



SMALL VOICES 
Big Dreams
2019

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN
AS EXPLAINED BY CHILDREN





VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AS EXPLAINED BY CHILDREN

Small Voices Big Dreams 2019. Violence against children as explained by children

© ChildFund Alliance

© Armando Bello, Marta Martínez Muñoz, Iván Rodríguez Pascual and María Soledad Palacios Gálvez

Full or partial reproduction of this document by any means or procedure is permissible, provided that the source is duly cited and that the text is not used for commercial purposes.

Printed in Spain and in New York

Published by: Educo and Capitals Alliance

ISBN: 978-84-945819-9-1

Legal deposit: B 16878-2019

Coordination: Sofía Esteve Quesada (Educo) and Elodia Giménez José (Educo)

Research team and authors: Armando Bello (coord.), Marta Martínez Muñoz (Enclave de Evaluación), Iván Rodríguez Pascual (Huelva University) and María Soledad Palacios Gálvez (Huelva University)

Correction: Christine Antunes (Educo)

Translation: Rebecca Gale (Educo)

Design: Elena Martí Querol (Educo)

Layout: Elena Martí Querol (Educo) and Anaïs Lopéz Villamarín (Educo)

Photography: ChildFund Alliance archive, Educo archive, Shutterstock, Pixabay, Morguefile

Read the full report: <https://www.educo.org/media/descarga/SVBD/Small-Voices-Big-Dreams-2019-Full-Technical-Manual.pdf>

For more information about the issues addressed in this document please contact:

info@educos.org

info@childfundalliance.org

The photographs used in this document are solely for illustrative purposes and should under no circumstances be interpreted as reflecting the content.

The names of the children have been changed to protect their identity.

The information in this publication is correct at the time of printing.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This survey would not have been possible without the dedication of ChildFund Alliance member organizations' staff, volunteers and field assistants around the world who spent weeks talking to children and documenting their opinions and ideas.

We also thank the more than 50 schools and community centers that lent their support, an estimated 20 civil society organizations, and the following consultancy firms: Netquest, Metroline Research, Kantar Sifo and Lightspeed.

Our deepest and sincerest thanks to the thousands of children who participated in this study and shared their perceptions with us.





CONTENTS

CHILDREN’S REFLECTIONS	2
FOREWORD	3
INFOGRAPHIC	5
INTRODUCTION. No child is immune to violence	9
CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AND VIOLENCE	11
Are their rights recognized?	11
Children’s rights, a shared task	12
MANIFESTATIONS OF VIOLENCE AND ITS CAUSES	15
Types of violence and its consequences	15
The causes of violence	21
PERCEPTION OF RISK AND PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE	25
Spaces where violence takes place	25
Protection agents and aggressors	31
CONCLUSION. Children call adults to “listen to us”	35
ANNEXES	43
Annex 1. Methodological note	43
Annex 2. The questionnaire	47





“WE NEED TO BE LISTENED TO; OUR VOICE IS IMPORTANT”

“They are not going to believe you.” **Yesica**

“Violence is something that traumatizes everyone.” **Alana**

“The first person I would tell would be an adult, but it must be someone I trust.” **Ibai**

“We need to be listened to. Our voice is important.” **Noemí**

“Every day women in this country are killed, we are disappearing, at risk from extinction. We must look after ourselves.” **Elena María**

“Children have a wonderful brain. We have our own opinions and just because we are children it doesn’t mean that everything we say is nonsense.” **Alba**

“There are various types of violence, physical, verbal, and emotional, which means that they attack your emotions.” **Ana Rosa**

“I think that it happens most of all when parents or relatives are not there to protect them.” **Fábio**

“Adults should know about children’s rights and participation.” **Aarya**

“What those of us that are here can do is to play our part and start to plant something good in our communities, help the children that we have nearby. But we must each play our part.”
Elena María

“What adults need to do most of all is try to understand what happens to children and how we are feeling.” **Ainhua**

“Because lots of people think that when you are a child your opinion will be ridiculous.” **Lucía**



Children...

- ...do not believe their **opinions matter**
- ...want more **love and communication**
- ...do not feel sufficiently **protected**
- ...urge adults to recognize and respect **their rights**
- ...think politicians are the ones **who least protect them**
- ...ask for spaces where they **feel safe**
- ...call for an end to **corporal punishment**
- ...are aware of **gender-based violence**
- ...seek easier access to **protection resources**
- ...want to be part of their own **empowerment**

A WORLD WHERE ALL CHILDREN LIVE FREE FROM VIOLENCE



“ *There is a need for a greater sense of urgency. Thirty years after adoption of the CRC, where are we? We need to do more, better and faster, to ensure no child is left behind.*”

Dr. Najat Maala M'jid,
Special Representative to
the UN Secretary-General on
Violence against Children

Violence against children is a global dilemma that cuts across borders, class, culture, ethnicity, race, gender and socioeconomic status. More than one billion children experience violence and exploitation every year. No matter where they live, and no matter who they are, no child is immune to violence.

Understanding all of the dimensions of violence against children is key to creating a world in which children live free from violence. However, it is very difficult to achieve lasting solutions if we do not know what children themselves are thinking. Children have much to contribute to our mission to end violence against children, and the success of any policy or action aimed at children depends on our ability to engage and respond to their voices, opinions and expectations.

As part of our Small Voices Big Dreams study, nearly 5,500 boys and girls in 15 countries revealed their own perceptions about the dimensions of violence against children. The results are shocking: more than 40% believe children are not sufficiently protected against violence and one in two feels that adults in their country do not listen to their opinions on issues that matter greatly to them.

Another clear message from the children who participated in the study is that the adults who should be protecting children are sometimes the ones harming them. The result is that children do not always trust the adults who are responsible for them, and they do not always feel safe, even in spaces created for and occupied by children.

Fear, low self-esteem, loneliness and suffering are just a few of the emotions children described feeling regarding the many types of violence that are present in their lives. Children have the inherent right to achieve their full potential, yet this will only be realized if they live in environments free from all forms of violence.

As a global network of 11 child-focused development organizations helping nearly 13 million children and their families in more than 60 countries, ChildFund Alliance works with and for children to prevent violence against children at all levels. The Alliance played a key role in ensuring the inclusion of a stand-alone target on ending violence against children in the Sustainable Development Goals (Target 16.2) and we continually promote the meaningful participation of children in decisions that affect them.

This year, as we mark the 30th anniversary of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), we can and must do better for the millions of children left behind. When it comes to achieving lasting change, we have a moral, legal and economic responsibility to do more. Children are a vital part of the social change that is needed to achieve a world free from violence. We want them to be agents of change and to be part of their own empowerment. Most importantly, they want it too.

I hope you will join us in our mission to create a world for children that is free from violence. Together we can make a real difference for the world's most valuable resource—children.

Sincerely,

Meg Gardinier
Secretary General
ChildFund Alliance



Violence against children is a global problem

No matter where they live, and no matter who they are, no child is immune to violence. Understanding all dimensions of violence against children is key to eradicating it. Incorporating and responding to children's voices, opinions and expectations is vital to the success of any policy or action aimed at helping children.

1 in 2 children surveyed said that in their country **adults do not listen** to their opinion on issues that matter to them



9 in 10 believe that the most important thing adults can do to end violence against children is **to love children more and listen to what they have to say**



More than 40% believe that **children are not sufficiently protected against violence** in the country they live in



Only 18.1% think that the **people who govern act to protect them**



Children feel safe:

- in their home
- with their parents (especially with their mothers)

9 in 10 believe that **recognizing and being aware of their rights** is a key factor for **preventing and tackling violence**



Children feel unsafe:

- on the internet
- on the street



Girls fear bad things will happen to them, while **boys fear they will be forced to do bad things**



69% of children **reject violence** as an educational tool



More than 88% think they should seek **the help of an adult when faced with a violent situation,** but most of them encounter barriers when accessing these resources



63.8% do not agree with the idea that **children cannot do anything to put an end to violence**

CHILDFUND ALLIANCE



**11 CHILD-FOCUSED
DEVELOPMENT
ORGANIZATIONS**



**HELPING NEARLY
13 MILLION CHILDREN
AND THEIR FAMILIES**



**ACTIVE IN
MORE THAN
60 COUNTRIES**



**WORKING TO
END VIOLENCE
AGAINST CHILDREN**

MEMBERS OF CHILDFUND ALLIANCE

barnfonden
Member of ChildFund

Active in 25 countries
Headquarters: Sweden

ChldFund
Australia

Active in 32 countries
Headquarters: Australia

ChldFund
Deutschland

Active in 32 countries
Headquarters: Germany

ChldFund
International

Active in 25 countries
Headquarters: United States

ChldFund
Ireland

Active in 3 countries
Headquarters: Ireland

ChldFund
Japan

Active in 3 countries
Headquarters: Japan

ChldFund
Korea

Active in 6 countries
Headquarters: Korea

ChldFund
New Zealand

Active in 6 countries
Headquarters: New Zealand

**Christian
Children's
Fund**
of Canada

Active in 12 countries
Headquarters: Canada

educo
Member of ChildFund Alliance

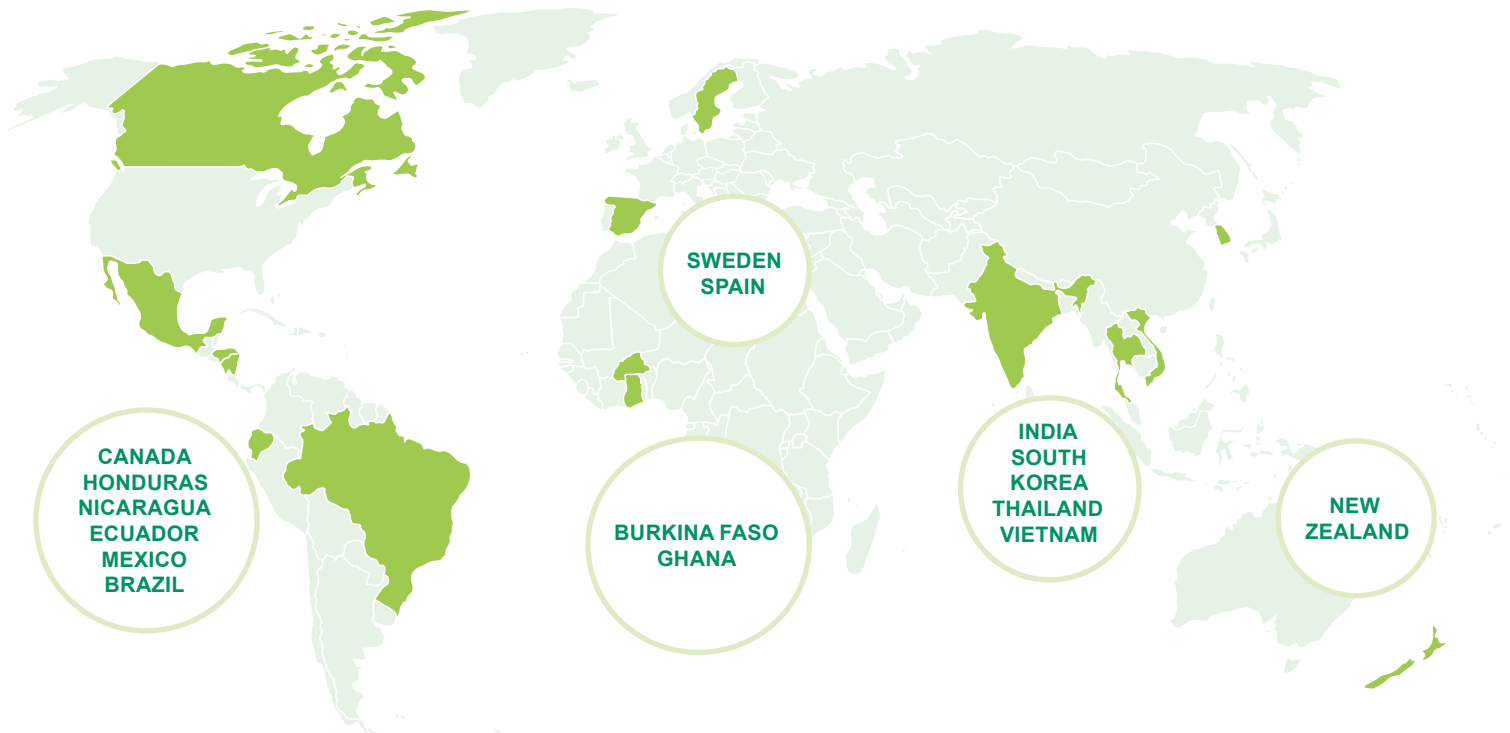
Active in 13 countries
Headquarters: Spain

**Un Enfant
par la Main**
Ensemble, construisons leur avenir !

Active in 17 countries
Headquarters: France

SMALL VOICES BIG DREAMS 2019

MAP OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES



2,615
girls

2,657
boys

23
did not state
their sex





INTRODUCTION

No child is immune to violence

All children have the right to adequate and effective protection against any and all types of violence. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC),¹ the most widely ratified international treaty in history, defines violence against children as “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.”

This year the CRC marks its 30th anniversary, and despite tremendous progress globally, the state of affairs of children, who represent 36% of the global population, continues to be alarming. **Every year nearly one billion children in the world suffer from some type of physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect.**²

No child in any country can be considered immune from violence because violence, which takes many different forms, transcends all geographical barriers and societal differences such as gender, religion, ethnicity, disability, as well as socioeconomic status. Violence invades almost all areas of the lives of children at every stage of their childhood and happens at the hands of actors who are often from a child’s most immediate environment.³

The findings of this report confirm the need for continued coordinated and global efforts to ensure children can live in a world free from violence.

Having access to comprehensive and evidence-based data, which enables the documentation, visibility and understanding of violence in all its forms, is the first step to eliminating it. But this cannot transpire without children sharing their experiences, knowledge and opinions and contributing their ideas and solutions to address this worldwide epidemic.

Small Voices Big Dreams (SVBD) is an initiative involving all the members of ChildFund Alliance. Our aim is to elevate the voices of children on issues that directly affect them. We firmly believe that if we stand alongside children, we can create sustainable solutions that protect and promote their rights and well-being.

In this edition of SVBD, approximately 5,500 children from 15 countries with very diverse geographical origins, living conditions and cultural traditions reveal their perceptions about violence against children in all its dimensions. Participating countries include Mexico, Brazil, Honduras, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Canada, Spain, Sweden, Burkina Faso, Ghana, South Korea, India, Thailand, Vietnam and New Zealand.

Children can and should play a key role in making fundamental decisions about matters related to violence against children.

Small Voices Big Dreams listens to and takes into account children’s

Children can and should play a key role in making fundamental decisions about matters related to violence against children

1 United Nations (1989). *Resolution 44/25 Convention on the Rights of the Child*. New York: United Nations General Assembly.

2 World Health Organization (2017). *INSPIRE. Seven strategies to end violence against children*. Washington D.C: OMS

3 Ibid.

opinions in order to best understand a global problem that has profound impacts on the lives and development of children worldwide. Recognizing and promoting the active role of children as rights holders and agents in their own lives contributes to reducing their vulnerability and becomes a factor for protection in and of itself.

On the other hand, children who have participated in this study consider the lack of recognition of children's rights as one of the possible causes of violence, as well as a type of violence.

This report presents the main conclusions from the 2019 Small Voices Big Dreams Technical Manual,⁴ which outlines in great detail the perceptions and opinions of children and adolescents from all over the world regarding the multiple dimensions of violence exercised against them. This research does not intend to replicate existing research about the causes or the effects of violence on children. Rather, it is a comprehensive analysis—by children—of the violence that is a reality for so many young people across the globe.

We are hopeful that world leaders will be spurred to action, by the compelling—albeit, tragic—stories of the role violence plays in the lives of the world's most valuable asset—our children. May we listen to their voices and be moved to action to restore their lives with the dignity and well-being they deserve.



Nine out of ten children believe that recognizing and being aware of their rights is a key factor for preventing and tackling violence



⁴ Bello, A., Martínez, M., Rodríguez, P., Palacios, M., (2019). Small Voices Big Dreams – Full Technical Report. Barcelona: Educo. <https://www.educo.org/media/descarga/SVBD/Small-Voices-Big-Dreams-2019-Full-Technical-Manual.pdf>



“Violence is the abuse of the rights and freedom of children”

CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AND VIOLENCE



Are their rights recognized?

The prevention and eradication of violence against children requires recognition and respect for the rights of children as individuals who are empowered to act fully and autonomously. It is therefore important that both children and adults know about and promote these rights.

The main objective of this study is to share the opinions of children from different geographies and societal status as to the phenomenon of violence against children in all of its dimensions. In this section, violence is addressed using a rights-based approach, reflecting the perception of children about their rights and the extent to which they are respected by the adult population.

In general terms, children appear to be very aware of their rights. More than 7 out of 10 respondents express that, just like adults, all children have their own rights. However, almost half of the children interviewed say

that they do not know about the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children believe that the lack of recognition of their rights by adults is not just a possible cause of violence but is a type of violence itself. Nine out of ten children agree that recognizing and raising awareness about children’s rights is a fundamental factor for preventing and tackling violence.

“Grown-ups should listen to what children say.”
Karan, 12 years old, India

“Society should give a voice to children, so that they feel safe and protected.” Rimpal, 12 years old, India

“Violence is the abuse of the rights and freedom of children.” Nanyamka, 12 years old, Ghana

Almost half of the children interviewed say that they do not know about the Convention on the Rights of the Child

In the group interviews, children express that there is no cause that justifies their rights not being recognized, because they should be guaranteed and respected always, regardless of the context children live in.

Children’s rights, a shared task

Children understand their rights as a shared task, both for adults and children, and ask for greater awareness about them.

“Children should be aware of children’s rights.”
Aarya, 12 years old, India

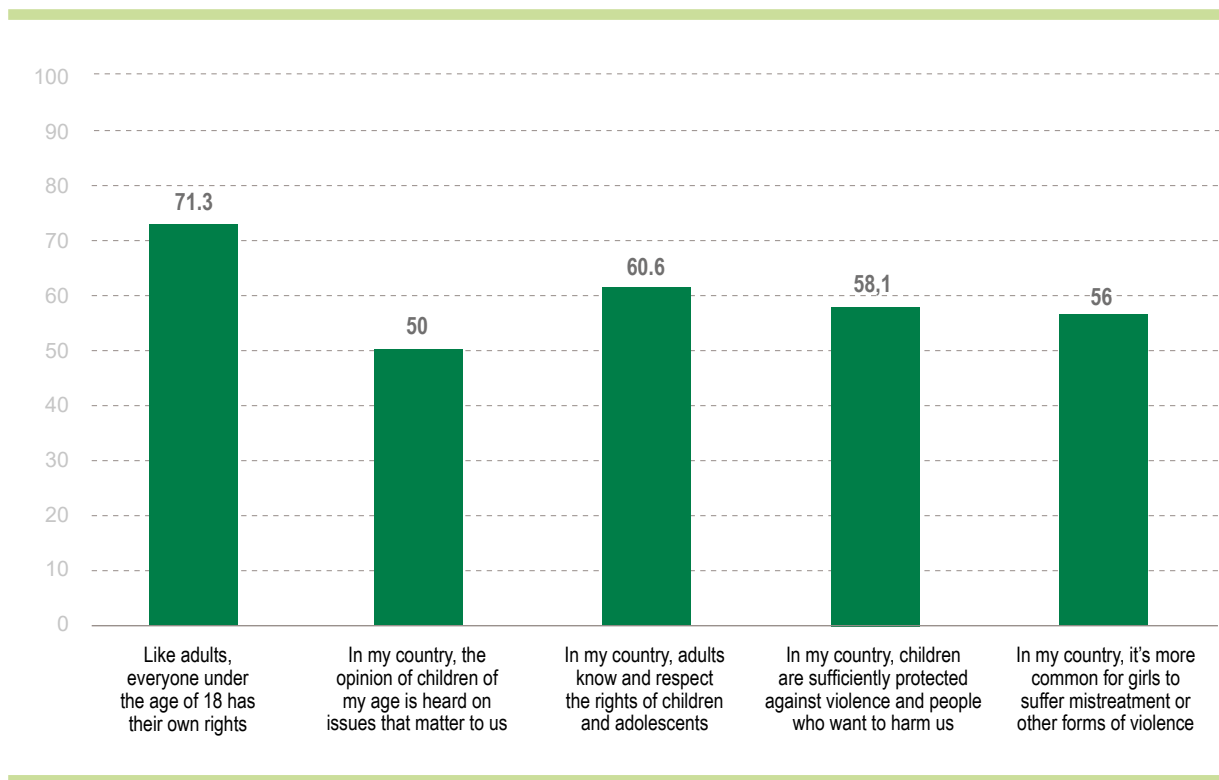
“We [children] all have the same strength, the same rights and the same obligations.” Letizia, 10 years old, Mexico

“Children, despite being children, have a wonderful brain which we use for things and we have our own opinions and just because we are children it doesn’t mean that everything we say is nonsense.” Alba, 13 years old,⁵ Spain

Although 60.6% of children appear to be satisfied with the extent to which adults know about and respect their rights, one in two believes that in their countries, their opinions about the issues that are important to them are not listened to. More than 40% think that children are not protected enough from violence.

Graph 1: Opinion about children’s rights and their fulfilment

% of children who “mostly agree” or “totally agree” with each sentence



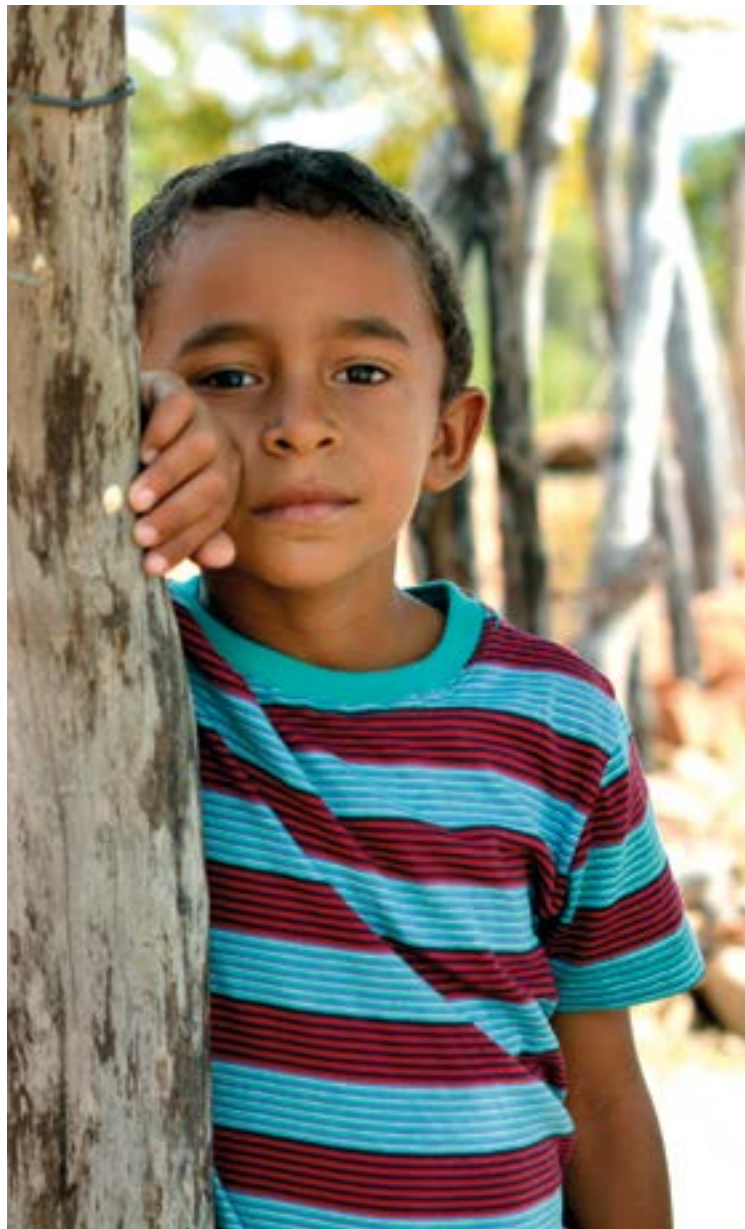
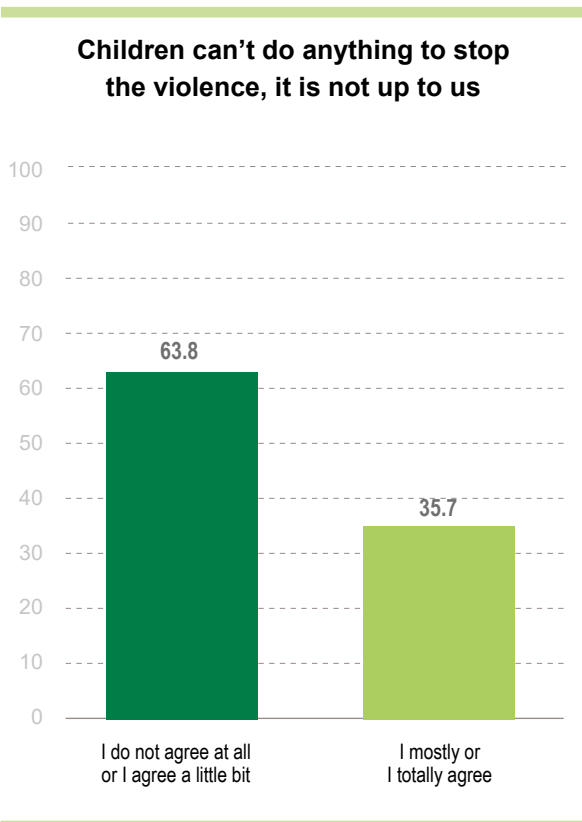
⁵ The population surveyed in this study was aged between 10 and 12, with very few exceptions. Notably, one boy and two girls participated in the group interviews when they were 13 years old, and their testimonies are incorporated in this manual.

The children who live in South Korea, Sweden, Spain and Canada are more satisfied about the way in which their rights are respected and how they are protected from violence. For example, in these countries, 80% of young people surveyed think that adults know about and respect their rights. In contrast, only 40.6% of young people in Brazil and 32.8% of youth in India believe that their rights are respected by adults⁶.

Graph 2 shows that children are aware that their participation is also key to putting an end to violence. Children are an essential part of the path towards a world free from violence. In this regard, a clear majority do not agree with the idea that children cannot do anything to put an end to violence.

Graph 2: Opinion about what children can do to put an end to violence

% of children who “do not agree at all or agree a little bit” or “mostly or totally agree”



More than 40% think that children are not protected enough from violence



⁶ For more details about the information provided, see: Bello, A., Martínez, M., Rodríguez, P., Palacios, M., (2019). Small Voices Big Dreams – Informe Técnico. Barcelona: Educo. <https://www.educo.org/media/descarga/SVBD/Small-Voices-Big-Dreams-2019-Full-Technical-Manual.pdf>

“JOINING FORCES” TO SECURE CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AND END VIOLENCE AGAINST THEM

Thirty years after global leaders promised to protect the rights of all children, Joining Forces—a partnership of six leading child-focused organizations, including ChildFund Alliance—says that millions of children have been left behind.

In the group’s first joint publication—*A Second Revolution: Thirty years of child rights and the unfinished agenda*, released in June 2019—the Joining Forces partners highlight the millions of children who are not in school and who face poverty, exploitation, violence, neglect, and abuse. They call on the global community to fulfill the broken promises of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and to take bold action to help those who continue to suffer. The report points to the more than 5 million children who die each year from preventable causes; 95,000 children who are murdered annually; 15 million adolescent girls who report experiencing forced sex; and 64 million children who lack access to primary education.

The Child Rights Now! Second Revolution global report focuses on the status of children’s rights in 17 countries and aims to integrate a child rights focus into measures aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. As ChildFund Alliance Secretary General Meg Gardinier said during the release of the report, “We must do better. This is a moral, legal and economic failure that the world can ill afford.”



Joining Forces: Child Rights Now! (2019) *A Second Revolution: Thirty years of child rights, and the unfinished agenda*.
<https://childfundalliance.org/news-and-views/in-the-news/469-joining-forces-child-rights-now>





“It is an act in which an individual harms another person physically, mentally and emotionally”

MANIFESTATIONS OF VIOLENCE AND ITS CAUSES



A global phenomenon, but with very different manifestations depending on the context

Although in global terms many common trends can be identified in the children’s opinions about violence against children and its different dimensions, there are also a number of differences in the way in which the interviewees perceive and experience this phenomenon depending on their country of origin.

Types of violence and its consequences

One of the objectives of our research was to learn from children their perspectives on the different

manifestations and types of violence that are inflicted on them.

Violence is not an invisible phenomenon for children, and many of their manifestations and forms are widely recognized by the child population. However, while there are types of violence that are more explicit and visible, others are more subtle, and therefore, more difficult for children to recognize.

There are types of violence that cause harm, but are not seen

The more direct forms of violence against children such as **sexual abuse** and **physical violence**, as well as **participation in a war or in organized crime**, are considered clear examples of violence by more than 80% of the respondents. In contrast, they do not always see forbidding children from playing in a public

Physical violence and sexual violence are among the most mentioned forms of violence in all the countries

space or the deprivation of material needs as a form of violence, perhaps because they are more structural or impersonal manifestations of violence against children. Humiliation, discrimination, lack of freedom for girls to make decisions about their lives, or the lack of access to basic services are also considered forms of violence, but they appear in a more ambivalent way in their discussions.

Graph 3 shows the level of visibility of the different manifestations of violence among the child population. It can be observed that greater recognition of certain forms of violence means more visibility and awareness, and less recognition means less visibility.

The analysis of the discussions of the children in the group interviews largely confirms these results. Physical violence and sexual violence are among the most mentioned forms of violence in all the countries, but with varying intensities and meanings.

Children understand physical maltreatment as “any kind of pain” caused in different ways, including “striking, attacking and hitting,” generally on purpose, unconditionally or without reason, and on a repeated basis.

Violence is also manifested through **sexual insinuations, rape and sexual abuse**.

“

To slap unconditionally is violence.”

Joohee, 12 years old, Korea

“

Violence is when someone is attacked and can cause injuries or the death of the person.”

Ama, 12 years old, Ghana

“

Hitting a child every day is violence.”

Awa, 10 years old, Burkina Faso

“

Touching someone’s body without permission.”

Sohee, 12 years old, Korea

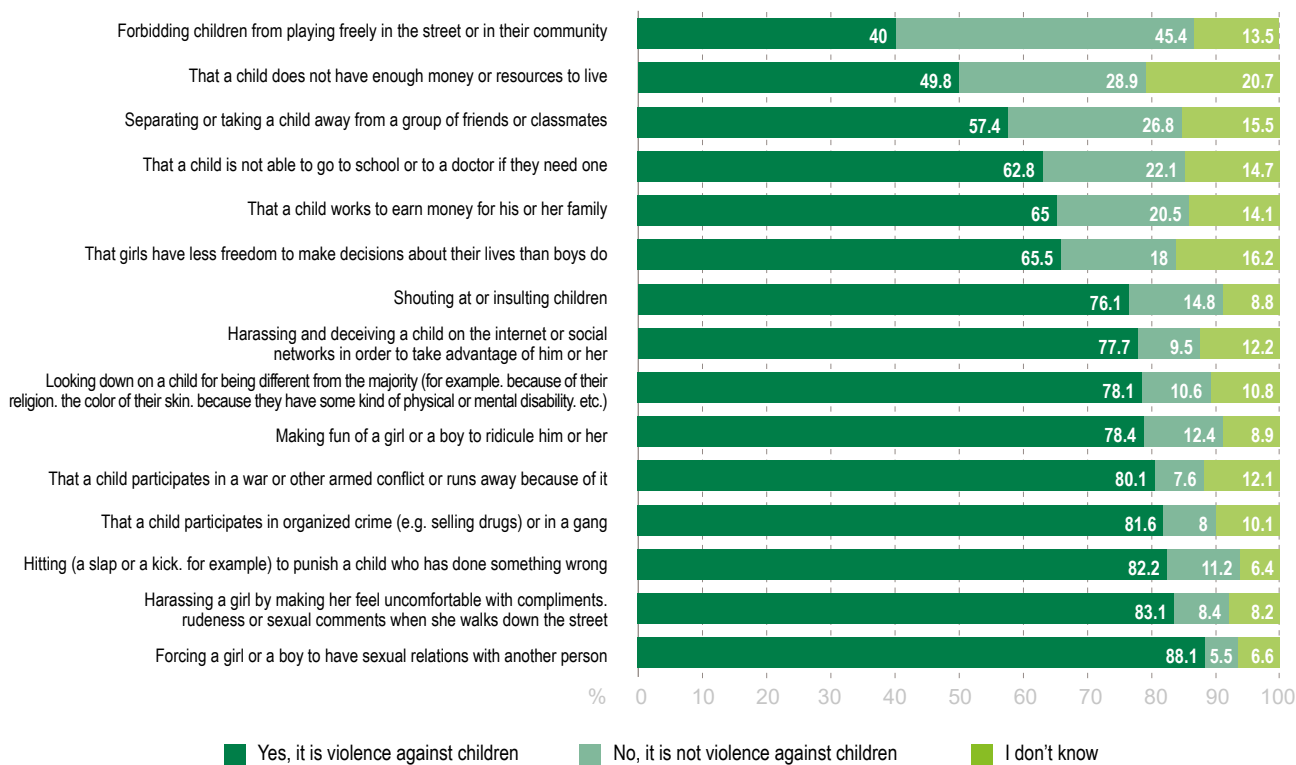




Graph 3: Recognition of the different manifestations of violence

% of children who do or do not recognize each of the manifestations suggested

Which of the following things do you think is an example of violence against children?



“*Sexual insinuation is also serious violence.*”
Suk-Hee, 12 years old, Korea

“*When they try to abuse you sexually.*”
Guadalupe, 10 years old, Mexico

Another kind of violence mentioned often in the interviews in all of the countries included in the survey of children for this report is “**psychological and verbal maltreatment**,” which aims to hurt using words and insults as a type of emotional abuse.

“*But there is also verbal violence, and psychological and physical abuse.*” Alexandre, 12 years old, Brazil

“*Violence is the act in which one individual hurts another, physically, mentally and emotionally.*”
Dzifa, 11 years old, Ghana

“*Prejudices, lots of prejudices, because the black people that live in the favelas, people think bad things about them.*” Bruno, 12, years old, Brazil

At the same time, there are very pronounced differences between the different countries, and in some of them, the children very clearly define some specific manifestations as types of violence that at a global level have not received much support.

There are types of violence that happen more when the living conditions are worse

Children from countries with lower levels of development and higher rates of inequality generally experienced higher rates of structural forms of violence, like forced child labor, material deprivation and lack of access to basic services. In the group interviews, the children from Honduras, Ghana and Burkina Faso mention different situations like labor exploitation, domestic chores in the case of girls, as well as episodes of abandonment, begging, trafficking and the danger represented by the presence of organized crime.

“Hitting a child and forcing them to go and get water from the well is violence.” Haoua, 11 years old, Burkina Faso

“For boys, child labor in particular. Most of them are on the farms when they should be in school.” Addae, 12 years old, Ghana

“The children that are on the street, that clean windows, collect bottles, sell mangos... Their rights are not being fulfilled, they don't eat, they don't study, they don't own anything, they don't have the freedom to play, the freedom to lead a normal life.” Maricruz, 12 years old, Honduras

The presence of abandonment, in particular abandoning children with illnesses or not helping them in difficult situations, is also present in their concerns.

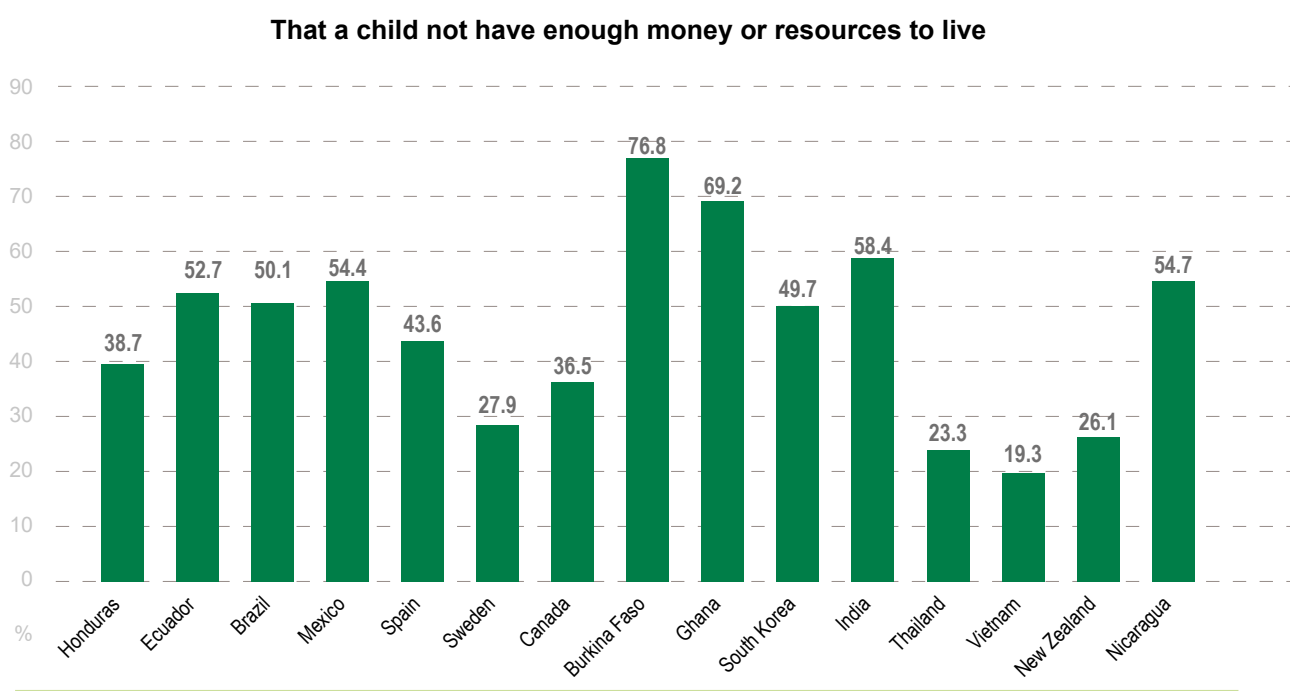
“Not helping children that are in difficult situations.” Payal, 11 years old, India

“Avoiding and abandoning children with illnesses.” Shraddha, 11 years old, India

At the same time, a significant increase can be seen in the proportion of children who identify the act of forbidding children from playing in the street or in the community as a form of violence in countries including

Graph 4 : It is violence if a child does not have enough money or resources to live

% of children who say it is a form of violence to deprive a child of the means or resources to live





Girls identify certain forms of violence more than boys do

Harassment of a sexual nature in the street is well recognized by both boys and girls as a form of violence, but more so among girls, with 84.1% thinking it is a form of violence compared to 82% of boys. The same is true for the statement **girls have less freedom than boys to make decisions about their lives**.



There is a group of young people around 21 years old in my neighborhood. I don't suffer from abuse there, it's more like psychological, a girl goes past them and they say 'goodbye my love' or say how pretty she is and how lovely, and that is the lack of respect there is."

Brenda, 12 years old, Honduras

While boys talk more about the danger of being incited to do bad things, girls talk more about the danger of bad things happening to them

Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nicaragua, and particularly in India. In contrast, this increase is very small in places including Thailand, New Zealand and Sweden.

Moreover, the proportion of children who identify as being harassed or deceived on the internet or on social media is much higher in the countries with a very high Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI), which is probably a consequence of more widespread access to the internet in these contexts and at this age. The proportion of children who think that harassing and tricking a child via the internet or on social media to take advantage of them is violence in countries with a high IHDI exceeds 93%, while among children from countries with a medium or low IHDI it is 65.6%.



My sister for example, she went to a secondary school and well... it seems, I don't know, I don't know why but... this group didn't like her, and well... they started to insult her on social media." Ibai, 12 years old, Spain

In their discussions there is also a clear difference in relation to the type of violence children are vulnerable to according to whether they are boys or girls. While boys talk more about the danger of being incited to do bad things, girls talk more about the danger of bad things happening to them.

According to the children's testimonies, boys are at greater risk of being kidnapped or robbed, or of being victims of forced labor or organized crime. Meanwhile girls are much more prone to being exposed to sexual violence, forced marriages and domestic work, which is typically not even considered work—unlike the work boys do outside the home.



Girls are raped and boys are forced to work very hard and are treated like slaves." Dzifa, 11 years old, Ghana

The differences, according to gender, manifest themselves in different intensities and forms in the different countries and look very different depending on the context. Therefore, in countries such as India, Ghana and Burkina Faso, the differences are more pronounced. Girls suffer from higher frequencies of rape and sexual harassment and are more frequently subjected to other **specific forms of violence** including domestic work and forced marriages.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE ACCORDING TO CHILDREN

Sadness Low self-esteem
 Defeated **TRAUMA** Loneliness
 Feeling guilty Run away from home Anger PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS
Embarrassed Depression Self-harm
 No support **Suicide** **Rejected** Hate **WORTHLESS**
A desire to disappear Falling ill They don't love themselves
 Like they are not good enough because nobody else loves them
POVERTY Unwanted **Scared** Unhappiness
 Teenage pregnancy Life on the streets
DRUG ABUSE Suffering **School dropout** **Fear**
 Resentment Harming others
Sorrow Emotional scars Distrust

“Some of the girls, they are not allowed to go to school.”
 Akosua, 11 years old, Ghana

“And the boys, there are gangs that take their organs, kill them, for them there is a difference between boys and girls. The girls are raped and the boys have their organs taken to be sold.”
 Adriana, 10 years old, Mexico

“Yes, there are differences between boys and girls in my house. For example, if they buy clothes for my brother they buy three things, but for me just one. Then I feel very sad. They give preference to sons.” Shaurya, 11 years old, India

“The girls that get married at a very early age will suffer a lot. They suffer from physical and emotional abuse.”
 Prafull, 12 years old, India

“When girls get home from school, they get straight to work. When the boys put their schoolbags down, they start playing, they don't want to help the girls, they can't be sent to buy things, they are told to leave their schoolbags and go and get water to wash themselves.” Aïssata, 11 years old, Burkina Faso

“I go to the mines. There in the mines there is a girl that earns money for her family, she sells oranges, food... We ask her why she has to sell things, and she says she is selling in order to be able to study because her parents can't pay for her to study.” Karan, 12 years old, India

“Girls are mistreated. They mistreat them. And the boys are sent to work on farms or serving others.”
 Abena, 10 years old, Ghana

The causes of violence

According to children, in violent situations there is always a power imbalance between victim and aggressor. Sometimes this violence is due to causes that are out of adults' control, sometimes it is due to the negligent behavior of adults when it comes to protecting children.

Globally, children highlight **three main causes of violence**. These refer to children's own defenselessness, the cycle of violence and to the loss of self-control due to substance use.

The defenselessness of children is one of the causes of violence most mentioned, both when the aggressor is an adult and when it is another child. **Almost six out of ten children think that violence occurs because they cannot defend themselves from adults or older children.**

“Those people are always older than us, so they have a more of an advantage to do bad stuff to us.”
Ana Rosa, 11 years old, Mexico

“For example, the older children that go to secondary school or high school start to mistreat us, insult us or say bad things about our families.”
Guadalupe, 10 years old, Mexico

When the aggressors are adults, another of the most common causes, according to 52.1% of children, is their lack of their self-control as a result of **drug and/or alcohol abuse** because “they are drunk and can't control themselves”.

“Depression, alcoholic drinks, smoking, drugs, but not just alcohol, drugs and things like that, because there are lots of normal people that don't have problems and do bad things to children. But that type of person, I think it is someone with no scruples or shame, who just hurts other people for no reason.” Juliana, 11 years old, Brazil



COUNTING PENNIES

Despite recognition within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the human and economic costs and overall scale of violence against children, very little had been known about the nature of expenditures targeted at preventing, or responding to, violence against children. ChildFund Alliance and partners including World Vision, UNICEF, Save the Children and others collaborated on a detailed study that for the first time reviewed official development assistance (ODA) allocated to ending violence against children (EVAC).

The resulting report, *Counting Pennies: A review of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to end violence against children*, found that total ODA spending in 2015 was \$174 billion. Of that amount, less than 0.6 percent was allocated to ending violence against children. This is equivalent to less than \$0.65 per child in aid-receiving countries to end a scourge that affects more than one billion children every year.

According to the detailed study, 80% of spending on EVAC was concentrated among six donors; the largest recipients tended to be poorer countries with low government resources or middle-income countries suffering from conflict/refugee crises; and the highest providers of ODA for EVAC were Canada, followed by the U.S. and Sweden.

Counting Pennies: A review of official development assistance to end violence against children (2017).
<https://childfundalliance.org/resources/publications/counting-pennies>

A high percentage of the surveyed children believe that adults who mistreat a child have been victims of the cycle of violence themselves and think that the fact that **they were abused in their childhood** is a factor that influences this aggression, both in adults and children.

“In reality I think they have not had enough opportunities in their lives to enjoy their childhood or their adolescence.” Patricia, 11 years old, Brazil

“They can be adolescents or parents that had a very difficult childhood, and so that has stayed with them and they can't let go of it. So they make other children pay for it so that they feel like they did when they were young.” Ava, Canada⁷

“Or from their homes, for example in school, there are some children that bring that from home; their parents insult them and hit them and all that... They memorize that, and the child thinks that maybe that it is OK because in their home that happens, they get to school and there they take it out on other children.” Alexa, 12 years old, Mexico

Education does not tolerate violence

In general, children reject violence as a possible **educational tool** or as something “necessary” to educate them. A clear majority of children, more than 69%, do not accept that it is necessary to hit children to educate them.

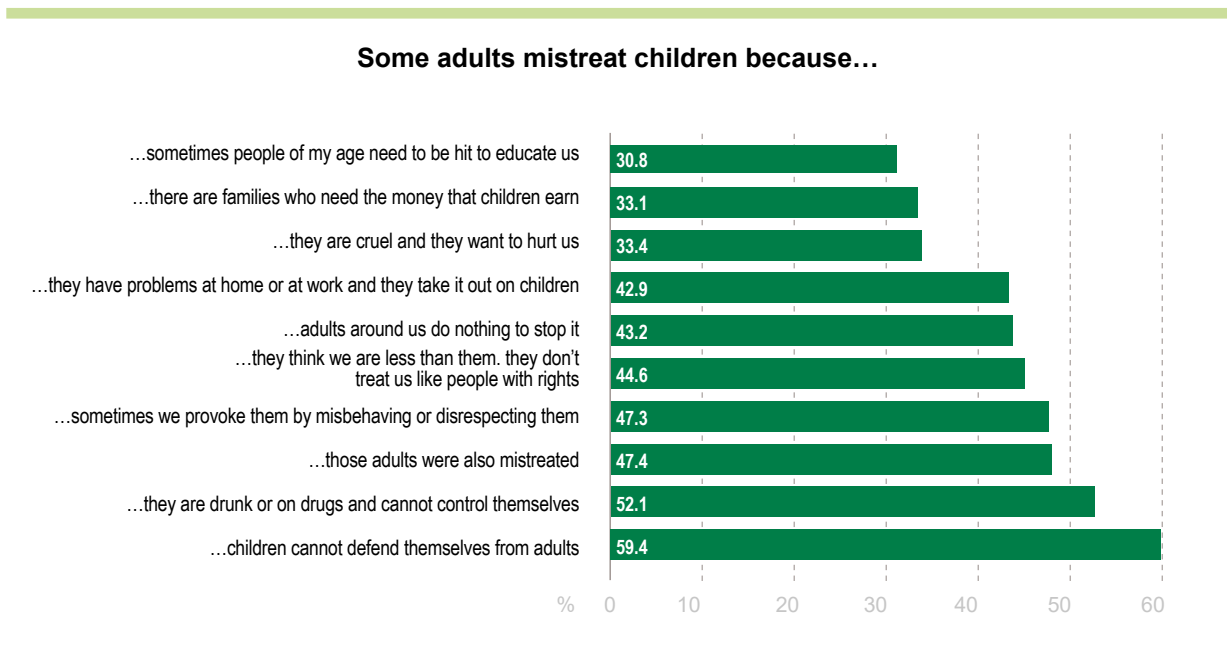
“No, there is no need to insult or hit a child for any reason. It is not fair.” Dhaneshwari, 11 years old, India

“Why is there a need to hit children?” Aarya, 12 years old, India

“I don't think it's necessary to hit a child and it's not nice.” Chloé, 12 years old, Canada

However, 30% of children do see corporal punishment as a disciplinary tool. These responses are more common among children in Asian and African countries.

Graph 5: Causes of violence carried out by adults
% of children who “mostly” or “totally” agree with each sentence



⁷ Due to data gathering issues, some children's ages do not appear in the report.

“*Yes, it is normal for an adult to hit a disrespectful child.*”
Idrissa, 12 years old, Burkina Faso

“*If there are children who don't pay attention to the teacher in school, spanking is necessary.*”
Mong-koo, 11 years old, Korea

Additionally, a significant proportion of children think that violence is sometimes a direct consequence of the victim's behavior; 47.3% think that the violence is due to a provocation, bad behavior or lack of respect of children towards adults.

Physical or psychological violence, and any kind of intimidation or threat, negatively affects children's development and socialization. Any kind of tolerance or acceptance of violence, as a tool for discipline or authority, shows a lack of awareness for its serious consequences. In this sense, it is crucial to make decisions that take into account the voice of children in order to improve their educational experience.

Children value to a greater extent an education based on empathy, affection, communication and respect, and on adopting zero tolerance towards violence.

“*For me, everything can be resolved through dialogue, but without punishment or physical violence.*” Yago, Brazil

Poverty as a cause of violence

In countries with lower levels of human development, an argument that comes up quite frequently and which is almost never contemplated in other countries, is the association of violence with the socio-economic context of the families: deprivation, poverty and unemployment. Equally, in countries including Burkina Faso, Honduras, Ghana and Thailand, one in every two children suggests the idea that a family's need for money can lead to situations of violence and mistreatment.

“*I think it is because of unemployment. Sometimes, right?*”
Marissa, 12 years old, Brazil



“*My father died when I was young. My mother must look after the family. My mother will take out her stress and anger on the children, hitting me and telling us to get out of the house sometimes.*” Samruddhi, 10 years old, India

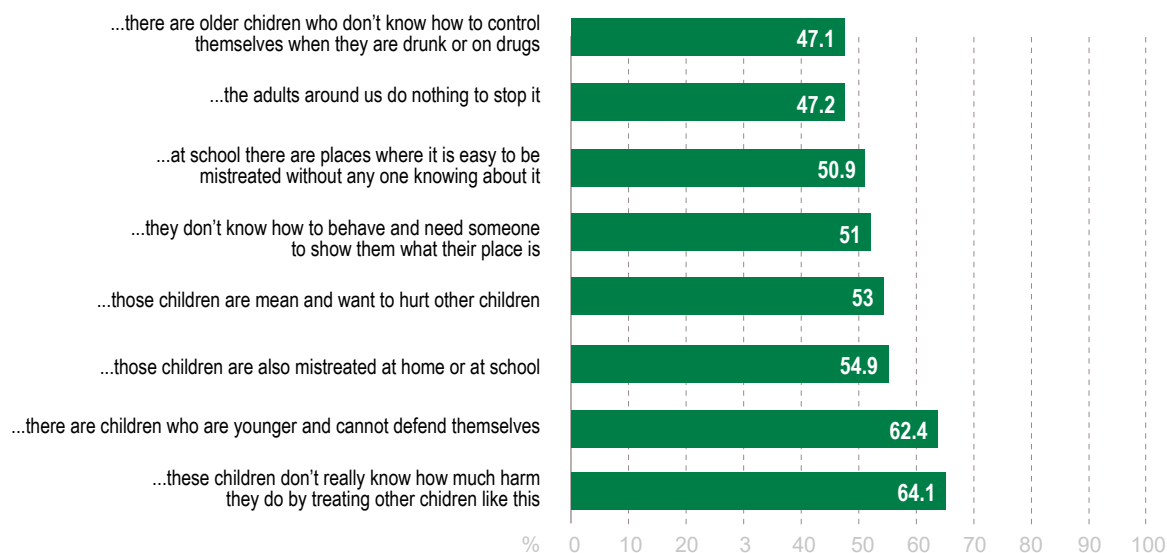
“*In my house we are poor. If I ask for something, they tell me off using aggressive words.*”
Sansakar, 11 years old, India

When asked specifically about violence carried out by other children, one of the possible causes highlighted is also a **lack of empathy or awareness** about the consequences of violence on behalf of the aggressor. **64.1% think that children who assault others do not know how much harm they are doing when they treat other children like that.**

Finally, there are also some pronounced differences in the discussions when identifying the **vulnerability factors** that determine a higher risk of suffering from violence. On the one hand, one of the main risk factors named by children in countries including Spain, Canada and South Korea is discrimination resulting from their being different; while in the rest of the countries where children were surveyed, it is the lack of a protective family environment and resources as well as poverty that are most frequently cited.

Graph 6: Causes of violence carried out by children
 % of children who “mostly” or “totally” agree with each sentence

Children mistreat other children because...



“Children in need, unprotected, that are alone. They just don't know how to protect themselves.” Guilherme, Brazil

“When people from lower castes can't enter the temple, then we feel very sad.” Aarya, 12 years old, India

“Because there are children that are not loved by their fathers or their mothers, and that hurts, you know? Anything another person says hurts more because they don't have the love of their parents.” Alana, 11 years old, Brazil

“Children that normally come from poor homes, their parents ask themselves how their child is going to have a good life, so they give them to other people to look after and some of those people do not have good hearts. They treat them differently. They always mistreat them.” Dzifa, 11 years old, Ghana

“They tend to bully people who they find defects in, but like... not really defects because no one is perfect. For example, if someone is a bit chubby, or doesn't have the same body as everyone else, or if they are a different nationality. Even just for the fact that they are smarter than you.” Alba, 13 years old, Spain

“I just think it is children who are different or have different abilities. Children that are different or have a different skin color, people that think they are strange and think that person is not normal, so I am going to be mean to them.” Noor, Canada



"I hardly leave my house"

PERCEPTION OF RISK AND PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE



One of the most significant findings is that the subjective well-being of children is directly linked to the perceived levels of risk and security in their environment. The higher the risk they perceive in their homes, schools and communities, the lower their life satisfaction level is, and vice versa.

Therefore Spain, Sweden, Canada and New Zealand, countries which stand out for having the highest levels of subjective well-being, also stand out for having a very low perception of risk and global insecurity. In contrast, the countries where children perceive a higher level of risk show much lower levels of subjective well-being. This is the case for Vietnam, Honduras, Ecuador, Mexico and Nicaragua.

In global terms, children perceive a significant part of their environment as insecure, highlighting online spaces and the street as places with the highest risk

Spaces where violence takes place

The issue of the possible spaces where violence takes place is one that has generated very relevant data for establishing possible global trends, as well as significant contrasts in children's perceptions depending on the context they live in.

In global terms, children perceive a significant part of their environment as insecure, highlighting online spaces and the street as places with the highest risk. Meanwhile, the home is the only space they clearly perceive as safe.

Nearly 4 out of 10 children who participated in the research think that the **internet and social media** are not very safe spaces for people of their age. Secondly, **urban spaces or public spaces** in general are also considered spaces with risks for children, with 34.4% of children thinking that the street, public transport and squares or parks in their communities are never or almost never safe.

Urban spaces and the public space in general appear as the main space where children are at risk in the group interviews. However, what the children say about these is very different depending on the context, and these spaces are clearly differentiated between **streets and parks, spaces controlled by organized crime groups, and areas of transit**, especially the route to school, more present in rural and isolated areas.

“

I run, scared to death, going and coming back scared. I am scared every time my mother asks me to go to my grandmother's house because it is dangerous there.”

Marissa, 12 years old, Brazil

“

In my community, children cannot go out at night because it is dangerous for children to go out alone at night.” Mariam, 12 years old, Ghana

“

Yes, there have been a lot of fights in my street, and then the police always come. Lots of fights, it is very strange there, very strange. I hardly leave my house.”

María, 10 years old, Brazil

The safest environments are at home and at school

In contrast, **the house they live in** is the only space the majority of children globally consider safe (58.7%), followed by school—especially within their own classroom (more than 47%). Another space indicated as safe, although to a lesser extent, is the associative space (37%).

“

Here some of us can see on the news that there have been explosions, lots of bad things, that's why it is not so safe to go out, only with our parents.” Lina, Mexico

This data is confirmed when children are asked if they themselves feel safe in the different spaces they frequent in their daily lives.

The risk perceived by children in public spaces is highest in the Latin American countries, as well as in Thailand and Ghana





Although results show that the public space is globally perceived as one of the places with the highest level of risk for children, it cannot be ignored that this space varies significantly depending on the geographical and socioeconomic context.

For example, **the risk perceived by children on the internet and in public spaces is highest in the Latin American countries, as well as in Thailand and Ghana.**

In Brazil, Nicaragua, Mexico and Ecuador half or more than half of the children surveyed have an acute perception of insecurity in their physical surroundings, indicating the places that are never safe as **the street** and **public transport**, more than tripling the data for Spain, Sweden and Canada.

For example, more than 30% of children in Thailand perceive the street as a space that does not guarantee their safety. Whereas in Spain or Sweden more than 85% say they feel safe when they walk alone in the area they live in.

Similarly, in Brazil, Nicaragua, Mexico and Ecuador children consider the **internet and social media** as very unsafe places, a view which children in Spain and South Korea share.

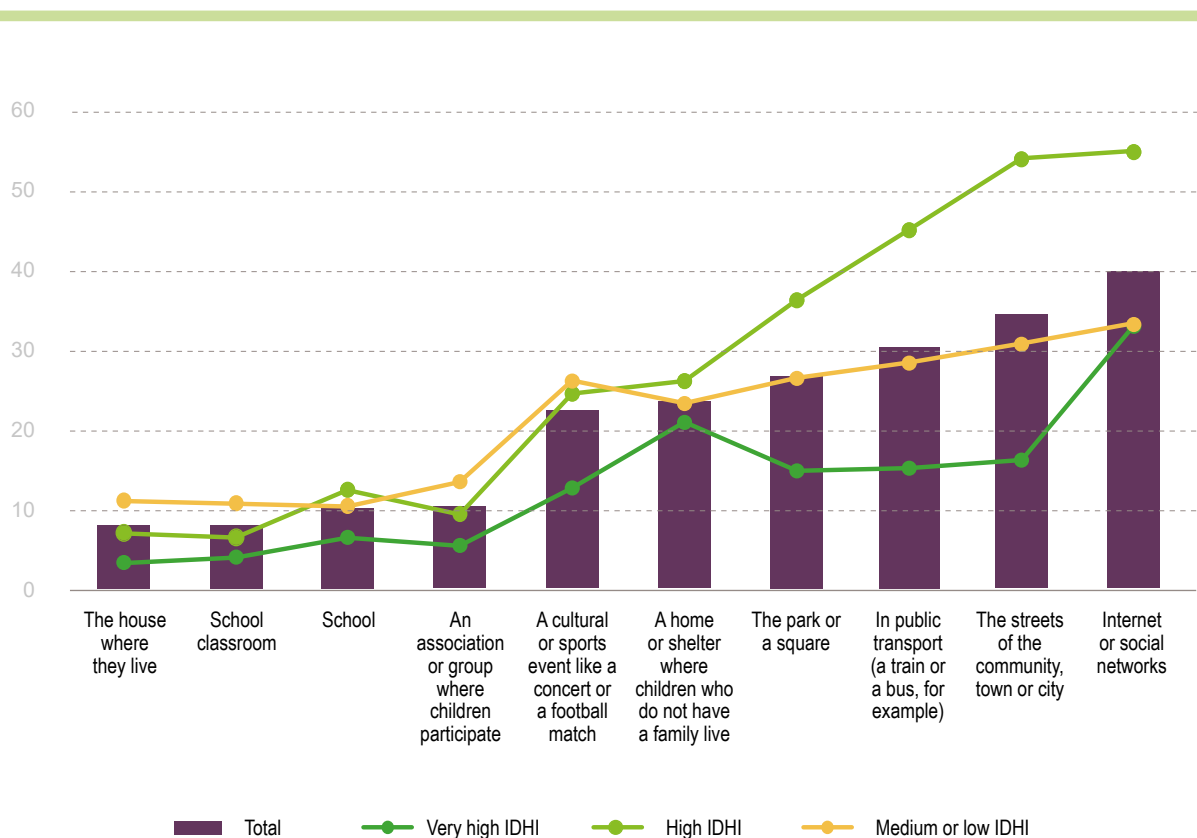
“The internet is a medium in which anonymity is guaranteed, so it is easy for verbal abuse to happen.”
Min-Jeong, 12 years old, South Korea

The discussions between the children who have participated in the group interviews have provided a broader, clearer and more detailed description of the places and spaces they inhabit, which enables us to observe clearly how **the public space assumes very different connotations and characteristics depending on the context.**

In Mexico, but particularly in Brazil, it is striking to see the strong presence of **“organized crime and criminal factions”** in the children’s accounts. **The street, the**

Graph 7: Spaces considered unsafe by children according to IHDI

% of children that answer that it is “never” or “almost never” safe for each of the spaces proposed



neighborhood, the favelas, the community and the district where the children live are all mentioned as risky spaces. The perception of the children is that they live in very dangerous places, where they are unable to go out in the street because of fights and assaults, the presence of drugs, theft and the lack of respect, episodes which happen even “on their doorsteps” and that “put your life at risk”. Something similar has also been detected in Honduras, where there is **the presence of “maras”⁸ and “mara” members.**

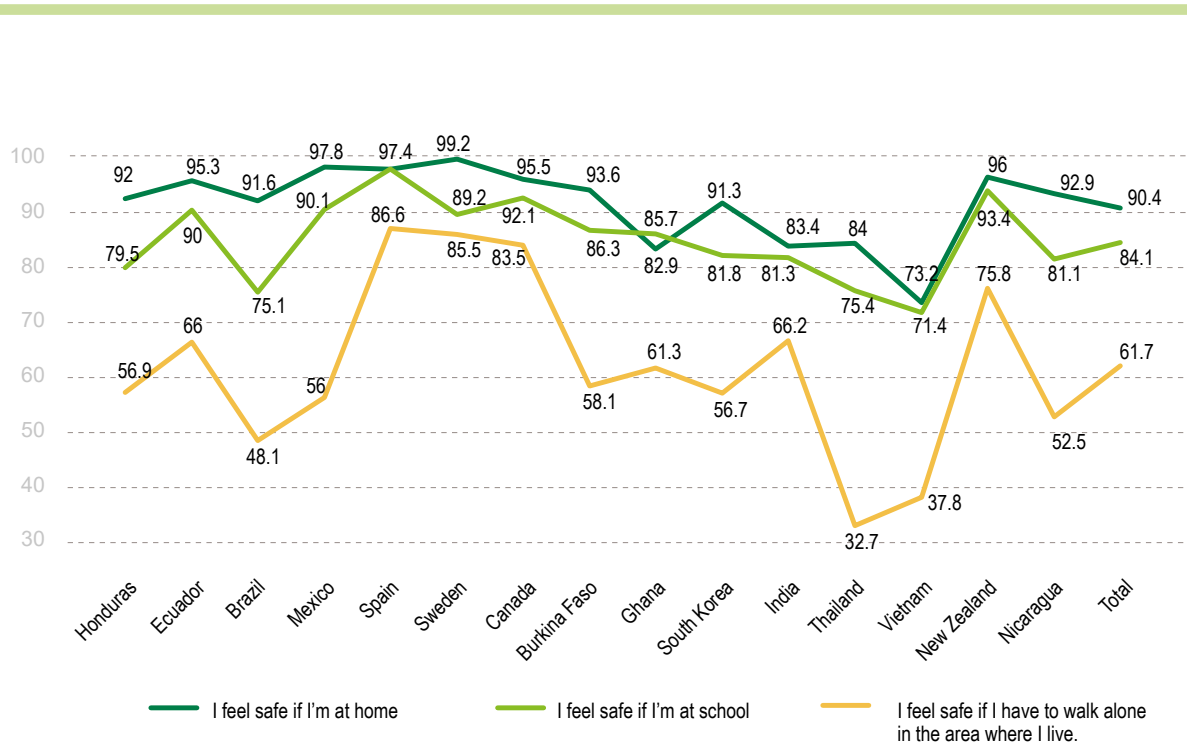
“I’ve lived in roughly 21 ‘drug dens’, inside the favela. Every time I woke up, there was already a smell of marijuana in my face, it wasn’t nice at all, that’s why we didn’t even last a month in that house. At that time my mother didn’t have any money, she found the cheapest house possible to rent, and the house was property of the owner of the favela. So my mother left that place after 1 or 2 months, because the smell of marijuana was there every day.”
Bruno, 12 years old, Brazil

“Crime, organized crime. It’s because there are rival factions. This area is dominated by a criminal gang and there, a little further away, there is another stronghold of the same faction.” Bruno, 12 years old, Brazil

“They kill, and not only do they kill, they also destroy everything.” João, 11 years old, Brazil

“On the one hand there are mara members... so sometimes I would walk to do errands at the grocery store and once on my way back there was one that kept looking at me, and the problem is that when they like a girl, she has to be theirs, there is no other way. Sometimes girls get entangled in it, even if you don’t want to, those kind of people are used to being the ones in charge and they are the ones who make decisions for people. Hopefully it is not happening to you because to some girls it does...”
Luz, 12 years old, Honduras

Graph 8: Level of agreement regarding perceived safety on the street, at school and at home by country
% of children who “mostly” or “totally” agree with each sentence



8 “Maras” is a word commonly used in some Latin American countries to describe gangs.



In countries including India and Burkina Faso, the spaces perceived as having the highest risk are areas of transit, where the majority of children mention the walk to school, to wells or to other communities in rural areas.

“When I go and get water from the drilled wells and the well [is] far away from my village, there are more risks.”
Shaurya, 11 years old, India

“Often on the way to school, on the way out of the village.”
Haoua, 11 years old, Burkina Faso

In South Korea the children say that they don't feel safe or are scared in **isolated places or places that are badly lit at night**, as well as dark alleyways and public toilets where there is no CCTV.⁹

“Even when I am crossing a bridge or in the street, even if there is lots of CCTV, I don't feel safe. I am a bit scared because I don't know where the CCTV is, and if I have a problem I am not sure that someone would come quickly to help me.” Suk-Hee, 12 years old, Korea

Although globally the differences by gender are not particularly pronounced, there seems to be a general trend that girls express a higher perception of insecurity and recognize themselves more as potential victims of violence

In general terms, both boys and girls think that women are more exposed and vulnerable to violence, although **girls show a more acute perception of their vulnerability**. Roughly 58% of girls (and 54% of boys) think that girls in their country are more likely than boys to be mistreated or suffer other forms of violence. Also, girls **show a high feeling of insecurity** when walking alone in the area they live in.

9 CCTV stands for Closed Circuit Television

“Yes... and I think that this insecure situation that us women have, is because there is violence, there is more violence against women than men.” Alba, 13 years old, Spain

“In my experience girls are harassed more than boys. I think some boys think that girls are weaker than boys, so they can annoy them.” Noor, Canada

“We women are disappearing. Every day around three women in this country are killed. We are disappearing, at risk from extinction, we must look after ourselves.”
Elena María, 12 years old, Honduras

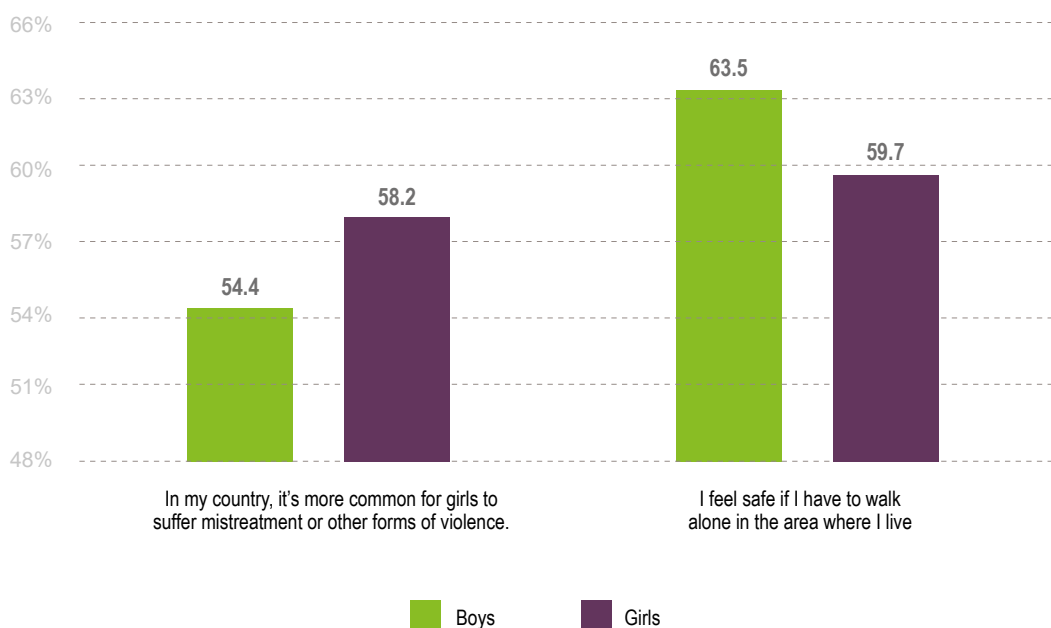


Girls' feelings of vulnerability increase as the country's level of development declines

Girls in the group of medium or low IHDl countries, more than boys, classify many of the spaces they inhabit in their daily lives as insecure, showing a higher perception of insecurity when walking in the areas where they live. The differences in relation to gender are especially evident in Ghana, Thailand, Honduras and Vietnam.

Only 18.1% of children think that politicians and the people who govern protect children from violence

Graph 9: Children's perceptions on their rights and safety, by gender
% of boys and girls who "mostly" or "totally" agree with each sentence





Protection agents and aggressors

In global terms, the only protection figures clearly identified by the children in all contexts are their parents, and especially their mothers. In contrast, the surveyed population shows a certain level of mistrust towards the political classes and those in power.

They perceive their parents as the people who protect children the most

“*Parents are safe havens.*”
Marissa, 12 years old, Brazil

Children clearly identify **mothers** as the people that protect children the most, with 86.4% supporting this statement, and to a slightly lesser extent, fathers. Other protection agents, although they are classified as such for a smaller proportion of the surveyed children, are **other members of the family** such as uncles and aunts, grandparents and, with less than 50%, **teachers** and the **police or military officers**.

They have a negative opinion about the political classes and those who govern

On the other hand, only 18.1% of children think that politicians and the people who govern protect children from violence.

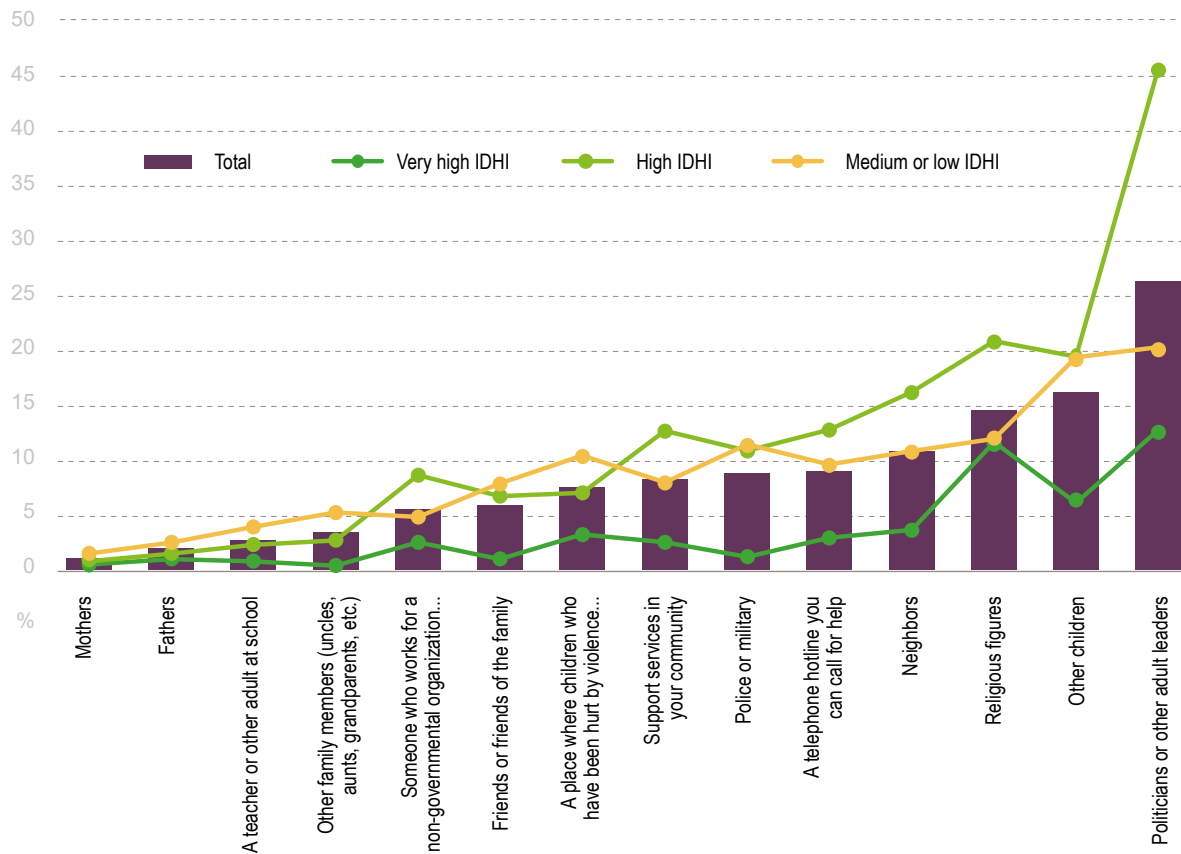
Although this data gives us a fairly clear global picture of the people perceived as protective figures by children, **the testimonies collected in the group interviews provide us with some additional elements to analyze that enable us to understand the different realities depending on the context or the country.**

The biggest differences are registered for the agents that at a global level have been classified as hardly ever protecting children, showing significant disparities between countries.

In the case of the **politicians who govern**, for example, almost half the children from Mexico, Brazil and Ecuador are clear that they never or almost never protect, a figure that is much lower among the population surveyed in countries with very high IHDI such as Canada and Sweden, and in those with medium or low IHDI.



Graph 10: Opinions regarding potential aggressive agents
 % of children who think they “never protect”



The percentage of the surveyed population who believe **children themselves** never or almost never provide protection is more than ten times higher in countries like Nicaragua, Honduras, Vietnam and Thailand, compared to what is registered in Sweden or Spain.

At the same time, **other members of the family** such as uncles and aunts and grandparents, or **close friends and acquaintances of the family**, as well as **teachers, the police and the military**, are perceived as less protective in countries in the Latin American region, especially in Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico and Nicaragua.

In the case of the **police**, they are mentioned on various occasions as adults who can protect children, both in the public space and in a domestic context, when the parents themselves are the aggressors. **However, they do not trust the efficiency of this resource in all of the situations**, because, as they frequently state, they think that the police will not always believe them and, especially in domestic violence cases, they may side with the adult. A boy in Brazil even suggests that “corrupt police officers” could be possible aggressors.

“It could be the people that you think are better than they are, they buy you things, like a mobile, they give you sweets, money, chocolate and all that. Those people could even be close to you. You think, ‘oh, that person likes me, that’s it’, and before you know it, they are doing bad things to you, right?” Mariana, 12 years old, Brazil

“The cases of child abuse normally occur in the home on behalf of the parents. The police and the person in charge of the case tend to force the abused children to go back to the house they live in with their parents. I think that is unfair because the child will be attacked again by their parents.” Sohee, 12 years old, South Korea

“ Sometimes it is hard because the police for example don't believe you.” Amalia, Mexico

“ Corrupt police officers as well.”
Bruno, 12 years old, Brazil

There is a relationship between protection agents and spaces of risk

In global terms, the data presents a clear image of which agents are more or less perceived as protectors by children and which spaces they feel more or less protected in. In this respect, by cross-referencing the responses of the respondents to both questions, it can be observed that **as confidence in some actors who should protect children decreases, the perception of risk in spaces where those actors play important roles in guaranteeing safety increases.**

This relationship is particularly significant on two occasions. In the first, when cross-referencing the perception of security at school, one of the spaces indicated as safest globally, with the identification of teachers as people that protect children from violence; in the second, when looking at the relationship between the perception of security on the street, one of the

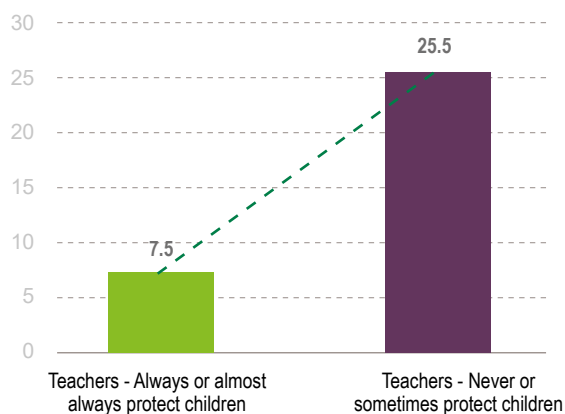


spaces indicated as having the highest risk globally, and the way in which children see police and the military as actors who protect them or not.

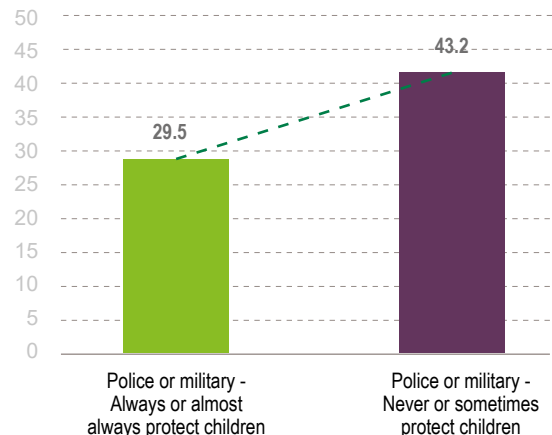
The following two graphs show a clear and significant result. In both cases, **the children who have singled out teachers and police or the military as people who never or almost never protect children from violence have simultaneously shown a sharper perception of risk at school and on the streets of their community, town or city.**

Graph 11: Perception of risk at school and on the street, based on whether teachers and police and military are considered protective figures

% of children who think that school is never or almost never a safe place for children based on whether teachers are considered protective figures



% of children who think that streets are never or almost never a safe place for children based on whether police and military are considered protective figures







CONCLUSION

Children call adults to “listen to us”

Prevention and positive treatment

The prevention and eradication of violence requires recognition and promotion of the active role of children as individuals with rights who are active agents in their own lives. This strategy best lends itself to collectively identifying sustainable solutions that suit the existing contexts and conditions.

Active, meaningful child participation in safe and adapted conditions contributes to reducing their vulnerability and constitutes a prevention tool in itself

Children identify possible actions for preventing or tackling violence, both on behalf of adults and the child population, at the same time as considering it a task that should be shared between children and adults.

In global terms, children have a very clear idea about what they need and what to ask for to avoid and prevent violence, as well as how to act when faced with violence. When confronted with more immediate or punitive options, **children seek much more structured and preventive responses from adults, based on respect and positive treatment, as well as the awareness and empowerment of children as subjects with rights.**

Feeling cared for and accompanied, having a good childhood and parents who love them, as well as teaching adults about children’s rights, are the main solutions offered, regardless of the children’s geographic context

To avoid violence, children point out the need to **have “a good childhood”** relying on the support, help and trust from their parents, their loved ones and the community. They say that they need care and love, they need companionship and positive treatment, and help from others when they feel bad. Their words also reveal a need and desire to feel protected, to be fed, to be comfortable and safe.

“*Sometimes the best thing for children is happiness and a good childhood so that they have the same with their children and this makes a change. And then you can say that you do it, your children do it and then your children do it with their children.*” Ana Rosa, 11 years old, Mexico

“*Helping is fundamental. If you see that someone is having a hard time because of a situation, help is fundamental because you show the person that they are not alone, that they have support and because if they feel that they don’t have anyone then it will get worse.*” Alba, 13 years old, Spain

Children, mainly in Spain and Canada, also indicate that **good communication** with adults is necessary, especially with parents and teachers. To achieve this they say adults **should listen to children more.** Among the resources they indicate for avoiding violence are empathy, learning to put ourselves in another person’s shoes in order to understand and help them, as well as **learning about respect.**

“*What adults need to do most of all is try to understand what happens to children and try and understand how we are feeling in order to try and do the best thing possible, to change things and help us feel better.*” Ainhoa, Spain



Nine out of ten (90.2%) children surveyed think that the most important thing that adults can do to end violence against children is to love children more and listen to what they have to say

“Listen to us [...] Because lots of people think that when you are a child your opinion will be ridiculous or won't make sense or won't mean anything even when it is a good idea because as you are a child, your opinion doesn't count.”
Lucía, Spain

“I think parents should listen to their children more. I think if you are in a bad situation and you want to talk to an adult, your parents are the first ones you should go to. But sometimes they are busy or have other things to do and don't have time for you.” Ava, Canada

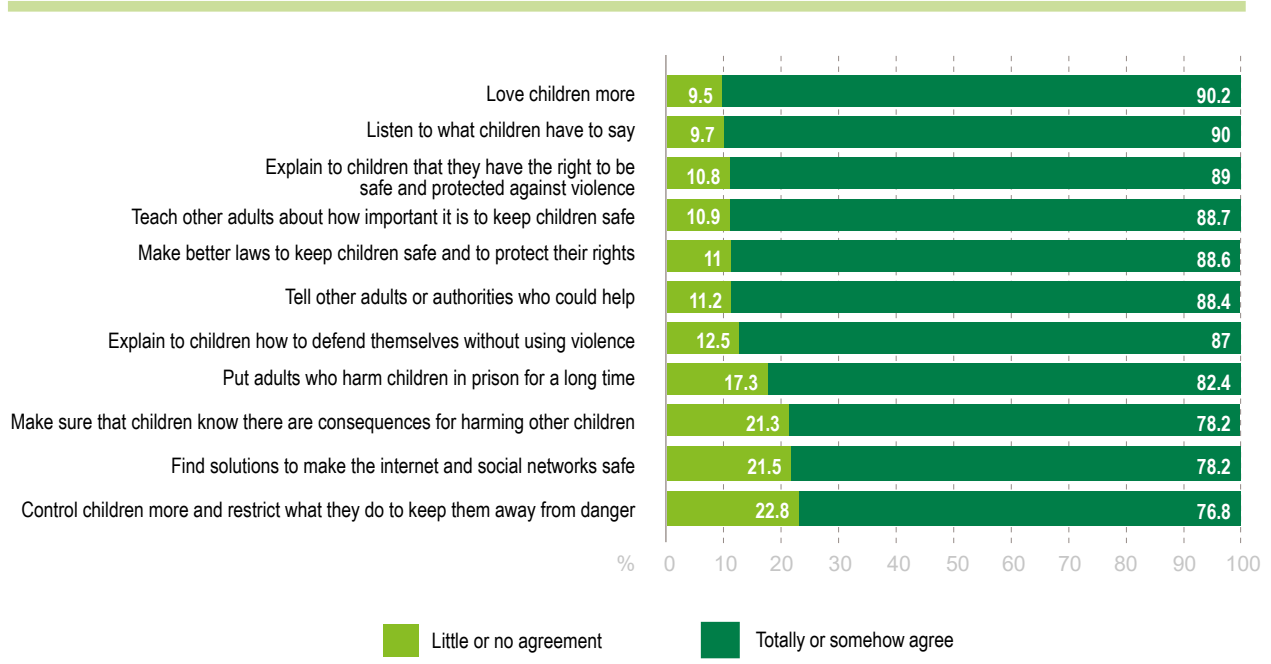
They also express their need for training to **improve their self-esteem and gain confidence** when talking to adults and high-level officials, so they can improve how they manage violent situations:

“I need training in self-confidence.”
Sheila, 12 years old, India

“I need them to teach me to talk to adults and high-level officials.” Aara, 12 years old, India

Graph 12: Opinion about what adults can do to put an end to violence against children

% of children who “mostly agree” or “totally agree” with each sentence





POSITIVE TREATMENT OF CHILDREN

Care for us
Protect us Be understanding **SUPPORT US**
Respect Right to education
SUPPORT Adults respect children's rights **Trust**
When you feel safe Provide food, shelter and care
Understand them talk to them listen to them give them advice have fun with them
Having shelter **TREAT CHILDREN PROPERLY**
Attention **Love** **Be healthy**
Not force children to work **Believe us**
Communication **Show Affection** Listen to children's voices
Live in peace **Feeling wanted**
Spend time with them

We need to be taught, listened to and loved more

“To protect us, care for us and take care of our security. [...] I think that adults should have the responsibility to take care of your security and have a better temper than the one they have.” Karla, 12 years old, Brazil

“They need to look after the children really well, attend to their basic needs and correct them when they make mistakes.” Ama, 12 years old, Ghana

At the same time, they stress the importance of **raising awareness** both with adults as well as with children themselves. They ask adults to recognize children's rights, respect them and believe in them, as well as giving them advice, confidence and trust.

“Adults should know about children's rights and participation.” Aarya, 12 years old, India

“Social networks also work, videos can be shown, they can show ways to help and contribute to the community by socializing with adults that have a bit of power in the community and teach them that children are capable too, that we need to be listened to, that our voice is important.” Noemí, 12 years old, Honduras

“We can ask an adult to raise awareness among the other adults so that they don't mistreat us.” Mouzetou, 12 years old, Burkina Faso

Proposals and obstacles

When asked what children themselves can do to end violence against children, many offered good resources and solutions, with a majority of them agreeing with responses that are empathic, cooperative and linked to children's rights.

The most popular response from the children was to **report and seek** help from others when confronted with a violent situation. More than 88% of children think that when faced with a violent situation, they should tell someone who can help them. Seeking the help of an adult or the police is also one of the options most often mentioned by children in the group interviews.

“

If it isn't a schoolmate that helps you, in the end someone else will help you or an adult will help you, we always do that, when you tell a teacher 'look this person is hurting us', you talk to the person and in the end you work it out. In the end it's talking about them all together so we can find a solution.” Marina, Spain

“

Call child protection services.”

Jacob, 12 years old, Canada

“

A child should go to the courts and ask for help.” Aïssata,

11 years old, Burkina Faso

“

If I know that my father is coming home after going out drinking, I ask my grandmother to come out with me.”

Thuy, 10 years old, Vietnam

We should reach out to others and work together

Children positively value actions in which they feel empowered to prevent and defend themselves against violence. They believe this can be accomplished either by working together and intervening to defend the child who is being attacked, or by providing support, as well as talking to the aggressors and seeking to solve the problem using dialogue.

More than 88% of children think that when faced with a violent situation, they should tell someone who can help them





“For me the solution is, if you see that they are bullying or mistreating someone, then at least, I would try and help them, and maybe we all get together to stand up to the bully so that they stop. But, I mean, once they have stopped, we're not going to keep going on about it and we're not going to turn into bullies ourselves.” Ibai, 12 years old, Spain

“I will look after my friend who has been bullied at school and will play with him/her no matter what [...] help them to open their heart.” Hyun, 12 years old, South Korea

“Your friends can always do something, even if they are small, emotionally they are going to help you, because if someone supports you when you are alone that is the greatest thing you can have.” Alba, 13 years old, Spain

“Put positive thoughts in their heads, to distract them from what has happened, like being bullied at school or something.” Charlotte, 12 years old, Canada

“Helping your friends, contributing, helping and supporting them.” Daiane, 11 years old, Brazil

“Three weeks passed and no-one did anything.”

In terms of the obstacles that children come up against when seeking solutions to end violence, **two elements that emerged very clearly from the children's discussions are fear and other difficulties involved with reporting and a lack of or unfamiliarity with protection resources.**

Although it is true that many of the children's answers point to the importance of being able to report something and go to a trusted adult, at the same time they make clear that they can't just trust anyone, especially if they are not a family member (e.g., teachers or police officers), because **not all adults are trustworthy.**

Graph 13 :Opinion about what children can do to put an end to violence against children
% of children who “mostly agree” or “totally agree” with each sentence*

What do you think children themselves can do to end violence against them?



*For the item "Use force if someone hits or mistreats me or someone I know", the total number of answers does not add up to 100% because this answer option has not been included in the questionnaire distributed in Burkina Faso, due to an error in the translation.



CHILD-FRIENDLY ACCOUNTABILITY

The Alliance's Child-friendly Accountability initiative, launched in September 2016 is working to empower children to hold governments and local leaders accountable to their obligations to end all violence against children, as per Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 16.2. The Alliance played a key role in securing the stand-alone target.

The program is designed to ensure that those who are in charge of protecting and fulfilling children's rights actually do what they are supposed to do. If they fail or choose not to do so, then children and their representatives need to be able to seek recourse. Initiatives include helping children access age-appropriate data and information, mapping child protection services, developing advocacy and media campaigns, social mobilization initiatives, and developing a shared web-based platform.

The Alliance aims to reach 2,500 or more children from at least 10 countries so they can learn to have informed dialogues on issues of concern—and have the opportunity to offer potential solutions—when they engage with decision-makers and other stakeholders.

For more information about Child-Friendly Accountability: <https://childfundalliance.org/our-work/strategic-priorities/child-friendly-accountability>

“

It has to be someone you trust.”

Olivia, 11 years old, Canada

“

The first person I would tell would be an adult, but it must be someone I trust. Someone from my club, or my family, or the parent of one of my best and closest friends.”

Ibai, 12 years old, Spain

“

But if they don't have parents, maybe a relative or someone close to the family.”

Alexandre, 12 years old, Brazil

Then there is also the fear of not being believed by adults and even receiving reprisals or punishments and being assaulted again. There is also fear of not seeing their parents again, or the suffering involved with retelling and reliving the violence they have been through, including the effects of revictimization.

“

So there are, for example, some teachers who might say you are making it up or just ignore you.”

Alba, 13 years old, Spain

“

I don't think it is easy, because he or she will have to explain it all again, and it is not easy because the child remembers it all again and has to repeat it all.”

Guilherme, Brazil

“

But then there is also fear. Once a friend was hit by her father. Her father almost never went to her house, but when he did, he would hit her. Once, her father hit her for no reason, so she tried to make a call to report him, but three weeks passed and no-one did anything.”

Bruno, 12 years old, Brazil

“

Children are not sure about going to the police station. Even I am scared of going to the police station. I prefer to call.” Pavan, 12 years old, India



“No. Because there a lot of people that don't believe them, so it is not easy for them.”
Patricia, 11 years old, Brazil

“I am scared that they will report my mother to child welfare and that they will come and get her and I will never see her again. It weighs on your conscience.”
Bruno, 12 years old, Brazil

Another common element that surfaced in the discussions with the children who were interviewed is the unfamiliarity with or lack of **protection and assistance resources**. More than a fifth of the children interviewed did not know what to say about whether public services or helplines were effective protection resources. Additionally, in the group interviews, on various occasions they indicated they didn't know where or who to go to get help, and they expressed several material and non-material obstacles for accessing the resources they do know about.

“In films, if something bad happens, people go to the police station. But I can't. It's too far away.”
Ji-Won, 12 years old, South Korea

“It is difficult because sometimes the places are far away from us and because we are young, we don't really know how to get around the city because we are always with our father or mother.” Ana Rosa, 11 years old, Mexico

“The police and the police station are far away from us, because they are in the city. So we children can't go there to report a situation of abuse.”
Haoua, 11 years old, Burkina Faso

“No, we don't know the number to call to report cases of abuse.” Ibrahim, 12 years old, Burkina Faso

Other aspects mentioned by the children are the support and educational resources that are needed to create better environments for protecting victims. They point

out the need for a space for respite and for dialogue in which children can let off steam, take the “weight off their minds,” talk about things without fear, and explain them to their parents.

“There should be projects, even in the state schools, so that children talk about their issues and explain them to their parents.” Mariana, 12 years old, Brazil

“Let off steam, I think a child needs to let off steam to take the weight off their minds.” Paolo, Brazil

“There should be a place for giving guidance to children that abuse other children.” Daniel, Brazil

“What those of us that are here can do is to play our part and start to plant something good in our communities, help the children that we have nearby and try to teach them that they have the ability, the potential and the responsibility to change what is around them. But we must each play our part.”
Elena María, 12 years old, Honduras

The obstacles pointed out by the children themselves only serve to reaffirm the need to create long-lasting responses to prevent and tackle violence by providing them with positive treatment and removing obstacles that do not enable adequate and appropriate protection when a violation of their rights takes place.

Finding sustainable solutions is vital to ensuring a world that is more fair and violence free. We can and must facilitate child participation in meaningful ways and break down the barriers that prevent children from challenging violations of their rights. Children are an essential part of the path forward. **Elevating children's voices, listening to their input, and treating them as active participants with full rights** will be crucial if we are to make real progress in creating a world for children that is free from violence.





ANNEXES

Annex 1. Methodological note

The data presented in this report is based on a study carried out in 15 countries. We collected the voices of nearly 5,500 children between the ages of 10 and 12 years¹⁰ via a questionnaire and group interviews. 2,615 girls took part as did 2,657 boys, and there were 23 child participants who did not state their sex. This study is the result of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodological designs.¹¹

The quantitative study was carried out using a survey based on a closed questionnaire with 20 questions¹² that 5,298 children in 15 countries responded to, all between 10 and 12 years of age. Methods of administering the questionnaire varied depending on the characteristics of the participating countries. For example, an online survey was conducted in Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, New Zealand, Spain, Canada, Sweden, South Korea and Vietnam. An in-person questionnaire was used, primarily in education centers, in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Honduras, India, Thailand and Nicaragua.

The qualitative approach was based on 21 group interviews in 10 of the countries in the sample, of which 11 were conducted with boys and girls, while 10 were carried out exclusively with girls. This decision responded to gender-based inequalities, and thus allowed for a closer approximation to the gender perspective. In total, 136 children participated in the

group interviews, 28 of whom were boys and 108 of whom were girls.

In order to fine-tune and adapt the research instruments as much as possible to the participating countries, as well as to incorporate elements that reflect a child-focused view of the phenomenon being studied, the first phase of the research included two consultation spaces. An exploratory survey was carried out in Alliance member organizations in each of the participating countries, aimed at improving knowledge of the socioeconomic and geographic reality of each participating country and facilitating the exploration of the different views and manifestations of violence in such different contexts. In addition, workshops were carried out with children and adolescents from some of the participating countries,¹³ the aim of which was to incorporate elements of a child's view of violence, as well as to serve as a test or pilot of the main thematic sections of the questionnaire. The results of these provided valuable contributions for the construction of better observation instruments.

The international nature of the study, carried out in countries with very diverse geographical origins, living conditions and cultural traditions, made it possible to capture a diversity of experiences and visions about this phenomenon, which is in itself global, but which also includes very different manifestations depending on the context. For this reason, the decision was made to also provide information about the comparisons that arise from grouping the countries according to the Inequality-

10 There are very few exceptions to this. In particular, 7 of the children who participated in group interviews, and whose testimonies are included in this report, were aged slightly over or under this range.

11 Both tools used are based on those produced and applied in Spain in the context of the *Érase una Voz* study in 2018, and which was the result of a consultation process which children actively participated in. For further details see: Bello, A.; Martínez, Muñoz, M. and Rodríguez Pascual, I. (2019) *Érase una voz... Si no nos crees, no nos ves*, Barcelona, Educo: <https://www.educo.org/erasedunavoz>

12 See Annex 2.

13 In the end, not all countries held these workshops, although they did take place in: Ghana, Mexico, Vietnam, Thailand, Nicaragua, Canada, Brazil and Honduras.

adjusted Human Development Index¹⁴ (IHDI) and, in some cases, to also provide a country breakdown.¹⁵

The IHDI is a criterion used for its value as a composite measure of the development and inequality present in the sample of countries considered. The data that refers to the three IHDI groups that are included in this report (very high, high and medium or low) presents some limitations, like decontextualizing the countries in relation to their geographic location and, therefore, they should be considered the result of an analytical approximation, rather than an exact reflection of each socio-political or geographical context.

As with all research, there are limitations regarding the scope, which fundamentally we can describe as:

- Limitations in relation to the purpose of the research: we should be aware that this study is research about the perception of children about violence, not necessarily a study of the incidence of this violence nor does it refer to the contact of this population with this phenomenon.
- Limitations related to the level of coverage and representation of the research: although a large sample has been used and very diverse population groups have been included, we must not forget that the age range is very concise (10-12 years old) and does not represent all children and experiences, although it can be considered an approximation. On the other hand, some geographical contexts are less represented in the study, in the same way that in the case of some of the participating countries, as indicated in the corresponding methodological section in the results report, the sample size has proved to be small and may harbor biases that make it advisable to treat the data disaggregation with caution.

¹⁴ The countries in the sample have been classified based on IHDI and grouped into three groups of very high, high, and medium or low. A more precise description can be found at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/inequality-adjusted-human-development-index-ihdi>.

¹⁵ Disaggregation by country is offered as an exception because it poses representation problems: in several of the participating countries (Ecuador, Spain, New Zealand, Honduras, Thailand and Nicaragua) the sample size is small and subject to possible biases that mean that this information should be interpreted with caution. However, sometimes this data is offered for its comparative and illustrative value of the significant differences within the overall sample, where its interest justifies this use. This analytical precaution should always be considered when providing the data disaggregated by country.





Table 1: Questionnaires administered by country

IHDI Level	Country	Questionnaires administered	% of the total
Very high	Sweden	381	7%
	Canada	400	8%
	New Zealand	153	3%
	South Korea	171	3%
	Spain	156	3%
	Total very high IHDI	1.261	24%
High	Brazil	722	14%
	Thailand	150	3%
	Ecuador	150	3%
	Mexico	629	12%
	Total high IHDI	1.651	31%
Medium or low	Vietnam	251	5%
	Nicaragua	162	3%
	India	900	17%
	Honduras	151	3%
	Ghana	522	10%
	Burkina Faso	400	8%
	Total medium or low IHDI	2.386	45%
Total questionnaires administered		5.298	

Table 2: Group interviews by country and gender

IHDI Level	Country	Number of groups			Number of participants		
		Mixed	Only girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Very high	Canada	2	-	2	5	7	12
	South Korea	2	-	2	2	10	12
	Spain	2	1	3	5	10	15
High	Brazil	2	1	3	7	14	21
	Mexico	-	2	2	-	16	16
Medium or low	Burkina Faso	1	1	2	2	12	14
	Vietnam	-	1	1	-	6	6
	Ghana	1	1	2	4	10	14
	Honduras	-	1	1	-	6	6
	India	1	2	3	3	17	20





Annex 2. The questionnaire

Hi!

This questionnaire is voluntary and completely anonymous, and we promise to keep everything you say secret. Do not write your name or surname. Please, we ask you to answer sincerely and individually. There are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know your opinion and a little more about you.

Q1 Would you define yourself as a boy or a girl? Boy Girl I prefer not to answer

Q2 How old are you today?

Q3 Were you born in the same country you live in? Yes No

Q4 And was either of your parents born in a different country than the one you live in? Yes No

Q5 Which of the following sentences (mark only one) best describes the people you live with most of the time (we mean those you live with at home)?

With my father and mother (and my siblings, if I have any)	
With one of my parents (my mother or father) (and my siblings, if I have any)	
With my parents, siblings (if I have any), and other members of my family	
With my parents, siblings (if I have any), and other people who are not members of my family	
I don't live with my family	
Other (write it down):	

Q6 Have you ever heard about the Convention on the Rights of the Child? Yes No

Q7 Do you agree with the following sentences?

	I don't agree at all	I agree a little bit	I mostly agree	I totally agree
Like adults, everyone under the age of 18 has their own rights				
In my country, adults know and respect the rights of children and adolescents.				
In my country, the opinion of children of my age is heard on issues that matter to us.				
In my country, children are sufficiently protected against violence and people who want to harm us.				
In my country, it's more common for girls to suffer mistreatment or other forms of violence.				

Q8 Why do you think some adults mistreat children? Mark with an “X” if you agree or disagree with each of the following sentences

	I don't agree at all	I agree a little bit	I mostly agree	I totally agree
Because sometimes people of my age need to be hit to educate us.				
Because children cannot defend themselves from adults				
Because they are drunk or on drugs and cannot control themselves				
Because those adults were also mistreated.				
Because they think we are less than them, they don't treat us like people with rights.				
Because adults around us do nothing to stop it				
Because sometimes we provoke them by misbehaving or disrespecting them.				
Because they are cruel and they want to hurt us				
Because they have problems at home or at work and they take it out on children.				
Because there are families who need the money that children earn.				

Q9 And when children mistreat other children, why do you think they do it? Mark with an “X” if you agree or disagree with each of the following sentences

	I don't agree at all	I agree a little bit	I mostly agree	I totally agree
Because they don't know how to behave and need someone to show them what their place is.				
Because there are children who are younger and cannot defend themselves.				
Because there are older children who don't know how to control themselves when they are drunk or on drugs.				
Because at school there are places where it is easy to be mistreated without anyone knowing about it				
Because those children are also mistreated at home or at school.				
Because those children are mean and want to hurt other children.				
Because the adults around us do nothing to stop it.				
Because these children don't really know how much harm they do by treating other children like this.				



Q10 Which of the following things do you think is an example of violence against children?

	Yes, it is violence against children	No, it is not violence against children	I don't know
Hitting (a slap or a kick, for example) to punish a child who has done something wrong.			
Forbidding children from playing freely in the street or in their community.			
Forcing a girl or a boy to have sexual relations with another person.			
That a child works to earn money for his or her family			
That a child participates in a war or other armed conflict or runs away because of it.			
That a child participates in organized crime (e.g. selling drugs) or in a gang			
Harassing a girl by making her feel uncomfortable with compliments, rudeness or sexual comments when she walks down the street.			
Shouting at or insulting children			
Separating or taking a child away from a group of friends or classmates			
That a child not have enough money or resources to live.			
That a child not be able to go to school or to a doctor if they need one.			
Making fun of a girl or a boy to ridicule him or her.			
That girls have less freedom to make decisions about their lives than boys do			
Looking down on a child for being different from the majority (for example, because of their religion, the color of their skin, because they have some kind of physical or mental disability, etc.).			
Harassing and deceiving a child on the internet or social networks in order to take advantage of him or her.			

Q11 Where do you think children are most at risk for mistreatment, physical or emotional abuse and other situations that make them feel bad? Mark with an "X" if you think a space is "safe" or "not safe" for children.

	Never or almost never is a safe space for children	Sometimes it is a safe space for children	Always or almost always is a safe space for children	I don't know
School				
The house where they live				
The streets of the community, town or city				
A cultural or sports event like a concert or a football match.				
Internet or social networks (like Facebook or Youtube)				
An association or group where children participate (like a sports club, scouts or a children's council).				
School classroom				
In public transport (a train or a bus, for example)				
The park or a square				
A home or shelter where children who do not have a family live.				

Q12 Who do you think are the people or groups that keep children safe?

	They sometimes protect children	They always or almost always protect children	I don't know
Fathers			
Mothers			
A teacher or other adult at school.			
Politicians or other adult leaders.			
Neighbors.			
Friends or friends of the family.			
Other family members (uncles, aunts, grandparents, etc.).			
Religious figures (for example, priests, nuns, rabbis, Imams, etc.)			
Other children.			
Police or military.			
Support services in your community (for example, Social Services, local or central government, community programs, a health clinic or other support groups you can go to in your community).			
A telephone hotline you can call for help			
Someone who works for a non-governmental organization (NGO) or humanitarian aid organization in your community			
A place where children that have been hurt by violence can live (for example, a child protection center).			

Q13 What do you think children themselves can do to end violence against them? Mark with an "X" if you agree or disagree with each of the following sentences:

Children can...	I don't agree at all	I agree a little bit	I mostly agree	I totally agree
Tell other children that they have the right to be safe and protected from violence.				
If we see an adult or a child hurting another child, we must inform someone who can help.				
We must explain to adults that we have a right not to be harmed in any way.				
Use force if someone hits or mistreats me or someone I know				
Children can't do anything to stop the violence, it is not up to us				
Running away or doing nothing, to stay safe.				
We can act directly to stop a fight or defend other children by speaking up or asking an adult for help.				
Support children who suffer violence or abuse by talking to them and showing them kindness and affection.				
Find other children and organize ourselves to find a solution				



Q14 What about adults? What can they do to end violence against children? Mark with an “X” if you agree or disagree with each of the following sentences:

Adults can...	I don't agree at all	I agree a little bit	I mostly agree	I totally agree
Explain to children that they have the right to be safe and protected against violence.				
Love children more.				
Listen to what children have to say.				
Find solutions to make the internet and social networks safe.				
Make sure that children know there are consequences for harming other children				
Tell other adults or authorities who could help.				
Make better laws to keep children safe and to protect their rights.				
Teach other adults about how important it is to keep children safe.				
Put adults who harm children in prison for a long time.				
Explain to children how to defend themselves without using violence.				
Control children more and restrict what they do to keep them away from danger.				

Q15 How rich do you think your family is compared to other families living around you?

Less rich Just as rich Richer

Q16 And how often do you worry about your parents not having a job?

Never Sometimes Often Always

Q17 Which of these things do you have and which ones do you not?

	Yes	No	I don't know
A computer you can use when you need it			
Internet connection			
School materials (notebooks or textbooks, for example)			
A mobile phone that only you use			
New clothes or clothes in good condition.			

Q18 How satisfied do you feel today with the following things? Remember that 1 is “Completely dissatisfied” and 7 is “Completely satisfied”.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Completely dissatisfied	Quite dissatisfied	A little dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	A little satisfied	Quite satisfied	Completely satisfied
With your family life							
With your friends							
With your school							
With yourself							
With the area or community where you live							
With your life in general							

Q19 Can you think of the area or community where you live and the people around you and tell us if you agree or disagree with these sentences?

	I don't agree at all	I agree a little bit	I mostly agree	I totally agree
I feel safe if I have to walk alone in the area where I live.				
I feel safe if I'm at home				
I feel safe if I'm at school				

TO FINISH...

Thank you very much for your collaboration, your opinion will be very helpful and is very important for other children your age. Before saying goodbye, we ask you to tell us what you thought about this questionnaire by answering a very brief question. Once again, we assure that your answers are anonymous, and we ask you to answer sincerely.

Q20 Can you tell us if you agree or disagree with these sentences?

	1	2	3	4
	I don't agree at all	I agree a little bit	I mostly agree	I totally agree
The questions were clear and easy to answer				
The questionnaire has been long or boring for me				
I think I have been asked questions that may be important for the well-being of children.				
I have felt uncomfortable answering some of the questions in the questionnaire.				



www.smallvoicesbigdreams.org

