

# Building Momentum:

## A call for action to end violence against children

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*An overview of Alliance projects around the world that are working to end violence and exploitation against children.*

July 2019

ChildFund®  
Alliance





Founded in 1938, ChildFund Alliance is a global network of 11 child-focused development organizations that helps nearly 13 million children and their families in more than 60 countries. We work to end violence and exploitation against children and to overcome poverty and the underlying conditions that prevent children from achieving their full potential. The Alliance network supports long-term community development, promotes children's rights and child protection, prepares for natural disasters, and responds to humanitarian emergencies. We work in partnership with children and their communities to create lasting change, and the participation of children themselves is a key component of our approach.

Building Momentum summarizes ChildFund efforts around the world to end violence against children. This brief was prepared with the assistance of consultants Julia Freedson in association with Yvonne Kemper.

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# FOREWORD

*by Marta Santos Pais*

It is my pleasure to offer opening reflections for ChildFund Alliance's *Building Momentum: A call for action to end violence against children*. The publication compiles selected ChildFund Alliance initiatives to end violence against children.

Over the past several decades of experience working at the global level to promote the rights of the child and safeguard children's freedom from violence, I have witnessed the crucial role played by civil society organizations, such as ChildFund, which has been at the forefront of innovative solutions to advance the well-being of children.

These efforts gain a particular relevance during the 30th Anniversary year of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, when we need to call on governments to reaffirm their commitment and intensify their efforts to accelerate progress in the realization of children's rights.

Of course, children's voices and perspectives must be at the center of all these efforts. I therefore commend ChildFund's commitment to meaningfully engage children as genuine partners and agents of change to build a world free from fear and from violence, everywhere and at all times.

*Marta Santos Pais is the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, a position she held for nearly a decade through May 2019.*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building on ChildFund Alliance's decades of experience in child protection programming, **this paper describes a variety of the Alliance's projects around the world that are working to end violence against children.**

These examples provide insight into the types of programming that are required for tackling some of the most complex and intractable cases of violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking of children. The examples, which are consistent with the framework of the *INSPIRE* strategies, also highlight the essential role that children and youth can play in holding local and national governments accountable.

Participation is increasingly regarded as a key element of effective child protection programming. This paper includes examples which highlight the importance of meaningfully involving children in efforts to end violence and amplifying their voices. By actively involving them, children learn what their rights are, how to stand up for their rights when possible and how to hold governments and local leaders accountable, including to their obligations to end all violence against children. The Alliance's approach is grounded in the belief that reducing violence against children requires such active involvement of children in the decisions that affect them.

The paper also provides a series of recommendations for action by governments committed to working toward a world free from violence for all children as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – particularly target 16.2 and other violence-related targets.

*"I want to talk about how children can live in a safe environment."*

- Child in South Korea

This year promises to be a critical one for advancing the SDGs. 2019 is the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations will hold the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will include a review of the SDGs' violence-related targets. To this end, ChildFund Alliance urges governments to take the following actions:

- ✓ Analyze gaps in child protection systems and create and implement policies to address those gaps and end violence against children.
- ✓ Increase financial commitments and actual investment to end violence against children.
- ✓ Meaningfully involve children in the development and implementation of child protection policies, as well as in SDG review processes.
- ✓ Effectively prevent and respond to violence against children by adopting evidence-based *INSPIRE* strategies and demonstrate leadership on ending violence against children.
- ✓ Report on target 16.2 and related targets in SDG monitoring and evaluation efforts.

*Photo of children playing in India provided by ChildFund International.*





## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Violence against children is preventable. Action by all stakeholders is key to realizing a world free from violence for all children. The SDGs provide a global framework for addressing the world's most pressing challenges. Adopted in 2015 by all United Nations Member States as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, fight inequality and stop climate change. The 17 SDGs set out goals, targets and indicators that UN Member States must achieve by 2030.

#### SDG 16.2

*End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children.*

SDG target 16.2 represents a groundbreaking commitment by UN Member States to end all forms of violence against children (EVAC).<sup>1</sup> This commitment to end violence against children is also integrated into other global goals, such as ending child labor (within SDG 8) and achieving quality education (within SDG 4).

ChildFund Alliance actively contributed to positioning SDG target 16.2 as a core element within the 2030 agenda. The three-year *Free from Violence and Exploitation* campaign included consultations with children in over 50 countries in which children voiced their perspectives on the post-2015 development agenda and shared their views about violence and exploitation perpetrated against them. Their call for a safer world for children has guided ChildFund's efforts to promote implementation of target 16.2.

Since the adoption of the SDGs, global momentum behind target 16.2 has been growing to support progress toward the achievement of SDG 16.2 and other violence-related targets. A group of ten agencies (including World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank) developed the INSPIRE Strategies, which present a broad range of economic, political and social evidence-based approaches that governments and their partners can use to turn target 16.2 into action.<sup>2</sup> Also, as of June 2019, 26 Member States have become Pathfinding Countries of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, making a formal commitment to action to end all forms of violence against children.<sup>3</sup>

*"Create a safe place for both boys and girls without discrimination."*

- Child in Zambia





Consultations with children in Indonesia for the report: *The Free Charters: Children's priorities for the post-2015 development agenda.*  
Photo provided by ChildFund International.

Building on ChildFund Alliance's decades of experience in child protection programming, this paper features projects around the world focused on EVAC. It also promotes recommendations for action by governments to further advance progress towards the achievement of SDG target 16.2 and other violence-related targets.<sup>4</sup> Our specific objectives are to:

- encourage governments to prioritize and fund implementation of INSPIRE strategies;
- highlight ChildFund's contributions to achieving target 16.2; and
- underscore the critical role that children play in EVAC.

*"I think children should be aware of these issues and raise their own voices against the problem [of violence]."*

**- Child in Vietnam**

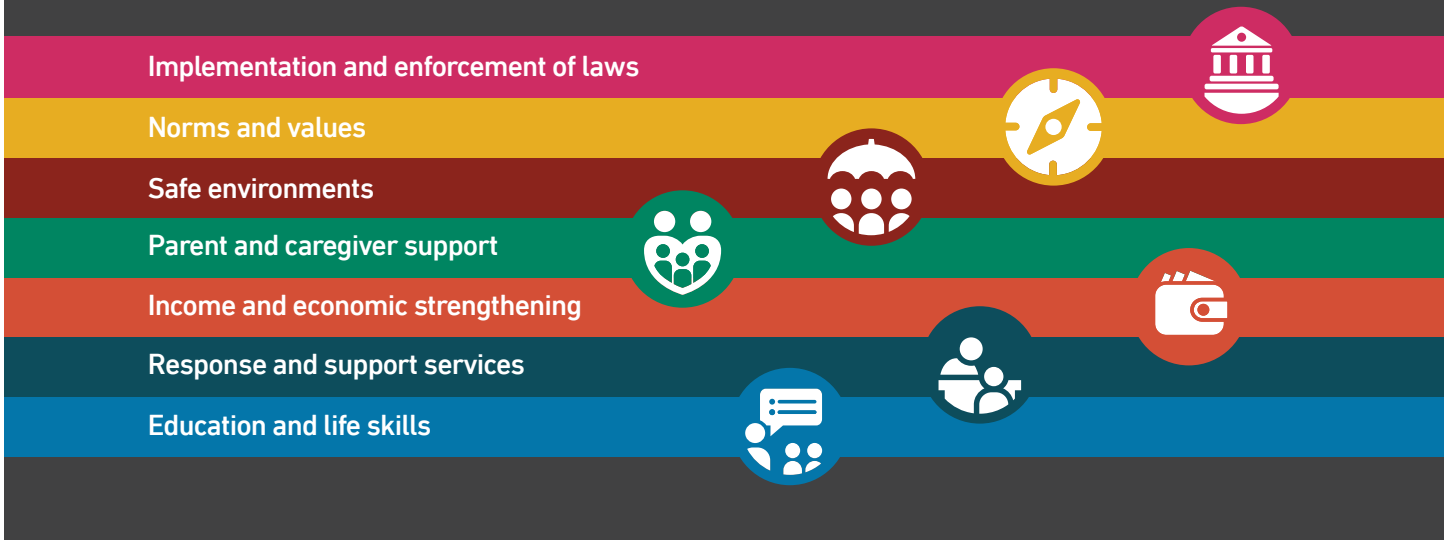
Photo provided by ChildFund International.

*"If I was queen of the neighborhood, I would tell all the bad people to leave and that good people are welcome to live here. So there would be no abuse and no bad things, and so all the children could be free."*

**- Child in Honduras**



# INSPIRE: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence against Children



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## 2. MAKING PROGRESS THROUGH THE *INSPIRE* STRATEGIES

The INSPIRE Strategies have been essential in advancing a holistic approach to EVAC across the globe. The following examples illustrate how ChildFund Alliance and partners are engaging with the INSPIRE Strategies through various program models. These efforts are helping to tackle some of the most complex and intractable cases of violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking of children. Each example below includes a reference to the related INSPIRE Strategies and SDGs.

### 2.1. Vietnam: Keeping young people safe online

ChildFund Vietnam's Swipe Safe program helps young people navigate the internet safely by educating them on potential risks, such as cyber scams, bullying or sexual abuse, and offering them strategies to protect themselves. The program is timely given the country's increasing concerns with cyber-bullying; an estimated one out of three students suffers from cyber-bullying in Vietnam according to a survey among middle-school and high-school students conducted by Hanoi National University.<sup>5</sup> Further, several recent cases of youth suicides in Vietnam were reportedly related to social media bullying and harassment, according to Vietnam's Minister of Information and Communications.<sup>6</sup>





Swipe Safe mobilizes parents, youth, schools and the private sector to play an active role in children's online safety. For example, the program is providing training for parents and internet café and game shop owners to identify and address possible online risks for children. It also supports schools to coordinate school-based trainings for children, organize informational events in schools and develop school policies and guidance materials on online safety.

A key innovation of the program is that it engages young volunteers with extensive knowledge on technology to train young people and others on online safety. The concept is that these trainers can more directly relate to their peers' experiences and help keep the curriculum up to date.

*"The trainer is actually only a few years older than me, I think that's why she can understand our perspectives more."*

- 14-year-old male participant

To reinforce the program's youth-led approach, organizers also select a Swipe Safe Champion within each cohort to facilitate online chat groups during the three to six months following each training, with support from the youth volunteer.

As of December 2018, over 3,600 adolescents, 300 "online safety partners" (including government officials and school representatives) and 300 parents had received online safety training through the program. While it is too early to measure impact on violence prevention, several child participants confirmed that their attitudes toward the internet had changed as a result of the trainings. Some participants also felt more confident making decisions related to sharing information and changing their privacy settings, based on surveys taken before and after the training.

The program has been designed to eventually collect and analyze 12,000 individual assessments of behavior change and increased capacity for protective behaviors through interactions with training materials.

In July 2018, ChildFund entered into a partnership with Microsoft and the government of Vietnam to help strengthen child protection in cyberspace as part of the Swipe Safe program. The aim is to develop a child-friendly application that allows users to report child abuse cases online and provides technical solutions for child safety in cyberspace; the application is expected to be released during 2019.

*"I thought my information in a secret chat group was safe and would not be exposed, but it actually is not."*

- 14-year-old female participant

## Swipe Safe - Vietnam

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### Relationship with SDGs and INSPIRE Strategies

#### SDG Targets



**4: Quality Education**

**Effective learning environments**

- The program works with schools to create safe learning environments.



**16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**

**End violence against children**

- The program educates children and others on how to identify and address possible online risks.

#### INSPIRE Strategies



**3: Safe environments**

- The program provides online safety for children.



**4: Parent and caregiver support**

- The program makes parents "online safety partners."



**7: Education and life skills**

- The program builds children's knowledge & skills on safe internet usage.

## 2.2. Papua New Guinea: Establishing services for survivors of family violence

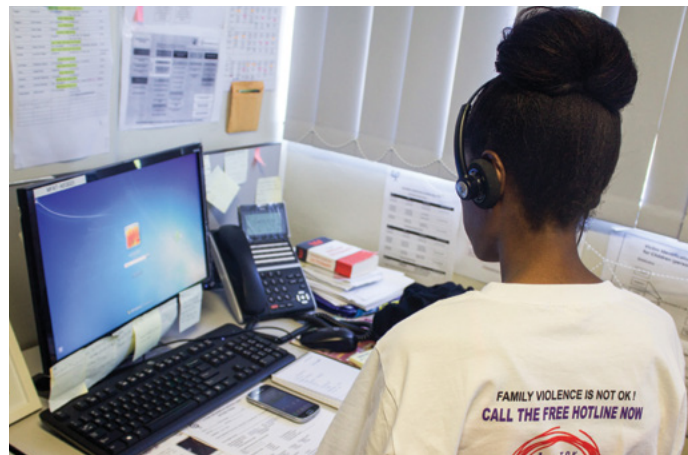
In Papua New Guinea (PNG) violence perpetrated against women and children has reached epidemic levels, with an estimated two-thirds of women experiencing physical or sexual violence during their lifetime.<sup>7</sup> According to data collected from more than 3,000 patients in a study by Médecins Sans Frontières, children accounted for more than half of all victims of sexual violence.<sup>8</sup> In response to this crisis, ChildFund PNG, in partnership with PNG's Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee and FHI 360, an international non-governmental organization, launched the first-ever national crisis hotline in August 2015.<sup>9</sup>

Through the hotline, survivors of violence and their families now have access to professional counselors 12 hours a day. The counselors can also refer callers to specialized service providers such as the police, medical services, safe houses and legal support as needed. In emergency cases, counselors can talk to the police on the client's behalf and then call the survivor back to assure her that help is on the way. Calls to the hotline are free and counseling is available in PNG's three national languages, English, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu. In PNG, where services are scarce (87 percent of the population of PNG live in rural and remote areas) and where mobile phone ownership is high, a telephone counseling service is critical. In fact, for survivors living in remote areas, telephone counseling is the only accessible intervention.

Due to a severe shortage of trained and qualified counselors in PNG, ChildFund has also been working in partnership with the PNG Counsellors Association (PNGCA) to boost the capacity of the counseling profession as a whole.

The program is "an effective and potentially high impact activity that could make a real difference in PNG" according to a recent external evaluation.<sup>10</sup> With less than nine percent of violence survivors seeking assistance through formal support structures (as of 2015 and prior to the start of the project),<sup>11</sup> having access to a confidential hotline can "help survivors open up and speak about the violence they are experiencing or the abuses they're experiencing at home" according to Wesh Siku, ChildFund PNG's project leader. He adds that knowing these services are available "can empower survivors of abuse by giving them the feeling that they can do something."<sup>12</sup>

The hotline is already having a positive impact in the lives of thousands of families who previously received little help. Since launching in August 2015, more than 23,000 people have called the service from across the country's 22 provinces. Many callers have been further referred to crisis counseling, safety planning, referral advice and suicide intervention. Some observers note a shift in national attitudes toward gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence as a result of the hotline and related activities.<sup>13</sup>



The 1-Tok Kaunselin Helpim Lain offers confidential phone counseling for survivors of violence and their families. Photo provided by ChildFund Australia.

### Strengthening Services for Survivors of Gender-based Violence - PNG

#### Relationship with SDGs and INSPIRE Strategies

##### SDG Targets



##### Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and eliminate all harmful practices

- The program's confidential phone hotline makes it easier for survivors and families to report on sensitive issues, such as GBV (e.g. trafficking, sexual exploitation) and harmful traditional practices (e.g., child marriage), and receive adequate services.



##### End violence against children

- The program facilitates reporting on all forms of violence against children and links child survivors to appropriate services.

##### INSPIRE Strategies



##### 1: Implementation and enforcement of laws

- The program enables children to advocate with governments for their rights.



##### 2: Norms and values

- The program raises awareness regarding children's rights.



##### 3: Safe environments

- The program increases safety in schools through a complaints system.

### 2.3. South Korea: Empowering children to protect themselves from violence

ChildFund Korea’s Child Assault Prevention (CAP) program aims to help children protect themselves from violence and abuse through education, empowerment and social support program components. Seoul’s Welfare Ministry reported a drastic rise in confirmed child abuse cases in South Korea, with a 175 percent increase between 2013 and 2016 (with 18,700 cases in 2016).<sup>14</sup> Notably, nearly half of the children reporting cases had suffered multiple abuses. According to government reports, the majority of cases involved harsh disciplinary measures by parents – the result of poor parenting knowledge and skills.

ChildFund’s CAP program works closely with children themselves in three distinct areas: 1) teaching them about their rights as children; 2) empowering them on how to respond in assault situations, including through training in self-defense techniques; and 3) helping to build support systems for children by involving teachers and parents in workshops that provide practical guidance on how to prevent violence against children, and providing one-on-one counseling for children, where needed. The program also operates eight child protection centers to serve as temporary shelters for survivors of child abuse.

The program’s emphasis on role-play and the direct involvement of teachers and parents makes it easier for child participants to learn how to deal with others’ aggressive behavior and speak about such problems.

*“What makes the CAP program different from other programs is that teachers re-enact a situation and show [us] how to respond.”*

**- Third-grade student in South Korea**

The third-grader also expressed an increased sense of confidence in standing up to older children who may use bullying behavior. Moreover, the program inspires teachers and parents to reflect on their roles in protecting children. After the workshop, one of the participating mothers expressed “regret” at not having paid more attention to violence against children and wanted to share her newfound “wisdom” with others.

Started in 2009, the CAP program now covers 13 administrative areas, cities and provinces across South Korea. It has reached children, parents and teachers in elementary schools, including nearly half a million children, 50,000 teachers and 65,000 parents who have participated in CAP workshops. Based on pre- and post-testing of participating children (and use of a control group), the program has positively impacted participants’ awareness of their rights, their ability to respond in crisis situations, and their sense of empowerment.



Participants in Child-friendly Accountability program. Photo provided by ChildFund Korea.

## Child Assault Prevention - South Korea

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### Relationship with SDGs and INSPIRE Strategies

#### SDG Targets



**End violence against children**

- The program educates children, parents and teachers to address violence against children.

#### INSPIRE Strategies



**2: Norms and values**

- The program informs children, parents, teachers and others about violence against children and ways to prevent it.



**4: Parent and caregiver support**

- The program enables parents and teachers to better respond to child assault in an appropriate way and how to prevent it.



**6: Response and support services**

- The program offers temporary shelter for child survivors of abuse.



**7: Education and life skills**

- The program builds the knowledge and skills of children, as well as parents and teachers, on how to prevent and respond to violence against children.





## 2.4. Bolivia: Fighting commercial sexual violence

Bolivia is an origin, destination and transit point for trafficking in persons.<sup>15</sup> In 2016, official statistics reported over 700 cases of human trafficking and related crimes.<sup>16</sup>

In response to this complex and far-reaching situation, ChildFund member Educo and local partner Fundación Munasim Kullakita take a multi-pronged approach to fighting commercial sexual violence. As a core element, the program offers comprehensive care and counseling for adolescent girls who have experienced commercial sexual violence by placing them in “transitional homes” (day and night care centers) or reaching out to them through “open spaces” that provide staff with the opportunity to interact with girls in street situations where commercial sexual violence is frequent. The aim of both settings is to support the participants’ successful socio-economic reintegration with their families and communities.

Between July 2016 and December 2018 the program worked with 76 adolescent girls who had experienced commercial sexual violence. Of those who have completed the program, 29 girls returned to their nuclear families; 14 reintegrated with their extended families; and nine have reached the age of independence and live independently. Sixty percent of the girls who have participated in this program are now in full-time education.

*“I like the home. I learn things [and] feel protected.”*

**- Child in Bolivia**

For some participants, having a safe space is a new and deeply influential experience, as one participant expressed: “I would like to tell other girl teenagers that there are people on the streets who take advantage of you and that there are homes where they help you. I’m at home here. There are people who love me, who support me and help me move forward.” Another participant wondered what she would have done without this program: “I think I would [have] continue[d] on a bad path. Here, I have learned to value myself.”

Beyond this direct support for survivors of commercial sexual violence, the program has taken steps to prevent this type of violence by addressing some of its underlying factors. For example, Educo and its partners have worked with ten schools located in the neighborhoods where they have seen that commercial sexual violence is prevalent in order to educate students, teachers and families on the risks and the steps they can take in response.<sup>17</sup>

This aspect of the program has also shown success, including:

- Nine schools have integrated programs on commercial sexual violence into their activities and four have integrated the topic into their standard curriculum.
- The Defender's Office for Children and Adolescents in El Alto Municipality began to implement a protocol for the identification of trafficking victims in January 2018. Using the new protocol, the Defender's Office identified ten cases in 2018 (compared to two identified trafficking cases the previous year): four cases of trafficking; two cases of commercial sexual violence; and four cases of pimping. As of December 2018, project staff have followed up on 17 complaints made through the Defender's Office, which have led to legal proceedings.
- In 2018, La Paz Municipality created a mobile Defender's Office for Children and Adolescents, which travels to communities to support risk assessments and awareness-raising campaigns for students.
- The National Police in 2018 created the nationwide Quick Response Special Unit and Cyber Patrol Unit, which has a specific focus on cases of commercial sexual violence, pimping, exploitation and trafficking. Civil society representatives and local business vendors, with support from La Paz Municipality, established the Plaza Eguido Local Community Council to fight commercial sexual violence and trafficking.
- Agreements with local businesses have stimulated the creation of job and training opportunities for the participants in the project, which contributes to their reintegration into the community and also acts as a therapeutic mechanism.

*Youth participant in Bolivia.  
Photo provided by Educo, a member of ChildFund Alliance.*



## Fighting Commercial Sexual Violence - Bolivia

### Relationship with SDGs and INSPIRE Strategies

#### SDG Targets



#### Effective learning environments

- The program supports a safe and gender-sensitive learning environment for the critical issue of commercial sexual violence.



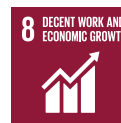
#### Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls

- The program offers comprehensive care and counseling for adolescent girls who have experienced commercial sexual violence.



#### End violence against children

- The program offers comprehensive care and counseling for adolescent girls who have experienced commercial sexual violence.



#### End forced labor, modern slavery and human trafficking, and prohibit the worst forms of child labor

- The program addresses human trafficking of girls.

#### INSPIRE Strategies



#### 1: Implementation and enforcement of laws

- The program strengthens capacities of local services.



#### 2: Norms and values

- The program raises awareness of families, communities and others.



#### 3: Safe environments

- The program provides safe spaces for survivors.



#### 6: Response and support services

- The program refers survivors to services.



#### 7: Education and life skills

- The program provides education and life skills to survivors.





*Dialogue on safer schools with head teachers in Kitgum District in Northern Uganda.*

## **2.5. Uganda: Strengthening community-based child protection systems**

In Uganda, ChildFund works with communities to fight the widespread nature of violence against children and to strengthen local child protection systems. According to a recent survey, three of four Ugandans aged 18 to 24 report having experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence during their childhood and nearly four in ten boys and three in ten girls report experiencing physical violence by an adult in their community.<sup>18</sup>

Focused on Kitgum and Agogo districts in Northern Uganda, ChildFund's program aims to strengthen community-led child protection systems to reduce violence against children and ensure prompt and adequate assistance for survivors. The program combines a variety of approaches to empower duty bearers to take effective action to end violence against children (e.g., trainings, awareness-raising, support for micro-enterprises) and strengthen the referral network for survivors of violence. A participant who had received a micro-enterprise

cash grant said, "I had never held [that amount of] cash money in my hand, but this happened when [the] project provided me cash ... this was unbelievable, I was able to cultivate a size of land I had never dreamed of, am forever grateful for the support provided to me last year."

The program also supports children to enhance their capacities to protect themselves and their peers from violence.

A key stakeholder explained that the project was "relevant and sustainable" and that it "strengthened coordination among child protection actors [and] the community-based structures ... [that are] actively working to protect children's well-being."



The program (2016–2018) has contributed to positive changes in the targeted communities, including the following changes reported after the first year:

- A seven percent decrease in reported incidents of violence against girls and boys, and a 20 percent reduction in reported incidents of violence against women and men.
- A higher level of satisfaction with the services provided reported by child survivors of violence. Nine out of every ten children surveyed were satisfied with the services received in 2017 compared to five of every ten in 2016.
- The Ugandan Police Force in both project districts reportedly investigated 78 percent of child protection cases reported in 2017, compared to 64 percent in 2016.
- More children in both districts reported feeling safe at school (nine out of every ten) in 2017, compared to eight out of every ten children in 2016.
- From the inception of the project, government structures were deliberately involved in the planning and implementation of activities in order to promote project ownership. This has resulted in budget contributions from the district local government for discrete project activities. For example, in Agago, the district government incorporated sensitization activities on child protection independent of the project’s activities.



Community forum on child marriage.

## Strengthening Community-based Child Protection Systems – Uganda

### Relationship with SDGs and INSPIRE Strategies

#### SDG Targets



#### End violence against children

- The program strengthens community-led child protection systems to prevent and respond to violence against children.

#### INSPIRE Strategies



#### 2: Norms and values

- The program supports a stronger community response to violence against children.



#### 3: Safe environments

- The program encourages violence-free homes by reducing household-level economic vulnerability.



#### 4: Parent and caregiver support

- The program offers child protection training and economic support to parents and caregivers.



#### 6: Response and support services

- The program works with child protection committees to strengthen referral systems for survivors.



#### 7: Education and life skills

- The program offers training and awareness raising, including on early marriage and other harmful practices, for local authorities and community members, including children themselves.



Children attend class in the Philippines.  
Photo provided by ChildFund International.

## 2.6. The Philippines: Combating exploitative child labor

ChildFund Philippines – as part of a civil society consortium led by World Vision – supported the implementation of a comprehensive program to combat child labor in sugarcane-growing areas of the country. This is highly relevant as over 1.2 million children are estimated to work in agriculture in the Philippines, a sector recognized as one of the most dangerous for children – with many becoming ill, injured and/or dropping out of school. Many of these children work on sugarcane farms where work includes long hours under the heat of the sun, use of dangerous tools, carrying heavy loads and contact with fertilizer and pesticides used in the fields.<sup>19</sup>

*“Freedom from work was a dream come true for me. I realized that I have a right to choose between labor and education. I felt that now I could do anything and achieve anything.”*

- Child in India

Some of the program’s key components targeting this form of child labor included:

- Educational support to help children at risk stay in school;
- Assistance to families to help them increase agricultural productivity, find alternative sources of income and link to social protection programs;
- Advocacy and collaboration with the Government of the Philippines and the sugarcane industry to integrate child labor prevention into policies, guidelines and trainings;
- Establishment and support for volunteer groups, such as community watch groups, child rights advocates and teachers, to educate communities about the dangers of child labor and the importance of education; and
- Support for the establishment of data collection systems on child labor and other child protection concerns to inform the monitoring and planning of the Government of the Philippines, civil society and other stakeholders.<sup>20</sup>

The program, which ran from 2003 to 2016, reduced exploitative child labor in target communities by 86 percent, provided opportunities for education to over 54,000 children and supported more than 30,000 households with the necessary resources to keep children out of hazardous work in farms. It also resulted in changed behavior of families and communities. A member of the program's voluntary Community Watch Group observed, "Before parents used to say to children, 'let's get to work so we can get something to eat.' Gradually the families reduced the days the children work and no more little children work."<sup>21</sup>

The program also created some long-term institutional changes in both the affected communities and nationally, such as:

- More than 70 sugar industry institutions and associations have instituted programs to reduce child labor in sugar supply chains.
- 130 villages incorporated child labor and child rights issues in their annual community development plans.
- Average monthly income in project households increased by 72 percent.<sup>22</sup>

The program's advocacy with the sugar industry on the national level also led to the Sugar Regulatory Administration guidelines to tie government assistance to sugarcane farms' commitments to implement a farming system that is child-labor free. Further, the Sugar Regulatory Administration now includes awareness of child labor and hazardous work for children in regular trainings and incorporates funding for child labor awareness-raising in its annual budget request.<sup>23</sup>

Given the success of the program, ChildFund Philippines is now considering ways to apply the learning from the first phase of the program to an integrated model to find solutions to child labor in other industries and areas of the country.

## LEAP against Exploitative Child Labor – the Philippines

### Relationship with SDGs and INSPIRE Strategies

#### SDG Targets



#### Universal primary and secondary education

- The program offers educational support for at-risk children.



#### End forced labor, modern slavery and human trafficking, and prohibit the worst forms of child labor

- The program uses multiple strategies (e.g., advocacy, community sensitization, income-generating activities for at-risk families) to address exploitative child labor.



#### End violence against children

- The program uses multiple strategies (e.g., advocacy, community sensitization, income-generating activities for at-risk families) to address exploitative child labor.

#### Strengthen relevant national institutions to prevent violence

- The program supports the government and others to establish systems to collect data on child labor and other child protection concerns.

#### INSPIRE Strategies



#### 1: Implementation and enforcement of laws

- The program supports villages in incorporating child labor and child rights issues into annual community development plans.



#### 2: Norms and values

- The program mobilizes local volunteer groups to create community awareness on child labor.



#### 5: Income and economic strengthening

- The program supports vulnerable families to diversify their income sources and improve their food security.



#### 7: Education and life skills

- The program provides education support to children at risk and vocational skills training to youth.





" Before, it was common to see that they treated their children with violence, but now parents take other measures to guide or correct them."

- Child in El Salvador

*Photo of El Salvador youth provided by Educo, a member of ChildFund Alliance.*

## 2.7. El Salvador: Strengthening protection systems for young people

In El Salvador, approximately one in five men and one in three women aged 18-24 say they experienced some kind of violence during childhood.<sup>24</sup> The climate of youth violence in the country keeps many children out of education and is a key cause of forced displacement. Setting up structures and systems to protect these children and youth can be life-saving.

Strengthening Capacities in the Children and Adolescents National Protection System program, led by ChildFund Alliance member Educo El Salvador, supports the establishment and functioning of local committees — called Local Rights Councils — in 24 municipalities across five departments in El Salvador. These councils are responsible for conducting local assessments on children's rights and developing and ensuring the implementation of local child rights policies and plans. This involves, for example, carrying out school visits to educate students about their rights, speaking with parents about positive parenting and discipline methods and working on municipal child protection policies. Local governments provide a designated budget allocation to enable the councils in all participating municipalities to carry out their work.

Through its collaboration with the government, the program ensures that the local councils' actions are closely aligned with national child protection initiatives. In addition, the program challenges prevailing negative stereotypes held by some members of the community about adolescents by enabling young people between the ages of 14 and 18 to join the local councils alongside adult members. Currently, 28 adolescents serve as council members, directly influencing local decision-making and helping to break down negative stereotypes. Educo El Salvador is also working with the Salvadoran National Council for Children and Adolescents on awareness-raising and training efforts centered around children's rights and improving relevant laws and policies.

This project has resulted in a renewal of political will towards children's rights, as shown by the continued investment by local governments in the Local Rights Councils. Also, in the course of the project, ten municipal councils passed action plans to strengthen protections for children and adolescents. In addition, 14 municipalities have established dedicated Municipal Units for Childhood, Adolescence and Youth that allow for the implementation of a more systematic approach toward protecting the rights of children in these communities.

*" I think we are one of the most important pieces to solve problems. We are not the problem, we are a fundamental part of the solution"*

- Youth in El Salvador

As a result of the program, Educo El Salvador has observed changes in the attitudes of parents, children and community members in the participating communities. Noting the impact of the program, one committee member said: *"Before it was common to see that [parents] treated their children with violence, but now parents take other measures to guide or correct them, based on love and respect,"* adding that being on the council is *"an experience that marks you forever."*



Photo of young woman in El Salvador provided by Educo, a member of ChildFund Alliance.

## Strengthening Capacities in the Children and Adolescents National Protection System - El Salvador

### Relationship with SDGs and INSPIRE Strategies

#### SDG Target



#### End violence against children

- The program strengthens protections for children and adolescents by creating and supporting dedicated child protection committees.

#### INSPIRE Strategies



#### 1: Implementation and enforcement of laws

- The program creates and supports local committees that ensure the implementation of local child rights policies and plans.



#### 2: Norms and values

- The program supports awareness-raising of children, parents and others on children's rights.



## 3. INVOLVING CHILDREN IN ENDING VIOLENCE

Children and young people have a right to express their views and to influence decisions affecting them. This principle is codified in the CRC. Participation is prominently featured within the UN Study on Violence against Children.<sup>25</sup> One of the 12 recommendations of the study calls upon States to engage with children and respect their views in all aspects of prevention and response to violence against children. Participation is increasingly regarded as a key element of effective child protection programming. By actively involving them, children learn what their rights are, how to stand up for them when possible and how to hold governments and local leaders accountable, including to their obligations to end all violence against children.

ChildFund's approach is grounded in the belief that child participation is key to reducing the impact of violence against children. ChildFund supports engaging children in decisions that affect them and providing them with access to tools and channels that allow them to express themselves. The following examples illustrate various ways that ChildFund is engaging young people around EVAC. These examples demonstrate involvement of children that is meaningful and based on children's informed understanding of their role in the process and potential influence on decisions.

*"Children are the future leaders, so the elders should nurture the children properly. The most important thing is the environment the children live in."*

**- Child in Myanmar**

*"Violence is the abuse of the rights and freedom of children."*

**- Child in Ghana**

### 3.1 Small Voices, Big Dreams

*Small Voices, Big Dreams*, launched in 2010, is an initiative of all members of the ChildFund Alliance that aims to amplify children's voices on issues that affect them. It is a report on children by children. Each edition of the report proves that children — when adults listen to them — are enabled to express a sophisticated and articulate view of the world and solutions to social problems.

The 2019 *Small Voice, Big Dreams* report addresses children's views about different forms of violence against them, and provides important insights as to what children think about their rights vis-à-vis violence. Children share their understanding of violence, such as which spaces they consider safe or unsafe and who they see as protective figures or agents of aggression in their lives. They also put forward the solutions from their perspective on ending violence against children.<sup>26</sup>

The report made it possible to capture children's diverse experiences and visions of how children see the violence that is perpetrated against them. The report also provides insight into children's varying experiences of violence in different countries. It is a global perspective on a global problem that has potential as an innovative tool for policy makers focused on EVAC by giving voice to children's opinions and proposals.<sup>27</sup> The *Small Voices, Big Dreams* study is due to be released in the second half of 2019.

*ChildFund International CEO Anne Lynam Goddard with children and youth in the Firozabad district of Uttar Pradesh in India.*





## 3.2. Youth Peace collaborative in Sri Lanka

ChildFund Sri Lanka is providing technical and financial support to the Alliance of Youth to End Violence Against Children (AYEVAC), a youth-led coalition movement with members in nine districts. AYEVAC aims to improve child protection nationally by building young people's capacities on leadership, advocacy and child protection. It organizes national and local campaigns to end violence against children and leverage AYEVAC's capacity to connect young activists across Sri Lanka.

*"In Sri Lanka, children are victims of violence almost every day and we feel it's time for us to raise our voices and join hands to protect them."*

**- AYEVAC member**

AYEVAC's approach gives space for children and youth to express their views in a cultural context where young people, especially young women, have often been excluded from decision-making processes. "In Sri Lanka, children are victims of violence almost every day," an AYEVAC member noted. "It's time for us to raise our voice and join hands to protect them."

Though still in its early stages, AYEVAC is already showing results as an effective platform for youth to raise awareness and conduct advocacy with decision-makers at local and national levels. In June 2018, AYEVAC brought together more than 700 young people from across the country to Colombo to peacefully march against violence and abuse of children in Sri Lanka. AYEVAC leaders also delivered a petition with more than 100,000 signatures to the Minister of Women and Child Affairs demanding stronger protections for children.<sup>28</sup>

This movement comes at a time when the Sri Lankan government has already committed to reinforce its efforts in protecting children from violence and abuse by becoming a Pathfinding Country. AYEVAC's young leaders are eager to seize on this opportunity and bring about real change for young people in Sri Lanka: "As youth, we should have a collective consciousness to eliminate the injustices of society," said Kalum, who has been involved in programs with one of the local partner organizations, VOICE Area Federation, since he was a young child. "This movement has created a strong platform for that."<sup>29</sup>

AYEVAC continues to advocate for preventing corporal punishment and psychological aggression; it recently organized the JUST SAY NO event, which included a panel discussion on the topic, with several university professors, children and community members.

*"Society must give children a voice to make them feel safe and protected."*

**- Child in India**



*Youth participate in the Child-friendly Accountability program in South Korea.*

## 3.3. Child-friendly Accountability Initiative

Through its wide-reaching, innovative Child-friendly Accountability Initiative, ChildFund Alliance is working with children to hold governments and local authorities accountable to their commitments to end all forms of violence against children.<sup>30</sup> As part of this global initiative, children aged 13 to 17 learn about their rights, meet with leaders responsible for child protection in their communities and develop child-friendly versions of child protection laws and policies. They also hold sessions to educate their peers, youth and adults in the community about their findings and conduct advocacy with key stakeholders. As part of the Child-friendly Accountability initiative, participating schools set up complaint boxes for children so that children can confidentially raise concerns. ChildFund piloted the initiative in India, Mexico, Paraguay and Vietnam in 2017. These ChildFund offices are now integrating child-friendly accountability methods into their ongoing programs, while ChildFund programs in El Salvador, the Philippines, South Korea and Uganda are also beginning implementation as part of their engagement with children in communities.

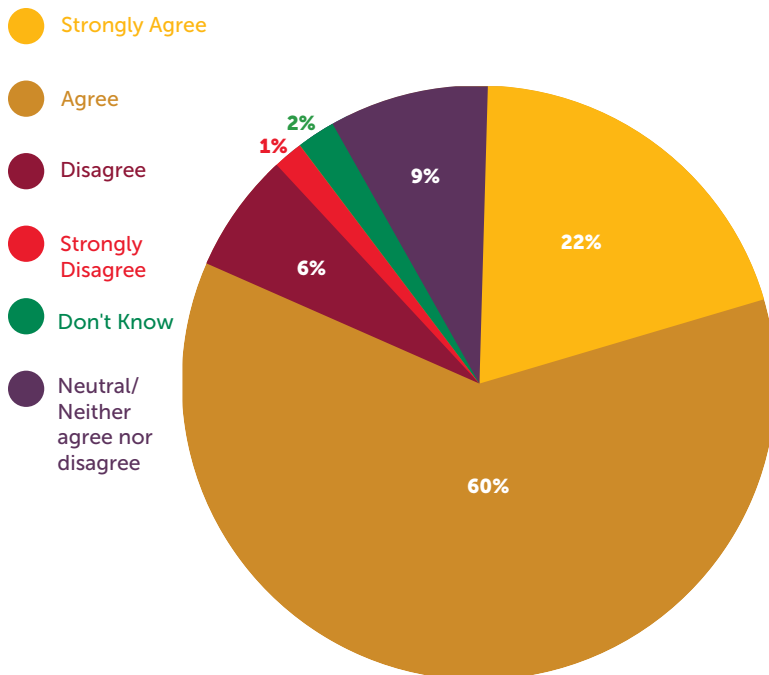
An early impact assessment of the Child-friendly Accountability Initiative indicates that stakeholders in participating countries overwhelmingly believe that children who participated in the program gained new knowledge, skills and confidence to hold government officials and local authorities accountable for their duties to protect children (see graphic on page 22). A middle-school student in South Korea felt that they could now be a "voice for the children" who are facing violence and wanted others to join this "good club."

In some cases, child participants have already taken action to advocate for protection of children. For example, some have advocated with local authorities, influenced the attitudes and behaviors of their families, peers and teachers, and reported cases of violence, abuse or exploitation of children to local child authorities or helplines. Some government officials and local authorities are also now more supportive of child protection, having made new commitments to protect children in their communities, arranged child rights trainings for teachers and revived dormant child protection structures. Though it is still early, many stakeholders believe the Initiative has led to a reduction of violence against children in their communities.<sup>31</sup>

For example, in Villa Hayes, Paraguay, advocacy by the children's group trained and supported through the initiative generated a number of positive results. The child-friendly accountability initiative is now part of an ongoing program involving six school councils, three district children's committees, the Association in Defense of the Rights of Children and Adolescents, and the National Network for Children and Adolescents in Paraguay. The following are examples of positive results:

- The mayor of Villa Hayes signed a commitment letter that outlined specific actions the local government would take to improve children's protection and arranged several meetings to follow up on these commitments, such as extending the reach of the child welfare office and adding street lights.
- The city established a CODENI office in the municipality of Villa Hayes, a free municipal service for the protection and promotion of the rights of children and adolescents. Among other aspects, the office provides family counseling, intervenes in cases where the rights of children and adolescents are threatened, and conducts awareness-raising of their rights.
- Participating children responded positively to the experience of participating in the initiative, with some expressing a desire "to continue the process" knowing that they "can contribute to changing the culture of violence" in their communities, such as through educating local authorities *about child rights and needs of the community to improve protection of children from violence.*

**The Child-friendly Accountability Initiative has resulted in a reduction of violence against children in your community.**



## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

2019 promises to be a critical year for advancing the EVAC agenda. In order to fully realize SDG 16.2, the ChildFund Alliance urges governments to take the following actions:

- ✓ Analyze gaps in child protection systems and create and implement policies to address those gaps and end violence against children.
- ✓ Increase financial commitments and actual investment to end violence against children.
- ✓ Meaningfully involve children in the development and implementation of child protection policies, as well as within SDG review processes.
- ✓ Effectively prevent and respond to violence against children by adopting evidence-based INSPIRE strategies and demonstrate leadership on ending violence against children.
- ✓ Report on target 16.2 and related targets in SDG monitoring and evaluation efforts.

The program examples included in this document reveal a growing momentum among governments, civil society members, children and youth to join forces to end violence against children and build safer communities. The examples also demonstrate the critical role that children and youth can play in holding local and national governments accountable to meet the goal of ending violence against children.

# ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Violence against children is defined as “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.” (UN General Assembly, Article 19, Convention on the Rights of the Child. [www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx))
- <sup>2</sup> The INSPIRE strategies are part of a comprehensive package (the INSPIRE package), which includes the core document with an overview of the INSPIRE strategies; the implementation handbook; and a set of indicators to measure progress towards implementation of the strategies.
- <sup>3</sup> 26 countries have committed as Pathfinding Countries: Armenia, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Georgia, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Romania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates and Uganda. See <http://www.end-violence.org/pathfinding>.
- <sup>4</sup> This paper presents examples of ChildFund's EVAC programs undertaken between 2015 and 2018, which coincides with the establishment of the SDGs.
- <sup>5</sup> Cong Van Tran et al., “Definition and Characteristics of “Cyberbullying” among Vietnamese Students,” *VNU Journal of Science, Education Research*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (2018) 1-10. <https://js.vnu.edu.vn/ER/article/view/4212>.
- <sup>6</sup> “Youth suicides shine light on cyberbullying in Vietnam,” *Tuoi Tre News*, March 14, 2018, <https://tuoitrenews.vn/news/society/20180314/youth-suicides-shine-light-on-cyberbullying-in-vietnam/44540.html>.
- <sup>7</sup> Emily Darko, William Smith and David Walker, *Gender violence in Papua New Guinea*, September 2015. <https://www.odi.org/publications/9887-gender-violence-papua-new-guinea>.
- <sup>8</sup> ChildFund/CIMIC/FHI360, 1-Tok Kaunselin Helpim Lain. *A report on the first two years of operation, 2017*.
- <sup>9</sup> Funding for this program, recently extended for a further four years, was made available under the New Zealand Aid Programme's Partnerships and Funds Programme, the New Zealand Government's international aid and development programme.
- <sup>10</sup> Adam Smith International, *Evaluation of New Zealand's Country Programme in PNG*, June 2018.
- <sup>11</sup> Darko, Smith and Walker.
- <sup>12</sup> PNG helpline says violence affects everyone, *RNZ*, June 28, 2018. <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/programmes/datelinepacific/audio/2018650926/png-helpline-says-violence-affects-everyone>.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> [http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=1422](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1422).
- <sup>15</sup> United States Department of State, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report - Bolivia, June 28, 2018. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3e0b9aa.html>.
- <sup>16</sup> Ministerio de Justicia y Transparencia Institucional, *Bolivia enfrenta integralmente la trata y tráfico de personas*, July 29, 2017. <https://www2.justicia.gob.bo/index.php/noticias/notas-de-prensa/2322-bolivia-enfrenta-integralmente-la-trata-y-traffic-de-personas>.
- <sup>17</sup> This may involve the creation of School Counseling Zones, which are safe spaces where trained adolescents can listen to and provide counseling to adolescents facing sexual and other types of violence.
- <sup>18</sup> The Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, *Uganda Violence against Children Survey. Findings from a National Survey*, August 2018. <http://www.togetherforgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/VACS-REPORT-FINAL-LORES-2-1.pdf>.
- <sup>19</sup> United States Department of Labor, ABK3 LEAP. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/our-work/projects/abk3leap>.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ruth Bowen, *Independent Final Evaluation, ABK3 Leap, Livelihoods, Education, Advocacy, and Protection against Child Labor in the Philippines*, Sistemas Familia y Sociedad (SFS), 2016. [https://www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ilab/Philippines\\_ABK\\_PhaseIII.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ilab/Philippines_ABK_PhaseIII.pdf).
- <sup>22</sup> ChildFund International, *Impact Report 2018, 2018*.
- <sup>23</sup> Bowen.
- <sup>24</sup> Ministerio de Justicia y Pública y Dirección General de Estadística Y Censos, *El Salvador 2017: Encuesta de violencia contra niños, niñas y adolescentes*, May 2019. <https://www.togetherforgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/VACS-Reporte-ESA-14-MAYO.pdf>.
- <sup>25</sup> Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, World Report on Violence against Children, UN Secretary-General's Study, October 2006. <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/content/un-study-violence-against-children>.
- <sup>26</sup> Research for 2019 *Small Voices, Big Dreams* included quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (group and key informant interviews) methodologies to explore the how children see the world. Consultations reached almost 5,500 children aged between 10 and 12 years from 15 countries worldwide.
- <sup>27</sup> Children participated in the design and research of the 2019 *Small Voices, Big Dreams* report. For example, in Spain, ChildFund member Educo formed a children's research council, which promoted the voice of children and adolescents from the outset. For more information on how the *Small Voices, Big Dreams* Children's Research Council functioned, see [www.educo.org/eraseunavoz](http://www.educo.org/eraseunavoz) (Spanish only).
- <sup>28</sup> ChildFund, *Meet the youth fighting to end violence against children in Sri Lanka*, August 15, 2018. <https://medium.com/childfund-international/meet-the-youth-fighting-to-end-violence-against-children-in-sri-lanka-6c4297660e6d>.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup> Child-friendly accountability is the ability for children to meaningfully participate in making certain that those charged with protecting and fulfilling children's rights actually do what they are supposed to do. If they do not or cannot, children and their representatives must have some recourse.
- <sup>31</sup> Julia Freedson and Yvonne Kemper, *Child-Friendly Accountability Initiative: Early Impact Assessment*, March 29, 2018 [Internal document].



*Photo of young girl in Honduras  
provided by ChildFund International.*

Every child deserves to live a life free from violence.

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