

# Report



07 - 08 June 2017

## European Development Days 2017

# Context

On 7 and 8 June 2017, the World Vision Brussels and EU Representation (EUREP) office participated in the [European Development Days](#) (EDDs). The EDDs, which are organised annually by the European Commission, bring the most important stakeholders and decision makers of the European development community together to discuss current development challenges and solutions. The World Vision EUREP office has been engaging at the EDDs for several years to highlight its work and advocate for the rights of children. This year World Vision's participation included among others a stand and a lab debate titled "Mobilising Partnerships and Investment to end Violence against Children".

## Main messages and objectives

The EDDs provide a platform to engage with a variety of stakeholders from the European Development community, specifically from the European Institutions, allowing to directly address decision-makers on World Vision's global campaign "[It Takes A World to End Violence Against Children](#)".

Every year, **1 billion children experience violence** across the globe. Violence against children manifests itself in many different forms, including physical, sexual and mental violence and abuse, neglect, sexual and commercial exploitation, trafficking, child labour, online abuse and bullying and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage. Their vulnerability is especially acute in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

As the protection of children is a commitment reflected in several global and EU policies, such as the [Agenda 2030](#), the new [European Consensus for Development](#) or the new [2017 Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child- Leave no Child Behind](#) the EDDs provided crucial opportunities to shift the political and public discourse from acknowledging the scale to solving the problem, by galvanising a community of interest to commit and secure investment to end all forms of violence against children.

The **key objectives** that World Vision EUREP aimed for during the EDDs were the following:

1. **To foster discussion on the gaps and challenges** that need to be addressed by the international community to end violence against children, specifically regarding norms and practices that restrain violence and to change attitudes and behaviours.
2. **Reflect on EU policies, action and investment in children** in its external action where tackling violence is concerned, an encourage decision makers to develop sustainable funding to address the underlying causes of fragility and conflict rather than prioritizing urgent short-term interventions
3. Highlight the **importance of child-focused programming** in line with [the WHO-led 7-solution INSPIRE package](#) to prevent, reduce or mitigate the impact of violence against children, including in conflict situations.
4. Ensuring that **children and young people are recognized as key and visible stakeholders influencing development, humanitarian and peacebuilding programmes and policies** and encouraging the EU to empower and give space to girls and boys to meaningfully participate in efforts to localise its external action.

# Child Participation



The meaningful, safe, and appropriate participation of children is a key strategic priority for World Vision. Children and young people play a significant role as agents of transformation and have the right to express their views on all matters affecting them to decision makers. In the recent years, WV has championed the participation of children at the EDDs.

This year, WV achieved a new milestone on child participation: Four Young Leaders To End Violence Against Children participated in the EDDs (from left to right): Mary (16) from South Sudan, Abigail (12) and Justice (16) from Ghana, and Alexandru (17) from Romania. All of them are activists in their communities to eradicate different forms of violence against children, including child labour, child marriage, gender-based violence, violence in schools, cyberbullying and violence in conflict contexts.

The Young Leaders **engaged actively with EDD participants**, including government representatives, officials from the European Institutions and civil society organisations, and informed them about World Vision’s “It takes A World Campaign”. Each of them also hosted an **“Inspiring for Change” workshop**, where they discussed with participants about their engagement in their communities and called them to take action for children.

Besides giving various media interviews, Mary from South Sudan was one of the speakers for the panel for the lab debate “Mobilising Partnerships and Investment to end Violence against Children”. Overall, the EDD was an important platform to **voice children’s and young people’s opinions and priorities** and to give them space where they can express their personal vision and aspirations on issues that are relevant to them, such as ending VAC.

In order to achieve a meaningful participation of the young leaders, World Vision conducted preparatory workshops in-country and in Brussels to provide the skills and knowledge the Young Leaders needed to engage confidently with the EDD activities.





## Stand “It Takes A World”

Throughout both days, World Vision EUREP facilitated a stand to **inform EDD participants about the launch of the “It takes a world” campaign** and raise awareness on the scourge of violence affecting children worldwide.

Through an **interactive approach** the World Vision EUREP team engaged and discussed with visitors around the topic of the global campaign: Through a “Wheel of Stories” featuring the stories of 50 children from WV country offices that have overcome different forms of violence, visitors heard the voices of children presenting their experiences and stories on violence. The stand provided the space for visitors to **discuss innovative ideas and solution-based approaches** to the issue with WV experts and the four young leaders. Visitors were also invited to leave a message for the child that they had drawn in the wheel. Their messages were shared over social media, which led to a **measurable increase in social media engagement** around the issue of violence against children and made **#ItTakesAWorld** one of the trending hashtags of the EDDs.

The interactive approach allowed showcasing WV’s global campaign to a **high number of visitors**, among them many EU officials or officials from Member States. The team also welcomed high level visitors at the stand, such as **Her Majesty Mathilde, Queen of the Belgians**. Young Leader Justice from Ghana shared with her his views on the crucial importance of young people’s participation as part of World Vision’s “It takes a World” campaign.



**Her Excellency Mrs. Novisi Abaidoo, Ambassador of Ghana to Belgium** also visited the stand for a bilateral meeting with Young Delegates Justice and Abigail, who informed her about their work and shared recommendations on how to prevent and eradicate different forms of violence in their communities, especially child labour.

# Lab Debate

## “Mobilising Partnerships and Investment to end Violence against Children”

On 08 June 2017, **ChildFund Alliance, EEAS, GPEVAC, WHO, UNICEF and World Vision** organised a lab debate entitled “[Mobilising partnerships and investment to end violence against children - A multistakeholder approach in fragile and conflict-affected contexts](#)”. Moderated by **Jean-Louis Ville, Acting Director for Human Development and Migration, DG DEVCO**, the event convened child protection experts from the above mentioned partners and the Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to discuss solutions and best practices to end violence against children, with special attention to fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

The debate was opened by Moderator Jean-Louis Ville who outlined the dimensions of the problem: Violence against children affects over one billion children around the world every year, and is an issue that diminishes the value of other development programs. **Young Leader Mary** underlined these words by sharing her own story of living in the streets of Juba exposed to different forms of violence before being rescued. Today, Mary is actively transforming her experiences into a force for good and serves as a mentor to her peers.

**Etienne Krug, Director of the Department for Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, Disability, Violence and Injury Prevention, WHO & GP to End Violence Against Children** presented the INSPIRE package, providing seven evidence-based solutions to prevent and respond to violence on different levels:



He encouraged EU and civil society actors to make use of these strategies which provide basic steps towards protecting of children, even in conflict-ridden contexts. The INSPIRE strategies protect children from the devastating long-term consequences of violence, and they contribute to the creation of safe environments in which children can fully benefit from other development interventions in sectors such as education or health.

**Laurence Uwera, Programme Director of ChildFund Guinea** elaborated on new mechanisms for child protection in Guinea that were made possible through the collaboration of a wide range of actors at all levels of society to change values and beliefs that contribute to a culture of violence. Both the involvement of local communities and traditional leaders and the effective consultation of the affected children themselves is indispensable for eliminating harmful practices.



World Vision EU @WorldVisionEU · Jun 8

We need to strengthen the Child Protection system in Uganda. Social workers are needed to keep all children protected. #ittakesaworld



**Lydia Najjemba Wasula** from the **Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development** shared the experiences of her national context. Uganda is currently welcoming around 1.3 million refugees from neighboring countries, providing them registration and access to social services to satisfy their basic needs. Despite targeted protection measures for vulnerable groups such as children, resource constraints in the light of the large number of refugees can undermine the effective protection of all children.



Presenting the actions taken by the European Union, **Mercedes Garcia Perez, Head of Unit Human Rights at the European External Action Service** emphasised that as the EU is moving towards a more rights-based approach in its foreign policy, children's rights are being made a key priority for several third countries and that the EU Delegations worldwide are working on implementing stronger child protection systems. In addition, the EU also recently adopted the new [2017 Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child- Leave No Child Behind](#) and the European Commission is already funding a

variety of programs to address different forms of violence against children. However, there still remains a significant gap in ensuring sustainable funding for the benefit of children.



# Impact

The participation at the EDD's resulted in **concrete political outcomes for World Vision**. Both the stand and the lab debate “Mobilising Partnerships and Investment to end Violence against Children” contributed to **place the topic of ending violence against children on the agenda of European decision makers**. Concretely, Mercedes Garcia Perez announced that the European External Action Service was interested in exploring opportunities to apply the Inspire Package in the work of the 139 EU Delegations worldwide. Mary's extraordinary contribution in the panel and her plea to EU officials to act for improving the lives of children played a big part in this decision to step up the engagement.

The engagement in the framework of the EDDs led to an **increased political will from the highest level of the European Union** to increase support for the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, possibly even as a member. Until now, three EU member states (Romania and Sweden as pathfinding countries and the UK as supporting partner) are engaged in the Global Partnership, while the EU as an organisation is not yet actively involved.

During the EDDs, World Vision EUREP had a **very strong media presence** and managed to **spread its messages effectively among the relevant audience in Brussels**. We issued two press releases, the first one on [Children and Young People Rising Up as EU signs Consensus for Development at EU Development Days](#), welcoming the commitment of the EU and its Member States in the new European Consensus for Development to improve the protection of children and calling upon them to translate their commitment into concrete action. The release was featured in the “stakeholders’ highlights” section of the EU Observer. In a second joint press release World Vision, UNICEF, WHO, the Global Partnership to End Violence and Child Fund together called for an end of violence against children and highlighted the key findings of the debate lab debate “Mobilising partnerships to end violence against children”, featured among others on the [website of the Global Partnership](#).



In addition, the team and the young leaders **gave several interviews**: Mary, Abigail and Justice were interviewed by Afrique/Europe and Abigail and Alexandru were featured by Capacity4Dev. All four of them together were also interviewed by [SDG Action](#), sharing their perspectives and solutions on challenges for children in their home communities. Ludovic Wahis, Policy and Communications Officer at World Vision EUREP was interviewed by Rai radio.

WV EUREP was also **very active on social media**, specifically on Twitter. In total we received around 17.7k impressions during the two days, resulting in 95 new likes for World Vision EUREP. Posts earned on average 35 retweets per day, making #ItTakesAWorld one of the trending hashtags of the EDDs. The best tweet reached an audience of 2454 accounts alone. All this contributed to increasing the visibility of World Vision EUREP and spreading the main messages of the “It Takes A World” Campaign.

# Contact

[World Vision](#) is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. [World Vision's Brussels and EU Representation](#) office works to support our engagements with the institutions of the European Union, as well as the many pan-European institutions, civil society and NGO actors, academic and private sector organisations based in the city.



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