

THE CAMPAIGN TO STOP VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

Third progress report



Learn

without fear.

Acknowledgements

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About this report

In 2008, Plan launched its pioneering global campaign to end violence against children in schools – *Learn Without Fear*. That campaign, focusing on the need to end sexual violence, bullying and corporal punishment, has met with a huge response worldwide. In this report, we look at the cumulative achievements of the campaign to date, as it completes its third year, to July 2011.

For more information on the *Learn Without Fear* campaign, go to plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear

“Schools succeed in their efforts to curb violence, particularly when they break away from a strictly sectoral approach in favour of holistic, participatory and child-centred strategies. Such strategies help to involve families in school life and envisage children as crucial actors and agents of change, shaping decisions with their perspectives and experience.

The whole-school approach is well illustrated by Plan International’s *Learn Without Fear* campaign, a global effort to raise awareness about the impact of violence on the enjoyment of children’s rights, and to prevent and end violence against children in schools. This important campaign is a critical contribution to our common efforts to prevent and address violence against children, including in and around schools.”

Marta Santos Pais, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children, October 2011.

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Cover photo: Girl recording radio programme on school violence prevention issues for the Timveni Child Media Radio project, Malawi.



Learn Without Fear

– worldwide achievements so far

- Since the campaign was launched, there are new laws and policies to protect over 485 million school children from violence.
- Nearly 53,000 teachers have been trained in non-violent teaching methods.
- Over 30,000 schools are directly involved in the campaign.
- Plan is working with teachers' unions in 20 countries, where they play a key role in spreading campaign messages.
- 311,501 people have attended awareness-raising in the aims of the campaign, helping to change beliefs and attitudes about violence towards children.

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Introduction

Plan launched *Learn Without Fear (LWF)*, the global campaign to end violence in schools, in October 2008. This summary sets out the cumulative achievements for the third year of the campaign, which was devised to focus on sexual violence, bullying and corporal punishment.

Violence against children in schools remains a widespread problem. Schools should be a safe place for quality learning, but instead of this, millions of children all over the world experience fear and violence every day that they go to school. In Brazil, for example, a survey of 1,200 students found that 70 per cent had been victims of school violence.¹

The campaign in context

As Plan discovered through its research in 2007, violence in schools is a massive problem, affecting millions of children in every country, every day. At present, 77 countries still allow teachers to punish children physically, and corporal punishment is widely used and accepted in schools – even in countries where the practice has been banned officially. Millions of children are exposed to what amounts to physical assault at school.² The most frequent victims of corporal punishment are boys, children with disabilities, and children from minority ethnic groups.³ While teachers' reasons for beating children are often minor, the consequences are not – children have died because of the injuries inflicted by teachers.⁴

Although death may be rare, physical harm – such as broken limbs and cuts needing stitches – and psychological harm are more common and their effects can last for days or years. And this violence impacts on educational attainment, diminishing the returns of education for every affected child. It causes non-attendance and school dropout, as well as a considerable financial drain on society. Children who experience violence at school are likely to earn less, be in greater need of healthcare and other services, and contribute less to their countries' economies.⁵

Sexual violence also remains a problem. Plan has come across a case of a six-year-old girl in West Africa who was raped while at school. In this instance, Plan was able to support her after the event and make sure the perpetrator was brought to justice.

During the campaign, we have also discovered that teachers may coerce children into sexual acts in return for good grades.⁸ These are not isolated incidents, as some would claim. They are common enough for children to have developed their own expressions to describe the phenomenon. For example, in Gabon, Cameroon and across the West Africa region generally, they use *moyennes sexuellement transmissible*, meaning sexually transmitted grades, playing on the French acronym MST (*maladies sexuellement transmissibles* or sexually transmitted infections), and in Mali, *la menace du bic rouge*, the threat of the red ball point pen – bad grades if girls do not agree to the sexual advances of their teachers.⁹

Violence in schools is in part driven by deeply entrenched cultural beliefs and attitudes towards children. The issue of bullying is so widespread that no country is immune. The statistics continue to be high, with new forms of bullying – such as cyberbullying

“I was beaten because I had not completed all the questions.”

John*, Kenya

Along with eight other children in his class, John was whipped with an electric cable for not completing his English homework. He was injured on his back, arm and abdomen and had to be taken to a clinic for treatment. Plan staff estimated his medical costs to be between US \$5 and US \$10. Given that most Kenyans live below the poverty level of \$1 a day,⁶ this could represent up to two weeks' earnings and have severe consequences for family finances.⁷

* John's name has been changed to protect his identity.

– now affecting children. In the UK, recent data showed that 9 out of 10 children reported bullying in their school, and one out of five between the ages of 10 and 15 said they were frightened or upset by bullying. Boys aged between 10 and 12 were the most common victims.¹⁰

Bullying continues to be a particular problem for adolescents who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.¹¹ With increased internet access and new technologies evolving, bullying has taken on new forms in addition to the traditional name calling and physical bullying. While still less common, there is a growing area of concern that mobile (cell) phones and the internet are being used to send hateful messages. The UK's British Crime Survey found that one in four victims of bullying reported receiving unwanted or nasty emails, texts or postings on a website.¹² And as many children carry phones with them and also access the internet after school, this type of bullying is hard to avoid or escape from.

In addition, Plan has uncovered in its programmes that, in some settings, parents can be a factor in violence in schools, sometimes colluding with school staff rather than supporting their children, by encouraging teachers to hit their children if they do not behave.

Progress to date

Despite these enormous challenges, Plan's work has shown that progress can be made to protect millions of children across the world. Implementation of new child protection policies and laws, teachers' unions promoting positive discipline training, and parents defending their children's rights have all contributed to a safer school environment, both for children and staff. Children have been at the centre of this campaign, empowered to defend their rights and supported to respect the rights of others. This report builds on the previous two *Learn Without Fear* progress reports, published in 2009 and 2010.

At the high level meeting of experts in Oslo, June 2011, co-organised by the government of Norway, the Council of Europe and the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on violence against children, Marta Santos Pais, Plan was recognised by the government of Norway as one of the main players when it came to combating violence against children worldwide.

Plan has been working at all levels – global, regional, national and local – to ensure that violence-free schools are a priority for governments and all those involved in children's education and rights.

“You cannot go home from the internet... It is like being haunted.”

17-year-old Paulo from Brazil.¹³

This school is now mainstreaming *Learn Without Fear* principles. All the children, parents, teachers and the whole community are committed to developing the school as a model of good practice. The school had started non-violent teaching practices by actually breaking the sticks that teachers were using at a special event.

“No sticks are used in the school by the teachers, and no sticks have been seen in the school compound since the event.”

Chair, Nepal Rashtriya secondary school management committee (SMC) in Nepal.

Campaign highlights

Since October 2008, the *Learn Without Fear* campaign and advocacy work has resulted in great positive gains for children worldwide. It has led to changes in laws and official policies, helped create safer schools and communities, and improved awareness of the issues among children and their parents.

1. Changes in legislation and policies

The most significant gain is that since Plan launched *Learn Without Fear* and started to focus on the issue of violence in schools by its programme and advocacy work, there are now new laws and policies to protect over **485 million** children from violence in schools.

This includes:

- **431 million children protected from corporal punishment as a form of discipline in schools**
- **23 million children protected from sexual violence**
- **31 million children protected from bullying.**

Plan is working towards a world where no one can inflict violence on children in schools without being brought to justice. We set ourselves the ambitious target to work with at least 20 governments to develop and enforce laws against school violence. To date, we have worked with over 27 countries. Some successes in the period April 2010 to July 2011 are listed below. Plan has used a range of mechanisms to improve protection for children, taking into account the different legal and political context in each country.

General legislation preventing violence in schools

- Mozambique – child protection has been included as an objective of the draft national education strategic plan.
- Paraguay – a new law was passed in May 2011 establishing a special procedure for the treatment of child abuse.
- Nepal – the government has endorsed a *Learn Without Fear* policy.

Corporal punishment

- Bangladesh – the government announced an outright ban on physical punishment in educational institutions in August 2010. This was reiterated in April 2011 through a Ministry of Education policy.
- Sierra Leone – Plan is working with others on district-level laws on corporal punishment, in the absence of a national legal framework.

“There is a difference between teaching using sticks and teaching with love and affection.”

Mahendra Rawat, member of the Mahabir Nepal Rashtriya secondary school management committee (SMC) in Nepal.

Sexual violence

- Burkina Faso – Plan is working on the realisation of a draft law forbidding sexual harassment due to become part of the penal code at the next reading. This will help to firm up the country's existing laws prohibiting bad treatment of children, including genital mutilation, sexual exploitation and abuse, youth corruption and prostitution, and forced marriage.

Bullying

- Philippines – the Anti-Corporal Punishment Bill now covers bullying as well as corporal punishment.
- Peru – in June 2011, Congress passed an anti-bullying law, although it is still awaiting regulations to become implemented.

2. Creating safer schools and communities

As children should feel able to report all forms of violence and have access to appropriate support, *Learn Without Fear* took a holistic approach to the issue of violence in schools. This meant that the campaign involved and empowered not only children, parents and teachers, but also stakeholders such as the police, lawyers, health and social workers. We believe this holistic approach has enabled the campaign to have a more lasting effect on the lives of children and communities that we work in. In addition, Plan helped to secure improvements in reporting systems in 31 countries and improvements in referral systems in 27 countries.

As a result of the campaign:

- **nearly 53,000 teachers have been trained in non-violent teaching methods**
- **over 30,000 schools are directly involved in the campaign in a range of ways**
- **there are school-level action plans to combat violence in 33 countries**
- **the enthusiasm of Plan staff and our partners has helped us reach over 35,000 schools, of which over 9,000 have action plans in place to combat violence.**

In India there are suggestion boxes in 698 schools where Plan has been providing support. These give children the opportunity to report cases of bullying, sexual abuse or corporal punishment.

Banarasi Saha, mother of a student studying in grade two [usually about age 7-8], said that her daughter regularly goes to school and it is no longer necessary to convince her to attend, as was usual previously.

“I noticed a big difference in my pupils' last term results, their performance was very impressive. This really showed that they are learning without fear. They felt more confident and secure about their education and they are conversant with their rights and responsibilities.”

Mr Kapende, teacher, Michiru primary school, Malawi.

“The teachers in Plan China gave students and teachers lectures. In the lecture, you don’t feel that they behave like teachers, a very interesting way of teaching. So this kind of teaching method is illuminating, affecting my own class teaching. When I teach students I don’t teach like a teacher, I respect students and treat them equally. So I changed my teaching method.”

Teacher, Chunhua County, Shaanxi Province, China.

“It is thanks to Plan Niger that I received my first training on non-violence at the school. I will not make any more use of violence in my class. I wish that this training was multiplied in order to touch more teachers. Thank you Plan Niger for supporting us.”

Zeinabou, teacher from Niger.

Plan is working with teachers’ unions in 20 countries where they can play a key role in spreading campaign messages.

In Bangladesh, as a result of the campaign, assistant teacher Lipi Khatun felt that punishment was decreasing even in the home and community. There are schools in the area where school management prohibited corporal punishment entirely.

3. Improved awareness

Over 1.1 million children have been involved directly in the campaign, engaged through a range of child participation activities.

In Ecuador, the theatre group *Manitas Pintadas* (Little Painted Hands), made up of girls and boys, developed a theatre production promoting the right to good treatment in the seven schools of the Julio Moreno parish, Santa Elena province. *The Voz de los Techos* (Roof Voices) children’s group gave interviews on *Espol TV*, a local radio station and the magazine of the newspaper *Diario El Universo*.

It is not only children. Whole populations have been reached by the *Learn Without Fear* campaign messages, broadcast through a range of media. Where it was possible to measure audience size, our campaign has reached out to over 119 million people through the mass media, cultural activities such as theatre, dance and poetry, and other means.

We have also targeted families to raise awareness because of their importance in helping to protect their children from violence. We have trained over 210,000 family members on children’s rights and protection from violence.

Training and education have played a key role in changing behaviour and attitudes. Thirty-eight countries report how training and education have positively changed the behaviour of teachers, parents, police and community leaders towards children.

In Liberia, the campaign worked as a coalition with media institutions for the production of skits, jingles and spot messages on *Learn Without Fear* for raising awareness on local and national radio. As a result, the campaign received commendations through phone calls from the general public, particularly parents and students, from several counties. There has also been a demand to continue the airing of the awareness messages on all radio stations, especially during the beginning of the school year.

In Bangladesh, parents participated in Plan training on child protection and violence in schools and are now practising what they have learned within their family. They are now speaking out against violence and seeking punishment of the abuser on behalf of their children. As a result, school authorities terminated the contract of one abusive teacher in a school in Dhaka.

Other key achievements

When *Learn Without Fear* was launched, Plan set out and published ambitious goals and objectives for the lifetime of the campaign. The overall progress against these goals and targets is set out in Appendix A. To date, we have exceeded 9 out of 10 targets, despite some countries having to curtail activities due to conflict, disaster or political changes.

34 Plan offices report that their relationship with government has improved because of the campaign.

- Plan is now the convener of the Child Rights Network in the Philippines and a key player in the national committee on children's rights in India.
- Plan Pakistan is working towards establishing and leading a national observatory on violence in schools.
- Plan was asked to assist with a government campaign against sexual abuse of girls in Mozambique.
- Plan staff participated in the National Teachers Conference in Kenya.
- In Benin, the *Learn Without Fear* banner is displayed on a key education website (<http://eduformbenin.com>).
- Plan Liberia is active in the National Child Rights Observer Group.
- Several Plan offices in Africa have secured regular TV and radio slots – in Liberia the campaign launch has been shown several times on national TV.
- In Paraguay, campaign updates are included in the Ministry of Education website.
- In the Dominican Republic, Plan is working with the National Council for Childhood to monitor support for child victims of violence.

“It is a historical achievement in the district. We have to work for the betterment of children. By our peaceful practice, the relations between teachers and students has been improved.”

Bijaya Kishor Pandey,
head teacher.

1. High-level meetings and partnerships

The campaign has engaged partners and worked with teachers and their organisations, has helped to develop safer communities and has involved children in all aspects of *Learn Without Fear*.

Plan has been an active participant in national and international efforts to combat violence in schools, working with key government, community and global allies to make changes for children.

At national level, Plan has made high-level presentations in 33 countries. Some examples not already mentioned are as follows.

- Plan India is working with the Mayor of Delhi, responsible for an area covering over 11 million people.
- Plan Vietnam is working with the Ministry of Education.
- Plan Liberia made a presentation to the National Legislative Committee on Education, Gender, Health and the Judiciary.

“The workshop was much more enriching than I thought it would be, and it motivated me so much that I recognise the need to change my attitude in my work as a teacher, as a daughter, and as a wife; I must motivate myself, change and fight for my dreams.”

Luz Maria Valderrama, teacher,
Rio Quito, Colombia.

- Plan Ghana took part in the Forum on the Day of the African Child.
- Plan Senegal made a presentation to UN agencies at a meeting on violence against girls.
- Plan Brazil participated in the meeting of the National Council for Education.
- In the Dominican Republic, Plan took part in the National Teachers’ Congress.
- Plan was the most influential non-governmental organisation at the fifth world conference on violence in schools in Argentina in April 2011, attended by more than 500 people from 40 countries.
- Plan has also presented campaign research evidence, most recently to the following:
 - Global Summit on Ending Corporal Punishment, Texas, June 2011
 - Child Helpline International (CHI) international consultation, Madrid, October 2010.

2. Working with teachers

Plan is working with governments to incorporate non-violence and elements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into teacher training in 36 countries, and working with teachers’ unions in 20 countries. Teachers are not only contributing to the creation of safer schools, but are also tackling violence against children outside school and raising broader child protection issues (such as early marriages).

Plan Kenya received an ‘Award for Recognition of Support’ from the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) in Kenya for its work. This is for Plan’s support to Childline for enhanced child protection through the programme *Ending the Silence on Child Abuse*.

In India, Plan’s school contact programme has reached schools in Delhi and Rajasthan. At the end of the training period, the school officials sign a certificate stating that ‘this school will now be violence free’.

Plan India organised a series of workshops for school administrators in Delhi in March 2011. More than 1,800 participants, including zonal directors, were trained in positive discipline, the *Learn Without Fear* campaign and the Right to Education Act.

Plan Burkina Faso is supporting the Primary Teachers’ Training Schools (*Ecoles Nationales d’Enseignants du Primaire*, (ENEP)) in the production of training modules that, when implemented, will contribute to a safer school environment. Plan is in the process of training the trainers in these ENEP schools.

3. Safer communities

Plan recognises that creating safer schools requires the active engagement of a range of professionals, as well as changing behaviour or attitudes in the community as a whole. For this reason, the campaign has reached out beyond teaching professionals. In particular, Plan believes parents must be empowered to demand justice and better education for their children. The number of people worldwide who we have made aware of this approach as part of the campaign has more than doubled in the past year to over 300,000 (see table).

It will take time to change deeply entrenched beliefs. For example, over half of adult Kenyans and nearly three-quarters of adult Pakistanis believe their religion allows them to slap their children if they do not behave. Despite such beliefs, the campaign has already succeeded in positively changing some attitudes in the areas where Plan works. Improvement in community attitudes and more empathy from parents has been reported in 36 countries.

As part of the campaign, Plan has run two international research projects involving nationwide opinion polling and schoolchildren’s questionnaires.

Results showed that 94% of Peruvians and 71% of Kenyans, for example, think that governments should completely outlaw all violence in schools.

This polling is due to be scaled up as part of the campaign and full data will be published in due course. Data like this gives Plan the backing to increase its advocacy efforts and work with governments to improve legislation and policy for child protection.

Type of people trained	Number trained by June 2011
Family members	212,995
Teachers	52,956
Community leaders	12,871
Local NGOs	7,845
Social care professionals	6,828
Health professionals	6,826
Police	4,207
Lawyers	3,844
Journalists	1,736
Religious leaders	1,393
Total	311,501

“For me it meant a change of attitude towards my children, where I must listen to them before imposing a punishment. Before I used to hit them first and then listen, but the *Learn Without Fear* campaign taught me that I have to change my attitude.”

A mother in Guatemala.

“The [school] manual has been a great help to show that our opinion matters and we are an important part of our school.”

Amalia, 15-year-old member of a school committee in El Salvador.

“Suggestion boxes have given us the opportunity to report abuse without fear.”

Girl in Mwanza district, Malawi.

4. Child participation

Children have been key stakeholders in every aspect of the campaign.

Plan has worked with children in 41 countries and *Learn Without Fear* campaign activities have ranged from helping to produce materials and messages, meeting government officials and peer-to-peer activities to forming school committees.

In Hanoi, Vietnamese pupils intervened when they realised that three of their friends were at risk of dropping out and persuaded them to come back to school.

Child participation	Total by June 2011
Children's participation in media activities	54,174
Child participation activities	1,391,837
Overall number of children supporting LWF	1,446,011

Conclusion

Although children continue to be victims of violence in schools around the world, Plan's *Learn Without Fear* campaign has shown that much can be achieved in a relatively short time. While international activities can be valuable, and financial support for education must include measures to deliver safe schools, the focus must be in ensuring that the right policy, legal, training and support frameworks are available in each country. Plan's experience has shown that working at national level is not enough. Work at district or local government level is sometimes required to implement national legislation, and to raise awareness of existing laws. In some countries, such as Brazil and Sierra Leone, Plan has focused on creating a legal framework at district level before the national framework is in place.

The campaign has led to improved relationships with governments in 34 countries where ministers have taken an active part. It is clear that their interest at national level is, in part, linked to the fact that they are involved in a global campaign.

Examples of Plan's achievements, reported here, come from around the world. In Paraguay, for instance, *Learn Without Fear* updates are included in the Ministry of Education website – and this is not an isolated case. In Nepal there is a government education policy entitled *Learn Without Fear* and prominently Plan branded. In Brazil, a mini anti-bullying subcampaign was run in partnership with a national magazine. Several African countries have secured regular TV and radio slots with media partners. In the case of Liberia, for example, the campaign launch has been shown several times on national television – a part of an all-embracing effort to stop school violence.

The *Learn Without Fear* campaign has shown that a global campaign gives focus, urgency and momentum to work that might otherwise stall for years. It has also been a catalyst to create partnerships between different NGOs, academics, unions and international agencies in countries where these were not well developed.

Violence in schools is in part driven by deeply entrenched cultural beliefs and attitudes towards children. That Plan has succeeded in getting teachers and politicians to stand up publicly and not only endorse the campaign but become active champions to tackle violence in schools is a fantastic testament to the dedicated staff and partners working on this issue.

“All of us need to lend a hand in fighting violence in schools.”

Joao Viana, Procurator of the State of Minas Gerais in Brazil, attendee at the international seminar on school bullying in Maranhão in São Luis, Brazil in April 2011.

Plan presented its programme experience from eight schools at the seminar.¹⁴

Appendix A

Progress against goals and targets

CAMPAIGN GOALS	CAMPAIGN ASKS	GLOBAL CAMPAIGN PROGRESS INDICATORS	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES 2011
Laws protecting children from violence in schools exist and are enforced in every country, and those responsible for keeping children safe deliver on their promises and fulfil their duties.	No one can inflict violence on children in schools without facing punishment.	Plan will work with governments to develop and enforce laws against school violence in at least 20 countries .	27
	UN agencies, multilateral donors, development banks and international NGOs increase support to governments to tackle violence in schools.	Plan will initiate or participate in high-level ministerial meetings in at least 30 countries to advocate for school violence to be recognised as a priority by those working in education, child protection and other relevant sectors.	44
All governments recognise the scale and severity of school violence and ensure the provision of appropriate care and support for children affected by violence in schools.	Children are able to report violent incidents and expect appropriate care and support when they are affected by school violence.	Plan will work in alliances with partners to develop reporting and referral mechanisms for children affected by school violence in at least 20 countries .	31
		Plan will advocate the establishment or expansion of confidential child helplines in at least 10 countries .	25
	Governments establish holistic data collection systems and carry out research to ascertain the scale and severity of violence in schools.	Plan will carry out research in at least 30 countries to understand the scale and severity of school violence and will use this data to advocate change.	35
	Governments and international organisations earmark significant resources to tackle violence in schools.	Plan will work in partnership with education authorities in at least 20 countries to develop and implement plans of action to achieve violence-free schools.	33
Children and adults respect and promote children's right to protection from violence in schools.	Children are recognised as key participants in developing strategies and solutions to address violence in schools.	Plan will work with children and young people in at least 40 countries to help break the cycle of violence. We will listen to children's views and encourage their involvement at all stages of the campaign.	41
		Pupils, parents, all school staff and the community work together to expel violence from schools.	Plan will work with teachers to manage classes and discipline children without using violence in at least 20 countries .
	We will work with teachers, parents and children in at least 40 countries to raise awareness of and build capacity to tackle the effects of violence and promote positive alternatives to violent discipline methods.		38
	Plan will also work with the whole school community to either create or enforce existing schools' codes of conduct. We will work with at least 5,000 schools around the world to raise awareness of violence and its effects.	36,074 schools (9,122 with action plans)	

Appendix B

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