-existing risk-factors for violence, such as stress and trauma.

Domestic violence within households can be exacerbated by conflict: after Hurricane Katrina hit the United States, for example, one study found that psychological victimization increased by over 10 percent for both men and women – and that physical violence against women doubled. [109]

Poor harvests, livestock loss, lower earnings and food insecurity was found to put pressure on men's traditional role as providers. As a result, some turn to alcohol to cope and can become more violent within the household.[110]

Disaster settings often contain characteristics that lead to increased violence. For example, during disasters, social systems and policing may collapse, leading to increased levels of violence that go unchecked. [111]

In periods of prolonged drought, women and girls make more frequent and longer journeys to obtain food or water, which makes them vulnerable to sexual assault. [112]

When people are displaced from their homes, they are often thrown into insecure environments – like camps for refugees and internally displaced persons – that lack proper protection mechanisms. More and more, displaced communities are relocating to urban areas, where they are even more at-risk of violence than in camps where they could receive services and protection.

Disasters increase the risk of children being separated from their caregivers. When this happens, children are at an increased risk of sexual violence, exploitation and other forms of abuse. [113]

When families experience poverty after a natural disaster, they often feel as though they have no choice but to force their child to work, even if those conditions are sexually, physically or commercially exploitative.

When families suffer the effects of climate change, they may marry their children to cope with their economic hardship. Child marriage puts millions of children – especially girls – at an increased risk of sexual and physical abuse, early pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other illnesses, and death during childbirth.

When a climate-related disaster destroys a community, it will often destroy that community's schools. Depending on the extent of the damage, it can take months – or even years – until that school is rebuilt. The longer children are out of school, the less likely they are to return.

CHILD LABOUR STATISTICS

In the world's poorest countries, slightly more than **1 in 4 children** are engaged in child labour[114]

152 million children are currently engaged in child labour, of which **73 million** were in hazardous work[115]

The Africa region and the Asia and Pacific region together host **nine out of every ten children** in child labour[116]

Africa ranks highest both in the percentage of children in child labour – **one-fifth** – and the absolute number of children in child labour – **72 million**[117]

Nearly **50 per cent** of children engaged in child labour are **5-11 years old**[118]

The agricultural sector accounts for the largest share – **71 per cent** – of child labourers[119]

A quarter of all children in the hazardous work group – **19 million children** – are aged 5-11 years[120]

10 million children are subjected to modern slavery[121]

CHILD LABOUR MESSAGES

What is child labour?

According to the International Labour Organization, child labour is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, potential and dignity, along with work that is harmful to children's physical and mental development.

Tell me more.

Child labour interferes with children's education by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, forcing them to drop out prematurely, or requiring them to split their time between school and excessively long, difficult work.

The worst forms of child labour can result in children becoming enslaved, being separated from their families, and being exposed to treacherous hazards and illnesses.

Often, child labour can expose children to dangerous working conditions, forcing them to work underground, under water, at dangerous heights, or in confined spaces. As part of this work, children are often forced to handle dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, creating an environment wrought with risk of injury.

Nearly 70 per cent of children engaged in child labour work in hazardous conditions, toiling away in mines, suffering abuse as domestic servants, burning their skin on chemicals, and breathing in pesticides drifting off crops – among many other circumstances.

Millions of young girls work as domestic servants – often without being paid. Once inside their employer's home, they are at unprecedented risk of exploitation and abuse, unable to hide, run or escape from someone they rely on for survival.

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