



Save the Children

*For the United Nations Secretary General's
Study on Violence Against Children*

Questions and Answers
for Children and Young People
on the UN Study on Violence
Against Children May 2005

Contents

Introduction	3
What is violence against children?	4
Why do a Study on violence against children? We need action!	5
What difference will the contributions of children and young people make?	5
Can my organisation apply for funding to support our important work to stop violence against children?	6
Why is it necessary to find out more about violence against children? Everybody knows it happens.	6
In most countries there are laws that forbid violence against children. But it still happens. So how is this Study going to change that?	7
Poverty forces a lot of children to work. And many working children experience violence. Children may be beaten if they do not meet the targets that are set for them. How can you change that if poverty is at the root of it all?	8
Violence against children is often caused by discrimination. How can you stop that?	9
A lot of violence happens because children don't have the power to stop it. How can the Study change things?	9
The two-year Study has already started. What has happened?	10
Where is the Study going to take place?	11
So what's the next step?	12
How can children go to these meetings?	14
What happens after the consultations?	14
When will the Study's report be published?	15
Will there be a child-friendly version of the final report?	16
Is there someone at the UN Study Secretariat responsible for encouraging child participation?	16
Useful Resources	16
Word Bank	17

Introduction

The United Nations Study on Violence against Children is an international project looking at violence committed against girls and boys across the world and what can be done about it.

This booklet answers questions you may have about the Study. It tells you what is going on with the Study and looks at what can be done to tackle violence against children. The booklet is based on questions sent by children to a special email address between January-March 2005, and on discussions that children and young people have had about violence against children.

If you are new to the Study, you could look at *What is the United Nations Study on Violence against Children?* That paper will give you an understanding about why the study has been undertaken, how it will be conducted, how you can take part in the Study, and what benefits the Study will bring for children. You can find it at, for example:

www.violencestudy.org

www.childrenandviolence.org

www.savethechildren.net

We have tried to answer all the questions children sent us. However there were some important questions that we cannot answer now, but the Study will help to find the answers. Here are some questions that children and young people in Uganda asked about the Study:

- Why do children suffer?
- How can a child be abused?
- Why do children sometimes not report violence?
- What punishment is given to someone who has abused a child?
- What can we do if teachers beat us?
- How can children help their friends who have been abused?
- How can we help a girl who is being raped?
- How can we protect ourselves from violence?

What is violence against children?

The World Health Organisation's World Report on Violence and Health has tried to say what violence means, and this Study will use the same definition. Violence is:

“The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”

This Study focuses on violence that happens when someone uses their strength or their position of power to hurt someone else on purpose, not by accident. Violence includes threats, and acts which could possibly cause harm, as well as those that actually do. The harm can be to a person's feelings, their mind, or their general health and wellbeing, as well as to their body. It also means harm people do to themselves, including killing themselves.

What does violence against children include?

For this Study, children are: everyone under the age of 18.

For this Study, violence against children is:

- All forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse (harming your body or harming your mind)
- Neglect or bad treatment
- Maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse and exploitation (such as child prostitution)
- Trafficking (sale and trading) of children
- Child abuse is any form of violence against children when it is done by someone who is responsible for them, or has power over them, that they should be able to trust (such as parents, other close family or teachers).

Why do a Study on violence against children? We need action!

A UN Study is an important way of bringing about changes for children. When the Graça Machel report for the UN on children affected by war was published in 1996, governments paid more attention to the problem. As a result many countries have made it illegal to use child soldiers. And in 2002 it was made a war crime to use child soldiers under the age of 15. This means that members of governments or rebel organisations that continue to use young children as soldiers can now be prosecuted and put in prison.

This Study will bring together information about violence against children across the world, from research that has already been done. It will also help governments, communities and organisations working with and for children to find solutions to stop this violence and to help those who have suffered violence.

The Study is being led by Professor Paulo Pinheiro, who is called the “independent expert”. To help him, a group of people are working at what is called “the Secretariat” in Geneva. They are partly from UN organisations like UNICEF, and Save the Children has seconded an Advisor on Children’s Participation to the UN Secretariat.

What difference will the contributions of children and young people make?

Listening to what children and young people have to say about violence and possible solutions makes a huge difference. Children are the experts on their own lives, and how they can best be helped. Adults don’t always know what concerns children and young people most. When children and young people themselves are asked, protection from violence is one of the things children feel is most important.

When this Study was set up, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child made it clear that children and young people should be consulted and that their views should be taken seriously. It is only possible to understand and prevent violence if children and young people themselves speak out about their experiences and their ideas about how to stop it.

The Study will also look at how children and young people work to stop violence against children. The final report from the Study will include ideas from children on how they can work with adults to stop violence against them.

Can my organisation apply for funding to support our important work to stop violence against children?

A few governments, UN agencies and NGOs have given a limited amount of money for the Study. It pays for a Secretariat, that is a group of people in Geneva, which will put together all the information into a final report, and for regional consultations. There is no money for grants to organisations working against violence.

The Study is trying to involve as many people as possible in countries around the world. This should encourage governments and other organisations to make more money available for local projects to prevent violence against children.

Why is it necessary to find out more about violence against children? Everybody knows it happens.

It is true that much violence against children is seen but not stopped. It will be important to discuss how best to encourage people to take more action to prevent and stop violence.

But there is also a lot of violence against children which is hidden. Children may not feel able to report violence because they are afraid their abuser will take revenge or because the abuser is a family member. Or they may think that the violence is deserved as a punishment for their behaviour. Hitting a child when they have done something wrong, for example, is acceptable in a lot of countries, and may not be seen as 'violence against children'. Although we often think of violence as hitting and hurting the body, violence can also hurt feelings. For example, when children are being bullied and bad words are shouted at them.

All children and adults need to know that violence against children happens and what can be done to stop it. All forms of violence against children are unacceptable. Children who have suffered violence also need to know that they are not alone.

The report of the Study will talk about all sorts of violence, including:

- violence in the home and the family
- violence in schools

- violence in care institutions such as orphanages and children's homes, including violence against children who come into contact with police, courts and prisons
- violence in communities and on the streets
- violence at work

It is also important to talk because children and young people can share ideas on what they can do to stop violence against children. There are already many local projects where children and young people themselves work to stop violence and support children who have suffered violence. For example, in Thailand and Bangladesh, there are young people who are trained to monitor violence against children and to work with local organisations to put a stop to it.

In most countries there are laws that forbid violence against children. But it still happens. So how is this Study going to change that?

Laws are important because they say what is right or wrong in a country. People who break the law can be taken to court and punished if found guilty. Article 19 of the CRC (the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) forbids all violence against children. But the laws of every country also need to forbid violence and often these laws are not strict enough. Or nobody takes action when the law is broken. Countries need to make sure that children can report on violence and abuse and that helpful action is taken when they do so.

The Study will look at which kinds of laws work best in preventing violence against children and in taking action against those responsible. The Study will give advice on improving the laws and making new laws.

The more people know about violence against children, the more likely they are to take action. The Study will look at the law, but also at other ways to change things. For example, it will try to find out how teachers, children and parents can work together to prevent violence in schools. Because of the importance of the Study, and because the Study will attract a lot of attention to the problems and solutions related to violence, everybody, including governments, will be encouraged to make more efforts to stop violence against children.

Since this is the first UN Study to really listen to children and young people, this may help governments, the UN and everybody to more deeply understand how violence affects the lives of children and to think of ways that will work better to protect children from violence.

Poverty forces a lot of children to work. And many working children experience violence. Children may be beaten if they do not meet the targets that are set for them. How can you change that if poverty is at the root of it all?

Many children have to work to help their family to survive. This Study is not looking at what can be done to give families a better income. But it will examine what can be done to protect children who work from violence against them. The Study will collect good examples of what communities, adults and children, have done to stop violence against working children, and make these known so others can follow their example.

Children who work sometimes organize themselves to protect their interests, like a kind of children's trade union. In some places in Asia and Latin America children (usually with help from adults) have created organizations that last. Such organizations have, for example, succeeded in giving working children access to health care they can afford. Some of the children involved have become spokespeople for child workers where they live and may speak out on issues that are very sensitive. This may, of course, be dangerous, but many working children have shown a lot of courage and found clever ways of doing so without putting themselves and their friends at risk.

Many countries have signed up to an international convention against child labour. This means governments should not allow children to do work that badly affects their health and development or interferes with education. You can find more about child labour issues on:

www.unicef.org/protection/index_childlabour.html

www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/

www.savethechildren.net/alliance/resources/child_wk.pdf

Violence against children is often caused by discrimination. How can you stop that?

Discrimination happens when a more powerful person or group of people treat less powerful people badly and unfairly. There are many grounds on which girls and boys are discriminated against, such as social class, HIV/AIDs status, disability, age, ethnic group, or because they are gay. Many times girls face particular kinds of violence just because they are girls: some girls are forced to marry early; babies are sometimes put to death because they are girls; girls are also raped and humiliated because they are girls.

The Study is a good way of letting the world know that children suffer as a result of discrimination. Violence linked to discrimination should be (and often is) against the law, and action should be taken by governments to enforce these laws.

Throughout the world, people who have been discriminated against have taken action to protest about and change their situation – for example in South Africa where black and white people were treated completely differently. People can also make a personal commitment not to discriminate. Children have often taken an active role. Girls and boys have protested against violence against girls, such as acid attacks in Bangladesh.

Children are often forgotten when people talk about discrimination. For example, many people don't realise that children with disabilities experience a lot of violence. This can be from hurtful bullying by other children but also violence by adults who will not accept these children in their communities. Children with disabilities may also be put in special institutions where there is not enough money for their proper care or caring staff. Institutions are another place where children can be treated violently.

A lot of violence happens because children don't have the power to stop it. How can the Study change things?

Giving girls and boys a voice is one of the most important ways to give children power, and an important tool against violence. Often violence against children is not reported, or if it is, is ignored.

Everybody has a responsibility to stop violence against children – not just governments but also parents, teachers and children. The Study can only draw attention to the problem of violence against children and suggest good ideas for action. But it is up to the international community and all of us to take that action.

By letting children and young people speak for themselves, adults will be given an important message that their feelings and opinions should be taken into account and that children and young people can play an active part in stopping the violence.

Raising these issues can be effective in making change. Children in Orissa, India, drew attention to the effects on children of physical and degrading/humiliating punishment in schools. They met with 35 politicians from ruling and opposition parties and explained their point of view. This resulted in a government order to ban such punishments in schools in the state of Orissa.

The two-year Study has already started. What has happened?

Countries across the world were asked to fill in a questionnaire (list of questions) which provided information on:

- laws that help prevent violence and protect children who have faced violence
- things that are done to stop violence against children
- how children themselves are involved in preventing violence
- what plans there are to improve the situation
- what statistics (information on numbers of children who experience violence) are available and what research has been done on violence against children
- what has been done to make people aware of violence against children and what to do about it

You can see whether your country filled in the questionnaire and what they had to say, if you go to www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/study.htm and select your country in the menu on the left hand side.

NGOs in many countries organise events to give children and young people a chance to share their experiences and views on violence against children.

There is a website for the UN Study:

www.violencestudy.org

There are also a series of regional consultation events (big meetings) being held around the world (see below for details).

There are discussions on UNICEF's Voices of Youth website. You can join these if you go to: www.unicef.org/voy/discussions/. The February newsletter of Voices of Youth looks at

the Study as well. You can get a copy from: www.unicef.org/voy/.

Another good website to look at is the Children's Right Information Network, CRIN. They have a special section on the UN Study with child-friendly pages on:

www.crin.org/violence/forchildren/index.asp

As well as the questionnaires to countries, organisations and interested individuals have been sending their reports and suggestions to the UN Secretariat. Reports are also sent in by organisations led by children and young people themselves. The deadline for receipt of these contributions is 30 June 2005.

Where is the Study going to take place?

The Study will rely on research about violence against children that has already been done in any part of the world. It aims to bring together and analyse what is known. It will, for example, use information from the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children. Official statistics from the UN and other organisations, such as UNICEF, will also be used. There will also be regional meetings and responses from countries to questions asked by the Study. If gaps in knowledge are found, research can then be carried out on new or neglected issues.

So what's the next step?

In the first half of 2005, meetings (consultations) on the Study take place in nine regions of the world. Here is the current list.

Region	Dates for Regional Consultations	Host
The Caribbean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 March 2005 Children and Young people's forum • 10-11 March 2005 Regional Consultation • 14-19 March Young People's Forum 	Port of Spain, Trinidad
South Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17-18 May 2005 Children and Young people's forum • 19-21 May 2005 Regional Consultation 	Islamabad, Pakistan
West and Central Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23-25 May 2005 Regional Consultation 	Bamako, Mali
The Americas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 May - 1 June 2005 Regional Consultation 	Argentina, Buenos Aires
North America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 June 2005 Children and Young People's Forum • 3 June 2005 Regional Consultation 	Toronto, Canada
East and Southern Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-5 June 2005 Children and Young People's Forum • 6-8 June 2005 Regional Consultation 	Johannesburg, Sth Africa
East Asia and Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11-12 June 2005 Children and Young People's Forum • 14-16 June 2005 Regional Consultation 	Bangkok, Thailand
Middle East and North Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27-29 June 2005 Regional Consultation 	Cairo, Egypt
Europe and Central Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 July 2005 Children and Young People's Forum • 5-7 July, 2005 Regional Consultation 	Ljubljana, Slovenia

You can find out more about the regional consultations, and any changes for your region, by going to the UN Study secretariat website:

www.violencestudy.org

www.crin.org/violence/regions/index.asp

Each of the regional consultations will involve around 300 participants. These will include

- governments from all of the countries in the region;
- children (under 18 delegates) from different countries in the region who will have been selected through an open nomination process based on criteria decided by the organisers of each consultation
- representatives from national and regional UN agencies and networks
- representatives from national and regional non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and networks that work on the different issues of violence or who work with children
- experts – people who have special knowledge in each region on the issues of violence being discussed

The regional meetings are held to find out what kinds of violence against children are happening in the region. The meetings should also mean that governments and organisations in all countries pay more attention to the subject and have public discussions about what to do to stop violence against children.

The meetings are organized in basically the same way in all regions, with a few differences. Most of them will have separate meetings beforehand for the children and young people participating, called Children's Forums or pre-meetings. They are set up to help the children and young people to prepare for their participation in the regional consultation itself.

Children and young people participating as Under-18 delegates in the regional meetings will be able to provide information about violence against children from their own country, make suggestions on what to do about violence and help make a plan of action for stopping violence against children in the region.

Each region will make a report of their regional consultation. Information from the regional reports will be included in the final report of the UN Study.

Children and young people who have participated in the regional consultations should be involved in follow-up activities in their own countries after the regional consultation.

How can children go to these meetings?

Only some invited children can attend the regional consultations. There will be only a few at each meeting because so many other people will be invited. Spaces are limited for children and adults. For the Europe/Central Asia consultation, for example, representatives of more than 50 countries will be invited. And there will be representatives from UN agencies, such as UNICEF, as well as NGOs and other national organisations.

Because few children will actually attend the consultation itself, regions are looking at other ways to include the views of children and young people from ALL countries. This could be through film or local meetings, which can send a report to the regional consultation or direct to the Study Secretariat in Geneva. It is work in countries and regions which will contribute most to exposing violence against children and to finding solutions to stop the violence.

What happens after the consultations?

The Study will look at all the information gathered at the meetings as well as from the national reviews and from organisations that have sent in their ideas. This should help to find out:

- what all regions have in common, for example, bullying in schools might be found in all regions
- what differences there are between regions
- where the gaps are in knowledge about the problem
- effective ways of preventing violence against children
- good ways of helping children who are experiencing violence
- what is working and what is not working to stop violence against children

The Study will then make a list of good ideas, called recommendations, on what governments and others can do to prevent violence against children and how to help children who have experienced violence. These recommendations will be published in a report.

There should be recommendations for:

- how to stop violence against children at home and in families, in schools, and in the community
- laws that are effective in stopping violence and protecting children who face violence.

- what governments, the UN and other organisations can do to help children who have suffered violence.
- what organisations working with and for children can do to stop violence against children.
- what children themselves, as well as their families and communities, can do to stop violence.
- how boys and men, as well as girls and women, can help make changes to prevent violence against children

When will the Study's report be published?

Once Professor Pinheiro, the independent expert, has finished the report, he will hand it to the United Nations Secretary General, who officially presents it to the UN General Assembly in the autumn of 2006.

The report to the UN will be short, but another longer report is also planned. The report to the UN already has an outline that says it will include:

- introduction and overview – information about the extent of violence against children. Also, what can make children more at risk.
- overview of what governments should do, laws and agreements that are in place to prevent violence against children and to protect children who have experienced violence
- violence in the home and family
- violence in schools and education settings
- violence in other institutional settings (orphanages, etc), including violence against children who come into contact with police, courts and prisons
- violence in the community and on the streets
- violence in work situations
- conclusions and ideas for action

After the report is launched, all countries and regions will be asked to take action, for example making plans, having discussions and debates at local level, launching new ideas to stop violence, and running campaigns.

Will there be a child-friendly version of the final report?

Yes. The UN Study Secretariat with other organisations working on the UN Study want to make sure the report and its conclusions can be read and understood by children everywhere in a child-friendly version.

Is there someone at the UN Study Secretariat responsible for encouraging child participation?

Yes, Ravi Karkara has been especially employed in the UN Study Secretariat to strengthen participation of girls and boys in the study and beyond. You can contact him at karkara@sgsvac.org

Useful Resources

UN Study on Violence against Children – www.violencestudy.org
CRIN – www.crin.org/violence/
UNICEF – www.unicef.org/voy/
OHCHR – www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/study.htm
Committee on the Rights of the Child – www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/index.htm
WHO – www.who.int/topics/violence/en/
Save the Children – www.savethechildren.net

Word Bank

Word	What it means
abuse	bad treatment that causes physical or mental harm
bullying	bullying includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People calling you names • Making things up to get you into trouble • Hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving • Taking things away from you • Damaging your belongings • Stealing your money • Taking your friends away from you • Spreading rumours • Threats and making you feel afraid • Making silent or abusive phone calls • Sending you nasty phone texts • Posting insulting messages on the internet • Bullies can also frighten you so that you don't want to go to school, so that you pretend to be ill to avoid them
child abuse	any kind of harm done to children, including through neglect, physical, sexual or mental violence by someone who is responsible for them, or has power over them, that they should be able to trust
child-friendly	designed for children, and understandable to them
children's homes	places where groups of children who don't have parents or whose families cannot look after them, are looked after.
Committee on the Rights of the Child	a group of experts on children from all over the world who meet in Geneva three times a year to hear what governments have been doing to protect and promote children's rights, as set out in the "United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child". The experts help governments to make sure that they take all the steps needed to make children's rights real in their daily lives. They are chosen at a special meeting in New York held every four years.
community	a group of people that know each other, or live near each other, or have other things in common
consultations	asking people what they think
Convention on the Rights of the Child	The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child spells out the basic human rights to which children everywhere are entitled. 192 countries in the world have signed up to the Convention. You can find out more about it on www.unicef.org/crc/

Word	What it means
discrimination	when a more powerful person or group of people treat less powerful people or groups badly and unfairly or favour some people. Many people experience discrimination including women and girls, people from some ethnic or cultural groups, and people with disabilities
expert	someone who knows a lot about a subject
family	meaning not just parents and child but everyone who might be thought of as part of a child's family. The extended family includes grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and others
gender	the way in which different societies understand the biological differences between men and women and what it means to be feminine and masculine. Ideas about how women and men (and girls and boys) should behave, and what should be their roles and responsibilities.
General Assembly	191 countries are represented in the United Nations General Assembly. It is like a parliament of the nations which meets in New York to discuss the world's most important problems. Although the UN is not a world government, it is a place where countries can discuss how they want to work together.
human rights and child rights	rights belonging to everyone because they are human, including rights to basic freedoms, and to have what they need to survive, develop and participate in society. Adults have rights and so do children.
mental or psychological violence	insulting, degrading or humiliating someone; hurting someone's feelings or causing emotional harm
neglect	not looked after properly, failing to care
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation – used by the UN to describe all organisations that are not part of a government and are not working to make a profit. Many NGOs exist to help people who have some sort of problem (such as poverty or disability) or to protect something (such as animals or plants)
orphanages	places where children whose parents have died and whose families cannot look after them, are looked after
participation	being involved in, playing a part in, something. Having your voice heard and being taken seriously – usually when decisions are being taken about something.
physical punishment	physical punishment includes any kind of physical violence including smacking, beating, whipping, that is done with the intention of controlling, educating, or discipline
research	careful study and investigation for the purpose of discovering and explaining new knowledge

Word	What it means
Save the Children	Save the Children is an international NGO, fighting for children's rights. It delivers immediate and lasting benefits to children worldwide. Twenty-seven Save the Children organisations make up the International Save the Children Alliance, the world's largest independent movement for children, making improvements for children in over 111 countries.
Secretary-General	the head of the UN, elected by all governments of the world. Currently Kofi Annan, who was elected in 1997, and who is the UN's seventh Secretary-General
sexual abuse of children	any kind of sexual activity done to children, especially by someone who is responsible for them, or has power over them, that they should be able to trust.
special session	see UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children
UNICEF	the United Nation's Children's Fund, originally set up in 1946 as the UN International Children's Emergency Fund. The main organisation in the UN which works for the protection, survival and development of children. It works closely with governments around the world to provide services for children such as medicines, vaccines, water, food and schooling
UN	the UN (United Nations) was created after the Second World War to provide a place for all the countries in the world to discuss problems and deal with issues that affect them all. (All the members together are called the UN General Assembly). The United Nations is based in New York and Geneva, but also has offices in other countries. If you want to find out more about the United Nations, go to www.un.org
UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children (UNGASS)	In May 2002 the UN held a special meeting to talk about the situation of children across the world and what could be done to make life better for all children. You can find out more about the Special Session if you go to www.unicef.org/specialsession/
WHO	World Health Organisation - The World Health Organisation is the UN specialist agency for health. The organisation works to help control disease and improve general standards of health and nutrition through international co-operation. It works to make sure that all people across the world can have the highest possible level of health.