



UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**The progress in
policies to end violence
against children**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Written by Magdalena Aguilar and Raša Sekulović based on data analysis by Andy Guth and Edith Nyabicha

Many thanks to World Vision colleagues for their guidance and contributions to the final report: Carol Mweemba, Edith Nyabicha, Tamara Tutnjevic, Kate Shaw and Brikena Zogaj.

Copyediting: Katie Fike

Design: Diana De León

Please contact tamara_tutnjevic@wvi.org with any queries or feedback on the report.

Cover photograph: ©Jon Warren/World Vision

Back cover photograph: ©Saw Moo Kale/World Vision

© World Vision International 2024. All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced in any form, except for brief excerpts in reviews, without prior permission of the publisher.

World Vision International would appreciate receiving details of any use made of this material in training and research or in programme design, implementation, or evaluation.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
WHAT WAS ANALYSED, AND HOW?	8
Methodology And Analytical Framework	8
Limitations	9
ANALYSIS: Unfinished business to end violence against children	10
1. Forbid – to flourish and thrive	10
2. Prevent – to protect	14
3. Report – to break the silence	18
4. Respond – to rescue and recover	21
5. Fund – to function	24
6. Manage data – to act with knowledge	26
7. Accountability – to build trust	28
8. Challenge perceptions – to transform the norms	30
RECOMMENDATIONS	32
Annex 1: List of policy indicators	35
Annex 2: Full rubric for Forbid: to Flourish and Thrive	38



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite progress made in preventing and eliminating different forms of violence against children over the past few decades, half of all children – **1 billion in total**¹ – still suffer some form of violence each year. An even higher proportion of the youngest and most vulnerable children – nearly 3 in 4 children aged 2 to 4 years – regularly experience physical punishment and/or psychological violence at the hands of parents and caregivers.² As children get older, school can be another source of danger: **246 million** girls and boys are exposed to violence in and around schools.³ Another **160 million children** are engaged in child labour,⁴ and their numbers are increasing as a result of climate change.⁵ Each year, around **12 million girls** are married during their childhood; at the current rate, it will take 300 years to eliminate child marriage.⁶

The causes of violence against children are many and are often intertwined. Poverty and economic distress, harmful traditions and norms, conflict and displacement, and gender inequality are among the main drivers of violence against children. Violence often remains under-reported and hidden, making the issue invisible to decision-makers and the public alike.

Failing to prevent and effectively respond to violence against children can have life-long **consequences** on the health, well-being, and ability of children to have meaningful relationships. These effects, in turn, can perpetuate the cycle of violence for generations to come. And the devastating impact of violence does not stop at an individual level: it contaminates communities and countries, harming social and economic development. The financial impact of physical, psychological, and sexual violence against children to the global economy comes with a hefty price tag of up to **US\$7 trillion**.⁷ The consequences of violence amount to considerable direct and indirect costs that erode economic development, increase instability, and prolong inequality.

In recognition of the scope and gravity of the problem, governments across the world have committed to end violence against children in all its forms by ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This commitment was further reinforced in 2015 when all United Nations (UN) members adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), which included specific targets to end all

forms of violence against children by 2030. However, the progress in achieving these commitments has been uneven and insufficient.

This report builds on World Vision's 2019 report, [Small Cracks, Big Gaps](#), which highlighted how lack of commitment from *governments allows violence against children to persist*. This new report aims to shed light on the current state of policy commitments to end violence against children in 21 randomly selected countries. Since not all the same countries were reviewed in both 2019 and 2024, this report is not a representative account of progress in reviewed countries over the past five years. Wherever possible, the results of this assessment were contrasted with the World Health Organization's (WHO) *Global Status Report on Preventing Violence Against Children 2020*.⁸

There has been some notable progress worth celebrating since 2019. For example, **Zambia** has improved its legal provisions to forbid all forms of physical and psychological violence against children in any setting by including adequate provisions in the legal framework adopted in 2022 (Children's Code Act). **Chile's** Civil Marriage Law was changed in 2022, forbidding any marriage below the age of 18 for both girls and boys. And the Democratic Republic of the Congo (**DRC**) identified mandatory provisions for reporting violence against children by any individual citizen, with associated penalties for not reporting.

Despite progress achieved, the overall situation has remained more or less the same. Over the last nine years, there have been improvements in legislation and policies to end violence against children, but a total ban on all forms of violence has been achieved in only a few countries. Furthermore, the legislation still lags behind on addressing the ever-increasing risks of online violence and exploitation. There is a growing understanding and implementation of proven evidence-based strategies to end violence against children. However, although these interventions **reduce violence against children when they are** implemented, the current scale and reach of these interventions has not been sufficient



©Claudia Martinez Perez/World Vision

to affect the global (or even national) picture. **This failure is** especially relevant given the significant setbacks in addressing violence in childhood and the increased risks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, growing conflict, and economic insecurity.

The current report, *Unfinished Business, the legal progress to ending violence against children*, comes just a few months before the first-ever Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children takes place in November 2024. This report acknowledges the existing gaps in legal systems, but shifts the focus towards offering solutions to prevent and address them. It calls for more ambitious, consolidated, and integrated efforts and investments to end violence against children, aiming to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) and the broader 2030 Agenda.

What is violence against children?

Violence against children includes all forms of violence against people aged under 18 years, whether perpetrated by parents or other caregivers, peers, or strangers. It can include physical, sexual, and emotional violence as well as neglect and witnessing violence. Harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting, are also different types of gender-based violence. Violence is also closely linked with different forms of exploitation, including child labour, commercial sexual exploitation, and child trafficking.⁹

Key Findings



1. FORBID – TO FLOURISH AND THRIVE

Enact and enforce laws that prohibit all forms of violence against children in all settings.

Despite progress in enacting legislation and policies to protect children from different forms of violence, the total ban is still an elusive category. Both laws and regulatory frameworks still include numerous and contradictory exceptions. The exceptions undermine progressive application of legal and policy measures, leaving considerable space for ambiguities and misinterpretations. They weaken legal protection and allow specific forms of violence to continue. Urgent action is required to address and remove these exceptions and ensure that these loopholes do not perpetuate and legitimise harm.

2. PREVENT – TO PROTECT



Implement evidence-based programmes and initiatives to prevent violence against children.

Although preventive services and mechanisms are clearly articulated by different legal and regulatory frameworks in several countries, their enforcement remains irregular, under-resourced or entirely absent. Key basic services mandated to create protective environments around children are often fragmented and disconnected, lacking an effective coordination mechanism to ensure their joint efforts, which makes some of the settings where children are expected to learn and thrive dangerous and unsafe. There is a dire need to establish and diversify child-centred and gender-sensitive services to prevent escalation of violence and create opportunities for children to learn how to better protect themselves.



3. REPORT – TO BREAK THE SILENCE

Establish clear reporting protocols and child-friendly mechanisms for reporting violence.

Even though reporting, referral pathways and related supporting mechanisms have been defined in many regulatory frameworks, their implementation heavily depends on availability and access to effective services which are currently lacking. Since children are rarely involved in shaping reporting mechanisms, they are often unaware of the service's existence and lack trust in its efficiency and confidentiality. Lack of coordination between different essential services (including education and health) further compromises a holistic and child-centred approach in responding effectively to the issues. Reporting channels and referral pathways are rarely gender-sensitive, which prevents many children from reporting.



4. RESPOND – TO RESCUE AND RECOVER

Provide government services and referrals to address cases of violence against children.

The key barrier to provision of timely and effective response services is reflected in their fragmented actions, further aggravated by lack of coordination and a weak focus on child-centred approaches to service delivery. Risks of repeated trauma persist in the absence of unified child-centred services that concentrate their efforts on the well-being of the child with a survivor-centred approach. Coordination and collaboration need to be stepped up to deliver services in a holistic and child-sensitive manner, to ensure timely and relevant assistance.



5. FUND – TO FUNCTION

Develop action plans with identified costs, funding sources, and transparent expenditure data.

Clear and transparent budgetary commitments related to children's overall well-being and rights are scattered, fragmented, and in some cases non-existent.



6. MANAGE DATA – TO ACT WITH KNOWLEDGE

Collect data through centralised information systems and conduct regular surveys on violence against children.

Having a centralised data system such as national database that is updated on a regular basis is crucial to uncover patterns that can be masked by larger, aggregated data. Overall, while some countries show efforts in collecting disaggregated data on violence against children on a regular basis, in most countries, data is infrequently collected, incomplete, and insufficiently disaggregated to inform practice and/or policy.



7. BE ACCOUNTABLE – TO BUILD TRUST

Ensure governments take responsibility for their commitments and allow participation in decision-making.

Slow progress has been observed on the development of comprehensive, funded, and current national action plans (NAPs). Where NAPs are in place, in most cases, they do not include specific strategies and/or actions to address major forms of violence against children. Creating specific independent institutions mandated to defend the rights of the children continues to be a point for attention and consideration.



8. CHALLENGE PERCEPTIONS – TO TRANSFORM THE NORMS

Conduct public awareness campaigns to change societal norms and perceptions regarding violence against children.

Governments have, in most cases, not taken comprehensive steps to prevent violence against children by challenging perceptions and behaviours. Sustained strategic approaches with dedicated funding for public awareness campaigns to end violence against children, both at national and local levels, is needed and continues to be a challenge.

Recommendations

The analysis points to an urgent need for increased political will, resources, and innovative approaches to end violence against children. Governments must accelerate their efforts, build new partnerships, and sustain commitment to protect children now.

While progress made is acknowledged and encouraged, there is much work to be done.

World Vision calls on all governments to step up their efforts to end violence against children by taking the following seven actions:



Enact laws that protect all children from violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect, and harmful practices in all contexts, and eliminate any legal exceptions that justify or tolerate violence against children.



Scale up the implementation of evidence-based approaches, such as those featured in the INSPIRE approach,¹⁰ to effectively prevent violence against children, and ensure the existence of child-friendly referral mechanisms and protection services, including mental health and psychosocial support and access to justice. Ensure that these services are implemented through strong national child protection systems.



Enhance data systems and capacity for data collection, use, and management to understand the prevalence of different forms of violence, strengthen evidence for increased investments, and identify emerging trends and forms of violence.



Increase funding and budget transparency by ensuring child-centred budgets and increased allocation of funding for child protection systems, as well as for the provision of integrated services for children.



Strengthen multi-sectoral and collaborative approaches and data sharing to address interrelated aspects of violence against girls and boys and to integrate protective measures throughout government policies and programmes.



Increase government delivery of community education and awareness campaigns in collaboration with key actors, such as faith-based leaders, to challenge negative perceptions and transform harmful traditions, norms, and behaviours.



Establish and formalise mechanisms for meaningful child participation in the design of policies and decisions that affect them and implement robust accountability mechanisms to ensure children's feedback and perspectives are acted upon, with transparent processes for monitoring and evaluating the impact of their participation.

WHAT WAS ANALYSED, AND HOW?

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This report is the sequel to *Small Cracks, Big Gaps* (2019), and it builds on the original methodology while weaving in new components and approaches. It identifies and celebrates governments achieving most of the recommended standards – but also highlights where individual governments and the international community must be more ambitious in drafting and implementing legislation as well as efficient and effective strategies to protect children from harm.

This report reviews the legal, policy, and planning progress of 21 countries, using a set of proxy policy

indicators. These indicators reflect the general principles and components of the UNCRC, are based on World Vision's child protection systems approach,¹¹ and reflect government public policy standards. The indicators also incorporate elements of evidence-based strategies to end violence against children, such as INSPIRE.¹²

Eight critical areas of policy action to end violence against children emerged from these indicators, expanding the original areas by linking them to intended outcomes:



1. **FORBID – to flourish and thrive:** Prohibit all forms of violence against children in all settings, clearly and completely in law and regulation.



2. **PREVENT – to protect:** Prevent violence against children through evidence-based programmes and initiatives that respond to trends and cases emerging in country data.



3. **REPORT – to break the silence:** Report cases of violence against children through clear responsibility and protocols for service providers and citizens, as well as child-friendly reporting mechanisms at the local level.



4. **RESPOND – to rescue and recover:** Respond to cases of violence against children through government services and referrals.



5. **FUND – to function:** Create action plans with clear costs, identified funding sources, and transparent expenditure data at national and sub-national levels.



6. **MANAGE DATA – to act with knowledge:** Collect data through centralised information systems and conduct regular population surveys on violence against children.



7. **BE ACCOUNTABLE – to build trust:** Take responsibility for commitments and allow citizens and children to participate in decision-making.



8. **CHALLENGE perceptions – to transform the norms:** Tackling perceptions through public awareness campaigns owned by the government, encompassing local activities led by service providers and professionals at the community level.

This 2024 report shows progress made in these eight critical areas and sheds light on where there is unfinished business. Progress in each area, or lack thereof, is presented in percentages, and analysed in relation to international standards. Lastly, each priority area also includes key finding(s), which relate to the recommendation section. The recommendations suggest specific interventions and/or strategies to respond to key findings from the analysis.

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



LIMITATIONS

Countries were randomly selected for review in this report, with varied levels of prevalence of violence against children and differing levels of commitment to eradication. Countries were not necessarily representative of a larger group but were based on locations where World Vision works and was able to support localised analysis and direct consultation with government and local actors. Only a few countries experiencing a high degree of conflict or humanitarian crises¹³ were included, leaving some gaps in the analysis.

While the review assessed legal, regulatory, and policy-level actions of governments, it did not assess the **quality of implementation** of these actions. However, implementation is vital for real change, which will not be possible if political will to enshrine commitments into fundamental laws for protecting children is absent.

Additional limitations include:

- **Children were not consulted** for their own opinions on child-sensitive policies and laws.
- **Violence/safety online** and other emerging forms of violence against children were not included in the analysis, although there is some evidence that progress is being made in different parts of the world adopting relevant policies and laws.
- **The significant influence of plural legal systems on national systems** and the fact that in many countries, traditional and religious laws often shape national legislation and even replace it in implementation, was not considered in the methodology.

ANALYSIS: Unfinished business to end violence against children

1. Forbid – to flourish and thrive

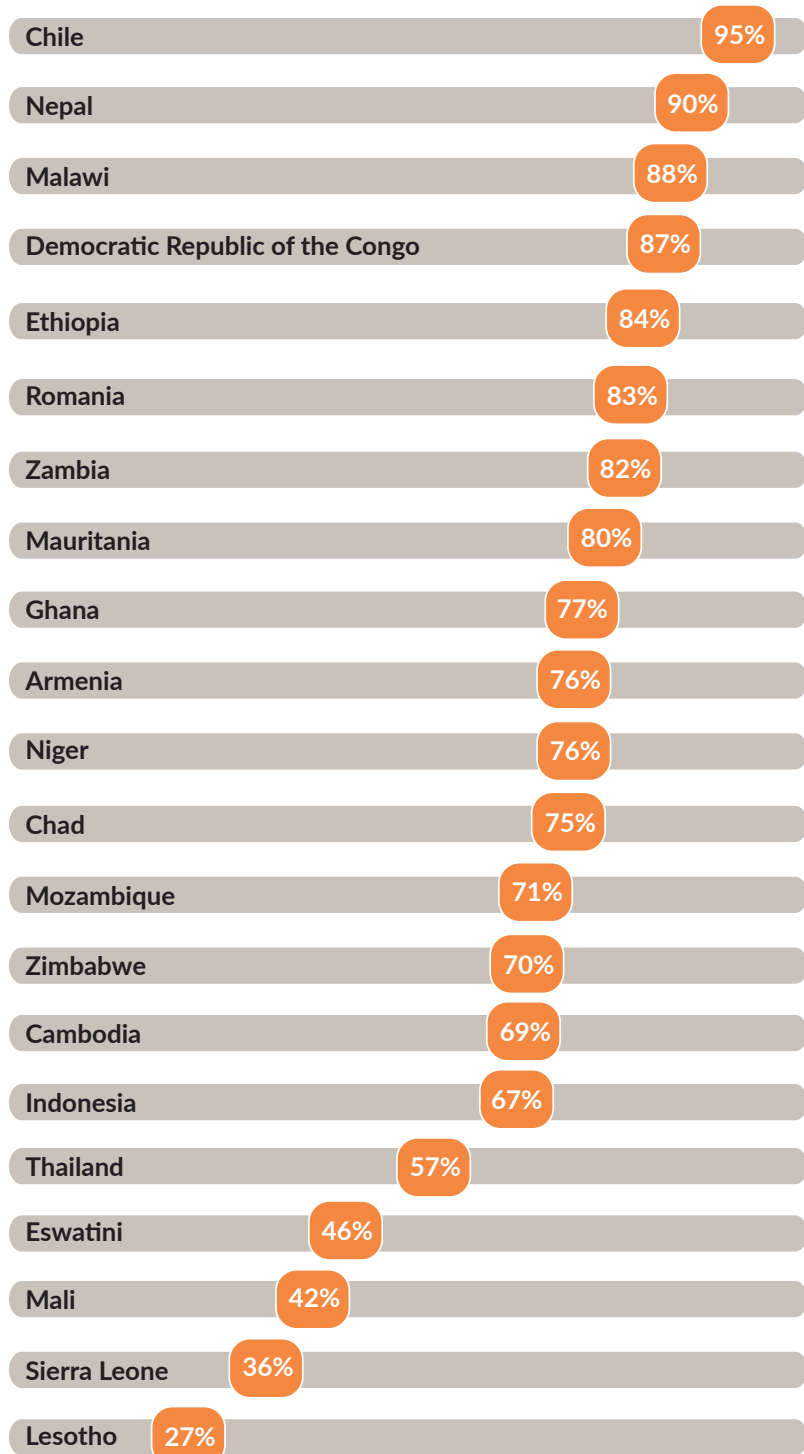
Laws and supporting regulatory frameworks create a foundation and guide actions and measures to prevent and respond to every form of violence against children. Governments must forbid all forms of physical and psychological violence, sexual violence, child labour, child marriage, neglect, and where applicable, female genital mutilation. Laws are the backbone of child protection systems, holding and uniting all the other components and functions towards impactful outcomes.¹⁴

The absence of child-sensitive, inclusive, and transformative laws reinforces the culture of silence and social acceptance of violence in its many shapes and forms. Laws need to be holistic and to encompass all causal factors driving the dynamics behind violence against children.

The assessment has identified several trends regarding the prohibition of all forms of violence against children. Some countries, such as Chile, Indonesia, and Zambia, have implemented complete prohibitions, though enforcement remains inconsistent.

In **Chile**, children are protected from all forms of violence in any setting (home, schools, alternative care, penal system) under the general provisions of Law No. 21.430 (On Guarantees and Comprehensive Protection, Article 36), Law No. 20.066 (On Domestic Violence)¹⁵, Penal Code, General Education Law (Article 15), Law No. 20.084 (On Juvenile Criminal Responsibility and Its Regulations). **Indonesia**'s current law forbids all

LEGAL PROGRESS TO FORBID VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN*



*Please see Annex 1 for the full rubric against which countries were evaluated.

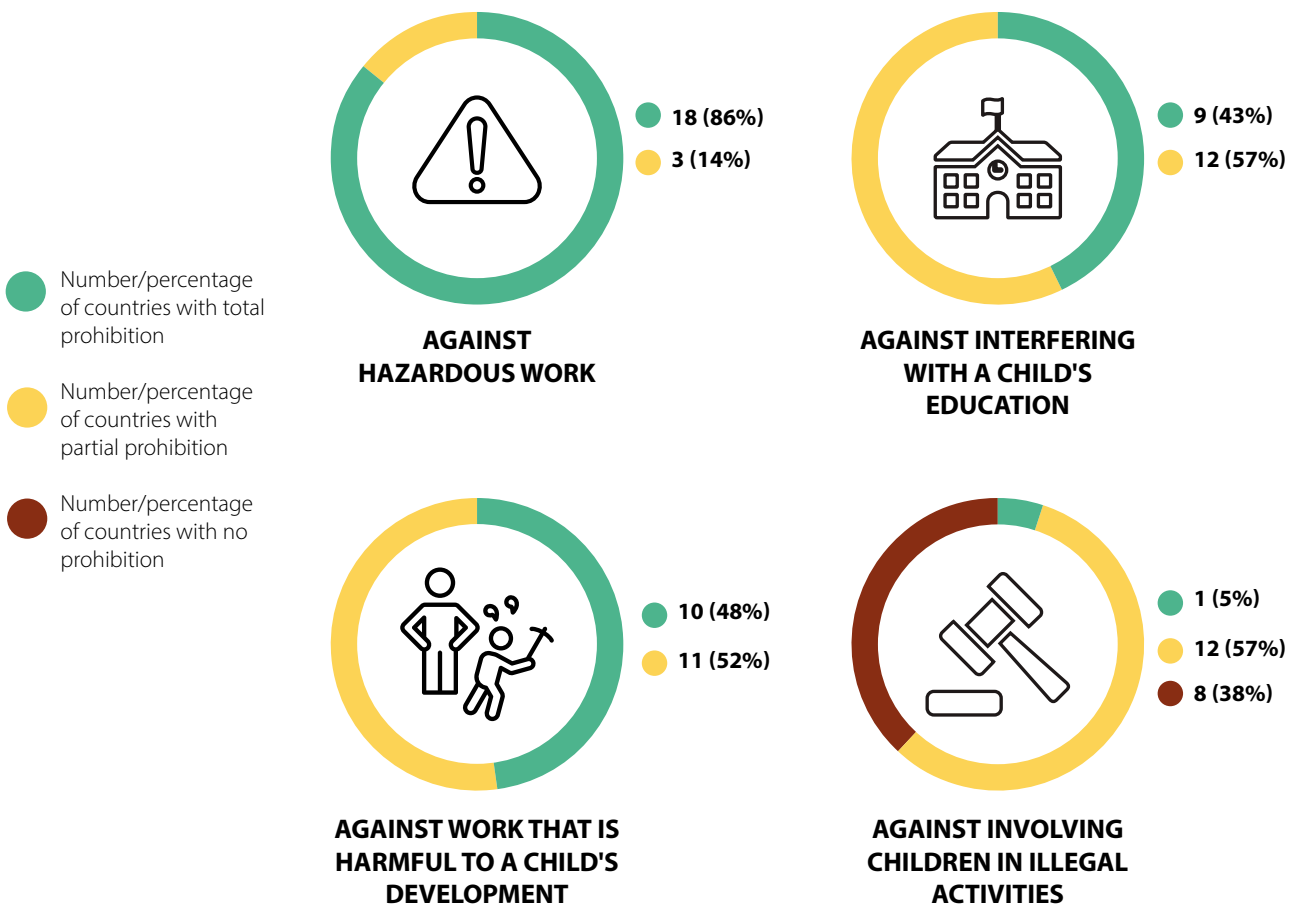
forms of violence against children in any setting. On sexual violence, Indonesia’s laws align with international standards and forbid sexual abuse and violence against children, commercial sexual exploitation, and sexual exploitation of children for prostitution. The laws concerning digital information and electronic communications also forbid child pornography online.

All of the participating countries have defined child trafficking as a criminal offence and have (with only one exception, Ghana) also criminalised the use of children for prostitution.¹⁶ **Similarly, child sexual abuse material has been defined as a criminal offence** (with one exception, Lesotho), including possession and distribution by any means. **The majority of the countries** (17 out of 21) have properly defined unlawful sexual activity involving children in their legal framework.

Legislation on child labour

It is encouraging to note that **all countries have ratified the International Labour Organization’s Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138); Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182); and Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29).** However, not all countries have fully banned child labour in all its forms.

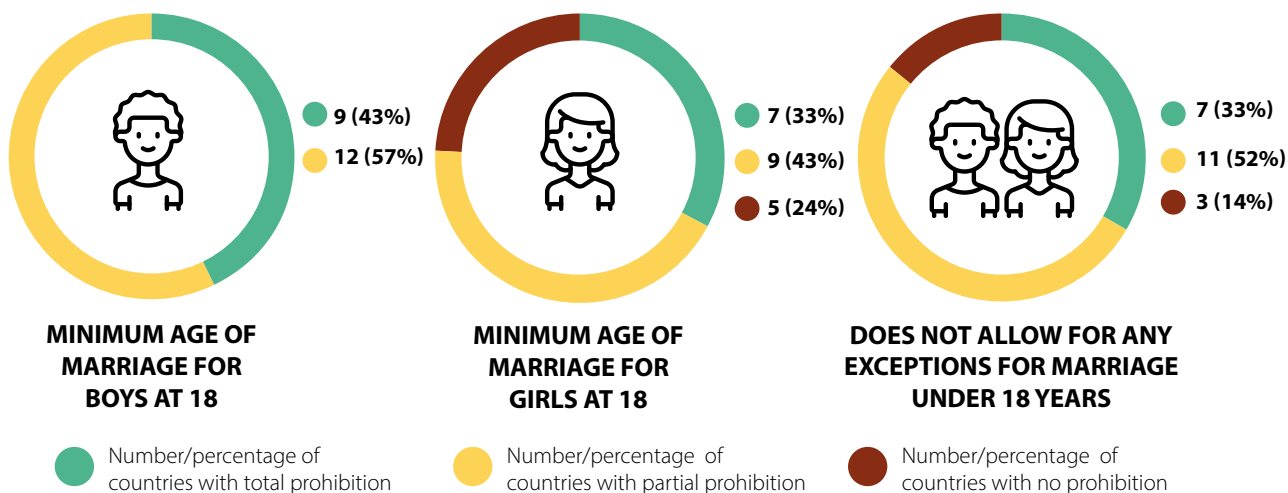
Legislation on child labour



Legislation on child marriage

The ‘gold standard’ recommended by UNCRC is having a minimum age of marriage of 18 years old, for both girls and boys, without any exceptions that would potentially erode this legal provision. The assessment shows that while some countries follow the UNCRC recommendation of setting 18 as the minimum age for marriage without exceptions, others allow for earlier marriages with consent, or have different minimum ages for girls and boys. Thailand stands out with a unique approach, setting the minimum age for marriage at 17 for both genders.

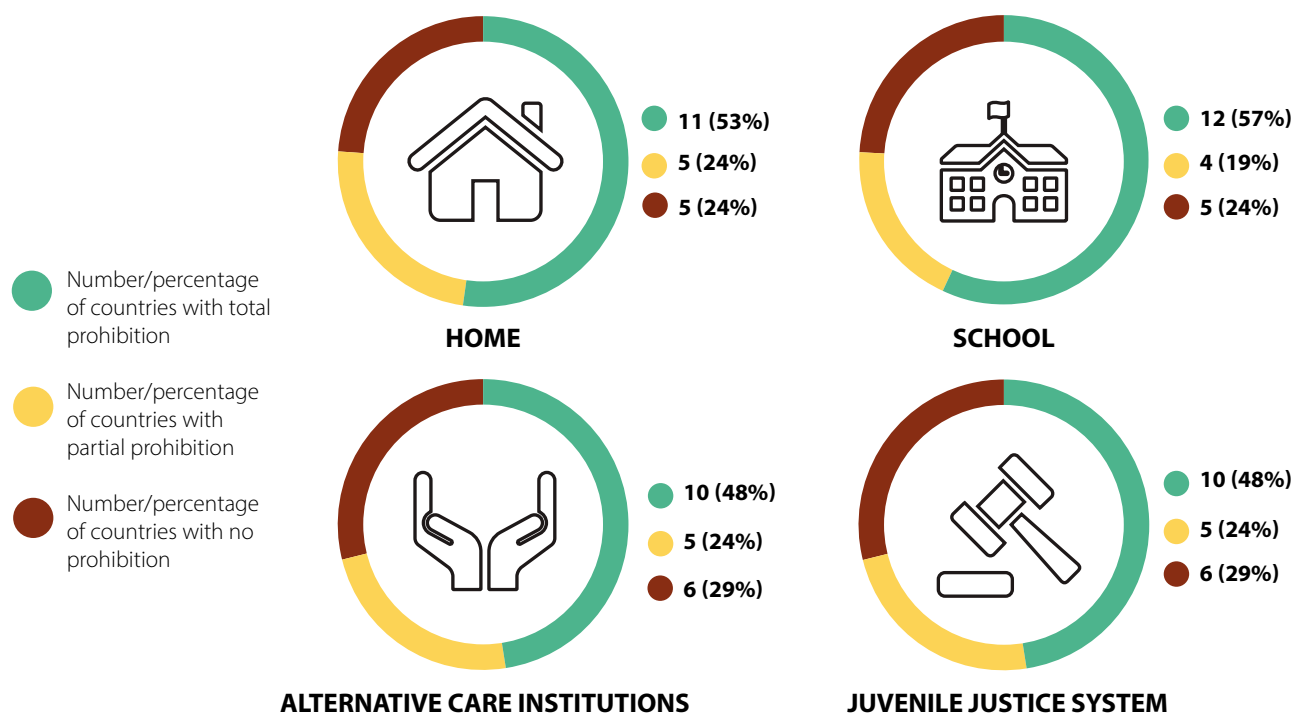
Child marriage



Legislation on physical or corporal punishment

While many countries have generally forbidden violence against children under various laws and legal frameworks¹⁷ **most of the sampled countries did not include provisions to forbid physical or corporal punishment.** Exceptions for home settings seem to be due to a common approach of non-interference within the private family domain, thus exacerbating the myth of ‘the untouchable home’.

Legislation forbidding physical or corporal punishment against children in all settings



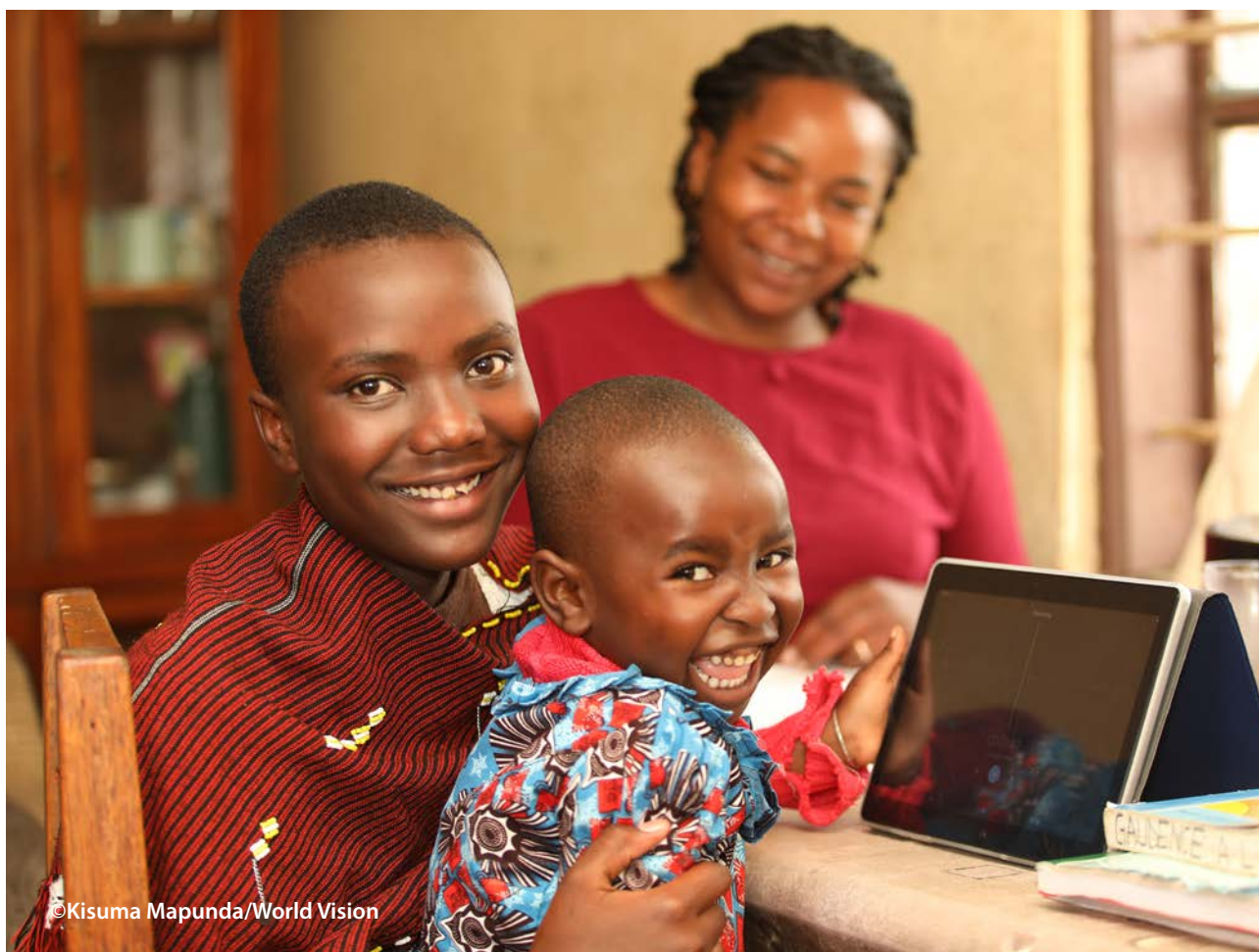
Additionally, although most laws are in place, they often lack child-friendly and gender-sensitive provisions. Furthermore, while laws exist, affirmative actions to protect and support the most marginalised and vulnerable are often insufficient.¹⁸

No exceptions

There are instances of partial prohibitions with fragmented and sometimes contradictory regulatory frameworks. **Any exception, no matter how small, allows violence to persist and continue legitimising what should be unacceptable and illegitimate.** For example, **Ghana's** Children's Act (1998) allows for corporal punishment by caregivers and guardians at home, in schools, in alternative care and in penal institutions for 'justifiable correction' (there is no clear definition of 'justifiable correction' nor an explanation on how violent discipline is prevented). While **Cambodia's** Civil Code (2008) sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 for both boys and girls, marriages under the age of 18 with parental consent are still allowed and practiced under the Civil Code and customary law.

There is no room for any level of legalised violence against children. Frequency, severity of harm, and intent to harm are not prerequisites for the definitions of violence. State parties may refer to such factors in intervention strategies in order to allow proportional responses in the best interests of the child, but definitions must in no way erode the child's absolute right to human dignity and physical and psychological integrity by describing some forms of violence as legally and/or socially acceptable.¹⁹

The combined effect of different legal loopholes – such as lack of protection from violence at school, high risks of exposure to sexual abuse, etc. – **creates multiple gaps in the overarching protective web.** Ten out of 21 sampled countries failed to include **sexting and grooming** in the definition of sexual violence against children. The age of consent to sexual activity remains problematic, leaving children between the ages of 16 and 18 unprotected.



©Kisuma Mapunda/World Vision

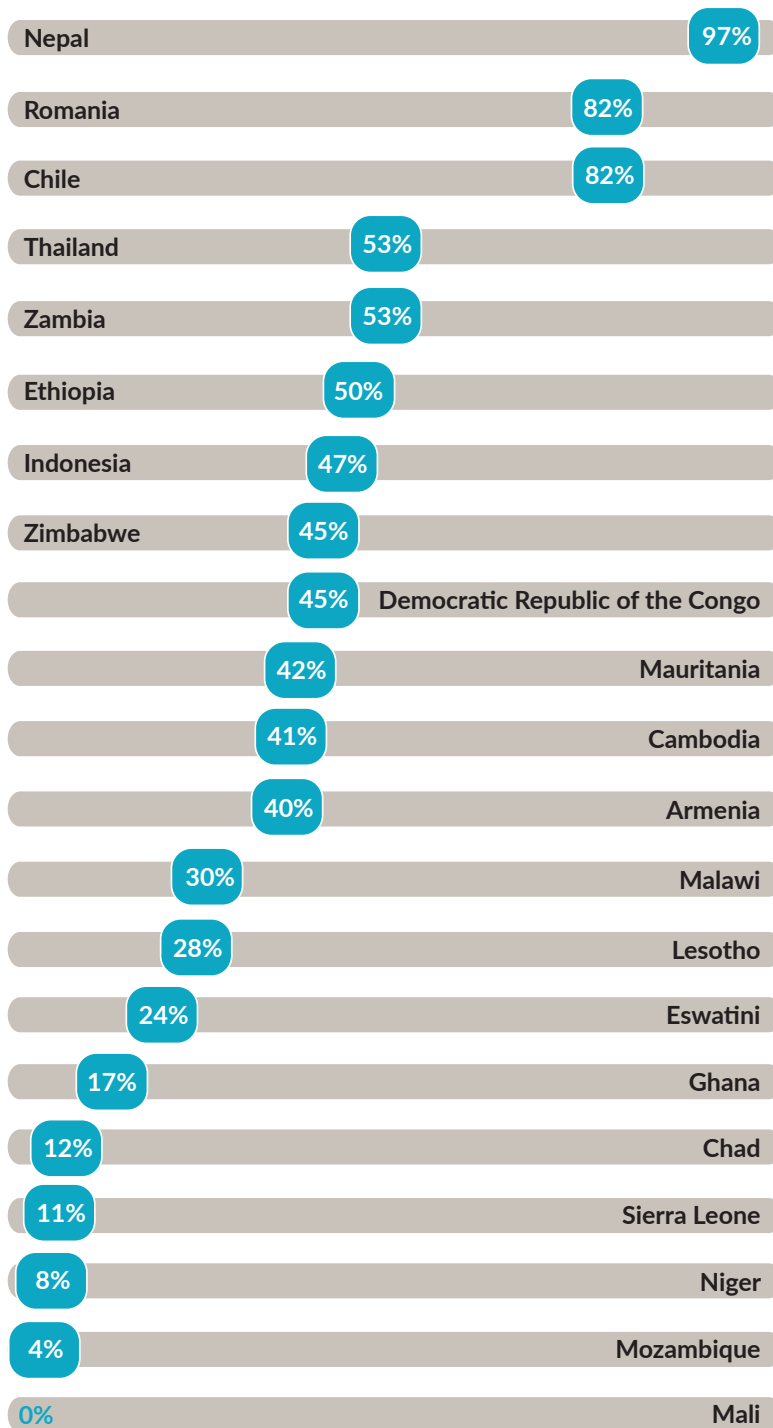
2. Prevent – to protect

Drastic action is needed to scale up our collective support for evidence-based prevention efforts if we are to end all forms of violence against children by 2030.²⁰ Proactive policies can stem behaviours and actions that lead to violence, ultimately ensuring that children are protected from violence and abuse. No violence against children is justifiable – it is always preventable.²¹

Prevention is one of the most impactful and cost-effective approaches to ending violence against children: investing in early prevention, detection, and intervention can spare a child, family, and society from experiencing the cycles of pain and trauma. Prevention includes public health and other measures to promote positive discipline, free from violence – for all children – and to target the root causes of violence at the levels of the child, family, perpetrator, community, institution, and society.²² By investing in protective measures and support systems, governments promote healthier and more educated societies. Preventing violence can also save substantial amounts of public funds in the long run. National studies from a range of countries estimate that preventing violence against children can save up to 5% of GDP.²³

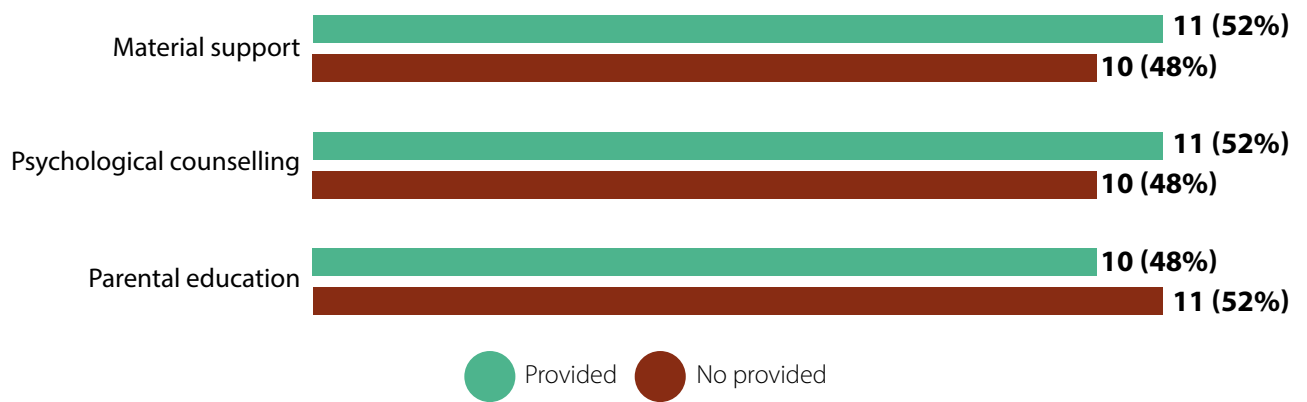
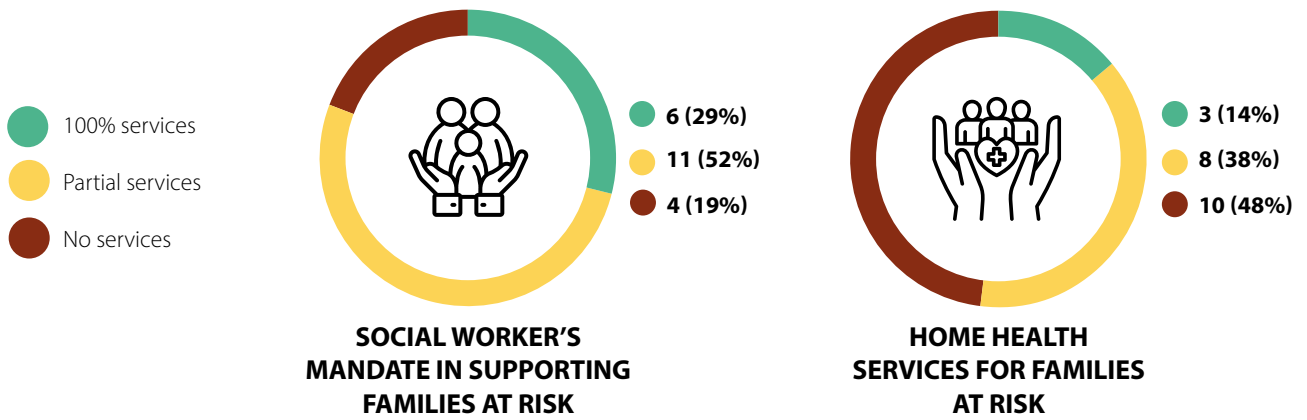
This review looked at the legal or other binding regulatory frameworks and mandatory provisions for different violence-prevention measures and services. One of the most important legally mandated services are home visits by social workers and community health workers to support families at risk. However, so far only **two countries – Nepal and Romania** – fully included home visits to prevent violence as requirements in their legally binding regulatory framework.

LEGAL PROGRESS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN*



*Please see Annex 1 for the full rubric against which countries were evaluated.

Number of countries providing social welfare services to prevent violence against children

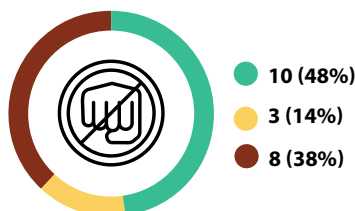


©World Vision

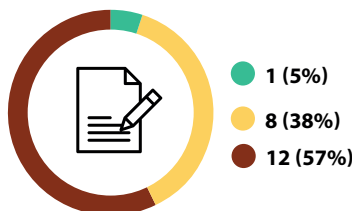
An opportunity to stop violence in schools

Addressing violence in schools is critical to ensure students', especially girls', mental and physical health, education attainment, and to prevent dropout.²⁴ Mandated school safety and environmental standards are an important set of measures to prevent violence and increase safety of children in school. Only **Nepal** has successfully included all standardised requirements into the national policies. These measures include child-friendly reporting mechanisms, clear measures to respond to violence (with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for school staff, parents, children), and compulsory requirements for teachers to be trained to recognise and respond to situations of violence against children. However, no country, so far, has put in place a full set of school safety standards, like separate toilets by gender, adequate lighting for school premises and surroundings, and schoolyard fencing.

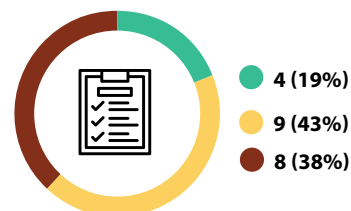
Seven countries – DRC, Eswatini, Indonesia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, and Romania – have included compulsory requirements for all schools (public and private) to include mechanisms for children to report violence against children. Only **Zambia** included direct participation of children as a requirement to the design/development of such (child-friendly) reporting mechanisms.



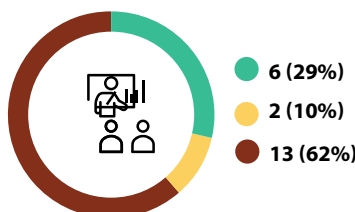
Anti-bullying and/or violence against children-safe policies



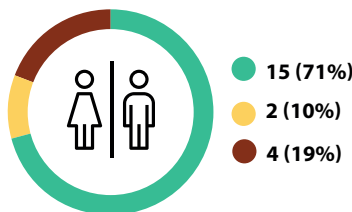
Mechanisms to report all forms of violence



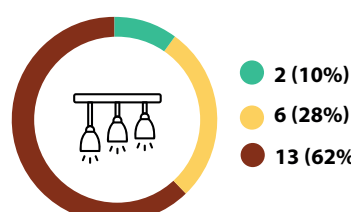
Clear measures planned and in place to respond to violence



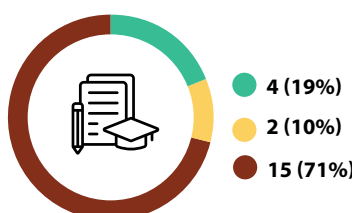
Training and capacity building for teachers to recognise and respond to violence



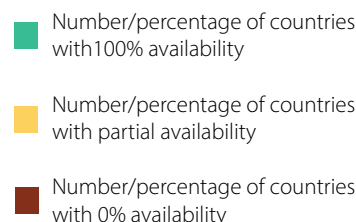
Separate toilets by gender required



Adequate lighting required in classrooms



Education policy requires gender-related life skills curriculum



Only four countries have included gender stereotyping as a compulsory requirement for life skills education in schools and the national education curriculum for primary and secondary level. Three more countries included such provisions as optional training. Four countries did not include, so far, any provisions for violence against children-safe policies and measures in schools to prevent violence.

The analysis shows that there are many missed opportunities to prevent violence against children in schools. This is highly alarming and problematic for several reasons. Schools are the setting that is mandated to provide learning

and contribute to overall child development. Ending violence in school has highly effective intervention recognised in the INSPIRE framework, and one with 11% return on investment. And finally, violence-free schools have been at the forefront of investment and efforts by international actors and donors since the launch of the Safe to Learn initiative in 2021.²⁵

The gender dimensions of violence against children

Government bodies should ensure that policies and measures take into account how different risks affect girls and boys in distinct ways with respect to various forms of violence in various settings.

States should address all forms of gender-based discrimination as part of a comprehensive violence-prevention strategy. This includes **addressing gender-based stereotypes, power imbalances, inequalities, and discrimination**, which enable and perpetuate the use of violence and coercion in the home, in school and educational settings, in communities, in the workplace, in institutions, and in society more broadly.

Men and boys must be actively encouraged as strategic partners and allies, and along with women and girls, to be provided with opportunities to increase their respect for one another and their understanding of how to stop gender-based discrimination and its violent manifestations.²⁶



©Patrick Abega/World Vision

3. Report – to break the silence

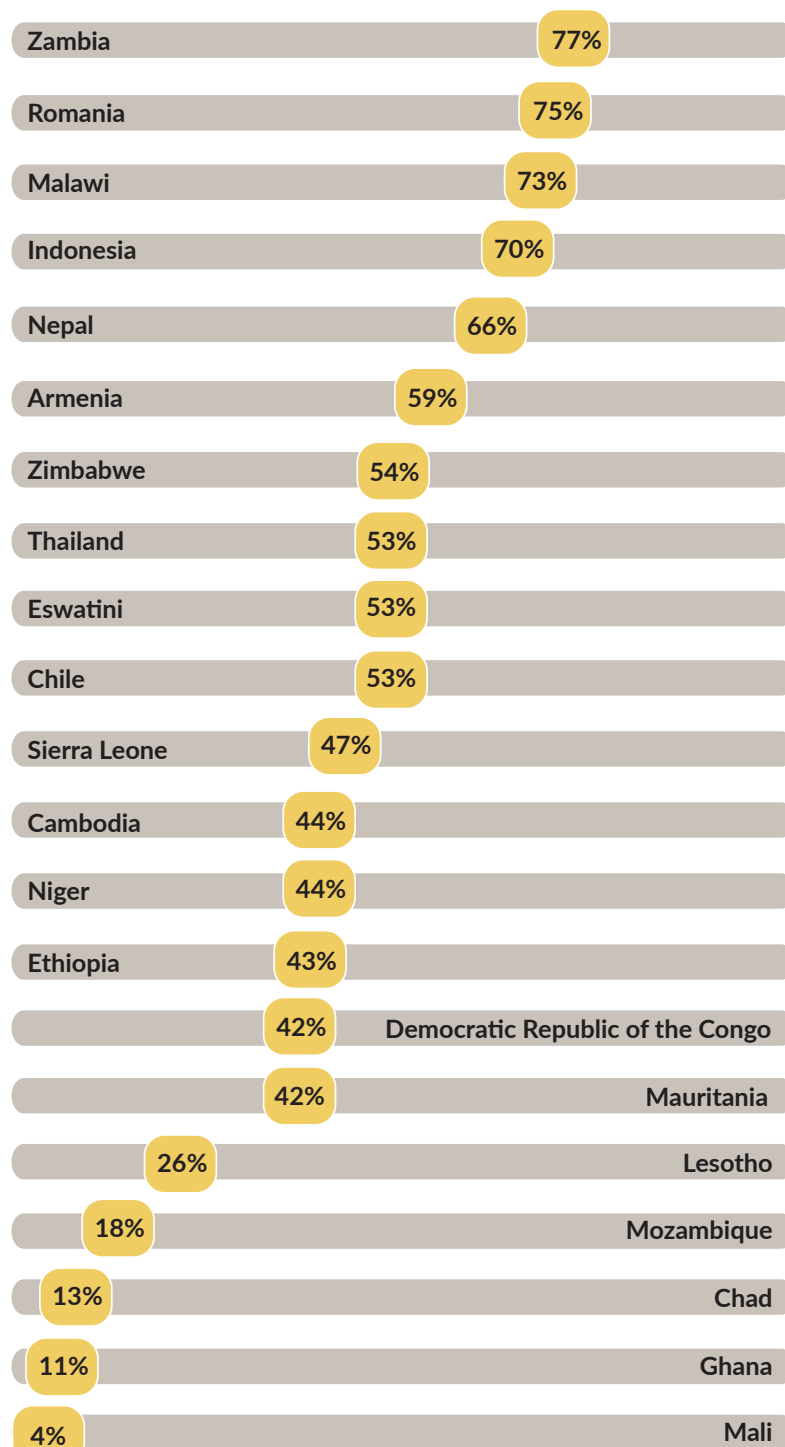
Governments must create laws and regulations that encourage children to report violence and that mandate communities and professionals to report violence. Pathways should be accessible and confidential, reliable and trustworthy. Having child-friendly services which take reports received seriously can encourage children to trust the system, and in turn, for the culture of silence to be broken.

One of the most serious problems in addressing violence against children is under-reporting. Lack of reporting means that children in need do not receive support they need. It also means that governments and other actors are not able to design and provide proper response and prevention services. A snapshot of the legal progress for each country in reporting violence against children is provided in the table.

Violence against children remains under-reported for a variety of reasons:

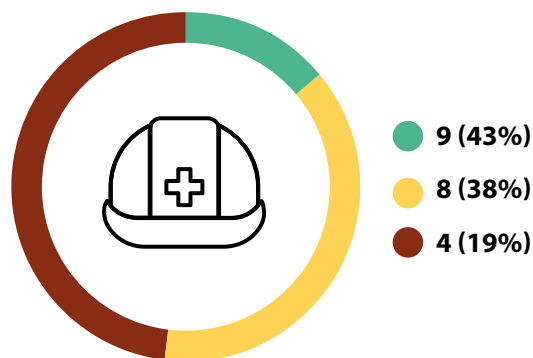
- lack of awareness and knowledge of the reporting mechanisms (and referral pathways)
- lack of trust in different services and their effectiveness
- concerns regarding challenges to preserve confidentiality and subsequent exposure to stigma and shame
- perpetrators' impunity as the laws do not provide for criminal or administrative penalties against adults who perpetrate/ exert violence against children (with the exception of extreme situations, where the child would be seriously injured)
- fear of community isolation.

LEGAL PROGRESS TO REPORT VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN*



*Please see Annex 1 for the full rubric against which countries were evaluated.

- Full availability of reporting mechanism
- Partial availability of reporting mechanism
- No availability of reporting mechanism



MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIRED HEALTH WORKERS

Under-reporting of violence indirectly feeds the culture of silence and enables violence to spread and persist, perpetuating a vicious cycle of trauma and fear. Even **when reporting mechanisms exist, they may be difficult to access**, particularly for children with disabilities and for those who cannot read or face language and cultural barriers. Furthermore, they **are often not developed with the involvement of children and communities**, thus creating mistrust and lack of awareness on their availability and role.

To facilitate greater reporting on cases of violence against children, governments are required to develop child-friendly reporting mechanisms as well as reporting and referral guidelines and protocols. They also need to ensure that service providers and individuals in contact with children are mandated and equipped to report incidents of violence.

Reporting protocols/guidelines in place for service providers

In every country, reporting of instances, suspicion, or risk of violence should, at a minimum, be required by professionals working directly with children. The legally binding regulatory framework should also provide reporting protocols/guidelines for the key service providers (police, health, education, social work).

Most countries (14) have included reporting protocols/guidelines for police workers and for social workers mainly, followed by reporting and referral protocols/guidelines required or developed for health services (13) and for educators (13, with only 10 which include protocols which could be identified). It is worth noting that in some of these cases, protocols/guidelines have been developed with a focus on gender-based violence.

Seven countries (DRC, Eswatini, Indonesia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, and Romania) have clearly **included in their legal framework mandatory responsibilities for professionals** (health workers, social workers, educators, other professionals in contact with children), as well as for **all individual citizens, to report** any situation of violence against children (identified or suspected). Penalties (administrative or criminal) have also been included for non-compliance.

Child-friendly reporting

Almost half of the countries (10) do not have child-friendly mandatory reporting pathways in places frequented by them. Requirements for using **child and gender-sensitive protocols** are provided by **12 countries**, while actual child and gender-sensitive protocols could be identified in **10 of these countries**.

In most cases, participating countries have included child-friendly reporting requirements in schools (eight) or in alternative care settings (four). A couple of countries have included such requirements for community centres, while only one included such requirements for any service provider (including health clinics).

Specialised police support

As with any crime, police are the first port of call for reporting violence against children. Given the sensitivity of issues and the age of victim, governments are required to ensure that police force is properly prepared and supportive. For this purpose, several measures may be put in place including

establishment of women and children's desks in police stations, establishment of special police units, and provision of referral protocols and guidelines, as well as training for those receiving reports.

Five countries have included legal or regulatory framework requirements for implementation of specialised desks in all police stations to facilitate reporting and streamline referrals of cases of violence against children and gender-based violence.

Another six countries have introduced such requirements for certain (not all) police stations (usually district or regional offices). A couple of countries have opted for other public places like **child protective services** (within social assistance offices) or **community centres to facilitate reporting** and streamline referrals of violence against children or gender-based violence.



©Stephen Frimpong Boadi/World Vision

In almost half of the countries (10), the legal or regulatory frameworks provide for specialised police units in certain police stations (usually county/district/regional level offices) to receive/respond to reports of violence against children. Four countries have included such requirements for all the police stations in the respective countries, while another two have included requirements for specialised individuals (police workers) to be provided in all the police stations for responding to violence against children and/or gender based violence.

The laws or binding regulations of **14 countries** require police units/officers to collaborate with other specialists (usually health specialists and social workers) in situations of violence against children. While **the police-centred approach** is predominating in the sampled countries, there is also another model which uses **a social worker-centred case management approach**, to ensure a case-sensitive, multidisciplinary, inter-institutional team intervention (bringing together social workers, police workers, health specialists, psychologists, etc.) under the coordination of the case manager (usually the social worker appointed by the child protection services).

Hotlines

The existence of free and publicly accessible hotlines to report violence²⁷ is another way for countries to ensure availability of child-friendly reporting mechanisms. In many countries, hotlines are not provided by the state but are either functioning **in parallel** or are **integrated with other** (general) emergency reporting hotlines (free of charge, with national coverage and operating 24/7).

Seven countries – Chile, Eswatini, Indonesia, Mauritania, Nepal, Romania, and Thailand – are fully compliant with international standards, meaning they have developed and implemented specific mechanisms for reporting violence against children, which are free of charge, have national coverage, and are operating 24/7.

Six of the participating countries **Armenia, Cambodia, DRC, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Zambia**, have established hotlines that may be used for reporting violence against children.

In eight countries – **Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Niger and Zimbabwe** specific hotlines for reporting violence against children have not been developed or did not reach national coverage yet.

4. Respond – to rescue and recover

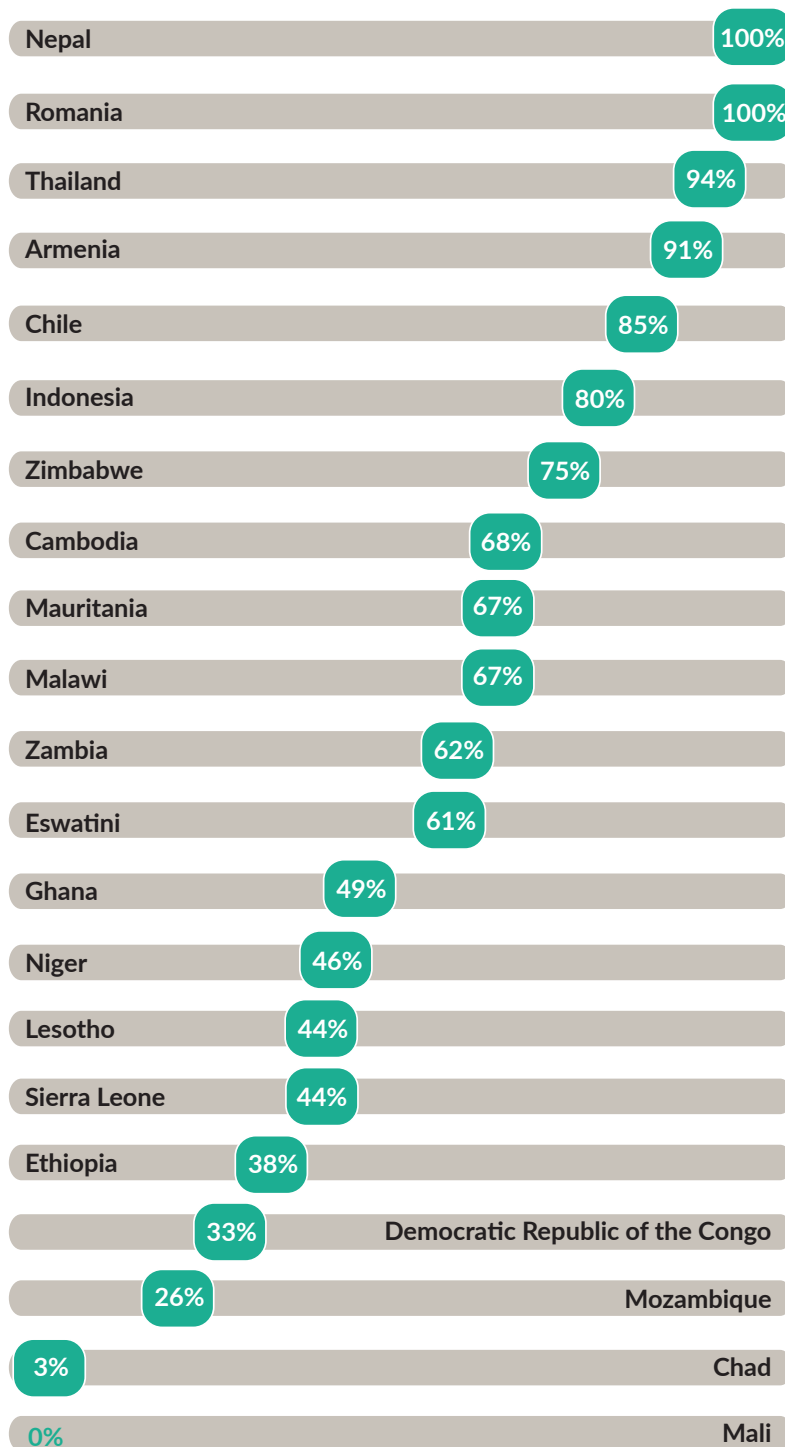
Governments must respond to violence in ways that protect a child from future violence and provide rehabilitation and justice to promote restoration and safety for all. Responding is not enough unless governments ensure that children will be supported and that the necessary measures are taken for them to recover from the effects of violence. The following outlines the progress of countries in terms of their legal framework to address violence against children, expressed as percentages.

Response services include mental health support, providing psychological assessment and counselling to the victims, as well as free-of-charge legal assistance, legal protection (like protection and restraining orders), victim/witness protection measures, judicial review (holding offenders criminally responsible), and material compensation to victims.

The data reveal considerable disparities in the provisions for child victims of domestic violence. While some countries have comprehensive measures in place, many fall short in offering extended medical care, mental health services, and legal support. The absence of free legal assistance and measures to remove perpetrators rather than victims exacerbates the vulnerabilities of child victims.

About 76% of surveyed countries provide first aid and medical assistance to victims of domestic violence, with slightly over 50% having mandated provision of extended medical care/rehabilitation and under 40% having mandated extended mental health care and psychological counselling.

LEGAL PROGRESS TO RESPOND TO VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN*



*Please see Annex 1 for the full rubric against which countries were evaluated.

Response services mandated by law



Most countries provide some measures to ensure that children are removed from violent home environments or are separated from abusive parents and placed into some form of emergency or alternative care (foster, kinship care, etc.). While keeping children safe from harm is the prerogative, placing them in alternative care and separating them from a non-abusive parent and family brings new risks and vulnerabilities for the child. Therefore, the preferred option should be to remove the perpetrator or to institute restraining orders against them. However, less than 50% of surveyed countries have put in place measures enabling this.

One third of countries has made provisions to ensure that child protection services for victims of child maltreatment reach all who need them.²⁸ Two countries, **Nepal** and **Romania**, have the most comprehensive provisions in cases of domestic violence, including **removing the perpetrator**, providing **protective placements** to victims if needed (in shelters, foster care, kinship care), provision of **free emergency medical assistance**, and longer-term medical assistance and rehabilitation services.

When it comes to access to justice for child victims, 60% of surveyed countries protect the identity of the child witness and less than 60% provide for closed court hearings and avoidance of the confrontation with the offender. Legal assistance/support to child victims is mandated in about half of the participating countries (10), while only eight of them are making it free of charge. This makes free legal support one of the least provided response/support services. This is a serious concern as it may significantly affect the ability

of child victims to initiate legal proceedings, receive adequate compensation, and ensure that perpetrators are punished. In turn, this can lead to increased impunity and lower reporting rates.

Two countries – **Chad** and **Mali** – have not included any response services so far for violence against children.

Clearly, there is an urgent need for more comprehensive and child-friendly approaches to support and protect victims, ensuring their access to justice and long-term well-being.



PREPARING TO IMPLEMENT

Once national governments adopt laws to end violence against children, they must also create policies to implement those laws. These policies provide for sufficient resourcing, coordination, awareness-raising, and political momentum to equip the public sector workforce to implement laws and allow its citizens to rely on these laws at the community level.

There are four distinct actions that governments must take to ready their policies for implementation: (1) fund, (2) manage data, (3) promote accountability, and (4) raise public awareness.

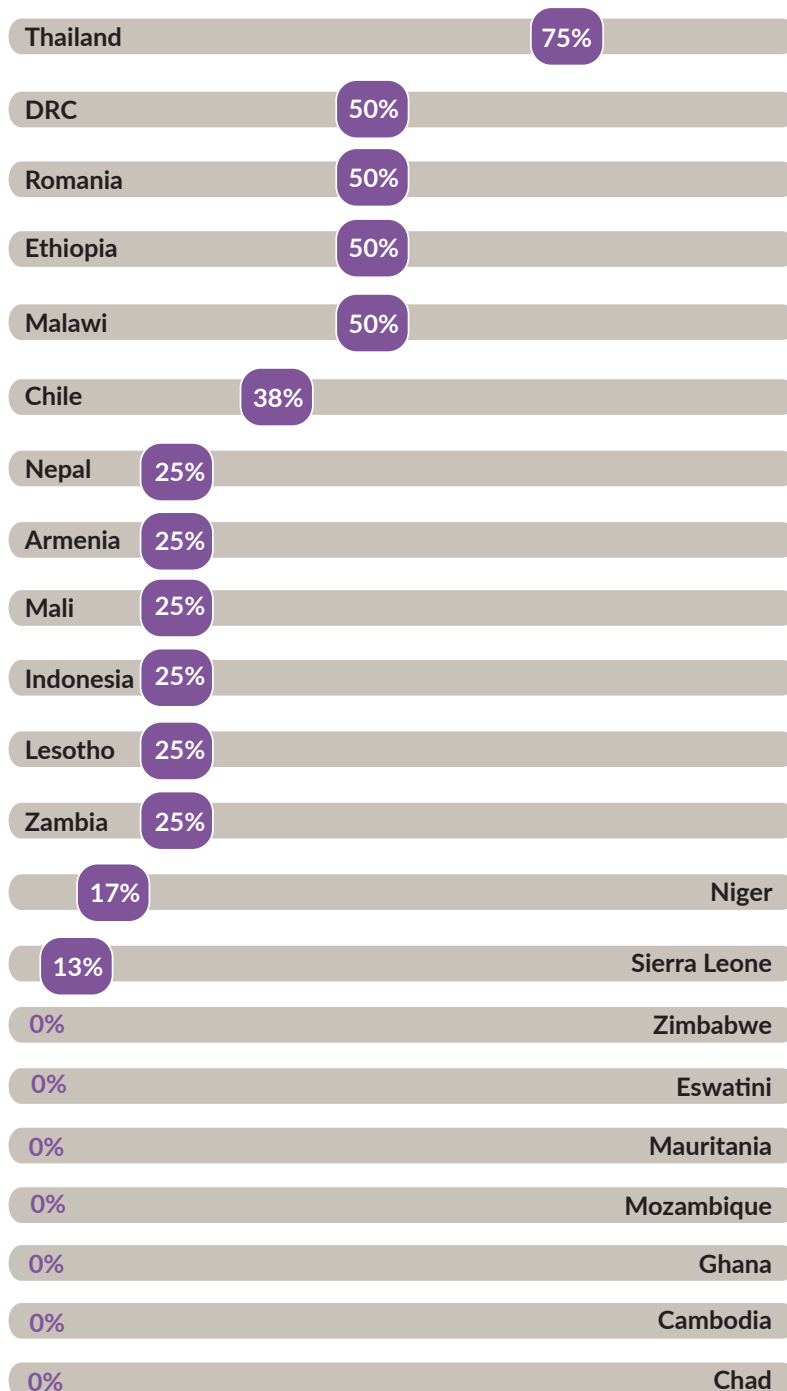
5. Fund – to function

Governments must fund action plans with clear costs, identified funding sources, and transparent expenditure data at national and sub-national levels. Comprehensive, long-term, and transparent financial commitment is key if governments are to function and deliver in their ambitions to end violence against children.

Ending violence against children requires the development of concrete evidence-based action plans that uphold children’s rights and dignity. Preventing violence against children through effective and well-funded evidence-based national action plans (NAPs) can, in the long run, save public funds and enhance community development.²⁹ Legal provisions (laws and regulations) create a framework for interventions to respond to violence against children, but **funding** is needed to act upon the implementation of legal frameworks. Effort invested in passing laws and adopting policies should not overshadow **the implementation** of plans and actions that are meant to ensure the legal provisions are acted upon.

This review showed that around 60% of governments have not included specific funding commitments to implement their national plans of action. Furthermore, information on budgetary allocations for ending violence against children was not available, but for the national level only, for 35 % of countries.

PROGRESS TO FUND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN*



*Please see Annex 1 for the full rubric against which countries were evaluated.



©Nathaniel Abadji/World Vision

Good examples of costed national plans for action include **Ethiopia's** Roadmap to End Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (C 2020–2024) and **Thailand's** Fifth National Human Rights plan (2023–2027), which has been costed out with identified sources of funding. **Malawi** has different NAPs aimed at fighting against different forms of violence (e.g. trafficking, child labour, etc.) which have been costed out with clearly identified sources of funding.

Despite some positive developments there are still significant areas of unfinished business between enacting policies and investments made in their implementation. For example, almost 80% of the sampled countries have prohibited child labour and exploitation, but only 30% of countries have clear budget allocations for implementation of the laws.

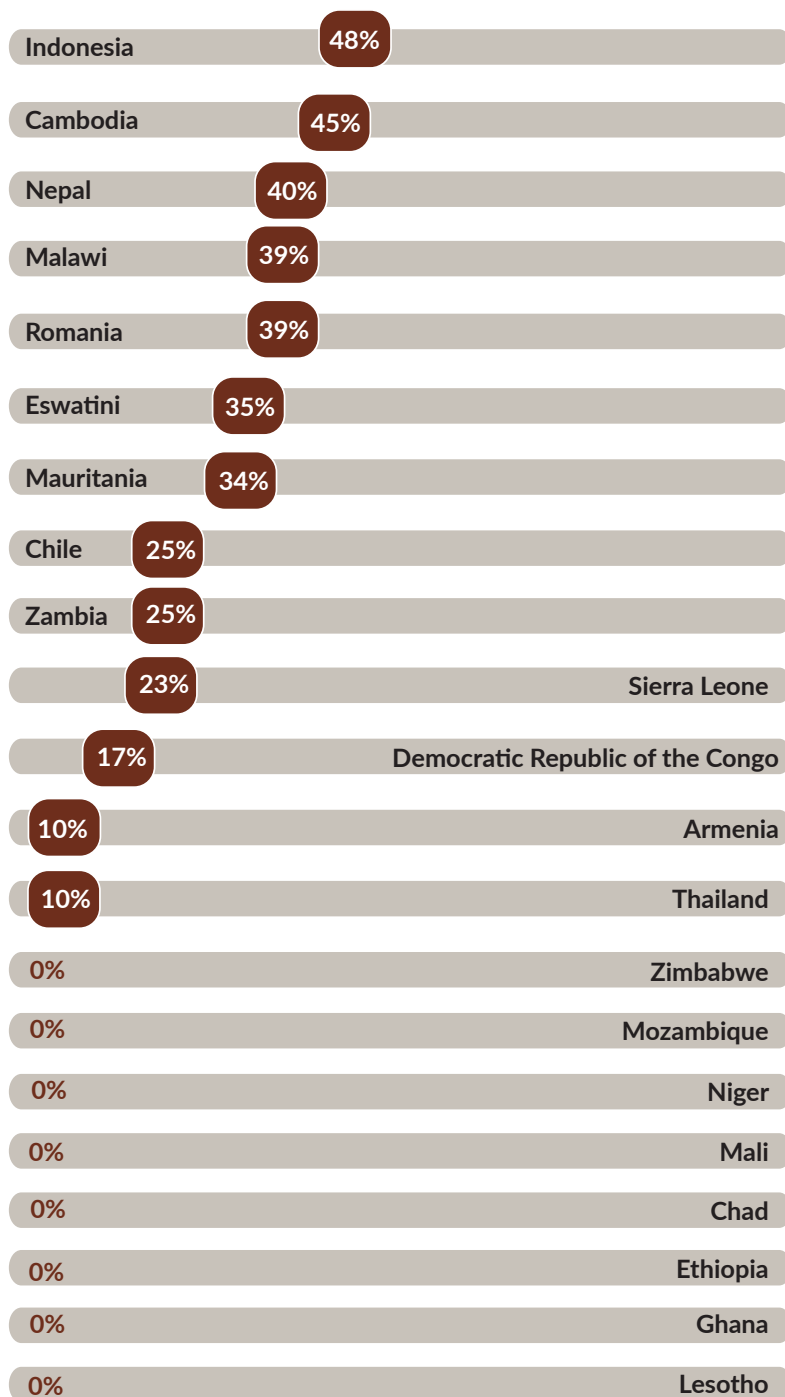
6. Manage data – to act with knowledge

Governments must manage data through centralised information systems and conduct regular population surveys on violence against children. Having a system in place is not much use unless it is regularly utilised for analysis, robust planning, decision-making purposes, and efficient service provision. The following table shows the percentage progress of countries in data management efforts to end violence against children.

A centralised information system with national databases that captures information of all types of violence, abuse, and neglect is of paramount importance to understand progress made to end violence against children and to observe trends over time. These information systems are expected to collect data in a desegregated manner, by type of violence and parameters which account for the diversity of children such as age, gender, and disability. The collection of disaggregated data and their analysis with an intersectionality approach is crucial if we are to understand and address the root causes of violence against children.³⁰

Overall, while some countries show efforts in collecting disaggregated data on violence against children on a regular basis, this World Vision analysis reveals that data are infrequently collected, missing, and/or failing to be sufficiently disaggregated to inform practice and/or policy.



PROGRESS ON DATA MANAGEMENT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN*



*Please see Annex 1 for the full rubric against which countries were evaluated.

Centralised information systems are critical tools for individual case management systems, referrals, and to create consistent prevalence data necessary for budget allocations. They are also essential to craft comprehensive policies. Accurate and frequent data collection on the prevalence of varied forms of violence, as well as use of prevention, reporting, and response services, is therefore crucial. Going forward, it is important that the regular collection (at least every five years) of prevalence data is included in national laws (for example, in NAPs).

Existence of centralised databases

Country	 Promising practices	 Efforts still needed
Cambodia	Cambodia's Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation established, with UNICEF's support, the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS).	While data is currently available on child victims of trafficking and exploitation, other types of violence against children are not yet clearly spelled out in the CPIMS.
Eswatini	A National Surveillance System on violence, coordinated by the Department of Social Welfare was established for the purposes of consolidating data on cases of violence.	The regulatory framework does not clearly spell out different types of offences. Therefore, it is not clear if data on all types of violence against children are considered.
Indonesia	The Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of Indonesia maintains an Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children, referred to as Simfoni PPA.	Early marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) and cutting are not included in the system. While Indonesia has a national strategy to prevent child marriage, supported by fairly elaborate and functional data collection systems, there still needs to be complete criminalization by law of the marriages involving children below the age of 18 in all cases.
Malawi	The Ministry of Gender, Children and Community Services manages a Child Protection Database (MIS), a gender-based violence MIS, and an Orphans and Vulnerable Children Database.	Data disaggregation does not cover female genital mutilation, and data is not disaggregated by the disability of the victims of violence against children.

While progress has been made in the creation of centralised national data systems, the analysis shows that **none of the sampled countries conducts regular violence against children surveys mandated by the legal or binding regulatory framework or implemented at the national level**. Survey data provide insights into the prevalence and nature of violence against children, determinants and factors that contribute to it, and information on perpetrators, among other topics.³¹

With the lack of progress made by the sampled countries under this indicator, it is worth highlighting the efforts of the **Cambodian** government: Cambodia's National Institute of Statistics of the Ministry of Planning leads the *Demographic Health Survey*, which includes some figures on violence against children. For the first time, national estimates are provided that detail the extent and types of sexual, physical, and emotional violence faced by girls, young women, boys, and young men in Cambodia. This information aims to assist in creating and implementing effective, child-friendly prevention strategies and improving services for all Cambodians, particularly children, who experience violence.

7. Accountability – to build trust

International standards require governments to report regularly on implementation of standards such as Universal Periodic Reports (UPR) and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Additionally, the 2030 Agenda stresses that governments have primary responsibility for ‘follow up and review’ of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets at national, regional, and global levels. A number of different modalities are envisaged for SDG follow-up and review, including voluntary national reporting (VNR) and thematic, regional, and global reporting. Additionally, the UNCRC requires governments to report progress against commitments and standards, in order to foster transparency and accountability. The progress to promote the accountability is highlighted in the below table.

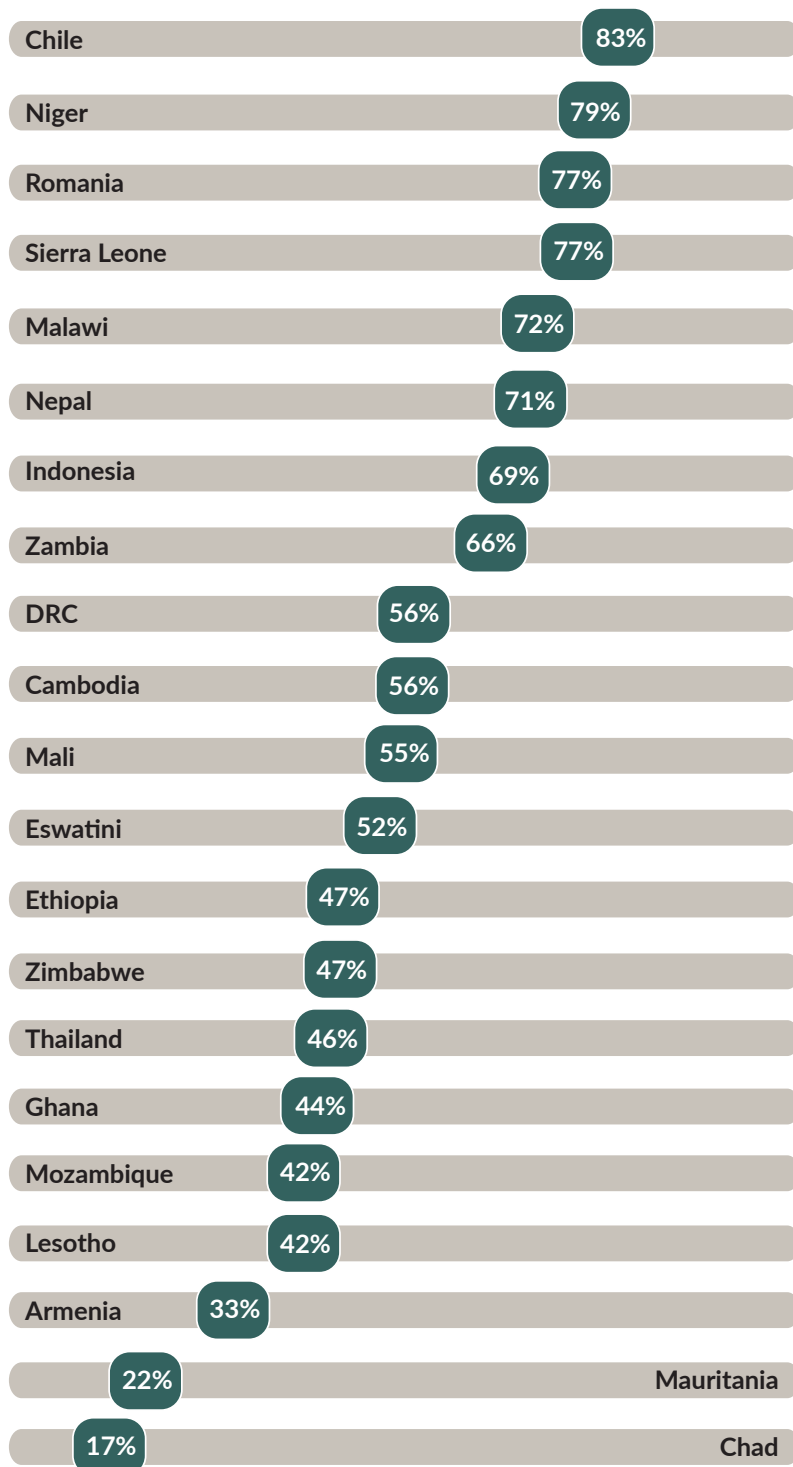
Reporting to the UNCRC

All sampled countries have been reporting to the UNCRC Committee, though only 14 did so regularly. Most countries have shown significant efforts in complying with at least one of the UNCRC Committee recommendations in the past five years and by regularly showing progress against action plans and commitments through VNR and UPR.

Child participation and consultation

One of the prerequisites to producing child-sensitive plans and strategies and to ensuring full commitment to a rights-based and inclusive approach is to involve children, especially by capturing and including their own suggestions, ideas, and solutions.

PROGRESS TO PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN*



*Please see Annex 1 for the full rubric against which countries were evaluated.

“*‘Children are part of the solution, and it’s really [about] making them involved since the beginning. They know very well where the services are failing. They are the experts.’* —Dr. Najat Maalla M’jid, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

When it comes to meaningful child participation in key stages of policy development to end violence against children, data shows mixed progress: 17 countries developed permanent mechanisms for consultation with children (in most cases in the form of child parliaments); however, only seven effectively used these consultation mechanisms when developing policies related to children.

Nepal and **Romania** consulted with children and took their opinion into account on policy development matters related to them, even if no permanent consultation mechanism has been established at the national level.

Existence and funding for national action plans

All sampled countries have developed plans of actions focusing on different forms of violence against children, and/or incorporated major violence against children issues in other welfare strategies. NAPs respond to issues relevant to their context.

Six countries do not have active NAPs to address any of the main forms of violence against children. Out of the 15 countries that are implementing NAPs to address various forms of violence against children, only seven have regularly reported on the progress made in the implementation of NAPs or national strategies.

Few national action plans have all the necessary characteristics of an effective plan. Most have only vague goals, are lacking details about sectoral implementation responsibilities, and have no costing information. Just 21% of countries have national plans of action that include specified indicators on the prevalence of violence against children with baseline and target values.

Well-crafted national action plans that are designed to advance evidence-based actions, important to obtain political commitment and make the case for increased financial investment. However, until they are adequately funded and implemented, they cannot result in measurable reductions in the prevalence of violence against children. **It is therefore alarming to note the very small proportion of countries with fully funded national action plans.** Overall, the proportion of fully funded national action plans for multiple types of violence is 28%, for child maltreatment 20%, and for youth violence 17%.

A child rights ombudsman

Adequate protection of the rights of children calls for a dedicated independent child rights defender office. Ideally, and as captured in the ‘Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions’ (Paris Principles³²), this structure would be represented under the figure of a ‘Child Rights Ombuds’ mechanism.

In total, 12 countries included a specialised department dedicated to promote and defend the rights of children in their Human Rights Defender office (Ombuds) structures or included a focal point person. For example, **Chile** has an Ombudsman for Children which is an autonomous, independent, public entity. **Indonesia** maintains two independent human rights institutions on children’s rights: one that monitors the effectiveness of child protection services and programmes, and the other that acts as an ombudsman. These two entities operate at the national level. **Seven countries did not mandate any specific independent mechanisms to defend the rights of the children.**



8. Challenge perceptions – to transform the norms

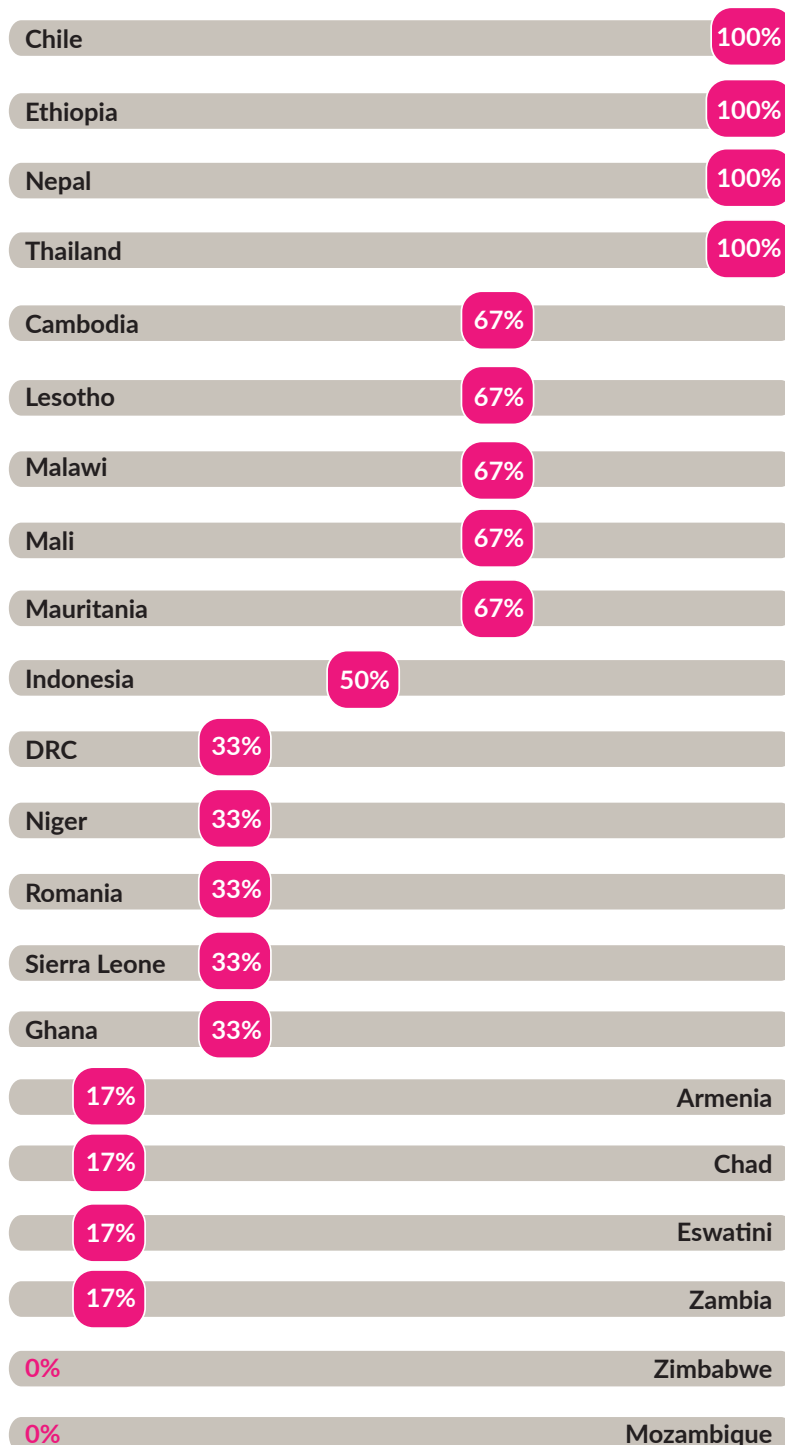
In order to challenge harmful behaviours and cultural traditions, well-managed, systematic campaigns are needed. They should challenge perceptions through public awareness campaigns owned by governments, encompassing local activities led by service providers and professionals at the community level, to transform norms and traditional harmful practices.

However, this review’s data shows that in most cases, no comprehensive steps were taken to prevent violence against children by challenging perceptions and behaviours, as outlined in the table below. Sustained strategic approaches with dedicated funding for public awareness campaigns to end violence against children at the national and local levels are also lacking.

Within the 21 sampled countries, few governments appear to have allocated budgets for ongoing public education and awareness activities accessible for sub-national planning and budgeting (this was also highlighted in the section ‘Prevent’). Typically, public awareness activities and campaigns have been implemented by civil society actors and development partners, and the scale and timeframe of such campaigns are often limited. **Chile, Ethiopia, Nepal, and Thailand** developed and/or implemented and **fully funded national and local public awareness campaigns** during the period 2020–2023, while **Ethiopia** limited the campaign to **few days a year**.

Most sampled countries contributed with funds and human resources (mainly), and/or by endorsing public awareness campaigns developed and implemented by civil society organisations, donors, and/or

PROGRESS TO PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN*



*Please see Annex 1 for the full rubric against which countries were evaluated.

intergovernmental agencies. **Mozambique** and **Zimbabwe** did not organise campaigns or contribute in any way to raising public awareness to address violence against children.

The government of **Thailand** has fully funded public awareness campaigns, at the national and local level, under the Department of Children and Youth and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. Since 2022, the Ministry of Social Development and

Family of **Chile** designs, promotes, and finances the 'Cuidemos la Niñez' Campaign, which seeks to raise awareness on measures to prevent and address violence against children in the country. What is particularly interesting is that **Chile's** Ombudsman for Children, which is an independent public institution, has organised another campaign ('Annual Rights Campaign 2020-2021') which includes adapted information and resources on violence against children.



©World Vision

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consolidate, integrate, combine: Unfinished business



© Stephen Frimpong Boadi/World Vision

Nine years into the implementation of the SDGs, the commitment to ending violence against children in all its forms has not yet led to the substantial action needed for real change. Significant gaps in laws, policies, and services persist, with dire consequences for children and communities.

The barriers slowing progress are often marked by fragmented actions and a disconnect between key actors, processes, and the management of limited resources. These issues are exacerbated by the absence of children's voices in discussions about their own welfare. Legal and policy inconsistencies hinder the universal prohibition of all forms of violence against children. While many countries have articulated preventive services and mechanisms, their enforcement is often irregular, under-resourced, or entirely absent. Preventive measures are underfunded, and key services meant to protect children are fragmented and uncoordinated, making some environments where children should thrive unsafe.

There is a critical need to establish and diversify child-centred and gender-sensitive services to prevent violence and empower children to protect themselves. Fragmented budget allocations and a lack of multisectoral coordination further complicate efforts, with national action plans often inconsistently funded and poorly implemented.

To make real progress in ending violence against children, we must not only move faster but also go deeper. This involves exploring the root causes of violence and harmful practices that normalise violence in society, examining and addressing legal ambiguities and loopholes that justify harmful actions against children, expanding collaborative partnerships, and strengthening coordination of joint efforts. It also means bringing marginalised children into the spotlight, ensuring their rights are realised and their aspirations achieved.

A comprehensive approach is essential, and a set of recommendations has been offered based on the latest findings and informed by the child protection systems strengthening approach. These recommendations are uplifted by three accelerators that reinforce the necessity to **consolidate, integrate, and combine child protection sector** limited resources, limitless knowledge, and unlimited dedication towards a shared goal: ending violence against every child, in every corner of the world, by 2030.

The triple axis of accelerators – consolidate, integrate, combine – addresses the unfinished business in legislation, guiding principles, and practices that need to be aligned with international standards. Once harmonised, these laws and regulatory frameworks need to be properly consolidated and **integrated** to reinforce a rights-based approach that places children at the centre of efforts to live free from violence. Limited and fragmented resources must be **combined** and shared among key actors and budget holders to ensure a greater and amplified effect. This approach leverages the contributions of different sectors responsible for various aspects of child protection and well-being.

Legal and policy frameworks must be harmonised with international standards and properly integrated to reinforce a child-centred, rights-based approach: There cannot be any legal exceptions that justify or tolerate violence against children. By addressing legislative gaps, improving resource allocation, and ensuring effective implementation of policies through targeted actions, governments can make significant strides towards ending violence against children. **Action-oriented dialogue** with key actors, such as faith-based leaders can help challenge negative perceptions and transform harmful traditions, norms, and behaviours, which can lead to legal frameworks being amended.

Coordinated efforts and **shared resources** are crucial to amplify the impact and achieve the goal of ending violence against every child by 2030. This includes ensuring that child protection-related resources are funded through multisectoral support. Additionally, ensuring that **children in all their diversity** are involved in their own protection by co-creating reporting mechanisms, processes, and services – such as ‘One-Stop-Centres’ – is a crucial way to make sure that prevention and response to violence against children is devised in a child-sensitive manner.

Prevention is the most effective way of eradicating violence – never allowing for it to happen in the first place. As such, more emphasis should be given by governments to early detection of violence against children and protected measures, including for the most vulnerable and excluded children. Continuous disaggregated data collection can help understand the prevalence of different forms of violence, strengthening the evidence needed to increase investments towards ending violence against children. It can also contribute to spotting evolving trends and emerging forms of violence, which are key to developing prevention strategies based on insights.



Unfinished Business, the legal progress to ending violence against children serves as a call to action, urging governments and other stakeholders to ensure that every child can flourish and thrive, free from violence. We must finish the job to create a safer, more supportive world for children.

While progress made is acknowledged and encouraged, World Vision calls on all governments to step up their efforts to end violence against children by taking the following seven actions:



1. Enact laws that protect all children from violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect, and harmful practices in all contexts and eliminate any legal exceptions that justify or tolerate violence against children.



2. Scale up the implementation of evidence-based approaches, such as those featured in INSPIRE, to effectively prevent violence against children, and ensure the existence of child-friendly referral mechanisms and protection services, including mental health and psychosocial support and access to justice. Ensure that these services are implemented through strong national child protection systems.



3. Enhance data systems and capacity for data collection, use, and management to understand the prevalence of different forms of violence, strengthen evidence for increased investments, and identify emerging trends and forms of violence.



4. Increase funding and budget transparency by ensuring child-centred budgets and increased allocation of funding for legal and child protection systems, as well as for the provision of integrated services for children.



5. Strengthen multi-sectoral and collaborative approaches and data sharing to address interrelated aspects of violence against girls and boys and to integrate protective measures throughout government policies and programmes.



6. Increase government delivery of community education and awareness campaigns in collaboration with key actors, such as faith-based leaders, to challenge negative perceptions and transform harmful traditions, norms, and behaviours.



7. Establish and formalise mechanisms for meaningful child participation in the design of policies and decisions that affect them and implement robust accountability mechanisms to ensure children's feedback and perspectives are acted upon, with transparent processes for monitoring and evaluating the impact of their participation.

This set of recommendations is not exhaustive and may be presented in different ways and adapted to different contexts and settings. The recommendations may be linked to different gaps they are addressing and further supplemented by key messages for advocacy and campaigning purposes. The recommendations mirror not only the eight priority areas, but also various components of child protection systems and aim at strengthening their key features, thus increasing the long-term prospects of sustainability and effectiveness of **consolidated, integrated, and combined** actions to end violence against children.

Each of the recommendations should be **consolidated** within international standards, **integrated** into ongoing actions and practice, and implemented through **combined** efforts and resources, to end and eliminate violence against children by 2030.

Annex 1: List of policy indicators

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

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

Category	Indicators	
4. Respond	17	The following response services are mandated by law: a) Removal of perpetrator (in domestic violence cases); b) Protective placement (in alternative care); c) First aid and medical assistance in cases of violence; d) Long term medical and mental health services; e) Psychological counselling and rehabilitation; f) Access to legal support / aid; g) Access to legal protection; h) Witness protection; and i) Judicial review (holding offenders criminally responsible).
5. Fund	18	National action plans to address violence against children have been costed out with identified sources of funding.
	19	Data is available on government budgetary commitments for ending violence against children at: a) national level; and b.) (local) community level
6. Manage Data	20	The law or regulatory framework mandates a centralized information system or national database with information on children victims of neglect, violence or abuse and assigns responsibility to implement the database, with data segregated by: a) Type of Violence (what types of violence aren't covered?) b) Age c) Gender d) Disability
	21	The law or regulatory framework requires that a Violence against Children Survey or other representative population survey providing a baseline of prevalence of violence against children is carried out every 5 years
7. Be Accountable	22	An independent human rights institution has been established to promote and defend the rights of children (children's ombudsman, commissioner or focal point within a human rights commission, or similar).
	23	The government regularly reports on the implementation of national action plan(s) to end violence against children.
	24	The government regularly reports on its ending violence against children efforts through UPR/ CRC/VNR processes.
	25	Children have participated meaningfully at key stages of the process of developing national action plans, core policies and strategies to end violence against children.
	26	The national government has complied with at least one CRC Committee recommendation in the last 3 years.
8. Challenge Perceptions	27	The government has funded: a) a public awareness campaign to address violence against children in the last 3 years. b) public awareness activities led by relevant professionals at community level.

Annex 2: Full rubric for Forbid: to Flourish and Thrive

Countries Reviewed	Child Marriage			Child Labour						Sexual Violence			Corporal Punishment			
	Law sets the minimum age of marriage for boys at 18	Law sets the minimum age of marriage for girls at 18	The law does not allow for any exceptions for marriage under 18 years	Laws against hazardous work	Laws against interfering with a child's education	Laws against work that is harmful to a child's development	Laws against cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment	Laws against the sale or servitude of children	Laws against involving children in illegal activities	Laws against sexual abuse and violence of a child	Laws against the commercial sexual exploitation of a child	Laws against child pornography	In home settings, full ban with penalties	In school settings, full ban with penalties	In alternative care (child care institutions, foster care, etc)	Juvenile justice systems
Armenia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cambodia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chad	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chile	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Democratic Republic of Congo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eswatini	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Ethiopia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ghana	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indonesia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lesotho	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Malawi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mali	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Mauritania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mozambique	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Nepal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Niger	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Romania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sierra Leone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Thailand	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Zambia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zimbabwe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

Yes Partial No

ENDNOTES

- ¹ World Health Organization (WHO). (2020). Global Status Report on Preventing Violence Against Children 2020. <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/332394/9789240004191-eng.pdf?sequence=1>
- ² WHO. (2022). 'Child maltreatment'. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/child-maltreatment>
- ³ United Nations (UN). (2016). '246 million children are victims of school-related violence'. <https://news.un.org/en/audio/2016/12/620472>
- ⁴ International Labour Office and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2021). Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/child-labour-2020-global-estimates-trends-and-the-road-forward/>
- ⁵ The disruptions caused by changing weather patterns create hazardous conditions that further endanger children, leading to increased instances of child trafficking and forced labor. These climate-induced shocks disproportionately affect vulnerable agrarian communities, making children more likely to be exploited for labor <https://news.un.org/en/audio/2015/06/601402>
- ⁶ UNICEF. (2023). Is an End to Child Marriage within Reach? Latest trends and future prospects. 2023 update. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/is-an-end-to-child-marriage-within-reach/>
- ⁷ Paola Pereznieta, Andres Montes, Solveig Routier and Lara Langston. (2014). The costs and economic impact of violence against children. ODI and ChildFund Alliance. <https://odi.org/documents/4585/9177.pdf>
- ⁸ WHO. (2020).
- ⁹ WHO. (2020).
- ¹⁰ WHO. (2016). INSPIRE: Seven strategies for Ending Violence Against Children. <https://www.who.int/publications/item/9789241565356>
- ¹¹ World Vision International. (2011). A Systems Approach to Child Protection. https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Systems_Approach_to_Child_Protection.pdf
- ¹² WHO. (2016).
- ¹³ The methodology was devised before Small Cracks, Big Gaps (2019) was produced. Therefore, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are not accounted for in the analysis presented.
- ¹⁴ UNICEF. 'Child friendly laws & policies'. <https://www.childfriendlycities.org/child-friendly-laws-policies>
- ¹⁵ Garantías y Protección Integral, Art.36
- ¹⁶ 'Sexual exploitation of children in/for prostitution' is frequently and incorrectly referred to as 'child prostitution', both in legal instruments adopted in the 21st century and in mass media (https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/TerminologyGuidelines_en.pdf). For the purpose of this report, World Vision has used the definitions included in the 'Terminology Guidelines For The Protection Of Children From Sexual Exploitation And Sexual Abuse', also known as the Luxembourg Guidelines.
- ¹⁷ Constitution, child protection laws, and/or other legal frameworks.
- ¹⁸ WHO. (2020).
- ¹⁹ UNCRC. (2011). General comment No. 13 (2011): The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence. https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/crc.c.gc.13_en.pdf
- ²⁰ WHO. (2020).
- ²¹ UN General Assembly. (2006). Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children. <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/content/un-study-violence-against-children>
- ²² Idem.
- ²³ UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children. (2022). The Violence Prevention Dividend: Why Preventing Violence Against Children Makes Economic Sense. <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/news/violence-prevention-dividend-why-preventing-violence-against-children-makes-economic-sense>
- ²⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2017). *School Violence and Bullying: Global Status Report*. https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/sites/violenceagainstchildren.un.org/files/documents/other_documents/unesco_school_violence_and_bullying_global_status_report.pdf
- ²⁵ Safe to Learn Coalition. (2021). Safe to Learn Strategy 2021–2024. [https://www.safetolearncoalition.org/strategy#:~:text=and%20through%20schools-,At%20the%20Global%20Education%20Summit%20in%20July%202021%2C%20Safe%20to,Strategy%20\(2021%2D24\)](https://www.safetolearncoalition.org/strategy#:~:text=and%20through%20schools-,At%20the%20Global%20Education%20Summit%20in%20July%202021%2C%20Safe%20to,Strategy%20(2021%2D24))
- ²⁶ UNCRC. (2011).
- ²⁷ 'Hotlines' and 'Helplines' are often used interchangeably. While these services have some commonalities, they also have differences. World Vision's study suggests that for this priority both hotlines and child helplines are considered.
- ²⁸ WHO. (2020).
- ²⁹ UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children. (2022).
- ³⁰ An intersectional approach to violence against women and girls includes a consideration of where gender intersects with other inequalities/oppressions (sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity, indigeneity, immigration status, disability) to produce unique experiences of violence. Extracted from: <https://eca.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ECA/Attachments/Publications/2019/10/The%20value%20of%20intersectionality%20in%20understanding%20violence%20against%20women%20and%20girls.pdf>
- ³¹ UNICEF. (2020). Strengthening Administrative Data on Violence against Children: Challenges and promising practices from a review of country experiences. https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Admin-data-VAC-publication-English_2021.pdf
- ³² European Network of National Human Rights Institutions. 'UN Paris Principles and Accreditation'. <https://ennhri.org/about-nhris/un-paris-principles-and-accreditation/>



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

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