

ISSUE FACT SHEET: VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS

DID YOU KNOW?

An estimated 150 million girls are victims of sexual violence each year (UNICEF)***.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Why is violence against girls so prevalent?
2. As a society, how are we all responsible for keeping girls safe?
3. What can a nation do to discourage violence against girls?
4. How does violence against girls damage a community?

DEFINITION

Violence is defined as the physical force exerted for the purpose of violating, damaging, or abusing; abusive or unjust exercise of power.

OVERVIEW

Violence against girls is one of the reasons many girls aren't educated. Parents often keep them home rather than risk their safety by sending them to school. Often in developing countries, children must walk long distances to and from school, and girls are especially vulnerable in these situations. There are many forms of violence against women, including physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. An estimated 150 million girls are victims of sexual violence each year, and 50 percent of all sexual assaults are on girls under the age of 15.*** These crimes are seldom prosecuted.

RELATED IMPACTS: POVERTY

Poverty only serves to magnify the vulnerability of young girls. Cultural apathy, child marriage, and a lack of

resources to work through the legal system compound the issue. Violence can have long-term impacts on a young girl, which undermines efforts – such as education – that help end generations of poverty. And girls living in poverty often don't have access to medical care or the psychological/emotional support to help them in the aftermath of an attack.

RELATED IMPACTS: EDUCATION

Safety is a real and valid concern in many parts of the developing world. In an effort to protect their children, parents will often keep them home rather than sending them to school. While parents may value education, attempting to keep girls safe becomes their priority.

While millions of boys and girls remain out of school, girls are more likely to remain excluded from education while out-of-school boys stand a greater chance of eventually entering school. Without an education, girls are more vulnerable to the impacts of poverty, hunger, disease and violence.*

WHAT'S WORKING

Yasmin, and girls like her, are today's superheroes – they fight incredible odds. However, like most superheroes, they need a support team.

Many organizations are working to provide the support needed by girls and their families.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are providing programs that:

- Help create legislation, protecting women and encouraging equal civil rights.
- Educate parents and community members about the importance of educating girls.
- Promote cultural activities focusing on gender equality.

***** A Note on Statistics**

Statistics regarding child marriage change over time as new information becomes available. See Statistics Used in Girl Rising (found in the Resources section) for updated data.