

MEDIA RELEASE

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KEY RESEARCH FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS INDEX ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN TO BE SHARED AT SVRI FORUM 2019

Critical research from the Out Of the Shadows Index (OOSI), a study by the Economist Intelligence Unit, measuring how 60 countries are responding to violence against children, will be shared at the SVRI Forum 2019. This global conference on violence against women and violence against children will be held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre in South Africa from 21 to 25 October 2019.

Child violence happens across the world, regardless of a country's economic status or citizens' quality of life. It takes place in the shadows, costs countries billions, has devastating emotional, health and socio-economic consequences and keeps children in poverty. No boy or girl is immune to this universal threat that in recent years has become even more enabled through improved communications connectivity and mobility.

SVRI Forum 2019 aims to increase awareness and promote research on violence against women and violence against children to influence policy and practice especially in low and middle income countries. Over 600 attendees including researchers, practitioners, government and United Nations representatives, policymakers, activists and funders from over 120 countries will gather at the forum to design solutions to end violence against children.

The OOSI was developed with support from the World Childhood Foundation, Oak Foundation and Carlson Family Foundation. International experts provided input using the latest available quantitative data and qualitative research. The Index shows countries' responses, highlights areas of attention, factors that drive change and how governments, businesses and society can achieve the UN SDG Target 16.2, calling to end all violence against children by 2030.

How does the Out Of the Shadows Index work?

Countries in the OOSI are given an aggregate score out of 100 in four categories of environment; legal framework;

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government commitment and capacity; and engagement of industry, society and media relating to violence against children. Each category is weighted differently, which experts agreed upon, according to the category's importance as a priority in driving progress to end violence against children. Government commitment and capacity is weighted at 33.3% of the score, environment at 29.2%, engagement of industry, society and media at 20.8%; while legal framework makes up 16.7%. Research in the OOSI covers 85% of the global population under 19 years of age.

Key findings from the Out Of the Shadows Index

- The top 10 countries in the OOSI are among the world's richest, but only four score 75 out of 100, revealing substantial gaps in protective conditions for children in even the wealthiest countries.
- UK, Sweden and Canada hold the top three positions in the OOSI. However, these countries still face challenges with the UK and Sweden not having laws requiring Internet service providers block child sexual exploitation content, and Canada and the UK not having official data on child exploitation prevalence.
- The average score of the 60 countries in the Index is only 50.2 out of 100.
- Many countries have strong legal frameworks for protecting children from violence, but most do less well implementing policies or creating effective responses.
- Partnerships with private sector and industry are needed to better protect children, especially against online child abuse where internet expansion has placed more children at risk.
- There is a need for increased government, business and public response to violence against children.
- Despite investments and efforts globally to end online child abuse and to track reported incidents of violence against children, data to measure and understand the scale of the problem is lacking.

What can we do to end violence against children?

Governments, businesses and societies globally must have a stronger, more targeted response and measure progress to end violence against children in the run-up to the 2030 deadline. Strategies include:

- Increasing awareness and knowledge of violence against children as a priority public health problem through communication and information to influence policy and service delivery.
- Developing a political mandate to end violence against children in each country. Governments must commit to international standards and their own domestic policies, while creating institutional capacity for specialised agencies and programmes.

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- Implementing national plans of action and devoting more resources to execute plans to end child violence.
- Developing a strong legal framework that protects children and deters offenders.
- Creating a healthy environment for children to grow up in and improving societal attitudes.
- Using research to advance social movements. Researchers working alongside activists to develop relevant research to inform, strengthen and expand activism around violence against children.
- Technology industries taking responsibility to help end child violence due to Internet and smart phone technology increasing the spread of child violence.
- Collecting data to be used strategically to inform decision-making.
- Businesses monitoring networks and work devices for illicit usage. Companies that share data and content online must have a notice and takedown system allowing the public to report potentially unlawful content.
- Having help from multinational organisations. Law enforcement must use the International Child Sexual Exploitation Database, created by INTERPOL, the global police agency, to identify victims.
- Implementing effective reporting mechanisms where countries collect and publish information on the number of reported offenses against children.

Find out more about the OOSI at www.outoftheshadows.eiu.com. Be part of the online conversation at: SVRI website: www.svri.org; Facebook: Sexual Violence Research Initiative; Twitter: @TheSVRI or Instagram: thesvri.

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MEDIA QUERIES

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OOSI website: www.outoftheshadows.eiu.com

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