

World Vision



It takes a world
to end violence against children



**LET'S JOIN FORCES
TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**
Regional Report for West and Central Africa

September 2021



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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACPF	African Child Policy Forum
APEVAC	African Partnership to End Violence Against Children
AU	African Union Commission
CAR	Central African Republic
CPE	Child Protection Code
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CVA	Citizen Voice Action
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FY	Fiscal Year
ITAW	It Takes the World to end Violence against Children
MSACF	Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Families
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PreVail	Preventing Violence across the lifespan research network
SCEFVC	Study on Crimes and Extreme Forms of Violence against Children
SCO	Civil Society Organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UL	Unlock Literacy
UNESCO	United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAC	Violence Against Children
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor
WHO	World Health Organization
WV	World Vision

LET'S JOIN FORCES TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Globally, more than a billion children are affected by violence. Every five minutes, a child dies as a result of violence. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) guarantees that all children have the right to live free from fear, oppression and all forms of violence. By adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, world leaders have set ambitious goals to end all forms of violence against children by 2030. World Vision has joined forces with stakeholders around the world to help achieve this goal. By launching the campaign It takes a World to end violence against children (ITAW) in 2017, World Vision resolved to impact the lives of millions of the most vulnerable children to end violence against them, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's agenda 2063.

At the end of the first phase of the campaign, this report examines the progress made and the prospects for implementing the second phase. More than an exhortation from the heart, this report constitutes a cry of alarm from children in this period of COVID-19 pandemic where they constitute the most vulnerable social strata around the world.

World Vision believes that a world without violence against children is possible because we have the evidence and the means. Through our strong programming models, our expertise in urban, fragile and conflict affected contexts, our growing database, and our advocacy and mobilization work, we are making lasting changes in children's lives. We amplify children's voices by engaging them as agents of change and partners in fostering their effective participation in decision making that affects their lives, communities and societies. Beyond these efforts, we are aware that our commitment alone is not enough.

That is why I would like to join the voice of children with that of World Vision to issue a solemn appeal to all stakeholders, including donors, the United Nations System, sub-regional organizations, political authorities and administrative authorities, communities, religious and traditional leaders, CSOs, children, parents, educators, etc., to give the best of themselves so that together, we can guarantee our children a safe living environment and a better future. No matter what the odds are, I remain convinced that through coordinated action we can meet this major challenge of our time.

United and determined, we will get there.



Carla Dominique Denizard
Regional Leader of World Vision



I. SUMMARY

Objective, scope and expected outcome of the review

This World Vision regional report aims to provide an accurate diagnosis of the efforts undertaken for the elimination of violence against children in West and Central Africa in order to highlight the impact of the first campaign phase.

The campaign took place in eight (08) countries around the following three themes:

- 1) Child marriage: [Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Niger and Chad](#).
- 2) Sexual abuse: [Sierra Leone](#).
- 3) Enlistment of children in armed forces and groups: [CAR](#)

The overall objective is to benefit **46,000,000** vulnerable children through direct actions focused on ending the violence.

Achievements and challenges of the campaign

In the eight (08) countries where the campaign was conducted, varying degrees of progress were recorded. There have been changes in laws and policies, prevalence and behavior change.

Child marriage

The resilience of girls and protection against teenage pregnancies are important achievements of the campaign.

Sexual abuse

The ITAW campaign has strengthened formal and informal child protection structures that promote, prevent, report and respond to sexual violence against children in Sierra Leone.

World Vision has empowered children to protect and defend themselves through the creation and running of clubs of children. The government amended the Sexual Offences Act in 2019. The budget for the Gender and Children program has increased over the past three years. Rape and all forms of sexual violence have been declared a national emergency.

Enlistment of children in armed forces and groups

The ITAW campaign has made progress in eliminating the worst forms of child labor in the Central African Republic, particularly the recruitment of children into armed forces and groups. The main achievements are among others:

- 1) Commitment of government and non-state armed groups to end and prevent grave violations against children, including the recruitment of child soldiers in 2019;
- 2) 1,150 children were demobilized during the reporting period (2019);
- 3) Creation and strengthening of 2 community child protection networks (RECOPE)
- 4) Establishment of the National Interministerial Committee to Combat Human Trafficking by the Government;
- 5) Adoption of the Child Protection Code (CPC) by the National Assembly on February 27, 2020;
- 6) Signature of the decree promulgating the law on child protection by President Faustin-Archange Touadera on June 15, 2020.

The voice of funders and leaders in addressing violence against children

'Children have the right to receive an education that prepares them to face the world in which they will live'. [Henrietta H. Fore](#) Executive Director of UNICEF

'Violence against African children is increasing. It defiles our collective conscience. Graça Marchel' [Founding President of Garça Marchel Trust](#)

'No violence against children can be justified and all violence against children can be avoided.' [Professor Paulo Pinheiro](#), independent expert on the [United Nations study on violence against children](#).

'Now that we know more about the extent and effects of all forms of violence against children, they must be guaranteed effective prevention and protection to which they have an absolute right'. [Extract from the study of United Nations on Violence Against Children](#).



Children's voices

Mali

«The biggest impact of COVID-19 has been the closure of schools, which has forced children to stay at home without access to learning. Mariam denounced the increased level of violence against children and made a passionate appeal to communities not to sacrifice girls on the altar of marriage due to the economic hardship associated with COVID-19.» **Mariam, 12 years old, Mali.**

CAR

«When we were in the armed groups, all our families disowned us and no one had the courage to approach us, but today with the testimonies and the sketches that we did in public, the whole community accepted us.» **Said a 16 years old child associated with armed groups – PACE assessment report.**

Sierra Leone

«We talk about sexual abuse against women and children during group meetings and carry messages to our families and our community » **A child member of S4T at the Ngoyila Program.**

Ghana

«I was traumatized... My parents were very disappointed. Things changed when we took part in a campaign run by WVG to encourage teenage pregnancy girls like me to go back to school. I was counseled during the campaign with my parents.» **Linda, 17 years old, a victim of sexual abuse during COVID-19 containment testifies**

II. METHODOLOGY

In its intervention, World Vision took the so-called 'whole partnership' approach to implement the ITAW campaign. To do this, a logical reference framework was developed and followed. Each of the three themes of the campaign, including child marriage, sexual abuse and the recruitment of children into armed forces and groups. Four (04) main areas of change have been defined. These are:

- 1) Children's resilience, voice and participation;
- 2) The quality of the protection services offered to children;
- 3) Sociocultural attitudes, values and practices;
- 4) and laws, policies and social accountability.

To carry out the campaign against various forms of violence, WV opted for the INSPIRE strategy which is a useful framework for understanding a set of agreed solutions at scale. global campaign to end violence against children. Based on extensive research across a number of programs, projects and interventions in different contexts, INSPIRE solutions have the greatest impact on reducing violence against children.

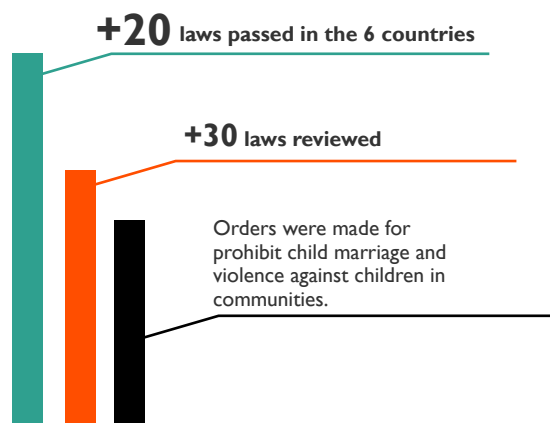
III. IMPACTS

Thanks to World Vision's advocacy with its partners, we note that the rate of child marriage has relatively fallen in the countries concerned. As a result, the prevalence was impacted in all of these countries.



POLICY

In terms of the application of policies and laws, there has been significant progress to capitalize on. There is not only political will at the level of the authorities for the desired change but also the application of the laws has strengthened considerably.





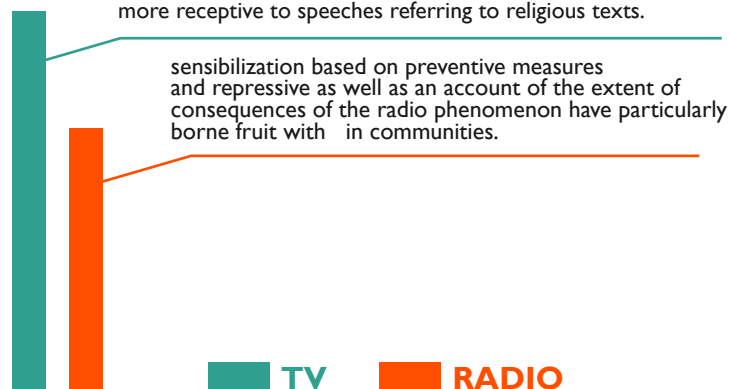
RELIGION

There is a greater awareness of key community actors, including religious, customary and traditional leaders facing the problem thanks to the popularization of the law relating to the protection of children in these countries.



MEDIA

TV debates made it possible to reach a large audience more receptive to speeches referring to religious texts.



INFLUENCE OF WORLD VISION

The World Vision team has contributed to several child marriage annulments and provided assistance to abused children.

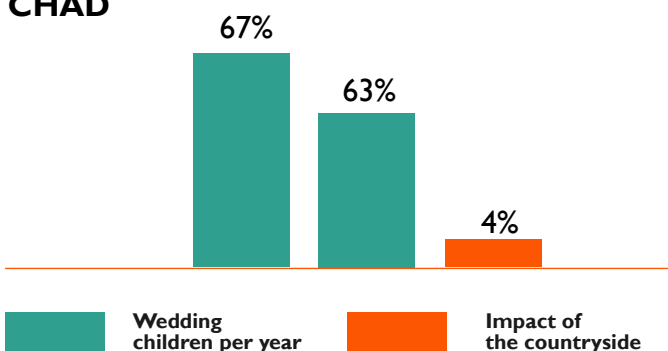
HEALTH



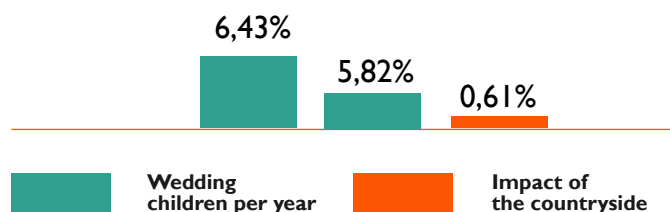
In addition to the annulment of several marriages and the readmission of girls to schools, community health centers have been equipped with important medical supplies and drugs. Appropriate health care is provided to adolescent girls who are victims of the after-effects of marriage, excision and sexual assault by health professionals trained in the consequences of early marriage.

IMPACTS BY COUNTRY

CHAD

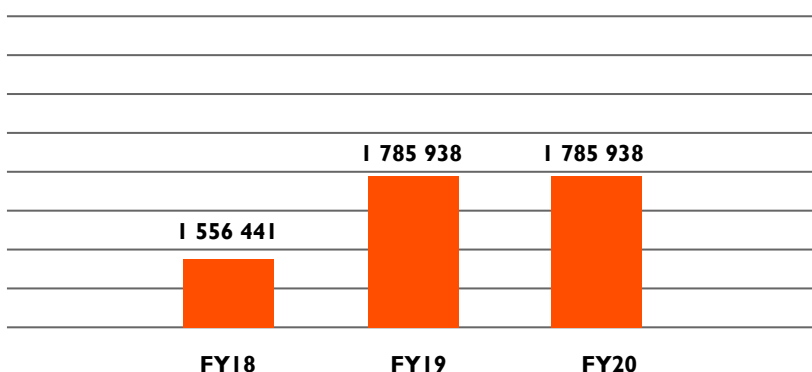


SENEGAL



MAURITANIA

Number of children affected following the enactment of anti-marriage laws of children at national level from FY2018 to FY2020

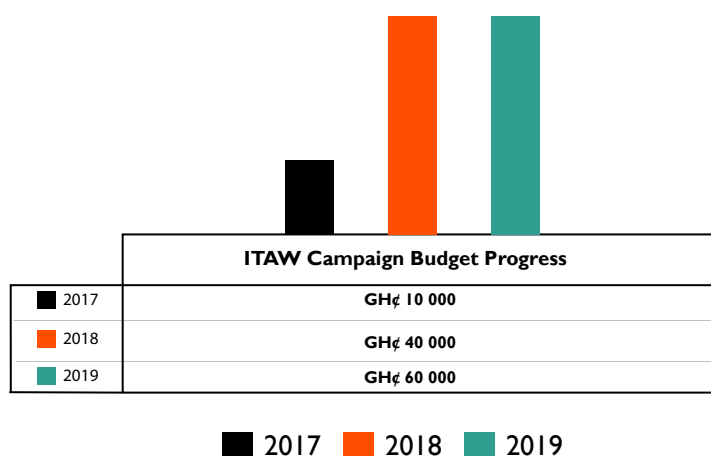


MALI

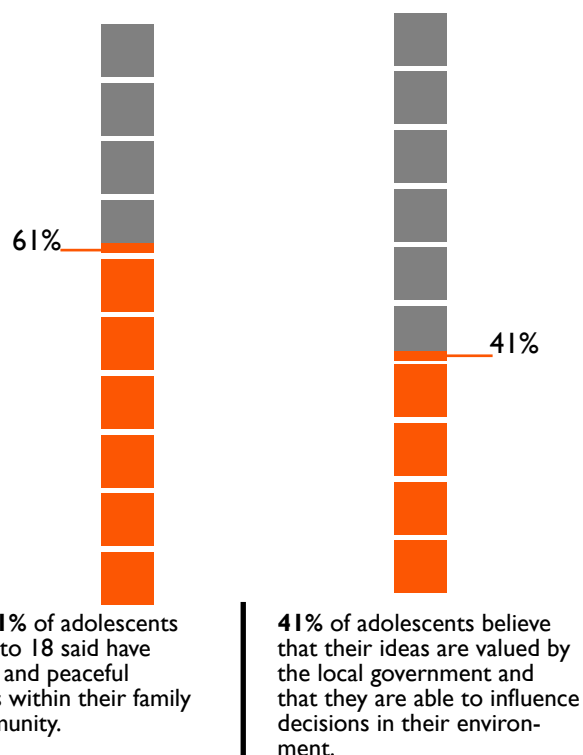
The campaign had a significant impact despite the delicate security situation. It enabled law enforcement and the implementation of formal policies.

GHANA

Review and submission of 3 protection laws children (law on the protection of children, law on criminal offenses and law prohibiting the domestic violence) in parliament.



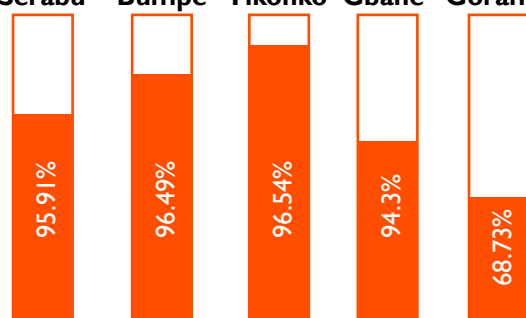
NIGER



Impact of the campaign on sexual abuse in Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, boys and girls confirmed that they had been trained by World Vision on how to protect themselves from sexual abuse and how to report cases of abuse. As of July 2021, 31 cases had been reported, 13 were prosecuted. The government amended the Sexual Offenses Act in 2019. The budget for the Gender and Children program has increased over the past three years. Rape and all forms of sexual violence have been declared a national emergency.

Serabu Bumpe Tikonko Gbane Gorama



(n=418) (n=388) (n=409) (n= 577) (n=480)

Percentage of caregivers who feel that their community is a safe place for children



Enlistment of children in armed forces and groups

Moderate progress has been made to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Impacts of the ITAW campaign in CAR

Level	Key achievements
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WVCAR supported the line ministry in the development and promulgation of the Child Protection Code which criminalizes the recruitment and use of children as soldiers; Capacity building of line ministries, police and gendarmerie on the convention on the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor;
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitization of local actors on the law on the WFCL and training on techniques for identifying and preventing WFCL (local leaders, administrative authorities, young people, parents, local committees, etc.); Establishment of 3 Citizen Voice Action (CVA) groups - an advocacy methodology at the local level; Reinforcement and support of peers in Empowered WorldView (EWV) Approaches to improve the well-being of their children; Creation and strengthening of two community child protection networks (RECOPE) in Bantagafo and Boca ranga

Summary of the campaign's impacts in the 8 countries



Ghana, Mali, Mauritanie, Niger, Tchad, Sénégal.

- ① Lower rate of child marriage
- ② Annulment of marriages
- ③ Voting, enacting and enforcing laws prohibiting
- ④ Large audience reached and aware



Sierra Leone

- ① Growing reporting of child sexual abuse to police



CAR

- ① Development and promulgation of the Child
- ② Protection Code

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Child marriage

AREAS OF CHANGE			
Children's resilience, voice and participation	Quality of child protection services	Socio-cultural attitudes, values and practices	Laws, policies and social accountability
RECOMMENDATIONS			
<p>Improve access to quality education for girls</p> <p>Find alternatives to closed schools (North and Center of Mali)</p> <p>Creation, engagement and strengthening of various platforms for exchanges, information and awareness of children and young people</p> <p>Include compulsory sex and relationship education in school curriculum and social contexts</p>	<p>Education of community members empowered to lobby and amplify the voice of girls and boys to mobilize citizen engagement for the benefit of campaign implementation and monitoring.</p> <p>Seek funding from new donors (grants, businesses, government and private / public donors) for the campaign</p>	<p>Create and strengthen dialogue between religious leaders and communities on the elimination of child marriage</p>	<p>Advocate for the vote and effective application of laws prohibiting child marriage</p>
STAKEHOLDERS			
Ministries of education, state actors and various stakeholders	Ministry responsible for child protection, UNICEF and other parties	Religious and traditional leaders	The decisions-makers



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Sexual abuse

The key recommendations made are summarized in the table below:

		STAKEHOLDERS
RECOMMENDATIONS	Conduct continuous and rigorous awareness campaigns targeting men, women, boys and girls to accelerate the achievement of the goals of the ITAW campaign.	WV, the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, the secretariat of the Hand Off Our Girls campaign, UNICEF and other NGOs
	Carry out an assessment of formal and informal structures and strengthen these structures through training, mentoring or sub-grants. This will increase the reach of the campaign since these informal structures are widely distributed in the communities.	The Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and partners including WV
	Strengthen coordination between the police and local actors and actively involve the youth wing in the fight against sexual abuse and exploitation of children.	The Ministry of Gender and Children
	Establish safe homes at the chiefdom level to meet the needs of victims.	The Ministry of Gender and Children and its partners
	Strengthen the capacities of medical staff at the chiefdom level so that they can effectively manage cases of sexual abuse	The Ministry of Gender and Children
	Collaborate with other like-minded organizations to advocate for the establishment by the judiciary of a district court in Falaba district	WV
	Conduct an analysis of barriers to reporting cases of sexual violence in Falaba and Koinadugudistricts and design a strong behavior change strategy	WV
	Catalyze training or strengthen faith-based organizations at district and chiefdom levels. It can then train the faith-based organizations or the ITAW campaign and underfund them to implement the campaign activities.	WV
	Design strategies and activities that will promote the participation of youth at the chiefdom and branch level in the Hands off our Girls campaign	WV

Recruitment of children in armed forces and groups

The key recommendations made are summarized in the table below:

CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
There is strong evidence that WVCAR should continue to support government advocacy initiatives to improve child protection at all levels moderate progress has been made in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.	WVCAR should continue to support government advocacy initiatives to improve child protection at all levels
	There is a need to strengthen collaborative strategies between government institutions and other humanitarian actors working in the field of Child Protection to monitor the effective implementation of Convention No. 182 which calls for the prohibition and elimination of worst forms of child labor and the Child Protection Code and report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.
More than 1.3 million children still need protection	Strengthen the implementation of ITAW activities through collaboration (especially with interfaith leaders) and integration of ITAW activities into other sectors.
Insufficient project budget	There is an urgent need to improve resource mobilization efforts for the implementation of the ITAW campaign and advocacy activities.
Existence of serious violations of children's rights in the already fragile context in CAR	WVCAR should strengthen its advocacy for vulnerable children through radio broadcasts and other social media (where possible) to comply with COVID-19 containment measures,



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