Coalition for Good Schools

Education Systems Are a Key Solution to Prevent Violence Against Children

A call to action for governments, development partners and funders at the Second Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children, from the Coalition for Good Schools.

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Why Education Systems?

Efficiency. In resource-constrained settings, we need practical, sustainable entry points to prevent violence at scale. Education systems offer existing infrastructure, reach, relationships and opportunities to integrate prevention into children's everyday lives.

Opportunity. More than a billion children are expected at school on any given day and spend a significant part of their formative years there, surrounded by adults with a duty of care. Schools can do more than respond when violence occurs: they can help prevent it by building safe environments, positive relationships, social and emotional skills, and cultures of respect. They can also be a credible bridge for influencing the community and parents.

Solutions already exist. Across the Global South, civil society organisations are developing and implementing locally grounded, evidence-informed approaches in partnership with their governments. These solutions are actively preventing violence, and our member experiences demonstrate changes in classroom practices, children's confidence and participation, community attitudes, stronger reporting mechanisms, and school policies and curricula. These experiences offer a foundation on which governments and partners can build.

We Call for Four Key Actions

1

Make education systems a central pathway for preventing violence against children

We call on governments to commit to taking effective, evidence-informed violence prevention to every school.

Move beyond isolated projects and reactive responses. Embed prevention in education policies, plans, curricula, teacher training, school leadership and everyday operational culture. This means engaging the whole school and the surrounding community to: address violence between children and violence by adults in both in-person and digital environments; promote positive discipline and respectful relationships; address unequal power relations, harmful gender norms and adult behaviour; and ensure children know where and how to seek help.

2

Recognise civil society as a strategic partner and co-leader

We call on governments and development partners to deepen meaningful partnerships with local civil society actors.

Frontline organisations bring contextual knowledge, trusted relationships, practical expertise and locally developed solutions. They help translate policy commitments into action, connect schools with families and communities, generate learning, and hold systems accountable. Make civil society actors a partner in shaping priorities, designing solutions, informing policy and evaluating progress.

3

Commit sustained financing for prevention — not just short-term activities

We call on governments, donors and development partners to allocate predictable, adequate resources for school-based violence prevention.

Effective prevention requires more than one-off campaigns or occasional awareness sessions. Structural financing must support sustained implementation, teacher and school-leader capacity, child participation, family engagement, referral and protection mechanisms, and monitoring and learning. Development partners should complement, rather than substitute for, domestic public investment. Resources should reach schools and the local organisations working alongside them, with flexibility to adapt approaches to local realities.

4

Invest in locally grounded solutions and take what works to scale

We call on governments and partners to strengthen, adapt and scale effective prevention approaches developed with and by local communities.

We have locally grounded solutions and growing evidence of what works. Across the Global South, civil society actors are demonstrating how positive discipline can replace corporal punishment; how children can lead peer education and conflict resolution; how schools can create safer reporting pathways; and how prevention can be embedded in curricula and protection systems. Contextual adaptation and local ownership of interventions rather than mere replication – and children's meaningful participation and leadership – must be part of these actions. Governments and funders must invest in the evidence, partnerships and institutional conditions needed to integrate promising approaches directly into education systems and sustain them over time.

The opportunity is clear: governments have the education infrastructure and the responsibility to finance and institutionalise prevention; civil society has the local knowledge, relationships and solutions; and development partners can help enable the work and complement domestic efforts by providing additional resources. Together, we can make schools a powerful part of the solution to preventing violence against children.