

Celebrating childhood:

A journey to end violence
against children



Celebrating childhood: A journey to end violence against children





“Grateful for the contributions of Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Laureate, Mordillo Foundation, Eric Puybaret, the International Museum of Children’s Art in Oslo, as well as UNICEF and the Bureau International Catholique de l’Enfance”

Front cover painting caption: Child at door facing the sunlight

Front and back cover paintings: Eric Puybaret

© 2016 United Nations

All rights reserved worldwide

Requests to reproduce excerpts or to photocopy should be addressed to the Copyright Clearance at copyright.com
All other queries on rights and licenses, including subsidiary rights, should be addressed to United Nations Publications,
300 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017,
United States of America.

Email: publications@un.org; website: un.org/publications

ISBN: 978-92-1-101357-3

eISBN: 978-92-1-060008-8

Sales no.:E.16.I.20

Coordination design: Pauran Ghaffarpour/UNON

Design and layout: Jinita Shah/UNON

Printing: UNON, Publishing Services Section/Nairobi, ISO 14001:2004-Certified



Table of contents

Forewords

H. M. Queen Silvia of Sweden	vii
Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of Chile	ix

Preface

Marta Santos Pais	xiii
Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children	

Part 1

Celebrating progress and igniting action for children's freedom from violence	1
Celebrating 10 years of the UN Study on Violence against Children: a milestone in the protection of children's rights	2
Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Independent Expert who led the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children; Chairperson of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria	
Building on achievements, continuing the fight for children	7
Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	
Fair, effective and child-friendly justice systems: a prerequisite to end violence against children	11
Yury Fedotov, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	
Promising justice for children	16
Turid Heiberg, Senior Adviser & Head of the Unit for Children at Risk, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Olivia Lind Haldorsson and Shawwna von Blixen	
Taking action to protect children from violence	22
Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra, First Ombudsperson for Children in Mauritius	
The next frontier in combating violence against children: the family	27
Assefa Bequele, Founder and former Executive Director of The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF)	
Migrant and refugee children in Europe: violence and detention must stop	32
Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights Council of Europe	
My experience and personal transformation in relation to violence	36
Maxima Apaza Millares, Senator and President of the Parliamentary Network for Children and Adolescents in Bolivia	

Part 2

Building a world as big as children’s dreams, free from fear and violence	39
Recipe for children’s protection from violence	41
Gastón Acurio, Chef and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador	
Building bridges through music to end violence against children	45
Lang Lang, Concert pianist, United Nations Messenger for Peace	
Nostalgic future	48
Tezuka Takaharu, Architect, Association for Children’s Environment Design Award	
City of Children - taking the voice of children seriously	53
Jorge Muñoz, Mayor of Miraflores, Lima – Peru	
Children are changemakers	58
Marc Dullaert, Founder and Chair of The KidsRights Foundation Founder of the International Children’s Peace Prize	
Ethics, aesthetics and citizenship: educating for life, for living together	65
Leonardo Garnier, Former Minister of Public Education, Costa Rica (2006 – 2014)	
Winnie’s story: taking action against online violence	71
Winnie Moreira, Young advocate	
Sports, education and the end of violence against children	74
Atlee Mahorn, Three-time Olympic sprinter, MBA	

Part 3

Breaking the silence and building children’s resilience	77
Rights and respect	79
Fernanda Santana, Young advocate for the rights of persons with autism	
A call for zero violence in schools and educational settings	83
Trisha Shetty, UN Young Leader for Sustainable Development	
Standing up against bullying	89
Aija Mayrock, Young writer “The survival guide to bullying”	
Cartoon Network	94

Don't be afraid – breaking the silence of child sexual abuse	97
Montxo Armendáriz, Film director and producer	
Every hour matters after rape: using data to support survivors	101
Daniela Ligiero, Chief Executive Officer, Together for Girls	
Building a safe home	106
Sister Doreen, The Christian Care Centre, Solomon Islands	
The transformative power of early childhood development in building peace in the world	109
Rima Salah, Child Study Center, Yale University James F. Leckman	
It's high time to end all violent punishment of children	114
Chris Dodd, Co-ordinator Churches Network for Non-violence	
Sport and children's right to play	119
Inter Campus	
Part 4	
Special protection for children at heightened risk	123
Birth of a rap song	125
Kelvin Augusto Enamorado, Young Rapper	
The potential of children affected by conflict to fulfil the promise of the sustainable development goals	130
Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict	
The chaos of emergencies: making children safe	134
Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	
When touched by poverty, the separation between bully and bullied is almost non-existent	138
Kathleen Saint-Amand, Young Writer, ATD Fourth World	
Children with albinism: from invisible to visible	142
Ikponwosa Ero, UN Independent Expert on enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism	
Protecting children from trafficking in emergency situations	150
Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children	



© Mordillo Foundation, 3077-A-E

Forewords

H. M. Queen Silvia of Sweden



Years ago, while visiting Brazil, I met a young boy. He was anxious to show me something and beckoned to me. At the side of the street, he pointed to a large brown box – the kind that could have been wrapped as a birthday present concealing a child’s rocking horse. Except this brown box wasn’t a present; it was this boy’s home. He was living on the street and alone. Later that evening, as I boarded my flight home, there was a severe tropical storm. As the wind howled and the rain fell, the only thing I could think about was this boy and his cardboard box home. What was he doing now?

If I had to pinpoint a moment when my life’s calling turned to children’s rights, it would be that moment. A child’s life is too fragile to be protected from the world’s harsh reality by a cardboard box. Our children deserve more from us, the adults.

While my first reaction all those years back came from my heart, I knew that any subsequent initiatives to protect children would have to be led by my head. Therefore, in 1999, I initiated the World Childhood Foundation, which focuses on preventative work; targeting groups where we know that children are at the most risk of being abused and exploited. Today we have funded over 1,000 projects in 20 countries.

When I founded the World Childhood Foundation 17 years ago, it was with a strong conviction that I wanted to do something for the most vulnerable children around the world. There were – and continue to be – so many issues confronting children and youth: sexual abuse, trafficking, child pornography, violence, the consequences of conflict, lack of or poor education, forced child labour. The list of ills then felt overwhelming. And, of course, today, there are challenges facing children that seemed inconceivable to me at the time, such as the impact of refugee crises on children and risks to children online.

Ten years after the founding of the World Childhood Foundation, in 2009, His Majesty the King and I initiated the Global Child Forum – a multi-stakeholder platform where leaders and learners from all sectors could come together to discuss children’s rights and forge partnerships that would lead to real solutions. Today, our focus is on

the business sector as a driver of that change. To-date, we have hosted eight Forums stemming from Stockholm to the Middle East and North Africa, to Southern Africa, to Southeast Asia and soon to South America.

Whether large or small, businesses have great power and influence in the communities and countries in which they work. With that power comes a moral responsibility to safeguard children's rights. But it is not only an ethical obligation – it is also sound business sense. Through our Forums and research, we have found that those companies which pay serious attention to children's rights in their operations – from responsible marketing to the abolition of child labour – perform better overall.

The role of children's rights in business is still nascent. Much work remains to be done. But there are inspiring examples – from around the world and from every sector – of companies taking action to support and respect children's rights. In our Forums, we have heard of companies providing on-site day care so that migrant parents can keep their families together, of digital telecommunication firms instituting security measures so that children can be safe online, and of large apparel manufacturers instituting codes of conduct within their work place to ensure that children have access to education.

2016 is an important year on the children's rights calendar. This year commemorates the tenth anniversary of the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. It is also the twentieth anniversary of the first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Stockholm, Sweden. Both the Study and the Stockholm Agenda for Action that was adopted by the Congress have resulted in important developments in the protection of children from violence. We have enjoyed a close collaboration with SRSB Santos Pais on Violence against Children.

This year also marks the start of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among its priorities is the elimination of violence against children, including a distinct target (Goal 16.2). I must admit, it dismays me that we even need to articulate this as a goal, rather than it being a conviction implicit in our humanity. Nonetheless, in order to create a world where all children can grow up free from violence, we need to harness the optimism embodied in the Sustainable Development Goals.

I couldn't help the boy in Brazil who lived in the box. But he inspired me to raise my voice to speak about children's rights.

Today, I am proud to support those who work in organizations like the World Childhood Foundation, the Global Child Forum, the United Nations and numerous other children's rights and human rights organizations. This community of heroic individuals, some of them profiled in this book, work tirelessly to keep the issue of children's rights on the political and business agenda – to ensure that children are safe, well cared for and face a bright future.

Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of Chile



There are few tasks that have the urgency and relevance of meeting children's needs for survival, happiness and development. Few things are so absurd and so discredit humankind as suffering during childhood. And nothing is probably more terrible and painful than the mutilation of the joys and hopes of a child on Earth, as a result of violence.

Hence, this book is a wake-up call that directly addresses us and urges us to action, from the various positions of political or social responsibility that we hold, but of course also from the ordinariness of our lives. It challenges us, individuals and families, schools and religious communities, institutions and governments. It reminds us of the responsibility that each of us has and calls us to become part of this work that cannot wait.

It is high time. It is time to end all forms of violence against children. And that means, of course, eradicating it in its crudest manifestation, which is a direct violation of their rights to life or integrity - as in the cases of physical, sexual and psychological abuse - sometimes within their own families or communities.

But it also means ending violence in its indirect, deeply rooted determinants, which are sometimes invisible, as are the inequities that for many decades have affected our children from the cradle, arbitrarily limiting their development.

It involves eradicating violence and gender stereotypes, inequities based on gender, culture, geography, religion or socioeconomic context.

It involves generating appropriate, cross-sectoral, cross-cutting policies that guarantee all children fair options to grow up in a protective family which promotes an atmosphere of love and understanding, to live in an environment free of violence and achieve their full development.

Unfortunately, this is not the reality we are guaranteeing every child in the world. And we know that this has consequences.

We know that mental disorders experienced by adults originate in childhood and to this we must add the violence of inequality in accessing quality education, housing and nutrition, which are also determinants. That is the reality we must change now: a tremendous

social inequality, which in the early years of life can determine vital life paths for children and adolescents.

Gabriela Mistral said: “We have committed many errors and many faults, but our crime is abandoning children, neglecting the fountain of life. Many of the things we need can wait. The child cannot. Now the child’s bones are being formed, the blood is being produced and the senses are being developed. We cannot answer “Tomorrow”; the child’s name is “Today.”

Today, then, is when we have not only the opportunity but the responsibility to generate safeguards of respect, care, protection and opportunities for children.

A particularly urgent task is to ensure that when their family cannot provide the care, attention and treatment that children need, the state will be up to the challenge, and treat them in a dignified manner that respects and promotes their rights.

But obviously, we need to go further. That is why we are promoting the institutional changes needed to ensure a comprehensive protection system of children’s rights, and create distinct institutions including a Child Rights Defender for the protection of children whose rights have been violated, and in another case a separate entity to address the situation of juvenile offenders.

As a society, we must take responsibility and act to end the violent inequality of opportunities that for so long have affected our children.

As a doctor and a paediatrician, and also as President, childhood policies have been at the centre of my concerns. I am convinced that every child and adolescent can develop their full potential if we secure for them a framework of protection and equity from the start.

Every penny we invest in a child has a huge multiplier effect in the future. The decisions we make and the support that we provide during early childhood are key to their learning, their health, their emotional stability and civic virtues. But they are also key to the future of the nation and humankind.

In the case of Chile, this is a path on which the State has been taking bold steps for decades, for example to significantly reduce child mortality.

I am also proud that I have stressed during my first term the need to tackle in a comprehensive manner the violent inequities that are generated from before birth and accrue throughout the life cycle of each child.

This way, we correct unequal opportunities from a young age, as we do through the educational reform that we are promoting, which seeks to ensure access to quality education for every child, regardless of their socioeconomic status, from nursery to higher education. And this goal, which is ethical and economic, also has profound implications for the potential development of children and especially girls.

As executive director of UN Women, I encountered the reality in many countries and particularly the dramatic situation in which thousands of girls live, seeing their rights violated and the way they are exposed to physical and psychological violence, and dramatic situations of sexual abuse, both as women and as children.

Limiting access to education and allowing early marriage or motherhood is a form of violence that must be eradicated, and that is a direct result of expanding access to education.

There is a sentence in the report on education in the State of the World's Girls 2012 that struck me: "Education alone may not be enough to transform the society in which we live, but the transformation can never be achieved without education."

That is our challenge. The figures show us that girls that continue studying reduce their risk of domestic violence and girls with secondary education are six times less likely to be married while they are girls.

We also know that educated women are empowered, are healthier, marry later and have healthier children. They have better access to family planning and to information on sexual and reproductive health. Hence the emphasis that States must put on education, not only girls but also boys and adolescents, is necessary to begin to eradicate the violence that affects them.

In this way we are determined to combat violence, not only in its most terrible and crude manifestations, but also structural violence, associated with inequality and marginalization.

Eliminating violence is achieved primarily by defeating indolence and overcoming vulnerability and impunity.

Yes: it is high time to end violence. And it is time to do so from governments, certainly through public policies. But it is also high time to mobilize a cultural change committing us as individuals, as families, communities, neighbourhoods and societies.

These are the mobilizing actions that this initiative is inviting us to take. It is an achievable dream; a childhood free from fear and limiting conditions. The reality is that we can build a more fair, fraternal and happier humanity, which is what every child needs and deserves.



Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Laureate

Preface

Marta Santos Pais



Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

I had a very happy childhood and grew up in a very caring family. My father was a writer and judge for children, my mother a teacher. Respect, solidarity and fairness were some of the values nurtured at home. I was never short of creativity and curiosity either and was always encouraged to stand by my beliefs and follow my inspiration. I was indeed an empowered child. Reaching out to less fortunate children was never an act of kindness. It just felt natural.

While growing up, I would see myself as a paediatrician, a teacher. I definitely wanted to become a judge for children, but in those days this was “mission impossible” for women in my country. But I was determined to join others in the most fantastic journey: a journey for a happy childhood for all children.

The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 was a moment of immense joy. I had the privilege of participating in the long negotiation process of this ground breaking treaty. I recall how we had been influenced by the spirit of the great Polish paediatrician Januzs Korczak encouraging us to place children first and above legal, political, social and economic differences, and recognizing children as full citizens and true agents of change. The Convention reflects this vision and entrusts us with a compelling mission: to spare no effort to translate its provisions into a tangible reality for every child, everywhere, at all times.

In 2006, the United Nations Study on Violence against Children confronted the international community with the extent, pervasiveness, complexity and impact of violence against children. Thanks to the mobilization created by the Study and the process of implementation of its recommendations around the world, real progress has been achieved and nations are now better equipped to prevent, eliminate and respond to violence against children.

In my role as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, I see the worst and best of humankind. The worst is certainly the way countless children are exposed to physical, psychological and sexual violence, often in a pervasive, hidden and concealed manner.

The children intentionally targeted in politically driven processes, manipulated in organized crime, obliged to flee violence in their communities, sold and exploited for economic gain, groomed online, disciplined through violent means, sexually assaulted in the privacy of their homes, neglected in institutions, abused in detention centres, bullied in schools, stigmatized and ill-treated as a result of superstition or harmful practices. Every five minutes a child dies as a result of violence.

Children's pervasive exposure to violence is well documented by UN reports, academic research and children's heart breaking stories. They all convey a pressing sense of urgency.

In fact, for millions of children around the world, life is defined by two words: FEAR and PAIN. For them, the world has no safe haven. And nations are missing the chance to build a better world for all.

Violence compromises all children's rights. It goes hand in hand with deprivation, high risks of poor health, poor school performance and long-term welfare dependency. In early childhood, the impact of violence is often irreversible. As children grow, their exposure to violence becomes part of a continuum, spreading across their life cycle and at times persisting across generations.

But beyond the impact on individual victims and their families, violence is associated with far-reaching costs for society. It diverts billions of dollars from social spending, slowing economic development and eroding nations' human and social capital.

My mandate also exposes me to the best of humankind. And the best comes, not surprisingly, from children themselves. Time and time again I meet child victims emerging from the worst of nightmares and yet they remain resilient, confident, generous, and show us, adults, the way ahead. In all regions of the world, young advocates join hands with national authorities, civil society and many other allies in raising awareness of the detrimental impact of violence, empowering young people to be the first line of protection from the risk of abuse and exploitation, and inspiring many others to build a world where children can grow up respected, nurtured and supported to reach their dreams.

Even in the most desperate of situations, children show hope for a better world and determination to achieve lasting change. It's much more than just positive thinking. It's about positively achieving change.

Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the world has made significant strides towards the realization of children's rights. But a better world is simply not good enough; we need to aim for the very best world for children!



The vision of the Convention will not be fully realized unless children's rights become a sustaining pillar of society and are embraced as a core value of the dialogue between generations.

Recent estimates show that at least 1 billion children are victims of violence every year. Clearly, much more needs to be done. It's high time to close the gap between international standards, political commitments and action. It is high time to promote a culture of respect for children's rights and of zero tolerance for violence.

Ten years after the UN Study was launched, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda provides a unique opportunity to renew commitments and reinvigorate actions to end violence against children.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has a set of 17 interrelated and mutually reinforcing Goals with a network of 169 related targets. For the very first time, the dignity of children and their right to live free from violence and from fear is recognized as a distinct priority on the international development agenda. Achieving these goals will help reduce the risk of violence in children's lives and provide effective responses for child victims, especially the goals related to education and health; gender equality and violence against women; the elimination of child labour; poverty eradication; access to justice and accountable institutions and to a legal identity. At the same time, failing to reach the targets related to violence against children – especially 16.2 – will compromise efforts in these areas, and hinder social and economic progress across the development agenda.

The adoption of target 16.2 by the United Nations was a breakthrough: the international community must now act to transform this momentum into an unstoppable movement towards a world free from fear and from violence for all children.

 **Joining hands together,
the sum of all forces
will be zero. Zero
violence.** 

Marta Santos Pais

The 2030 Agenda seeks to transform the world, leaving no one behind. The best way to avoid leaving children behind is by putting them first! A society that fails to do so risks arriving last in the quest for sustainable peace, justice and progress.

To make the vision of Agenda 2030 of a world free from violence a reality for all children and in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children, in early 2016 we launched with many partners the High Time to End Violence against Children initiative. The High Time initiative believes in the transformative power of leaders from all walks of life and in their determination to stand up for children. It promotes the mobilization of all those who can actively engage in creating circles of nonviolence around children's lives.

This book is about what ending violence against children takes, means and brings. It's a celebration of childhood and a manifesto for a world where children can grow with dignity and free from violence. It gathers inspiring testimonies of people whose talent and time are bringing us closer to a world of nonviolence for all children. The contributors are remarkable people of all ages and backgrounds. They are visionary leaders and child rights defenders, scholars and artists, all of whom have demonstrated decisive commitment to build a better world for children.

We trust that you will be inspired by the personal stories, the professional achievements and the dreams and creations presented in this book. In the countdown to 2030, everybody counts. Children want to count on you! Every citizen of the world can be an agent of change. And this can inspire others to bring about the change we need.



Photo © Thomas Louapre,
Mots d'Enfants, Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE)

Part 1

Celebrating progress and
igniting action for children's
freedom from violence

Celebrating 10 years of the UN Study on Violence against Children: a milestone in the protection of children's rights



Independent Expert who led the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children; Chairperson of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria

Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro

The process of the UN Study on Violence against Children was certainly an eventful journey and also a great, often deeply depressing, personal journey for me and many others.

It revealed to me in particular just how far children almost everywhere have been left behind even with the growing condemnation of inter-personal violence in human societies. How paradoxical and shocking it is that the smallest and most vulnerable should still in so many states be waiting for basic legal protection from violence in their homes and other settings.

Because we really tried in the UN Study to give children meaningful space and time to reveal their own feelings, it also taught me how deeply children feel about the daily assault on their dignity by people they want to love and respect. Countless children asked me, during the nine regional consultations and other meetings, whether the Study would make a difference to their lives.

It was easy enough for us to write then: "The Study should mark a turning point – an end to adult justification of violence against children, whether accepted as 'tradition' or disguised as 'discipline'".

Now, 10 years on, it is indeed high time to ask whether that "turning point" has been reached, whether we have anything much to celebrate. I am afraid our conclusion has to be – not enough. Children have been, are still being, left behind. Their voices are certainly being heard more strongly; there is much more research revealing the awful scale of adult and state violence against children and many more studies emphasizing the harm it does. But much remains to be done.

The second of the Study's 12 overarching recommendations was to prohibit all forms of violence against children in all settings, including all corporal punishment and all harmful practices. We ambitiously set 2009 as the target for achieving this clear and comprehensive prohibition.

I make no apology for mostly focusing in this very short article on law. Children's rights to protection cannot be satisfied without law which clearly and where necessary explicitly prohibits violence against them.

Back in the period of the preparation of the Study, we used to hear people suggesting that there are already enough laws protecting children – the problem lies elsewhere. But this is first of all wildly inaccurate – very few states as yet have an adequate framework of law fully protecting children from all forms of violence. And it is disgracefully undermining of the rule of law. At times during the course of the Study, and more recently in the context of the Commission of Inquiry into Syria, I have felt despairing about states' and others' ability to understand that insisting on full respect for human rights and the rule of law is quite simply the only hope for human societies. We must insist on a clear and complete legal framework of prohibition as the essential foundation. How far a state has got in constructing and then systematically implementing such a legal framework is a clear sign of true commitment.

Of course legislation is not sufficient: other, primarily educational, measures and support to parents and caregivers must be linked to law reform. But law in itself, properly disseminated, is a most powerful tool in changing social norms that tolerate and condone violence.

Almost all states, by ratifying the CRC, are under a clear obligation to protect the child from all forms of violence. Now, 26 years after the Convention's adoption, we have an additional advocacy context with the Sustainable Development Goals and in particular target 16.2 on "ending" all violence against children. The Agenda is of course very welcome, as is its pledge that "we will leave no one behind". And I would like to stress the urgency of leaving no one behind to recall the spirit of the UN Study to prevent and address violence in situations of peace but also in situations of unrest or conflict -such as the Occupied Palestinian territory or Yemen amongst many others- where incidents of violence against children may occur not strictly caused or linked to conflict. Whether it provokes faster progress will depend as usual on how committed, creative and passionate and persuasive ours and others' advocacy is.

In any case, 2030 seems a very long way away for all of us and especially for children: we need to set ourselves and states very much closer targets, including, in particular, to achieve universal legal protection from violence.

We have to get to the detail beyond a commitment to "end" all forms of violence; all states will sign up to that – indeed they have - just as so many have enthusiastically repeated the Study's slogan: "No violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable".

The protection of children's rights cannot be satisfied without a law which clearly and explicitly prohibits violence against them.

Paulo Pinheiro

But, to try to end on a more positive note: we do know that in terms of prohibiting all violent punishment of children, there is progress: the number of states with a full ban has trebled from 16 in 2006 to 50 today; and another 53 states have committed to full prohibition; thus more than half of UN member states have either banned or committed to do so.

I dwell on this issue for a number of reasons: first, as UNICEF has documented so clearly in its very valuable “Hidden in Plain Sight” report, this is the most common form of violence against children; second because, both during the Study process and still today, challenging its legality and social acceptance remains extraordinarily controversial, with some states still prepared to openly defend so called “reasonable” physical punishment, some still caning and flogging children in their medieval penal systems.

But I also dwell on it because it appears that this may still be the only form of violence against children whose legality in every state and territory the world over has been mapped in detail, and the changes in legislation required to achieve a full ban set out clearly. This mapping has formed the basis for systematic briefing of human rights monitoring bodies including the UN’s Universal Periodic Review – maintaining and increasing an informed pressure on states and leading to measureable progress.

Surely similar detailed mapping is urgently required for all the other forms of violence, including newly emerging threats, as the basis for ever more effective advocacy.

I just want to mention finally the state violence embodied in so-called juvenile justice systems, more accurately labelled penal systems for children. I am so glad that there is to be a Global Study on children deprived of liberty as this is much needed.

If, as it appears, we can achieve rapidly accelerating progress in prohibiting violent punishment of children including within the family, surely we can and must with renewed passion argue for an end to the state violence of criminalizing children and locking them up as punishment. This new Global Study will hopefully be uncompromising in promoting this.

The World Report on Violence against Children, published with the UN Study report, urged governments to limit detention only to those who have been assessed as posing a real danger to others, and then only as a last resort, for the shortest necessary time, and following a judicial hearing.

If we really want to build a world free from fear and violence, it is high time to accept that clearly prohibiting violent punishment of children, by their parents and other carers, and by teachers and by the state – is an essential foundation stone. My personal pledge is to continue voicing these concerns and to support the High Time to End Violence against Children initiative and other global efforts to achieve effective and explicit prohibition of all forms of violence against children, including in their homes.

International initiatives like High Time to End Violence against Children and the new Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence against Children are immensely valuable and I am privileged to be involved with both initiatives. To decisively accelerate progress on the elimination of all forms of violence against children by 2030, we must ensure complementarity and collaboration between both initiatives at all levels in order to have the maximum effect.



Photo © "Fly quickly! Peace, little pigeon please! Quickly fly with our peace-loving heart over high mountains and across great walls". Zhou Kui , 8, China. (BK46260). The International Museum of Children's Art in Oslo, Norway

At The International Museum of Children's Art in Oslo, Norway, you can see the world through children's eyes. The Museum, established in 1986, regards children's art as a living part of folk art. Children's own opinion and concerns are presented through changing thematic exhibitions. The three basic functions of the Museum are to collect, promote and preserve children's art worldwide. Read more at www.childrensart.com

Building on achievements, continuing the fight for children



United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio

Twenty years ago, denouncing the massive violations of the rights of children affected by armed conflict, Graça Machel wrote: “There are few further depths to which humanity can sink”. In 2006, the UN Study on Violence against Children started completing the most appalling of catalogues: the catalogue of evils and wrongs, of suffering and trauma, of abysmal gaps, missed opportunities and enormous challenges. Going through this catalogue is an eye-opening and heart breaking exercise.

Violence is everywhere. It is usually hidden, occasionally denounced, often absurdly justified, repeatedly ignored, rarely effectively addressed and always destructive. Humanity can indeed sink very deep, down to levels where children are treated as commodities, used as shields, weapons and slaves, or simply discarded as trash. Today, hundreds of millions of children are victims of violence, their vulnerability magnified by layers of exclusion and deprivation.

In situations of war and conflict, if they survive at all, children are particularly vulnerable to being sold and trafficked for the purposes of different forms of exploitation. Examples that illustrate this phenomenon abound: children have been abducted in Nigeria by Boko Haram for the purpose of sexual slavery and forced labour. Yazidi girls have been sold by ISIL in slave markets in Iraq for sexual slavery and forced domestic labour. More recently, in April 2016, 159 children were abducted in Western Ethiopia’s Gambella region, 68 of whom are still unaccounted for and are at grave risk of being sold and exploited by their captors.

Beyond war and conflict-related sale of children and forced labour, children are sold and compelled to engage in forced labour in a wide variety of sectors and occupations: domestic work, agriculture, manufacturing, forced begging, forced criminal activities, servile marriage, to name a few, giving rise to a diverse set of realities for child victims. Even though we lack reliable estimates of the phenomenon, due partly to its hidden nature, proxy indicators suggest that it is widespread and no country is immune. The latest global estimate concludes that 5.5 million children are victims of forced labour, and girls represent the greater share of the total.

The impact of migration on children's vulnerability, whether travelling on their own, with their parents or simply left behind is also shocking. Thirst for financial gain and profit by intermediaries and direct abusers takes precedence over respect for the most basic rights of children.

In his study of 10 years ago, Paulo Pinheiro recommended eliminating the worst form of child labour, as a form of violence, as a matter of priority.

Forced labour of children must be regarded as an unacceptable form of violence and responded to as such. It deprives children of their childhood and compromises their future. Selling children as tools for economic gain is not only immoral but also illegal and can under no circumstances be justified. Not only does it cause immediate humiliation and physical and mental suffering, but it violates multiple rights of the child, increasing their vulnerabilities and impairing their development to the fullest potential.

In all these situations the primary responsibility of States, as signatories to major human rights instruments at global and at regional level, are at stake. States must adopt and implement legislation which criminalises the sale of children for the purposes of forced labour and the conditions leading to it, such as debt bondage. It is also essential that children are not criminalised, even if they are forced to engage in legal activities.

Children targeted frequently lack the agency to denounce their exploiters and abusers, and to obtain redress often meets with insurmountable barriers, often due to social tolerance and silence. It is therefore essential to guarantee that effective remedies are available and accessible for children, through child-sensitive complaint and reporting mechanisms and child-sensitive justice proceedings. Commensurate compensation should be part of these proceedings.

Today, 10 years later, under the Sustainable Development Agenda, we have a number of relevant goals to be achieved within the next decade: Goal 8, target 7 calls on Governments to take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms. Closely linked to that is Goal 16.2 since many of the worst forms of child labour include abuse and exploitation, amounting frequently to torture.

Alliances created for the achievement of these goals are important steps in the right direction. Hearing the voice of children in this context is absolutely crucial. Only they know what it feels like to be forced to work in the streets, in brothels, in households, in the fields, in quarries, in spinning mills, in factories, in back shops, in the sea, and to have no one to turn to, to end their ordeal.

Achieving these goals is a Government commitment, but Governments cannot act alone. It is our duty as adults and responsible citizens and consumers to show, this time for real, that we are ready do everything we can to stop children being treated as commodities and give them a chance to live their childhood and prepare their future. Children are not for sale!

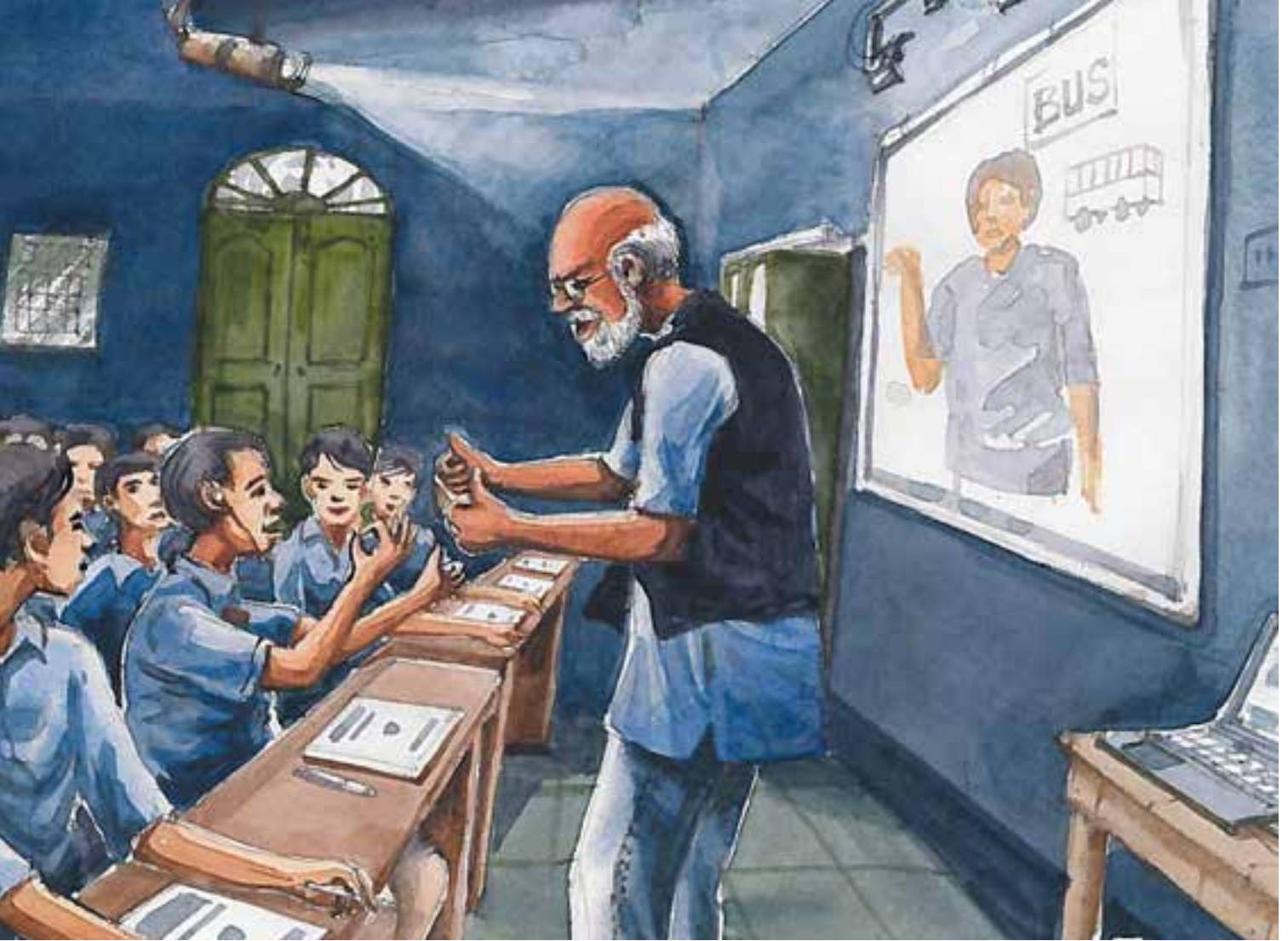
Children are not mini-human beings with mini-human rights. Deprived of rights and dignity, children keep drowning in silence while millions of bystanders look from the edge of this huge pit, paralysed by the sheer magnitude of the unfolding drama, their feelings numbed by a reality that they have come to accept as fate. The attempted rescue operations save a few lives, but there are always many more children falling than rescued.

And the hole grows deeper and darker, offering new hidings for the monsters that prey on children of all ages. The dark net is a new and big virtual cavern where child sexual predators lurk and harm countless children in all impunity. In my personal and professional fight for children's rights, I often feel that I have been punished like Sisyphus, to roll the burden up the pit, never really reaching the edge. And I wonder. What can I do to change the paradigm? What can we ALL do?

Despite its terrifying findings, the UN Study on Violence against Children also brought hope, in particular to children. It echoed their voices and reflected their fears and expectations, integrating them in the recommendations that would guide action in the years ahead. The Study identified the actions needed to put a stop to the violence haunting children's lives. The participatory and inclusive process put in place for the preparation of the Study laid the foundation of a broad and sustained commitment to the implementation of its recommendations. Thanks to this effort, progress can be celebrated and, above all, accelerated. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is THE OPPORTUNITY we were looking for. By working together to meet its important goals and targets, we are filling gaps, forming strong safety nets, building bridges, assembling ladders... We are empowering people, organisations and States, creating resilience and building the capacity needed to seal the pit, once and for all. So that humankind can build upon solid ground and reach for the stars.

Despite its terrifying findings, the UN Study on Violence against Children also brought hope, in particular to children. It echoed their voices and reflected their fears and expectations.

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio



"Sign language is the mother tongue of deaf people. Let's promote it." Master Swastik Jana, 16, India
"Courtesy of Children With Disabilities, Programme Division, UNICEF"

Fair, effective and child-friendly justice systems: a prerequisite to end violence against children



Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Yury Fedotov

Throughout the world, millions of children face violence and fear, much of it hidden from the world's gaze. We all have a tremendous responsibility to save lives and to end the degrading violence against children that occurs in every country and every region of the world. This not only calls for an integrated response and greater cooperation, but also a recognition of the powerful role that justice systems can play in protecting children and respecting their rights. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is committed, along with its partners, to highlighting the connections between justice and the sustainable development goals and contributing to the end of violence against children by 2030. I hope that this article successfully conveys the importance of a fair, effective and humane justice system as a necessary requirement to protect children from violence. In doing so, it makes use of three cases as illustrations and then goes on to outline key issues that should be taken into account if we are to effectively prevent and respond to this pervasive phenomenon.

To serve and to protect: Three cases illustrating how fair and effective justice systems protect vulnerable children

Case 1: Cherubin was 11 years old when he was accused of witchcraft after his grandfather, his brother and his aunt all died in the same week. Just as the family were about to kill him through starvation and physical assault, a neighbour informed the police who arrived in time to prevent his death. The police officers warned the family that any physical assault on the young boy would end in a prosecution and a likely severe sentence. The police also referred the case to the child protection services and a week later, a child protection officer visited Cherubin's family, assessed the situation, provided advice to the parents, and reiterated once again the gravity of the situation. His family were told how to improve their care of the young boy. Two weeks later, the family brought Cherubin to a Missionary Centre because they did not want to keep him. Now, Cherubin is attending primary school with other kids of his age, and receives regular visits from his family.

The threat of facing trial was a deterrent and it saved the young boy's life. It also demonstrates the role that an effective justice system can play in preventing violence against children.

Case 2: Tom and Natalie's parents were in the middle of a divorce when both kids were 12 and 13. When the judge asked them if they had something to say, Tom replied that "in any case, my parents hate me", and Natalie said "I just want to get a job and move out. I definitely don't want to see my mother anymore". In his interim judgment, the judge decided that the kids should be seen by a psychologist as well as child protection services. One week later, both professionals visited the children in their home and discovered the children had only a mattress on the floor and no toys or books. The children informed the social worker that they were often physically punished. Both parents were requested to attend a parenting class and the children continued to consult the psychologist weekly. After six months, the child protection services reported to the judge that the children had improved and that the parents had learned to take care of them properly. The judge decided to award the custody of the children to their mother and ordered a follow-up with the child protection services within two years. A report was sent to the Prosecutor that despite the parental neglect no criminal action was deemed necessary.

Tom and Natalie's story shows that the justice system is crucial to prevent and respond to incidents of violence against children.

Case 3: Jesús David, 16 years old, spent most of his childhood and adolescence suffering from serious abuse, violence and neglect from his parents until he was recruited by a criminal gang who offered him US\$5,000 to kill a member of a rival gang. Jesús David was prosecuted for the crime and sentenced to eight years of detention in a specialized juvenile justice institution. When deprived of his liberty, Jesús David demonstrated aggressive behaviour, initiating violence against his peers. Thanks to the work of specially trained detention facility personnel on violence prevention, Jesús David slowly began to open up and regularly participated in the restorative justice programme organized by the institution. He learned how to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner, as well as how to value and respect others. After three months, Jesús David was empowered by the social workers in the detention facility to become a conciliator among his peers. He effectively led a group of six young people in designing restorative justice practices and supporting the detention facility's staff in mediating conflicts and creating a peaceful environment in the institution. Recognizing the success of the restorative justice programme, and upon the request of the detention facility's Director, the judge allowed Jesús David and the other six young leaders to leave the detention facility every week and carry out awareness activities and transmit values of respect, diversity and peace to students in a nearby school.

Jesús' story shows that a specialized and effective juvenile justice system which counts on trained personnel is instrumental for ensuring that children in contact with the law are dealt with in a manner that reduces the risk of being further victimized or abused.

Criminal Justice Systems: Promoting accountability, ending impunity

The three cases above illustrate the wide range of actions that can be taken by the justice system and which are effective in preventing and responding to cases of violence against children.

Violence against children can occur anywhere at any time. The list of places is almost limitless: in their home, in schools, on the streets, in care or justice institutions, in the community, in cyberspace. The forms of violence are also appallingly varied and include domestic violence, bullying, online and physical sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced labour, the use of children by organised crime, armed and terrorist groups, and in some instances, harmful practices. All of these require accountability mechanisms to end impunity which cannot happen without a fair, effective and humane justice system.

But the role of the justice system should not only be seen as an instrument for ending impunity and ensuring accountability mechanisms. Something that is often underestimated, and must be taken into account, is the role of criminal justice institutions and actors in promoting preventive measures against violence aimed at children. While we must acknowledge that not all types of violence against children should be dealt with by the justice system, often those working within that system are the first to have contact with incidents of violence. For this reason, they have an undeniable responsibility to prevent re-victimization and to take actions to ensure that other systems (i.e. health, education, child protection) provide suitable responses.

In recognising the pressing need to address the incidents of violence against children and, in particular, the key role of the criminal justice system in this regard, in December 2014 the international community adopted a new international legal framework, the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. This tool was developed not only to help states address the need for integrated violence prevention and child protection strategies, but also to acknowledge the complementary roles of the justice system on the one hand, and the role of child protection, social welfare, health and education sectors on the other. It was designed, in effect, to create a protective environment framework: one that would prevent and respond to violence against children.

So for policy-makers, judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and child protection professionals it is high time to re-evaluate the following: 1) Is the justice system doing everything it can to prevent violence against children? 2) Is the justice system responding to incidents of violence against children in an effective and appropriate manner? and 3) Is the justice system dealing with children in contact with the law in a manner that reduces the risk that they may be further victimised or abused? It is also important for children, their families and communities to have trust in justice institutions and to find in them the right avenues to claim their rights and to fight against crime and violence.

A fair, effective and humane justice system as a necessary requirement to protect children from violence.

Yury Fedotov

Justice systems can serve as the main engine for upholding rights and overcoming social deprivation, exclusion, neglect and violence. Accountable and inclusive justice institutions contribute to equity and poverty alleviation, protect the socially weak and promote peace and development. It is a well-known fact that justice is a pre-requisite for the achievement of sustainable development. And it was exactly against this background, following the recognition of the linkages between justice and development, that the international community emphasized the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular of SDG target 16.2, which explicitly refers to ending all forms of violence against children, and is an integral part of the promotion of just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

Although all children have the right to be protected from all violence, including abuse and exploitation as set out in Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, nowadays many children all over the world still lack the opportunity to grow up in a peaceful and non-violent environment: an environment in which their right to survival, development, and well-being are fully respected. Violence against children is widespread and cuts across countries and different socio-economic background affecting millions of children globally.

While it is fair to acknowledge considerable progress has been achieved in recent decades by a number of countries, much work still needs to be done to effectively prevent and respond to violence against children. Countries, however, face numerous challenges. First of all, it is imperative to acknowledge that there is a lack of data and statistics on violence and crime committed against children and on the performance of relevant institutions dedicated to tackling the problem. Many countries still lack political will, effective legal and policy frameworks and the necessary resources. Most children in the world still lack the ability to be vocal advocates for their own protection.

In 2006, the UN Global Study on Violence against Children shed light on the connection between social attitudes and standards and institutional deficiencies on the one hand, and the ingrained nature of violence against children on the other. The study became an important call to action for the international community: in particular by showing that violence against children cannot be defeated through sectoral interventions, but requires the coordination of a variety of actors and institutions.

Indeed, in order to tackle this very complex and multifaceted phenomenon, it is crucial to change the current paradigm and to move away from fragmented responses to a systemic approach that counts on the coordinated action from different actors and institutions. The justice system has a key role to play in this pragmatic shift.

In December 2014, the United Nations General Assembly entrusted UNODC with the important mandate of supporting Member States in preventing and responding to violence against children in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. This mandate represents an invaluable opportunity to build upon UNODC's successes in this field and to join forces with our partners, other committed UN agencies, Member States, civil society organizations and the private sector, to contribute to peace and safety for the children of the world.



Promising justice for children



Senior Adviser & Head of the Unit for Children at Risk, Council of the Baltic Sea States

**Turid Heiberg
Olivia Lind Haldorsson and Shawna von Blixen**

Child victims of physical and sexual abuse in parts of Europe are increasingly accessing justice. When referred to a Barnahus (Children's House), children are received in a child-friendly environment where the needs of the child are at the centre of the process and re-traumatization can be avoided. A multi-disciplinary team including a judge observe the professional interviewing of the child, and video and audio of the interview is used as evidence in court. Children report

being less frightened when the process is conducted in a Children's House and therefore more likely to disclose the details of their abuse. Non-abusive caregivers also feel more supported when offered the Barnahus expertise and services.

The Barnahus, also called Children's Houses in Europe, were inspired by the Children's Advocacy Centres in the United States of America. In Europe, they were launched in Iceland in 1998. The Barnahus focus on collecting evidence from children for the court system with respect to "due process" and in cooperation with the various professionals involved in the judicial process. There are now more than 50 Barnahus in the Nordic countries, including Denmark, Norway and Sweden, Åland (Finland), Greenland and the Faroe Islands. In the Nordic model, the Barnahus is an integral part of the public child welfare and judicial system. Child-friendly centres similar to Barnahus have already been set up in several countries such as in Croatia, the Netherlands, Lithuania, UK, Cyprus and Poland.

The Barnahus movement in Europe

The PROMISE project, co-funded by the European Commission, is an agent of change in mobilizing national and local agencies, governmental and non-governmental, towards establishing Barnahus and child-friendly centres throughout Europe. The project promotes children's rights by promoting and supporting action to ensure that all child victims and witnesses of violence in Europe are protected by child-friendly interventions and have rapid access to justice and care. PROMISE inspires change by sharing good practices and high quality standards for a European approach to multi-disciplinary and interagency framework and cooperation.

The Promise Vision

PROMISE promotes the human rights of children to prevent all forms of violence against children. Child victims and witnesses of violence in Europe are to be protected by child-friendly interventions and rapid access to justice and care, based on the following main principles:

1. Respect for the participatory rights of the child by ensuring that he/she is heard and receives adequate information and support to exercise these rights;
2. Multi-disciplinary and interagency collaboration during investigations, procedures, diagnostic and needs assessments and service delivery, with the aim of avoiding re-traumatization and securing outcomes that are in the best interests of the child;
3. Comprehensive and accessible services that meet the individual and complex needs of the child and his/her non-offending family or caregivers;
4. Ensuring high professional standards, training and sufficient resources for staff working with child witnesses and victims of violence.

The PROMISE project is the agent of change by mobilizing national and local agencies, governmental and non-governmental, towards establishing Barnahus and child-friendly centres in many more countries in Europe. The Barnahus model refers to multi-disciplinary and interagency interventions organized in a child-friendly setting fulfilling the following criteria:

1. Forensic interviews are carried out according to an evidence-based protocol;
2. The evidentiary validity of the child's statement is ensured by appropriate arrangements in line with the principles of "due process". The aim is to prevent the child from having to repeat his/her statement during court proceedings if an indictment is made;
3. Medical evaluation for forensic investigative purposes as well as to ensure the child's physical well-being and recovery;
4. Psychological support, short-and long-term therapeutic services for trauma to the child and non-offending family members and caretakers;
5. Assessment of protection needs of the child victim and siblings in the family and follow up.

The PROMISE project inspires change by sharing good practices and high quality standards for a European approach to the multi-disciplinary and interagency framework and cooperation in all situations such as:

1. Multi-disciplinary and interagency cooperation among social, health, and criminal law professionals and agencies to prevent, investigate and respond to violence against children including measures before, during and after the judicial proceedings;
2. Ensure a range of general and specialized social services and mental health care for children and families;
3. Identifying good practices in a) coordination, joint work and mutual adjustment between agencies, in b) cooperation, agencies influencing and affecting each other and in c) collaboration, in terms of shared services among agencies in a spirit of collective policy-making;
4. Ensuring awareness-raising at national level of children's rights to a non-violent childhood.

The PROMISE vision and the work to promote and support the establishment of the Barnahus model, or similar models and child-friendly centres, in all countries in Europe will continue even after the EU funded project comes to an end, through the establishment of a European Network of professionals.

Several actors participate in the PROMISE project partners such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States, Child Circle, Verwey Jonker Institut, MDCK/Kenter Jeugdulp and Barnahus in Iceland, Stockholm and Linköping. The people behind developing the Barnahus in Europe are all connected with the projects as mentors and experts.

A key goal of the Barnahus movement and the PROMISE project is to provide high quality standards and practical guidance for a European child-friendly multi-disciplinary and interagency model, underpinned by assessment tools, policy analysis and advocacy.¹

The project is stimulating the adoption of these practices through exchange and expert meetings, study visits and capacity building between professionals in the field. Many countries are organising roundtables involving key stakeholders and professionals discussing roles and responsibilities, legal, policy and funding provisions as well as carrying out capacity building exercises.

Passionate change-makers are working towards establishing the Barnahus or child-friendly centres in Latvia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Malta. A potential second phase of the PROMISE project will support the quality standards of existing and new Barnahus and child-friendly centres, and inspire more countries to join in the Barnahus movement.

¹ The guidance material and operating tools are available on the website: www.childcentre.info/promise.

International and European law guiding the PROMISE project

The PROMISE project promotes a one-stop approach for child victims and witnesses of crime, limiting the number of interviews and ensuring comprehensive care including social, medical, therapeutic and legal support. A decision at national or local policy level is necessary before setting up a Barnahus. It is important to strengthen the capacity, knowledge and exchange among government's justice and child welfare sectors, the medical field, public/private forensic and therapeutic services as well as child rights NGOs and advocates.

■ ■ The Children's House provides... a child-friendly environment where the needs of the child are at the centre of the process. ■ ■

Turid Heiberg

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the foundation for many laws with regard to children at risk of violence. In recent years, there has been a significant development of law, policy and practice concerning child victims and witnesses of violence at international, regional and national levels. Relevant European legal instruments include for example, the EU Victim Directive, the Directive of The European Parliament and the Council on combating child sexual abuse and exploitation, the Anti-trafficking Directive and the Council of Europe Lanzarote Convention. The Council of Europe has developed relevant guidelines and recommendations on child-friendly justice and child-friendly social services.

Furthermore, guidance has been developed at the international and European level to strengthen the child protection systems' ability to prevent and respond to violence against children. Such guidance, including the European Commission's reflections on integrated child protection systems, recognizes that a key feature of these systems is a multi-disciplinary, interagency approach to prevent child victimization. The Barnahus model is a leading European multi-disciplinary and interagency practice model responding to child victims and witnesses of violence. The Council of Europe supports the Barnahus as a good practice which promotes child-friendly, multi-disciplinary and interagency services supporting child victims and witnesses of violence.

Encouraging results and challenges

Funding is often referred to as an obstacle to establish Barnahus. However, research shows that traditional ways of investigating child abuse are more costly than developing an efficient coordination among the multitude of sectors and professionals that need to be involved to ensure proper care and justice for the child - and a fair trial for the alleged perpetrator.

Using the Barnahus model is not only cost-effective, but also has a higher likelihood to ensure justice to children and due process to the alleged perpetrator. The Barnahus model is recognized as a leading model to secure the child's disclosure and there has been a dramatic increase in the number of prosecutions of child abuse when cases are referred to the Barnahus.

Developing Barnahus to the highest standard is a process of adapting to the local context, and getting the acknowledgement from children, caregivers and professionals that Barnahus is a practice to be continued and improved. However, cooperation among sectors is most effective when based on written agreements, training and supervision. Lastly, monitoring and using the positive impact on law and justice should strengthen the system and the practice of the Barnahus.

Some countries have legal obstacles, such as restrictions against sharing information about a case among different sectors, a legal provision that all parties need to meet in court and take direct part in the trial, or no requirements for professionals to report abuse. Most countries with Barnahus still have some of these challenges yet have found solutions. Denmark has developed a separate law for the Barnahus and the related processes and in the Netherlands they have developed a privacy protocol, which enables professionals to share information in the best interest of the child. There also should be zero tolerance for not conducting investigations in a short time.

Lastly, the Barnahus services started with special attention to children who have been sexually abused and exploited. However, several Barnahus have extended their target group to include child victim of physical abuse and in Sweden all children victims of violent crimes, including female genital mutilation and honour crimes, are included. Refugee and migrant children are among those who have been exploited and even trafficked on their way to their destination country – but also in the destination country itself. Barnahus should be a service for all children who have been victims of such criminal offences.

Barnahus is increasingly promoted as a good practice and must be part of the national system in order to be sustainable long-term. However, contributions from independent donors may play an important role in supporting the Barnahus in achieving the highest standard. Children deserve nothing less than getting a fair chance to tell their story and have a fair trial without suffering from re-traumatization.



Cover of "Adieu Violence", publication of the Ombudsperson for Children's Office, Mauritius

Taking action to protect children from violence



First Ombudsperson for Children in Mauritius

Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra

Violence against children is unacceptable in this century. Children need to be loved, to be supported and to grow up in a violence-free environment. Their harmonious development is important for them now, but is also a must for the future of our society when today's children have to nurture the world.

On the 10th anniversary of the UN Study on Violence against Children, the High Time initiative is an excellent way of mobilising more people around the theme of zero tolerance of violence. I am pleased, as a member of the Editorial Board of the UN Study, to look back on how the Study had a positive impact in a country like Mauritius. The first overarching recommendation was to “strengthen national and local commitment and action” and I will look at how this influenced action in Mauritius. I believe that, even though Mauritius is a small country in size, its example can be followed in many respects, and not least for its action on children's rights. The impact of the Study has been very deep but a renewed commitment could now be beneficial to Mauritius.

The global Peace Index places Mauritius among the 25 countries where there is stability and peace and as the first in Africa. It is also among the first 10 countries where there is no conflict. This index rates the level of safety and security in society but does not rate the level of violence against women and children. Mauritius is unfortunately not free from such violence, which, as with many countries around the world, is often invisible. However there is an environment which favours change in this area. Mauritius is a democratic country that respects the rule of law, has an independent judiciary, has held regular elections since 1976 and has seen different political parties in government. This is an environment that is open to change and the hope of seeing a reduction in the level of interpersonal violence is a reasonable expectation. In 1982, to show its deep commitment towards women and children, the Mauritian Government set up a dedicated Ministry which now has a special unit for the protection of children.

The country has also set up independent institutions such as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to prevent all forms of human rights abuse. Then, on 10 December 2003, on Human Rights Day, after having passed an Ombudsperson for Children's Act, the President of the Republic appointed an Ombudsperson for Children who is not attached to the NHRC. This was a historic decision. It is the first, and up to now the only, independent National Human Rights Institution for Children in Africa.

The Ombudsperson's role is to ensure "that the rights, needs and interests of children are given full consideration by public bodies, private authorities, individuals and association of individuals." It has wide powers and can advise the government on "legislation, policies and practices..." After eight years in the position, I can vouch for its relevance and efficacy in the monitoring of children's rights. While in office, addressing the issue of violence against children was one of my priorities.

While being a voice for developing countries for the UN Study on Violence against Children, I thought that this role provided an exceptional opportunity to advance the rights of children both at home and in the region and to campaign on different aspects of violence against children (VAC).

In Mauritius, I launched a national campaign to keep all those concerned with children's rights informed about the issues being discussed by the Editorial Board of the UN Study and being raised by all contributors on the Board. This campaign targeted all stakeholders including those at the highest political level. The Ministry responsible for child development was constantly informed of various aspects of the UN Study. Many of those who were approached signed a pledge to do their best to prevent violence against children. Some professionals in the child rights field put forward proposals to tackle violence against children and NGOs were invited to prepare a resolution on this issue during a workshop where children participated too.

Training programmes for journalists encouraged the electronic and written media to develop a keen interest in the coverage of issues of violence while also understanding the ethical challenges of such reporting, the need to protect the identities of child victims and to respect all children involved in their news stories. Gradually, sensational and shallow reporting is now giving way to more thoughtfully researched articles which reflect the recommendations of the UN Study.

A network of adolescents called "Budi's friends" was set up during this time to ensure that child participation was at the heart of the ongoing campaign. Budi (Creole for Buddy) was a cartoon character created to speak to children in television spots. These spots had a great impact on parents and children and addressed the "do's" and "don'ts" of physical violence including corporal punishment and sexual violence. The spots also urged children to say "no" and to report cases of violence to the Ombudsperson. Budi was also used in comic strips which were distributed in schools and in children's shelters. Later a film made from the story of the comic strip was also widely distributed along with posters, bookmarks, stickers and other items.

The private sector in Mauritius was very much involved in the campaign and, through its corporate social responsibility, funded all the material for the campaign for several years. The last film made was on positive discipline.

In 2006, when the Report on the Study was presented to the UN General Assembly, our local campaign was at its peak. An educational carnival was organised on the theme after weeks of sensitisation

Children need to be loved, to be supported and to grow up in a violence-free environment. (This is important for them now, but is also a must for the future of our society.)

Shirin
Aumeeruddy-Cziffra

workshops throughout the island with the help of many grassroots NGOs. The preparatory workshops were as important as the carnival itself which was attended by the President of the Republic, the Minister and local government representatives. The media covered the event extensively and for several days, photographs and articles maintained the profile of the event, creating even greater awareness of the issue of violence against children.

The messages were clear: “No violence against children is justifiable”; “All violence against children is preventable”; “Say no to drugs and violence”; “Child prostitution is illegal and must be banned” were on banners, headgear, T-shirts etc. Children, parents, teachers and social workers joined hands to translate the positive messages to the public. But above all the carnival provided an opportunity to point out that violence is often invisible because of fear and of shame. Victims

feel that there is a great deal of stigmatisation around violence against children, especially in a small country like ours. The carnival allowed two thousand children to come out in the open and, using fancy costumes, hats, hand puppets and elaborate banners, to condemn violence and learn through play how to deal with this very sensitive issue.

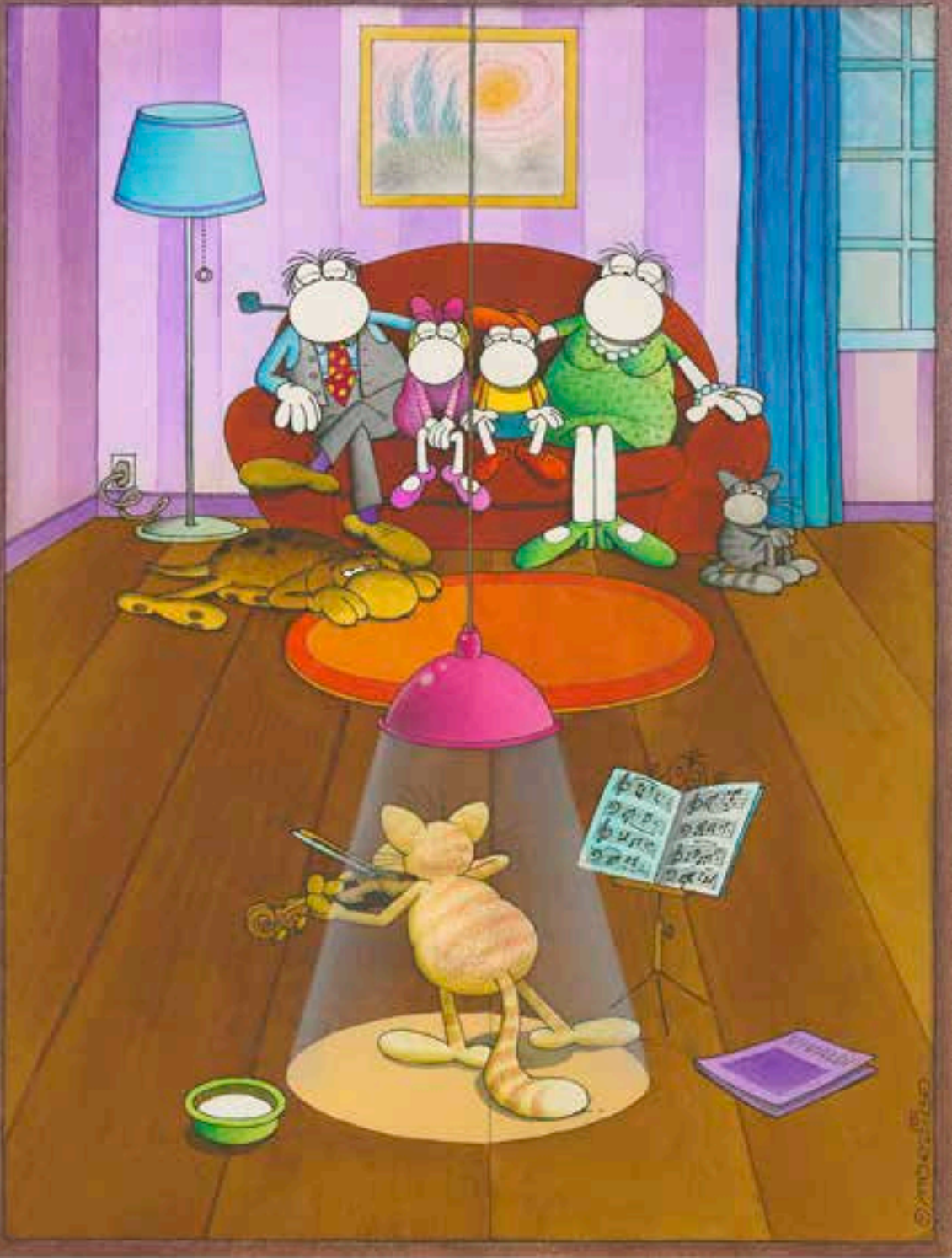
Throughout the campaign, the emphasis was laid on the different settings where violence exists and on the means to prevent such violence. The campaign gave rise to innumerable cases being reported to the Ombudsperson, to the police or to the Child Development Unit (CDU). Sometimes, when parents were at fault, children were removed and placed in shelters or in foster families. Sometimes I was able to start a mediation and ensure that there was a follow-up by the CDU. It was in this context that I proposed the introduction of a Mentoring Scheme for Children who did not deserve to be removed but could be followed by a mentor while staying in their family.

As for violence at school, the Ombudsperson’s office prepared a kit for the training of teachers, head-teachers, school inspectors and other school personnel. This was organised with the help of the Ministry of Education and took place regularly in different regions, including the island of Rodrigues, a dependency of Mauritius. The kit contained documents on “Prevention of violence in educational settings”, “Ending corporal punishment in schools”, “Reporting and identifying child abuse”, “Class management and corporal punishment”, “Understanding the CRC”, “Taking action against bullying” and two posters. The response of school personnel was mostly positive although there is still some resistance on the part of a minority who think that making children aware of their “rights” creates problems with school discipline. Of course it is everyone’s responsibility to educate children about Rights, Respect and Responsibility starting from a very young age. A sticker on these three Rs was then prepared and distributed to remind everyone that each right entails a responsibility but that age and maturity have a lot to do with the degree of responsibility. In workshops with primary school children, it was obvious that those who have grown up in safe environments know exactly what these notions mean. Others have to learn. What was touching was the way some children would teach others.

Last but not least, the Ombudsperson's Office published a book in French entitled "Adieu Violence" which addressed the issue by relating it to the UN Study as well as to the 2004 WHO Report on Health and Violence which had greatly influenced the UN Study. A local study had been undertaken in our country to assess how NGOs were dealing with the different aspects of the issue and these findings also were incorporated in the book, giving recognition to the excellent work of these grassroots NGOs.

The UNICEF office based in Madagascar organised a sub-regional consultation over and above the regional one held in Johannesburg. Our office and government representatives participated fully in the consultations, which had a great impact in the Indian Ocean Region. There was at that time the Observatory of the Rights of Children in the Indian Ocean Region (ODEROI) which was collecting data in the five member countries of the Indian Ocean Commission (Madagascar, Seychelles, Comoros, Réunion Island and Mauritius). ODEROI published its report on violence against children but unfortunately, it has since had to close due to lack of funds and the coordination between the member countries is no longer taking place systematically. However, I have had the opportunity to continue an exchange on the issues with NGOs and the public in Seychelles and also with the French "défenseur des enfants" (Children's Ombudsperson), officials and NGOs in Réunion Island.

There is a lot more that can be done in this part of the world. The new High Time initiative could be an occasion to renew the campaign throughout the islands of the Indian Ocean.



© Mordillo Foundation, 2815-A-E

The next frontier in combating violence against children: the family



Founder and former Executive Director of The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF)

Assefa Bequele

A celebration and call for a correction

By all accounts the ten years since the World Report on Violence against Children by Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro² are a cause for celebration. How many world reports can claim to have had such an impact? Violence against children is now on the world agenda. The report has unleashed an exceptional flow and volume of research, advocacy work and legal and policy reforms around the world. The subsequent appointment of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children has undoubtedly given added visibility and momentum to the problem. In one word: fantastic. But we are far from ending violence. If we are to see the end of violence in the coming two to three decades or in our life time, and an Africa that embraces a culture of peace, human rights and human dignity, we need to tackle the next and one of the last frontiers in child protection and development – the family.

One of the unintended consequences of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the successor international and regional instruments has been, on one hand, the dominance of somewhat purely technical solutions such as child-friendly laws and budgetary policies and, on the other hand, the almost total neglect or absence of the family as a critical tool in the realization of child rights. There are fairly straightforward reasons for this. The first is that the CRC and other related instruments put the primary obligation and responsibility for action on the State, the duty bearer. The second is the obvious appeal of easily observable and measureable technical tools, such as legal and budgetary policies, for effecting change.

On the positive side, there is no doubt that the architects and proponents of the CRC and other related instruments have been successful beyond their wildest dreams. Take Africa alone. The CRC has had enormous impact. One clear piece of evidence is the construction of an African Children's Charter which adopted almost wholesale the templates of the CRC and borrowed quite heavily the language, philosophy and tone of the CRC, of course, with a degree of African adaptations and specificities. At the national level, as ACPF studies have documented, Africa is a more child-friendly continent now than it was say 20 years ago.³ There has been impressive progress in the harmonization of national laws with child-related

² Pinheiro, PS (2006). World Report on Violence against Children. New York, United Nations

³ ACPF (2013). The African Report on Child Wellbeing. Addis Ababa: The African Child Policy Forum.

international conventions. Though gaps remain, there is growing recognition and enhanced effort to narrow the gap between law and practice and growing pressure and effort towards a more child-friendly budgetary policy. All good. The problem is that, but for some perfunctory provisions or allusions, the family is more or less absent not only from the policy matrix but also from the policy discourse and parlance.

Why the Family?

Undoubtedly the family has been and remains the single most important provider of child protection and development especially here in Africa. Regrettably, the African family is often maligned and seldom celebrated. But we should honour our fathers and mothers past, indeed all the millions of African fathers and mothers who brought up their children so well in spite of enormous difficulties and challenges, past and present. And we owe it to them to cherish the good and the positive in African values, for example: respect for parents, elders and the community; respect for nature; and, in a world ridden with moral ambiguity, the legacy of a solid a sense of what is and isn't right.

Even so, we should not glorify the past or our traditional culture. We should acknowledge that there are family values and practices that are harmful and antithetical to the dignity of boys and girls and men and women - values and practices with far-reaching consequences on the healthy growth and development of the individuals concerned, on the behaviour of generations of men and women, and, finally, on the peaceful and sustained development of our continent. If we therefore are to achieve a world fit for children, as is often invoked, and an Africa which embraces and nurtures a culture of non-violence, peace, rights and democratic governance, we should recalibrate our policy optique in favour of the centrality of the family both as a legitimate area of concern and a catalyst for change. Why?

The first and obvious reason is that the family, along with schools, is the single most important locus of violence against children. ACPF studies indicate that some 60% of children in Zambia, Morocco and Uganda and around half in Mali and Ethiopia experienced physical punishment from family members.⁴ Although the principal motive was to discipline the child, it did sometimes take severe forms: some 16% reported scars on their body, and 25% said that the pain inflicted on them had stopped them from going to school or playing outside the house.

It is well documented that childhood experiences, specifically physical, emotional and sexual violence, more broadly the quality of the relationship with parents and family members, have immediate and long-terms consequences on the child. According to ACPF children's and youth polls, one of the two most important factors determining happiness or sadness for most children is their relationship with family members, the other being the circumstances of their family lives.⁵ Perhaps more importantly, violence at home affects the development and architecture of the brain and can have adverse impact on the

⁴ ACPF (2014). The African Report on Violence against Children. Addis Ababa: The African Child Policy Forum.

⁵ Ibid.

neurological development of the child thus resulting in physical and mental illness and various kinds of illnesses.⁶

Equally important, children who are victims of or have witnessed family violence including inter-partner violence are likely to commit and perpetrate violence against their own or other children. Says a UN report, “Children experiencing family violence also tend to replicate these patterns with their partners and/or their children and there appears to be intergenerational transmission of family violence. Boys exposed to violence are at a high risk of perpetrating violence themselves”.⁷

We therefore need to recognize the important role of the family as a central place in the provision of protection, the socialization of the child and as an agent of change. It is within the family that the child receives sustenance, observes and internalises gender roles and, learns notions of what is right and wrong, what is and isn’t acceptable, and whether beating another person is or isn’t OK. Moreover, a child’s vision of the world is influenced by early childhood experiences. A child that has experienced or witnessed violence as a ritualistic way of treating children and women will often grow into the adult that beats another child or another adult, the policeman mercilessly beating an unarmed citizen, or, the thug we see in community neighbourhoods or the political arena. Sadly, though with the best of intentions, there are many traditional child-rearing practices that tend to be antithetical to the dignity of the child, that stress subordination (especially of women and girls) and that rationalize corporal punishment (especially of boys) rather than communication, dialogue and participation.

The wider picture: Family, Politics and Economics

There is a corollary to the above. The political landscape in much of Africa is vitiated by a coarse political discourse and violent actions both by state and non-state actors. One wonders if the root cause of our political problems may not be found in the culture, traditions and values that spawn family life and dynamics. Children are to be seen and not to be heard is a common refrain in Africa as it is in many parts of the developing world. This attitude “makes for a profoundly uncivil and unhealthy norm. It not only requires unquestioning obedience, but suggests that children are inferior beings in relation to adults ... It is the converse of an empowering motto”.⁸ Growing up in such a milieu cannot be helpful to the growth of a culture of rights and dignity for all boys and girls, of women and men, and persons with a disability. Nor is it conducive to the emergence of a culture of addressing one’s differences through dialogue and negotiation. So it may well be that if we are to get out of this vicious circle of endless political violence and the ever present danger of failing statehood that bedevils or threatens much of Africa we may have to begin where it all begins, where values are learnt and transmitted – the education of the family.

Violence against children is now on the world agenda. The report has unleashed an exceptional flow and volume of research, advocacy work and legal and policy reforms around the world.

Assefa Bequele

⁶ WHO (2002). World Report on Violence and Health. Geneva. World Health Organisation.

⁷ UNDESA (2015). Report of the Expert Group Meeting, Family policy development: achievements and challenges. New York. United Nations.

⁸ Peck, M. Scott (1994). A world waiting to be born. London. Arrow.

Furthermore, what is happening within and at the level of the family is also critical for promoting and sustaining development. Violence has huge social and economic cost. But beyond that, a modern economy requires a particular type of work ethic and behaviour, for example, respect for time; punctuality; respect for commitments to deliver in good time and good quality, etc. These qualities have taken centuries to take root in industrialized countries. But we cannot wait for centuries if we want to catch up with the rest of the world or generate the growth needed to meet the expectations of an increasingly demanding citizenry. There again the family is where we should begin for it is here that these values are imbibed.

Conclusion

Putting the family at the heart of public policy has many inter-related benefits. It contributes to greater health and wellbeing and correspondingly to reduced economic and social costs; it enhances human dignity; it promotes a culture of peace, rights and democracy; it helps establish a conducive environment for sustained development; and it could ultimately give birth to a world free of violence.

The question then is: What is to be done and how? Given the many different social, cultural and economic factors impacting on family wellbeing and behaviour, getting the family to be an effective agent of change would require a multifaceted approach that combines multiple interventions, for example, social and economic policies that support and enable the family to provide for the physical development of children; school feeding programmes; child- and family-sensitive social protection programmes; and access to health and educational services. This much is well-known and almost universally accepted. But what we wish to stress here is the need to consider actions that are directed at changing the mind set of families, their ethos and values. These are unlikely to be expensive and almost certainly cheaper than other forms of investment including those in the child development area. What is required is a two-fold approach: First, we need a genuine commitment by political leaders and policy activists to explicitly and clearly designate the family as a direct object and target of public policy. This must be backed by an improved understanding of the relationship between family, family structures and socio-economic contexts on one hand and violence against children on the other. For example, violence among urban- based and single-parent families is likely to be different from that in rural or two-parent families. There are other examples of differences in the incidence and nature of violence because of differences in contexts as well. The point is that political and policy commitment must be accompanied by a robust programme of research on the family. Secondly, we need to experiment with the skilful and imaginative application of evidence-based public education and information campaigns to engage and change the mind sets, the ethos and values of mothers, fathers and the general citizenry. Only in so doing would we be able to develop and sustain a culture of zero tolerance for violence and a world free from violence.



Migrant and refugee children in Europe: violence and detention must stop



Commissioner for Human Rights Council of Europe

Nils Muižnieks

Conflict, violence and other human rights violations are among the root causes that push migrant and refugee children to leave their countries of origin. Unfortunately, violence does not stop on leaving these countries. Many children continue to experience violence at different stages of their trip to a safe destination. It occurs at the hands of smugglers, in transit countries, during sea crossings and at land borders. In 2015 alone, roughly one third of those who crossed the Mediterranean were children and many of them lost their lives at sea.

Migrant and refugee children and their families are confronted with violence and abuse by law enforcement and border guard officials when attempting to cross borders of European countries: violent push-backs and the use of anti-riot weapons against them have increasingly been reported. Children are also often left completely unprotected in the informal settlements that have mushroomed near borders. There, they experience difficult living conditions and are mostly deprived of access to basic care and support, apart from the help provided by volunteers, NGOs and international organisations. These children, especially girls and those who are unaccompanied or separated from their families, are at very high risk of abuse, sexual violence, labour exploitation and trafficking.

The detention of children on the move generates yet other risks of ill-treatment. Many of them are detained in transit countries or in the countries of asylum, sometimes for prolonged periods of time. The frequently declared rationale for imposing detention on children travelling with their family is that family unity must be preserved. The detention of unaccompanied children is presented as a means of providing protection to them. Emergency or “crisis situations” are also arguments that are used to justify detention which appears, unfortunately, to be on the rise almost everywhere in Europe. Detention is not used as a last resort but as a starting point for identification or asylum proceedings, a practice which is not compatible with international human rights standards.

In 2015, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan E. Méndez, highlighted that conditions in which children were detained on grounds of their immigration status included “overcrowding, inappropriate food, insufficient access to drinking water, unsanitary conditions, lack of adequate medical attention, irregular access to washing and sanitary facilities and to hygiene products, lack of appropriate accommodation and other basic necessities”. It has also been documented that unaccompanied children are sometimes detained together with adults and, therefore, are at high risk of violence and abuse,

including sexual abuse. They can also be seriously mistreated by the staff of detention facilities. Many of them are left unprotected and without remedies as they do not have access to a guardian or a lawyer. Immigration laws and practices often fail to consider these children as full subjects of rights and to protect them accordingly.

Various studies have demonstrated that immigration detention often results in post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety, undermines the physical and psychological well-being of children and has a long-term impact on their development. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) stressed in 2016, in a series of five cases against France on the administrative detention of migrant children, that the accumulation of psychological and emotional aggression to which children in administrative detention were subjected necessarily had negative consequences on young children that could amount to inhuman and degrading treatment.

As stressed by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, immigration detention is never in the child's best interest. I believe that it is unfair as it is only justified with reference to the immigration status of the child or his parents. And it is a disproportionate measure, as the harm inflicted on children in the context of detention cannot be justified by immigration control requirements. It should completely cease.

Fortunately, immigration detention of children is avoidable. Non-custodial alternatives to detention are in place in a number of countries, both for unaccompanied minors and for families with children. During my visit to Belgium in 2015, I had the opportunity to visit housing units in which families with children were accommodated, instead of being detained. Family units provide an environment where the rights of children can be better protected and where family life is preserved. Children have access to social support and in most cases, to education. Moreover, I learnt that alternatives are usually less costly than detention. More information on existing positive practices can be found in "There are Alternatives", a handbook on alternatives to detention produced by the International Detention Coalition.

Furthermore, it is heartening to see that international bodies and NGOs are increasingly joining forces to raise awareness about the disastrous impact of immigration detention on children and to advocate for ending this practice. Examples of cooperation include the Global Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children and the Inter-Agency Working on Ending Child Immigration Detention, a consultative process seeking to build consensus among States on the need to end the practice of child immigration detention. In 2014, UNHCR also launched a global strategy to end immigration detention, with a specific focus on the detention of children. The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Marta Santos Pais, calls for prevention of and adequate responses to violence against migrant and refugee children and an end to their deprivation of liberty on the basis of their status.

Children on the move generate yet other risks of ill-treatment... many children continue to experience violence at different stages of their trip.

Nils Muiznieks

Achieving the prohibition of the immigration detention of children and providing safer alternatives would substantially contribute to reducing the level of violence experienced by children on the move.

I will continue to urge member states of the Council of Europe to end child immigration detention, irrespective of the circumstances, as it is a serious violation of children's rights. I am also convinced that it does not improve the effectiveness of national immigration policies: it just makes them less human rights compliant.



"Fly". Constantina Constantinou and Charoula Ellina, 10 years old, Cyprus. (BK46791). The International Museum of Children's Art, Oslo

At The International Museum of Children's Art in Oslo, Norway, you can see the world through children's eyes. The Museum, established in 1986, regards children's art as a living part of folk art. Children's own opinion and concerns are presented through changing thematic exhibitions. The three basic functions of the Museum are to collect, promote and preserve children's art worldwide. Read more at www.childrensart.com

My experience and personal transformation in relation to violence



Senator and President of the Parliamentary Network for Children and Adolescents in Bolivia

Maxima Apaza Millares

My experience regarding violence against children goes back to my own childhood, when my parents used violent punishments such as forced fasting and confinement after beating me with an iron cord, which left me with marks and bruises.

These forms of punishment in our culture, using any instrument that is at hand, regardless of how dangerous they are, are the vestiges of the violent punishment that the Spanish conquistadors inflicted on people working in mines in our country, and then was reflected in the forms of labour and family relationships, where to this day the treatment and punishments are violent.

Once I became a mother, I would use the same type of punishment I received on my children, until one day I stopped when my son literally told me to examine how big the hand I used to punish him was. This made me see how strong I was in front of them and how my punishment and clumsiness frightened them, which made a strong impression on me and made me start to analyse my own attitudes and behaviour.

Then came the last of my daughters and all my actions towards her education began to change, with dialogue and plenty of communication. Today she is 16 years old, our mother - daughter relationship is based on mutual respect, with my strong stand towards her education and the right response from her side. Also, I am now a grandmother and I feel the support and trust that I have instilled in my two older children have had a significant effect on their lives in relation to their partners and my grandchildren.

Now that I'm a Senator and President of the Parliamentary Network for Children and Adolescents and can influence and provide leadership, it is important for me to work on the protection of children, and thus on the elimination of all forms of violence, which I think can be achieved not only with an appropriate legal framework and strengthened services and institutions, but most importantly by transforming attitudes and creating a culture of respect.

I am also part of the group of women who work for a "Living Well" Bolivia, which promotes the participation of women in 50% (Chikatchikat, Kjusankjuskan) of each area of social activity and proposes more comprehensive action on issues pertaining women.

Moreover, as I have been President of the Parliamentary Network of Children and Adolescents since 2015, I have been able to closely witness the breaches in the rights of children and adolescents in my country and how violence is used against them in all fields, including social and family contexts, as well as in state institutions charged with their care and the safeguard of their human rights.

My work in the Network has prioritized the strengthening and coordination at all levels and areas of the state, through the Network assembly members, so that in the framework of their legislative, oversight and budget approval powers, the current legal structure is implemented in a coordinated manner and with the existing rights-based, comprehensive and systemic angle that already is in place in the country, which is consistent mainly with the international conventions on the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities. This is key to transform the family, the state and society in their role to ensure compliance with the human rights obligations regarding this population, especially in the fight to prevent and eliminate violence.

It is important for me to work on the protection of children, and thus on the elimination of all forms of violence, which I think can be achieved not only with an appropriate legal framework and strengthened services and institutions, but most importantly by transforming attitudes and creating a culture of respect.

Maxima Apaza



Photo © Thomas Louapre,
Mots d'Enfants, Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE)

Part 2

**Building a world as big as
children's dreams, free from
fear and violence**



Mr. Gastón Acurio with potato producers in Peru

Recipe for children's protection from violence



Chef and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador

Gastón Acurio

The best meal is not the one made with the most expensive ingredients, but the one that is prepared with love, patience and dedication. Get started

Ingredients

Respect	Opportunities to thrive in life
Tolerance	Good examples
Tenderness	Myth busting

Introduction

Growing up free from violence is a child's right. It is also essential to their full physical, emotional and mental development. Achieving this requires mixing the right amounts of several ingredients. Some of them can be found at home or in the family environment, for example love, respect, and good examples. Some others, such as opportunities for development, also depend on external factors. Based on my experience as a son and as a father, I share with you my recipe for a violence-free childhood.

Instructions

Step 1: Choose the ingredients

Remove everything that could damage the self-esteem of your daughters and sons: shouting, hurtful phrases, physical punishment, lack of attention and neglect.

Step 2: Add love to all your daily actions

No matter the age your children, if they behave well or not, if they have good grades or not at school – show them that you love them, that your affection for them is unconditional and forever. Spend time with them. Play, talk and cook together.

Step 3: Season with respect and tolerance

Remember that your daughters or sons do not need to have the same opinion as you: respect their views, likes and preferences. Encourage the discovery and development of their talents. Teach them to treat everyone with respect. Talk to them about topics such as the different forms of violence, bullying, discrimination and diversity. Share with them the stories and traditions of your people.

Ensure that they actively participate in those large family meals that we should never miss. From my experience, I can tell you that the family table, where we mingle with uncles and aunts, cousins and grandparents; where relatives from the city and from the countryside come together, is the best classroom to learn about healthy coexistence, tolerance and respect for diversity, and cultural and intergenerational exchange. Believe me, there is no tastier or more enriching experience than that table.

Step 4: Add opportunities

Children and adolescents need equal opportunities to achieve their full development. Provide equal opportunities to your daughters and sons.

Remember that States have the obligation to support all families in this task. When you elect a mayor, a member of parliament or a President, choose the one who has a plan for the comprehensive development of all children and adolescents.

Step 5: Garnish with examples

Be the example. Protect your daughters and sons, treat them with love. But also show that you care about all the other children and young people in your community and your country.

Stand up against exploitative practices – like the so called “godparents”, who take advantage of the poverty and exclusion that affect so many children, by forcing them into domestic labour in exchange for food and a roof over their heads.

Teach your children to fight against the sex trade which is rooted in male chauvinism and linked to crimes such as human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. Remember: If there were no demand, there would be no child trafficking.

Act against violence. Do not keep silent. Report it. Speaking up can save lives.

Step 6: Serve without myths

Reflect with your family about violence against children and work together to end these three common myths:

- Violence is cultural. Not true: violence is present in all cultures; it is about attitudes and behaviour, but it can change.
- A child of violent parents will be violent with his or her own children. Not true: someone who is conscious of the damage caused by violence, can raise their children with love and respect.
- The family home is always the safest place. Not true: for the great majority of children and adolescents who suffer physical, emotional and sexual violence, it occurs in their own homes. Fathers and mothers have the responsibility to ensure their home is the safest place for their daughters and sons. Treat your children with love and respect and be very careful about who you entrust with their care and protection.

Step 7: Always search for improvement

Finally, remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that all the world's cuisines become spaces that support children growing up free from violence.



"The pianist with no arms". I drew a pianist wit no arms playing the piano with his feet.

Artist: Dalin Brezeanu, 8-year-old girl, Italy

"Courtesy of Children With Disabilities, Programme Division, UNICEF"

Building bridges through music to end violence against children



Concert pianist, United Nations Messenger for Peace

Lang Lang

When I think of my childhood, there is one particular moment that I frequently revisit – the two-and-a-half-year-old me in front of the TV, watching the episode “Cat Concerto” from the cartoon series “Tom and Jerry”. In the cartoon, Tom plays Franz Liszt’s masterpiece Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, while Jerry attempts a number of different ways to disrupt his performance. It was incredibly fun and the music really got me hooked! After seeing Tom play, I felt so “inspired” and started to imitate him on my little piano, a present that I had just received from my parents. This was the day when my music talent was first discovered, and so began my life-long journey as a pianist.

That particular moment of happiness and joy was the catalyst that triggered the “explosion” of the talent inside the two-and-a-half-year-old Lang Lang. But my story should not be an exception. I believe that every single child in this world can experience such a moment at some point in his or her life. All girls and boys have hidden talents to be explored and all children should be given the opportunity to realize their full potential. And happiness is the key!

Violence, on the other hand, robs children of their happiness and the opportunities to explore and nurture their talents. As a human being, I cannot tolerate any forms of violence against children and I urge everybody to join me in the global effort to end violence against children, once and for all.

As a United Nations Messenger of Peace and a former Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF, I have striven to mobilize support for improving the lives of children around the world, in particular through education. The Lang Lang International Music Foundation was established in 2008, with the mission of encouraging music education as a means of social development for youth. The Foundation operates with the conviction that music, as a universal language, can help bridge cultural gaps and unite communities, thereby bringing happiness to all.

Despite all existing efforts to improve children’s lives, we have not succeeded in making the world a safer place for them. Violence against children persists. Millions of children have been deliberately killed, injured, raped, and abducted due to armed conflict, while tens of thousands have been forced to join armed groups and become perpetrators of extreme violence themselves. This is simply tragic and unacceptable. When I read in the news, again and again, about the children dying on the battle fields of

■ ■ All girls and boys have hidden talents to be explored and all children should be given the opportunity to realize their full potential. And happiness is the key! ■ ■

Lang Lang

the prolonged Syrian crisis, or drowning while trying desperately to flee the war zones with their families, I feel so powerless. The reality that these children face is light years away from the kind of happy childhood that they all deserve. We must take action so that they do not grow up without hope.

Together with Chief Conductor Sir Simon Rattle, the Berliner Philharmoniker and First Lady Daniela Schadt, I participated in a fundraiser concert at the Waldbühne in Berlin in June 2015, to make a public appeal for more support for Syrian children. The funds collected were used to support UNICEF's work to create a violence-free environment for the internally displaced and refugee children, where they can go to school and have access to psychological support and healthcare. These are essential conditions for them to regain hope.

Back in 2009, I brought 100 young pianists to my stage for a unique joint performance that produced something far greater than any single performer could ever have created alone. That was the origin of the 101 Pianists, now a flagship programme of the Lang Lang International Music Foundation aimed at inspiring the next generation of music lovers and performers. I hope that, one day, I can invite 100 young pianists from conflict and post-conflict countries around the world to play with me. It would be a concert for the celebration of childhood, happiness, and hope. It would also be a concert where once again, we say no to all forms of violence against children.



Fuji Kindergarten by Tezuka Architects, 2007 (Photo: Katsuhisa Kida)



Children playing on the oval rooftop of Fuji Kindergarten (Photo: Katsuhisa Kida)

Nostalgic future



Architect, Association for Children's Environment Design Award

Tezuka Takaharu

Nostalgia is the word to describe a desire for a world that has existed in the past. I do not think the past is better or more ideal than the present because we are still experiencing a world with violence, poverty and war. Yet we humans continue to dream about nostalgia. I think this is because there are important things we are losing as time passes. I use the words "Nostalgic Future" to describe a world where we can access this ideal form of nostalgia in the future.

In the 20th century, the future was represented by images of computers and machines. These idealistic visions are featured in science-fiction movies such as Metropolis, Modern Times and Tron. The Matrix film shows a world where images and feelings in the computer are more real than real world. There is a programme to control everything, yet the technology is invisible like air. The world is getting closer and closer to the world portrayed in this movie. Technology is capable of improving our lives and freeing us from fear and disease. We can travel the world, or easily access the jungle because we have transport, technology and emergency backup. Technology has made these things possible. Now it is up to us whether we make use of the technology for an idealistic future, or for disaster. What is the ideal environment for humans in the future, and especially for children?

When I go to international conferences about pedagogy, I find that speakers often talk about the future of education being an integration of computer-aided technology and clean, safe environments for classrooms. Presenters often show projections onto walls displaying classrooms with computer screens and playgrounds with soft, colourful antibacterial plastic. If you look at many of the latest school designs, the modern school building is getting bigger and bigger and looking more like an IT company's headquarters. Sometimes I find there are very small playgrounds, while the structure itself is taking up most of the land. In these buildings, children don't walk outside all day so they don't get wet or feel cold. Many people believe that this is the future but I am always against these choices for children.

I think it is time for us to understand that we are a part of a bigger existence. These controlled environments are not the vision of the future anymore; they are slowly weakening the creativity of children. Just as a fish cannot live in purified water, children cannot live in a clean, quiet and controlled environment. Our life is a part of the surrounding environment and that cannot be disconnected.

Background Noise for All

A few years ago, while in Bali, my wife and I were invited by Dr Tsutomu Ohashi to see a Kecak, an Indonesian music drama and dance. Dr Ohashi is a molecular biologist, composer and neuroscientist, renowned for his outstanding research on the effects of hypersonic sounds on humans. I had the privilege to be with him only a short moment and I learned a lot from him during that time. I recorded the Kecak with my mobile phone but when I replayed it back in Japan I found the music was masked by background noise. I first thought there was a glitch with my mobile phone. I soon realized that the background noise was from the jungle. In the jungle, I did not pay attention to the noise. In fact, I did not feel the noise was distracting at all. Simply I ignored the noise and enjoyed the Kecak ritual. Humans have a natural noise cancelling system to selectively listen to what we want. We cancel the noise not by frequency, but by information. Of course, this effect did not work when I was back in Japan because I was not amid the same background noise.

Actually our body is full of noise too. When we dive underwater, it is possible to start hearing noises from our own bodies. The noise from our cardiovascular system is louder than that of a construction site, yet we are capable of only hearing the sounds of a Mozart performance. We have naturally learned to ignore the noise from inside of our body. In complete silence, we can be extremely sensitive. It is very natural to be exposed to high frequency background noise. It is not natural to be in complete silence. I think this is the reason why we hear about children having difficulties staying quiet in the classroom. I consider it only natural that they feel nervous in an enclosed environment without any background noise. I suspect that the design of modern, quiet school buildings could be the cause of many autistic symptoms in children.

In 2007, we designed Fuji Kindergarten and have received numerous awards in fields from architecture to education, including The Japan Institute of Architects Award in 2008 and Best of All in the OECD/CELE 4th Compendium of Exemplary Educational Facilities. Fuji Kindergarten is a large oval shape, well known to allow 600 children to run freely around the oval roof. The kindergarten's sliding doors are completely open between April and November. When these doors are open, the building functions as a roof. There are no clear boundaries between each classroom. There are only boxes, and 1.8-meter tall panels to indicate areas. Fuji Kindergarten accepts more than 30 autistic children among many other children. The principal has told me that these 30 children do not show obvious signs of autism when they are in the building. When some children have had a difficult time in other kindergartens, they transferred to Fuji Kindergarten and behaved no different to other children without mental disorders.

The key to Fuji Kindergarten was to design spaces as very open environments, filled with background noise. Not only is noise coming from other classrooms, but also from outside too. There are classes teaching basic mathematics while another class is playing piano nearby. The children are obviously selecting information from the background noise. Some visitors often worry if the children are able to maintain concentration. One time the kindergarten was featured on a television programme. The film crew told me that they were very surprised to find that the children were capable of ignoring the television camera and continued listening to the teacher. A visitor from Germany once questioned Mr Kato, the

principal of Fuji Kindergarten, “How do you make the children go quiet?” Mr Kato said it is quite easy. He whispered and they quieted down. The children always know he has something interesting to say, so they listen.

Children have different levels of personal space in order to feel comfortable. In nature, space is limitless and we are allowed to choose any distance we want. In the classroom, if a child must stay in a set area, they cannot define their space. It is expected that some students do not stay within certain boundaries. The classroom space only exists because the boundary exists. When the boundary disappears, the constraints disappear.

There is always a question made by visitors to Fuji Kindergarten on a rainy day, what happens if these children get wet. The answer of Mr Kato is very simple: “In Japan, children change their clothes if they get wet, they are waterproof. Unlike a mobile phone, children do not break when wet in a bathtub. They can be washed clean. Sometimes, I take my own children to the sea to chase turtles. When my son was 7 years old he was capable of swimming more than 1000 meters. Now he is 11 years old. He dives in the river and catches fishes. Children should be treated as a part of the natural environment.”

▲▲ School building is getting bigger and bigger... these controlled environments... are slowly weakening the creativity of children. ▲▲

Tezuka Takaharu

Natural Environment

Children are strong and capable enough to stay outdoors. Of course they need protection in extreme weather, though not all the time. When we think of old settlements, these buildings are comfortable enough for most of the seasons. Comfort cannot be measured simply by temperature or humidity. In 2001, we designed a house called Roof House, where the family enjoys living and inhabiting the space on top of the inclined roof. When we published the project we were criticized that the roof is too hot in summer and too cold in winter. The critics were saying that the roof cannot be used and the design is based on fiction that I had imagined. The owner responded saying that they use the rooftop every day. The answer was very simple. The roof is hot in summer: therefore the roof should be used before sunrise or after dark while the roof is still cool. The roof is cold in winter: therefore the roof should be used after noon when the roof gets warm enough.

In the past, humans found comfort through timing and location instead of controlling our living environment with technology. This is just like a cat finding its favourite place to laze. Human behaviour is full of contradictions. We go to the beach in summer. The sand is 50 Celsius (122 Fahrenheit). We go to ski in winter. The ski slope is -20 Celsius (-4 Fahrenheit). This is telling us that the comfort is about the level of pleasure, not temperature. It is possible a fisherman’s hut on the water could be much more comfortable than an expensive, air-conditioned, modern concrete structure. We can say the same thing about schools. A traditionally designed school hut in Bali could be much more comfortable than the latest, modern, air-conditioned school.

There are kindergartens and childcare facilities around the world with playgrounds covered with antibacterial plastic. This kind of technology is spreading. Of course such a technology is much needed in this world, for example, it can be very useful in a refugee camp where sanitation is poor. Yet we can easily go wrong. It is often said that the dangers of excessive use of antibiotics may create antibiotic-resistant bacteria. For children, a sterilized environment can be just as dangerous as a polluted one.

Children also need to be treated as a part of the natural environment. Dr Tsutomu Ohashi said we are a kind that has grown up in the jungle; we cannot deny what we are. When we overprotect children with artificially created environments, they cannot grow up properly. In Fuji Kindergarten, Mr Kato leaves the children on top of the roof. Some spontaneously run more than six kilometres in the morning. These children do not require any special training in order to get faster and stronger. They may get wet and sometimes fall down from a tree branch. They may tumble and get slight injuries. That is how they learn the way of life.

Whenever I see the smiles of children who were raised at Fuji Kindergarten, I get lumps in my throat at the thought of this joy being packed into a suitcase and sent to children all around the world. It is quite possible that the children who have access to the latest technology are not receiving a better education than the children with little access to the technology but learn in a natural environment.

Acknowledgments

This text could not be completed without the advice from Mr Sekiichi Kato, principal of Fuji Kindergarten and Dr Tsutomu Ohashi. I want to show a special thanks to these two people, and to those who have helped me see the facts in this text.



"My". Panmpa Ngern Gorn, 9 , Thailand. (BK12138). The International Museum of Children's Art, Oslo, Norway

At The International Museum of Children's Art in Oslo, Norway, you can see the world through children's eyes. The Museum, established in 1986, regards children's art as a living part of folk art. Children's own opinion and concerns are presented through changing thematic exhibitions. The three basic functions of the Museum are to collect, promote and preserve children's art worldwide. Read more at www.childrensart.com

City of Children - taking the voice of children seriously



Mayor of Miraflores, Lima – Peru

Jorge Muñoz

A “safe, inclusive and accessible place, tailored to the needs of all people and in which the voice of children is taken seriously,” is the city that is being forged in Miraflores, in Lima, Peru, a municipality that aims to become an ideal space for the development of children and adolescents. The idea is inspired by Francesco Tonucci’s “City of Children”: Tonucci is a renowned pedagogue, Italian thinker, and promoter of public spaces for the recreation of children and adolescents.

This commitment to transformation starts with the political will of the authorities, and with respect and sensitivity for identifying and addressing the needs of different groups of people, starting with those that require particular attention: girls, boys and adolescents.

Our experience in seeking to make Miraflores a space for everyone has led us to conclude that the task must start by taking children seriously. This means recognizing them as full citizens under the law, providing them with the opportunity to be active players in building their city and creating participatory spaces where their voice is taken into account. In addition to the actions that can be taken by the Municipal Ombudsman, it is necessary to empower children themselves, providing them with opportunities to live as autonomous and participating citizens.

With this aim, Miraflores is seeking to transform the district into a place suitable for children, from the perspective of the child and with the participation of children across two areas: developing public spaces for all, which are inclusive and safe, and enabling the political participation of children in the city.

Firstly, it is often thought that children are safer if they don’t leave the house, or go out only occasionally; but we start from the premise that public spaces are safer if used frequently by children and adolescents. As Tonucci says: “The streets are unsafe because there are no children” (Miraflores, 2013).

To that end, the Municipality of Miraflores has designed a number of programmes and policies that allow for the restoration of confidence and encourage the use of public spaces on an equal footing for all citizens.

The work has been hard and began by fighting one of the biggest social problems affecting the whole country: common crime. Since 2011, we have been implementing 53 prevention and crime reduction strategies, and as a result criminal incidents have been reduced by 61% in the district. However, children and adolescents are still exposed to other risks such as violence.

How to empower children to prevent them from being victims of violence? This is our task and our second key area of concern. Since 2011, Miraflores has adopted the Municipal Ordinance No. 346 which has resulted in the formation of the Children Advisory Council and the Adolescents Advisory Council; both of these play the role of advisors to the Mayor, not only on decisions that may affect the child, but on improving the city overall.

The Children Advisory Council convenes district citizens between 7 and 11 years of age, who are chosen by lottery to ensure that all children can participate, regardless of their condition, character or gender. Since 2011, experience has matured and it continues to grow; so far the Councils have had 177 meetings or activities, of which 22 included the Mayor. The current Children Advisory Council is the third one to be convened and it has 56 elected children for the current five year period.

During these five years, many diverse and valuable proposals and projects have been submitted by the child councillors. The first Council of Children (2011 - 2013) strongly addressed the issue of security. After learning about the work of the Municipal Public Safety Team, they asked to be part of this effort through the "Alert Bracelets" project. The project provided children with silicone bracelets which had the phone numbers for Alerta Miraflores (Miraflores Alert) and the National Police engraved on them, and in this way the children were able to report immediately various situations that they considered dangerous. Children presented this project to the Mayor and Citizen Security Council who approved the proposal unanimously.

Among situations they considered particularly dangerous were the exposure to any situation of violence including when adults argued in their presence. The bracelets were distributed to 10,000 children from the district's educational institutions and the impact was positive, not only because of the number of bracelets or complaints, but because adults included children in the task of promoting security in the district and opened a valuable reporting channel.

The second Council of Children (2014 - 2015) implemented a project which had high visual impact on society - "The Wall of my Rights". This project demonstrated the concern of the child councillors to capture children's rights in a mural on a public wall with the intention of showing children and young people's value to the community, and to ensure that they are respected.

With the support of the artist Sonia Storino and her team, the child councillors, with their parents and friends, painted the mural which measures 80 metres long and is located in one of the major thoroughfares of the city. From the distance you can see a board with the phrase that says: "With the eyes of a child" - a tribute to Francesco Tonucci. From a short distance we can also appreciate the phrases displayed on the

wall by the councillors, seeing that they have particular characteristics: the words they use do not represent the exact text of the articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, but rather reflect their own interpretations of their rights, as seen through their own experiences:

“We have the right to have rights”, “Children have the right to be treated right,” “We have the right to be respected”, “I have a right to be taken for a walk”, “We have the right to be loved” ... and a beautiful rendition of their right to participation: “We have the right to help our district.”

Taking children seriously provides them with the opportunity to be active players in building their city and creating participatory spaces where their voice is taken into account.

Jorge Muñoz

Children change our world, transform it in ways that we adults are often not open to accept, and we also use violence or punishment to impose our point of view. The municipal authorities set an example by listening to children, providing them with a place in the community and as a result the children have shown adults the importance of opening communication channels based on respect and affection. Children, for their part, have learnt not to remain silent, to value their own thought processes and to be tolerant of others.

In a joint effort with the Municipal Ombudsman and the Miraflores Adolescents Council, the councillors proposed the “Defenders Teachers” project for educational institutions in the district. In this project trusted teachers are elected and it is to these teachers that children who become victims of, or are exposed to, violence can go for support. These teachers are advised by the child councillors who guide their work.

Children proposed the qualities that this defender teacher must have: defender teachers “are reliable, patient and friendly, resolves conflict and seek practical solutions with authority, are fair, show genuine interest in helping children, express their ideas clearly so that we understand, resolve conflicts with discretion and help students to reflect without confronting them “. This important proposal will be implemented in five educational institutions in the district starting in November 2016.

The current councillors are meeting a team of municipal officials and workers much more open to listening to children. The councillors propose structural changes to their city, make proposals regarding public spaces, urban mobility and accessibility, which are part of the 2016-2026 Plan of Urban Development, and will be submitted to the participatory budget this year.

Another experience of great impact was the campaign “Listen, Understand, Trust” by the Young Leaders Municipal Programme, which built in 12 public spaces, a small house decorated with recycled material, in which adults were invited to talk with their children. A total of 553 adults participated and the results were very positive: 83% considered it was very important to listen to children, 80% said that talking with their children helped prevent risk behaviours, 68% indicated that the module improved family relationships and 63% stated that the campaign helped prevent mistreatment of children. Thus, public spaces, besides being recreational, can serve as spaces for dialogue and family listening.

Miraflores also conducts public hearings called “Miraflores Listens”, where children and adolescents participate, and “The City with Children” attended only by persons under 18. In these hearings, the Mayor talks about issues that affect security, public spaces, play and leisure, the right to participation and environmental development. Participants get prepared in advance to learn in depth about the topics and collect the views of their colleagues and friends. There have been three public hearings involving 320 children and adolescents living in or studying in the district.

Among the initiatives put forward to restore confidence in the public space are the programme “Juegathon” which promoted playing in parks, so that children and their parents can enjoy the so-called traditional games that stimulate integration and interaction with other children from the same neighbourhood. As a result, gone are the times when the parks were solely ornamental spaces, designed from the perspective of adults, where “it was forbidden to play ball” and signs instructed children “to keep off the grass”. These have been replaced by democratic, open spaces, which invite children and adults to play and to engage with both nature and culture.

Since 2011, 874 Juegathons have taken place with the participation of more than 50,000 children. In these games adults find new ways of communicating with children and thereby learn to rule out violence from their daily interactions. Children become strong as members of a group and parents learn from each other in a healthy and constructive atmosphere. “Adults should trust us ... we can take care of each other” (Child Councillor Miraflores - Meeting with Francesco Tonucci, Miraflores - 2013).

These initiatives and experiences have important implications in the struggle to eradicate violence as it forces adults to look out from the child’s perspective, and therefore look at reality from a different and valuable point of view; it helps to transform the misconceptions that we have about children and allows us to look holistically; to visualize the child as an active citizen, and therefore competent in many respects; adults learn how to listen to children and to talk and think laterally; and the child helps transform the city, school and home.

A city without violence is a child-friendly city, willing to listen and take into account children’s views. Municipal authorities are called to set an example of empathy, tolerance and respect for children. With this work, we don’t do children a favour; we do ourselves a favour, allowing us to benefit from the advice of those who are more creative than we are.

We look from a different perspective, I am one metre twenty tall, children can see things that adults do not see and feel with a different heart. We are strong, playful, funny and creative ... we are citizens just like adults are... we offer this service on behalf of the Mayor and the residents of Miraflores ... we just want you to listen to us.

Frida, 7-year-old councillor to the Mayor, Presentation of Proposals for the Urban Development Plan, March 2016.



Children are changemakers



Founder and Chair of The KidsRights Foundation
Founder of the International Children's Peace Prize

Marc Dullaert

Boundless potential

Children are changemakers. They have the power to move the world. With this belief over a decade ago, I founded The KidsRights Foundation, envisioning an organization that would work in close collaboration with children to realize their rights and positively influence their communities.



Far too often, decisions are made about children, not with or by them. I am convinced that realizing children's rights more effectively calls for the perspective, experience and authority of children themselves. Even the most deprived children

are actors of change in their communities. Their potential is boundless. They should be able to act, and make decisions together with others, on the matters directly affecting them.

The urgency to act

Sustainable development starts in the community. It starts with educated, safe and healthy children, who are able to grow up in inclusive, supportive and peaceful societies. Yet, we are failing to adequately take care of the world's children. Violence, exploitation abuse, and conflict are horrible realities that affect all 2.2 billion children around the globe. The gruesome facts are unacceptable.

- Every 5 minutes, a child is killed by violence;⁹
- 59 million children do not have access to primary school;¹⁰
- There are 168,000 children in employment, child labor and hazardous work;¹¹
- Over 100 million live in street situations worldwide.¹²

⁹ UNICEF, (2014) Children in Danger: Act to end violence against children, United Nations Children's Fund, United Kingdom, p.4. http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publications/Unicef_ChildreninDanger_ViolencereportW.pdf

¹⁰ UNESCO, (2015) A growing number of children and adolescents are out of school as aid fails to meet the mark, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, p. 1. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/fs-31-out-of-school-children-en.pdf>

¹¹ ILO, (2013) Marking progress against child labour - Global estimates and trends 2000-2012, International Labour Office, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), Geneva, p. 3. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_221513.pdf

¹² UNICEF, (2002) The State of the World's Children 2003; Child Participation, United Nations Children's Fund, New York, p. 37. <http://www2.unicef.org:60090/sowc/archive/ENGLISH/The%20State%20of%20the%20World's%20Children%202003.pdf>

Far too often, decisions are made about children, not with or by them.

Marc Duallert

The year 2016 marked the start of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The inclusion of a distinct target to eliminate all forms of violence against children in this development agenda provides a powerful momentum to galvanize political will and mobilize wide social support for children's freedom from violence.

It is upon us to make sure this international momentum is translated into local action, positively impacting the day-to-day realities of children worldwide. We will only achieve the ambitious goals set for the world's children, if and when we dare to walk off the beaten tracks, and dramatically shift our ways of working. Despite our efforts, over the last decades, far too little progress has been made for the protection of children's rights, far too many children have fallen victim to violence. Indeed, far too many children have been left behind, in particular the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach. Across all sectors, we have to truly and continuously commit to listen to children, empower them, and collaborate with them; joint action is needed now to shift the tide once and for all.

One child can make a difference

Together with children as *changemakers*, *KidsRights* inspires and empowers a global movement for children's rights. We aim to realize child participation as described in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 12-17) for as many children as possible.

We believe that children are *changemakers*, that child participation matters, and that we all have a role to play. With words and action, together with children and our partners, we bridge children's local realities and local *changemaking* activities with international decision-making processes. We command global attention for the power of children and children's rights and act as a catalyst to ignite change.

KidsRights discovers remarkable children from around the globe, who put in all their time and efforts to help other children, to make their communities more safe and pleasant to grow up in. We empower them as positive and resilient *changemakers*, amplifying and accelerating their actions in their communities and beyond. However small some initiatives may initially be, once children get the support and opportunities needed, their impact can become boundless.

We ensure that children are being heard. Together with children, we demand global attention for their power as *changemakers* and pressing children's rights issues. Also, children act with us for their rights. To directly realize child participation and children's rights, KidsRights supports grassroots projects and amplifies actions of young *changemakers*. Lastly, we make sure everyone is informed about the global children's rights situation. Through our research and publications we provide insight in the status of children's rights worldwide.

Child participation is key in everything we do. It builds mastery of skill, fosters empathy and establishes a child's valued place in the community and the world at large. Indeed, the long-term benefit of including children in creating safe, healthy, productive communities and peaceful societies is widely acknowledged. Yet, child participation is still very far from being a matter of course.

The International Children's Peace Prize

I am very proud of the impact we have achieved with the prestigious International Children's Peace Prize. The prize is awarded annually to a child who has shown special dedication to children's rights in his or her community. It is a strong and unique international platform for children to speak their minds.

I remember very well watching the news announcement of Nobel Peace Prize winner Ms. Wangari Maathai in 2004. That same evening, a television documentary about Iqbal Masih was shown, a brave Pakistani boy who had opposed child labour and lost his life in the process. He was only 12 years old.

It was then that I realized that children are not merely vulnerable. They also carry an enormous power within them to realize positive changes in the world, despite their often personal experiences with violence. I also understood just how much they need to be empowered and heard. And so, the International Children's Peace Prize was born.

In merely one decade, the prize has grown out to be an internationally recognized platform, celebrating the power of young *changemakers*. The prize was launched in 2005 during the Nobel Peace Laureates' Summit in Rome, chaired by Mikhail Gorbachev. Since then, the prize has been presented annually by a Nobel Peace Laureate. Each year, the message of the winner reaches hundreds of millions of people. Their positivity and resilience is contagious. Notably, one of the International Children's Peace Prize winners is now the youngest Nobel Peace Laureate to date; Malala Yousafzai.

There can be only one winner

Whilst only one child can win the International Children's Peace Prize every year, we work the whole year round to empower many more children as *changemakers* for children's rights. This year KidsRights has promoted the stories of change of a record number of 120 children nominated for the 2016 prize. They show us that change truly is possible.

"Hey you oldies, listen to the children, listen to the children, listen and act."

Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Laureate
and Patron of KidsRights

In November 2014 KidsRights launched *The KidsRights Youngsters* to optimize the social impact of the International Children's Peace Prize winners. The KidsRights Youngsters is a unique advocacy and awareness raising platform of the young winners that aims to realize children's rights, as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. *The KidsRights Youngsters* urge decision-makers to put their words into action, to prioritize child participation and children's rights, and to collaborate with children and youth to substantially improve their quality of life around the globe.

Through their grassroots actions, online campaigns and international advocacy, these young people literally bridge local realities of children with international decision-making processes. They inspire and mobilize children, youth and adults worldwide to be engaged and act for children's rights. In child consultations organized to inform the post-2015 agenda, children identified violence as one of the biggest obstacles to their healthy development.¹³ *The KidsRights Youngsters* decided to speak out on the theme from their personal experience, inform children worldwide with facts and figures, and asked them to express their thoughts. KidsRights invests in International Children's Peace Prize projects, grassroots children's rights projects connected with the themes and countries of the prize winners. Through these investments, we amplify the efforts and impact of the winners and many more children. We directly stimulate child participation and improve the realization of children's rights. Children are involved in the projects and inspire others to also join. In the past 10 years, KidsRights has empowered and helped realize children's rights with more than 155.000 children.

By annually publishing the KidsRights Index, we provide young *changemakers* with insight on the status of children's rights in 163 countries worldwide. Knowing what is going on in the world is key to being able to act for change.

The story of Abraham M. Keita, International Children's Peace Prize winner 2015, illustrates the power of children to stop violence in their communities.

"We cannot achieve sustainable development without ensuring that my rights, my education, my health is just as important as that of my brothers. We should learn to respect and support each other."

Thandiwe Chama, International Children's Peace Prize winner 2007

¹³ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Plan International, Save the Children, Why children's protection from violence must be at the heart of the Post-2015 development agenda A review of Consultations with Children on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, New York, 2014, p. 1
http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/publications_final/why_childrens_protection_from_violence_should_be_at_the_heart_of_the_post_2015_development_agenda.pdf

Keita's story: stopping violence against children in Monrovia, Liberia



My name is Abraham M. Keita and I am from Liberia. When I was a boy, my father would tell me about what his environment was like and how children lived in peace. He would tell me about how violence against a child was not just a family's business, but the entire community's concern. He would tell me about how an abuse or an assault on a child was an abuse or assault on every child in his community. In fact, he told me, violence against children was not as frequent as it is now because everyone stood up against violence and spoke out for children's rights and protection.

Many years went by and during Liberia's 14 year civil war I was born into this world in my country's largest slum. When I began to get a sense of touch, I realized that the mosquitos and cockroaches were my best friends. I realized that poverty and hunger had taken roots in my life. Above all, I realized that violence against children in my community was rampant and that no one was looking out for children who were victims of sexual and other forms of violence. No one cared to give them justice.

When I was five years old, my father was killed by rebels while driving for a humanitarian relief organization. Since then my mother, siblings and I had to fight for survival in a slum largely regarded as the home of ex-combatants, criminals and victims of rape.

Life in West Point was extremely tough, but I managed to enter school at age nine and graduated from high school at age 17. It was at the age of nine that my passion to fight for justice for child victims of violence was aroused. I started leading peaceful protests, writing petitions and speaking out for children. My work over the years gained so much recognition that many children were inspired and began to speak against injustices permeating the corridors of the society.

My story is a sad and painful one but I am always proud to share it because many children around the world are in similar situations or perhaps in situations worse than mine. But overall, it is the story of growing up in violence with difficulties and despair but also with hope and a deep belief in everyone's ability to promote change, to stand up for justice and for the realisation of child rights.

As you read this story, I am inviting you to embrace children's rights and dismiss acts of violence against children. Violence leaves scars forever: the pain, the fear, the suffering and the isolation. We all have a moral obligation to end violence and it is High Time to do this.

... but we can all move the world! Towards a global movement for children's rights

Over the last decade, I have learned a lot from children like Keita and their solutions to safeguard children's rights. No matter what background or age, we can and should all take our responsibility. Children's efforts to positively influence their communities need to be seen, replicated and amplified. It is therefore our ambition at KidsRights to continue growing and strengthening the global movement of changemakers for children's rights, allowing children to take their future in their own hands. They can improve their schools, they can improve their living conditions, they can help us stop violence.

As we continue our fight to prevent, eliminate and respond to violence against children, it is crucial to celebrate the commitment and actions of young *changemakers* in all corners of the world, so that others can be inspired to join in an unstoppable movement towards a world free from violence against children!

Change is possible.

#SayNOtoViolence

Rica

Wouldn't it feel so good if you heard laughter instead of cries?
 Wouldn't it feel so right if you can peacefully sleep at night?
 Wouldn't it make you smile when you hear "sorry" after a fight?
 Wouldn't it be so great when in darkness, there's a ray of light?

Wouldn't it be so good if I'll just sing you a song.
 Instead of quarreling with you all day long?
 If we just dance together and build a fire?
 If we would just be honest and tell no lies?

Imagine a world where there's not hate nor pain.
 In a world where the only tears that fall is rain.
 In a home where the only thing that break are plates.
 In a society that the only thing that divides us are gates?



Knight costume, Costa Rica

Ethics, aesthetics and citizenship: educating for life, for living together



Former Minister of Public Education, Costa Rica (2006 – 2014)

Leonardo Garnier

What do we educate for? That should be the first question facing anyone willing to launch an education reform.

Education is commonly understood as a mainly academic process, aimed at preparing the new generations so that they can take their place in the world of work. That is, of course, vital, if education is to allow us to break the vicious circles of poverty and inequality.

For education to achieve that goal, it is essential that our kids learn to think, to inquire, to argue and to reflect on what they learn. It is crucial that they become owners of their own language, capable of understanding what they hear and to say what they truly mean; able to comprehend what they read and to express themselves clearly in writing; it is essential for them to develop logical thinking so that they can easily distinguish valid from invalid or fallacious arguments. It is equally important that they appropriate mathematical language and its logic; and the same goes for scientific thinking: they should learn not from ready-made answers, but from open questions, through inquiry and problem solving, rather than just through the mechanical repetition of predetermined answers. They must learn how to construct abstractions starting with what is concrete and familiar, instead of learning empty abstractions as though they were given truths. This should be the basic goal of any education reform.

But education has to be so much more. It must be a tool for abolishing all human relations based on fear, domination and aggression. What we need is not just an education for the market place, but an education for life, one that teaches us how to live together, how to share our resources, our spaces, our time, our affection, and our lives.

There is nothing more difficult than living with others. However, while we find it obvious that we need formal and systematic educational processes in order to learn how to read and write, or to learn math, we seem to think that the most difficult of learnings –that of living together- can be left to itself. It is as though we believe that we can learn how to live just by living; that we can learn how to coexist merely by coexisting. Truth is, if we learn that way, we do so very poorly.

Through Costa Rica's Ministry of Education, we launched an ambitious educational reform which we purposely named in a particularly pompous way: "Education for Ethics, Aesthetics and Citizenship".

The project started with some of the most underrated subjects of the curriculum which were, however, essential for our objectives: Arts, Music, Physical and Civic Education.

Arts and Music Education are usually seen as some sort of nice curricular decoration, rather than as an essential piece of the educational puzzle. These are courses that neither teachers nor parents value and therefore are not valued by the students themselves (which is made worse by the fact that they are often quite boring courses). This is all the more absurd given that the Arts reflect some of the most sublime and intense facets of human existence, and are very much capable of awakening the passion and interest of our students.

Arts and Music Education are not only important in themselves, but they are also increasingly recognized as particularly important for confronting the challenge of creativity and economic competitiveness. Today, cultural industries are among the most dynamic and profitable sectors of our economies. For emerging economies, culture can be a first rate component in their development strategies – be it literature, music, videos and movies, or even the fashion industry or gastronomy.

In that context, which should be the goals of the new Arts Education we were seeking? The most important, we believe, is having our children learn to enjoy art: have them take pleasure in paintings, sculptures, music and so on.

Our second objective is for our students to learn how to appreciate art, which is different from just enjoying it. Appreciation implies a value judgment: to understand why I like what I like, or why I don't. It means being able to distinguish genres, styles, eras, schools and artists, along with their diverse qualities. Beware though, as "quality" is a tricky concept; for it may be based on objective criteria, but may also be the result of prejudices that often underestimate the quality of new art forms and especially those that attract new generations. Thus we propose an open and fresh approach to arts appreciation.

Our third objective has to do with understanding art. Understanding means different things. It means to understand the technique of a work of art, because we are talking about artistic disciplines, with specific techniques. A student should be able to distinguish a watercolor from an oil painting, a sonata from a bachata, a sonnet from a free rhyme. But understanding art also means to be able to place a work of art within its historic and social context: the world in which it was created, its influences, be it artistic, political, economical or so on. Finally, understanding art means understanding the artist as well: while it would be difficult to comprehend the art of Frida Kahlo out of the context of the Mexican Revolution, that context would be insufficient if we are not familiar as well with her life, her pains, her passions and dilemmas.

Our fourth and final objective is essential: that students actually express themselves artistically, translating their thoughts and feelings into forms of artistic expression. Here it is important to avoid a frequent confusion: schools and colleges are not conservatories and academies for only those who

stand out for their artistic talent; schools should be there for all students and all should be able to express themselves artistically: sing, dance, recite poems, play an instrument, join a choir, paint, tell stories, make collages or videos, be part of a garage band - whatever it is that artistically translates their thoughts and their feelings.

These four objectives – to enjoy, to appreciate, to understand art and to be able to express themselves artistically – allowed us to build innovative arts and music education programmes. Programmes loaded with recreational experiences, creative work, context sensitive activities, discovery of sounds and colors, textures and harmonies that could then be used by students to communicate ideas and emotions through their artistic creations. Furthermore, the new programmes promote interaction, collaborative work among students, as well as respect, tolerance and enjoyment of artistic diversity.

Physical education also became a learning process geared towards the enjoyment and practice of various forms of human movement, play, dance and sport. The emphasis was no longer on competitive sports but on engaging all students in the playful exercise of movement, play and sports, all in an inclusive atmosphere of movement and team work.

Civic education used to be one of the least appealing subjects for students, where they had to memorize facts and important national holidays, as well as some laws - even learning the Constitution by heart- only to be able to spit them out mechanically in an exam and to forget them a few hours later. With the new programmes, this changed radically.

In grade 7 students learn about topics such as road safety, public safety and disaster prevention. They do not stay in the classroom, they are taken to the streets of their community to identify, for example, places where there are risks or hazards; then they prepare plans and propose preventive actions to the authorities. Thus, the learning of the rules, laws and institutional frameworks is approached through confronting real problems relevant to their everyday lives. Our students learn about risks, but above all, they learn about their own responsibility as citizens.

In grade 8, students discuss their own identity and the diversity of Costa Rican society, learning not only to tolerate but to enjoy the diversity that enriches us all. They become aware that they should not discriminate against anyone because of their appearance, religion, or sexual orientation and that they should never be disrespected for being who they are. They learn that while there will always be conflicts when we live with others, such conflicts need not be solved through violence or disrespect, but rather seeking solutions that recognize everyone's rights.

Grade 9 focuses on citizen participation, democratic representation and human rights. Students learn that living in society requires rules that must be respected to the extent that they are legitimate; they also learn about how we can transform those rules through legal democratic processes and how, in extreme situations, our ethical principles may lead us to challenge and confront some of those rules. In

grades 10 and 11 the discussion focuses on political systems, emphasizing the importance of responsible political participation: learning to make individual and collective choices is one of the greatest challenges we face in citizenship and coexistence.

The purpose of such Civic Education is not just about achieving a theoretical understanding of citizenship – even though the corresponding concepts are covered – but mainly about the practical exercise of citizenship through learning by doing. Ethics cannot be truly learned through sermons or speeches, but through learning experiences where the students themselves confront ethical dilemmas and argue amongst themselves in order to decide how best to solve them. The old approach of learning through fear, in which students learn to “behave” for fear of a punishment or in exchange for a prize (the old sticks and carrots scheme) is replaced by an ethical approach: students learn to do the right thing, because they think it is the right thing. Following the teachings of Paulo Freire, this is education for freedom, an education in which blind obedience gives place to reason and the responsible exercise of freedom.

This new paradigm requires not only a change in the content – to bring it closer to the daily life of students – but a change in pedagogical strategy. Passive learning is abandoned, giving way to a dialogue-centered approach based on the confrontation of ethical, civic and political dilemmas, and where individual and collective reflection leads the way to the construction of shared interests and visions. This requires developing both the ability to argue rationally and the ability to listen respectfully to other views. It also means being willing and able to change our mind when a convincing argument is presented.

We have opened the curriculum to project-based learning, where students identify a problem, investigate, argue, learn and build explanations and solutions that they can share with their peers. A variety of resources such as movies, plays, talks, forums and even community activities are used in a process where the teacher assumes the position of facilitator and guide, rather than sticking to the traditional lecture style. Of course, this also transforms the evaluation processes, with conventional tests being complemented with self-evaluation and co-evaluation by students. All this results in deeper forms of learning which, instead of being forgotten the day after a test, are internalized and appropriated by the students, becoming part of their identity.

It was this new way of learning which captivated Carla Andrea Rojas, - a 14-year-old student attending grade 8 in Liceo San Antonio, Desamparados. She and her classmates produced short films about coexistence and gender.

Education is an academic process that...allow us to break the vicious circles of poverty and inequality... for education to achieve that goal, it is essential that our kids learn to think, to inquire, to argue and to reflect.

Leonardo Garnier

“You take your nose out of your books and express yourself in a more entertaining way. Classes are very different, because in Civics there is a closeness with the teacher now. We make videos to deal with the information we have learned in the classroom. Sometimes, when you just write, you don’t really understand what you are writing about; a short film is better”, the young girl said.¹⁴

While transforming the classroom experience, the Project of Education for Ethics, Aesthetics and Citizenship went beyond the classroom and beyond curricular reform: a wide range of activities were developed in order to allow students to take an experiential leap in their learning process. Perhaps the most powerful example is the Students Arts Festival: thousands of young people across the country participate in more than forty artistic disciplines in this Festival at all levels: in schools, circuits, regions and in national encounters. Other examples are the Students Sports Games and the Student Governments – which have become a rich practical exercise of civic responsibilities for students.

Alongside these lines, an ambitious project was developed: “Convivir” or The “Living-Together” programme, whose methodology sought to promote coexistence in all schools and high schools in the country and in particular in those with more serious problems of conflict and violence. For this programme, we took advantage of many of the activities traditionally carried out in schools, but incorporated into them the goals and methodology of “Convivir”: how to deal with and solve conflicts, strengthen identities and build bridges between people. Thus, traditional activities such as the celebration of anniversaries, student government, the Student Arts Festival or even certain academic subjects’ assignments are now used as a means of generating community values and as practical exercises in learning how to live together.

In conclusion, all these reforms have a common thread: an education for life, for learning to live, learning to live with each other. If that was our goal, it was fundamental to break with the dynamics of fear in our schools, with the logic of blind obedience. Schools should never be seen as training camps, but rather as true centres of education whose ultimate goal is to prepare each student to become the person he or she wants to be: free, fearless, full of capacity to transform their dreams into reality and to collaborate with others in the construction of theirs, and in building our common life.

¹⁴ Ministerio de Educación Pública: Reformas Educativas: Imágenes y ejemplos, Costa Rica, 2014, p. 10



"The good is for everyone". Nataly Kostadinova, 11, Bulgaria
"Courtesy of Children With Disabilities, Programme Division, UNICEF"

Winnie's story: taking action against online violence



Young advocate

Winnie Moreira

Before I introduce myself, I want you to picture me as someone from your circle of friends. Actually, imagine me as someone like you. Perhaps a little chattier. I started in this activism thing without even knowing what it was. I used to participate in groups like the Adolescent Citizenship Hub (from UNICEF's Seal of Approval initiative). One day, I was invited to a Girl Empowering Seminar, hosted by UNICEF. That was a milestone in my life.

By the way, I am Winnie, I am 18 years old and I live in Brazil in a small town called Taiobeiras. My town is all I got, since my family and my people live here. Now, you tell me: Wouldn't you fight for all you've got in life?

As Taiobeiras grows, violence grows too. I never supported any kind of violence, although it never made any difference to me. Until one day, violence started to show up right in front of my face, and the silently oppressed victims were crying for help.

Everybody has access to Internet in Taiobeiras both in urban and rural areas. I think Internet is an extension of our lives rather than a separate world. Violence also happens in the Internet. We all have the right to privacy, and revenge porn is a crime that really affects girls who trust their partners and share naked pictures a.k.a. nudes!

In my school, I used to witness boys waiting for the next "naked of the week" show up in WhatsApp groups or in other social media. The victims then lived a week of terror and a whole life marked by a trauma.

I never shared these photos, but it also didn't make any difference to me. Until one day it happened to my friend Jessica. The whole town was talking about her. They had her naked pictures. Her family was in shock. She started experiencing horrible things, but still, she was strong enough and didn't quit school. I know it is really hard for a girl in this situation to face school, but it's their right and they can't give up!

My contact with Jessica was in school. When her photos got public, lots of people started ignoring her. This time I realized I could not keep my mouth shut. I wanted the whole town to hear me, but a microphone would not be enough. Then, UNICEF released a campaign on the safe use of the Internet called #SurfSafe. (Along with the campaign, there was a video and a meme contest on 5 different issues concerning the safe use of Internet.)

Internet is an extension of our lives rather than a separate world. Violence also happens in the Internet.

Winnie Moreira

At first, I must confess I was reluctant to talk about such a difficult issue as revenge porn. I could talk about other issues. The prize was a visit to São Paulo to record a video with a famous YouTuber on You Tube Space. That was magic, but almost impossible to me. So I did what I had to do. I asked for a friend's help. She put a camera right in front of my face and I started talking about my opinion on the crimes against these girls' honour. I really wanted to make difference. So I posted the video.

All my friends started sharing the video, and lots of people saw it. Everybody in school started talking about it, and many people told me the video made them think about the issue. To me, the mission had already been accomplished, but, as a bonus, I won the national Surf Safe contest. Because of that, I met lots of incredible people, but what really mattered was to be able to give voice to all those girls.

My advice is that you don't need to suffer violence to defend a cause. You need to be supportive. Just because everybody is doing something, it doesn't mean it is right. Have humanity, and look for change when you notice there is something wrong. The world needs you. Your family, your street, your school, and your town need you. Start by doing small things just like I did. You can change lots of things just like I changed.

Lots of stories like Jessica's happen right beside you. You can do more than simply not sharing. And for those who do this kind of thing, please, think twice. It is a crime that can devastate lots of girls and their families' lives.

I want to graduate from Law School in order to defend all the minorities that suffer violence both in and outside the Internet. I believe we can live in a better world. In order to make it better, you just have to believe too!



"Ability". My artwork shows that disabled people all around us and in every field are as good as anyone else. Disabled people can be artistic, achieving, smart, athletic and brave. In my point of view, there is no human being in the world who is disabled. Saddat Nazir, 11, USA

"Courtesy of Children With Disabilities, Programme Division, UNICEF"

Sports, education and the end of violence against children



Three-time Olympic sprinter, MBA

Atlee Mahorn

I have spent the better part of the last 40 years in sports as an athlete, coach and now as a sports dad. Whether it's competing in the Olympics or in an egg and spoon race in elementary school, sports satisfy our desire to compete, win and above all to celebrate the human spirit. Sports promote health and education. Sports instil confidence, determination and drive in children.

To that end, we must use the power of sports to end violence and exploitation against children. Children are our future is an oft-cited expression. Using sports as a barometer of growth and development not only ensures we promote programmes that foster development but that we build the right sports facilities and educational infrastructure to support sustainable development. Children like my own benefit from sports programmes at school, in parks and recreation centres and through health fairs that use sports to further educational and health goals. The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Goal says this about sports:

Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.

In 2010, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) launched the inaugural Youth Olympic Games (Games) in Singapore with the stated goal of combating childhood obesity. Organizations like Right to Play are driven by the mission of using sports "to educate and empower children and youth". We must continue to build on the success of these organizations. In sports' training we speak about long-term athletic development. This must be coupled with educational programmes that seek to nurture children to become valuable and contributing members of their societies.

It's no accident that the annual human development index measures health, education and income. Sports have an important connection to all three areas. Sports promote better health, wellness and fitness. Health security promotes education. Education leads to better income, growth and development for all, but especially for our children.

■ ■ Sports instil confidence, determination and drive in children. ■ ■

Atlee Mahorn

My story and life in sports is very typical of so many athletes. Growing up in the Caribbean, I was inspired by listening to the radio, hearing cricket competitions being played in faraway places like India, Pakistan, Australia and England. It made me dream, and that started my love affair with all things sports. Sports helped me realize my dreams and explore the world. I became an Olympic athlete while in high school in Toronto, Canada, and earned an athletic scholarship to the University of California, Berkeley, arguably the best public university in the world.

Sports allowed me to travel, to learn three languages, and to meet people from many cultures. That's the glamorous part of my story.

The rest of the story goes like this, and I believe it reveals the most important lesson that I learned. Looking back, I can tell you that I didn't have the best support from my family. In fact, I don't believe my sports' dreams ever mattered to them. My strongest support came from my high school English Literature teacher, who also happened to be my coach. He saw my potential, supported me and even took me in to live with him. The reality is that kids face many obstacles and sometimes it may take the love and care of a stranger to help them realize their potential. I owe a lot of my success as an athlete to him. I also realized that in life you must always look for the opportunities and aim high – and we must all help our children to do this too.



Photo by Emmanuel Petre,
Mots d'Enfants, Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE)

Part 3

Breaking the silence and
building children's resilience



© Mordillo Foundation, 2835-A-E

Rights and respect



Young advocate for the rights of persons with autism

Fernanda Santana

My name is Fernanda Santana, I'm a Brazilian self-advocate with autism and a member of Abraca, the Brazilian association of action for the rights of people with autism. What I'm writing about here represents the current opinion of the entire autistic community ... not doctors, not parents, but people with autism themselves.

And the essence of what I have to say, of course, is much the same for people with other disabilities too.

I'd like to start by quoting one of the general principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: "the respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity".

For us, people with autism, the key word is neurodiversity. And we are proud to say that our neurodiversity is truly an expression of the human diversity. That's our identity. Our autism isn't a disease or a mental illness, neither is it a curse, our autism is part of who we are. And that's why the existence of a cure isn't possible. Because people are who they are, and their differences are important too.

Autism may be a relatively new word, but we have been here for a long time, across the entire history of mankind, contributing in our way. Unfortunately, society has been cruel to us. And the children are, of course, those who suffer most.

Starting with the difficulty of diagnosis, especially for girls and women with autism who often go unnoticed. In so many places it is still hard to find doctors and other professionals that can tell you, for sure, if you are autistic or not. Especially if you are a little girl who uses her mouth to talk. Many receive misdiagnoses and wrong treatments, and unnecessary medication. But a correct diagnosis isn't a guarantee that all will be fine.

Our autism isn't a disease or a mental illness, neither is it a curse, our autism is part of who we are.

Fernanda Santana

I know it's hard for a family to notice that their child is different from what they expected. That's frustrating, for sure. But if you think the worst about autism, just the bad part, if you think that it's terrible and that autistic people can't be happy, can't live a "normal" life, can't do anything at all, can't have a job, or study, or marry ... well, of course it will be terrible to hear that your child is autistic.

All over the world, there are desperate families without information, without help, without any support at all. And because of this lack of support, they are easily misled. They give all the money they have to the first person who promises a cure, a fake-cure. And then the most bizarre things can happen: these are the "alternative therapies".

In Brazil, for example, we are fighting against the MMS protocol, which is industrial-strength bleach that the parents give their own autistic children to drink or force it into their rectum in form of an enema. It's so strong that it erodes the intestines to the point that they literally come out in pieces.

Recently we heard about a clinic that killed a little autistic boy by making him walk absurd distances, just because they think that autism is laziness. In some countries, for some reason, some psychiatrists wrap autistic kids in cold wet towels and they call that a treatment. In many countries autistic children are being exposed to injections of stem cells, for which there is no scientific justification. Some people make autistic children breathe pure oxygen in chambers that may burst into flames. Others suggest chemical castration. Or chelation, which removes all metals from the body, including calcium, which is very important to the human body. We also heard about brain surgery and other horrible things. Occasionally, someone dies, but the "alternative therapies" continue.

The convention says that: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment". But that is what's happening today.

More aware families, or those that simply don't have enough money to pay for these dangerous "alternative therapies", seek healing through unproven and odd diets and, of course, behavioural therapies, which is a polite name for brainwashing. Children are trained to pretend they aren't autistic, trained to hide their true identity, to obey without opposition. The psychological damage is a matter of time. Compliance-based therapies, such as ABA, also make autistic children more vulnerable to other forms of violence, including bullying and sexual abuse.

Over-medicalization is very common, to drug and dope autistic children is an easy way to make them seem calm and controllable. If that does not work, then there are the mental asylums and institutions. Or, if the family has enough money, the most contemporary version, an entire housing complex that simulates the real world and keeps autistic people isolated from the real community. Is that respect? Is that protection? I don't think so. There is no consent and it isn't in the best interest of the child.

These children are NOT having their rights respected. And they will not, not until we start talking about acceptance and respect. That is what we need today. We need self-advocacy. We must start to talk about what these kids are capable of, we must empower them by telling them that they can do it, can decide for themselves. Even those who don't use their mouths to speak have to know they have rights about themselves, about their body, their health, their life.

Society needs to know that autism is more than some difficulties and that it isn't a disease. It needs to understand that autism does not have to be defeated, because trying to do so causes the defeating of autistic people themselves and their own rights, their self-confidence, their self-esteem, their possibilities and hopes.

We need you to stop the violence against autistic children by bringing information to the world. Not information about medical treatments, but about human rights, respect and acceptance. The governments need to give support to the families, the schools need to receive instruction, and children need to grow-up with their self-esteem and general health intact.

That's the only way. The respectful way. Not just for autistic children, but for children with any disability who are different, sure, but never less.



At The International Museum of Children's Art in Oslo, Norway, you can see the world through children's eyes. The Museum, established in 1986, regards children's art as a living part of folk art. Children's own opinion and concerns are presented through changing thematic exhibitions. The three basic functions of the Museum are to collect, promote and preserve children's art worldwide. Read more at www.childrensart.com

"Education". Rotana Lunrasri, 12, Thailand. (BK32672). The International Museum of Children's Art in Oslo, Norway

A call for zero violence in schools and educational settings



UN Young Leader for Sustainable Development

Trisha Shetty

“In the last week, how many of you here in this classroom have been leered at or touched inappropriately when taking public transport, been sexually harassed by a family member or neighbour, subjected to unwanted sexual attention in your school or when with your group of friends, or witnessed someone else being sexual harassed?”

When posed with this question, over 98% of children in my classroom raise their hands, hesitantly at first, and then, almost with a collective sense of solidarity, you see more and more hands being raised in the classroom.

I am a social activist who is working towards ending sexual violence in India through my non-profit organisation, SheSays. SheSays addresses sexual violence as a public health issue and part of my work involves conducting Sexual Violence Prevention and Education seminars in schools and colleges. Children are sexually abused by relatives at home and by persons of trust or authority and most of the cases go unreported. “Child abuse is shrouded in secrecy and there is a conspiracy of silence around the entire subject,” Renuka Chowdhury, former Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ministry of Women and Child Development, has said.¹⁵

Child Sexual Abuse is an epidemic that plagues Indian societies, yet there is a desperate attempt to ignore this issue and hold on to the veil of secrecy. Children are discouraged from speaking up about the sexual abuse they have gone through, leaving them with a deep-rooted sense of shame and isolation.

The first step to dealing with a problem is to acknowledge its existence. This is why I pose the aforementioned question to my students, so they understand that they are not the anomaly, that the abuse they went through is not their fault and it is not their shame to bear. The dialogue opens up room for the child to come forth and ask for help, to address concerns they may have, that as children they have been systematically conditioned to stifle.

In 2007, the Ministry of Women and Child Development in India with the support of UNICEF, Save the Children and Prayas, released “A National Study on Child Abuse”.¹⁶ These are some of the findings of the report:

¹⁵ Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, “National Study on Child Abuse: India 2007,” 2007.

¹⁶ Ibid

- 53.22% children reported having faced one of more forms of sexual abuse; among them 52.94% were boys and 47.06% girls.
- 53.18 % children in the family environment not going to school reported facing sexual abuse;
- 49.92% children in schools reported facing sexual abuse;
- 21.90% of all children were subjected to severe forms of sexual abuse that included sexual assault, making the child fondle private parts, making the child exhibit private body parts and being photographed in the nude;
- Only in 3% of the cases of sexual abuse were the police informed.

Statistics on reported crimes of Child Sexual Abuse for the year 2015 by the National Crime Records Bureau of India state the following:¹⁷

- Total reported cases of Penetrative Sexual Assault: 6,723
- Total reported cases of Aggravated Penetrative Sexual Assault: 2,077
- Total reported cases of Sexual Assault: 3,795
- Total reported cases of Aggravated Sexual Assault: 342
- In 94.8% of cases of Penetrative Sexual Assault or Aggravated Penetrative Sexual Assault i.e. rape, the perpetrator was known to the child.

These numbers attest to the need to be more aggressive, honest and innovative in our approach to end sexual violence against children. The strategy that has worked best for SheSays has been twofold: engaging with the students directly in open conversation and in parallel sensitising and training the teachers and parents in school premises on how to take accountability and best deal with cases of child sexual abuse.

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Education seminars conducted by SheSays cover five sections:

1. Consent - how this is the element missing in all cases of sexual violence, the importance of seeking and giving consent and instances when consent is vitiated.
2. Know the law - explanation of the relevant laws against sexual abuse recognised by the Indian Constitution, which safeguard the rights of the child to have autonomy over his or her body.
3. How to navigate through redressal agencies - once the laws have been identified, information on how to report the crime to the police, or one's educational institution or help agencies that will take cognisance of the crime.
4. Bystander intervention skills - skill building and risk reduction strategies on how children can safely intervene and help, should they see someone being sexually abused.

¹⁷ National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs of India, "Crime in India 2015", 2015

5. Nexus of support - training children to be support systems for each other by sensitising them on the things to do/ say or to avoid saying to their friends who have been sexually abused and confide in them; also identifying vetted teachers and counsellors that the students can turn to in case they don't have the desired family support.

Parents are often not comfortable facilitating discussions on healthy sexual behaviours nor acknowledging the unfortunate instances of sexual abuse their children go through. These are the common responses we have heard from children about what their parents have said when the child confides in them about being sexually abused:

You are not special, I have been sexually abused as well and so has your grandmother. We don't talk about this because it serves no purpose. You just have to stay strong, ignore it and concentrate on studies.

If this story comes out, people will judge you, not him. He has nothing to lose, society members will start talking badly about you. Trust us, we are your parents, we are only doing the right thing by not reporting it.

The idea of going to the police and reporting the crime is alien to most parents, there is resistance to even sending the child for counselling. Sexual abuse has been normalised in society today and sadly the children we engage with have been conditioned to deal with abuse as a way of life.

It is therefore crucial for schools and educational institutions to take the lead on such discussions. When a child has no trusted adult or support system to speak to, they often end up confiding about their struggles and feeling of shame and betrayal to their peers. Unfortunately, the peers are themselves children who are not equipped to deal with such information. Very often the child who has shared his or her story ends up being further victimised or isolated due to the information being mishandled. Therefore, the solution as I see it, is to treat children with respect and understand that if sensitised and equipped with the necessary skills, they can be effective support systems for their peers.

The beauty of dealing with children is that they still hold onto hope and optimism for a better future and have a deep sense of responsibility towards others. A normal occurrence after concluding the seminars in educational institutions is children approaching me in confidence to share their personal story of abuse and wanting to explore what their options are now and how they can get help. With most adults who reach out to my organisation for legal counsel and help with reporting the crime, the general premise is to punish the perpetrator or seek justice. But my interaction with children who come forth and ask for help after being sexually abused in their own homes for months by their math tutor, or by the neighbour who carpools the children to and fro from school, or by the domestic help or family member is unique. The child usually wants

■ ■ The dialogue opens up room for the child to come forth and ask for help, to address concerns they may have. The beauty of dealing with children is that they still hold onto hope and optimism for a better future and have a deep sense of responsibility towards others. ■ ■

Trisha Shetty

to report the crime, not just so that the perpetrator is held accountable for abusing him or her but because they feel responsible for the other vulnerable children that the perpetrator may be in contact with.

I had a child, in between tears, tell me that when she told her parents about being abused by her math tutor, they first didn't believe her, and the abuse carried on for four months in her own room. The parents eventually believed her and told her to never speak about the abuse to anyone as "she will be judged by people and called names". She was shamed into silence, but she felt like she had to speak up for the sake of other children the math tutor would abuse.

As adults, her parents failed in safeguarding this child; but she consciously wanted to do better by other children. Such is the untainted perspective of looking at sexual abuse through the eyes of a child. They have a steadfast moral compass that adults would be wise to emulate.

After conducting the SheSays seminars in schools, we ask students to fill out an Impact Assessment Form. These were the common findings from the Assessment forms:

- Now that they know their rights, the children are more likely to report Street Sexual Harassment.
- They are more likely to speak up against fellow students displaying sexist behaviour.
- They would feel obligated to engage in bystander intervention to help others in distress.
- Feel more confident in being able to help a friend who may be going through trauma due to sexual abuse.
- More likely to engage with their parents in honest conversations about sexual abuse.
- More likely to reach out and ask for help or see a counsellor to deal with trauma related to sexual abuse.

My learnings from speaking to children across educational institutions in India is that the topic of sexual abuse is often uncomfortable to address, especially child sexual abuse because there is the inherent feeling of not wanting to interfere in 'family business'; a sense of deference we feel towards parents in not wanting to tell them how to handle matters of sexual abuse that affect their children. And although I speak from an Indian perspective, the solution of facilitating honest dialogue with children with regards to sexual violence through educational institutions resonates the world over. Educational institutions taking on the onus to engage with their students on talks on consent and sexual abuse and how it affects us all as society will ensure that, together, we have effectively lifted the veil of silence that perpetuates and breeds abuse within homes, in schools and colleges. We all play a role in either perpetuating the cycle of violence or stopping it. Educational institutions play a pivotal role in this cycle; they must be recognised as an integral support system for children.

Children speak out

From about a few years ago, until around now, talking about sexual violence with a child was considered taboo and put off because it was uncomfortable. This denied the child the right to a lot of information that is necessary to understand this issue. In my opinion, school discussions go a long way in educating children about dealing with this in a safe way and also help the teacher understand and gauge the perspective children have on sexual violence. They can correct any harboured misconception that the child might have. The SheSays session showed me a whole new perspective. Usually I cancel my night plans due to concerns about my safety, but now that I know my rights and have all the required details regarding how to handle a situation I am more comfortable going out. Feels like a more secure experience. **Ananya, 14 years old**

I've heard people say that children are vulnerable. But isn't this the exact same reason they should be protected? I'm fortunate enough to have grown up in a transparent environment where everyone shared everything, but most children aren't. And that's why, in my opinion crimes and violence against children are rising. Because children don't know their rights. It's funny we call ourselves educated, but this fails us, when we need it the most. **Aninthitha, 15 years old**



Photo © Shafiqul Alam Kiron/UNICEF

Standing up against bullying



Young writer “The survival guide to bullying”

Aija Mayrock

I was eight years old the first time that I was bullied.

One of my classmates said to me, “No one likes you. No one will ever like you.”

From that day forth, I endured bullying every single day for eight years. I was verbally, physically, and cyber bullied. I believed my classmates. Their words started to become the constitution I lived by. I stopped speaking in school. I kept my head down and my eyes on the ground at all times. In a way, I began to give up.

At 13 years old, my dad had a job opportunity across the country. My whole family moved from New York (where I was bullied) to California. I was so excited. I thought to myself, “This is my new beginning. Everything is going to be okay.” I had one year in California that was great - I made friends, I wasn’t bullied - all was okay. But I soon learned that you can never really escape your past.

On Halloween of my freshman year of high school, a girl I had never met, who went to my old school in New York, dressed up as me for Halloween. She wore a sign around her neck with my name on it, posted the picture online, and it went viral. Someone sent me a text message of the post. There were thousands of comments saying the most disgusting, horrible things about me. But the strangest part of all was that I didn’t even know any of these people.

I was in a state of shock. I have never been so afraid of the world. I have never felt so alone, so hated, and so lost.

The cyber bullying continued for days and so I deleted all of my social media and changed my phone number. Sometimes I would get up to fifty calls from blocked numbers every day. In the weeks following this cyber bullying attack, I thought about my life, what I had gone through, and what good could maybe come from my experiences.

About a year later, I read an article about a boy who had taken his life because he was bullied. In that moment, I realized that if I sat back and did nothing, then I was just as bad as everyone who had bullied me. And so on that day, I put pen to paper and I began writing the book that I never had, but always needed to - “The Survival Guide to Bullying.”

Ever since my book has been published in many countries around the world, I have received hundreds of thousands of messages from kids who are dealing with bullying. I've realized that bullying is an international epidemic that is so widespread and so devastating - we must take action now.

From my experience, there are 3 steps that need to be taken to prevent and stop bullying. But first, let's figure out how to spot bullying.

There are 3 types of bullying:

Verbal Bullying: Teasing, name calling, putting someone down, threatening to cause harm, and/or saying inappropriate sexual comments.

Social Bullying: Leaving someone out on purpose, telling other kids not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors, and/or embarrassing someone.

Physical Bullying: Hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, tripping/pushing, taking or breaking possessions, and/or mean hand gestures.

Cyber Bullying: Any of the above that happens online or on a cell phone.

*What makes bullying DIFFERENT from kids being kids is one thing - it is repetitive. It has happened several times and has the possibility of continuing.

STEP 1: FIND YOUR WINGMAN

I dealt with bullying all by myself. I didn't tell anyone because I was so afraid of what people would think - maybe it was my fault, maybe I did something wrong? That's my one life regret - I wish I had told someone, anyone. So the first thing you must do is find a wingman - someone who will stick by you through this difficult time - a person you can confide in.

1. Picking the perfect wingman:

Create a TOP 5 list of the adults in your life that you trust, whether it's your mom, dad, teacher, guidance counsellor, coach, whoever. Ask to have a meeting or conversation with these people. Take a deep breath, summon all of your courage, and tell them EVERYTHING. Share every little detail of your bullying experiences, how you feel, and what you need help with. Sometimes you might need to have a few conversations before someone really listens to you. But you should not deal with this alone.

2. What if you can't find a wingman:

There is ALWAYS someone in your life who is there for you and wants to help you. I know it might seem like that isn't true, but when I finally looked around and realized just how many people cared about me and wanted to help me - I was shocked. If you have had repeated conversations with the TOP 5 people on your list and no one is helping you, then create a TOP 10 or 15 list. Think outside the box: maybe your favourite teacher, assistant principal, friend's parent, neighbour, etc is a good option of someone to talk to.

Bullying does not define you. Nothing does. You have every possibility in this world. You can and will survive. You will thrive. And if you choose to, you will change the world and the future of bullying.

Aija Mayrock

3. Other ways to get help:

I started therapy when I was 15 years old. I had been so against therapy for so many years, because I thought that it meant something was "wrong" with me. But sometimes we need that little bit of extra help to get through a tough time. You can speak to your guidance counsellor at school or look for youth groups in your community. Often times, there are a lot of free therapy programmes at your disposal. Additionally, you can always talk to the adults on your list about speaking to a professional.

4. Calling a wingman:

There are also people you can talk to literally ANYTIME you need - just call a hotline or log onto a teen chat. Often times, these services are 24/7, free and anonymous.

STEP 2: STAND UP AND USE THAT VOICE OF YOURS

Throughout the eight years I was bullied, I never stood up for anyone else. I was so afraid that I would get bullied more, if I spoke up for others. Then one day I realized this: If I don't stand up for anyone, then who would stand up for me?

From that day forward, ANYTIME I saw someone being bullied, I took a stand and used my voice to speak up for them.

YOU have a voice that can either stay quiet or be oh-so-powerful. Use your voice to speak up for others. Take a stand and be a leader rather than a follower. You could be changing someone's life forever.

If you stand up for others who are bullied and it continues relentlessly, then make sure you go to a teacher and alert them of the situation. Write down all of details and tell the teacher EVERYTHING. Don't be afraid of getting in trouble - you could be changing or saving someone's life forever.

STEP 3: BECOME A SUPER HERO IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Often times, schools say they have a zero tolerance policy regarding bullying, but yet very little is ever done. So if your school is not taking action against bullying and you think it's a big problem - then become the super hero on your campus and in your community.

How To Become A Super Hero:

1. Speak to the faculty and staff at your school about creating and implementing a zero tolerance policy that you believe will work for the kids in your school. Think about what your ideal school day without bullying would be like. Put those dreams into action. Follow up with meetings and emails - don't ever stop fighting for what you believe in.
2. Create an anti-bullying club at your school. You might be a kid, but **YOU HAVE POWER**. Your voice can change the world. Start by creating a club in your school and influence the student body to be kind, rise up to bullying, and change the culture of your community.
3. Befriend the kids who need a friend. I was one of those kids - I sat alone every day and had no friends. The people that were nice to me are people I will remember for the rest of my life. So if you see someone who needs a friend, then go sit with them and talk to them. Show them that you care. Become their super hero.
4. If you have an idea - whether for a campaign, movie or book - **DO IT**. I was 16 years old when I first had the idea to write my book. I was told I couldn't do it - I was just a kid. But I would not let **ANYONE** tell me that my dreams weren't real. So I wrote every day, I self-published, I got a book deal, and then I got it into school curriculums around the world. You can do the same thing. Fight for the future you want to see.

One More Note From Me...

Bullying does not define you. Nothing does. You have every possibility in this world. You can and will survive. You will thrive. And if you choose to, you will change the world and the future of bullying.

In the moments when you feel that there is no hope, remember that I have had those moments, too. And so has every other person who has been bullied. But we must keep going. We must do everything we can to advocate for ourselves and others. We are all destined for something great.

Never stop believing in yourself and the future you want to see.

Cartoon Network

BASTA DE BULLYING™

NO
TE QUEDES
CALLADO

Cartoon Network Takes on Bullying in Latin America and the Caribbean

Cartoon Network Latin America reaches over 60 million households in the region. Its pro-social program, The Cartoon Movement, is mobilizing the channel's powerful media platforms to prevent violence in communities and schools.

The regional initiative Basta de Bullying, no te quedés callado (Chega de Bullying, não fiques calado in Portuguese for audiences in Brazil) -- adapted from the CN US campaign, Stop bullying: Speak Up! -- was organized with civil society, including the humanitarian NGOs Plan International and World Vision, and government partners, to raise awareness and help students, parents and educators to prevent bullying.

The pan-regional initiative has evolved in a systematic manner since its rollout in 2012. The first phase emphasized awareness about the problem and the fact that bullying is unacceptable under any circumstances. The next phase focused on practical ways to combat and deal with bullying, placing emphasis on the responsibilities of bystanders and adult intervention.

A bullying prevention Pledge for students and adults was then widely publicized and a seven-module tool kit was distributed in hard copy and on line, as well through an app for mobile devices, aimed at primary and secondary students as well as educators and parents.

Subsequent phases have focused on cyberbullying and how children are taking action to end bullying and the discrimination that often underpins it in their schools and communities.

The ongoing campaign includes dozens of animated and live action Public Service Announcements broadcast regularly (representing over US\$20 million in airtime), dedicated websites (<http://www.bastadebullying.com> and <http://www.chegadebullying.com.br>), the Pledge campaign (over 1.5 million children and adults have signed on to date) and the toolkit and app for kids, parents and educators that provide practical information and activities about dealing with bullying, including a module dedicated to cyberbullying.

Campaign partners Plan International and World Vision are using the campaign tool kit in schools and communities to train teachers and empower students in over a dozen countries in the region, working closely with national and local educational authorities and the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI).



CAMPAIGN MESSAGES: EVERYONE MUST HELP TO PREVENT BULLYING

- Many schools are taking action against bullying. What is your school doing to prevent bullying? **Get involved. Speak up to stop bullying!**
- Help your school prevent bullying. Tell everyone to sign the Pledge against Bullying and join the 100% Pledge Schools. **Speak up to stop bullying!**
- Bullying affects everyone. **All of us** -- students, parents, school staff -- **must do our part to prevent it. Speak up to stop bullying!**



BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION

- We all come in different sizes, colors and abilities. Don't discriminate and don't bully. You can help. **Respect our differences. Speak up to stop bullying!**
- **We are all different. Discrimination hurts.** Respect all classmates and protect them against bullying.
- Big / little, shy / outgoing, black / white, rich / poor -- we are all different and equal. Don't discriminate. **Don't bully. It hurts -- and it's not cool. Speak up to end bullying!**
- **Bullying can be with fists and it can be with words. Both really hurt.** Bullying is unacceptable. All of us -- students, parents, school staff -- must do our part to prevent it. **Speak up to stop bullying!**
- Bullying is violent, whether physically or psychologically. Speak up, tell an adult, talk about bullying with friends. **More violence is not the answer.**



TALKING ABOUT BULLYING

- Are you worried about bullying? Talk to your parents or a teacher. They can help. **Speak up to stop bullying!**
- Is someone bullying you on line? Cyberbullying's no game. It really hurts. Talk to your parents or a teacher. They can help. **We are all affected by bullying and together we can prevent it. Speak up!**
- Parents, is bullying a problem at your kid's school? Preventing bullying is everyone's responsibility. Talk to your kids. **Talk to their teachers. You too must speak up to stop bullying!**
- Do you know someone who is being bullied? Tell them it's wrong. It's not their fault. Include them among your friends. **Do the right thing. Speak out against bullying!**

TAKING ACTION

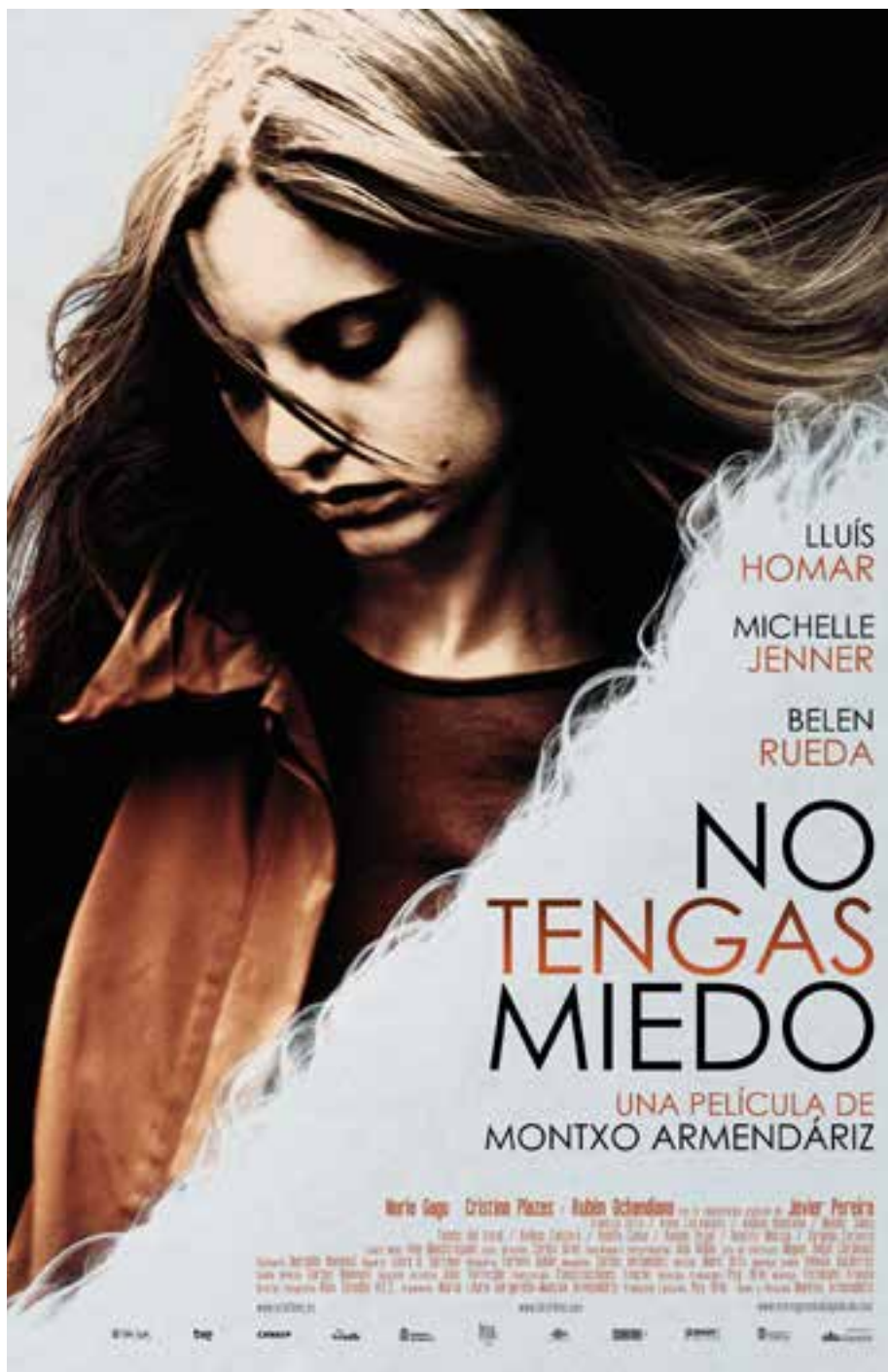
- If you see someone being bullied, don't just stand there. **Take action.** Tell people to stop. Find an adult to intervene. Say a kind word to the kid who's bullied. **Be a hero and speak up to stop bullying.**
- Parents, join your kids and your school to prevent bullying. Sign the Pledge to stop bullying. **Be responsible. Get involved! Speak up to stop bullying!**

Cartoon Network™. Basta de bullying, no te quedas callado! My todos los logos, personajes y elementos relacionados son marcas registradas de © 2011 Cartoon Network.

BASTADEBULLYING.COM

CHEGADEBULLYING.COM.BR





LLUÍS
HOMAR

MICHELLE
JENNER

BELEN
RUEDA

NO TENGAS MIEDO

UNA PELÍCULA DE
MONTXO ARMENDÁRIZ

María Gago - Cristina Plazas - Rubén Ochandiano en la producción de Javier Pereira

Producción: Gago Plazas Ochandiano / Dirección: Montxo Armendáriz / Guion: Montxo Armendáriz / Música: Alberto Iglesias / Fotografía: Juan José Barba / Montaje: Juan José Barba / Sonido: Juan José Barba / Vestuario: Juan José Barba / Peluquería: Juan José Barba / Maquillaje: Juan José Barba / Transporte: Juan José Barba / Alimentación: Juan José Barba / Alojamiento: Juan José Barba / Otros: Juan José Barba

www.gagoplazasochandiano.com www.armendariz.com www.no tengas miedo.com

Don't be afraid – breaking the silence of child sexual abuse



Film director and producer¹⁸

Montxo Armendáriz

One day I heard the story of a young boy who had been sexually abused by his music teacher. Another day, I heard about a teenager who had been suffering at the hands of her grandfather's perversions for several years. These stories were told to me by some friends who work as therapists helping people who have suffered or are suffering this sort of abuse. And I wanted to know more. And so began the story of the film "Don't be afraid" (*No tengas miedo*).

I got in touch with several victims and talked with them. I was shattered when I heard their stories, learning about their suffering, produced by such a horrible aggression. Above all, I felt a deep admiration when I saw the daily determination and courage they have to remake their lives.

I lived with their pain and hope for more than a year, I talked with the therapists who helped them, and I tried to distance myself from the topics that surround this theme to analyse the complexity of some human behaviours without preconceptions. And that is how I discovered the impressive dramatic and personal richness that was behind the experiences I heard: stories of silence, of guilt, of manipulation and dependencies. But also stories of survival, of fighting against adversity, against humiliation, against submission.

"Don't be afraid" was inspired by all of this material. It is a film about the victims' determination to face a traumatic fate; about their will to build up their own future; about the need to show on the screen a dark truth our society insists on ignoring.

I wish to thank the film's team for their invitation to participate in such a special film. For me, it was like a gift after a stolen childhood and the adult's fight that followed. And from here I want to tell the victims: do not be afraid, don't let the time halt at those horrible moments, don't stop living. Life is very short and has to be lived. Don't let others impose the silence, speak out! We deserve a life in dignity and we can make it happen!

¹⁸ www.oriafilms.es/notengasmiedoweb/sinopsis.html

The Crew

“When somebody sexually assaults a person, he or she violates more than the body. The assault wears many places in the person, including those that cannot be physically touched. Victims of abuse dissociate from their bones during the trance. Their head flies far away, to another place. It’s a long and lonely journey. And when they return, they are voiceless. As if the dignity, the skin, but also the most subtle of things: the words were stolen from them. We told this story to lend them our words, so that they can feel less lonely. We tried to find witnesses to their journey. Tell what they endured, with the hope that there will be someone there, people listening.”

“When I first read the script, I had to stop and breathe several times. It is impossible not to feel kicked in the stomach by this story. I am lucky to be a part of this film, as it points out, without complacency, a problem that cannot be kept concealed.”

“I wonder in which precise point in time an adult decides that a child is an object they possess. I wonder where those children find the strength to keep breathing. And I dream how wonderful it would be seeing a smile in their eyes, as this would mean that nobody has injected the disgust and fear in their bodies yet.”

“I have been involved in this film project since the very beginning and I am impressed by the generosity and commitment of the crew towards such a crucial issue. I believe the film addresses abuse rigorously and with the intention to serve a cause. It contributes to fill a social debate gap and shows how the film industry also can help those whose fate was to suffer from life’s darkness, people who deserve meeting other people willing to send them some light.”

“When I was a boy, my main worries were to know whether I would be chosen for the school soccer team, if I could spend at least a few moments with Verónica (my first sweetheart) , if the following summer we would go to Aquopolis, if I would complete my cards collection, or what was on the sandwich my mum had prepared for me. That was my microworld, my bubble, my parallel reality. And now I wonder: who has the right to enter unannounced in a child’s life? Who can dare to blast that wonderful bubble? Who, eh? WHO? And I am speechless.”

Diving into this complex and terrible reality touches something deep down inside you. As the testimonies left by the crew in the film's blog show, we were all moved, but also proud of giving a voice to the victims and denouncing a hidden reality.

The preparation of the film was indeed very intense. But nothing could prepare us to what would come later: the letters, the testimonies, the debates, the campaigns. We were quickly overwhelmed by the reaction of the victims and survivors of sexual abuse and by the child protection champions. For those fighting to break the silence, the film was a welcome sparkle to ignite the needed public debate. For many victims, it brought recognition to their suffering and courage to speak out and seek help. And of course, we suspect that there were those who felt uncomfortable and even threatened by the spotlight put on their criminal behaviours.

We are committed to continue breaking the silence of abuse and to invite others to contribute to end violence against children, investing in prevention and education to reach professional networks, schools, the family and society as a whole. So that no child be left without protection. So that together, we free childhood from violence and abuse. It is High Time!

Do not be afraid; don't let the time halt at those horrible moments... Don't let others impose the silence, speak out! We deserve a life in dignity and we can make it happen!

Montxo Armendariz



Cover of "Adieu Violence", publication of the Ombudsperson for Children's Office, Mauritius

Every hour matters after rape: using data to support survivors



Chief Executive Officer, Together for Girls

Daniela Ligiero

When Maureen Phiri of Malawi was 11 years old, her family sent her to be a house girl in a neighbour's home. Unbeknownst to his wife, the neighbour repeatedly raped Maureen while she lived with and worked for the family. Fearing the stigma that she would face from her community if she reported the man, she decided to keep the crime a secret and dealt with the emotional and physical trauma all on her own. It wasn't until several years later that she discovered the man who raped her had also infected her with HIV.

I was luckier than Maureen. I too experienced sexual violence as a child, and like Maureen, did not receive immediate post-rape care services. Thankfully my perpetrator did not have HIV, so that's one less challenge I've had to deal with. I was also fortunate that my experience did not lead to an unplanned pregnancy. In fact, I'm one of the few survivors who over the years was able to access the services, help and support I needed to heal from the trauma I experienced.

This changed the course of my life in deep and significant ways – I was able to go to school, get a PhD, and spend the last 20 years of my life working on issues that matter most to me. I've worked to advance the sexual and reproductive health and rights of people all over the world, and to prevent gender-based violence and violence against children. I was also able to marry a wonderful man, who respects and supports me, to start a family, and to live a full and joyful life. Today, I also lead an amazing public-private partnership called Together for Girls, which focuses on ending violence against children, particularly sexual violence against girls. Sadly, most children who experience sexual violence do not get the opportunity to heal from it like I did.

At Together for Girls, we are proud to contribute to this movement, High Time to end violence against children, through our sustained effort to gather data on the scope and magnitude of violence against children and to work with country governments to take action. Our partnership's Violence Against Children Surveys, with data from 10 African, Asian and Caribbean countries, show that between 20-38% of girls and 10-18% of boys experience sexual violence. The surveys also show that girls in sub-Saharan Africa who experience sexual violence are more than three times more likely to get HIV over their lifetime than girls who have not, and about one in three of these girls report a resultant pregnancy from rape. Ultimately, we want to prevent all sexual violence from happening in the first place, but, in the meantime, we want to make sure that preventable consequences are addressed.

Do You Know Why Every Hour Matters After Rape?

Every hour matters after rape to prevent many lifelong physical and mental health consequences. Here's what you need to know about the short window of time available to access critical services:

EVERY H⁷²OUR MATTERS

Speed is of the essence.

72 WITHIN 72 HOURS:

Take **post-exposure prophylaxis medication** (PEP) within 72 hours of a rape for HIV prevention. After 72 hours, HIV testing is still important, as is appropriate treatment, counselling, and support.



120 WITHIN 120 HOURS:

Take **emergency contraception** within 120 hours for pregnancy prevention.



GO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:

Get a **physical examination** to identify and treat injuries.



Take **medications** to prevent other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Get **immunizations** to prevent tetanus and Hepatitis B (where available).



Medical professionals can collect **forensic evidence** to support criminal investigations if you choose to file a police report.



You may be **referred to other services**, including the police, legal service providers, and case managers.



ANYTIME:

Counselling and other psychosocial support can help you work through trauma.



The sooner some post-rape medications are taken, the more likely they are to be effective. If you miss the timeframe for these medications, other health services and psychosocial support, can still be beneficial.

Learn more at everyhourmatters.org

72 Hours Can Change a Life

The majority of people globally, even those in the most developed countries such as the United States of America, are unaware that some of the long-term consequences of rape can be prevented if a survivor quickly accesses post-rape care. HIV can be prevented with post-exposure prophylaxis medication if taken within 72 hours of a rape. Emergency contraception to prevent an unwanted pregnancy is also most effective within 72 hours – although it can be effective up to 120 hours after unprotected sex. Depending on the circumstances, treatment can also address other short- and long-term health consequences, including physical injuries, other sexually transmitted infections, tetanus or hepatitis B. Receiving psychosocial support is also critically important, and can help anytime – no matter how long it has been since a rape took place.

Whether one contracts HIV as the result of sexual violence should not be left up to chance—as was the case for Maureen and for me.

To raise awareness of both the need to seek comprehensive services after rape and make these health services available in all communities, Together for Girls, launched the Every Hour Matters advocacy campaign this year.

Our partners, including the governments of the United States and Canada, five UN agencies and several private sector organizations, have helped create this campaign in response to data uncovered through our surveys, which show that very few children who experience sexual violence receive any services to heal from it. For example, in Kenya’s 2010 survey, just 7% of girls sought services and only 3% received them. The situation was even worse for boys: 2% tried to get services and less than 1% got care.

This lack of service utilization happens for a lot of reasons – sometimes there are no services, other times they are biased, ineffective or often re-traumatizing; our cultural norms on sexual violence lead some victims to feel ashamed, and to question or blame themselves for the crime they experienced. (A study by the U.S. National Institute of Justice found that the top two reasons for not reporting sexual assault on campus were “self-blame” and “shame or embarrassment.”) However, another important reason is that most people don’t know that there’s a limited window of time to seek certain kinds of health services, and that “every hour matters” for post-rape care.

72 Hours Can Inspire Creative Solutions

Maureen’s story illustrates how we as a global community are failing to adequately protect and support those who experience rape, especially adolescent girls who are the most vulnerable to sexual violence and its long-term consequences such as HIV and unwanted pregnancy. While global and national leaders are considering investing new resources to prevent physical, sexual and emotional violence against children as part of the newly-adopted Sustainable Development Goals, we should also be looking to

Ultimately, we want to prevent all sexual violence from happening in the first place, but, in the meantime, we want to make sure that preventable consequences are addressed.

Daniela Ligiero

take on the stigma associated with rape to help survivors feel more comfortable disclosing these experiences and seeking the services they need to begin healing.

Fortunately, in the past few years, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and several other countries have recognized the magnitude of the problem and have begun setting up services as part of their work through the Together for Girls partnership. District-level one-stop centres that provide healthcare, social welfare and police services to survivors all at one location are promising and becoming more common interventions. Integrating post-rape care services that are child- and youth-friendly into existing health structures can also be effective. Other solutions that directly address the cultural norms of violence and gender inequality that contribute to rape are also showing results with changes in attitudes, increased reporting of sexual and gender-based violence and greater use of services.

As part of the next phase of the Every Hour Matters campaign, we are also looking at how mobile technology can be utilized to prevent sexual violence as well as help survivors learn about and seek services at greater rates. In our partner countries in Africa where some post-rape care services are not as readily available, we are also seeking to work with governments and NGOs to increase care while also collaborating with technology companies to implement solutions that will more quickly and efficiently connect survivors with the closest-available services.

Of course, a survivor of sexual violence should be free to decide if and when to share this experience. As a survivor myself, I understand how challenging this can be. But contracting HIV, having an unplanned pregnancy, feeling ashamed or fearing others' reactions should not be added to the trauma of the experience itself.

While many countries around the world – especially those that are part of the Together for Girls partnership – are now making great progress, the Every Hour Matters campaign aims to further inspire an urgent response across the world so that every community is prepared to end violence and help support survivors like Maureen.

We hope you will join us in spreading the word that #EveryHourMatters after rape. For more information on the campaign, visit everyhourmatters.org or togetherforgirls.org.



Building a safe home



The Christian Care Centre, Solomon Islands

Sister Doreen

The mission began at the sisters' place in the centre of town called Patterson's House in the early eighties. Women and children began to use the sisters' house as a refuge when fleeing from violence at home perpetrated by their fathers, brothers, husbands or male relatives.

During that time, because the house was not designed to cater for such situations, the sisters at most times had to give up their rooms for the families.

Also, at the time, such activity was not conducive to the sisters' religious orders' time table, which involved meditation and prayer times.

It was also not comfortable for the women and their children because of the need for space and recreation for their children.

As a result the sisters decided to establish a safe home for such women and their children, a place where they could run for safety and also be comfortable. Somewhere they could consider their home, although away from home, whilst under the sisters' protection. That was the Dream Plan of late Sister Lillian Maeve and the Community of the Sisters of the Church.

In 2001 a site for the safe place was identified and confirmed at Tenaru. Clearance of the bush by the sisters began and the sisters moved into a leaf-thatched roof house in the area. Between 2003 and 2004 the building that was funded by the Government of New Zealand began. It was completed in 2005 and officially opened and the first victims were accepted into the new home.

As more women came to the centre at Tenaru, the sisters realized the biggest challenge was the accepted cultural pattern – the belief that in Melanesian society bride price gave ownership and power over the women which resulted in the perception that men have the power to beat their wives and children. As a result, the community backlash against the sisters' work was a significant challenge.

There were also questions about the house and the role it played. However the sisters witnessed firsthand the violence, injury and trauma caused to the women and children. This made the sisters more determined to continue the work that would help and give refuge to the women and their children.

We, the sisters, saw the need for safety and protection, and recognized that the perpetrators must face justice. However another stumbling block was within the police force itself, as the officers were usually not so sensitive to domestic violence issues affecting women and children. In some cases, some officers were themselves perpetrators of domestic violence.

As the years went by, in addition to the centre's core function of providing a safe haven with accommodation, food and medicine, legal support also gained special relevance. This meant that a sister had to accompany the victims to court and help them through the process of dealing with local police.

We have also taken on the extra task of counselling the children; we provide the space and opportunity for the children to speak about how they felt and what they witnessed in their homes. And we have encouraged the fathers and mothers to apologize to their children in what has become the "family round table reconciliation." However, we firmly believe that despite this reconciliation, the perpetrator must also face justice.

And most importantly we the sisters want the children to be made aware that it is not right to cause injury or harm to another person, and most importantly to women and children.

The journey now is to ensure that the effects of the violence endured by these children especially do not affect them for the rest of their lives. We, the sisters, want to ensure that the vicious cycle ends with their parents and that they do not carry on the practice into the next generation.

According to a report from 2009, 64 % of women aged 15-49 with partners in the Solomon Islands have experienced physical, sexual and emotional abuse from an intimate partner. The study also shows that a child whose mother has experienced partner violence will be five times more likely to be emotionally, physically or sexually abused by a partner. Gender based violence is viewed by many as a private and acceptable phenomenon, which shows that there is some inter-generational transmission of violence. You can imagine that children who are direct witnesses of violence are also affected.

The Christian Care Center is the only safe house we have in Solomon Islands. The dream is to have more safe houses around the country – as women and children will only speak or seek assistance if they are removed from the home in which violence is prevalent. And if the people they run to for assistance can provide protection and a confidential environment to enable them to speak out.

Whilst dealing with such violence, we must ensure all homes that have children are safe, so children do not feel that they have to seek love and attention outside their home which can result in sexual abuse and teenage pregnancy. Ultimately, loving their neighbor includes their children, wife and husband which will build a happy home and community. So in the larger picture this must translate to a safe family, community and country, in which the laws protect our children from violence and abuse. Our children are the future. We must ensure our children of today are better people by being nurtured in good values.

■ ■ Building a safe home for women and their children, a place where they could feel safe and also a place they could consider their home. ■ ■

Sister Doreen



Photo © Jannatul Mawa/Unicef

The transformative power of early childhood development in building peace in the world



Child Study Center, Yale University

Rima Salah, PhD
James F. Leckman, PhD

On this auspicious occasion – the 27th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child and the first anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations General Assembly, we can rightly celebrate the impressive gains achieved for the children of the world. The mortality rate for children under 5 years of age worldwide has declined from 12.7 million in 1990 to 5.9 million in 2015. Immunization coverage increased from 16 percent in 1980 to 84 percent in 2012. Improvement and nutrition have led to a 37 percent drop in stunting since 1990. The number of children out of school declined by almost half from 102 million to 57 million.



But progress has been only true for some, leaving millions of children behind, and their rights to thrive and grow to their full potential denied, reinforcing social inequity for the children of the world. Unfortunately, we know that over 200 million children under 5 years of age in low and middle income countries (LMICs) and in emerging economies will face inequalities and fail to reach their development potential, as they grow up with a broad range of risk factors that include poverty, poor health, abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as

inadequate care and learning opportunities. This is compounded by the situations of displacement, war, conflict and extreme violence to which families are exposed. Today millions of children and their families in the world, in Africa and in the Middle East are living in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity. This is a time of unprecedented displacement of more than 65 million people, primarily women and children. According to the latest publication of UNICEF “Uprooted: The Growing Crisis for Refugee and Migrant Children,” 50 million children have migrated across borders or have been forcibly displaced, and a shocking 28 million have been uprooted by horrific conflicts and violence.

Images of children`s bodies washed up on the shores of the Mediterranean continue to haunt us. Images of children fleeing their homes, communities and villages in boats, trucks and cars continue to haunt us. Images of children detained behind bars continue to haunt us. What also continues to haunt and concerns the international community is the lasting negative impact of violence, forced displacement, and the disruption of the fabric of communities and families, and the erosion of protective systems on young

children and its detrimental effect on their development. The future economic, social, and political health of societies is also at stake.



Lack of nurturing care and protection, which is linked with poverty, stress, parental ill health, including mental disorders and substance use, inadequate nutrition, living in violent conflict zones, and other adverse childhood experiences can have deleterious consequences for early neural and social development and increase the risk of less than optimal outcomes across the life span. For example, studies in LMICs have found that mothers who believe that their husbands are justified in hitting them are more likely to believe that harsh corporal punishment is also necessary to rear their children successfully. Sadly, victims of violence and maltreatment during childhood are more likely to become perpetrators and victims of violence later in life. We need to take action to reverse this vicious cycle and create a virtuous cycle so that nurturing care is passed from generation to generation.

Advances in science suggest also new opportunities to contribute to sustainable peace through investment in positive early development of young children. It further highlights the importance of positive parenting and reinforces the evidence that early stimulation, caregiving, attachment, bonding and creating safe contexts for children all have positive influence on their brain development, and can help children grow, learn, and thrive.

In addition, emerging and well established scientific evidence from multiple disciplines (developmental psychology, ethnology, epigenetics, economics) continues to substantiate the link between the early years and early life environment with long-term wellbeing, violence prevention and behaviours linked with more peaceful communities. Many of these crucial findings are summarized in The Lancet Early Childhood Development Series masterfully assembled and compellingly presented the available scientific evidence. Based on their reviews, it is clear that the formative years of life and intra-and-inter family and community relationships are powerful agents of change that can promote resilience, social cohesion and peace.

Many of these scientific advances are also examined in a documentary, The Beginning of Life that documents the early lives of children and their families in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Italy, Kenya and the United States.

One of the topics addressed in the documentary concerns the emerging field of “epigenetics” which examines how environmental risk factors (poor nutrition, pre- and peri-natal complications including high levels of maternal stress during the pregnancy, and well as other adverse childhood experiences) can influence how an individual’s DNA is read and transcribed throughout the developing body and brain. Indeed, it turns out that the variation in regulation of gene expression during development, rather than variation in protein sequence, is almost certainly the dominant factor in our evolution as a species. Such changes in gene expression in the brain have led to the creation of new combinatorial expression patterns


Advancement in science suggest also new opportunities to contribute to sustainable peace through investment in positive early development of young children.


Rima Salah and James Leckman

during development and ultimately to the formation of distinct neuronal circuits that are shaped in part by the child's biological and social environment from preconception onwards.

In these critical times, unfortunately, there is insufficient investment in the early years of life as a path to peace, social transformation and violence prevention. This is true, despite the existence of many early childhood programmes that have been developed and disseminated across the globe, from Afghanistan and Pakistan to South Africa, Nigeria, and Cote d'Ivoire, from Turkey and Lebanon to Jamaica, Chile, Colombia and Brazil. The holistic and inclusive approach of these programmes aims to mitigate trauma, to promote emotional regulation and sensitivity to others, eliminate harsh punishment, and to encourage the formation of positive social relationships within families and communities.

As pointed out in the third review of The Lancet Early Childhood Development Series, authored by Linda Richter and colleagues, we must strengthen government leadership to scale-up nationwide early child development programmes that are effective and sustainable. We also need to find ways to empower families and children so that their voices can be heard and they can become agents of change in partnership with government agencies.

The Early Childhood Peace Consortium (ECPC)¹⁹ was founded on the idea that the global community must address the root causes of violence and conflict, and that children and families can be agents of change for peace. The vision is to create an inclusive movement for peace, social justice and prevention of violence, through using early childhood development strategies that enable the world community to advance peace, security and sustainable development. The goals and vision of the ECPC are well aligned with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Agenda 2030 was particular historic moment for children and young children, as it was the first time in history early childhood development was included in the global development agenda, and was recognized as essential for sustainable human development.

¹⁹ Early Childhood Peace Consortium (ECPC) was launched at UNICEF in 2013. Its founding members included UNICEF, Anne Çocuk EĐitim Vakfı (AÇEV, the Mother-Child Education Foundation), Yale University, the Fetzer Institute, the Simon Xavier Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace, and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations.

To achieve this, it is important:

- to contribute to the debate on peacebuilding by focusing on early childhood development and engaging families, communities, civil society, and governments and philanthropists through science and practice;
- to link emerging knowledge from bio-behavioural and environmental sciences with existing scientific evidence to increase investment, advocate for and create local and sustainable programmes, as well as policies and systems for peacebuilding and reduction of violence through early child development programmes;
- to advocate and disseminate relevant information to policy makers, networks, providers of family relevant social services, parents and caregivers; and

In the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants that was adopted on the 19th of September, Member States have agreed “to support Early Childhood Development for refugee children”. We know that this will help to protect young children, parents, caregivers and their communities from the consequences of violence and displacement.

However, the real breakthrough came with the adoption of the Resolution 2282 “On Sustaining Peace” emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace, particularly through the prevention of conflict and addressing its root causes, and reaffirming the important role of women, youth and communities in preventing conflict and in building and sustaining peace.

This is all compounded by the rise of civil society and the growing voices of people, of communities and families and their resolve to work in the service of peace. They want to be heard not only as victims of conflict and displacement, but also as agents of change and as drivers of peace.

It is only by moving forward together that we can change the tide of violence. What we need is an unflinching vision, an unwavering commitment, as well as a strong partnership for and with children and their families.



Mural, Children do as children see, MANARA, The Arab Network for child Rights

It's high time to end all violent punishment of children



Co-ordinator Churches Network for Non-violence

Chris Dodd

Corporal punishment of children is the most common form of violence which children suffer in societies worldwide. It violates a child's physical, emotional and spiritual integrity and it puts at risk a child's right to health, education and development. The imperative for prohibiting and eliminating it is children's right to respect for their human dignity and physical integrity and to equal protection under the law. States cannot design effective national child protection systems or say they hold children in high esteem while their laws still justify violent punishment of children.

The idea that children, the most vulnerable and fragile people, should endure humiliation and pain in the name of discipline must be challenged. Corporal punishment is considered by many to be a part of normal parenting in many countries, children are the only people singled out by law for less protection from violence than adults expect for themselves.

People are often surprised and puzzled that prohibition of corporal punishment should be a priority when there are so many breaches of children's rights and other extreme forms of violence against so many children around the world - even though corporal punishment is a cause of children's death and injures millions of children. Legalised violence against children perpetuates children's powerlessness and low status, leaving the door open to all other forms of extreme violence and exploitation against children. The idea that some degree of violence against children should be socially approved and sanctioned by states is symbolic of children's low status. Reversing this pattern is fundamental to promoting respect for children as rights' holders.

Prohibition of violent punishment by law is an essential strategy for ending all forms of violence against children. It makes it clear to all people working with and caring for children that hitting a child is no more lawful than hitting anyone else. An active campaign for law reform challenges the way in which children are regarded and promotes children as people in their own right.

Violent punishment of children is entrenched in culture and tradition and for most people, this issue is a deeply personal one and a reflection of one's own experience. This makes it difficult for some to see the issue as one of equality and human rights.

■ ■ **The idea that children, the most vulnerable and fragile people, should endure humiliation and pain in the name of discipline must be challenged.** ■ ■

Law reform alone is not enough but it is necessary. For as long as the law says it's permissible to hit children, child protection measures and education for positive, non-violent discipline will be undermined. Many adults have never questioned the violent punishment they endured as children and some may argue it was for their own good. Unless corporal punishment is explicitly prohibited by law generations of children will continue to be hit and hurt and child protection policies will never be fully effective.

Chris Dodd

Some argue that public education and positive parenting alone are sufficient to change behaviour. But children should not have to wait until societal attitudes change for their fundamental right to live free from violence. Children's right to legal protection from all forms of corporal punishment is recognised under international and regional human rights treaties; countries which have ratified these treaties are legally obliged to enact laws to prohibit corporal punishment and to measure whether its message of the need for non-violent childrearing is translating into reality.

In order to make a difference in children's daily lives legislation should be accompanied by implementation strategies, public education on children's rights, information about the risks of corporal punishment and the benefits to children and parents of positive non-violent forms of discipline.

Progress worldwide

Globally, prohibition has accelerated from the pioneering ban in Sweden, in 1979, to four countries by 1990, eight by 2000, 28 by 2010 and now 50 (as of October 2016). Paraguay is the most recent country to have implemented prohibition in August 2016.

In addition, governments in another 53 countries – a quarter of all UN member states – have expressed their commitment to enacting prohibiting legislation by clearly accepting recommendations to do so made during the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) or in other official contexts.²⁰

Faith-based support for reform is an integral part of the global movement for prohibition of all violent punishment of children. The publication of the UN Secretary-General's World Report on Violence against Children (2006) influenced religious support for prohibition worldwide. One of the most significant faith based actions supporting this report's recommendations is: "A Multi-Religious Commitment to Confront Violence against Children". Many religious communities are now familiar with this declaration, the Kyoto Declaration, which is the result of secular and religious collaboration.

²⁰ Further information and updates on progress can be found on the Global Initiative website: www.endcorporalpunishment.org

The declaration makes a strong call to religious communities to reject all forms of violence against children including corporal punishment. It was formally adopted by over 800 religious leaders from all the world religions at the Eighth World Assembly of Religions for Peace in Kyoto, Japan, 2006.

Seven recommendations were made as a guide for religious communities. Article 6 states:

We call upon our governments to adopt legislation to prohibit all forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment, and to ensure the full rights of children, consistent with the Rights of the Child and other international and regional agreements.

We urge them to establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of these laws and to ensure that religious communities participate formally in these mechanisms. Our religious communities are ready to serve as monitors of implementation, making use of national and international bodies to maintain accountability.²¹

Countering religious justification for punitive violence against children and challenging those who use their scriptures and sacred texts to justify it is an important part of working with religious communities. It involves building a base of broad religious support and making it possible for religious leaders and their communities to play an active, leading role in the movement for reform. Religious supporters are well positioned to advocate with colleagues and minority groups in their own communities who use their faith and religious texts to justify violent punishment of children.

There are now growing numbers of religious communities and organisations who consider ending legalised violence against children to be both a moral and religious imperative. For many faith communities this sometimes involves changing a deeply entrenched culture of acceptance of corporal punishment.

Increasingly, religious leaders from all the major world religions are denouncing violent punishment of children as incompatible with the values expressed in their religious teachings. These values are very similar to the human rights principles of respect for human dignity, equality, justice and non-violence. Religious values helped form the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and generations of religious leaders and scholars have played a significant role in defending human rights.

These values which are shared by most religious communities transcend theological and denominational differences and form a basis for multi-religious cooperation towards eliminating violent punishment of children. There are many examples of religious communities working in solidarity with secular organisations, bound by universal values, a shared respect for human dignity and a strong commitment to human rights.

²¹ A 10th anniversary guide for reflection and discussion on the declaration is available at www.churchesfornon-violence.org

Religious leaders can make powerful and influential statements which urge others into action. In a service held at St Davids Cathedral, Wales, UK in February 2014, dedicated to ending legalised violence against children, the Bishop of St Davids, Wyn Evans stated in his sermon:

How we treat those who are weak and defenceless is a marker of a civilised society. Violence, both deliberate and directed and casual and unthinking and directed towards children especially, and by extension the disruption to the life of family and society, violence, especially when it has the sanction of the state and the law behind it, is pandemic.

The need for urgent action

Violent punishment of children is a global problem in need of urgent action. It is high time to end the legality and acceptance of what children identify as the most common form of violence and fear they endure.

Universal prohibition of violent punishment of children is within reach. How long children have to wait depends on the strength of our advocacy and the resolve and sense of urgency with which we work together towards achieving children's right to full respect for their human dignity and to equal protection under the law. We can only imagine what the world would be like if all children were treated with respect, non-violence, kindness and compassion.

I am absolutely convinced that the way we raise our children is the chief cause of either peace or war among human beings. If we could somehow decree tomorrow that no children would ever again be subjected to the terror, the pain and the gross injustice of corporal punishment from the adults in their lives, I believe we would have a peaceful world in one generation.

David Langness, Bahá'í Teachings.



Toscana September 2009: Coppa del mondo InterCampus/Inter Campus World Cup. Photo ©Franco Origlia

Sport and children's right to play



Inter Campus

Born as an expression of the ethical spirit that has distinguished FC Internazionale Milano since its foundation, Inter Campus is a Corporate Social Responsibility programme that supports social-religious-racial equality worldwide, with a specific focus on children's rights.

Inter Campus formalizes long term cooperation agreements with carefully selected reliable NGO's around the world, supporting their educational programmes, sanitary protection initiatives and social inclusion aims in favour of children, using football as an educational tool. Through its activity, Inter Campus operates in 29 countries providing adults technical formation, promoting children's right to play and fostering the development of local communities.

Inter Campus Israel and Palestine

In several areas of the world, because of poverty, war or disease, children are denied the opportunity to be children and play. According to the "Declaration of the Rights of the Child" proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution of 1959, later reaffirmed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, playing is an essential activity for the development of every child. For this reason, Inter Campus decided to use football as a social tool to enable children's right to play.

In addition to this general objective, every Inter Campus intervention is designed according to the specific needs of the local communities. In Israel and Palestine the main challenges are related to violence and lack of integration among the different ethnic and religious groups. The main goal in this region is fostering integration and promoting peace, through dialogue and cultural exchange.

Inter Campus is to make people and children from all over the world become friends.

7-year-old Liel, Inter Campus Israel and Palestine participant.

Football is an educational tool. To enable children's right to play. Kids learn having fun... fostering integration and promoting peace, through dialogue and cultural exchange.

Inter Campus

The aim of the project is to integrate more than 200 kids representing the Israeli, Arab-Israeli, and Palestinian cultures. Thanks to the power of sport and the dedicated activity of Inter Campus, these kids meet every month in the same pitch and play together.

Inter Campus works on the territory in three centres in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and West Bank, together with the NGO, Ghetton. This partner, locally based, runs the everyday activities with six trainers, and 200 kids. They train four times a week, representing a major reference point in the lives of the children. Every training session, according to Inter Campus methodology, has a motor-technical objective, but also, some important goals: correct usage of spare time for the kids, integration among them, learning of rules and sport values, such as respect, loyalty, mutual help. Cognitive, social and emotional areas of kids' personality are always involved during the training sessions. Kids learn while having fun. The children are also involved in off-field activities, like recreational visits to cultural sites, which are otherwise not accessible for them.

Periodical meetings among the children from the different parties are the most important moments of integration. Palestinian children enter the Israeli territories, so all the children can play together and get to know each other.

After several years of constant activity, we succeeded in giving a monthly frequency to these shared moments. Despite being a restricted time, the symbolic value of these encounters gives them a new perspective, opening their minds and allowing a first-person opinion, based on real life experience. The result of this long term activity is to overcome the prejudice they are often forced to live with, affected by society and sometimes families themselves. The main tangible impact of this process is to enable a spontaneous dialogue among parties and to develop a respectful coexistence.

Inter Campus has been dedicated to social work in diverse countries of the world since 1997. Through soccer, the Inter Campus programme has been able to transmit values that cannot be disregarded for the future of each child involved such as a family, education, hope and opportunity for the future. It is difficult to describe in words one's sentiments when encountering these children and their manifestations of joy upon seeing us.

Inter Campus is strongly supported by the Moratti family and by the entire Club and this social programme can rely on more than 200 local educators who collaborate in the development of activities in favour of children. The result of the contribution of each part involved is source of great pride to all of us.

Luis Figo

They are not just playing football, they are learning to treat each others as human beings, not as Arab or Jewish, by stereotypes.

Father of an Israeli child

A further activity was planned to facilitate integration among the six coaches: they were invited to Italy to gather and work jointly on the Italian pitches. In June 2016, five trainers from both parties met in Milan and shared an immersive week of football clinics, together with other Inter Campus trainers from Mexico and Colombia. This was a great opportunity for teambuilding and cultural exchange.



Photo © Marina Gente,
Mots d'Enfants, Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE)

Part 4

Special protection for
children at heightened risk



우주로 가면 ©Kim, Jiheon; Age: 6, Republic of Korea
“Courtesy of Children With Disabilities, Programme Division, UNICEF”

Birth of a rap song



Young Rapper

Kelvin Augusto Enamorado

After living for six years in one of the most dangerous neighbourhoods in the world (Chamelecón SPS) from 2008 -2014 I was able to experience a reality contrast by suddenly moving from a rural community to the urban reality of San Pedro Sula. Then I too noticed situations that for most people living in the Chamelecón sector are routine, such as the actions of gangs fighting for territory, armed violence and all that this implies.

It was not until 2015 that I found a way to capture these facts on paper through the musical genre of hip hop culture, RAP whose acronym means RESPECT AND PEACE.

I Cannot Remain Silent²²

Composer and interpretation: MC Shino Rock (Kelvin Augusto Enamorado)

Organization: Warriors Zulu Nation Honduras

In life peace is what I want
 That war ends in our neighbourhood
 I look out the window and everything is very different
 If you go out on the streets they tag you as a criminal
 If you hear a noise, an alarm went off
 Because there is a guy with a weapon in his hand
 That's how he walks through our neighbourhood, with no shame of course
 If that dude presses the trigger, shots are heard
 He didn't go to school he doesn't know the abcs
 This is what we see daily in our ghetto
 By shooting the guy imposes respect
 If the gun is discharged that's not a good melody
 Act of bravery to violence you say no-way

²² Excerpts

Grab the pen and vent on paper
It's not good for you to show off with the gun
Because instead of the gun you better grab the pen
Change won't happen my friend if you don't make up your mind
Change won't happen if it doesn't start with you
To death and to weapons let's all say stop
Yes to music and life yes to the real Hip Hop

I cannot be silent seeing all that happens
My conscience rejects it
Even if they tie me up they cannot silence me
Because I'm the voice of those who cannot speak

I invite respectfully the President to come to my ghetto
A whole day in my township I dare him
He'll meet people with many scars
Chubby kids because they are full of worms
If he comes to my house he'll see why I get angry
Seeing so many children not studying
But the weight of my writing is not enough
Sadly he won't know how it feels
Instead of buying weapons, please invest in health
Instead of publicity please invest in our youth
If they don't want more bullies
They better build schools instead of battalions
When you feel this deep anger in your chest
When you also believe life is unfair
When you see we want to study but money is nowhere
Government don't pretend you didn't hear
You will represent me when you live like I do
If you ever had my problems that is gone

Clearly we are all different
But lets be all united to be stronger
God health and family above all is what I need
I have Friends I love like brothers and sisters
Education a roof and food
I also include
Music paper and ink
And with this I'm done.

No Puedo Callar²³

Compositor e intérprete: MC Shino Rock (Kelvin Augusto Enamorado)

Organización: Warriors Zulu Nation Honduras

En la vida haya paz eso es lo que yo quisiera
 Que en nuestro vecindario se acabe ya la guerra
 Me asomo a la ventana y todo es muy diferente
 Si salís a la calle te pintan de delincuente
 Que es lo que se escucha suena una alarma
 Porque hay un joven que en su mano anda un arma
 Así anda por el barrio y sin pena claro
 Si ese güirro (joven) jala ya suenan los disparos
 No fue a la escuela no se sabe el alfabeto
 Eso es lo que vemos a diario en nuestro gueto'
 A punta de disparos el güirro (joven) pone respeto
 Si dispara la pistola no es buena melodía
 Acto de valentía a la violencia decís nel
 Agarra la pluma y desahógate en papel
 Con la pistola no es bueno que presumas
 Es que en vez del arma mejor agarra la pluma
 El cambio no pasara amigo si no te decidís
 El cambio no pasara si no empieza por vos mismo
 A la muerte y a las armas ya digamos stop
 Si a la música y la vida si al real Hip Hop

No puedo callar viendo todo lo que pasa
 Mi conciencia lo rechaza
 Aunque me amarren nunca me podrán callar
 Porque yo soy la voz de los que no pueden hablar

Lo invito a mi gueto y con mucho respeto
 Un día completo en mi colonia
 Conocerá personas con muchas cicatrices
 Niños muy gorditos porque llenos de lombrices
 Si viene a mi casa sabrá porque me ciño
 Viendo sin estudiar en mí barrio a tantos niños

²³ Extracto

Pero el peso de mi letra no es suficiente
Tristemente no sabrá lo que se siente
Que en vez de comprar armas inviertan en salud
Que en vez de publicidad inviertan en la juventud
Si no quieren que haya más matones
Mejor pongan escuelas en lugar de batallones
Cuando sientan esta profunda rabia en su pecho
Cuando crea también que la vida es injusta
Cuando quiera estudiar pero el pisto (dinero) no le ajusta
Gobernador mejor no se haga que no escucho
Usted me va representar cuando viva igual que yo
Si tuvo mis problemas es algo que ya paso

Lógicamente todos somos diferentes
Pero estemos unidos para que seamos más fuertes
Dios salud y mi familia ante todo necesito
Tengo amigos y amigas que los quiero como hermanos
Educación techo y comida
También meto
Música papel y tinta
Y con eso estoy completo.

An infectious smile,
An undying spirit
These are not disabilities.



"Boy with a brush" In my painting, I want to show that disabilities can never affect a mind." Aditya Sriram, 11, Malaysia.
"Courtesy of Children With Disabilities, Programme Division, UNICEF"

The potential of children affected by conflict to fulfil the promise of the sustainable development goals



Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

Leila Zerrougui

When they adopted the new development agenda, Member States pledged to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind. Children, especially those affected by armed conflict are, without a doubt, among the most vulnerable. And they have been left the furthest behind.

Too often during conflict, we think that children are on the periphery of violence. In reality, it is they who are most affected by war, and our efforts to protect them are being seriously challenged. Right now, in countries such as South Sudan,

Syria, Yemen and many more, children are killed, maimed, recruited and used as child soldiers, abducted and victims of sexual violence. Schools and hospitals are under attack, and children have little or no access to basic life-saving humanitarian assistance.

Boys and girls in war-torn countries are much more than victims of incredibly difficult circumstances. They are key to building the peaceful, strong societies envisioned by the new development agenda. To fulfil the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we must harness the potential of boys and girls affected by conflict.

An agenda that takes the needs of children affected by armed conflict into account

Peace, justice and strong institutions are at the heart of the new development agenda. Several goals are related to children, including ensuring quality education and health services, ending the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and stopping all forms of violence against children.

Education

The SDGs affirm that every child has a right to a quality education. Yet, conflict too often means the end of learning for millions of children.

Schools are destroyed or damaged, and boys and girls forced to abandon their homes rarely find a safe place to continue their education during their displacement. Thousands of schools in conflict-ridden areas have closed their doors because of insecurity, interrupting the education of millions of children.

Too often, girls are the first to lose access to education. Parents keep them home because they fear for their safety or because of extremist groups that prohibit their access to school. While fleeing conflict or in exile, girls also become victims of trafficking or forced into early marriage.

Peace, justice and strong institutions are at the heart of the new development agenda.

Leila Zerrougui

With protracted conflicts, the education of entire generations is at risk. This is why providing access to school during emergencies must be a priority. If children were able to continue learning in times of war, countries would be better equipped to rebound and build a durable peace. Similarly, we must prioritize rebuilding schools once peace is achieved. Experience shows that it can take decades to reinstall skilled teachers and the physical infrastructure required to provide a quality education.

Investment in education is essential to fulfil the promise of the SDGs. We cannot expect children to participate in the development of their countries if they do not have basic skills. Without education, development will be hampered, and economic opportunities will remain few and far between, fuelling grievances and new cycles of instability, which will also impact other countries.

SDG 4 reminds us that we need to “promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. This is especially important for children recruited and used as child soldiers or whose education was interrupted for so long that going back to a regular school might be difficult or impossible.

Child soldiers often witness or are forced to commit violent acts. For these children, going back to their communities or back to school might not be easy. They may have a hard time finding their place in society once their ordeal is over. We need to provide tailored psycho-social reintegration programs, and help them find ways to contribute to their communities. For others, returning to school may not be possible and we need to provide opportunities through vocational training. Without assistance, these boys and girls may grow up to contribute to the stalling or, worse, the reversal of development.

Resources and expertise are required to support the release and reintegration of former child soldiers, with special attention given to the needs of girls. Providing financial support to reintegration programs must be a key priority in post-conflict situations.

Healthy lives

Health services save and sustain lives. Today’s armed conflicts increasingly leave hospitals in the direct line of fire. Attacks on hospitals, health workers and patients strike at the heart of the protection of children affected by armed conflict, and force doctors and medical personnel to flee, depriving communities of their vital expertise when it is most needed. Violence perpetuated against health-care facilities and personnel has a significant effect, causing dramatic increases in the mortality rate of patients, including, of course, children.

Rebuilding health infrastructure and bringing back doctors and nurses to post-conflict communities can

take years. As a result, the health of boys and girls is affected and so is the country's development.

To fulfil the development agenda's call to "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", protecting hospitals and health services in times of conflict must be a priority.

Prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers

In the past two decades, the protection of children affected by armed conflict has been firmly placed on the agenda of the United Nations highest bodies.

Over the years, tools have been developed and resolutions adopted to form the core of a strong framework to address violations against children, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers. This has reinforced the work achieved through ILO conventions and mechanisms to end the worst forms of child labour.

As a result, more than 115,000 child soldiers have been released since 2000. The campaign "Children, Not Soldiers", launched in 2014 with UNICEF, has contributed to the emergence of a global consensus that children should not be recruited and used by national forces in conflict. The momentum generated by the campaign has also opened new avenues of engagement with non-state armed groups, especially those active in countries concerned by "Children, Not Soldiers".

With the support of the international community, the goal of ending the recruitment and use of children is finally within reach. It is now our common responsibility to dedicate the necessary attention and resources to this problem to accomplish this development objective.

Peaceful, inclusive societies and the end of all forms of violence against and torture of children

Countries that have faced years, or decades, of conflict have to embark on a difficult journey to build the peaceful and inclusive societies envisioned by the development agenda. Addressing the root causes of conflict, ending discrimination against vulnerable groups, resolving grievances that may have fermented among communities are only a few of the challenges faced by these societies.

In this regard, adopting legal frameworks in conformity with international standards and pursuing accountability are essential. They are vital to end violations against children and prevent their recurrence. Accountability comes in many forms, but Governments bear the primary responsibility for protecting civilians and ensuring justice.

The SDGs are poised to make a real difference in the lives of millions of children affected by armed conflict. It is now our collective duty to join forces to ensure that all these boys and girls from Afghanistan to South Sudan to Colombia will grow up to live and contribute to the potential for meaningful change brought about by the new development agenda.



A young girl paints "child rights" on a wall of a Turkish Red Crescent Society child friendly space in Istanbul. Photo © Turkish Red Crescent Society



The winning entry in an Indian Red Cross child protection artwork contest in Tamil Nadu. Messages reflect prevention of physical and psychological violence in schools and communities during peace and emergencies

The chaos of emergencies: making children safe



Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Elhadj As Sy

In the chaos that follows an emergency, some things are sadly predictable. This includes the terrible fact that violence, including against children, often increases. Disasters can shake, even ruin, support systems while at the same time adding new levels of stress to families and communities. These shocks increase vulnerabilities of girls and boys to gender-based physical, sexual, and psychological violence and neglect.

Moreover, in the aftermath of a disaster, children are often left alone to fend for themselves. This is especially true of children who have a disability, or who are orphaned, unaccompanied, separated from their families, or living on the streets. It is a twisted reality where the heaviest burdens fall on the children who need support the most.

This surge in violence and vulnerability is predictable and it is preventable. Yet, tragically, it is not prevented, at least not on the scale that is required.

It is a pattern that plays out time and time again. It is one that we are currently seeing along the migration routes to Europe. In the past 18 months, more than 1.3 million people have arrived in Europe, fleeing conflict, discrimination, poverty and lack of opportunity.²⁴ This exodus has included hundreds of thousands of children. Between June 2015 and April 2016, the number of children arriving by sea, often at the mercy of smugglers and on dangerously unsafe rafts, increased from 16% to 35%. In 2015, almost 90,000 unaccompanied children applied for asylum in Europe. In the same period, there was a 46% increase in the number of trafficked children arriving in Britain, and a 300% increase in trafficked children arriving from Nigeria alone.²⁵

Here again we witness a collective failure to adequately respond to this crisis within a crisis. Collectively, across continents, our global efforts to protect children or to provide them with targeted services in countries of transit or destination are inadequate, even non-existent at times. We are falling far short of where we need to be and children are living with the consequences, many of which remain unseen and unheard.

²⁴ UNHCR: <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>

²⁵ Ibid

In Europe, and in crises around the world, there is a collective responsibility to improve. Much of this responsibility lies with States, but humanitarian organizations can do much more. We can begin with improving our collection of age and gender disaggregated data. Violence against children is often hidden: good data can bring it into the light. We need to do more to ensure that referral systems exist and that we are linked to them, and to provide support services for victims and survivors as well. Systems need to be put in place so that at-risk children are identified as early as possible; this calls for better training for our frontline responders. Critically, more should be done to maintain family unity to prevent separation. These actions can be complemented with scaled-up investments in safe spaces, psychosocial care for girls, boys and families and improved access to humanitarian education, along with efforts to support young people to take a leadership role in finding and implementing solutions.

There are indeed significant and troubling gaps in our current approach, but there are also reasons to be optimistic, even hopeful. More often than not, this hope comes from communities and local humanitarian organizations, including those working on the front line of some of today's most complex humanitarian crises. In Yemen, for example, the health and safety of tens of thousands of children is threatened by a now two-year long conflict.

The Yemen Red Crescent is working with teachers, parents and students to establish child friendly spaces in schools so that students have a place to be physically safe and to learn to cope with the psychological burdens of the fear and anxiety caused by the conflict. As a Red Crescent colleague explains, "Our programme helps children express themselves. They were reluctant at first, but then they started interacting more and more with us. The number of returnees to schools has increased since the beginning of the programme. Now we are also engaging with more children because everyone needs a safe environment."

Partnership is an essential part of such efforts. Whether it is a local government, ministry of education, health care providers, local youth agencies or non-governmental organizations, working in partnership allows for more coordinated, cohesive approaches. As one Red Cross volunteer from Nepal recently put it: "One organization is not enough for effective child protection. We aim to partner and coordinate with government, UN and NGOs and community groups. If we act together to educate people in the community on protecting children from violence, they will teach others and the cycle will be repeated outwards."

While action in emergencies is critical, experience has taught us that work done before an emergency is equally important. Child protection should be a part of preparedness efforts and contingency planning. This includes working through schools and communities to reach children, parents, teachers and first responders to identify risks, plan for them and practice action. A youth volunteer with the Nicaragua Red Cross articulates it this way, "I really like being part of the school brigade. We help others practice ways to feel good in their mind and to know how to prevent violence in emergencies. All of us work as a team to take care of other kids."

We cannot stop hurricanes, earthquakes or other natural hazards; however, we can prevent them from becoming disasters. Hazards may be natural, but violence is not; there is nothing inevitable about adults landing their fists on children, or girls and boys being trafficked or sexually attacked, or left exposed to injuries. A young Palestinian refugee in Lebanon who volunteers for the Red Cross says it best, “No one is born violent, it is not instinctive or in our nature. Violence in disasters is under our own control.”

In the same way that, in the aftermath of an emergency, we ensure safe water and sanitation, provide emergency health services, and establish shelters for people displaced, we must also do all we can to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation. It is high time that we make this a priority. Protection must indeed be an integral part of any life saving package in emergency preparedness and response.

■ ■ (In a situation of emergency) the heaviest burdens fall on the children who need support the most. Child protection should be a part of preparedness efforts and contingency planning. ■ ■

Elhadj As Sy

YOUNG PEOPLE SPEAKING OUT

My family came to Turkey from Syria because of the fighting and because my parents were worried about the abductions of girls. Maya, 15-year-old refugee, Turkish Red Crescent volunteer. Girls might be having sex to get help in return or even protection. When there’s no money or good jobs after a disaster, women and girls sometimes need to turn to transactional sex. They don’t always have a choice. Female youth at a Red Cross focus group discussion in Haiti.

It sucks and it’s too hard to find someone who cares and will do something about the abuse. You can’t trust anyone. I drink a lot—and yes, I have tried to commit suicide about three times in the past couple of years. I hate it! Youth participant, Red Cross violence prevention workshop, Canada. I know that when I help the kids learn about staying safe from violence in the typhoon recovery, I help their parents, too. Everyone benefits. **Joseph Joshua (JJ) Magtuba**, 16-year-old volunteer with the Philippines Red Cross.

As a youth, I can have an influence on other young people. If we can reduce the percentage of people who resort to violence, even by a few percentage points, it will be a start that we can build on to make people safer in our community. **Khaled Issa abou al Omarein**, 18-year-old refugee, volunteer with the Palestine Red Crescent.



"Don't Cry, Girl. Nothing Is Wrong". In my picture, the girl without an arm spilled the soup in the restaurant. The waitress is rude. She shouts at her. Other waitress comforts her. Nothing is wrong with being disabled. Help them. Zeynep Cundar, 7, Turkey
"Courtesy of Children With Disabilities, Programme Division, UNICEF"

When touched by poverty, the separation between bully and bullied is almost non-existent



Young Writer, ATD Forth World

Kathleen Saint-Amand

I am a writer. And as ironic as this might seem, I often have problems with words and their interpretations. Words have definitions, but they alone cannot form an idea. It takes other words with other definitions to broaden the idea, clarify the perspective. Bullying, according to the Advanced English Dictionary, is the act of intimidating a weaker person, or teasing and making fun of others.

I personally disagree with part of this definition. "The act of intimidating a weaker person?" I, not by my standards or should I by anyone else's standards be considered weak because I've been bullied. Bullying evokes emotion, and how that emotion, be it rage, hatred for oneself or others is channeled, it strips that person of their pride, dignity, and confidence. And it intensifies when you are bullied because you are poor.

Allowing someone to bully you does not make you weak. It makes you afraid. When I was bullied when I was younger, I avoided everyone, because I was afraid of an altercation. I didn't think I was all the things they said I was, but it hurt my feelings that someone would think this way about me. Not giving anyone any incentive to bully me, but allowing them to strip me of my strength I was fearful of people, and how if I retaliated it could worsen what people thought of me. I was attempting to obscure myself from judgement. But I failed in doing so, and it was a lesson learned.

Difficult experiences do not make you weak. They build character, even if you are scared. Everyone gets scared.

The way children treat each other at school mirrors the way adults treat each other in society. This means that crudeness, violence and slanderous language are all in effect, even in childhood. It begins at childhood. Children see examples set by adults, on TV or in their community, and reinforce it in their situations with their peers. And this terrible cycle begins. I am not only speaking for my age group. Harassment does not fade away when you get older. As a matter of fact, it becomes a more acceptable form of intimidation and mockery, such as being denied a job or healthcare. And as you look towards those who have less and less, this form of harassment becomes more and more acceptable, more and more of a joke to those who cannot see between the fine lines.

I had the unfortunate opportunity to see this in action. And only whilst I was writing this did I truly understand what I saw, and why it happened the way it did.

■ ■ The way children treat each other at school mirrors the way adults treat each other in society. ■ ■

Kathleen Saint-Amand

I was on my way to school. A homeless man got on the train that was moderately occupied, on the brink of becoming crowded. Immediately upon stepping on the train, the crowds began to disperse, because of his smell. Recognizing that this blatant reaction to him was possibly hurting his feelings, I stayed in my seat as passengers began to flood the next car. A man moving between cars stepped into our car and began a long winded rant about who he was and what the homeless man smelled like.

"I've worked construction in these railroads for a long time. And I've never smelled anything like you before. Get out of this train. Go take a shower!" On and on he went, and with much regret do I note that I said nothing, nor did anyone else who remained on the car to stand silently against him.

Then he rolled his newspaper up, and hit him. With disgust I watched him, as he hit the homeless man, as the homeless man shielded himself from the blows. Because he was homeless, and because he smelled he was getting hit.

The man moved towards the next car sickeningly pleased with himself, and the train pulled up into the station, and everyone left in the car looked everywhere except where the homeless man laid. That man, he deserved better, and I am utterly ashamed that I allowed him to move on with the memory that no one cared.

I've realized that the homeless man could have protected himself. He could've fought back. But the stigma among people who are less fortunate would make everyone who didn't witness the event think that it was the homeless man who initiated a fight.

It is right to interfere sometimes, and in that moment, no one did. I want to, in this moment, apologize. There are people who care, sir. And you did not deserve to be hurt. Your misfortunes do not define you as a person, and I allowed it. With all my experience, and all my insight, I did nothing. I am sorry.

In the U.S. we have raised awareness of interfering when bullying is witnessed among children, but harassment doesn't have to be physical or verbal, and it certainly doesn't have to be a child. Not sitting next to someone because they look less fortunate, avoiding eye contact with someone who you have the slightest inclination to believe is poor are all factors. This is what children see, and they imitate it amongst each other.

Newton's Third Law states that "Every action has an equal and opposite reaction" The line of separation between the bully and the bullied is almost non-existent when we include poverty into the discussion. Boubakar Sarr, an activist from Senegal in his contribution to an International Seminar about poverty, violence and peace attested to this.

"From the time I started school, the teacher was the one who made me suffer. I would get there early in the morning bringing my school supplies in a plastic bag and wearing plastic shoes. He would tell me, "You're dirty. Go sit in the back." Right in front of the other students and my classmates.

So one day during the break, I saw someone with nice shoes and I took them from him and left. So who was the violent one? Me? The teacher? Even if that's how school is, it determines who is poor and who isn't. In the educational system, they make more of an effort to give classes and a good education to the students who aren't poor. They cast you aside and your future is ruined."

There is no age limit to being a victim of harassment, and no age limit as to who the bully is and who they are bullying. Recognizing this can save the future of many children who continue this terrible cycle because of circumstance and lack of knowledge

I have spoken against a future of children who suffer from bullying. Now it is you who will shape a future without it.



"Crossing the Lines", 2014, Yrneh Gabon²⁶

²⁶ Yrneh Gabon, is a visual and performance artist who first saw the prejudices against people with Albinism as a child in Jamaica
contact: yrnehgabon@gmail.com

Children with albinism: from invisible to visible



UN Independent Expert on enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism

Ikponwosa Ero

In 2015, the world gathered at the United Nations to proclaim their commitment to an ambitious vision, namely the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals set out human rights and development targets to be attained by the year 2030. One of the foundational principles of SDGs is leaving no one behind.

This is good news for one group especially that has been left behind, namely persons with albinism, and in particular children.

Albinism is a unique condition. It is characterized by the absence of pigmentation in any or all of the skin, hair and eyes. In an environment where a majority are pigmented, a person with albinism stands out. With white skin, light coloured hair and eyes, the appearance of most persons with albinism has caused systemic stigmatization for centuries.



This people group have faced discrimination, neglect and violence both within the family and in their communities. Today, in several countries, they are being hunted and physically attacked. This is due to the misbelief that their body parts can bring wealth and good luck when used in witchcraft practices. Since 2007, hundreds of such attacks have been reported by civil society and other reliable sources. It has also been reported that the body parts of persons with albinism have monetary value on a black market including a clandestine trade in body parts within and across borders. **The majority of victims of this form of violence are children.**

One of major causes of this violence is deep misunderstanding about the science of the condition. Various erroneous misunderstanding include the misbelief that persons with albinism are types of ghosts, that they have superpowers, are a curse, and that they do not die.

Other forms of violence faced by children with albinism include ostracism and extreme exclusion from their family, communities and schools. Rejection and bullying is so rampant that many children lose hope and drop out of school. This is not just an issue in Africa. Bullying of children with albinism is a near-global phenomenon. In Europe and North America, bullies are empowered and inspired by negative portrayals of people with albinism in popular culture. The 'evil albino' remains a common character in Hollywood.

Children with albinism are also vulnerable to skin cancer due to sun damage as their skin lacks the necessary pigmentation to protect them from the sun's rays. Many children as young as 5 years old show signs of advanced sun damage which, if left untreated, could result in early death from skin cancer. Further, sun damage disfigures their appearance and this also contributes to the prejudice, bullying and violence faced by children with albinism.

Albinism also causes vision impairment. While the severity of impairment ranges in each child, it is very important that visual care and visual aids are provided under disability programmes so that children with albinism can go to school and achieve an education. For places where attacks occur due to albinism, having an education is a matter of life since education is likely to help them get jobs indoors and out of the sun. Education also lifts them out of poverty and the vulnerability to attacks which often targets the poorest of the poor amongst them.

A key characteristic of albinism is its multi-faceted nature. Addressing the violence and related discrimination against children with albinism requires work from all stakeholders, including government and non-governmental organizations. In addition, because this is an issue that is often under-funded, there is a need to foster new partnerships across various sectors to ensure that this group is no longer left behind.

There are many specific actions that can be done to end the spectrum of violence faced by children with albinism. I highlight four of them in this essay. While considering the work of individuals who lead by example using their skills, talents and business profits to do extraordinary things in promoting non-violence in the lives of thousands of children with albinism.

1. Raising Public Awareness on Albinism to Ensure the Protection of Children²⁷

The importance of spreading the truth about albinism cannot be overstated. Ignorance of albinism is what fuels the attacks and discrimination faced by persons with the condition. There is an urgent need to promote scientific and human rights knowledge on the condition globally and particularly in areas where there is violence; where children are the most vulnerable of all.

²⁷ Dr. Patricia Lund, Contact: p.lund@coventry.ac.uk

Dr. Patricia Lund is a geneticist, researcher and lecturer at Coventry University. She began working on albinism over 25 years ago, when work on the issue was sparse. Her multi-sectoral and multi-faceted studies in six African countries have explored health, genetics, social welfare, education and community perceptions. She has always involved families with albinism as active collaborators and strives to work in hard-to-reach rural as well as urban areas. Her work has included training of educational and health professionals. It has also raised significant scientific knowledge on albinism and informed policy on the issue, both within Africa and internationally.

In a quest to develop positive change and input concrete result from her research into the lives of persons with albinism through community education, Patricia has developed advocacy posters, radio dramas and information booklets (available at <http://blogs.coventry.ac.uk/dash-to-africa/resources-2/>).

One booklet for children in Africa has illustrations to reach the minimally literate, giving children and young people with albinism the tools to better understand, protect and care for themselves. A new booklet for very young children is being translated into several African languages.

Is there any special food I should eat?

No, you can eat the same food as everyone else in the family.



I go red when I bath in hot water. Should I use cold water?

No, the redness is temporary (it is not the same redness as you get when out in the sun!). You can use hot water to wash.

How can my friends help me?

- Join you playing in the shade or indoors rather than out in the sun
- Walk with you so that you are safe crossing the road and help you learn how to get around at school and in the community



- Call you by your name when they see you, so that you recognize their voice, even if you do not see them clearly
- Read out loud to you
- Help you copy notes from the board in school and share their notes with you afterwards.

Full copy at <http://albinism-in-africa.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Albinism-booklet-Africa.pdf>

Community Protection - A result of Successful Awareness Raising

The impact of awareness-raising is best appreciated when we see community responses in cases of attacks. Dr. Lund shares the following case examples from Malawi:

Maria, a 6-year-old girl with albinism was on her way back from her rural school when abductors attempted to kidnap her. Onlookers intervened to save her. Two further attempts were also thwarted by persons around responding to her cries. The matter has been reported to the police, but Maria and her family continue to live in constant fear. Although rejected by her father she receives loving support from her extended family who call her 'a gift from God'.

Tamale, a 13-year-old girl is the only member of her family with albinism. Their rural home is a basic structure, with a piece of fabric covering the entranceway to create the semblance of a door. Tamale's family fear for her life because their home faces a busy rural route leading to a trading centre. A neighbour, building a home for himself, lent the family a wooden door to enhance their security; a well-wisher has now donated a door and lock.

Yrneh Gabon: Artist

Yrneh Gabon is a visual and performance artist who first saw the prejudices against people with Albinism as a child in Jamaica.

This inspired him to research the issue with the goal of making a contribution to awareness-raising using his artistic talents.

Between 2013 and 2015, Yrneh researched and documented the effects of prejudice, ignorance and violence inflicted upon people affected with albinism in Tanzania, Jamaica and the USA. He subsequently put together an art exhibition: Visibly Invisible, through which he depicted and showcased his findings. The Exhibit – which was showcased for months at the California African American museum - included video, photography, collage, assemblage, sheet metal, cast bronze and ceramic sculpture to express both the pain and uniqueness of the condition of albinism.

The art pieces also shared inspirational stories of persons with albinism he met on his journey and illustrated his heart-felt devotion towards all adults and children living with the condition. Indeed, less than a year later, Yrneh would be at the forefront of supporting two children with albinism who were victims of attacks in Tanzania. He helped them to receive medical treatment and settle in the USA through the country's asylum process.

2. Investing in education of children with albinism²⁸

Born and raised in Canada, Peter Ash is a person with albinism. As a child he endured the low vision that accompanies albinism along with the bullying from his school mates who did not understand why he appeared the way he did. Peter overcame the suffering and vowed to help others, particularly children, to have an education free from bullying and lack of support. The opportunity came in his adult years when Peter had succeeded in business. Upon hearing of the sometimes fatal discrimination faced by people with albinism and children in particular, he decided to invest significantly in the education of children with albinism through the non-governmental organization (NGO) he founded, Under The Same Sun. Today, this NGO provides education for hundreds of children with albinism including a significant number that have been abandoned and some who have survived physical attacks.

▲ ▲ [Agenda 2030] set out human rights and development targets to be attained by the year 2030 leaving no one behind. This is good news for one group (children with albinism) that has been left behind. ▲ ▲

Ikponwosa Ero

They are now in safe high quality schools where they receive support for their vision impairment and other children without albinism learn to include them in all activities – in the shade of course! Every three years the children are treated to a fun-filled summer camp, where they play and are involved in various creative child friendly activities to improve their self-esteem. They learn about their immeasurable self-worth, their human rights and dignity and how to self-advocate. The children are also helped to overcome the trauma of attacks and discrimination and learn how to report threats of the same to trustworthy adults.



3. Investing in health of children with albinism²⁹

In 2004, Harry Freeland was in Senegal where he met a child with albinism whose mother begged him to take the child away permanently. The mother was frustrated by the pains that come with societal stigma for having a child who appeared white. She was also surely worried about all the care she had to give for the health and well-being of the child. With no money in hand, Harry was

²⁸ Peter W. Ash, contact: info@underthesamesun.com

²⁹ Harry Freeland, contact: harry@standingvoice.org

unable to help immediately but made a resolve to do something. First he used his skills as a filmmaker to create a documentary titled “In The Shadow of the Sun” for the BBC. The documentary featured the multi-faceted nature of albinism: the social, economic, health aspects among others. To date, this award winning film has screened in 80 countries worldwide and has been viewed by millions of persons from Africa to Europe and North America.

Successful awareness raised by “In the Shadow of the Sun” led to global fundraising which drove Harry to develop an NGO, Standing Voice. Standing Voice has pioneered innovative health – vision and skin - care services for persons with albinism, particularly children across Africa. Children receive free eye tests, free eye wear including adaptive devices and glasses to help with vision impairment and their education in school. They also receive free Tanzanian-made sunscreen, sun protective clothing and skin care education. These services are delivered by in-country professionals and a strong participation from governments making these innovative models sustainable from the start. Through these programmes, thousands of cases of skin cancer have been averted and many lives of children have been saved and prolonged.

4. Educating about albinism in Fiji³⁰

An Australian dermatologist with over 20 years of experience working in the Pacific, particularly Fiji, Dr. Margot Whitfeld for years has been visiting to work with doctors on skin health issues generally.



In the course of this work, she began to come across people with albinism with various levels of sun damage to their skin. Their plight and lack of education about their condition left her astonished. Her early research estimated that Fiji has a particularly high rate of albinism: 1 in 700. Despite this, very little was known in Fiji about albinism and in particular, the vision or skin issues and the impact they have on the lives of those with albinism. Vision aids and sunscreen were not generally available for children in village schools.

There was clearly a greater need for education at all levels. This need resulted in the formation of the Fiji Albinism Project led by Margot alongside professionals in health

³⁰ Dr. Margot Whitfeld, contact: mwhitfeld@stltderm.com.au



and education from both Australia and Fiji. The Project supported a number of firsts for Fiji including the first school-based workshop on albinism, a community based symposium among others. These events were platforms for personal testimonials which in turn helped to build a picture that explained albinism in Fiji and provided the knowledge needed for Margot and her colleagues to make sound decisions and advocate for change in Fiji. The Project has now been incorporated into the Ministry of Health which provides monthly skin and eye clinics. It is Margot's hope that the Project will become a model across the Pacific region in supporting people including and especially children with albinism.

Conclusion

While persons with albinism particularly children have been historically left behind, the tides are turning. Not only has the UN taken up their cause, beginning with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children; individuals such as Patricia, Yrneh, Peter, Harry and Margot show that extraordinary things can be done with what we consider ordinary: our skills, talents, time and resources. In serving in this way, each of them, individually and collectively, is transforming our world in a manner envisioned by the SDGs. They are building environments for nonviolence by promoting peace through public education, equipping children with albinism with an education, advancing inclusive societies, and working to end abuse, exploitation, and all forms of violence against children.

Inspired by these private actors, I too make a commitment as the UN independent expert on albinism and a person with albinism myself to foster an environment of partnership, collaboration and information-sharing in a manner that advances and propagates more action on the issue. In this way, I am hoping to help promote the SDG goal of building partnerships and strengthened global solidarity in the ongoing movement to make violence against children with albinism and all children a matter of the distant past.



"We are the same. Even disabled or ordinary people are the same. Hyun Jin Cho, 10, Republic of Korea.
"Courtesy of Children With Disabilities, Programme Division, UNICEF"

Protecting children from trafficking in emergency situations



UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children

Maria Grazia Giammarinaro

In so many areas of the world, in so many ways, children are deprived of their rights. Childhood itself is stolen: boys and girls are deprived of education, compelled to perform the worst forms of child labour, are subjected to abuse, sexual violence and exploitation, and even forced to commit crimes and atrocities.

Although children's rights are today acknowledged as one of the most important chapters of human rights, in reality children's rights continue to be violated and denied. Trafficking in persons is one of the ways children are exploited and tortured all around the world.

Among the many forms of exploitation and trafficking, today it is necessary to shed light on children's vulnerabilities to trafficking deriving from conflicts, including from the atrocious consequences of the conflict underway in Syria and Iraq, and from other endemic conflicts existing in many areas of the world. In these situations, children are the easiest victims of exploitation and trafficking.

Children are directly involved in hostilities through forced recruitment by government armed forces, paramilitary groups and rebel groups. Moreover, children are especially vulnerable to trafficking into military service by armed groups if they are separated from their families, are displaced from their homes, live in combat areas or have limited access to education.

Children trafficked into forced military service perform a variety of combatant and supportive roles. Many children, typically boys, are forcibly recruited or kidnapped for use by armed militias in ongoing conflicts. Children are also used as suicide bombers and human shields. For instance in Iraq, ISIL and other extremist groups traffic boys and young men, including members of the Yazidi minority, into armed conflict, radicalize them to commit terrorist acts using deception, death threats or the offer of money and women as rewards. Others are compelled to work as porters, cooks, guards and messengers or are forced to commit crimes, such as looting and physical and sexual violence. Boys and girls in these situations are often sexually abused and may also be forced to take drugs.

While the forcible recruitment of children often involves abduction or coercion, recruiters also appeal to notions of martyrdom or social and economic factors or employ trickery or indoctrination to enlist children. There are instances where the Internet, particularly social media, has been used by extremist groups in a deceptive manner to exploit the vulnerability of educated young children from middle class families in Western countries in order to recruit them.

Recruitment of children to be exploited in conflict-related activities is highly gendered. It is estimated that 10 to 30% of children in fighting forces are female. Girls who are forcibly recruited or abducted into military service typically face forced domestic labour and sexual violence and exploitation such as forced marriage and/or sexual slavery.

Recently there has been an egregious pattern of abducting women and girls from their homes or schools in conflict-affected settings. In some cases, this involves trafficking for forced marriage and sexual enslavement by extremist groups such as ISIS, Boko Haram and their affiliates, which is believed to be a strategy to generate revenue as well as to recruit, reward and retain fighters. In order to prevent such abductions, families are reported to be confining women and girls and removing girls from school.

There are other ways in which children are victimized as a consequence of conflict that are less known and addressed.

In situations in which there are a large number of refugees, asylum seekers, and also as a consequence of the breakdown of the rule of law, criminal networks specifically target impoverished communities in order to exploit the most vulnerable including children.

Poor and displaced families may entrust the care of their children to traffickers who promise to provide them with education or skills training, but ultimately exploit them for the purposes of prostitution, forced labour and domestic servitude, or irregular adoption. The practice of early marriages with foreigners, arranged by families in camps or outside camps in order to protect girls, can result in trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Even in countries that have adopted a generous policy toward Syrian refugees such as Jordan and Lebanon, refugees are compelled to work to survive, and to accept any working conditions. Children are the most affected by this form of exploitation, which can result in trafficking: they are vulnerable to being targeted to work in the informal economy, to be paid less than adults, and to be forced to work long hours. Children's situation is made even harder because they are often the primary source of revenue for the entire family.

Iraqi and Syrian refugee children in Lebanon, for example, work in textile factories, construction, the food service industry, agricultural labour or as street vendors in conditions amounting to forced labour. Moreover, there appear to be organized systems within refugee camps for making these work

arrangements. In Iraq and Lebanon, Syrian refugee children are trafficked for purposes of exploitation, including begging and selling items on the street. In May 2015, at least 1,500 children, 75% of whom were Syrian, were reported as begging or working as street vendors in and around Beirut, working excessive hours to earn income for their families.

These worst forms of child labour, which often mask other forms of exploitation, such as trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation, have negative consequences on children's health and education. Unaccompanied children from Afghanistan and the Sudan in refugee camps in Calais and Dunkirk in France are trafficked for sexual exploitation and forced to commit crimes, including stealing or selling drugs, by traffickers who promise them passage to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Internally displaced women and girls are often disproportionately affected by loss of livelihoods during displacement. In Jordan for example, Syrian refugees and asylum seekers, including children as young as three, are lured to work illegally for low wages to sustain families, which puts them at risk of trafficking.

Furthermore, exploitation and trafficking are the probable destiny of people - among them many children - trying to flee conflict, in search of a safe place. Those surviving their perilous journey find themselves in a situation of complete destitution, are compelled to use facilitators to start and later continue their journey, are often indebted, and can be sold to other traffickers and exploiters to work without a salary, in slavery-like conditions.

In this situation, children fleeing conflict bear the same destiny as many other migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and are even more vulnerable to physical violence, sexual assault, extortion and trafficking, as well as detention by national authorities. Incidence of trafficking and exploitation, primarily among Afghan, Syrian and Iraqi men and boys with low educational levels and travelling alone, is identified among irregular migrants arriving in Europe along the western Balkan routes.

The International Organization for Migration recently estimated that more than 70% of migrants travelling overland through North Africa and arriving by boat to Europe show strong indications of having being trafficked or exploited for profit along the way.

The journey of female migrants and unaccompanied children is particularly hazardous. Thousands of such women and children have disappeared, presumably abducted for the purposes of trafficking related exploitation. Sudanese and Somalian refugees and asylum seekers fleeing conflict, including numerous unaccompanied children, have been kidnapped or lured from refugee camps or while travelling, sold and subsequently held captive in Libya or in the Sinai desert for purposes of exploitation through extortion.

Although children's rights are today acknowledged as one of the most important chapters of human rights, children continue to be victims of exploitation and trafficking.

Maria Grazia
Giammarino

People of the Rohingya Muslim minority fleeing persecution in Myanmar take maritime and overland journeys, often through Thailand, to reach Malaysia as irregular migrants. Initially smuggled across borders, some are subsequently trafficked to fishing boats and palm oil plantations, ending up in bonded labour to repay the debts incurred for their transport. Others are held captive and abused in Malaysia until ransom is paid by their relatives.

Despite the gravity and the atrocious features of child trafficking in situations related to conflict, which have been observed to have similar features to other crisis situations such as natural disasters, we have to imagine a future without violence against children.

Achieving zero violence in emergency situations, and in general terms among people caught in conflict or fleeing conflict and crisis situations, requires us to identify prevention as a key area of action.

Prevention means, firstly, that everybody can play an essential role.

We are not talking only about people caught in conflict, but also about people, including children, fleeing conflict. This means that violence and exploitation can be detected next to us. For example, a girl, working as a domestic worker in our building, might have this background. This means that our eyes and ears should be trained to identify indications of severe exploitation and violence against girls performing domestic work, for example when they appear hungry, depressed, sick, or when they are abused by children they care for.

We are talking about children in camps, reception centres for migrants, even administrative detention centres, where unfortunately children are also often detained. We are talking about children trying to reach their preferred country, and are isolated, and do not want to be identified for fear of being expelled and deported. Such children can become victims of trafficking simply because they have to accept exploitation as their only means of survival. Who are the intermediaries? Who are the final exploiters? How many times do we see indications of children's exploitation such as begging and close our eyes? How can we act effectively against such exploitation, as consumers, as citizens, as workers?

However, prevention must also be promoted by public institutions. Prevention requires that national authorities identify child protection as a priority, especially in situations related to migration and asylum, wherever exploitation and trafficking take place, and especially in agriculture, fishery, domestic work, garments, and tourism, and tackle the driving factors of exploitation. Among them, one of the most powerful is the lack of regular channels for migration. Therefore it is necessary to ensure policy coherence: the fight against trafficking is incompatible with restrictive migration policies that place people in a situation of irregularity and vulnerability to exploitation and trafficking.

Therefore the goal of zero violence against children, as far as exploitation and trafficking are concerned, requires a policy shift: to prevent trafficking in persons, to protect children's rights, it is necessary to protect the rights of all migrants, and of all vulnerable people, be they foreigners or nationals.

Secondly, every channel of protection must be used to ensure children's rights. Children must be protected first and foremost as children. However, measures provided by national legislation for trafficked persons should be applied, when it is in the best interest of the child.

Thirdly, not only indications of child trafficking but also indications of the risk of trafficking must be identified, at the borders, in hotspots, in camps, in administrative detention centres, to provide children with immediate and viable solutions on an individual basis, in the best interests of the child.

Finally, detention of children on migration grounds must be banned, as it is never in the best interests of the child.

My thoughts go often to the children, men and women who died - in the Mediterranean Sea, in South East Asia and elsewhere - during their journey towards a safer and better life. Those who survived have often found themselves in a situation of exploitation, and risk losing their dignity and their hopes. In the face of all this suffering, our duty is to find better ways to stop it. This is possible.

Trafficking - as in the case of historical slavery - takes place because enormous economic interests lie behind exploitation of the global poor, which includes exploitation of so many boys and girls.

However, this will be stopped, if people of good will - both powerful people and simple citizens - who feel that trafficking is morally and socially unacceptable, will take action against exploitation, injustice, trafficking and violence against children.



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

www.violenceagainstchildren.un.org

ISBN: 978-92-1-101357-3



9 789211 013573