

# Small Voices, Big Dreams

4 September, 2019

**#SmallVoicesBigDreams**

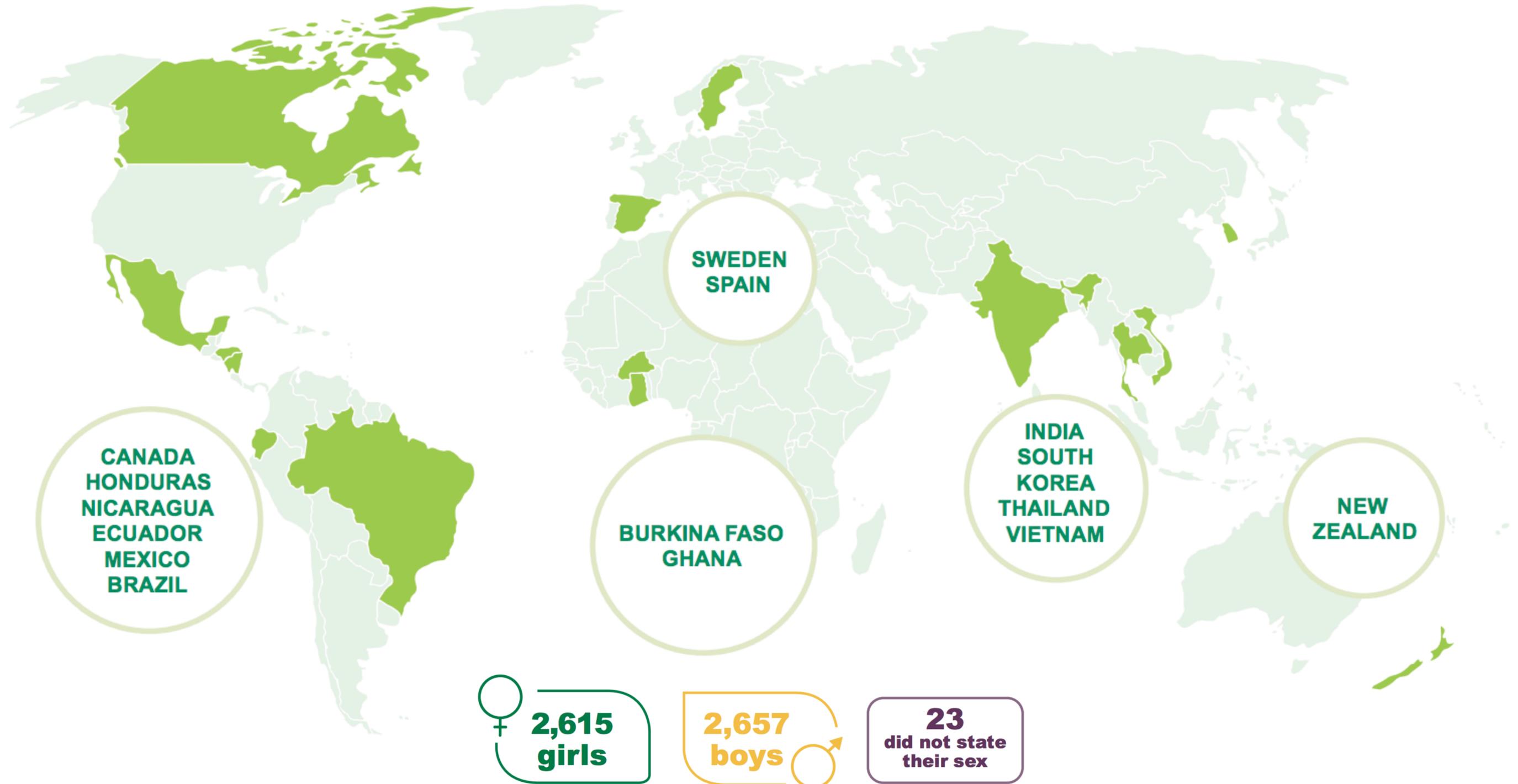
ChildFund<sup>®</sup>  
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SMALL VOICES   
*Big Dreams*

# Background

- *Small Voices, Big Dreams* (SVBD) is a **ChildFund Alliance-wide** initiative.
- Formed in 2002, ChildFund Alliance is a **global network of 11 child-focused development organizations that help nearly 13 million children** and their families in more than 60 countries.
- **Purpose of SVBD:** To elevate the voices of children on issues that directly affect them.
- SVBD 2019 compiles opinions of nearly **5,500 children from 15 countries** on violence against children.

# SVBD 2019 participants



***“Children should be aware of  
children’s rights.”***

- Aarya, 12, India

# No child is immune to violence

- Every year, nearly **one billion children** in the world suffer from some type of physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect.
- **Violence takes many different forms**, transcends all geographical barriers and societal differences, such as gender, religion, ethnicity, disability, as well as socioeconomic status.
- Nine out of 10 children surveyed believe that **recognizing and being aware of their rights** is a key factor for preventing and tackling violence.

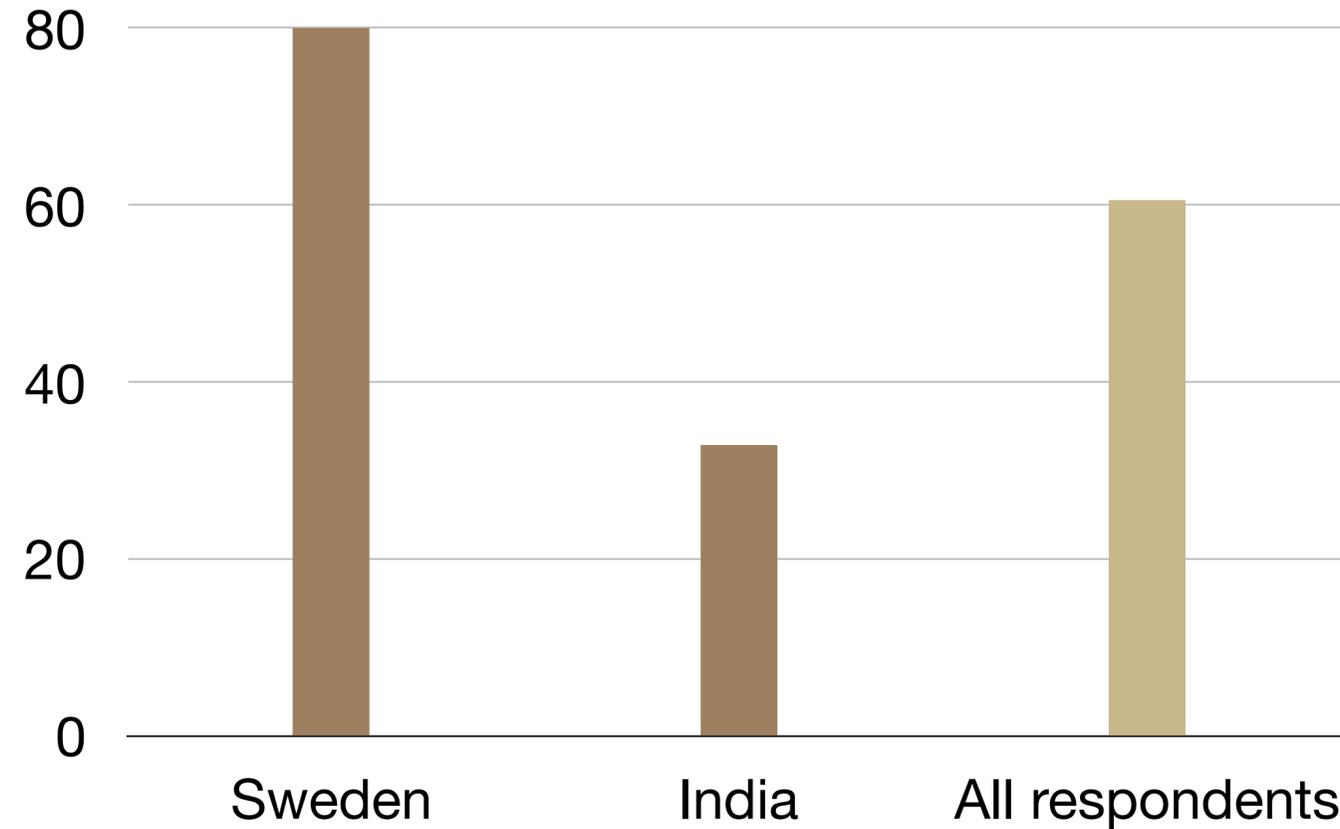
# Children's rights and violence

- **Children appear to be very aware of their rights.** More than 7 out of 10 respondents express that, just like adults, children have their own rights.
- Yet, nearly half of children surveyed say they **do not know** about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- More than 40% think **children are not protected enough** from violence.
- 90% of children agree “**to avoid violence against children, adults should listen to what children have to say.**”

***“We need to be listened to;  
our voice is important.”***

- Noemi, Honduras

# By comparison...

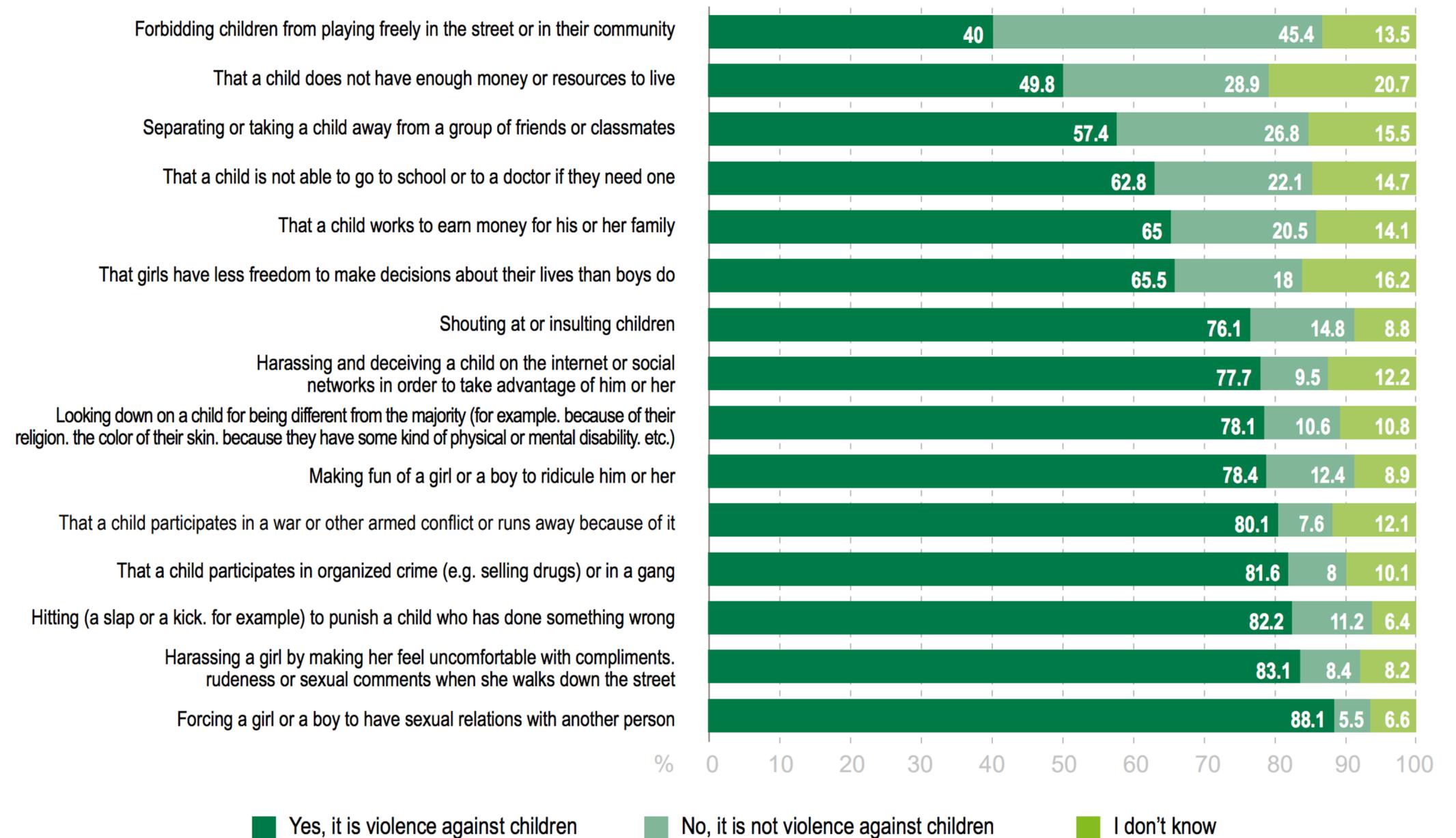


**Percentage of young people who think that adults know about and respect children's rights**

# Types of violence as told by children

While there are different types of violence that are more explicit and visible, **others are more subtle and, therefore, more difficult for children to recognize.**

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



# Where violence occurs...

- There are certain types of violence that happen more when the living conditions are worse.
- **In countries with lower levels of development, children report experiencing a higher rate of systemic violence**, like forced child labour, material deprivation and lack of access to basic services.
- The proportion of children who identify as being **harassed or deceived on the internet or social media** is much higher in countries with a very high score on the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index. This could be due to the fact that access to computers and the internet is higher in these countries.

# Violence for boys vs. girls

- Both boys and girls recognize **harassment of a sexual nature** in the street as a form of violence, but more so among girls (84.1% vs. 82%).
- There is a clear difference in the types of violence boys and girls are vulnerable to. 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.**
- **Boys are more at risk of being kidnapped or robbed, or of being victims of forced labour or organised crime.** Meanwhile, **girls are much more prone to being exposed to sexual violence, forced marriages and domestic work.**

***“Girls are raped and boys are forced to work very hard and are treated like slaves.”***

- Dzifa, 11, Ghana

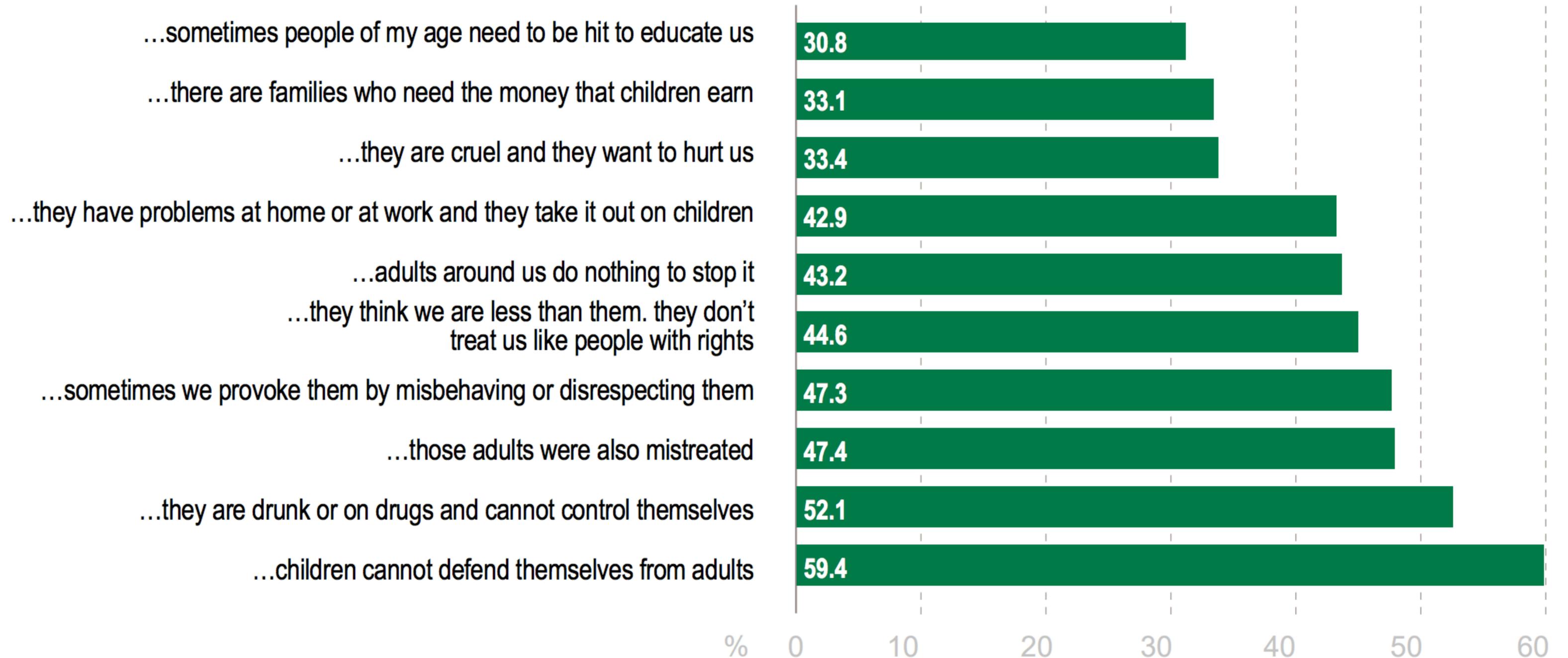
# Consequences of violence as told by children

**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

# The causes of violence...

- According to children, **in violent situations there is always a power imbalance** between victim and aggressor.
- Children highlight three main causes of violence:
  1. **Children's inability to defend themselves;**
  2. **The cycle of violence; and**
  3. **The loss of self-control due to substance abuse.**

# Why do adults mistreat children?



***“Yes, it is normal for an adult  
to hit a disrespectful child.”***

- Idrissa, 12, Burkina Faso

# Poverty as a cause of violence

- In countries with lower levels of human development (Burkina Faso, Honduras, Ghana and Thailand) one in two children say that **‘a family’s need for money can lead to situations of violence and mistreatment.**



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

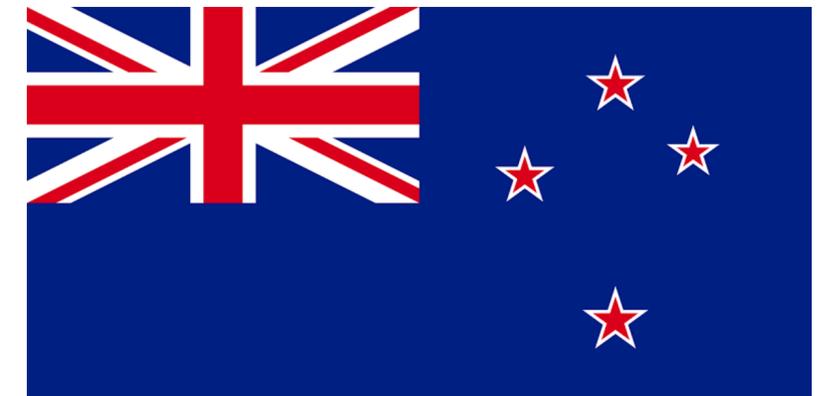
- Sansakar, 11, India

# Spaces where violence takes place

- Children perceive different places in their environments more violent than others, with **home and school perceived as being the most safe.**
- Globally, **the internet and social media have been reported as the most unsafe, followed by the streets and then public transport.**
- More than **30% of children in Thailand perceive the street as a space that doesn't guarantee their safety**, whereas in Sweden or Spain, more than **85% feel safe when they walk alone in their community.**
- In India and Burkina Faso, **areas of transit were considered the highest risk**, places where many children mention the walk to school, to collect water or to visit other communities.

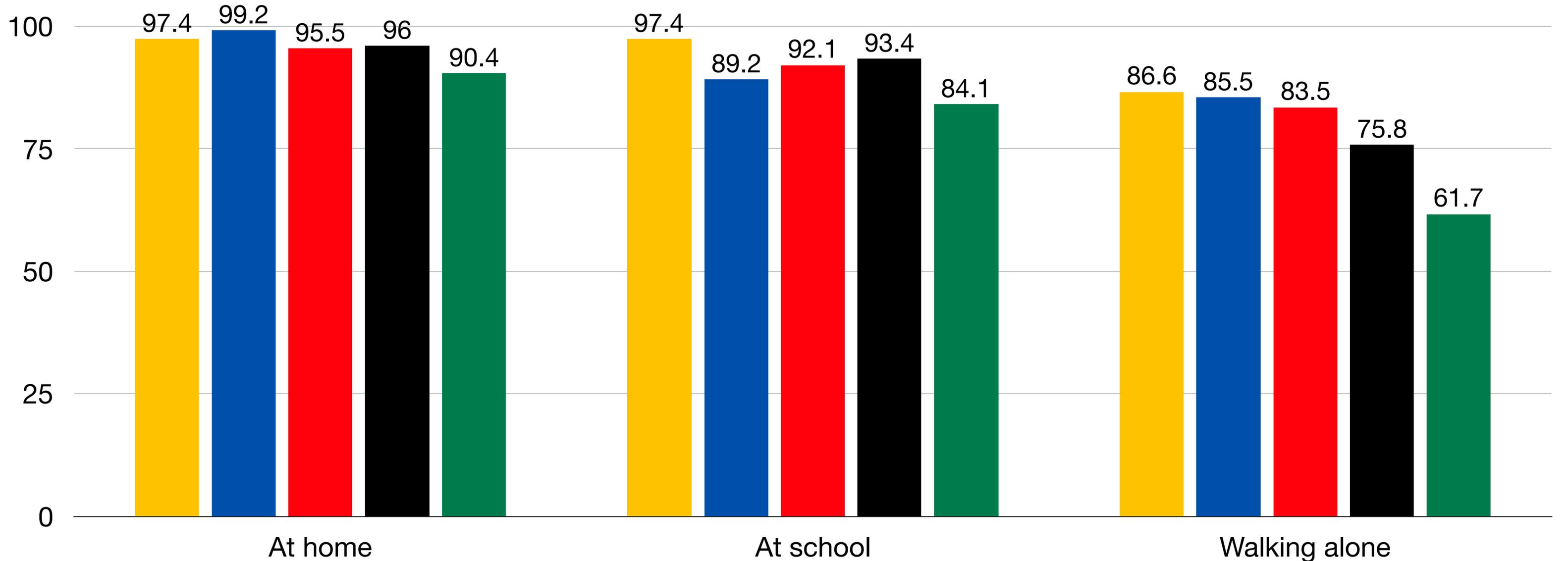
# Perceived risk and safety

- One of the most significant findings of SVBD 2019 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 in their homes, schools and communities, the lower their life satisfaction level is.
- In countries with high well-being (Spain, Sweden, Canada and New Zealand), children appear to have a very **low perception of risk** and global insecurity.

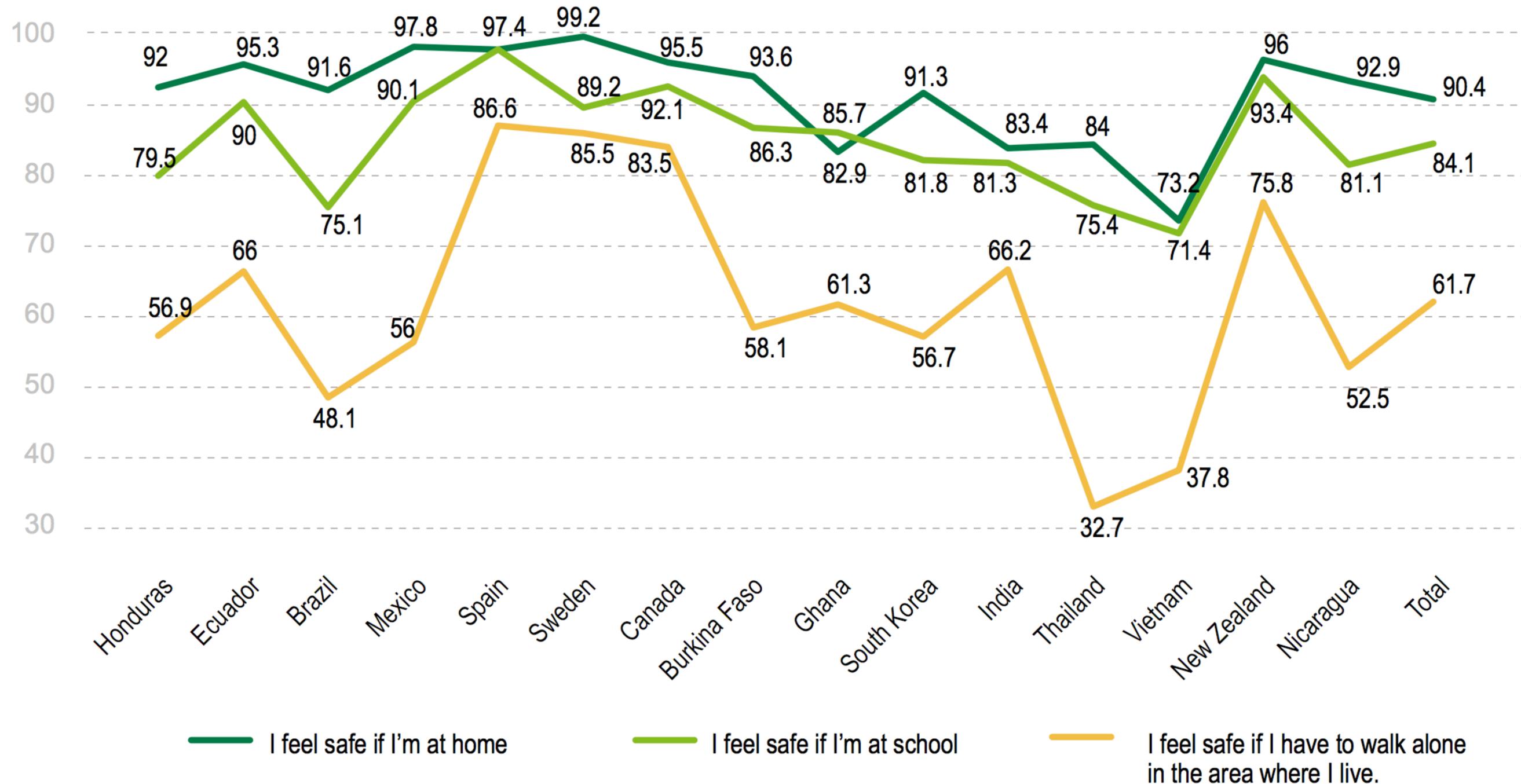


# “I feel safe...”

Spain Sweden Canada New Zealand All respondents



# Perceived risk and safety



***“[Risks are] often on the way  
to school, on the way out of  
the village.”***

- Haoua, 11, Burkina Faso

# The experience of girls vs. boys

- Globally, both boys and girls think that women are more exposed and vulnerable to violence, although girls show a more acute perception of their vulnerability.
- **63.5% of boys and 59.7% of girls feel safe walking alone.**
- **Girls living in medium- and low-IHDI countries, more than boys, classify many of the spaces they inhabit in their daily lives as insecure.** These differences are especially evident in Ghana, Thailand, Honduras and Vietnam.

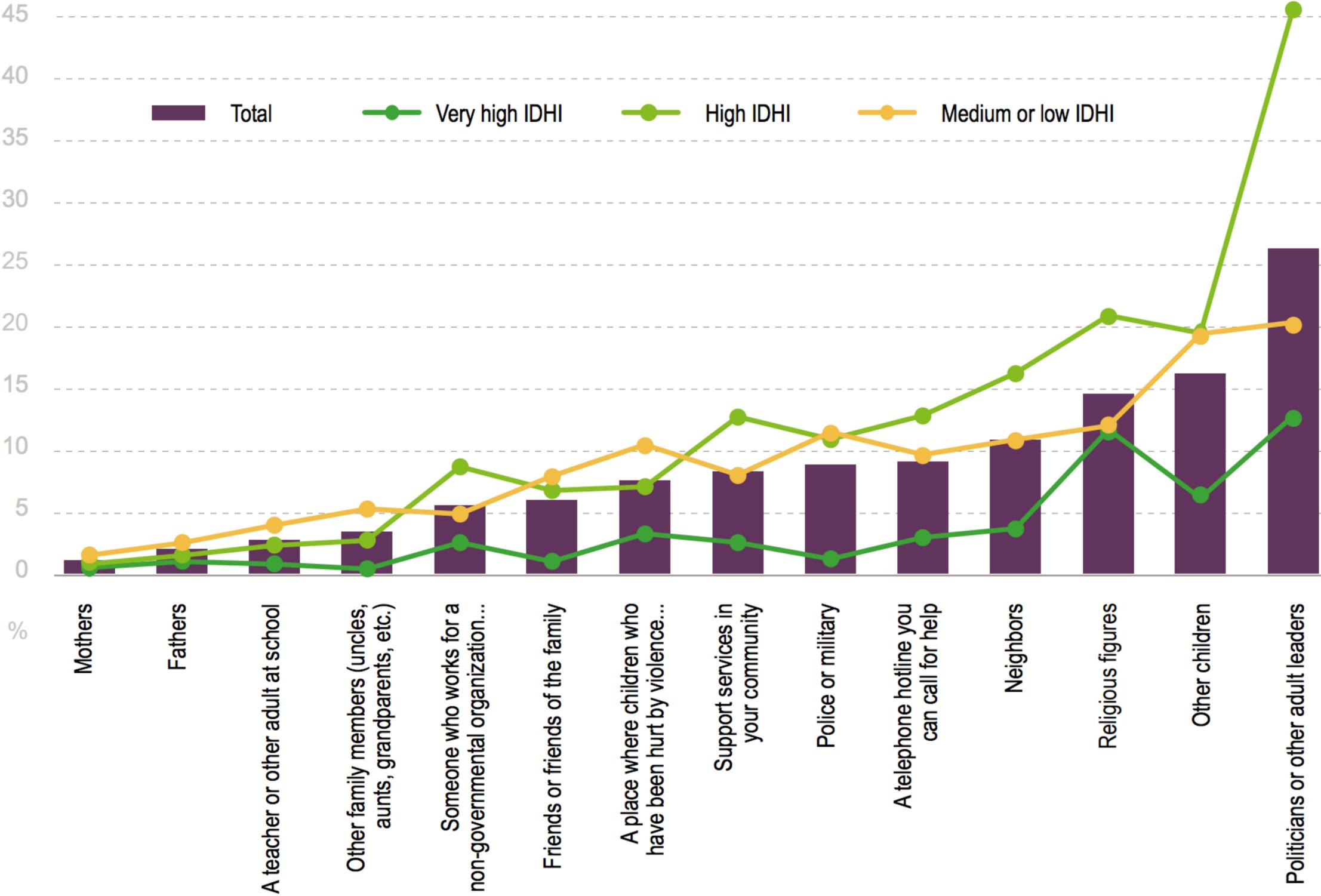
***“We women are disappearing.  
Every day around three women  
in this country are killed... we  
must look after ourselves.”***

- Elena Maria, 12, Honduras

# Who keeps children safe?

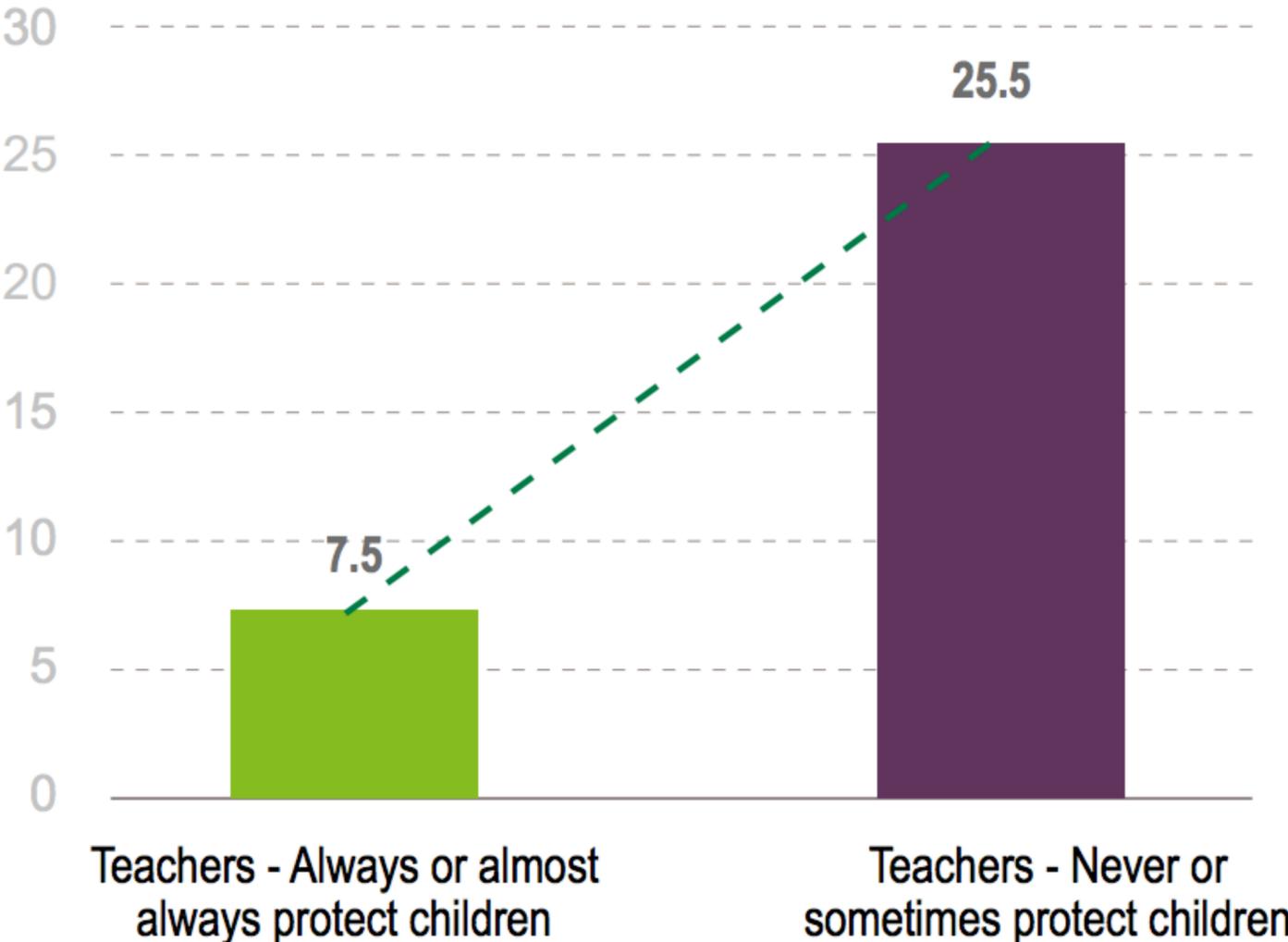
- Globally, **86.4%** of children identify mothers as the person who keeps them the most safe and, alternately, only **18.1%** of children think that politicians and the people who govern protect children from violence.
- There is a link between those who suggest that school is unsafe, and those who do not believe teachers keep them safe. Similarly, for children who think the streets are unsafe, and those who do not believe police or military protect them from violence.

# Those who don't protect children...

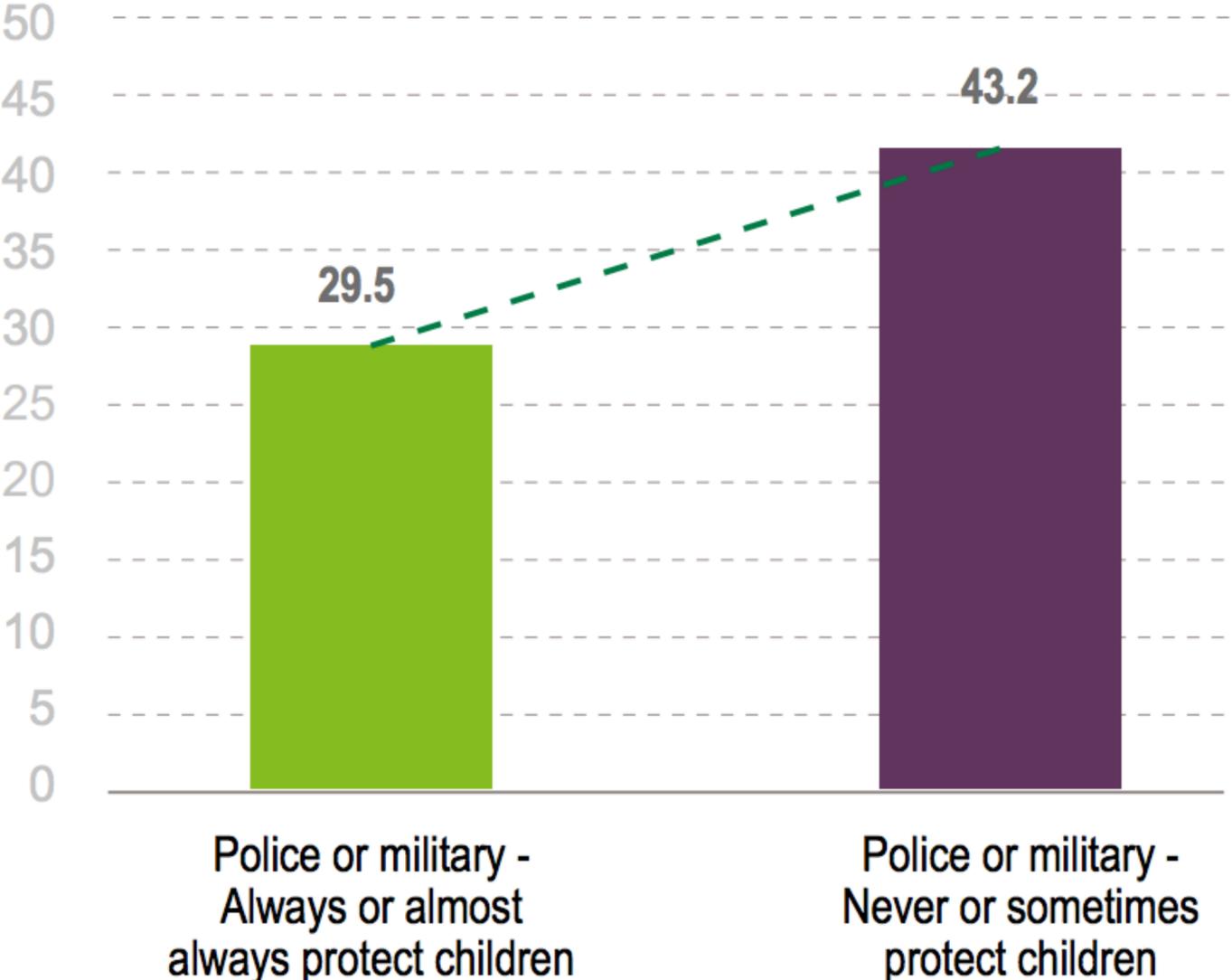


# How protectors affect perceived safety

% 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



# Ending violence against children

- Nine out of 10 children surveyed think that the most important thing adults can do to protect children against violence is to **love children more** and **listen to what they have to say**.
- More than **88% of children think that when faced with a violent situation, they should tell someone who can help them**.
- However, **children did express the fear of not being believed** by adults, or even receiving reprisals or punishments and being assaulted again.

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

- Ibai, 12, Spain

***“...there are, for example, some teachers who might say ‘you are making it up’ or just ignore you.”***

- Alba, 13, Spain

# What adults can do...

**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

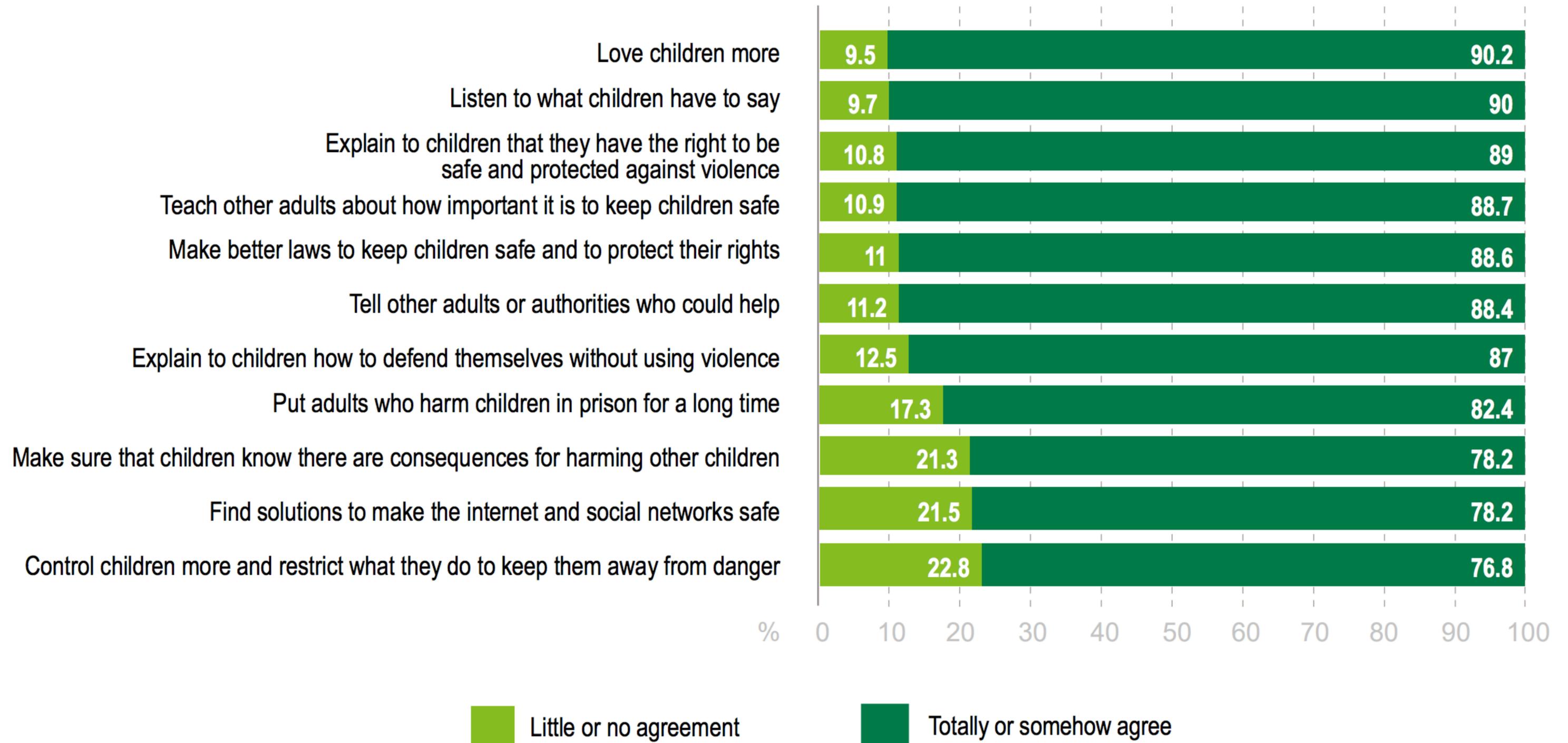
Not force children to work **Believe us**

Communication **Show Affection** Listen to children's voices

Live in peace **Feeling wanted**

Spend time with them

# What adults can do...



# Conclusion

- **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 by the children surveyed, regardless of the children's geographic context.
- **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.
- Read the report: [www.smallvoicesbigdreams.org](http://www.smallvoicesbigdreams.org)

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