

Towards a Violence-Free Generation

Using science to fuel action and end violence against children

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

A first step in preventing this violence, is better understanding its magnitude, nature, and consequences. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Violence against Children Surveys (VACS) measure physical, emotional, and sexual violence against girls and boys. VACS data have been released in eight countries. Data collection is ongoing in several more.



More than **1 in 4** girls experienced **sexual violence** in most countries surveyed.



* Swaziland VACS only surveyed girls.

* Tanzania data may differ from the VACS final report due to different analytic approaches.

Data are reported by individuals aged 18 to 24 who experienced sexual violence prior to age 18.

Percentage of individuals aged 18-24 who experienced violence prior to age 18:

physical violence



53%	Cambodia	54%
61%	Haiti	57%
66%	Kenya	73%
42%	Malawi	65%
50%	Nigeria	52%
22%	Swaziland	*
55%	Tanzania	53%
64%	Zimbabwe	76%



emotional violence



19%	Cambodia	25%
35%	Haiti	27%
26%	Kenya	32%
20%	Malawi	29%
17%	Nigeria	20%
26%	Swaziland	*
24%	Tanzania	28%
29%	Zimbabwe	38%



* Swaziland VACS only surveyed girls

DATA SPOTLIGHT: SWAZILAND

Increased risk of negative health conditions and behaviors associated with exposure to childhood sexual violence¹

Reported by girls aged 13-24

STIs (including HIV)	3.7x
Pregnancy Complications	3.5x
Alcohol Use	3.0x
Unwanted Pregnancy	2.9x
Feeling Depressed	2.3x
Suicidal Ideation	2.3x
Attempted Suicide	2.0x
Difficulty Sleeping	1.8x
Cigarette Use	1.2x

DATA SPOTLIGHT: ZIMBABWE

Percentage of girls who experienced specific types of sexual violence prior to age 18

Reported by girls aged 18-24

Unwanted sexual touching	20%
Attempted unwanted sex	15%
Coerced sex	7%
Forced sex	9%

* Total percentages exceed 33% reported above because girls often experience more than one type of sexual violence.

1. Reza A, Breiding MJ, Gulaid J, et al. Sexual violence and its health consequences for female children in Swaziland: a cluster survey study. *Lancet* 2009;373:1966-72.

Turning data into action

The Violence against Children Surveys (VACS) systematically measure physical, emotional, and sexual violence against girls and boys, and identify risk and protective factors and health consequences, as well as use of services and barriers to seeking help. Children who experience violence are at greater risk for common and destructive yet preventable consequences, including HIV, chronic diseases, crime and drug abuse, as well as serious mental health problems. Findings from VACS provide data that may help countries ensure that limited resources to develop, launch, and evaluate violence prevention programs and child protection systems are used most effectively. A group of policies and programs that are effective in preventing violence is outlined in the [THRIVES](#) technical package, which includes: **T**rainning in parenting; **H**ousehold economic strengthening; **R**educed violence through legal protection; **I**mproved services; **V**alues and norms that protect children; **E**ducation and life skills; and **S**urveillance and evaluation.



ACTION SPOTLIGHT: TANZANIA

Tanzania improves programs and services to prevent violence against children

Sparked by the high rates of violence identified by VACS, the Government of Tanzania developed a multi-sector National Response Plan to prevent violence against children that focuses on education, social welfare, legal, justice, public health, and community. The plan pays particular attention to sexual violence, the vulnerability of girls, and the health consequences of violence.

To see results, Tanzania is launching several new programs and policies, including

- A new child protection training manual and trainings for government ministries on prevention of gender-based violence and survivors of violence
- Guidelines for budgeting for child protection at the local government level, including child protection guidelines for schools
- A revised national code of conduct for teachers
- A comprehensive pilot program to address child violence in three districts, focusing on school- and community-based prevention, and bringing together police, justice and social welfare for response services

In addition, CDC's office in Tanzania has identified the "Families Matter!" program, an evidence-based intervention designed to promote positive parenting practices and effective parent-child communication about sexuality and sexual risk reduction for parents of 9-12 year olds, as a platform for preventing and responding to childhood sexual violence.

Global partners

VACS is part of the *Together for Girls* partnership (TfG) which focuses on conducting national surveys to document the magnitude and impact of sexual violence, supporting a coordinated response to strengthen violence prevention, and leading global advocacy to promote evidence-based solutions.

These partners include:

- Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD)
- CDC Foundation
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Grupo ABC
- Nduna Foundation
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- U.S. Department of State
- U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
- U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)
- Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada

The surveys are implemented under the leadership of country governments with participation from in-country partners and with support from UNICEF and TfG partners. CDC receives financial support to provide technical assistance for VACS from PEPFAR and from foundation partners through the CDC Foundation.



For more information on **VACS**, visit: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/vacs

For more information on **THRIVES**, visit: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/vacs/publications.html