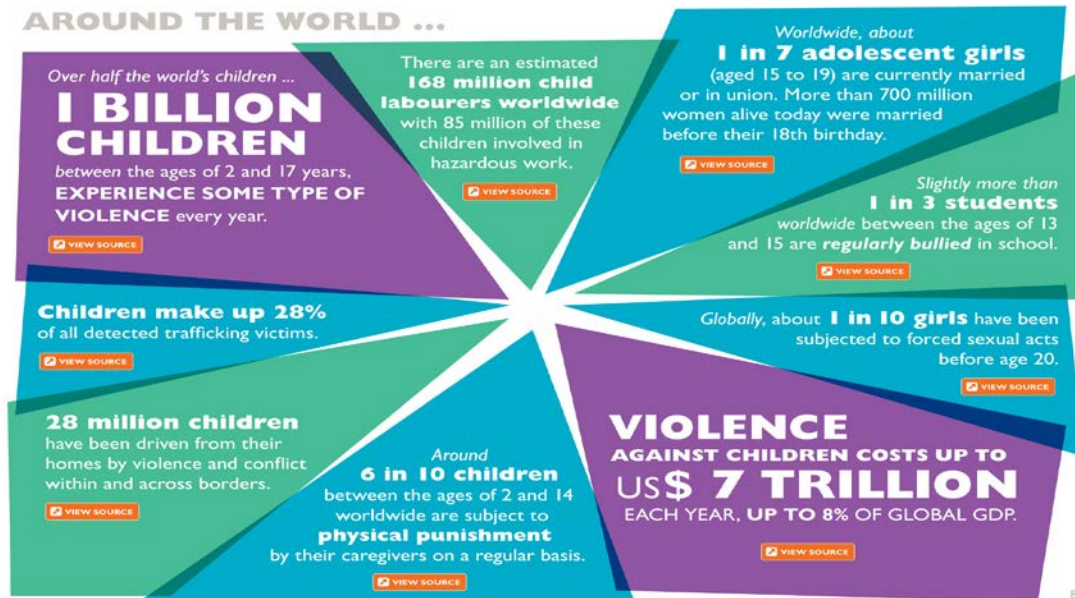


It Takes a World to end violence against children

Every year, violence affects more than one million children, in every country and every community. It occurs in homes, schools and communities, in rich and poor countries alike, and it impacts children of all ages, races, and of different ethnic, social and economic backgrounds. It robs them of their dignity, their rights, their potential, their future. Recent research that abuse and maltreatment can lead to life-long physical and mental health problems, lower educational achievement, and even affect a child's brain development. Victims of violence are more likely to become future perpetrators, feeding a cycle that consumes lives.



Living a life free from violence is the right of all children, and no form of violence against children is justifiable. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, peaceful, nurturing and enabling environment. Ensuring that all children have the opportunity to achieve their full potential is the foundation of stable societies and a critical element for future sustainable and inclusive economic growth. But today, too many children do not have that opportunity.

We are living in times of the highest global levels of forced displacement since World War II. More and more children are pushed to be on the move, escaping war and conflict only to fall vulnerable to other forms of violence: use and recruitment by armed groups, sexual abuse, trafficking, labour or child marriage. The traumas of war, forced displacement and natural disasters leave children especially vulnerable, stripping away their normal safeguards, placing them in situations of high risk, abuse or exploitation, and often spurring continuing cycles of fear and aggression.

If we don't end violence against children now, we risk jeopardizing the progress and losing the investments made in child survival, health and education, as well as overall economic development. Violence against children costs up to US\$7 trillion a year. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Adults and children in countries across the globe recognize the urgency of preventing violence against children. A recent World Vision report *Fearing Wrong* shows that people from lower- and upper middle-income countries, like Brazil, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Guatemala, and Indonesia, perceive violence against children as a present reality in their lives. While everyone in society has a responsibility to help address this urgent problem, 80% of those from lower- and upper-middle-income countries believe that government has a responsibility to address violence against children.

Over the past 25 years we have seen gradual progress towards ending violence against children. There is no shortage of commitments on protecting children— it is an explicit obligation set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols. Other international and regional human rights instruments provide similar and complementary safeguards and call upon all states to take all appropriate measures to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children. However, only recently, with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, have we seen violence against children acknowledged as a global development issue.

The world's governments have set ambitious targets to end violence by 2030 in order to deliver the vision of a world where all children—girls and boys alike—grow up free from violence and exploitation. This task is beyond the reach of any one organization or institution. New global initiatives have been formed to support increased action at the country level, to drive coordination or to tackle specific forms of violence. Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, Alliance 8.7 and Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies are just some of them.

We know more than ever before about the prevalence and impact of violence against children. We know the most effective solutions to help put an end to it. INSPIRE – package of solutions is example of evidence based strategies to reduce violence that has been endorsed by the leading experts and organizations in the field. But ending violence against children requires more than knowledge. It requires:

- ❖ Changing attitudes and beliefs that condone violence against children making it visible and unacceptable;
- ❖ Strengthening commitments and putting in place mechanisms to implement laws and policies;
- ❖ Ensuring greater accountability for the implementation of existing and new commitments;
- ❖ Scaling up effective prevention and response approaches; and
- ❖ Increasing investment in proven strategies and in strengthening multi-sectoral systems to reach every child in every community in every country, particularly the most vulnerable in the hardest places that protect children.

We have an unprecedented opportunity to make a real and tangible difference in the lives of vulnerable children. But we must move quickly, and we must do so together. Taking actions and making choices that put implementation of the commitments and solutions at the top of everybody's to-do list is the remaining challenge for all of us. To see an end to violence against children, we will need to see greater collaboration, partnership and investment from leaders, businesses, governments, communities, organisations and faith groups than we've seen before. Until violence against children is dealt with as a local and global priority, with the urgency, political will and resources to meet the challenge, sustainable reduction in violence against children will remain out of reach.

World Vision's new global campaign commits the organization's full weight behind the goal of ending violence against children, building on the lessons learned from local programmes in more than 60 countries and aligning with global frameworks of best practice. Our campaign specifically seeks to do this by igniting movements to catalyze changes in attitudes, raise awareness and drive courageous and effective action; strengthening prevention, response and restorative measures to address violence against boys and girls; increasing long-term, targeted funding; and ensuring greater accountability for the implementation of existing and new commitments to end violence. Our campaign will run from the smallest community to the largest world stage and will inspire the minds and win the hearts of those who hold power, leaders and people everywhere. It will compel them to take a stand alongside the children and young people who are already calling out for change. Everyone has a role to play, wherever they are. That is what it takes. It takes a world to end violence against children.