

Your ideas on how grown-ups can help you stay safe

The report has all the ideas you told us about ways to help children keep safe. In the report we tell grown-ups about some of the things they need to do to make you safer:

- there needs to be education about refugees and returnees and people need to know it is wrong to hurt children and discriminate against them;
- children need people in the community who are there to care for them, people who can help them when something goes wrong, people who will listen to their problems;
- children need more education about HIV and AIDS, about how to keep safe, and what to do if something bad happens to them;
- children need to do activities that will help them feel better when they remember the sad things that have happened to them, like war, leaving their homes, being treated badly or seeing violent things in their areas;
- schools, especially girls' toilets need to be made safer;
- there should be things for children to do after school like sports, cultural activities and clubs;
- grown-ups need to be educated that forced marriages for girls under 18 are illegal;
- grown-ups must make sure children are all able to go to school for as long as they need to and if they are not in school help them find ways to earn money so they will not have to do things that place them in danger of violence;
- teachers, soldiers, police, government officials, churches, UN agencies and NGOs all need to find ways to make children safer.

The children who attended the consultation in Johannesburg told people from all your countries about these things.

Children have rights!

It is important to remember that children have rights. Have you heard of the Convention on the Rights of the Child? This is an agreement between countries to make sure that certain rights are protected. Almost all of the countries in the world have agreed to create laws that protect the children's rights that are written in the Convention. Zambia, Angola and South Africa have agreed to this Convention. This means your government has promised to make sure children in your country are safe from all types of violence.

The big report will remind governments and all other people who work to look after children about ways to keep children, especially refugee children, safe from violence. You did a very important thing for children in your country and all over the world by telling us your stories. Well done and thank you!

*"We are children! We want peace!
All of us dream about peace."*

You told us about your lives!



Photo: F. Bonelli

A report-back to children who participated in the UNHCR research study on violence in the lives of refugee and returnee children in Southern Africa

The study was submitted to the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children



June 2005

Dear children,

Do you remember that some people from UNHCR visited you earlier this year to do research with you? Do you remember that children from Angola, South Africa and Zambia took part in the research? Do you remember us talking together about your lives and the violence you experience in your lives?

What you told us was very interesting and very useful too! We took all the recordings back to Johannesburg, wrote down everything you said and then wrote a report. We gave the report to many different people:

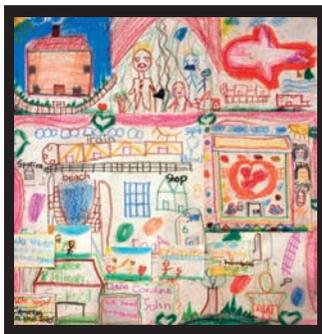
- to UNHCR and all the different people who work with UNHCR in your area and in other parts of the world;
- to people in the government in your country;
- to the United Nations so that they hear stories from refugee and returnee children and put them in the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children;
- to people who work in your country to make sure children get their rights.

These people were very interested in the report. Some of them were surprised about the things that happen to you, they had not heard these things before. Some of them have told us they will try to do something about the problems of violence. This may take some time and we cannot promise that things will change quickly. But it is good that now they know what happens to children in your place!

We know that for some of you the stories you told us made you feel very sad. Your story can help grown-ups understand how violence makes children feel.

What happened to your drawings?

When you get this short report you should also get your drawings back. They have been on a very long journey! We took them on the airplane to Johannesburg and kept them very safe. We took photos of them. Can you see a photo of your picture in this report? In July people from all over Eastern and Southern Africa came to Johannesburg to talk about the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. Your pictures were exhibited there. Some children who took part in the research were also there and they told people about what you said. People from all over Africa and the world looked at them and found out about your lives.



The report we wrote is very long because you told us lots of things, so we have written a short report here for you to read. You will also get a copy of the long report.

What the report says about violence in your lives

From what you told us we know that refugee and returnee children in all three countries face lots of violence. This is some of the violence you told us about.

In Zambia

- Forced marriages
- Being afraid of bandits
- Being afraid of rape
- Corporal punishment at school
- Walking a long way and doing very hard 'piece work' to earn food or money
- Girls sometimes take money or food from men in exchange for sex

In Angola

- Violence from people because you have come from Zambia. Local people stop you going to school, collecting water, using the taxis and selling at the market. Some people even beat you and call you 'Zambiano'
- Rape
- Being afraid of bandits

In South Africa

- Some people call you 'makwerkwere' and sometimes beat you
- The places where you live are violent
- Poverty is a big problem for girls who sometimes sell sex for food or money

How you protect yourself

You told us about lots of ways you have for protecting yourself. You walk with friends, you stand near the security guards on the train, you don't go to unsafe places, you walk with adults to some places, you try to make friends with people so they accept you and are nice to you. You do lots of clever things! These are all in the report.

