



# Small Cracks, Big Gaps:

How governments allow violence against children to persist



## Foreword

Our world is getting better, every year. We are making amazing progress on fighting diseases and mortality and are investing huge amounts to advance the medicine and knowledge and to create better living conditions. But not for all. Children are almost one third of the world's population and remain the most at-risk age group. As a global community, we made exciting promises to end violence against all children thirty years ago by adopting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We renewed those vows by committing to the Sustainable Development Goals four years ago. In those thirty years, laws and policies have been developed, the complexity of violence and its forms are better understood, evidence-based solutions have been agreed on, and civic movements brought the issue into public attention. Yet, the inconsistent stats we have and self-reported data show that violence against children is not reducing at the pace necessary to meet the Sustainable Development Goals' targets.

Approximately 1.7 billion children still experience some form of violence every year. This means a huge percentage of the next generation will be affected by violence's life-long consequences that push people to life at the margins of society: severe health problems, difficulties acquiring an education and a decent job and relationship issues. The lack of decisive action to end violence against children has unimaginable long-term human, social and financial costs and seriously jeopardises our chance to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals targets.

World Vision believes that it takes each and every one of us to end violence against children. A critical step in the right direction is for governments to make violence illegal and to put in place a comprehensive set of national laws and policies that provide for strong prevention and response measures.

We have reviewed national legislation and policies related to ending violence against children in 20 countries. What emerged is a picture that resembles an Impressionist painting: whole from afar, but made of disjointed dashes when looked upon closer. Legal bans do not yet cover all forms of violence. Ambitious declarations are not followed by resources to implement them. Fragmented initiatives are not enough to support victims, or more importantly, to ensure prevention. There are so many children affected by violence worldwide every year, yet too few of them consulted and involved in creating a world that is safer for everyone.

As a global community, we all must do more to address the gaps this report identifies. At a minimum, laws have to set boundaries for the social and legal tolerance of violence in every country, investments need to be directed towards interventions that will reach the largest number of children wherever they are and prevent multiple forms of violence. Progress needs to be monitored regularly.

The 193 United Nations Member States have incredibly diverse energy, expertise and resources. We are calling for each and every one of them to join us and become champions for ending violence against children. It takes political leadership, and the time to drive action is now. Let us act together as a global community and say no to violence against children once and for all. It is the right time to transform our societies into safe and nurturing environments where girls and boys can grow free from violence and fear, and able to create a peaceful, just and inclusive world.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniela Buzducea".

**Daniela Buzducea**  
**VP, Advocacy and**  
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## Introduction

Every year, more than 1.7 billion children around the globe experience emotional, physical and sexual violence in homes, communities, schools, workplaces, detention centres, institutions and online. The causes of violence are many and often interconnect to form a dangerous web for children. The root causes range from societal to intimately personal. Poverty and economic distress, cultural norms, conflict and displacement, weak safety net services, and gender inequality are among the drivers of violence against children. Often violence is under-reported and hidden, meaning children's suffering remains invisible to decision makers and public alike. Failing to prevent and effectively respond to violence against children can have life-long impacts on health, well-being and attitudes towards family and relationships. These in turn can perpetuate the cycle of violence into the next generation. But the debilitating impact of violence does not stop there. It contaminates to communities and countries, jeopardizing social and economic development. This places a significant financial burden on societies – globally estimated at up to USD\$ 7 trillion annually.

Recognising the need to address this critical problem, governments across the globe have committed to end violence against children in all its forms by ratifying the Convention on the Rights on the Child (CRC). This commitment was reinforced in 2015 with the adoption of the Agenda 2030 – an essential action considering the immense scale and impact that violence against children has worldwide.

World Vision believes that a world without violence against children is possible.

Achieving these commitments requires accelerating, as well as expanding and increasing the impact of the interventions World Vision knows work. It takes creating new partnerships to accelerate action, dramatically increasing resources and taking every effort to sustain the political will to protect the world's most vital resource – children.

We have reviewed the policies and legislative progress of 20 countries who made commitments to end violence against children. Countries selected reflect the varying levels of prevalence of violence against children and the different levels of commitment by governments to end it.

The review reveals that, while some progress has been made to end violence against children, commitments by governments have not been matched by substantial action. This leaves significant gaps in laws, policies and programmes that can have severe consequences for children. It demonstrates the current limits on the ambitions of many governments to ending violence against children, which put at risk the fulfilment of the entire Sustainable Development Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and the broader Agenda 2030.



### What is violence against children?

Violence against children includes all forms of physical, sexual and mental violence, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, harm or abuse, including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage.

## What We Analysed?

The report identifies where individual governments and the international community, as a whole, must be more ambitious in enabling legislation, plus efficient and effective strategies to protect alarming numbers of children from harm.

WorldVision reviewed the legal, policy and planning progress of 20 countries (including nine pathfinding countries<sup>1</sup> and six countries undergoing the Voluntary National Review<sup>2</sup> at the 2019 High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development). Using a set of proxy policy indicators, the review explored the situation in each country. These indicators reflect the general principles and components of the CRC, as well as government public policy standards. They also incorporate elements of evidence-based strategies to end violence against children such as INSPIRE. They cover eight critical areas of policy action to end violence against children:

- **FORBID** all forms of violence against children in all settings, clearly and completely in law and regulation.
- **PREVENT** violence against children through evidence-based programs and initiatives that respond to trends and cases emerging in country data.
- **REPORT** cases of violence against children through clear responsibility and protocols for service providers and citizens, as well as child-friendly reporting mechanisms at local level.
- **RESPOND** to cases of violence against children through government services and referrals.
- **FUND** action plans with clear costs, identified funding sources, and transparent expenditure data at national and sub-national levels.
- **MANAGE DATA** through centralised information systems and conduct regular population surveys on violence against children.
- Be **ACCOUNTABLE** for commitments and allow citizens and children to participate in decision-making.
- **CHALLENGE** perceptions through public awareness campaigns owned by government encompassing local activities led by service providers and professionals at community level.

By reviewing countries against the same policy indicators, World Vision developed a clear picture of which categories are making the most progress, and which require urgent prioritisation by governments and decision-makers. Despite the limited number of countries reviewed, and based on consistency with other existing evidence, World Vision believes the findings of this report represent global trends and gaps that demand further attention and urgent action.

<sup>1</sup> Pathfinding countries are countries that have publicly committed to accelerate progress in ending violence against children under the auspices of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.

<sup>2</sup> Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) are voluntary reporting mechanisms that enable governments to report on progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goals. VNRs are submitted and discussed at the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.



Hasanthi Jayamaha; ©2012 World Vision  
Children running in Eravurpattu Village Sri Lanka



# Report Limitations

The selection of countries reviewed in this report reflects varied levels of prevalence of violence against children and differing levels of commitment to eradication. However, several limitations of the report should be noted.

Among core criteria applied was that World Vision work in each country reviewed, enabling localised analysis and direct consultation with government and local actors. However, this dictated that countries were not necessarily representative of a larger group. Additionally, there was no specific prevalence threshold that triggered the review, and only one country experiencing a high degree of conflict or humanitarian crises was included.

Finally, while the review assessed legal, regulatory and policy-level actions of governments, it did not assess the quality of implementation of these actions. Recognising that evidence on implementation is vital for holding governments fully accountable for their commitments, this report puts forth the premise that real change for children is impossible if political will to enshrine commitments into fundamental laws for protecting children is absent. As such, it is the first and foundational report in a forthcoming series of reports in which World Vision will explore commitments to end violence from various lenses including implementation of policies, as well as experiences of children and citizens.

Laura Reinhardt;  
©2018 World Vision  
Portrait of 13-year-old Shyamoli  
in the doorway of her home, in  
Bangladesh.





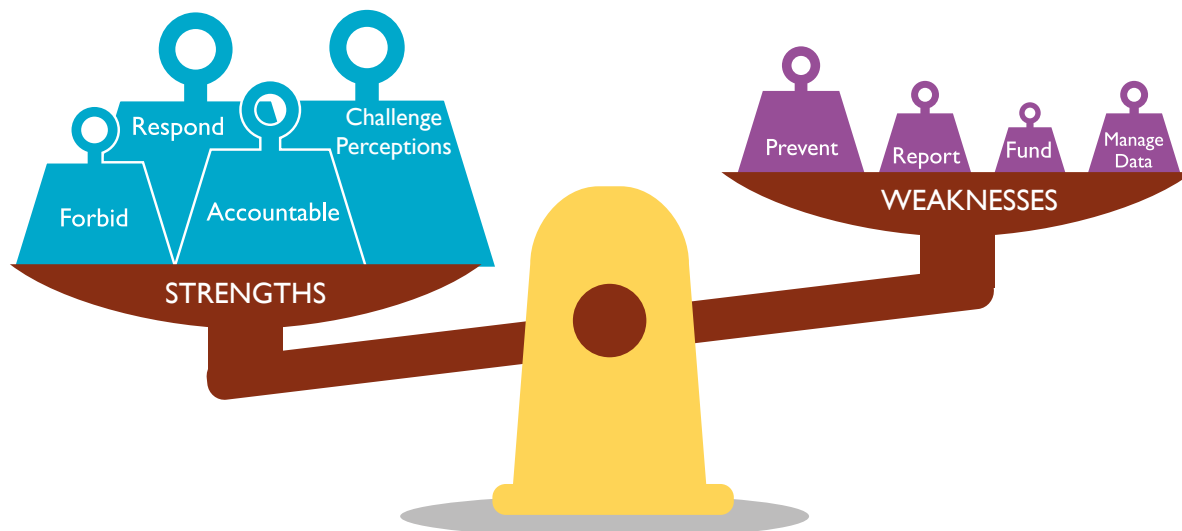


Evelyn Lopez; ©2009 WorldVision / Girls from Ixim Achi, Guatemala

## What We Found Out: Improved Government Efforts, but Faster Action Needed

A clear global picture of progress and gaps is emerging. No countries are on track for transparency regarding their funding and data. Other areas where progress is slow or lacking are around prevention, reporting and accountability.<sup>3</sup>

### Strengths and weaknesses of national policies to end violence against children



<sup>3</sup> While this report does not present a “score” or “ranking” of countries, categories were reviewed to determine how many countries achieved positive results against at least 70 per cent of the policy standards or actions in each category. This allows for a clearer view of which categories are making most or least progress across the 20 countries reviewed.

# Seven Gaps in Government Policy to End Violence against Children



**Laws and regulations have gaps that allow specific violence to continue**  
 No countries demonstrated - in law and regulation - that violence against children in all its forms and in all settings was illegal.




**Responsibility for long-term education and societal change is deferred to development partners**  
 Despite progress on national policy and planning, governments are not demonstrating sufficient ownership over long-term changes to social norms and behaviours. Public education efforts or prevention programs are often lacking the scale or reach that only government can provide through services and sub-national structures.




**Plans for generating and managing data are absent in all reviewed countries**  
 The lack of investment in systems to collect reliable population data, and to monitor trends, places interventions to prevent, respond to and report violence, at risk.




**Policies that prevent violence against children struggle to reach national scale**  
 Many prevention initiatives are not reaching national scale. This limits impact, reach into vulnerable populations, co-ordination with other interventions and cost efficiency.

**Funding commitments lacking, over-reliance on development partners for support**  
 Most action plans are ambitious yet have substantial funding gaps. Many governments look to development partners such as UNICEF and bilateral donors to find other solutions. Financing of action plans is not transparent, especially when budgets are spread over government ministries and are not visibly consolidated.



**Children are not meaningfully consulted in decisions that impact them**  
 Participation of, and consultation with, children is lacking in the planning and monitoring of actions to end violence, resulting in reduced accountability for progress. Most positive examples of children and youth participating in policy consultations are largely supported by civil society with little ownership by government.





**Ownership of action plans dispersed across government departments**  
 In countries without a centrally responsible and accountable government body, action plans to end violence against children are difficult to measure, budget for, and it is difficult to ensure adequate cohesion of services at the sub-national levels. This reduces ownership of, and responsibility for, results at national level.





## What We Recommend: Seven Actions for Governments to End Violence Against Children

In order to end all forms of violence against children by 2030, all countries must:



**Prohibit all forms of violence against children in all settings** and close gaps in legislation that allow for specific types of violence.



**Invest in prevention programs and reporting mechanisms.** Scale up existing solutions, such as INSPIRE strategies, by integrating them into government strategies and providing clear policy guidance for child-friendly reporting and implementation through child protection systems.



**Be a global champion for the prevention of violence against children** and help elevate this issue as a global development priority.



**Increase funding and transparency** in budgets allocated to interventions to end violence against children at national and sub-national levels, and across all sectors and mobilize additional funding from other sources.



**Prioritise and invest in regular data collection** and management for planning and decision making that responds to needs of all children regardless of their circumstances.



**Mandate, resource and plan for child consultations** in policy development, reviews, monitoring and reporting of ending violence against children initiatives.



**Increase government delivery of community education and awareness campaigns** that contribute to social change and prevent violence against children.

# The Analysis: What Governments Have Done and What They Need to Improve

## I. Forbid

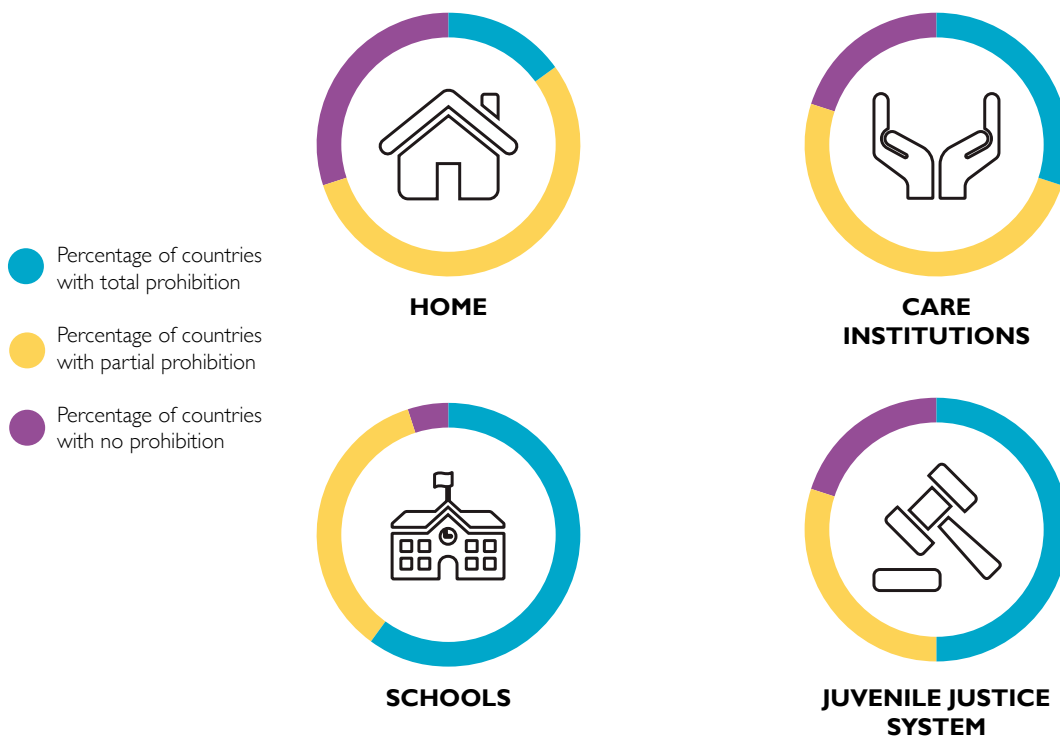
Governments must create laws that forbid all forms of violence against children. These laws help set community values and create a basis for interventions to respond to violence against children. Regrettably, none of the countries reviewed could show that violence against children in all its forms, and in all settings, was illegal without exceptions. Legal gaps can undermine broader efforts to eliminate violence against children, and more must be done to clearly and robustly state that violence against children in any setting is 1) illegal, 2) carries substantial punishments if prosecuted and convicted, and 3) is unacceptable amongst the general population.

To assess gaps and identify progress in this area, World Vision reviewed laws and regulations in 20 countries to determine which types of violence against children were fully outlawed, and whether these laws forbid

such violence in all settings. In many countries, laws and regulations were established over many years, and therefore fragmented – often complemented by newer legislation targeting specific forms of violence (such as human trafficking or domestic abuse). However, despite the complex array of legislation, countries have permitted gaps in legislation to continue.

The picture below shows the substantial limitations that remain within legislature forbidding violence in all settings, most notably in the home, where most violence against children occurs. While most countries have laws protecting children from physical, sexual and emotional violence, the majority still allow for a broad definition of punishment or chastisement of children in the home. For example, **Cambodia** and **Eswatini** have strong action plans to end violence against children, but do not specifically outlaw violent actions in the home when rationalised as “acceptable discipline” by parents. While many gaps in countries reflect cases of older,

### Legislation forbidding violence against children in different settings





## Why do some countries still allow child marriage in their legislation?

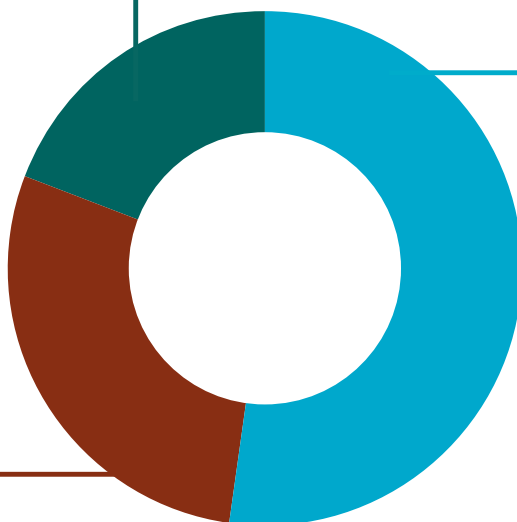
Special circumstances  
(teenage  
pregnancy, etc...)



Permission of  
parents and/or  
local authorities



Religious or cultural exceptions



foundational laws (such as criminal codes) inadequately updated or amended, other countries continue to allow deliberate exceptions, especially in relation to child marriage. Among all reviewed countries, only two – **the Democratic Republic of the Congo** and **Guatemala** – fully outlawed marriage for boys and girls under the age of 18, without exception. Every other country reviewed continues to allow marriage under the age of 18 under specific circumstances. Eleven countries permit children to marry with consent or permission of parents and/or local authorities; at least six countries have specific mention of religious or cultural exceptions (such as the Customary Marriage Act in **Sierra Leone** and **South Africa**, and religious law in **the Philippines**). Where these exceptions are allowed, there is often gender discrimination against girls, whose age for legal marriage is lower than boys. At least five countries maintain a lower age of marriage for girls, and at least four countries made exceptions for “special circumstances”, usually interpreted as teenage pregnancy, although age of the male is not referenced.

The number of countries lacking a thorough legislative foundation for ending violence against children and those that continue to allow for “exceptions” is distressing. The table below demonstrates that while more multifaceted issues including child labour are often well legislated – showing that complex issues can be thoroughly regulated given government and political will – others including child marriage and child pornography are not strongly regulated. And, regrettably, only four countries (**the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, South Africa** and **Zambia**) have outlawed female genital mutilation even though it continues in various forms and expressions in seven of the reviewed countries, where the practice is prevalent.<sup>4</sup>

While some countries including **El Salvador, Eswatini, Guatemala, Indonesia** and **Romania** achieved a high degree of legislation addressing these issues, considering how violence and vulnerability change over time – whether by economics, geography, or evolving traditional practices – the continued allowance of these gaps and omissions is unacceptable.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to these four countries, there are cases of female genital mutilation in Indonesia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone. This report did not investigate whether female genital mutilation is prevalent in all countries that do not have strong data on it or whether population changes (such as migration) might lead to changes in the occurrence of this practice.

### Countries forbidding specific types of violence

Countries reviewed	Child Marriage				Child Labour					Sexual Violence		
	Law sets the minimum age of marriage for boys at 18	Law sets the minimum age of marriage for girls at 18	The law does not allow for any exceptions for marriage under 18 years	Laws against hazardous work	Laws against interfering with a child's education	Laws against work that is harmful to a child's development	Laws against cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment	Laws against the sale or servitude of children	Laws against involving children in illegal activities	Laws against sexual abuse and violence of a child	Laws against the commercial sexual exploitation of a child	Laws against child pornography online and offline
Angola	✓	✓	✗	✓	⬇	✗	⬇	✓	✓	✓	✓	⬇
Armenia	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	⬇	✓	✓	⬇	✓	⬇
Bangladesh	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	⬇	✓	⬇	⬇	✓	⬇
Bosnia and Herzegovina	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	⬇
Cambodia	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	⬇	✓	✓	✓	✓	⬇
The Democratic Republic of the Congo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	⬇
El Salvador	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eswatini	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethiopia	✓	✓	✗	⬇	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	⬇
Guatemala	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Indonesia	✓	⬇	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mexico	⬇	⬇	✗	✓	✓	✓	⬇	⬇	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mozambique	✗	✗	✗	⬇	✗	⬇	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	⬇
Peru	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Philippines	✓	✓	✗	✓	⬇	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	⬇
Romania	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	⬇
Sierra Leone	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
South Africa	⬇	⬇	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	⬇	✓	✓
Sri Lanka	⬇	⬇	✗	✓	✓	✓	⬇	✓	✓	⬇	⬇	⬇
Zambia	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	⬇	⬇	⬇

Yes ✓ Partial ⬇ No ✗

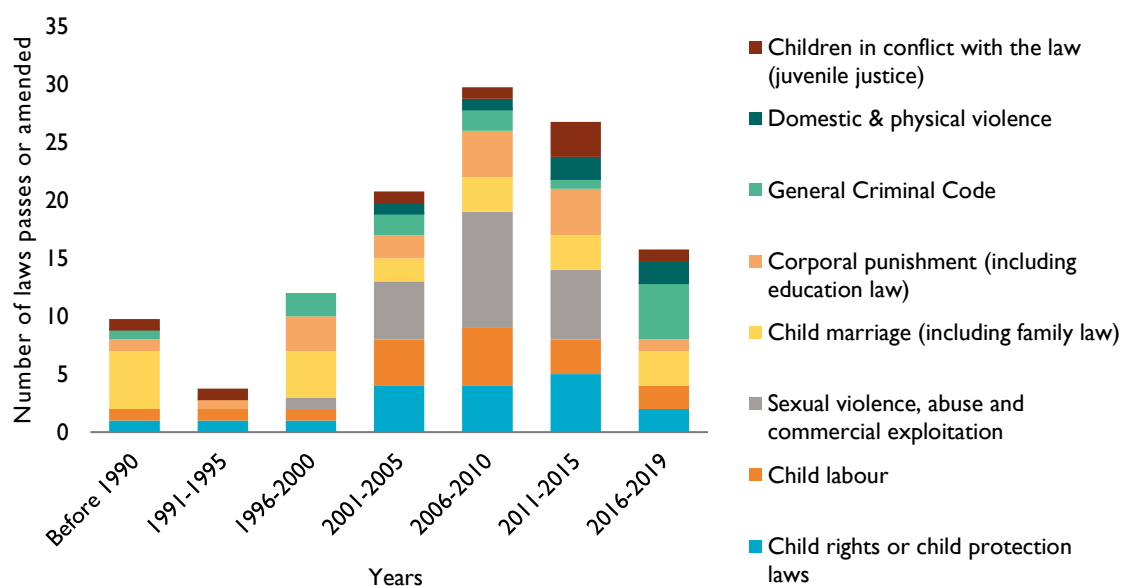
The next figure shows the development and amendment of laws related to violence against children in the last thirty years, illustrating ample opportunities to close the gaps above. It also reveals a peak in new or amended legislation to forbid violence against children between 2006 and 2015, especially in areas of sexual violence and exploitation (such as human trafficking and child labour), possibly in response to the 2006 United Nations study on

violence against children.<sup>5</sup> While this flurry of legislation in the prior decade may have been successful and thus, likely debilitated continued advancements in protective legislation, it is surprising that more countries have not established or amended laws as varied types of violence against children evolve (such as the practice of “grooming” and online child sexual exploitation).

5 In October 2006, the United Nations released a study on violence against children by an Independent Expert. The study analysed violence against children in five settings (home and family; schools and educational settings; care and justice institutions; workplace; and community) and presented a set of recommendations that represent a comprehensive framework for follow-up action.



## Number and type of laws passed or amended since 1991



For example, **El Salvador, Eswatini, Indonesia, Mexico** and **Peru** have laws forbidding child pornography on and offline. However, every country reviewed showed limitations in responsiveness to the evolving challenge of online sexual exploitation of children especially where laws forbidding sexual violence cannot be adequately applied to online environments. While the production, distribution and possession of child pornography online may be illegal, few countries require internet service providers to report cases of such content, and a functioning “take down” process may not exist that allows citizens to report abusive content and requires internet service providers to remove it.

As long as gaps and exceptions in laws are allowed, violence such as child marriage, corporal punishment at home, and online sexual exploitation of children will continue.

## 2. Prevent

To enable progress in reducing the prevalence of violence against children, governments must create laws, regulations and policies that prevent violence, reaching the entire population. Prevention policies are imperative, empowering children, peers, parents, caregivers and professionals to identify risks, seek help, and create solutions before violence strikes.

Without policies enabling prevention initiatives to scale nationally, the negative consequences of violence against

children for entire populations and economies will persist: a current estimated cost of physical, sexual and psychological violence against children is documented at between 2 and 5 percent of global Gross Domestic Product (measured as loss in future productivity).<sup>6</sup> The 2014 Global Status Report on Violence Prevention by the World Health Organization showed the undeniable positive impact of prevention initiatives including specific strategies that represent wise investments for governments.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, prevention initiatives must be systematic to reduce multiple forms of violence, considering the interconnectedness of varied forms of violence, alongside avoiding re-emergence of eradicated abuses. This assessment highlighted several types of services as proxy for larger prevention efforts. It reviewed regulatory frameworks for services targeting vulnerable families (such as home visits), and prevention initiatives in schools (such as school policies, physical safety, and utilisation of school curricula to enforce positive attitudes and behaviours).

All countries reviewed have action plans that include prevention initiatives; however, only two countries (**Sri Lanka** and **Zambia**) had up-to-date action plans addressing (even in small ways) all six forms of violence against children for which World Vision assessed: child labour, child marriage, female genital mutilation, physical violence, sexual violence and exploitation, and trafficking in children.

A well-documented pitfall of efforts to eliminate violence against children indicates interventions not implemented

<sup>6</sup> Perezniето, P., Montes, A., Langston, L. and Routier, S. *The costs and economic impact of violence against children*, ODI and ChildFund Alliance, 2014: Page 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Global status report on violence prevention 2014*. World Health Organization, 2014.



Laura Reinhardt; ©2018 World Vision / Ivy Siamujaye, with her brand new backpack filled with school and hygiene supplies in Moyo, Zambia.

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at scale.<sup>8</sup> Clear provisions in law and policy are necessary prerequisites for implementation at scale; therefore, lack of such provisions suggests the challenge of scale is ongoing and significant portions of populations are excluded from potentially life-saving prevention programs. This also was documented in the 2014 World Health Organization report – that despite investments, countries were not implementing “on a level necessary to achieve significant and sustainable reductions in violence”.<sup>9</sup> Five years on, after fresh commitments, new action plans, and additional

investment, there is little evidence to suggest much has changed.

Since the two most common perpetrators of violence against children are household members, followed by peer students<sup>10</sup>, interventions such as home visitations and school-based prevention are invaluable. Despite initial costs of re-training service providers and establishing local budget and monitoring mechanisms for these services, such programs are effective and more efficient than treating victims.

Strong examples of positive developments are illustrated in countries where established home visitation programs are fully mandated and operating. Home visitations are instrumental in preventing mistreatment of children – such as addressing neglect and improving tactics for parents disciplining children<sup>11</sup>. They also demonstrate an efficient extension of existing service delivery frameworks to achieve scale and enable added value for citizens. When combined with local support for parents and caregivers, they present a cost-efficient strategy for governments.<sup>12</sup>

Of the 20 countries reviewed, 17 had home visitations to prevent violence against children mandated in law or policy delivered either through health services, social services, or both. However, only eight countries – **Armenia, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Peru, the Philippines** and **South Africa** – report a fully mandated home visitation service. The majority of countries revealed significant gaps in how this critical prevention program was mandated, prioritising its use as a response mechanism and limiting its potential to prevent violence. For example, countries including **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala** and **Sri Lanka** mandated that social or welfare services conduct home visitation only after a child or family encountered the law or courts (for example, where social services act as a liaison through court proceedings, or to monitor complaints to authorities). Similarly, healthcare workers often lacked a clearly articulated role in violence prevention policies. Instead they responded to possible cases of violence or neglect discovered during home visits to deliver broader health packages, such as patients missing maternal, newborn and child health appointments in **Indonesia**.

Positively, this review illustrated a number of countries strengthening approaches to prevent violence against children in school settings. Reducing violence against

8 Planning and supporting interventions to be taken to scale (i.e., nationally implemented) is a core component of the INSPIRE framework, which notes that poor coordination and insufficient support often leads to limited implementation of evidence-based prevention strategies. See *INSPIRE: Seven strategies for ending violence against children*, World Health Organization, 2016.

9 *Global status report on violence prevention 2014*. World Health Organization, 2014: Page 27.

10 Devries, K. et. al (2018); *Who perpetrates violence against children? A systematic analysis of age-specific and sex-specific data*. Published online 2018 Feb 7. doi: 10.1136/bmjpo-2017-000180.

11 *Ending Violence in Childhood; Global Report 2017*. Know Violence in Childhood. 2017: Page 68.

12 For more information on home visitations, see the “Parent and caregiver support” strategy of *INSPIRE: Seven strategies for ending violence against children*, World Health Organization, 2016: Page 50.

children through school institutions and educational policies is critical given that the majority of children worldwide access some form of school institution. This generates accessible and cost-efficient methods to reach children with life-saving information and skills.

To assess progress, this review focused on the degree to which countries established clear and comprehensive policies to prevent violence in schools, strengthened school safety standards (especially the physical environment), and included life skills into national curricula. While there is a clear bias towards countries addressing physical environment for safety and updating life skills curricula, ten countries reported having initiatives and/or progress against all three areas of intervention, while four achieved strong progress in all three areas.

While some policy frameworks are new and scaling up, they provide good models for other countries. For example, **Guatemala** reinforced its school-level reporting and complaint systems, as well as re-established training regimes for teachers on violence prevention and response that award them professional credits as they advance in their careers. This initiative improves the sophistication and prominence of the training. **Eswatini** exemplifies a positive approach to end violence through school management processes, specifically the Schools as Centres of Care and Support programme; **Peru** rejuvenated the physical environment of schools underscoring safety through construction and safety standards progressively applied since the 2010 General Law of Education. Finally, **South Africa**'s National

School Safety Framework and its corresponding annual safety plans and safety audit checklist created safety standards at school – including a stronger emphasis on teacher training for prevention and early detection of violence, now clearer and more accessible for teachers and students. Examples such as these make prevention of violence against children in schools an important area of shared learning and promote acceleration of evidence-based implementation among countries.

### 3. Report

Governments must create laws and regulations that encourage children, communities and professionals to report violence, to ensure those who experience and witness violence are helped; such pathways should be accessible and confidential, including reporting avenues tailored to children's needs. Professionals need guidelines and training to understand their role and coordinate with key actors. To assess progress in this area, the World Vision review examined the degree to which professionals and adults are legally obligated to report cases of violence against children. This included reporting protocols of service providers, and whether citizens and children can access reporting avenues safely and confidentially, such as child-friendly reporting mechanisms within local services and availability of free hotlines.

Regrettably, the review found that while many countries implemented thorough reporting protocols, adults and service providers are not held responsible for reporting

#### Who should report violence against children?





known cases of violence against children. Less than half of the countries reviewed (8 in 20) have legally regulated mandatory reporting of violence against children for service providers and professionals in contact with children. Only three countries have laws making adults more generally responsible for reporting cases. Given that adults possess the first level of responsibility for protecting children and ensuring their rights are realised, this lack of regulated obligation is disturbingly inadequate. Countries such as **Bangladesh, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Mexico** and **Sri Lanka** have almost no legal obligation for adults and professionals in contact with children to report violence against children, when recognised.

Conversely, several countries (**Guatemala, Peru, the Philippines, and South Africa**) have relatively comprehensive legal and policy frameworks for reporting. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** have comprehensive guidelines for responding to cases of violence against children, with dedicated sections for each public actor (social services, police, health, and varied educational settings). **Romania** has similar strength in its regulatory framework, in which reporting methods recognised the multi-sector nature of violence and provide multidisciplinary and interinstitutional response.

Increasing reporting of violence also must be enhanced through child-friendly reporting mechanisms, in which children can easily and readily access safe and confidential opportunities to report violence experienced or witnessed. Regrettably, only two countries possess mandated child-friendly reporting mechanisms in all locations where children frequent – schools, health centres, alternative care institutions, and other police/government/community centres. Five of the countries mandated child-friendly reporting mechanisms in schools,

four in alternative care institutions, only two in other government/community centres, and none fully mandated in health centres.

While national processes may exist for registering complaints and reporting abuse, reporting mechanisms that exist for children, *where children live their lives*, and that mitigate against obstacles children face aiming to report violence (such as fear of being shamed, of their report being dismissed, and uncertainty if the action against them was unacceptable) are desperately absent. Additionally, provisions for reporting options (such as hotlines) and mandatory reporting protocols for local service providers are weak.

Despite substantial investment from development partners and NGOs for hotlines in many countries, only half of the countries assessed have a free of charge, accessible and legally protected hotline for reporting violence against children cases. Furthermore, existing services often have limitations, such as not being free of charge (in **Guatemala**), not open 24 hours (in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**), or having toll-free limitations for children in remote areas, where no public phones are available (in **Eswatini**). Similarly, only 50 per cent of assessed countries have clear regulatory requirements enabling women’s and children’s desks in police stations and mandated public spaces (such as a local government centre/office) to encourage reporting and streamline referrals and responses.

The absence of child-friendly reporting mechanisms is an ongoing weakness in countries’ initiatives to end violence against children, even where frontline service providers have regulated reporting protocols. For example, **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala**

### Where can children report abuse?





Jon Warren; ©2019 World Vision / Rohingya children enjoy their time at World Vision's Child-Friendly Space in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

and **the Philippines** have strong response planning and systems, so that frontline service providers have regulated reporting protocols, alongside specialised training programs teaching police to respond to cases with sensitivity to gender and age. However, none have mandated service-level reporting options for children.<sup>13</sup>

Closing these reporting gaps is critical for improving data on cases of violence against children and empowering children, as well as enabling adequately resourced response mechanisms and child protection systems sensitive to the unique needs of children and families.

## 4. Respond

Governments must respond to violence in ways that protect a child from future violence and provide rehabilitation and justice to remedy the violent act. Relying on resources revealing the nature of cases reported and relevant trends in data, governments must amend or draft laws and policies that ensure service providers and response mechanisms are adequate and tailored to

specific needs of children in their country. Response services including medical care, counselling, legal support, and protection from offenders are critical for victims in the immediate aftermath of violence. They are an effective method to prevent further abuse, as well as to reduce significant long-term social and health costs including trauma and children in conflict with the law.<sup>14</sup> This review explored the presence of nine response services, each providing a vital purpose within a functioning child protection system. (See Annex I for the complete list.)

Of the 20 countries, only eight had all nine services *fully and clearly* mandated in law<sup>15</sup>; an additional four countries achieved some progress towards all nine services, but not yet fully mandated. The most common services absent from response frameworks were witness protection programs and long-term medical, counselling and rehabilitation services.

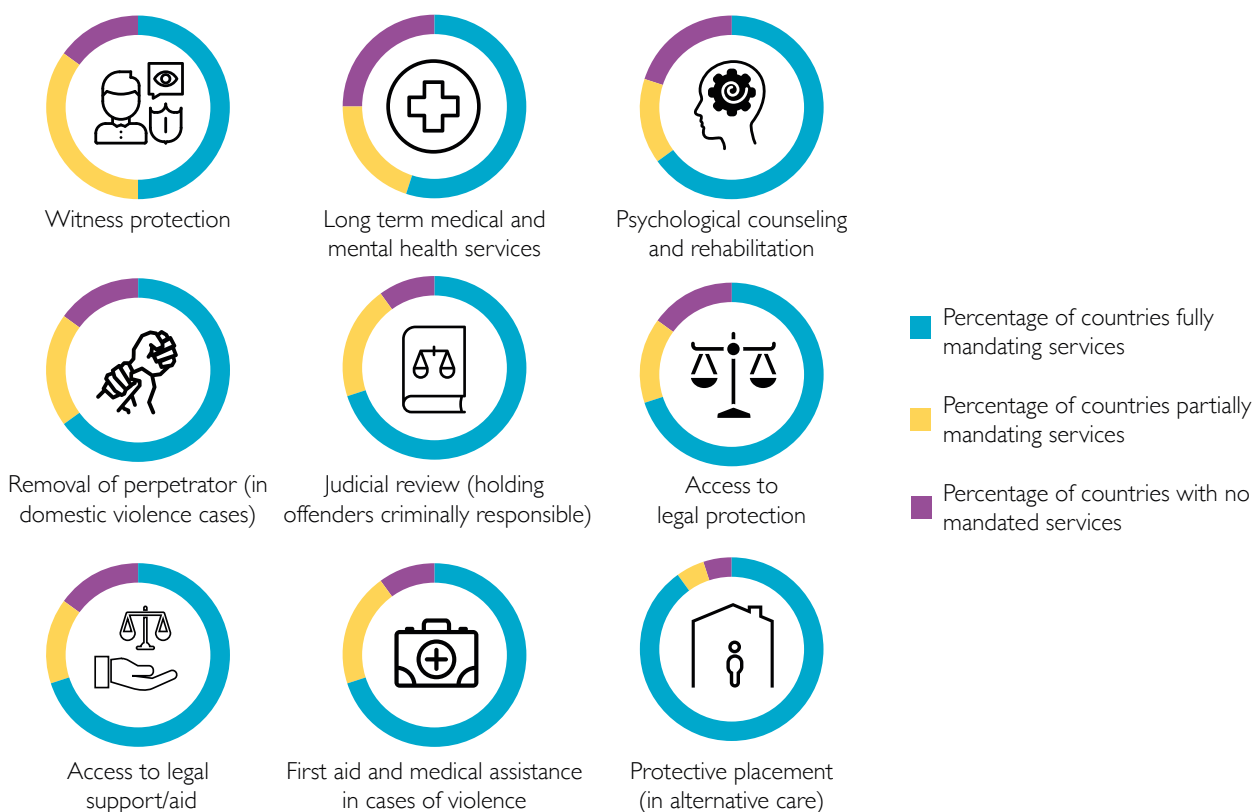
This analysis suggests that response planning to date has been implemented with an emphasis on reactive and life-preserving interventions, such as removal of perpetrators, removal of children from dangerous situations, medical

<sup>13</sup> The Philippines mandated for a department for minors in the prosecutor's office and in the police. However, this is generally to respond to cases of juvenile justice rather than violence against children.

<sup>14</sup> See the 'Response and support services' strategy of INSPIRE: *Seven strategies for ending violence against children*, World Health Organization, 2016: Page 61.

<sup>15</sup> Five of the eight countries were pathfinding countries.

### Services available for survivors



treatment, and interventions seeking to restore physical integrity of the child victim. However, longer-term services – which are critical for reducing repeat offences, justice and prosecution, reducing trauma and addressing mental health, and ending intergenerational violence – are not yet sufficiently instituted in laws and policies.

While these short-term responses remove the child from the source of abuse, they do little to address root causes of violence. This focus on immediate and reactive services was reflected in additional consultations World Vision conducted with citizens regarding their experience of services.<sup>16</sup>

As with prevention, many local service providers already view response to violence against children as part of their responsibility through referrals, treatment of injuries, and advice on positive parenting. Yet, the majority of local service providers report a lack of training to best respond to such cases, including how to leverage referral and supervision chains to efficiently and effectively respond to incidents.<sup>17</sup>

Governments must improve coordination (national and sub-national), training of service providers and referral pathways (especially for longer-term responses, such as healthcare counselling services and legal protection) to reduce long-term impacts of violence against children, leverage efficiencies available through already responsive local service providers, and prevent additional violent incidences.

### 5. Fund

Similar to any government priority that cross-cuts various sectors, ministries and strategies, ending violence against children requires the development of evidence-based action plans that are adequately costed and resourced. To evaluate the extent to which governments are matching their commitments to ending violence against children with adequate funding for implementation, World Vision assessed if national action plans to address violence against children have been costed and identified funding sources,

<sup>16</sup> Out of 44 focus groups of children and citizens carried out in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone, approximately 40 per cent listed immediate responses to violence, such as removing the perpetrator, as a primary purpose of the child protection response services. Fewer expected to receive counselling and first aid (34 per cent) and longer-term legal aid or protective placement in witness protection (16 per cent). Social workers in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone also reported that processes of removing children from harm (i.e., placements) were strong, whereas longer-term custody arrangements and steps for prosecution of perpetrators were less effective.  
<sup>17</sup> *It Takes Health to End Violence Against Children: Understanding Community Health Workers' perceptions and practices in preventing, detecting and responding to violence against children.* World Vision International, 2019.



plus whether budgets are detailed and transparent at national and local levels.

The review showed that while most countries are developing new or updated action plans that work across government, very few of those plans were meaningfully costed or identified funding sources for implementation. None of the countries reviewed made budgets available for civil society and other actors to view and understand at national and sub-national levels. Lack of prioritisation in this area will weaken progress in any of the other seven categories.

When assessing even the best examples of progress in this area, four realities are apparent:

1. Commitments to end violence against children were not matched with funding, even in countries with strong policy frameworks; therefore, action plans are unlikely to be achieved. Budget planning for national action plans was dispersed across various ministries rather than centralised.
2. Planning and budgeting processes were disconnected; thus, costing exercises have not provided additional funds in national budgets, alongside ongoing expectation that development partners will fill these budget gaps.
3. Governments did not consolidate or communicate budget plans in ways accessible and easily understood by service providers and monitored by citizens.
4. National resource allocation was not translated into local budgets for service providers.<sup>18</sup>

While some countries demonstrated promising costing practices (for example, **Eswatini** completed activity-based costing for its national action plan and **Bangladesh** had plans to continue increasing budgets allocated to end violence against children year by year up to 2020), government actors frequently acknowledge that additional funding is sought from development partners and multilateral institutions. These funding gaps – and plans on how to fill them – are often shared without transparency and undermine the likelihood that action plans will be implemented.

The ongoing expectation that donors and development partners will invest in and significantly fund initiatives in action plans must be challenged if the SDG targets are to be met. Without national investments by governments, identification of funding and transparent costings, international donors are less likely to contribute to actions plans, inhibiting implementation. Decision-makers must take increasing ownership and demonstrate political will to foster transparent funding and cohesive implementation

<sup>18</sup> Additional consultations by World Vision with service providers reveal that they consistently lack local budgets for transportation required for home visits, as well as communications/internet equipment vital for referrals and case management.

of strategies for positive change impacting children at the community level.

As governments increasingly own the agenda of ending violence against children, international donors and development partners can help mobilise new funding sources including from the private sector. They also can play a role in helping countries cost the appropriate package of interventions at scale and support the redirection of national resources to pay for those. Only with the full understanding of requirements can the right mixture of national investments and catalytic funding from development actors be determined.

## 6. Manage Data

Accurate and frequent data-collection regarding the prevalence of varied forms of violence, as well as use of prevention, reporting, and response services is foundational for understanding progress and trends over time, thereby enabling informed decision-making, robust planning, and efficient service provision. Governments must create centralised information systems or national databases that host information on child victims of all



Laura Reinhardt; ©2013 World Vision  
Marcella, age 7 from Guatemala is smiling. Her parents have received parenting training from World Vision.



Laura Reinhardt; ©2018 World Vision / Sherinah Naluwugge, age 12 from Uganda and her teacher Esther Naluue work together to stop bullying.

types of violence, abuse and neglect. These systems must segregate data by type of violence, age, gender and disability, as well as assign responsibility to manage databases to a specific public-sector workforce. The review assessed the regulatory framework for each country for such databases, plus requirements and planning for collecting population data on violence against children at least every five years.

The World Vision analysis illustrates that prevalence and response data are rarely systematized, infrequently collected, not centralised, poorly funded, and/or unable to be sufficiently disaggregated to inform practice (such as case management protocols) and/or policy. This is a serious concern for all twenty countries reviewed. Centralised information systems are critical tools for individual case management systems, referrals, and create consistent prevalence data necessary for budget allocations and future policies.

No countries could report clearly mandated plans and resources to conduct nationally representative surveys to produce data on violence against children frequently (at least every five years). Currently, many countries rely on data produced by United Nations-funded violence surveys with no known national plans or budget allocation to repeat these over time. This raises significant questions about ownership of this critical data as initial investment from development partners has only been met with subsequent ongoing data-collection plans by a small number of governments.

Yet, some countries are making progress maximising data from reporting. **Mexico's** INFOSIPINNA is a good example of a national system capable of disaggregating by age, gender and disability, although its capacity to record varied "types" of violence is limited. **South Africa** also has a strong National Child Protection Register that records abuse and neglect of children, as well as circumstances surrounding it. This information is intended to be shared among professionals responding to cases and to inform budgets and planning. While reliance on other data sets (possibly not as well disaggregated) and development partners to fund data collection continues, there is increasing ownership of the National Register, especially as provincial government staff take increasing responsibility for its maintenance (versus sending all forms to the capital for entry). Other countries (such as **Eswatini, Mozambique** and **Romania**) progressed within data-collection and management; however, all have limitations substantially reducing their system's ability to inform decision-makers.<sup>19</sup>

Addressing the challenge of collecting and utilising quality data is a priority among many global actors, especially in streamlining tools, catalysing learning, and data usage<sup>20</sup>. However, progress must be made at country level to ensure data-collection is regular and systematic, monitoring is prioritised, and investments support centralised data sources. Achieving this requires commitment beyond development partners, or even a "lead" ministry, to secure greater ownership across

<sup>19</sup> Eswatini and Romania, for example, are unable to disaggregate cases in which children have a disability, and South Africa has similar disaggregation challenges, whereas Mozambique is lacking a centralised system.

<sup>20</sup> In March 2019, representatives from UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, and more met at the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Data and Evidence to End Violence Against Children. The Forum aimed to increase collaboration, partnership and understanding of the support required for countries to improve data-collection, streamline existing tools, identify gaps in data, and improve evidence and learning.



government actors, who understand the value of such data to meet the SDGs.

## 7. Accountability

Given the ambitious agenda of the SDGs and the moral urgency of ending violence against all children, monitoring progress and holding institutions accountable for commitments are critical, from international to local levels. The CRC requires governments to report progress against commitments and standards, which fosters transparency and accountability.

Just as child protection systems must have careful planning to ensure perpetrators are held to account, action plans and policies require systems that make decision-makers accountable for commitments to child rights, and enable children and citizens to participate in decision-making and reporting processes.<sup>21</sup> To assess this, World Vision reviewed existing independent institutions mandated to defend children’s rights, regularity of governments reporting on progress against action plans and commitments through global mechanisms (such as the Voluntary National Review (VNR) and Universal Periodic Review (UPR)), how often governments respond to the CRC Committee recommendations, and whether children can meaningfully participate in any of these processes, plus be consulted on decisions and planning impacting them. Governments that have demonstrated good accountability through regular reporting on progress and reasonable participation of children also tend to have established independent human rights institutions to promote and defend children’s rights – as a stand-alone mandate or subsidiary or department of a broader human rights institution.<sup>22</sup> Of the 17 countries whose governments regularly report on their efforts to end violence against children through UPR, CRC and VNR processes, 13 have human rights commissions that are (at least in part) independent. Additionally, these countries generally are more likely to have complied with at least one CRC Committee recommendation in the last three years (14 out of 17). The review did not assess the extent to which independent human rights institutions lead to improved accountability; however, findings showed a relationship between having clearly mandated institutions with independence from other government bodies and successful activities that enhance accountability in reporting and participation.

A product of the renewed momentum towards ending violence against children in recent years is the



Katia Maldonado; 2014 World Vision  
Baltimore from El Salvador playing football with his favorite toy.

<sup>21</sup> Secondary analysis of global indexes suggests that “where governments are accountable, effective in-service delivery, assure citizens’ rights and listen to citizens’ voices they are more likely to reduce childhood violence” (*Ending Violence in Childhood: Global Report 2017. Know Violence in Childhood*. 2017: Page 39.)

<sup>22</sup> There is some evidence to suggest that counties that have a dedicated child rights institution (rather than a department or office of a broader human rights office) – such as in Guatemala, Indonesia and Sierra Leone – have a broader scope of response services for victims of violence, are more accountable for reporting on progress in ending violence against children, and have stronger public education and awareness programs.



### Countries demonstrating accountability through regular reporting and meaningful participation of children in decision-making

Country	Pathfinding country	Conducting VNR in 2019	Government regularly reports on progress in ending violence against children (VNR, UPR, etc.)	Children meaningfully participate in developing national action plans, policies and reports	In last 3 years, government complied with (at least) 1 CRC recommendation
Angola	No	No	Partial	No	Yes
Armenia	Yes	No	Yes	No	Partial
Bangladesh	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Bosnia and Herzegovina	No	Yes	Yes	No	Partial
Cambodia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Partial
The Democratic Republic of the Congo	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
El Salvador	Yes	No	Yes	Partial	Yes
Eswatini	No	No	Yes	Partial	Yes
Ethiopia	No	No	Partial	No	Partial
Guatemala	No	No	Yes	Partial	Yes
Indonesia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes
Mexico	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Partial
Mozambique	No	No	Yes	Partial	Yes
Peru	Yes	No	Yes	Partial	Yes
The Philippines	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	Yes
Romania	Yes	No	Yes	Partial	Yes
Sierra Leone	No	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes
South Africa	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes
Sri Lanka	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zambia	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

Yes      
 Partial      
 No 

participation of children in national and international consultation platforms, as well as grassroots initiatives ensuring children's voices are heard and documented to meaningfully contribute to planning and reporting processes. Regrettably, most of these efforts remain the responsibility of civil society organisations and development partners, not yet transitioned into government action to ensure children and citizens can meaningfully participate in planning, monitoring and reporting processes. As a result, accountability continues to largely lie between governments, United Nations institutions steering the SDG framework, and donor governments.

In the World Vision review, only three countries were recorded as having meaningful participation of the children

who are most impacted or most targeted by new policies or laws, although limitations remain.

**Mexico** has included boys and girls in consultation workshops for the development of the national child protection system (called PRONAPIINNA); however, these appear to only have been at national level, limiting participation of children in rural and remote areas. Similarly, **Eswatini's** Junior Child Protectors and Clinic Teen Clubs have been well received by government, but are not available to children in all parts of the country and still largely reliant on NGOs and international organisations for funding. Whereas in **Sri Lanka**, the elected Youth Parliament at national level, established in 2010 (now expanded into similar children's councils), is also operating at sub-national level to increase the

number of youths participating in decision-making and increasing accountability of government actors.

**The Philippines** provides a strong example of achieving both good utilisation of accountability mechanisms and strong, mandated participation of children and youth. Starting with the 1974 Child and Youth Welfare Code, the active participation and responsibility of children and youth in civic life has clearly cascaded through levels of government and provided platforms for youth organisations to participate in accountability and reporting processes. The Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children, 2000–2025, called “Child 21”, helps link the participation

of children to key actions of government agencies. However, there is some suggestion that the quality of child participation and consultation are not always consistent across sectors.

The assessment has shown strong commitments from governments to report on progress towards ending violence against children annually and through global accountability mechanisms, as well as gradual progress in meeting CRC Committee recommendations. However, relatively few countries regularly reporting on their national action plans for ending violence against children, substantial limits in meaningful child and youth participation in accountability and reporting processes,

### Pathfinding Countries

Pathfinding countries are a trademark of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. They are 26 countries whose governments made a formal commitment to take comprehensive action to end all forms of violence against children including strengthening laws and policies, allocating increased finances, generating data, and accelerating and monitoring actions taken to end violence against children.



Ten of the twenty countries reviewed for *Small Cracks, Big Gaps* report were pathfinding countries, providing a useful comparison point. Regrettably, the review revealed that, across most of the categories assessed, pathfinding countries made similar progress, and had similar gaps, to non-pathfinding countries.

One important exception was in “Accountability”. This difference demonstrates the value of frameworks such as the Global Partnership in terms of reporting on progress in ending violence against children, responsiveness to international scrutiny and recommendations (such as through the CRC recommendations), and participation of children in planning and policy decisions, all critically important and valuable.

However, it does raise concern that these actions do not result in additional, more tangible, changes for children. Pathfinding countries, for example, did not have greater activity relevant to recent changes in legislation to close gaps in laws related to violence against children, have not achieved greater coverage of response services than other countries, and have not had greater investment in public education or awareness activities to challenge perceptions regarding violence than non-pathfinding countries.

Positively, the assessment did suggest that pathfinding countries 1) are more likely to have thoroughly mandated home visit services (which are a good proxy indicator for the development of systematic prevention services), with six pathfinding countries having a fully mandated home visit service, compared to only three non-pathfinding countries, and 2) may be more equipped to respond to violence against children online, with four pathfinding countries forbidding sexual violence of children both online and offline, compared to only one non-pathfinding country.

and continued reliance on international organisations and NGOs to support reporting, continue to undermine the promotion of accountability. These factors are central to ending violence against children and to achieving the entirety of SDG 16 on peace, justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

Despite solid compliance by governments to reporting against the CRC and the SDGs, weaknesses in global accountability mechanisms persist. CRC reporting, in particular, is plagued with delays in submissions and reviews of State reports; Agenda 2030 relies solely on voluntary reporting of progress without independent reviews. To gain from governments' compliance and make these processes more meaningful, efficient and thus beneficial for children, the weaknesses of global accountability mechanisms must be identified and addressed.

## 8. Challenge Perceptions

Typically, public awareness activities and campaigns have been implemented by civil society actors and development partners; however, it is critical that governments take steps to inform citizens about issues of violence against children to change behaviours. Public awareness and education activities are central to address social norms and behaviours allowing violence to continue, unabated. However, the scale and timeframe of such campaigns often are limited and require reach only governments attain, including through participation and leadership of local service providers and authorities.

In the World Vision analysis, no countries achieved the standards of planning and executing public awareness campaigns in the last three years that:

1. were fully funded, especially with government budgets;
2. had ongoing ownership for implementation by a

3. government department; and mobilised local service providers and/or community-level professionals (those with day-to-day interactions with children and their households) to lead public education and/or campaign activities.

Despite this, strong examples exist from which governments can learn. For example, **the Democratic Republic of the Congo** initiated several public education campaigns including targeted activities in response to its context as part of the African Union's regional campaign to end child marriage. Some of these campaigns continue in schools with involvement of teachers; however, it is unclear if ongoing activities are owned, monitored or funded by government. **South Africa** provides a good example of long-term government investment in changing public attitudes through its annual 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign and Child Protection Week, which has been operating since 1998.

Other governments also are intentionally engaging local service providers in their campaign and education activities (such as **Ethiopia's** mobilisation of health extension workers) and some sustained focus on violence through annually implemented campaigns (such as the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women in **the Philippines**). However, both struggle to attain clarity on ownership and funding.

Engaging service providers in social change campaigns and education is critical given their local knowledge and existing commitment to social change; however, few governments appear to have allocated budgets for ongoing public education and awareness activities accessible for sub-national planning and budgeting. While donors and civil society can continue as main partners in the process of educating citizens, thereby challenging harmful behaviours and cultural practices,



Florence Joy Maluyo; ©2016 World Vision / Classmates Samsia and Hadiya attend child-friendly space sessions at their school in the Philippines.



governments must provide leadership and systematic actions (that assign responsibility to specific actors and ministries) to change ad hoc advertisements into well-managed, directed campaigns that build momentum to prevent, report and respond to violence against children.

## Recommendations: Stepping up political leadership to close gaps

The adoption of the SDGs four years ago, and the broader commitments made to ending violence against children in all its forms, have not, as yet, resulted in the substantial action required to bring about change. Significant gaps in laws, policies and programs remain, with dire consequences for children and communities. Furthermore, the sheer ambition of the Agenda 2030, with 17 global goals and 165 targets, makes it difficult to prioritise actions to end violence against children in the same way that more targeted efforts such as the United Nations Study on Violence against Children achieved.

In reviewing legal and policy gaps, as well as progress of the 20 countries in relation to their commitments, *Small Cracks, Big Gaps* report illustrated that:

- legislation still requires improvement,
- budget planning and data management remain under-prioritised,
- overreliance on international organisations and donor governments for funding and other support.

The motivation and actions of international and development partners are important but not enough to end violence against children: greater political support, ownership and accountability at national level are imperative.

This report presents a powerful reference point by which progress can be measured in the coming years. It provides individual countries with a systematic assessment that is practical and targeted, plus provides global stakeholders with a critically important overview indicating where we must all be more ambitious.

World Vision calls on all governments to demonstrate stronger leadership to achieve a world free of violence against children, by taking the following seven essential actions:

1. Prohibit all forms of violence against children in all settings and close gaps in legislation that allow for specific types of violence.
2. Invest in prevention programs and reporting mechanisms. Scale up existing solutions, such as INSPIRE strategies, by integrating them into government strategies and providing clear policy guidance for child-friendly reporting and implementation through child protection systems.



Gabriela Grama; ©2014 World Vision  
Bianca with her mother Oana in Vulturesti, Romania.

3. Be a global champion for the prevention of violence against children, and help elevate this issue as a global development priority.
4. Increase funding and transparency in budgets allocated to interventions to end violence against children at national and sub-national levels, and across all sectors and mobilize additional funding from other sources.
5. Prioritise and invest in regular data collection and management for planning and decision making that responds to needs of all children regardless of their circumstances.
6. Mandate, resource and plan for child consultations in policy development, reviews, monitoring and reporting of ending violence against children initiatives.
7. Increase government delivery of community education and awareness campaigns that contribute to social change and prevent violence against children.

World Vision believes that a world without violence against children is possible; and the *Small Cracks, Big Gaps* report showcases examples of national ownership and responsiveness, demonstrating positive results. Investment in ending violence against children has a ripple effect, fostering strong societies and economies. Yet, overall, the international community remains very far from realising this vision for children – a world in which every child has legal protection from violence. If we are to turn our promises and commitments to children into a reality by 2030, ambitious government leadership is needed, with the international humanitarian development community playing a catalytic and supporting role.

## Annexes

### I. List of policy indicators

Category	Indicators
I. Forbid	<p>1 Does the legal and regulatory framework protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, corporal punishment, any other form of cruel or degrading punishment or treatment in any setting?</p> <p>a) home, b) schools, c) alternative care (child care institutions, foster care, etc.); and d) penal system, as a sentence of the courts or as punishment in penal institutions.</p>
	<p>2 All and any form of sexual violence and assault against children is forbidden by law:</p> <p>a) sexual abuse and violence, b) commercial sexual exploitation; and c) child pornography on line and off-line.</p>
	<p>3 Female genital mutilation is forbidden by law.</p>
	<p>4 The law prohibits the participation of children in labour that:</p> <p>a. is hazardous; b. interferes with a child's education; c. is harmful to a child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development; d. involves cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment; e. involves the sale of children or servitude; and f. involves activities in which a child is used for legally punishable criminal acts, such as trafficking in drugs or prohibited goods.</p>
	<p>5 The law:</p> <p>a) sets 18 as the minimum age for marriage for men; b) sets 18 as the minimum age for marriage for women; and c) forbids marriage for men and women under the age of 18.</p>
	<p>6 There are up-to-date (active) national action plans that address violence against children in all its forms and / or on relevant violence against children issues in the country, including:</p> <p>a) child labour; b) early marriage; c) female genital mutilation; d) physical violence; e) sexual violence and exploitation; and f) trafficking in children.</p>

2. Prevent	7	The law or regulatory framework mandates home visiting in support of families at risk by: a) social welfare services b) health services.
	8	All schools are required by law to implement: a. Anti-bullying and / or violence against children safe policies; b. Mechanisms to report all forms of violence; c. Clear measures planned and in place to respond to violence; and d. Training and capacity building for teachers to recognize and respond to violence.
	9	All schools are required by law to implement school safety environment standards that include provisions for: a. separate toilets by gender; b. adequate lighting; and c. school yard fencing.
	10	The official national school curriculum includes life skills education with an objective to help children and youth: a. manage the risks of violence; b. be equipped with information for decision making; and c. addresses gender stereotyping.
3. Report	11	The law provides a mandatory responsibility to report for: a. professionals in contact with children; and b. any individual.
	12	There are regulatory reporting protocols for each of the key service providers: a. Police; b. Health; c. Education; and d. Social Work.
	13	The law / regulatory framework mandates a free, publicly accessible hotline to report violence against children.
	14	The law or regulatory framework provides for women and children's desks in police stations or other mandated public spaces to encourage reporting and streamline referrals and response.
	15	The law or regulatory framework provides for specialized police units, individuals who are specifically trained or protocols to work with specialists to: a. receive reports on violence against children; and b. follow gender-sensitive protocols c. follow child friendly protocols d. follow protocols to involve/ work with other specialists as needed
	16	There are child-friendly reporting mechanisms mandated by law in: a. schools; b. health clinics; c. alternative care; and d. community centres.
4. Respond	17	The following response services are mandated by law: a. Removal of perpetrator (in domestic violence cases); b. Protective placement (in alternative care); c. First aid and medical assistance in cases of violence; d. Long term medical and mental health services; e. Psychological counselling and rehabilitation; f. Access to legal support / aid; g. Access to legal protection; h. Witness protection; and i. Judicial review (holding offenders criminally responsible)



5. Fund	18	National action plans to address violence against children have been costed out with identified sources of funding.
	19	Data is available on government budgetary commitments for ending violence against children at: a.) national level; and b.)(local) community level.
6. Manage Data	20	The law or regulatory framework mandates a centralized information system or national database with information on children victims of neglect, violence or abuse and assigns responsibility to implement the database, with data segregated by: a.)Type of Violence (what types of violence aren't covered?) b.) Age c.)Gender d) Disability
	21	The law or regulatory framework requires that a Violence against Children Survey or other representative population survey providing a baseline of prevalence of violence against children is carried out ever 5 years.
7. Be Accountable	22	An independent human rights institution has been established to promote and defend the rights of children (children's ombudsman, commissioner or focal point within a human rights commission, or similar).
	23	The government regularly reports on the implementation of national action plan(s) to end violence against children.
	24	The government regularly reports on its ending violence against children efforts through UPR/ CRC/VNR processes.
	25	Children have participated meaningfully at key stages of the process of developing national action plans, core policies and strategies to end violence against children.
	26	The national government has complied with at least one CRC Committee recommendation in the last 3 years.
8. Challenge Perceptions	27	The government has funded: a) a public awareness campaign to address violence against children in the last 3 years. b) public awareness activities led by relevant professionals at community level





World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Inspired by our Christian values, we are dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. We serve all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

We believe a world without violence against children is possible, and World Vision's global campaign It takes a world to end violence against children is igniting movements of people committed to making this happen. No one person, group or organisation can solve this problem alone, it will take the world to end violence against children.