



Learn

without fear.



THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO

**END VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS**

Plan's Learn Without Fear campaign is an important step towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals. I believe that there is hope – we can end violence in schools. With global solidarity and by synergising our efforts, we really can make a difference for millions of children all over the world.

Salil Shetty, Director,  
United Nations Millennium Campaign

We welcome Plan's latest campaign that tackles violence in schools. School-related violence knows no colour or creed, and child helplines play a critical role in allowing children to report incidents and offering support to those who are affected. We look forward to working closely with Plan in making schools around the world violence-free zones.

Jeroo Billimoria, Chair,  
Child Helpline International

Teachers are at the centre of this campaign ... Violence keeps children away from school. They dread school, because its environment is not safe enough for them and therefore not conducive to learning. I therefore urge you all to back Plan and the Ministry for this campaign.

Odile Bonkoungou, Minister of Basic  
Education and Literacy, Burkina Faso

I am confident that the Learn Without Fear campaign will enable us to promote violence-free schools where children can learn and develop. We are committed to working with Plan for the benefit of school children.

Waldo Albarraçín, Ombudsman, Bolivia



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- **Painful lessons: the politics of preventing sexual violence and bullying at school.** London: Overseas Development Institute. Nicola Jones, Karen Moore, Eliana Villar-Marquez & Emma Broadbent (2008)
- **Expel violence! A systematic review of interventions to prevent corporal punishment, sexual violence and bullying in schools.** Bordeaux: International Observatory on Violence in Schools. Catherine Blaya & Eric Debarbieux (2008)
- **School violence in OECD countries.** London: Karen Moore, Nicola Jones & Emma Broadbent (2008)

These reports are available in full on our website [plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear](http://plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear)



Photos used in this document feature children from communities and groups with which Plan works, but it should not be inferred that they are necessarily victims of violence.

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Designed by Plan.



© Plan/Michael Bisceglie. Girl at Plan-supported school, Bolivia.



**Safety and security don't just happen: they are the result of collective consensus and public investment.**

**We owe our children – the most vulnerable citizens in any society – a life free from violence and fear.**

Nelson Mandela,  
World Report on Violence and Health, 2002

## Acronyms and glossary

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AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
Battery	Beating; intentional use of force or violence
Common law	Law developed through decisions of courts and similar tribunals, based on custom, culture, habit, and previous judicial decisions
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
EFA	Education for All (global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults)
GNP	Gross National Product
GSHS	Global School-Based Health Survey (school-based survey designed to help countries measure and assess the behavioural risks and protective factors of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among children and adults worldwide; conducted by WHO and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HBSC	Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (cross-national research study conducted in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, focusing on young people's health and well-being, in particular health behaviours and social context)
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals (a set of eight time-bound targets aimed at ending extreme poverty worldwide by 2015; agreed by leaders from developed and developing countries at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
Statutory rape	When an individual (regardless of age) has consensual sexual relations with an individual not old enough to legally consent to the behaviour
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNVAC	United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children
US	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization

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## Foreword



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### **Professor Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro**

Former Independent Expert for the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children (UNVAC) and Commissioner and Rapporteur on Children, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and Organization of American States

Violence in and around schools affects children in every country, every day – from corporal punishment and bullying to gun and knife crime and sexual assault.

Wherever it occurs, violence in schools has damaging consequences for both children and wider society. Children have to bear the pain and humiliation; it affects their learning, their personalities and their future prospects.

In the many instances where violence goes unpunished and unacknowledged there is no peace or justice for the children who suffer, and the effects can be permanent.

Children have a right to a safe school environment where they can learn to the best of their ability.

Violence against children – whether by children themselves or by adults in a position of power – is preventable and must not be tolerated.

Learn Without Fear is Plan's contribution to what must be a global effort to protect children from physical, sexual and mental abuse in schools, which should be places of safety for children.

There are no simple solutions, but Learn Without Fear is based on the latest research into the scale of the problem, the legal remedies and practical programmes that can succeed in preventing and stopping school violence.

Children have the right to go to school without fear and expect a quality learning experience without threats of violence. This campaign has the potential to make a real positive impact on the lives of millions of children.

Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro

Violence in schools is a truly global problem.<sup>1</sup> The violence may be corporal punishment, sexual abuse, neglect, verbal and emotional abuse, bullying, peer-to-peer violence, youth gangs, weapons or harassment on the journey to and from school.

Plan is one of the oldest and largest international development agencies in the world, operational in 66 countries. We work in 49 developing countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas and have offices in another 17 developed countries in Europe, North America, East Asia and Oceania. We directly support more than 1.5 million children and their families, and further, we indirectly support an estimated nine million people who live in communities that are working with Plan.

An internal survey carried out in 2007 across all the countries in which Plan operates found that the main school violence issues affecting the children and communities we work with are corporal punishment, sexual violence and bullying.<sup>2</sup>

### The campaign

This evidence led Plan to create Learn Without Fear, a campaign to end violence against children in schools, with a particular focus on the main issues identified above. Each Plan office will adapt the campaign in order to tackle the aspects of school violence that are of greatest importance to children in each country.

Underpinned by the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the ethos of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the campaign will build on the impetus created by the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children (UNVAC) in 2006. It will also build on our expertise in quality education, school improvement and child protection programme work. Plan's Child Centred Community Development<sup>3</sup> approach to grassroots work will be pivotal to the implementation of the campaign.

Learn Without Fear – and this report – focuses on the 66 countries<sup>4</sup> in which Plan operates, but aims to impact on the lives of children beyond Plan's direct

## Introduction

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reach. Evidence is therefore included from other countries to demonstrate the truly global nature of the problem. The campaign will operate on many levels; from global work with international agencies to working in partnership with national governments, communities and individuals. We recognise that success will require a concerted effort by all stakeholders, not least children themselves, who are ingenious and enthusiastic about devising the best strategies to address the challenges posed by violence in schools.

### The research

This report builds on a rigorous systematic review and an extensive literature review. The literature review scrutinised existing materials on school violence and gave a global analysis of legal and social mechanisms protecting children from school violence. This was supplemented by telephone and email interviews with governmental and non-governmental experts from Africa, Latin America and Asia.<sup>5</sup>

The systematic review identified and synthesised relevant research from all over the world in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese to evaluate the impact of school violence prevention programmes.<sup>6</sup> However, a point of note is that school violence evidence produced in many countries does not reach internationally traceable systems, such as the internet. It is therefore likely that some successful programmes will have been missed by the desk-based reviewers.

### This report

This report outlines Plan's Learn Without Fear campaign and focuses on corporal punishment, sexual violence and bullying in schools. The first three chapters outline the scale and severity of these forms of school violence, their causes and consequences and ways in which law and policy can be improved. The fourth chapter focuses on what works in tackling school violence, with a particular focus on programmatic interventions.

The final chapter contains Plan's call to action, proposing what international organisations, governments, teachers, parents and children themselves must do to stop violence in schools. Each Plan office has set ambitious goals; these

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have been aggregated and are outlined in the call to action, showing the work that Plan itself will undertake.

Whilst this report also intends to improve our understanding of school violence and fill some of the gaps identified by previous studies (such as UNVAC), it is clear that further research is needed. The first step to putting an end to school violence is to know the size and nature of the problem. In particular, it is necessary to examine social, political and cultural contexts in which school violence exists in order to develop appropriate interventions.

Quality education is key to eliminating poverty and giving children the chance to improve their lives, but school violence is a major barrier. However, stopping school violence requires a paradigm shift, and the commitment of individuals, governments and international agencies. This will take time, but Learn Without Fear aims to be a step in the right direction.

Violence against children is an abuse of their rights. It is not only cruel and unjust but also predictable and preventable.<sup>7</sup> It is time that children have a chance to learn without fear to reach their full potential.



© Panos/G.M.B. Akash. Schoolgirl, Nepal.



© Mark Read. Corporal punishment role play at Plan-supported youth centre, Togo.



## Corporal punishment

Teachers always hold a stick. Once I argued with a teacher, I was instructed to lean on the wall and I was hit three times by a stick. I was so stressed out and perspired heavily.

Plan Thailand research with children and young people aged 7-18

# Corporal punishment

## Defining corporal punishment

Corporal punishment occurs when physical force is used by someone in a position of authority against someone in his or her care with the intention of causing some degree of pain or discomfort. This can take the form of hitting children with a hand, or with a cane, strap or other object; kicking, shaking or throwing children; scratching, pinching, biting or pulling hair; forcing them to stay in uncomfortable positions; locking or tying them up; burning, scalding or forced ingestion – for example washing mouths out with soap.<sup>8</sup> Such punishment can have psychological as well as physical effects.

## The extent of the problem

The use of physical force to inflict pain on children as a punishment is common in schools in many countries across the world. The UNVAC study called on all countries to ban corporal punishment by 2009.<sup>7</sup> Yet 90 countries out of 197 monitored by the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children legally permit teachers to physically punish children in their care.<sup>8</sup> Even in countries where corporal punishment is banned, such as China, the law is often not effectively enforced.<sup>9</sup>

### INDIA

We are beaten mercilessly in school. As a result we are unable to sit properly.

Boys, 10 to 12 years old

If we wear a colourful dress to school on a non-uniform day, the teacher punishes us.

Girls, 13 to 15 years old

In Cameroon, corporal punishment in schools is illegal. But a study covering four of Cameroon's provinces, published two years after the 1998 ban, found teachers made no secret of using corporal punishment for "cheekiness, disobedience and academic mistakes" and 97 per cent of students reported that they had been physically punished.<sup>10</sup>

The evidence shows that boys typically suffer greater violence at the hands of their teachers than girls do if they step out of line in class.<sup>8</sup> And children already discriminated against based on, for example, disability, poverty, caste, class, ethnicity or sexuality are more likely to suffer corporal punishment than their peers.<sup>5</sup>

In the western world, boys and black children are much more likely to be hit at home and at school.<sup>11</sup> And studies in developing countries suggest that discrimination occurs across the world. In Egypt, for example, 80 per cent of boys have suffered corporal punishment at school, compared to 67 per cent

© Peter Gilbieri (16 years old). Peter's photo of a teacher in Ghana was a winner in the 'Who do you look up to' category in the 2007 Plan/Shoot Experience global youth photography competition.



of girls. One quarter of the children punished said they sustained injuries as a result.<sup>7</sup>

Gender discrimination is sometimes reflected in law. In Singapore, corporal punishment of boys is legal but it is illegal for teachers to hit girls.<sup>8</sup>

And gender stereotypes influence not only how teachers treat boys and girls but how they act themselves. Sub-Saharan African research suggests that female teachers often call on male teachers to carry out corporal punishment of students, while female teachers are the most likely to resort to emotional abuse and insulting language to control students, thereby reinforcing gendered patterns of discipline and communication.<sup>12</sup>

Corporal punishment is widespread in African schools. It is against the law in only 21 of 54 countries.<sup>8</sup>

### **Research carried out in Benin, where corporal punishment is legal, found that 41 per cent of teachers and 79 per cent of schoolchildren reported corporal punishment in schools.<sup>5</sup>**

In Latin America, teachers are permitted to hit students in 14 out of 19 countries.<sup>8</sup> UNVAC's Latin America regional consultation found that physical punishment is widely permitted and often goes unreported. In some countries it is reported to be a "daily occurrence for many children".<sup>13</sup>

In Guyana, a study of 1,200 nine to 17 year-olds in 24 secondary schools found that more than half (56 per cent) reported being whipped by their teachers using branches from trees, pieces of wood, rulers, metal strips from old tables and other parts of school furniture. Other punishments reported by the children included being made to kneel (18 per cent); shaken (20 per cent); slapped (26 per cent). More than a quarter (26 per cent) reported suffering injuries as a result of violence by teachers.<sup>14</sup>

In Peru, a study of more than 2,000 children from private and public schools showed that 13 per cent were affected by physical aggression. 59.3 per cent reported being punished with belts, sticks and cords and 40 per cent mentioned punching, pinching and pushing.<sup>15</sup>

## **Plan's work in GHANA**

### **Promoting positive discipline**

Plan, in close collaboration with the Ghana Education Service, provided training, influenced the enforcement of the teachers' code of ethics and teaching methods and installed an effective school monitoring system on non-violent disciplinary methods across 184 communities in Ghana.

As a result, over 5,500 people in Southern Ghana are now familiar with the basic rights of the child, in particular those related to the prevention of school violence. To date, the activities have also reached more than 10,800 children.

## Corporal punishment

### SUDAN

One day, on our way home from school, a number of our fourth grade classmates decided to swim in the irrigation channel nearby. Unfortunately while we were happily playing in the water the headmaster saw us. I was terrified and could not go to bed most of that night. When I finally fell asleep, I dreamt that the headmaster was flogging me in the school yard in front of all the students. My nightmare became a reality when the headmaster called out our names and everyone was lashed with a leather whip 10 times. My friend left school as a result and travelled to the capital city where he is now working in a restaurant. He was very angry that day and is now frustrated with his current situation.

Boy, 13 years old

In Brazil, 84 per cent of 12,000 students from 143 schools in six states reported their schools as violent. Almost 70 per cent of these students said they had been victims of school violence.<sup>16</sup>

In Asia, 14 countries have a total ban on corporal punishment in schools, three have a partial ban but 16 have no legal restrictions.<sup>8</sup>

Corporal punishment is widely practised in educational institutions in Pakistan, in at least 40 per cent of government schools and 35 per cent of private schools, as well as in religious schools.<sup>17</sup> The use of corporal punishment to discipline children is not only deeply entrenched in school practice and social attitudes, it also has legal sanction: Section 89 of the Pakistan Penal Code 1860 (No. XLV) empowers parents, teachers and other guardians to use moderate corporal punishment as a means to correct the behaviour of children under 12 years old.<sup>5</sup>

In the developed world, corporal punishment is legal in France, Korea and a number of Australian and US states.<sup>5</sup> In the US, schools are the only institutions where the use of violence is legal. It is banned in psychiatric hospitals, the military and prisons.<sup>6</sup>

In some countries, the severity of corporal punishment is limited by law. In Singapore, for example, boys can be struck only on the palms of the hand or the clothed buttocks, and only by the principal or an authorised person. This was confirmed by an official Ministry of Education document that indicates that caning should not take place when the teacher is emotionally upset.<sup>8</sup>

But where legal limits exist, they are not always enforced. In addition, schools often lack policies and rules on discipline, leaving it up to individual teachers to impose their own.<sup>12</sup> UNVAC's West and Central Africa regional consultation stressed that "inside the classroom, the teacher is in sole command and free to decide how he will impose discipline".<sup>18</sup>

The CRC, which all countries in the world except the US and Somalia have ratified, requires States to protect children from all forms of physical and mental violence.<sup>7</sup> Yet, only 23 countries have declared a total ban on corporal punishment in all settings (including in the home). The majority of these are

in Europe, but children in Costa Rica, Uruguay, Venezuela, Israel and New Zealand are also protected by law from all corporal punishment.<sup>8</sup>

The use of corporal punishment at home can indirectly influence the level of violence at school as children learn that violence is an acceptable form of negotiating relationships.<sup>19</sup>

## Causes of corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is often defended in the name of tradition and sometimes in the name of religion.<sup>20</sup> In some countries, hitting a child is considered the right of parents and teachers. The supposed beneficial impact on children's behaviour is also frequently used as an argument to defend physical punishment as a discipline method.

In fact, corporal punishment is more likely to cause children to act violently than to improve behaviour. There is no evidence that corporal punishment improves children's academic achievement. A review of existing literature carried out for Plan found "no serious work that defends corporal punishment at school".<sup>21</sup>

Indicators of School Crime and Safety data from the Centre for Effective Discipline<sup>22</sup> shows that the often-employed argument stating students are lazier without school corporal punishment is wrong. In the US, 64 per cent of the states allowing school corporal punishment have an education level lower than the national average.<sup>23</sup>

Rather than educational efficacy, it is tradition, religion and the support of parents and teachers for corporal punishment that sustains the practice.

UNVAC's West and Central Africa regional consultation found that in a number of countries – including Central African Republic, the Gambia, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal – the right of parents or others in charge of a child (such as teachers) to 'give that child a beating' is openly acknowledged.<sup>18</sup>

A US opinion poll showed that one in four respondents thought that primary school teachers should inflict corporal punishment on their pupils, if they deemed it necessary.<sup>6</sup> In a survey by the All-Japan Parents and Teachers

## Plan's work in INDIA

### Stopping corporal punishment

Corporal punishment research with 1,500 children in 41 schools in India highlighted the need for urgent action. The study directly linked violence in schools to high drop-out rates, damaged self-esteem and personality problems in pupils.

Plan is now working with grassroots NGOs on creating models for child-friendly environments in 170 schools, and with governments to replicate these elsewhere. Plan also engaged children in developing a child-friendly version of the study, to enable them to advocate for a corporal punishment ban.

Top education officials from the Ministry of Human Resource Development have recently asked all states and union territories to amend urgently their education acts and rules to penalise teachers and school management officials who hurt children. While corporal punishment in schools was banned in national policy in 1986, the implementation of this through federal policies, laws and school policies has not occurred widely.

## Corporal punishment

### PARAGUAY

Our school principal punishes very hard. She makes us go down on our knees over small stones or bottle screw tops for over 20 minutes and also she often pulls our ears.

Girl, 8 years old

### CAMEROON

When the school year started, my father refused to provide my school dues. Since I did not have textbooks, I was beaten in front of others and driven away from school for one week. I was very ashamed and thought of leaving school.

Girl, 10 years old

Association, only a quarter of respondents stated that corporal punishment should never be administered by a teacher.<sup>24</sup>

In Latin America, violence is often accepted as a way of life and a normal or harmless phase that children need to go through and develop resilience towards. Some parents explicitly authorise teachers to beat their children if they misbehave as they do at home. In other cases, school authorities do little to acknowledge or address the problem of violence.<sup>5</sup>

Even where corporal punishment is outlawed or limited by law, its cultural acceptability often encourages weak enforcement of the law. In many countries, the reporting of cases of abuse to school authorities appears to be low and suspected perpetrators are rarely held accountable.<sup>25</sup>

Yet it is a paradox and a breach of human rights that the smallest and most vulnerable people should have less protection from assault than adults.<sup>11</sup> Corporal punishment of children breaches their fundamental human rights to respect for human dignity and physical integrity. Its legality in many countries conflicts with the universal right to equal protection under the law.

In the UK, although corporal punishment is banned in schools, “reasonable chastisement” can legally be carried out by those who have parental responsibility.<sup>26</sup> According to children’s charity NSPCC, “the current legal framework, dating back to 1860, neither provides children with adequate protection from physical force, nor gives a clear message that physical punishment is not an acceptable practice in a modern society.”<sup>27</sup>

In countries where corporal punishment in schools is legal, or where laws against beating children are not strictly enforced, the actual use of corporal punishment is often affected by everyday factors such as teachers’ stress, availability of resources and teacher training.<sup>8</sup>

Although it is of critical medium- and long-term importance, the current international drive to achieve Education for All (EFA) has posed major challenges for education systems across the world. The focus on quantity (number of children enrolled) rather than quality has in many countries left teachers struggling to control more children in often cramped conditions.<sup>5</sup>

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In some instances, this has resulted in the unintended consequence of making children more vulnerable to violence at school.

For example, when Kenya eliminated primary school fees in 2003, 1.5 million new children enrolled. The average class size tripled from 40 to 120 pupils, posing enormous challenges for teachers attempting to maintain discipline.<sup>28</sup> Not only is this likely to reinforce teachers' reliance on physical punishment to discipline students, but it also risks decreasing their capacity to intervene in cases of student violence.

The 2007 EFA report shows that 41 countries – many in Latin America and South West Asia – have reduced the proportion of national income spent on education.<sup>29</sup> According to the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), public debates about education tend to focus on basic infrastructural issues such as school buildings, the lack of educational materials, high teacher-pupil ratios and the high costs of school fees. And once again, teachers who are struggling to cope are more likely to rely on corporal punishment to maintain order.<sup>5</sup>

These problems are compounded in countries where teachers have poor training and motivation. In Ecuador, many teachers suffer from low pay and a lack of training in alternative non-violent disciplinary techniques. As a result, they often resort to punitive and physically violent methods of control.<sup>30</sup>

In Asia, the general acceptance of corporal punishment in schools and at home is often part of a wider problem of violence. This includes bullying and sexual violence, violence against women and girls in homes and in the community, and discrimination against various minority groups. Respect for elders means that their behaviour – even when violent or discriminatory – can be seen by children as acceptable, perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of violence and supporting the child's own bullying or violent behaviour.<sup>5</sup>

## Consequences of corporal punishment

In the short term, corporal punishment can lead to physical injury and even death.<sup>31</sup> In the longer term it boosts the development of violent behaviour.<sup>5</sup> Corporal punishment is associated with assaults on spouses, depression,

## The meaning of equal protection

Giving children equal protection means criminalising assaults on children in the same way and to the same extent as assaults on adults. Criminalising corporal punishment means making it against the law.

Children's rights to respect for their human dignity and physical integrity and to equal protection require that the law effectively and equally protects them from all forms of corporal punishment and other humiliating punishment or treatment.<sup>8</sup>

# Corporal punishment

## ETHIOPIA

When asked about the effects of corporal punishment, children listed disturbed personality, physical injury, death, running away on to the streets and suicide due to fear of punishment.

Girls, 13 and 14 years old

## SPAIN

If they hit me, I learn to hit.

Girl, 12 years old

problem-level drinking and lowered educational, occupational and economic achievement.<sup>8 20 32 33</sup>

There are two major reasons for negative long term effects. Firstly, children who face corporal punishment at school are more likely to drop out of education, harming their future prospects.

A study in Nepal, where corporal punishment is routine, found that 14 per cent of school drop-outs can be attributed to fear of teachers.<sup>34</sup>

Even when children remain in school, fear of beatings harms their education. Students in Belize explained that they were told by their parents and teachers that they were being punished out of love, and this led many to believe that it was right to administer corporal punishment to them. However, they stated that they cannot learn when there is the threat of the whip and that they need to feel loved, not threatened with violence.<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, corporal punishment often causes psychological damage to children. Brazilian children aged seven to nine years were asked to describe their corporal punishment experiences and they reported that the pain is not always physical. They described “pain in the heart” and “pain from the inside”.<sup>35</sup>

Most obviously this psychological damage can lead to depression, feelings of abandonment and suicide.<sup>36 37</sup> But children who are physically punished are also less likely to engage in altruistic behaviour or empathise with others.<sup>8</sup> They are more likely to engage in disorderly and aggressive conduct and more likely to use corporal punishment on their own children; thus perpetuating the cycle of violence.<sup>38</sup>

One of the most powerful conclusions of the research is a strong correlation between corporal punishment and crime at school, which shows that murders committed in US schools are significantly more frequent in the states authorising corporal punishment than in the others.<sup>37 39</sup> This close link between corporal punishment and physical abuse was confirmed by a detailed analysis of 88 studies from around the world.<sup>6</sup>

© Plan/Ida Olsen.  
Participant in PEP project  
with a drawing of school  
corporal punishment.



Ending corporal punishment in schools is therefore not only a matter of children's fundamental human rights. It is also an essential strategy for reducing the level of violence in societies.

## Improving law and policy

Effective prohibition of corporal punishment requires a clear, unambiguous statement in legislation. Otherwise, the idea persists that inflicting pain on a child in the name of discipline is acceptable, normal or even in their best interest.<sup>8</sup>

Assault on adults is a criminal offence in all countries. But in many, the law also gives parents, and those acting in their place (such as teachers), a right to various forms of 'reasonable punishment'. In some circumstances, this can mean giving adults the right to assault children in the name of discipline.<sup>8</sup>

In some countries, particularly those following the common law system, the right to use 'reasonable' corporal punishment does not appear in legislation. Instead it has been established through case law, with defendants acquitted of assaulting children because the nature of the attack was deemed to be part of 'reasonable' childrearing.<sup>8</sup> Where 'reasonable' or 'moderate' punishment is permitted, it is left to the courts to decide what is and is not acceptable. This inevitably results in confusion, the only clear message being that at least some level of violence is acceptable.<sup>8</sup>

Recent court decisions in some countries recognising all corporal punishment by parents, teachers and others as incompatible with states' international obligations (such as the CRC) are welcome. However, court decisions can be reversed and are no substitute for clear, unambiguous legislation.<sup>8</sup>

Elsewhere, both statute and case law is silent on corporal punishment, but there is a traditional acceptance of the 'right' of parents and others to use it.<sup>8</sup> This means that while the assault laws appear to make no distinction between adults and children, it is often assumed that it is legal to hit children in the name of discipline.<sup>8</sup> In such countries, prohibition can only be achieved through an explicit statement in law applying to the family, schools, penal systems for children and in the laws and regulations governing all alternative care settings.<sup>8</sup>

## Plan's work in VIETNAM

### Reducing physical and emotional punishment (PEP)

Children used Theatre for Development in this project to raise awareness and express their views on PEP. It promoted dialogue with policy makers from community to national level. 300 participants including district education authorities, headmasters, children and parents participated in lobbying for the formulation of a school code. A workshop was organised by the District Department of Education and Training. Topics included school codes developed in provinces covered by the project; children's opinions of PEP in schools and presentations on serious PEP cases in the country and current laws against PEP in schools.

Through the project, children produced numerous short films and radio programmes and had articles and photographs published in national and provincial bulletins. Booklets on violence were produced for distribution to schools across the country.





## Sexual violence

I have been very much disturbed; emotionally disturbed and very much stressed. I am trying very hard to forget how it happened, but I am failing. I can't just forget it; it's like it's just about to happen again, like it's just happening. I remember every detail.

Girl, 15 years old, Zambia, raped by her teacher<sup>40</sup>

## Sexual violence

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### Defining sexual violence

The UNVAC study defines sexual abuse of children as including any kind of sexual activity inflicted on children, especially by someone who is responsible for them, or has power or control over them, and who they should be able to trust.<sup>150</sup>

### The extent of the problem

The number of children across the world subjected to sexual abuse is shocking. The World Health Organization (2002) estimated that 150 million girls and 73 million boys under the age of 18 had been raped or suffered other forms of sexual violence.<sup>31</sup>

There are currently no reliable estimates of how much of this abuse takes place in or around schools. This is in large part due to the shame felt by the victims and the – often justified – lack of confidence that reporting the incident will lead to action against the perpetrator. There has also been a lack of research into the issue.<sup>5</sup>

But that does not mean it is impossible to gauge the extent of the problem. We do know that such violence is usually carried out by people known to the child (for example, relatives, teachers and peers) and that school-based sexual abuse is a major problem in many countries and regions.<sup>5,6</sup>

In contrast to corporal punishment, girls are at greater risk of sexual violence than boys – although many boys are also abused.<sup>5</sup> In many schools girls face a twin threat of sexual violence from both male teachers and older male students.<sup>41</sup> Studies show that girls are most likely to be abused on their journey to or from school, in or near toilets, empty classrooms, computer rooms, libraries or dormitories or near the perimeter of school grounds.<sup>41</sup>

Research in Uganda found that eight per cent of 16 and 17 year-old boys and girls questioned had had sex with their teachers and 12 per cent with ancillary staff.<sup>6</sup> In South Africa, schoolteachers were found guilty of one-third of child rapes.<sup>42</sup>

#### CANADA

A female secondary school student told a male student that she wanted to be left alone. He hit her on the buttocks. While in computer class, the male student grabbed her between the legs.

Teenage participant in school safety project<sup>155</sup>

In Zambia, one third of students aged 13 to 15 years reported having been physically forced to have sexual intercourse at least once in the previous month.<sup>43</sup> Almost one-quarter of Malawian children fear they will be attacked while walking to school, and one-third are fearful of particular places within the school grounds.<sup>25</sup>

High levels of sexual aggression from boys and teachers towards schoolgirls have been documented in Botswana, Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe<sup>44 45</sup> and generally in sub-Saharan countries.

Numerous studies in Africa have found that some male teachers exploit the advantages of their gender and authority by offering good grades in exchange for intercourse or other sexual acts from girls in their care.<sup>5 7</sup> Indeed, sexual abuse appears to be widespread and institutionalised in many countries in Africa. Such abuse is commonly seen as an inevitable part of school life and education authorities are often reluctant to tackle the problem or bring perpetrators to justice.<sup>46</sup>

A study in West and Central Africa found that teachers justified sexual exploitation of female students by saying that their clothes and behaviour were provocative, and that the teachers were far from home and in sexual need.<sup>7</sup>

Although the evidence about the extent of sexual abuse in Latin American schools is more limited, what does exist suggests that such violence occurs too frequently in the region.

**A study of Ecuadorian female adolescent victims of sexual violence found that more than a third (36.9 per cent) named teachers as perpetrators.<sup>47</sup>**

A World Bank study in the same country found more than one in five adolescent girls had been victims of sexual abuse at school.<sup>48</sup> UNVAC's Latin America consultation found that, like their peers in Africa, girls in the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama experience sexual coercion from teachers, sometimes with threats that their grades will suffer if they do not cooperate.<sup>13</sup>

## Plan's work in KENYA

### Child helplines

Child helplines enable children and young people to contact someone in an emergency or non-emergency situation. They provide supportive information, link children to immediate rescue and safety and assist with access to long-term services.

Thanks to the work of Plan Kenya and Childline Kenya, a free 24 hour telephone helpline – 116 – was launched in March 2008. The service, delivered by the government of Kenya in partnership with Childline Kenya, provides both preventive and support services through referrals and school outreach services. The Department of Children's Services provides personnel to manage rescue operations, court procedures and preparation of children's cases.

The new three-digit number is memorable, and free on all telephone technology – 116 is a national emergency number in Kenya.

## Sexual violence

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There is also limited information about sexual abuse in schools in Asia.<sup>5</sup> But again, the evidence that does exist makes disturbing reading.

**Thailand's Children and Family Protection Centre, part of the Ministry of Education, states that every week at least one teacher sexually abuses a student.<sup>17</sup>**

In South Asia, cases of abduction and trafficking of children on their way to school have been reported, as have examples of sexual violence being used as extreme forms of bullying or even discipline. A survey in Indonesia also revealed a high incidence of sexual and psychological violence in schools.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the research on sexual violence in South Asian educational institutions focuses on the tertiary level. Indeed, sexual violence, including rape, molestation, verbal harassment and sexual bullying by male students, staff and members of the public, is reported on university and college campuses throughout Asia.<sup>5</sup>

But there is evidence of abuse in schools too. A survey for UNVAC in Nepal found that almost 14 per cent of child respondents (mostly girls but also boys) had been fondled or kissed, and 15 per cent of these children had experienced this at school.<sup>17</sup> In the same survey, of the nine per cent of children who experienced more serious forms of sexual abuse, such as oral sex or penetration, 17.5 per cent said that it took place at school.

Although safeguards are often greater in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, sexual violence at school is a global problem.

**A study in the Netherlands showed that 27 per cent of students reported being sexually harassed by school personnel. The same study found that sexual harassment by school personnel appeared to cause more psychological health problems than peer harassment.<sup>49</sup>**

A study in Sweden noted that sexual harassment in schools is recognised as a key public health problem for girls, yet the sexual harassment of students by teachers has been subject to very little research. The authors found that

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among 17 and 18 year-old girls, 49 per cent felt that sexual harassment at school was a significant problem.<sup>50</sup>

According to the organisation Collectif Féministe Contre le Viol 3.3 per cent of all sexual attacks in France take place within the school environment.<sup>6</sup> A Swiss national survey reported that between seven per cent and 20 per cent of female respondents declared they had been victims of this type of violence at least once in their lives.<sup>51</sup>

According to a school survey in Spain, almost two per cent of respondents had been victims of sexual harassment and a quarter of those reported themselves as aggressors.<sup>52</sup> In an Irish study with more than 3,000 post-primary pupils, 30 pupils stated they had been sexually harassed.<sup>53</sup> According to data published in 2005, sexual abuse had been suffered by 6.2 per cent of students in Germany and 1.1 per cent in Belgium.<sup>46</sup> In Canada, one in four girls surveyed said she had experienced sexual harassment at school.<sup>54</sup>

## Causes of sexual violence

The causes of sexual violence vary greatly from country to country and school to school but teachers' behaviour and traditional gender stereotypes are key factors.

Sexual abuse of children in schools is outlawed in all but one of the 66 countries where Plan operates; the exception being Pakistan.<sup>5</sup>

Regardless of the legal position, however, teachers' behaviour can reinforce culturally acceptable gender practices and attitudes. By not reporting or responding seriously to complaints of sexual abuse, teachers and school authorities convey the message that sexual abuse will be tolerated.<sup>5</sup>

Victims are often reluctant to report sexual violence and abuse because of concerns about stigmatisation, lack of confidence that schools will take action, and limited willingness to confide in teachers for fear of reprisals.<sup>5</sup> Equally troubling is the fact that few perpetrators are held accountable.<sup>56</sup> Teachers are often reluctant to report colleagues' abuse, and in some contexts school authorities and even parents do not necessarily disapprove of sexual relations between pupils and teachers.<sup>44</sup>

## Sexual violence

### GHANA

He sent for me to come to his office, he said "I have nurtured you since your lower primary days. Now you look special and I want to walk with you". He promised to give me money if I accepted his proposal. He asked me to drop his books home after school. When I entered his house compound he dragged me into his room and pushed me into his bed and whispered "me hyew wo" (I will burn you) into my ear. He fondled me, but I screamed so he allowed me to go.

Schoolgirl

Girls in societies where women are accorded a lower or more passive status (and where practices such as infanticide, female genital cutting and honour killings take place) are more likely to suffer sexual violence at school.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, unless teachers themselves have been educated about gender and power issues, they are likely to model behaviour that reflects their own experiences and those of the wider community, which are often deeply unequal and even violent. For instance, a South African survey found that 47 per cent of female teachers in a pilot project had suffered physical abuse at the hands of an intimate partner, and 25 per cent of male teachers admitted they had been physically abusive to an intimate partner.<sup>57</sup>

Another key concern relates to the risk of violence while travelling to school. UNVAC research suggests that girls' likelihood of molestation increases as the distance to school increases.<sup>7</sup>

In some African countries, the 'folk' belief that AIDS can be cured by having sex with a virgin, has led to the abuse of students with disabilities who are seen as easy targets and assumed (not always correctly) to be sexually inactive.<sup>58</sup> Anecdotal evidence from the Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled suggests that this practice has extended to include abuse in educational facilities, with the sexual abuse of students in a school for deaf people.<sup>59</sup>

**The Global Survey on HIV/AIDS and Disability noted that people with disabilities have a significantly elevated risk of physical violence, sexual abuse and rape, yet have little or no access to the police or legal system for protection, and have less access to medical interventions and counselling than their non-disabled peers.<sup>60</sup>**

In Latin America, sexual violence against girls tends to remain a silent crime because of the stigma attached to early loss of virginity, often including expulsion from school for girls who get pregnant and discrimination against those infected with HIV. There is also a lack of confidence that the judicial system can protect ordinary citizens' rights.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, “within the context of silence and shame that surrounds HIV infection, the fear of stigma, discrimination and possibly violence can lead to HIV-infected and affected children withdrawing from school or being excluded due to bullying, as reported in Bolivia, El Salvador and Haiti.”<sup>61</sup>

A lack of policies and procedures to address sexual abuse is common in countries in Latin America. For example, in Peru, until 2007, teachers accused of sexual abuse could still obtain a job in another geographical area because of the lack of a centralised reporting system for such crimes.<sup>61</sup>

In South Asia and Islamic South East Asia, the concepts of family honour, sexual purity and shame make girls less likely to report sexual violence out of guilt or fear that she will be blamed. In some parts of South Asia, rape is viewed first and foremost as an offence against the honour of male members of the family.<sup>5</sup>

One report notes that “in India incidents other than rape are dismissed under the inappropriate term ‘eve-teasing’ [a euphemism for sexual harassment or molestation] ... Eve-teasing degrades a girl or woman without affecting her physically and is considered by men as something ‘light in nature’ and ‘fun’, whereas for females it is a violation”.<sup>63</sup>

Anecdotal evidence from India also suggests that students studying at ‘bridge schools’ – usually residential schools to help former child labourers make the transition into school – are vulnerable to sexual harassment and other forms of violence.<sup>64 65</sup>

The UNVAC study reports that Pakistan’s Minister of State for Religious Affairs recorded more than 2,500 complaints of sexual abuse by clerics in religious schools in 2002 and 2003. However, these did not lead to successful prosecutions.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout South and East Asia, the implementation and enforcement of existing laws protecting children is often weak. While there has been a great deal of outreach by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in many Asian countries, there is still a lack of effective knowledge of child rights, and a lack of understanding about the full range of effects that different forms of child abuse can have on the immediate and long-term well-being of a child.<sup>5</sup>

## Plan’s work in THE NETHERLANDS

### The power of partnerships

Plan, on behalf of seven Dutch child rights organisations, has signed a covenant with the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation. This commits all parties to reducing violence against children worldwide.

A national Violence against Children Working Group, including NGOs, academics and the Ministry for Development Cooperation, has been established to support the members’ work to implement the UNVAC recommendations.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has agreed to support the design and implementation of the EU Guidelines for the Rights of the Child, with a specific focus on violence.

As a result of campaigning by Plan and other NGOs, UN organisations and some governments, the UN last year voted to establish a Special Representative on Violence Against Children. Over 23,000 Dutch people signed a petition initiated by Plan Netherland’s Youth Board, which called for the creation of this post.

## Sexual violence

### UNITED STATES

I saw a psychologist when I was 14 and I disclosed to her about the abuse and she told me that I was doing the right thing by telling someone about what I had endured. I kept that in mind after it was leaked out into the community and the school district. I kept that close to my heart when I was called a liar, when my head was smashed into lockers, when my hair was pulled out of my head and when I was spat at. By the time I was 15, I threatened to commit suicide. When this failed to get the help that I needed so desperately, I finally did try to commit suicide during school hours. I was almost 16. My abuser only served three months for the four and a half years of abuse that he inflicted on me. He now no longer has to register as a sex offender.

*Jaime, a survivor of sexual violence<sup>71</sup>*

In Asia, the extent to which there is a public and policy focus on sexual harassment and violence depends to a large extent on whether the country faces a high level of trafficking in women and children, or a high level of sex tourism. However, while trafficking and sex tourism can and do affect school children, these issues are not generally perceived to reach into schools themselves.<sup>5</sup>

The level of new technologies also matters, with reports from Vietnam noting the rise in sexual abuse via the internet – such as when online identities and social networks are created, allowing adults to gain children’s trust and subsequently abuse or manipulate them.<sup>66</sup>

### Consequences of sexual violence

The effects of sexual violence in school are multiple and overlapping. Victims suffer physical and psychological trauma and are at risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.<sup>67</sup> Young girls may also face the consequences of unwanted pregnancy. These include unsafe abortion, social stigma and being forced to leave school.<sup>7</sup>

Sexual harassment and violence form a major barrier to girls’ and young women’s access to education and their ability to benefit from it. It is a powerful factor in influencing parents to keep girls out of school, for girls themselves avoiding school and for girls’ underperformance in the classroom.<sup>68</sup>

In Africa, a number of studies stress that fear or experience of sexual violence in schools is a major reason why some girls under-perform at school or drop out altogether. This is reflected in their lower enrolment rates at secondary school level.<sup>69</sup>

The long-term psychological and physical consequences of rape and other serious offences can be severe.<sup>50</sup>

**A study in Australia reported significant long-term associations between child sexual abuse and experiencing rape, sexual and mental health problems, domestic violence and other problems in intimate relationships.<sup>70</sup>**



©Plan/Martin Dixon.  
Separate toilet blocks for girls and boys can help to reduce the risk of sexual violence.

Where children feel unable to report sexual violence because of guilt or fear of negative repercussions, they often turn to alcohol or drug abuse in an effort to cope with their experience.<sup>72 73 74</sup> Other potential problems include depression and becoming offenders themselves.<sup>50</sup>

Those who do report abuse often experience hostility, which can force them to change and sometimes quit school, while the teachers or students accused of abusing them often remain in place and experience no repercussions.<sup>75</sup>

There are currently no estimates for the number of people who die each year as a result of sexual abuse in school. But given the scale of the problem and the dangers posed by sexually transmitted infections, illegal abortions and mental health problems it seems inevitable that sexual violence in schools takes the lives of many children each year.

In addition, attitudes towards AIDS mean that children who are living with HIV often suffer social and economic discrimination.<sup>5</sup> People living with HIV, and often their households as well, continue to be excluded from work, access to services, and family and community life.

The very high prevalence of HIV in southern Africa has raised concerns among authorities and NGOs about the vulnerability of school-age girls to infection, either through assault while travelling to school or through sexual abuse or coerced sex by male teachers or pupils within school grounds.<sup>76</sup>

## Improving law and policy

Law and policy tend to take account of the fact that sexual violence in schools affects girls and boys differently. Good practices to address the issue include the following:<sup>5</sup>

- the development and enforcement of gender-sensitive anti-violence regulations, including systematic reporting of offences and holding perpetrators accountable<sup>77</sup>
- employing a higher number of female teachers and school-based social workers, and ensuring they receive adequate training in preventing and

## Sexual violence

### PERU

[The teacher] took her to the head teacher's office. He sat down, removed her underwear and told her "because you are a minor, I am only touching you."

Mother of primary school girl raped by her teacher<sup>62</sup>

### UGANDA

Our teachers should be there to teach us and not to touch us where we don't want or to solicit love favours from us girls. We are irritated by love advances from teachers. I feel like disappearing from the world if a person who is supposed to protect me instead destroys me.

Girl, 15 years old

responding to gender-based violence so that they can serve as role models and counsellors to girl students<sup>78</sup>

- the development of life skills curricula that include modules to build both boys' and girls' awareness of the power dynamics of gender inequality, and practical sex education and sexuality classes to provide alternative models to the often abusive relations that children may see modelled within the household or community<sup>63</sup>
- training youth leaders and peer educators to tackle school violence, especially empowering children and young people to stand up to and report violence<sup>67</sup>
- development of preventative healthcare services, including training personnel to raise awareness in the community, recognise warning signs of abuse and to intervene sensitively<sup>79</sup>
- training police officers to deal with crimes of sexual violence and employing specially trained court intermediaries to support child victims in prosecuting cases of abuse<sup>78 80</sup>

When tackling sexual violence in schools, it is also important to involve a wide range of stakeholders, including political and religious leaders and community-based organisations.

In Africa, all countries in which Plan works have legislation providing general protection to children against sexual violence, mainly through penal codes.<sup>5</sup>

The potential impact of these legislative measures is, however, likely to be shaped by the dual legal systems that characterise many African countries. Customary regulations, laws and norms often exist in tandem with modern judicial frameworks, and at community level, the former often dominate. Accordingly, any legislative or policy strategy must pay particular attention to the implications for traditional laws and their gatekeepers.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, in a recent landmark ruling, Zambia's High Court awarded a 15 year-old girl US\$13,000 after she was raped by a teacher. The court also ordered the prosecution of the teacher. The girl brought the case after another teacher encouraged her to go to the authorities. But she had to endure

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personal attacks and accusations that she was lying before being vindicated in court.<sup>81</sup>

Although only six out of 12 Latin American countries in which Plan works have laws explicitly protecting children from sexual violence at school, the rest have generic laws prohibiting sexual violence against children.<sup>5</sup>

The lack of legislative measures to tackle school-based violence in Latin America and the Caribbean is in keeping with the low priority given to sexual violence against children by many governments in the region.<sup>82</sup> This is highlighted by the fact that only seven of the 16 Caribbean states responded to the UN Commission on Human Rights' Report on Violence against Children.<sup>7</sup>

In Asia, only Indonesia has an explicit law that prohibits sexual violence against children in the specific contexts of home, school and other alternative care settings.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the Indonesian NGO Coalition has noted inadequacies with rape laws in that country that do not seem to have been adequately dealt with in the Child Protection Law.<sup>83</sup> Girls aged 12 to 16 seem to be excluded from both statutory rape and rape laws; the penalties for both are low and the penal code does not recognise the vulnerability of boys to rape and sexual abuse.<sup>5</sup>

Pakistan has no legislation directly prohibiting child sexual abuse or exploitation and no clear definition of sexual consent. Until recently, when the Islamic Hudood laws were overturned, it was almost impossible for a girl or woman to report rape or sexual violence without being accused of zina (sexual activity outside marriage). Those convicted of zina faced imprisonment or lashes. Most girls and women in Pakistan still have no legal protection against marital rape.<sup>5</sup>

An example from the Philippines shows the complexity of the legal system surrounding sexual violence against children. The Children's NGO Network reports that Republic Act (RA) 7610, also known as the Child Protection Act, was adopted after the Philippines ratified the CRC in 1990.<sup>84</sup> This Act provides special protection against child abuse, exploitation and discrimination. It also provides people with the means to report abuse to various official bodies, and stipulates that school teachers and administrators, as well as medical officers

## Sexual violence

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and a range of government officials, must report such abuse. To encourage reporting, several hotlines have been set up.<sup>85</sup>

However, RA 7610 is vague, since child sexual abuse is included under the category of child prostitution. Because of these inadequacies, prosecution under this Act is difficult. Further, while the revised penal code also prohibits the sexual exploitation of minors, the penalties for offences against children between 12 and 18 are very low.<sup>5</sup>

All OECD countries have ratified the CRC, with the significant exception of the US, and there is a general awareness of the Convention's existence and how it can be used to prevent child rights violations. Legislation that provides general protection to children from sexual violence exists, and guidelines and regulations at the school, school board and ministry of education level regulate appropriate relationships between children, teachers and other school staff.<sup>86</sup>

While protecting children and young people from sexual abuse and harassment is the main goal of such documents and workplace campaigns, protecting adults and the institutions in which they work against allegations of sexual misconduct and lawsuits is also considered important.

In the US, for example, a Supreme Court decision in 1992 allowing victims of sexual assault to sue school boards<sup>54</sup> has encouraged documentation and standardisation of procedures.

Similarly, the stated purpose of a document published by the UK's Department for Children, Schools and Families<sup>87</sup> is both to facilitate a safe and supportive environment through informing those who come into contact with children, and to set out guidelines to educate adults on what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct.

### INDIA

In our village the teacher  
molested a [13 year-old] girl.  
We organised a rally and took  
a petition to the police station.  
They arrested the teacher.

Schoolboy<sup>149</sup>

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The guidelines state that adults must not:

- have sexual relationships with children or young people (defined as people under 18 years of age)
- have any form of communication with a child or young person which pertains to sexual activity or be sexual in nature
- make sexual remarks to or about a child or young person
- discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children or young people

They also state that adults should:

- ensure that relationships with children take place in public places with clear boundaries set
- take care that language or action does not give rise to comment or speculation



© Plan/Daniel Silva. In many countries, children are at risk of violence when travelling to and from school.





# Bullying

It's always against the weaker children that can't defend themselves. The bullies want to execute power, because they can't do it in other ways. Violence in schools is often underestimated, especially psychological violence.

Female, 19 years old, Germany

## Bullying

### ECUADOR

Once a friend hit me in front of the teacher, he punched and kicked me, and after this during a break he made me fall ... and I got hurt. The teacher did nothing.

Boy, 13 years old

### SWAZILAND

One day we were learning a new topic and I never understood it. My teacher started shouting at me; she started shouting that I'm becoming lazy and stupid because I had gotten a lot of things wrong in my work.

Boy, at a workshop for 6 to 8 year-olds<sup>8</sup>

## Defining bullying

Definitions of bullying vary, but commonly emphasise the importance of repetition, along with harm and unequal power.<sup>88</sup> Not all aggression is bullying, but bullying is always aggression, defined as hurtful and hostile behaviour.<sup>89</sup>

Definitions highlight the difficulty the victim faces in defending themselves combined with the desire by the perpetrators, who bully to gain some material or social reward or emotional pleasure.<sup>90</sup>

The differences in definitions make it difficult to interpret findings and undertake international comparisons.<sup>6</sup> In this report, we will use the Olweus definition of bullying, as his work has influenced the development of a number of bullying prevention programmes in many countries: "A student is being bullied or victimised when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students".<sup>91</sup>

## The extent of the problem

Bullying is a common behaviour in schools across the world.<sup>92</sup> Research conducted between 2003 and 2005 in a wide range of developing countries for the Global School-based Health Survey (GSHS) found that between one-fifth (China) and two-thirds (Zambia) of children reported being verbally or physically bullied in the previous 30 days.<sup>93</sup> The picture is similar in OECD countries. Almost a quarter of seven million students questioned in Spain and a third of those surveyed in Australia reported being bullied by classmates.<sup>94</sup>

Bullying affects large numbers of children in African schools. For example, in a Kenyan survey of 1,000 students in Nairobi public schools, between 63.2 per cent and 81.8 per cent reported various types of bullying.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, in a South African survey, more than half of respondents had experienced bullying at least once in the previous month.<sup>96 97</sup>

Using a broad definition of bullying that includes not only physical aggression but also blackmail, name-calling and social exclusion, fieldwork in central Ghana by Yvette Owosu found that 62 per cent of girls aged 11 and 12 in junior secondaries (government schools) said that they had experienced bullying at school.<sup>98</sup>

In Benin, research conducted in the district of Pahou found that 82 per cent of teachers and 92 per cent of school children confirmed that bullying occurs among pupils and teachers.<sup>99</sup>

In Latin America and the Caribbean there is limited national research on school-based bullying. But what does exist suggests that as many as eight out of every 10 children in Bolivia may be affected by bullying. In Uruguay, Ecuador and Brazil, approximately one-third of students reported that they had been involved in bullying, either as the aggressor or the victim.<sup>5</sup>

A study in Bogota, Colombia, with more than 1,000 participants found that 30 per cent of boys and 17 per cent of girls had been involved in a fight. One-fifth of respondents had been victims of daily bullying.<sup>100</sup> In another survey with a similar number of participants in San Salvador, El Salvador, 15 per cent of respondents said they had been involved in at least one fight, and 20 per cent said they often bring a wooden bat to school to protect themselves from bullies.<sup>101</sup>

There is also a lack of data on the problem in Asia, but the studies that do exist suggest millions of children across the continent are regular victims of bullies. In fact, UNVAC describes bullying as an “emerging problem” across the region.<sup>7</sup>

In a Bangladeshi study of the relationship between intervening in bullying and bystanders’ feelings of shame, bullying “remains an understudied subject [and] ... school intervention programmes to deal with the problem are non-existent”. This is despite reports of extreme cases of violence in Bangladeshi schools, leading to extensive media coverage.<sup>102</sup>

## Plan’s work in COLOMBIA

### Conflict resolution for adolescents

Over six years, this project aims to provide training for 10,500 students, 670 teachers, 650 parents and 64 communities in conflict resolution and peace-building processes; to strengthen youth networks and governmental institutions and to lobby policy-makers.

The project gives youth at risk the opportunity to become peace promoters in their schools and communities. It allows them to experience personal growth by developing their leadership, communication and conflict resolution skills.

To date 7,000 students have been trained.

## Bullying

The same Bangladeshi study stated that bullying is a serious problem in the country – 30 per cent of students admitted bullying someone at least once over the past year.<sup>102</sup>

The GSHS in the Philippines<sup>103</sup> noted that, nationwide, over one-third of students were bullied on one or more days during the previous 30 days. 28 per cent of these bullied students reported that they were most often hit, kicked, pushed, shoved, or locked indoors. More boys (35.8 per cent) than girls (22.2 per cent) reported such physical bullying. Lower-year students were more likely than higher-year students to have been bullied in general, and physically bullied in particular.

A survey in Laos found 98 per cent of girls and 100 per cent of boys had witnessed bullying in schools – with the majority of victims being girls or children from ethnic minorities.<sup>17</sup> And in China, a study of 4,700 girls and boys in primary and secondary schools found that 13 per cent had been victims of bullying.<sup>104</sup>

Yet despite the scale of the problem, only five of the 66 countries examined in this report – Korea, Norway, Sri Lanka, the UK and the US – have laws explicitly prohibiting bullying in schools.<sup>5</sup>

Boys are generally more likely than girls to be both victims and perpetrators of bullying, although this is not the case everywhere – girls are more frequent bullies in Japan.<sup>105</sup> Boys and girls also treat their victims in different ways. Boys are more likely to use physical intimidation and violence, while girls tend towards verbal and social bullying.<sup>5</sup>

### Causes of bullying

Children often become targets for bullies because of their ethnicity<sup>106</sup> or sexuality.<sup>5</sup> For example, studies have found that bullying in English and French schools is often ‘racialised’ with children targeted because of their ethnicity.<sup>19 107</sup>

The International Lesbian and Gay Association spoke to 750 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered young people from 37 European countries and

#### VIETNAM

Emotional punishment is shouting, abusing, making fun or discriminating. An example of this is that when a student is not very bright he is called an idiot in front of everyone.

Participant in Plan’s Physical and Emotional Punishment (PEP) programme

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found that one in six had experienced discrimination and prejudice at school.<sup>108</sup> UNVAC also points out that “violence [in educational settings] is increasingly directed against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered young people in many States and regions.”<sup>109</sup>

Disabled children are also more likely targets. The UN Violence Study on Violence Against Children with Disabilities reports that they may be more likely to put up with abuse in order to gain access to social groups.<sup>86</sup>

Plan’s report **I’m a teenager: What happened to my rights?** highlights an increasingly common reason for being bullied – the stigma associated with AIDS. Children whose parents are living with HIV, or those who have been orphaned by the disease, may be rejected by their friends and schoolmates.<sup>110</sup> As one 16 year-old South African girl put it:

**They treat you badly. You don’t feel like walking in the street, they give you names. They whisper when you pass. They take it that when one person in the house is sick, all of you in that house are sick.**

Apart from these specific groups, bullies, particularly boys, often target the youngest, smallest and weakest children.<sup>107</sup>

The above factors determine why some children rather than others are bullied but they do not explain why the bullying itself takes place. Although many teachers and parents reportedly view bullying as an inevitable part of school life, this is not the case.

Bullying is linked to experiences of violence in the home, as children learn that violence is a primary mechanism for negotiating relationships. Children who suffer family violence are more likely to be bullies and be bullied.<sup>5</sup>

Physical violence in general and bullying in particular is also more common in schools that are overcrowded and where there is inadequate adult supervision.<sup>151</sup> Children attending schools located in violent or poor neighbourhoods or where discrimination against ethnic or other groups is accepted, are also more likely to experience violence.<sup>86</sup>

## Bullying

Education policies can also have an impact on bullying. For example in Portugal:

**School children must repeat sixth grade unless they pass a rigorous test. Consequently, at least 10% of all sixth graders (more often boys) have been held back two years or more, and these older, bigger children are almost twice as likely ... to be bullies as the class average.<sup>112</sup>**

There are other factors that have been identified as affecting bullying in different regions.

For example, economic need and social inequality are identified by many researchers as key factors fuelling both bullying and sexual violence in Africa and developed countries.<sup>113</sup> A comprehensive review of existing developed country literature, found that rising levels of deprivation, inequality and social exclusion play a large part in school-based violence.<sup>1</sup>

In Latin America and the Caribbean, bullying is one of the spill-over effects of criminal gang violence in schools.<sup>5</sup> UNICEF reports that school bullying is often linked to inter-gang rivalry and trafficking of illicit drugs within schools.<sup>114</sup>

In Asia, school-based bullying attracts even less public attention than sexual violence. Indeed, it is often considered that bullying and fighting are all part of growing up.<sup>6</sup>

In India and other parts of South Asia, caste continues to play a significant role in increasing the vulnerability of children to violence, including in the school environment. It can also discourage children from reporting abuse. Throughout the region, indigenous and minority ethnic status is also a key basis for discrimination and violence against and between students, as is religious status.<sup>5</sup>

The spread of new technology has increased the intensity of problems faced by bullied children. Cyber bullying, the use of the internet, mobile phones and other digital technologies to threaten or abuse children, means bullying can now take place at any time and without spacial limitations.<sup>115 116</sup>

### PANAMA

Older boys hit younger ones. They eat their food and threaten you if you try to stop them. One guy kicked a younger one until he started vomiting and all this because he did not have any money to give him.

Indigenous schoolboy<sup>11</sup>

Most victims do not report what they are suffering because they feel ashamed, fear derision or revenge from their aggressors and blame themselves. Moreover, few victims believe their schools will take real action to improve the situation. Bullied children tend to have a smaller network of friends who might provide them with support and protection.

## Consequences of bullying

Victims of bullying may lose self-esteem, feel shame, suffer anxiety and come to dislike school and play truant to avoid victimisation.<sup>117 118 119 120</sup>

Those who remain in school often develop concentration problems and learning difficulties, which further increase their disaffection.<sup>121 122 123</sup> Others react aggressively, sometimes bullying other classmates in an effort to regain status.<sup>124</sup>

Most seriously, victims of bullying suffer from increased stress and serious psychological problems and are more likely to attempt suicide.<sup>6</sup> Studies show children who are bullied are five times more likely to be depressed than their peers and that bullied girls are eight times more likely to be suicidal.<sup>125</sup>

But bullies also suffer problems. They too are more likely to experience anxiety and depression and are at a higher risk of suicide and self-harm than those not involved in bullying.<sup>126</sup>

In addition, both victims and bullies are likely to perpetuate the cycle of violence. A number of African studies suggest childhood experience of bullying increases anti-social and risk-taking behaviour in adult life.<sup>97 127</sup> And according to the US Secret Service, more than two-thirds of school shooting incidents are motivated by revenge against bullies.<sup>128</sup>

**US research found that sixty per cent of bullies will have at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24.<sup>129</sup>**

## Plan's work in TIMOR-LESTE

### Eliminating violence in schools

Based on the results of Speak Nicely to Me – a national study conducted by Plan, its local partners and government representatives – this pilot project has been promoting positive discipline and school-peace pacts among children and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in two districts of Timor-Leste.

So far, four schools in two districts have created their own school peace codes. Thirty teachers have participated in a training course on positive discipline and 180 PTA representatives have received training on child protection mechanisms.

Plan Timor-Leste is now working to scale up this initiative in order to reach more children, teachers and parents, and talks have been held with the Ministry of Education to gain their support.

## Bullying

### PARAGUAY

They do discriminate. There are some guys who say ... you are poor, I have money

Schoolboy<sup>11</sup>

### THAILAND

Friends like to make fun of me or look down on me. I feel that this is a form of violence without them hurting me physically. Teachers sometimes do the same thing and blamed me in front of other children. I was humiliated.

Participant in Plan's research with children aged 7-18

## Improving law and policy

Most countries lack legislation that provides specific protection against bullying. In Africa, partial exceptions include Kenya, where it is possible to take administrative action against bullying in schools (a student found bullying another may be suspended or expelled from school), and Guinea Bissau, where the penal code can be applied.<sup>5</sup>

Korea, Norway, Sri Lanka, the US and the UK (where in 1999, it became a legal requirement for schools to have some form of anti-bullying policy<sup>106</sup>) have specific legislation to protect children against bullying in different contexts. Several others have laws that may be used to deal with specific forms of bullying.<sup>5</sup>

As discrimination is often the basis for bullying, anti-discrimination legislation is an important first step to prevention.<sup>5</sup> Most countries have now ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, although a few maintain procedural reservations, which may be relevant in some cases of bullying.<sup>5</sup>

One OECD-wide policy initiative worthy of mention is the programme Comprehensive Measures to Address the Problem of Bullying, launched in Korea in 1994, involving the active participation of national Parent-Teacher Associations. This school management project emphasises interactions between teachers and parents to identify, prevent and eradicate bullying in particular schools.<sup>86</sup>



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© Plan/Minna Kumpulainen. School children, Vietnam.



## Tackling violence in schools: what works?

I used to ignore violence occurring to students and teachers in my school but I am now able to speak out against violence confidently. As a result, some forms of violence like corporal punishment have reduced. I have realised that some schools do not perform well academically due to various problems affecting both students and teachers, one of which is violent behaviour.

Girl, 16 years old, Uganda, participant in Plan's international youth project on gender-based violence in schools

## Tackling violence in schools: what works?

### VIETNAM

My teacher is different. If she sees two children talking she will come and sit with them or send them out of the class but not use violence.

Participant in Plan's physical and emotional punishment prevention (PEP) project

### KENYA

I joined the programme in order to help me to know how to handle violence against myself and others.

What I have learnt is that we are all equal so it is not good to give us unfair punishment. This programme is going to help us solve the problem of violence in schools, communities and the country at large.

Boy, 15 years old, participant in Plan's international youth project on gender-based violence in schools

Although there is a body of research on some aspects of school violence in some countries, further detailed analysis is needed of the extent and nature of school violence at local level when developing programmes to tackle the issue. Although the available evidence identifies interventions that have contributed to a reduction in school violence, it is important to understand the social, political and cultural context in which programmes are delivered. What works in one particular community, country or region might not be effective elsewhere. This chapter aims to provide a starting point for further in-depth local analysis and programme development.

### Local interventions

In general, available research suggests that the most effective local strategies for tackling corporal punishment, sexual violence and bullying are those that concentrate on the school itself, for example changing classroom techniques and establishing clear rules regarding behaviour in school.<sup>6</sup>

School-wide interventions that aim to lower the violence rate are the most effective.<sup>130</sup> Not only do they reduce violent or aggressive behaviour, they can also reduce truancy, improve academic achievement, and enhance social skills and well-being.<sup>6</sup>

A key component of a school-wide approach is clear management standards.<sup>131</sup> School violence should be challenged every day and be integral to school management.<sup>6</sup>

A US study of more than 1,200 schools<sup>132</sup> showed that the school environment impacts on the successful establishment of intervention programmes. Other studies show that victimisation increases when there is instability in the teacher team or a lack of clarity and fairness in applying school rules.<sup>133</sup>

Much also depends on how the school implements intervention programmes. Schools that are already organised in a proactive and democratic manner with strong links to their communities have a stronger chance of success.<sup>6</sup>

The active commitment and support of adults, particularly teachers and parents, is critical. This often requires training for teachers and support for parents.<sup>5 6</sup> Victimisation and aggression diminish when children feel supported

by their family and by teachers, and when local stakeholders such as residents' associations, the police and social services work together to protect children.

An analysis based on 83 studies of schools where violence had decreased concluded that duration and quality of programmes were important, and pointed to the effectiveness of four types of programmes:<sup>134</sup>

- self-control improvement
- social skills training
- multiple modes – where different methods are used at the same time, for example: (a) classroom-based social and problem skills training, (b) playground-based behaviour modification, and (c) group-delivered parent training
- administrative techniques – group conduct, clear behaviour rules and norms shared by the school

Effective programmes are generally those based on encouragement, not on repression. For example, where military training-style programmes have been introduced, they have failed to reduce the number of assaults.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, promoting children's awareness of their rights and encouraging their participation in school governance is of fundamental importance in overcoming authoritarian school environments and promoting non-violent discipline.<sup>5</sup>

In African countries – where school **corporal punishment** often persists in the name of tradition – teachers receiving training on alternative discipline methods are generally more favourable towards corporal punishment abolition than teachers who have not received such training.<sup>5, 8</sup> This is an interesting indication of the possibility of changing attitudes through law and training, and avoiding the perception that abolition of school corporal punishment is a colonialist move against a claimed tradition.<sup>6</sup> It is therefore important to develop progressive actions that lead to non-violent alternatives for class and school management.

## Plan's work in EL SALVADOR

### Working with the whole school community

A Plan initiative that started in 2004 with 50 schools has resulted in a government commitment to scale up to national level. The project targets the whole school community to promote debate on peaceful values and put them into practice. A manual, which aims to mainstream school violence prevention and student participation into the rules and regulations of all public schools throughout the country, has been produced. It offers guidelines to encourage student participation in the drafting of their school rules, thus instilling a culture of self-regulation and respect for their peers and their school environment.

The **Step by Step Manual towards School Coexistence and Student Participation** was launched by the Minister of Education in November 2007 as a mandatory tool for all public schools in El Salvador.

## Tackling violence in schools: what works?

### GHANA

From what these children have said and done concerning the various types of abuse against them, we (adults) should bow our heads in shame. But there will be more chances for us to raise our heads with pride, only if we support our children to have access to health, education, and to participate in communal decision-making.

Village Chief

### GERMANY

There would be a lot less violence in schools if there were a stronger sense of community in the classrooms.

Girl, 15 years old

**I've just started to understand that corporal punishment is violence against children, and that we can find other ways of disciplining them ... I did some training, and I began to understand that children aren't adults, that they have different priorities, and that one has to be gentle with them ... I did explain to one parent that beating his child was violence and against his rights, and I've been talking to my colleagues individually to try and get them to think differently about corporal punishment.**

Primary school teacher, Togo

Programmes tackling **sexual violence** need more in-depth evaluation to inform policy makers. It would be helpful to gain more information on how successful interventions could be replicated and how sharing knowledge between countries could be achieved.

The link between knowledge, behaviour and the ability to avoid or reduce victimisation has not been established. No study reviewed for this report informs on the impact on reducing incidences of sexual abuse.<sup>135 136 137 138 139</sup>

Likewise there is a major gap in research concerning sexual abuse within the school environment and how to prevent it. This issue remains hidden in many countries.<sup>6</sup>

However, research indicates that programmes to tackle sexual violence are more effective when targeted at smaller audiences<sup>140</sup> and when they teach students self-protection skills.<sup>141</sup> The amount of teaching time also seems to be one of the main factors influencing effectiveness – programmes with four or more sessions and actively involving children have greater impact.<sup>142 143</sup> This implies that breaking information into manageable portions is preferable to providing it in one large amount.<sup>143</sup>

Programmes that offer children some active participation, such as role plays, are generally more effective and are better retained by children.<sup>140 142 144 145 146</sup>

Evaluations of programmes designed to tackle and prevent school **bullying** are, on average, not very encouraging. Most report a restricted or ambiguous

effect at best. They cannot, therefore, be generalised and more research is needed in this area.

Nevertheless lessons can be learned:<sup>6</sup>

- in some cases, results are more positive for primary schools than secondary schools – this suggests the need for early bullying prevention
- it appears that gender is an important factor – studies indicate that girls are more receptive to anti-bullying intervention, have more favourable attitudes towards victims (especially during adolescence) and are significantly more willing to play an active part in challenging school bullying, although it seems that the programmes are more effective for boys than for girls in the long term
- a positive school environment – with a comprehensive approach involving the entire teaching team – is essential for any programme’s success
- the longest programmes are the most effective
- collaboration between a local project and a large national campaign is not always a guarantee of success
- effective programmes focus on interactive methods (role playing, real life situations, and practical work on feelings and emotions) rather than just information transmission
- work on bullying is most effective when associated with interventions with families, teachers and the whole school and the wider community

Many NGOs have made efforts to tackle school violence. UK initiatives such as the NSPCC’s Full Stop Anti-Bullying Campaign have a no-tolerance attitude to bullying. The NSPCC’s work includes disseminating educational resources on violence prevention, raising awareness in schools and providing support to victims so that they feel empowered to take action and speak out about bullying.

## Plan’s work in TANZANIA

### Voice of children

Aiming to mitigate harassment of school children by teachers, parents and other adults, this child-led media project transmitted 26 video magazines on TvT, the national television broadcaster in Tanzania.

The project proved to be an eye-opener for school and local authorities but especially for the 29,658 individuals reached directly by community screenings. The project aimed to give a voice to children to advocate for their rights in 25 schools, in particular those aspects related to violence.

As a result of the project, children are now involved in the decision-making process of some schools and communities. For example, some districts have added more primary teachers to their schools after receiving requests from children.

## Tackling violence in schools: what works?

### EL SALVADOR

Fear is not the best way to educate children.

Mother of two children

### COLOMBIA

Before this project, there were many problems among students and between parents and teachers. This has changed a lot because we now discuss the problem, we are organised and provide support for those who need it.

Participant, Plan's Young Peace Builders project

In Latin America, efforts to tackle school violence in the context of broader political efforts to establish a culture of peace, democracy and accountability appear to enjoy broad regional resonance, and could be usefully built upon.<sup>5</sup>

### Legal and social mechanisms

Local interventions, although critical to reducing violence in schools, cannot be expected to be successful without a supportive legislative environment.

Earlier chapters examined the legal status of corporal punishment, sexual violence and bullying across the world. But there are also some general points about legal and social mechanisms that are important.

Globally, there is very little attention paid to the quality of laws to tackle violence in school or their enforcement. This contrasts sharply with the policy debate about violence against girls and women in which considerable emphasis is placed on legal measures.

Legal prohibition of violence in schools is a vital first step towards making schools safe for children. If violence is not outlawed then it becomes difficult to convince communities, school authorities and parents that it is unacceptable.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, civil society has a role to play in convincing policy makers to outlaw corporal punishment.

All forms of violence against children in school must be outlawed. A school that tolerates one form of violence against children – such as corporal punishment – is also likely to be permissive of others. Indeed corporal punishment and sexual violence are linked. A girl who submits to giving sexual favours to a teacher will expect to avoid being beaten, whereas one who turns down a teacher risks a beating.<sup>147</sup>

But laws alone are insufficient. Strong enforcement is a necessary next step to reducing the number of children who suffer violence at school. Without enforcement, laws become largely irrelevant.

Resources are also important. Securing sufficient and reliable budgets both ensures funding to implement changes in schools and signals political commitment to addressing the problem.

## Guidance for policy makers

Drawing on a WHO report on violence and health, Mona O'Moore suggests a nine-point framework for policy approaches to prevent school bullying and violence:<sup>148</sup>

1. Draw up, implement and monitor a national action plan to prevent school bullying and violence. This plan should be based on government and NGO consensus and include representation from education, health, social welfare and justice agencies.  
  
Actions should include reviewing and reforming existing legislation and policy; improving data collection; strengthening services for victims; developing prevention responses and monitoring and reporting on progress.
2. Enhance the capacity to collect comprehensive and reliable data on school bullying and violence. Standardise definitions and improve comparability across countries and time.
3. Define priorities for, and support research on, the causes, consequences, costs and prevention of school bullying and violence. Undertake systematic and rigorous evaluations of prevention initiatives.
4. Develop a national strategy to assist schools to prevent and reduce bullying and violence.  
  
Programmes should be tailored to the needs and characteristics of individual schools. The most successful interventions are regularly audited whole-school programmes, introduced early in the educational career of children and involving multiple stakeholders in the design process. They focus on reducing the risk of bullying and violence; responding to incidents of bullying and violence and treatment and rehabilitation for those involved in incidents.
5. Develop a media campaign to promote non-violent values, attitudes and behaviour.
6. Integrate prevention of school bullying and violence into teacher education at both pre-service and in-service levels.
7. Establish an advisory body for partners in education.  
  
This body should provide advice and guidance on how to develop and implement school policies and programmes to tackle bullying and violence.
8. Contribute to an international research network.  
  
Potential areas of research in which an international network could play a key role in preventing school bullying and violence include national baseline investigations where the same definition and tools or measurement are used; in-depth case studies of national policies and monitoring and evaluation of violence prevention programmes.
9. Promote legislation to deal effectively with school bullying and violence.



© Plan/Luis Vera. Girls from a child rights group, Paraguay.



## Plan's call to action

Violence in schools should be taken seriously and the whole community should be involved in addressing this problem. The time for acting is now, not tomorrow because we might lose students before we realise it.

Male, 19 years old, Philippines

## Plan's call to action

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No country is immune from violence in schools. As this report shows, sexual abuse, physical violence and bullying affect children all over the world.

Violence and the threat of violence have a devastating impact on the lives of young people. At worst, tens of thousands of children suffer physical injury, sexually transmitted infections, mental health problems and death as a direct result of violence in schools. Millions more children have their education ruined as they are forced to miss classes, afraid of what they may face there.

A safe school environment is the right of every child. It is up to all of us – international organisations, governments, local communities, teachers, parents and children – to work together to uphold children's right to a violence-free education. Real change will require a shift in behaviour and attitudes at all levels.

**Plan will do its part.** In addition to campaigning for change, we will integrate programmes to prevent school violence into our education and child protection programmes in at least 40 countries and we will train our staff and volunteers to tackle the issue head on. Children and young people will be active participants in the campaign and their ideas and opinions will shape our actions at all levels.

But we cannot hope to achieve widespread change alone. Our campaign will raise the profile of the issue among the public and persuade governments, schools and other key players of the need to act.

**During this campaign, Plan will work towards a world where:**

### **1. No one can inflict violence on children in schools without facing punishment.**

Governments must outlaw all forms of violence against children in schools, including corporal punishment, gender-based and sexual violence, bullying, neglect and degrading punishment. These laws must be consistent with Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international standards. But legislation alone is not enough. To deliver real change, laws need to be rigorously enforced so that those breaking them know they face serious consequences.

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**Plan will** work with governments to develop and enforce laws against school violence in at least 20 countries.

## **2. Children are able to report violent incidents and expect appropriate care and support when they are affected by school violence.**

All countries must have independent and child-friendly reporting mechanisms, such as confidential helplines, where children are safe from reprisal and secure in the knowledge that their complaint will be taken seriously. All stakeholders, including governments, judiciary, police, health, welfare and education services, teachers, parents and children must work together to protect children and prevent future occurrences.

**Plan will** work in alliances with partners to develop reporting and referral mechanisms for children affected by school violence in at least 20 countries. Plan will also advocate for the establishment or expansion of confidential child helplines in at least 10 countries.

## **3. Children are recognised as critical participants in developing strategies and solutions to address violence in schools.**

Children are not only the victims of violence, but are often also the perpetrators of violent acts. They have a vital role to play as advisers, innovators, educators, youth leaders and role models to keep themselves and their peers safe.

**Plan will** work with children and young people in at least 40 countries to help break the cycle of violence. We will listen to children's views and encourage their involvement at all stages of the campaign.

## **4. Governments establish holistic data collection systems and carry out research to ascertain the scale and severity of violence in their schools.**

The first step to putting an end to school violence is to know the size and nature of the problem. Governments, with the aid of UN agencies and NGOs, must establish and operate data collection systems on violence

## Plan's call to action

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against children in schools, and use these to inform policy and practice to protect children.

**Plan will** work with partners to improve existing data on violence against children in schools. We will carry out research in at least 30 countries to understand the scale and severity of school violence and will use this data to advocate for change.

### 5. Significant resources are earmarked by governments and international organisations to tackle violence in schools.

Extra money in education budgets will ensure that proven interventions such as reducing class sizes, professionalising the teaching profession, increased training, peer education, psychosocial, welfare and health support mechanisms can be put in place.

Poor pay, low status and inadequate training for teachers contribute to a culture of violence in many schools, so **Plan will** lobby governments to increase resources. In addition, we will work with teachers to manage classes and discipline children without using violence in at least 20 countries. We will also strengthen school violence prevention work in all 49 countries in which we have programmes.

### 6. UN agencies, multilateral donors, development banks and international NGOs increase support to governments to tackle violence in schools.

This will be achieved by funding specific projects, monitoring progress, strengthening capacity, sharing good practice and including the issue on their own agendas.

**Plan will** initiate or participate in high-level ministerial meetings in at least 30 countries to advocate for school violence to be recognised as a priority by those working in education, child protection and other relevant sectors. Plan will also empower the children, teachers, parents and communities we work with to hold governments to account.

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## 7. Pupils, parents, all school staff and the community work together to expel violence from schools.

Positive change requires grassroots action as well as government commitments. Local communities must be at the forefront of efforts to create violence-free schools.

This could be achieved through plans of action or school-based codes of conduct for staff and students and by raising awareness of school violence and its effects.

**Plan will** work in partnership with education authorities in at least 20 countries to develop and implement plans of action to achieve violence-free schools. We will work with teachers, parents and children in at least 40 countries to raise awareness of and build capacity to tackle the effects of violence and promote positive alternatives to violent discipline methods. Plan will also work with the whole school community to create a 'Happy Schools' code. We will work with at least 5,000 schools around the world to raise awareness of violence and its effects.

All violence against children is preventable. It does not need to happen. And there are many simple solutions as outlined in this report that will help to achieve dramatic change. But creating this change requires each one of us to take individual responsibility to stop violence against children in schools.

**Plan is ready to play its part. We urge others to join us.**

To find out more and get involved, visit our website at [plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear](https://plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear)

## Appendix 1

### Summary of legal status\* of corporal punishment, sexual violence and bullying of school children, in countries where Plan works

STATE	Prohibited in the school			RATIFICATION DATE OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC), 1989	SCHOOL POPULATION**
	CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	SEXUAL VIOLENCE	BULLYING		
ASIA					875,353,304
Bangladesh	NO	YES	NO	3 Aug 1990	52,984,897
Cambodia	SOME	YES	NO	15 Oct 1992 (a)	5,218,653
China	YES	YES	NO	2 Mar 1992	281,709,015
India	SOME	YES	NO	11 Dec 1992 (a)	368,633,695
Indonesia	NO	YES	NO	5 Sep 1990	59,415,622
Laos	YES	YES	NO	8 May 1991 (a)	2,110,707
Nepal	NO	YES	NO	14 Sep 1990	9,704,853
Pakistan	SOME	NO	NO	12 Nov 1990	55,289,030
Philippines	YES	YES	NO	21 Aug 1990	21,740,618
Sri Lanka	NO	YES	YES	12 Jul 1991	4,333,106
Thailand	NO	YES	NO	27 Mar 1992 (a)	13,796,172
Timor-Leste	NO	YES	NO	16 Apr 2003	416,936
Vietnam	NO	YES	NO	28 Feb 1990	not available
AFRICA					190,828,863
Benin	NO	YES	NO	3 Aug 1990	3,410,630
Burkina Faso	YES	YES	NO	31 Aug 1990	6,040,790
Cameroon	YES	YES	NO	11 Jan 1993	6,865,394
Egypt	YES	YES	NO	6 Jul 1990	22,321,233
Ethiopia	YES	YES	NO	14 May 1991 (a)	32,112,742
Ghana	NO	YES	NO	5 Feb 1990	8,490,325
Guinea	YES	YES	NO	13 Jul 1990 (a)	3,988,004
Guinea Bissau	YES	YES	NO	20 Aug 1990	624,178
Kenya	YES	YES	NO	30 Jul 1990	14,629,496
Liberia	NO	YES	NO	4 Jun 1993	1,487,830
Malawi	YES	YES	NO	2 Jan 1991 (a)	5,972,594
Mali	YES	YES	NO	20 Sep 1990	5,381,285

STATE	Prohibited in the school			RATIFICATION DATE OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC), 1989	SCHOOL POPULATION**
	CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	SEXUAL VIOLENCE	BULLYING		
Mozambique	NO	YES	NO	26 Apr 1994	8,621,962
Niger	NO	YES	NO	30 Sep 1990	5,735,149
Rwanda	NO	YES	NO	24 Jan 1991	3,786,394
Senegal	YES	YES	NO	31 Jul 1990	4,850,233
Sierra Leone	NO	YES	NO	18 Jun 1990	2,197,320
Sudan	SOME	YES	NO	3 Aug 1990	12,479,492
Tanzania	NO	YES	NO	10 Jun 1991	15,276,605
Togo	YES	YES	NO	1 Aug 1990	2,683,371
Uganda	NO	YES	NO	17 Aug 1990	13,094,731
Zambia	YES	YES	NO	6 Dec 1991	5,292,624
Zimbabwe	NO	YES	NO	11 Sep 1990	5,486,481
LATIN AMERICA					96,354,709
Bolivia	NO	YES	NO	26 Jun 1990	3,164,452
Brazil	NO	YES	NO	24 Sep 1990	48,080,699
Colombia	NO	YES	NO	28 Jan 1991	12,693,522
Dominican Republic	YES	YES	NO	11 Jun 1991	3,090,390
Ecuador	YES	YES	NO	23 Mar 1990	3,650,170
El Salvador	YES	YES	NO	10 Jul 1990	2,209,342
Guatemala	NO	YES	NO	6 Jun 1990	5,307,317
Haiti	YES	YES	NO	8 Jun 1995	3,649,197
Honduras	YES	YES	NO	10 Aug 1990	2,520,067
Nicaragua	NO	YES	NO	5 Oct 1990	1,904,707
Paraguay	NO	YES	NO	25 Sep 1990	2,093,687
Peru	NO	YES	NO	4 Sep 1990	7,991,159

## Appendix 1

STATE	Prohibited in the school			RATIFICATION DATE OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC), 1989	SCHOOL POPULATION**
	CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	SEXUAL VIOLENCE	BULLYING		
EASTERN EUROPE					850,925
Albania	YES	YES	NO	27 Feb 1992	850,925
OECD COUNTRIES					152,279,548
Australia	SOME	YES	NO	17 Dec 1990	3,782,413
Belgium	YES	YES	NO	16 Dec 1991	1,800,894
Canada	YES	YES	NO	13 Dec 1991	5,571,366
Denmark	YES	YES	NO	19 Jul 1991	1,080,675
Finland	YES	YES	NO	20 Jun 1991	986,873
France	NO	YES	NO	7 Aug 1990	11,254,079
Germany	YES	YES	NO	6 Mar 1992	13,441,902
Ireland	YES	YES	NO	28 Sep 1992	795,714
Japan	YES	YES	NO	22 Apr 1994	18,122,429
Korea	NO	YES	YES	20 Nov 1991	8,247,097
Netherlands	YES	YES	NO	6 Feb 1995 (b)	2,801,729
Norway	YES	YES	YES	8 Jan 1991	982,886
Spain	YES	YES	NO	6 Dec 1990	6,262,713
Sweden	YES	YES	NO	29 Jun 1990	1,722,804
Switzerland	YES	YES	NO	24 Feb 1997	1,318,706
United Kingdom	YES	YES	YES	16 Dec 1991	11,055,801
United States Of America	SOME	YES	YES	16 Feb 1995 (c)	63,051,467
SCHOOL POPULATION** IN COUNTRIES WHERE PLAN WORKS					1,315,667,349

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## Notes

- Some: Prohibited in some states, state schools, primary schools and/or pre-schools
- a: Accession
- b: Acceptance
- c: Signature only

## Sources:

- **Corporal punishment:** The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children ([www.endcorporalpunishment.org](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org))
- **Sexual violence, bullying and the ratification of the CRC:** Nicola Jones, Karen Moore, Eliana Villar-Marquez and Emma Broadbent (2008) Painful lessons: the politics of preventing sexual violence and bullying at school. London: ODI
- **School population data:** UNESCO Institute of Statistics [http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF\\_Language=eng&BR\\_Topic=0](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=136&IF_Language=eng&BR_Topic=0) (Accessed on 06 August 2008)

\*Status of legislation as at May 2008.

\*\*School population figures include pre-school, primary and secondary schools only

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### International commitments

There are a number of universal and regional commitments and documents relevant to violence against children in schools; below is a non-exhaustive selection. The majority of these are not legally binding but they are recognised customary law that should be enforceable at domestic level through national legislation and national policy in countries that have signed and ratified them. Plan therefore calls on all countries to comply with their international commitments to ensure that children are protected from violence in schools.

#### Human rights instruments: treaties, declarations and treaty body references

- **UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948) is “a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations”. Article 5 states that “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”. Article 26 states that “everyone has the right to education” and “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”
- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** (entered into force on 2 September 1990, 193 states parties): Article 2 states the obligation to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment. Further, Article 19 states the obligation to take all appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Article 28.2 demands school discipline to be administered “in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention”. Further, article 37 states that “no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

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- **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment** (entered into force on 4 January 1969, 113 states parties): Article 1 – ‘torture’ means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed. It is possible to consider physical abuse committed by a teacher as an act protected under this convention. Article 16 sets up the obligation to prevent other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture, when such acts are committed by or at the instigation of, or with the consent or acquiescence of, a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.
  - **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (entered into force on 23 March 1976, 116 states parties): Article 7 states that no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and as emphasised by the Human Rights Committee in General Comment 20 on article 7, corporal punishment falls within the scope of article 7. Article 24 points out that every child shall have, without any discrimination, the right to such measures of protection as are required by their status as a minor, on the part of their family, society and the state.
  - **UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women** (entered into force on 3 September 1981, 118 states parties): Article 1 sets up a wide definition of discrimination under which it is possible to consider school violence against women, committed on the basis of gender, as discrimination. With regard to educational matters, Article 10 points out the right of women to access the same curricula, examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard, and school premises and equipment of the same quality, and the obligation to eliminate of any stereotyping of the roles of men and women.

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- **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** (entered into force on 4 January 1969, 145 states parties): States shall adopt measures to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms, notably in the enjoyment of the right to security of person and protection by the state against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution.
- **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (entered into force on 3 May 2008, signed by 118 states and ratified by 7): This Convention guarantees rights for disabled persons. 67 countries have signed and three have ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention establishing a complaint procedure in the case of violations of rights included in the Convention. The document is based on principles of respect for dignity, autonomy and freedom to make one's choices, non-discrimination, full and effective participation, respect for difference, equal opportunities and accessibility. The Convention gives special attention to violence, abuse and neglect of children with disabilities in educational settings under the non-discrimination foundation principle.
- **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** (adopted 13 September 2007): This declaration is a comprehensive statement addressing the rights of indigenous peoples. Article 6 of the declaration is relevant in addressing protection against violence in all settings for indigenous children. The Convention gives special attention to violence, abuse and neglect of indigenous children in educational settings under the non-discrimination foundation principle.
- **International Labour Organization Convention 182. Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour** (entered into force on 19 November 2000, 165 states parties): The convention states the obligation to take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, such as the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances.

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- **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography** (entered into force on 18 January 2002, 124 states parties): The Protocol prohibits the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and sets up some measures that states shall implement in their territories.
  - **International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families** (entered into force on 1 July 2003, 37 states parties): Article 16 states that migrant workers and members of their families shall be entitled to effective protection by the state against violence, physical injury, threats and intimidation, whether by public officials or by private individuals, groups or institutions. Article 30 states that the child of a migrant worker shall have the basic right of access to education on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the state. Access to public pre-school educational institutions or schools shall not be refused or limited by reason of the irregular situation with respect to stay or employment of either parent or by reason of the irregularity of the child's stay in the state.
  - **Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime, Palermo Protocol** (entered into force on 25 December 2003, 117 states parties up to December 2006): One purpose of this Protocol is to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, paying particular attention to women and children, which includes the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons for the purpose, among others, of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation.
  - **General Comment No. 8 (2006). The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment (arts. 19; 28, paragraph 2; and 37, inter alia)** (adopted on 2 March 2007): In this General Comment, the Committee on the Rights of the Child emphasises that eliminating violent and humiliating punishment of children, through law reform and other necessary measures, is an immediate and unqualified obligation of state parties.

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- **Human Rights Committee** – monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:
  - Article 7: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment...”
  - Article 10: “All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person...”
  - Article 24(1): “Every child shall have, without any discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, property or birth, the right to such measures of protection as are required by his status as a minor, on the part of his family, society and the State.”
  - Article 26: “All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.
  - In its General Comment No. 20, adopted in 1992, on Article 7 of the Covenant, the Committee states: “The prohibition in Article 7 relates not only to acts that cause physical pain but also to acts that cause mental suffering to the victim. In the Committee’s view, moreover, the prohibition must extend to corporal punishment, including excessive chastisement ordered as a punishment for a crime or as an educative or disciplinary measure. It is appropriate to emphasise in this regard that Article 7 protects, in particular, children, pupils and patients in teaching and medical institutions.”
- **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** – oversees implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:
  - Article 10(3): “Special measures of protection and assistance should be taken on behalf of all children and young persons without any discrimination for reasons of parentage or other conditions...”

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- Article 13(1): “The States Parties to the present Covenant recognise the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms...”
  - In 1999, the Committee adopted a General Comment on The Right to Education: “In the Committee’s view, corporal punishment is inconsistent with the fundamental guiding principle of international human rights law enshrined in the Preambles to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and both Covenants: the dignity of the individual. Other aspects of school discipline may also be inconsistent with human dignity, such as public humiliation. Nor should any form of discipline breach other rights under the Covenant, such as the right to food. A State Party is required to take measures to ensure that discipline which is inconsistent with the Covenant does not occur in any public or private educational institution within its jurisdiction. The Committee welcomes initiatives taken by some States parties which actively encourage schools to introduce ‘positive’, non-violent approaches to school discipline.”
  - The Committee has expressed concern at the persisting legality of school corporal punishment and recommended prohibition. For example, in 1997 it recommended the elimination of corporal punishment in privately financed schools in the UK. In May 2002, the Committee called on the UK to ban all physical punishment of children in families.
  - **Committee against Torture** – responsible for monitoring implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It condemned corporal punishment in 1995.
  - **Corporal punishment and juvenile justice standards**
    - UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, the “Beijing Rules”: Rule 17.3 (Guiding Principles in Adjudication and Disposition) states: “Juveniles shall not be subject to corporal punishment.”

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- UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty: Rule 67 states: “...all disciplinary measures constituting cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment shall be strictly prohibited, including corporal punishment...”
- UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, the “Riyadh Guidelines”: Paragraph 21(h) states that education systems should devote particular attention to “avoidance of harsh disciplinary measures, particularly corporal punishment” and paragraph 54 says: “No child or young person should be subjected to harsh or degrading correction or punishment measures at home, in schools or in any other institutions.”
- **European Committee of Social Rights** – supervises conformity of the law and practice of member states of the Council of Europe with the European Social Charter. In 2001 it made a ‘general observation’ on Article 17 (“The right of mothers and children to social and economic protection”) of the Charter, which noted:
  - “The Committee does not find it acceptable that a society which prohibits any form of physical violence between adults would accept that adults subject children to physical violence. The Committee does not consider that there can be any educational value in corporal punishment of children that cannot be otherwise achieved.
  - “ ... the Committee considers that Article 17 requires a prohibition in legislation against any form of violence against children, whether at school, in other institutions, in their home or elsewhere. It furthermore considers that any other form of degrading punishment or treatment of children must be prohibited in legislation and combined with adequate sanctions in penal or civil law.”
  - Since then, the Committee has asked many members for details of the legality of corporal punishment, in the home, schools and other institutions and day care. In 2003, in its Conclusions concerning Poland and other countries it found a violation of article 17 on the grounds that “corporal punishment of children in the home is not prohibited”.

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## Regional documents and treaties

### Africa

- **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child** (entered into force 29 November 1999, 38 ratifications, 11 signatures): Article 16, Protection Against Child Abuse and Torture, requires states parties to “take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse, while in the care of the child”. Article 11, Education, requires states parties to “take all appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is subjected to schools or parental discipline shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the child and in conformity with the present Charter”. Other relevant articles include Article 20, Parental Responsibilities, Article 21, Protection against Harmful Social and Cultural Practices and Article 27, Sexual Exploitation.
- **African Charter on Human and People’s Rights** (entered into force 21 October 1986, 53 states parties): Article 18 ensures the protection of the rights of the woman and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions.
- **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa** (entered into force on 25 November 2005, 21 states parties): The treaty defines violence against women as all acts perpetrated against women that cause or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm, including the threat to take such acts, and establishes that states parties shall adopt and implement appropriate measures to ensure the protection of every woman’s right to respect for her dignity, and the protection of women from all forms of violence, particularly sexual and verbal violence.

### America

- **American Convention on Human Rights** (entered into force on 18 July 1978, 24 states parties): Article 19 states that every minor child has the

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right to the measures of protection required by their condition as a minor on the part of their family, society, and the state.

- **Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture** (entered into force on 28 February 1987, 17 states parties): Under Article 2, ‘torture’ means any act intentionally performed whereby physical or mental pain or suffering is inflicted on a person for purposes of criminal investigation, as a means of intimidation, as personal punishment, as a preventive measure, as a penalty, or for any other purpose. It is possible to consider physical abuse committed by a teachers as an act protected under this convention.
- **Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, Convention of Belem do Para** (entered into force on 5 March 1995, 15 states parties): Article 7 condemns all forms of violence against women and sets up the obligation to pursue, by all appropriate means and without delay, policies to prevent, punish and eradicate such violence. Article 9 also establishes that states parties shall take special account of the vulnerability of women to violence by reason of, among others, minor age.
- **Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Persons With Disabilities** (entered into force on 14 September 2001, 17 states parties): Article III entrust states to adopt the legislative, social, educational, labour-related or any other measures needed to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities and to promote their full integration into society.
- **I/A Court H.R., Juridical Condition and Human Rights of the Child. Advisory Opinion OC-17/02** (adopted on 28 August 2002): In this advisory opinion, the court holds that the states parties to the American Convention on Human Rights are under the obligation to adopt all positive measures required to ensure protection of children against mistreatment, whether in their relations with public authorities, or in relations among individuals or with non-governmental entities.

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## Europe

- **European Union Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA of 22 December 2003 on Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography:** The decision obliges each member state to take the necessary measures to ensure that the coercing of a child into prostitution or into participating in pornographic performances, the recruiting of a child into prostitution or into participating in pornographic performances, and the engaging in sexual activities with a child are considered punishable.
- **Council of Europe Convention on “Cybercrime”** (entered into force on 1 July 2004, 20 states parties): The Convention states the obligation to adopt such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to establish the following as criminal offences under its domestic law: producing of child pornography for the purpose of its distribution through a computer system; offering or making available child pornography through a computer system; distributing or transmitting child pornography through a computer system; procuring child pornography through a computer system for oneself or for another person; and possessing child pornography in a computer system or on a computer-data storage medium.
- **Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse** (adopted on 25 October 2007, signed by 28 states, not yet in force): It proposes measures that can prevent exploitation and abuse, such as training and awareness-raising for people working with children, and classwork for children in primary and secondary schools to learn how to protect themselves. It proposes that each country sets up an internet helpline and makes sure there are services to help victims. It also sets out ways that abusers can get help. Most importantly, it sets out detailed measures for countries to provide legal safeguards against all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, ranging from criminalising all sexual abuse to stopping child prostitution and child pornography.

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- **Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings** (entered into force on 1 February 2008, 10 ratifications): The general purpose of this Convention is to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, that is, the recruitment, transportation, transfer etc, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in human beings”, even if this does not involve any of the means set forth.

### International goals and programmes

- **Education for All:** In April 2000, the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal adopted the Dakar Framework for Action to achieve six Education for All (EFA) goals.
- **Millennium Declaration and Development Goals:** In September 2000, the Millennium Declaration established two of the EFA goals as two of the eight Millennium Development Goals. Goal 2 states that, by 2015, all children should have access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality. Goal 3 is to, by 2005, achieve gender equality in primary and secondary education and, by 2015, achieve gender equality in all levels of education. These two goals constitute a specific timetable for achieving “the right of the child to education ... progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity” required by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **The United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) role in promoting girls’ participation:** In 2000, then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched the UN Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI), a partnership for girls’ education and gender equality. It is emerging as an effective strategy for the prevention of violence against girls. In countries where UNGEI is established, partners work together to strengthen interventions that promote girls’ access to quality education.
- **The Yokohama Global Commitment 2001:** Adopted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children that took

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place in Yokohama, Japan, which brought together representatives from governments, intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and members of civil society from around the world. The Commitment reaffirmed the protection and promotion of the interests and rights of the child to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation, such as child prostitution, child pornography and trafficking of children for sexual purposes.

- **A World Fit for Children:** The Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Children, 8 to 10 May 2002, culminated in the official adoption by 180 nations of its outcome document, **A World Fit for Children**. This document includes 21 specific goals and targets for the next decade. In particular, it states the obligation to ensure that education programmes and materials fully reflect the promotion and protection of human rights and the values of peace, tolerance and gender equality. The agenda also aims to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation, including paedophilia, trafficking and abduction.
- **Building a Europe For and With Children Programme:** This three-year Council of Europe programme seeking to ensure respect for children's rights throughout all countries in Europe. Its objective is the promotion of children's rights and their protection against all forms of violence. It is based on the four Ps: protection of children, prevention of violence, prosecution of criminals, and participation of children. The programme pays special attention to particularly vulnerable children – those with disabilities, living in poverty, and being raised without parental care.
- **The Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action:** This is a global partnership against the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The Agenda for Action aims to identify priorities for action and to assist in the implementation of relevant international instruments. It calls for action from states, all sectors of society, and national, regional and international organisations against the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Adapted from Nicola Jones, Karen Moore, Eliana Villar-Marquez and Emma Broadbent (2008) **Painful lessons: the politics of preventing sexual violence and bullying at school**. London: ODI.

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This report drew heavily on information from the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children ([www.endcorporalpunishment.org](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org)) and the following commissioned pieces of research:

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Physical punishment denies children their fundamental right to grow up to become capable of making a responsible contribution to a free society. Children and adolescents deserve better than to be beaten for their so-called errors or disobedience. They deserve constant and quality guidance and attention; creative and enriching dialogue; and stimulating and challenging education. No form of violence, including physical, sexual or psychological, can ever be justified as being in the best interests of the child.

Mary Robinson, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva 2001



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