

Save the Children advocacy relating to the UN Study on Violence against Children

In 2000 and 2001, the Committee on the Rights of the Child devotes its two days of general discussion to violence against children. As a result, the Committee recommends a UN Study on the subject.

In 2001, the UN General Assembly requests the UN Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth study on violence against children.

In 2002, Save the Children decides to make use of advocacy opportunities generated in connection to the UN Study to help eliminate all forms of violence against girls and boys.

In 2003, the UN Secretary-General appoints an independent expert, Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, to lead the Study in close cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

In 2004, a Director for the Study is appointed, Ms Amaya Gillespie from UNICEF, to lead a small secretariat with support from OHCHR, UNICEF and WHO. As her first public

engagement, the new Study Director participates with other UN and NGO staff in a Save the Children Workshop on child participation (the report is available on www.savethechildren.net).

In 2004, Save the Children also submits toolkits to guide children's participation in consultations and in research (see next page).

In 2005, UNICEF organizes 9 regional consultations as part of the study process; Save the Children is an active planning committee partner in most regions. Save the Children seconds an expert on the participation of girls and boys to support the UN Study secretariat. Save the Children publishes a child-friendly version of Professor Pinheiro's concept paper for the Study (widely available on UN and NGO websites in English, French and Spanish). See next page for information about Save the Children submissions.

In 2006, the Study expects to present its findings and recommendations.

The Vision

The right of every girl and boy to a life free from violence will be realized.

The Aim

All parts of societies recognize and take action to eliminate all forms of violence against girls and boys, with the result that people's behavior; attitudes and practices are changed with respect for children's rights.

Save the Children Advocacy

All Save the Children's advocacy will be based on the principles of Child Rights Programming (CRP) including strengthening and promoting: children's participation, accountability and non-discrimination including gender equality. Working from a CRP perspective means addressing the root causes of rights violations related to violence against children, including patriarchal power structures, and unequal power-relations between children and adults. It means that Save the Children is recognizing children as rights holders and social actors, creating child-friendly environments and providing child-friendly information on abuse and violence. Governments should be recognized as primary duty-bearers accountable for addressing and taking action against violence. It also means recognizing parents and family as the primary caregivers and protecting and supporting them in this role. It implies using participatory and empowering approaches, working in partnerships and alliances for promoting rights of the child and for addressing violence against girls and boys.

Overall priority

- Save the Children will focus on the **participation of girls and boys** (from various background: age, disability, ethnicity, religion, region, status, language, HIV/AIDS status, sexual preference, etc.) as an overall and specific contribution in addressing violence affecting them. The core purpose of their participation is to empower them as individuals and as members of civil society and will involve giving children a genuine opportunity to express their views, be involved in decisions or take action.

The International Save the Children Alliance's priorities reflect those identified and prioritised by girls and boys in many consultations/processes around the world. They also take into account Save the Children members' present experience and capacities as well as the need for complementarity vis-à-vis other organizations involved.

The following three specific themes are given priority:

- Children in conflict with the law
- Physical and humiliating punishment
- Sexual abuse of girls and boys

Save the Children recognises that gender-based violence is relevant to all the above themes and needs special consideration.

Settings

Violence against girls and boys must be addressed in homes, schools, communities, workplaces, streets, institutions, etc.

Save the Children Submissions to the UN Study

At a global Save the Children workshop in Bangkok in 2003, 25 participants (including regional focal persons and task group members) representing Alliance members from Canada, Denmark, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden and UK agreed to propose a few key themes for Save the Children advocacy. These were later presented at the Members' Meeting in Bangkok. Since then, work on these themes has continued and submissions to the UN Study have been made, or under way, for all of them.

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

An overall and cross-cutting priority is children's meaningful and ethical participation in addressing violence affecting them. Meaningful and ethical participation of children is guided by the following principles:

- An ethical approach and a commitment to transparency, honesty and accountability
- A safe approach in which children's protection rights are properly safeguarded.
- A non-discriminatory approach that ensures that all girls and boys – regardless of their gender, ability, language, ethnicity, etc have an equal opportunity to be involved
- A 'child friendly' approach, which enables children to contribute to the best of their abilities.

In the official call for submissions, reference was made to Save the Children's first contribution to the Study:

A toolkit produced to encourage children's meaningful and ethical participation in the Study has been published by Save the Children (in two parts: *So You Want to Consult with Children? and So You Want to Involve Children in Research?*) (See: <http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/resources/publications.html> and www.savethechildrensweden.org)

Save the Children is also preparing child-friendly versions of key documents and the South and Central Asia region has finalized a film, "*Children's voices AGAINST VIOLENCE against Girls & Boys*", prepared by children as a regional contribution to the UN Study.

CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW

Save the Children has long and wide-ranging programme experience working with children at risk including when they are in conflict with the law. Save the Children's work has shown the intricate relationship between their experience of being in conflict with the law and violence. It has also highlighted the inappropriateness of the justice system in addressing the care and protection challenges these children face, often exposing them to further violence. The submission will focus on those links and the importance of good community based alternatives to the justice system ly particularly in terms of prevention, diversion and reintegration. It will include examples of good practice from several countries where Save the Children has programme experience. In addition Save the Children will submit a report which will bring together the views and recommendations of the children we work with in this area in terms of what works for them and what would prevent them from coming in conflict with the law in the first place.

PHYSICAL AND HUMILIATING PUNISHMENT

Save the Children works towards eliminating, through education, legal reform and other measures, all forms of control and punishment of children in the home, schools and all other settings, which breach children's fundamental rights to respect for their physical integrity and human dignity. In consultations all over the world, children are giving evidence that physical and humiliating punishment is the most common and the most widespread form of violence experienced by them in the world today. Save the Children believes that it is essential not just to listen to children, but also to act on what they say.

Challenging all physical and humiliating punishment of children, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has called on States in all regions to prohibit and eliminate these forms of violence through awareness-raising and public education. Save the Children is among the first international NGOs to take up the challenge, seeking to accelerate the process with a variety of programmes at regional and national levels. This submission will draw on work in progress in all the regions, including research into children's own views and experiences, situation analysis of the laws allowing physical and humiliating punishment, advocacy of law reform and public and parent education.

SEXUAL ABUSE OF GIRLS AND BOYS

Sexual abuse means the imposition of sexual acts or acts with sexual overtones on children by one or more persons. Save the Children's submission will build on Save the Children's long experience of programme and advocacy work against child sexual abuse and exploitation of girls and boys. Some 10 country/regional papers are under preparation and the submission will be based on those. In addition to brief descriptions and situation analysis, workshops with children will be held and programme experiences reviewed. Examples of good practices are included and preventive strategies explored. The overall purpose is to identify some essential learning points for addressing the problem.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence is relevant to all the above themes and also needs special consideration. Gender-based violence means violence inflicted or suffered on the basis of gender differences, such as female-feticide and infanticide, honor killing, early marriage, acid attacks, female genital mutilation, anorexia, bulimia, as well as street violence related to boys. All forms of violence have a gender and diversity dimension. A discussion paper on this subject has been submitted by Save the Children as a contribution: *Children and Gender-Based Violence*

Save the Children has also made available some 50 selected existing Save the Children reports relevant to the Study and a discussion paper and report entitled "After the Study" that opens the discussion about possible outcomes, in particular at international level.

National Save the Children members, regional offices and country programmes that participate in the UN Study process may also submit – and encourage partners to submit – reports relevant to the Study.

The Save the Children Task Group on Children and Violence

Created by the Advocacy Group in 2002 and led by Save the Children Sweden, this group was greatly helped by the work and expertise of other, already existing Alliance groups; notably the Child Participation Working Group, the Task Group on Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation and the Task Group on Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children. Today, the Task Group's work on remaining thematic submissions is led by the following members:

- Children in Conflict with the Law: Save the Children UK
- Child Sexual Abuse: Save the Children Norway
- Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children: Save the Children Sweden

The Task Group also benefited from Alliance cooperation in regions that made it possible to create links between the Task Group and Focal Points in all regions. These, in turn, link up with members involved at national level. So, there are also many National Focal Points.

At the end of 2004, another global workshop took place, this time in Pretoria. The purpose was for the regional focal persons and the Task Groups to review plans for advocacy on the selected themes and preparations for Save the Children's contributions and advocacy at the regional consultations and globally.

Future directions

Save the Children is in a unique position to link children's concerns, priorities, recommendations and actions with policy makers at sub-national, national, regional and global levels. With Save the Children's credibility and extensive global experiences we are also in a unique position to influ-

ence other development agencies, media, private sector, academia and civil society to take action against violence affecting girls and boys. Also, there are many lessons to share between the global challenge "quality education for children affected by war" and the UN Study to further address rights violations of children in all settings and circumstances.

In 2004, Save the Children published a discussion paper and workshop report entitled "After the UN Study – what next?" to explore possible outcomes of the Study. There seems to be general agreement that changes at national and local levels are those that will affect children most. Actions at international and regional levels should support such changes.

For the Task Group it is critical that the findings and recommendations in our own submissions to the UN Study, and those of the UN Study itself, are disseminated as widely as possible and that relevant parts are discussed and acted upon in schools, in institutions and elsewhere by children themselves and all other key stake-holders in a country.

Thus, 2005 is critical for influencing the UN Study recommendations and for mobilising key actors to make commitments in order to help stop violence against children.

While 2006 will be critical for preparing for advocacy to stop violence against children world wide using our own and the UN Study recommendations to mobilize for actions. Save the Children members who have not yet been involved can engage both through advocacy and programmes. The Task Group plans to prepare publications, including child friendly versions, that can easily be translated and adapted to different national settings so that all members who wish can participate in a launch coinciding with the UN Secretary General's presentation of his report to the UN General Assembly at the end of the year.

If you wish to start preparing for advocacy already now, or are simply interested in receiving regular updates, please provide Save the Children Sweden with contact details for a focal person in your organization.

Author Kwon Eun-jung, girl, age 18 (senior, high school) from South Korea. The drawing is entitled 'family war'.



Boy age 13, from Nepal.



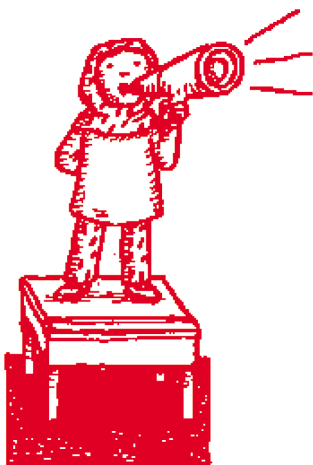
*Save the Children fights for children's rights.
We deliver immediate and lasting improvements
to children's lives worldwide.*

Girl age 12, from Nepal.



Girl age 12, from Nepal.

Call for action!



**For further information, please contact
Save the Children Task Group on Children
and Violence:**

Lena Karlsson, Save the Children Sweden
Chair
lena.karlsson@rb.se

Clare Feinstein, Save the Children
Lead for child participation
clare.feinstein@savethechildren.nl

Helena Gezelius, Save the Children Sweden
Senior Adviser
helenagezelius@ch.internet.net

Turid Heiberg, Save the Children Norway
Lead for submission on child sexual abuse
turid.heiberg@reddbarna.no

Elizabeth Jareg, Save the Children Norway
Save the Children Representative to the NGO Advisory Panel
elizabeth.jareg@reddbarna.no

Alana Kapell, Save the Children Canada
Child participation and
National Focal Point for the UN Study in Canada
akapell@savethechildren.ca

Ravi Karkara, Save the Children Sweden
Regional Focal Point for the UN Study in South Asia
Seconded to the UN Study Secretariat as an Advisor on the
participation of Girls and Boys
ravikarkara@savethechildren.org.np

Florence Martin, Save the Children UK
Lead for submission on Children in Conflict with the Law
f.martin@savethechildren.org.uk

Mali Nilsson, Save the Children Sweden
Lead for submission on Physical and Humiliating Punishment
mali.nilsson@rb.se

**Save the Children Regional Focal Points for the
UN Study on Violence against Children:**

East and Southern Africa: Alebel Derib,
Save the Children Sweden
alebel@swedsave-et.org

Lisa Sekaggya,
Save the Children Uganda
l.sekaggya@sciug.org

Ulrika Sonesson,
Save the Children Sweden
ulrika.sonesson@za.rb.se

West Africa: Ulla Blomquist,
Save the Children Sweden
ulla.blomquist@scswa.org

**Middle East and
North Africa:** Elisabeth Sundström,
Save the Children Sweden
esundstrom@scsmena.org

East Asia and Pacific: Dominique Pierre Plateau,
Save the Children Sweden
dplateau@mweb.co.th

South Asia: Ravi Karkara,
Save the Children Sweden
ravikarkara@savethechildren.org.np

Europe and Central Asia: Gabriela Alexandrescu,
Save the Children Romania
rosc@mb.roknet.ro

Pepa Horno,
Save the Children Spain
pepa@savethechildren.es

Latin America: Denise Stuckenbruck,
Save the Children Sweden
denise.stuckenbruck@scslat.org

Maria Ines Cuadros,
Save the Children UK
m.cuadros@savethechildrenuk.org.co

Luz Maria Sequeira,
Save the Children Norway
luz.sequeira@reddbarna.org.ni

North America: Alana Kapell,
Save the Children Canada
akapell@savethechildren.ca

For additional copies of this folder contact:
Save the Children Sweden
Information Service
107 88 Stockholm, Sweden
Telephone: +46 8 698 9000
Fax: +46 8 698 9012
e-mail: info@rb.se
Web address: www.rb.se and www.savethechildrensweden.org



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Title: "El diálogo es mejor que la violencia" (talking is better than violence) Author: L.G.L.S., age 10, Brazil

*Save the Children's Advocacy Work
regarding the UN Study on*

Violence against Children



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