VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN UGANDA SURVEY

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGES
#ENDViolence #InvestInUGchildren
BACKGROUND

1. First-ever national household survey that measures the prevalence, nature, and consequences of physical, emotional, and sexual violence against children in Uganda, including sub-national estimates of violence against children.

2. Conducted by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development with support from Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS); UNICEF; The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); The US Agency for International Development (USAID); Makerere College of Health Sciences School of Public Health; ChildFund International; The AfriChild Centre for the Study of the African Child; and TPO-Uganda.

3. Methodology
   - Data collected through interviews with 5,804 children and young people - 3,159 females and 2,645 males.
   - Respondents separated into two groups - Ugandans aged 13 - 17 years and 18 - 24 years.
   - Responses disaggregated by sex and analysed independently.

WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

Violence means any form of physical, emotional or mental injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse, intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against an individual which may result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.
3 in 4 young adults experienced some form of violence during childhood.

1 in 3 young adults experienced at least two forms of violence – of either sexual, physical and emotional violence - during childhood.
ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE

HALF OF ALL 18-24 YEAR OLD UGANDANS BELIEVE IT IS ACCEPTABLE FOR A MAN TO BEAT HIS WIFE

AMONG 18-24 YEAR OLDS, 6 IN 10 BELIEVE A WIFE SHOULD TOLERATE VIOLENCE IN ORDER TO KEEP THE FAMILY TOGETHER
Sexual violence is defined as including all forms of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children. This encompasses a range of acts, including:

- completed non-consensual sex acts
- attempted non-consensual sex acts
- abusive sexual contact
- the exploitative use of children for sex

Sexual violence is a serious problem affecting children of all ages. It includes a wide range of acts, from complete non-consensual sex to abusive sexual contact, and the exploitative use of children for sex. The effects of sexual violence on children can be long-lasting, leading to a range of physical, mental, and emotional issues. It is important to recognize and address sexual violence, as it can have serious consequences for children's well-being and future success.
**KEY FINDINGS**

**AMONG 18-24 YEAR OLDS:**

1 in 3 females

1 in 6 males

**EXPERIENCED SEXUAL ABUSE DURING THEIR CHILDHOOD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females</th>
<th>35%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 in 10 YOUNG WOMEN WERE PHYSICALLY FORCED TO HAVE SEX DURING THEIR CHILDHOOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females</th>
<th>10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 in 5 girls’ first sexual experience was forced or pressured.

Girls are 4 times more likely than boys to have had their first sexual experience forced or pressured.

1 in 4 have experienced abusive sexual touching.

1 in 10 have experienced sexual touching.
DESCRIPTION OF FIRST INCIDENCE OF SEXUAL ABUSE

1 IN 2
HAD THEIR FIRST EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL ABUSE WITH SOMEONE WHO WAS AT LEAST 5 YEARS OLDER

1 IN 4
1 IN 4 YOUNG ADULTS WHO EXPERIENCED SEXUAL ABUSE DURING CHILDHOOD FIRST EXPERIENCED IT AT 13 OR YOUNGER
UGANDAN CHILDREN MOST FREQUENTLY EXPERIENCE SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE EVENING

Girls are more than twice as likely as boys to have experienced their first incident of sexual abuse by a stranger or spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend.

Boys are twice as likely as girls to have experienced their first incident of sexual abuse by a friend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Girls (%)</th>
<th>Boys (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbour</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolmate</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACCESSING SERVICES AFTER SEXUAL VIOLENCE

TWICE AS MANY GIRLS MISSED SCHOOL AFTER EXPERIENCING SEXUAL VIOLENCE THAN BOYS
ROUGHLY 1 IN 3 KNEW OF A SERVICE TO SEEK AFTER EXPERIENCING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

However, only a small minority sought a service after experiencing sexual violence.

And an even smaller minority received a service after experiencing sexual violence.
THE MAJORITY OF GIRLS AND BOYS TOLD SOMEONE AFTER EXPERIENCING SEXUAL VIOLENCE
Violence Against Children in Uganda: Key Facts and Messages

Physical violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force with the potential to cause death, disability, injury, or harm. VACS Uganda indicators of physical violence included punching, kicking, whipping, beating with an object, strangling, suffocating, attempted drowning, burning intentionally, using or threatening with a knife, gun, or other weapon. Respondents were specifically asked about physical acts of violence perpetrated by four types of potential perpetrators: Intimate friends, defined during data collection to include a romantic partner, a boyfriend/girlfriend, or a spouse. Peers, including people the same age as the respondent not including a boyfriend/girlfriend, spouse, or romantic partner. These may be people the respondent may have known or not known including siblings, schoolmates, neighbors, or strangers. Parents, adult caregivers, or other adult relatives. Adults in the neighborhood such as teachers, police, employers, religious or neighborhood leaders, neighbors, or adults the respondent did not know. For each perpetrator type, respondents were asked about three measures of physical violence: Has (1) an intimate friend (romantic partner, boyfriend, or husband)/(2) a person your own age/(3) a parent, adult caregiver, or other adult relative/(4) an adult in the neighborhood ever: punched, kicked, whipped, or beat you with an object? choked, suffocated, tried to drown you, or burned you intentionally? used or threatened you with a knife, gun, or other weapon?

**Consequences**

- More than 1 in 4 girls who experienced pressured or physically forced sex became pregnant.
- 1 in 6 girls reported exchanging sex for material support.
- Children who suffered sexual abuse experienced higher mental distress than children who didn’t.
- Boys who experience sexual violence are more than 3 times as likely to have symptoms of sexually transmitted infections than boys who don’t.
Physical violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force with the potential to cause death, disability, injury, or harm. Physical violence includes:

- punching, kicking, whipping, beating with an object, strangling, suffocating, attempted drowning, burning intentionally, using or threatening with a knife, gun, or other weapon.

VACS Uganda indicators of physical violence included punching, kicking, whipping, beating with an object, strangling, suffocating, attempted drowning, burning intentionally, using or threatening with a knife, gun, or other weapon. Respondents were specifically asked about physical acts of violence perpetrated by four types of potential perpetrators:

1. Intimate friends, defined during data collection to include a romantic partner, a boyfriend/girlfriend, or a spouse.
2. Peers, including people the same age as the respondent.
3. Parents, adults the respondent may have known or not known including siblings, schoolmates, neighbors, or strangers.
4. Teachers, police, employers, religious or neighborhood leaders, neighbors, or adults the respondent did not know.

For each perpetrator type, respondents were asked about three measures of physical violence:

- Has (1) an intimate friend (romantic partner, boyfriend, or husband)/(2) a person your own age/(3) a parent, adult caregiver, or other adult relative/(4) an adult in the neighborhood ever: punched, kicked, whipped, or beat you with an object? suffocated, tried to drown you, or burned you intentionally? used or threatened you with a knife, gun, or other weapon? Physical violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force with the potential to cause death, disability, injury, or harm. VACS Uganda indicators of physical violence included punching, kicking, whipping, beating with an object, strangling, suffocating, attempted drowning, burning intentionally, using or threatening with a knife, gun, or other weapon. Respondents were specifically asked about physical acts of violence perpetrated by four types of potential perpetrators:

- Intimate friends, defined during data collection to include a romantic partner, a boyfriend/girlfriend, or a spouse.
- Peers, including people the same age as the respondent.
- Parents, adults the respondent may have known or not known including siblings, schoolmates, neighbors, or strangers.
- Teachers, police, employers, religious or neighborhood leaders, neighbors, or adults the respondent did not know.
KEY FINDINGS

THE MAJORITY OF YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL VIOLENCE DURING THEIR CHILDHOOD

- 68% experienced physical violence with nearly half experiencing it at the hands of parents or adult caregivers.

WITH NEARLY HALF EXPERIENCING IT AT THE HANDS OF PARENTS OR ADULT CAREGIVERS

- 45% of men and 49% of women experienced physical violence by an adult in the community.

4 IN 10 MEN 3 IN 10 WOMEN EXPERIENCE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE BY AN ADULT IN THE COMMUNITY
4 in 10 boys, nearly double that of girls, experience physical violence from their peers.

Among those who were subjected to physical violence by an adult, their first experience was nearly always committed by a teacher.

- Boys: 94%
- Girls: 86%
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN UGANDA: KEY FACTS AND MESSAGES

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IS OFTEN WITNESSED AT HOME

THE MAJORITY OF CHILDREN HAVE WITNESSED PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITY

THE VAST MAJORITY OF CHILDREN WHO EXPERIENCE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, EXPERIENCE MULTIPLE INCIDENTS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

9 IN 10 OF BOTH GIRLS AND BOYS

♀ 41%  ♂ 34%
ACCESSING SERVICES AFTER PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

1 IN 4 CHILDREN MISSED SCHOOL AFTER EXPERIENCING PHYSICAL VIOLENCE
Violence Against Children in Uganda: Key Facts and Messages

**ROUNGLY 1 IN 3**

Roughly one in three children knew of a service to seek after experiencing sexual violence.

- 32% of girls
- 42% of boys

**HOWEVER, ONLY 1 IN 10 CHILDREN SOUGHT A SERVICE**

After experiencing physical violence.

- 10% of girls
- 12% of boys

**AN EVEN SMALLER MINORITY RECEIVED A SERVICE**

After experiencing physical violence.

- 8% of girls
- 11% of boys
Violence Against Children in Uganda: Key Facts and Messages

Overall, boys are more likely to seek and receive a service for experiencing physical violence than they are for experiencing sexual violence.

The majority of children told someone after experiencing physical violence.

- Seeking a service: Physical violence seeking rate is 12%, sexual violence seeking rate is 6%.
- Receiving a service: Physical violence receiving rate is 11%, sexual violence receiving rate is 5%.

Women's reporting rate: 59%, Men's reporting rate: 64%.
OF ALL CHILDREN WHO EXPERIENCE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, 1 IN 5 ARE INJURED

1 IN 2 BOYS WHO EXPERIENCE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED GREATER MENTAL DISTRESS THAN BOYS WHO DIDN’T

BOYS WHO EXPERIENCE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE WERE MORE LIKELY TO HARM THEMSELVES THAN BOYS WHO DIDN’T
Emotional violence is defined as a **pattern of verbal behavior over time or an isolated incident** that is not developmentally appropriate and supportive and that has a high probability of damaging a child’s mental health or his/her physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development.
KEY FINDINGS

AMONG 18-24 YEAR OLDS 1 IN 3 EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF EMOTIONAL OR VERBAL VIOLENCE DURING THEIR CHILDHOOD

THE MAJORITY OF CHILDREN WHO EXPERIENCE EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE, EXPERIENCED MULTIPLE INCIDENTS

7 IN 10 8 IN 10

THE MOST COMMON PERPETRATOR OF EMOTIONAL OR VERBAL VIOLENCE WAS A CHILD’S MOTHER OR STEPMOTHER

41% 35%
CONSEQUENCES

CHILDREN WHO EXPERIENCE EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE WERE MORE MENTALLY DISTRESSED THAN THOSE WHO DIDN’T

CHILDREN WHO EXPERIENCE EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE WERE MORE LIKELY TO THINK OF KILLING THEMSELVES THAN THOSE WHO DIDN’T

GIRLS WHO EXPERIENCE EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE WERE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE SYMPTOMS OF A SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE THAN GIRLS WHO DIDN’T
CALL TO ACTION

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- If you experience any form of violence, report it immediately to trusted parents, teachers, religious leaders, health workers and community leaders who can offer you protection and help you to access services, including justice

- Report any cases of Violence Against Children (VAC) to the nearest Police Station, Community Development Officer, Probation Officer, or call the Child Helpline (Sauti 116)

- Develop and use life skills, such as proactive communication, to prevent and protect you from all forms of violence

- Avoid risky situations like walking alone at night in the dark or in deserted places

- Analyze the behaviour of your friends and make friends with those who have a positive influence on you and can help support and guide you to access appropriate services

- Join safe online discussion groups and information sources for critical information and positive support and counselling

- Seek health care and information from a health centre

- In case of sexual violence, seek Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)\(^1\) from a health facility within 72 hours

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP/PARLIAMENTARIANS

- Implement existing policies and legislation to ensure children are protected from violence in the home, community and school

- Identify new legislation, policies and programmes that will better protect children from violence

- Stimulate constructive discussion and debate about violence against children publicly, in parliament, and in other fora

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\(^1\) Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is the short-term use of ARVs to reduce the likelihood of acquiring HIV infection after potential occupational or non-occupational exposure.
CALL TO ACTION

PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

- Your own behavior as a parent or caregiver has an impact on children. Model positive behaviors such as open communication and caring attitudes, rather than violence.

- Prevent and protect children from all forms of violence - sexual, physical and emotional.

- Support children who experience violence to receive prompt protection, services and justice.

- Increase children’s, especially adolescents’, access to information and integrated services to better secure their well-being.

- Talk openly with children about their rights and concerns.

- Encourage children to stay in school, and to complete primary and secondary education.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- Publicly encourage communities to reject all forms of violence, and to report all cases to relevant authorities.

- Speak out against violence in churches and mosques and make congregations aware of violence in communities as well as the attitudes and behaviours needed to change it.

- Raise awareness of the negative consequences of physical, sexual and emotional violence against children.

- Participate in parents’ networks to support information sharing on parenting, as well as to better prevent and respond to cases of Violence Against Children (VAC).

- Provide platforms for children and young people to safely discuss issues such as violence against children.
INSTITUTIONS

- Protect all children from all forms of violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse

- Communicate with parents, guardians, family members, other members of the community and local organisations about how to prevent violence, as well as access key services, such as health and justice services, when children experience violence

- Work effectively with schools and other community-based programmes and services for children to implement a structured approach that follows-up and refers cases of violence against children when they occur

- Provide a supportive school environment that empowers children, and does no harm to them

- Support children to seek medical care and social rehabilitation services as required

- Discourage settling cases of sexual violence out of court and, instead, report any cases of Violence Against Children (VAC) to the nearest Police Station, Community Development Officer, Probation Officer, or call the Child Helpline (Sauti 116)

- Allocate the appropriate resources to prevent and respond to violence against children across all sectors

- Facilitate the establishment of supportive, child-friendly platforms such as in school and out of school clubs, which offer space for girls and boys to talk about sensitive issues that affect their lives, such as violence

- Provide appropriate counseling and guidance to children/adolescents

- Communicate with adolescents in a friendly, encouraging way about their needs and rights

- Develop the life skills of children, especially adolescents, in order for them to increase their self-esteem and confidence so that they are able to resist negative social pressure
CALL 116 TO REPORT VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

CALL 116, TOLL FREE

Report Child Abuse

#ENDViolence #InvestInUGchildren

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www.facebook.com/unicefuganda    www.youtube.com/user/UNICEFUGanda