

WHERE NEXT?

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

DAVID STEVEN, CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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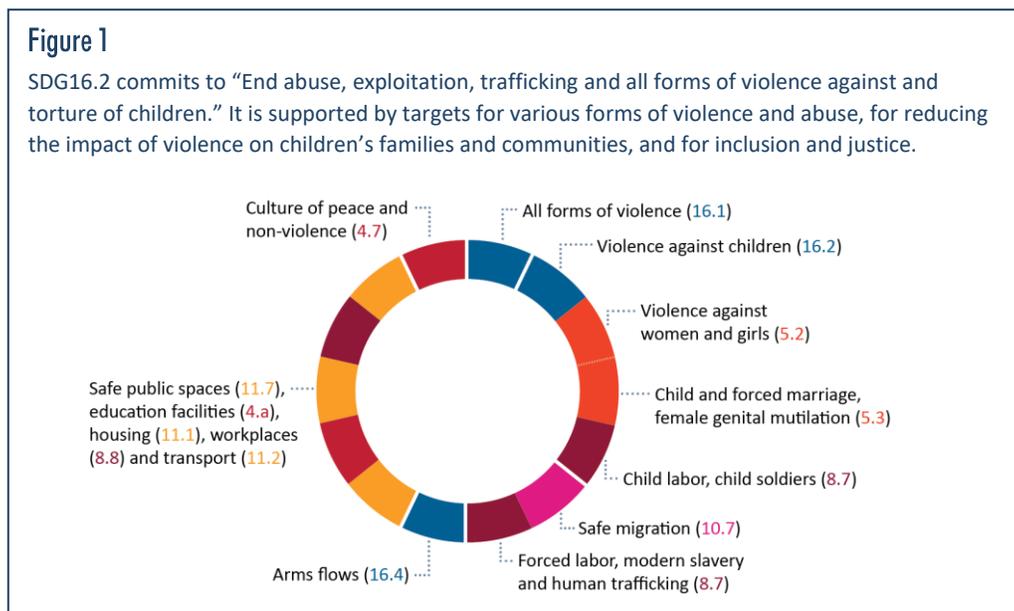
Introduction

In 2014, as negotiations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development intensified, the Center on International Cooperation published *If Not Now, When? Ending Violence Against the World’s Children*.¹

This report reviewed the Open Working Group’s proposal for “visionary” targets covering all forms of violence against children, which argued that these targets offered:

*An historic opportunity to unite the world behind a global, national, and local movement to protect children from violence, based on increased **political will**, a **global partnership** that will protect children, and the identification of **pathfinder countries** that will be ready to deliver the new agenda from January 2016.*

Since the finalization of the 2030 Agenda (figure 1), important steps have been taken to deliver these targets, with increased political commitment, the launch of a new multi-stakeholder partnership, and a group of countries making the prevention of violence against children a priority. However, accelerated commitment and action is now needed if significant, measurable, and sustained reductions in levels of violence are to be achieved.



Political Will

If Not Now, When? underlined the importance of increased political will, given the denial that surrounds violence against children, the influence of international norms on child protection, and the untapped potential of a growing body of evidence on “what works” to prevent violence. It called for leaders to:

Signal their personal commitment to protecting children, and to early and sustained action to meet proposed targets for the new development agenda.

Following their agreement at the Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, the SDG targets have been successful in strengthening advocacy of a growing movement that aims to end violence:

- The Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Violence against Children, and for Children and Armed Conflict have worked to mobilize “leaders from all walks of life to take concrete action and widen circles of non-violence around children’s lives.”²
- International organizations have united behind INSPIRE, a “package” of seven strategies for ending violence against children (see figure 2). INSPIRE draws together “the best available evidence to help countries and communities intensify their focus on the prevention programs and services with the greatest potential to reduce violence against children.”³
- Major campaigns have increased pressure to act, including the *It Takes a World* campaign (World Vision)⁴ and the *#EndViolence* campaign (UNICEF).⁵



Ending violence against children is not yet, however, at the forefront of debate about how to deliver the 2030 Agenda. Threats to children are usually considered in isolation, rather than as part of the broader challenge of building peaceful societies that are free from fear and violence.⁶ The needs of children have also been largely absent from debate about how to deliver the Secretary-General’s prevention agenda, with little recognition of INSPIRE’s potential as a frontline tool for longer-term prevention.

Internationally, the most prominent political champions are still those with mandates tied to children’s rights, not those with broader political, development, and security responsibilities. The same is true at national level, where heads of state and government, and ministers of foreign affairs, finance, and planning must play a more central role in ending violence. Campaigns have gained significant traction, but are far from building the groundswell of support needed to drive the transformational change required by SDG16.2 and related targets.

Global Partnership

If Not Now, When? called for the formation of a global partnership to scale up action to prevent violence and protect children.

It recommended that this new partnership should act as a platform for implementing the strategies needed to end violence, and for national commitments and action. The partnership should also provide estimates for “the cost and effectiveness of interventions to prevent violence, leading to a ‘Solutions Summit’ that would mark a step forward in the development of evidence-based policymaking.”⁷

Partners began work to develop the partnership in early 2015, with the Special Representative on Violence against Children, UNICEF, WHO, the Elevate Children Funders Group, and the child-focused agencies* among those playing an early role.[†] The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (*EndViolence*) was launched by the Secretary-General at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in July 2016.⁸ An associated multi-donor Fund to End Violence against Children was also launched.⁹

The *EndViolence* partnership aims to “mobilize a powerful movement behind a common strategy for ending violence, strengthening the political will that is needed for delivery of ambitious, evidence-based policies and programmes that will lead to significant, sustained and measurable reductions in violence.”¹⁰ It is identified as the overarching platform for implementation of the INSPIRE strategies.¹¹

Since its launch, the partnership has:

- Begun to strengthen the movement for ending violence against children at global and regional levels, by supporting regional platforms in Africa¹² and Asia,¹³ collaborating with other partnerships such as Together for Girls, Girls not Brides, the Child Protection in Humanitarian Action Alliance, and establishing a “corporate council” of business leaders.¹⁴
- Set up an INSPIRE implementation working group as a forum for governments, international organizations, civil society, and foundations. The working group will develop the guidance, indicators, and training needed to ensure that INSPIRE achieves impact at global and national levels.¹⁵
- Signed up 13 “pathfinder” countries, six of which have agreed national roadmaps for implementing SDG16.2 and related targets (see below).¹⁶
- Developed an economic costing model which allows countries to cost interventions for ending violence against children, according to parameters that can be tailored to their context and capacity.
- Announced that Sweden will host the Solutions Summit on Violence against Children in February 2018.

*ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children’s Villages, Terre des Hommes International Federation, and World Vision. UNICEF was also part of this group during negotiations of the 2030 Agenda.

[†] The Center on International Cooperation provided the partnership with strategic support ahead of its launch.

The *EndViolence* partnership is still in its early stages. It must now demonstrate that it has the confidence and support of its major partners, ensure that INSPIRE fulfills its potential as the primary strategic framework for ending violence against children, and act as a focus for financing a field that has traditionally been starved of funds.

Above all, it will be judged on whether its pathfinder countries deliver measurable results for children and whether these countries believe a global partnership adds significant value to their national efforts.

Pathfinder Countries

If Not Now, When? called for “pathfinder” countries, from all regions and income groups, to develop and implement “an *ending violence* road map, with an emphasis on actions for 2016-2020 and clear identification of domestic and international funding needs.”¹⁷

This recommendation was informed by a study of the experience of partnerships from other sectors, with low-performing partnerships likely to be “those that expand too quickly, their embryonic systems overwhelmed by members with only a weak commitment to action.”¹⁸ In the early years of a new partnership, it is better to have a small number of countries delivering transformative change than many countries making, at best, incremental progress.

To date, the record on national leadership is promising:

- At the launch of the *EndViolence* partnership, ministers from Indonesia, Mexico, Sweden, and Tanzania committed to roadmaps for ending violence. These countries have subsequently been joined by Nigeria, Paraguay, and Sri Lanka, with commitments from countries of all income groups demonstrating the importance of a universal response to violence against children.
- Pathfinder countries have demonstrated their willingness to develop more ambitious and integrated plans. Mexico, for example, has committed to 31 priority actions, based on the INSPIRE strategies, as the basis for a multi-sectoral approach to ending all forms of violence.¹⁹
- Tanzania, for example, brought together eight plans for ending various forms of violence against women and children, each of which had its own coordination structure, into a comprehensive plan that will build “systems that both prevent violence against women and children in all its forms, and respond to the needs of victims/survivors.”²⁰
- Cooperation has been strengthened between pathfinder countries. For example, ministers from Indonesia and Sweden have agreed to work closely together, making the case for investing in systems that protect children and cooperating to prepare for the Solutions Summit in Stockholm.²¹
- Beyond the group of pathfinders, other countries – Canada, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom – are providing financial and political support to the *EndViolence* partnership and fund, while Ignite Philanthropy has been formed by a group of foundations* as a pooled fund in support of INSPIRE and the *EndViolence* partnership.²²
- The major child-focused international NGOs are consolidating their work at a national level, agreeing at a recent meeting at the Bellagio Center to support joint platforms to end violence, initially in four countries.

The commitment from pathfinder countries must be sustained over the time needed to implement national roadmaps and to demonstrate results. This process cannot be taken for granted. Intensive support for the

* The founding members are the Human Dignity Foundation, Oak Foundation, and the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

countries is still needed, combined with mutual learning and accountability. The first wave of pathfinders must demonstrate sustained success to make the case for increased investment and political support, and to encourage other countries to follow the direction they have set.

Where Next?

As the 2030 Agenda enters its third year, those working to end violence against children must redouble their efforts.

The next milestone is the HLPF in 2019, which has a twofold significance. At ministerial level in July, it will take the theme “empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” and review SDG16 and SDG10 (inequality).^{*23}

In September, leaders will gather for the first 2030 Agenda summit, where they will review results in the first four years for all 17 SDGs. The summit marks the beginning of the second four-year cycle, and will provide “high-level political guidance” on the agenda and “mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation.”²⁴

November 2019 marks the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, providing an opportunity to build on momentum from the HLPFs, with events that emphasize the importance of an active approach to preventing abuses of children’s rights.

Action is needed across nine areas to maximize the opportunity that 2019 offers to step up efforts to protect children from violence.

1. Tell a more positive story

“No violence against children is justifiable; all violence against children is preventable” – the central message of the 2006 Secretary-General’s study on violence against children – continues to resonate.

In the decade since the study was published, the evidence that violence is preventable has continued to strengthen. Advocacy for ending violence, however, has lagged behind. Too often, messages focus only on the scale of the problem, feeding the fatalism about violence that inhibits action, rather than also explaining how positive change can be brought about.²⁵

The INSPIRE strategies offer an opportunity decisively to shift the debate from problems to solutions, making the case that “we already have sufficient evidence to allow us to stop the violence and replace it with safe, stable and nurturing environments in which children can thrive.”²⁶

INSPIRE must also be used to articulate a compelling case for investment, persuading decision makers that implementation will deliver long-lasting social and economic benefits.

This will demonstrate how improvements in children’s safety provide the foundation that allows them to develop normally and to thrive, with violence having unacceptable costs not just for children themselves, but for societies and economies.²⁷

2. Look outwards

The drive to end violence against children will only become a first rank issue if its champions move beyond a narrow “child protection” focus, and engage with broader policy debates and directions.

* Also SDG4 (education) and SDG17 (partnership).

There are three important opportunities to underscore the importance of tackling violence against children to delivering broader international objectives.

- *The Roadmap for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies.* The roadmap provides a “first guide” for those working to implement all 2030 Agenda targets for peace, justice and inclusion (SDG16+).²⁸ It provides a platform for the EndViolence partnership to strengthen cooperation with those working on other SDG16+ targets (safe cities, access to justice, social inclusion, etc.).
- *The Secretary-General’s prevention platform.* The EndViolence partnership and its pathfinder countries should also explain the importance of INSPIRE to the Secretary-General’s prevention agenda and to sustaining peace, distilling lessons learned and gaining consensus for further investment in results.²⁹ This is especially important as the UN and the World Bank set out a shared agenda on prevention.³⁰
- *Reform of the UN development system.* Through the UN reform processes, there are growing pressures for international actors to work towards system-wide results that cut across organizational and sectoral silos. INSPIRE provides a basis for international organizations to define shared results and to demonstrate how they will work together to support member states as they deliver SDG16.2.

In each of these cases, there is an opportunity to explain how concrete commitments to ending violence, at national and local levels, will contribute to building more peaceful societies and to creating the conditions in which children can play a productive role in their societies.

3. Aim higher

Existing champions for ending violence against children – in particular, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and the co-chairs and board members of the EndViolence partnership – have an important role to play in making the case for action to those working on broader development, rights, and security challenges.

This is a time of changing leadership in the international system. The Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, and UNDP Administrator are all still in the early stages of their time in office, while UNICEF now has a new Executive Director.

These senior figures – along with the World Bank President and Chief Executive Officer – have the potential to drive violence against children up the international agenda, as part of a broader focus on prevention, and on building peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Member states can also make a vital contribution as leaders for children, using their convening power and platforms to ensure that the EndViolence partnership and INSPIRE have sufficient political and financial support.

Increased leadership from the private sector and from philanthropists will also be important. The EndViolence corporate council offers the potential to engage the chief executives of major businesses, while Ignite Philanthropy seeks commitment from a new generation of foundations.

All countries should be encouraged to be accountable for actions to prevent violence against children, tracking and reporting on their commitments, including through their national voluntary reviews at each year’s HLPF. The Global Alliance on Reporting Progress on Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies can help with this objective.³¹

4. (Re)-commit to INSPIRE

The INSPIRE strategies must be promoted and strengthened. The priorities are to:

- Invest in implementing the INSPIRE strategies at national and local levels, as growing number of countries make commitments to prevention programs at scale.
- Ensure that existing global and regional partners have a genuine commitment to INSPIRE and a common understanding of how to maximize the transformational potential of the strategies.
- Expand the number of partners who have formally endorsed or adopted INSPIRE, so that it becomes the principal “operating system” for all those working in the field.
- Agree a division of labor, so it is clear how each partner will contribute to making INSPIRE a success.
- Launch the INSPIRE implementation guide at the Solutions Summit and promote it to decision makers and funders around the world, while investing in local implementation and research capacity.
- Finalize indicators that will monitor how many children are covered by one or more INSPIRE strategies to an acceptable level of quality as part of a rigorous tracking mechanism.
- Develop costing models for each strategy, and use INSPIRE to align funders, increase finance for violence prevention, and track the allocation of resources.
- Build on the recently completed Know Violence in Childhood global learning initiative³² to develop a research agenda that will strengthen INSPIRE over time.
- Create a version of INSPIRE that is tailored to vulnerable countries and those affected by conflict (INSPIRE+), linked to the Secretary-General’s prevention agenda.

Each of the INSPIRE strategies offers opportunities for leadership, but there is particular potential for a big push on the strategy for *parent and caregiver support*. Positive parenting models are important to all forms of prevention, with life-long impacts on children’s development, attitudes, and relationships, while support programs for families are highly cost effective. UNICEF, WHO, and other partners should make action on parenting a major part of their contribution to the Secretary-General’s prevention agenda.

5. Nurture the pathfinders

The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children has brought together an important group of pathfinder countries, each of which has made an important start in implementing the SDG targets for ending violence against children.

Many of the pathfinders need intensified strategic, technical, research, and financial support to maximize their chances of success. All of them will benefit from strengthened platforms for learning and for mutual accountability.

The partnership should:

- Focus its efforts on existing rather than new pathfinders, given the importance (and difficulty) of demonstrating measurable progress against the SDG targets. It would be a mistake for the partnership to spread limited resources too thinly.

- Develop an engagement strategy for each pathfinder country with the aim of building and sustaining consensus between partners from all sectors over the time periods needed to demonstrate results.
- Bring together global and regional partners to ensure coordinated support for each pathfinder, with leadership at senior levels and a clear division of responsibility, especially from partners that have a strong national presence.
- Raise funding to ensure it can dedicate senior staff time to each country, based on a clear understanding of the partnership’s catalytic role and with no attempt to build duplicative delivery mechanisms at national level.
- Explore with pathfinders how they will demonstrate progress at the HLPF in 2019, working with the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies.

6. Break down silos

As a pathfinder, Tanzania chose to develop a unified plan for ending violence against women *and* children.

The Tanzanian plan drew on the INSPIRE strategies, but also the framework for preventing violence against women, which has been developed by UN Women and other international organizations.^{*33}

It demonstrated that, while there are differences in emphasis in prevention for adult women, a joint approach strengthens political profile and resource mobilization, and cuts duplication and encourages multi-sectoral collaboration.

This example must be built on, through greater cooperation between the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and similar partnerships for women, in particular the Spotlight Initiative, a new global fund launched by the United Nations and the European Union.³⁴

In the medium-term, partners should explore whether a strengthened version of INSPIRE should cover both women and children.

A shared approach, and a clear division of labor, is also needed with Alliance 8.7 which has been formed “to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour.”³⁵ Significant resources are being invested in these areas, increasing the importance of a coordinated approach.

The partnership must also continue to deepen links with other partnerships (Together for Girls, Girls not Brides, the Child Protection in Humanitarian Action Alliance, etc.).

The ECOSOC Partnership Forum in 2018 or 2019 would provide an opportunity for a strategic dialogue between all major multi-stakeholder partnerships working on the SDG16+ targets for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

7. Engage other sectors

INSPIRE should also be used as the focus for strengthening links to those working on other development challenges.

- *Implementation and enforcement of laws* – justice is identified as one of three “grand challenges” in the Roadmap for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, with a Task Force on Justice starting work

* ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, OHCHR, WHO

in 2018. This offers an opportunity to ensure the needs of children are central to those working on SDG16.3 (*access to justice for all*).

- *Safe environments* – the High Level Panel on UN-Habitat recently proposed a new mechanism (UN Urban) to strengthen cooperation across the UN on urban challenges, an issue identified by the Secretary-General as “one of the most pressing concerns of the United Nations.”³⁶ Whether or not this recommendation is taken forward, a stronger focus is needed on the burden of violence experienced by adolescents in urban settings, including at the HLPF in 2018 where safe cities (SDG11) is one of the themes. Indonesia’s leadership on child-friendly cities provides an important foundation to build on.
- *Income and economic strengthening* – empowering families economically can reduce child maltreatment, intimate partner violence, and early and forced marriage, but requires partnership with those working on social protection and women’s economic empowerment. Cooperation with the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection, launched by ILO and the World Bank, provides one opportunity to take forward this work.³⁷
- *Education and life skills* – this strategy aims to teach children pro-social skills and keep them safe in school. The priority is to make the case that these objectives are central to “inclusive and equitable quality education” (SDG3), a goal that will be reviewed at the 2019 HLPF. Mexico’s call for joint global action on bullying offers one focus of a wider global campaign on safety in schools,³⁸ as does the SRSG’s report on protecting children from bullying.³⁹

8. Strengthen the campaign

More work is needed to build a “global, national, and local movement to protect children from violence.”⁴⁰

In part, the challenge is strategic. There are large numbers of individual campaigns, but they are not yet working towards common objectives and “asks.” Children themselves need a stronger voice, in line with the 2030 Agenda’s promise to provide them with “a platform to channel their infinite capacities for activism.”⁴¹

There are considerable assets to draw on. UNICEF has one of the most powerful brands in the world. Influential civil society actors have identified violence against children as a priority. Grassroots activists are a powerful force for change, while faith leaders have a central role to play in the transformation of norms and values needed to protect children.

The EndViolence partnership and the child-focused agencies (UNICEF and the main civil society organizations) should act as a hub for advocacy on SDG16.2, based on an external engagement plan that is founded on a “theory of influence” and sets clear priorities for the next 2-3 years.

The partnership should work with the major advocacy organizations and platforms to explore a “campaign of campaigns.” This would identify shared goals, priorities, champions and “moments” that will maximize impact, while allowing each component campaign to maintain its distinct role and contribution. It would also help national campaigns learn from and reinforce each other.

High-level champions need to be used more effectively, through a strategy that makes links to broader social, economic, and security objectives, while consistently challenging the failure to listen and respond to child victims of violence. Important lessons should be drawn from 35 years of advocacy on HIV/AIDS, while the SRSG’s “High time to end violence against children’s initiative” provides a platform for the mobilization of champions.⁴²

9. Drive towards 2019, and beyond

The Solutions Summit is an opportunity to:

- Demonstrate backing from governments, international organizations and other partners at the most senior level for national action to end violence against children.
- Promote the INSPIRE strategies as the central framework and the EndViolence partnership as the shared platform for delivery of SDG16.2 and related targets.
- Display the progress of pathfinder countries and provide a platform for them to make further commitments to implementation.
- Announce new finance for ending violence against children, while strengthening mechanisms for managing pooled funds such as the Fund to End Violence against Children.
- Issue a call to action – the Stockholm Declaration on Ending Violence against Children – that will start the clock on 18 months of intensive preparations for the 2019 HLPF, providing a foundation for scaling up as the final decade of the 2030 Agenda begins.

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