

## Violence in the home, school and community

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Every year, 1 billion children experience physical, sexual or psychological violence. Every five minutes, a child dies as a result of violence<sup>1</sup>. This violence is most commonly perpetrated by people with whom children interact every day, and often occurs in places where they should feel safe. Schools represent the potential to be protective and empowering spaces for children. When education systems are working effectively, schools form a crucial part of a functioning child protection system, identifying and referring at-risk children and providing support within the school. Schools are also an important entry-point to shape children's understanding of gender norms and roles, sexual consent and reproductive rights, supporting healthy relationships and non-violent behavior from a young age.

The kinds of violence experienced vary across different country contexts and depend on factors including poverty, gender, age, disability, ethnicity or sexual orientation. Worldwide, half of all school-age children (6 to 17) live in countries where corporal punishment at school is not fully prohibited<sup>2</sup>, leaving them without legal protection. Bullying is a reality for huge numbers of young people – as many as 1 in 3 students between the ages of 13 and 15 experience bullying<sup>3</sup>.

Violence also hampers learning and is detrimental to children's well-being. It decreases self-esteem, reduces attendance, lowers grades, and leads many children to drop out of school altogether. It also contributes to a destabilizing cycle of violence where child victims are more likely to be perpetrators or victims later in life. In conflict-affected settings the risks to children are even higher, and safe schools can provide refuge and normalcy. Studies have estimated that school-related gender-based violence costs around \$17 billion a year to low and middle-income countries<sup>4</sup>. Ending violence against children contributes to more peaceful, stable societies.

## Progress to date

Whether sexual exploitation for grades, corporal punishment in the classroom or bullying and harassment, all forms of violence in schools can and must be prevented. It is both the right and the smart thing to do – morally, socially and economically – as it enhances children’s chances of staying in school, increases their future employability and makes them less likely to repeat the cycle of violence.

To expand the political will and individual and collective action needed to end violence in schools, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, the United Kingdom and UNICEF are seeking partners to join an ambitious campaign. With elements of in-country support, communications and advocacy, the campaign seeks to leverage financing to affect change on the ground, including through the Fund to End Violence Against Children.

Since its inception in 2016, the Fund has awarded nearly US\$30 million to 31 projects combatting online child sexual exploitation and abuse and another 12 to address the prevention of violence against children facing conflict and crisis. This is through generous contributions from the Governments of the United Kingdom and Japan, and Human Dignity Foundation.

## What is needed?

The Fund is seeking investments to eliminate violence in the daily lives of children, with a focus on advancing programming to end violence in schools. The campaign’s aim is to endorse and support legislation and policy development; child friendly reporting, referrals and response; community and school engagement; and child participation. Funded projects could be targeted around improving regulations and law; delivering school and community-based advocacy or training; and making school facilities safe. Each project would entail a strong focus on child safeguarding and would need to demonstrate how it is contributing to policies, programmes and practices that protect children from all forms of violence in and around school, and where possible support national priorities. Besides addressing violence in schools directly, a secondary gain will be improving the evidence base on what works to tackle school-based violence.

1. Hillis, Susan, James Mercy, Adaugo Amobi and Howard Kress, ‘Global Prevalence of Past-Year Violence Against Children: A systematic review and minimum estimates’, *Pediatrics*, vol. 137, no. 3, March 2016, e20154079, available at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/01/25/peds.2015-4079>
2. A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents, UNICEF, November 2017
3. A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents, UNICEF, November 2017
4. Fact Sheet: What is the Cost of School-Related Gender-Based Violence? USAID, July 2015

To find out more and to discuss the opportunity of contributing to the Fund, please contact:

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The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and its associated multi-donor trust fund support the commitments made in the Sustainable Development Goals to end all forms of violence against children by 2030. The Fund aims to prove through catalytic investment that evidence-based programming yields tangible results and there is an ‘investment case’ to be made.

