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## **One in Two Children in Developing Countries Say Children Aren't Safe at Home; Just as Many U.S. Kids Say Children Are at Risk Online**

**RICHMOND, Va., Nov. 20, 2015** – Two months after the United Nations made protecting children against violence a global priority, almost half of young children in developing countries say that they believe that children are not safe in their own homes. About the same number of American kids believes that children are at risk on the Internet.

The findings are part of just-released survey sponsored by the ChildFund Alliance of nearly 6,000 children ages 10 to 12 in 44 countries around the world, as well as a parallel survey of 1,353 U.S. kids, ages 6 to 18 in largely impoverished areas, commissioned by ChildFund International, the U.S. member of the Alliance.

According to the sixth annual *Small Voices, Big Dreams* survey – conducted through one-on-one interviews in the field and online surveys in the United States – 46 percent of children in developing nations say they believe that children are most at risk of being harmed at home, the second-highest survey response behind “walking in places alone” (55%). (Children could select more than one answer.)

In the parallel survey, U.S. children say they think that kids are least safe walking in their neighborhoods (cited by 64% of respondents) and in parks (45%). Almost as many (44%) say children are not safe online. Almost nine in 10 American kids (89%) say children here are not at risk of danger at home.

“Governments around the world have collectively committed to protecting children against violence through the U.N.’s Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted last September, and the results of this survey illuminate how children see the dangers that confront their generation,” said Anne Lynam Goddard, president and CEO of ChildFund International. “While many children are exposed to various forms of despicable violence – forced hazardous labor, sexual trafficking and abductions, among them – we also know that their safety is regularly threatened in places they should feel the most secure: at home and in school. These findings serve as a pointed reminder of the extent of the commitment we must make to keep children safe.”

The survey's results reflect significant variation among the disparate nations. In the African country of Guinea, for example, only 4 percent of children say that children are at risk for harm at home, while in Togo, 94 percent of children say the children of their country are unsafe at home.

Survey participants were asked for their insights as to why they believe adults mistreat children. Children in developing nations are split as to the primary reason with 40 percent saying it is because "adults have power" and 35 percent attribute it to being the "child's fault." Similarly, 32 percent cite "punishment" as being behind the abuse.

In Australia, 70 percent of children surveyed say that adults harm children due to drugs or intoxication. Three in five French children (60%) believe that abuse is the result of their parents themselves having been mistreated as children.

"This annual survey reminds us of the honesty and clarity in how children see the world around them," Goddard said. "These truths often point to the areas that most need our attention."

When asked what they would do to better protect children if they were the leader of their country, one in five children (22%) in developing countries say they would punish the abusers/send them to prison while 20 percent say they would pass, strengthen or better enforce laws designed to protect children.

One in three (32%) of American children agree with the emphasis on passing and/or enforcing laws that will more effectively protect them.

In Afghanistan, one in three children (32%) say that if they were their country's leader they would require that children finish their educations. Thirty-nine percent of Vietnamese children say they would discourage bad behavior while exemplifying good behavior.

As for the most important thing that children believe adults – especially parents and caregivers – can do to keep children safer, children in developing nations are largely split. Almost one in five (18%) say that adults should listen to what children have to say. The next-most popular answers: Educate other adults about why children deserve better treatment (13%); report cases of harm against children (11%); and enact stronger laws to protect children's rights (10%).

More than one in three children in the United States (35%) agree that adults should listen to children more, with a quarter (23%) saying that harm against children should be reported to the proper authorities.

In the Asian nation of Timor-Leste, about two-thirds of children (64%) say that adults should "love children more," while one in four children in Mexico (25%) and Liberia (25%) say that adults should see that people who hurt children are punished.

"As in years past, the children who participated in this survey are those whose voices are rarely heard and whose opinions are rarely sought," Goddard said. "Not only do these results provide a forum for some of the world's most vulnerable children to tell us collectively what they see, but

their insights also give us important direction for how we should shape our efforts to best serve them.”

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<b>PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES</b>			
<b>AFRICA</b>	<b>AMERICAS</b>	<b>ASIA</b>	<b>DEVELOPED</b>
Benin	Bolivia	Afghanistan	Australia
Burkina Faso	Brazil	Bangladesh	Canada
Ethiopia	Dominica & St. Vincent	Cambodia	Denmark
Ghana	Ecuador	India	France
Guinea	El Salvador	Indonesia	Ireland
Kenya	Guatemala	Philippines	Japan
Liberia	Honduras	Sri Lanka	New Zealand
Mali	Mexico	Timor-Leste	South Korea
Senegal	Nicaragua	Vietnam	Spain
Sierra Leone	Paraguay		Sweden
The Gambia			USA
Togo			
Uganda			
Zambia			

**About the *Small Voices, Big Dreams* Survey**

The *Small Voices, Big Dreams* survey was commissioned by the ChildFund Alliance in May 2015. The survey was conducted in 44 countries with children aged 10 to 12. This included 33 developing nations in Africa, Asia and the Americas as well as 11 developed countries. A total of 5,805\* children were surveyed—3,773 children in developing countries and 2,032 children in developed nations.

Three of the six questions were open-ended, meaning the children were not given a list of answers to choose from. The three remaining questions were multiple choice. All translated responses were provided to global research company GfK to process the data. Code frames were developed by GfK Roper’s global research team and approved by ChildFund. The data was then compiled, coded and tabulated by GfK Roper.

\*Japan’s data is not reflected among the total respondents. A total of 126 Japanese children participated in the study.

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**About ChildFund International**

ChildFund International is a global child development and protection agency serving 20 million children and family members in 30 countries. For 75 years, we have helped the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable children survive and thrive to reach their full potential and become leaders of enduring change.

As a member of ChildFund Alliance, we create supportive environments in which children can flourish. For more information about ChildFund, visit [www.ChildFund.org](http://www.ChildFund.org).

### **About ChildFund Alliance**

ChildFund Alliance is a network of 12 child-focused development organizations working in 58 countries around the world. With an annual turnover of more than \$500 million, ChildFund Alliance helps an estimated 15 million children and their families to overcome poverty.

Founded 75 years ago, our members are not-for-profit organizations that work directly with children, families and their communities. The Alliance seeks to speak with one global voice for, with and on behalf of children.

Our vision is a world in which children realize their rights and achieve their potential.

### **About GfK Roper**

GfK is one of the world's largest research companies, with more than 11,000 experts working to discover new insights about the way people live, think and shop, in more than 100 markets, every day.

GfK Roper Public Affairs & Corporate Communications is a division of GfK. The group specializes in customized public affairs and public opinion polling, media and corporate communications research, and reputation measurement in the U.S. and globally. The division also serves as the official polling partner of the Associated Press, conducting the AP-GfK Poll ([ap-gfkipoll.com](http://ap-gfkipoll.com)).

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