

**Committee:** Special Conference on Children’s Rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Issue:** Evaluation on violence against children

**Student Officer:** Eleni Koukouza

**Position:** Deputy-President

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## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

My name is Eleni Koukouza and I am an IB student in Platon School. I am pleased to address you at the 5<sup>th</sup> PS-MUN Conference, in which I will be serving as the Deputy President of the Special Conference on the Rights of the Child in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Furthermore, one of the most interesting things I enjoy doing in my free time is attending MUN Conferences, as global issues were always appealing to me. MUN has taught me many things, such as responsibility, cooperation, respect, diplomacy, confidence, critical thinking, but above all MUN has contributed to my personality and dream, which is to become a doctor and assist children in LEDCs. That is, actually, one of the reasons I was willing to serve on this position.

I strongly believe that this is the moment when you delegates, are asked to share your thoughts and ideas, plans and knowledge through diplomatic means. I am confident that this MUN conference will be a memorable experience to us all and will provide us with incentives to think about such issues, while gaining something that is worth remembering.

I wish you all a fruitful debate.

Kind Regards,

Eleni Koukouza

## INTRODUCTION

Violence is the act of applying physical force with the aim of hurting, damaging, or killing someone or something. It also includes threats which could probably cause harm, even though they finally do not. The harm could be physical, mental or psychological. In extreme cases violence includes deliberate harm of a person to themselves, including suicide.

In 2001, the United Nations created the Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC), in which the problem of violence against children (VAC) across the world is closely examined and ideas

for further research and solutions are put forward. It is of paramount importance though to underline that not all countries have signed the Convention.

As in every socio-cultural issue, Violence against Children could be prevented and eliminated only after a cohere understanding of its magnitude, causes and consequences. More specifically, in the Special Conference our goal is to try to discuss and deal with issues, such as but not limited to:

- Forms and types of violence against children.
- The causes of the phenomenon.
- The effects of violence against children on their physical and mental health, as well as the effects on the environment and culture in general.
- Possible short and long –term measures taken by governments, organizations and the community to prevent and minimize the problem.
- Ways of dealing with children who have already faced violence.



Source: <http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/katherinemain>

## DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

**Violence** is “ the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.”

- **Self-directed violence** “refers to violence in which the perpetrator and the victim are the same individual and is subdivided into self-abuse and suicide.”
- **Interpersonal violence** “refers to violence between individuals, and is subdivided into family and intimate partner violence and community violence.”
- **Collective:** “refers to violence committed by larger groups of individuals and can be subdivided into social, political and economic violence.”

Source: <http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en/>

**Domestic Violence** *“occurs when a person uses physical violence, coercion, threats, intimidation, isolation, stalking, or emotional, sexual or economic abuse to gain or maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship.”*

**Physical violence:** *“Includes pushing, shoving, pulling, shaking, slapping, biting, hitting, punching, kicking, strangling, throwing objects at a partner, restraining, throwing the partner, use of weapons at hand like a frying pan or broom, or use of conventional weapons such as a gun or knife.”*

**Sexual violence:** *“Examples of sexual violence include: discounting the partner's feelings regarding sex; criticizing the partner sexually; touching the partner sexually in inappropriate and uncomfortable ways; withholding sex and affection; always demanding sex;”*

**Verbal and psychological abuse:** *“Examples of psychological abuse include: insulting the partner; ignoring the partner's feelings; withholding approval as a form of punishment; yelling at the partner; labeling the partner with terms like "crazy," "stupid;" blaming the partner for all his troubles; putting down the partner's abilities as lover, parent, worker; demanding constant attention and showing resentment to children;”*

**Abuser:** *“individual who is inflicting the abuse.”*

Source: <http://hr.umich.edu/stopabuse/resources/definitions.html>

**Consent:** *“Agreement or permission expressed through affirmative, voluntary words or actions that are mutually understandable to all parties involved.”*

**Retaliation:** *“Intimidation, threats, harassment, adverse changes in work or academic environments—or other adverse actions threatened or taken against a complainant or a third party—in an attempt to retaliate against, prevent, or otherwise obstruct the reporting of sexual misconduct.”*

Source: <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/policies-terms/key-terms.html>

**Confidentiality:** *“In a way that it’s intended to be private, secret; privately.”*

Source: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/confidentially>

**Homicide:** *“The killing of a person by another.”*

- **Justifiable homicide:** *“The killing of a person in circumstances which allow the act to be regarded in law as without criminal guilt.”*
- **Culpable homicide:** *“An act which has resulted to a person’s death but is held not to amount the murder.”*

Source: [The Oxford Dictionary](#)

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### General background

Almost all governments have agreed some of them not formally, though, to protect children from violence. However, not many measures have been taken to eliminate the issue and as a result the consequences of it are multiplied each year.

Further facts other than the above statement may include:

According to WHO (World Health Organization), approximately 53.000 children were murdered worldwide in 2012.

Each year over 3 million children are reported to be victims of violence in all its forms.

Many cases of abuse are never reported and it is estimated that the actual number is almost 3 times greater than formally estimated.

Child violence permanently disables 18000 children annually.

WHO estimated that 250 million boys and girls under 18 are victims of sexual violence.

In Egypt and Sudan 3 million girls and young women are subjected to *female genital mutilation*; that is, performing procedures in order to alter the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

According to ILO, (International Labour Organization) in 2004, 1.8 million children worked in prostitution and pornography, without their consent.



According to VACS (Violence Against Children Surveys), more than 1 billion children (half the number of children of the world) are victims of violence every day.

According to the International Business Times (IBT), the countries with the highest rate of child abuse are South Africa, India, Zimbabwe, the United Kingdom and the United States.

VACS reported the following information:



Physical Violence

by an adult relative, intimate partner, or authority figure

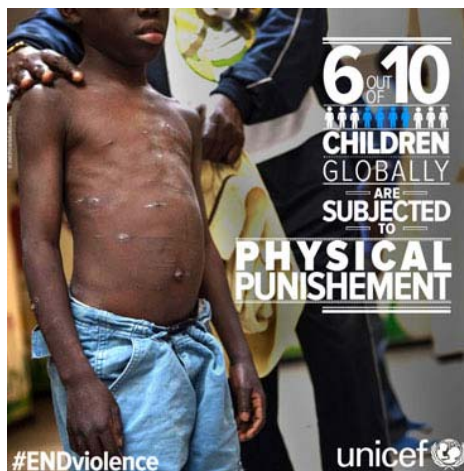
	Percent Girls	Country	Percent Boys	
	61%	Haiti	57%	
	66%	Kenya	73%	
	55%	Tanzania	53%	
	64%	Zimbabwe	76%	

Emotional Violence

by an adult

	Percent Girls	Country	Percent Boys	
	35%	Haiti	27%	
	26%	Kenya	32%	
	24%	Tanzania	28%	
	29%	Zimbabwe	38%	

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/vacs/index.html>



Source: [http://www.unicef.org/mozambique/media\\_15389.html](http://www.unicef.org/mozambique/media_15389.html)

## Types and forms of violence

*Violence between family members* is an old phenomenon which has increased rapidly over the years. This includes physical, sexual and emotional violence, neglect, early marriage and harmful traditional customs (e.g. honour killings or female genital mutilation).

*Violence in schools* includes physical violence from teachers, bullying (physical and mental violence from classmates) and sexual and racial violence (rapes, abuses, etc.)

*Violence in the working place* refers to physical or mental abuse to children who work by their employers, other staff, clients and slavery.

*Prostitution and child pornography:* Every year almost 1.8 million children are exploited in prostitution and pornography, according to ECPAT worldwide. Furthermore, articles 34 and 35 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child state that all governments should protect the children from such acts, as well as provides a holistic explanation of the rights and interests of child victims. An estimated 1 million children enter the multi-billion dollar commercial sex trade every year, while suffering degradation and life-threatening risk, according to UNICEF.

*Violence in the Community* refers to violence between classmates and children of the same age group, or from boyfriends or girlfriends. It also refers to violence between street children, between refugees, sex tourism, trafficking and violence through the media.

*Violence in orphanages and prisons:* According to UNICEF, there are between 143 million and 210 million orphans worldwide. Nearly 30 percent of all children with disabilities in Russia live in orphanages where they are facing violence.



Source: <http://human.theoslotimes.com/russia-children-with-disabilities-face-violence-neglect/>

## Causes of VAC

In order to understand the phenomenon of VAC, we need to apply the Reductionist Approach; that is to break it down in small parts, in order to have a more precise and definite idea of the issue and its causes. The causes of VAC are complex and include many factors such as the psychological stability of the victim and the abuser. Though, some of them are poverty, lack of education, loneliness and social isolation, unemployment, very high expectations of the child, previous experiences of abuse, low self-esteem, depression, alcoholism and drug abuse, mental health, immaturity, economic crisis, racism, inequality between men and women. Furthermore, it has been suggested that violence in the media plays an important role in expressing violent behaviors, especially in childhood. Children have been proved to become less sensitive to the pain of others, while being more fearful to the world around them. Video games exhibiting violence have also raised some questions, since the player is the one participating in the action, rather than just a viewer.

## Effects of VAC

*Physical Effects* include all the body injuries that are caused by abuse. They can be minor, such as bruises, or severe such as broken bones or death. Syndromes or impaired brain development are also some of the effects of physical abuse.

*Psychological Effects* include isolation, mental instability, low self-esteem and depression. One must take into consideration that the physical pain and suffering leaves, but the emotional scars caused by the experience have more serious effects, such as criminal behavior and suicide.

*Behavioral Effects* include delinquency, teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, as well as exhibiting similar behavior to others.

*Effects on Community* include mostly the socio-economic consequences, such as financial costs for welfare payments, social costs to the community of problems such as mental illnesses, homelessness and crime.

### Previous Attempts to solve the issue

Generally, there has been no effective attempt to solve the issue so far. Several resolutions such as the *UN Resolutions on the Rights of the Child (A/ RES/ 64/ 146)*, which is included in the *Convention on the rights of the child*, have been released. Governments that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child are obliged to be examined for the progress regarding the advancement of the implementation of the Convention. The UN adopted the Convention on 20 November 1989 and came into force on 2 September 1990. The Convention has been ratified by 194 countries, including every member of the UN except Somalia, South Sudan and the United States. Somalia and South Sudan have already started the process in order to become members. According to the *World Report on Violence against Children*, although there have been serious improvements regarding the issue in terms of the Convention, further action has to be taken and governments that have not ratified the Convention are encouraged to do it.

Regardless of the Convention it has to be mentioned that the actions taken so far proved to be inefficient, since the problem of Violence against Children has been rapidly increased the last 50 years with further types of violence being introduced.



Source: <http://mileskorak.com/2012/04/20/how-to-give-children-the-vote/>

In addition, two international laws have been included in Conventions 138 and 182 by the International Labour Organization (ILO), in order to help working children, however no law exists which protects children in the working place.

The UN has written guidelines with the aim of helping governments assure that children are treated properly while being in a court of law. These include the *UN Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving child and Victims and Witnesses of Crime*.

## Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

The high Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are the three main coordinating entities which have been studying the issue on Violence Against Children thoroughly. Other Committees and Organizations which scrutinize and attempt to solve the issue may include UNESCO, ILO, UNHCR, UNODC, UNDP, UNAIDS, UNDPI, DAW.

Of paramount importance is the *World Report on Violence Against Children*, which efforts to examine the nature, extend and causes of violence against children around the world. It proposes clear recommendations for action to prevent and stop the phenomenon. Since 2003, the Report has been alternated by working groups and organizations and in 2006 the study was considered by the UN General Assembly. The key message of the report is that no violence against children is justifiable and that all forms of violence can be prevented.

Furthermore, the *Optional Protocol on the Rights of the Child* creates obligations on governments to punish all activities related to violence against children, not only to those performing it, but also to those accepting the child for these activities. It states that children



should be supported with all the necessary medical and psychological care, as well as with financial and logistical support.

The value of education is also mentioned in the Protocol, which until November 2014 had been ratified by 14 countries, including Gabon, Thailand, Germany, Bolivia, Albania, Spain, Portugal, Montenegro, Slovakia, Costa Rica, Belgium, Ireland, Monaco and Andora.

The Children and Violence Challenge Fund (CVECF) exists in order to support impact evaluations of addressing violence in LEDCs. More specifically, there are 9 projects held in 9 countries- South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, Burundi, Colombia, Dominican Republic, India, China and Albania. Its interventions are not limited to: parenting education, child protection mechanisms, and children's empowerment. The grantees include among others NGOs and Universities.

## Possible solutions

### *By governments*

The government should assure that their plans are in line with the UN Conventions and Treaties. They should therefore ban all violence against children. Furthermore, considering the fact that the problem of VAC increases every day due to the lack of preventing the issue, it is suggested that a consistent plan of preventing VAC is reinforced. Of course it is of paramount importance to inform the public through the media about the causes and effects of VAC in order for them to be more sensitive with the issue. The question of child labour should be closely examined as a factor affecting VAC. Governments should encourage people to report cases of VAC and make it easier for the victims to express their views, if possible. Punishment methods for abusers and eliminating racism should also be taken under serious consideration. Schools should also have a set of rules for both teachers and students and new training program for parents and teachers is provided. In addition, governments are responsible for the safety of children who live in institutions and prisons, as well as for the psychological health of previous victims of VAC. Finally, governments should find better ways to deal with children who get into trouble with law, especially those without parents, as well as assuring that children and teenagers are educated about the nature of the Internet and its dangers.

### *By the community*

Further support for the parents is suggested from the community. Parents should be able to get advice in order to help their children develop properly from a really young age. Moreover, the community should give extra help for families who are having difficulties due to lack of education, economic stability, or racism. Also it is recommended that the community reports

cases of VAC. The community should make sure that schools inform children about their rights and that the programs provided by the government are applied as it is needed.

### Useful links

[www.efc.be](http://www.efc.be)

[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.sttopsexualviolence.iu.edu](http://www.sttopsexualviolence.iu.edu)

[www.childrightsconnect.org/](http://www.childrightsconnect.org/)

[www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

## Bibliography

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/vacs/index.html>

[http://www.efc.be/news\\_events/Pages/CVECF\\_grants\\_2012.aspx](http://www.efc.be/news_events/Pages/CVECF_grants_2012.aspx)

<http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en/>

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>

<http://www.loveourchildrenusa.org/cabusefacts.php>

[http://www.unicef.org/esaro/5480\\_violence-against-children.html](http://www.unicef.org/esaro/5480_violence-against-children.html)

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/child-sexual-abuse-top-5-countries-highest-rates-1436162>

[http://www.unicef.org/crc/index\\_using.html](http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_using.html)

<http://www.secasa.com.au/sections/for-students/child-physical-abuse-understanding-and-responding/effects-of-child-physical-abuse/>

[http://www.unicef.org/violencestudy/pdf/Study%20on%20Violence\\_Child-friendly.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/violencestudy/pdf/Study%20on%20Violence_Child-friendly.pdf)

<http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/policies-terms/key-terms.html>

<http://www.childrightsconnect.org/connect-with-the-un-2/op3-crc/>