

UNICEF inputs into SG's Report on Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

The UNICEF office for The Americas and the Caribbean in 2012 developed a multi-country initiative to address the high levels of armed violence and its impacts on children and adolescents in the region, taking an integrated rights-based approach to child-focused armed violence prevention and reduction (AVPR), which includes a focus on addressing the differential gendered dimensions and impacts of this violence. Building on previous experience with AVPR in the region, strategies of the initiative include a three-pronged approach: strengthening data and evidence on the impacts of armed violence on children and adolescents, including differential impacts on girls and boys of different ages; strengthening and integrating AVPR into institutional systems and mechanism for child protection, including through the development of national and local policies and plans to prevent violence against children and women; and support for community-based child-centred AVPR programmes, which include a focus on ensuring gender-balanced community participation in their planning and implementation. Acknowledging the reinforcing and inter-generational nature of various forms of violence (armed violence, domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse of children, gender-based violence etc) in various environments (homes, communities, institutions, etc), UNICEF's AVPR efforts are linked and integrated with wider efforts prevent and respond to violence against children, including girls as a group with specific vulnerabilities, and women. Specific examples of countries in the region where AVPR-related initiatives have been integrated within broader efforts to promote the rights, empowerment and protection of girls and women include:

- **El Salvador, where** UNICEF supported the "Preventing the Use of Fire Arms" Project, where children and adolescents, including girls, were empowered to freely express their views and concerns regarding armed violence, and where these were then developed into a public-awareness raising and national mass media campaign. UNICEF is also supporting initiatives to mainstream gender, rights and life skills for adolescents within the framework of the inclusive education approach in order to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders to promote positive meaningful participation of adolescents in the community.
- **Colombia, where** UNICEF promoted the active participation of thousands of girls and adolescents girls in local processes aimed at building a more protective environment against violence, abuse and exploitation in the context of armed violence and the armed conflict.
- **Brazil, where** UNICEF has worked together with the UNCT on joint UN communications campaigns including to address gender-based violence and disarmament, and with the government for the development of a Municipal Guide to preventing lethal violence against adolescents and youth.
- **Mexico, where** UNICEF is supporting the Childhood without Violence campaign, developed by over 100 civil society organizations, and which in the first phase (2012) focused on three issues identified as the most urgent – corporal punishment against children, sexual violence against children and women, and armed violence.
- **Costa Rica, where** the UNICEF supported Urban Palettes and Lollipops strategy for urban social interventions. The strategy, which includes measures to foster equal leadership of members of the community, seeks to revitalize and strengthen the maintain of public spaces – to date, it has resulted in the tangible prevention of violence against women through improved design of public spaces and by empowering communities to reclaim community spaces.
- **Honduras, where** UNICEF and UN Women worked together with the National Observatory on Violence and the National Autonomous University of Honduras to undertake studies and research on the impacts of violence on children and women. While boys were identified as the group most vulnerable to armed violence, the research found a worrying trend of a 19% increase in femicide between 2010-2011, representing some nine deaths per month.

Beyond the Latin America and Caribbean region, UNICEF AVPR interventions which seek to promote the participation and address the impacts of armed violence and weapons on women include:

Libya, where work to address the impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) on children and women has included the development of radio spots and talk shows, where guests have included Libyans involved in local community initiatives, in order to highlight the impacts of SALW at the community level. SALW risk awareness and advocacy have been at the forefront of these discussions. UNICEF has also supported workshops with and the distribution of resource materials to the media and journalists to raise awareness on the definition and impact of SALW on children and women, how to appropriately report on the misuse of SALW, and to distribute key resources to support reporters. This resulted in a segment on Al Jazeera Arabic

promoting safer behavioral practices with regards to SALW. Lastly, working in partnership with local organizations, UNICEF has supported the erection of billboards, a powerful form of public information, in Tripoli, Misrata and Sirte , with topics focussed on celebratory shootings, firing of weapons into the air, and the safe storage of SALW in home.

Nepal, where UNICEF works for the protection of children, their families and communities through a number of key interventions on armed violence. These include support for weapons-injury surveillance, through the Surveillance System on Armed Violence which is operational in all 75 districts of Nepal, and which monitors incidents of intentional explosions, small arms and other portable lethal weapons. The information from the surveillance system has provided data and evidence, including on the differential impacts of armed violence on girls, boys, women and men, to advocate for armed violence reduction intervention in Nepal. UNICEF Nepal also supported capacity building initiatives such as the organization of workshops and training on armed violence reduction; and has supported the 'Stop Violence through the Gun' country-wide public awareness campaign.

Globally, UNICEF continues to advocate for increased investment and commitment to the establishment of more systematic and sustainable weapons-related injury surveillance systems, including ensuring age and gender disaggregation in weapons-related surveillance and data collection efforts. This is in response to the fact that assessments and surveys continue to be privileged and prioritized as the primary mechanisms to gather evidence to inform Mine Action and Armed Violence Prevention and Reduction programmes, despite the fact that these surveys seldom provide adequate disaggregation of differential impacts based on gender and age, to enable effective identification and targeting of vulnerable groups, and the inability of such instrument to provide the information necessary to adjust and adapt programmes as evolving weapons-related situations shift over time. Meanwhile, UNICEF continues to implement Mine Action projects in over 20 countries worldwide. These efforts include a focus on Mine/ERW Risk Education, support for age and gender appropriate victim assistance, and advocacy for the implementation of weapons-related international instruments, including to ensure the appropriate integration of age and gender considerations.