The Voices of Children and Young People giving a voice to children and young people worldwide

2003 - 2013
126 MILLION CONTACTS

RWD <<
The Voices of Children and Young People

GIVING A VOICE TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WORLDWIDE
The Global Network of Child Helplines 173 Members in 141 Countries - 124 Full Members

• Albania Child Rights CA
• Algeria Nadia
• Argentina Linea 102 CABA
• Argentina Linea 102 Province BsAs
• Aruba Telefón Pa Hubentud
• Australia Kids Help Line
• Austria Rat Auf Draht 147
• Bahrain Bahraini Child Helpline
• Bangladesh Aparajeyo Bangladesh
• Belgium (HJT) Kinder- en Jongerntelefoon
• Bosnia Herzegovina SOS 1209
• Botswana Childline Botswana
• Brazil Abi 123!
• Brazil Safernet
• Brunei Helpline 141
• Burkina Faso Direction Generale de L'Encadrement et de la Protection de L'Enfant et de L'Adolescent (Ministere de L'Action Sociale et de la Solidarite Nationale)
• Cambodia ChildFund Cambodia
• Canada Kids Help Phone
• Canada Jeunes écoute
• Chile Foro Infancia
• China CAPAC, ISPCAN X/an Philanthropic Child Abuse - Prevention and Aid Centre
• Colombia Linea Infantil 106 Coroplatin
• Cote d’Ivoire BICE - Cote d’Ivoire
• Croatia Hrabartelefon
• Curacao Telefón pa Mucha i Hoben
• Czech Republic Safetline
• Denmark Bornsiklar
• Egypt Child Helpline 16000
• Estonia Lapsemure
• Ethiopia Enhancing Child Focused Activities
• Finland Mannerheim League for Child Welfare
• France Allo Enfants en Danger 119
• Gambia Child and Environmental Development Association (CEDAG)
• Germany Nummer Gegen Nummer
• Greece Smile of the Child
• Greece Helpline Connection
• Guinea Conakry AGUJAS
• Hong Kong S.A.R. Hotline Against Child Abuse
• Hungary Hek Vonal
• Iceland Red Cress 1717
• India Childline India Foundation
• Indonesia TESA 129
• Iran Sedaye Yara
• Iraq Kurdistan Iraqi Child Helpline
• Ireland ISPCC Childline
• Israel Nital Hotline
• Italy Telefono Azzurro
• Japan Childline Support Center Japan (NPO)
• Jordan 110 for Families and Children
• Kazakhstan Balaga Homek (Union of Crisis Centres)
• Kenya Childline Kenya
• Latvia Children Youth Trust Phone
• Latvia Hotline 8000600B
• Lesotho Childline Lesotho
• Lithuania Vaku Lija
• Luxembourg Kanner-Jugendtelefon
• Macedonia Firstline Children’s Emergency
• Madagascar Association Serosera Fanantenana
• Malawi Tithandizane Child Helpline/YONECO Malawi
• Malaysia Childline Malaysia
• Maldives Child Help Line 1412
• Mauritania AMSME
• Mauritius Halley Movement
• Mexico Casa Alanzan
• Mexico Telefono ANAR Mexico
• Mongolia Friends 1979 (NAC)
• Montenegro NGO Children First
• Mozambique Lhna Fala Crianca
• Namibia LifeLine/Childline Namibia
• Nepal Child Helpline 1098 (CWIN-Nepal)
• Netherlands De kindertelefoon
• New Zealand Kidsline
• New Zealand Youthline
• New Zealand What’s Up?
• Nigeria Human Development Initiatives - HDI
• Norway Red Cross Helpline for Children and Youth
• Pakistan Madadgaar Helpline for Children and Women Suffering from Violence and Abuse
• Palestine SAWA
• Peru Telefono ANAR Perú
• Philippines Bantay Bata 163
• Poland 116 111 Helpline for Children
• Poland Youthsorp pl
• Portugal Helpline.org
• Portugal SOS Crianca
• Qatar Qatar Foundation for Women and Child Protection
• Romania Asociatia Telefónul Copilului
• Russian NFPCC
• Saudi Arabia National Family Safety Programme
• Senegal Centre GINDO
• Serbia SOS Childline
• Sierra Leone Don Bosco Fambul
• Singapore Tinkle Friend Helpline
• Slovakia LDI
• Slovenia TOM
• South Africa Childline South Africa
• Spain Telefono ANAR Spain
• Sri Lanka Childline Sri Lanka 1929 (National Child Protection Authority)
• Sri Lanka Lama Sarana (Don Bosco)
• St. Martin Positive Connection
• Suriname BEL 123 HJT
• Switzerland Pro Juventute Beratung + Helfe 147
• Taiwan Province Of China 113 Hotline
• Thailand Childline Thailand
• Tajikistan 1577-1391 Child Protection Hotline
• Tajikistan Youth Hotline 1388 (KYCI)
• Tanzania Higher Council for Childhood
• Tanzania Higher Council for Childhood
• Tunisia Childline Tunisia
• Turkey Association for Solidarity with The Freedom- Deprived Juvenile
• United Arab Emirates Sharjah Social Service Department
• United Arab Emirates Dubai Foundation for Women and Children
• Uganda Uganda Child Rights NGO Network - UCRNN
• UN Get Connected
• UN Muslim Youth Helpline
• UN Runaway Helpline
• UN NSPCC/Childline
• Uruguay Linea Azul
• USA California Youth Crisis Line
• USA Boys Town
• USA Child Abuse Hotline
• USA Covenant House Nine line
• USA National Runaway Safeline
• USA Stop It Now!
• USA 2nd Floor Youthline
• Vietnam Child Helpline Vietnam
• Yemen Arab Human Rights Foundation
• Zambia Lifeline/Childline Zambia
• Zimbabwe Childline Zimbabwe

49 Associate Child Helpline Members

• Afghanistan Warchild UK
• Antigua and Barbuda Friends Hotline
• Armenia Child Rights Orientation Centre
• Azerbaijan Reliable Future NGO
• Belarus Smorgon Society Information centre on Children and Human Rights Education
• Belgium Pomirane
• Belgium Ecoute d’Enfants
• Benin Plan Benin
• Benin BPM
• Bhutan National Commission for Women and Children
• Bolivia Educativ
• Bulgaria Animus Association
• Burundi Ministere de la Solidarite
• Cameroon DCI Cameroon
• Costa Rica Línea Cuenta Corriente
• Cote d’Ivoire Direction de la Protection de L’Enfant
• Dominican Republic INDESUI
• Democratic Republic Congo War Child UK
• Ecuador CNNA
• El Salvador Telefono Amigo
• Georgia “Public Health and Medicine Development Fund of Georgia”
• Ghana African Movement for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect - AMPCAN
• Guatemala Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos
• Haiti Jiriimedia
• Israel ERAN
• Jamaica Children’s Coalition of Jamaica
• Korea (South) 1577-1391 Child Protection Hotline (NCPA)
• Korea (South) Youth Hotline 1388 (HYCI)
• Kyrgyzstan
• Lebanon Higher Council for Childhood
• Lebanon Nab'a
• Liberia Ministry of Gender and Development
• Libya Libyan Association for Child Rights
• Liechtenstein Sorgentelefon Kinder und Jugendliche
• Madagascar Direction de la police Judiciaire
• Malawi Tithandizane Child Helpline/YONECO Malawi
• Malta Support Line 179
• Malta SOS Malta
• Mongolia Childline 123
• Nicaragua Linea 133
• Sudan National Council for Children Welfare
• Tajikistan Child Rights Center
• Tunisia Tunisian Association for Child Rights
• Turkey Association for Solidarity with The Freedom- Deprived Juvenile
• United Arab Emirates Abu Dhabi Social Support Centre
• UK Ukraine La Strada
• USA MYYS
• USA Polaris Project
• Uzbekistan Children & Families Support Association of Uzbekistan
• Vanuatu Vanuatu Family Health Association
1989
The Convention on the Rights of the Child is adopted.

1996
The first international (CHI) meeting of child helplines is held in Venice, Italy.

2001
International meeting of child helplines in Pune, India ignites the idea of a Global Network: Child Helpline International (CHI).

2003
Child Helpline International is founded in Amsterdam with 49 child helpline members in 46 countries.

2003
CHI’s Mission: to respond to children in need of care and protection and voice their concerns to policy and decisionmakers.

2003
CHI’s Vision: A world where technology allows children to be heard one by one and through their voices shape the world and realize their rights.

2004
The first Regional Consultations are held in Africa, Americas and Caribbean, Asia Pacific and Europe.

2004
The most common reasons for contacts with a child helpline regard: ‘peer relationships’, followed by ‘abuse and violence’, ‘psycho-social and mental health’ and ‘sexuality and sexual awareness’.

2004
CHI has grown to 74 members of which 64 are full members and are 10 associate members.

2004
CHI submits its first recommendation to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

2005
The International Telecommunications Union and CHI sign a Memorandum of Understanding.

2005
In this year, child helplines in the CHI network received over 10.6 million contacts from children and young people.

2005
The Second International Consultation of child helplines is held in Amsterdam, The Netherlands (20-23 March).

2006
The third International Consultation of child helplines is held in Stockholm, Sweden (1 – 4 October).

2006
Child helplines are recommended as a tool to create child-friendly reporting mechanisms in the United Nations Violence Against Children Report in overall Recommendation B.

2007
CHI’s second strategic period. The network has three objectives: Advocate for better child protection services, increase recognition of children’s voices by creating awareness about child helplines and establish a global network of child helplines.

2007
The CHI network grows to 91 child helpline members (full and associate).

2007
CHI publishes its first Violence Against Children follow-up report (November 2007).

2008
CHI celebrates its fifth anniversary.

2008
The CHI network grows to 99 full members in 88 countries and 27 associate members in 27 countries.

2008
International Child Helpline Day is celebrated for the first time under the theme Towards a Regional and Global Number.

2008
The Fourth International Consultation is held in Amman, Jordan (17 – 19 November).

2008
The ITU issues a statement on the allocation of short toll free numbers, preferably 116 111 to child helplines.

2008
Nearly 30% of all contacts to child helplines worldwide were about abuse and violence. Other common issues that children and young people wanted to talk about were family relations and peer relations.

2009
The CHI network grows to 108 full members in 92 countries and 27 associate members in 27 countries.

2009
Child helplines in the CHI network receive 12.6 million contacts from children and young people.
2009

Children and young people most commonly wanted to talk about psycho-social mental health (19%), abuse and violence (19%), peer relationships (15%), sexuality and sexual awareness and family relationships (both 10%).

2009

CHI contributes to the development of the International Telecommunication Union’s Global Guidelines on Child Online Protection.

2009

CHI and Relaf (Red Latinoamericana de Acogimiento Familiar or The Latin American Foster Care Network) sign a Memorandum of Understanding.

2009

Plan International and CHI sign a Memorandum of Understanding to start a pilot project on Violence in Schools.

2009

The role of child helplines to fulfill children’s Right To Be Heard is recognized in the Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment on article 12: “…to establish easy access to individuals or organizations to which they can report in confidence and safety, including through telephone helplines, and to provide places where children can contribute their experience and views on combating violence against children.”

2010

The CHI network grows to 109 full member child helplines in 95 countries and 38 associate member child helplines in 38 countries.

2010

The number of contacts received by child helplines tops 13.6 million. The number of visits to websites increases rapidly to 3.8 million visits in 2010.

2010

Most common reasons for contact were abuse and violence (19%), psycho-social mental health (17%) and peer relationships (15%).

2010

CHI improves its data collection questionnaire to add a gender dimension.

2010

The Fourth International Consultation of Child Helplines is held in Madrid, Spain (25 – 27 October).

2010

The North American Alliance of Child Helplines is established (May 2010).

2010

CHI signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Aflatoun and the BeCause Foundation.

2010

CHI’s soul statement is formulated: “Children are full citizens of the world. They need, deserve, and have an inalienable right to respect, nurturance, and support aimed at keeping them safe and helping them to participate fully in their lives according to their individual capabilities. Adults have a special obligation to ensure that children are safe and receive this respect, nurturance and support. Child helplines provide children with unique opportunities to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs and to seek help in their own terms, without fear or inhibition. Trusted by children, child helplines help to keep children safe and to receive respect, nurturance and support. They do this through their own direct responses and by using the knowledge given to them by children to advocate on their behalf. CHI exists because child helplines around the world gain strength from working together to express these shared ideals, values and beliefs.”

2011

The CHI network grows to 114 full members in 98 countries and 41 associate members in 40 countries.

2011

The number of contacts that child helplines in the network receive continues to grow to 17.3 million. Another 4.3 million visits to child helpline websites are registered.

2011

Abuse and violence was an issue for one in five of the children who contacted child helplines around the world. Other common issues children and young people wanted to discuss were psycho-social mental health (17%), peer relationships (15%) and family relationships (11%).

2011

The CHI network starts its third strategic period. Its objectives are to: establish more child helplines, strengthen the network and use child helpline information to strengthen national child protection systems worldwide.

2011

CHI publishes its fifth Violence Against Children Report which is launched by Marta Santos Pais, United Nations Secretary General’s Special Representative on Violence Against Children in Paris, France (25 January).

2012

CHI network grows to 167 member child helplines in 135 countries.

2012

Gathered in Durban, South Africa on 20 November, child helplines operating in 136 countries adopted the Durban Resolutions.

2012

In ten years, child helplines received 126 million contacts from children and young people.

2013

In ten years, 118 child helplines in 95 countries have joined the CHI network.

2013

CHI holds its first Policy Dialogues.

2013

CHI has 173 members in 141 countries.
Dear readers,

The world’s nations came together in 1989 to reaffirm the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which called for the continuous improvement in the situation of children all over the world. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most ratified of all the United Nations Human Rights treaties.

Since then many actions, such as the ‘World Fit for Children’ and the ‘Millennium Development Goals’, have been initiated to operationalise the intentions enshrined in the Convention. Child Helpline International applauds the United Nations for taking up these many different initiatives and actions to protect 2 billion children worldwide who remain unprotected.

Children and young people in many parts of the world are still in critical situations as a result of inadequate social conditions, natural disasters, armed conflicts, exploitation, illiteracy, hunger and disability. This urgently requires more effective national and international action.

In the absence of social protection it is likely that many young people may never be able to achieve their full potential and contribute to a society or a nation to which they belong. Great global social and economic inequalities have a huge impact on children.

It seems as if we are drifting further away from our intentions. We cannot afford to let go now. We have to invest in social protection and help the young strengthen their resilience to life’s challenges. We have to protect each nation’s human capital.

Protection and resilience building starts with listening. Listening to the voices of children and young people.

Many of the world’s children are still struggling to be heard. Their voices tell us heart-breaking stories, stories that are often not heard or listened to by those who should.

Child helplines worldwide are at the forefront of child protection allowing children and young people to receive counselling and assistance when in need. Data from Child Helpline International shows that in the last ten years over 126 million contacts were made with child helplines worldwide.

Over the past decade, children and young people have consistently contacted child helplines on issues of abuse and violence, troubled family relationships, problems at school and bullying.

Child helplines are operating in very different and sometimes difficult circumstances in a world that is developing fast, but also faces many challenges and various dominant social and cultural practices. As we look at the trends in the data collected and analysed by Child Helpline International, we can see an increasing number of children and young people who are denied access to services or who are in conflict areas. A UNICEF study on children affected by armed conflict mentions that nearly two thirds of the world’s population of children, or about 1.5 billion children living in 42 countries, were affected by violent, high intensity conflict between 2002 and 2006.

I strongly believe that child helplines empower children to take their lives into their own hands and resolve their problems as much as they can. They also serve as an early warning system for politicians and policymakers. They represent a social barometer that cannot be ignored and which indicates what is going on in the lives of children and young people - one of society’s most vulnerable groups. Whilst this publication offers further insights into the many serious problems faced by children in the world, I can see a great deal of hope for the future, especially when child helplines work in close collaboration with key decision makers.

This publication adds volume to the voices of our children and young people - growing up in our societies, encountering joy and youthful optimism on the one hand, but also hardship and experiences in their childhood and adolescence that will shape the rest of their lives. They are our future leaders, doctors, craftsmen, entertainers and teachers and they all have the right to be protected and to be heard. They all have, without exception, the right to live a life with dignity, free from fear and violence.

That is why I personally urge politicians, policy and decision makers and partners to read this publication: The Voices of Children and Young People. It contains a wealth of information, stories and trends. Please take it to heart and listen to their voices in all your work. Only by collective action, commitment and will can we ensure a bright future for the next generation of children and young people across the globe.

Introduction

Nenita La Rose
Executive Director
Child Helpline International
Executive Summary

Child helplines have been providing counselling, care and protection to children and young people for several decades. In 2003 child helplines from around the world came together as a network to amplify their voice and increase the impact of their collective work through greater collaboration and co-ordination. Child Helpline International (CHI) was tasked with the responsibility of establishing child helplines in countries where none existed, strengthening existing child helplines, and collecting data on the contacts made with child helplines to influence policy at the national and international level. The network began with 49 members in 2003 and has now grown to 173 child helpline members operating in 141 countries.

All child helpline members of CHI collect data and document the reasons for every contact that is made with them by a child or young person. CHI data shows that 126 million contacts were made with child helplines worldwide in the past ten years, however only 41 million contacts were responded to. Of these 41 million contacts, many of them were not segregated according to the standard reasons recorded by child helplines and were marked as unknown or unspecified. The remaining 85 million were contacts including test calls, prank calls or silent calls made to child helplines, mostly by young people before they actually began a conversation with the counsellors. It is also important to note that a large portion of these 85 million contacts remained unanswered because of the lack of human and financial resources faced by child helplines.

The most number of contacts were received in Europe (46%), followed by Asia Pacific (31%), Africa (14%), Americas and Caribbean (7%), and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (2%). The majority of children and young people who contacted child helplines around the world in the past ten years were between 10 - 18 years of age. The majority of contacts were made over the telephone, however children and young people are increasingly adopting other means of communications such as online chat, email and text messaging, in order to seek support and advice.

The data collected over a period of ten years indicates that children are willing to share their concerns and fears once they have trust in a system or mechanism. The increase in the number of child helplines, free of charge, easy to remember telephone numbers, and the adoption of new communications technology has enabled more children to access child helplines services than ever before.

The extensive data collected by CHI over the last ten years has provided an insight into the depth and range of issues faced by the young population in a country or region. The steady increase in contacts over the ten year period indicates that children and young people are feeling more empowered than before and are reaching out to child helplines to get information, support and care. On average, the number of contacts increased 5% per child helpline annually. This rise in contacts indicates that more children are contacting child helplines due to increased accessibility and awareness, or indeed that there are new emerging issues that need to be addressed by decision makers.

The most common issues that children and young people wanted to talk about were peer relationships (17%), abuse and violence (17%), psycho-social mental health (16%), and family relationships (15%).

The purpose of “The Voices of Children and Young People”, is to present issues that have always existed (presented in “RWD”) in children and young people’s lives and to highlight emerging issues (presented in “FWD”) that reflect the changing social paradigms and the challenges children and young people across the world experience every day.

Abuse and violence remains a constant issue causing serious problems in all regions. Over 4 million children and young people reported a form of abuse and violence (physical, emotional, sexual). The majority of abuse and violence cases were committed by an immediate family member.
One of the main reasons why children and young people contact child helplines has always been and remains to be the struggles at home and within the family. Hardships, such as interpersonal relationships or practical matters including maintenance and child support, custody and access, divorce and separation represent 15% of all contacts received by child helplines.

Child helplines received 1 million contacts regarding problems in schools. Besides general school-related issues such as academic problems, performance anxiety, problems with teachers or dropping out of school, many adolescents experience different forms of violence and abuse that are committed by their teachers and peers. Bullying is a significant problem that plagues many children’s lives.

Data from child helplines indicates serious gaps in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The ongoing financial crisis, increasing poverty and social inequalities have hit children and young people hard. Such inequities escalate humanitarian crises and increase the risks that vulnerable children and young people experience. Many children and young people are contacting child helplines on development-related issues including lack of birth registration, abandonment, the fulfilment of basic needs, inability to access basic services and discrimination. These factors greatly undermine the chances and wellbeing of the child, and highlight the disparities in progress towards the MDGs.

Hundreds of thousands of innocent children and young people have been killed in the increasing number and intensity of armed conflicts around the world over the last ten years. Those who have survived the bloodshed are living in extreme vulnerability, presenting a huge challenge to child protection agencies such as child helplines. It is in these unstable environments that we see child helplines redefining resourcefulness and creativity – in spite of limited resources. The innovative spirit of highly committed child helpline staff and the strong connections they build with referral systems, strengthens child protection mechanisms and acts as crucial access point for children and young people who would otherwise have nowhere to turn. It is therefore imperative that child helpline services are available to children and young people who are living in countries that are experiencing conflict or are in a state of emergency.

Contacts from “Generation Z” (those born in and after 1995) on psycho-social mental health issues in rich and developed countries with high or very high Human Development Index (HDI) levels are spiralling, especially during the more recent years and since the onset of the global economic crisis. Data trends demonstrate that compared to all the contacts from adolescents, this issue rose from 15% in 2006 to 21% in 2012.
THE DURBAN RESOLUTIONS

Gathered in Durban, South Africa on 20 November 2012, child helplines operating in 136 countries adopted the Durban Resolutions. Child helplines call upon all stakeholders in governments, agencies and the private sector to:

- Recognise child helplines’ unique capacity to bring the voices of children to bear on strengthening child protection;
- Partner with child helplines to ensure that they are sustainable and accessible for all children free of charge; and,
- Ensure that the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include the protection and empowerment of children and young people.

The data in this publication represents the voices of children and young people. It is imperative that governments and civil society listen to this call for action and ensure the strengthening of child protection systems by supporting existing child helplines and establishing child helplines in countries where they do not currently exist.

Generation Z is growing up in a world that has the advantage of rapidly advancing communication technology, however it also leaves children and young people susceptible to threats such as online bullying, commonly known as “cyber-bullying”. In the past two years more than 30,000 contacts on cyber-bullying were made with child helplines globally, of which the majority of contacts were from girls (71%).

Child helplines play an invaluable role in protecting children and young people. Annually, child helplines provide millions of children and young people with crucial services that safeguard their wellbeing. Child helplines should be recognised by governments and international organisations as an essential mechanism for guarding children, especially in countries where such services are currently lacking. In some countries, child helplines constitute the universal access of children and young people to child protection services, therefore governments and civil society should provide resources into such structures, so that their potential can be increased and strengthened.
**Warning Signs**

- Over 4 million children and young people reported a form of abuse and violence (physical, emotional, sexual).
- Children and young people are struggling at home and within the family.
- Teachers and peers commit a large number of abuse and violence cases.
- The voices of children and young people tell us that many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s) are not being attained.
- Child helplines in conflict environments provide support and protection to children and young people. Without their existence, these citizens would not be able to receive the right assistance and have their safety ensured.
- Generation Z is more susceptible to threats such as cyber-bullying.
Abuse and Violence

Abuse, violence and neglect collectively represent one of the most common reasons (17%) for children and young people to contact child helplines around the world. In total, 4.3 million contacts were received in the ten year period from 2003 to 2012 from children and young people affected by abuse and violence.

Children and young people have contacted helplines to seek help regarding issues of physical abuse (32%), bullying (28%), sexual abuse (19%), emotional abuse (11%) and neglect (10%).

Almost one million cases of physical abuse were reported by children and young people to child helplines. A member of the child or young person’s immediate or extended family committed 58% of the physical abuse cases. Girls (57%) report more cases of physical abuse occurring at home than boys.

Sexual abuse has emerged as one of the most prevalent forms of reported abuse globally. Almost one in five (19%) reported cases of abuse and violence are sexual abuse cases. In 40% of the sexual abuse cases, the perpetrator is identified as a person from the child’s immediate or extended family. In 81% of the sexual abuse cases, a male is reported by the child or young person as the person who committed the offence. More girls report sexual abuse (71%) cases to child helplines than boys.

More than one in ten abuse and violence cases involves emotional abuse. Data shows that immediate, extended and mixed family members were responsible for 66% of all the emotional abuse cases. More girls (61%) than boys reported such cases.

One in ten cases of abuse and violence is because a child is neglected. More girls (54%) than boys contact child helplines regarding this issue. In 75% of the cases, immediate, extended and mixed family members neglect the child or young person.

Case: Jessus (12) called the child helpline from a neighbour’s house. He had been locked up by his aunt, who forced him to do all of her domestic chores. If he did not perform to her standards, he would not get food or water. A neighbor spotted Jessus when he was carrying heavy trash down the road. Jessus almost fainted and struggled with his heavy load. With his neighbors help Jessus called the child helpline. The counsellor listened to his story and also talked with the neighbor. The child helpline’s social workers rescued Jessus from his aunt and found temporary care for him in a shelter. > Americas and Caribbean

A significant proportion of parents want the right to hit their children if they deem it necessary as part of their parenting strategy. << ASIA PACIFIC

In 2012, a child helpline in the CHI network received 14 contacts on abuse and violence per day. <<
**WARNING SIGNS**

Abuse and Violence represents over one in six contacts made to child helplines across the world.

Immediate or extended family members commit 50% of all abuse and violence cases.

The majority of Abuse and Violence cases are reported by girls (60%).

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**Case:** Leila (14) contacted the child helpline hysterically crying, whilst she was hiding in her bedroom closet. She was scared that her dad would find her and beat her. She said that her dad was drunk and on drugs and that she had previously been to the hospital due to his abuse. The counsellor immediately alerted the police whilst speaking to Leila, within 20 minutes the police rescued her, and informed the child helpline that they would follow up on the case. > The Americas and Caribbean

**Case:** Naledi (8) contacted a child helpline to report that her father’s cousin who was living with them had been sexually abusing her. The girl told the counsellor that she was afraid and had not spoken to anyone about her abuser. Naledi also informed the child helpline that she was too afraid to tell her parents in case they beat her. The child helpline contacted the parents and talked to them about the on-going situation. The child helpline provided emotional support to the girl, and explained to the parents how to denounce the abuse, including the legal process that should be followed. During a follow-up call, the child helpline was pleased to discover that the abuse had been condemned by the parents and has since been processed by the police. > Africa
Troubled Family Relationships

The lives of children and young people are surrounded by many interplaying dynamics such as home, school and social interactions. When parents separate or families split up, children bear the brunt of such family crises. Contacts regarding such matters represent 15% of all contacts made to child helplines over the past ten years. More girls (65%) than boys contacted child helplines on family related issues.

Over the past ten years almost 4 million contacts were made by children and young people with child helplines because they were struggling with family matters, involving parent-child relationships (42%), parents in conflict (23%), maintenance and child support (6%), child custody and access (5%) or new and blended families (3%). Other issues that children and young people sought advice on included sibling relationships (8%), parents with addiction or mental health problems (6%), bereavement (5%) or adoption issues (2%).

Children seeking counsel on interrelated issues such as divorce, separation and new and blended families account for almost one in three contacts (26%) made regarding family related issues.

Over one in ten contacts (11%) on family matters concern issues involving child maintenance and support as well as child custody and access.

Contacts relating to child custody and access tripled during 2008-2012 from 5,055 to 15,256 contacts respectively. A similar increase also occurred with contacts relating to child support and maintenance, which rose from 5% in 2008 to 8% in 2012 (24,164 contacts).

Across all regions, children and young people make contact to the same degree regarding issues of divorce and separated parents or parent-child relationship issues, except in Africa where more contacts were received regarding child maintenance and custody. In Europe, there has been a significant increase (almost 300%) on contacts regarding such issues (maintenance/custody) during the financial crisis years (2008-2012).

Children and young people also seek help in coping with domestic violence at home. In ten years, over 200,000 contacts were made with child helplines on this issue.

Case: Shu Lin (8) called a child helpline and shared that her parents were getting divorced. She explained that they often fight, and that she is at home to witness it. Sometimes they hit each other. She feels sad about what is happening at home and asked the child helpline why can’t they just talk about their problems instead of fighting? The counsellor at the child helpline empathised with how she was feeling and explained that it is not her fault that her parents are fighting and getting divorced. The child helpline counsellor also explained that the problems experienced by her parents were between them and that they needed to work on finding a solution. Shu Lin and the counsellor spoke for a while, until she felt better about the situation and realised that her parents still love her no matter what happens in their relationship. The counsellor also advised Shu Lin that if she ever feels the same that she can always contact the child helpline because they are there to help and listen to her.

Asia Pacific
Children and young people all around the world are experiencing problems in their families. Contacts regarding child custody and access have risen dramatically in the past five years. Contacts relating to child support and maintenance have steadily increased.

**Case:** Anna’s (16) parents divorced 8 years ago, and for the past 2 years she has lived with her father and his new partner. She does not understand why she has to live with her father, and she feels unwelcomed and unwanted. Anna explained that her relationship with her mother is good, and that she would like to live with her again. The counsellor supported Anna in finding ways to express her emotions and feelings, and practised simple communication techniques to help with the relationship with her father. Through the counselling she was able to understand different points of view on her situation. The counsellor also directed Anna to relevant services that would help her understand why it may be appropriate for her to live with her father. Anna appreciated the help given, and later called the child helpline to update them on her progress. > Europe

**WARNING SIGNS**

- Children need more attention from their parents. Since their parents are too busy with their jobs, they often contact the child helpline because they crave attention that they do not get at home. << Asia Pacific
Problems at School

School should be a safe environment where children can learn and develop without being burdened with problems. Children and young people struggle with issues relating to their studies, their teachers and with bullying. Child helplines receive many contacts from children and young people all over the world who express such problems.

Over a million and a half contacts (1.6 million) were made by children and young people with child helplines on school related problems, of which 57% were made by girls. Children and young people usually contact child helplines on issues relating to school when they are experiencing academic problems (39%), teacher problems (21%) and performance anxiety (14%). Other problems that they talk to child helpline counsellors included homework related problems (8%), dropping out of school (11%), or other adult related issues (7%).

Teachers have been reported to be perpetrators of abuse and violence (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect and bullying). Over 21,000 abuse cases were reported to child helplines in the ten year period. The majority of these cases were reported in Africa (51%) followed by Asia Pacific (35%), Europe (10%), MENA (4%) and the Americas and Caribbean (<1%). Generally, more male teachers (64%) were identified as perpetrators of abuse and violence, especially in sexual abuse cases (81%).

Peers also commit a significant proportion of abuse and violence cases (31%), of which 12% were sexual abuse cases, 25% physical abuse cases, 50% bullying cases, and 18% emotional abuse cases. Girls (59%) make more contact regarding abuse and violence committed by peers, than boys.

Bullying is a growing problem which children and young people face on a daily basis. Over one in four cases (28%) of abuse and violence is because of bullying, most of which takes place on school premises (80%). Bullying can be divided into four major categories – emotional, physical, exposure and theft. Data shows that 52% of the contacts on bullying are categorised under emotional bullying, 31% are physical bullying, 10% are incidents of bullying perpetrated through theft and 7% of the contacts were from children or young people who were exposed to some form of bullying.

Case: A mother contacted a child helpline because she was experiencing problems with her child Abraham. Since her separation from her husband she noticed that Abraham’s academic performance was poor. After speaking to a counsellor, she brought him to the child helpline’s walk-in centre. The Counsellor explained the importance of how his future depended on education. As a result, the boy changed his attitude and became more diligent in school. He still walks into the child helpline when he feels like he needs to talk to someone. > Africa

>> Corporal punishment remains a huge problem in schools. We often find that teachers use physical abuse as a form of discipline. Worst of all, many parents encourage it. << AFRICA
**WARNING SIGNS**

Children and young people are experiencing abuse and violence at school.

Teachers commit a large number of abuse and violence cases.

Peers commit a significant proportion of abuse and violence cases.

Bullying continues to plague the lives of children and young people in school.

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**Case:** The child helpline was called by a distressed father. His daughter had been beaten by a teacher at school. The beatings resulted in a broken arm. The child was taken for appropriate care, but the father wanted to know what steps he could take in order to prosecute the perpetrator. The child helpline referred the case directly to the relevant department in the Ministry of Education for investigation. During the investigation, the teacher was suspended without pay. The verdict is currently pending > MENA

**Case:** Cam (9) contacted a child helpline because she was being bullied at school. Cam felt isolated and could not focus on her up and coming exams. She had reported it to the teachers and the headmaster, who ignored her and did not take any action. Cam felt stuck and isolated. The child helpline empowered her with certain techniques that would help her cope with the bullying. The helpline also counselled her in taking certain steps to help end the bullying. > Asia Pacific
Violence against children is widespread and pervasive. It knows no economic, cultural or social borders and affects children of all ages in all regions of the world. Yet, most of the time child victims do not know where to go, whom to call and how to report incidents of violence and seek assistance to overcome the trauma they have suffered. For this reason, a priority of my mandate as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children is to promote in all States the establishment of law which is safe, child-sensitive, well-publicised, confidential and accessible mechanisms before whom children can seek advice and report incidents of violence, and benefit from effective remedies and long lasting reintegration. This was also a crucial recommendation put forward by the UN Study on Violence against Children.

Over the past decade, there has been an increasing comprehensive landscape of child helplines that address incidents of violence. This is an important development that we need to welcome! Child helplines enable children to anonymously seek help from well trained personnel who reach out to children and give them the advice and support they need and that they are entitled to. Moreover, through their daily contacts with children in more than 140 countries, child helplines generate valuable data and information about manifestations of violence and risk factors aggravating their occurrence. These are critical insights that governments and other stakeholders should take into account when shaping action to prevent and respond to violence against children.

I therefore warmly welcome this valuable report Voices of Children and Young People, issued by Child Helpline International, which provides first-hand data and insightful evidence informed by over 126 million stories shared with child helplines by children across regions over a period of ten years. The report is testimony to the trust children place in helplines and it is a sound basis to inform policies and interventions to build a world where violence against children has no place. But in addition, this report makes a strong call for urgent action.

I urge governments in all regions to further support child helplines in the provision of essential services to children and in their data collection efforts. I encourage decision makers to take to heart the lessons provided in this report and support further research in order to strengthen national child protection systems and effective prevention and response to incidents of violence against children.
Shankar, a young boy in India, was severely injured with worm-infested sores on his forehead and covering his leg and was in need of urgent medical attention. Despite his vulnerable state, Shankar was refused by the hospital as he did not have enough money to pay for treatment. At this point, Childline India intervened.

What started as a project for street children by street children themselves, grew into a national organisation spanning over 291 cities and districts in 30 provinces working with 540 partner organisations across India.

This concept took root and attracted other existing child helplines around the world, gained global momentum, and led to the birth of Child Helpline International. In the past 10 years, child helplines in 141 countries have received over 126 million contacts from children and young people.

Child helplines are at the centre of the child protection systems. By being at the centre, child helplines are responsible for responding to all needs of children and young people. It is the vision of child helpline to listen to children and to provide them with the comfort and care that they are struggling for. From Shankar, who was in desperate need of medical attention in India, to Caroline whose 8 year old daughter was being sexually abused by her husband in Kenya, to Shoeb who had lost contact with his parents during bombardments in Palestine, to Anouk who felt incredibly lonely as a young cancer patient in the Netherlands... all children want and need to be heard.

It is up to us, as adults, to create a sturdy protection system to ensure that no child is alone. It is up to child helplines to ensure that every single child around the globe knows that there is someone out there who cares for them, and that children know that comfort is only a phone call... email... text... or chat away.

This publication looks at the various cases and contacts made over the past 10 years. Based on the analysis of the gathered data we call for:

- Child helplines are the centre of the child protection system. Increased budgetary allocations must be made at the national and global level to ensure quality access to child helplines and to protect children and young people from abuse, violence and exploitation.
- The United Nations and its member states are encouraged to set up child helplines in all conflict zones and declare them as neutral, non-partisan organisations protecting children and young people, who are victims of a war or internal conflict.
- The United Nations, multilateral organisations and governments should develop a comprehensive child protection policy to ensure the overall well-being of children and young people, minimising the impact of the economic crisis and social inequality, and ending the emerging menace of cyber-bullying.

As you read through this publication, please think of Shankar, Caroline, Shoeb and Anouk, and the millions of vulnerable children just like them throughout the world. Let us ensure that a 24/7 helpline and protection system is available globally so every child knows that they are not alone.

>> Child helplines ensure that every single child around the globe knows that there is someone there for them who cares, and that children know that help is only a phone call...email...text...or chat away. <<
MDG’s in Child Protection Are Not Being Achieved

It is widely accepted that the Millennium Development Goals may not be achieved by 2015. CHI data on contacts made with child helplines illustrates the gaps that remain in achieving some of the MDGs.

Global child helpline data shows that the on-going financial crisis, increasing poverty and social inequalities have hit children and young people hard. Deprived of their basic rights, they are becoming increasingly marginalised, especially in the less developed regions of the world. Contacts made with child helplines in countries at the lower end of the Human Development Index (HDI), show not only the increased incidence of abuse and violence, but also bring to light the dangerous impact of widening economic disparity and disenfranchisement of children and young people.

Even in European countries where governments are tightening their belts and implementing austerity measures, children and young people are feeling the brunt of these changes. In many countries child welfare measures have been curtailed and in others many children’s services have been withdrawn due to a lack of funding. But the worst impact is being felt in developing and fragile states where young people are struggling to claim their rights. Social and economic poverty in these countries make children and young people extremely vulnerable.

Analysis of CHI data shows that many children and young people are contacting child helplines regarding lack of birth registration, abandonment, lack of basic needs, inability to access basic services and increased discrimination. These factors greatly undermine the life chances and wellbeing of the child, and highlight the gaps in progress towards meeting the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).

Birth registration is vital to any child’s identity and future. It is therefore essential that all children, especially from marginalised, disadvantaged social groups are provided with birth certificates that establish their identity as a person and as a citizen. Almost 38,000 contacts on birth registration were received by child helplines during the ten year period under review, of which 60% were made in the African region, followed by 30% in the Asia Pacific region.

Over the past five years, an average of 18 children each day contact child helplines around the world in order to seek advice on how to obtain a birth registration.

Another alarming issue is the abandonment of children across the globe. In ten years over 60,000 children and young people have contacted child helplines because they have been abandoned by their parents or caregivers. CHI data shows that abandonment is not differentiated by HDI level, as it is prevalent in both developed and developing states. Regionally, 36% of contacts on abandonment were received in Asia Pacific, followed by Africa (33%), Europe (20%), the Americas and Caribbean (8%) and MENA (3%).

Improving the health of children and their access to healthcare are key steps necessary to attainning the MDGs that targeted combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Analysis of CHI data shows that children and young people experience problems in accessing health care in both developing countries with low HDI and developed countries with high HDI. Almost 138,000 contacts were made with child helplines on this issue, of which a majority were received during 2010-2012. Regional disaggregation shows that most contacts were made with child helplines in Asia (60% - mostly from India, Nepal and the Philippines), followed by MENA (13% - mostly from Sudan and Egypt), Africa (12% - mostly from Guinea-Conakry), Europe (12% - mostly from Greece, Netherlands and Portugal) and the Americas and Caribbean (4% - mostly from Canada, Chile and the Unites States of America).
CALL FOR ACTION

Child helplines are the centre of the child protection system. Increased budgetary allocations must be made at the national and global level to ensure quality access to child helplines to protect children and young people from abuse, violence and exploitation.

Case: Rafael’s (18) parents died when he was young and he was raised by his relatives. When Rafael turned 18 his guardian’s attitude towards him changed. Rafael wanted to get an identity card, so that he could access services on his own. However he discovered that there was no legal documentation of his existence. The case was thoroughly investigated by a child helpline officer and was referred to an organisation for direct legal assistance. This organisation made an official appeal to several institutions and as a result Rafael obtained his birth certificate and later his identity card. > Europe

Case: Lucy (14) contacted a child helpline because she was orphaned and needed medical assistance, psycho-social support, shelter, adequate food and social and educational reintegration. The helpline facilitated the rescue of the girl and placed her in a safe home where her well-being was monitored and her case followed up on. > Africa

>> The proportion of contacts that child helplines receive on basic needs, requests for food and financial assistance has increased by two-thirds over the last ten years. <<
While one of the MDGs is the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, data from child helplines shows these issues remain significantly prevalent. Children and young people living in the poorest households reach out to child helpline in times of despair when they are lacking basic necessities such as food or social welfare. In the past ten years, over 220,000 children and young people have contacted child helplines calling for food, resources or financial aid.

According to HDI levels, the majority of these contacts were received in low HDI (32%), medium HDI (32%), very high HDI (26%), followed by an additional 10% of contacts that were made in high HDI countries. More girls (54%) reported such concerns to child helplines and a majority of these contacts were made in the Asia Pacific (37%), followed by Africa (30%), Europe (21%), the Americas and Caribbean (8%) and MENA (4%). Specifically, since 2007 the highest percentages of contacts were received by child helplines in Nepal, India, Pakistan, Kenya, South Africa, Greece and the United States of America. This indicates that not only are there resource gaps in these countries and global social security systems, but that child helplines offer a safety net of solution based intervention that help keep children and young people safe.

Discrimination exacerbates exclusion, particularly when it denies access to education for children struggling to break out of the poverty trap. Almost 40,000 contacts were made by children and young people expressing their inability to access education. Not surprisingly 95% of the contacts were recorded in countries with low to medium HDI levels. Regionally, 71% of the contacts were received in Africa, followed by Asia Pacific (23%), Europe (3%), MENA (2%) and the Americas and Caribbean (1%). The majority of children and young people unable to access education were girls (52%).

Children face discrimination on a daily basis in access to other services too, either due to their ethnicity, physical and mental health, gender, language, sexual orientation, or disability. Over 183,000 contacts were made with child helplines on issues related to discrimination. The key reasons for children and young people contacting child helplines on discrimination related issues were due to access to education (31%), mental and physical health (22%), immigration issues (19%), racism (19%) and employment related (9%). Regionally, contacts on discrimination were received in Africa (38%), Asia Pacific (34%), Europe (19%), the Americas and Caribbean (3%) and MENA (6%).

**The proportion of contacts on access to education has more than doubled since 2005.**
CHI data demonstrates that the majority of contacts on issues relating to discrimination are received in United Kingdom, Iceland, Nepal, South Africa and Guinea-Conakry. Children and young people in the African region face more discrimination issues regarding access to education (57%) and racism (27%). Children and young people in MENA mostly made contact concerning mental and physical discrimination (88%).

An alarming trend has been identified in the numbers regarding racism related issues which have increased from 1% (3 contacts) in 2003 to 29% (6,729 contacts) in 2012. Regionally, the majority of contacts on racism were reported in Africa (54%), followed by Asia Pacific (23%), Europe (19%), the Americas and Caribbean (3%) and MENA (1%). The child helplines that have had the most racism related contacts are in South Africa, Nepal and Guinea-Conakry.

**Case:** Nishad (15) contacted a child helpline because he was hungry. After speaking to him for some time, Nishad confessed that he was homeless and was not attending school. Immediately the counsellor asked him for his location and alerted a social worker about the situation. Nishad was rescued and placed in a shelter. He now attends school and has been placed with a family that want to adopt him. > Asia Pacific

**Case:** Dominic (7) called the helpline saying that he failed school because he didn’t have money to pay for the bus which takes him to school. The counsellor talked to him about how he was feeling about it, and then asked why he didn’t have a free pass from the government as it is free of cost. The boy said that his mother missed the deadline to apply for the pass. The counsellor told him that she was going to contact the municipality to ask for a free pass for him as every child had a right to it. When the counsellor called Dominic back he said: “I thought you had forgotten about me! I’m so happy that you didn’t”. Just as the counsellor was speaking to him, his mother arrived home and asked to talk to the helpline. She thanked the helpline for their service and said that her son wrote down the helpline’s number on a piece of paper with the following sentence: “If I get sad I must call this number...” > Americas and Caribbean
Children and Conflict

As conflicts across the globe have increased and become bloodier than before, the lives of children and young people in these situations have become more perilous, exposing them to extreme dangers and impacting their emotional well-being. Conflicts have a long-term debilitating impact on the physical and mental health of children and young people.

Bloodshed, violence and deprivation during and after conflicts significantly influence the lives of children and young people. Millions of children have lost their lives, and many more millions around the world are currently living through conflicts, residing in camps and shelters, deprived of basic amenities, exploited, or rendered disabled for life.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said in a document on children affected by armed conflict that nearly two thirds of the world’s population of children or about 1.5 billion children living in 42 countries were affected by violent, high intensity conflict between 2002 and 2006. 1

The Geneva based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, a multi-stakeholder body that collects data on internal displacement for the United Nations (UN) and humanitarian agencies estimates the figure of internally displaced children to be at 13.5 million.2 The numbers have increased significantly over the past couple of years as more conflicts have emerged in Africa, Asia Pacific, and the MENA region.3

Contacts with child helplines in the countries that are experiencing or are emerging from conflicts demonstrate a range of issues and problems that children and young people confront in their daily lives. To improve the understanding of the need for child helplines in all conflict zones, this section contains data from the child helpline in Palestine, a country in conflict, and Nepal, which is emerging out of an internal conflict.

Children and young people in conflict zones suffer from extreme forms of abuse and violence, psycho-social and mental health issues, deep trauma and often neglect and exploitation.

Generation after generation in Palestine have grown up in a state of constant war which has lasted over 65 years. Data collected by the child helpline in Palestine “Sawa” gives an insight into the needs and problems of children and young people living in one of the most precarious regions in the world.

Since 2008, nearly 130,000 children and young people have contacted Sawa seeking care and protection. Of the known reasons why children and young people contacted the child helpline, more than 46% (41,000) contacts were from those who had suffered abuse and violence. Another 17% (15,000 contacts) concerned psycho-social and mental health issues, most of them regarding the fear and anxiety that young people experience in a conflict zone.

In an environment beset by violence and conflict, children and young people are unable to maintain a stable life. They have trouble in their relationships with peers and also with their family members. Often, children and young people living in a conflict environment grow up to support violent behaviour as that is what they witness in their formative years.

Data from child helpline in Nepal, CWIN, highlights the state of children and young people in the conflict and post-conflict period. Between 2003 and 2009 more than 446,719 children and young people contacted the child helpline in Nepal about their direct involvement in the conflict. Since 2009 no such contacts were received, as the armed conflict came to an end and children ceased to be recruited as soldiers.

However, the impact of the conflict was severe on the lives of young people. Access to education and health care became highly impeded. Over 18,000 young people reported dropping out of schools and another 18,000 contacted child helplines to seek healthcare.

2 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, http://www.internal-displacement.org/children
3 UNHCR http://www.unhcr.org/521621999.html
Economic deprivation resulting from the protracted conflict in Nepal increased the vulnerability of children and young people to abuse and exploitation, and it continues unabated at an alarming rate. Child helpline Nepal received, in the ten year monitoring period, more than 15,000 contacts on trafficking of children, over 14,000 on sexual exploitation, more than 21,000 on domestic child labour, over 7,500 on children used for begging and another 7,200 on children used on criminal activities. Most of the cases of exploitation registered a sharp increase after 2009, when a political solution brought an end to the violence.

As child helplines maintained and stepped up their services during the conflict period more than 1.1 million children and young people were able to access advice, care and protection through Sawa and CWIN.

Both Sawa and CWIN provide an example of the services child helplines provide in conflict zones. There are numerous child helplines around the world operating in conflict areas and humanitarian situations, rising to the challenge of protecting children and young people’s lives and rights.

**CALL FOR ACTION**

The United Nations and its member states are encouraged to set up child helplines in all conflict zones and declare them as neutral, non-partisan organisations protecting children and young people, who are victims of a war or internal conflict.

**Case:** Sawa received a call from a five year old girl who was left alone with her three year old brother. The parents had apparently not returned from a short outing during the bombings three days prior. The Sawa Counsellor managed to locate the girl's whereabouts, send an emergency vehicle to retrieve the siblings and to bring them to a safe environment. Their pictures were pinned to search boards across the city and their parents were able to locate them some days later. > Palestine
Children Feel Less Happy in Developed Countries

Generation Z – namely those born from 1995 to the present day – are largely unhappy. The current global economic situation is aggravating psycho-social mental health issues amongst young people as they face new challenges within their families and altered socio-economic realities.

From the contacts made with child helplines, it emerges that the social and economic environment is a primary cause of mental health problems. Since 2007, with the onset of the economic crisis, there has been a sharp increase in contacts regarding issues related to psycho-social and mental health in developed countries that have very high Human Development Index (HDI). Data trends show that compared to all contacts received per year, contacts from adolescents on psycho-social mental health rose from 15% in 2006 to 21% in 2012. These contacts are more prevalent in regions where the impact of the economic crisis has been significant.

The correlation between the onset of the global economic crisis and reports of psycho-social mental health issues is striking. Disaggregated data on issues such as depression, fear and anxiety, suicidal tendencies and self-harm show an increase of occurrence at the time of the economic upheaval. During 2007 – 2012 contacts on depression, fear and anxiety increased by up to 320% in both high and very high HDI countries, and respectively, contacts on suicidal tendencies increased by 250% during that period.

Generation Z is highly connected to communication and media technology, which has empowered young people with ease of access to knowledge but makes them vulnerable to bullying, stalking and trolling in the virtual world.

Bullying has become increasingly dominant, especially through social media channels. In ten years over a million contacts were made to child helplines on bullying and cyber-bullying. Generally, more girls (58%) reported bullying compared to boys. The gravity of bullying in the lives of children and young people can be gauged from the fact that 28% of contacts made with child helplines in the past ten years on abuse and violence were related to bullying.

Web and mobile-based messages reach children and young people in the privacy of their own home, twenty-four hours a day making bullying inescapable and more impactful than in the past. As a result, an increasing number of child helplines state that they receive contacts on cyber-bullying. CHI began collecting data on cyber-bullying in 2011 and since then more than 30,917 contacts have been received by child helplines about this growing phenomenon. Contacts on cyber-bullying also demonstrate a similar trend in terms of the gender of victims - 71% of cyber-bullying cases that are reported to child helplines, are made by girls.

Contacts on psycho-social mental health rose from 15% in 2006 to 21% in 2012. These contacts have been more prevalent in regions where the impact of the economic crisis has been significant.
**Case:** “I don’t want to live anymore. Nothing makes any sense to me. I ate some pills 15 minutes ago and hope I will die”. This was Joe when he called a child helpline in distress. “Nobody loves me, I am so alone with my problems. I want to be through with everything”. The child helpline listened to Joe, and advised him to induce vomiting in order to get rid of the pills he had taken. Joe then agreed to provide his personal information so that the child helpline could send someone to examine him in person.  

**Case:** Amal (18) became involved with the wrong group of friends. When she tried to withdraw from their friendship, the group sent her a pornographic video featuring a girl that looked like her. Amal’s group of friends threatened to send the video to everyone she knew. Amal was afraid, and did not know how to deal with situation. The counsellor encouraged her to watch the video – so that she could be assured that no one would mistake her for the person in the video. After counselling, Amal was able to approach her family and together they went to the police. Thereafter, she moved schools so that she could feel safe and protected.  

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**CALL FOR ACTION**

The United Nations, multilateral organisations and governments should develop a comprehensive child protection policy to ensure the overall well-being of children and young people, minimising the impact of the economic crisis and social inequality, and ending the emerging menace of cyber-bullying.
BACKGROUND > CHILD HELPLINE INTERNATIONAL

The story of Child Helpline International began 25 years ago on the streets of India where CHI’s Founder Jeroo Billimoria had been working as a social worker and gave her phone number to children in need. Her phone did not stop ringing! That was when Jeroo realised that these children really needed someone to speak to and seek help from in times of need. This was when CHildline India was set up with the support of volunteers, who kept a log of phone calls that they received. This established the importance of data collection for the creation of child friendly policies whilst placing it at the centre of child protection.

At an international gathering of child helplines in Pune, India, in 2001, a number of child helpline representatives discussed the need for a child helpline “helpdesk” that would support child helplines and create new ones in countries where they did not exist. This lead to the International Consultation, held in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in 2003 which was attended by 49 child helpline representatives from all over the world. Thereafter, Child Helpline International was officially launched.

Child Helpline International has grown into a unique, global network of 173 members comprising civil society and government organisations in 141 countries. Our organisation is recognised at all levels of its work, whether it is: our knowledge and resources, the steps we take in safeguarding the rights and lives of children , the strengthening or creation of child helplines, our data, or advocacy and awareness raising.

To date, Child Helpline International has achieved many milestones. Besides strengthening child helplines or creating ones in countries where they do not exist, Child Helpline International is making its print on the international child protection community.

Three times a year, Child Helpline International sends recommendations to the Committee on the Rights of Children (CRC), which are used in its Concluding Observations.

In 2008 The European Commission (EC) reserved the toll free telephone number of 116 111 for child helplines which was later followed by the Council of Europe recommending this number to all child helplines in the region.

In 2012, through Child Helpline International efforts the South Asian Association of Child Helplines (SAACH) assigned the regionally harmonised number 1098. Our work has also been recognised by the United Nations through various reports, and we have also received several awards (Multidisciplinary Team Award from International Society of Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in 2012, and the Award for Promoting Regional, and the International Cooperation from the World Summit on the Information Society in 2013).

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILD HELPLINE SERVICES AND DATA

It is the basic right of children and young people to be heard, to voice their opinions and their concerns. This is enshrined in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child. Child helplines give a voice to children and young people and empower them to take their lives in their own hands, to resolve their problems and get professional assistance.

Child helplines are mechanisms that allow children and young people to reach out for care, assistance, counselling, intervention and referral when they are in need. In many cases, child helplines are at the forefront of child protection providing children with an entry point into a system that may not be child friendly or accessible.

With these crucial services offered to children and young people, child helplines are in a unique position to collect accurate data on the concerns, issues and in some instances horrors that children are exposed to. Because child helplines are the first unofficial contact, children are inclined to open up more with them than with other services. This vital wealth of data can be used to steer key policy decisions by governments, and provide guidance to civil society organisations to align their programmes relevant to the needs of children and young people so that collectively they are able to strengthen child protection systems at the national and sub-national levels.

For this to happen, child helpline services have to be optimally accessible. CHI has also consistently recommended the implementation of four key child helpline indicators to achieve maximum impact. The implementation of these indicators guarantee maximum accessibility to all children, regardless of their gender, origin, economic status or location.

These indicators are:

1. **Free of cost**: Child helplines should be accessible, free of costs from landlines and mobile phones for both the child and the child helpline, so that children and young people have the possibility to access help, irrespective of their gender or economic status.
2. **Three or four digit telephone number or regionally harmonised numbers**: A national number with few digits makes it easy for the child to remember it in case of emergency.
3. **National coverage**: Child helplines should have national coverage so that any child can seek assistance from any part of the country, especially rural areas.
4. **Opening hours 24/7**: In order for child helplines to be accessible to children at all times it should have services that work around the clock, every day of the week.
Child Helpline International (CHI) is the global network of 173 child helplines in 141 countries (April 2013). In ten years together child helplines in the network received more than 126 million contacts from children and young people in need of care and protection. CHI supports the creation and strengthening of national toll free child helplines worldwide and uses child helpline data and knowledge to highlight gaps in child protection systems and advocate for the rights of children.

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Disclaimer:
CHI’s work is firmly grounded in the principles and values enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), including children’s right to privacy and protection from harm. To this end, and to preserve the trust and confidence children place in child helplines worldwide every day, all identifying details and information about individual children cited in this report have been removed or altered. Although cases and quotes are real, the names of children and young people are not.

This publication is based on the analysis of information received from 147 child helplines in the CHI network around the world. This data was obtained through CHI's data questionnaire that were given annually to the child helplines. The conclusions and statements are based on this information and they do not capture the full scope of practices and policies of all countries and cases handled by child helplines and other child protection organisations at the national level.

The percentages for reasons of contacts shown in this publication are based on contacts made to child helplines with a known reason.

In 10 years, child helplines received more than 126 million contacts. These contacts are made through different means of contacts such as telephone, SMS, email, chat, outreach activities and walk-in centres. Only 41 million of 126 million contacts resulted in a conversation. Two thirds of contacts made through telephone can’t be answered due to lack of capacity. A part of those unanswered contacts are made up of prank calls or test calls. Child helplines also reported many contacts with unknown reasons, requests for information or reasons for contact other than CHI categories. The percentages shown are based on the remaining segment.
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The Voices of Children and Young People

GIVING A VOICE TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WORLDWIDE