

**ENDING
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
CHILDREN:**
key messages
& statistics

Abridged version



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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 children⁴

One in two children experience violence every year⁵

Every seven minutes, an adolescent dies as a result of violence⁶

Children with disabilities are almost **four times more likely** to experience violence than non-disabled children⁷

Over one million children are reported missing every year⁸

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 caregivers¹⁰

One in every four children is living in a country affected by conflict or disaster¹¹

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 law¹²)

Worldwide, close to 130 million (more than one in three) students from age 13-15 experience bullying¹³

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 world¹⁵

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.



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