

# VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN SURVEY: Using Science to Fuel Action

## BY THE NUMBERS

**1 billion**

More than 1 billion children—  
half of all children in the  
world—are victims of  
violence every year

**1 in 4**

More than 1 in 4 girls and  
1 in 10 boys surveyed  
have experienced sexual  
violence; less than 1 in 10  
of these children received  
supportive services

**>50%**

More than 50% of all children  
have experienced physical  
violence before age 18 in the  
majority of countries studied

## The Issue

Violence is a silent public health problem that hides within communities all around the world. It relies on secrecy and affects the most vulnerable members of society – our children. The effects of childhood sexual violence are pervasive, long lasting, and costly for all members of a community.

Recent Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) data showed that among those who reported being a victim of childhood sexual violence, few received healthcare, legal/security aid, or counseling support. Children exposed to violence are at greater risk for mental illness, chronic diseases, infectious diseases such as HIV, reproductive health problems, and social and developmental difficulties.

## CDC's Response

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides technical assistance to countries throughout the world as they implement the VACS. These surveys measure the physical, emotional, and sexual violence against boys and girls, as well as identify risk and protective factors and health consequences of childhood sexual violence. VACS data have been released in eight countries, and data collection is ongoing in several other countries.

**“This is a historic day. A day  
when Nigeria stands up and says  
to our children – we commit to  
protecting you from violence.”**

Muhammadu Buhari, President of Nigeria,  
following the release of VACS data

*VACS data show that violence against children is a problem in low- and middle-income countries. Few victims receive the help they need.*



## CDC's Response (continued)

CDC works with a global public-private partnership called Together for Girls, which was formed to end violence against children in response to a 2006 call-to-action by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to respond to and prevent violence against children.

CDC has created the THRIVES framework to summarize the critical components for preventing violence against children. THRIVES is a core group of complementary strategies for preventing violence

against children. These strategies cross health, social services, education, finance, and justice sectors: **T**rainning in parenting, **H**ousehold economic strengthening, **R**educed violence through protective policies, **I**mproved services, **V**alues and norms that protect children, **E**ducation and life skills, and **S**urveillance and evaluation. CDC, PEPFAR, UNICEF, USAID and the WHO each recognize multiple THRIVES strategies as critical components in the reduction of violence against children.

## Our Partners

- Becton, Dickinson and Company
- CDC Foundation
- United Nations Children's Fund
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
- World Health Organization

A full list of partners can be found here: <http://www.togetherforgirls.org/about-us/>

For more information, please visit:

Violence Against Children Survey: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/vacs/>

THRIVES: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/vacs-thrives.pdf>

*At least 25% of females experienced some form of childhood sexual violence in the majority of the countries studied.*



National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

Division of Violence Prevention