

Save the Children's Summary Analysis Report, part II

*Highlighting Key Comparisons
between
the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children
and
the Views and Recommendations from Save the Children*



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Sweden

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- which respects and values each child
- which listens to children and learns
- where all children have hope and opportunity

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Introduction

This brief report highlights some key comparisons between the views and recommendations of Save the Children, and the final report submitted by the Secretary General on Violence Against Children (SGSVAC Report 23.08.06). A report focusing on comparison of children's and young people's views and recommendations with the SGSVAC should be read as a complementary report to this one. Save the Children has been both directly involved in processes feeding into and supporting the UN Study on Violence Against Children at local, national, regional and international levels, whilst also playing a key role in supporting meaningful opportunities for child participation in the entire process – with a key focus on ethical practice.

Save the Children has promoted and supported children and young people to share their own experiences, views and recommendations concerning violence against children, and has incorporated children's recommendations into our own reports. However, two separate summary reports have been produced to enable comparisons between the SGSVAC report and 1) children and young people's views and recommendations; and 2) the views and recommendations of Save the Children. As whilst Save the Children has based its recommendations on children's recommendations, we have also added some of our "own" recommendations based on practice and policy analysis.

The key points shared in this report have been identified through comparison of the SGSVAC report, with views and key recommendations of Save the Children which are summarized in a set of 5 key summary reports concerning violence faced by children in different settings (home & family; school & other educational settings; care & justice institutions; workplace; street & community).

This report highlights some key positive reflections, whilst also focusing on key gaps in terms of recommendations made by the Save the Children (building upon children and young people's views) which are not adequately reflected in the Secretary General's report. *However, it must be acknowledged that many of these 'gaps' may be more adequately represented and/or addressed in the forthcoming book of the UN Study on Violence Against Children which will provide more elaboration on the analysis and recommendations highlighted in the Secretary General's report.*

The book on UN study is not yet complete. Thus, it is hoped that these two summary analysis reports can be used at national, regional and international levels as complements to the SGSVAC report and incorporated into governments action plans to implement the UN Study recommendations.

Key Positive reflections:

- In the *Introduction (section I)* of the SGSVAC report there is a clear focus on the process and importance of involving and listening to the views of children and young people, and the role that Save the Children played in facilitating and advising on children's participation processes.
- Many of children and young people's diverse experience of violence in different contexts and settings, with attention to gender, ethnicity, dis/ability

and other differences are mentioned in the report (*in sections II. A Global Problem, III. Settings in which Violence Takes Place*).

- The *Over-arching Recommendations (in section VI)* reflect a number of the key recommendations made by Save the Children (incorporating the views and recommendations of children and young people). These recommendations include: Promotion national and local action using a multifaceted and systematic framework; Prohibiting all forms of violence against children in all settings; Prioritizing prevention; Promoting non-violent values and awareness-raising; Enhancing the capacity of all who work with and for children (including training on child rights); Providing recovery and social reintegration services; Ensuring the participation of children; Creating accessible and child-friendly reporting systems and services (including telephone help-lines); Ensuring accountability and end impunity to perpetrators; Addressing the gender dimension of violence against girls and boys; Developing and implementing systematic national data collection and research; and Strengthening international commitment
- In particular, the over-arching recommendations include a key focus on ensuring the participation of children (article 12, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child), engaging and respecting their views in all aspects of prevention, response and monitoring of violence against them. Furthermore, support and encouragement for children's organizations and child led initiatives to address violence guided by the best interests principle is highlighted.

Key Gaps:

- In *section II Global Problem and section III Settings in which Violence Takes Place* whilst there is a focus on gender inequality as one of the root causes contributing to violence against children, there could be more of an explicit focus on issues of gender, power, hegemonic forms of masculinities and sexualities; as well as the need to work with boys and men to redefine and reconstruct the notions of masculinities, manhood and fatherhood. Other forms of diversity analysis (e.g. disability, ethnicity, rural/urban location could also be further highlighted).
- In the *'Home and Family' sub-section (of section III Settings in which Violence Takes Place)* there needs to be more emphasis on the negative impact of violence in families e.g. how it may cause children to run away from home or be placed in an institution, thus increasing the risk of violence faced in other settings. Furthermore, boys and girls who experience violence in the family are socialised to violent behaviour and are more likely to be perpetrators and/or victims of violence as they grow older.
- In the *'workplace' sub-section (of section III)* there is a lack of acknowledgement that children's work is not a uniform activity, and that while some forms of work violate children's rights, other forms of work do not. Work can have both positive and negative effects on the realisation of a range of child rights, and this effect will vary greatly with the type of work and with the maturity, gender and other status of the child.

- In the ‘*Care and Justice system*’ sub-section (of section III) the particular risk of sexual abuse facing girls is highlighted. However, in many parts of the world boys in prison and juvenile justice institutions/ detention centres also face high risk and experience of sexual abuse.
- In the *over-arching recommendations* (section VI) in the recommendation concerning national data collection and research there could be a broader focus on supporting participatory research with and by girls and boys (of different ages in diverse contexts), rather than just mentioning interviews with children. Furthermore, the need for the development and dissemination of child friendly information (in local languages) on all policies, services and protection issues affecting girls and boys is lacking in the over-arching recommendations, as well as in the setting specific recommendations.
- **The *setting specific recommendations* (section VI) do not give enough focus on the importance of engaging and involving children and young people in developing and implementing solutions. The importance of children’s participation (and association) should be highlighted in each setting (e.g. homes, schools, care settings, work and community).** It is only mentioned in the work setting (and in a narrow way).
- *While the over-arching recommendation* highlights the importance of supporting children's organisations and initiatives, but it should also be highlighted that adult agencies should also learn from and make partnerships with existing child led initiatives when developing our programs.
- *In the over-arching and specific setting recommendations* the whole issue of **diversity** could be stronger in the SGSVAC report – with far greater emphasis on strategies to address and respond to diversity, such as having information on violence in ethnic minority languages, in brail, etc; making child protection structures accessible to girls and boys of different ages and dis/abilities; to children from different religious and ethnic groups; and for children living in remote areas, etc,
- In the *setting specific recommendations for ‘Family and Homes’* (section VI) there could be a more explicit emphasis on fatherhood, and the need to promote and support the positive caring roles of fathers; as well as the need to challenge patriarchal structures and unequal power-relations between adults and children which protect the abuser. Work is needed with men and boys to address gender discrimination, promote healthy relations, address dominant forms of masculinity and to provide children with positive father figure role models.
- A recommendation made by Save the Children for the UN study to set a definition on child sexual abuse and exploitation is not addressed. This was called for to further the protection of all children under 18, providing guidance to governments in establishing laws and policies regarding the legal age of consent, marriage laws and traditional practices.
- In the *setting specific recommendations for “schools and other educational settings”* (section VI) there is an additional need for: increased focus on parental and community involvement in school matters; employment of increased numbers of counselors/ social workers within schools who are trained in child centred

psycho-social support; guidance for ensuring a sensitive response to child sexual abuse by education professionals, in close co-operation with the child protection system, health services and the police; and increased efforts to prevent children's exclusion and drop out from school, to prevent increased risks of violence that school drop outs may face.

- In the *setting specific recommendations for 'care and justice systems' (section VI)* there should be increased focus on: diversion mechanisms (particularly community based diversion mechanisms) to prevent children entering the formal justice system; increased focus on implementation strategies to prevent and address the physical, sexual, mental and emotional ill-treatment of children and young people currently faced by children in conflict with the law and/or in residential institutions (including stigma and discrimination); increased efforts to promote the participation of children in the care and/or justice systems (including their role in individual care planning, as well as collective advocacy); increased support for care leavers ensuring that young people leaving institutions have a place to live, a place to work and/or can continue their education; and efforts to ensure ensuring journalists can't publish the names or photos of children who are in conflict with the law and/or who have been abused.
- Within the *'care and justice' sub-section* there is also a need for increased emphasis on allocation of increased resources by Governments to support de-institutionalisation processes, and the scale up of community based prevention, care, protection and diversion mechanisms; Increased investments in the social sector (including social protection and social welfare); as well as the need to support the establishment and implementation of current efforts towards international guidelines for the care and protection of children without parental care.
- In the *setting specific recommendations for 'workplace' (section VI)* there should be increased emphasis on: governments being guided by the best interests principle in developing and applying appropriate legislation to ensure that boys and girls are protected from harmful child work. Working girls and boys (of different ages in different work settings) must be involved to determine what intervention is in their best interests; sexual and emotional violence and discrimination, as well as accidents and ill-health.
- In the *setting specific recommendations for 'community' (section VI)* there should be increased focus on: the provision of safe shelters for street children; the benefits of establishing centres and/or clubs for children and young people to meet together and take part in activities to prevent boredom and provide positive alternatives to channel their energy and creativity (including opportunities for life skills and conflict resolution activities); the establishment of structures for children's participation in their community (e.g. children's village or municipal councils) to enhance their participation and protection; work with boys and men as partners to prevent all forms of gender based violence and to take initiatives for more equal gender roles and relationships; and mechanisms to share best practices for the prevention of community violence against children.