

THE BODY SHOP: BREAKING SILENCE

Sometimes the best-kept secret turns out to be the worst-case scenario. That is the situation for an estimated 275 million children worldwide who witness domestic violence. Often feeling alone, terrified and invisible, their childhood secrets are not accompanied by shared giggles and joyful whispers of innocence, but by panic, shame and the emotional scars of trauma.

For these hidden victims of household brutality, the effects of seeing their parents or caregivers battered, bruised and bullied can last a lifetime. For this reason, The Body Shop International, UNICEF and the Secretariat for the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children teamed up to shine a spotlight on a pandemic that is cloaked in secrecy.

The Body Shop International, the skin- and body-care retailer, has long championed humanitarian causes. In 2004, The Body Shop launched 'Stop Violence in the Home', an ongoing global campaign to raise awareness. Although documentation of the devastating effects of domestic violence on women has improved in recent years, far less is known about the damage done to children who witness the abuse. Consequently, The Body Shop looked to UNICEF when its focus turned to the smallest victims of this huge problem.

In August 2006, The Body Shop's 'Stop Violence in the Home' campaign was launched in 50 countries. Through more than 2,000 stores around the world and The Body Shop At Home businesses in the United States and the United Kingdom, the campaign raised awareness and funds to support local partners working to prevent domestic violence and to provide treatment.

Behind Closed Doors: The impact of domestic violence on children is a joint UNICEF/The Body Shop publication that

identifies a strong link between domestic violence and child abuse. Among child survivors of abuse, 40 per cent reported domestic violence within their homes. The report also reveals that children from violent homes often exhibit learning problems, limited social skills, aggression, low self-esteem, depression and anxiety, and are more likely to experience domestic violence later in life, as victims or perpetrators.

UNICEF distributes *Behind Closed Doors* through its National Committees and field offices. The Body Shop coordinates the campaign through its worldwide markets. The goal is to raise awareness and foster dialogue about this largely ignored pandemic – and to encourage governments to enact legislation that criminalizes domestic violence and establish programmes to help children recover. In addition to visibility, the in-store campaign's brochures and leaflets are used to raise funds for non-governmental organizations that work with child survivors of domestic violence.

"Thanks to the support of UNICEF and the passion and determination of The Body Shop store staff, the campaign has played a vital role in taking what is a very challenging and difficult issue from behind closed doors and out into society," said Christopher Davis, Global Campaigns Manager of The Body Shop International. "Creating *Behind Closed Doors* and launching the findings across the world gave the campaign a great profile and support – our ultimate objective of making a real difference, raising awareness and funds for children around the world."

The Body Shop and UNICEF are committed to achieving long-term results from the *Behind Closed Doors* campaign. And they are working together to pry open those doors behind which frightened children wait to be rescued.