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## ENDING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

### WHICH GOAL?

**Goal 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

**Targets:** <http://www.globalgoals.org/global-goals/peace-and-justice/>



Every five minutes a child dies as a result of violence. Violence against children is everywhere. But people turn a blind eye. It's hidden behind closed doors. It's invisible.

All children have the right to live free from violence (*Articles 19, 36, 38, 39*). Violence which harms their physical and mental growth. Violence which holds back every society.

Violence, exploitation and abuse are often practiced by someone known to the child, including parents, other family members, caretakers, teachers, employers, law enforcement authorities, state and non-state actors and other children. Only a small proportion of acts of violence, exploitation and abuse are reported and investigated, and few perpetrators are held accountable.

Violence, exploitation and abuse occur in the homes, families, schools, care and justice systems, workplaces and communities across all contexts, including as a result of conflict and natural disasters. Many children are exposed to various forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, including sexual abuse and exploitation, armed violence, trafficking, child labour, gender-based violence, bullying (see UNICEF, *Too often in silence*, 2010), cyber-bullying, gang violence, female genital mutilation/cutting, child marriage, physically and emotionally violent child discipline, and other harmful practices.

No matter a child's gender, race, family, age, ability or where they live in the world, every child has the right to

be safe from all forms of violence. Governments, adults, parents, communities and other children are all responsible for protecting children against violence.

The Sustainable Development Goals present a historic opportunity to change the outcome that so many children endure – but only if we focus on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and put their safety, education and health at the heart of the agenda.

The inclusion of *Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies* shows that there is a will to end violence in all its forms. Goal 16's targets will include ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children, as well as significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Every five minutes a child dies as a result of violence. We cannot wait any longer to act.
- Around 120 million girls under the age of 20 worldwide (about 1 in 10) have experience forced intercourse or other forced sexual acts.
- In 2012, 95,000 children and adolescents aged 0 to 19 were killed – almost one in five of all homicide victims that year.
- Almost one quarter of girls aged 15 to 19 worldwide – almost 70 million – report being victims of violence since age 15.
- Around 6 in 10 children aged 2 to 14 worldwide – almost a billion – are regularly punished physically by their caregivers.

## ACTIVITIES TO LEARN ABOUT GLOBAL GOAL 16

### WORD CHECK!

- Abuse
- Exploitation
- Trafficking

### ADVICE FOR TEACHERS

Violence is an issue which affects children everywhere – including children in your class. Often, violence is hidden in plain sight and children may be experiencing or have experienced violence, but not disclosed their experience. It's important to talk about this subject so that children can know their rights and also know what to do if they or someone they know is experiencing violence.

However, when talking about this issue in a class setting, it's really important to make a safe space for conversation so that no child is harmed, distressed or has a personal experience exposed in front of people who they may not want to share this with.

Teachers should also be aware that stories of violence in the news can cause children to feel distressed.

You can use these further resources to help guide how (or even if) you approach these topics with your students:

- Oxfam's guide to Teaching Controversial Issues : <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/teacher-support/tools-and-guides/controversial-issues>
- UNICEF Australia's guide on how to talk to children about the Syria crisis. <http://www.unicef.org.au/blog/september-2015/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-the-refugee-crisis>

## PRE-SESSION ACTIVITY: HEART CONTRACT (10 MINUTES)

### Resources:

- Butchers paper/whiteboard
- Pens

UNICEF often uses a tool called a *heart contract*, to enable the participants in a session to agree on what they are going to do to make a safe space. We strongly recommend that teachers firstly check with school counsellors or support workers to see if there are any sensitive issues which they need to be aware of and decide whether this is an appropriate subject to discuss in a classroom setting. Teachers also need to be aware that there may be children in their class who have experienced or are currently experiencing forms of violence, abuse and neglect and who have not disclosed this to a trusted adult.

### Steps:

1. Explain that today the group is going to be learning about the subject of violence against children.
2. Explain that every child has the right to be safe from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect. This is written down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
3. Explain that for the group's discussion, it's important for the group to be a safe space for everyone.
4. Explain that the group is going to agree on what things we are going to do to make this a safe space for everyone.
5. Draw a big heart on the board/butchers paper.
6. Invite one student volunteer to come up and scribe.
7. Ask the group what we are going to do to make a safe space. Students provide their suggestions and one student scribes the answers.
8. Prompt questions:
  - a. What things do you need to feel safe and like you can share your views?
  - b. If someone suggests something like: "respect each other" ask a further question: "how do you know when you're being respected?". Or if someone suggests "listen" ask "how do you know when you're being listened to?"
  - c. Keep asking – does anyone have anything else to add? Anything different? Anything similar?
  - d. Keep expanding on responses.
9. When it seems like everyone who wants to has provided their views, recap on what's written in the contract and clarify that everyone feels comfortable with this.
10. During the rest of the session the teacher can refer back to this heart contract as a behaviour management tool, and things can be added.

## ACTIVITY 1: GLOBAL YOUTH LETTER TO THE WORLD'S LEADERS (20 MINUTES)

For students aged 14 and over

### Resources:

- *Letter to the World's Leaders* video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Svh9qsxiAoo>  
*Letter to the World's Leaders*: <https://medium.com/photography-and-social-change/dear-world-leaders-fbdf85abd56a>
- Handout 6: Tommy's Story

### Steps:

1. Heart contract

2. Explain that today you are going to explore the impact of violence on children and young people around the world.
3. Ask:
  - a. Do you feel safe in your community?
  - b. What would make you feel more safe?
4. Watch the *Letter to the World's Leaders* video, featuring UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador David Beckham.
5. Explain that 18 child survivors of violence from across the world have written a letter to world leaders calling on them to end the widespread abuse that affects millions of children. From violent conflict in South Sudan, sexual abuse in Iceland, and child trafficking in Pakistan, the powerful letter highlights an epidemic of violence that is facing children in every corner of the world.
6. Individually, students spend 10 minutes reading the letter to world leaders. A letter to the world's leaders <https://medium.com/photography-and-social-change/dear-world-leaders-fbdf85abd56a>
7. And/or students read Handout 6: Tommy's Story
8. Group discussion:
  - a. What issues raised in these letters do you think are similar to issues in your own communities?
  - b. What forms of violence are described?
  - c. What is the impact of violence on these young people?
  - d. Who is responsible for protecting children against all forms of violence?
  - e. What action do these young people ask world leaders to take?
9. If you could talk to our country's leaders about ending all forms of violence against children, what would you say? Students could include this in their letter or message to their local MP. If there is time, students can write their own letter.
10. Explain how the Global Goals aim to address and be part of ending all forms of violence against children.

## ACTIVITY 2: CHILDREN IN GAZA TALK ABOUT THEIR LIVES IN A CONFLICT ZONE (25 MINUTES)

For students aged 8 and over

### Resources:

- Stories from Gaza photo story:  
<http://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Documents/PhotoStories/Stories-from-Gaza-Photo-Story-2015.pdf>

### Steps:

1. Heart contract.
2. Read the stories from Gaza as a class.
3. Discuss the questions at the end of the story.
4. Draw a Venn diagram on the board. As a class, brainstorm the similarities and differences students noticed between their own lives and the lives of the children in the story.
5. Explain: no matter where children live in the world, they all have the same rights. This includes the right to be protected from things that can harm them – like conflict.
6. Explain what UNICEF is doing to support children affected by conflict.
7. Brainstorm – what can your class do to support people who are refugees overseas or in your local communities?

## UNICEF IN ACTION

UNICEF works with partners around the world to ensure children's rights are protected and upheld in all



situations by building protective environments. Protective environments help prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation of children through:

- strengthening government commitment and capacity to fulfil children's right to protection;
- promoting the establishment and enforcement of adequate laws;
- addressing harmful attitudes, customs and practices;
- encouraging open discussion of child protection issues that includes media and civil society;
- developing children's life skills, knowledge and participation;
- building capacity of families and communities; providing essential services for prevention, recovery and reintegration, including basic health, education and protection; and
- establishing and implementing effective monitoring and reporting.

Every year, UNICEF responds to hundreds of emergencies around the world, in partnership with other organisations and governments.

In 2014, UNICEF's response to children in emergencies included:

- Treating 1.8 million children for severe acute malnutrition
- Vaccinating 16 million children against measles
- Providing 13 million people with access to safe water for drinking, bathing and cooking
- Providing 1.8 million children with psycho-social support
- Supporting 2 million children to access formal and informal education.

#### FURTHER LINKS

- **Understanding Community Violence, World's Largest Lesson & UNICEF:** <http://tg1wllcdn.bonsaitiger.com/localised/en/11%20Understanding%20Community%20Violence.pdf>
- **UNICEF resources:** <https://teachunicef.org/teaching-materials/topic/peace-education>
- **UNICEF New Zealand resources on refugees:** <https://www.unicef.org.nz/learn/school-room/conflict-and-refugees>



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## HANDOUT 6: TOMMY'S STORY

Tommy, 16 years-old stands in Dublin.

In his community, Tommy has been subject to violence and intimidation from the police and his peers. Tommy has participated in UNICEF Ireland's Picture Your Rights project, where he photographed areas within his community where he doesn't feel safe.

Tommy has identified the lack of recreational space and facilities as one of the main reasons for violent encounters in his community. He cites the prevalence of violence amongst adolescent boys but admits he feels safe at home and at school where he is surrounded by people whom he knows and cares for.

Here's his story in his own words:

"Violence is the norm here and I'm always trying to avoid it because it can come from anyone – police, adults or even people my own age.

"If the police didn't just threaten you and get you into trouble, I'd feel safe.

"The police will come over with their batons and verbally threaten you and hit you. They hold you by the throat, bash your head against the window, threaten you with children's court, leave you in a cell for a few hours, all just for standing at a certain place."

"I feel unsafe when I see a police car drive by, see a group of lads with their hoods up, seeing one fella on his own. Even just two people on their own is bad. When you see loads of lads in other groups, it's scary.

"I've been chased through my own neighbourhood, kicked and put in a car by a total stranger for thinking that I did something, that I didn't do. He brought me up to the police, just left me there and nothing happened. The police did nothing about what happened to me, they just listened to him. They only cared about what they thought I did.

"I feel safe at home and in school. At home I know nothing is going to happen to me and it's the same at school. I feel safe in my estate where I know everyone and they know me, they know my face. No one makes me really feel safe outside my area. Probably only your best mates but that's about it. You can't trust anyone else.

"Give us more stuff to do in our areas. People go around robbing people's bikes and phones cos [sic] they've nothing else to do. That's what people do – they hop on people and take their phones. You think groups are going to rob you.

"If I felt safe all the time, I could be myself a bit more and not always look behind me. I could talk about things I want to. You're too afraid people take things the wrong way and react badly.

"I think people are learning violence from family and friends, or if they go through something in life, it turns them into that. You'd never see someone who robs houses from a posh family. So much has to do with what you're surrounded by, the place you're from and what you see."

**Every five minutes a child dies as a result of violence and millions are left unsafe in their homes, schools and communities. The stories of these children are rarely told. Through the EndViolence Youth Letter initiative voices of 18 child survivors of violence from across the world are now being heard. From violent conflict in South Sudan, sexual abuse in Spain, and child trafficking in Pakistan, these powerful testimonies highlight an epidemic of violence that is facing children in every corner of the world.**

**From these testimonies, UNICEF created a joint letter, addressed to world leaders, calling on them to end the widespread abuse and turn written promises into change for children.**

**Read the full letter here:** <http://www.unicef.org.au/blog/september-2015/youth-letter-to-end-violence>

**Through the ENDViolence Youth Letter Tommy's voice is being heard.**