



Strengthening Child Protection

Evaluation of a systemic approach in
Latin America and the Caribbean

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than one billion children worldwide suffer from the scourge of violence every year. Violence against children occurs in homes, at schools and in wider society.¹ Violence takes many forms, and the negative effects can be long lasting, often preventing children and adolescents from thriving. In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), violence against children is the most frequently mentioned problem reported by children and adolescents themselves.² The enormity of this problem has caused the international community,³ including World Vision, to strengthen its commitment to end all violence against children.

In 2013 World Vision launched a regional project to strengthen child protection systems across 14 countries. This evaluation report summarises the findings from five country-level reports: Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru. The evidence is presented in a socio-ecological framework, examining children and adolescents' experiences in their homes, schools and communities; individual protective factors such as life skills; and the changes in the legal framework and partnerships for child protection.

Key findings or successes:

- decrease in levels of violence at home and at school
- changes in social norms around the use of corporal punishment
- increase in children and adolescents' knowledge about their rights
- a stronger sense of agency with regards to their rights and protection
- more appropriate local mechanisms for reporting abuse
- successful influence on public policy and laws for child protection, including better implementation of existing laws
- effective coordination and collaboration between formal and non-formal child protection actors
- capacity building with child protection actors leading to better support services.

Where more must be done:

- Violence in the wider community remains an issue.
- Children lack a trusted adult to go to in times of need.
- Certain vulnerable groups are not able to access child protection services.
- Some services are not utilised due to a lack of trust or ineffectiveness.

The evaluations identified best practices that could be scaled up, especially strengthening the links between child protection actors from civil society and government. Further analysis is needed within each specific context to identify specific actions for ongoing strengthening of child protection systems.

1 S. Hillis, J. Mercy, A. Amobi, et al., 'Global Prevalence of Past-year Violence against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates', *Pediatrics* 137/3 (2016): e20154079.

2 See Declarations from the First Pan-American Forum of Children and Adolescents as part of the 20th Pan-American Congress (Lima, 2009), the Second Ibero-American Forum of Children and Adolescents in the framework of the 12th Ibero-American Forum of High Authorities on Children (Buenos Aires, 2010), Child and Youth Declarations from all three Sub-Regional Events on Follow-up to the UNVAC Study (Paraguay, April 2011; Santo Domingo, December 2011; and Kingston, May 2012) as well as the Regional Network of CAY supported by World Vision declaration from their in-person meeting in May 2011 in Quito.

3 UNICEF sponsors a campaign to end violence against children; see <https://www.endviolenceagainstchildren.org/>.

INTRODUCTION

Child protection is critical to the well-being of children. Where children are not safe in their families, communities and at school, they cannot thrive. Violence against children can have long-lasting negative consequences on children and society. It jeopardises the survival, health and education of children, eroding countries' economic and social capital. Many children in Latin America and the Caribbean live in areas where violence against children is all too common. As a result of the growing rates of violence against children and the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children and its recommendations, as well as extensive consultations and assessments, World Vision developed the Regional Project for Strengthening Child Protection. The project launched in 2013 in 14 countries in the region,⁴ covering 76 area development programmes. It used a systems approach to address the issues and create lasting, positive benefits for children and adolescents. The overarching goal of the project was to contribute to the strengthening of child protection systems to prevent, protect against and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and all forms of violence against children and adolescents in the LAC region, especially the most vulnerable.

As with World Vision ongoing child protection work in each country, the project used a systems approach. This approach can strengthen local and national child protection systems in contextually appropriate ways so that governments, civil society, faith-based actors, community stakeholders, families, and children and adolescents are empowered, coordinated and working together to create a protective environment that cares for and supports all children and adolescents, especially the most vulnerable. World Vision LAC uses evidence to advocate for better public policy, mobilising others, fostering partnerships and building capacity to enhance child protection and well-being.

The Regional Project for Strengthening Child Protection activities targeted both formal and non-formal elements of the child protection system and responded to the gaps and strengths identified in a particular context at both national and local levels. This approach, which brings together the formal and non-formal elements and actors, has the potential to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of violence. This systems approach looked comprehensively at the root causes of child

protection issues, drawing attention to the gaps or weaknesses in a society which put children at risk and do not respond adequately to instances of violence against children.

In 2016, an endline evaluation of the project was conducted in five countries in LAC. The evidence demonstrated that levels of violence in homes and schools had decreased. However, violence in the wider community had, at best, remained the same. Evidence also showed that children and adolescents had increased knowledge of their rights, that more appropriate mechanisms for reporting child protection violations were in place, and that children and adolescents had an increased sense of agency with regards to their rights and protection. Furthermore, since the project's inception, World Vision has successfully influenced the legal framework for child rights through strong advocacy efforts, including the improved implementation of existing legislation and new child protection laws and policies. World Vision was widely recognised for its contribution to strengthening child protection by both community members and child protection actors. The evidence also pointed to World Vision's influence in partnership with communities, governmental authorities, civil society organisations and children and adolescents themselves. Furthermore, as a result of World Vision's partnerships with formal and non-formal child protection actors, capacity improved and coordination increased, resulting in better support services for children and adolescents.

Considering the endline evaluation findings and analysis, it is clear that the Regional Project for Strengthening Child Protection Systems has contributed to the strengthening of the child protection systems both locally and nationally. Through close collaboration with communities, civil society and governments, World Vision has created safer environments for children and adolescents, stronger protective factors among children and adolescents, and more rigorous legal frameworks and support services that strengthen child protection.

Summary of key findings:

- Children and adolescents reported feeling safer in their homes and at school, including going to and from school.
- The use of corporal punishment at home had decreased.

4 Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru.

- Social norms around the use of corporal punishment are changing.
- There is an increase in children's and adolescents' knowledge about their rights.
- Schools had become less violent environments for children and adolescents, with reported reductions in bullying, peer-to-peer violence and the use of corporal punishment by teachers and school administrators.
- Children and adolescents had a stronger sense of agency with regards to their rights and protection.
- More appropriate local mechanisms for reporting abuse were in place.
- There had been successful influence on public policy and laws for child protection, including better implementation of existing laws.
- Capacity building with child protection actors is leading to better support services to prevent and respond to cases of abuse.
- World Vision has served as a catalyst, convening formal and non-formal actors to work together in a coordinated manner to strengthen child protection systems.
- There was a greater awareness of and commitment to child rights and protection within the communities evaluated.

While the accomplishments of the project are highly valuable, it is important to analyse further the implications of the findings to continue strengthening child protection systems. Best practices were identified, and consideration should be given to scaling up such practices, especially the establishment and expansion of links among child protection actors from civil society and government. Based on the key findings and analysis, recommendations were made to World Vision as well as to child protection actors, including civil society organisations and governments. Additional analysis of the findings within the specific contexts is necessary in order to develop and implement appropriate and effective actions.

Recommendations to World Vision include:

1. Utilise a broad-based approach to monitoring violence against children.
2. Strengthen the use of evidence-based approaches to transform social norms on child protection.
3. Ensure that the improvements to the child protection system and the positive outcomes are sustainable.

5 Area development programmes are distinct geographical areas, typically where beneficiaries live and work, varying in size, context and population, where World Vision partners with local stakeholders to improve the well-being of children through multiple-sector projects aimed at the root causes of issues that negatively affect children. Each area development programme has its own staff and design which seek to support families and community to improve child well-being.

4. Support the development of children's and adolescents' relationships with local child protection system entry points.
5. Conduct ongoing outreach, engagement and monitoring of the most vulnerable children.
6. Continue to encourage the meaningful participation of children and adolescents in child protection systems strengthening.

Recommendations to external child protection actors from governments and civil society organisations include:

1. Increase investment in child protection.
2. Support the improved implementation, coordination and monitoring of child protection policies and legal frameworks with effectiveness and integrity.
3. Take steps towards addressing 'hot spots' for violence against children.
4. Improve access to and quality of support services, including mental health and psychosocial services for children and adolescents.
5. Integrate social protection initiatives into efforts to reduce violence against children and strengthen child protection.

APPROACH AND DESIGN OF THE REGIONAL PROJECT FOR STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Since its launch in 2013, the Regional Project for Strengthening Child Protection Systems in LAC aimed to strengthen child protection systems in 14 countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. The project was implemented in 76 area development programmes⁵ which conducted advocacy and programming activities to strengthen the child protection systems. The overarching goal of the project was to contribute to the strengthening of child protection systems to prevent, protect against and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and all forms of violence against children and adolescents in the LAC region, especially the most vulnerable. The project's outcome objectives included:

1. strengthening of child protection systems at the local level in participating communities
2. strengthening of child protection systems at the national level in participating countries
3. improvement in the capacity of the World Vision regional office and the national offices to strengthen child protection systems.

To identify the most pressing child protection issues, gaps and strengths, World Vision national offices conducted comprehensive assessments in 34 area development programmes in 10 countries⁶ during 2011 and 2012 using the Analysis, Design, and Planning Tool (ADAPT). The ADAPT engages children, adolescents and community actors in participatory assessment, analysis and planning that seek to understand the state of child protection in the given context. The ADAPT allowed formal and non-formal child protection actors collectively to identify the root causes of child protection issues in the community, as well as the effectiveness of and gaps in the current child protection system.

Results from the ADAPT assessments⁷ identified child protection systems' strengths, such as robust legal frameworks and the important role that community actors play in child protection by strengthening social safety nets for children. The assessments also found significant gaps, including weak implementation of child protection laws, especially at the local level; poor knowledge about laws, rights, resources and services; limited capacity of child protection actors; and a lack of collaboration among actors. Insufficient public spending on services related to child protection also had resulted in the absence of formal reporting mechanisms at the local level. Importantly, the assessments found that homes and schools – the closest environments in children's circles of care – were also the primary places where violence against children occurred. The main child protection issues identified were physical and psychological abuse, primarily in the home and school; sexual assault and abuse; neglect and abandonment, child labour; child trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation; teen pregnancy as a result of sexual abuse; and domestic violence. This data was used to inform World Vision programming and advocacy at local

and national levels, to influence stakeholders and to set benchmarks for the project's monitoring and evaluation.

Following the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children and its recommendations, as well as extensive consultations and assessments conducted by World Vision, the LAC regional office and the 14 national offices in the region acknowledged the need for a systems approach to address both the formal and non-formal elements and actors that together have the potential to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of violence. The Regional Project for Strengthening Child Protection Systems used a systems approach which looked comprehensively at the root causes of child protection issues, drawing attention to the gaps or weaknesses in the system. During the life of the project, US\$5.1 million and considerable energy were invested in the systems approach, targeting countries and communities throughout the region. Project activities targeted both formal and non-formal elements of the child protection system⁸ and addressed the gaps and strengths identified in the child protection systems and the particular contexts (national and local).

In the systems approach, World Vision's project activities target both formal and non-formal actors and elements that together have the potential to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and all forms of violence against children and adolescents. (See Figure 1.⁹) The term formal elements refers to laws, regulations and policies established by the government, while non-formal elements are the attitudes, values, behaviours, social norms and traditional practices in society. Formal actors are recognised as government authorities at different levels, such as those responsible for the defence and administration of justice, police, and those working within public services that directly and indirectly contribute to the strengthening the child protection system. Non-formal actors include parents and caregivers; civil society organisations; community and faith leaders; and children, adolescents and youth. The boundaries between these elements and actors depend on the country contexts and are often more blurred at the community level.¹⁰

6 Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru.

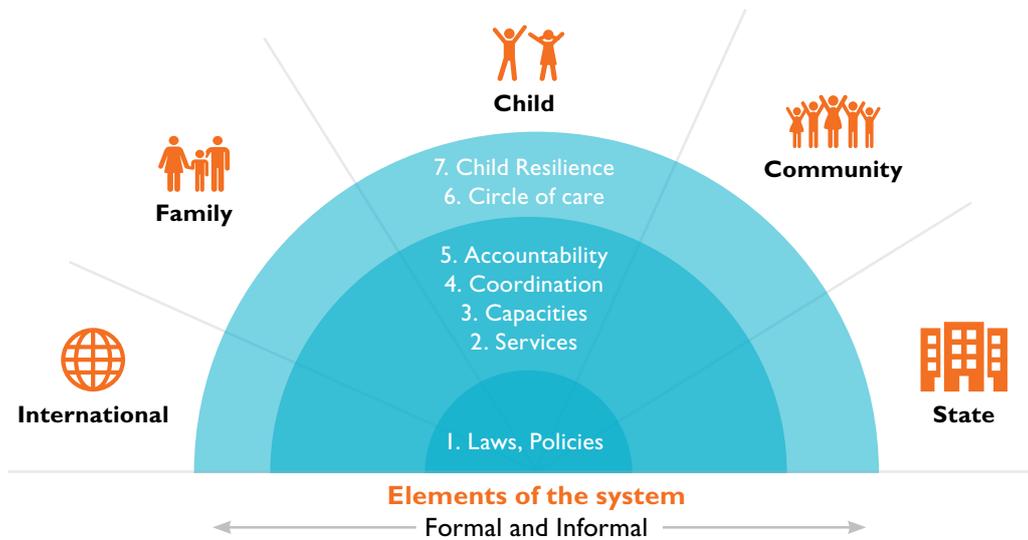
7 World Vision Latin America and the Caribbean, *Child Protection Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean A National and Community Level Study across 10 Countries* (2014). <http://www.wvi.org/ChildProtectionLAC>.

8 World Vision defines the child protection system as a set of coordinated formal and informal elements working together to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of violence against children.

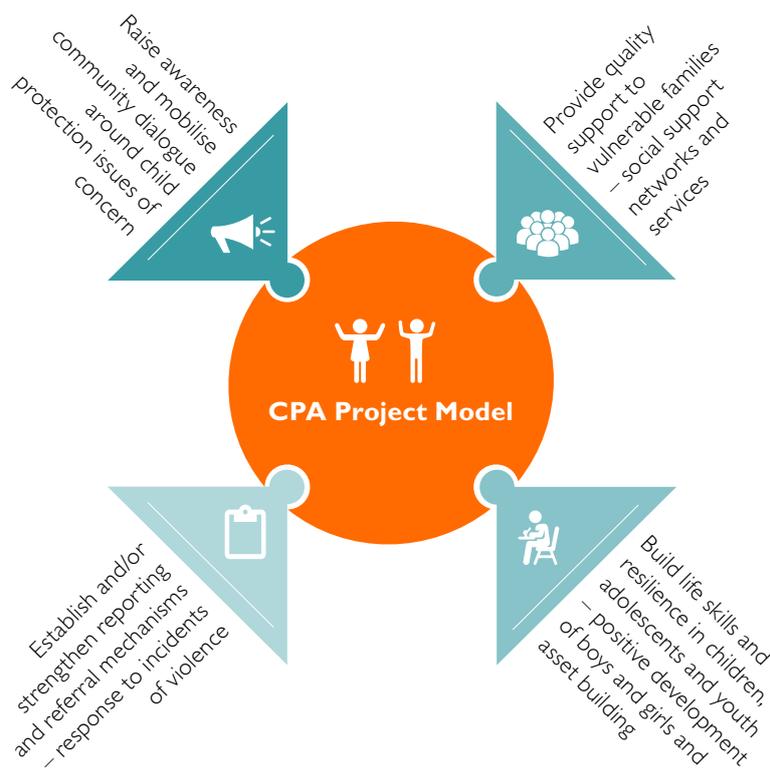
9 Please note that this was the diagram used at the time of the regional project's design and implementation. The diagram to depict World Vision's system approach was revised in 2016.

10 World Vision International, *A Systems Approach to Child Protection: Discussion Paper* (2011), 2.

Figure 1. The seven elements and five main types of actors of the child protection system.



At the centre of the regional project's signature systems approach was the Child Protection Advocacy project model. The Child Protection Advocacy model is a set of specific interventions that focus on strengthening the child protection system (both formal and non-formal elements) at the community level, thus empowering local communities to strengthen the protection of children and adolescents from abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of violence. The four key components of the Child Protection Advocacy project model include:



The Child Protection Advocacy project model provided a comprehensive framework for child protection work at the community level while also establishing an evidence base for advocacy efforts at local, national, regional and global levels. World Vision programme staff and partners have contextualised the Child Protection Advocacy project model and developed interventions specific to the particular context following in-depth analyses with partners.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was led by the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity with the aim of providing an independent evaluation of the outcomes achieved by the Regional Project for Strengthening Child Protection Systems in LAC. The objective was to collect systematic data pertaining to children's experiences with violence, social norms about the use of violence, and changes in knowledge and behaviour related to child protection, as well as changes in local and national child protection systems since the implementation of the regional project.

Mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) were used to collect data from February to July of 2016. Quantitative data were collected using surveys with random sample of respondents: children and adolescents as well as parents and caregivers. In both cases a probabilistic method was used to select respondents randomly from the appropriate populations. Another survey was used to collect data from local formal and non-formal child protection actors, using a non-probabilistic sample. Qualitative data were collected using focus group discussions with adolescents, parents or caregivers, and child protection actors at the local level, as well as individual key informant interviews with child protection actors at the local and national levels. The surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted in Spanish and, when appropriate, the native languages of Mam and Quechua.

Background

In addition to the ADAPT assessments, 13 of the 14 World Vision national offices conducted baseline studies starting in 2013. For the five countries included in this endline evaluation, baseline studies had a combined sample size of 2,661 children and adolescents; 884 local child protection actors, including parents and caregivers; and 39 regional and national child protection actors, including civil society and government representatives. The surveys with children and adolescents examined their freedom from violence and perceptions of safety, their knowledge of risks and actions to take when confronted by child abuse and their participation in activities to support their own protection as well as that of others.

Although the baseline collected valuable information, it was limited in several respects. The national offices used different sampling strategies and divergent operational definitions of some indicators, thereby making it difficult to draw meaningful comparisons across countries. In some cases the samples consisted mainly of people who had participated in World Vision programmes. Also, since most surveys were conducted in Spanish, there was limited participation from native speakers of Quechua or Mam.

The endline evaluation aimed to overcome these challenges and to provide an independent assessment of the outcomes achieved. The evaluation design used probabilistic sampling to learn about changes that had occurred in area development programmes, which had been randomly selected within each country, without regard to whether the sampled individuals had participated in World Vision interventions. Across countries, common indicators and definitions of violence against children were used, and care also was taken to standardise the survey and data collection processes as much as possible.

Sampling strategy

The five countries – Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru – were purposely selected, and as the regional project was implemented in multiple area development programmes¹¹ and resources were limited, a two-stage sampling strategy was used to identify which ones would be evaluated. First, two area development programmes (one urban and one rural)¹² were randomly selected in each country. (See Appendix A for information on the area development programmes evaluated.) Second, the communities within each area development programme were sampled for inclusion in the survey administration. Within each of the communities, households were sampled systematically (every fifth house in urban areas and every third house in rural areas), with the total number of people sampled from each community being proportionate to the population size of the community. In each country the aim was to survey approximately 500 children and adolescents, 140 parents and caregivers, and 15 formal and 15 non-formal child protection actors. The sample size for children and adolescents was calculated at N=484 using the World Health Organization's (WHO) calculator for population-based surveys.¹³ Because the focus of this survey

11 The project was implemented in 4 to 9 area development programmes per country included in the evaluation.

12 Two rural area development programmes were selected in Guatemala because the project was implemented only in rural areas.

13 The confidence interval was set at 95 per cent, with a 0.05 margin of error.

was children and adolescents and resources were limited, fewer parents and caregivers were surveyed. Thus, the sample size for parents and caregivers was calculated at N=121 with a confidence interval set at 95 per cent, a margin of error of 0.1 and a design effect of 1.5. The survey with child protection actors was non-probabilistic as it was aimed at key local child protection stakeholders. Surveys were conducted in Spanish and, where indicated, in Quechua in Bolivia and Peru, and Mam in Guatemala. In each country the surveys in Spanish and native languages were reviewed and revised in order to take into account the local context and language used.

For the surveys with formal and non-formal actors, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, nonprobability sampling strategies were used. World Vision national office and area development

programme staff and volunteers used a combination of purposive and convenience sampling to identify and convene informants. Similar to the surveys, focus group discussions with adolescents and parents or caregivers were conducted in Spanish, Quechua or Mam.

Participants

Across all the countries, a total of 3,855 people participated in the survey data collection. Table 1 shows the number of survey participants by country and category. In addition, 80 focus group discussions with 612 participants and 92 key informant interviews were conducted overall. The demographic composition of the survey participants is shown in Table 1 below and the demographic composition of focus group and interview participants follows in Table 2.

Table 1. Demographic composition of survey participants.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS						
	Bolivia	Dominican Republic	Guatemala ¹⁵	Nicaragua ¹⁶	Peru	TOTALS
Children & Adolescents						
Female	293	226	315	267	270	1,371
Male	334	264	204	252	270	1,324
Urban	388	258		261	277	1,184
Rural	239	232	519	258	263	1,511
Subtotal	627	490	519	519	540	2,695
Parents and Caregivers						
Female	118	126	74	78	108	504
Male	80 ¹⁴	34	78	78	71	341
Urban	125	75		78	92	370
Rural	75	85	152	78	87	477
Subtotal	200	160	152	156	179	847
Child Protection Actors						
Female	33	38	22	49	34	176
Male	30	28	41	10	28	137
Urban	40	32	32	37	29	170
Rural	23	34	31	22	33	143
Subtotal	63	66	63	59	62	313
Total	888	716	734	734	781	3,855

14 The gender for two parent/caregiver survey participants is unknown.

15 The project was implemented in four area development programmes in Guatemala, and all areas are characterised as rural. For this reason, no urban participants are in the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

16 Note that the area develop programme in Granada is a peri-urban location.

Table 2. Demographic composition of focus group and in-depth interview participants

FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS						
	Bolivia	Dominican Republic	Guatemala	Nicaragua	Peru	TOTALS
Focus Group Discussion Participants						
Rural	66	72	129	57	58	382
Urban	47	67		47	69	230
Subtotal	113	139	129	104	127	612
Boys	26	32	32	32	39	161
Girls	33	42	33	33	32	173
Subtotal	59	74	65	65	71	334
Mothers	13	17	17	12	17	76
Fathers	13	15	14	15	13	70
Subtotal	26	32	31	27	30	146
Formal	10	14	13		12	49
Non-formal	18	19	20	12	14	83
Subtotal	28	33	33	12	26	132
Total	113	139	129	104	127	612
In-depth Interview Participants						
Female	11	8	7	11	12	49
Male	8	7	12	9	6	42
Subtotal	19	15	19	20	18	91
Rural	7	7	14	9	7	44
Urban	7	5		7	6	25
National	5	3	5	4	5	22
Subtotal	19	15	19	20	18	91
Youth	2	4	4	4	1	15
Formal	11	6	7	8	8	40
Non-formal	6	5	8	8	9	36
Subtotal	19	15	19	20	18	91
Total	19	15	19	20	18	91

Research teams and organisation

The research teams included international and national researchers. The international researchers were from the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity and were responsible for training national researchers, monitoring, mentoring, data analysis and report writing for all countries. For each country, national research firms, hired by the World Vision national offices, provided teams of 9 or 10 researchers who conducted all of the surveys. They also facilitated the majority of focus group discussions and key informant interviews, with some being facilitated by the Columbia Group researchers. The research teams

were supported in the field by World Vision national office and area development programme staff, including the regional project manager.

Each national team included male and female researchers, which made it possible to match the gender of the researcher and the participants in most cases. The research recognised the ethical complexities and dilemmas associated with research on children and adolescents,¹⁷ and steps were taken to reduce possible negative impacts, which included not inquiring about sexual abuse. When child protection issues emerged, the researchers followed up with child protection focal points from World

17 A. Graham, M. Powell, N. Taylor, D. Anderson and R. Fitzgerald, 'Ethical Research Involving Children', Innocenti Research Centre (Florence: UNICEF Office of, 2013); G. Berman, et. al., 'What We Know about Ethical Research Involving Children in Humanitarian Settings: An Overview of Principles, the Literature and Case Studies', Innocenti Research Centre (Florence: UNICEF Office of Research, 2016).

Vision. Ethical considerations also included talking in a respectful, empathic manner when querying about violence children and adolescents and difficult life conditions. Informed consent was obtained from parents or caregivers for the participation of their children, and assent was obtained from the children/adolescents themselves. Informed consent was obtained from parents or caregivers and child protection actors for their participation. The researchers were also trained on and agreed to abide by World Vision's child protection standards.

Tools

The quantitative tools used were a survey for children and adolescents, a survey for parents or caregivers and a survey for local formal and non-formal actors. The surveys with children and adolescents collected information in seven main categories: demographic information, school and work, discipline at home, experiences with violence, social norms, life skills and resilience. Surveys with parents and caregivers collected information on children's and adolescents' freedom from violence, social norms related to violence against children, parenting practices, knowledge of and participation in child protection activities, and knowledge of services and laws related to child protection and well-being. Surveys with child protection actors collected information on perceptions of the prevalence of violence against children, social norms and the child protection system, including changes in laws, services, capacities and coordination. Mobile devices were used to collect all survey data; this enabled real-time monitoring of the data.

The qualitative tools used were guides for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with subgroups at the local level. In-depth interviews were also conducted at the national level with formal and non-formal child protection actors. Interview and focus group discussion guides aimed to collect data on children's and adolescents' experiences with violence, perspectives of violence against children, pathways to response, child protection support mechanisms, changes that have occurred in recent years, and preventative factors that limit violence against children at the community level and/or national level depending upon the participants' roles.

Data analysis

The survey data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software and included descriptive analysis and significance testing at the country level with regard to gender, age group (8–12 and 13–17) and participation in World Vision interventions. Changes in perceptions, attitudes and behaviour relating to violence and the child protection system were identified through questions about changes that had occurred following the project's implementation. Additionally, data gathered on the current situation was compared with baseline data where possible and with qualitative secondary data. The qualitative data analysed changes through specific questions about changes in violence against children and in the child protection system that had occurred over the past two years. The qualitative data analysis was conducted using grounded theory as a methodology by the lead international researchers. Key categories, themes and patterns were identified inductively through holistic reading and examined through processes of triangulation with different subgroups (e.g. male parents or caregivers; female parents or caregivers; adolescent girls affiliated with World Vision; adolescent girls with no affiliation with World Vision; formal child protection actors; and so on). Since qualitative data frequently provides insight into processes of social change and the mechanisms through which changes occur, the qualitative data was triangulated with the quantitative data and with the qualitative secondary data, boosting analytic power through convergent findings where possible.

Limitations

Because different methodologies and different operational definitions of violence had been used in the baseline data collection, it was not possible to make exact comparisons with the endline findings, though trends were identified. This was partially compensated for by the use of 'before-after' questions in the surveys, focus groups and interviews. The survey data collected was not an actual measurement of incidence but instead relied on participants' memories or recall of past events and perceptions of violence, which are known to be fallible. Comparison groups instead of control groups were included in

the evaluation design, which limited the ability to make causal inferences. Also, the surveys did not undergo rigorous validation testing. Further, the indigenous languages of Quechua and Mam did not always allow for exact translations of some of the response patterns. As a result, some questions, when translated, may not have been understood in the manner intended. Accordingly, those questions were eliminated from the analysis. Also, World Vision staff helped the research team access participants in the qualitative data collection, and this could have been a source of social desirability bias. Similarly, there was some influence by data collectors and World Vision staff in administration of the surveys, focus group discussions and interviews which created potential biases. As some of the findings highlight, quantitative and qualitative data were not always aligned, demonstrating the complexities associated with the sociocultural constructs of violence against children

In addition, it is important to note that the communities targeted by the project and the endline evaluation have experienced high rates of inequality and violence, which are magnified for children, adolescents and youth. The historical and sociocultural contexts as well as the frequency of incidents of violence against children within these communities sometimes contribute to a normalisation of violence and complacent attitudes or behaviours towards violence. Such contexts and attitudes can present challenges for collecting valid data on violence against children because underreporting can be a concern.

Finally, due to resource constraints, the evaluation focused primarily on objectives one and two of the project: strengthening child protection systems at the local level (objective one) and the national level (objective two). While objective three, strengthening child protection capacity within the World Vision regional office and national offices, was not explicitly evaluated, some consideration was given to this through analysis of secondary data from country reports and related qualitative data collected through interviews with World Vision staff and a focus group discussion with World Vision Guatemala national office staff.

RESULTS

The findings and analysis are organised into three sections, using a social ecological framework. The first section examines findings related to children and adolescents living free from violence in their home, school and community. The second presents the findings regarding protective factors such as life skills, resilience and the voice of children and adolescents. The third section focuses on strengthened collaboration for child protection, that is, changes in the local and national child protection systems, such as capacity, services and support mechanisms, new laws and accountability to legal frameworks, and partnerships for child protection.

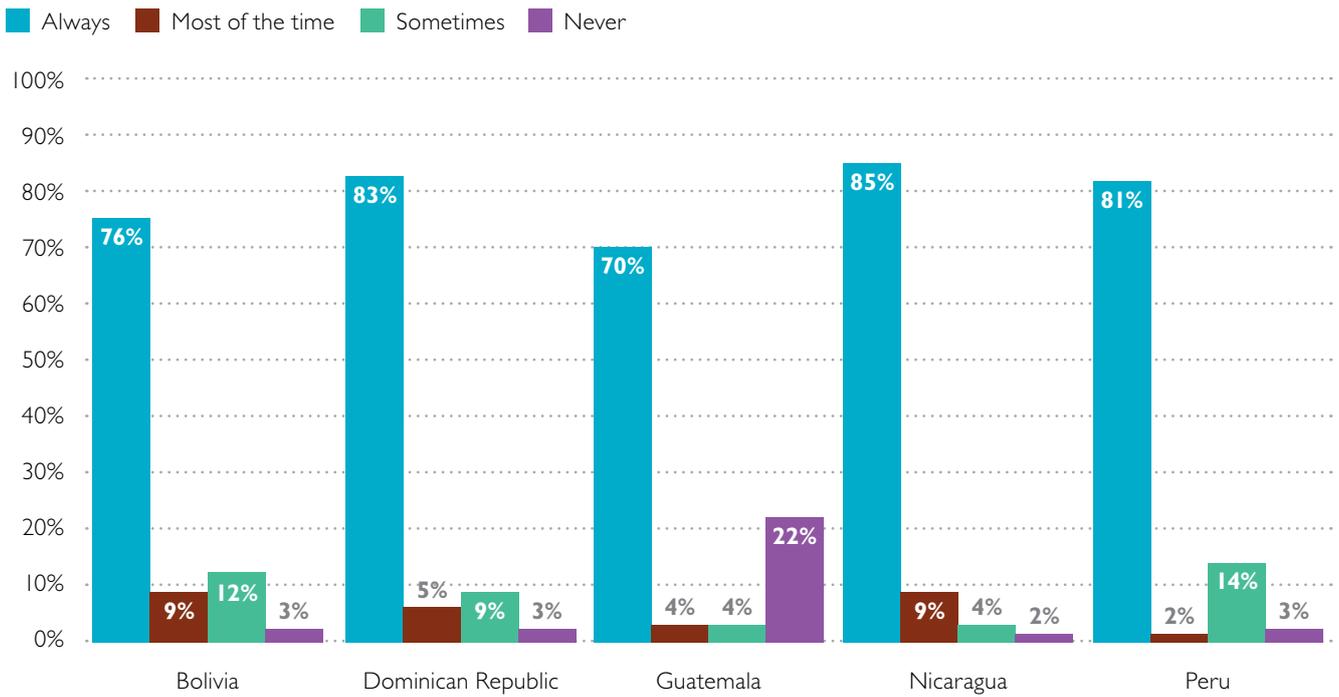
Safe environments for children and adolescents

Across the participating countries, children and adolescents reported feeling safe where they lived. (See Figure 2.) This perception of general safety where one lives could reflect the respondent's environment at home, school, or community or even all three.

Some children and adolescents reported that these changes had occurred due to increased sensitisation led by the World Vision area development programmes and the corresponding increase in attention from parents or caregivers.

I think that it is more secure because the children are receiving more attention from their parents.
– Adolescent boy, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

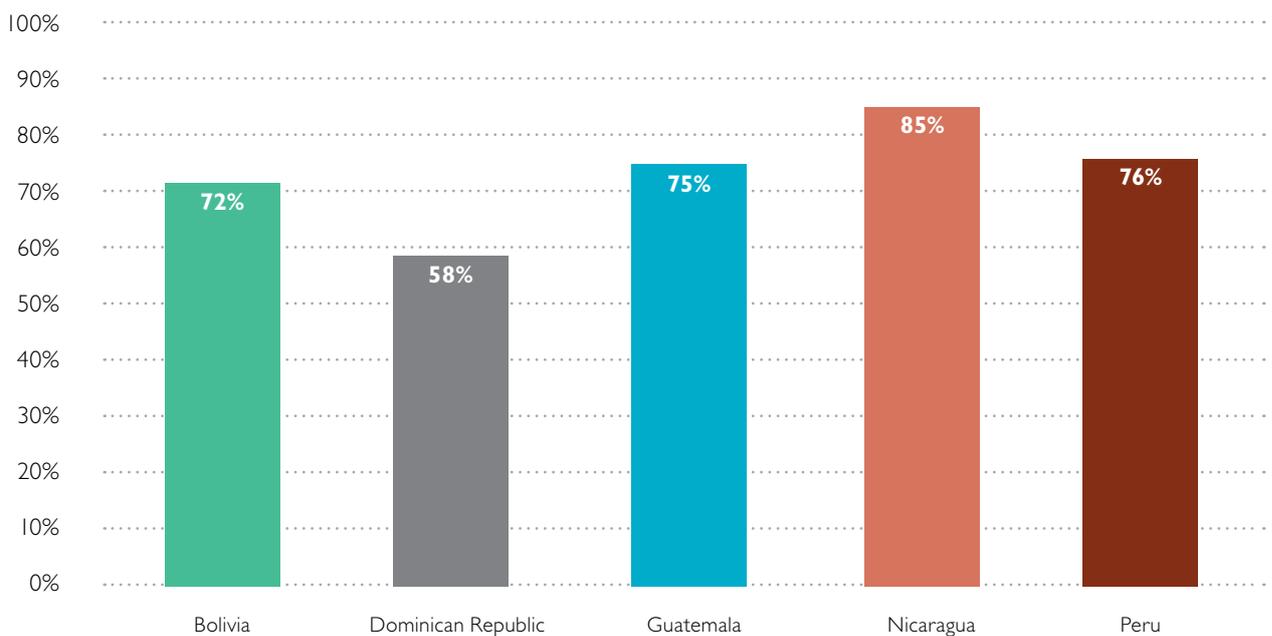
Figure 2. Percentage of children and adolescents who reported feeling safe where they live



Moreover, survey data from formal and non-formal child protection actors such as teachers, religious leaders, community leaders and social workers at the local level indicated that the care of children and adolescents in their homes has improved or is much improved over the past two years. Indeed, 72 per

cent of actors in Bolivia, 58 per cent in the Dominican Republic, 75 per cent in Guatemala, 85 per cent in Nicaragua and 76 per cent in Peru reported improved care of children and adolescents in their homes in their localities. (See Figure 3.)

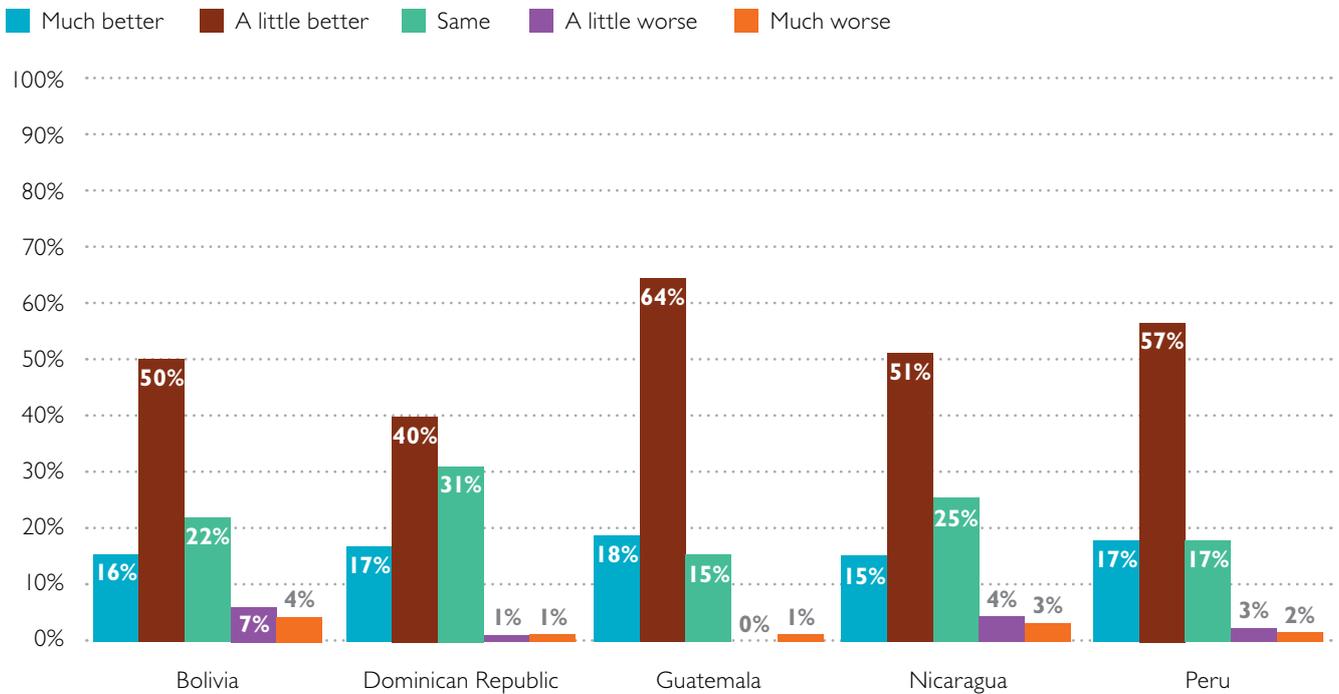
Figure 3. Percentage of child protection actors who reported improved care of children and adolescents in their homes compared to two years ago



The majority of parents or caregivers also corroborated the findings from child protection actors, reporting that compared to two years ago, parents are treating their children better in their communities ('a little better' or 'much better'). (See Figure 4.)

The following sections will add depth and provide a more nuanced understanding of this overall finding that most children and adolescents feel safe where they live.

Figure 4. Percentage of parents and caregivers reporting how parents and caregivers in their community are treating their children and adolescents compared to two years ago

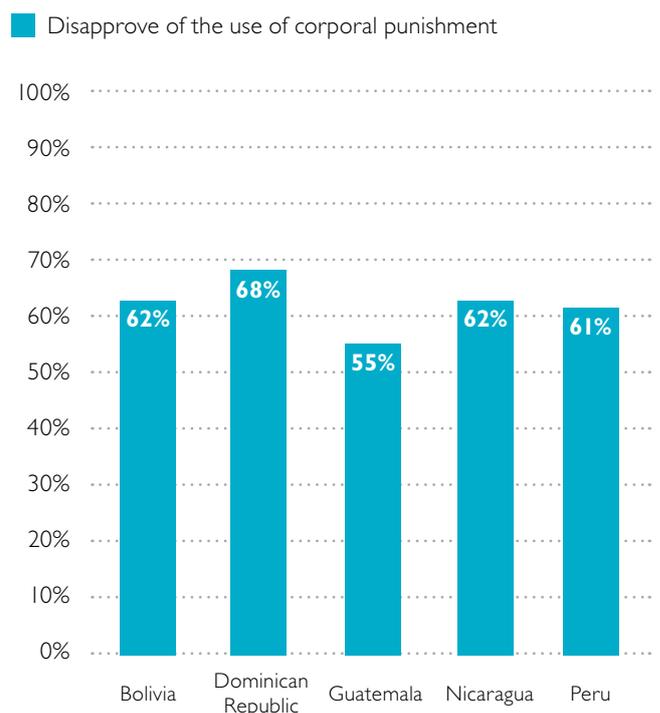


Violence in the family

A pervasive form of violence against children is corporal punishment. In many areas corporal punishment is a social norm and is rooted in the belief that good parents teach their children good behaviour in part by beating them for bad behaviour. However, this evaluation finds that parental use of corporal punishment is decreasing, and some of the decrease seems due to World Vision interventions. At the same time, children and adolescents continue to see child beating as one of the main forms of abuse, suggesting the continued use of corporal punishment by some parents or caregivers.

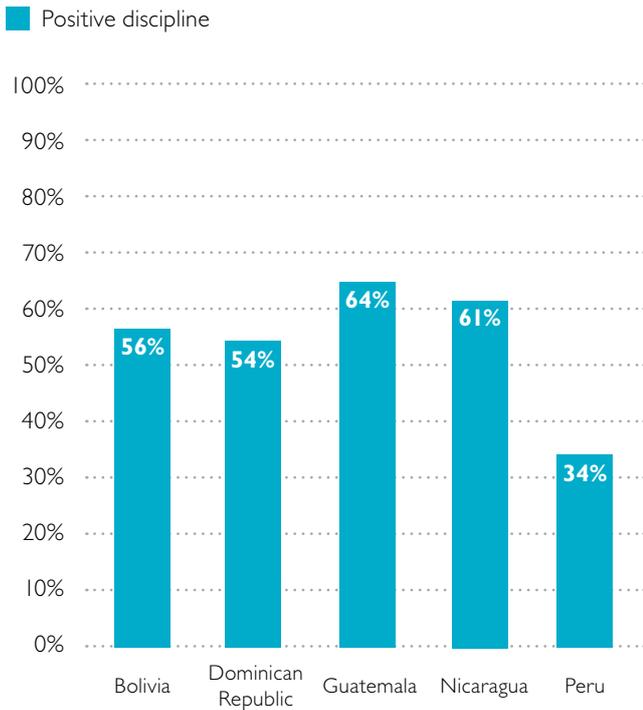
Corporal punishment. Across all five countries, changing attitudes and behaviours in regard to corporal punishment were evident. When asked on the survey about the attitudes and behaviour of most people in their community, the majority of parents and caregivers reported that most people disapprove of corporal punishment as a method of discipline. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5. Percentage of parents and caregivers who believe that most people in their community disapprove of the use of corporal punishment of children and adolescents



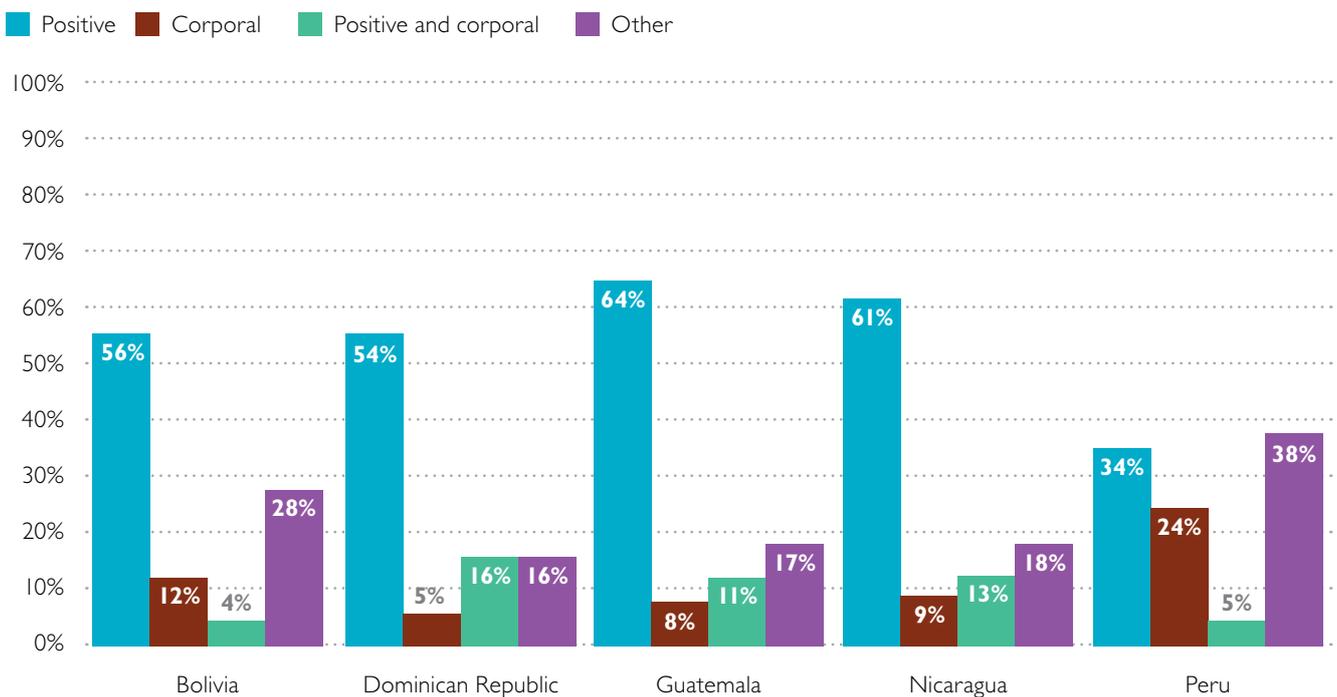
Parents' and caregivers' perceptions of changing parenting practices in regard to corporal punishment were corroborated by children and adolescents. In four of the five countries over half of children and adolescents reported that positive methods of discipline were used exclusively with them. (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6. Percentage of children and adolescents who report that parents and caregivers use exclusively positive alternatives to corporal punishment in disciplining children and adolescents



Yet data also showed that corporal punishment continues to occur even though there is an overall reduction. The percentage of children and adolescents who reported that they had been disciplined only by receiving corporal punishment was 12 per cent in Bolivia; 15 per cent in the Dominican Republic; 8 per cent in Guatemala; 9 per cent in Nicaragua; and 24 per cent in Peru, where legislation prohibiting corporal punishment was approved just five months prior to data collection. (See Figure 7.)

Figure 7. Type of discipline used by parents and caregivers as reported by children and adolescents



Broadly, the qualitative data also indicated that there has been a reduction in the use of corporal punishment by parents and caregivers. While some parents and caregivers still believed it was appropriate and beneficial to use physical punishment to teach good behaviour, they reported that nonetheless they have stopped physically disciplining their children.

There is a change in the cultural ways of parenting . . . more tenderness, less violence.

– Non-formal child protection actor, focus group discussion, Bolivia

We hit them, yelled at them, we blackmailed them . . . but our children will grow up in a different environment, in the context of this new legal framework and new relationships. New patterns will be established, and we, the transition generation, we are unlearning the old and trying to learn a new model and we are going to pass this paradigm shift on to our children and our grandchildren.

– Formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Nicaragua

Parents and caregivers also reported similar changes, as illustrated by the focus group discussion excerpts below.

Before, there was heavy abuse of children by parents. There was no communication with the children. . . . What they did was that they punished with a stick, wood, rope, electric wires. . . . They said 'You're not going to study – you go to work.'

– Mother, focus group discussion, Peru

Respondent 1: Before, children would be punished with a belt. . . . Now, over here, it is different. Parents talk with their children.

Respondent 2: Before, the children were beaten; they threw them to the ground and beat them with a stick.

Respondent 3: Now there are laws for children and adolescents.

– Fathers, focus group discussion, Nicaragua

Many attributed their behaviour to World Vision workshops, which not only had sensitised them about the law and children's and adolescents' rights but also taught them positive parenting skills. The following discussion among mothers illustrates this point:

Respondent 1: In homes they have changed the experiences of children about violence. There is still violence, but not like before.

Respondent 2: Children are no longer punished as before, perhaps because the talks [by World Vision] have been given to mothers. They have been taught other ways than to hit with a stick.
– Mothers, focus group discussion, Guatemala

Adolescents also reported that corporal punishment by parents and caregivers had decreased.

Parents used to beat their children with belts, sticks – gave them a strong beating. Now they do not.

– Adolescent girl, focus group discussion, Nicaragua

I have seen changes in my house, and now they do not hit my little siblings.

– Adolescent girl, focus group discussion, Bolivia

There is less violence because parents are attentive to the children. . . . They are punished less than before.

– Adolescent boy, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

Because now there is the law. It is now no longer normal to mistreat children.

– Adolescent girl, focus group discussion, Nicaragua

However, not all parents and caregivers saw these changes in law and practice as positive. Some parents and caregivers said that the laws had taken away their ability to instil good morals and teach good behaviour, and as a result, children and adolescents were more disobedient. Others said that the decreasing use of corporal punishment even contributed to violence outside the home.

The child protection code has taken away the rights of parents.

– Father, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

I have a son and he says, 'If you hit me there are laws' . . . and for us, the parents, it is a trap. We can't give them a whip and educate them.

– Father, focus group discussion, Bolivia

Now violence is worse because children don't get punished. . . . It is needed to teach moral behaviour.

– Mother, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

Although the overwhelming majority of children and adolescents reported that the reduction in physical punishment was a good thing, a small minority of children and adolescents saw corporal punishment as necessary to teach good behaviour and values.

Yes, it has improved a little in the houses regarding the fathers. They are not as violent as they were before and they try to explain with words and actions. . . . But I appreciate my parents because they have hit me, because now I understand a lot.
 –Adolescent girl, focus group discussion, Bolivia

In addition to corporal punishment, children and adolescents were also asked if they had been hurt by an adult in their family in the previous two years. Overall, the results indicated that children and adolescents continue to suffer physical violence within families, with the rates varying by country. The percentages of children and adolescents who had not been hurt by an adult in their family ranged from 67 per cent in the Dominican Republic to 92 per cent in Guatemala. (See Figure 8.) The percentages of children and adolescents who said they had not been hurt by a sibling or cousin ranged from 76 per cent in the Dominican Republic to 92 per cent in Nicaragua.

Violence at school

Overall, the data on violence against children at school indicated a pattern of reduced violence. The majority of children and adolescents reported that

violence at school had declined during the previous two years. Children and adolescents who have never been personally threatened at school ranged from 79 per cent in the Dominican Republic to 88 per cent in Peru. (See Figure 9.)

Figure 8. Percentage of children and adolescents who reported that they have not been physically hurt by someone in their family in the past two years

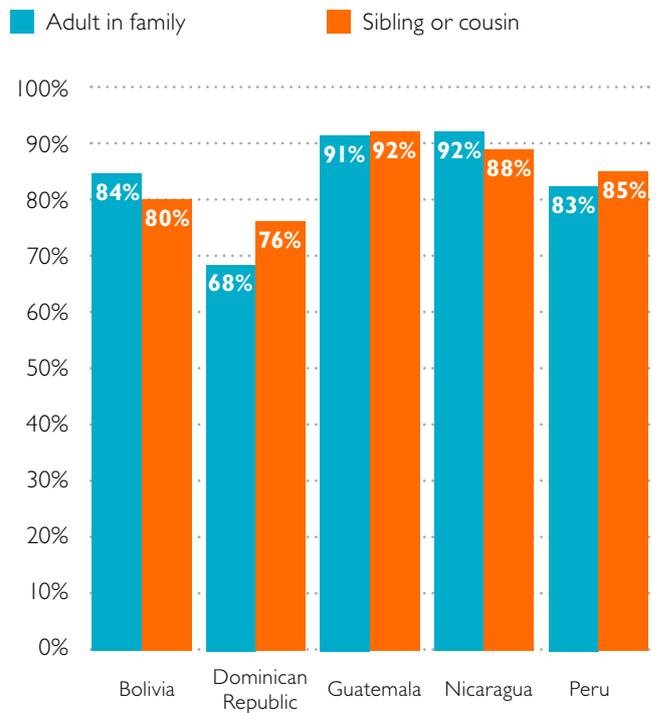
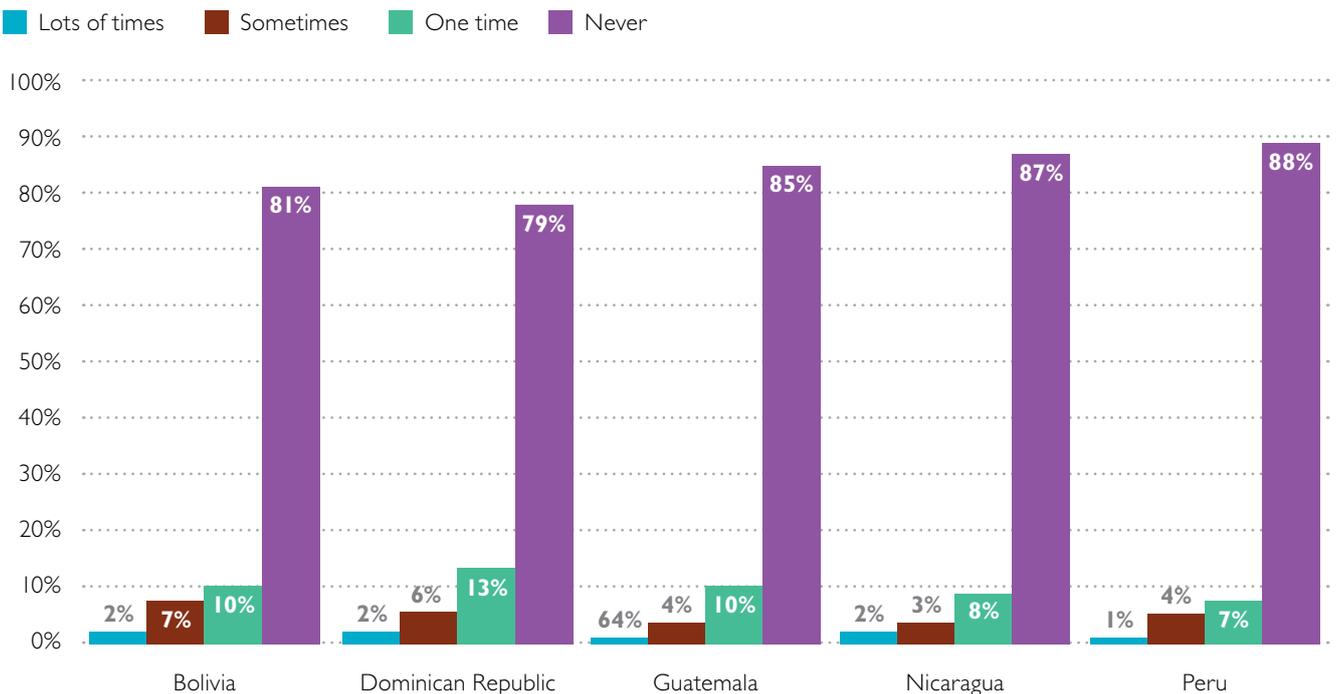


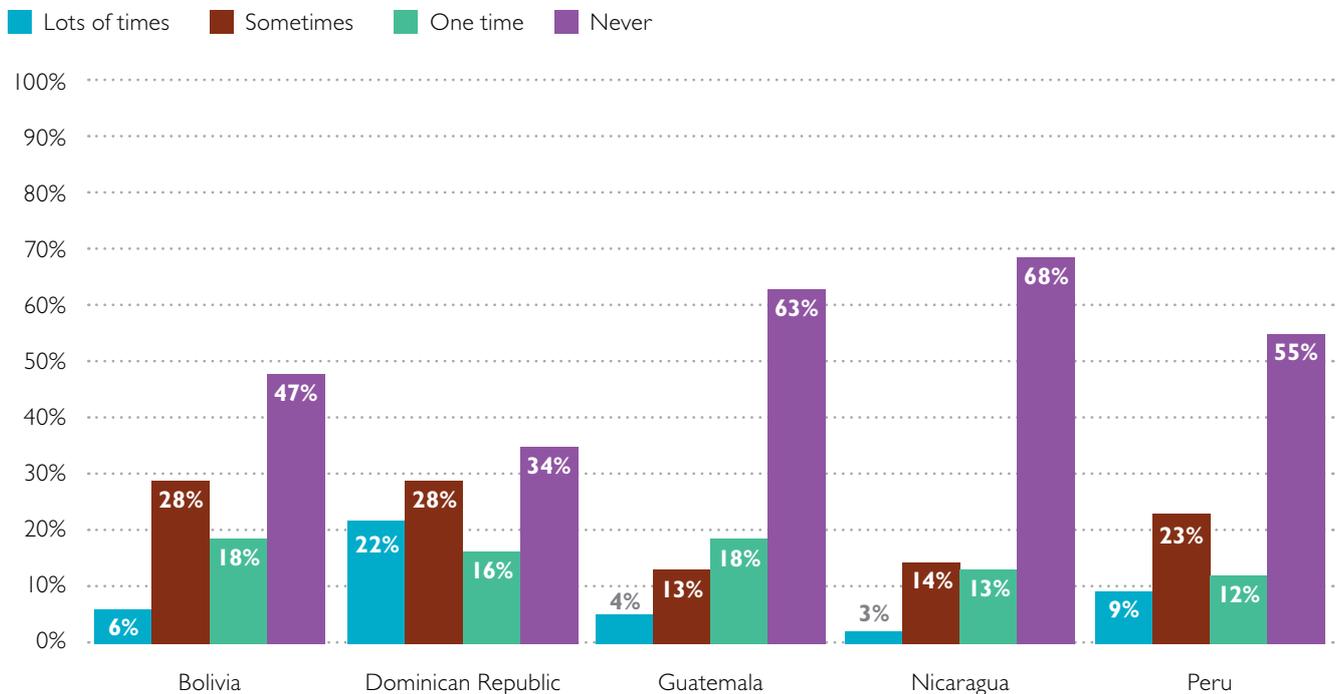
Figure 9. Percentage of children and adolescents who had been personally threatened with violence at school in the previous two years and the number of times they had been threatened



Although most children and adolescents had never been threatened personally at school, many more reported having witnessed other children and adolescents being threatened. (See Figure 10.)

In spite of witnessing threats, most children and adolescents reported that they feel safe at school and going to and from school. (See Figure 11.)

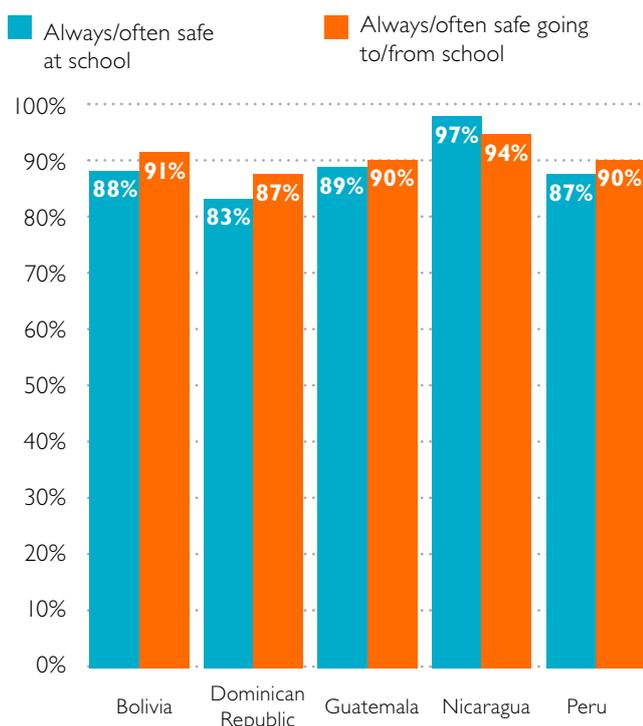
Figure 10. Percentage of children and adolescents who had witnessed other children and adolescents being threatened at school in the previous two years, and the frequency of the threats



For the children and adolescents who reported that they did not feel safe, the main reasons cited were bullying by other students in the form of threats, abusive language and physical violence; fights among

students; and threats by teachers. In urban areas, gangs emerged as a reason some children did not feel safe going to and from school. In some schools sexual violence by teachers or other staff emerged as the reasons they did not feel safe.

Figure 11. Percentage of children and adolescents who feel safe at school and going to and from school



The qualitative data revealed that most participants saw violence in schools as having declined over the preceding two years. Some participants attributed this decrease to new laws prohibiting the use of corporal punishment by teachers at school. Along with other civil society organisations, World Vision played an active role in the establishment of these laws and communities' awareness of them.

Some teachers are not good, but they no longer hit. They understand that they no longer need a whip. The laws have changed hitting.
–Mother, focus group discussion, Bolivia

For me it has changed, because in the past the teachers could hit students. The parents authorised it, but not anymore, because it is forbidden.
– Adolescent girl, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

Respondent 1: Teachers no longer can shout at the children.

Respondent 2: Teachers cannot hit the children [because of the law¹⁸].

– Adolescent girls, focus group discussion, Peru

Participants attributed the increased school safety to anti-bullying campaigns and workshops on peer-to-peer relations and conflict resolution led by World Vision and civil society groups and organisations. World Vision, along with other institutions and organisations, was also recognised for having helped to create more caring school environments due to the trainings provided to teachers on positive discipline and conflict resolution.

Respondent 6: Over the last two years, the situation has changed because a lot of work has been done regarding bullying. Bullying is not new, but now it has a name and its consequences have become more evident. It has received more attention and teachers are training students to report these cases.

Respondent 1: Since it has been addressed by the Ministry of Education, students have stopped having fights after school, and teachers pay more attention to this situation even after school hours.

– Child protection actors, focus group discussion, Guatemala

Respondent 2: Yes, it has changed for the better. Before, there was more abuse among students.

Respondent 6: Before, there was a fight every day. But now we think better things and we now know how to avoid it.

– Adolescent girls, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

Fighting between students has been reduced – from three times a week to one or two times a month.

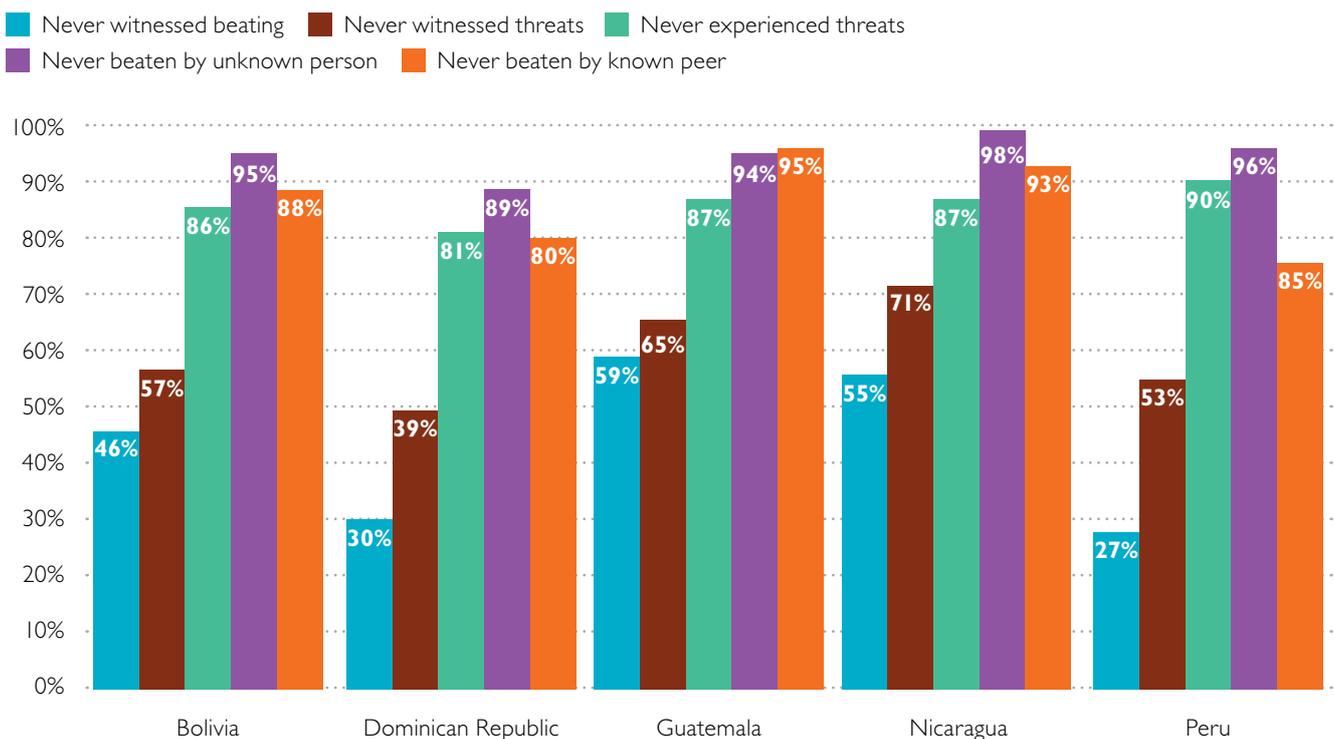
– Adolescent boy, focus group discussion, Nicaragua

The [World Vision] project to stop bullying at school has made it better in schools. Before, many people were fighting.

– Adolescent boy, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

The survey data from child protection actors corroborated these views; 86 per cent of child protection actors in Bolivia, 77 per cent in the Dominican Republic, 91 per cent in Guatemala, 87 per cent in Nicaragua and 76 per cent in Peru reported that there have been improvements in the care of children and adolescents at school from two years ago.

Figure 12. Percentage of children and adolescents who have never experienced violence in the community by type of violence



¹⁸ Law 29719, which promotes coexistence without violence in educational institutions. Often referred to as the Anti-bullying Law.

Violence in communities

While violence in homes and schools was reported to be decreasing in many of the area development programmes, violence in the wider community was still a reality in children's and adolescents' lives. Some children and adolescents and parents and caregivers felt that violence in their communities had stayed the same or had increased during the previous two years. When parents and caregivers were asked whether children and adolescents in their community felt safe, in four out of five countries fewer than half responded 'most of the time' or 'almost always': 45 per cent in Bolivia, 34 per cent in the Dominican Republic, 32 per cent in Guatemala, 53 per cent in Nicaragua, and 38 per cent in Peru.

The qualitative data from adolescents revealed the breadth of their concerns about violence, which included not only physical violence but also violence related to children working on the street, neglect, alcohol and drug abuse, not attending school, unsanitary environments, a lack of police involvement, sexual abuse and teenage pregnancy.

Respondent 5. There are changes, but it is worse. Violence has increased because violence is not only physical but also verbal and mental. On the streets there are more children working; that's part of violence.

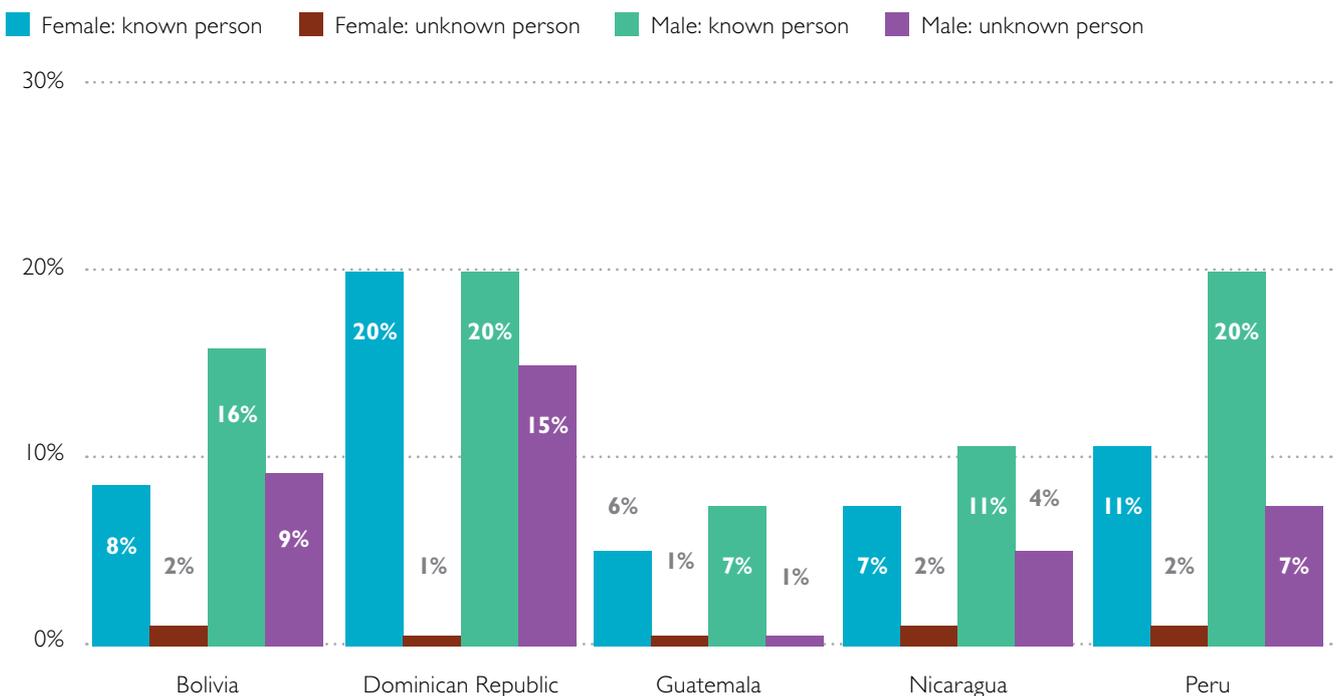
Respondent 7. For me it has increased and has not diminished. . . . There are more children working on the street who should not be. There are fewer children in school . . . like your father may not give you the opportunity to study.
– Adolescent girls, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

I would say it has not changed much, because I walk through the streets, and every time I walk it is the same. That is to say that there still is garbage, and several neighbours here have called for lights for more protection for young people after school. But nothing, nothing has changed. I even found out yesterday, or the day before, that a child was lost and police did not do anything.
– Adolescent boy, focus group discussion, Bolivia

Differences exist by gender, with boys experiencing significantly more violence than girls. Being hurt by someone known was reported by boy and girls significantly more than being hurt by someone unknown. (See Figure 13.)

In contrast to the view that violence posed a significant danger, the survey data indicated that in reality most children and adolescents had not personally experienced physical violence in the past two years in the community (the figures ranged from 79 per cent in the Dominican Republic to 90 per cent in Guatemala), even though significantly more had witnessed violence. (See Figure 12.)

Figure 13. Percentage of children and adolescents by gender who report being physically hurt in their community by someone known or unknown in the previous two years



Respondent 2: There are criminals, and if you don't have anything, they will kill you.

Respondent 3: Children see it all. They are like sponges – they absorb everything.

– Mothers, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

The qualitative data revealed that some communities, or specific areas in communities, were safe, whereas others were not; people could try to avoid the unsafe ones. The reasons given for children and adolescents not being safe included gang activity in some urban areas, robberies and the presence of drugs and alcohol, which were associated with fighting and aggressive behaviour in both urban and rural areas.

Respondent 1: It depends on the particular community. Some are safe, while others are more dangerous.

Respondent 6: Every day I have to see them leave the house, but I have to pray for them to return healthy. Down here is not violent. Here below you can be calmer, you can breathe more easily. . . . More violence comes from up there, from when gangs form.

– Mothers, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

I see the gangs through my window at home.

– Adolescent girl, focus group discussion, Bolivia

The qualitative data also indicated that violence in some communities had decreased due to initiatives such as awareness raising, campaigns and mobilisations addressing violence against children, trainings and community-led monitoring by various groups, including World Vision.

In my community it [World Vision] has had much impact, because people talk if there is a problem and apologise.

– Adolescent girl, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

With trainings and lectures about violence, machismo and other issues, violence has reduced. Of course, it is still there because it is difficult to stop, but it is quite improved.

– Mother, focus group discussion, Nicaragua

I would say that it has become a little safer, because World Vision has also helped in part by speaking about children's protection, and also sensitising parents.

– Adolescent boy, focus group discussion, Bolivia

Child protection actors emphasised that the perceptions of increased violence may occur not because violence happened more frequently, but because there was greater awareness of the issue. This was in part due to the sensitisation initiatives carried out by World Vision, which had led to increased sensitivity to violence, an understanding of what constitutes as violence against children and increased reporting.

Complaints regarding violence have increased. It does not mean that violence has increased. Due to the sensitisation, awareness has increased, and it has allowed the cases to become public; institutions are informed about them and people talk about them.

– National child protection actor, key informant interview, Nicaragua

I'm not all that sure that violence has increased. What I believe, rather, is that people are becoming more aware of their rights. And what they are doing, instead of remaining silent, is reporting it to the protection authority.

– National child protection actor, key informant interview, Peru

Analysis

These findings highlight the fact that changes are under way. Parents and caregivers acknowledged substantial support provided by World Vision and the community groups that World Vision had mobilised. However, some parents and caregivers did not feel supported and argued that their rights as parents or caregivers had been taken away. They saw their inability to punish their children by using physical discipline as allowing disobedient and disrespectful behaviour and as contributing to children's and adolescents' delinquency, including engaging in violent acts. This backlash and the feeling of not being supported are perhaps unsurprising, because the change threatens old habits and parental authority, which are related to deeply ingrained sociocultural values and identity.

To some extent the sense of parents being undermined relates to the way in which child rights were introduced. Children and adolescents were taught their rights and reporting options without bringing parents and caregivers on board. This resulted in parents and caregivers feeling threatened by children and adolescents who had become disobedient and disrespectful. On the other hand, parents and caregivers who had participated in

workshops, where they were able to engage in dialogue and reflection and were provided with alternatives, appeared to embrace the idea of child rights. This suggests the importance of doing child rights education with parents and caregivers first, or perhaps simultaneously with children and adolescents. It also suggests the value of collective reflection, which is often limited by the use of more didactic approaches.¹⁹

One significant finding across countries was that by the end of the regional project, children and adolescents reported feeling safer in their homes and at school. In homes, there was not only a reduction in corporal punishment but also in other forms of violence by parents and caregivers. Also, most children and adolescents reported that they always feel safe at school and going to and from school. There were signs that schools had become less violent environments for children and adolescents. Children and adolescents, teachers and child protection actors spoke consistently of reductions in bullying, fighting, and the use of corporal punishment by teachers.

These positive changes are noteworthy because bullying by students and corporal punishment by teachers had been major issues prior to the project. For the most part, these changes were attributed to anti-bullying campaigns, sensitisation workshops for parents and teachers, and changes in the law, all of which reflected efforts by World Vision.

It should be noted that there was not unanimity in the area development programmes studied as to whether violence against children had actually been reduced. In fact, some community people thought that there had been no reductions in violence, and some even thought violence had increased. This study, like most, included no direct measures of violence against children such as observations of beatings and other forms of violence against children. Nevertheless, the overwhelming weight of both quantitative and qualitative evidence indicated that violence against children had been reduced overall. A likely interpretation of the divergent views is that the project's activities had increased awareness of violence against children, making them more attentive to it than they had been before. Another possibility is that the people who reported seeing no decrease lived in areas known as 'hot spots', where violence continued unabated. Although the former interpretation seems more likely, additional inquiry is needed.

With regards to social norms, several lines of evidence suggested that a positive change had begun to occur around child beating, and that World Vision interventions had contributed to this change. Prior to the implementation of the regional project, corporal punishment was a major source of violence against children and was described as a deeply rooted sociocultural practice that had endured for centuries. By the end of the project the majority of parents and caregivers across countries believed that corporal punishment is now disapproved of as a method of disciplining children and adolescents.

These positive changes are noteworthy because bullying by students and corporal punishment by teachers had been major issues prior to the project. For the most part, these changes were attributed to anti-bullying campaigns, sensitisation workshops for parents and teachers, and changes in the law, all of which reflected efforts by World Vision.

To understand the significance of this finding, it is useful to reflect on the role played by reciprocal expectations in maintaining the social norm of corporal punishment by parents and caregivers. When corporal punishment is the norm, people expect that bad behaviour by a child or adolescent will lead to a beating by the parents or caregivers. Also, parents and caregivers expect that their failure to beat a child or adolescent who has misbehaved will be seen as bad parenting that is likely to evoke criticism or social censure by other parents and caregivers. When the social norm begins to change, one expects to see a change in these reciprocal expectations. At the end of the regional project, most parents/caregivers saw corporal punishment as a disapproved method of disciplining children, and adolescents indicated that people no longer expected parents or caregivers to beat a child or adolescent who had misbehaved.

Behavioural evidence also indicated a change in social norms regarding corporal punishment by parents and caregivers and also by teachers. With the exception of Peru (where legislation prohibiting corporal punishment was approved less than five months prior to data collection), most children and adolescents indicated that parents and caregivers used nonviolent,

¹⁹ M. G. Wessells and K. Kostelny, 'Child Rights and Practitioner Wrongs: Lessons from Inter-Agency Research in Sierra Leone and Kenya', in *Handbook of Children's Rights: Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. M. Ruck, M. Peterson-Badali and M. Freeman, 579–96 (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2017); and N. Benham, 'Awkward Engagement: Friction, Translation and Human Rights Education in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone', unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2011.

positive forms of discipline more frequently than they used corporal punishment. This contrasted starkly with the descriptions of beatings with whips, wires, ropes and other objects that had been the usual methods of discipline two years prior. Following the implementation of the regional project, these findings demonstrate positive progress towards changing parents' and caregivers' attitudes and behaviours in regards to corporal punishment, while also shedding light on the recurrent use of the corporal punishment and the need to continue working towards its eradication.

Protective factors

Demonstrating life skills on child rights and protection, valuing the norms that protect children and adolescents, and participating in actions to ensure protection are important protective factors for children and adolescents, crucial components of a strong child protection system. These protective

factors span the social ecology of the child or adolescent, as some are individual (e.g. life skills), whereas others relate to home, school or community.

Life skills

One of the aims of the regional project was to help children and adolescents develop the life skills that serve as protective factors. Among these were identifying child protection risks and knowing actions that one could take to avoid those risks. The survey data found that nearly all children and adolescents could identify at least one child protection risk. The most serious risks identified by children and adolescents were missing school, beatings at home, violence in the community and working. (See Figure 14.) Other forms of violence included alcohol abuse, drug abuse, neglect by parents or caregivers, parental fighting, bullying by peers, poverty, unsanitary environments, sexual abuse, teen pregnancy and dangerous vehicles on the road.

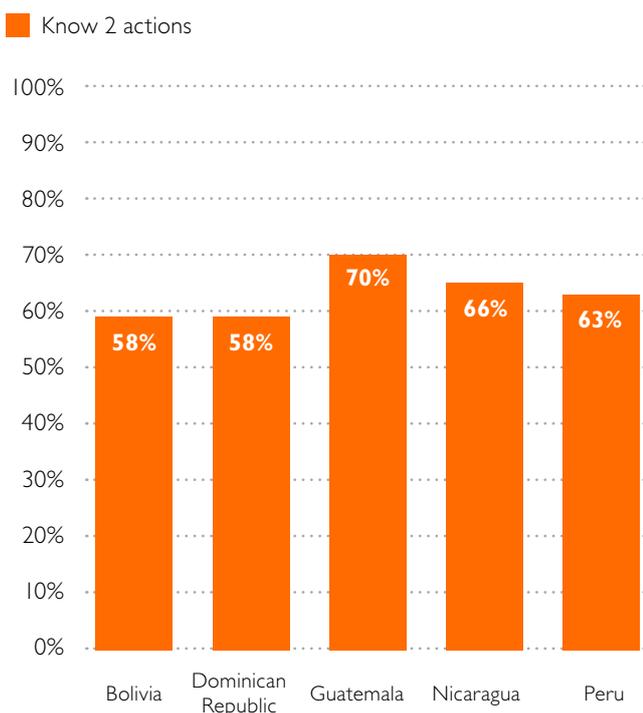
Figure 14. The most serious forms of violence against children as identified by children and adolescents



Across all five countries, 58 per cent or more of children and adolescents knew of two actions to take to respond to violence against children. (See Figure 15.) Though the methods of collecting data differed from the baseline to the evaluation and caution must be used in interpreting the results, the findings suggest a significant increase in the knowledge of

actions to take in three of the five countries, following the regional project's inception. The countries that did not demonstrate an increase used a different sampling technique at the time of the baseline, which resulted in surveying children and adolescents who already had a significantly high level of knowledge of actions to take when confronted by violence against children.

Figure 15. Percentage of children and adolescents who identified at least two actions to take if they encountered violence against children in their community



Across all five countries, over 90 per cent of children and adolescents knew at least one person or place to go when they encountered violence against children.

In focus group discussions, adolescents said that their first response to violence against children was to go to a trusted adult or friend. Other actions were to approach various non-formal and some formal child protection actors in their community, including community leaders, school principals and directors, teachers and faith leaders.

I would tell a trusted person, tell my neighbour, my best friend.

– Adolescent girl, focus group discussion, Bolivia

Respondent 1: I would go to the local board for child protection, to the evangelical church, to the Catholic church.

Respondent 2: It depends on what environment one is in, because if it's in a school, one ought to bring it to the guidance office or the principal. If they do not resolve it, you can then bring it to the school district or the Ministry of Education.

– Adolescent boys, focus group discussion, Peru
When parents beat us, or when they fight in the classroom, throw punches on the playground drawing blood, we tell the teachers. Also when we see that a small child is wronged, we tell the teachers.

– Adolescent boy, Key informant interview, Peru

Children and adolescents who had directly participated in World Vision activities, as well as those who had not, consistently indicated going to World Vision as an action they would take in response to violence against children.

Yes [I know of actions to take], because for example, if something happens to us and our family is poor, we can go to World Vision.
– Adolescent boy, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

The person or institution that helps would be World Vision, because it is the one that is against violence within the family, bullying and all these issues. This would be an institution that supports you.

– Adolescent girl, focus group discussion, Bolivia

Sometimes you can go to organisations like World Vision, because there they help us against child abuse that happens to young children. In that case they can help us because they have more experience, they know things and one can count on them, and so children are confident.

– Adolescent boy, focus group discussion, Nicaragua

Children and adolescents were also able to identify where to make formal reports of violence against children or where to go to receive counselling and other services. However, most children and adolescents said they would not approach such authorities directly. Most noted that while the police service was an option for reporting, they would not go to the police with a problem because the police were viewed as corrupt or ineffective. This view was particularly prevalent in the Dominican Republic and Bolivia. Moreover, some also saw government institutions as ineffective. They preferred instead to go to a trusted adult, especially a community leader, and entrust that person with the responsibility to take appropriate action on their behalf.

Some children and adolescents reported that there is a gap between learning what should be done and what they would actually do when violence against children occurs.

Usually, it is like exams – you study for a while, then you forget. It's the same. You say, Ah! This is true! But when in the situation where you encounter violence, you very seldom put into practice what you have learned. For small children it's even more difficult to do because of their

vulnerability and age and even their size, because they are fragile little persons.

– Adolescent girl, focus group discussion, Bolivia

However, this gap in some places is filled by means of networking and collective action. In the Dominican Republic, for example, adolescents formed the National Movement of Child and Youth Leaders with support from World Vision. This alliance enabled them to undertake numerous actions before government institutions to promote child rights and protection, thereby benefiting other children and adolescents.

What I've seen is the change in the experiences of children and adolescents because of the activities of the youth network.

– Non-formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Dominican Republic

Both the survey data and the focus group discussions revealed that children and adolescents had learned about their rights. The right they mentioned most frequently was the right to education.

We have a right to education, to life, to love, nationality, and family.

– Adolescent boy, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

Now children are not like how they were before, they already know their rights; they can take a hit and say, I am going to complain and advocate.

– Formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Bolivia

Adolescents also spoke of the values that they learned (such as treating others with respect and practising peaceful behaviour) and how these contributed to their protection, gave them confidence and motivated them to take action for positive change. Important topics discussed included preventing bullying, nonviolent conflict resolution, drugs, teenage pregnancy, and HIV and AIDS. These were taught in schools, churches and also by World Vision and community groups.

Respondent 1: World Vision doesn't just give aid but makes us reflect. Activities to see that the world is not all violence. We must be the change for tomorrow.

Respondent 5: World Vision has brought the people out of poverty. Also with them we have learned values, rights.

– Adolescent boys, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

Some children feel more confident; they feel better. Now they can leave school and not be scared that another person wants to assault them.

– Adolescent boys, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

Voices of children and adolescents

The qualitative data revealed that, during the project, children and adolescents had increased their sense of agency, which is a vital component of children's and adolescents' ability to protect themselves. As illustrated in Table 3, many children and adolescents were actively engaged in addressing issues such as bullying, child abuse, corporal punishment, alcohol and drug abuse, child labour and domestic violence as well as advocating for their rights and protection.

Table 3. Issues that children and adolescents had campaigned on or worked to address in the past two years

Bolivia

Child rights, child abuse, domestic violence, alcohol abuse, bullying, better care of children by parents, cleaner schools, drug abuse, corporal punishment, environmental protection, child labour, sexual exploitation, transportation for children, school violence

Dominican Republic

Bullying, child abuse, teen pregnancy, alcohol abuse, street children, school improvements, domestic violence, violence against women, child labour, verbal violence, community improvements, environmental protection, drug abuse, recreational spaces for children, delinquency

Guatemala

Child rights, reducing violence among children, caring for the environment, child protection, respecting elders, children in emergencies

Nicaragua

Bullying/peer-to-peer violence, child abuse, child rights, drug abuse, children not attending school, community improvements, school improvements, alcohol abuse, environmental protection

Peru

Bullying, child abuse, child rights, better communication with parents, environmental protection, right to play, recreational spaces for children, education for all children, gangs, school violence, verbal abuse, corporal punishment, violence against girls, child labour

In focus: Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic a national youth leadership alliance, Movement of Child and Youth Leaders, was formed with the support of World Vision. World Vision provided special training on how to facilitate actions for child protection strengthening at the local and national levels as well as how to mobilise and collaborate with others. The Movement of Child and Youth Leaders is now a Christian, nonpartisan social organisation made up of and directed by children, adolescents and youth. These empowered and organised young people seek to encourage children, adolescents and youth to be agents of change for the transformation of their families, communities and country. They have led numerous actions in response to child protection issues. Their advocacy efforts have had an impact not only in mobilising others at the local and national levels but also in influencing government institutions to fulfil their responsibility to promote the protection and well-being of children and adolescents.

The youth alliance [National Movement of Child and Youth Leaders] has more than 1,000 children and youth advocating for the prevention of teen pregnancy and reducing physical abuse. We have youth groups and debate groups on protection issues. World Vision has trained youth leaders with an emphasis on the protection of children. The youth then train other youth. When World Vision ends, we still want to continue, so we are going through legal incorporation with the government.

– Non-formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Dominican Republic

The narratives of children and adolescents demonstrated the empowerment, pride and positive results that their participation has achieved.

Before, . . . parents lived abusing their children, shouting. When the campaign I Use My Voice against Child Abuse came, we visited houses; we began to raise awareness among parents; we walked in this community and in other communities, bringing visibility to I Use my Voice

against Child Abuse; and we talked with parents about the parenting practices which are not correct [using physical harm] or shouting. Instead [we explained] they could use dialogue, a way to talk with children, and that it was not right to mistreat them or beat them.

– Non-formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Nicaragua

It is easy to say that World Vision has a presence. We can highlight there has been a transformation in the system. Institutions have a fluent communication with the communities. Adolescents and children participate and promote their rights; they advocate for their own rights.

– Non-formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Nicaragua

We have been explaining to others what is violence, where they should go, who they should go to if they have these types of problems. We have done some activities to inform others and to talk about this issue.

– Adolescent girl, focus group discussion, Bolivia

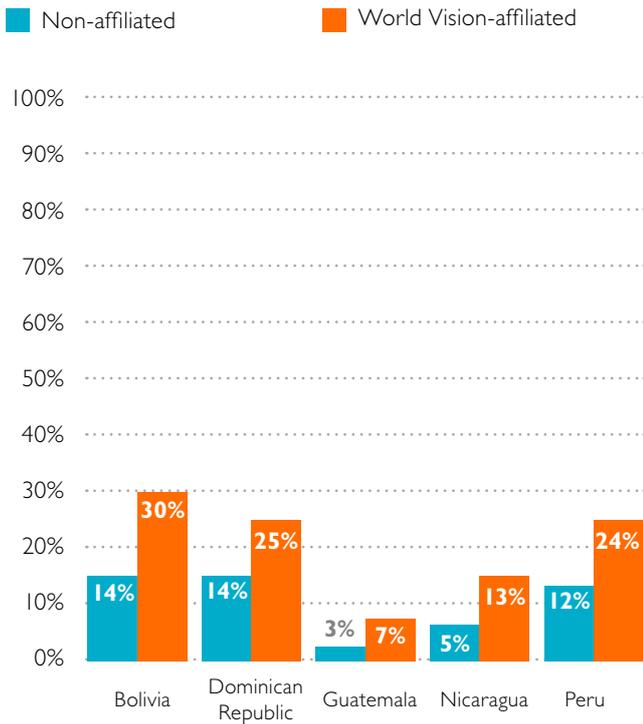
Respondent 1: For example, I have worked with World Vision and have campaigned about bullying, about violence against children.

Respondent 3: The trainings have been given by World Vision and UNAN [National Autonomous University of Nicaragua] that have groups of young people and adolescents. We have been empowered about that. We met with teachers in schools, and we have dealt with children of that community. And yes, there has been considerable change, because now there is less violence.

– Adolescent girls, focus group discussion, Nicaragua

An important finding was that children and adolescents who were affiliated with World Vision – by attending workshops or trainings or as sponsored children – were twice as likely to have participated in campaigning and working to address issues (such as those described in Table 3) as were children and adolescents who had not been directly involved in any World Vision activities. (See Figure 16.)

Figure 16. The percentage of children and adolescents who had participated in campaigns or had otherwise addressed children and adolescents' issues during the preceding two years



However, some of the children and adolescents who had not had the opportunity to be involved in clubs, workshops or trainings felt voiceless and marginalised and said that they were neither listened to nor encouraged to participate.

Facilitator: What have youth and adolescents in your community done to ensure their protection from violence?

Respondent 1: Nothing. You want to do anything, our style, our way, and adults prevent it. They say we're stepping out of the box.

Respondent 2: If we are inspired to make a group, it would lead to many problems. We do not have the capacity for that. We are not well heard in the community.

– Adolescent girls, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

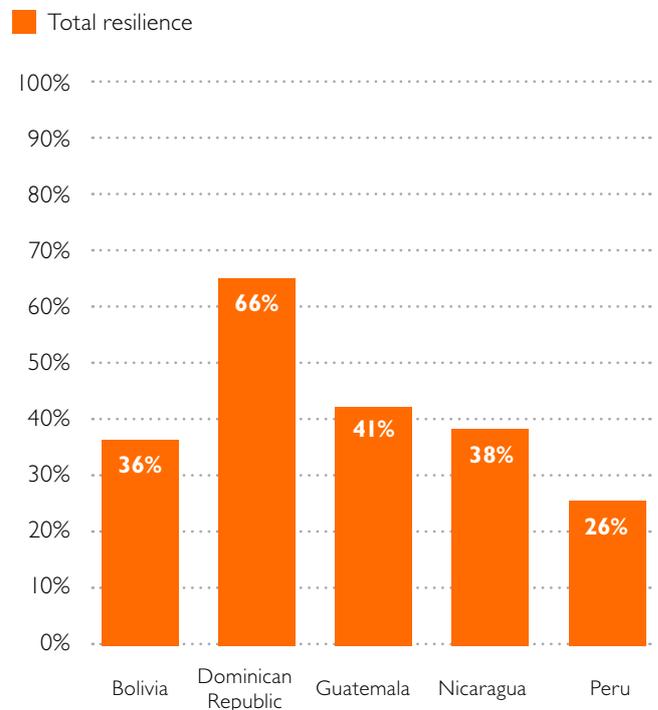
Resilience

The majority of children and adolescents reported attributes associated with protective factors that are linked to resilience. These attributes include making friends with other young people, making good decisions, having people to talk with when

one has a problem, and so on. The more protective factors that are present in children's and adolescents' environments as well as each child's individual characteristics, the better they will be protected from violence and its negative consequences.

Children and adolescents who reported that they had high levels of attributes for most or all of 12 items associated with resilience (e.g. 'I make friends with other young people'; 'I feel good about my future'; 'I have an adult outside my family that I can talk to when I have a problem') ranged from 26 per cent in Peru to 66 per cent in the Dominican Republic. (See Figure 17.)

Figure 17. Percentage of children and adolescents reporting high levels of resilience attributes on 12-item scale



The analysis also looked at these attributes organised into the three categories: positive identity, social competencies and community support.

Figure 18. Percentage of children and adolescents reporting high levels of positive self-concept attributes on five-item subscale

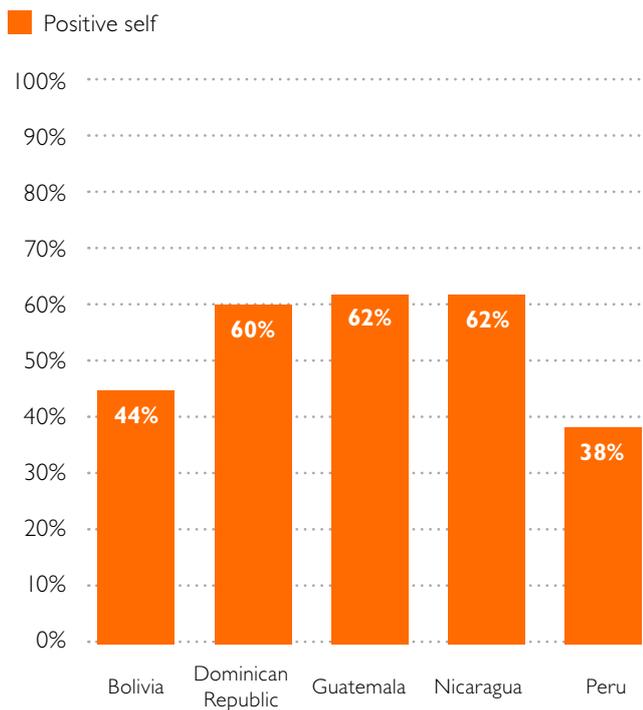
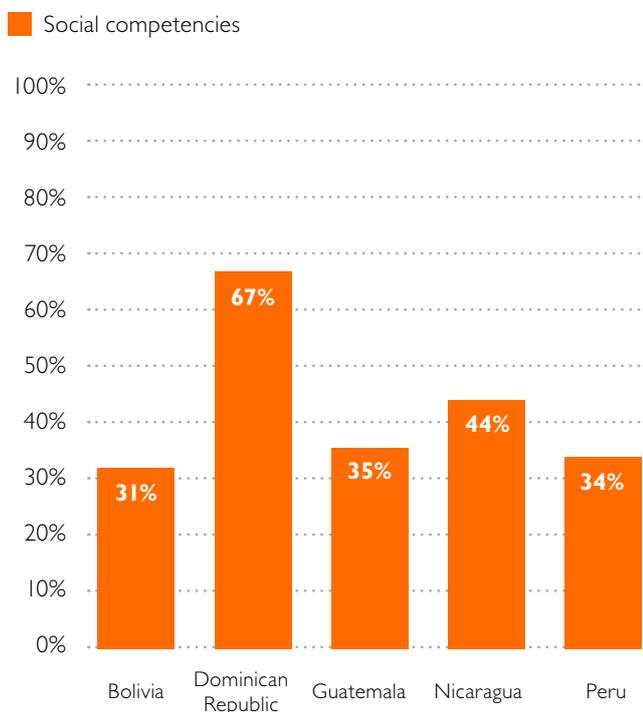
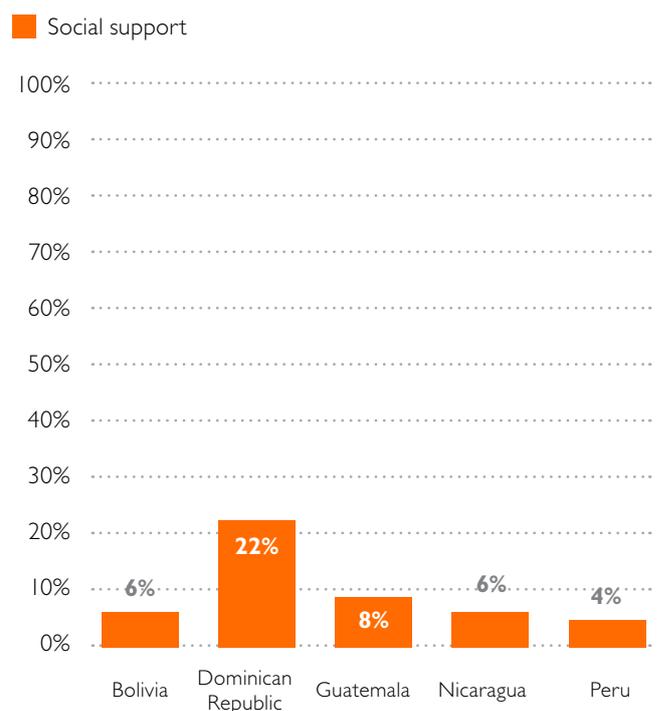


Figure 19. Percentage of children and adolescents reporting high levels of social competencies attributes on four-item subscale



On the positive identity scale, children and adolescents from Guatemala, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic had the highest levels at 62 per cent, 62 per cent, and 60 per cent, respectively. Children and adolescents from Bolivia had 44 per cent, and those from Peru 38 per cent. (See Figure 18.) On the social competencies scale, children and adolescents from the Dominican Republic had the highest levels at 67 per cent, while in other countries levels were lower: 31 per cent in Bolivia, 35 per cent in Guatemala, 44 per cent in Nicaragua and 34 per cent in Peru. (See Figure 19.) The community support category revealed that, overall, children and adolescents had low levels of attributes in this area. Children and adolescents in the Dominican Republic had 22 per cent, followed by 8 per cent in Guatemala, 6 per cent in Bolivia, 5.5 per cent in Nicaragua and 4 per cent in Peru. (See Figure 20.)

Figure 20. Percentage of children and adolescents reporting high levels of community support attributes on three-item subscale



The analysis also looked at children and adolescents who had participated in World Vision activities in the preceding two years compared with children and adolescents who had not participated in any World Vision activities. The findings revealed significant differences for some of the categories in the following countries:

- In Bolivia, children and adolescents affiliated with World Vision had significantly higher rates of community support²⁰ (p. <0.01).
- In the Dominican Republic, children and adolescents not affiliated with World Vision had higher social competencies²¹ (p. <0.05).
- In Peru, children and adolescents affiliated with World Vision had significantly higher community support (p. <0.05).
- In Nicaragua, children and adolescents affiliated with World Vision had significantly higher total resilience (p. <.01); community support (p. <0.01); and social competencies (p<0.05).

Analysis

The Regional Project for Strengthening Child Protection Systems was highly successful in teaching children and adolescents life skills, such as being aware of various forms of violence against children and knowing at least two appropriate actions to take in response to violence against children. However, it is also important to note the gap between knowing what one 'ought to do' and what people usually do; it is possible to know where to go and how to report yet not be better protected or supported in reality. On the positive side, some children and adolescents not only knew what they 'ought' to do but expressed intentions to do so. With regard to the latter, some children and adolescents said that they would go to World Vision because of its stand against violence and its provision of support and teaching of life skills.

Children and adolescents as well as child protection actors said that during the regional project children and adolescents had become more aware of their rights and that this has given them increased confidence. Children and adolescents, especially those with some affiliation with World Vision, showed greater agency and leadership on behalf of child rights through their extensive participation in campaigns. It was significant that children and adolescents affiliated with World Vision saw themselves as actors and change agents rather than as beneficiaries of a development project. This is unusual because, despite the recognition of the importance of child participation, the levels of meaningful child participation in the child protection sector remain relatively low.

It is important to note, however, some of the gaps in protective factors. One of the preferred actions for responding to violence was to talk with a trusted adult. Yet most children and adolescents in four out of five of the countries indicated that they did not have an adult outside the family with whom they could talk when they had a problem. From the standpoint of psychosocial well-being, this is a critical gap, because it potentially means that children and adolescents lack adult support at a moment of considerable distress. Particularly if the source of violence comes from within the child's or adolescent's family, it is essential to have a trusted adult to go to outside the family. This is an area that warrants immediate attention and programme strengthening by World Vision. In addition, there is no guarantee that the protective factors listed above will invariably achieve positive outcomes for child protection. For example, trying to overcome problems in a positive way may not actually lead to improvements in protection or well-being.

20 Though affiliated children and adolescents in Bolivia, Peru, and Nicaragua had higher percentages for community support, these percentages were nonetheless very low.

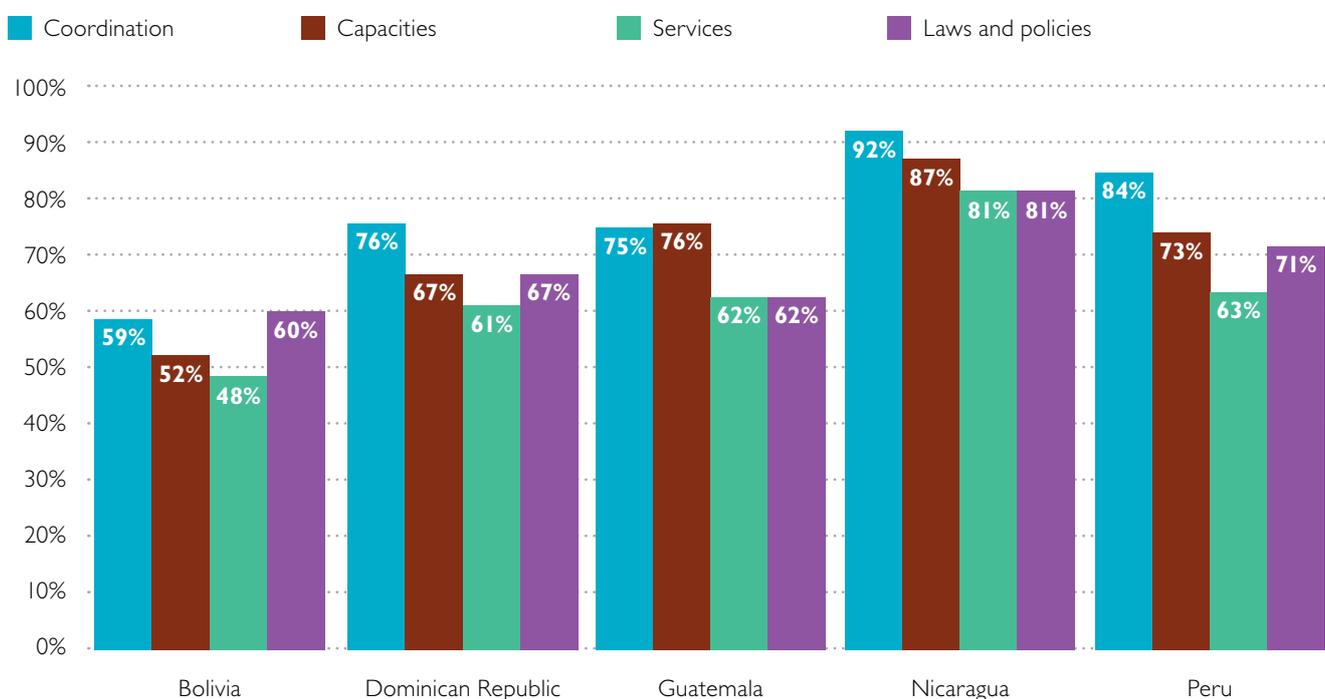
21 Though non-affiliated children and adolescents in the Dominican Republic had a higher percentage for the social competencies category, both affiliated and non-affiliated children and adolescents in the Dominican Republic were the highest of all countries overall.

Strengthened collaboration for child protection

This section highlights the project's contribution to strengthening policy and legal frameworks, the capacity of key actors, services and support mechanisms, and partnerships for child protection. Through World Vision's comprehensive lens, formal and non-formal actors and elements are all seen as important parts of the child protection system. Strategic efforts are made to improve coordination and collaboration among the different actors in order to improve support services for children and adolescents.

In all five countries both formal and non-formal child protection actors at the local level reported seeing improvement in the child protection system in the preceding two years. In the survey those who reported that they knew of new laws, policies and regulations regarding child protection ranged from 60 per cent to 81 per cent. Furthermore, those reporting improvements in the coordination of actors and institutions for child protection ranged from 59 per cent to 92 per cent. (See Figure 21.)

Figure 21. Percentage of child protection actors who reported that laws, services, capacities and coordination in the preceding two years were 'improved' or 'much improved'



Increased capacity for child protection

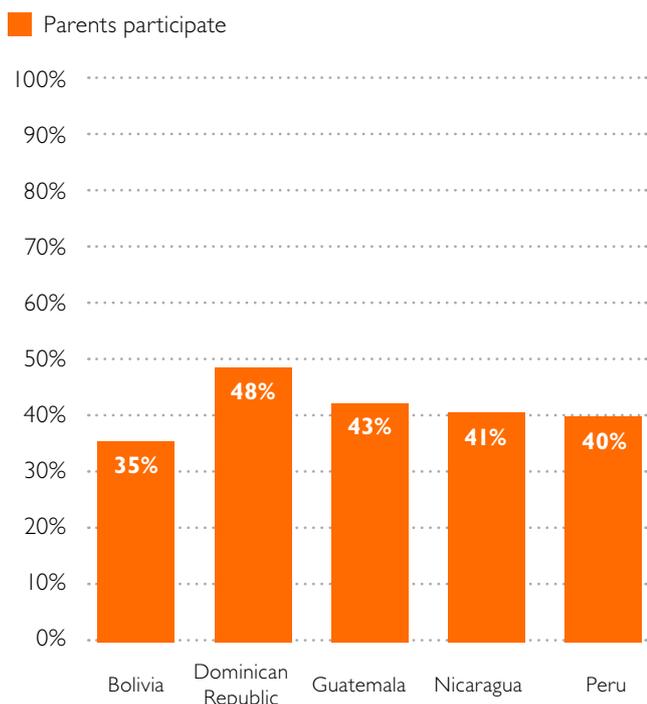
As can be seen in Figure 20, both formal and non-formal actors reported improvements in capacity to fulfil responsibilities and provide services for children's and adolescents' protection and well-being. In addition, the qualitative data across all countries indicated that the knowledge and capacity of children and adolescents, parents and caregivers, and child protection actors had been strengthened in areas where World Vision intervened, including at local and national levels. Some of the groups trained at the local level included women's groups, parents' groups, faith leaders and religious institutions, school groups and youth groups.

Families now have the opportunity to talk, to receive support and counselling, and not wait until the last minute when a serious aggression has occurred that could require a more serious response.

– Non-formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Nicaragua

For parents and caregivers, capacity building has focused on child rights, positive parenting and preventing and responding to violence against children. Importantly, a large number of parents and caregivers reported having participated in World Vision activities that promote the protection of children and adolescents (see Figure 22).

Figure 22. Percentage of parents and caregivers who have participated in World Vision activities that promote child protection



There has been a slight decrease in abuse because we have had the help of World Vision. They [World Vision staff members] have helped us with parenting classes. There have been good speakers that have shown us videos that touch your heart, even one [that] brought me to tears, because all of the topics reflected what was happening in our families. That's why I believe that many parents have considered this and there have been improvements.

– Non-formal child protection actor, focus group discussion

The talks and workshops by World Vision are important because they have helped to transform the community. Machismo has decreased.

– Mother, focus group discussion, Guatemala

The capacity of local and national child protection actors, both formal and non-formal, to prevent and respond to violence against children has been strengthened. Child protection actors within the area development programmes consistently recognised World Vision's contributions to building increased awareness and capacity for child protection. As they explained:

There is less violence now. World Vision visits us and provides us with guidance to reduce violence.

– Non-formal child protection actor, focus group discussion, Peru

World Vision has staff that go to the communities; they have the means to constantly visit the communities and train them and guide them.
– Formal child protection actor; key informant interview, Guatemala

Some noteworthy capacity building initiatives in the countries evaluated include the following:

Bolivia

In partnership with the School of Plurinational Public Management, World Vision Bolivia provided training to strengthen the capacities of public servants and authorities in implementing the new Code for Children and Adolescents and the Comprehensive Law to Combat Human Trafficking.

Dominican Republic

In partnership with civil society organisations, World Vision Dominican Republic developed a certification course for reporters titled Reporting and Child Rights. The objective of the course was to deepen the journalists' knowledge about the international framework on children's rights, gender equality, the post-2015 development agenda and the equity approach to development. More than 50 journalists successfully completed the course.

Guatemala

In Guatemala, staff from the municipality, including child protection officers, received training on preventing and reporting incidents of abuse, on accompanying child and adolescent victims during reporting, and on follow-up procedures and legal processes when necessary.

Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, a formal agreement between World Vision and the Supreme Court of Justice enabled a nationwide training of World Vision area development programme advocates and 5,000 facilitators who work with communities through the judiciary branch of government. Two hundred judges were also trained through collaboration with the Supreme Court of Justice's Institute of Higher Judicial Studies.

Peru

In Peru, special training was conducted with children and adolescents as well as teachers and other school leadership and staff to establish municipal school groups made up of students and supported by schools. Such groups were trained on preventing and responding to violence against children at school and in the surrounding communities.

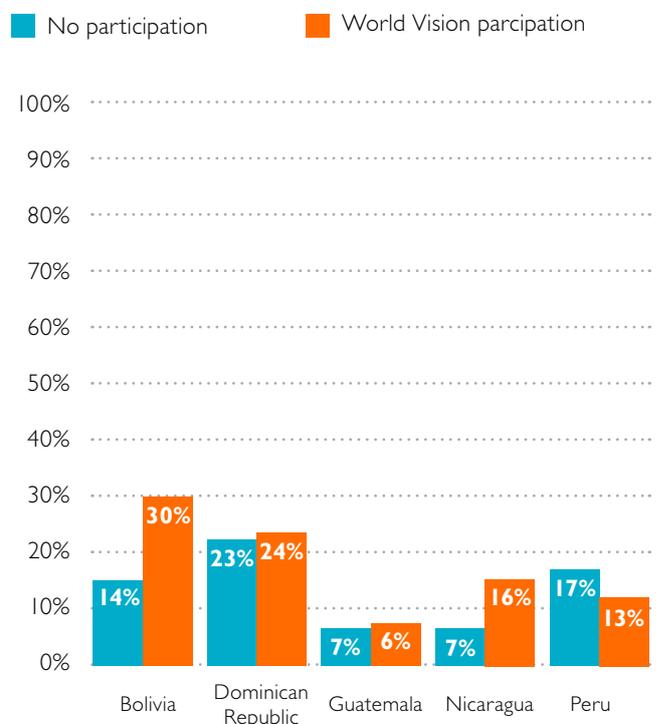
In addition to developing capacity building initiatives with external partners, national offices also built World Vision's internal capacity for child protection. Staff from different sector teams, such as health and education, were trained at both the local and national levels. Child protection competencies and responsibilities have been successfully included in job descriptions, and regional and national child protection policies have been revised and strengthened as part of a renewed commitment to child protection by World Vision leadership and staff.

Improved services and support mechanisms

As highlighted above (see Figure 21), child protection actors reported that services for the protection of children and adolescents were improved or much improved from two years prior. However, only some parents and caregivers reported being aware of new services since the project began, ranging from 23 per cent in the Dominican Republic to 6 per cent in Guatemala. Survey data from all five countries found that World Vision was consistently mentioned as providing new services for children and adolescents. Other new services that were reported included school-related services in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Peru, while services for responding to abused children and adolescents were mentioned in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua. Other services included church-related services and building the capacities of parents and

caregivers. In Bolivia and Nicaragua more than twice as many parents and caregivers who had participated in a World Vision activity knew of new services, compared to parents and caregivers who had not participated in a World Vision activity. (See Figure 23.)

Figure 23. Percentage of parents/caregivers who reported knowing of new child protection services by participation in World Vision activities



In focus: Guatemala

World Vision has successfully worked with local and municipal governments to make changes to the local child protection system, specifically the services available. In Guatemala, World Vision successfully advocated for child protection groups to be officially mandated in the four municipalities where the project was implemented. World Vision Guatemala provided the technical training plus educational and promotional materials, while the municipalities provided the physical space, funding and coordination for a Municipal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents to be established in each of the four areas. These offices promote awareness of child rights and carry out preventative actions. They are responsible for identifying vulnerabilities, receiving reports of abuse, and referring and accompanying individual cases of abuse. During the first two years these four municipal offices dealt with 68 cases. World Vision Guatemala also supported the municipal offices in convening other actors, organisations and groups to identify key child protection functions and means for improved coordination.

World Vision came here to Ixtahuacán and supported the opening of the Municipal Office for Child and Adolescent Protection. . . . And they worked with the current mayor and they successfully opened the office and then from there organised a network for child and adolescent protection that involves the participation of all the institutions in the municipality; for example, education, health, justice of the peace, national registry of persons, human rights attorney, the municipality office and all the organisations that are not part of the municipality but can support the protection network.

- Formal child protection actor; key informant interview, Guatemala

Yes, there have been significant changes. Although not everybody notices it, there has been some progress. Considering the time the child protection system network has operated, I think changes have been significant. There's still a long way to go, it is true, but we are crawling now, and soon we will be walking to obtain the objective of eradicating violence against children and adolescents in 90 per cent or even 100 per cent of our municipality.

- Non-formal child protection actor; focus group discussion, Guatemala

In focus: Dominican Republic

World Vision worked closely with the governmental entity responsible for implementing and coordinating the child protection system, the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI), to strengthen and expand the child protection system's installation and coordination at the local level. Fifty-five local Child Protection and Rights Restoration Boards and 91 Municipal Directories were established and trained with the support of the regional project. These boards and directories play an important role in expanding the presence of and access to child protection actors and institutions, allowing legal frameworks to become actualised at the community level.

Also, small cluster groups of volunteer community members have been trained and organised as part of a larger child protection network. As a network, these cluster groups share information with the local boards and monitor the local child protection system. These groups are critical in reaching the most distant and vulnerable children, adolescents and families that would otherwise be unreachable by the local boards and municipalities.

In focus: Peru

At the provincial and district level in Peru, World Vision successfully advocated for the creation of new resolutions and ordinances to support the protection of children and their rights. In both area development programmes evaluated (as well as others across the country), World Vision provided technical assistance and guidance to establish and operationalise Municipal Committee on the Rights of the Child (COMUDENA) and the Municipal Ombudsman Offices of the Child as part of the Municipal Department for Children and Adolescents (DEMUNA). The Municipal Ombudsman Offices of the Child is responsible for the implementation of the child protection system at the local level. As part of these efforts World Vision Peru facilitated awareness raising and capacity building for its staff in order to support improved coordination and collaboration with the justice operators to further promote and protect the rights of children and adolescents. When child rights are violated, children can seek assistance from the local child protection representatives of the ombudsman's office. As a result of World Vision Peru's efforts, this now has the support of a multi-sectoral committee and new public policies and investments for the protection and well-being of children and adolescents.

Within the World Vision area development programmes evaluated, child protection had been integrated into all strategic plans and programming, allowing World Vision to be recognised as a 'guiding light' for child protection throughout the communities. In focus group discussions and key informant interviews, adolescents, parents and caregivers, and child protection actors provided narrative details on World Vision's role in shifting the focus towards child protection and the elimination of violence against children. They reported that this was achieved by building capacity, mobilising local actors and organisations and providing additional support and services for child protection. Child protection actors stated:

In the district, machismo is still king, and alcoholism, but not in World Vision communities. In areas where they [World Vision] are intervening, violence is dropping slowly, compared to two years ago.

– Non-formal child protection actor, focus group discussion, Peru

World Vision is an organisation based in the community that encourages the empowerment of all community actors, as well as children, which generates transformation in the intervention places. We can see the difference between a municipality and a community where they have directly intervened from one where World Vision has not been.

– Non-formal child protection actor, Key informant interview, Nicaragua

Respondent 1: When World Vision completes its cycle, it will be us that will be responsible and continue this work.

Respondent 2: World Vision created critical thinking . . . how to work on all issues regarding children.

– Non-formal child protection actors, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic

Some participants raised questions about the sustainability of the processes and accomplishments of the regional project. It is possible that the ongoing social-norms-change process is well supported by World Vision but that it will either weaken or subside after the project has ended. As will be discussed in the recommendations, possible remedies mentioned by child protection actors include the transfer of functions from World Vision to the communities and working in a manner that enables the development of higher levels of community ownership.

So I think it would be good for the following to occur: a counterpart should be formed to monitor, convene and encourage this group of partners, including the community. . . . Keep in mind that World Vision projects are beautiful, but they sometimes fail in the follow-up phase.

– Non-formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Nicaragua

Although services have increased and improved, in some countries limited access to services continues to be a gap. While services exist, some people either do not know where to go to access them or have difficulty accessing them for a variety of reasons. In Guatemala and Peru, indigenous people who lived far from towns were reportedly unable to access services because of the distance, difficulty with transportation and a lack of knowledge about services. In the Dominican Republic, discrimination against Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent was reported to be a barrier to access.

Some people know where they can go, but don't go. Some don't know where to go. . . . Some think you need to pay money, or to know an insider.

– Non-formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Dominican Republic

Also, there was a significant gap between knowing of existing services and using them. Across all five countries many people expressed a reluctance to report violations against children to the police, saying that the police were ineffective or corrupt. Child protection actors reported that some people chose to ignore services, while some parents and caregivers and children and adolescents reported that they would not use particular services. For example, in the Dominican Republic, the discrimination against Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent was also reported to be a barrier to accessing services. In Peru, native people who live far from towns can't access services because of the distance, difficulty with transportation and lack of knowledge about the services available. In addition, adolescents said that they knew that they were supposed to report child protection violations and knew how to do so, yet often did not report them, in part out of fear because of their own vulnerability and the poor quality of services. If this low level of willingness to report to formal authorities is not addressed, it could severely limit the effectiveness of a child protection system and contribute as well to a weakening of support for the formal system of laws.

In addition, the importance of psychosocial and mental health support for children and adolescents who had themselves been violated was not prominent, either in the descriptions of the project under review or in the narratives of focus group and interview participants. Although it is possible that mental health and psychosocial support were so well provided for by other agencies that the topic never came up, it is more likely that there is a gap in services. This is an area that requires further attention and effort.

Influencing national policies and legal frameworks for child protection

To prevent violence against children it is crucial to ensure that the right laws and policies are in place and that they are enforced. At the national level a powerful source of child protection system strengthening has been the development, passing and implementation of new laws and policies. Noteworthy laws that have been approved during the life of the regional project include laws against human trafficking in Bolivia and Nicaragua, a law prohibiting the use of physical and humiliating punishment against children and adolescents in Peru, and a law against child marriage in Guatemala. In all five countries World Vision provided technical guidance and training for the implementation of child protection systems according to the law. In Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, World Vision has played an active role in developing, promoting and supporting the implementation of national codes for children and adolescents as well as mandated procedures and protocols that are a part of these codes (see Table 4 and also Appendix C for detailed information on World Vision’s contributions).

Table 4. Public policies influenced by World Vision

Bolivia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code for Children and Adolescents / Law 548 • National Plan and Plurinational Policy against Human Trafficking • Guidelines on the prevention and response to sexual violence as part of Code for Children and Adolescents / Law 548 • Comprehensive Law to Combat Human Trafficking / Law 263
Dominican Republic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed legislation to prohibit corporal punishment • Commission established to develop a proposal for legislation to prohibit corporal punishment • Legislation for early childhood care and development • Advocated against the Constitutional sentence 168-13, which puts children, adolescents and youth of Haitian descent at risk of statelessness • National Roadmap on Violence against Children • Law 136-03 / Code for the Fundamental Rights of Children and Adolescents • Prevented the proposed modification to Law 136-03 to increase penalties and punishments for children and adolescents
Guatemala
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree-Law 8-2015 / Reforms to Decree-Law 106 of the Civil Code • Law for integrated protection of children and adolescents, Decree-Law 27-2003 • Law against physical punishment and other forms of cruel punishment as a method for disciplining children and adolescents, Decree-Law 5184
Nicaragua
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law 779, Comprehensive Law on Violence against Women • Law 870 Family Code • Law 896 against human trafficking
Peru
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law 30403 against the use of physical and humiliating punishment of children • Child and Adolescent Code

The qualitative data from child protection actors at the national level described the impact of the new laws.

One of the most important material aspects is the approval of the Family Code, which establishes in a clear and precise way the prevention and struggle against violence, and prohibits physical punishment and physical abuse as part of the discipline. It also creates instances to respond to all the procedures established by the Code.

– Non-formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Nicaragua

There is now no single violent act committed against children that is not currently considered a crime, any way you look at it! A blow, a shout, sexual abuse, violence in a physical, psychological, social, school, family context, is all a crime.

Everything has been typified in current legislation.

– Non-formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Nicaragua

The implementation and enforcement of new laws had a significant impact on a reduction of violence against children and adolescents at home and at school.

Now with the new laws, our husbands do not beat us and our children. Before there was a lot of violence. There was too much machismo. But now those things have changed within our homes.

– Mother, focus group discussion, Peru

In countries across the region World Vision advocated for and subsequently encouraged the approval and implementation of laws that aid the protection and well-being of children and adolescents. Two positive features of this work were its collaborative nature and its breadth. Recognising that advocacy is more effective when multiple agencies speak with a single voice, World Vision took a highly collaborative approach that involved systematic partnership and mobilisation with different stakeholders from civil society organisations, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN bodies, and government institutions. The breadth of work was significant: laws changed on issues as diverse corporal punishment, child marriage, human trafficking, statelessness, and minimum prison time for convicted children and adolescents. World Vision took a comprehensive approach, which is essential for effective system strengthening.

Recognising that establishing a law will not protect children and adolescents without its effective enforcement, World Vision also advocated in a collaborative manner for new policies and led strategic planning to ensure the full implementation of new laws for child protection. In these and other ways World Vision has exercised leadership through advocacy and has demonstrated its ability to work concurrently and effectively at diverse levels ranging from the families to local, national and international levels for the protection of children and adolescents.

The countries included in the Regional Project for Strengthening Child Protection Systems continue to experience significant gaps between the laws that protect children and adolescents and the enforcement of those laws. Several countries had legislation that dictated a structure for the child protection system, which was non-existent or inactive in several communities prior to the efforts led by World Vision. In the five countries evaluated, World Vision contributed to closing this gap between the law and its implementation through advocacy to committees, offices and services.

Partnering for child protection

Numerous community groups and organisations are working to support children's protection and well-being (see Table 5), many of them in collaboration or coordination with World Vision area development programmes. More than half of all parents and caregivers reported that they knew of community groups and organisations that support children's and adolescents' protection.

Also as a result of the Regional Project for Strengthening Child Protection Systems, strong linkages have been made between formal and non-formal child protection actors, as well as among local, national and regional child protection systems.

Communities have played an active role in this [the passage of child protection law]. All the achievements that we, as a country, have attained have been due to the coordination and joint work of various organisations of civil society, among them, ChildFund, Plan, Save the Children, and World Vision, of course.

– Non-formal child protection actor, key informant interview, Guatemala

Table 5. Community groups and organisations supporting child protection

Country	Type of Community Group	Activities
Bolivia	Peace Foundation, school boards, religious organisations, parents' groups	Drawing classes, educational projects, sports activities, courses on values and self-esteem, help with food and basic necessities for vulnerable children, security for the neighbourhood so children are safe, training on child rights, safety committees, workshops for parents, school monitoring, meals for children, and workshops on values and respect for children, adolescents and youth
Dominican Republic	Church groups, youth club neighbourhood councils, neighbourhood boards, school boards and organisations featuring sports	Recreational activities for children, adolescents and youth; life skills training; and community clean-ups for child-safe recreational spaces
Guatemala	Health committees, church-affiliated groups, teacher groups, midwife groups, parents' committees	Providing clothes and food, addressing malnutrition, advising on how to care for children, providing educational activities for children, offering workshops on child protection
Nicaragua	Health brigades, religious groups, community groups, youth groups, justice promoters, local facilitators from the judicial system, teachers	Training on positive parenting and child rights; workshops on social protection; talks with mothers, children, adolescents and youth; educational talks; provision of life skills and food; video forums on self-protection for children and adolescents and bullying prevention; trainings on using digital technology and social networks safely, trafficking, self-esteem, co-existence, communication and care routes for victims of violence
Peru	Municipal school boards, church groups, teacher-led groups, child protection community networks, network of organisations, National Alliance of Transformative Leaders, community defenders for children and adolescents	Advising children, providing food and medicine, training on child protection to committee, holding workshops for children and parents, helping organise parent committees in schools, offering parenting classes, promoting safety of children

Through a systems approach, World Vision has been able to focus specific efforts on child protection strengthening at local, national and regional levels.

Without such a targeted focus on system strengthening, it is unlikely that child protection systems in the region would be as robust as they are at present. Through its regional efforts World Vision has partnered with UNICEF, UNHCR and other international NGOs – including Plan International, Save the Children, and ChildFund among others – to contribute to strengthening child protection systems and eliminating violence against children. These collaborative efforts are making a difference in lives of children and adolescents in countries throughout LAC. This includes countries where World Vision does not have direct programming, such as Panama, where World Vision contributed to the reform of the child protection law. World Vision has provided technical expertise

Without such a targeted focus on system strengthening, it is unlikely that child protection systems in the region would be as robust as they are at present.

and advocated for child rights and protection by collaborating with the Global Movement for Children in LAC, MERCOSUR,²² SICA,²³ the Organization of the American States, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child, and the Economic Commission for Latin America.

World Vision has made significant contributions to child protection systems by working in partnership. Table 9 in Appendix D highlights some collaborative contributions.

22 Mercado Común del Sur, Common Market of the South.

23 Sistema de Integración de Centro America, Central American Integration System.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings indicate that the interventions of World Vision's Regional Project for Strengthening Child Protection Systems in LAC have had promising effects on reducing violence against children. Valuable accomplishments include:

- reduced use of corporal punishment by parents, caregivers and teachers
- reduced violence against children in homes and schools
- an increased sense of the safety for children and adolescents
- the development of life skills and positive values that enhanced children's and adolescents' protection and motivated them to work collectively to address issues that threaten the protection and well-being of children and adolescents
- the mobilisation of community groups to reduce and prevent violence against children
- new and improved laws and policies that help to prevent and respond to violence against children while also enhancing their well-being.²⁴

In the communities evaluated, violence continues to affect children and adolescents. Children and adolescents, as well as parents and caregivers, felt that violence in their communities had not decreased during the life of the project. Children and adolescents voiced extensive concerns about violence against children, including structural violence. Furthermore, few children and adolescents identified a non-parent adult that they felt they could turn to should they experience a situation of abuse, especially if the situation should occur at home. This warrants further investigation in order to address the issue in partnership with the communities and especially with children and adolescents themselves.

Through the project World Vision achieved high levels of community mobilisation for ending violence against children. This high level of community mobilisation provided a meaningful platform for changing social norms and values related to violence against children. These changes should be of high priority because some forms of violence against children, such as corporal punishment, are frequently ingrained in sociocultural norms.

World Vision was recognised for its work with children and adolescents and its contribution to strengthening child protection by community members and local and national child protection advocates and authorities. The secondary data and qualitative evidence also demonstrated World Vision's influence by working in partnership with communities, governmental authorities, civil society organisations, and children and adolescents themselves. As a result of World Vision's activities, there are increased services and support for children and adolescents affected by violence, better coordination among partners and stronger capacity among child protection actors. These results are impressive and speak to the positive contributions of World Vision in strengthening the child protection system.

Considering the endline evaluation findings and analysis, it is clear that the project has contributed to the strengthening of the child protection systems both locally and nationally in the communities and countries evaluated. It has successfully contributed to shifting attitudes and behaviours and creating structures and legislation that support child protection. Through World Vision's close collaboration with communities and civil society and governments, the organisation has created safer environments for children and adolescents, stronger protective factors, more rigorous legal frameworks and support services that strengthen child protection.

Although the regional project's accomplishments are highly valuable, it is important to analyse further the implications of the findings in order to strengthen efforts aimed at ending violence against children and improving child protection systems. Based on the key findings and analysis, recommendations are made to World Vision as well as child protection actors, including civil society organisations and governments. The recommendations are general because they intend to respond to results derived from different contexts and realities within the communities and countries evaluated. In developing a response to these recommendations, additional analysis of the context is necessary in order to implement appropriate and effective actions.

24 Because no comparison conditions were included in the evaluation design, one cannot definitively attribute these changes to the World Vision intervention because the changes may be owed to other factors. Yet the qualitative data provided multiple indications that the changes are owed at least in part to the World Vision interventions.

Recommendations to World Vision

1. Utilise a broad-based approach to monitoring violence against children

The data from this evaluation indicates that despite the quality programming by World Vision, violence against children remains a significant challenge in the area development programmes. A long-term approach needs to be adopted by World Vision, governments, civil society and other international non-governmental organisations. The cornerstone of an effective long-term approach is a nationwide system of surveillance that monitors violence against children. World Vision should consider partnering with civil society and other international agencies to advocate for a national and regional system to monitor violence against children. World Vision and its partners could use population-based outcome measures to build an evidence base of violence against children in order to develop evidence-based programming to strengthen the protection of children and adolescents.

2. Strengthen the use of evidence-based approaches to transform social norms on child protection

Globally, the evidence regarding changes in social norms indicates that such changes are more likely to occur when internally driven rather than driven externally by civil society organisations or governments. Processes that promote dialogue and critical reflection, such as those used by World Vision, can create this internal driver for change. Progress has been made in changing social norms, but a more concerted effort is needed to utilise evidence-based practices with an emphasis on dialogue and reflection during training sessions, limiting the use of didactic methods such as teaching people about child rights. Child rights training should occur simultaneously for children and adolescents, parents and caregivers, and other adult child protection actors. In addition, programme strategies should work under the guidance of carefully selected community change agents who can advise on contextually appropriate means of enabling changes in social norms. When facilitating this work, assessment and evaluation processes should measure social norms and change processes, such as changes in reciprocal expectations.

3. Ensure that improvements to the child protection system and positive outcomes are sustainable

World Vision and its partners are achieving significant reductions in violence against children, yet there are concerns about whether these positive changes will be sustained. Communities and governments are more likely to take responsibility for the processes and the outcomes when it's their own collective work rather than the work of an external organisation such as World Vision. Exit strategies need to be developed in partnership with local communities and governments to increase the likelihood of sustainability. Such strategies should include a transfer of key functions and decision making from World Vision staff to communities. Child protection is everyone's responsibility, and community-owned processes would increase the likelihood of ongoing improvements to the system and positive outcomes for children and adolescents.

4. Support the development of children's and adolescents' relationships with local child protection system entry points

A functioning child protection reporting system requires strong collaboration and open dialogue among government authorities, civil society and especially children and adolescents themselves. By intentionally supporting relationship development and communication, trust in the reporting system can be fostered.

Children and adolescents are at risk of violence and having their rights violated even within the family. The evaluation evidence showed that children and adolescents lack a trusted adult to go to in times of need. Having such a trusted adult is an essential part of child protection. This warrants immediate attention and strengthening by World Vision. In facilitating a process to address this issue, it is important that adults are trained in how to engage appropriately with children and adolescents, supporting their empowerment and well-being, building their capacity to access reporting mechanisms and providing accompaniment to children and adolescents when accessing services, if needed.

5. Conduct ongoing outreach, engagement and monitoring of the most vulnerable children

Highly vulnerable children are among those at greatest risk of experiencing violence and its harmful effects. They typically have very low visibility, are hard to reach and may be marginalised by or even left out of efforts to reduce violence against children, such as children's clubs or youth campaigns.

The first step is to define clearly who the most vulnerable children are. Second, efforts to reduce violence against these children should be designed to be contextually appropriate and take into account both the risks and protective factors, recognising that the most vulnerable children frequently experience a combination of risk accumulation and a paucity of protective factors.

Ideally, vulnerability should be measured at the population level in order to track sudden increases or decreases in vulnerability in order to guide appropriate programme adjustments. Using standard definitions and measurements as part of an inter-agency agreement and collaborative implementation would enable a robust evidence base that could be led by or contributed to by World Vision.

6. Continue to encourage the meaningful participation of children and adolescents in child protection systems strengthening

The evaluation demonstrated both the depth of young people's sense of agency and their contributions to reducing and preventing violence against children. Key next steps are to work with partners to expand child and adolescent participatory approaches to prevent violence against children and also monitor the effectiveness of such approaches using more robust designs than were included in this evaluation. This work should not only embody World Vision's leadership but also serve as a promising practice for other organisations on how to most effectively reduce violence against children and strengthen child protection systems with the active engagement of children and adolescents.

Recommendations to external child protection actors, including governments and civil society

1. Increase investment in child protection

Governments and child-focused or family-focused civil society organisations must allocate adequate long-term and predictable funding for child protection system strengthening. Efforts should be made to increase budgetary allocation and expenditure in key sectors and programmes that affect children and adolescents. Such budgetary allocations should be supported by a comprehensive situational analysis based on timely and disaggregated data. Transparency and accountability of funds used for child protection system strengthening should be a shared priority between governments and civil society organisations.

2. Support the improved implementation, coordination and monitoring of child protection policies and legal frameworks with effectiveness and integrity

As the findings state, there is a clear gap between existent legislation and its implementation, especially in more rural or disenfranchised communities. Governments at national and subnational levels as well as civil society organisations should take steps to improve the quality and effectiveness of the child protection system and its ability to respond to the needs in communities. Increased involvement of national governments and regional bodies in the monitoring and management of the child protection system's functioning in accordance with the law is needed. This is most effective when conducted in coordination with community and child-focused organisations. In areas where there have been issues of impunity and corruption, governments should develop and use systematic strategies to weed out the corruption and ensure transparency, justice and the rule of law. Furthermore, governments should establish benchmarks for tracking the effectiveness of the system in responding to and resolving cases of violence against children, beginning at the local level and continuing through to the justice system. Key civil society organisations should be consulted in these processes and, when possible, participate in the monitoring of the child protection system and the tracking of cases of violence against children.

3. Take steps towards addressing ‘hot spots’ for violence against children

To establish safe environments for children and adolescents, effective work is required in a range of environments and contexts. Contextualised, adaptable approaches that can be tailored to fit different settings and situations should be used. Highly collaborative approaches that link local and national governments and civil society organisations should also be used. Governments, as responsible duty bearers of the law, and child-focused organisations should monitor problem spots within or near their programming areas and deliberately adapt programming to address violence against children in those areas.

4. Improve access to and quality of support services, including mental health and psychosocial services for children and adolescents

Efforts to end violence against children must include access to quality services and supports for children and adolescents who suffer violations or have perpetrated them. Civil society organisations as well as governments should collectively assess and monitor the adequacy of existing services, including psychosocial supports and mental health services such as counselling for severely affected children and adolescents. If these supports are inadequate or not widely accessible, steps must be taken to fill these gaps. As World Vision demonstrated, there are opportunities for potential civil society–government collaborations to provide and coordinate services and resources. Governments and civil society organisations should heighten efforts such as those related to communication and awareness raising to inform communities, including children and adolescents, of the services available and the means for accessing them.

5. Integrate social protection initiatives into efforts to reduce violence against children and strengthen child protection

To reduce the role that poverty plays as a driver of different forms of violence against children, it is important for governments and child-focused organisations to integrate social protection into child protection programmes. This can play a vital role in strengthening the resilience of children and adolescents and their families and communities. Strategies to improve social protection – such as livelihood programmes, cash transfers, and savings and loan activities, linked with macro-level economic supports, contribute to greater equity and human development, including the realisation of child rights and protection. Efforts to monitor and evaluate the role that economic opportunities and improvements have in strengthening child protection systems and reducing violence against children should be included within programme strategies. When working with historically oppressed or marginalised groups, such as indigenous people and migrant and immigrant populations, these economic efforts to improve social protection should be connected with antidiscrimination campaigns and advocacy efforts to end discrimination and eliminate structural violence within civil society and government systems.

APPENDIX A – OVERVIEW OF AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES EVALUATED

Country	Area Development Programmes	Description
Bolivia	Sembrando Unidad	Sembrando Unidad is located in the country's capital city of La Paz. It is a semi-urban zone built into the mountainsides surrounding the city. The majority of its inhabitants have migrated from rural areas in search of better opportunities. It has high levels of insecurity, mainly from armed robberies and assaults.
	Koari	Koari is located in the Tiraque municipality in the Cochabamba Department of the Upper Valley of the Andean mountains. It is a rural, farming area with native inhabitants that primarily speak Quechua.
Dominican Republic	Palmera	Palmera is a marginalised area of east Santo Domingo, the country's capital city. The majority of the families migrated to Santo Domingo from rural areas in search of work. Palmera includes both formal and informal settlements.
	Apolinar Perdomo	Apolinar Perdomo is in the south, near the Haitian border, and comprises a central town in a mountainous area with villages surrounding. Residents are mainly farm workers and include Haitian migrants and descendants of Haitian immigrants.
Guatemala	Ixtahuacán and San Juan Atitán	Both of these Mayan communities are located in Western Highlands, in rural hills above highland towns. This is one of the poorest regions in the country, and historically it was significantly affected by political violence during Guatemala's civil war. Currently, this area has high rates of food insecurity, alcoholism, international migration and, in some places, insecurity from drug-trafficking routes towards the north. Nearly all residents are Mayan, and their primary language is Mam.
Nicaragua	Granada	Granada is located in southern Nicaragua where the industrial activities are based on sugar mills and alcohol distilleries. Fishing takes place in Lake Cocibolca. In addition, Granada's historical centre and the lake attract tourists to the area. Granada is the most visited city in Nicaragua.
	Terrabona	Terrabona is in the municipality of Matagalpa, which is located in northern Nicaragua. The population in this municipality is primarily dedicated to farming grains such as beans, corn and sorghum, and also vegetables.
Peru	Alto Carabayllo	Alto Carabayllo is located in the Carabayllo district of Lima. It is a peri-urban community on the outskirts of the capital city. The community is located on sandstone hills and is made up of neighbourhoods accessible only by footpaths. It is heavily affected by landslides, and there is some gang activity in the area.
	Renacer	Renacer is made up of rural mountainous communities in the districts of Tambillo and Acocro in the Huamanga Province in the region of Ayacucho. These are communities made up of primarily native peoples who speak Quechua. This region experienced widespread political violence during Peru's political insurgency period and continues to face violence from robberies and assaults. Renacer is mainly a quinoa and grain farming zone.

APPENDIX B – METHODS USED TO COLLECT DATA

Methods used to collect data from children and adolescents, caregivers, and child protection actors

Tool	Participants	Description
Survey	Girls and boys, 8–17 years	Survey on experiences with violence and other child protection issues, life skills and resilience
Survey	Parents and caregivers	Survey on child protection issues, discipline, social norms and changes in the child protection system
Survey	Local formal and non-formal child protection actors	Survey on child protection issues, social norms, changes in the child protection system and outcomes for children
Focus group discussions	Girls and boys, 13–17 years; parents and caregivers; child protection actors	Group discussions were conducted for approximately 90–120 minutes with 7–10 participants on children’s experiences with violence and the child protection system
Key informant interviews	Local and national formal and non-formal child protection actors	One-on-one interviews conducted for approximately 60–90 minutes on children’s experiences with violence and the child protection system

APPENDIX C – WORLD VISION’S CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC POLICIES RELATED TO CHILD PROTECTION

Country	Public Policy	Description of Activity
Bolivia	Code for Children and Adolescents / Law 548	World Vision successfully influenced the national legislation for child protection and child rights by advocating for its regulation and operationalisation at the local, municipal, state and national levels and ensuring the systems approach in the Code for Children and Adolescents. World Vision presented evidence generated from across the country which represented 10 per cent of the population of children and adolescents in Bolivia and provided technical guidance for strengthening the child protection system and developing a roadmap for integrated prevention of violence against children.
	National Plan and Plurinational Policy against Human Trafficking	A network made up of 50 civil society organisations placed its trust in World Vision Bolivia and the Archdiocese of the Peace (Pastoral de Movilidad Human) to represent them in developing the Plurinational Policy to Combat Human Trafficking. As part of the task force, World Vision Bolivia provided technical support to ensure that the policy considered children and adolescents and their rights and protection from human trafficking. World Vision also conducted awareness raising and capacity building on the anti-trafficking legislation among government and civil society representatives.
	Guidelines on the prevention and response to sexual violence as part of Code for Children and Adolescents / Law 548	World Vision Bolivia worked closely with the National Commission for Children and Adolescents to develop a roadmap for preventing and responding to sexual violence. World Vision Bolivia along with other civil society organisations provided technical expertise to develop systematic guidelines for government departments to prevent and respond to sexual violence and restore the rights of children and adolescents that suffer from sexual violence. In 2014, the Ministry of Justice published the guidelines as part of the implementation of Law 548.
	Comprehensive Law to Combat Human Trafficking / Law 263	World Vision Bolivia, together with other NGOs, worked to conduct advocacy for the promulgation of Law 263, which is directly related to child protection because the majority of victims are children and adolescents. World Vision provided technical support in the legislative proposal and then supported its dissemination and awareness raising.
Dominican Republic	Proposed legislation to prohibit corporal punishment	Along with the national Coalition of Non-Governmental Organisations for Children, World Vision advocated before members of the National Congress to approve this proposed legislation. World Vision also carried out mobilisation actions led by the National Movement of Child and Youth Leaders for the campaign Region Free from Violence against Children, including collecting over 10,150 signatures. Child/youth leaders presented the signatures before the National Congress.
	Established commission to develop a proposal for legislation to prohibit corporal punishment	

Country	Public Policy	Description of Activity
	Legislation for early childhood care and development	Along with the Institute for Early Childhood Care, World Vision developed a legislative proposal for the care and protection of children 0–5 years of age.
	Constitutional sentence 168-13, which puts children, adolescents and youth of Haitian descent at risk of statelessness	World Vision, together with the National Movement of Child and Youth Leaders, the Dominicans for Rights Movement and the Reconoci.do Movement carried out mobilisation activities and collected more than 8,500 signatures which were presented to the Constitutional Court, seeking the restoration of full citizenship rights for those affected.
	National Roadmap on Violence against Children	World Vision contributed to the development and adoption of the National Roadmap, a national strategic framework to address all forms of violence against children. The National Roadmap has been approved and is currently being implemented.
	Law 136-03 / Code for the Fundamental Rights of Children and Adolescents	World Vision advocated for Municipal Directories and Local Child Protection Boards to be established, according to the law, and provided technical support.
	Modification to Law 136-03 to increase penalties and punishments for children and adolescents	World Vision advocated with other civil society organisations to prevent the change in legislation that would increase penalties and punishments for children and adolescents under 15 years of age.
Guatemala	Decree-Law 8-2015 / Reforms to Decree-Law 106 of the Civil Code	In collaboration with other civil society organisations, World Vision played a leading role in the 2015 passage of a law which increases the legal minimum age for marriage to 18.
	Law for Integrated protection of children and adolescents, Decree-Law 27-2003	World Vision Guatemala developed a proposal to modify this child protection law and its implementation by state agencies according to information collected and the analysis conducted in partnership with the Guatemala Research Centre.
	Law against physical punishment and other forms of cruel punishment as a method for disciplining children and adolescents, Decree-Law 5184	World Vision and other child-focused civil society organisations have presented a proposal to the Legislative Commission for Human Rights, seeking the prohibition of corporal punishment by law. The document is pending review from Congress.
Nicaragua	Law 779, Comprehensive Law on Violence against Women	World Vision Nicaragua and the Commission of Women and Children developed and validated the child-friendly version of the roadmap for caring for child and adolescent victims of violence as part of the Comprehensive Care Model which corresponds with Law 779.
	Law 870 Family Code	World Vision and the Supreme Court of Justice developed a child friendly version of the Law 870 Family Code and two implementation plans, one for the Supreme Court of Justice and the second for the Administration of the Ministry of the Family.
	Law 896 against human trafficking	After participating in technical consultations to develop anti-trafficking legislation, World Vision Nicaragua was part of the commission that drafted Law 896.

APPENDIX D – HIGHLIGHTS OF WORLD VISION'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Country	Highlights
Bolivia	<p>As a result of World Vision Bolivia's collaborative relationships with local government authorities, efforts were joined with different municipalities to conduct 41 ADAPT community assessments on child and adolescent protection. The assessments have allowed for a deepened understanding of priority child protection problems, the causes of such problems and the functions of the national child protection system. The Parliamentary Network for Children and Adolescents supported the visibility of the assessments. Presented before local, municipal, departmental and national authorities with the support of the Parliamentary Network, this information has provided a foundation for establishing new public policies and strategies for strengthening child protection.</p> <p>In collaboration with civil society organisations, World Vision Bolivia has worked closely with the Ministry of Justice, the governmental institution charged with implementing the national child protection system, to influence the development and regulations of the new Code for Children and Adolescents. As a part of these efforts World Vision Bolivia developed a roadmap for the comprehensive prevention and response to sexual violence against children and adolescents which was officially recognised within the Code for Children and Adolescents.</p> <p>World Vision Bolivia supported the Ministry of Justice in advocating for the enactment of the Code for Children and Adolescents as well as the activation of commissions and the Parliamentary Network to promote the Code's implementation and monitoring. In partnership with the School of Plurinational Public Management, World Vision Bolivia provided training to strengthen the capacities of public servants and authorities in implementing the new Code for Children and Adolescents and the Comprehensive Law to Combat Human Trafficking.</p> <p>Due to its recognition as a leading expert in child protection, World Vision Bolivia was one of the two civil society organisations selected to represent the Plurinational Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking. As a part of the task force, World Vision Bolivia provided technical guidance on the new anti-trafficking legislation and ensured that child rights and protection were considered. At local, national and international levels World Vision has conducted awareness raising and capacity building with formal and non-formal actors on the law and its implementation.</p>
Dominican Republic	<p>World Vision partnered with the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI), the national body responsible for the governing of the national child protection system, and the Coalition of NGOs for Children to develop a National Roadmap to strengthen reporting and referral mechanisms and monitor child protection.</p> <p>World Vision won funding to partner with UNICEF for a project titled Protection of Children and Adolescents: A Mission of All. As a part of this project World Vision organised a regional network for the protection of the rights of children and adolescents that connects different groups, organisations and networks near the border with Haiti in order to protect and defend the rights of children and adolescents around the border. The network has influenced the implementation of public policies and increased local governments' budget allocations for child protection near the border.</p>

Country	Highlights
Guatemala	<p>World Vision's most noteworthy partnership was with municipality governments and the Municipal Offices for Child and Adolescent Protection in municipalities across the country. World Vision supported the municipal governments in establishing action plans for child protection. World Vision provided training and resources for the opening of the local child protection offices. The Municipal Offices for Child and Adolescent Protection have taken on a leadership role to convene local institutions and organisations to work together to fulfil a variety of functions for child protection.</p> <p>World Vision also worked in collaboration with other civil society organisations to successfully advocate and ensure the approval of legislation to increase the minimum legal marriage age to 18 years of age.</p>
Nicaragua	<p>World Vision has partnered with civil society organisations and communities and has mobilised and empowered networks of children, adolescents and youth to bring increased awareness to violence against children and mobilise for child rights and protection through the national campaign 'I Use My Voice against Child Abuse'.</p> <p>Through the area development programme in Granada, World Vision worked in coordination with other organisations and institutions to contribute to the reactivation of the Municipal Commission for Child Protection in order to promote the prevention of abuse and the protection of children and adolescents, to support reporting and response mechanisms, and to work against sexual exploitation.</p>
Peru	<p>World Vision Peru partnered with the local and municipal governments for the creation of the Municipal Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as the official recognition of the Ombudsman Offices for the Child at the local level. Also at the municipal level, World Vision partnered with governments to ensure the approval of regulations for participatory budget processes which include children and adolescents as well as women and persons with disabilities. World Vision Peru's collaboration with municipal governments allowed for this new regulation which supports children's and adolescents' interests in their communities by promoting greater communication and collaboration between local governments and community members, especially children and adolescents.</p> <p>World Vision was an active part of a civil society coalition that monitored the implementation of the recommendations from the UN General-Secretary's Global Study on Violence Against Children. In 2014, the results of the consultations with children and adolescents were presented to a National Congress Task Force to strengthen the child protection system's implementation and the basic conditions needed for child protection.</p> <p>In partnership with World Vision, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (the institution responsible for the national child protection system) developed a model for the local child protection system.</p>

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It takes a world
to end violence against children

World Vision

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