Small Voices, Big Dreams
4 September, 2019
#SmallVoicesBigDreams
• Small Voices, Big Dreams (SVBD) is a ChildFund Alliance-wide initiative.

• Formed in 2002, ChildFund Alliance is a global network of 11 child-focused development organizations that help nearly 13 million children and their families in more than 60 countries.

• **Purpose of SVBD:** To elevate the voices of children on issues that directly affect them.

• SVBD 2019 compiles opinions of nearly **5,500 children from 15 countries** on violence against children.
SVBD 2019 participants
“Children should be aware of children’s rights.”
- Aarya, 12, India
No child is immune to violence

- Every year, nearly **one billion children** in the world suffer from some type of physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect.

- **Violence takes many different forms**, transcends all geographical barriers and societal differences, such as gender, religion, ethnicity, disability, as well as socioeconomic status.

- Nine out of 10 children surveyed believe that **recognizing and being aware of their rights** is a key factor for preventing and tackling violence.
Children’s rights and violence

• **Children appear to be very aware of their rights.** More than 7 out of 10 respondents express that, just like adults, children have their own rights.

• Yet, nearly half of children surveyed say they **do not know** about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

• More than 40% think **children are not protected enough** from violence.

• 90% of children agree “**to avoid violence against children, adults should listen to what children have to say.**”
“We need to be listened to; our voice is important.”

- Noemi, Honduras
By comparison…

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

- Sweden: 80%
- India: 20%
- All respondents: 60%
While there are different types of violence that are more explicit and visible, others are more subtle and, therefore, more difficult for children to recognize.
Where violence occurs...

- There are certain types of violence that happen more when the living conditions are worse.

- In countries with lower levels of development, children report experiencing a higher rate of systemic violence, like forced child labour, material deprivation and lack of access to basic services.

- The proportion of children who identify as being harassed or deceived on the internet or social media is much higher in countries with a very high score on the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index. This could be due to the fact that access to computers and the internet is higher in these countries.
Violence for boys vs. girls

- Both boys and girls recognize harassment of a sexual nature in the street as a form of violence, but more so among girls (84.1% vs. 82%).

- There is a clear difference in the types of violence boys and girls are vulnerable to. While boys talk more about the danger of being incited to do bad things, girls talk more about the danger of bad things happening to them.

- Boys are more at risk of being kidnapped or robbed, or of being victims of forced labour or organised crime. Meanwhile, girls are much more prone to being exposed to sexual violence, forced marriages and domestic work.
“Girls are raped and boys are forced to work very hard and are treated like slaves.”

- Dzifa, 11, Ghana
Consequences of violence as told by children

Sadness  Low self-esteem
Trauma  Loneliness
Embarrassed  Anger
Defeated  Psychological problems
Run away from home  Self-harm
Feeling guilty  They don’t love themselves
Rejected  because nobody else loves them
A desire to disappear  Worthless
Like they are not good enough  Unworthiness
No support  Unhappiness
Suicide  Life on the streets
A desire to disappear  They don’t love themselves
Like they are not good enough  Unworthiness
Poverty  Unwanted
Teenage pregnancy  Scared
Drug abuse  Unhappiness
Resentment  Harming others
Sorrow  Emotional scars
Suffering  Fear
School dropout  Distrust
Harm others
The causes of violence…

• According to children, in violent situations there is always a power imbalance between victim and aggressor.

• Children highlight three main causes of violence:

  1. Children’s inability to defend themselves;

  2. The cycle of violence; and

  3. The loss of self-control due to substance abuse.
Why do adults mistreat children?

- sometimes people of my age need to be hit to educate us: 30.8%
- there are families who need the money that children earn: 33.1%
- they are cruel and they want to hurt us: 33.4%
- they have problems at home or at work and they take it out on children: 42.9%
- adults around us do nothing to stop it: 43.2%
- they think we are less than them, they don’t treat us like people with rights: 44.6%
- sometimes we provoke them by misbehaving or disrespecting them: 47.3%
- those adults were also mistreated: 47.4%
- they are drunk or on drugs and cannot control themselves: 52.1%
- children cannot defend themselves from adults: 59.4%
“Yes, it is normal for an adult to hit a disrespectful child.”

- Idrissa, 12, Burkina Faso
Poverty as a cause of violence

- In countries with lower levels of human development (Burkina Faso, Honduras, Ghana and Thailand) one in two children say that ‘a family’s need for money can lead to situations of violence and mistreatment.'
“In my house we are poor. If I ask for something, they tell me off using aggressive words.”

- Sansakar, 11, India
Spaces where violence takes place

- Children perceive different places in their environments more violent than others, with **home and school perceived as being the most safe**.

- Globally, the **internet and social media** have been reported as the most unsafe, followed by the streets and then public transport.

- More than **30% of children in Thailand** perceive the street as a space that **doesn’t guarantee their safety**, whereas in Sweden or Spain, more than **85% feel safe when they walk alone in their community**.

- In India and Burkina Faso, **areas of transit were considered the highest risk**, places where many children mention the walk to school, to collect water or to visit other communities.
Perceived risk and safety

- One of the most significant findings of SVBD 2019 is that the subjective well-being of children is directly linked to the perceived levels of risk and security in their environment. The higher the risk in their homes, schools and communities, the lower their life satisfaction level is.

- In countries with high well-being (Spain, Sweden, Canada and New Zealand), children appear to have a very low perception of risk and global insecurity.
“I feel safe…”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>All respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At school</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking alone</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Countries: Spain, Sweden, Canada, New Zealand, All respondents.
Perceived risk and safety

The graph illustrates perceived risk and safety across various countries. The data is presented as a line chart with countries listed on the x-axis and percentage values on the y-axis. Three lines represent different scenarios:

- Green line: I feel safe if I’m at home.
- Orange line: I feel safe if I have to walk alone in the area where I live.
- Turquoise line: I feel safe if I’m at school.

The values range from 30% to 100%, with individual country data points marked for comparison.
“[Risks are] often on the way to school, on the way out of the village.”

- Haoua, 11, Burkina Faso
The experience of girls vs. boys

• Globally, both boys and girls think that women are more exposed and vulnerable to violence, although girls show a more acute perception of their vulnerability.

• 63.5% of boys and 59.7% of girls feel safe walking alone.

• Girls living in medium- and low-IHDI countries, more than boys, classify many of the spaces they inhabit in their daily lives as insecure. These differences are especially evident in Ghana, Thailand, Honduras and Vietnam.
“We women are disappearing. Every day around three women in this country are killed... we must look after ourselves.”

- Elena Maria, 12, Honduras
Who keeps children safe?

- Globally, **86.4% of children identify mothers as the person who keeps them the most safe** and, alternately, only **18.1% of children think that politicians and the people who govern protect children from violence**.

- There is a link between those who suggest that school is unsafe, and those who do not believe teachers keep them safe. Similarly, for children who think the streets are unsafe, and those who do not believe police or military protect them from violence.
Those who don’t protect children...
How protectors affect perceived safety

% of children who think that school is never or almost never a safe place for children based on whether teachers are considered protective figures

- Teachers - Always or almost always protect children: 7.5%
- Teachers - Never or sometimes protect children: 25.5%

% of children who think that streets are never or almost never a safe place for children based on whether police and military are considered protective figures

- Police or military - Always or almost always protect children: 29.5%
- Police or military - Never or sometimes protect children: 43.2%
Ending violence against children

• Nine out of 10 children surveyed think that the most important thing adults can do to protect children against violence is to love children more and listen to what they have to say.

• More than 88% of children think that when faced with a violent situation, they should tell someone who can help them.

• However, children did express the fear of not being believed by adults, or even receiving reprisals or punishments and being assaulted again.
“The first person I would tell would be an adult, but it must be someone I trust…”

- Ibai, 12, Spain
“...there are, for example, some teachers who might say ‘you are making it up’ or just ignore you.”

- Alba, 13, Spain
What adults can do...

- Care for us
- Protect us
- Respect
- Support
- Trust

When you feel safe: Provide food, shelter and care
Understand them: talk to them, listen to them, give them advice, have fun with them
Having shelter: Treat children properly
Attention: Love, Be healthy
Communication: Show Affection, Listen to children’s voices
Live in peace: Feeling wanted, Spending time with them
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love children more</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to what children have to say</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain to children that they have the right to be safe and protected</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>against violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach other adults about how important it is to keep children safe</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make better laws to keep children safe and to protect their rights</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell other adults or authorities who could help</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain to children how to defend themselves without using violence</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put adults who harm children in prison for a long time</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure that children know there are consequences for harming other</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find solutions to make the internet and social networks safe</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control children more and restrict what they do to keep them away from</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>danger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Little or no agreement: Green
Totally or somehow agree: Dark Green
Conclusion

• Feeling cared for and accompanied, having a good childhood and parents who love them, as well as teaching adults about children’s rights, are the main solutions offered by the children surveyed, regardless of the children’s geographic context.

• Elevating children’s voices, listening to their input and treating them as active participants with full rights will be crucial if we are to make real progress in creating a world for children that is free from violence.

• Read the report: www.smallvoicesbigdreams.org
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