

# Violence against children is no longer tolerated



**Save the Children**

## Preventing and responding to all forms of violence and promoting family-based care

**Save the Children believes that children have a right to live a life without violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, and in 2015 it is unacceptable that violence against children still takes place. We know that violence against children is a reality that children experience every day and everywhere. We also know that it can be prevented.**

We are committed to make the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015 the opportunity to end all forms of violence against children. Children and young people have a clear vision of this world without violence. Girls and boys voiced what they want to see ending: Physical and humiliating punishment in homes, schools, care institutions and other settings; Sexual violence and abuse in homes, schools, care institutions and other settings; Harmful child work.

Save the Children is making a difference in the lives of children worldwide through our work to protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation and by promoting a safe family environment. Save the Children has an ambitious child protection breakthrough for 2030 which will change the way the world treats children and help us – in partnership with others – to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives and our ambition that *Violence against children is no longer tolerated*.

### **Save the Children's Violence against Children programs in East and Southern Africa include:**

In **Tanzania** we have developed a concept called **BABA BORA** (literally 'good father'). It is a proactive and positive approach to engaging and involving men and boys in changing behavior towards children, especially girls, in the home, school and community. Violence against children is the main focus but BABA BORA is also about gender equality.

In **Rwanda** we have been supporting the Government's efforts to ban violence in schools settings in Burera District. A national-level workshop on Positive Discipline was conducted on Tuesday 27th October 2015, where the Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Children committed to support law reform efforts and partners who are engaging in Positive Discipline Programming.

**In order to better protect children who migrate in Southern Africa** we have undertaken a participatory research study in six cities across three countries in Southern



Africa – Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Preventing unsafe migration in rural communities of origin and protecting children who move from violence, exploitation and abuse needs family strengthening and positive parenting interventions; the protection of children in transit and upon arrival in cities; rigorous child protection system strengthening; assisted voluntary return; and, strengthening coordination between government child protection actors.

We know that children are best protected and cared for in a safe family environment, ideally with their own families but, when not possible, in family or community-based alternatives such as kinship care. In order to **better understand and improve informal alternative care mechanisms to increase the care and protection of children** we have undertaken participatory research on the experiences of children living in kinship care in Ethiopia, Kenya and Zanzibar. The research has called, among other recommendations, for the establishment and expansion of family strengthening services including child sensitive social protection schemes, especially for vulnerable single parents and elderly caregivers, an increase in positive parenting schemes for all caregivers

and, the strengthening of child protection systems, including informal mechanisms to increase oversight of informal kinship care.

We have also developed a **VAC Live Learning Initiative** in 11 countries in East and Southern Africa to collect learning and strengthen the quality of design, delivery and monitoring of programming and advocacy to prevent and respond to violence against children.

## Save the Children's Key Messages on Violence against Children

- We will build a critical mass against violence, support governments to invest in child protection in order to implement the SDG targets to end violence and demonstrate evidence based solutions on what works. We work with partners, media and the public to transform attitudes and beliefs and tolerance towards violence against children in homes and communities;
- Evidence shows that caring, protective, safe families are central to children's survival, learning and protection. Together with our partners, we engage with families and provide them with the necessary support to ensure that children are cared for and protected in a safe family environment and that the number of children outside family care is significantly reduced;
- We believe that community based and national child protection systems must be strengthened so that there are laws, policies, reporting mechanisms, child friendly justice systems and services in place to properly protect children from all forms of violence;
- All girls and boys have the right to be protected from violence. We support children's empowerment and proactive child participation to protect themselves and their peers and we support their advocacy to end violence. We address gender and other forms of discrimination and poverty which puts some children at an additional risk and we engage men and boys to end gender based violence.

The participatory research study conducted by Save the Children in 2014-2015 in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa on children on the move found that 35% of migrating children in border towns indicated that they were not in touch with their families. Many children cited sexual abuse, violence at home, negative family relationships and parental divorce as key drivers of their decision to leave home. Yet 100% of these children on the move, without exception, indicated when asked that they believed it is "very important" to stay in touch with family. The study has informed us that older children who have migrated alone are less likely to report feeling safe in new surroundings at their destination than younger children. Only 9% of all children surveyed in border towns during the study reported feeling safe, compared to 78% of children who were surveyed in capital cities or larger metropolitan areas of destination.

