



"I believe all children deserve a chance to succeed in life, wherever they live. I'm proud to champion this important lesson and help share the message that all children have the right to live free from fear of violence and be able to pursue their dreams"



Serena Williams Professional Tennis Player, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador

Understanding Community Violence

Subject

Citizenship

Learning Outcome

- To understand what violence is and how it can exist in different forms
- To explore the different reasons for violence around the world
- To make connections between local experience of violence and global violence
- To develop solutions for preventing violence

Preparation

- Read the notes to teachers about violence against children in appendix 1
- Prepare a board to write students' suggestions
- Print or make available the children's stories included in appendix 2

Total Time:

60
minutes

Age Range:

11-14
year olds



World's Largest Lesson is a collaborative education project to support the announcement of the United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development. The project is living proof of the importance of Global Goal 17 "Partnerships for the Goals" and would not have been possible without the help of all of our partners working with us and with each other.

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Introduction

15
mins

Begin a discussion about violence – what words do the group associate with violence? Think broadly about different forms of violence, including those that might happen in their own communities and those they are aware of from domestic or international news (be sensitive to the needs of your students and their families who may have experienced violence).

Ask students to write these words on a piece of paper. Go around the group and ask everyone to share their words.

Are there any types of violence that come up more than once (e.g. physical or emotional violence, conflict, or gang violence?). Where do these types of violence happen? Or do most of the words reflect emotions related to the experience of violence?

Exploring Violence Around the World

25
mins

Ask students to read the children's stories. Students should then discuss or write answers to the following questions relating to their stories:

- Who were the victims of violence and who were the perpetrators in the stories?
- What types of violence have you learnt about? Are these different from the types of violence noted at the start of the lesson?
- What were some of the factors that led to the violence occurring in the first place? Encourage students to think about wider issues like poverty and unemployment, as well as local factors such as people's attitudes to violence and the stresses of being a young person.

Bring the class together to feedback/discuss the last question. Highlight any similarities between each of the stories and the students' own experiences or previous knowledge.

What Can Be Done?

10
mins

Ask students in pairs to discuss and agree three actions that could prevent any form of violence that they have seen or heard about in their own communities/school. Remind students of the types of violence discussed earlier and that violent behaviour can take many forms. Bring the class together to discuss these actions and write them on the board. Students could vote to decide on the top five actions and produce a manifesto for change in their community.

Students may also want to think about actions to prevent violence on a global scale.

Take Action on Community Violence

10
mins

Turn this short list into an action plan or class display. Discuss how students could spread the message about their actions more widely through their school or community.

Take Action for the Global Goals

As an educator you have the power to channel students' positive energies and help them believe that they are not helpless, that change is possible, and that they can drive it.

The Design for Change "I Can" School Challenge invites children to take action, make change for themselves and share it with children across the world.

Visit www.dfcworld.com to get started.

To download a Design for Change lesson pack or a simple advice pack for young people to take action themselves visit www.globalgoals.org/worldslargestlesson



Violence Against Children



BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Violence, exploitation and abuse of children is a global problem. “We are uncovering the fact that children experience extreme violence in everyday life, everywhere,” says Susan Bissell, Unicef’s global head of child protection.

Violence against children is defined by Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse”.

There are many different types of violence, including physical, psychological and sexual violence. It can be direct or indirect. For example, violence can be directly life-altering or life-ending through physical harm. And it can also be indirect – for example, witnessing violence at home or the effects of war on countries and communities.

Violence can occur behind closed doors; Unicef believes that a lot of violence against children goes unreported.

We also know that violence can worsen existing development problems. For example, it can prevent a child from getting an education if a school is used as a military base. Violence can also have lasting impacts on the development of a child’s brain, which can mean they are unable to reach their full potential.

If we are to truly make headway in creating a better world for children, tackling violence must be a priority.

Please Note:

The discussions you have with your students in this lesson need to be handled sensitively and with consideration given to students’ backgrounds and experiences. You want to make the classroom a ‘safe’ place for your students to share their ideas and even experiences. Some students may want to be excused from certain discussions and this should be respected. You may find the following sources of advice on how to approach controversial topics in the classroom useful.

Oxfam UK’s guide to Teaching Controversial Issues

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/teacher-support/tools-and-guides/controversial-issues>

The Historical Association’s guide to Teaching Emotive and Controversial History

<http://globaldimension.org.uk/resources/item/1522>

Many teachers find the Philosophy for Children techniques useful when handling discussions of this nature, you can read more here

<http://globaldimension.org.uk/news/item/13650>

If you do not feel adequately prepared to teach this lesson then please seek advice from a UNICEF office before teaching.

Where We've Seen Success

We know that violence can be tackled and that there are ways to prevent violence, and support children who have experienced it. Here are a few examples:

Strategy: Support parents, caregivers and families

A three-year study in Turkey showed that creating a positive family environment for underprivileged mothers and their children resulted in a 79 per cent decrease in physical disciplining. Mums attended regular discussion sessions on parenting led by local coordinators, and were supported by mothers from the same communities who visited them at home to provide training on parenting techniques.

Strategy: Help children manage the risks they face

A programme in 150 schools in Brazil is helping children living in slums to overcome the emotional scars they've endured as a result of violence. The programme works to reintegrate children into society and helps keep them safe from further violence.

Strategy: Promote and provide support services for children

In Sudan, police stations have introduced family and child protection units, which have significantly increased access to police services for victims of violence and for children who are in trouble with the law. Before these units were set up, the police didn't always have time to investigate cases of sexual and physical abuse of children, and many crimes went unreported. Following a successful pilot, another 18 units have been established across Sudan.

Strategy: Implement laws and policies that protect children

In 1979, Sweden was the first country to prohibit any form of corporal punishment (a form of physical punishment that involves deliberately causing pain in order to punish a person or child). This resulted in an 80 per cent decrease in the use of corporal punishment over a 35- year period.





Martin's story El Salvador

Martin is 11 years old and about to enter fifth grade. He loves riding his bike and playing football with his grandfather. He lives with his mother in an inner city community in El Salvador.

A couple of years ago, his older brother started acting differently. He was hanging around with a group of friends that Martin knew to be a gang. He began smoking and taking drugs and after some time became violent. One time Martin woke up to his brother kicking him repeatedly for no reason.

Sadly, Martin's brother died a year ago from a drug overdose. His friends ran away and left him on the ground convulsing, with only one person going back to check if he was alive. He is the first thing Martin thinks about when he wakes up. "When I think about my brother," said Martin, "I think about him coming home, think that he'll come back, and after when I feel sad about all of this, I try and distract myself by riding my bike." Martin dreams of living in a peaceful place with less violence.

Martin finds it hard to trust other people but says he will never get involved with a gang as he's seen how what happened to his brother has affected him and his mum and he wants to be different. He says that joining a gang wouldn't get him anywhere at all, and that he would just end up like his brother. Instead, he focuses on maths as he aspires to be a doctor or an accountant, to make something better of his life. Today, Martin goes to a school where Unicef has a programme called No te digna? ("Rise above it"), which teaches children how to resolve arguments without violence, that violence is wrong and that they don't have to suffer in silence. We can help children living in danger like Martin.



Denis's story, Guatemala

Denis is 10 years old and in fifth grade at school. He lives with his parents in Guatemala, Central America. It wasn't always just Denis. His younger sister was kidnapped when she was just two months old. Denis and his parents still don't know where she is.

Denis and his family have been supported by the Unicef-funded Fundación Sobrevivientes (Survivors Foundation), which is helping them search for his sister. Denis is worried about his sister, but hopeful. "I feel very sad I don't have my sister," he says. "I am confident we will find her."

Guatemala is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for children. It has the second highest rate of child murder. Every day, 40 children lose their parents to violence. And 22 new cases of sexual violence against a child are reported every day (at least one every two hours), yet few cases ever get to court.



Alia's story, Nigeria

When Alia was 10, her family got news that members of Boko Haram had attacked nearby villages in Michika, north-east Nigeria. The next day, the men arrived in her town and her father was killed. Alia, together with her mother and other family members, managed to flee to the town of Mubi, leaving all their belongings behind.

Three months later, Mubi also came under attack and the family were forced to flee across the border to neighbouring Cameroon. Eventually they made their way back to Nigeria and ended up in a camp for people displaced by the violence. Alia is now attending a Unicef-supported school in the camp.

Her mother suffered from high blood pressure and diabetes before the attacks, and now she is very sick, adding to Alia's worries. Alia misses her father and her friends, and is scared that attacks will occur again, but she refuses to give up hope. "I want to be a nurse," she said. "I want to help people." If it were not for camps such as the one Alla and her mother are in, people in conflict areas would not be able to find safety. It is important for children to be protected from conflict and violence and given help if they experience war.



Susana's story El Salvador

Susana is 13 and lives in El Salvador, a country where many children are pushed into powerful crime gangs. Susana herself is a part of the prevention of violence committee in her school, but a lot of her friends have been involved in gang violence. She has known kids who were good students, but because their parents had problems, they left school, turned to drugs and some even died.

A few of Susana's friends have gang-member boyfriends, which has caused them either to become violent towards Susana themselves, or to feel pressurized to take part in gang activities by other gang members. Susana has tried to support one of her friends by telling her "she could choose not to have a gang member boyfriend". Susana's cousin had to move away after refusing to join a gang, because he was worried for his life.

Susana thinks that gangsters are violent because they are depressed and either without family, or not supported by their families. Gangs make them feel accepted and a part of something. She says that gang leaders are like father figures, and force boys to do things for them in return for their support. She said, "a boy might ask why he should kill and the gang leader will say, 'because I gave you support'."

Susana's violence prevention group teaches children how to be good parents in the future, and she says, "I am going to love my children". Susana does not think she is any braver than others, but that being in gangs is unhealthy, and her work in violence prevention is necessary. But sometimes doing the right thing can be difficult and take a lot of bravery. Susana dreams of living in a free country, where the only option for neglected children is not becoming involved in gang violence.



Farida's story, Niger

Abused by her stepmother, 16-year-old Farida ran away from home and fell into the hands of violent gangs in Zinder, Niger. The gangs get children to commit robbery and assaults. Girls are especially vulnerable and are often victims of abuse.

Children have the right to grow up safely. When children around the world are asked what makes them feel safe and happy, being with family is by far the most common response. Yet for too many, violence begins early and begins in the home.

In many countries, gang and drug-related violence is rife, especially in fast-growing cities that have seen little investment in infrastructure or justice systems.

Today Farida is back in school, thanks to a Unicef-supported shelter for girls. The shelter helps Farida and other young victims of violence to reintegrate and reunites them with family. "I would really like to become a lawyer and defend the cause of children," says Farida.

Today Farida is safe. But millions more children are still in danger. We need to do more to end violence against children for good.



Name has been changed and a model used in the photograph.

Hanh's story, USA

Sixteen-year-old Hanh was born in Vietnam in Southeast Asia. When Hanh and his sister were small children they were kidnapped and illegally adopted by a woman who lived in Missouri, USA.

The woman who illegally adopted Hanh and his sister forced them to work and earn money for her. "She made me deliver newspapers, wash dishes at a restaurant, and sometimes work on construction projects. She made my sister clean at a hotel near where we lived, and do all the cooking and cleaning at our house", Hanh said. He explained that if they did not give the woman all the money they made, she would beat them.

After years of abuse Hanh told the pastor at his church – someone he trusted – what was going on. The pastor called the National Human Trafficking Resource Center who helped Hanh and his sister escape their situation and receive medical care, counselling and also found them a safe place to live. Hanh said, "We can now begin to heal from those years of exploitation".

Today Hanh and his sister are safe. But millions more children are still in danger. We need to do more to end violence, exploitation and abuse of children.

Case study courtesy of Polaris (the parent organisation of the National Human Trafficking Resource Center) and TeachUnicef.