

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT – PREVALENCE AND ATTITUDINAL RESEARCH IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA



Global Initiative to
**End All Corporal Punishment
of Children**

Summaries prepared by the Global Initiative to
End All Corporal Punishment of Children
(www.endcorporalpunishment.org), March 2008

Note: No prevalence research identified for Benin, Cape Verde, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal

BURKINA FASO

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 56% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (37%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 71% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

CAMEROON

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 75% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (43%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 56% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

According to a study on corporal punishment made by the NGO EMEDA with UNICEF support in December 2000, 81.4% of families admitted to using corporal punishment against children as an educational measure.

(Reported by UNICEF, June 2004)

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 74% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (23%) believed that children need to be physically punished.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

COTE D'IVOIRE

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 71% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (39%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 65% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

GAMBIA

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 71% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (31%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 74% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

GHANA

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 69% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (43%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 47% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

GUINEA-BISSAU

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 70% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (25%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 52% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

LIBERIA

Research by the NGO Cherish the Kids has shown that corporal punishment of children is common in most homes. In a 1999 survey of 18,000 parents of children aged 5-15 years, 85% approved of corporal punishment. Of these, 46% approved of severe beating of children in cases of “gross misbehaviour”. The same organisation undertook a survey of school chapters in 1999-2000, which found that of 24,000 children from 41 schools in rural and urban areas, 81% said they had been physically punished or severely flogged by their parents. A large scale interview study of parents and children in rural areas showed that one third of children (38%) were disciplined by beating and flogging, and children reported that harsh discipline caused injuries.

(All studies reported by Cherish the Kids in correspondence with the Global Initiative, July 2004)

NIGERIA

Large scale research in 2000 by the Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN), revealed that physical assault was one of the most common complaints against police by juvenile offenders. About two-thirds of the juveniles reported being verbally abused (66.5%), physically assaulted (64.7%) and threatened with beating (68.5%) by police. The figures relating to treatment by custodial officers were 43.5% for verbal abuse, 39.1% for physical assault. Corporal punishment was found to be frequently used in custody. 25.7% of young offenders reported being flogged very frequently, 12.8% frequently, 44.1% sometimes and 17.4% never. The corresponding figures for other types of corporal punishment were: kneeling 25.9%, 13.8%, 33%, 27.3%; frog jumping 26.3%, 9.4%, 33.9%, 30.4%; and tough physical drill 14.1%, 20.6%, 30.4% and 0%.

(Alemika, E.E.O. & Chukwuma, I.C., 2001, *Juvenile Justice Administration in Nigeria: Philosophy and practice*, Lagos: CLEEN)

SIERRA LEONE

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 76% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (56%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 85% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

TOGO

According to a statistical review by UNICEF, 73% of children aged 2-14 experienced minor physical punishment in the home in 2005-2006, although a smaller percentage of mothers/caretakers (33%) believed that children need to be physically punished. The same review reported that 53% of girls and women aged 15-49 believed that a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

(UNICEF, 2007, *Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children – Statistical Review, Number 6, December 2007*)

From mid-2005, Plan Togo commissioned research into violence and abuse in schools (Plan Togo, 2006). This included a joint study with the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) which involved interviews with 1,000 schoolchildren in 35 villages and with more than 500 mothers of school aged children, teachers, traditional chiefs, members of security services, social workers and others, a case study on violence and abuse in Togolese schools comprising 19 first-person narratives and observations based on interviews with children, parents and teachers in 7 villages and 2 towns, and a discussion of structural violence in the education system in Togo. In the FAWE research, children in their last 3 years of primary school were interviewed: 88% of the girls and 87% of the boys reported experiencing physical violence at school; 52% of girls and 48% of boys reported experiencing threatening behaviour or psychological violence.

(Plan Togo, 2006, *Suffering to Succeed? Violence and abuse in schools in Togo*, Lome: Plan Togo)

A 2003 Human Rights Watch report on child trafficking in Togo noted that many boys had been recruited into agricultural labour and worked very long hours, with many recalling that taking time off for sickness or injury would lead to longer working hours or corporal punishment. Most boys interviewed reported suffering physical injuries on the job and some of these were from corporal

punishment by employers. The report notes that girls trafficked for domestic or market labour also experienced frequent beatings, carried out by bosses or by other neighbours.

(Human Rights Watch, 2003, *Borderline Slavery: Child Trafficking in Togo*)