Children speak about being free from violence and exploitation

ChildFund® Alliance

ChildFund Alliance

A worldwide alliance of 12 children's development organisations, working in 58 countries to improve the lives of vulnerable and excluded children, help them overcome poverty, and achieve their rights http://www.childfundalliance.org

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Summary

As the United Nations General Assembly prepares to discuss the future global priorities for people all over the world –children have made a resounding statement that violence and exploitation perpetrated against them MUST be included.

ChildFund Alliance conducted 55 focus groups with children in 41 countries, and involving over 1,300 individual children so that their voices can be heard as part of the post-2015 agenda. This study provides horrific examples of violence and exploitation raised by some of the children:

- being punished with heated metal rods and spoons;
- being abducted so their organs could be harvested;
- their hands being dipped in boiling oil;
- girls being forced to become pregnant to act as drug mules;
- being forced into child marriage to settle family disputes and debts; and
- being severely beaten at schools, leading to death.

Children participating in focus group discussion in Laos. **Photo:** ChildFund Laos.

Despite their awareness of these horrendous violations, children themselves were able to recommend practical solutions to increase their safety.

The top three calls to world leaders were to create and enforce legislation against violence; to fund and run awareness campaigns at all levels; and to ensure offenders are punished so that children feel safe.

Children stated that they felt free when they were actively listened to, had access to safe schools and the opportunity to play.

Globally the top three forms of violence and exploitation identified by children were sexual violence, child labour and physical and humiliating punishment. African children also highlighted harmful traditional practices and children in the Americas pointed to the issue of bullying.

Children also identified other risks, which included drug and alcohol abuse, dropping out of school and pregnancy, as well as being forced to engage in criminal activity.

Introduction

Throughout the world, children are subject to the worst forms of child labour, living and working in the streets; harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage, and female genital mutilation and cutting; sexual abuse; the impact of armed conflict, including the use of child soldiers by armed forces and gangs; lack of access to justice, including child-friendly justice, and unnecessary institutionalization, among others.

Preventing and responding to violence and exploitation is essential to ensuring children's rights to survival, development and well-being.

The impact of violence and exploitation is known. Countries with high rates of child labour tend to have low rates of school attendance. Children who study in a violent environment achieve lower academic results than those who do not. A child victim of abuse and exploitation can be affected emotionally, mentally and physically, and his or her ability to learn and socialize can be seriously hampered.

If the post-2015 development framework is to carry the torch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and if the next generation of development goals is to finish the job of the current one, violence and exploitation must be explicitly included and addressed.

To enhance the voices of children in this process, this report looks at qualitative data from 55 focus groups with over 1300 children who participated in this process, and also analyses 6,500 MY World votes from children on their priorities for the post-2015 agenda.

Children participating in focus group discussion in Ecuador. **Photo:** ChildFund Ecuador.

From these focus group discussions, there were a series of common concerns and themes that children identified regarding their own protection from violence and exploitation. They include:

- Children aspire to have their rights fulfilled and to be able to exercise their fundamental freedoms –including the right to non-discrimination, and the right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.
- The experience of violence and exploitation perpetrated against these children takes many different forms, most prominently sexual violence, child labour, and physical and humiliating punishment.
- While many children stressed that both girls and boys are victims of violence and exploitation, they pointed to the fact that girls are more exposed to violence and exploitation related to their sexuality, while boys are more at risk of being subjected to physical harm.

About this Report

Child participation is not only a right, but also a general principle and part of the general measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This means that the Convention cannot be fully realised if children are not respected as rights-holding citizens and their views are listened to and given due weight.

Furthermore, participation is highly valued and acknowledged in the UN Study on Violence against Children.[1] Of the 12 overarching recommendations of the Study, the seventh relates to children's participation, and calls upon states to engage actively with children and respect their views in all aspects of prevention and response to violence against children.

The purpose of this report is to strengthen the voices of girls and boys in the agenda-setting process for the post-2015 development framework. Specifically, this initiative seeks two main objectives:

a) to ensure that children's voices are included in the post-2015 development agenda;
b) to fill a gap in qualitative research regarding children's views about violence and exploitation perpetrated against them, and their place in the post-2015 development agenda.

Understanding and defining violence and exploitation from the perspective of girls and boys is crucial, as it plays a fundamental role in developing child-centred measures to address them. To this purpose, focus groups were conducted in 41 countries, all of which engaged between twenty to thirty children in open discussion.

[1] Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (2006), *World report on violence against children* (United Nations). Available at: http://www.unviolencestudy.org/.

While the authors coordinated this process, it is in the end the result of children's views and participation.

Methodology

This report is based on first-hand information children shared during focus group discussions in 41 countries across Asia, Africa and the Americas. The selection of the countries was based on ChildFund's countries of operations. The participation of girls and boys was ensured in each of the focus group discussions and the information coded.

To ensure that discussions were conducted in a safe and inclusive environment and to support the facilitators the following documents were shared:

- a concept note
- a facilitators' guide
- a focus group session plan
- a list of open-ended questions, with both principal and guiding questions
- all the necessary consent forms for children and their caregivers
- a reporting guideline

These documents were mostly adapted from existing publications. Additionally, the facilitators were provided with feedback and guidance, as and when necessary, to successfully conduct the discussions and collate the information.

These focus group discussions provided a platform for girls and boys to discuss child protection concerns, specifically violence against and exploitation of children; to share their understandings and experiences of these issues; and to recommend possible actions to end all forms of violence and exploitation perpetrated against children.

Facilitators asked the following questions, with the respective sub-questions to guide the dialogue:

1. What makes you feel free?
2. What makes you feel free from violence and exploitation?
3. What makes you feel free to take action to stop violence and exploitation?
4. What can world leaders do to free children from violence and exploitation?
5. What can adults do to free children from violence and exploitation?
6. What are the risks that children face? Are they different for boys or girls? What are the risks for girls? What are the risks for boys?
7. Is there anything else you would like to say about the protection of children from violence, exploitation and abuse?

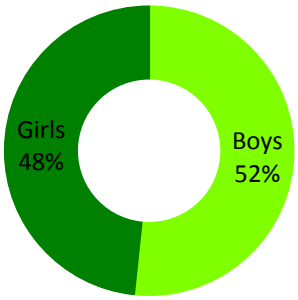
The process applied the standards for child participation as highlighted in the General Comment No. 12, enabling children to express their opinion and develop their recommendations.

The graphs indicate what percentage of the total number of focus groups raised a particular issue. Annex 2, at the back of the report, sets out the coding that was used to collate the answers.

Disaggregated information for participating children in focus groups

	Boys	Girls	Total
Africa	306	307	**613**
Americas	184	176	**360**
Asia	207	169	**376**
Globally	**697**	**652**	**1349**

Participants by Gender - Globally



Major themes coming out of focus group discussions

1. Children's rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

In all focus group discussions, children expressed the aspiration of having their rights fulfilled, and their fundamental freedoms respected. This aspiration mostly related to participation, education, health, food and their right to play. Children also pointed out that there needed to be more awareness about children's rights, and that adults at all levels need to ensure that this happens.

"I feel free when my rights are respected by my parents, the leaders, and the state."
17-year-old girl, Guinea

1.1. Participation

Throughout the focus groups, participation came across as one of the strongest aspirations of children. They were aware of the differences between effective participation and tokenism; of the settings in which their opinions should be brought to bear; and of the value that this would add to decision-making processes.

Many children mentioned that they wanted to be "actively heard" by adults and decision-makers. In many cases, the possibility of expressing their opinions and views was correlated with the reduction of violence.

Children expressed their desire to be partners rather than adult's beneficiaries. Intergenerational dialogue was fundamental for children to feel safe and for children to be able to take action.

"I feel free when I reach my dreams and the elders don't tell me to shut my mouth."
15-year-old girl, Bolivia

1.2. Discrimination

Children spoke about the desire to be free from discrimination in general. They expressed their aspirations for a life free from discrimination, where children receive equal treatment in schools and are afforded equal opportunities. More often than not, children talked about the need to stop gender discrimination, both as a violation against children but also as a solution to reduce violence and exploitation. The other dimension that was mentioned was discrimination against children with disabilities.

"Adults should treat every child equally."
15-year-old boy, Liberia

1.3. Survival

In nearly all focus groups children identified their right to the provision of basic needs, their right to survival and to health. The realization of these rights was seen as contributing to them feeling free and being free from violence. For most children, basic needs were defined as adequate food and healthcare. Children made the link between a lack of resources and their feelings of safety. They identified that they were more at risk of violence and exploitation if the household was not able to meet its basic needs. Children talked of being forced on the street to beg for money and being forced into early marriages to pay off debt.

2. Education and schools

According to children, three situations hinder their access to education. First, child labour – whether agricultural, domestic or otherwise– was mentioned as one of the factors preventing boys and girls from having access to education. Second, security was also identified as one of the obstacles for children going to school, as they often do not feel safe on their way from and to their homes. Third, teachers who resort to physical and humiliating punishment were also mentioned as an obstacle to children's education, and as contributing to the fact that, on occasion, children do not feel safe –not to mention happy and free– in school.

At the same time children identified schools as a place where they were subject to violations from teachers and other students. They called upon teachers and Governments to do more to ensure that their schools are safe and free from violence.

Children emphasized the need for an easy and smooth reporting system and for administrators to ensure that action is taken against perpetrators. Many participants called for an end to sexual harassment in schools and suspension of any teacher caught harassing students.

"Teachers and big man should stop abusing children."
15-year-old girl, Liberia

3. Create and enforce legislation

The importance of laws and their implementation was raised in various ways in nearly all focus groups. Children want their leaders to make child rights known and respected to protect them. Children in each region identified the importance of world leaders to both create and enforce legislation to prevent and respond to violence against children.

"Governments should not only enact laws but have to strive to enforce the laws."
15-year-old boy, Ethiopia

4. Punish offenders and perpetrators

The importance of punishing offenders of violence against children was of slightly higher importance in **Africa** and the **Americas** than **Asia.** For children, this call to punish offenders and perpetrators of violence against them indicates the high level of concern they face having offenders and perpetrators living amongst them, leaving them open to re-offending. It is well documented that violence against children does not just happen in isolated cases; many children are subject to multiple forms of abuse.

"Existing institutions only defend adults to the point that a child cannot go to the chief for a complaint. Also people are not courageous enough to disclose violence."
14-year-old boy, Burkina Faso

5. Community awareness

Children identified the importance of community awareness for adults including parents, teachers, leaders, local leaders and caregivers. They felt this could be achieved through mass media campaigns. Children also made suggestions about where and how community awareness campaigns could take place, including at local markets, coffee ceremonies and through radio.

Raising awareness on the effects of violence against and exploitation of children was a common solution given by children. Whether regarded as something they can do themselves, or as actions adults could implement, children from all three regions saw in awareness raising

an effective way to prevent and address violence and exploitation.

"My dream in the future is for parents, teachers and community leaders to take real actions to stop violence and every form of exploitation against children."
13-year-old girl, Timor Leste

6. Severe and numerous forms of violence and exploitation perpetrated against children

Children raised many different experiences of violence and exploitation. Some of the more extreme forms of violence included: being punished with heated metal rods and spoons, being abducted so their organs could be harvested, children's hands being dipped in boiling oil, girls being forced to become pregnant to act as drug mules, children being forced into child marriage to settle family disputes and debts and being severely beaten at schools leading to death.

In many focus groups, children talked about the fact that both boys and girls faced similar risks of being subject to violence and exploitation. For example, child labour was raised for girls as mostly domestic labour and for boys it was in the context of agriculture. Sexual violence was also seen as a violation that both boys and girls experienced. The top three shared experiences of violence were sexual violence, child labour, and physical and humiliating punishment.

Across the different focus groups, children recognised that boys and girls faced higher risks of particular manifestations of violence and exploitation perpetrated against them. While boys and girls were considered at risk of sexual violence, girls were subject to a higher risk of commercial sexual exploitation.

When children spoke of different forms of violence and exploitation the list included, in order: sexual violence, child labour, physical and humiliating punishment, trafficking, harmful traditional practices, children associated with armed forces and gangs, and bullying.

One of the main forms of violence to which focus groups referred was physical harm, including corporal punishment at home, school and work.

Focus groups also referred to armed conflict or crime-related violence as a constant source of violence and exploitation perpetrated against children.

Children participating in focus group discussion in Nepal. **Photo:** ChildFund Nepal.

Children's recommendations

After analysing the data from the focus group discussions, the top actions that children wanted world leaders to take were: create and enforce legislation against children, raise awareness on violence and exploitation against children, punish offenders and perpetrators, and guarantee access to education.

Throughout the focus group process, children continued to raise issues that they thought needed to be addressed and suggested actions that adults and leaders should take to free children from violence and exploitation. They included, but were not limited to, the following list of recommendations for action:

Children participating in focus group discussion in Ghana. **Photo:** ChildFund Ghana.

Services

- Run awareness training with parents and teachers to determine ways they could work together to reduce violence.
- Map risks at the local level.
- Create safe spaces for children.
- Give priority to protection programs for children not in school.
- Increase the number of local support units.
- Use children's clubs as a hub for services and activities that keep children safe.
- Implement programs that improve the safety of children travelling to school.
- Decentralize services to children.
- Ensure that water holes are well lit and placed in safe areas.
- Implement codes of conduct for teachers
- Put children's helplines in place.
- Conduct self-defence classes.
- Implement and fund parenting classes.
- Conduct local level surveys of the violations children face.

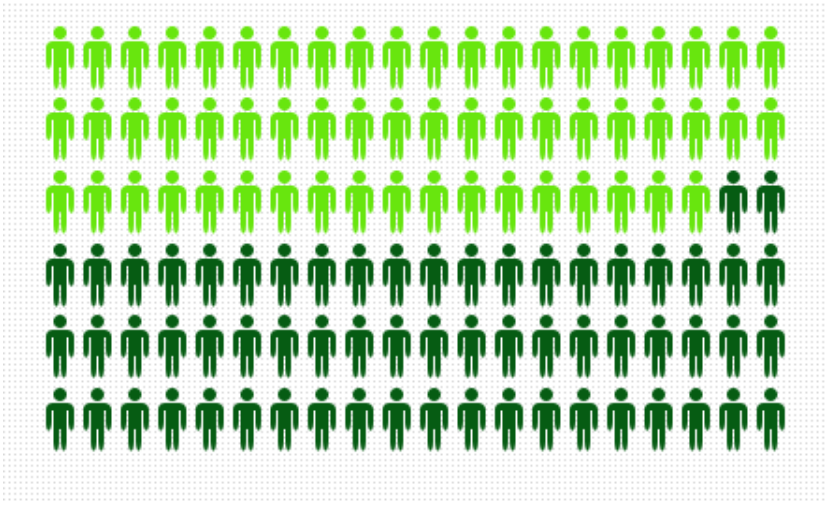
Law enforcement

- Run counselling for perpetrators.
- Ensure anonymous reporting to the police.
- Increase the national and local budgets for the prosecution of offenders.
- Ensure all domestic laws increase the age to undertake hazardous work to 18.
- Create local police units.

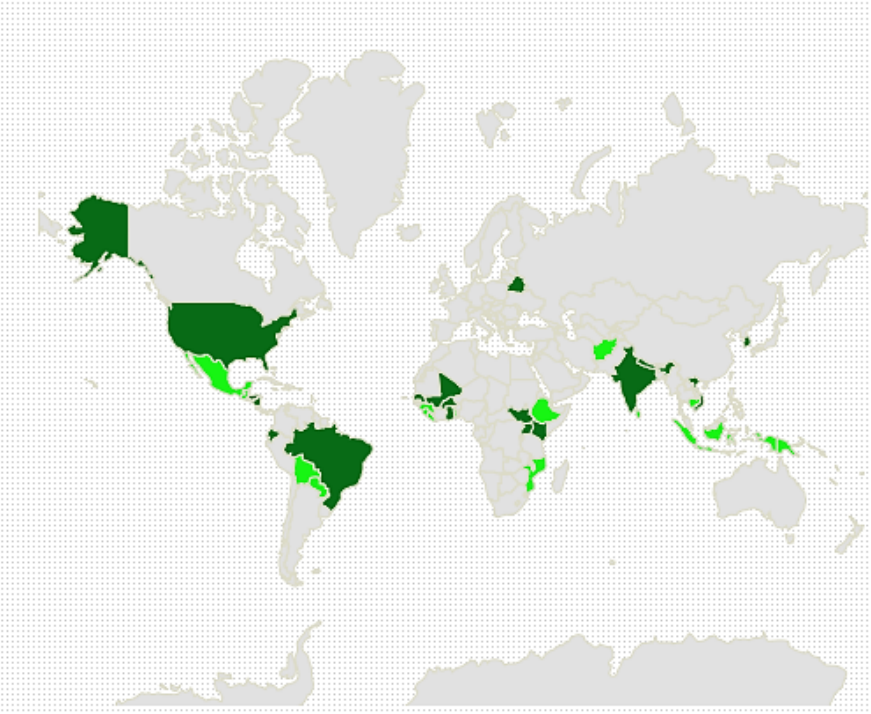
Education

- Have a greater focus on the education on the Convention of the Rights of the Child and other international instruments.
- Implement a worldwide campaign on violence.

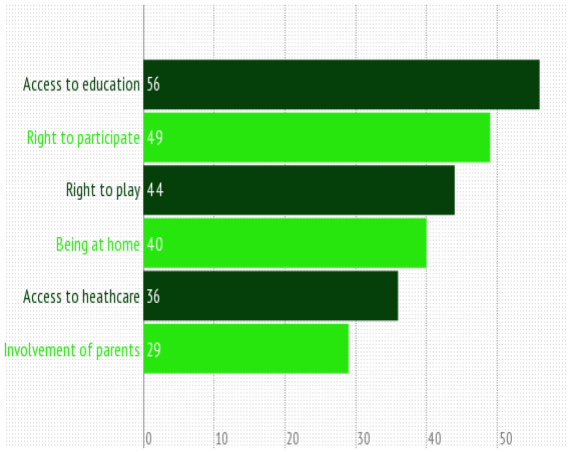
Global findings: A graphic summary



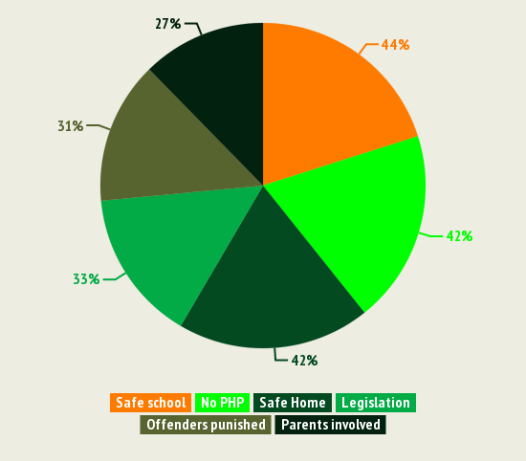
Girls Boys



What children need to feel free

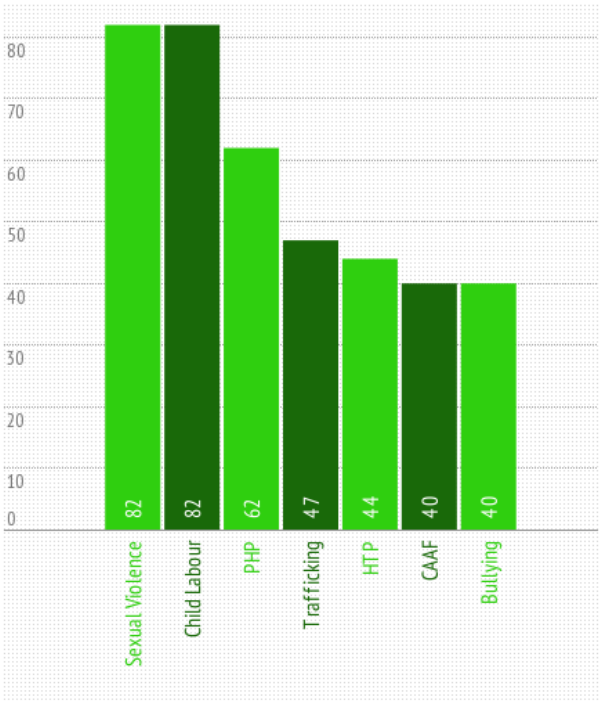


What children need to feel free from violence and exploitation

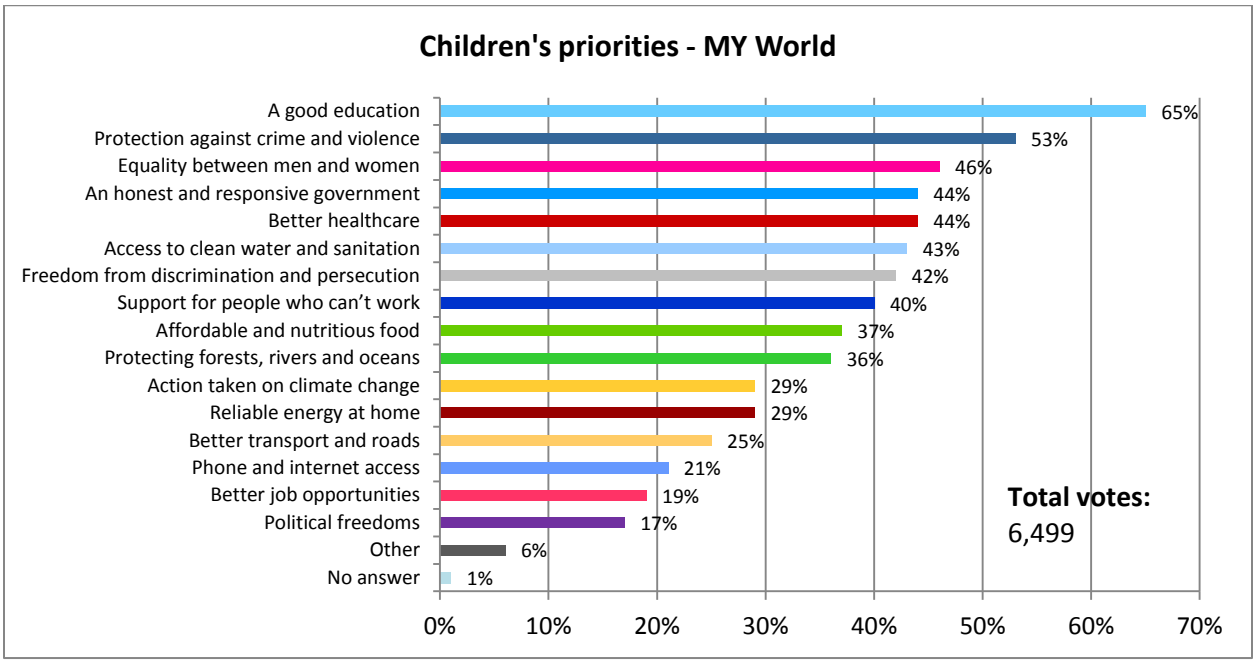


What world leaders should do to free children from violence and exploitation

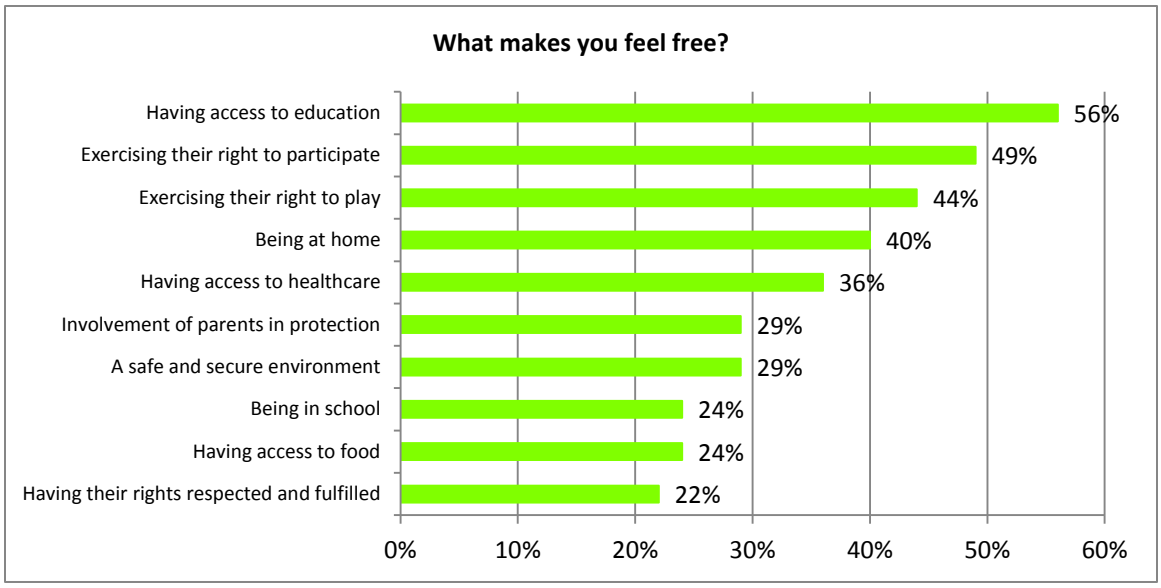
Forms of violence and exploitation perpetrated against children

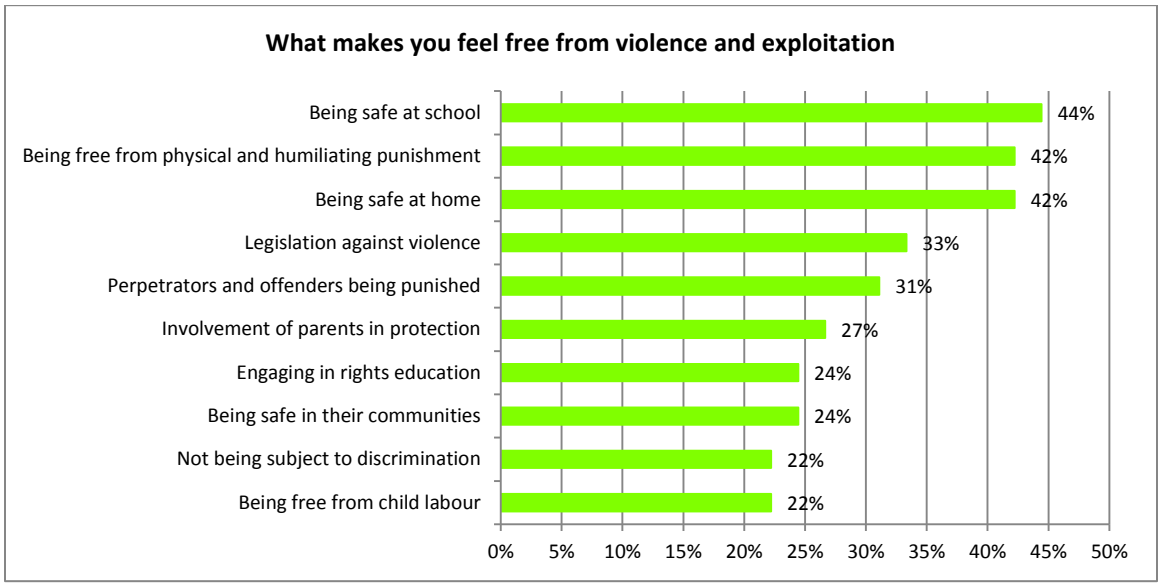


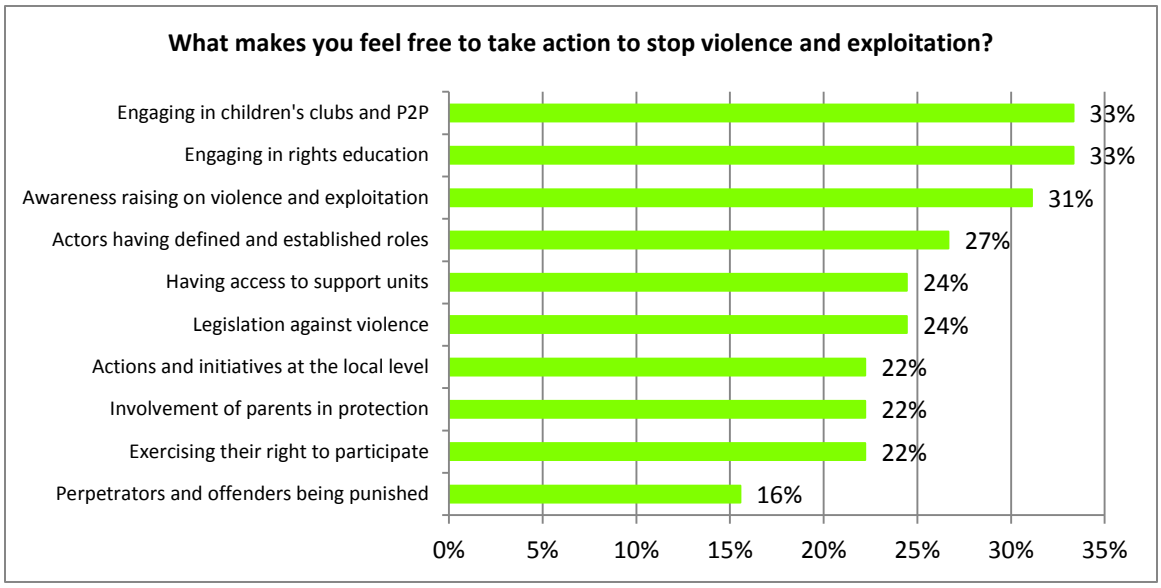
6500 children in 47 countries vote for the priorities the post-2015 agenda should address to make them free



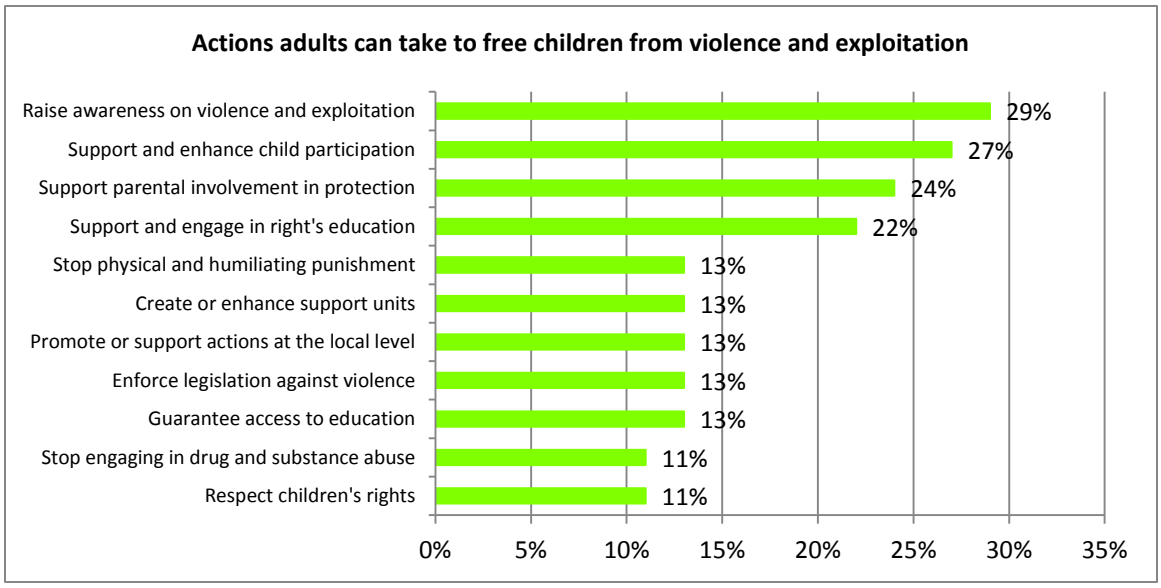
Global findings from discussion questions

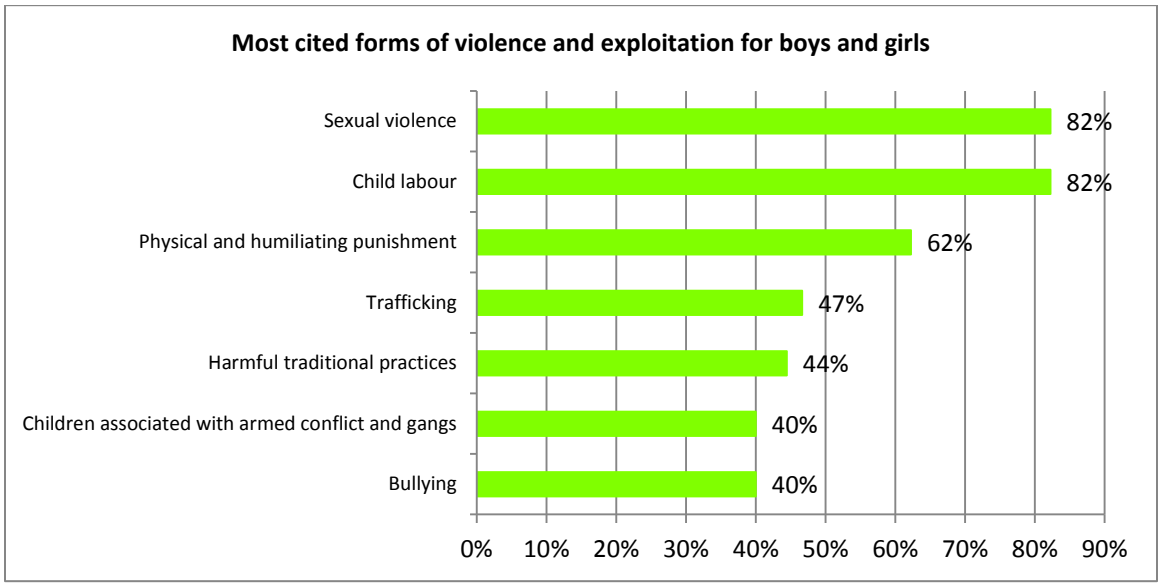





What makes you feel free to take action to stop violence and exploitation?
Engaging in children's clubs and P2P
Engaging in rights education
Awareness raising on violence and exploitation
Actors having defined and established roles
Having access to support units
Legislation against violence
Actions and initiatives at the local level
Involvement of parents in protection
Exercising their right to participate
Perpetrators and offenders being punished
33%
33%
31%
27%
24%
24%
22%
22%
22%
16%
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%
35%

Actions world leaders can take
Create and enforce legislation against violence
Raise awareness on violence and exploitation
Punish offenders and perpetrators
Guarantee access to education
Support right's education
Address poverty
Promote or support actions at the local level
Support and enhance child participation
Create or enhance support units
Enhance safety and security
Create institutions
60%
44%
36%
36%
29%
22%
22%
16%
13%
11%
11%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%


Actions adults can take to free children from violence and exploitation
Raise awareness on violence and exploitation
Support and enhance child participation
Support parental involvement in protection
Support and engage in right's education
Stop physical and humiliating punishment
Create or enhance support units
Promote or support actions at the local level
Enforce legislation against violence
Guarantee access to education
Stop engaging in drug and substance abuse
Respect children's rights
29%
27%
24%
22%
13%
13%
13%
13%
13%
11%
11%
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%
35%


Most cited forms of violence and exploitation for boys and girls
Sexual violence
Child labour
Physical and humiliating punishment
Trafficking
Harmful traditional practices
Children associated with armed conflict and gangs
Bullying
82%
82%
62%
47%
44%
40%
40%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%

Children's answers to discussion questions

1. What makes you feel free?

1.1. Top issues

The primary purpose of this question was to ask what makes children feel happy and safe, and flesh out the things that they want and do not want to happen in their lives.

To this question, children brought up specific examples of settings and situations in which they felt free, happy and safe, but also responded with counter-examples of situations in which they did not feel free and felt their rights were violated, including through violence and exploitation.

In general terms, aspirations of children regarding what makes them feel free, happy and safe revolved around access to education, decision-making processes, healthcare and food. Emphasis was also placed on being with friends, and carrying out ordinary activities without fear, in safe and secure environments.

Across the three regions where the focus group discussions were conducted, three issues were constantly brought up as fundamental for children to feel free: first, access to education; second, the fulfilment of their right to participate; and third, the fulfilment of their right to play.

i. Having access to education

In the first place, a majority of participants across countries and regions expressly associated feeling free with having access to education. This issue was brought up in 56% of the focus groups discussions.

According to children, three situations hinder their access to education. First, child labour –whether agricultural, domestic or otherwise– was mentioned as one of the factors preventing boys and girls from having access to education. Second, security was also identified as one of the obstacles for children going to school, as they often do not feel safe on their way from and to their homes. Third, teachers who resort to physical and humiliating punishment were also mentioned as an obstacle to children's education, and as a factor contributing to the fact that, on occasion, children do not feel safe –not to mention happy and free– in school.

Access to education was the number one answer in **Africa,** while it was tied in second place in the **Americas** and **Asia,** having been mentioned in 58%, 55% and 53% of the focus groups, respectively.

ii. Exercising their right to participate

In the second place, the issue of children's participation in decision-making processes, from home and school to their communities and cities, came across as fundamental for children to feel free. In this sense, 49% of focus groups raised the issue of their involvement in the decisions that affect their lives: of adults actively listening to them and of their opinions being taking into account.

The realization of their right to participate was the number one answer in the **Americas,** while it was in second place in **Asia,** and in fifth place in **Africa,** having been mentioned in 73%, 53% and 32% of the focus groups, respectively.

iii. Exercising their right to play

Thirdly, children associated feeling free with the possibility of engaging in cultural, leisure and recreational activities. Participating children mentioned being able to exercise their right to play in 44% of the focus groups. To exercise this

right, children stated that there need to be the provision of adequate infrastructure on the part of local and national authorities, such as parks and cultural centres.

The possibility of exercising their right to play was the number one answer in **Asia,** while it was tied in second place in the **Americas,** and came in eighth place in **Africa,** having been mentioned in 67%, 55% and 21% of the focus groups, respectively.

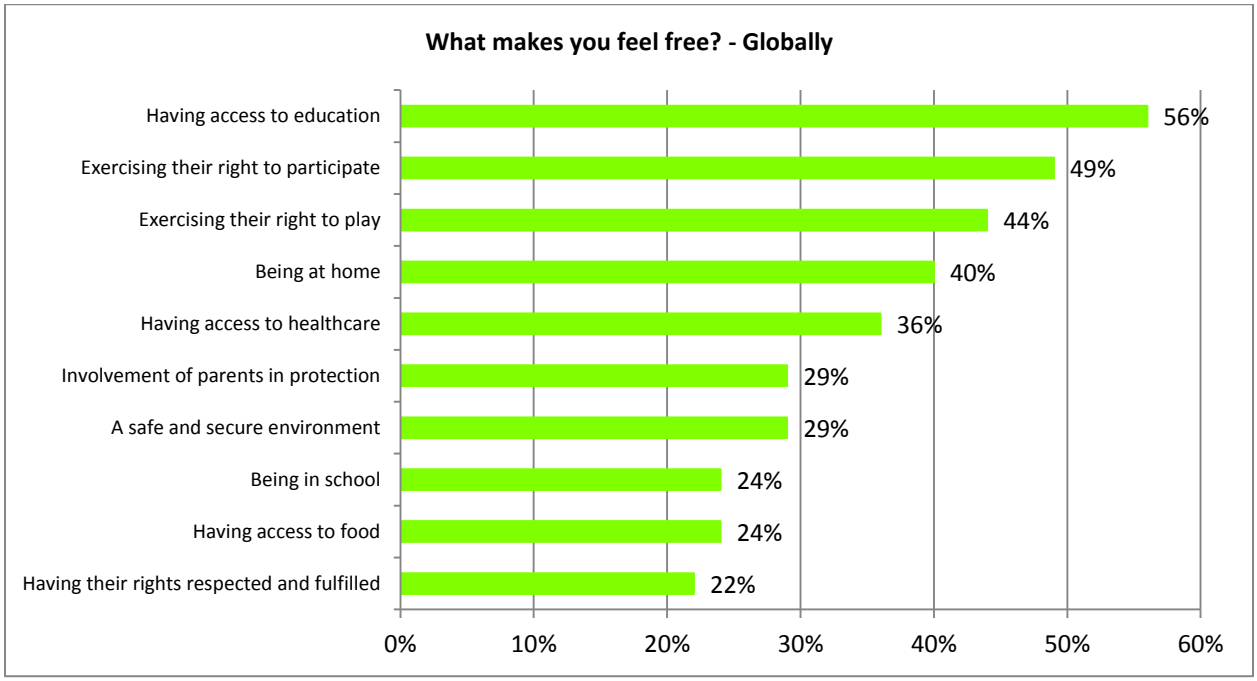
iv. Other important issues

Being at home and being at school were also settings in which children said they felt free, with them being brought up in 20% and 24% of the focus groups, respectively. These answers in relation to this particular question sharply contrast those for other questions, in which home and school were mentioned as settings with both positive and negative connotations – i.e. as spaces where children feel protected and safe, but also as spaces where violence and exploitation takes place.

Also, children stated that they felt free when communities and public spaces are safe and secure environments. This issue was brought up in 29% of the focus groups, and was mostly associated with the possibility of being able to go outside and walk in the street without fear of violence and exploitation by their peers or by adults.

Children cannot feel free if they are subjected to violence or exploitation. Throughout the focus groups, children strongly called for all forms of violence and exploitation against them or their peers to be stopped.

Finally, in 29% of the focus groups children associated feeling free with their parents playing an active role in their lives and in their protection from violence and exploitation.



1.2. Regional breakdown: Africa

"I feel free when my rights are respected by my parents, the leaders, and the state."
17-year-old girl, Guinea

"I will feel free when there is no more corporal punishment."
11-year-old girl, Senegal

In **Africa,** access to education was mentioned in **Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Togo** and **Zambia.**

In **Ghana** children pointed out the importance of school being a place where they feel safe: "At school we feel free when there are rules to protect us, and when offenders are punished for misbehaving toward us." At the same time, girls in **Liberia** expressed that they do not feel free at school when teachers demand sex in exchange for good grades.

In **Benin,** for example, education was not only mentioned as something to which children should have access, but also as something that entails concrete responsibilities for children: working hard in class, studying hard, and doing their homework. Children in **Benin** thus exhibit an acute awareness of the correlation between rights and responsibilities. In the same sense, a child in the **Gambia** stated: "I want to focus on my education, to be disciplined and hardworking."

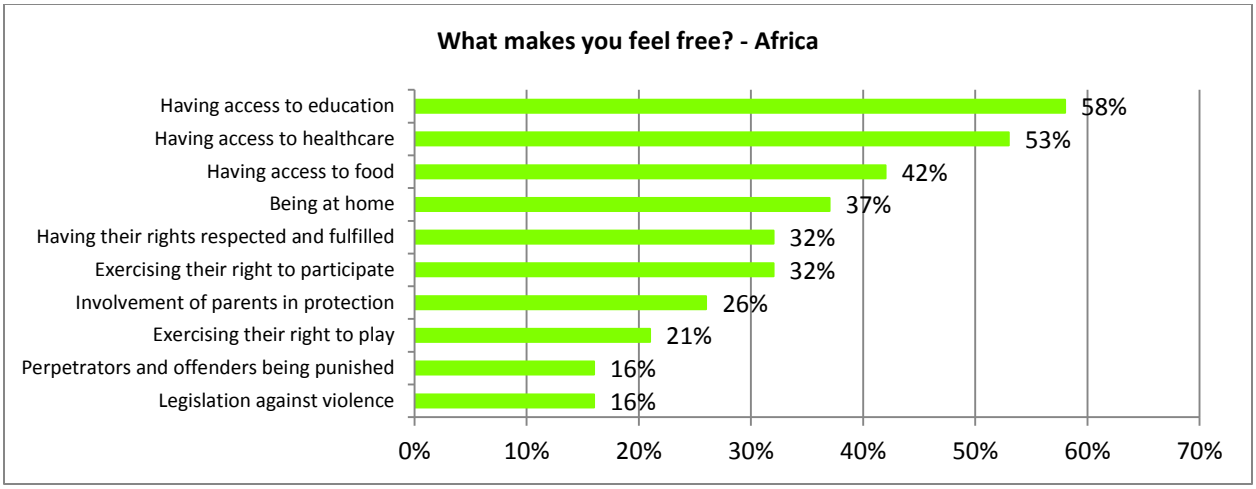
Children associated feeling free with having access to healthcare services and to food, having been mentioned in 53% and 42% of the focus groups. For example, in **Burkina Faso,** children placed a high premium on parents nursing them back to health when they are sick, while in other countries access to healthcare was raised as something that the state should provide.

Children in **Mozambique** expressed their aspiration for more inter-generational dialogue between children and adults to enable children to express their opinions on matters about which "we have something to say."

In **Africa** weight was also given to the existence and enforcement of legislation to protect children from violence and exploitation, and to offenders being punished, both of which were mentioned in 16% of the focus groups. In **Kenya,** for example, children stated that they feel free because "drug dealers are now being reported and arrested."

Girls in **Zambia** expressed that the protection of children from violence and exploitation should involve everyone "from community leaders to heads of state, so that children live in a safe environment and can concentrate on their development."

Children and facilitators after focus group discussion in Senegal. **Photo:** ChildFund Senegal.



1.3. Regional breakdown: The Americas

"They shouldn't criticize us. As young people, all we want do is change the world to make it better."
16-year-old girl, Ecuador

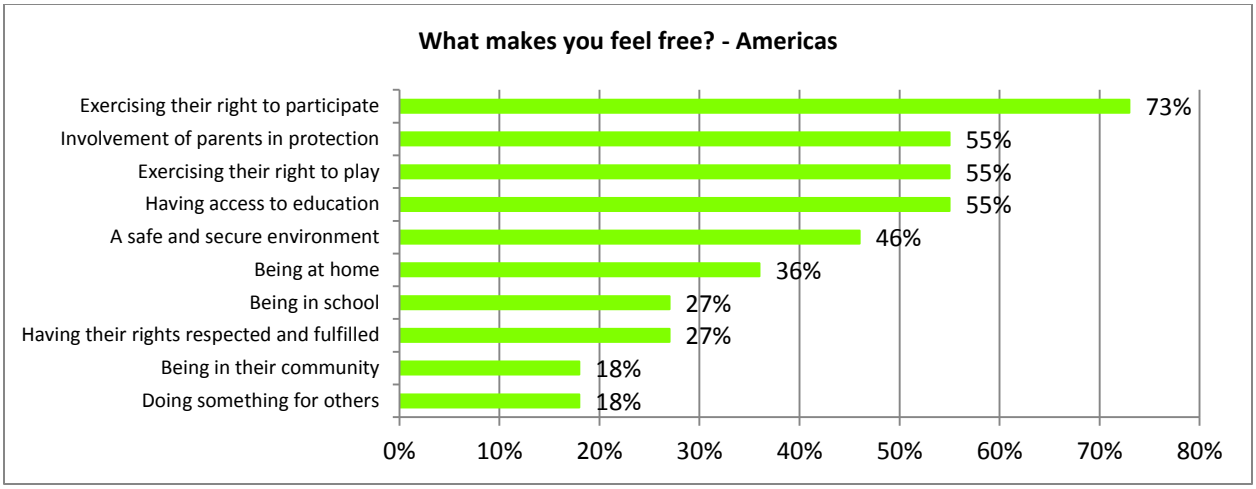
"I feel free when I reach my dreams and the elders don't tell me to shut my mouth."
15-year-old girl, Bolivia

In the **Americas,** the realization of their right to participate was linked to children feeling free in **Bolivia, Dominica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua** and **Paraguay,** where children called for adults and authorities to actively listen to their opinions, and for opportunities to express themselves more freely without fear of being punished. In **Nicaragua,** for example, children stated they feel free when they are allowed to express what they think without being coerced, while in **Mexico** and **Paraguay** participation was also linked to children being engaged in communal activities.

Moreover, children put an emphasis on the active engagement of their parents in their lives and their protection from violence and exploitation, as well as on exercising their right to play and having access to education. These last three issues were mentioned in 55% of the focus groups. In **Ecuador,** for example, children stated that in order for them to feel free their domestic chores and other forms of labour should not prevent them from studying or partaking in capacity-building initiatives.

Home, school and the community were also brought up as settings where children feel free, having been mentioned in 36%, 27% and 18%.

Finally, children made explicit references to actively engaging in initiatives that benefit the community or other people, as something that makes children feel free. This was the case in **Bolivia** and **Guatemala.**



1.4. Regional breakdown: Asia

"My dream in the future is for parents, teachers and community leaders to take real actions to stop violence and every form of exploitation against children."
13-year-old girl, Timor Leste

In **Asia,** the possibility of exercising their right to play was explicitly linked to children feeling free in 67% of the focus groups including **Afghanistan, Cambodia, India, Republic of Korea, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste** and **Vietnam.**

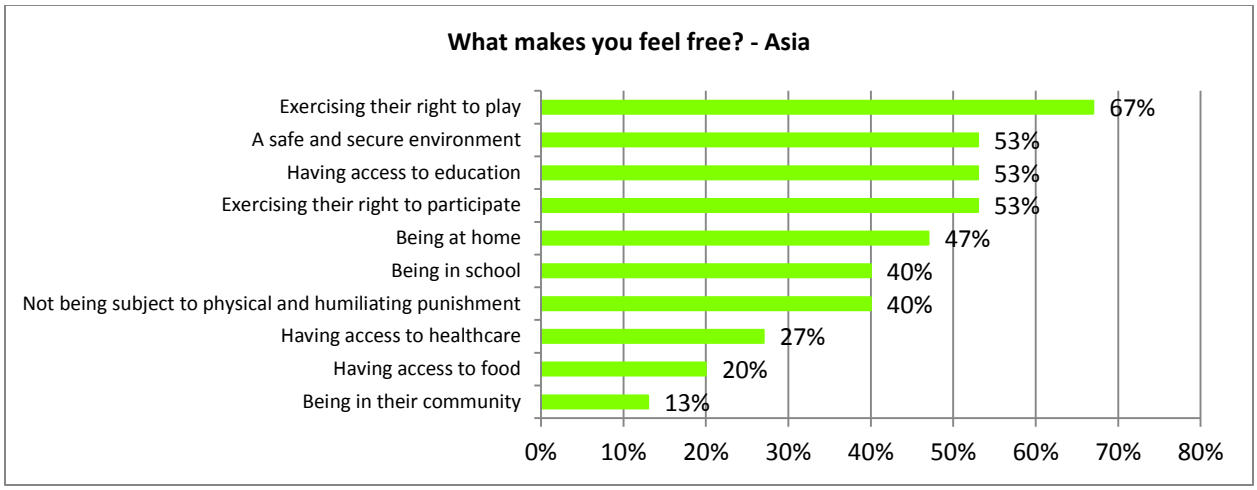
The right to play was very highly regarded in the **Philippines,** where children, irrespective of gender, associated feeling free with "being able to play and interact with other children safely and without fear." This was also the case in **Vietnam,** where participants stated that they feel free when they have the possibility of "going out and playing with friends."

Children also placed a high premium on having secure and safe environments, on having access to education, and on the realization of their right to participate, all of which were explicitly associated with feeling free in 53% of the focus groups. For example, in **India,** children stated that "conducive environments at home and the community are very important," as well as "good facilities in school and teachers that build confidence amongst the students."

As in the case of the Americas, home, school and the community were highlighted as settings where children feel free in 47%, 40% and 13% of the focus groups. In **Nepal,** for example, there was consensus about the occurrence of physical punishment in schools, and children unanimously called for schools to become safer.

At the same time, in **Afghanistan, India, Nepal** and the **Philippines** children mentioned the occurrence of physical and humiliating punishment as a situation in which they did not feel free, or its absence as something that made them feel free. **Asia** was the only region where some form of violence and exploitation was explicitly brought up in answer to this question.

In **India,** children stated that they do not want to be punished physically or abused verbally, especially "using filthy language or a hot rod that leaves a lasting wound."



Girls discussing flip charts in focus group in Papua New Guinea. **Photo:** ChildFund PNG.

2. What makes you feel free from violence and exploitation?

2.1. Top issues

The primary purpose of this question was to inquire about what makes children feel safe, and flesh out their views regarding violence and exploitation, as well as their ideas to eliminate them.

Children in an overwhelming majority of the focus groups said that they had experienced or witnessed different types of violence at home, in school and in their communities. As in the previous question, children often answered with counter-examples portraying situations of violence and exploitation.

Globally, the three most recurrent answers to this question were: being safe at school, being safe at home, and being free from physical and humiliating punishment.

i. Being safe at school and home

Globally, being safe at school and home ranked as the top two answers to this question, having been mentioned in 44% and 42% of the focus groups. School and home were mentioned as settings where children felt protected and safe, and thus free from violence and exploitation. However, they were also mentioned as settings where violence and exploitation occurs, and thus places that need to be made safe so that children can feel free from violence and exploitation. Interestingly, these answers point simultaneously to a fulfilled and unfulfilled aspiration on the part of children: safe schools and safe homes.

Being safe at school came in second in the **Americas** and **Asia,** and was tied in third place in **Africa,** having been mentioned in 36%, 67% and 32% of the focus groups, respectively. Being safe at home came in first place in **Asia,** and was tied in third place in the **Americas** and in fourth place in **Africa,** having been mentioned in 73%, 27% and 26% of the focus groups, respectively.

ii. Being free from physical and humiliating punishment

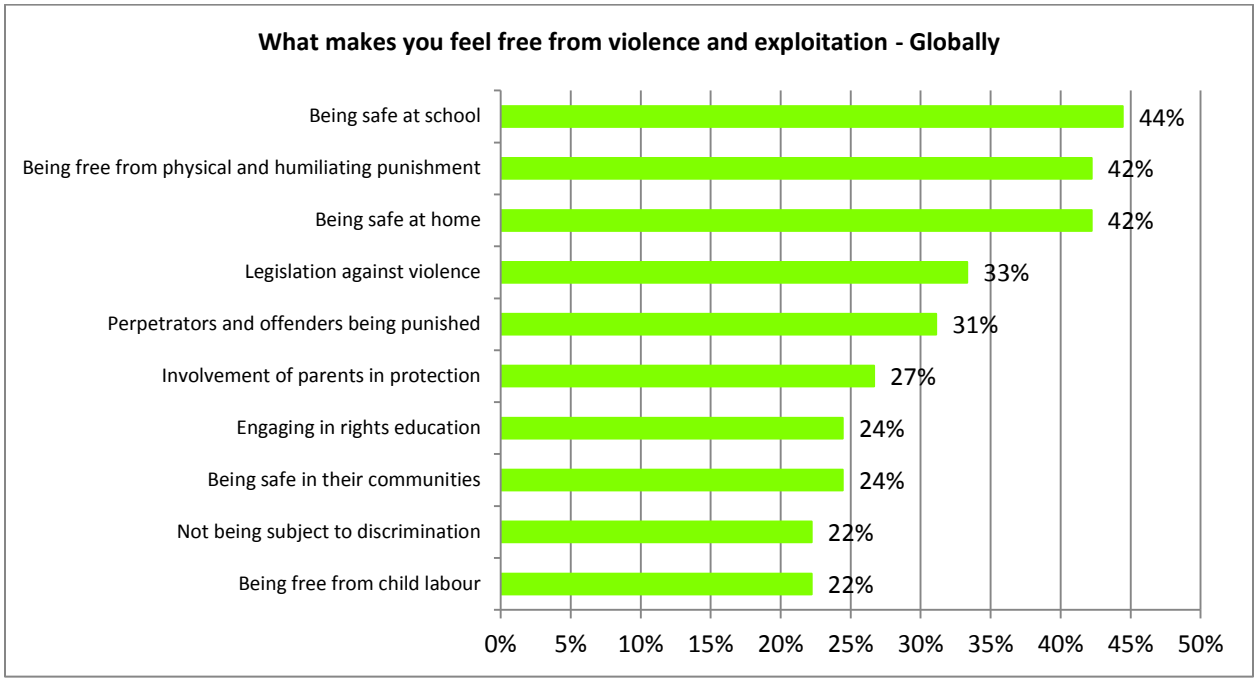
In the same sense, physical and humiliating punishment, at home and in school, was consistently mentioned as a counter-example: a situation in which children do not feel free from violence and exploitation. However, its absence was also mentioned as a situation in which children do feel free from violence and exploitation. Underlying this answer was a generalized call for physical and humiliating punishment to stop. This issue was brought up by 42% of the focus groups.

iii. Other important issues

Children feel free from violence and exploitation when legislation is in place and is enforced by local and national authorities, and when perpetrators of violence against and exploitation of children are punished. These two issues were mentioned in 33% and 31% of the focus groups.

Children in 27% of the focus groups stated that they feel free from violence and exploitation when their parents play an active role in their life and in their protection, while rights education was brought up as a contributing factor to children feeling free from violence and exploitation in 24% of the focus groups. In this sense, calls were made not only for adults to engage in educational initiatives concerning children's rights, but also for children themselves to have access to this type of initiatives.

Instances of violence and exploitation at the community level were also mentioned as counter-examples in 24% of the focus groups, while discrimination and child labour were brought up in 22% of the focus groups.



2.2. Regional breakdown: Africa

"Existing institutions only defend adults to the point that a child cannot go to the chief for a complaint. Also people are not courageous enough to disclose violence."
14-year-old boy, Burkina Faso

In **Africa,** children in 47% of the focus groups stated that they feel free from violence and exploitation when offenders and perpetrators are punished. This was the case in **Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Senegal, Sierra Leone** and **Uganda.**

In **Guinea,** children not only called for children's rights and protection policies to be enforced by the Government, but also for violations to be "handled according to the law."

In **Kenya,** children stated that they feel free from violence and exploitation when they are afforded protection after giving information or evidence about their occurrence, and in **Senegal** they called for the state to "fully play its role in the protection of children" and "arrest and severely punish child abductors."

At the same time, counter-examples were also prevalent, and provided insight into extreme forms of punishment. Indeed, physical and humiliating punishment was brought up in 37% of the focus groups, particularly in **Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya** and **Mali.**

Children in one of the participating countries in the region**,** for example, stated that violence against children comprises physical, psychological and verbal abuse, while exploitation was defined as "using children for monetary gain without their consent or taking away their rights by force." They also recounted how a child's parents were arrested for "dipping his hand in boiling oil for stealing," and declared

"we're happy when offenders are punished under the law."

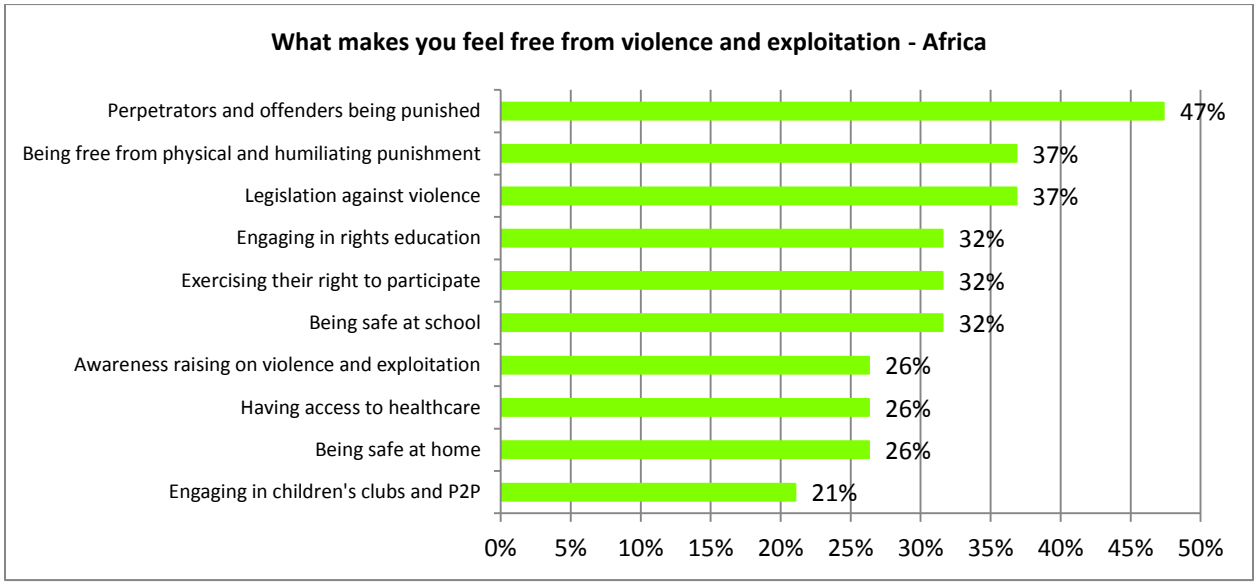
Meanwhile in another country children provided examples of physical and humiliating punishment, such as "being whipped for three hours or being burned with hot spoons."

However, children in **Africa** mostly provided positive examples of places and situations in which they felt free from violence and exploitation. This is the case of rights education (32%), participation (32%), awareness raising (26%), and engaging in children's clubs and other peer-to-peer activities (21%).

Children in **Ethiopia,** for example, explained how their engagement in a school club has provided them with the opportunity to carry out awareness raising activities about the issues of violence against and exploitation of children in their community. This has led, according to them, to a reduction in harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation and cutting; in child abduction and child trafficking; and in the occurrence of physical and humiliating punishment, among others.

In **Mozambique,** children stated that they feel free not only after "attending lectures on how to protect themselves from violence and exploitation," but also once "their parents become aware of these issues and know how to avoid them." In the same sense, children in **Zambia** said that one way of feeling free from violence and exploitation is to know their own rights and responsibilities, which can be done through sensitization campaigns and enforced by having clear structures for reporting violations.

Finally, as was also the case in the Americas and Asia, both home and school were mentioned as settings where children feel free from violence and exploitation, but also as settings where these violations take place.



2.3. Regional breakdown: The Americas

"When my friend stopped going to school, I went to look for him at home. He told me his parents had burned his books and were making him work with them harvesting grains. That is exploitation, because they don't let him study."
17-year-old boy, Guatemala

In the **Americas,** children in 45% of the focus groups stated that they feel free from violence and exploitation when their parents are actively involved in their lives and their protection. Particularly, this was the case in **Brazil, Dominica, Mexico, Paraguay** and **St Vincent.** Children in this last country said they feel free from violence and exploitation "when parents protect us, when they look after us, and when they don't abandon us."

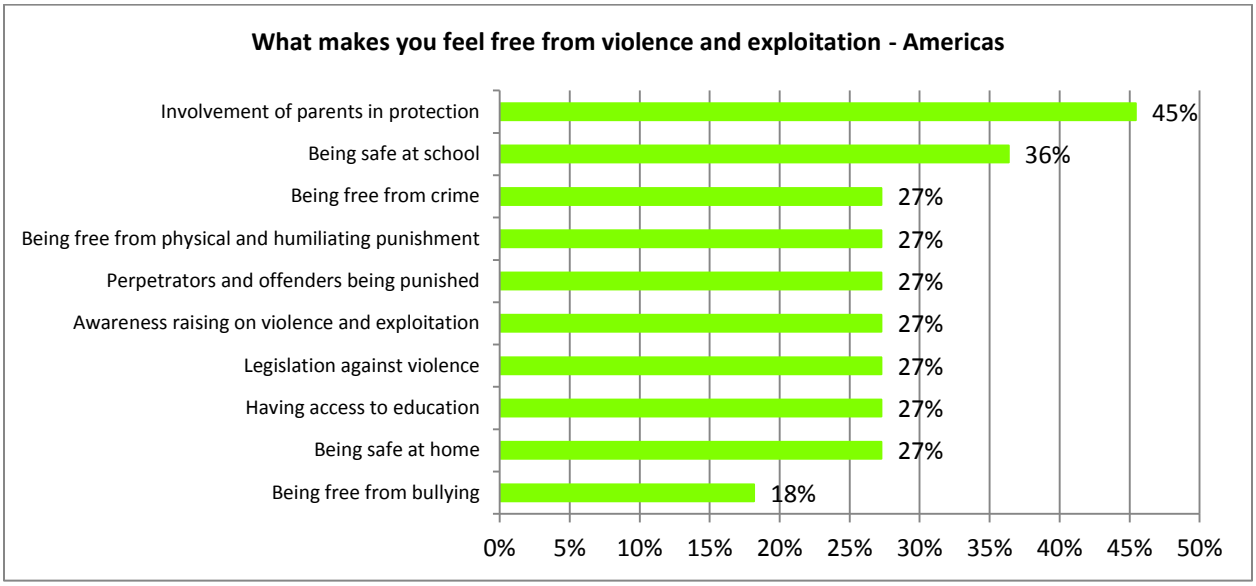
In the **Americas,** counter-examples of instances of violence and exploitation were prevalent in the answers to this question, including those that took place at school (36%) and at home (27%). Being and feeling safe in these two settings was deemed as fundamental. In **Ecuador,** children recalled instances of violence within their schools, where teachers and peers abused children physically and verbally, sometimes on the basis of their socio-economic status.

Similar experiences where also recounted in **Mexico,** where explicit references were given of crime, physical and humiliating punishment, and bullying, and a call for safer environments was made.

However, children suggested concrete ways to make them feel free from violence and exploitation, including punishing offenders and perpetrators, awareness raising, putting legislation against violence in place, and providing access to education. For example, in **Dominica,** children overwhelmingly called for "stiffer penalties for offenders, and for a better enforcement of laws," but also recalled the experience of the East Dominica Children Federation as a successful example of awareness raising and rights education.

In **Honduras,** children called for "more respect for the law and more respect for our opinions," while in **Nicaragua** they vehemently stated that "no children should be forced out of school in order to work."

Girls in focus group discussion in Guatemala. **Photo:** ChildFund Guatemala.



2.4. Regional breakdown: Asia

In **Asia,** children overwhelmingly brought up counter-examples of instances of violence and exploitation in answer to this question. In **India,** children almost unanimously said they had experienced some form of violence at home, at school or in their community. They explicitly recounted how teachers regularly victimized children for not doing their homework. To address this situation, they proposed that "adults be sensitized about children's rights, so that they cannot force them into situations where they face violence and exploitation."

They referred to instances of violence and exploitation at home, at school and in the community in 73%, 67% and 47% of the focus groups, respectively. In **Indonesia,** children stated that violence was "not new" to them; some of them had even been assaulted while using public transportation.

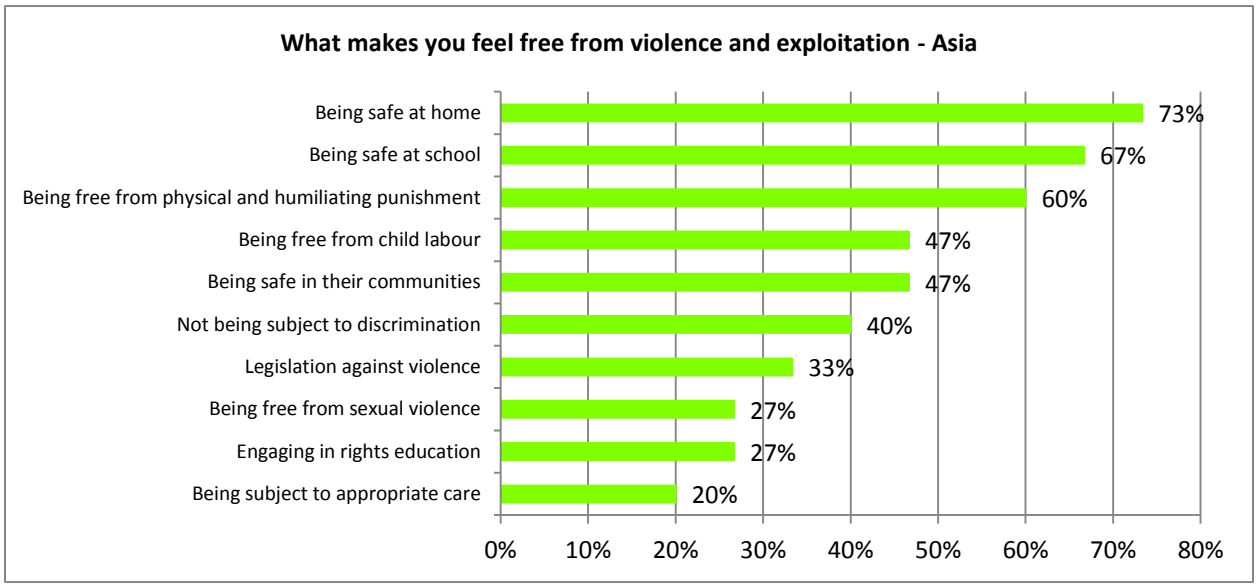
A girl from **Laos** recounted: "We are in a rural area, and people from the big cities would like to hire us to work for them as housemaids, but my mother wants to sell me to a restaurant to serve men drinks."

At the same time, instances of physical and humiliating punishment (60%), child labour (47%), discrimination (40%), sexual violence (27%), and lack of appropriate care (20%) were mentioned as preventing children from feeling free from violence and exploitation.

Children in the **Philippines** mentioned that being free from violence and exploitation included "not being scolded and spanked by parents; not being bullied by classmates; not being embarrassed by teachers; not engaging in child labour; and not being verbally abused."

In **Timor Leste,** moreover, children told about instances of sexual exploitation at the community level, recounting how "family members peddle young girls to other people in exchange for money" and how family members sexually abuse them.

Solutions were also suggested on the part of children to address these issues. For example, enacting and enforcing stricter laws, awareness raising on violence against children at the community level, and rights education were all put forward by children in **Nepal.**



Boys in focus group discussion in Nepal. **Photo:** ChildFund Nepal.

3. What makes you feel free to take action to stop violence and exploitation?

3.1. Top issues

This question was geared toward inquiring about the conditions under which children feel empowered enough to take action against violence and exploitation, and about the enabling factors and obstacles they face when they do so.

There is no doubt that adults should take action to stop all forms of violence against children. However, focus groups expressed that it is crucial that adults think of children as allies in all interventions to free children from violence and exploitation. Children feel they are able to initiate action if the adults are appreciative and supportive of their initiatives. Children would also feel free to take action if their parents and caregivers acknowledged that children could be involved in preventing and responding to violence and exploitation.

In answer to this question children came up with concrete actions that could be taken so that they feel free and empowered to take action against violence. Globally, the three most recurrent answers were: engaging in children's clubs and other peer-to-peer initiatives, as well as in education on children's rights; awareness raising on violence and exploitation; and actors having defined and established roles.

i. Engaging in children's clubs

As stated before, participation is one of the most crucial issues for children to feel free and safe. Having spaces where they can voice their aspirations, concerns and opinions is a constant call across the different countries where the focus groups were conducted. Children also aspire to being able to engage in inter-generational dialogue with their parents, teachers and other adults, whom they claim should actively listen to them.

Children's clubs and other child-led organizations were regarded as empowering mechanisms that provide children with the opportunity to intervene in the public life of their communities, and acquire skills for an active exercise of citizenship in a supportive environment.

Engaging in children's clubs was the most common answer to the question on what makes children feel free from violence and exploitation, having been brought up in 33% of the focus groups. It came in first in **Africa,** where it was mentioned in 42% of the focus groups; was tied in third place in **Asia,** where it was mentioned in 27% of the focus groups; and was tied in fourth place in the **Americas,** where it came up in 18% of the focus groups.

ii. Engaging in rights education

Along with being able to participate in the decisions that affect them, children see in rights education a highly effective mechanism for them to feel free and safe. Being aware of their rights and having adults know about children's rights were regarded as adequate ways to empower children to take action to stop violence and exploitation.

Across the three regions, two different sides of rights education were highlighted: children want not only to learn about their rights and for other children to be aware of them, but also for adults to engage in education about children's rights so that they refrain from subjecting them to violence and exploitation, and support children's own actions to stop them.

Engaging in rights education was tied in first place, having been mentioned in 33% of the focus groups. It was the most common answer in the **Americas,** was tied in first place in **Asia,** and was tied in fifth place in **Africa,** having been mentioned in 45%, 47% and 16% of the focus groups, respectively.

iii. Awareness raising on violence and exploitation

Raising awareness on the effects and implication of violence against and exploitation of children was one of the most common answers regarding possible solutions to this issue. Whether regarded as something they can do themselves, or as actions adults could implement, children from all three regions saw in awareness raising an effective way to prevent and address violence and exploitation.

Ideas to raise awareness ranged from child-led activities with communal and local impact, to worldwide campaigns involving the media.

Globally, awareness raising came in third, having been mentioned in 31% of the focus groups. It came in second in **Asia,** and was tied in third place in the **Americas** and **Africa,** having been mentioned in 40%, 27% and 26% of the focus groups, respectively.

iv. Actors having defined and established roles

Children are aware that there is a multiplicity of actors that play a role in their protection from violence and exploitation, from their parents to their local and national Governments, to multilateral organizations.

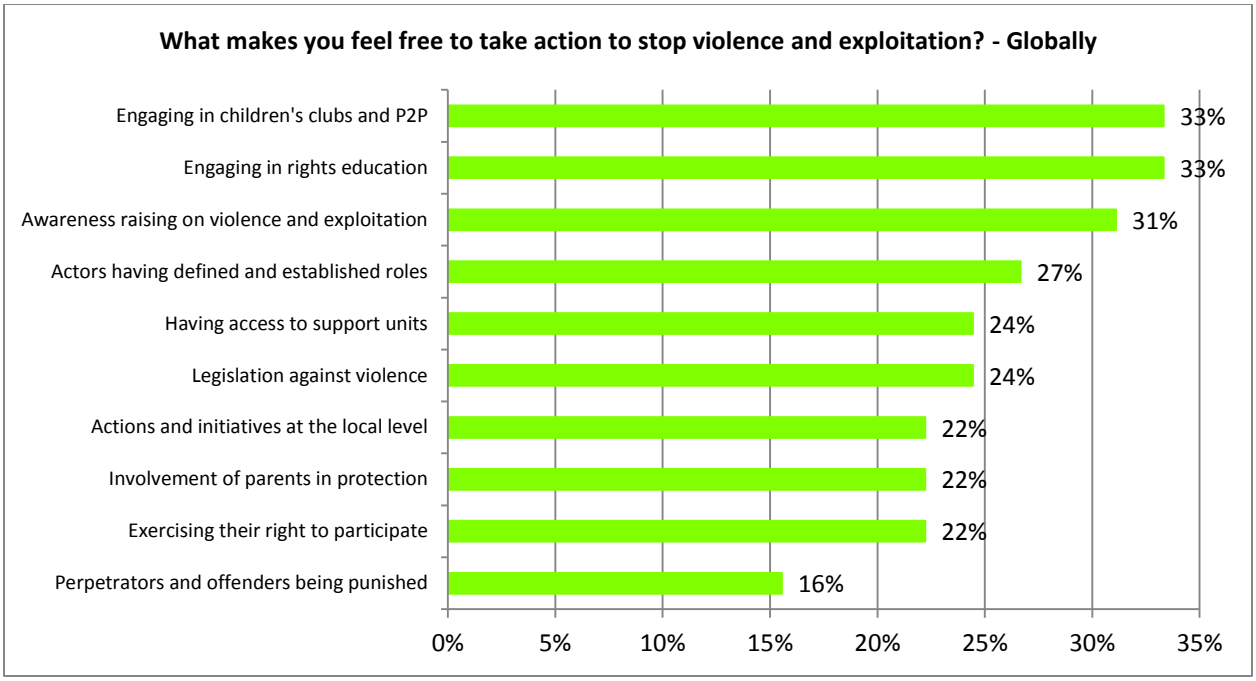
In this regard, one of the obstacles that was most commonly identified was the lack of coordination amongst these actors, whether persons or institutions. Children vehemently called for establishing roles at the different levels, and having actors adhere to these roles in their protection of children from violence and exploitation.

Globally, this answer was brought up in 27% of the focus groups. It came in second place in **Africa,** was tied in third place in the **Americas,** having been brought up in 42% and 27% of the focus groups, respectively.

v. Other important issues

Across the regions where the focus groups were conducted, it became apparent that for children to feel free to take action to stop violence and exploitation their local and national Governments must take a series of steps: they must provide access for them and their parents to support units, such as psycho-social assistance and counselling (24%); they must enact and enforce legislation to protect children from violence and exploitation (24%); they must implement initiatives at the communal and local levels (22%); and they must punish offenders and perpetrators of violence and exploitation (16%).

Furthermore, children expressed they felt free to take action when they have the support of their parents, and when they play an active role in their lives and in their protection from violence and exploitation; and when they are afforded the possibility to exercise their right to participate, both through conducive spaces and through active listening on the part of parents and other adults.



3.2. Regional breakdown: Africa

"Reports that may arise from violence and exploitation against children should be treated without fear or favour."
Sierra Leone

"We need the support of elders to stop violence against children. We need elders around us."
Gambia

In **Africa,** children in 47% of the focus groups stated that their engagement in child-led organizations and other peer-to-peer activities makes them feel free to take action to stop violence and exploitation. In the first place, the weight afforded to this answer sheds light on the importance of effectively realizing children's right to participate in the decisions that affect them. It shows children want spaces where they can express their opinion, engage in activities that afford them the necessary skills for an active exercise of citizenship, and take action against the issues that affect their communities. Secondly, this answer also provides insight into the importance of peer support, which in this way can be regarded as fundamental in the empowerment of children to take action.

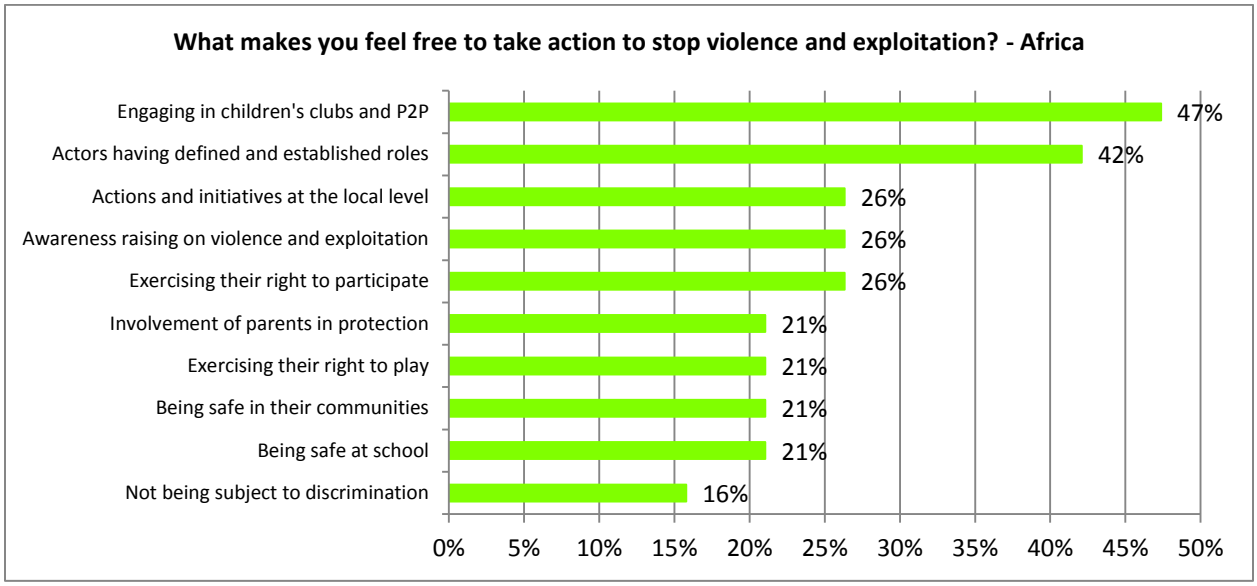
In **Ethiopia,** children said they feel free to take action to stop violence and exploitation when "we are able to organize ourselves in clubs, and engage in teaching the community about the issues we face."

Children in **Mozambique** recalled how, despite the resistance of parents and other adults, the children's parliament conducted a series of lectures with parents and caregivers to educate them on children's rights and raise awareness on certain forms of violence and exploitation. In **Zambia,** children's committees in schools were highlighted as safe spaces to bring about change through peer-to-peer sensitization.

At the same time, children also called for the different actors to have defined and established roles in 42% of the focus groups. For example, in **Liberia** they emphasized the importance of

every actor fulfilling its role in the protection of children from violence and exploitation, from parents to schoolteachers and administrators, community leaders, local and national Governments, and world leaders. This was also the case in **Kenya,** where the role of a working system was also highlighted; and in **Uganda,** where children called for "sensitization of both children and parents about their roles."

Actions at the communal and local levels, as well as awareness raising, were also regarded as fundamental for children to feel free to take action against violence and exploitation. In **Ghana,** for example, children were in agreement that, at the community level, "people should be sensitized so they understand the rights of children."



3.3. Regional breakdown: The Americas

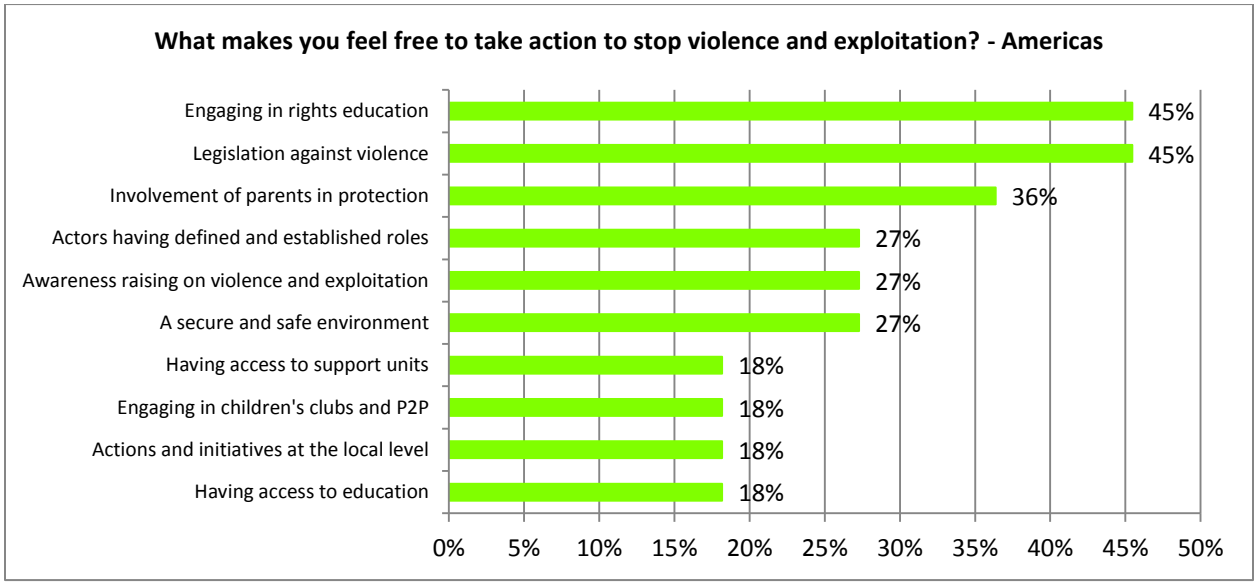
"Learning about my human rights makes me confident to do something to stop violence."
Mexico

In the **Americas,** two enabling factors were mentioned as fundamental for children to feel free to take action to stop violence and exploitation in 45% of the focus groups: engagement in rights education, and the enactment and enforcement of legislation to protect children. Jointly, these two answers point to the importance of not only having enforceable legal frameworks for the protection of children from violence and exploitation, but also of adults and children being aware of the rights afforded by these frameworks.

Answers to this question also point to the need to shed light on the magnitude and implications of violence and exploitation through awareness raising initiatives, and of these frameworks defining the responsibilities of each set of actors in the protection of children from violence and exploitation. Both of these issues were mentioned in 27% of the focus groups.

Finally, a call was also made for parents to play a more active role in the protection of children from violence and exploitation in 36% of the focus groups. This was the case, for example in **Ecuador,** where children were vocal in affirming that adults are the ones in whose hands it is to stop violence against and exploitation of children. This includes not only parents, but also teachers, local and national authorities, and civil society organizations.

In **Nicaragua,** children stated that to take action against violence and exploitation what they needed the most was adults to believe them when they report instances of violence and exploitation.



3.4. Regional breakdown: Asia

"If I know my rights, no one is allowed to beat me or shout at me."
Belarus

"What to do? People recognized the offenders in the community, but cannot do anything against them. They are moving freely around the villages."
18-year-old girl, Nepal

"Provide every child the information they are entitled to know."
Philippines

In **Asia,** children highlighted the importance of having access to support units, and of rights education in 47% of the focus groups.

In **Timor Leste,** creating awareness about children's rights amongst adults and children was also identified as a fundamental way to stop violence and exploitation, while in **Vietnam** children also emphasized the need of initiatives and projects to protect children from violence and exploitation.

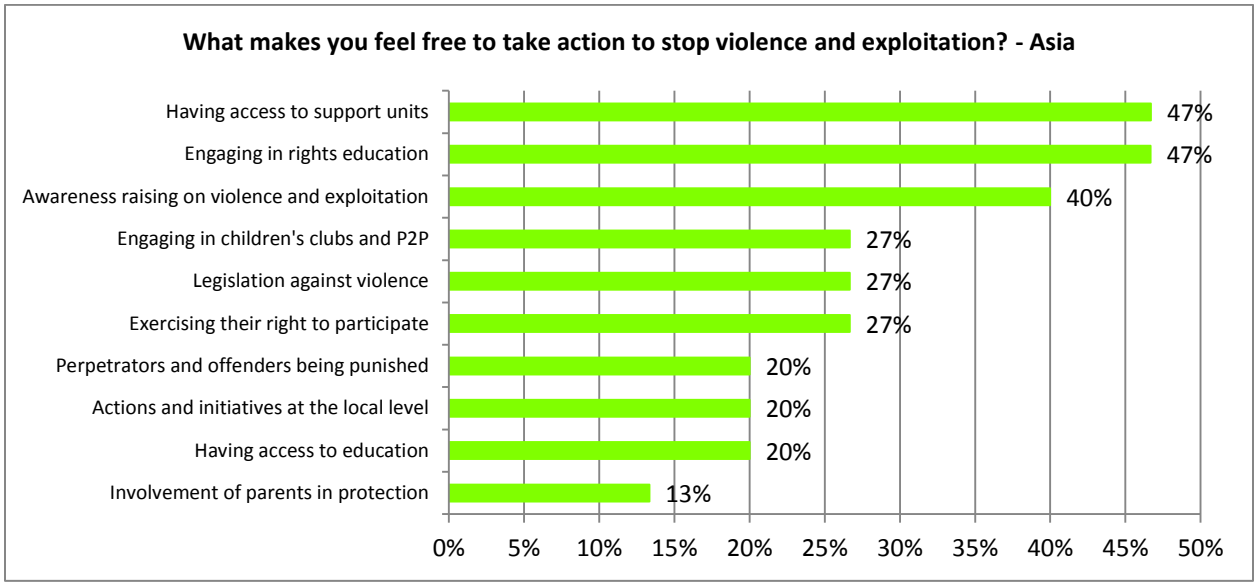
Children in the **Philippines** said they felt free to take action against violence and exploitation when the Government has "the budget to defend abused children."

Raising awareness on the effects and implications of violence against and exploitation

of children was also regarded as fundamental for children to feel free to take action.

Children's clubs and other peer-to-peer activities, the realization of children's right to participate and the enforcement of legislation to protect children were all mentioned by 27% of the focus groups. In **India,** children stated that their association with children's clubs had given them "confidence to act against the violation of our rights," and recalled awareness raising initiatives that they had implemented on child labour and child marriage.

In **Nepal** children stated the need to "organize groups and create environments to discuss about violence and exploitation," but also called for more stringent laws to be put in place and enforced, and for offenders and perpetrators to be punished.



4. What can world leaders do to free children from violence and exploitation?

4.1. Top issues

The primary purpose of this question was to enquire what children would like world leaders to say, do and make happen in relation to the prevention of violence against and exploitation of children. While children often said they could not name world leaders, they knew what actions they should take to free them from violence and exploitation.

Across the regions, children were clear on what they saw as the most important actions world leaders could take, which included: first, create and enforce legislation against children; second, raise awareness on violence and exploitation against children; third, punish offenders and perpetrators; and fourth, guarantee access to education.

"Put children's issues on top of the agenda. Not just by talking about the issues, but we want concrete action."
17-year-old boy, Zambia

i. Create and enforce legislation against children

Children in each region identified the importance of world leaders to both create and enforce legislation on prevention and response to violence against children. Globally, 60% of the focus groups raised this issue as a priority for world leaders to address. This was highest in **Asia** with 80% of the focus groups raising the issue, followed by **Africa** with 58%. For children in the **Americas,** it was lower at 36%. However, in all three regions it was the top priority. This indicates the importance that children place on holding world leaders to account, both for legislation to free children from violence and for the enforcement of that legislation. For these children, laws themselves are not enough.

ii. Raise awareness on violence and exploitation against children

The call for world leaders to raise awareness of violence against children was highest in **Africa.** In the **Americas,** it was listed alongside punishing offenders and enhancing security. In **Asia,** it was the third most common action that children asked from world leaders. Children who participated in the focus groups felt that awareness by parents, teachers, community leaders and others about violence and exploitation against them would have an impact in decreasing violence. They also provided examples of how this could be done, including through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), but also through sharing of information within the community and at the local level.

iii. Punish offenders and perpetrators

Globally, punishing offenders and perpetrators was raised by 47% of the focus groups. The importance of punishing offenders of violence against children was slightly higher in **Africa** and the **Americas** than within **Asia.** For children, this call to punish offenders and perpetrators of violence against them indicates the high level of concern they face with having offenders and perpetrators living amongst them, leaving them open to re-offending. It is well documented that violence against children does not just happen in isolated cases; many children are subject to multiple forms of abuse. This reiterates the importance to the children of punishing the offenders and perpetrators so that they can feel safe from violence and exploitation.

iv. Guarantee access to education

Access to education was identified as equally important globally as the call to raise awareness. However this was as a result of the high importance given to this topic by children within **Asia** where 67% of the focus groups asked world leaders to prioritize education while in **Africa,** 26% of the focus groups identified this as an issue. Guaranteed access to education did not come up as a top issue from children who participated in the focus groups from the **Americas.**

v. Other important issues

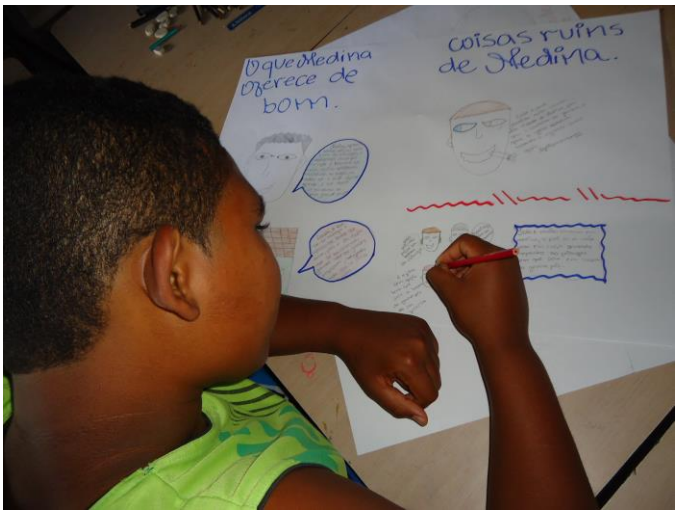
Support to rights education was of particular importance for world leaders to address in both **Africa** and **Asia** but did not come up as a priority within the **Americas.** Addressing poverty and support to actions at the local level were of equal importance to children globally. Within **Africa,** there was a higher call on world leaders to address poverty, and the call to promote or support actions at the local level was highest within **Asia.**

Children in **Africa** and **Asia** called on world leaders to support and enhance their right to participate in decisions that affect them, while this was not as high in the **Americas.**

Globally, children recognized the need for world leaders to address create or enhance support units that provide them with direct services for both the prevention and response to violence against children. This was identified higher in **Asia;** however, children in all three regions did identify it as an issue.

Safety and security and creation of institutions were identified equally as issues for world leaders to address. Enhancing safety and security was identified as one of the top concerns to be addressed by world leaders in the **Americas** but not in **Africa** or **Asia.** The creation of institutions equally, was identified by 16% of the children in **Africa** but not in the other regions.

Children discussing in focus group in Guinea. **Photo:** ChildFund Guinea.



Children engaged in focus group activity in Brazil. **Photo:** ChildFund Brazil.

4.2. Regional breakdown: Africa

"World leaders should have in mind that children are the barometer of development."
17-year-old boy, Guinea

When analysing the data from the focus group discussions, the top actions children wanted world leaders to take were: create and enforce legislation on violence, raise awareness on violence and exploitation, and punish offenders and perpetrators.

The importance of laws and their implementation, as a key issue for world leaders to address, was prioritized by 60% of the focus groups across African countries. In **Burkina Faso,** children asked that the judicial powers make child rights known and respected to protect them better.

The call for laws on violence against children was raised in **Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Liberia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Sierra Leone,** the **Gambia, Uganda** and **Zambia.** In **Kenya** and **Uganda,** this extended to having child-friendly officers and courts. In **Zambia,** the recommendation to world leaders was for a judicial system that is child-friendly, especially for rural children. In the **Gambia,** a call to "make laws against violence" was also made, and was echoed in **Senegal,** where children stressed the importance of enacting laws and regulations to protect them, but also of punishing those who break said laws and regulations.

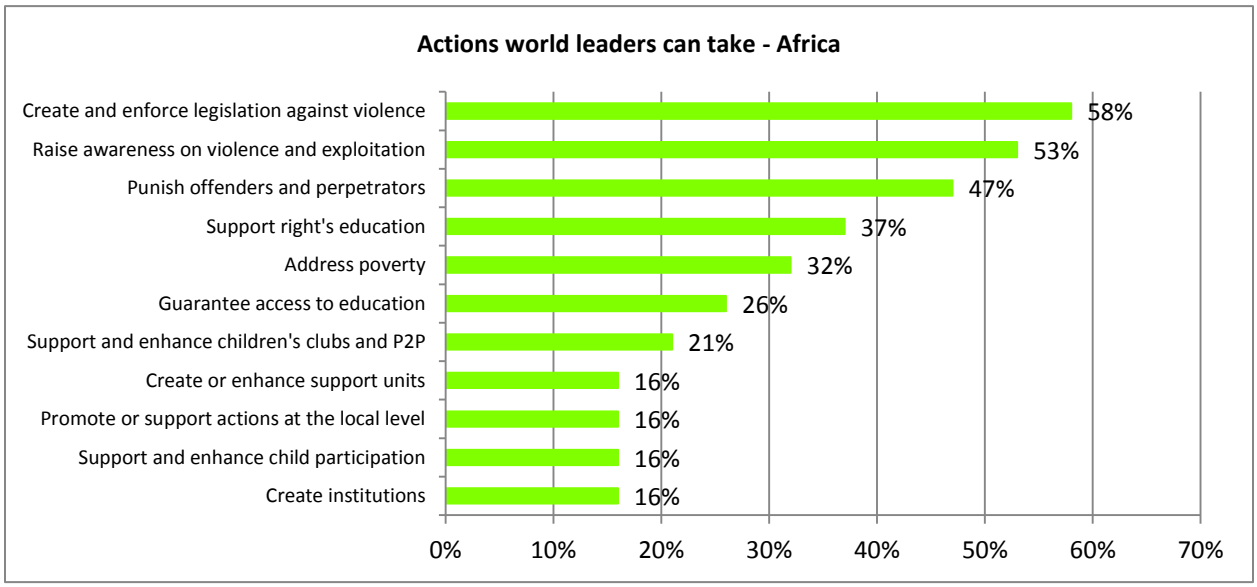
"Legal actors should play a great role in tackling child trafficking from rural to urban areas."
15-year-old girl, Ethiopia

Children in **Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Togo** and **Zambia** made a call for world leaders to raise awareness on violence and exploitation**.** They felt this

could be achieved through mass media campaigns, including at local markets, coffee ceremonies and through radio. In **Burkina Faso,** for example, children called for world leaders to "denounce violence against and exploitation of children using their personal charisma, and in their speeches," while in **Benin,** world leaders were called upon to "sensitize people throughout the world, and demand that laws against this evil are voted."

In both cases, however, the role of local authorities in conducting awareness raising and rights education at the community level was also emphasized, and presented as complimentary to that of Governments and world leaders.

In **Ethiopia**, **Ghana**, **Guinea, Kenya, Liberia and Mozambique, Togo** and **Mali** there was specific reference for world leaders to punishing the offenders of violence against children. In **Sierra Leone,** children wanted to send a message to world leaders that perpetrators of violence against children, including trafficking, child marriage, rape and commercial sexual exploitation, should be treated like murder cases.



4.3. Regional breakdown: The Americas

"Leaders should think that young people deserve to be listened to so when laws are made our opinions are taken into account and our needs are respected."
Ecuador

When analysing data from the focus group discussions in the **Americas** the following issues were raised as priorities for world leaders: create and enforce legislation against violence; promote or support actions at the local level; punish offenders and perpetrators, raise awareness on violence and exploitation and enhance safety and security.

Children in the **Americas,** like children in all other regions, strongly called for world leaders to create and enforce legislation against violence. This resounding call highlights the awareness that children have of the importance not just of creating legislation but also of enforcing that legislation. Without enforcement, they will continue to face violence within their communities.

A focus group of young girls in **Dominica,** called on world leaders to impose bans and have penalties for people who violate children. Older girls called on world leaders to enforce laws. In **Honduras,** children's perspective is that international institutions make promises but do not fulfil their duties. In **Ecuador,** the focus group wanted Government to listen to children when writing the laws to learn what they need and respect their rights. In the **United States,** the call for leaders to not pass an "open-carry" gun law that would allow people without permits to carry firearms as long as they are visible.

The call for world leaders to promote and support efforts at the local level was highest in the **Americas.** The focus group in **Paraguay** called for world leaders to come to communities, to learn more about the issues of violence and exploitation of children and learn about their experiences. In **Brazil,** the participants called on world leaders to invest in education, health, social protection, local counselling, helplines and community centres, all as ways to protect them from violence and exploitation.

Along with the call to enforce legislation, children in the **Americas** also identified the importance of punishing the perpetrators of violence against children. In one focus group, the participants were unable to think of a single case where the perpetrator was punished.

In **Mexico,** the focus group called for abusers to go to prison. In **Dominica,** the call from children to world leaders was to deal with people who are perpetrators of violence against children including putting drug dealers in jail.

Within the focus groups in the **Americas,** there were a number of calls to world leaders to not just create and enforce legislation on violence against children, but also to ensure that children themselves understand what is in that legislation. In **Bolivia,** participants cited several reasons for asking world leaders to ensure that they are aware of the laws. Firstly, so that they can comply with the law, but also so that they can know when violations of the law occur and can charge the abuser. In **Dominica,** the call was also for local consultations to take place to seek input prior to signing declarations.

There were also calls for world leaders to ensure increased awareness about violence against children. These included campaigns using various information communication technologies (ICTs) and in addition, not to violate freedom of expression of citizens and the media.

Participants of the focus groups in the **Americas** prioritized calling on world leaders to enhance safety and security, which did not occur in the other regions.

In many cases, the call was for police protection, including additional resources for increased police presence. One call was for leaders to destroy empty homes that draw gang activity and to increase police presence in neighbourhoods where significant violence occurs.

4.4. Regional breakdown: Asia

"If I were president, I would build a very nice school in every village."
12-year-old boy, Laos

"Leaders must make laws and effectively enforce them so that violence, exploitation and abuse on us are stopped."
Papua New Guinea

In **Asia,** children made an overwhelming call to world leaders to create and enforce legislation against violence.

In **India,** children called for "more child-friendly laws to be issued" and for "strict laws against violence to be enacted and implemented," while in **Indonesia,** children asked for world leaders to take the lead in implementing child protection laws and creating awareness about the benefits of investing in children.

In the **Philippines,** children called for world leaders and Governments to implement child protection laws with stiff penalties for offenders and perpetrators. One girl recounted how after being abused, the perpetrator "was sent away instead of being punished." Children in **South Korea** also called for harsher penalties and for offenders being punished.

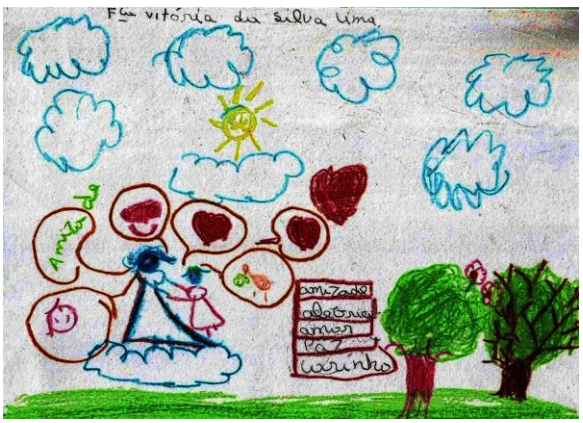
Access to education was also one of the major topics, having been mentioned in 67% of the focus groups in **Asia.** In **Laos,** for example, one 14-year-old girl stated that, if elected president, "I would tell all children to go to school and not drop out. I would tell parents not to ask young girls to stop studying."

In **Timor Leste,** children pointed out that the Ministry of Education has an important role to

play in educating children and their parents about children's rights, while also making sure, along with other entities, that all children have access to education in equal standing regardless of their gender.

In **Afghanistan,** while access to education was emphasized, children also called for implementing rights education initiatives at the community level and carrying out prevention programmes regarding violence against and exploitation of children.

In fact, awareness raising about the effects and implications of violence against and exploitation of children was one of children's major suggestions to world leaders, coming up in 53% of the focus groups in **Asia.**



Outcomes from focus group activities in Brazil. **Photos:** ChildFund Brazil.

5. What can adults do to free children from violence and exploitation?

5.1. Top issues

This question was intended to learn from children what their thoughts were as to what adults, beyond world leaders, can do to free children from violence and exploitation. As stated earlier, adults must all take action to stop violence against children but the focus groups also felt that adults should see children as allies to make this happen.

When answering this question, children prioritized four top issues. However, this was closely followed by five issues that were tied. This reflects the wide-ranging actions that children believe adults should be taking to protect them.

"I want a life that takes care of me."
14-year-old boy, Brazil

"Adults should treat every child equally."
15-year-old boy, Liberia

i. Raise awareness on violence and exploitation

This was what resonated amongst the children in the majority of the focus groups as the action adults can take to free them from violence and exploitation. Some of the reasoning behind this issue being prioritized was that children felt that with this awareness, adults would be better placed to know about the violence they face and the impact it has on them. In some instances, the children acknowledged that adults had experienced violence as children and it would be through their understanding of why it was wrong that the shift towards their protection would occur.

This was the number one issue for the children in **Asia** and the second highest for children in **Africa** and the **Americas.**

ii. Support and enhance children's participation

Globally, children called on adults to support and enhance children's participation as their second priority. This was tied with raising awareness in **Asia.** In **Africa** it was the fourth highest response. However, in the **Americas** it was tied in fifth place alongside addressing sexual abuse, create or enhance support units, punish offenders and perpetrators, promote or support actions at the local level, engage with media and ICTs, guarantee access to healthcare, guarantee access to education and respecting children's rights.

This reiterates the importance of adults listening to children and recognizing them as allies in their protection. This was a priority for children to feel free and also a priority action for adults to take.

iii. Support parental involvement in protection

Children called upon adults globally to support parental involvement in protection of children from violence and exploitation. This is in recognition of children's statements about home as a place that made them feel safe, but also a space where they experience violence. Children recognize the important role that parents have in securing their protection from violence.

Further broken down by the region, support to parental involvement in protection was the number one issue in **Africa** and the **Americas**. For children in **Asia,** this tied in fourth place, alongside supporting children's clubs, addressing child labour and stopping physical and humiliating punishment.

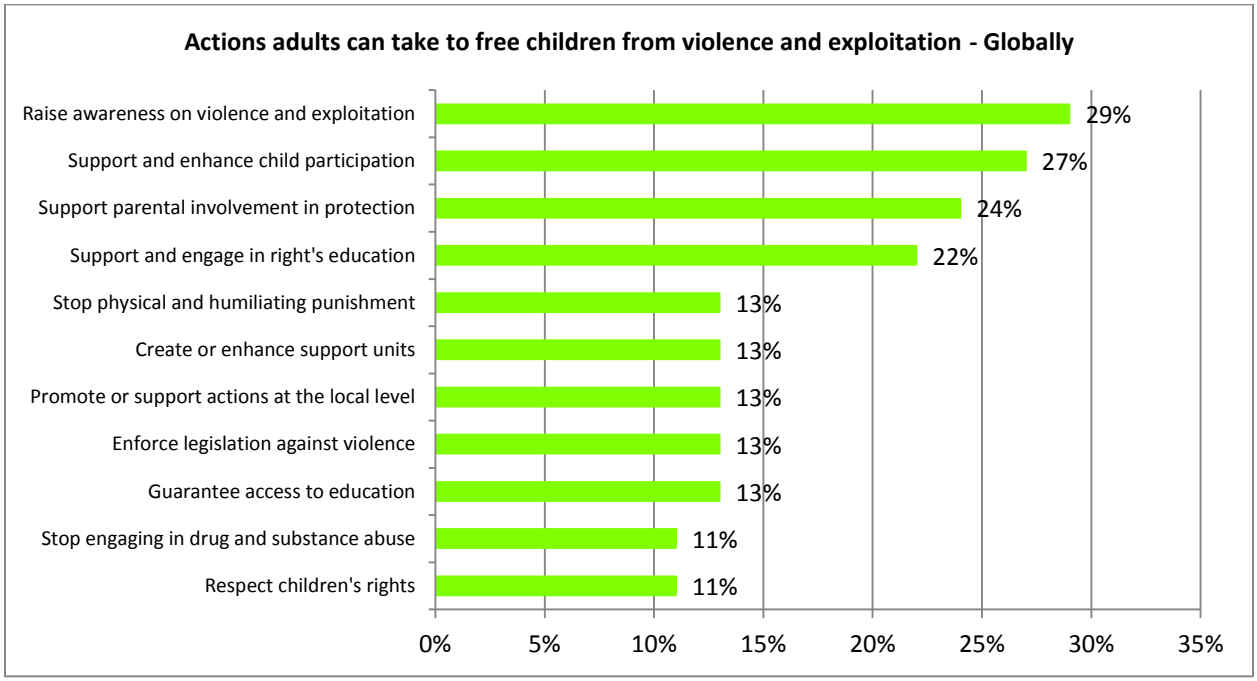
iv. Support and engage in rights education

For children, adults taking action to support and engage in rights education will help them be free from violence and exploitation.

For the children who participated in the focus groups, this issue was tied for second in both **Africa** and the **Americas.** For the children in **Asia** this was slightly lower at 20%.

v. Other important issues

As previously identified, in response to this question, there were five additional issues that children had tied as equally important globally. These include: stop physical and humiliating punishment, create or enhance support units, promote or support actions at the local level, enforce legislation against violence and guarantee access to education. The fact that these were all equally prioritized indicates that for the children, these issues were all of importance to them.



5.2. Regional breakdown: Africa

"Create a safe place for both boys and girls without discrimination."
12-year-old girl, Zambia

"Less domestic violence and more sharing."
12-year-old girl, Cape Verde

In the countries that participated from **Africa,** the number one issue raised by children was to support the role of parents in protecting children. In **Zambia,** this was acknowledging for them that violence and exploitation starts from a small community which is home, and, that those adults should be in the forefront to fight against violence and exploitation. Children in **Zambia** also identified the importance of parent's education on child rights and that those rights are respected.

In **Ghana,** the children called for parents to provide the needs for children so that they are not exploited. In **Guinea,** children put older brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers into the category of adults who should protect them from danger. Children in **Ethiopia** called for a culture of openness between parents and children to protect the children from violence and exploitation. In **Cape Verde,** there was also a call for parents to pay more attention to the welfare of their children, while in **Benin** children called for parents to stop threatening their children, to stop using physical and humiliating punishment to discipline their children, and instead provide them with advice.

Awareness raising among adults was identified as the second most important action adults can take to protect children against violence and exploitation. This was identified in **Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone** and the **Gambia.**

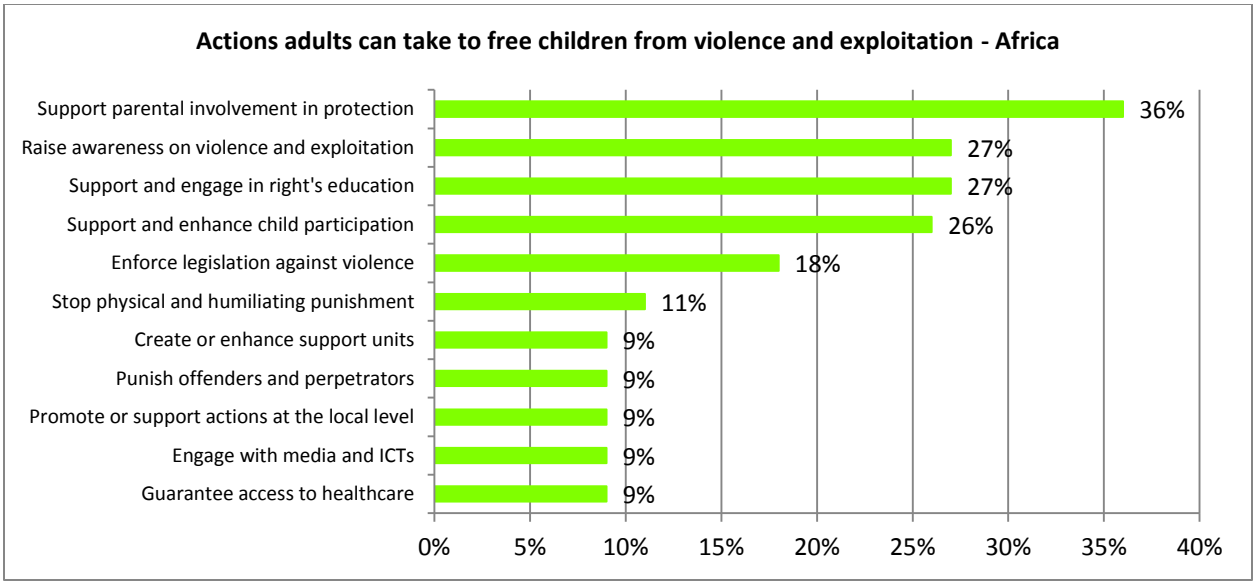
In **Mozambique,** the reason they wanted adults to be more aware was because some adults do not know they are subjecting children to violence and exploitation, because they experienced similar situations and consider the treatment normal behaviour.

In **Ethiopia,** children identified awareness raising amongst themselves as a key tool for their own protection.

At the same time, in **Burkina Faso,** children recognised that different actors have different roles to play in freeing children from violence and exploitation, and highlighted the different channels through which they can take action, from parents to teachers, from civil society organisations to local authorities.

The third highest priority for children in the African countries that adults can take to protect them was rights education. This was identified in **Ghana**, **Kenya, Liberia, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zambia.** In **Senegal,** for example, along with adults protecting them, children made the call for adults to "understand children's rights."

Children participating in focus group discussion in Dominica. **Photo:** ChildFund Dominica.



5.3. Regional breakdown: The Americas

"Make people aware of violence and make them understand what impact it has."
Dominica

Within the **Americas,** children's call for what actions adults can take to free children from violence and exploitation was similar to the global responses, with the exception of supporting children's participation. This is also the variation that occurred when the question was asked about what world leaders can do to free children from violence and exploitation.

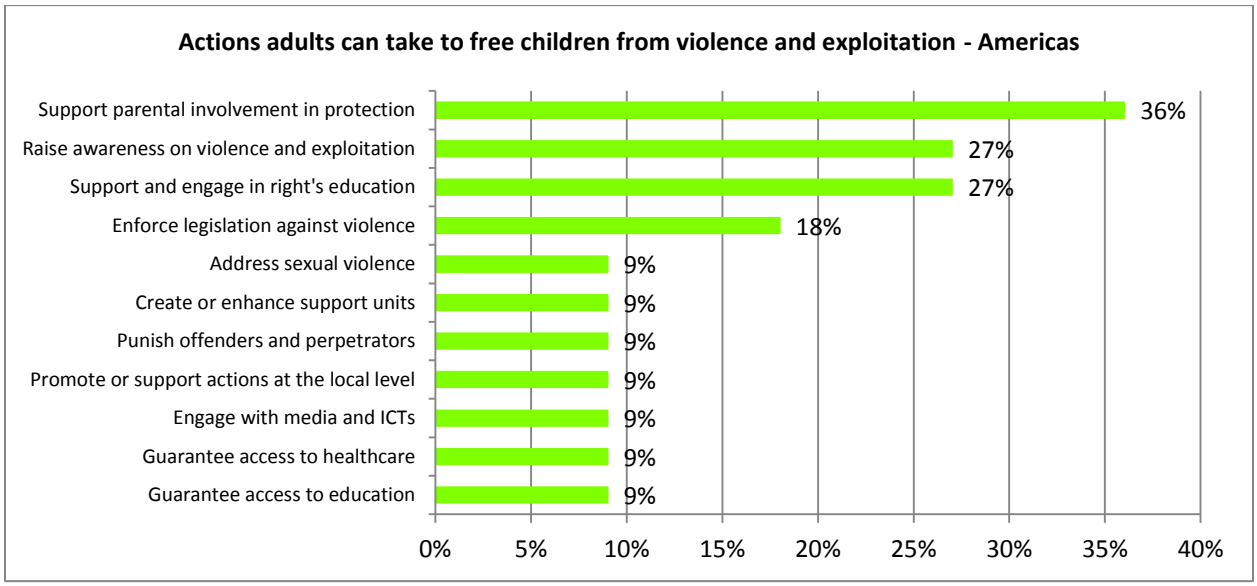
The children who participated in the five focus groups with child-led organizations in **Brazil** all identified the importance of parental involvement and their respect for children as the first step to creating a safe environment for children. In **Guatemala,** the children identified the importance of the role that parents play in the lives of boys and girls. This includes, the importance of parents being educated on violence and exploitation against children. The focus group participants in **Honduras** highlighted the importance of parents not abusing them but rather providing advice and setting an example.

The participants in **Bolivia** called on the importance of campaigns to inform parents and other adults about violence against children. In **Dominica** the participants called on adults to educate children on the risks and consequences of violence and exploitation.

In **Mexico,** children called upon adults to protect them and share information but also to encourage them to report crimes. They felt that adults should inform children about violence and exploitation.

In **St Vincent** the participants identified multiple entry points for raising awareness, including demonstrations, marches and rallies and through the media.

Participants in **Paraguay** referred to the need for adults to be aware of the rights of children. They felt this awareness is important for adults to understand the significance of social and educational programs for children, so that they can realise their rights.



5.4. Regional breakdown: Asia

"Adults at home, school and community have a crucial role as the best guides and protectors."
India

"Adults in our community must sit together and make some new rules for us to follow. If our parents follow these rules and also talk to their children, then children can be free."
Papua New Guinea

Across focus groups in **Asia,** children stated that adults have the responsibility to protect children from violence. Children suggested adults should not discriminate on the basis of gender, or involve them in activities that are harmful for them. They strongly called for adults to work on their behalf for the fulfilment of their rights. In **Indonesia,** children said "adults have the responsibility to care for children and to make them feel safe and secure."

To end all violence and exploitation, children made the following recommendations for adults to act as agents of change in realizing children's rights: raise awareness on the effects and implications of violence and exploitation; support and enhance children's participation in decision-making processes; stop engaging in drug and substance abuse; support and enhance children's clubs; address child labour; stop physical and humiliating punishment; and support parental involvement in the protection of their children.

In **Afghanistan,** children mentioned the existence of child well-being committees at the community level, and highlighted that adults play a fundamental role in this, from where they can engage in training to prevent and address violence against and exploitation of children. In the same sense, children in **Belarus** stated that adults could contribute by providing

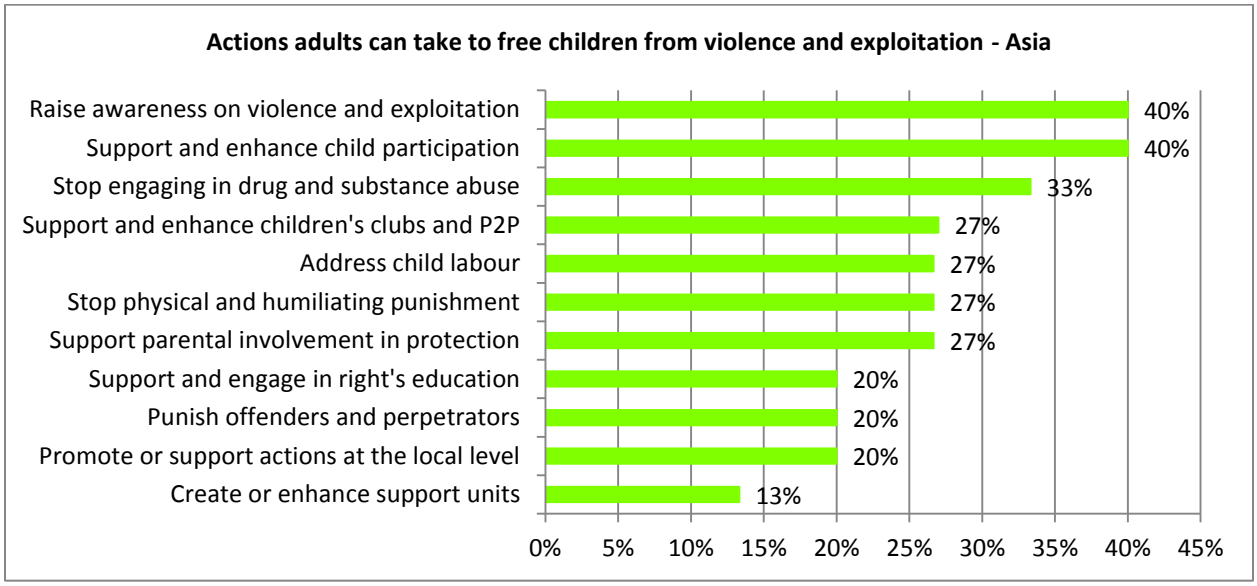
information to children, for example on precautionary measures that have to be taken to avoid being subject to violence and exploitation.

In **Sri Lanka,** adults were called to engage in mass media campaigns to raise awareness on violence against and exploitation of children.

In **India,** children emphasized that adults should also be aware of the rules and regulations regarding children's rights and child protection, by engaging in awareness raising and education initiatives, while at the same time supporting the participation of children in decision-making processes.

Active listening on the part of adults was not only mentioned in the context of children's right to participate, but also in the context of reporting violations to their rights. In **Nepal,** children called for "adults to listen to the voices of children when we report cases of violence and exploitation."

At the same time, children also mentioned that adults should stop engaging in behaviour that leads to or constitutes violence or exploitation. In **Cambodia,** children called for adults to stop abusing children physically and verbally, to stop child labour, and to stop forcing children to quit school. Children in **India** called for their teachers to put a stop to physical and humiliating punishment, "which drives many children away from school" and for adults to stop abusing alcohol, which "makes them commit crimes against children." In **Timor Leste,** children asked for adults to stop using physical and humiliating punishment as a way to discipline their children.



6. What are the risks that children face? Are they different for boys and girls? What are the risks for girls? What are the risks for boys?

6.1. Top issues

The purpose of this question was to identify the risks that children face in terms of violence and exploitation. Participants were also asked if they believed these risks varied according to gender, and to identify the risks for boys and for girls, accordingly.

The most often cited forms of violence and exploitation faced by children were sexual violence, child labour, and physical and humiliating punishment.

In response to the question about the difference in risks for boys and girls, in many focus groups children talked about the fact that both boys and girls faced similar risks of being subject to violence and exploitation. For example, child labour was raised for girls as mostly domestic labour, while for boys it was raised in the context of agriculture. At the same time, sexual violence was also seen as a violation that both boys and girls experienced.

But children also recognised that boys and girls faced higher risks of particular manifestations of violence and exploitation. For example, while in many instances boys and girls were considered at risk of sexual violence, girls were seen at a higher risk when it came to commercial sexual exploitation.

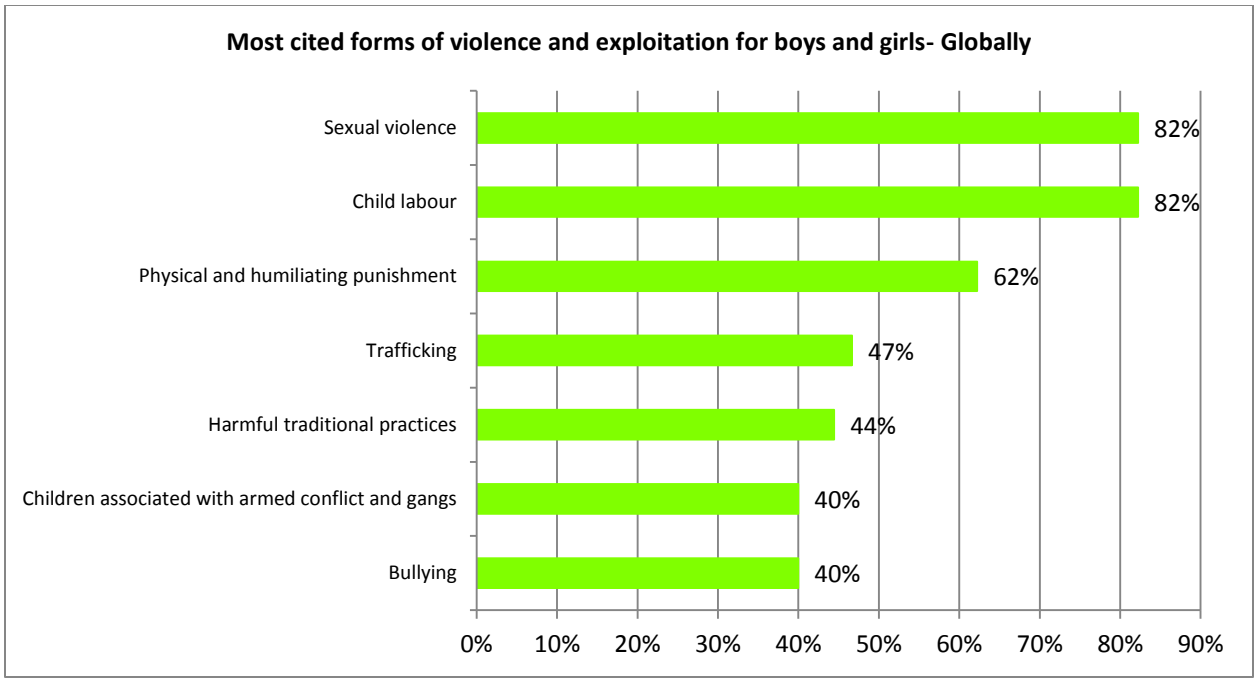
Harmful traditional practices, while being experienced by both girls and boys, were identified as mostly concerning girls in **Africa** and **Asia.**

"Overlooking me is violence."
15-year-old boy, Liberia

"We are also human. I don't understand why we are treated inhumanly and not considered citizens."
13-year-old girl, Nepal

When children spoke of different forms of violence and exploitation, the list for girls included, in order: sexual violence, child labour, harmful traditional practices, trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, bullying, and physical and humiliating punishment.

For boys, the risks included, in order: child labour, children associated with armed forces and gangs, bullying, trafficking, sexual violence, physical and humiliating punishment and commercial sexual exploitation.


Most cited forms of violence and exploitation for boys and girls- Globally
Sexual violence
Child labour
Physical and humiliating punishment
Trafficking
Harmful traditional practices
Children associated with armed conflict and gangs
Bullying
82%
82%
62%
47%
44%
40%
40%
0%
10%
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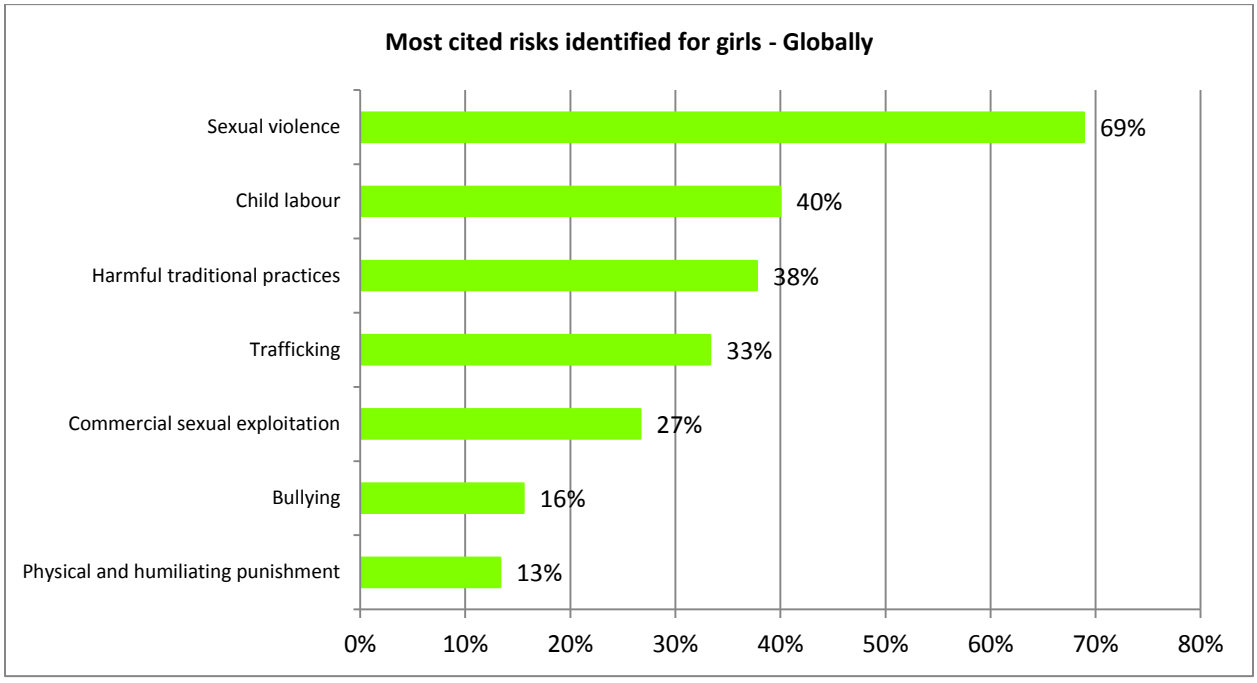
Most cited risks identified for girls - Globally
Sexual violence
Child labour
Harmful traditional practices
Trafficking
Commercial sexual exploitation
Bullying
Physical and humiliating punishment
69%
40%
38%
33%
27%
16%
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10%
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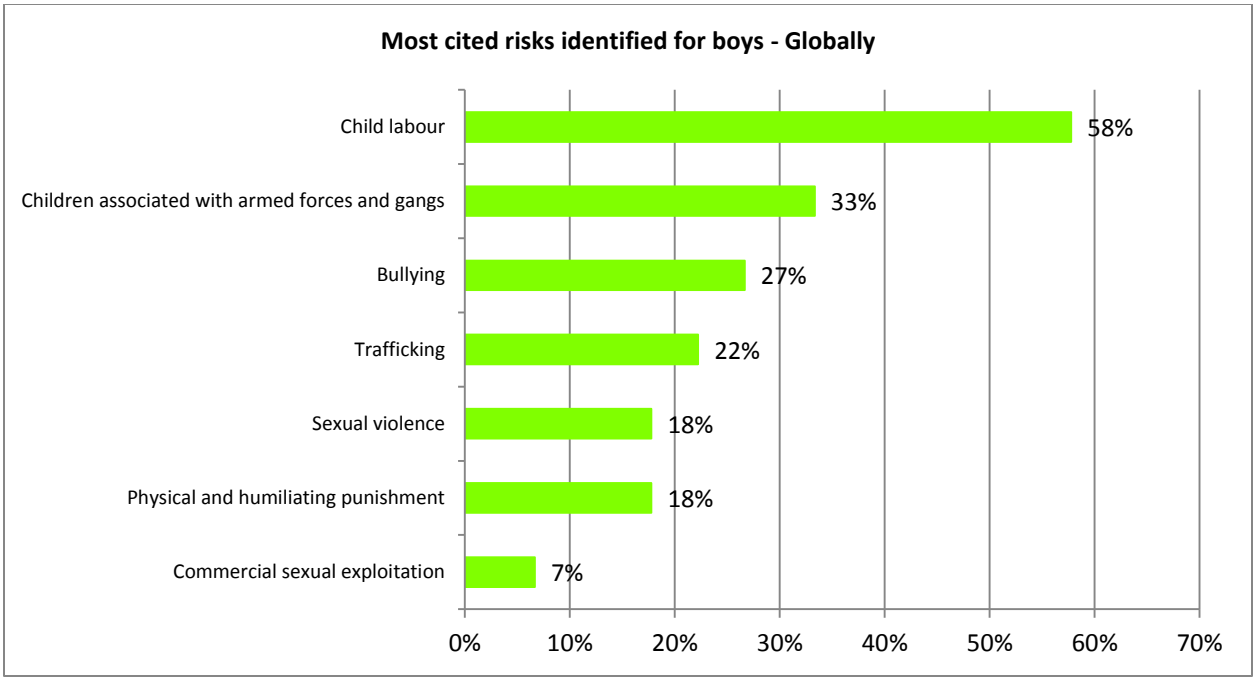


6.2. Regional breakdown: Africa

In **Africa,** the most cited forms of violence and exploitation for boys and girls were: child labour (84%); sexual violence (79%); and harmful traditional practices (68%).

Boys

In **Africa,** issues associated with armed forces and gangs were the number one risk for boys at 26%, followed by child labour at 16%. The number one issue they raised under child labour was working in agriculture. Orphans and vulnerable children, sexual violence, trafficking and abductions were all tied for third with 5% of the focus groups identifying them as issues facing boys in their countries.

In **Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone** and **Uganda** focus groups all identified boys being associated with armed forces and gangs as a risk. In **Ghana, Kenya** and **Uganda** they identified being forced into gangs. In **Guinea** and **Liberia** they identified armed conflict. In **Sierra Leone,** they identified both association with armed conflicts and gangs as a risks.

In **Cape Verde, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique,** the **Gambia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan** and **Zambia** focus groups all identified child labour as a risk for boys. In **Ethiopia,** they identified this as heavy tasks in agriculture and illegal mining. In **Ghana,** it was illegal mining.

In **Kenya,** it was identified that boys were at risk of commercial sexual exploitation, while in **Uganda** they identified sexual abuse by other men.

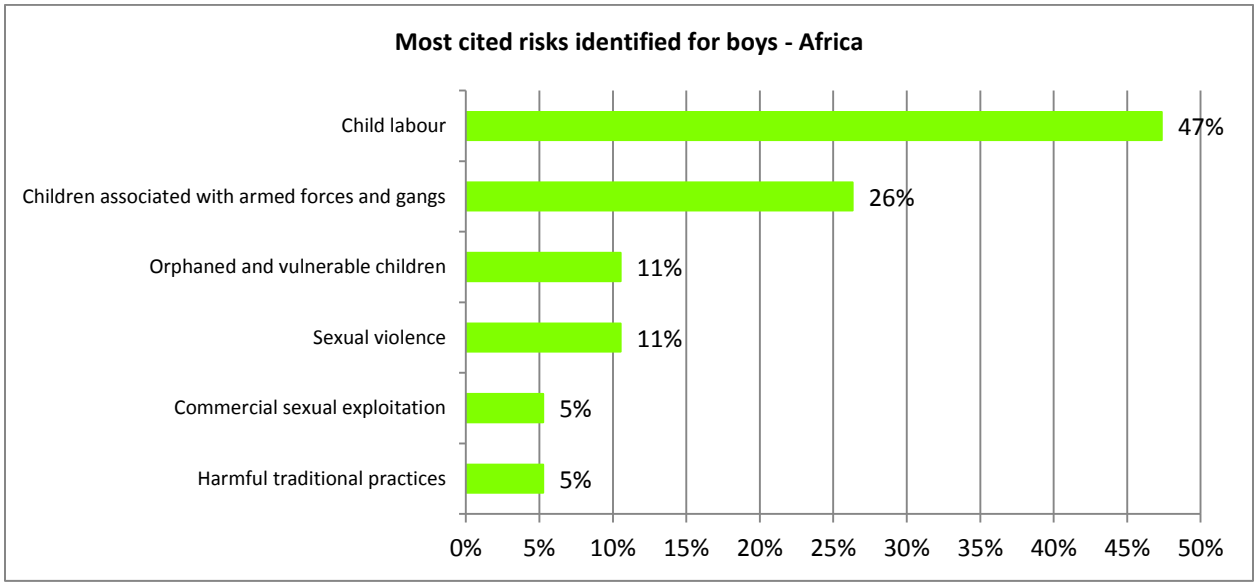
Girls

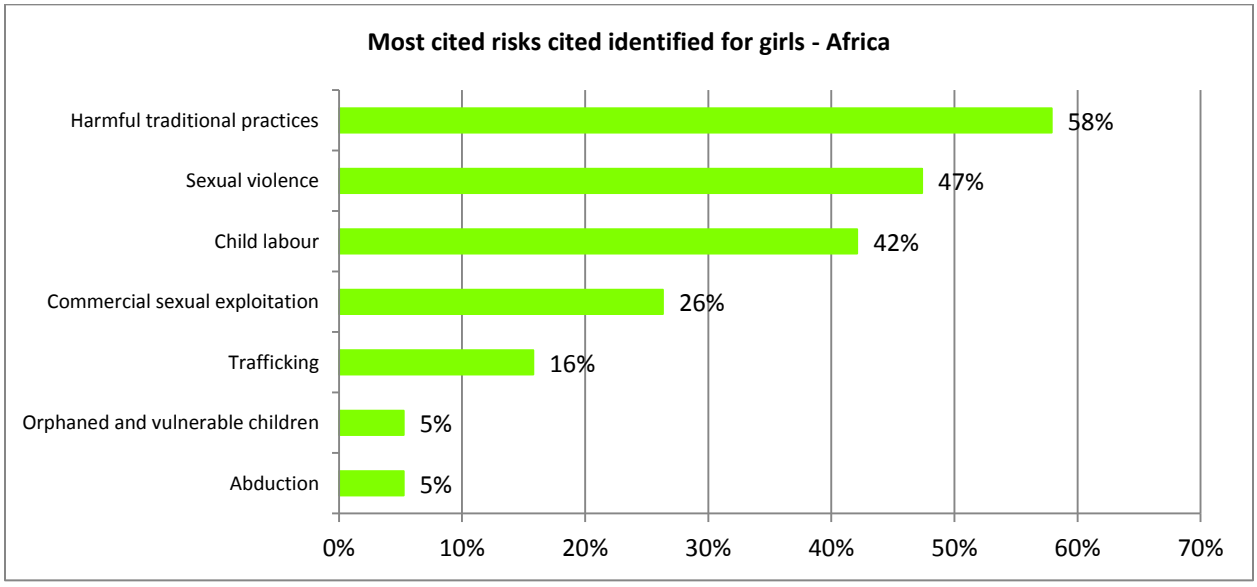
In **Africa,** focus groups identified harmful traditional practices as the number one risk for girls. This was followed by sexual violence and child labour. For the girls, the number one issue that was raised in terms of harmful traditional practices was child marriage, and within child labour, the number one issue was domestic work.

In **Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, South Sudan,** the **Gambia** and **Zambia** focus groups all identified harmful traditional practices as the number one child protection risk that girls face.

Sexual violence was raised as the second highest risk regionally including in **Cape Verde, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone** and **Uganda.**

In the region, the third most prevalent risk for girls was child labour. This was raised as an issue in **Liberia, South Sudan,** the **Gambia** and **Uganda.**





6.3. Regional breakdown: The Americas

In the **Americas** a big difference in the risks between boys and girls was not identified. For example, in the **United States,** boys were identified as being more at risk than girls due to "being in the middle of it" and the pressure to be tough and violent.

In **Dominica,** it was felt that the best way to prevent this was to have gender appropriate spaces and services for both sexes in both private and public settings. For the boys, the preventative action was basic needs, including clothing, shoes and shelter as the issues to address the sexual exploitation of boys. In **Ecuador,** the focus groups identified all risks as being the same for girls and boys.

In the **Americas,** the most cited forms of violence and exploitation for boys and girls were: sexual violence (82%); bullying, and child labour (73%); and children associated with armed conflict and gangs (55%).

Boys

Sexual violence was tied with child labour as the most prevalent risk for boys. Sexual violence was raised as an issue for boys in **Dominica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay** and **St Vincent.** In **Brazil,** homophobia was identified as an issue affecting their security. Child labour was raised as a risk for boys in **Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico** and **Nicaragua.**

The issue of children associated with armed forces and gangs was raised by 45% of the focus groups, the same percentage as bullying. Gangs were considered a risk for boys in **Bolivia, Honduras** and **Nicaragua.** In **Bolivia,** the risk was both intra-gang violence as well as violence when a boy refused to join a gang. Bullying meanwhile was identified for a risk for boys in **Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua** and **St Vincent.**

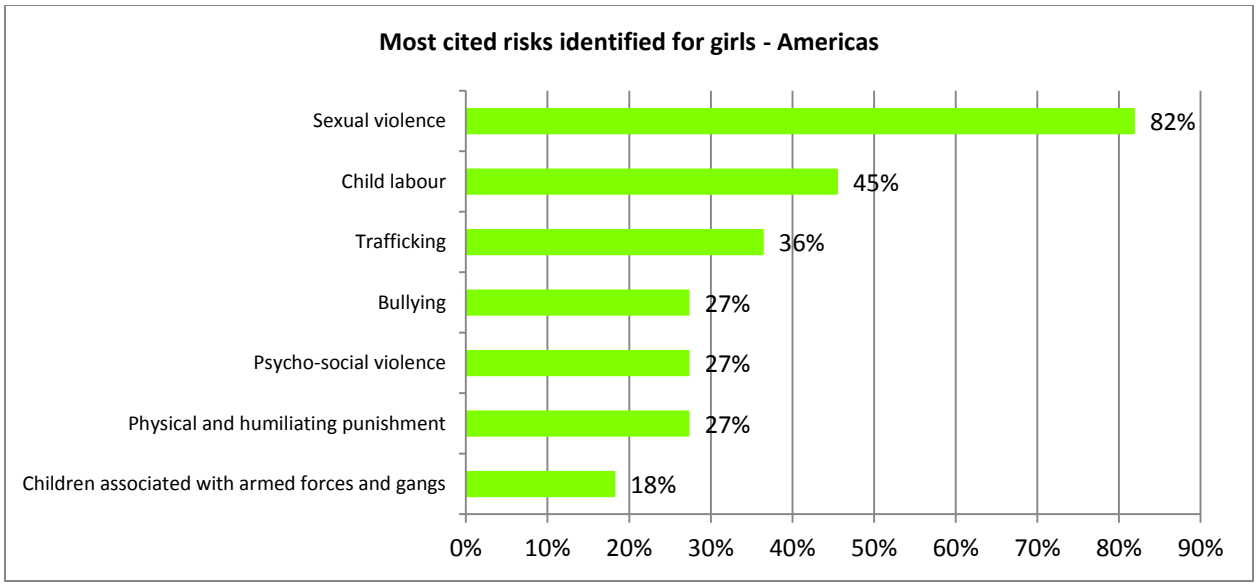
Girls

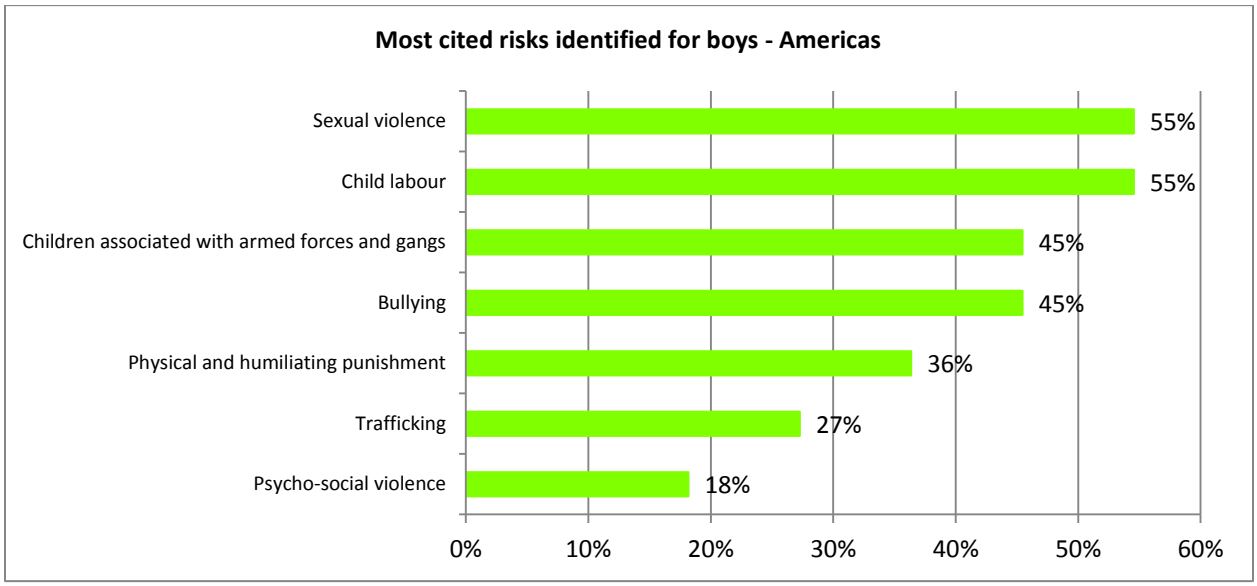
As mentioned above, in this region both boys and girls raised a number of issues. However, while sexual violence was raised by 55% in the focus groups for boys in the region it was raised by 82% for girls. The risk of sexual violence for girls was raised in **Bolivia, Brazil, Dominica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay** and **St Vincent.**

In **Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico** and **St Vincent,** risks of pregnancy and STDs as a result of sexual abuse were also identified for girls. In **Mexico,** they identified girls becoming pregnant for trafficking drugs, as pregnant women are not searched.

Child labour was raised as a risk for girls in **Brazil, Guatemala** and **Nicaragua.** In **Bolivia,** they identified the discrimination girls face while at work as a risk. Trafficking was raised for girls in **Mexico** and **Nicaragua.**

In **Brazil,** the children identified the role of media as contributing to stereotypes in gender role imbalances.


Most cited risks identified for girls - Americas
Sexual violence
Child labour
Trafficking
Bullying
Psycho-social violence
Physical and humiliating punishment
Children associated with armed forces and gangs
82%
45%
36%
27%
27%
27%
18%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%


Most cited risks identified for boys - Americas
Sexual violence
Child labour
Children associated with armed forces and gangs
Bullying
Physical and humiliating punishment
Trafficking
Psycho-social violence
55%
55%
45%
45%
36%
27%
18%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%

6.4. Regional breakdown: Asia

In **Asia,** the most often cited forms of violence and exploitation for boys and girls were: child labour, and physical and humiliating punishment (87%); trafficking (67%); and bullying (53%).

Boys

The number one risk identified for boys was child labour, by 73% of the focus groups. This was raised as a risk for boys in **Afghanistan**, **India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka** and **Vietnam.** In the **Philippines,** boys who are gay they are at an increased risk of physical abuse by their fathers and forced to work as house helpers.

Bullying was identified as a risk for boys in **Cambodia** –specifically in school–, **India** and **Papua New Guinea.** Trafficking was identified as a risk in **India, Nepal, Sri Lanka** and **Vietnam**. In the **Philippines,** trafficking for organ extraction was identified.

There were a number of risks faced by boys in **Asia** that did not come up in the other regions. These included environmental issues, such as flooding and snakebites, and discrimination based on caste.

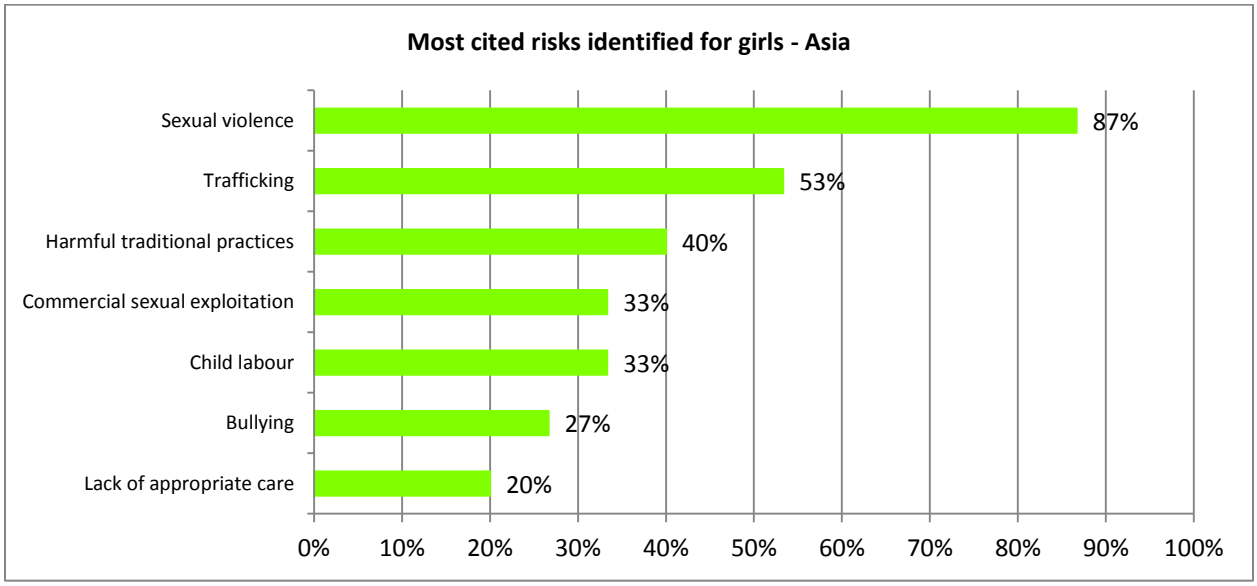
Girls

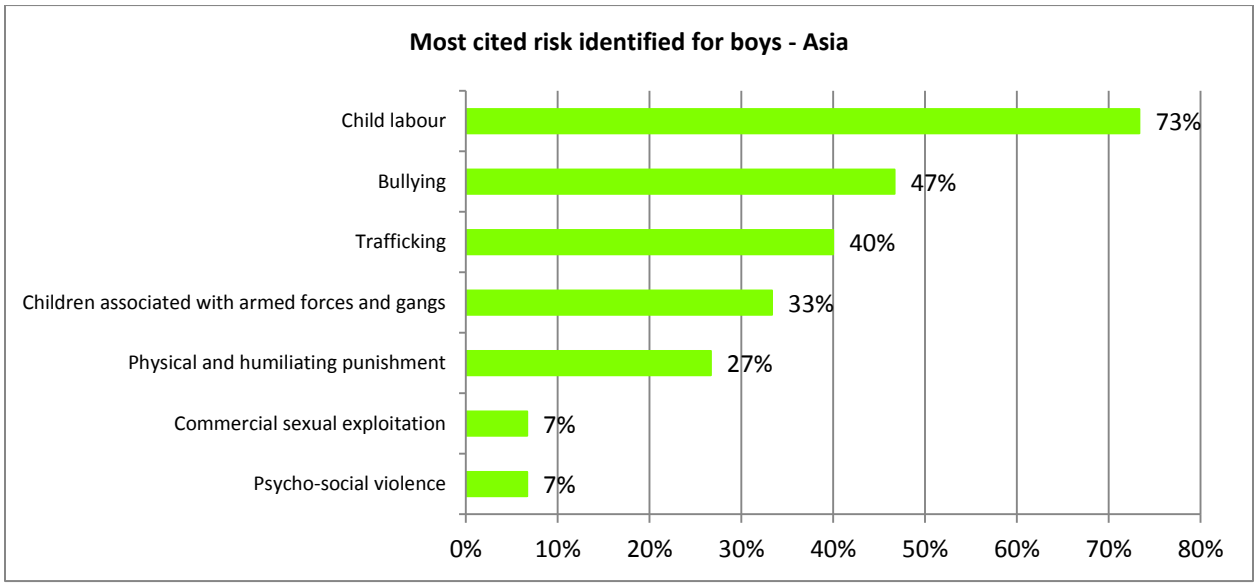
Across **Asia,** the major risk identified for girls was sexual violence. This was the case in **Belarus, India, Indonesia, Nepal,** the **Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka,** and **Timor Leste.**

Trafficking was raised as an issue in 53% of the focus groups in **India, Nepal,** the **Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka** and **Vietnam.**

The third most cited risk for girls in **Asia** was harmful traditional practices. Girls in **India, Nepal, Papua New Guinea** and **Timor Leste** raised this**.**

Similar to the boys, there were a few risks faced by girls that were raised in the Asian focus groups that were not raised in the other regions. These were suicide explosions, female feticide and murder after sexual abuse.




Most cited risk identified for boys - Asia
Child labour
Bullying
Trafficking
Children associated with armed forces and gangs
Physical and humiliating punishment
Commercial sexual exploitation
Psycho-social violence
73%
47%
40%
33%
27%
7%
7%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%

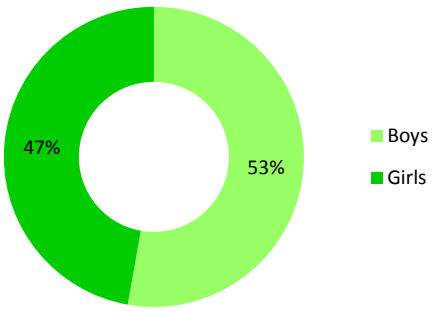
Children's voices in MY World survey

MY World is a United Nations global survey for citizens. Working with partners, the aim is to capture people's voices, priorities and views, so they reach world leaders as they begin the process of defining the next set of global development goals.

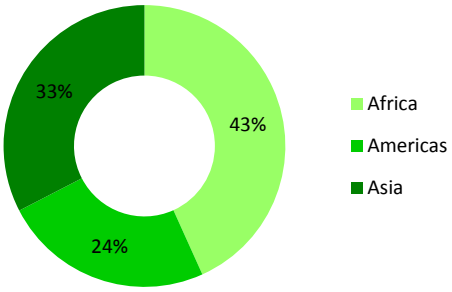
Respondents are prompted to list the top six priorities out of sixteen that they would like to see reflected in the post-2015 development agenda. Based on their age, gender, country, and educational level, we can assess what children are prioritizing for their future.

Between July and August 2013, ChildFund Alliance conducted 6,499 one-on-one interviews with children aged 10-12 in 47 countries around the world, including developed and developing nations. As part of these interviews, children were asked to take the MY World survey.

Participants of My World by gender

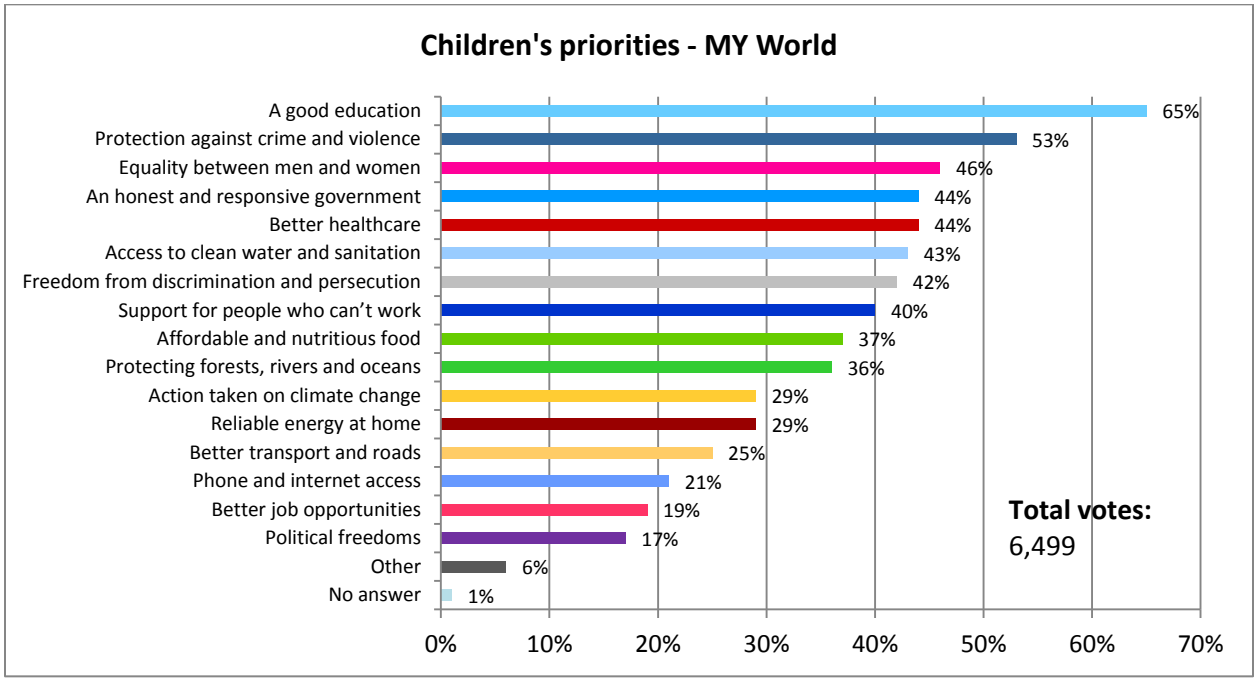


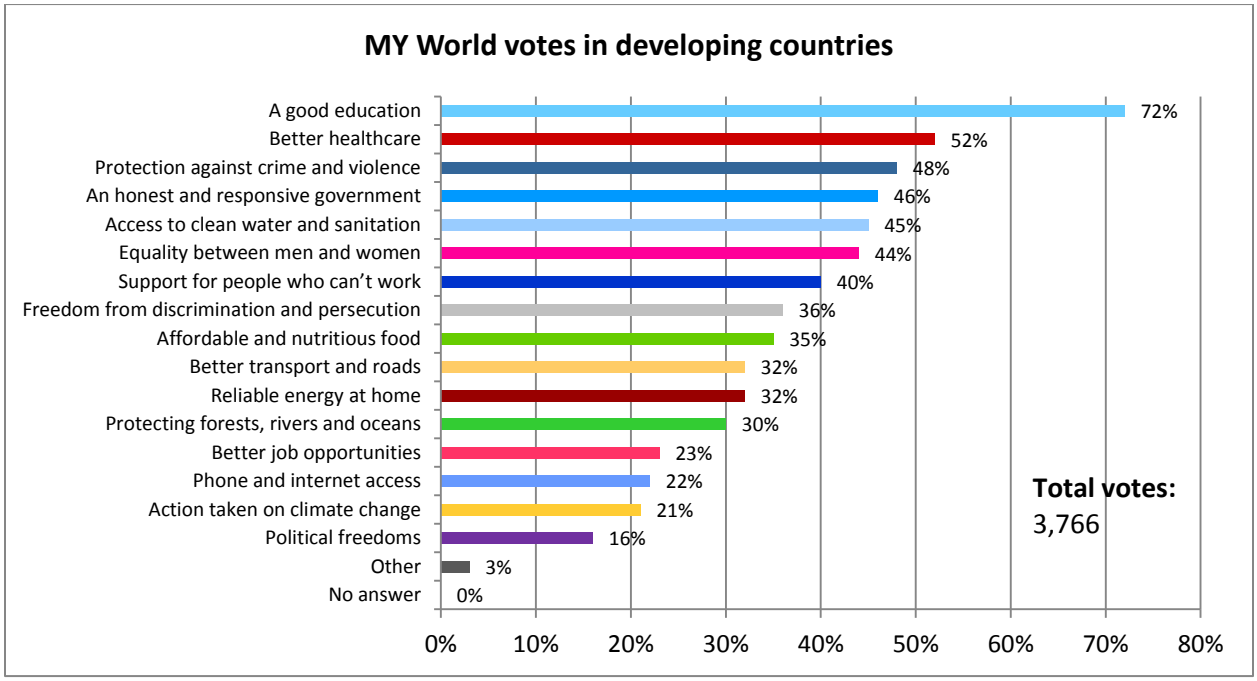
Proportion of My World votes between regions

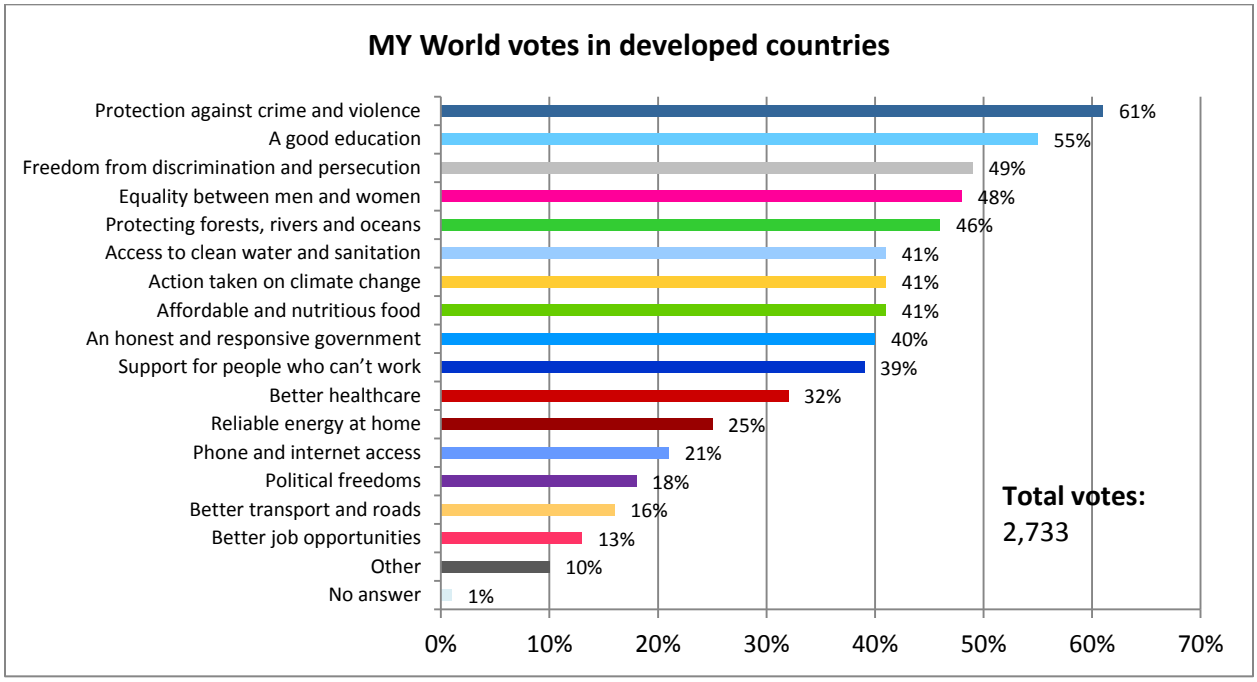


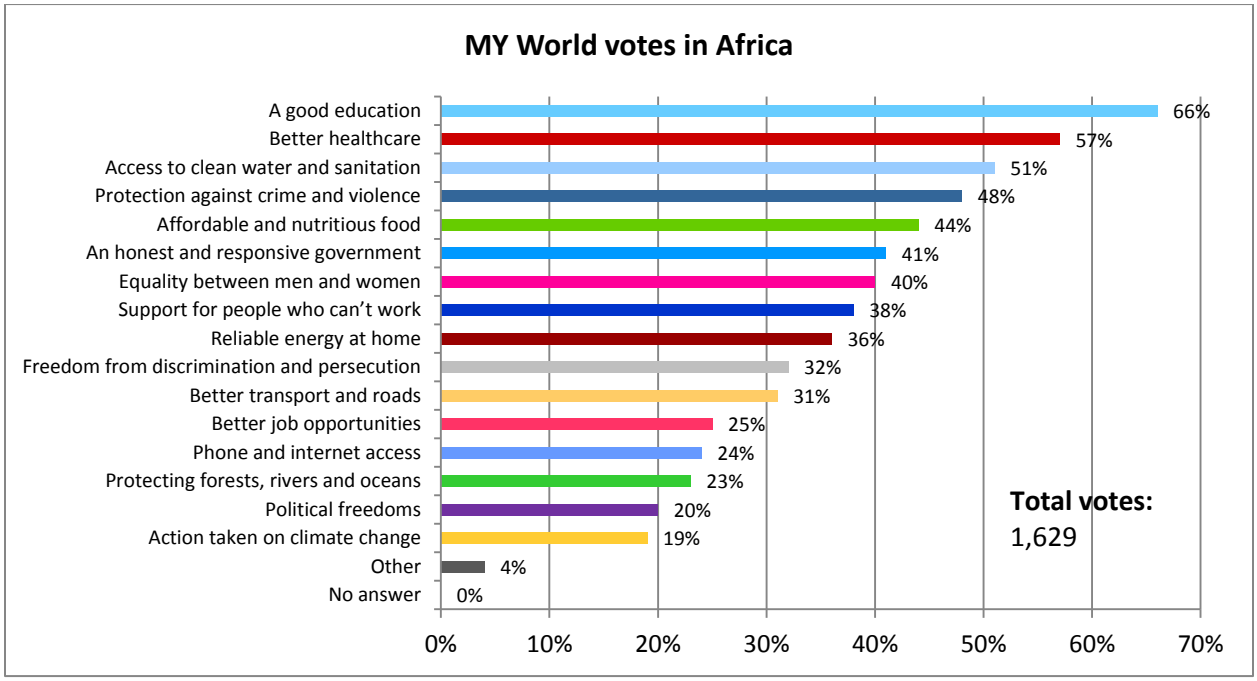
The following pages summarize the results of this exercise, illustrating what these 6,499 children aspire the next development priorities to be.

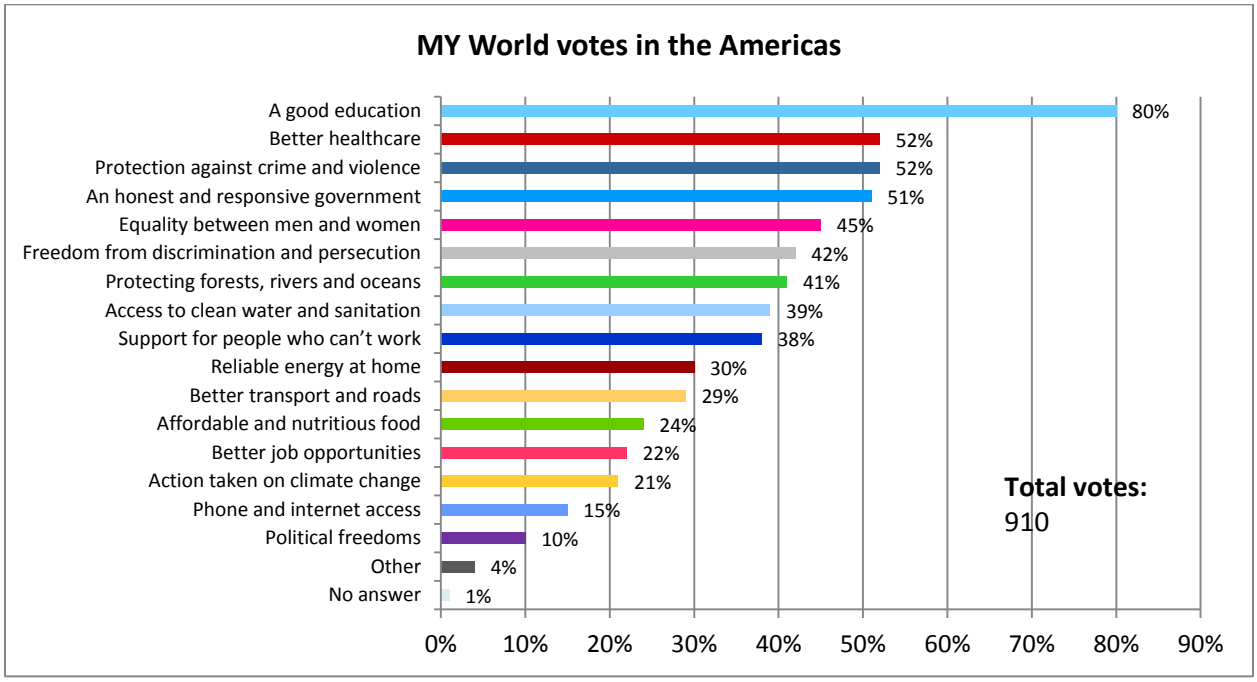
It is worth noting that protection against crime and violence was globally the second most voted priority for the post-2015 development agenda, with 3,465 votes (or 53% of the votes). Furthermore, protection against crime and violence seems to be a priority for both developing and developed countries.

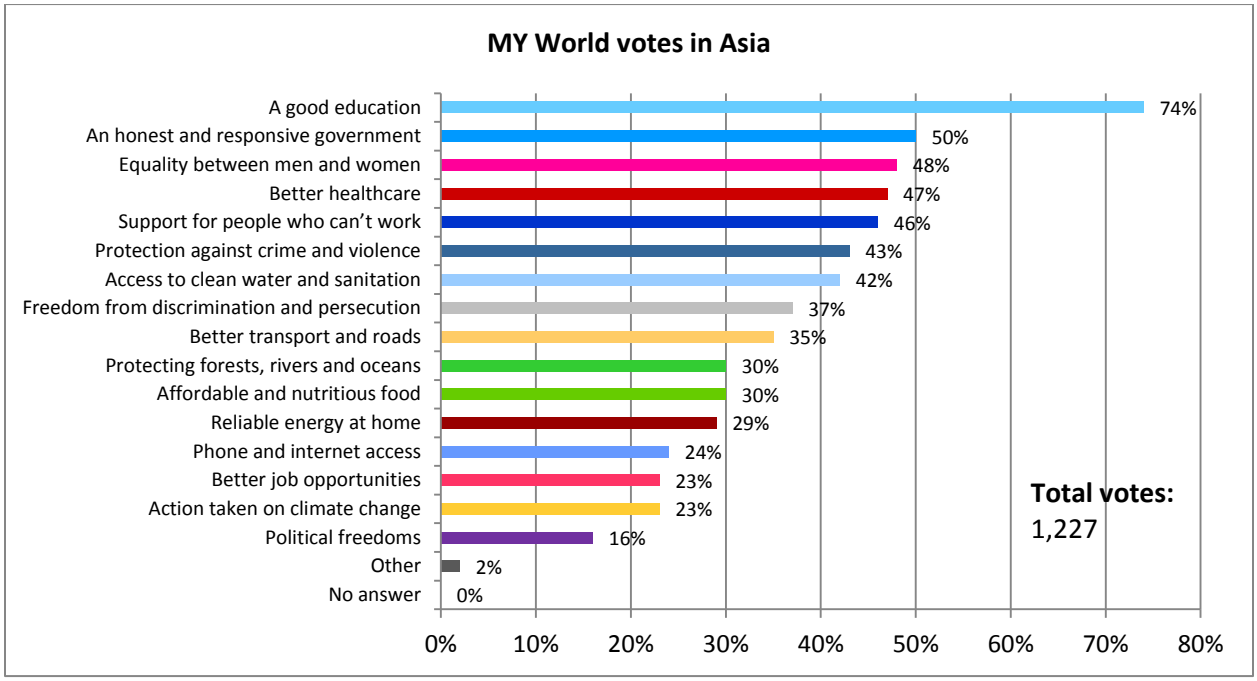

Children's priorities - MY World
A good education 65%
Protection against crime and violence 53%
Equality between men and women 46%
An honest and responsive government 44%
Better healthcare 44%
Access to clean water and sanitation 43%
Freedom from discrimination and persecution 42%
Support for people who can't work 40%
Affordable and nutritious food 37%
Protecting forests, rivers and oceans 36%
Action taken on climate change 29%
Reliable energy at home 29%
Better transport and roads 25%
Phone and internet access 21%
Better job opportunities 19%
Political freedoms 17%
Other 6%
No answer 1%
Total votes: 6,499
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%


MY World votes in developing countries
A good education 72%
Better healthcare 52%
Protection against crime and violence 48%
An honest and responsive government 46%
Access to clean water and sanitation 45%
Equality between men and women 44%
Support for people who can't work 40%
Freedom from discrimination and persecution 36%
Affordable and nutritious food 35%
Better transport and roads 32%
Reliable energy at home 32%
Protecting forests, rivers and oceans 30%
Better job opportunities 23%
Phone and internet access 22%
Action taken on climate change 21%
Political freedoms 16%
Other 3%
No answer 0%
Total votes: 3,766
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%


MY World votes in developed countries
Protection against crime and violence 61%
A good education 55%
Freedom from discrimination and persecution 49%
Equality between men and women 48%
Protecting forests, rivers and oceans 46%
Access to clean water and sanitation 41%
Action taken on climate change 41%
Affordable and nutritious food 41%
An honest and responsive government 40%
Support for people who can't work 39%
Better healthcare 32%
Reliable energy at home 25%
Phone and internet access 21%
Political freedoms 18%
Better transport and roads 16%
Better job opportunities 13%
Other 10%
No answer 1%
Total votes: 2,733
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%


MY World votes in Africa
A good education 66%
Better healthcare 57%
Access to clean water and sanitation 51%
Protection against crime and violence 48%
Affordable and nutritious food 44%
An honest and responsive government 41%
Equality between men and women 40%
Support for people who can't work 38%
Reliable energy at home 36%
Freedom from discrimination and persecution 32%
Better transport and roads 31%
Better job opportunities 25%
Phone and internet access 24%
Protecting forests, rivers and oceans 23%
Political freedoms 20%
Action taken on climate change 19%
Other 4%
No answer 0%
Total votes: 1,629
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%


MY World votes in the Americas
A good education 80%
Better healthcare 52%
Protection against crime and violence 52%
An honest and responsive government 51%
Equality between men and women 45%
Freedom from discrimination and persecution 42%
Protecting forests, rivers and oceans 41%
Access to clean water and sanitation 39%
Support for people who can't work 38%
Reliable energy at home 30%
Better transport and roads 29%
Affordable and nutritious food 24%
Better job opportunities 22%
Action taken on climate change 21%
Phone and internet access 15%
Political freedoms 10%
Other 4%
No answer 1%
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%
Total votes:
910


MY World votes in Asia
A good education 74%
An honest and responsive government 50%
Equality between men and women 48%
Better healthcare 47%
Support for people who can't work 46%
Protection against crime and violence 43%
Access to clean water and sanitation 42%
Freedom from discrimination and persecution 37%
Better transport and roads 35%
Protecting forests, rivers and oceans 30%
Affordable and nutritious food 30%
Reliable energy at home 29%
Phone and internet access 24%
Better job opportunities 23%
Action taken on climate change 23%
Political freedoms 16%
Other 2%
No answer 0%
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%
Total votes:
1,227

Annex 1: Questions for focus group discussions

Principal questions	Supporting questions
1. What makes you feel free?	• *What do you want your parents, school, and community to do or not to do for you to feel free?* • *What are the things you do not want to happen in your life?* • *What are the things you want to happen in your life?*
2. What makes you feel free from violence and exploitation?	• *Do you know what violence and exploitation is? What forms of violence have you experienced in your life? Have you ever witnessed violence and exploitation to your friends or peers?* • *What are the things that can be put in place to make you safe or make your whole environment safer?* • *Can you give an example of actions taken in your community or that you have experienced to tackle violence and exploitation, and that you think are good or have made you happier?* • *Can you suggest any idea to eliminate all forms of violence against children?*
3. What makes you feel free to take action to stop violence and exploitation?	• *Have you ever taken any steps or action to stop violence and exploitation? Could you share them with us? What difficulties did you encounter? What support did you get?* • *What do you expect to be in place for you to take action to stop violence and exploitation without any fear?* • *In what circumstances do you feel free to take action to stop violence and exploitation?*
4. What can world leaders do to free children from violence and exploitation?	• *Do you know what is going on at the international level regarding child protection?* • *Do you know what world leaders are doing to free children from violence and exploitation?* • *Can you tell us what world leaders can do that is effective at the national and local levels?*

5. What can adults do to free children from violence and exploitation?	• *Do adults who work with children inform children about violence and exploitation? Do they usually know what to do when there is violence and exploitation?* • *Can you describe what they do? And how they do it?* • *What do you expect from adults to free children from violence and exploitation?*
6. Are risks different for boys and girls? What are the risks for girls? What are the risks for boys? **Note:** Facilitators may choose to divide the group in two (boys and girls) to discuss this question.	
7. Is there anything else you would like to say about the protection of children from violence, exploitation and abuse?	

Annex 2: List of acronyms and coding explanation

List of acronyms

CAAF Children associated with armed forces, including children's association with gangs and other forms of involvement in armed conflicts.

CRC UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

HTP Harmful traditional practices, including child marriage, female genital mutilation and cutting, witchcraft rituals and other forms that compromise the development and education of the child and leave long lasting consequences and may result in disability or death and others.

MDGs Millennium Development Goals.

PHP Physical and humiliating punishment, including corporal punishment, and psychological and physical abuse.

What makes you feel free?

"A safe and secure environment"	Security in public spaces and communities.
"Being at home"	Children being with their families at home, in a protective and supporting setting.
"Being in school"	Schools being protective, safe and supporting settings.
"Exercising their right to participate"	Children being actively listened to and their opinions being taken into account, excluding all explicit references to child-led organizations.
"Exercising their right to play"	Cultural, leisure and recreational activities, as well as the provision of infrastructure for these purposes.
"Having access to education"	Attending school and receiving a safe and quality education.
"Having access to food"	Children and their families having access to food.
"Having access to healthcare"	Children having their right to health fulfilled.
"Having their rights respected and fulfilled"	Children's rights being respected and fulfilled, including references to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, but not to specific rights.
"Involvement of parents in protection"	Active engagement of children's parents in their lives, as a positive factor for their protection and well-being.
"Legislation against violence"	Existence of legislation against violence, including it being effectively enforced and implemented by local and national Governments; and adults and communities abiding by it.
"Perpetrators and offenders being punished"	Offenders and perpetrators of violence against and exploitation of children being punished.

What makes you feel free from violence and exploitation?

"Awareness raising on violence and exploitation"	Children, families and communities being aware of the effects and implications of violence and exploitation perpetrated against children.
"Being free from bullying"	Bullying by peers in schools and other settings.
"Being free from child labour"	All forms of child labour, including agricultural and domestic labour for both boys and girls.
"Being free from crime"	Criminal activity against children, including children as perpetrators.
"Being free from physical and humiliating punishment"	Physical and humiliating punishment, including corporal punishment and psychological abuse.
"Being free from sexual violence"	Sexual violence against boys and girls, including molestation, rape and other forms.
"Being safe at home"	Homes as settings where children feel free from violence and exploitation, and simultaneously as settings where these violations occur.
"Being safe at school"	Schools as settings where children feel free from violence and exploitation, and simultaneously as settings where these violations occur.
"Being safe in their communities"	Communities as environments where children feel free from violence and exploitation, and simultaneously as environments where these violations occur.
"Being subject to appropriate care"	Appropriate care.
"Engaging in children's clubs and P2P"	Engagement in child-led organizations, such as children's clubs and parliaments, and other child-to-child structures.
"Engaging in rights education"	Education about children's rights, for both adults and children.
"Exercising their right to participate"	Children being actively listened to and their opinions being taken into account, excluding all explicit references to child-led organizations.
"Having access to education"	Attending school and receiving a safe and quality education.
"Having access to healthcare"	Children having their right to health fulfilled.
"Involvement of parents in protection"	Active engagement of children's parents in their lives, as a positive factor for their protection and well-being.
"Legislation against violence"	Existence of legislation against violence, including it being effectively enforced and implemented by local and national Governments; and adults and communities abiding by it.
"Not being subject to discrimination"	Non-discrimination on the basis of disabilities, gender and other forms.

"Perpetrators and offenders being punished"	Offenders and perpetrators of violence against and exploitation of children being punished.

What makes you feel free to take action to stop violence and exploitation?

"Actions and initiatives at the local level"	Actions and initiatives by local authorities and Governments, including at the community level.
"Actors having defined and established roles"	Actors, including children, parents and the authorities, having defined roles in the protection of children from violence and exploitation, and being aware of them.
"Awareness raising on violence and exploitation"	Children, families and communities being aware of the effects and implications of violence and exploitation perpetrated against children.
"Being safe at school"	Schools as settings where children feel free from violence and exploitation, and simultaneously as settings where these violations occur.
"Being safe in their communities"	Communities as environments where children feel free from violence and exploitation, and simultaneously as environments where these violations occur.
"Engaging in children's clubs and P2P"	Engagement in child-led organizations, such as children's clubs and parliaments, and other child-to-child structures.
"Engaging in rights education"	Education about children's rights, for both adults and children.
"Exercising their right to participate"	Children being actively listened to and their opinions being taken into account, excluding all explicit references to child-led organizations.
"Exercising their right to play"	Cultural, leisure and recreational activities, as well as the provision of infrastructure for these purposes.
"Having access to support units"	Support units in place and functioning, for children and their families.
"Involvement of parents in protection"	Active engagement of children's parents in their lives, as a positive factor for their protection and well-being.
"Legislation against violence"	Existence of legislation against violence, including it being effectively enforced and implemented by local and national Governments; and adults and communities abiding by it.
"Not being subject to discrimination"	Non-discrimination on the basis of disabilities, gender and other forms.
"Perpetrators and offenders being punished"	Offenders and perpetrators of violence against and exploitation of children being punished.

What can world leaders do to free children from violence and exploitation?

"Address poverty"	Actions to address poverty in all its forms, including the provision of energy and water and sanitation services, but excluding food and healthcare.
"Create and enforce legislation against violence"	Creation, enforcement and implementation of legislation and policies to prevent and address violence against and exploitation of children.
"Create institutions"	Creation of institutions that provide appropriate care for those children who need it.
"Create or enhance child protection systems"	Creation or enhancement of child protection systems.
"Create or enhance support units"	Creation or enhancement of support units for children and their families.
"Engage with media and ICTs"	Engagement with the media and use of information and communications technologies to prevent and address violence against and exploitation of children.
"Enhance safety and security"	Actions to make communities, villages and cities safer places.
"Guarantee access to education"	Actions to guarantee children's access to safe and quality education.
"Guarantee access to food"	Actions to ensure children and their families have access to food.
"Guarantee children's rights"	Children's rights being respected and fulfilled, including references to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, but not to specific rights.
"Promote or support actions at the local level"	Support for actions and initiatives by local authorities and Governments, including at the community level.
"Punish offenders and perpetrators"	Offenders and perpetrators of violence against and exploitation of children being punished.
"Raise awareness on violence and exploitation"	Actions to create awareness of the effects and implications of violence and exploitation perpetrated against children.
"Support and enhance child participation"	Actions for children to be actively listened to and for their opinions being taken into account, excluding all explicit references to child-led organizations.
"Support and enhance children's clubs and P2P"	Actions to support engagement in child-led organizations, such as children's clubs and parliaments, and other child-to-child structures.
"Support rights education"	Actions to support education about children's rights, for both adults and children.

What can adults do to free children from violence and exploitation?

"Address sexual violence"	Sexual violence against boys and girls, including molestation, rape and other forms.
"Address child labour"	All forms of child labour, including agricultural and domestic labour for both boys and girls.
"Create or enhance support units"	Support units in place and functioning, for children and their families.
"Enforce legislation against violence"	Existence of legislation against violence, including it being effectively enforced and implemented by local and national Governments; and adults and communities abiding by it.
"Engage with media and ICTs"	Engagement with the media and use of information and communications technologies to prevent and address violence against and exploitation of children.
"Guarantee access to education"	Actions to guarantee children's access to quality education.
"Guarantee access to healthcare"	Actions to guarantee children's right to health, including caring for them when they are ill.
"Promote or support actions at the local level"	Support for actions and initiatives by local authorities and Governments, including at the community level.
"Punish offenders and perpetrators"	Offenders and perpetrators of violence against and exploitation of children being punished.
"Raise awareness on violence and exploitation"	Actions to create awareness of the effects and implications of violence and exploitation perpetrated against children.
"Respect children's rights"	Children's rights being respected and fulfilled, including references to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, but not to specific rights.
"Stop physical and humiliating punishment"	Physical and humiliating punishment, including corporal punishment and psychological abuse.
"Support and engage in rights education"	Education about children's rights, for both adults and children.
"Support and enhance child participation"	Children being actively listened to and their opinions being taken into account, excluding all explicit references to child-led organizations.
"Support parental involvement in protection"	Active engagement of children's parents in their lives, as a positive factor for their protection and well-being.

What are the risks that children face? Are they different for boys and girls? Are risks different for boys and girls? What are the risks for girls? What are the risks for boys?

"Abduction"	Abduction and kidnapping.
"Bullying"	Bullying by peers in schools and other settings.
"Child labour"	All forms of child labour, including agricultural and domestic labour for both boys and girls.
"Children associated with armed conflict and gangs"	Association of children with armed forces and gangs, as well as other forms of involvement in armed conflicts.
"Commercial sexual exploitation"	Commercial sexual exploitation, such as male and female prostitution, and other forms.
"Harmful traditional practices"	Harmful and traditional practices that affect both boys and girls, including child marriage, female genital mutilation and cutting, witchcraft rituals and others.
"Lack of appropriate care for children"	Lack of appropriate care.
"Orphan and vulnerable children"	Orphans and other vulnerable children who are more exposed to risks than their peers.
"Physical and humiliating punishment"	Physical and humiliating punishment, on the part of parents, teachers and other adults.
"Psycho-social violence"	Psycho-social violence, such as verbal abuse, on the part of parents, teachers and other adults.
"Sexual violence"	Sexual violence that affect both boys and girls, at home, school and their communities, on the part of peers, parents, teachers and other adults, including molestation, rape and other forms.
"Trafficking"	Child trafficking across and within borders, including trafficking for the purpose of harvesting children's organs.

Annex 3: Child-friendly version of MY World survey

- Everyone who is old enough should be able to vote, and people should be allowed to say what they think without worrying about something bad happening to them.
- There should be support for people who cannot work.
- Healthcare should be better (for example, health centres, doctors and nurses).
- We should do more to protect the earth.
- Everyone should be safe from crimes and also from violence.
- Men and women, boys and girls should not be treated differently.
- Everyone should have a good education.
- The forests, rivers and oceans should be safe from harm.
- Everyone should have clean water and a safe place to go to the bathroom (for example, a toilet or latrine).
- Everyone should be treated the same and nobody should be treated badly.
- There should be better jobs for people.
- Governments should be honest and meet the needs of the people.
- There should be roads and transportation so everyone can travel (for example, buses).
- Everyone should have power at their home (for example, for lights and cooking).
- Everyone should be able to use phones and the internet.
- Everyone should have food that is good and not too expensive.
- Suggest your own priority

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