



The condition of girls and young women in the world 2014



by Terre des
Hommes Italy
Foundation



On the occasion of the **International Day of the Girl Child**, introduced by the **UN** in 2012 and celebrated yearly on 11 October, **Terre des Hommes** launches again the “**indifesa**” **Campaign**. This initiative aims at safeguarding education, health, protection from violence, discrimination and abuse for girls worldwide.

With this important **awareness raising campaign**, Terre des Hommes places the protection of girls' rights worldwide at the core of its interventions. It commits itself to defend their right to life, freedom, education, equality, and protection. It will achieve this starting from concrete field interventions, leading to tangible results in breaking the poverty cycle and offering better opportunities to thousands of girls and young women globally.

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by



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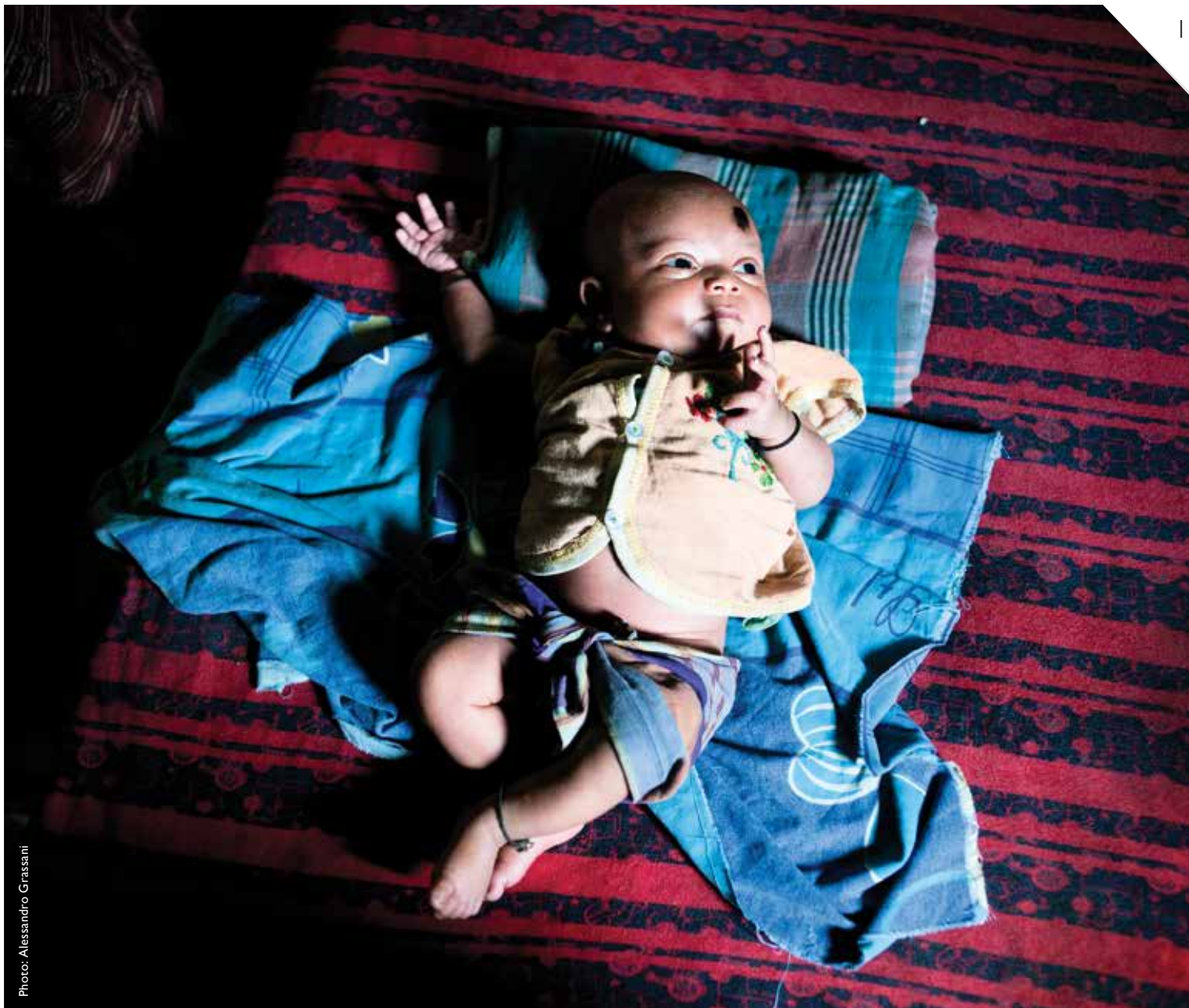


Photo: Alessandro Grassani

This year's report again provides insight into the status of girls and young women in Italy and globally. In it, Terre des Hommes assembles data and analysis both on "historic" phenomena, such as genital mutilation, early pregnancies and marriages, and on new forms of violence and abuse, such as sex tourism via webcam. This phenomenon involves girls and boys all over the world in numbers that it is currently impossible to quantify. Police Forces in several countries are fighting to curb it.

Once again the report shows the importance of available reliable data on the various phenomena analysed. At the same time, it highlights the need to turn attention towards exploiters, be they sex tourists (Italy boasts some primacy in this field) or parents, often fathers, who give away their girls as brides. It discusses child prostitution as a phenomenon that, here in Italy, lies at the intersection between some girls' disinhibition and urge for consumption, and the unscrupulous sense of power exercised on them by adult men who are uncaring of the law.

We cannot ignore how crucial the gender dimension is in dynamics of power and abuse. This is essential to intervene with a comprehensive approach that gives voice and room to rights, values, and respect for the integrity of all human beings, especially during the vulnerable age of growing up.

For those who work with children and gender as well as for hundreds of thousands of girls worldwide, it is especially pressing to stress, as the UN do, the urgent need for States and communities to enact all necessary measures that will ensure that every girl can become active agents of the so-called girl effect. These preconditions will allow girls to improve, in a spin-off effect, societies and living conditions for themselves and those living around them. Where should we start from? What should we target? Girls have already begun to answer. Let's listen to them.

Vincenzo Spadafora

National Guarantor for children and young people

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INTRODUCTION



Photo: Giulio Di Sturco

It seems like yesterday when the idea of a campaign about Girls started shyly circulating within Terre des Hommes. Girls can at once be fragile beings and carry an extraordinary power, when one reads their stories full of sacrifice, violence and humiliation.

As we meet these girls daily in different parts of the world, it seemed right to us – if not a moral obligation – to dedicate an ambitious project like InDifesa to them. Today, at the third edition of this campaign, we are particularly proud of this initiative.

InDifesa wishes to bring attention to the plight of millions of girls and young women globally. It wants to be a valuable tool calling for greater vigilance against the many violations of girls' rights, which take place with silence and indifference on behalf of an international community that could do much more.

For us, the meaning of these Girls has always been very clear. But it is not the same for everyone. Yet, I feel like saying, life begins in a woman's womb. It is in the mother's eyes that a child finds his sense of self.

Much of humanity survives thanks to the wounded working hands and broken backs of millions of young women.

We look at these girls with pain for their suffering, with tenderness for their vulnerability, but also with deep anger against the blindness of international politics, still unable to recognise them and defend their full dignity. I want to promise these girls that we will not forget them. Terre des Hommes will strengthen its efforts to increase legal protection, educational and medical support that is tailored to their specific needs, training opportunities that will allow their full potential to blossom. In Italy and globally.

I wish them a life that is full, happy, and rich in surprises, just like they are.

Donatella Vergari

Secretary-General of Terre des Hommes Foundation Italy

The Girl declaration

When the member states of the United Nations signed the Millennium Declaration, in September 2000, a serious omission was made. In none of the eight Millennium Goals was there any mention of girls and their rights. As the time approaches to assess the results achieved in these 15 years, many associations are working to make sure that this doesn't happen again.

"The Girl Declaration" is a new and coloured document. It is not a top-down declaration written by a distant official. It has been written listening to the thoughts, dreams, projects and needs of 508 girls living in poverty across the globe. "The Girl Declaration" is a tool to stop poverty before it starts, by investing on the 515 million girls and young women who currently live in poverty¹.

What are the concrete goals?

1. Educatio - Ensure all girls globally free, quality secondary school, prioritizing the most marginalised, the rural, poor and at risk of marriage. Eliminate violence and harassment at schools.

Eliminare le violenze e gli abusi nelle scuole

2. Health - Reduce the number of girls who become pregnant before age 18 by 50% by 2030. Nearly 13 million adolescent girls give birth each year in developing countries. End female genital mutilation for all girls.

3. Safety - Prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against girls and young women. Ensure all states have national and sub-national mechanisms to identify and report sexual violence against girls. Strengthen laws and law enforcement practices to contrast trafficking and exploitation of girls.

4. Economic security - Increase girls' savings and access to financial services by 50% by 2030. Ensure all girls receive quality financial literacy training. Reform those laws that prevent girls from managing their own belongings.

5. Citizenship - Eliminate child marriage by 2030. Approximately 14 million girls marry each year. Ensure all girls have access to full citizenship rights.

To change the world, it is necessary to invest on girls. This should be done not because of ethics, morality or human rights. It should be done because this is a wise investment, which will bring benefits to the broader community. Ensuring them healthy growth, suitable education, a safe environment and professional skills is to give them the opportunity to become adult women who will be able to take conscious decisions for their future.



Photo: Alberto Molinari

The website of "The Girl Effect" campaign reads: "When you improve a girl's life (...), these changes have a positive ripple effect" also on the lives of her brothers, future husband and children. "As an educated mother, an active, productive citizen and a prepared employee, she is the most influential force in her community to break the cycle of poverty." "The girl effect" is like a cyclone that disrupts a community and its balances. Just one extra year of secondary education helps girls find jobs that pay 15-25% more. This is not trivial if we consider that women, differently from men, invest 90% of their earnings in their families (men stop at 30-40%)².

A healthy and educated girl will have healthier children and will be more aware when taking care of their health and their rights.

Moreover, eliminating those obstacles that prevent girls from expressing their potential (e.g. child marriage, pregnancy, illiteracy) countries would benefit from a significant increase of their gross domestic product. In India, teen pregnancies result in 10 billion dollars in lost potential earnings. If Bangladesh were to eliminate child marriage and pregnancy for one million girls, the country could benefit from a potential increase in its GDP equal to 69 billion dollars³.

Investing on girls pays, yet less than 2% of development expenditure currently goes to girls. So long as girls remain invisible, the world will miss an incredible opportunity to change.

1 "The girl's declaration" is a project of Nike foundation, in collaboration with "NoVo foundation", United Nations Foundation, Coalition for adolescent girls. <http://www.girleffect.org>

2 The population council, "Girls on the move"

3 <http://www.girleffect.org/about/>



Chapter I

Prenatal selection

Armenia is not a country for girls: today, among the under 18, there are 39 thousand more boys than girls. And if the current pre-natal selection rates do not change, 93 thousand girls will have gone missing by 2060⁴. This situation is the outcome of the patriarchal structure of Armenian society “that prefers boys to girls,” according to Christophe Guilmoto of the *French research institute for development*. A soviet “abortion culture” and easy access to technologies allowing parents to know the sex of the baby before birth also play a part⁵.

Researchers indicate three factors that contribute to the increase in the number of boys to the detriment of girls: traditional preference for male heirs, access to technologies allowing prenatal selection (scans and abortion), and decrease of fertility rates. In brief: fewer children are being born, preferably boys.

The ratio at birth between boys and girls is usually 1.05: i.e. 105 boys for every 100 girls. In China, where since 1971 the *single child policy* has caused 336 million abortions⁶, this ratio has risen to 118 boys per 100 girls. In Armenia it is 114. In this small Caucasian country, women are exposed to strong family pressure to bear

4 Unfpa, 2 May 2014. <http://eeca.unfpa.org/news/93000-women-be-missing-armenia-2060-if-high-pre-natal-sex-selection-rate-remains-unchanged>

5 Unfpa, 2 May 2014. <http://eeca.unfpa.org/news/93000-women-be-missing-armenia-2060-if-high-pre-natal-sex-selection-rate-remains-unchanged>

6 <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/22/opinion/chinas-brutal-one-child-policy.html>

How many girls are born in...

On a global scale, 102-106 males are born for every 100 females



	First born	Second born	Third born	Fourth born
Armenia	$\frac{106,8}{100}$	$\frac{110,4}{100}$	$\frac{176,9}{100}$	$\frac{177,4}{100}$
China	$\frac{113,8}{100}$	$\frac{130,3}{100}$	$\frac{161,6}{100}$	$\frac{145,9}{100}$
Korea	$\frac{106,2}{100}$	$\frac{107,4}{100}$	$\frac{141,7}{100}$	$\frac{154,9}{100}$
Vietnam	$\frac{110}{100}$	$\frac{109}{100}$	$\frac{115,5}{100}$	$\frac{145,9}{100}$

Source: UNfpa

male heirs. In their first pregnancies, they may be willing to accept the birth of a girl, but the third must be a son, thus reaching the astounding figure of 176 boys for every 100 girls. This number has no equals globally.

When we speak of *missing girls* (an estimated 100 million girls⁷ are thought to have been killed before birth) we think especially of China and India. Yet the phenomenon is far broader and affects other South-East Asian countries (Korea, Vietnam and Pakistan) and Asian diaspora communities, as well as Balkan and Caucasian countries.

An “altered” balance between boys and girls is evident in Azerbaijan (117 boys for every 100 girls). In the global classification, this country is second to China⁸. High ratios are found also in Georgia (111.8), Albania (111.7), Kosovo (109) and Montenegro (109).

Another country in which this phenomenon is alarmingly present is India, where every year one million girls are “missing” due to selective abortion or high infant mortality. In 1991, 945 girls were recorded for every 1,000 boys in the age group 0-6 years. In 2011, this number had dropped to 914 girls, with falls of 902 in urban areas.

Selective abortion is a crude reality also for girls born far away from their parents’ countries of origin: a report published by the British newspaper “The Independent” (based on the 2011 national Census data) denounces between 1,400 and 4,700 “missing” girls in England and Wales⁹.

Research among Asian migrant communities in the US, Canada and United Kingdom shows an abnormal gender ratio at birth. Although far from home and living in different social and economic contexts, these communities withhold the same attitudes as in their home countries. This is true among the Chinese, even where they are not forced to abide by the single child law. Among Korean, Indian and Chinese migrants living in the US, 108 boys are born for every 100 girls¹⁰.

The reasons pushing many parents towards male preference are various. The main one, however, is the conviction that girls are “worth less” than boys. A popular Confucian proverb in Vietnam says: “With one son you have descendants. With 10 daughters you have nothing¹¹”. When they marry, moreover, girls become part of the husband’s family and take with them significant dowries that – in many cases – weigh heavily on their families of origin. According to UNICEF, son preference is a sign of “social, cultural, political and economic injustices against women, and a manifest violation of women’s human rights¹²”.

According to Amartya Sen, the Indian economist who during the Eighties denounced the case of “missing women”, selective abortion “is a kind of high-tech manifestation of a preference for boys¹³”. Sen also highlights that women’s education “which has been a powerful force in reducing mortality discrimination against women (...) has not been able to eliminate, at least not yet, natality discrimination¹⁴”.

7 <http://www.UNfpa.org/gender/selection.html>

8 “La masculinisation des naissances en Europe Orientale”, Christophe Z. Guilmoto e Geraldine Duthé, Ined – Institut national études démographiques, www.ined.fr

9 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/the-lost-girls-illegal-abortion-widely-used-by-some-uk-ethnic-groups-to-avoid-daughters-has-reduced-female-population-between-1500-and-4700-9059790.html>

10 <http://www.UNfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2012/Sex%20Imbalances%20at%20Birth.%20PDF%20UNfpa%20APRO%20publication%202012.pdf>

2012.pdf

11 <http://www.UNfpa.org/public/cache/offonce/home/news/pid/6221#sthash.kDUxoc5v.dpuf>

12 http://www.unicef.org/media/media_58924.html

13 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/the-lost-girls-girls-are-still-aborted-in-states-with-more-educated-women-by-amartya-sen-9059544.html>

14 Ibidem

Discrimination at birth

Discrimination against girls is not limited to selective abortion. In many countries, it continues after birth, a trend proved by exceptionally high mortality rates among girls under the age of five.

Once again numbers reveal the extent of discrimination against girls. In normal conditions, mortality of baby boys is 20-25% higher than that of baby girls, with a

sex ratio between 110 and 125. When mortality rates tend to level, or even become worse for girls, then we should hear alarm bells ringing.

UNFPA (the United Nations Population Fund) shows that in several countries of South-East and Central Asia girls between zero and five years die much more than their male peers. In four countries (China, India, Nepal

Bangladesh Nutritional Disparity



Children suffering from chronic malnutrition under the age of 5 (%)	41	42	36	43
Underweight Children under the age of 5 (%)	34	39	28	39
Children < 5 years old suffering from Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) (%)	16	15	14	16
Women with a low Body Mass Index (BMI) (<18.5 kg/m ² , %)	-	24	14	28
Girls in the preschool age group affected by anaemia (%)	-	51	-	-

Source: "Improving Child Nutrition", April 2013
http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Nutrition_Report_final_lo_res_8_April.pdf

India Nutritional Disparity



Children suffering from chronic malnutrition under the age of 5 (%)	48	48	40	51
Underweight Children under the age of 5 (%)	42	43	33	46
Children < 5 years old suffering from Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) (%)	21	19	17	21
Women with a low Body Mass Index (BMI) (<18.5 kg/m ² , %)	-	36	25	41
Girls in the preschool age group affected by anaemia (%)	-	70	-	-

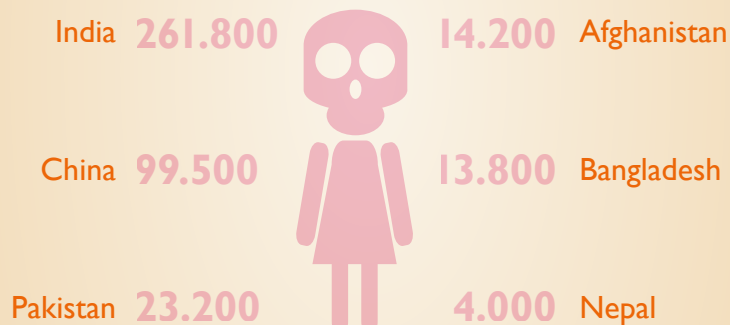
Source: "Improving Child Nutrition", April 2013
http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Nutrition_Report_final_lo_res_8_April.pdf

and Afghanistan) mortality is significantly lower among males compared to females, China and India presenting the worse figures (71 and 88 respectively)¹⁵.

Why do girls die more than boys in these countries? The main cause is no doubt poor feeding, in terms of both quality and quantity. In India, for instance, 70% of girls under the age of five suffer from anaemia and 43% are underweight. The scenario is equally difficult in Bangladesh: 39% of girls are underweight, 42% suffer from stunting (chronic malnutrition) and 51% from anaemia¹⁶. In India, various reports on child nutrition show a pervasive discrimination against girls. Even hospitalisation rates are lower for girls than they are for boys¹⁷.

How many more girls* die each year compared to their male peers?

(*under 5 years of age)



Source: UNfpa

Neglecting a girl, not feeding her properly, not giving her the necessary medical care, not vaccinating her is the simplest route for a couple holding an unwanted baby girl in their arms. According to the UNFPA, between 2005 and 2009 these discriminations caused almost 420 thousand more deaths every year among girls born in the countries affected by this phenomenon.

“Unlike prenatal selection and infanticide, which are based on conscious decisions – says the UNfpa report “*Sex imbalances at birth*” – girl neglect may partly correspond to the delayed behaviour of parents with unwanted daughters who have failed to use prenatal selection. ”.



Photo: Giulio Di Sturco

¹⁵ UNfpa, *Sex Imbalances at Birth*, p. 25

¹⁶ Unicef, “*Improving child nutrition*”, 2013

¹⁷ UNfpa, “*Laws and Son Preference in India*”



THE STORY



The beauty of women Notes from a trip to India with Terre des Hommes

Let me start from the flowers in women's hair, those scented garlands of fresh flowers that are sold at every street corner and that women and girls in India so often wear. When you hug one of them, you are swathed in a wave of simple, primitive pleasure, a pleasure of almost abstract perfection. Garlands sway from black hairstyles, they drape subtly from passengers seated on rickety and noisy motorbikes, they stop at the lights in deafening traffic in the midst of a nonsensical mass of houses, roads and landscapes, and they dance in the widespread urban smog and dirt that India 2.0 offers to the eye. Garlands are almost a good-luck charm, an open invitation to further explore, to search for the secret flower of a country that shows itself without shame, in an old-fashioned way. Those who, like me, pay attention to detail and see beauty in the shades of meaning that are concealed in that detail, are overwhelmed by the strong smells, noise and colours of India. Here, extremes coexist in an unstable balance, governed by the brutality of daily relations: caste, widespread corruption, male dominance in families, women (girls) trapped in an antique destiny of overpowering. Here, to be born a woman is still a problem. In the countryside, it can amount to an early death sentence and in cities - where women today have prominent roles in politics, as writers, artists, scientists - threats to fundamental rights are constant.

Where is the beauty, then? Where is the spiritual India that has been so well known for centuries? It cannot be limited to the blinding intensity of the ashrams, the temples, the sacred images (or could such an extraordinary evolution of the spirit be the result of disaster and defeat of the environment?). Ah, India, the gaze sweeps the horizon...

Until departure, I had imagined this country through the tales of those who had already been there, as a place that hits one's heart, engraving in it deep emotions. Finally, after hearing so many stories, it is

time to visit: ten days in the state of Tamil Nadu, South India, to visit a few centres of Terre des Hommes offering practical help to families and children in extreme difficulty. We travel especially to villages, remote ones, at even a thousand meters above sea level, where only extreme abandonment resists. A handful of rice and an egg a day, bare feet, closed schools, degradation, and dirt. Back in Italy, it took me weeks to write down objective impressions of this trip, to testify faith in the good intentions of a distant and inconsistent society.

Distance allows me now to translate the experience of a country "with no unconscious", in which everything is explicit, exposed to the eye, and in which extremes meet. The western idea of beauty is missing here, or maybe it mockingly peeps through the petals of flowers pinned in women's hair.

It is a reminder that ferociousness is at the origin of the sacred. A violent act, a sacrifice. From India, through Greece, in a long ritual, even for us in the West, myth translates into theatrical gesture through betrayal. At all latitudes, Bollywood prevails by the side of ritual. Mobile phones ring even in the most remote villages in the mountains of Tamil Nadu, where bare essentials are lacking and brash Christian tombs dot the roadside. Like a huge magnifying glass showing the possibilities of (in)human "growth", India offers to whoever cares to look a direct, detailed and shocking picture of humanity today. What we are, what we are not. It does so with the clear language of a child, forget psychology.

This is our world, the Only one!

Sonia Bergamasco
Actress, poet, musician



Chapter 2

Female genital mutilations

Female genital mutilations are a violent, painful and traumatising operation. They bear consequences for girls' health for the whole of their lives. In some cases, they even lead to death as a result of severe bleeding or infection. Approximately 125 million girls and women have suffered one of the various forms of genital mutilation: circumcision (removal of the tip of the clitoris), excision (removal of the clitoris and of the inner lips), and infibulation (removal of the outer lips followed by sewing of the vagina).

The phenomenon is especially present in 29 countries of Central Africa and the Middle East. In Somalia, 98% of women between 15 and 49 are mutilated. In Guinea, the phenomenon affects 96% of women. Egypt (91%), Mali (89%), Sudan and Sierra Leone (88%) follow. Most of these women were operated before the age of five and in any case before turning fifteen¹⁸.

Despite the operation being extremely painful, harmful for women's bodies and dangerous, mothers themselves perform FGM on their daughters. In Somalia, Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Egypt, more than 50% of women between 15 and 49 years believe that the practice should continue. It should be noticed, however, that in most of the affected countries (19 out of 29) the majority of women and girls is convinced that genital mutilations should be no longer performed. Young women (in the age group 15-19) are especially against FGMs. In Egypt, only 34% of young women are in favour of the practice, against 64% of adult women¹⁹.

European Union: How many girls are at risk of FGM?



	Women with FGM	Girls at risk
Belgium	6.260	1.975
Germany (2007)	19.000	4.000
Ireland (2011)	3.170	n.p.
France (2007)	61.000	n.p.
Italy (2009)	35.000	1.000
The Netherlands (2013)	29.000	40-50 cases per year
Great Britain*	170.000	65.000

Source: European Campaign "End female genital mutilation"

* Female genital mutilation: the case for a national action plan - Home Affairs Committee
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmhaff/201/20104.htm>

However, FMGs do not only affect Africa and the Middle East. An estimated 500 thousand women and girls aged between 15 and 49 who have suffered this practice now live in Europe, where 180 thousand girls and young women are at risk²⁰. In June 2014, the case of sixty girls living in Norrköping (East of Sweden)²¹ who had suffered genital mutilations, including 28 victims of infibulation, brought back attention on this issue.

A report published in June 2013 by activists of the European campaign "End female genital mutilation"²² attempts an estimate of the number of women and girls victims or at risk of FGM in Europe. The data are contained also in a document issued by the Eu-

¹⁸ <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>

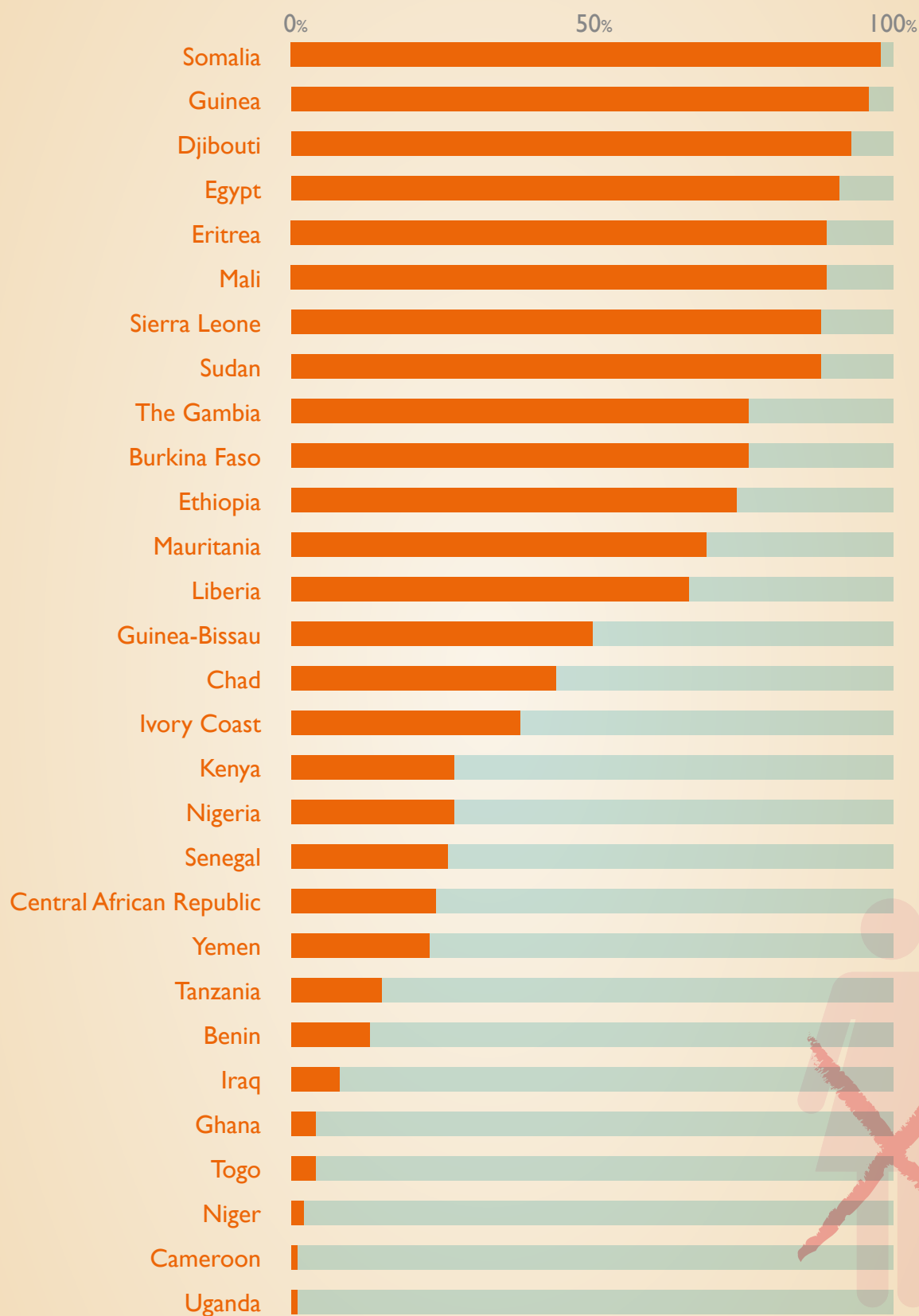
¹⁹ "Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. A Statistical Overview and Exploration of The Dynamics of Change", July 2013, http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_69875.html

²⁰ European Parliament resolution of 14 June 2012 on ending female genital mutilation

²¹ Article published by RT (<http://rt.com/news/167368-genital-mutilation-sweden-girls/>)

²² "Ending female genital mutilation: where do we stand in Europe?" http://www.endfgm.eu/content/assets/ENDFGM_Where_do_we_standinEurope_June2013_light_with_links.pdf

How many women are victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)?



Source: Unicef

ropean Commission in November 2013²³.

It should be highlighted that this data consists mainly of estimates. These are calculated on the basis of the foreign population presence in the various countries. For instance the figures for the Netherlands were obtained considering “at risk” 40% of foreign women originating from the countries in which genital mutilations are widespread²⁴.

The authors of the study²⁵ underline the absence of comprehensive research at the European level that can provide detailed information “on the number of women and girls at risk in Europe, taking into account second generation migrants and specificities of different ethnic communities.”

In the United Kingdom, an estimated 170 thousand women and girls have suffered genital mutilations and another 65 thousand girls under the age of 13 are at risk. At least 70 women every month seek for help from health professionals to cure the consequences of mutilation²⁶. The Home Affairs Commission of the British House of Commons has recently published a document announcing that, from September 2014, hospitals would begin reporting information about FGM. It is expected that “the new reporting arrangements would give, for the first time, a clear picture of what is happening in the UK”²⁷.

In Italy, approximately 39 thousand women and girls have suffered some form of genital mutilation²⁸. A reliable estimate of how many girls are at risk, instead, is more difficult and a significant gap exists between the two most recent estimates. A research by the Ministry for Equal Opportunities (2009) suggests that 22% of 4,600 girls under 17 are at risk, i.e.

approximately one thousand cases. Much higher is the number suggested by “Albero della Vita”²⁹ which estimates the presence in our country of more than seven thousand girls at risk, almost 70% of whom attend nurseries and primary schools and are aged between three and ten.

29 “Il diritto a essere bambine”, December 2011



Photo: Andrea Frazzetta

23 “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council towards the elimination of female genital mutilation”, November 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_based_violence/131125_fgm_communication_en.pdf

24 Female genital mutilation in Netherlands” <http://www.awepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Female-Genital-Mutilation-in-the-Netherlands.pdf>

25 “Ending female genital mutilation: where do we stand in Europe?”

26 “An Unpunished Crime: The lack of prosecutions for female genital mutilation in the UK” http://www.newcultureforum.org.uk/home/pdf/fgm_report.pdf

27 Female genital mutilation: the case for a national action plan - Home Affairs Committee, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmhaff/201/20104.htm>

28 Unicef, http://www.unicef.it/Allegati/MGF_scheda_dati_2014.pdf



Access to education

“Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.” Major steps have been made in recent years towards achieving the second Millennium Development Goal: the number of children attending primary school has increased by about 50 million between 2000 and 2010³⁰.

Between 2000 and 2011, the number of children not attending school dropped from 102 to 57 million³¹. These positive trends, however, will not allow achieving the goal of universal primary education by 2015.

Much work remains to be done, especially for girls and young women. Sitting at a school desk is still a difficult challenge for many of them. According to Unicef, approximately 31 million girls who should attend primary education (out of a total of 57 million)

and 34 million girls who should attend secondary education are unable to do so (data from 2011³²). The family's economic conditions and living in urban rather than rural areas impact significantly on the out-of-school rates of girls. A research by Unesco in 57 developing countries highlights these discrepancies: girls not attending school are 21% of the total (20% for boys). The presence of other factors increases the out-of-school rate: 24% of girls living in rural areas do not go to school (against 13% of those living in cities) and this figure rises to 32% among girls coming from poorer families³³.

Ethiopia is an emblematic case. Among the children of Addis Ababa, almost all those from wealthy segments of the population attend school, whereas 45% of children in the rural region of Afar have never sat behind a desk. Differences are amplified “crossing” these ratios with gender: 65% of girls in

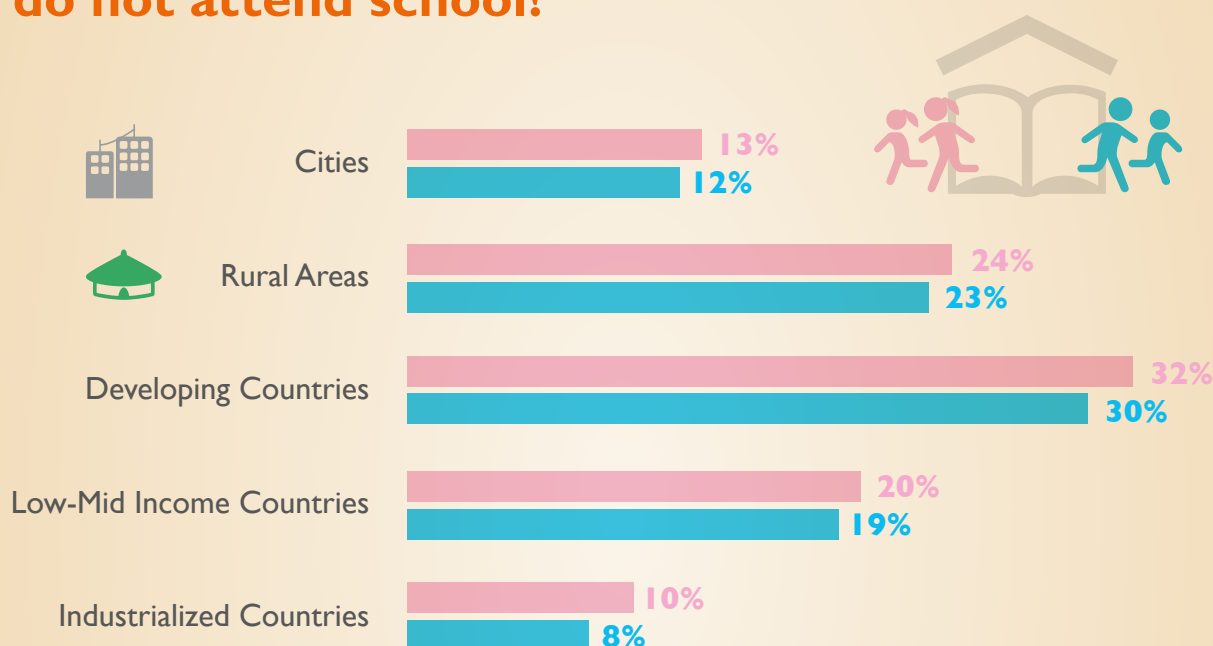
30 Unicef, “Making education priority in post 2015 developing agenda”, 2014

31 “The Millennium Development Goals Report”, 2013

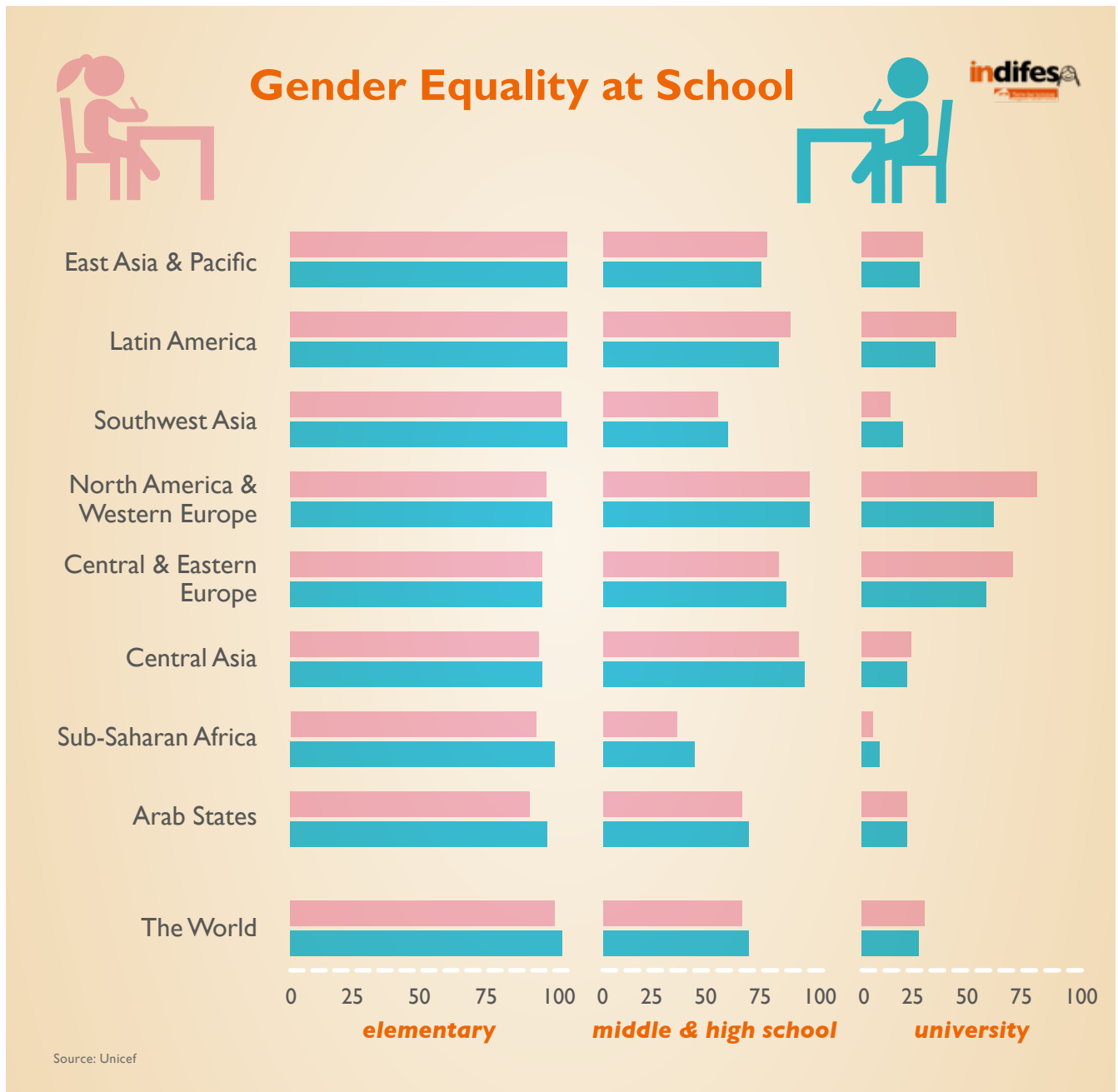
32 http://www.unicef.org/education/bege_70640.html

33 <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/fs-25-out-of-school-children-en.pdf>

How many children do not attend school?



Source: UIS survey conducted in 57 countries between years 2006 and 2011.



Afar have never been to school³⁴.

Although the gap between boys and girls has tightened, in many countries girls are still being discriminated. Completing primary education is a particular challenge for girls living in Sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia. The consequences are severe: in the poorest countries, one third of girls between 15 and 24 are unable to read³⁵. Of the 755 million adults who cannot read or write, almost two thirds are women.

Forced marriage and early motherhood are the

main reasons forcing girls and young women to drop out of education. Nonetheless, other factors pose additional challenges for girls, for instance violence in school.

Whereas significant achievements have been made in access to primary education, gender disparity remains remarkable in secondary and tertiary education. In countries such as the Central African Republic, Niger, Chad and Malawi, less than one girl in 200 goes to university³⁶. Moreover, despite one of the Millennium Goals is to “promote gender equality and empower women” by 2015, only 62 coun-

34 <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/fs-25-out-of-school-children-en.pdf>

35 <http://girlsglobe.org/category/gender-equality/>

36 “The Millennium Development Goals Report”, 2013



Photo: Benoit Chattaway

tries of 168 will achieve gender equity in secondary education by this date.

Discrimination against girls (especially when they belong to a minority) is not limited to countries of the global South. A research by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights³⁷ shows that skin colour influences educational career and teachers' dispositions towards students. Coloured boys, for instance, are expelled from school three times more than whites: 16% against 5% (all data refer to school year 2011-2012). A similar trend is observed among Native American or Alaskan students, who represent 1% of the total student population but 3% of the total expelled children.

A similar picture is found when considering data concerning female students. The suspension rate among coloured girls is 12%, whereas that of Native American girls is 7%. This is well above 2% for girls and 6% for white boys.

Italy, girls failing to start

NEET: the four letters of this acronym label young people who neither study, nor work (*“Not employee or in training”*). In Italy, this concerns 2 million and 665 thousand youths (out of a total of 6.5 million) between 20 and 29 years. The incidence is particularly high among girls: the national average is 49%, with peaks of 65-70% in Southern Italy³⁸.

What are the reasons pushing Italian girls to the margins of the labour market? Undoubtedly, the crisis is to blame. However, also other influencing factors are highlighted in the report *“Occupazione-istruzione-educazione: le trappole nascoste nel percorso delle ragazze verso il lavoro”* [Employment-education: Hidden traps in girls' transition to the labour market].

First and foremost, the influence of the family and its economic condition: 25% of girls abandoning secondary education and 67% of those leaving university do so because of the cost. Economic difficulties at home push 27 girls out of 100 to leave secondary education. Difficulties in the family of origin seem, instead, to have less influence in the case of boys: only 12% leave secondary education because of the

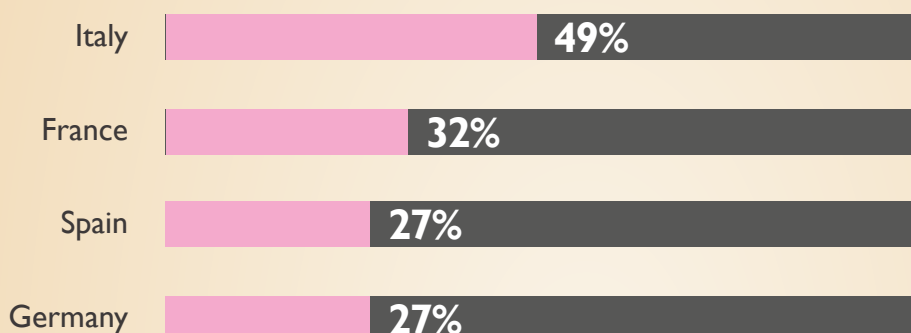
cost or of economic problems, and excessive costs for university are relevant only for 58%.

Also in our country we witness those phenomena of exclusion that affect so many girls in the global South. As stated in the report: *“It is still widespread to bet more on the son than on the daughter, rather than betting on the real capacity and potential on one and the other”*.

Another factor affecting girls is the lack of coherence between education and employment opportunities: three girls in ten (29%) say that their occupation is unrelated with what they learned. The educational paths favoured by girls (Italian, law, languages, education) are also those leading to lower employment rates and lower salaries. Very few girls (9.9%) have degrees in technical and scientific subjects, which offer better employment prospects.

38 McKinsey & company, *“Occupazione-istruzione-educazione: le trappole nascoste nel percorso delle ragazze verso il lavoro”*, 2014
http://www.mckinsey.it/storage/first/uploadfile/attach/143926/file/sintesi_ricerca_occupazione_istruzione_educazione_f.pdf

Girls inactive in the workforce in Europe



Source: McKinsey & Co. from Eurostat data



Photo: Mimmo Frassinetti

THE STORY



Maud, the Power Girl

Maud is 17 years old and may seem an ordinary girl like many others. She is pretty, fond of her friends, and has recently discovered WhatsApp. But something about her is different. She has been attending university since age 14, because she is particularly bright. When she attended primary education, she had to walk 7 kilometres to reach her school in Zimbabwe. She had to get up early to go to school. She also had to get used to changing situations when, following her mother's death to cancer, she was entrusted to her brother. That was also not easy, because of the personality of who should simply protect her, and because of the difficulties of attending, at 7, a school very distant from home, with impassable roads in the rainy season. In order to get there on time, she had to wake up every morning at 5 am. After school, she had to help her relatives in their work.

To look at her now, the winner of several awards from organisations in London, Africa and Dubai, one of the 20 youngest power women in Africa in 2012, makes us understand how this girl has never lacked determination and passion for numbers. She says: "I just carried on, despite all the difficulties, because I love studying".

In this beautiful African country, schools are not easily accessible to children. Maud is no exception. Before independence, rural schools were an integral part of white settlers' farms and, when the latter left the country, they were abandoned. The few and poor people who repopulated the area live several miles away from the schools. School infrastructures are derelict: the roof is often missing – and when there is one it is made of grass and dried mud, or steel plates – there are no windows, desks and chairs are missing, there are no quality textbooks. The books on which the children study in rural areas of the country are supplied by UNICEF, through Care. But this is not enough. An extra effort is needed. Why is it so?

Because, in spite of these difficulties, Zimbabwe remains a country on which it is worth investing. Mugabe has invested heavily in education. Everyone, from farmer to retailer to studying child, speaks perfect English. This is thanks to trained teachers who follow their students with passion. They do so despite the lack of means. When I travelled to this country, we visited Maud's first two schools, where she studied up to age 10: the Chiurayi Primary School and the Hurudza Primary, near Kwekwe.

The latter was particularly surprising. There are virtually no bathrooms. Children of very different ages are crammed together in only three classes. Paradoxically, this was Maud's good fortune. She followed several classes at once; she stayed longer in school to rest and to avoid having to immediately walk all those miles to get home. Passionate about math, she absorbed information and grew. She passed all the tests giving her access, at only 14, to university. She was excited to see her first school, which is not even fenced and this is a problem, especially in winter, because children live in total contact with animals. I told Maud that very little is enough to help, especially when money is spent wisely by teachers: school fees amount to \$20 per child, but only 10% of parents are able to pay them.

Her old teachers look at Maud with pride. They tell her: this is the situation and we must not let it discourage us, but must look at the future. Maud knows that she is lucky. She is now at the University of Harare. Children look at her and dream that, one day, like her, they will be able to study at university. Here, there is hope.

Mariangela Pira
Class CNBC



Chapter 4

Disability, double discrimination

One child out of twenty up to the age of 14 suffers from a disability. Globally, this corresponds to approximately 93 million children and young people³⁹ who suffer from different forms of exclusion and discrimination, such as lack of access to health and education services, especially when these are scarce.

For girls, the situation can be even worse: gender and disability contribute to a situation of “double discrimination” that is particularly challenging. They receive less care and less food than boys; they are more easily excluded from family relations and everyday activities.

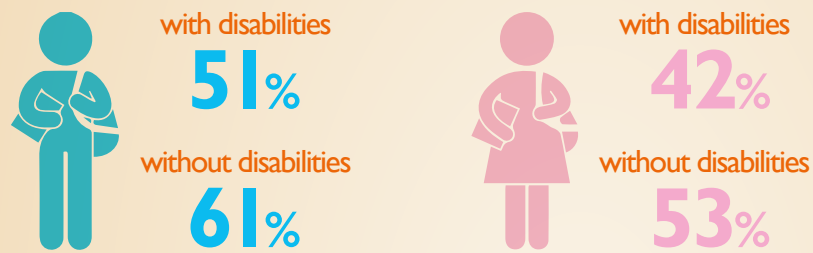
Access to education is also more difficult for a girl with a disability, even when compared to her peers. A research by the World Health Organisation in 51 countries highlights that only 42% of girls with a disability completes primary education, against 53% of girls without a disability. Among boys, the rates are respectively 51% and 61%⁴⁰.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to access reliable figures indicating how many children have disabilities and that also include a gender distinction. In Italy, for instance, it is not known how many children with disability there are in the age group 0-5⁴¹.

Girls and young women “suffer” from the effects of disability in different ways, even when they are in good health. Taking care of a severely disabled child, for instance, is demanding and tiring for mothers. Often, healthy daughters end up caring for their disabled siblings.

Another factor that hits especially girls and young women is malnutrition. Unicef underscores that malnutrition severely compromises the learning and development capacity of children. The effects are

How many girls have completed primary school?



Source: WHO (World Health Organization) survey conducted in 51 countries.



apparent when children are very small, but the consequences last for the rest of their entire lives⁴².

Discrimination and exclusion expose children with disabilities more strongly to abuse and violence. The Unicef report “State of the world’s children” cites a study conducted in Norway, which revealed that deaf girls are twice as likely to suffer from sexual abuse (and boys thrice as likely) than their peers without disabilities.

In many countries, moreover, among which the U.S. and Australia, girls with a disability are subject to forced sterilisation. In 2009, the *European Disability Forum* claimed that forced sterilisation “is a form of violence that violates the rights of person with disabilities to form a family, decide on the number of children they wish to have, gain access to information on family planning and reproduction, and retain their fertility on an equal basis with others”.

In Australia, parents may decide to have their daughters sterilised after having being authorised by a tutelary judge. In some cases, this decision is taken in good faith, with the conviction that sterilisation will allow the girl better life conditions⁴³ and avoid unwanted pregnancies.

39 State of the world's children 2013, Children with disabilities, May 2013, Unicef

40 State of the world's children 2013, Children with disabilities, May 2013, Unicef

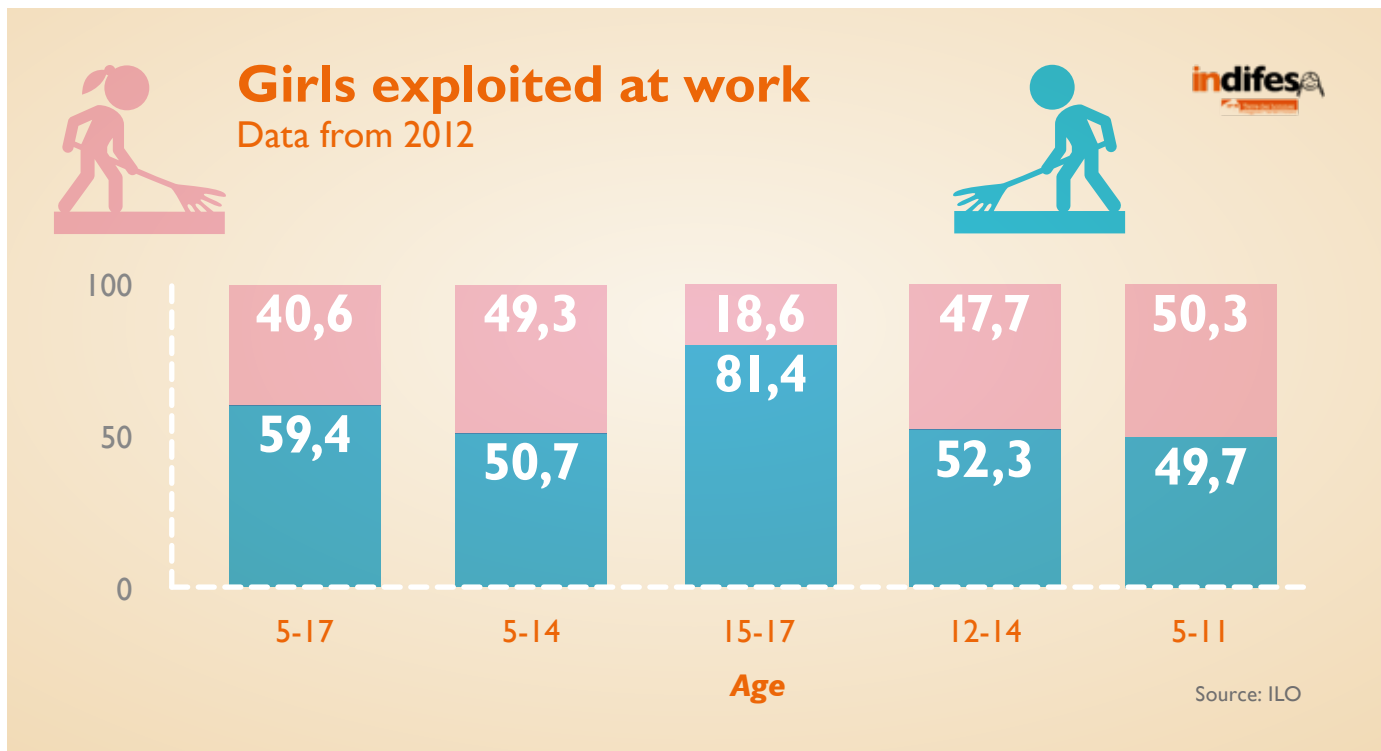
41 Seventh CRC report, “I diritti dell’infanzia e dell’adolescenza in Italia”, http://www.gruppocrc.net/IMG/pdf/7o_rapporto_CRC.pdf

42 State of the world's children 2013

43 <http://www.uildm.org/2013/09/05/sterilizzazione-forzata-un-crimine-contro-le-donne-disabili-di-tutto-il-mondo/>



Chapter 5



Working children

The good news is that in 12 years the number of children forced to work has reduced significantly: between 2000 and 2012 they dropped by almost 78 million, many of whom are girls. The number of working girls has gone from 113 million and 300 thousand in 2000 to 68 million and 200 thousand in 2012 (-40%). A significant reduction was registered also among working boys, who went from 184 million and 200 thousand to 148 million and 327 thousand (-25%)⁴⁴. These results are certainly important, yet there is still much progress to be made. According to ILO (International Labour Organization) estimates, 11 children out of 100 globally are forced to work. Many of them do so within family activities, especially in agriculture (6 children out of 10 work in the fields⁴⁵), as well as in craftsmanship, fishing or as domestic workers in the homes of wealthier families.

168 million children cannot go to school, nor can they play. They are forced to work to support their families, contributing to fragile domestic economies or – in the worse cases – they are sold to repay their parents' debts. This condition of exploitation

compromises their fundamental rights and – often – puts their health at risk. Most of these children live in South-West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, where one child out five is forced to renounce to school and play in order to work.

Although the phenomenon affects mainly boys (approximately 99 million and 800 thousand out of the total number of 168 million working children), the number of girls and young women – aged between 5 and 17 – who are forced to work is extremely high: 68 million and 200 thousand. As underlined by the ILO, however, “these figures might underestimate girls’ involvement in child labour.” Girl labour, in fact, is far less visible than that of boys as it is often used in domestic work.

It is also interesting to note the gender distribution. Whereas the age group 5-11 does not show particular differences between the number of boys and girls (both approximately 36 thousand), the gap widens in the age group 12-14 and becomes even broader in the group 15-17, where boys account for 81% of the total number of child workers (almost 30 million more than girls).

⁴⁴ ILO, “Making progress against child labour”, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed_norm/-ipec/documents/publication/wcms_221513.pdf

⁴⁵ ILO, “Making progress against child labour”, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed_norm/-ipec/documents/publication/wcms_221513.pdf

Hazardous labour

Approximately 30 million girls engage in hazardous jobs (they were 74 million and 800 thousand in 2000), out of a total of approximately 85 million. Also in this case, the most significant reduction between 2000 and 2012 is among girls, with 44 million and 500 thousand girls and young women less involved in these kinds of activities.

In absolute terms, boys are the majority. However, if

we focus on the younger age groups (from 5 to 14), we find that girls are the most involved in the worst forms of exploitation. In the age group 5-11, girls are 58% of the total (2 million and 800 thousand more than boys). In the following age group, 12-14, girls are 56% (2 million and 300 thousand more than boys). This result is explained by girls' massive involvement in domestic work, one of the worse forms of labour exploitation.

Domestic work

Locked inside the house, long work hours and heavy chores are often imposed on domestic workers. They do not receive enough food and at times are not even paid. Invisible to the outside world, they are exposed to violence on behalf of their employers and to the risk of sexual abuse.

The ILO estimates that 11 million and 300 thousand girls and young women (out of a total of just over 15 million) are employed as domestic workers in homes other than their own⁴⁶.

These girls work as domestic labourers firstly to support their own families economically. However, for many parents sending their daughter to serve another family is also an economic saving. This choice is tied, partly, to the conviction that domestic work is safer than other types of work.

Further pushing girls in this form of exploitation is the conviction that their education is less important than that of their brothers. An educated boy – people believe – will have better chances to find a good job, whereas it is better for girls to start learning early how to take care of the home.

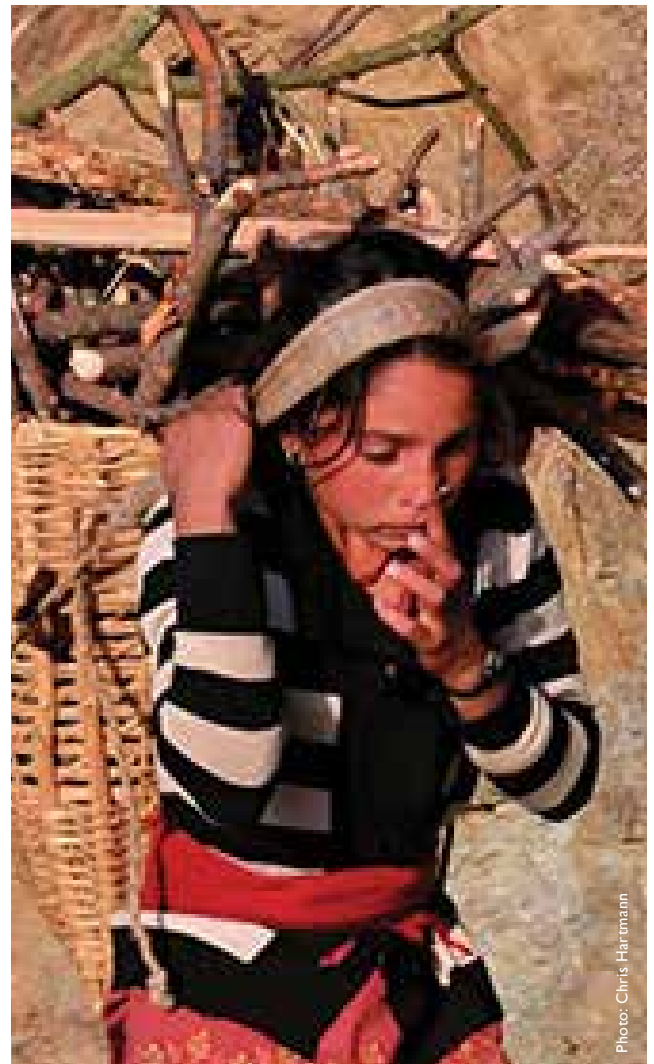


Photo: Chris Hartmann

46

ILO, Ending child labour in domestic works, 2013

Nepal, fight against exploitation

“Kamalari” are Nepali girls from the Tharu ethnic group who are domestic workers in the city, or in the homes of great land owners. They start working very young. Many are less than 14 when they leave their fathers’ home. They are paid little or even nothing. Their work is used as a guarantee for their parents to incur debts, pay medical or other urgent expenses.

Urmila Chaudhary⁴⁷ was a domestic worker from 6 to 17 years old in the home of a respected politician in Kathmandu. Eleven years of slavery to repay her family’s debt to buy medicines for her brother’s wife (4 thousand rupees, approximately 40 euros). Urmila is now president of the “Kamalari Forum”, a movement of former girl slaves fighting for the elimination of this “tradition”. She has already scored some goals: several districts have self-proclaimed themselves “Kamalari free”. Moreover, actions have been undertaken to free girls forced to work in the worse conditions.



47 This episode is told in the Terre des Hommes report “Twelve years as slave”, 2014

Domestic workers



15,5 million

of children in the world

11,3 million

are female



2,1 million girls 5-11 years old

2,8 million girls 12-15 years old

7,5 million girls engaged in domestic labor under **unacceptable situations**

5,8 million girl-maids do **hazardous works**

Source: ILO

THE STORY



Isabel, the young domestic worker

Isabel (14 years old) had been taken with her sister by a relative to work in the city of Arequipa, about 300 km from the Andean village where she was born. The girl was a domestic worker for a family and studied at night by going to evening classes. One night, she was attacked and raped when returning from school. Out of fear, she said nothing to the family she lived with, but five months later she discovered that she was pregnant. Because she is a minor, the prosecutor of Arequipa filed a report against an unknown person and looked for a specialised reception centre for the girl. Because no specialised centres were available,

Isabel was temporally admitted at the Yanapanaksun Centre between July and October 2013.

Thanks to the intervention of the centre’s staff, a place was later found at a centre specialised in assisting young women victims of sexual violence. Isabel, who gave birth last December, is currently being cared for here. The prosecutor’s report of the violence is following its course and Isabel’s situation is still monitored by the staff of the Yanapanakusun Centre, even though she is no longer staying at the Hogar.



Photo: Alda Yanni

No longer helpless...



The indifesa campaign has totally changed the life of many Peruvian girls who were exploited as domestic workers. 100 of them have signed up for free for evening classes to complete their primary education and aim at getting a secondary diploma. The school has also allowed them to attend remedial classes, after-school, recreational and sporting activities that are particularly important to raise the girls' self-esteem and overcome the grief they suffer from since being separated from their families. Some of them have benefited from specialised medical care and received funds for special individual or family needs.

Ten girls from the Yanapanakusun Centre, who had been victims of exploitation and abuse, received scholarships to specialise in catering and hotel business. The campaign also allowed providing for the needs of all girls admitted to the shelter (hogar) in Cusco, especially their psychological assistance. "All the girls suffer from serious problems of social integration," says Angelica, psychologist of the centre. "These problems later develop into learning difficulties, low self-esteem, strong impulsivity and aggressiveness. The girls arrive in very precarious conditions, the lucky ones are extremely behind with their education. Despite these initial conditions, most of them show good basic intelligence, motivation and interests. Almost always, with adequate support, there are good chances that in the medium term the girls will catch up with their education and restore

a positive social attitude." In 2013, the Hogar of the Yanapankusun Centre hosted 42 girls, 26 of whom for an extended period and 16 in response to short-term emergency situations. 11 of these girls were particularly critical cases, having suffered from sexual abuse, serious abuse or neglect. Upon arrival, almost all of them presented chronic malnutrition and poor health. Therefore, during 2013, 146 medical visits were organised for the young guests: 32 visits with general practitioners / paediatricians; 50 visits with dentists; 30 with ophthalmologists; 30 parasite check-ups and 4 controls for anaemia. This medical care allowed solving 80% of dental problems and 90% of ophthalmologic cases; eliminating the most dangerous cases of parasitosis (e.g. tapeworms, which affected more than 10% of the girls) and reducing the incidence of intestinal parasites by 80%. Thanks to adequate nutrition, together with the administration of iron and vitamins, the cases of severe anaemia (initially 12%) were totally cured, and cases of mild anaemia were reduced by 40%.

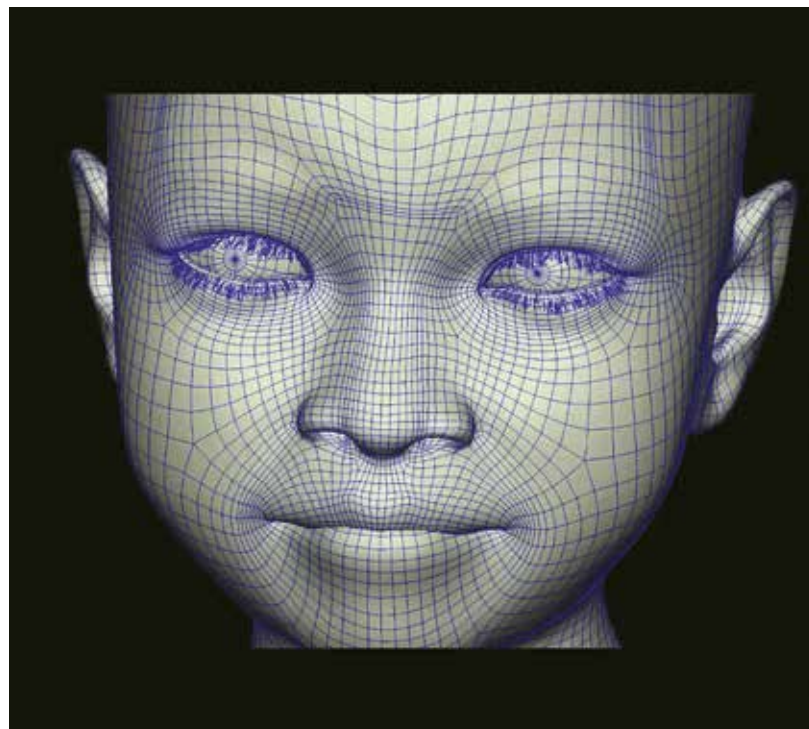
Meanwhile, Terre des Hommes' commitment continued to prevent the migration of girls from the countryside, reaching more than 1,000 children in the district of Huancarani, in the Andes. The project promotes education, recreational activities, sport and cultural activities, provides basic medical care and awareness raising of parents on hygiene and child rights.

Sex tourism via webcam

Sweetie is 10 years old and she lives in the Philippines. Every day she has to sit in front of the webcam and talk to men. “As soon as I go online they come to me. Tens, hundreds, every hour. Many”. In only ten weeks she was contacted by over 20 thousand people. Men from all over the world, paedophiles who feel safe when behind a computer screen, who abuse of girls and boys living in poor countries. Forced to sell themselves in front of a webcam.

What these men do not know is that Sweetie is not real. She is a computer model, made piece by piece by Terre des Hommes Nederland with one precise mission: to prove that more can be done in the fight against paedophiles online with this new form of sex tourism via webcam, exploiting the new frontiers of digital technology. Interacting with the adults who contacted the girl, researchers collected data – often crossing it with data from social networks – to investigate their real identities. The personal data of more than one thousand paedophiles were handed over to Interpol during a public press conference on 4 November 2013 in the Hague.

“Webcam child sex tourism” (WCST) is the latest form of child exploitation and it is expected to grow. Internet access – in fact – is increasing globally: even in the poorest countries over 30% of the population now has an internet connection. At the same time, the number of predators willing to pay to watch minors having sex in chat is increasing. According to the FBI, at every given moment at least 750,000 people are online. There are no figures for the number of victims globally, but estimates indicate that in the Philippines alone between 60 and 100 thousand children are forced to sell themselves⁴⁸. Thousands of them do this in front of a webcam in internet cafes (hidden behind a blanket), in their own homes (with full awareness of their parents) or in the homes of friends or pimps. In countries like the Philippines, several “sexual dens” have been discovered, entire buildings equipped with “secret rooms” hosting the complete cycle of the sex industry: from prostitution,



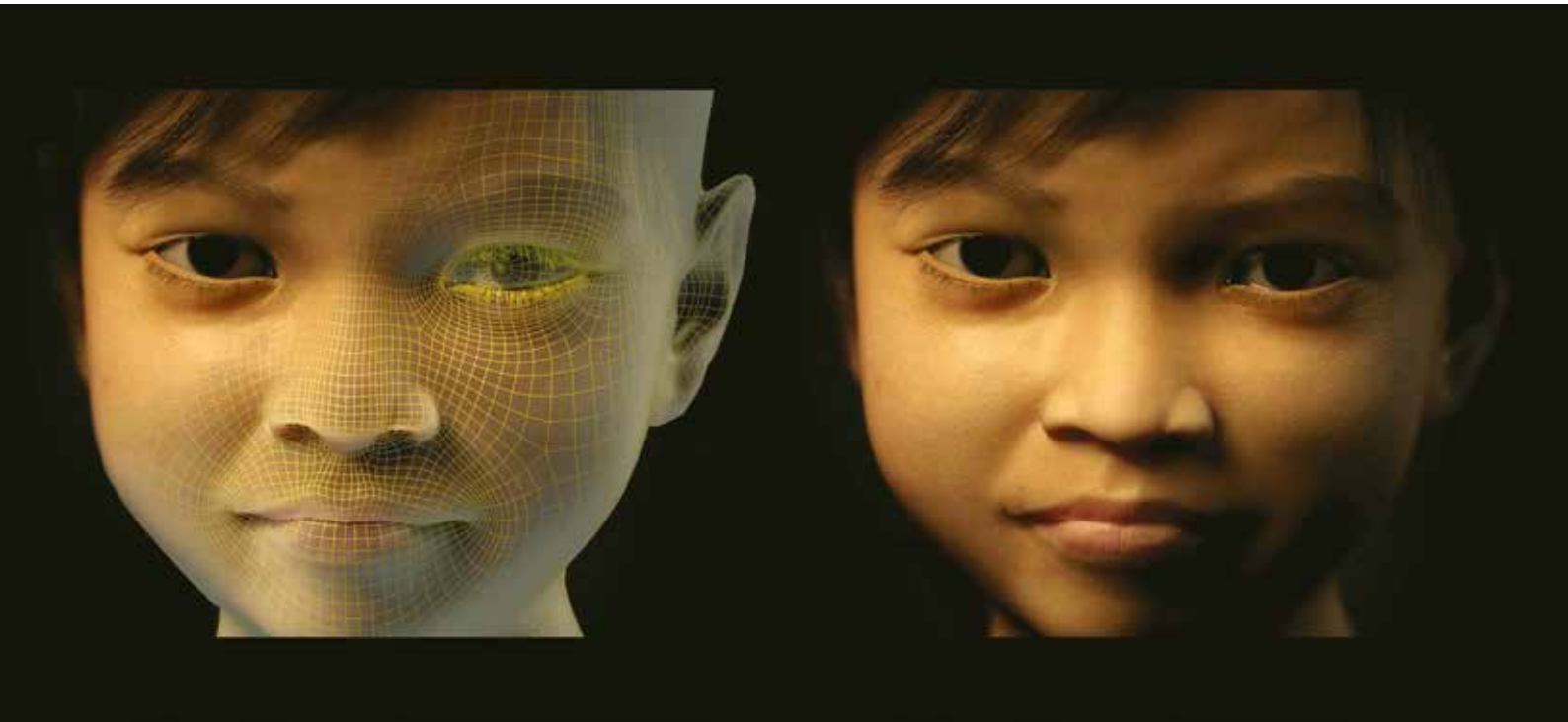
to webcams featuring adults and children, to sex or physical violence against children.

Despite these figures, and although the phenomenon is being spoken about since at least seven years ago, very few people globally have been charged with this crime. There is a clear difficulty, on behalf of policing authorities, to monitor the phenomenon, to investigate it (today this is mainly based on reports by victims and their family members), and to collect evidence. Unlike the exchange of paedo-pornographic material, it is easier not to leave traces of WCST in the computer cache.

What are the risks for children connected to WCST? “Sex tourism” via webcam can have the same devastating effects for the victim’s psyche as physical abuse. Children suffer from lack of self-esteem and depression. They show symptoms of post-traumatic stress. They often feel shame and guilt for what they have done. They have self-destructive behaviour and use alcohol and drugs. WCST can therefore be considered a kind of child prostitution and as such it should be prosecuted.

It is difficult, if not even impossible, to access

⁴⁸ Terre des hommes, “Webcam child sex tourism”, 2014 <http://www.terredeshommes.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Webcam-child-sex-tourism-terre-des-hommes-NL-nov-2013.pdf>



precise data about how many boys and girls are exploited in the prostitution business. The organisation Ecpat estimates that approximately one million and 800 thousand children are forced to sell themselves⁴⁹. The Philippines, together with Thailand, Mexico and Brazil, are one of the “classic” sex tourism destinations. “Monsters” have been taking their holidays here for at least 15 years. According to Ecpat, other countries in Africa (South Africa, Morocco, Kenya), Asia (Mongolia), America (Colombia, Argentina) have recently joined this list⁵⁰. In the cities of Malindi and Mombasa alone, along the Kenyan shore, between 10 and 15 thousand girls are exploited by tourists⁵¹. These men often come from Italy (18% of the total), Germany (14%) and Switzerland (12%).

With Sweetie, Terre des Hommes has asked governments and police authorities to adopt proactive investigation techniques. According to our estimates, the investigation techniques used by Terre des Hommes would allow identifying ap-

proximately 100 thousand online predators in one year. This is the aim of the petition that can be signed on the Avaaz platform or on the website: <http://www.youtube.com/sweetie>

Since its public launch, the video of the campaign has been watched by over one billion people. Most importantly, it has been proved that this investigation technique is effective in stopping predators. Police in countries like the United Kingdom, the U.S., Australia, Ireland, Belgium and South Africa have already arrested paedophiles on the basis of the evidence collected by Sweetie. The Police of the Philippines publicly announced that child sex tourism via webcam is the number 1 crime in the country. Argentina has introduced more severe punishment for online paedophiles. In the Philippines, dozens of children who were slaves of this practice have been saved.

49 <http://www.ecpat.net/what-we-do>

50 Ecpat, Combating child sex tourism http://www.ecpat.net/sites/default/files/cst_faq_eng.pdf

51 http://www.unicef.org/protection/kenya_37817.html



Chapter 6

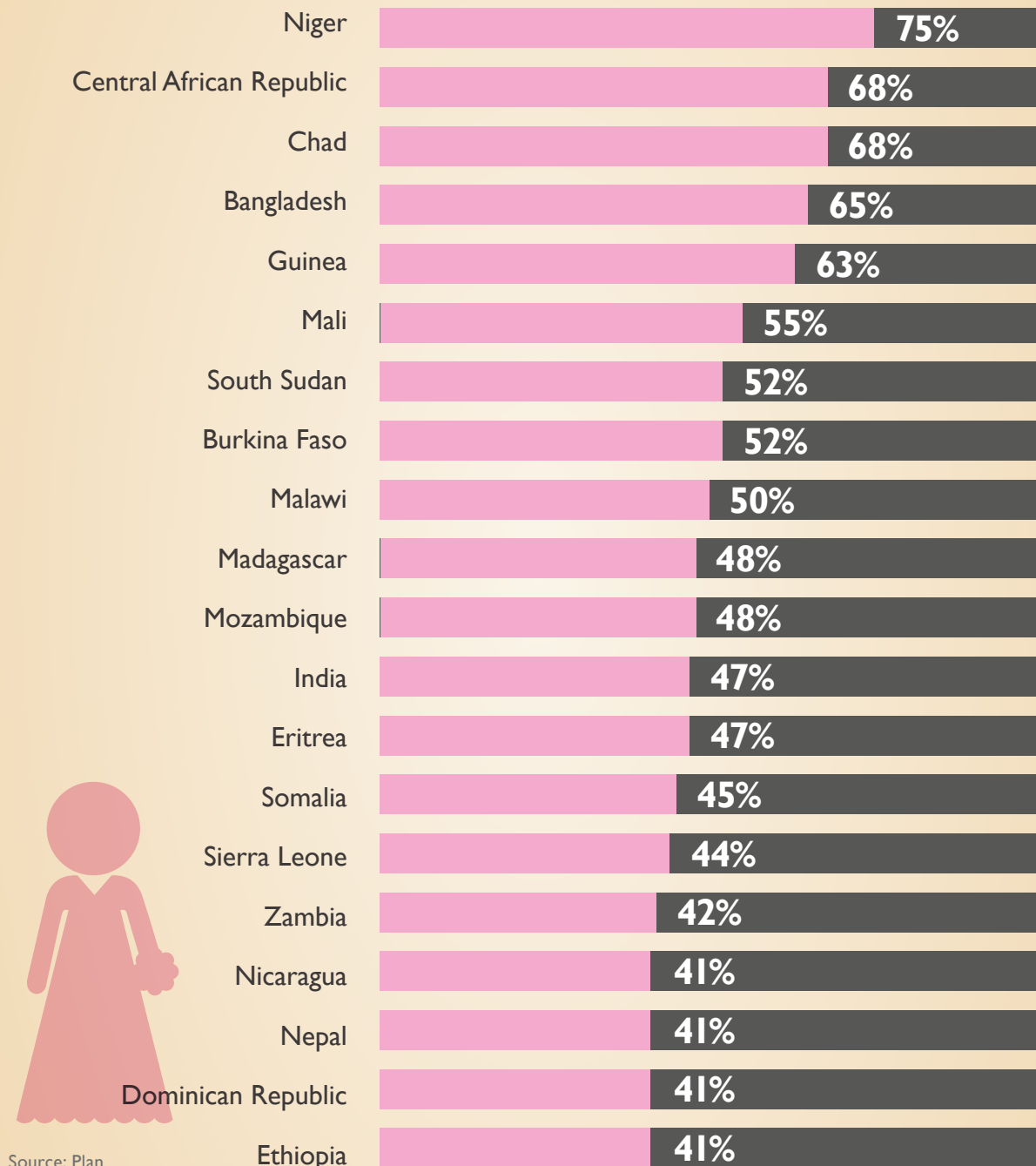
Child Marriage

Niger, Central African Republic, Chad, Bangladesh and Guinea. These are the top five countries of a sad list: the list of nations with the highest number of girl brides. This phenomenon affects, yearly, approximately 14 million girls and young women. In other words, every day 39 thousand weddings are celebrated with girls under the age of 18. Unless

policies are enforced in the coming years to contrast this phenomenon, more than 140 million girls will become baby brides by 2020⁵².

52 Data is drawn from the report "A girl's right to say no to marriage", by Plan international. <http://plan-international.org/files/global/publications/campaigns/exec-sum-girls-right-to-say-no-marriage-english.pdf>

How many girls get married before turning 18 years old?



Source: Plan

Fifteen out of the twenty countries with the highest rates of child marriage are in Africa. 29% of girls living in Sub-Saharan Africa married before the age of 18, and 13% was less than 15 at the time of marriage⁵³. To contrast this severe phenomenon, the African Union, in partnership with Unicef and Unfpa, launched for the first time an ad hoc two year sensitisation campaign. The campaign will start in ten countries particularly affected by the phenomenon (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Mozambique, Malawi, Niger, Sierra Leone and Zambia) to then continue, in two subsequent years, in other countries.

“Despite many commitments to end child and forced marriage, progress has not come fast enough,” noted Julitta Onabanjo, Unfpa director for East and Southern Africa, during the launch of the campaign. “We can’t afford to allow child marriage to hold back our girls any longer – she added, explaining the aims of the initiative – We can’t allow child marriage to prevent our girls from getting an education, knowing [that] when a girl is deprived of education, poverty is passed to the next generation”⁵⁴.

Who are these girl brides? They are mainly girls who have grown up in rural areas and dropped out of education. Only 20% of girls under 18 who completed secondary education, in fact, become girl brides, against 63% of those who have not completed their education⁵⁵. Poverty is another factor influencing young age at marriage: young women belonging to the 20% poorest population group are three times more exposed to the risk of child marriage⁵⁶.

For millions of girls and young women, what should be the happiest day in a woman’s life marks the end of childhood and the beginning of abuse and violence. Marriage forces them out of school, condemning them to a life of grim prospects and (often) poverty. According to Unicef, child marriage is “a violation of the fundamental rights of the child”.

Although the phenomenon does also concern boys, it is girls who suffer mostly the effects: mistreatment, sexual violence (especially when the husband is older), risk of sickness or death due to complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Every year approximately 13 million and 700 thousand girls between 15 and 19 give birth to a baby. Approximately 50 thousand of them die yearly⁵⁷ and their babies are weaker compared to those born from mothers who are over 20.

Quality primary education and the opportunity to complete secondary schooling are essential factors in saving girls from child marriage. Education, in fact, gives girls more choices; it enables them to have an active role in society and to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty, insecurity and illness. Pragmatically, a girl who studies longer will marry later, she will put off the first pregnancy for a few years, she will have less children. Moreover, thanks to her better education, she will have more chances of finding a job or setting up a better paying self-employment.

“External” factors, such as war, also influence the incidence of child marriage. The most exemplary recent case is the Syrian conflict. On the one hand, the number of child marriages was already high in the country before the conflict started (13% of brides was under 18). On the other hand, the conflict has significantly boosted the phenomenon, particularly among refugees and displaced in neighbouring countries. Among Syrian refugees in Jordan, according to a recent report by Save the children⁵⁸, one marriage out of four involves a bride under 18.

Abdullah is 23 and has married Maha, who is just 13. “If we had been in Syria, her father wouldn’t have let her marry. She is too young – he says -. But in these circumstances, with the fear of violence and rape, fathers prefer to organise marriage for their daughters”⁵⁹.

Many families arrange marriage for their adolescent

53 <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/african-union-launches-first-ever-campaign-end-child-marriage/>

54 <http://www.UNfpa.org/public/lang/en/home/news/pid/17573#sthash.dXjxHgQy.dpuf>

55 “Girl’s right to say no marriage” by Plan international

56 Unfpa, “Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage, 2012

57 “Girl’s right to say no marriage” by Plan international

58 Save the Children, “Too young to wed”, http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/too_young_to_wed.pdf

59 Save the Children, “Too young to wed”, http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/too_young_to_wed.pdf

Child Brides



In the world

146 countries



per le ragazze

legally consent to
marriage before 18 years of age

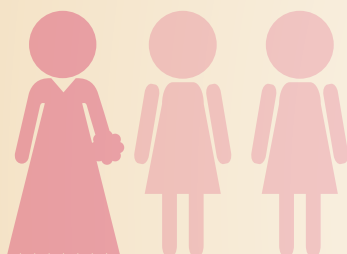
105 countries



per i ragazzi

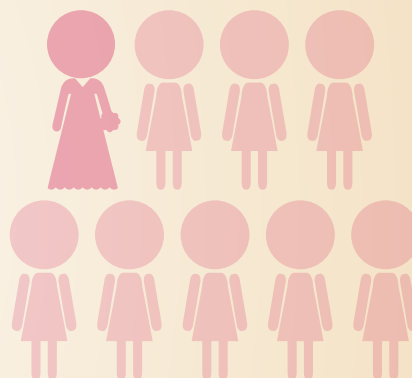
In Developing Countries

1 out of 3 girls



under 18 years old
is a **child bride** (34%)

1 out of 9 girls



under 15 years old
is a **child bride** (12%)

Source: Plan

daughters in the belief that they will thus protect them from violence and abuse, and to secure them adequate livelihood⁶⁰.

Baby Syrian brides are found not only in Jordan, but also in the Erbil refugee camp (Iraq)⁶¹, among

refugee communities in Egypt, Turkey and Lebanon⁶² where a significant number of grooms are of Saudi, Palestinian, Iraqi or Kuwaiti origin. In the summer of 2014, the terrible news became public about rapes and kidnappings of young Yazidi girls, who were abducted in Iraq and given in marriage to ISIS guerrillas.

60 <http://www.irinnews.org/report/95902/jordan-early-marriage-a-coping-mechanism-for-syrian-refugees>

61 Un Women, "We just keep silent", 2014

62 Child Protection in Emergencies Working Group – Lebanon, January – February 2013



Chapter 7

Girls and natural disasters

A volcanic eruption, an earthquake, a tsunami, a drought, a flood, a war: these are dramatic situations for entire populations. Girls and young women, however, suffer a double discrimination. "The coping strategies adopted by their families may mean they are pulled out of school, married too young or forced to sell their bodies in order to feed and protect their families - according to Valerie Amos, United Nations Under-secretary-general for Humanitarian affairs -. There are few places they can turn to for help⁶³".

Natural disasters and humanitarian crises are phenomena with dramatic consequences for the entire population: deaths, casualties, destroyed and impoverished families who can rely on nothing but international aid. "But if you are female, and particularly if you are an adolescent, disasters and crises may put you at greater risk than if you are male; especially in those societies where girls are already less privileged than their brothers"⁶⁴. Humanitarian crises, in fact, do not strike at random: in countries in which girls and young women already faced discrimination, an emergency further exacerbates the situation. Discrimination starts from the onset of emergency: in a crisis situation men receive preferential treatment compared to women. Even access to food is much more difficult for girls than it is for boys⁶⁵.

The greatest risk in these circumstances is falling victim of sexual violence and abuse, followed by the possibility of unwanted pregnancies and illnesses such as Aids. After the earthquake that devastated Haiti in 2010, the pregnancy rate in displaced camps was three times higher than before. Two thirds of these pregnancies were unwanted⁶⁶. These pregnancies are partly attributable to difficulties in accessing contraceptive measures. In many cases, however, they are the result of violence and abuse.

Environmental disasters increase precariousness in the lives of women and girls, who incur additional burdens and risks in satisfying even basic needs. The lack of safe toilets and bad night illumination are two simple factors exposing them to the risk of violence. A research fol-

lowing the tsunami in India reveals the lack of security in temporary shelters, of adequate illumination, and of minimum privacy. These conditions make women feel particularly insecure, particularly with regard to the high number of unknown men living around them⁶⁷.

Often, however, those who should protect them are the ones committing abuse: soldiers, humanitarian workers and family members. A research in a Liberian refugee camp showed that abuse against children – in particular girls under the age of 15 – was widespread and that the perpetrators were camp officials, humanitarian workers, peacekeepers and government officials⁶⁸. Catastrophic events such as an earthquake or war precipitate the situation of families that were already living in poverty, making them even poorer. Those who have nothing left have no other choice than sell themselves. Those who should be there to help are often ready to exploit this situation. An old Unicef report (from 1996) reveals that "In 6 out of 12 country studies on sexual exploitation of children in situations of armed conflict ..., the arrival of peacekeeping troops has been associated with a rapid rise in child prostitution"⁶⁹. A research update conducted eight years later shows that these abuses continue.

Many families impoverished by a natural disaster take girls out of school to reduce costs as much as they can. In Pakistan, after the cloudbursts of 2009, 24% of girls (against 6% of boys) left school at the beginning of secondary education⁷⁰. Several studies in Burkina Faso, Niger, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Pakistan and Philippines demonstrate that out-of-school rates in times of crisis are higher among girls than boys. This situation is partly explained by the lack of economic resources, partly by the fear that girls may become victims of abuse or violence on the way between home and school.

63 Plan International, "In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disasters"

64 Plan International, "In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disasters"

65 London School of Economics: "The Gendered Nature of Natural Disasters: The Impact of Catastrophic Events on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy, 1981–2002"

66 Human Rights Watch, "Nobody remembered us", 2011

67 Robert Lalasz, "The Indian Ocean tsunami: Special challenges for women survivors", 2010

68 Save the children UK, "From Camp to Community: Liberia Study on Exploitation of Children", 2006

69 Unicef, "Impact of armed conflict on children"

70 Plan, "Disasters and Girls' Education: Pakistan Study", 2013



Chapter 8

Pregnancy and reproductive health

Every day approximately 20 thousand young women under 18 and living in a developing country give birth⁷¹. In one year, 2 million adolescent mothers younger than 15 deliver a baby. For such young women, pregnancy and childbirth come with severe health risks and often tragic consequences: approximately 70 thousand adolescents die every year due to complications. Young women under 15 are five times more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth compared to women aged between 20 and 29⁷².

Early pregnancies are, moreover, a severe violation of girls' fundamental rights. "Pregnancy undermines a girl's possibilities for exercising the rights to education, health and autonomy, as guaranteed in international treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child – states the latest report by Unfpa, the United Nations Population Fund - Conversely, when a girl is unable to enjoy basic rights, such as the right to education, she becomes more vulnerable to becoming pregnant⁷³".

UNfpa estimates that most adolescent mothers live in Central and West Africa, where 28% of young women between 20 and 24 years old has given birth before reaching the age of 18. 6% of these were less than 15 when they gave birth for the first time⁷⁴. In countries of East and Southern Africa, adolescent mothers are 25% (4% those under 15). In South Asia 22% of girls aged between 20 and 24 has given birth before reaching 18 years of age (4% before 15).

Early pregnancies do not occur only in developing countries. Out of 13 million and one hundred thousand pregnancies affecting young women below 18 every year, approximately 680 thousand occur in countries of the global North. The United States hold the first place, with a record number of 329,772 adolescent births (in 2011).

71 UNfpa, Motherhood in childhood. Facing the challend of adolescent pregnancy, 2014
<http://www.UNfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/swp2013/EN-SWOP2013-final.pdf>

72 www.unicef.it

73 UNfpa, Motherhood in childhood. Facing the challend of adolescent pregnancy, 2014

74 UNfpa, Motherhood in childhood. Facing the challend of adolescent pregnancy, 2014

Child Mothers



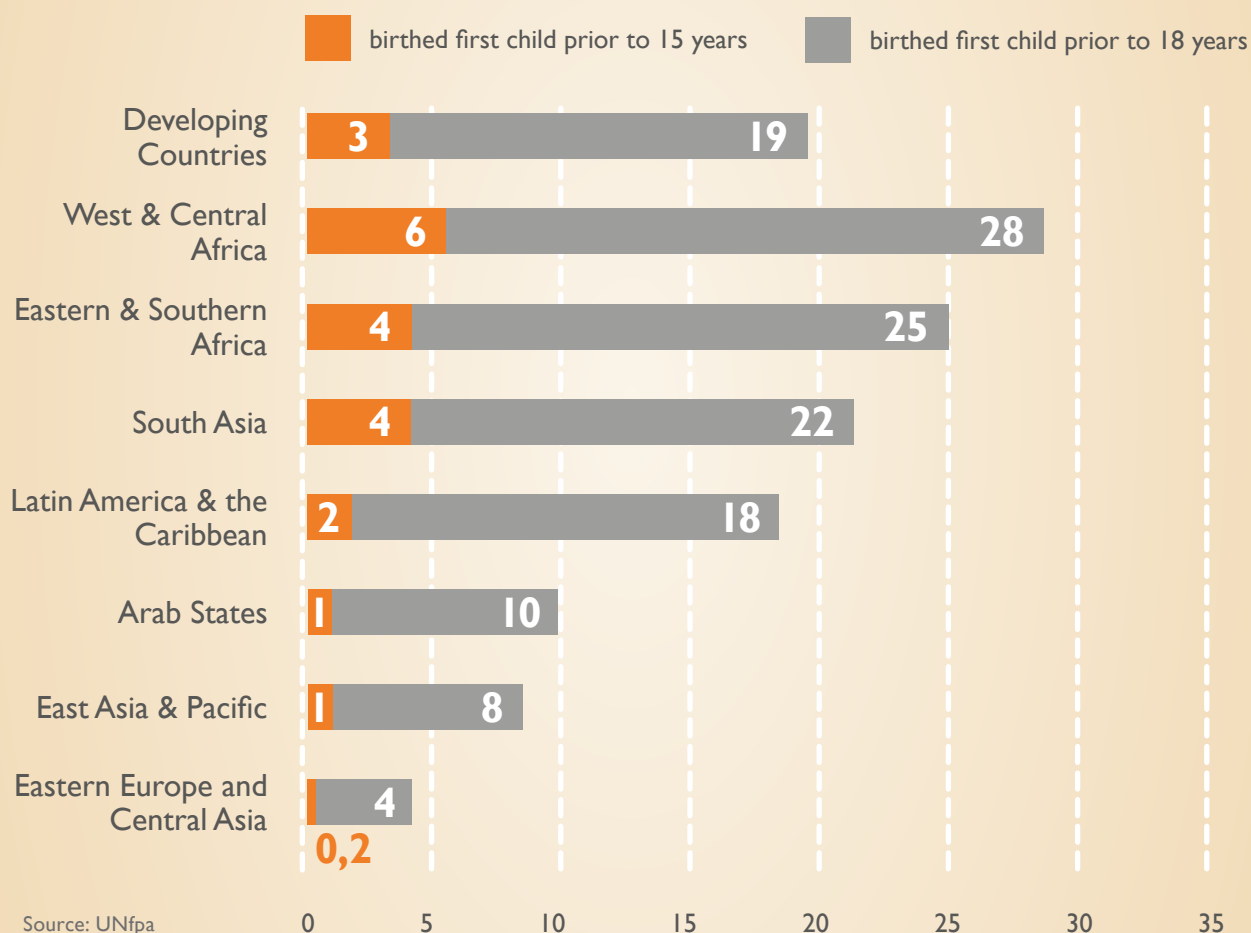
95% of **births**
by **adolescent mothers**
occur in **Developing Countries**

19% of **girls**
in **Developing Countries**
become **pregnant**
before 18 years of age





Women that have given birth before 18 and 15 years of age (values presented in percentages)



Consequences of early pregnancy

The first consequences of early pregnancy are especially physical: an adolescent body is not “ready” to cope with the stress that comes with pregnancy and childbirth. Their immaturity exposes young women to the risk of long and painful labour, which may result in damage to the baby or even in the baby’s death.

The number of stillborn and neonatal deaths is 50% higher among babies born to adolescent mothers than it is among those born to young women aged between 20 and 29. Moreover, approximately one million babies born to adolescent mothers never reach their first birthday. And those babies who do survive have higher chances of being underweight or premature.

Long labour and difficult childbirth can result in obstetric fistula: an unnatural tear between the vagina and the bladder/rectum, which leads to constant and uncontrollable leakage of faeces and urine. Women who suffer from this condition are often rejected by their families and marginalised. Younger women, who are not yet fully developed and have a small pelvis, are particularly exposed to the risk of this laceration. In countries such as Ethiopia, Malawi, Niger and Nigeria, one in three women who has a

fistula, suffered this laceration during adolescence.

Early pregnancy has serious repercussions on the future of adolescent mothers, who are forced to leave school before completing their education. The higher the level of a girl’s education, the more she will be able to find a better paying job. In addition, an educated woman is more aware of her capabilities and potential role in society. Moreover, remaining as long as possible in education (completing at least secondary education) reduces the risk of early marriage and pregnancy.

For a young woman who leaves school to become a mother, the chances of returning after childbirth are very low, even in those countries where the law allows for this. In South Africa, for example, the 1996 “School Act” stipulates that pregnant girls cannot be denied access to education. Research, however, has shown that only one girl in three goes back to the classroom after giving birth.

In the United States only half of adolescent mothers completed high school by age 22. 90% of those who did not interrupt their studies because of a pregnancy completed high school by age 22.

Let girls be girls

According to Ugandan government estimates, 24% of teenagers are pregnant or have already had a child. And 24% of young women aged between 15 and 24 have had an abortion (2011). To contrast this situation, the Ministry of Health and Unfpa launched the campaign “Let girls be girls”⁷⁵. The goal is to reduce teenage pregnancy and lower the mortality rate of young mothers (aged 15 to 24 years old) from 24% to 15% by July 2015.

The programme includes the free distribution of contraceptives and sex education in schools. This

strategy sparked protests among religious leaders who oppose the campaign, arguing that it promotes immorality and promiscuity among young people. In fact, more than 90% of teenage pregnancies occur within marriage: although in Uganda the minimum age for marriage is fixed at 18 years, a high number of girls marry at a younger age. According to Unfpa, 49% of Ugandan girls marry before reaching adulthood⁷⁶.

75 Irin, 24 July 2014, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/100399/uganda-teen-pregnancies-plan-under-fire>

76 <http://countryoffice.UNfpa.org/uganda/?events=5505>

Sex and health

Young age and the inability to resist an often much older husband are the two factors that further penalise child brides. It is almost impossible for them to refuse sexual intercourse or to impose the use of contraceptives. This increases girls' risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. One of the main problems to be addressed and solved if we want to give young mothers the opportunity to shape their own future is the widespread difficulty in accessing contraceptives (especially condoms).

The most recent estimates by the World Health Organisation indicate that approximately 222 million women do not have access to the contraceptives they need⁷⁷. This demand is stronger in countries with the highest mortality risk. This unmet need is particularly strong among the weaker segments of society: teenage girls, the poor, those living in shanty towns or in rural areas, refugees.

If girls had universal access to modern contraceptive techniques, at least part of the over 3.2 million unsafe abortions occurring worldwide yearly could be avoided. One million and 400 thousand of these operations take place in Sub-Saharan Africa, one million and 100 thousand in Asia⁷⁸. In Africa alone, 36 thousand women and girls die from the consequences of an abortion every year.

These dangerous operations can result in death (by hemorrhage or infection) or serious injury. These abortions could be avoided if the "right to contraceptive information and services for adolescents", stipulated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), was duly applied⁷⁹.

77 WHO, "Ensuring human rights in the provision of contraceptive information and services", 2014

78 UNfpa, Motherhood in childhood

79 UNfpa, "Right to contraceptive informations for women and adolescents" <https://www.UNfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2011/Contraception.pdf>

Aids & Girls



Every year

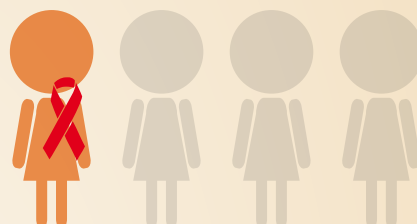
380.000 HIV infections

in girls between **15** and **24** years of age



1 in **4**

girls live in **sub-Saharan Africa**



Source: UNAIDS



Photo: Bruno Nani

Ensuring free and easy access to contraceptives would also combat the spread of HIV. On the one hand, significant progress has been made in the fight against AIDS (the number of new infections is declining: from 3.4 million a year in 2001 to 2.1 million in 2013); on the other hand much remains to be done, especially for the protection of girls and young women.

Every year 380 thousand new infections are registered globally among girls and young women aged between 15 and 24 years. This figure corresponds to approximately 60% of new infections in this age group (2013 data)⁸⁰.

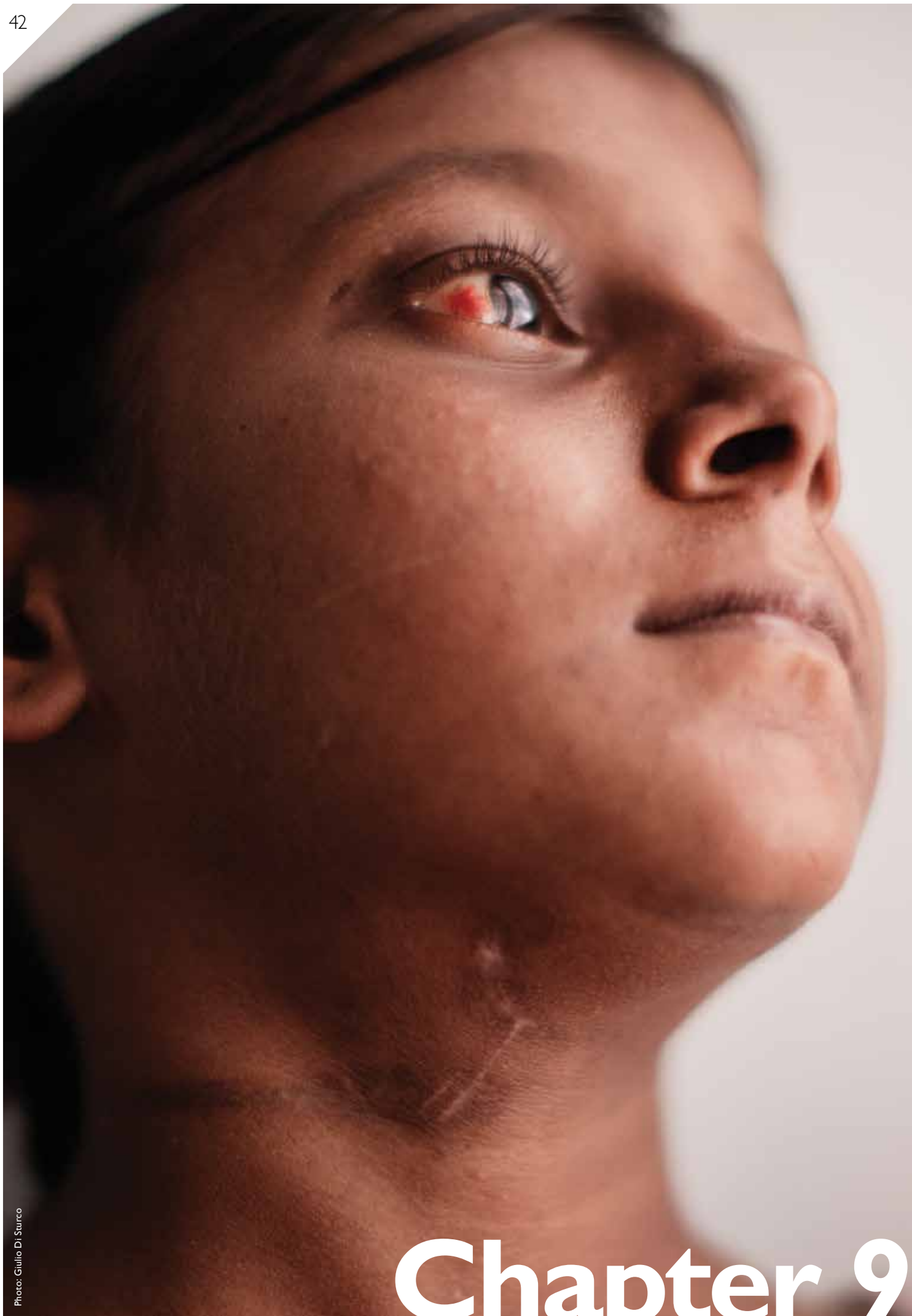
The most severely affected continent by HIV is Africa, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, which is home to 70% of all people who are infected with HIV (24.7 million out of a total of 35 million). It is precisely in this area that the risk of infection is higher among girls and young women. Out of 380 thousand new infections that occur each year among adolescent girls and young women, one in four is a girl or young woman living in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Women are at greater risk of contracting the infection. They are more vulnerable than boys not only for “biologic” reasons, but above all for a number of external factors: gender violence and sexual abuse, low education levels, poor access to health services and information about how to protect themselves from infection.

Teenage girls and young women often have no power to decide about issues that relate to the protection of their own health. For instance, it is very difficult for them to negotiate condom use with an (often older) partner. Similarly, they have limited access to HIV testing, modern contraceptive techniques and therapies.

The high incidence of early marriage in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the related out-of-school rates, significantly affects the information and knowledge detained by these girls: 26%, in fact, has adequate knowledge of the risks linked to AIDS and infection, compared to 36% among boys.

80 Unaid, “The gap report” 2014 http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2014/UNAIDS_Gap_report_en.pdf



Chapter 9

Violence against girls and young women, a never ending emergency

Abuse against women, both physical and psychological, is mirrored by abuse against girls. Girls are the most vulnerable victims of a phenomenon that, following most experts, is rooted in patriarchal and macho cultures that consider women subordinate to men, as if they were a private property.

The horrific episodes that hit the news headlines during the summer of 2014, when a father stabbed his two daughters aged 12 and 14 in Sicily and another father killed his 18 month old baby girl in the Marche region, brought attention to femicide against daughters as an extreme consequence of domestic violence.

In an attempt to measure this often hidden phenomenon, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) conducted a survey⁸¹ of 42,000 women in 28 European countries, which constitutes the most comprehensive research ever on this subject. According to the findings, 12% of women declared that they suffered some form of abuse or sexual act by an adult **before age 15**. This percentage corresponds to 21 million women in the EU.

In Italy, this figure drops to 11% of respondents, while 33% recalls having experienced at least one form of physical, sexual or psychological abuse as a child. 67% of European women who were abused did not report the issue to authorities, meaning that only 3 out of 10 cases come to light.

The survey also revealed that 30% of women who were sexually abused as adults at the European level had already experienced sexual or psychological violence in childhood. This provides further evidence of how, if not properly assisted, abused girls can later comply with abuse as adults, returning to the role of victims of violence and possibly turning their children in witnesses of violence.

This picture shows how urgent it is to ensure girls, young and adult women a strong network of support services (medical, psychological and legal) that specifically target victims of gender violence. Similarly, as required by the Istanbul Convention, it is

essential to invest in measures for the prevention of, awareness raising and education about gender discrimination.

This European Convention, which has so far been ratified by 13 states including Italy, entered into force on 1 August 2014. It aims at protecting women from all forms of violence and preventing, prosecuting and eliminating violence against women and domestic violence; helping to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to promote gender equality, including through the reinforcement of women's autonomy and self-determination; establishing a global framework, policies and measures for protection and assistance.



Photo: Giulio Di Sturco

81 The research of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights was presented in March 2014 http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-april4_en.pdf



Domestic Violence: experienced within the first 15 years of age (%)



Survey from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights on 42,000 women

	<i>physical violence</i>	<i>sexual abuse</i>	<i>any form of violence (physical, sexual, psychological)</i>
Germany	37	13	44
Denmark	36	13	46
Finland	46	11	53
Spain	21	11	30
Italy	25	11	33
The Netherlands	16	20	35
France	33	20	47
Romania	23	(1)	24
Sweden	33	15	44
United Kingdom	25	18	40
Europe	27	12	35



In Europe
1 out of 3 girls
has experienced some form of **violence**

Child victims: +56% in the last 10 years

Police data on crimes committed against children depicts Italy as a country that, over the last ten years, has seen a surge of criminal cases in which the victims are children and, to an even greater extent, girls. Between 2004 and 2013, victims have grown from 3,311 (63% girls) to 5,162 (61%). A positive reading can be given of this growth, if we consider that the increase may reflect greater awareness that certain behaviours must be reported to authorities. The emergence of phenomena such as abuse within the family (87% since 2004, with 1,408 deaths in 2013), abuse of means of correction or discipline (+84%), aggravated sexual assault (42%) would then also reflect greater faith in institutions responsible for the protection of minors.

Another possible interpretation is to be found in the impoverishment of the population during the last decade. Insecurity within households has grown, with a 111% increase in cases of breach of obligations to pay family support, with 1,009 victims




in 2013 and a 94% increase of cases of abandonment of children or impaired. Sexual exploitation of children for commercial purposes on behalf of organised crime has also evolved in these years in significant ways. Images of child bodies are increasingly used in paedophile networks: +411% of victims of child pornography crimes, +285% of possession of pornographic material. In both cases, 80% of the victims are girls and young women. Fight against child prostitution also needs to be strengthened, as this phenomenon decreased by only 10%, with 80 victims in 2013, 71% of which were girls (82% in 2004, when the victims were 89).

Data on sexual violence shows that girls and young women are particularly vulnerable: in 2013, they were 85% of the total of 605 victims. In addition, 82% of the 373 victims of aggravated sexual assault were females.

Crimes against children, the portrait of a country that changed for the worse

Data compiled from all law enforcement records



	2004		2013		Δ
	victims <18	% 	victims <18	% 	Δ 
Voluntary manslaughter*	27	59%	12	33%	-56%
Negligence of family duties	478	51%	1.009	51%	111%
Misuse of force during discipline	129	47%	237	41%	84%
Mistreatment within the family or at school	751	50%	1.408	51%	87%
Kidnapping of disabled individuals	84	49%	218	54%	160%
Abandonment of minors or disabled persons	234	38%	454	41%	94%
Child Prostitution	89	82%	80	71%	-10%
Possession of pornographic material	13	77%	50	80%	285%
Child pornography	36	61%	184	80%	411%
Sexual Violence	740	81%	605	85%	-18%
Sexual acts with a minor	364	79%	421	79%	16%
Corruption of minors	131	77%	123	77%	-6%
Aggravated Sexual Assault	262	76%	373	82%	42%
Total	3.311	63%	5.162	61%	56%



Source: SDI-SSD, consolidated data. * Operational data - source D.C.P.C.



Photo: Andrea Frazzetta

THE STORY



Elisa

Elisa is a 5 year old girl. She has a history of suspected abuse and beatings. She comes, with her mother, from a Hospital attached to the Help Service for sexual and domestic violence (SVSeD) of the Mangiagalli Clinic in Milan.

During the interview with the social worker and paediatrician, the mother says that, upon returning home from work one day, she found her daughter and partner sleeping together in the double bed. When she approached the child to wake her, she noticed that the pillow was stained with blood, and that the girl had a swollen eye, bruises, the mark left by a hand on her cheek, a bite on the ear. She took the girl to another room and noticed other bites on her back and various scratches. The child was wearing only her underwear. When she asked for an explanation, Elisa said that she had played karate with her mother's partner, that he pulled punches at her while she stood still, and then he had laid her on the couch and punched her again in the head. A few days later, Elisa told her mother that, after that game, he had asked her to go to bed, where he had stroked her legs and "fanny" while saying to her "You are a beautiful princess" and hitting himself below the belly. The following days, Elisa suffered from pain in the sacral region and repeated dysentery. The specialists of the Help Service reported the case to the authorities, who opened an investigation. Meanwhile Elisa is being cared for medically and psychologically.

Another case followed by our service is that of a 13 year old disabled girl called Anna. She was sent to us by the Emergency Room of one of Milan's hospitals, where she had been taken by her parents upon request of the Carabinieri for sexual harassment.

Anna is a Romanian girl with walking difficulties. At the interview, the parents referred what the girl had told them the night before. Anna had said that, at home that morning, she had been accompanied to the bathroom by a 55 year-old family friend, who was

staying with them at the time. Once in the bathroom, he had shut the door and made her compliments while trying to touch her. She failed to move away from him and no one else was home to help. He started to masturbate and touch her. He also threatened her not to tell her parents. That same evening, as soon as she could, Anna told her parents, who contacted the Carabinieri, took her to the nearest hospital and then to our service. She, too, was placed in the hands of psychotherapists, after having been visited by doctors.

The Help Service for sexual and domestic violence (SVSeD) has been supporting women and children since 1996 and, since 2011, also child victims of abuse. The service provides health care by a paediatrician for children 0-13 years and by a gynecologist for girls / young women aged 13 years and older, who are victims of sexual violence. Cases of physical and psychological abuse are referred to the paediatrician from 0 to 18 years. A coroner, nurse / midwife, social worker, and a psychologist are also part of the team. We offer health care at the Emergency Room of the Policlinico (Via F. Sforza, 35) 24 hours / day; phone help line to speak with one of the workers of the non-profit organisations Telefono Donna and SVS DonnAiutaDonna; intake and support by social workers and psychologists; support in accessing locally available services; legal advice for both criminal and civil law by SVS DonnAiutaDonna.

Between 01.01.2014 and 07.31.2014 we registered 170 intakes of children for suspected sexual abuse and 49 for physical and psychological abuse, 90% of which are girls and young women under the age of 18.

Lucia Romeo

Paediatrician Responsible for the SVSeD Help Service for sexual and domestic violence, IRCCS Policlinico, Milan



Chapter 10

Violence and gender stereotypes: starting from school

ScuolaZOO

Are schools a place in which boys and girls can be trained to respect themselves and others, to be non-violent and to build gender relations based on equality? Can preconceived roles, which often hinge on discriminatory gender stereotypes, be challenged in school? “Di Pari Passo” [Hand in Hand] is an effort of Terre des Hommes, together with Soccorso Rosa and FareXBene Onlus, to do so in secondary schools in Lombardy (and beyond). The initiative set off from data collected in the field, which investigated how deeply rooted the justifications (or even the legitimations) are of gender violence and stereotypes about the roles that

males and females wish to or should perform.

During 2014, we broadened our vision and included in our survey, conducted in partnership with the Community of Scuola Zoo, also secondary schools of our peninsula. We administered a questionnaire to more than 1,300 children of both sexes, aged between 14 and 18 years, and we tried to trace an initial picture that we will refine over the coming months.

The initial findings are not encouraging.

ScuolaZOO

Domestic violence

Let us start with a positive result, one of the few promising ones. According to Italian adolescents (74.8% of them at least), domestic violence should not be tolerated by victims, not even in the name of the alleged good of the children. This may not be much, but it shows a clear awareness that violent relationships can lead only to more violence or suffering.

Other findings from the sample are less encouraging. First, there is evidence of blaming of the victim, although indirect: more than 65% of research participants said they totally or partially agreed with the statement that “if a woman is constantly being abused, she should be blamed for continuing to live with this man.” Answers about the causes of violence are even more alarming. Even more than in the research conducted among high school boys and girls, there is a strong idea that violence is tied to hardship and social marginalisation rather than to cultural reasons.

Over 80% said they completely or somewhat agree with the statement that “men who abuse do so because they have problems with alcohol or drugs”; 90% believe that “psychic imbalances” are the main cause of violence. These data raise concerns about how gender-based violence is spoken about in Italy. More than 20% of respondents, for instance, claim that jealousy is at the basis of “physical punishment” and almost 40%

of respondents believe that violence is a “private” issue concerning the couple, in which other people should not interfere.

In short, much still needs to be done, although survey data should always be interpreted with caution, especially in presence of contradictory answers. The most important thing is however not to withdraw from action or to believe, as 50% of respondents do, that gender violence is a marginal phenomenon and that it is exaggerated by the media.

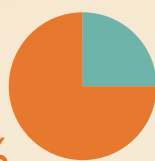


Gender Violence: What do the kids think?

Survey conducted by ScuolaZoo for Terre des hommes on a sample of 1,300 boys and girls aged 14 to 18 years.

If you have **children**, you have to endure the abuse **for their own good**

74,8%
do not agree



25,2%
agree or
partially
agree



If a woman is continuously abused **it is her fault** because she decides to stay with this man

65,9%
agree or partially agree



34,1%
do not agree

Men that abuse women do it because they have problems with **alcohol** or other **drugs**

80,2%
agree or partially agree



19,7%
do not agree



Men who attack their women have **mental imbalances**

89,9%
agree or partially agree



10,1%
do not agree

A girl who purposely makes her boyfriend **jealous** deserves to be punished/beaten

78,4%
do not agree



21,6%
agree or
partially
agree



Domestic Violence is a **private matter** between the couple and others should not interfere with the issue

63,5%
do not agree



36,5%
agree or
partially
agree

Domestic violence is not very common, they are **rare cases**

54,6%
do not agree



45,4%
agree or partially agree



The role of women and stereotypes

The picture emerging from answers to questions about the role of women and gender stereotypes is less dramatic, though it also contains some of the most interesting trends. Data on femicide are so dramatic to hit the news. Statistics mapping power and showing the gendered distribution of income in Italy are also now universally known and criticised. However, it is also true that psychological “violence” and discrimination often take place far away from the spotlight; they leave no marks or visible signs; they find their breeding grounds in the creeping and pervasive idea that men and women should have different roles and powers within society.

The picture emerging from this research is not comforting. While it is true that for almost 92% of respondents “important decisions regarding the family must be made by mutual agreement between spouses,” it is also true that:

- » 55.4% say that they strongly or somewhat agree with the statement that it is “the man who should lead the family”;
- » 59.3% agree with the statement that “taking care of the home and family is a woman’s prerogative”;

- » 65.6% agree with the statement that, in our society, “women’s role is mainly to be mothers.” In this case, we do not know if this statement is understood as describing reality or if it indicates belief in a “natural” division of roles.

The idea that some things are more “natural” for women is clearly still alive, given that according to 44.6% of respondents “men are not capable of performing household activities” and about 30% say that they strongly or partially agree with the idea that “performing household chores is humiliating” for men.

A more detailed analysis of these data would be needed, though it can be certainly said that they reveal a substantial backwardness of the Italian context. In the coming years, Terre des Hommes’ “indifesa” Campaign aims at addressing this situation and, in collaboration with institutions, schools and other private social organisations, at providing articulated and comprehensive responses.

Building on Trust

One of the imperatives for those working with adolescents is to build a healthy trust relationship. This, in turn, allows adolescents’ self-confidence to grow. The literature generally agrees that adolescents develop behavioural disorders - that may be associated with addiction to drugs, anti-social behaviour, or self-injury - mainly when they suffer from low self-esteem.

A child, adolescent or young adult establishes a positive emotional relationship towards those people who, through continuity and interaction, help him/her grow as a person in all aspects (self-esteem, ability to be autonomous, to plan, to interact with others, to take responsibility, to respond positively to failure, etc.), help him/her grow intellectually and culturally, and involve him/her in learning activities.

Which people do Italian teenagers trust? We asked 1,022 girls (we deliberately excluded boys) aged between 13 and 18, and attending secondary school. In **partnership with Scuola Zoo**, the largest Italian teenager community, we administered them a **questionnaire**.

The unpublished data offer an interesting key to understand relations between adults and adolescents. With confirmations and surprises, they open up new lines for future research and for the identification of influential networks to work with in order to achieve positive behavioural changes in different age groups.

Who do Italian girls trust?

Survey conducted by ScuolaZoo for Terre des hommes
on a sample of 1,022 girls from 13 to 18 years of age.



Who do you tell your secrets to?

13 years old	29% mom	19% sibling	7% dad	7% teacher	4% friend
16 years old	39% friend	11% sibling	9% nobody	8% mom	
18 years old	38% friend	17% nobody	11% mom	6% sibling	



Chi ti conosce meglio?

13 years old	31% mom	23% sibling	15% dad	
16 years old	22% friend	18% mom	13% sibling	6% dad
18 years old	22% friend	25% mom	13% nobody	12% boyfriend



Di chi ti fidi di più?

13 years old	29% mom	21% dad	16% sibling	
16 years old	19% sibling	18% mom	15% friend	11% dad
18 years old	21% mom	17% amica	11% nobody	8% dad 6% boyfriend



A chi ti rivolgeresti per un consiglio?

13 years old	35% mom	24% dad	14% sibling	5% teacher
16 years old	27% friend	11% mom	16% sibling	12% dad
18 years old	28% friend	12% mom	11% sibling	9% boyfriend 5% dad



A chi chiederesti un aiuto?

13 years old	30% mom	26% dad	20% sibling	3% teacher
16 years old	24% friend	16% mom	11% sibling	12% dad
18 years old	23% friend	19% mom	7% sibling	12% boyfriend 10% nobody 3% dad

From family to friendship networks as the main reference

The first figure, which should not come as a surprise, indicates that **trust, as well as friendship with which it is closely connected**, is given to few people. Regardless of age, between 70 and 80% of interviewees have faith in 2-3 people at the most.

Up to age 13, the family is the core repository of this trust: more than 60% of respondents **share their secrets** with their mother (29%), siblings (29%) or father (who remains in the background with 7%). Later on, the axis shifts strongly towards the network of friends (the “best friend” usually becomes the recipient of confessions for around 40% of adolescents between 15 and 18 years). In the same age group, brothers and sisters are still prominently present, as they are seen as “equal” family members. At around 17-18 years, fiancés/boyfriends make their appearance.

Moving on to the analysis of who really understands them, more than 70% of respondents up to age 13-14 indicate that family members are still those who **know the girls better**. Again, around age 15 the axis shifts towards friends, though not in a particularly marked way: the research seems to tell us that, in the end, mothers are still those to “know” girls best (according to 25% of those around 18 years). Another possible interpretation, given the fragmented nature of responses, is that girls do not feel understood by anyone in particular (13% say this explicitly, though the fact that none of the possible people that respondents could choose from in the questionnaire significantly prevails, unlike for other answers, could be the sign of greater “loneliness” among adolescents).

Interestingly, the same question posed to adults (500 people interviewed by telephone by **Focus Marketing for Terre des Hommes** in March 2014) generated 43% of replies indicating the “mother” as the only one to who knows her teenage children. This highlights a gap, which has already been noticed by other surveys, between the perceptions of adults and adolescents.

A more direct question about **trust** (“Who do you trust the most?”) confirms the centrality of the family in early years, though the data reveals a surpris-

ing reversal of roles: up to age 15, fathers seem to be a greater reference than mothers. Girls are more willing to seek help (24% of girls aged 14) or advice (25% of fourteen year-olds) from their fathers. Friendship networks emerge only later (35% of 17 year olds and 28% of 18 year olds turn to friends for advice, 28% of 17 year olds and 23% of 18 year olds ask friends for help, though at the latter age fiancés/boyfriends also make their appearance). Brothers and sisters, as equal family members, replace parents (though mothers regain importance around 18 years). Boyfriends become a clear reference only among older adolescent girls and not before 18 years.

These responses are in stark contrast with those of adults: 49% of surveyed adults are convinced that, in case of need and especially when faced with the risk of violence, adolescents would turn to their parents for help or advice.

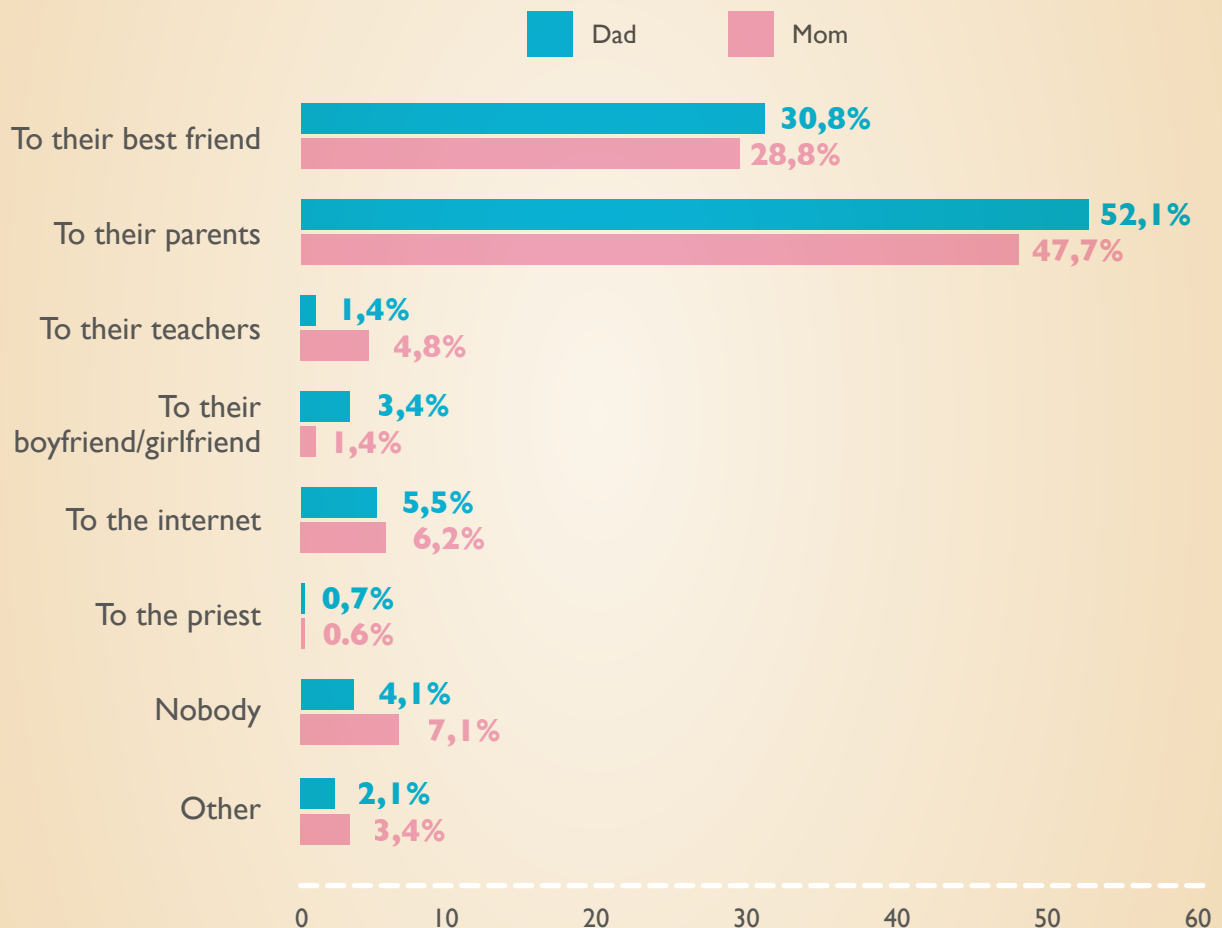
Explicit (“I do not trust anyone”) or implicit (the increasing share of indifference under the label “other”) **mistrust** grows from age 16. It is as if the data were saying that, around 18 years, the combined effect of efforts to build one’s own “identity / autonomy” and of greater insecurity increase the tendency of adolescent girls to withdraw (17% of respondents would not reveal her secret to anyone), or the feeling of being an isolated galaxy of feelings, emotions and thoughts that no one can penetrate.

Adults are self-aware of not being a reference that adolescents will listen to. When asked “*In your opinion, whose judgment do you think your adolescent child – or, FOR THOSE WITHOUT CHILDREN, children aged between 13 and 18 – listens to the most?*” as many as 45.2% of respondents in the research by Focus Marketing said: his/her friend.



Who would your child ask for help? (13-18 years)

Survey taken on 500 Italian parents, conducted by
Focus Marketing for Terre des hommes, 2014



The disappearance of fathers and the absence of teachers

One of the clearest findings of the research is the gradual disappearance of the father figure as respondents' age increases. Fathers are a strong "reference" for 13 year-olds and even become the main recipient of "trust" or requests for "help" and "advice" around 14 years. However, between 17 and 18 years they almost disappear from girls' horizon: only 3% of 18 year-olds ask their fathers for help and only 5% would turn to them for advice. The rates concerning mothers are respectively 19% and 12%. In short, puberty and growing maturity generate a gap with respect to the father figure, who is **seen as no longer knowing his daughter** (only 3% of 18 year-olds place their father in first place among those who know them best) and **as someone to whom a girl would certainly not reveal her secrets** (only 2% of 17 and 18 year-olds would do so).

Another indisputable finding of the research is the absence of teachers. Only around 13 years adolescent girls would confess a secret to them (7% of cases) or ask them for advice (5%). The impression, according to 7% of respondents, is that teachers know their students well. After 14, teachers are no

longer a figure of reference, to the point that they are not mentioned at all among the people who adolescent girls trust or reach out to for "help" or "advice". This is a clear sign of how broken the teacher / student relationship has become, despite its importance in school learning. This may be a possible good starting point in reforming the Italian school system.



Parents' fears

Violence against children is a major concern among parents. What are the main preoccupations of Italian parents with regard to the types of violence that may affect their children and the places in which this violence may occur?

Research conducted by Terre des Hommes in partnership with **Focus Marketing** indicates that the place in which children are most exposed to the risk of violence, according to 25.6% of respondents, is **school**. This is followed by the street (according to 24.6%) and nightclubs (22%). The internet is also a source of concern, and 21% of parents indicated this as the most dangerous place for their children.

That the web is perceived as a risky place is

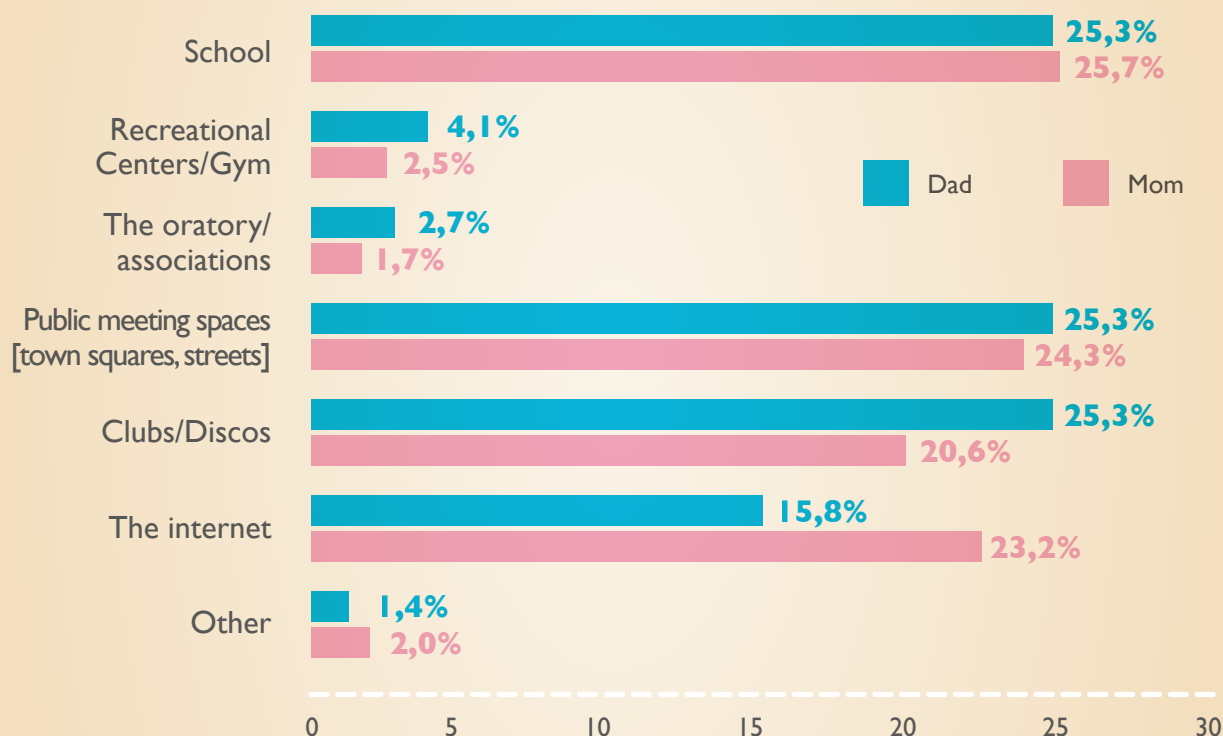
confirmed by answers to the question "How important do you think it is to report cases such as ..." According to 98.2% of respondents, it is very or moderately important that children report cases of online enticement. And 98.4% of parents believe that it is vital to report cases of threat or blackmail by adults (though, in this case, fewer parents consider this "very important"). Invitations to consume alcohol or drugs are also a cause for concern (for 97% of respondents), alongside bullying or contact for sexual purposes. Offenses based on ethnic, origin, or religious grounds are perceived as potentially less risky (only 60.4% believe them to be very important) as those based on sexual orientation (68.2% regard them as very important).



Which environment is most dangerous for your children? (13-18 years)



Survey taken on 500 Italian parents, conducted by Focus Marketing for Terre des hommes, 2014



How important do you think it is to draw attention to things such as...



500 Italian parents were surveyed by Focus Marketing for Terre des hommes, 2014

	<i>not at all</i>	<i>kind of important</i>	<i>important</i>	<i>very important</i>
Insults based on sexual orientation	1,8%	5,6%	24,4%	68,2%
Insults based on ethnicity, place of origin, or religious beliefs	1,6%	7,0%	31,0%	60,4%
Proposals for physical contact	1,0%	1,8%	14,0%	83,2%
Threats or blackmail by adults	1,2%	0,4%	9,4%	89,0%
Bullying	1,0%	2,0%	14,8%	82,2%
Offers to use alcohol and or other drugs	1,0%	2,0%	10,0%	87,0%
Educational methods based on the physical and psychological violence	1,0%	1,4%	15,8%	81,8%
Online Grooming	0,80%	1,0%	7,60%	90,60%

A positive spin-off

Once again this edition of the InDifesa Report brings good and bad news about violence against girls globally. It shows that undeniable progress has been made with respect to long-standing problems, such as the exploitation of child labour. Nonetheless, it also highlights the emergence of new forms of violence and exploitation, such as those via webcam on the internet. The case of Sweetie, a virtual Filipino 12 year old girl, was instrumental in revealing key aspects of this phenomenon and its extent. Most importantly, Sweetie proved that, with the aid of current technology and without excessively invading privacy, it is possible to track down online “predators” and bring them to justice.

Yet again we have shown that, in these cases at least, laws are in place but political will is also needed to enforce them. These technological extremes open up new questions about how to prevent and combat new phenomena at the international level. However, also other notable forms of violence persist, such as forced marriages, exclusion from school, and the most severe form of violence: selective abortion. Too many girls globally are denied their fundamental rights on the basis of deceitful cultural, religious or traditional beliefs. In this regard, Terre des hommes reiterates the position that has been stated on many occasions by the UN and is currently accepted by all states and governments, albeit with predictable exceptions: that no violation of human rights, particularly those of children, can be justified by religious or secular traditions of any kind. There is also a bright side to the story. Conducting research, naming problems as such, calling violence with its name, not masking it behind religious or traditional justifications that dignify shameful practices may not be sufficient to solve problems, but it does draw attention to them. This opens the path to research and possible solutions.

Our organisation always grounds its policy recommendations in field experience. We believe that research must be coupled with campaigns that raise public awareness about violence against girls, for example in the domestic sphere. We believe that such a strategy can lead to positive spin-offs: it makes citizens more aware and better informed on the one hand, and on the other hand it pushes policymakers to intervene with relevant legislative tools. Ultimately, this is the scope of the InDifesa report. It is a tool to inform citizens, but also a means to shape public opinion. The ambition is that, this way, citizens will be spontaneously motivated to put policymakers under greater pressure to address certain issues. The study on domestic violence, for example, led to

some important decisions, such as the introduction of new medical-legal practices in the university curriculum.

Violence against girls is also a lens through which global issues can be observed. In a civilization that is “suitable for children”, which is free from violence and in which all their fundamental rights are respected, even adults would live much better. This leads to a fundamental question that this report cannot address directly, but that it helps to phrase in the right terms: why is there so much violence against children, in particular against girls? This is the ultimate question that Terre des hommes wishes to answer with the facts presented in this report: identify the deep, structural causes of violence. Of course we cannot do this alone, but it is good to underline that this is one of the ways in which this report should be read. We would like all our readers to ask this question, to look inside themselves and the world they live in to understand how such wicked deeds are still possible or even justifiable. Together with all of you we can find answers, and solutions.

Raffaele K. Salinari

President of Terre des Hommes International Federation

Two years of indifesa, Terre des Hommes' campaign for the rights of girls and young women

indifesa is a campaign launched by Terre des Hommes Italia in response to the appeal of the United Nations for the rights of girls and young women. It includes activities that strongly contrast and prevent gender-based discrimination and violence, in Italy and worldwide.

The campaign was launched on 11 October 2012, with the Department for Equal Opportunities and at the presence of the President of the Italian House of Deputies, on the occasion of the First International Day of the Girl Child. **indifesa** places the promotion of girl rights at the core of its actions. It promotes interventions to prevent and combat gender-based violence and discrimination, but also to achieve concrete results in breaking the cycle of poverty and offer better life opportunities to thousands of girls and young women.

Significant actions have been undertaken at the international level, with specific projects in favour of **“girl domestic slaves”** in Peru and Ecuador, of **“child brides”** in Bangladesh, of **“adolescent mothers”** in Côte d'Ivoire, of **“girls saved from infanticide”** in India. In many ways, however, Italy is the area in which Terre des Hommes' commitment has been broader and more innovative. Here is a summary of what we have done and are still doing in these first years of activity.

indifesa: activities in Italy during the first 2 years



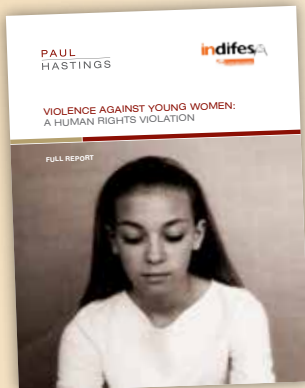
INDIFESA REPORT

On 9 October 2012 Terre des Hommes launched the first report on the **“Condition of girls and young women in Italy and in the world”**. The report provides a dramatic, up-to-date picture of: selective abortion and infanticide; malnutrition and child mortality; female genital mutilations; breast ironing; schooling and gender education; child labour and domestic exploitation; gender-based violence; sex education; girl brides; legal discrimination; trafficking of minors; early pregnancy; girl soldiers. The National Ombudsman for Children and Young People and the President of the Italian House of Deputies, Gianfranco Fini, were among the people attending the presentation.

The **second edition of the report**, with a particular focus on **domestic slavery** of girls and young women, was launched on 9 October 2013 at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, with the presence of international guests, the National Ombudsman for Children and Young People and representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and of the Ministry of Education.

TERRE DES HOMMES – ANSA REPORT

On the International Day of the Girl Child, Terre des Hommes presented together with ANSA (which shared its immense DEA article) the report “Girl Chronicles”. For the first time, this report analyses the occurrence of news items concerning girls and young women in Italy and issues affecting them. It offers a dramatic snapshot in which, as one might expect, “crime” is the winner, with stories of murder, abuse, violence and exploitation. On average every day 6 news items report cases of violation and abuse!



FIRST COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ON LEGISLATION CONTRASTING VIOLENCE AGAINST YOUNG AND ADULT WOMEN

In November 2012, during the Council of Europe International Conference “*The Role of International Cooperation in Tackling Sexual Violence against Children*” held at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Terre des Hommes presented the **first comparative research on legislation contrasting violence against young and adult women**. The study was realised thanks to the pro bono commitment of the law firm Paul Hastings. This research had already been brought to the public’s attention during the 57th session of the CSW (Commission on the Status of Women) at the UN Headquarters in New York in March.

The research clearly highlights how the EU can make a decisive contribution in harmonising different types of offences and minimum sanctions applied by member states. For this reason, Terre des Hommes launched the “**Human Rights without Frontiers**” Appeal, asking for an extension of the European Union’s legislative competence to all human rights violations, which would favour smooth, prompt and effective response on behalf of the EU to the various forms of discrimination and violence against girls.

AWARENESS RAISING AND PREVENTION MEETINGS FOR GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION IN HIGH SCHOOLS: HAND IN HAND [DI PARI PASSO]

In partnership with Soccorso Rosa / San Carlo Hospital, Terre des Hommes initiated **meetings to raise awareness and prevent gender-based discrimination in high schools**. The aim is to fight against prejudice and discrimination among pre-adolescents and provide teachers and parents with effective tools to identify potentially at risk situations.

In two years, the courses have reached more than 1,000 boys and girls attending Milan’s high schools. They are conducted by two psychologists from Soccorso Rosa, with the additional involvement of Terre des Hommes’ legal advisors on themes concerning the identification and reporting of gender-based violence. Under the auspices of the Department for Equal Opportunities, the courses led to the first handbook for high schools, which has taken the same title as the courses: “Hand in Hand” [Di Pari Passo].



PAEDIATRICIANS AND CHILD ILL-TREATMENT

On 21 March 2013 the **ireport on awareness of child ill-treatment among paediatricians** was presented. This survey was realised in partnership with the **Mangiagalli Clinic in Milan / Desk for Ill-Treated Children and Adolescents SBAM** and it highlights clear failings in the training of doctors and paediatricians to recognise ill-treatment and report cases to competent authorities.

Specifically, when asked if they had encountered cases of violence and abuse during their service as paediatricians, 65% of respondents said yes, but 51.5% decided not to report them. Most paediatricians claimed that they did not have sufficient evidence (55.1%). 13.6% said they feared repercussions in the family environment. A significant percentage (18.3%) admitted taking no initiative because they did not know who to report the cases to and how. The survey also revealed respondents’ uncertainty about who should file a report. Only 5% of doctors had a form that

helps diagnose ill-treatment, even if they almost unanimously admitted (89% of respondents) that such a tool would be greatly useful.

The questionnaire highlights the urgent issue of training: almost half of respondents had not participated in a congress on child abuse in the last 3 years, and 34% had attended only one. The desire for professional updating on this issue is, however, strongly felt: 89% of respondents claimed that this is an urgent need. One last, dramatic figure confirms the need for a campaign like **indifesa**: girls and young women account for 79% of reported cases and are the most frequent victims of sexual violence and of pathologies deriving from inadequate treatment.

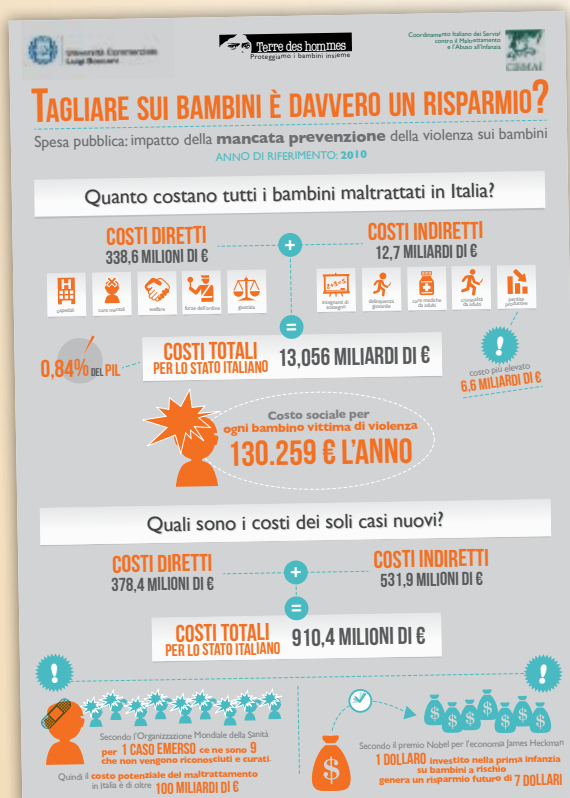
In response to doctors' and paediatricians' need for greater information, in 2014 Terre des Hommes, SVSeD and the Medical Association of Milan jointly created a new agile tool to combat child ill-treatment. The *Toolkit for doctors and paediatricians in the management of cases of (suspected) ill-treatment to the detriment of girls and boys* contains useful and timely information on various types of abuse, how to report them and who to. The flyer is distributed in health services in Milan and is available online at http://www.terredeshommes.it/download/vademecum_maltrattamento_bambini.pdf

Various Regional authorities, together with Terre des Hommes, are currently adapting the Toolkit to their local reality.



At the same time, a series of training sessions were launched on specific forms of ill-treatment, targeting doctors and health workers. The trainings are the outcome of a partnership between the Italian Medical Association, local health authorities (ASL), Terre des Hommes and SVSeD during the current year. Among this is the “First Course in Child Abuse Diagnosis”, in partnership with the Medical Association of Milan, SVSeD, University of Milan - Department of Forensic Medicine. The course begins in November 2014 and offers 48 hours of class devoted to this phenomenon, with lectures by head physicians and experts from various medical disciplines. This unique training project is entirely devoted to child maltreatment and its inclusion in all subjects offered in the curriculum of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery.

MONITORING ILL-TREATMENT OF MINORS IN ITALY AND EVALUATING THE COSTS OF PREVENTION POLICY FAILINGS



One of the themes that Terre des Hommes has addressed in recent years, following the recommendations of the working group on the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC), is the lack of a system for the collection and analysis of data about the ill-treatment of girl and boy children in Italy.

In partnership with CISMAI (Coordinamento Italiano Servizi contro il Maltrattamento e l'Abuso all'Infanzia) and within the **indifesa** Campaign, Terre des Hommes initiated two extremely innovative studies in the Italian context:

- The first **national survey on the scale of ill-treatment against children**, undertaken in partnership with ANCI, titled “**Ill-Treatment of children: how widespread is it in Italy?**” The report provides a detailed picture, unique in its kind, realised thanks to the involvement of relevant municipal councils and social workers at the local level. It portrays phenomena such as material and/or emotional negligence; assisted violence; psychological mistreatment; sexual abuse; pathologies deriving from inadequate treatment and physical violence. In 2014, thanks to collaboration with the National Ombudsman for Children and Young People, the survey was extended to 250 additional Italian municipalities. Updated data will be presented in 2014.

- The first evaluation conducted in our country, thanks to the contribution of Bocconi University in Milan, of the **costs deriving from lack of prevention of ill-treatment and abuse against minors in Italy**. A fundamental contribution, despite it coming several years later than in other countries, toward a more efficient and effective use of financial resources available for social policies

MILAN CHARTER FOR THE RESPECT OF THE IMAGE OF GIRL AND BOY CHILDREN IN COMMUNICATION AND AGAINST DISCRIMINATORY STEREOTYPING IN ADVERTISING

In 2012, Terre des Hommes finalised the compilation of a **Charter for the Respect of the Image of Girl and Boy Children in Communication** (the **Milan Charter** can be consulted and commented on the website www.cartadimilano.org). The Charter is made up of 10 articles, written with the support of over 70 experts. It fills a cultural gap in Italy and spotlights the use (and abuse) that is made of child images, especially in commercial communication. It addresses heated issues such as hyper-sexualisation, objectification and adultification of children; the challenge to educational and parenting models; the diffusion of bad eating patterns; the use of sense of guilt and health alarmism; the exploitation of pain and illness; ethnic and cultural difference; discrimination and sexist communication. On this last issue, within the **indifesa** Campaign, the Charter has become a tool that citizens (following solicitation by Terre des Hommes and its partners, such as Il Corpo delle Donne, to cite the most prominent) have actively used on several occasions to report severe cases of sexist and discriminatory communication. In order to increase the effectiveness of the Charter, on 21 May 2013 Terre des Hommes, in partnership with Pubblicità Italia, Assocom and ADCI, organised in Milan the first of a series of seminars targeting professionals in the communications sector and addressing gender stereotyping.

In autumn 2013, two new seminars were held on the same issue:

- On 24 September, in the Main Theatre of Milan's Judicial Court building, the Law Society of Milan organised a conference on the rights of girl and boy children in communication. The Milan Charter was officially launched on this occasion;
- On 18 November, at the Franco Parenti theatre, during an event dedicated to the rights of the child, The National Ombudsman for Children and Young People and Pierfrancesco Majorino (Councillor for Social Policies of the Municipality of Milan) officially signed the Milan Charter.

IO SONO QUI [I'M HERE]: A CHILDREN'S BOOK TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR BODY, IDENTITY AND FREEDOM

In November 2012, together with Carthusia, on the occasion of an event held under the Galleria del Corso in Milan, Terre des Hommes presented the book for primary school children "Io Sono Qui" [I'm Here], by Sabina Colloredo and Svjetlan Junakovic. The book tells the tale of the monkey Tendra, who is invisible to the eyes of many, but not all animals. Some of them see her with the heart and recognise her for what she really is: a creature full of life, courage, ready to discover herself and her future. This fun and imaginary story helps today's girls to become tomorrow's women. The book was also a means to meet many boys and girls attending primary schools in Northern Italy.

ATTIVITÀ DI COMUNICAZIONE

indifesa in Italy has been much more than the above: more than 30 television shows hosted Terre des Hommes' staff and our testimonials. Hundreds of articles have been published about the condition of girls and young women in Italy and worldwide. Tens of volunteers have met Italian citizens in public squares and during public events, promoting the rights of girls and young women. Several special reports have been devoted to the topic of paedophilia and sex tourism via webcam, inspired by Sweetie (who received several awards during the Advertising Grand Prix in Cannes). In 2013, this campaign also received the prestigious Areté Prize for Social Communication.





These two years have been full of challenges, commitments and actions that are unique in the Italian context and that have the aim of placing the rights of girls and young women at the centre of attention. It is hard to squeeze these two years in such a short report. These are the first two years of indifesa. In 2014, we will celebrate the first three years of activity, with many novelties and consolidated initiatives, and with the launching of a new three-year period in the name of the rights of girls and young women.

For further information:
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