



children first.



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UNICEF MADAGASCAR

Ending Violence Against Children

A PROPOSAL PREPARED FOR UNICEF NEXT GENERATION

SEPTEMBER 2018

Situation Overview

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Madagascar is an island nation in the Indian Ocean, off the eastern coast of Africa. The country is well known for its rich biodiversity and beautiful beaches. Although viewed as a tropical paradise, Madagascar's communities face a spectrum of challenges.

According to the World Bank, families are on average 40 percent poorer than they were in 1960 and 91 percent of the 25 million Malagasy citizens lives on less than \$2 a day.

Madagascar remains on the lower ranks of many international indices across all social sectors, pointing to the multiple deprivations that children and families face. Madagascar currently ranks 161 out of 189 on the Human Development Index. Furthermore, the island ranks among the top ten countries most vulnerable to cyclones and with extremely weak coping capacities. Persistent socioeconomic disadvantage denies children their rights, weakens a child's protective environment and places them at higher risk of ill health, malnutrition, impaired physical and mental development or school drop-out.



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Most public services in Madagascar are critically underfunded, depriving millions of people equitable access to quality social services. Children and women suffer disproportionately in Malagasy society and numerous factors, including an insecure economy, climate change and certain harmful practices, negatively affect their well-being.

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN MADAGASCAR

In addition to, and sometimes because of, the multiple deprivations that they face, children in Madagascar are extremely vulnerable to various forms of violence, abuse and exploitation in school, at home and in the community. Violence against children can take many different forms: discipline from a parent to control an 'unruly' child; sexual violence against an adolescent girl, perpetrated by her boyfriend, neighbor or stepfather; the bullying of one child by a peer; corporal punishment of a student by his or her teacher. Too many children are affected by such violence, yet it is rarely acknowledged, in part because it is so commonplace. According to a 2018 National Study on violence against children in Madagascar, violence is a part of children's daily lives and is often perceived as an appropriate form of discipline by both adults and children. Communities, families and children tend to justify or even value physical violence for "educational purposes" and view it as an ordinary part of what happens in families and schools.

The sexual exploitation of children in Madagascar's travel and tourism sector is another form of violence that children are vulnerable to. In 2013, the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children reported an increase in the sexual exploitation of children in Madagascar, a situation that is particularly prevalent in tourist areas along the coast of Madagascar.

Most cases of violence against children in Madagascar, including sexual violence, are dealt with within the family. As a result, reporting rates are low and prosecution of the perpetrators inadequate, as is the prevention of violence, and the provision of care and treatment for survivors. Lack of knowledge about the available mechanisms, concerns about the

economic burden of bringing a case to justice, a lack of trust in the justice system and the desire to maintain social cohesion all contribute to low reporting.

The following statistics further highlight the prevalence and acceptance of violence and exploitation in Madagascar:

- 14 percent of girls ages 15 to 19 reported having been victims of sexual violence and 15 percent have reported being victims of physical violence.
- 47 percent of girls and 44 percent of boys think that a husband is justified in beating his wife or partner under certain circumstances
- 84 percent of children ages 2-14 have been subjected to at least one form of psychological or physical punishment.
- 9 out of 10 children have experienced corporal punishment in their home.
- More than half of young people have experienced violence in schools.

Violence, **poverty, inequality and social exclusion** are inextricably linked, and the difficult living conditions faced by most Malagasy households have an undeniable impact on the level of violence against children. High levels of unemployment limited economic opportunities, and a lack of services create circumstances that can lead to frustration and unrest, which may lead to violence

There are additional factors that contribute to violence against children in Madagascar, including personal, family, social, economic and cultural factors that increase the risk of violence against children and help to perpetuate it. **Child-related factors** include the fact that young children are more vulnerable to violence because they are physically smaller, are more easily intimidated, have fewer negotiation skills, and lack the life experience needed to predict escalation. **Family-related factors** reflect that, while violence against children takes place across all economic and social groups, children are at increased risk of violence when families are characterized by low incomes or low parent education levels. **Social and cultural norms** can protect children against violence, but they can also support and encourage the use of violence. **Gender inequality** plays an important role in patterns of violence, and gender stereotypes are often used to justify violence, creating a rationale for humiliation, intimidation, control and abuse. **Situational factors**, such as widespread access to weapons and alcohol and drug consumption, can also give rise to violence.

Violence hampers learning and is detrimental to children's well-being. It decreases self-esteem, reduces school attendance, lowers grades, leads many children to drop out of school altogether and can result in serious health issues. It also contributes to a destabilizing cycle of violence where child victims are more likely to be perpetrators later in life. The repercussions are not inconsequential, with ripple effects throughout society as well as future generations.

UNICEF in Action

Following a comprehensive review of its work on protecting children from violence, conducted in 2015, UNICEF has made ending violence against children an organization-wide priority across all areas of its work. To establish a more cohesive global strategy, UNICEF is building on the key approaches, including 1.) strengthening national commitments to multisector plans and priority actions; 2) assisting with the development and implementation of legal and policy frameworks; 3.) providing technical support to the justice, social welfare, health and education sectors; and 4) supporting communities, parents and children.

In Madagascar, UNICEF is working to identify children who are most vulnerable to rights abuses and reach them with vital interventions. Reinforcing social services and developing the capacity of institutions such as the police and judiciary to respond to cases of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation are essential components of UNICEF's work in Madagascar. UNICEF works in partnership with public agencies, civil society, and the private sector, addressing national

priorities and working to set up a functional system that can prevent and address violence against children. This work requires:

- Supporting parents, caregivers and families to increase the use of positive discipline methods;
- Helping children and adolescents build their coping skills and manage risks and challenges without the use of violence;
- Changing attitudes and social norms that encourage violence and discrimination, and addressing the negative consequences of harmful social norms on children;
- Promoting and providing support services for children, with emphasis on quality, accessibility and confidentiality;
- Developing and implementing laws and policies that protect children, including the development of a national child protection policy, codes of conduct in schools, a national strategy to end child marriage, and a national action plan on violence against child; and
- Supporting data collection and research to generate solid evidence to accurately understand the magnitude of the problem.



Gina (name changed) lives on an island off the coast of northwest Madagascar. When she was 13, she met a French national who ended up taking explicit photos of her and a friend and sexually assaulted them. Gina ended up going to the police and the perpetrator was arrested. It turned out that he was part of a larger criminal network involved in the distribution of child sexual abuse material.

UNICEF, together with its partners and the tourism and telecommunications industries, have created a multi-sectoral approach to promote public awareness and provide continued community outreach to support behavioral changes in affected communities.

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The Impact of Your Support

Given the multiple drivers of violence and the variations of violence and exploitation that children experience, UNICEF has designed a comprehensive two-year program that aims to address the underlying drivers of abuse, while also strengthening child protection services to better respond to the need of survivors and children at risk. The program includes **three key strategies** to prevent and respond to violence against children in Madagascar:

- Strategy 1: Strengthening child protection systems
- Strategy 2: Empowering communities to prevent violence
- Strategy 3: Increasing access to support for the survivors of violence

With support from NextGen, at least 800 children and 2,000 community members will directly benefit from the activities described below. In addition to directly targeting some of Madagascar's most vulnerable children, the system strengthening component of the program will indirectly benefit more than 1 million children in Madagascar.

STRATEGY 1: STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Addressing violence against children depends on: laws, policies and standards; services to prevent and respond to violence; human and fiscal resources and management; communication and advocacy; collaboration and coordination; and evidence and data for decision-making. When these actors and components work together attuned to the cultural,

social and political environment, they create a **functioning and holistic child protection system** that is better able to protect all children from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse across all contexts.

Using a systems-based approach, UNICEF seeks to create an environment in Madagascar where boys and girls are free from violence, exploitation and abuse, and where laws, services, behaviors and practices minimize vulnerability, address known risk factors, and strengthen the resilience of children. At the same time, such a reinforced system needs to be capable of providing care and support for those children who have become victims of violence and exploitation. Through this approach, teachers, police officers, social workers, health care workers, lawyers, and professionals from other sectors can be frontline supporters, protecting children and alerting other actors to situations where children display signs of distress or indicate that they have experienced abuse.

Support from Next Gen will enable UNICEF to reinforce the coordination mechanisms of **Community Child Protection Networks**. In Madagascar, Community Child Protection Networks are the entry point for child protection interventions. These networks, which consist of administrative authorities from various sectors, police officers, judges, doctors and non-governmental organization representatives, help to ensure that local communities are engaged in child protection work – both in identifying vulnerable children and in connecting them to services, including medical, psychosocial and legal services and other support that may be required. The vital work of the Networks includes facilitating the coordination of all child protection interventions.

Through these community networks public, non-governmental, social, and judicial and police actors, as well as community leaders play a role in monitoring and reporting child rights violations. They are responsible for raising awareness, identifying and reporting cases of abuse, and accompanying and referring survivors of exploitation to the proper services and authorities. The community networks also keep a log of cases filed to enable them to keep track of vulnerable children's access to protection services. At regional level, Child Protection Networks serve to plan, coordinate and implement strategic, region-wide actions for child protection.



Madagascar Police Commander, Jean Paul Andrianirina, sits in a hallway during a break at a UNICEF-supported one-stop Vonjy Center for child victims of sexual violence in Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar. The Malagasy government, together with UNICEF and its partners, has set up such centers at hospitals in four cities, with counsellors, doctors and police providing services for free, in one location, to child victims.

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This program will also support the development of a functional child protection information management system that can collect data on violence against children and share at a centralized level for better program planning and management.

STRATEGY 2: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

A key component of this program is the prevention of violence against children in communities and homes. To reduce violence, parents, caregivers and community members must be educated and encouraged to adopt positive discipline methods. Children and adolescents should also be provided with the skills to cope and manage risks and challenges

without the use of violence, while being given the tools to seek appropriate support when violence does occur. The following activities will help address the underlying drivers of violence and promote positive social change:

- **Communication for Development:** Communities will be sensitized on child protection and child rights through community dialogues and interpersonal communication activities. Reducing violence in communities requires sensitization activities, community dialogues and interpersonal communication activities that focus on child protection and child rights. With support from NextGen, UNICEF will roll out a Communication for Development (C4D) strategy to make Malagasy communities more aware of child protection laws and services and of what constitutes harmful practices against children, so that they behave in ways that are protective of children. C4D involves understanding people, their beliefs and values, the social and cultural norms that shape their lives. It involves engaging communities and listening to adults and children as they identify problems, propose solutions and act upon them. Through this program, 2,000 community members will be reached by C4D activities that are designed to prevent violence in their communities.
- **Meaningful Opportunities for Youth:** Children at risk will be reached with prevention mechanisms, including life skills programs that seek to build their capacities to reinforce their resilience to manage risks and challenges including. These opportunities help children develop critical thinking, build their self-esteem to communicate effectively, solve problems cooperatively, and protect themselves from violence throughout their lives. For young people who sometimes feel helpless and frustrated, such programs can show them alternative ways to manage life's risks and challenges other than with violence or other harmful behaviors. 400 children and adolescents will be reached through this intervention.

STRATEGY THREE: INCREASING ACCESS TO SUPPORT FOR THE SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE

Ensuring that the survivors of violence are linked to quality services where they can access help and support and report violent incidences is a crucial component of this program. UNICEF has partnered with the Government of Madagascar on several key interventions that respond to urgent protection needs and promote healing, recovery and re-integration. These services include:

- **The Child Helpline “147”:** UNICEF, has supported the child protection service of the National Police, the Ministry of Population, as well as the Municipality of Antananarivo, to put in place Child Helpline “147”, the national toll-free telephone helpline for reporting child abuse, violence and exploitation. The helpline is confidential, free and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, receiving and responding to cases of violence against children. The helpline also provides counselling services, with more than 60 trained listeners available to support callers – including police officers and social workers from local and national government - and share information across 15 shifts to provide around-the-clock support and coordination and to respond to the needs of children, adolescents and adults who call for help and advice. In 2017, the toll-free child helpline received 149,576 incoming calls, of which 859 concerned “real cases” and not requests for information (or crank calls or other calls not related to child protection).
- **Vonjy Centers:** These are one-stop service centers for child victims of sexual violence. At the centers, children can receive an integrated package of medical, psychosocial and legal services free of charge, without having to travel to multiple locations. The centers also empower doctors, social workers and police officers to work together in one place, which has significantly improved the process of investigating and prosecuting offenders. To date, more than 2,500 victims have benefitted from integrated quality care in the 4 Vonjy Centers across Madagascar: Antananarivo, Toamasina, Majunga and Nosy-Be.
- **Care and support services:** 400 child victims of all forms of violence will be identified and will receive the package of services that various child protection actors have agreed on as being essential. Proper case management will be conducted to ensure that each child victim is adequately supported.

- **Reintegration Support:** Vocational training and school reintegration programs are available for 200 children victim or at risk of violence and exploitation. In order to strengthen the resilience of children who have been victims of violence and exploitation, or who are at significant risk due to the economic and social situation of their families, they will be supported to either re-enter school, or, if this is no longer a feasible option for them, to undergo vocational training in order to become economically self-sufficient and therefore less vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The Way Forward

The eradication of violence against children is a key component of sustainable development. This program incorporates bold and ambitious strategies to end violence against children in Madagascar and create safer, more just and prosperous communities. Central to these efforts is support from partners, like NextGen, who can lead the way in accelerating action, leveraging resources and facilitating exchange of knowledge.

UNICEF is grateful for NextGen's thoughtful consideration of this project. By investing in these critical child protection interventions, thousands of children in Madagascar will be given a second chance to grow in stable, nurturing and protective environments while accessing the services they need to recover and thrive. Together, we can bring an end to exploitation, abuse and neglect and build a future free from violence.

On behalf of children in Madagascar, thank you for your support!



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Budget

ACTIVITY	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	TOTAL
Child protection system strengthening through the application of national child protection policies and legal framework and improved child protection mechanisms.	\$30,000	\$19,000	\$49,000
Children at risk of violence and exploitation in target regions are better protected through integrated and coordinated prevention and protection mechanisms	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$110,000
Child victims or at risk of violence and exploitation in target regions benefit from supportive environments to meet their immediate and longer-term needs.	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$70,000
Planning, monitoring and evaluation costs	\$9,160	\$9,160	\$18,320
Subtotal	\$129,160	\$118,160	\$247,320
Retention Costs (UNICEF 8% UUUSA 2%)	\$13,180	\$12,057	\$25,237
Total	\$142,340	\$130,217	\$272,557

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The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children’s lives than any other humanitarian organization by providing health care and immunizations, safe water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF’s work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood. For more information, visit unicefusa.org.

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