

Ending Physical and Humiliating Punishment against Children: Sudan



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Lead Researcher: Dr. Salwa Saad Awad

Researchers in alphabetical order:

Ahmed Mohamed Obeid
Amal Hashim Al-Jack
Amani Hashim
Amir Khalaf Allah Yaagoub
Amna Bashier
Aymen Maali
Bashir Ahmed El-Haj
Iglal Mohieldin Yassin
Mujtaba Saeed Arman
Salaheldin Abdelaziz
Salwa Abdalla
Salwa Kamal El-zubair

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Editor: Greg McIvor

Save the Children Sweden
Eastern and Central Africa Regional Office
Box 3457
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 32 10 960
Fax: +251 11 32 14 234
Mail office@swedsave-et.org

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Executive summary

In Sudan, corporal punishment is widespread and common in schools and in the home. It is practised by schoolteachers for “educational” purposes and by parents as a method of disciplining children.

Save the Children Sweden performed a field study to investigate the attitudes of Sudanese children to corporal punishment and to analyse their views on preferred alternatives. The field research was based on the aim of gaining a better understanding of the prevalence, magnitude, types and causes of physical violence as it affects children. It also aimed to document the children’s views and opinions on the violence inflicted on them and to make their voices heard. Another objective was to identify good practices and alternatives to corporal punishment by children and for children.

The field study was conducted in Khartoum, Sudan’s capital. The city’s multicultural and ethnic diversity made it an ideal area for research and enabled the researchers to approach schoolchildren of various social backgrounds.

The research revealed that corporal punishment is prevalent in schools and in the home and is practised by schoolteachers and parents alike. The majority of children interviewed for the study said they had experienced physical punishment either at school or at home.

Children’s perceptions of physical punishment were examined and children were able to disclose the types of punishment meted out at school or in the home, the main causes of such punishments, and their suggested alternatives. Children were also approached to identify those who carry out acts of physical punishment.

Sudanese policy and legal frameworks were reviewed with the aim of identifying loopholes and good practices with regards to physical and humiliating punishment.

The methodology underpinning the study relied heavily on qualitative research. The main reason for this approach was to focus on the participation of children and to translate their perceptions into intelligible comments, thereby facilitating the redrafting of policies and legislation on physical punishment.

The sample size was very limited due to time constraints. The study began just at the end of the school year and children were either busy with exams or were starting their summer holidays. All data had to be collected within three weeks, which made it difficult to apply all the participatory techniques with children.

Sudan’s government has exhibited a genuine commitment to establish a policy framework to prohibit physical punishment at all schools, as evidenced by the school regulations it issued in 1994. It is also important to highlight that Sudan has signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter.

However, the children’s views expressed in this study reveal that these laws and charters suffer from weak implementation. Neither the study team nor any of the research participants discovered any monitoring or supervisory techniques for ensuring compliance.

Traditionally, physical punishment is the main technique for disciplining children in Sudanese schools and homes. Teachers still use corporal punishment as their primary method of punishing schoolchildren. Children displayed remarkable awareness of the alternative techniques that their teachers and care-givers could use. They highlighted dialogue and listening as the main tactics that should be employed prior to any punishment. Forty-three per cent of children interviewed mentioned the importance of schoolteachers being acquainted with students’ families, while 31% of students commented that teachers should not insist on them paying fees to the school.

Beating (hitting) emerged as the commonest type of corporal punishment. The use of the hand is also very common. Slapping in the face, kicking and blows to the shoulders were all mentioned.

Parents and teachers were identified as the main perpetrators of physical punishment in the home and at school respectively. Street children said they received physical punishment from adults on the streets and from police officers. Within the penal system, corporal punishment is commonplace, particularly during the investigation period.

Reasons for physical punishment focused on the poor awareness of teachers, parents and children themselves about the rights of children and the alternatives to punishment.

The study concludes with key recommendations addressed to the Sudanese government (notably the Ministry of Education), school administrations and national and international human rights organisations. It also calls for the creation of children's advocacy groups to work for the abolition of corporal punishment in schools and to raise public awareness about the problem.

I. Introduction

All children have human rights, regardless of their age, gender, race, ethnicity or disability. These rights are clearly set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. The convention is the most widely accepted human rights treaty ever (only two countries are yet to endorse it) and commits governments to protecting and ensuring children's rights.

Children are often seen but not heard. Yet their voice is crucial to the development process. Without a specific focus on child rights, we risk missing the issues that matter to children. This UN study was therefore designed to analyse children's views on the different types of treatment that they receive from their mentors, teachers, parents and peers – particularly treatment that implies violence.

Corporal punishment is, quite literally, the application of punishment to the body. Even after being differentiated from capital punishment, it remains a very broad term. It can be used to refer to a wide spectrum of punishments, ranging from forced labour to mutilating torture. This study focused on a form of corporal punishment that seems to be the pivotal area of controversy – the infliction of physical pain to discipline youngsters.

It is not suggested that this is the most problematic area, but is highlighted because it seems to be the commonest principle for applying corporal punishment. Furthermore, the infliction of pain without injury appears to be the prime justification for using corporal punishment, even though opponents make frequent reference to cases in which such punishment results in injury.

Corporal punishment goes by a variety of names including “beating”, “hitting”, “spanking”, “paddling”, “swatting” and “caning”. Some of these terms are generic; others are specific to the severity of the punishment or the instrument used to inflict it. This study uses some of these terms interchangeably as general descriptions of corporal punishment.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The primary objective of the study was to shed the light on the practice of corporal punishments on children in Sudan. The specific objectives were to:

- Explore and identify the views and perceptions of physical and humiliating punishment of children among children, teachers and parents.
- Identify the type, prevalence, magnitude, perpetrators, causes and effects of physical and humiliating punishment of children.
- Review the policy and legal framework so as to identify loopholes and/or good practices with regard to physical and humiliating punishment of children.

2 Research methodology

2.1 Type of research

The study took the form of social action research, which involves learning about the real, material, concrete and particular practices of particular people in particular places. The researcher and the researched subjects are all considered as participants. This is as a joint approach that considers the researched subjects as stakeholders or local members. Guba (in Stringer, 1996) insists on this joint approach because local stakeholders are the only experts on local culture, beliefs and practices and because moral considerations require that local perspectives are honoured.

2.2 The participant's point of view

The study describes how the people who were analysed interpret the events in which they participate. This was done by talking to them in formal or informal interviews, through quick exchanges while we participated in and observed their ordinary activities, and by watching and listening as they went about their activities. The nearer we get to the conditions in which they actually attribute meanings to objects and events, the more accurate our descriptions of those meanings are likely to be.

2.3 Sampling procedure

Since the results of qualitative research are typically generalised to a population of varied background and socioeconomic status, areas were defined according to socioeconomic status (high, middle and low socioeconomic classes). The first step was to categorise the population of people to which we wanted to generalise the research results. For example, schoolchildren and their families of low social class live in a specific residential area. Similar profiling was used to identify other socioeconomic levels and helped to ensure that the data collected was as representative as possible. The table below shows the residential areas from which data was collected.

Residential Area Socioeconomic Status	Khartoum	Khartoum North	Omdurman
High	Ryadh, Amarat, Manshiya, El-tayef	El-Safia, Kafouri, Merghanyia, Mughtaribeen	Muhandiseen, Mulazmin, Madinat elnil
Middle	Sahafa East & West, Burri, Kalaklat, Lamab, Gabra	Elshaabya, Hilat Hamed, Daroushab, Elamlak	Beit Almal, Hay Elomda, Alaarda, Thourat
Low	Mayo, Eldiem, Jebel Awlia	Alizzba, Haj Yousif, Shigla, Taybat Alahamda	Abbasia, Ombada, Marzoug, Salha

The next step was to develop a screening routine to identify families. This was done randomly according to the clusters of households in each residential block. The researchers chose houses randomly and then asked the intended family for permission to be interviewed. This screening routine was useful to control the mix of participants in a focus group or to fill interviewing quotas.

2.4 Data collection tools

2.4.1 Interviews

Focus group discussions, in which children were asked unstructured questions, were the main tool for data collection. Guided interviews were adapted for use in small or medium-sized groups of children, enabling responses to be discussed by participants and thus introducing an element of cross-checking and validation which might not have been present in individual interviews. Another option available to the researchers was specialised groups or panels to discuss a particular concern or question. Intensive interviews were conducted with children's teachers or mentors and later analysed using the discourse analysis technique.

Khartoum was chosen as the location for the research project since it represents the different cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the whole country. As the capital city, it is

exposed to rural-urban movements. These are reflected in the cultural diversity of its inhabitants and make it a rich environment for research.

2.4.2 Discussion on focus groups

At present, the two principal means of collecting qualitative data in social science are individual interviews and participant observation of groups. Focus groups combine elements of both of these two approaches. The intermediate nature of group interviewing means that focus groups occupy an easily comprehensible position within the existing set of qualitative methods and also possess a distinctive identity of their own. They also provide access to forms of data that are not obtained easily using either of the other two methods.

In this context, it is particularly important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of focus groups, and to do so while comparing them to qualitative methods. The main advantage of using focus groups for this study was that they offered the opportunity to observe a great deal of interaction in a limited time frame. Thus they enabled the observation of a wide range of behaviour in the research subjects' natural settings.

2.4.3 Naturalistic observation

Naturalistic observation involves an investigator viewing participants in their natural environment and noting down the activities that take place. This method offers researchers the ability to collect data on a wide range of behaviour, to witness a broader range of interactions and to generate a more open discussion of the research topic. By comparison, focus groups are limited to verbal behaviour, consist only of interaction in discussion groups, and must be created and managed by the researcher.

2.4.4 Types of observation

The modes of observation used in this study mainly took the form of unstructured, non-interactive watching of children's activities, their conversations, other types of communication and the general atmosphere. Observations were used to:

- Generate initial research questions.
- Verify or cross-check information obtained from other methods and sources.
- Develop rough initial indicators for children or events which could then be tested using other methods.

2.4.5 Projective technique

A projective technique was deployed to improve the process of acquiring data from child participants so as to enhance the interviews and the flow of communication. This encouraged the children to reflect themselves and their own experiences.

2.4.6 Drawings/visual methods

Visual stimuli, including children's own drawings as well as images produced by other children or adults, were used to stimulate focus group discussions or interviews. Drawings were used to:

- Illustrate something that research participants were trying to explain.
- Provide insights into areas of the respondents' lives, for example home life, the school environment, troubles, hopes and dreams.
- Illustrate ideas and identify preference criteria, for example what constitutes a good thing, a good person or a good practice and vice versa.

2.4.7 Drama

In situations that benefited from concrete presentation, the researchers used role-plays to encourage the children to express themselves. The role-plays were very short and the researchers endeavoured to take part in them.

2.4.8 Letters and storytelling

Children were also asked to tell stories and to write letters to air their emotions, thoughts and ideas. This helped in defining their views on alternatives to physical punishment and on negative practices that they experience at school and perceive as unfair.

2.5 Analysis of data

Making sense of data is partly a matter of intuition and partly a matter of being systematic. The intuitive part is about seeing themes, patterns, making guesses, constructing arguments and asking follow-up questions. In this respect a researcher may find that familiarity with the literature helps to decide the important themes, though one will need to test out one's own ideas too. As patterns, arguments and questions arise the data begin to be transformed from a pile of notes, transcripts, documents and other recordings into "evidence". Much of the work of making sense of data requires systematic ordering. This is largely a process of analysis and can be broken down into a remarkably simple set of routines.

2.6 Research strategies

Activity	Method
Research sample Identification of sites where children are found Identification of the research population Identification of the sampling procedure	Mapping Interviews Secondary data collection Training of children researchers Selection of sample population (children and adults)
Analysis of reasons that expose children to corporal punishment	Observation Interviews Drawing Role-plays Focus group discussions Storytelling Photographs
Children's views on the use of violence against them by their parents, care givers, teachers and supervisors	Observation Interviews Drawing Role-plays Focus group discussions Letters

3. Literature review

Corporal punishment can be defined as a painful, intentionally inflicted (typically by striking) physical penalty administered by a person in authority for disciplinary purposes. Corporal punishment can occur anywhere. Whippings, beatings, paddling, and flogging are specific forms of corporal punishment (Cohen, 1984).

3.1 International instruments

Many international human rights instruments prohibit the use of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. These documents include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Most people in the West probably imagine that whipping as a judicial sanction is an anachronism that is prohibited under international human rights law and used only by a very few fundamentalist Muslim states. However, the reality is that 57 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and 19 years after the Human Rights Covenants entered force, a number of countries still apply whipping as a judicial penalty. Independent monitoring organisations such as Amnesty International continue to report the use of such punishment. In this regard, Amnesty's 1994 annual report identified Afghanistan, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, Sudan, Iran, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Libya, Uganda, Somalia and Tanzania. Other countries nations that use this punishment are Saudi Arabia, Brunei, Botswana, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen and Oman.

There are only two states in the world whose constitutions expressly prohibit flogging – Ethiopia and Argentina. There are 22 states whose constitution declares them to be Muslim or Islamic. About half of them use flogging, which is a part of the Islamic legal system. Many constitutions prohibit cruel and inhuman punishment, but some of these countries practise flogging (for instance Libya). The constitutions of some countries, such as Pakistan, expressly permit corporal punishment as a legal sanction.

3.2 Sudan's national policies on corporal punishment

Most corporal punishment in Sudan's schools violates national law and international standards. Sudanese law permits limited school corporal punishment, but only in specific and highly restricted circumstances. Numerous international and regional human rights institutions have declared that some or all forms of school corporal punishment violate the human rights of children. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the UN Special Reporter on Torture, and the European Court of Human Rights have all spoken out against corporal punishment generally, viewing it as a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Many nations have either severely restricted corporal punishment or banned it outright.

School corporal punishment is considered a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. It can also impair the child's enjoyment of the right to education and may undermine the purpose of education as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The convention is the most widely ratified international human rights treaty; Sudan ratified it in 1990.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is responsible for making authoritative interpretations of the rights contained within the convention and for reviewing the compliance of signatories. It has stated categorically that all forms of corporal punishment are incompatible with the protections given to children under the convention:

“The committee notes the non-compatibility of certain areas of national legislation with the provisions and principles of the convention, including the punishment of flogging.” (18 February 1993, Preliminary observations CRC/C/15/Add.6, para.7)

“The committee notes the willingness shown by the government of Sudan to take into account the recommendations made by the committee with a view to reviewing existing legislation in order to bring it into conformity with the convention. In this regard, the committee welcomes the state party’s decision to establish a committee to review national laws pertaining to children and that its preliminary observation in the area of the abolition of the punishment of flogging has been taken into account by the reviewing committee. The committee expresses the hope that the review of child-related laws will result in the total abolition of flogging.” (18 October 1993, CRC/C/15/Add.10, paras. 4 and 17)

“The committee is concerned that corporal punishment is widely practiced in the state party, including within the family, schools, and other institutions; that children have been the victims of violence by, among others, the police; and that instances of torture, rape and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment have been committed against children in the context of the armed conflict.

“The committee recommends that the state party: prohibits under law the practice of corporal punishment in the family, in schools and in all other contexts and make use of legislative and administrative measures, as well as public education initiatives to end the use of corporal punishment including, inter alia, the provision of information on alternative non-violent methods of discipline; prevents all forms of violence against children; and makes sure that perpetrators of violence against children, including the police, are prosecuted...” (4 October 2002, CRC/C/15/Add.190, paras. 35 and 36 (a and b))

3.3 Schools policy

In 1994 the Sudanese Ministry of Education and Scientific Research issued a decree defining the goals of punishment in higher secondary schools. It stated that:

- Punishment should aim at amending and curing unwanted and unaccepted behaviour and should promote a safe and healthy educational environment.
- Teachers should match the suitability of punishment with the wrongdoing exhibited by the student.
- Punishment should not be vengeful or harmful and should be functional to the treatment of problems that may affect the educational process.

3.4 Types of prohibited acts and their punishment

Extended absence from school that continues for three weeks without a permit from the school administration is punishable by expulsion from the school.

It is the class teacher’s responsibility to impose appropriate punishment for routine wrongdoing like late arrival at school, failure to do or complete homework, non-compliance with school uniform rules, and so forth.

Any punishment relating to low academic performance and exam failure is the responsibility of the head teacher and teachers, as is punishment for major wrongdoing such as deviating from the school’s values and cultural boundaries. Punishments for carelessness and negligence in completing homework or when there is massive class disobedience are determined on the basis of educational techniques.

3.5 Types of prohibited punishment

The decree identified some punishments as not permissible:

- Smacking on the face, kicking and striking with the hand.
- Insults using words or names that undermine human dignity.
- Depriving a student from attending a class. However, a student who causes disturbance to the teaching process should be referred to the class teacher for suitable punishment.

This schools policy is the only legislation that clearly delineates the use of physical punishment in schools. Other legal frameworks are contained in international treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Sudan is a signatory.

3.6 National laws that allow corporal punishment

3.6.1 Whipping under Islamic Sharia law

The penal codes of some Muslim states that apply Sharia law contain provisions for many crimes to be punished by flogging (via the administration of between three and 100 lashes). They claim this is based on applying Islamic law in its historical texts as taken from the laws of God, which “supersede all man-made law” (Amnesty International, 1995).

Does Islam in its main sources, the Koran and the Sunnah (sayings of the Prophet), provide for flogging as a punishment for all these crimes? This study argues that almost all crimes punished by flogging are based on man-made law, not on the Koran or the Sunnah, and that the current practice in Muslim states which apply Islamic law is not consistent with the provisions of the Koran – even for those crimes for which whipping is decreed as a penalty (Ackerman, 1994).

There are two categories of crimes and punishment in Islamic law – determined and discretionary. Determined crimes and penalties are provided in the Koran and the Sunnah (which specify both the crime and its punishment) because they are crimes against the law of God.

About 20 countries allow whipping as a judicial sanction, which equates roughly to one out of ten United Nations member states. In many of these nations, this form of punishment is a legacy of the British colonial system. In Singapore and Malaysia it was originally handed down from colonial rule but nowadays seems to meet the needs of Asian values and authoritarian rule. Whipping is still provided for in the laws of some African states as an inheritance from colonial times. The African Charter and the constitutions of most independent African states prohibit cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, but domestic laws in some countries still permit flogging. Use of this punishment has decreased in recent years and there is hope that it will be abolished in non-Muslim sub-Saharan African states. Zimbabwe’s Supreme Court has been influenced by the Strasbourg Court’s reasoning in the case of *Tyrer v UK* in ruling that whipping is inhuman and degrading punishment (Ann Elizabeth, 1990).

Whipping is usually associated with authoritarian rule and countries like Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Democratic states in the Muslim world, including Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan and others, do not invoke this punishment. In Sudan, all these laws were frozen during the multi-party “democracy period” in 1985-1989.

4 Fieldwork findings

4.1 Corporal punishment in schools

Corporal punishment in schools is widely accepted by parents and among most families in Sudan. It is commonly considered as:

- A necessary means of education
- Character-building
- An integral part of a local culture/religion
- A means of classroom management

Debate centres on the practice of corporal punishment deemed to be equivalent to “child abuse”. Corporal punishment may meet this yardstick if it:

- Can cause serious medical injury to the victim and even fatality
- Can prompt children to skip or leave school because of fear of further punishment
- Undermines a safe learning environment
- Endangers the child’s future professional and socio-psychological development

Corporal punishment is used against schoolchildren for a wide range of disciplinary infractions, including late arrival, missing school without permission, having a dirty or torn school uniform, rudeness, fighting, stealing, substance abuse (Cilicion)ⁱ, and any form of disruptive classroom behaviour such as talking to other students, snatching another pupil’s belongings, and so on.

Students were asked to clarify why teachers hit them and their responses were grouped in certain categories. Some 41.1% said teachers beat them for late arrival school, while 45.1% said corporal punishment was imposed for failure to complete homework or to recite the Koranic verses.

No less than 89% of schoolchildren at Koranic schools (Khalwa) said the Imam’s main use of corporal punishment was on students who could not perfectly recite chapters or verses of the Koran. Some 2.5% of Khalwa students said they had been beaten by the Imam for not being sufficiently clean, even though it has been observed that Khalwa students lack basic hygiene facilities such as proper access to soap and water.

The study revealed that 7% of children interviewed said beatings were administered if they were unable to pay the fees requested by the school, while 2.3% said teachers beat them for absences that might be due to sickness (but for which they did not have a doctor’s note). One group of children said:

“We might get sick but not need a medical check up. When we have a fever or a cold these diseases do not require us to see a doctor. We just stay at home and when we get healthy we go back to school to face whipping.” Schoolchildren in Lamab/Khartoum, March 2005

Some 4.4% of schoolchildren said teachers beat them at school for wrongdoing. The following statement highlights behaviour that teachers consider “wrong”:

“If we laugh, teachers consider this as impolite and accordingly they beat us. They also have many other reasons for which they think that we are criminal. When we tease each other by throwing a ball or snatching something from a friend they immediately think we are thieves and have bad intentions.”

Schoolchildren in Sabafa/Khartoum, March 2005

Another group expanded on why schoolteachers beat students:

“Teachers are usually very firm. They do not laugh. We have a teacher in the school whom we have never seen laughing or smiling. He always has a frown on his face. If this teacher sees one of us happy he will immediately look for a cause to reverse this happiness into sadness. He likes to show his happiness by seeing sad.”

Schoolchildren in Shaabiya/Khartoum North, March 2005

Unsatisfactory academic performance is another key reason for corporal punishment. Students in most academic institutions – schools, Khalwas or special education institutions – revealed that teachers beat them for poor academic performance. In mathematics, it is very common for students to be punished physically for failing to get an equation or sum right. It is not uncommon for teachers to strike children for giving the wrong answer to a problem. Teachers think they are disciplining their students and by doing so will make them stay attentive. In some classes and schools, teachers set target marks that students are supposed to achieve. Those who fail to reach the target are beaten.

Another vital issue revealed by the students concerned their inability to complete their homework. Teachers usually ignore the fact that a student’s poverty and home life might contribute to his/her inability to comply with a teacher’s wishes. Many teachers punish students who fail to complete their homework or learn their lessons, regardless of whether the child has the necessary books or materials or opportunities to complete the work.

The study found that group punishments are widely imposed if students make noise and disturb their class or others. All-class punishments were reported by 56% of the students interviewed. Another 25% said such punishments were imposed when pupils refused to sit an exam. Refusal was usually in protest at the short notice of the exam, the difficulty of the subject, lack of time for extra tutoring, or unsuitable scheduling. Another 19% of students said class punishments were even imposed for failure to compete in a sporting activity. A group of eight upper secondary school students aged 14-16 said:

“Teachers usually ask the school team in the last few hours of a competition to come to play a football match with another school. Or they might call an exam at the time we are preparing ourselves for a planned match. They usually like to choose the very worst time and when we don’t comply with their wishes we will all be beaten and they call us stupid students whose ‘minds are in our shoes’.”

Schoolchildren, Omdurman, March 2005

Many teachers, including class teachers, impose group punishments. If a number of children make noise, many students may be caned in turn by one teacher. Also, children may be punished by more than one teacher at once. Students explained that the usual punishment for being noisy in class was for the wrongdoer to be brought to the staff room and made to kneel or lie down and be caned or whipped by three to six teachers at the same time.

Minor injuries like bruising and swelling are the “normal” result of corporal punishment. More serious injuries (welts, sprains, broken fingers, etc) are less common but many children interviewed had either experienced such injuries or knew of others who had. Sprains and broken fingers can easily occur if a child reaches out his or her hand to ward off a cane or moves a hand as the cane comes down. Extremely serious injuries (temporary or permanent loss of hearing, teeth knocked out, broken wrists or collar bones, internal injuries requiring surgery, etc) are rare but do occur. Several of the children interviewed had either sustained such injuries or knew of others who had.

4.2 Forms of corporal punishment

Children described the use of various forms of corporal punishment against them. The commonest type was whipping. Children of both sexes related experiences of punishments such as slapping, pinching, hitting or kicking – either by teachers or parents. Eighty-seven per cent of children said teachers or parents used a whip when punishing children. Sixty-five per cent of girls interviewed said teachers and parents used other methods with them, such as blows to the shoulder and pinching different parts of the body. A very few girls (3%) said they had been slapped. Caning was the second-most commonly reported form of school corporal punishment after whipping.

4.3 Teachers' views of corporal punishment

A variety of indicators was used to measure teachers' attitudes towards the application of corporal punishment in their classrooms. The indicators centred mainly on the following variables:

- Teacher with punitive attitudes
- Teacher with low classroom management skills
- Poor teacher-student relations
- Overcrowded classrooms
- No school policy prohibiting corporal punishment
- Reemployment of abusive teachers
- No schoolyard supervision (bullying)
- Unreliable transport to school
- Unfitting curricula
- Criminal/gang presence at school
- Child/family belongs to a discriminated group

4.4 Schoolchildren's voices on alternatives to corporal punishment

Schoolchildren were interviewed on their perceived alternatives to corporal punishment. The alternatives were basically addressed to teachers and are shown in the table below.

Responses	Percentage
Teachers should know something about our family background	43%
Teachers should stop asking for money	31%
Teachers should put themselves in our position	14%
Teachers should communicate with our families	12%
Total	100%

Asked to consider ways to avoid the painful punishments inflicted on them, children identified the school-family relationship as the most important route to enable them to explain themselves and to familiarise teachers with their family backgrounds. The children suggested this would help teachers to understand why the children behaved in certain ways. They said school demands were sometimes incompatible with families' financial status.

4.5 Corporal punishment in the home

A number of indicators were used when discussing corporal punishment with families or child care givers, and were also discussed as major risk factors for child abuse. Discourse

centred on the definition of violence, with responses revolving mostly around corporal punishment. Parents admitted that they inflict corporal punishment on their children as a method of discipline. Indeed, 89% of interviewed parents declared corporal punishment to be the best technique for inculcating desired behaviour in their children.

4.5.1 Children raised by single or young parents

The other indicator assessing the prevalence of corporal punishment is when a child is raised by a single parent or very young parents without support from an extended family (WHO, 2002). Here, the study found that 30% of the families interviewed were young parents, ranging in age from 20 to 28. The middle-aged parents were between 30 and 48 years old. Some 88% of mothers interviewed said they were financially burdened and the resulting social impairment led them to inflict corporal punishment on their children.

4.6 Reasons for corporal punishment in the home

Mothers interviewed gave many reasons for why they administered corporal punishment at home. These varied from the personal traits of their children to financial factors.

Reasons for corporal punishment

Responses	Percentage
Making loud noise	24
Destroying items of furniture, kitchen utensils, toys, etc	12
Disobedience	35.6
Persistent demands for money, toys, shoes, food, etc	28.4
Total	100

The interviews revealed that parents – particularly mothers – use corporal punishment to defend themselves, and that they gain emotional catharsis from it. This is the clear inference from the responses in the table above. Most of the families interviewed said the financial demands that their children made on them stemmed from requirements imposed by schools. One family said:

“We got tired of all the items the schoolteachers asked to be brought to school. They ask for school fees although we know that education at school, particularly primary education, is free. The schoolteachers force our children to have private lessons. The schoolteachers don’t know that we financially incapable of feeding our children, let alone of being able to meet all their demands.”
Family in Khartoum North, Al Haj Yousif district, March 2005

Another family stated very aggressively that schools were not aiming to educate youngsters:

“Nowadays teachers cannot be educators. They are financially burdened themselves. Therefore they ask for money for private lessons to earn a living. This phenomenon should be carefully handled by the Ministry of Education. They claim something and do another thing. Where is free education and education for all? Our children will stop going to school very soon and instead of having an educated generation we will end up having criminals on the streets.”
A father in Elshafa West/Khartoum, March 2005

Another justification given by families for hitting children is that children are confused. They are torn between school and home, and what adults may think is important at home might be considered trivial by their teachers.

“They receive corporal punishment at school as well as at home. What we think is important for them to learn, teachers at school think is not. One day I told my son to bring me his drawing book so I could see it. He told me there was no point. Such subjects are not considered as important as mathematics, for example.”

Father in Omdurman/Elmulazmin area, March 2005

Such disagreements are rooted in a lack of school-family communication. This issue proved to be crucial in the educational development of schoolchildren and was one reason why some might consider dropping out of school.

“I feel very fearful when I go to school. This is because teachers might not be happy to know that we don’t have money to pay for private lessons. I don’t like going to school because teachers beat us for unknown reasons.”

Schoolchild, Ombada, March 2005

The above narrative underlines the need for school counsellors. Children can benefit in a number of ways if schools provide such support. The counsellor is committed to humanising educational systems, enhancing the school climate and providing for individual differences to develop the potential and uniqueness of each student. Administrators and curriculum specialists consult counsellors because they are knowledgeable about students’ and parents’ complaints about classes, teaching methods, course requirements and grading methods. The experienced counsellor is able to identify patterns in these complaints, such as teaching methods that are overly rigid, monotonous or unchallenging or that accommodate a limited number of learning techniques (for instance the exclusive use of lectures or discussions).

4.6.1 Family break-ups

Children can suffer trauma and terror from family conflicts or harsh treatment meted out within the family (Figley & McChubbin, 1983; Terr, 1981; Trautman, 1987). A traumatic event in a child’s life can lead to fear-related problems that interfere with the child’s normal functioning. A child who otherwise functions on a high level with regard to control, self-worth and security may develop reactions to specific fear objects in this way. Children become stressed when they feel tension at home. Some teachers interviewed for this study felt that household tension was the main cause of academic underperformance among children.

There are also suggestions that negative behaviour by a child is strongly connected to how the parents and other family members respond when the behaviour occurs. It is important for the school and family to explore the root of such problems.

“When children come to school, we expect them to be very vivid and energetic. But you can tell who is having a problem at home from the way they act at school. Some might exhibit very violent behaviour at school to vent their anger. This of course causes us a lot of problems.”

Schoolteacher, Omdurman, March 2005

When children face conflicts at home they need to have a supportive environment at school. Living in two harsh worlds is devastating for the child and may push it to choose another world, such as the city streets. One child highlighted the difficulties that children face at schools:

“We face a double punishment every time we have a problem either at school or at home. It’s as if teachers and parents are working interchangeably to punish us. When there’s a problem at home and we fail to do our homework, teachers beat us at school. We fail to do our homework because of the problems at home.”

Schoolchild, Omdurman, March 2005

4.6.2 Insufficient family income

When a family has insufficient income it has a strong effect on the child. Parents experience disappointment at not being able to meet the financial demands of the family members, particularly children. Children interviewed during the study were asked to what extent they expected parents to yell at them or beat them in different circumstances. The results are shown in the table below.

Insufficient family income

Responses	Percentage
When we ask for money for school	43
When there is insufficient food at home	24
When there is a social event	21
When somebody is sick and needs to be taken to hospital	12
Total	100

The responses in the table underline the financial pressures that many Sudanese families face. Children need financial support to be able to achieve a desired social look. They copy each other in many aspects of dress styles, games and books – whether for academic or entertainment purposes – and pocket money. Corporal punishment occurs most frequently in connection with children asking for money for school, while parents believe their children should get a free education. Schools’ requests for money put children in an invidious position.

Children share their parents’ burden when it comes to caring for a sick person and are aware of the high cost of medical treatment. They therefore keep a low profile when someone in the family is sick. One can easily imagine the burden felt by a young child who has to ask for money for school or another activity when someone is sick at home. In such conditions there is a risk that children might start to look for other solutions to support their families or themselves. The financial pressures experienced by children are illustrated in the table below

Economic reasons that pushed street children to desert their families

Responses	Percentage
To support the family financially	52
Not enough food at home	26
Unable to pay school fees	17
To look for a better living conditions on the street rather than at home	5
Total	100

4.6.3 Violent relationships in the family

Schoolchildren react to changes and stress within the family unit and may display symptoms at school when a crisis occurs at home. These symptoms may trigger the system to provide help to the troubled family. Counsellors can, for instance, use family

counselling to solve a child's problems and assist the child's family in finding solutions to problems from a social context.

4.7 Children's views on stopping corporal punishment in the home

When children were asked about their views on physical punishment at home they expressed their experiences along with suggested alternatives. The responses revealed that children want to be able to express themselves and be listened to before being punished. Children made clear they wanted to be treated humanely.

Alternatives to physical punishment by parents

Responses	Percentage
Listen to us	52
Stop giving us pocket money	20
Hit us lightly	10
Deprive us of things that we like	7
Not hit us excessively	11
Total	100

The children's most preferred alternative was to be given the opportunity to be heard. Children expressed this in narrative form by saying:

"We would like them to listen to us and give us the opportunity to explain to them why, for example, we did what they think is wrong. Before they hear us they get furious and angry. And they immediately think of something to use for punishing us. They even use their slippers."
Group of children, Khartoum Aldaim, March 2005

Another group of children interviewed noted that some people rarely use physical punishment.

Some 39.5% of the children interviewed said old people set a good example in not punishing children, making the following observations about them:

- They listen to us carefully and consider what we need.
- They treat us as equals.
- They give us time to explain ourselves.
- They always have time for us.
- When we do wrong they tell us what to do.
- They respect us as human beings.
- We feel embarrassed when they get unhappy with us because they always treat us well.
- We like to help them because they are always good to us.
- We very rarely get angry with them.

When asked about the alternatives to corporal punishment in school, the children recommended the following:

Responses	Percentage
Teachers should value what students do	76
Teachers should involve students in decision-making	24
Total	100

Educators and psychologists argue that teachers can oversee classrooms and develop their pupils' knowledge, skill and aptitudes through means other than corporal punishment. For example, they claim that praising pupils' good conduct, imposing non-physical punishments and involving children in drawing up school rules are all methods that significantly reduce disciplinary problems. Educators and psychologists argue that alternative methods of discipline are more beneficial and less detrimental to a child's development than corporal punishment and do not necessarily require significant additional investment.

4.8 Children with disabilities

Children with disabilities also expressed their views on corporal punishment in the home or at school (special educational institutes). Children with a variety of disabilities (including deafness, blindness and other physical disabilities, as well as mental disabilities) were canvassed. Forty-three per cent of mentally disabled children stated that it was bad to be beaten by anybody. They felt distressed and sad when somebody beat them. They said those who beat them were parents, other peers in the institute or people in the neighbourhood. One mentally disabled child described a situation in which a teacher was violent towards him:

“A teacher yells at me and she calls me an animal. She loudly shouts and say ya hayawan (animal) and then she immediately starts to beat me.”
12-year-old child, Khartoum, March 2005

4.9 Community risk factors for child abuse

The indicators for risk factors arising in the community relate mainly to the socioeconomic backgrounds of families and their children:

- High unemployment rate
- Few social or protective networks
- High violence in neighbourhood
- No or poor school

4.10 Legislation that does not ban corporal punishment/abuse

Sudan's judicial system is generally not a practical alternative for rectifying school corporal punishment. Since most families cannot afford lawyers, they have little access to the courts – and poor prospects of prevailing in legal action if they do. Furthermore, the judicial system is not strong. Legal processes are slow and court judgments difficult to enforce.

The prevailing view in society is that teachers are fully responsible for the education of young children. According to a well-known and widely used Sudanese proverb, a parent who takes his child to school will tell the schoolteacher to “take the meat and give us the bones”. Thus, there is often unswerving confidence in the teacher's ability to take care of children at school. Asked about excessive punishments meted out by teachers, some parents said they were concerned that protesting – either to the school administration or the legal authorities – would have an adverse impact on their child. Some even suggested they might face violence themselves if they protested to the school.

In total, 27% of parents said they had discussed whether to put their child into a different school because of a cruel teacher. Their experience was that when they reported abusive behaviour to the school authorities the principal invariably sided with the teacher and asked them to transfer their child to another school if they were unhappy about the way school rules were enforced.

Corporal punishment occurs in a number of settings, but the study discussions focused mainly on homes and schools. These locations share a number of important features that distinguish them from other settings. In the home and at school children punishment is meted out by adults (parents or teachers), often without any formal investigation and often for infractions that are not prohibited by some home or school order but, rather, are deemed to be morally wrong.

Nevertheless, significant differences exist between homes and schools. Parents are more likely to have their children's interests at heart and to love and care for them. Parents are also more likely to know their children better than teachers know their pupils. Teachers, after all, have relatively little contact with their pupils – and what contact they do have is often in the context of crowded classrooms.

Students interviewed discussed the difference between corporal punishment at home and at school and the legitimacy of such punishment in either setting. One group of seven children said:

“We all accept it when parents inflict corporal punishment on us because they want to make us good people. They show us the reason behind the punishment, but at school they just punish us and they use a horse whip which is inhumane to use on a human being. This makes us resentful towards school and teachers.”
(Khartoum, March 2005)

While some children oppose any corporal punishment, even by parents at home, others only oppose its use outside the home. Boys interviewed complained it was deeply embarrassing to be whipped in front of other students at school. They said whippings were very painful and they were unable to hide their pain. They said:

“It is very painful when they beat us and we fail to hide our tears or to stand the pain. We usually suppress the pain until a cry slips out. The pain is unbearable and the setting where we receive the punishment is usually in front of the entire class and we have to be brave or we're called cowards. At home, the same punishment is given where there is nothing to hide and in a setting where nobody will talk badly about you and instead you might find support from the rest of the family.”(Khartoum, March 2005).

Not all institutional settings are equally impersonal. Schools, for instance, are much more personal than state courts. Teachers know their pupils better and are likely to care more for them than judges do for the accused that stand before them. Punishment in schools can thus be seen as serving a useful educational purpose. It facilitates the move from the jurisdiction of the family to the jurisdiction of the state, teaching the child that punishment is not always inflicted by people who are close and know and love one. This is not to say that teachers, like judges, should not inquire into relevant aspects of a wrongdoer's background before inflicting a severe punishment.

School corporal punishment can be a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and equivalent to the use of beatings to punish detainees in prisons or police stations. In each case, state agents make use of violence to discipline and punish people under their supervision and control, and the violence is inflicted with the intention of

causing physical pain and humiliation. In schools, the perpetrators are teachers rather than prison guards or police officers, and the victims are schoolchildren rather than detainees.

Juvenile offenders interviewed in this study revealed the differences in the punishments they received while at school and during time spent as reformatory detainees. They said modes of punishment at school, including whipping, were known to them and accepted but a different type of punishment was imposed on them while in custody or in the reformatory. A group of juvenile offenders at Geraif Reformatory gave this description of the punishment they received in the juvenile justice system:

“Here in the reformatory we receive double punishment If one of us does something that doesn’t please the guards then we will be lashed several times. They keep telling us that it is a reformatory to reform people who have shown misconduct.” Geraif Reformatory, Khartoum, March 2005

Many international human rights instruments prohibit the use of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. These include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As part of the study, an attempt was made to explore the knowledge and awareness of penal institution staff on the rights of young offenders. Four guards at one reformatory said there were no rules against corporal punishment at the site. Indeed, they mentioned a “golden rule” that stated that the reformatory was for those who need to be reformed via whipping.

Sixty-five per cent of the juvenile offenders in the two reformatories and custody centres visited said they had received corporal punishment at some stage of the juvenile justice system. Some 87% of those interviewed while in custody said they had been beaten by the police to obtain a confession.

Girl offenders face different punishments from boys at the Geraif Reformatory. According to two girls interviewed, female offenders are usually asked to clean and wash the clothes of the women guards. Another three girls noted that girl offenders – particularly those deemed to have a sense of responsibility – were sometimes sent outside the reformatory to serve in police officers’ houses. There, their tasks were mainly laundry work clothes or cleaning the kitchen and yard. They were not paid for this work.

Throughout the juvenile justice system, many children risk physical harm or psychological damage from violent punishments. Children are physically weaker and psychologically more vulnerable than adult detainees and therefore at potentially greater risk. But while it is nowadays widely accepted that corporal punishment of prisoners constitutes a human rights violation, many still hold on to the belief that corporal punishment of children has an educative and instructive purpose, without which a child will not be able to learn. This perception was shared by most workers in the juvenile justice institutions visited.

4.11 Effects of violence on young children

It has been proven that violence can have a profound effect upon a child’s life even prior to birth. Studies show that pregnant women who experience battery often deliver low birth-weight babies who run a high risk of developmental problems (Prothrow-Stith & Quaday, 1995). Shaken Baby Syndrome, the shaking of an infant or child by the arms, legs or shoulders, can be devastating and result in irreversible brain damage, blindness, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, spinal cord injury, seizures, learning disabilities and even death (Poussaint & Linn, 1997). The growing body of knowledge regarding early brain development suggests that “the ways parents, families and other care givers relate and

respond to their young children, and the ways that they mediate their children's contact with the environment, directly affect the formation of neural pathways" (Shore, 1997, p. 4).

Some 35.6% of respondents said the main effect was great pain, while 16.3% cited fear either of teachers at school or parents at home and 12.3% felt abhorrence of people and the setting in which they received punishment. Weakness and embarrassment were expressed as reactions to punishment by 9.8% and 5.8% of children respectively, while 8.6% singled out a lack of respect for the perpetrator.

Another issue that was discussed with children was their view of the aggression displayed towards them by adults and whether they would be likely to mimic the adults who inflicted corporal punishment on them.

A high proportion of those interviewed – 37.9% – said they thought they would themselves inflict corporal punishment on children when they were older. The proportion of those who thought they would not perform corporal punishment on children was 48.1%. This figure is very encouraging but needs to increase. Also, orientation efforts are needed for those who are undecided about whether they would carry out corporal punishment.

Corporal punishment has deep psychological effects on children. Researchers have highlighted the fact that violent children usually come from violent homes in which parents routinely use violence as a means of resolving conflict and handling stress (Page et al, 1992). Even if children are not abused physically themselves, they can suffer psychological trauma, including lack of bonding, from witnessing beatings. As Lerner (1992) points out, attachment or bonding has far-reaching implications not only for the emotional well-being of a child, but also for a child's cognitive development and ability to cope effectively with stress and to develop healthy relationships. Children who witness violence can display an array of emotional and behavioural disturbances, including low self-esteem, withdrawal, nightmares, self-blame and aggression against peers, family members and property (Peled, Jaffe, & Edleson, 1995).

In the Sudan study, a seven-year-old child commented:

"My mother beats me using her slipper. She beats me when she is in the kitchen or doing something serious like chatting to her friends. When her friends visit us at home she tells my brothers and I not to come into the room where they're sitting. If one of us needs something and goes to talk to her while other women are there she will immediately yell at us and punish the one who asked, or sometimes all of us."

Khartoum North/Alsaftiya March 2005

Schoolchildren confirmed the methods that teachers and parents use:

"Teachers use the black whip that we call the horse whip. It's a whip that has an iron wire inside the plastic hose. Parents use whatever they find in front of them, like a slipper, a stick or sometimes kitchen utensils. It is of course the mothers who use the mufrika [the Sudanese cooking stick]. Fathers use belts or sticks to give beatings."

Schoolchildren in Khartoum/Burri, March 2005

The research revealed that blows to the back were the commonest form, reflecting the traditional procedure for whipping (particularly for boys). Some children said they prepare themselves for a whipping by wearing several layers of clothing. Girls tend to receive their punishment on their hands, which they have no chance of protecting.

While some children cry or lash out verbally against the perpetrator, others suppress their anger or mount a silent protest by refusing to eat:

“When we go on food strike, parents think that it is good to punish ourselves and they know that the strike will be for a short time and then we will start eating again. Only grandparents think of us and attend to our needs. This method of strike is useless at school. We never use it at school. Teachers never pay attention to what we do. Therefore we never use striking as a pressure technique when we are at school. Even if we agree in a group to go on strike by not attending a class or not performing a certain activity, teachers punish all of us physically and they make it even worse.” Group of children in Omdurman, March 2005

4.11.1 Effect of corporal punishment on learning

Research shows that chronic exposure to violence adversely affects a child’s ability to learn (Shore, 1997; Prothrow-Stith & Quaday, 1995; Kurtz, Gaudin, & Wodarski, 1994; Lorion & Saltzman, 1993). Learning itself is an essential tool for violence prevention (Prothrow-Stith & Quaday, 1995). Children who achieve in school and develop important reading, critical thinking and problem-solving and communication skills are better able to cope with stressful and perhaps dangerous situations. Also, academic achievement enhances the development of positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, both of which are necessary for children to experience emotional well-being and to achieve success. The relationship between violence and learning is particularly significant because cognitive skills are crucial in terms of academic success, self-esteem, coping skills and overall resilience. As Prothrow-Stith and Quaday (1995) assert: “When our children’s ability to learn is being dangerously undermined, the foundation of our society is being damaged in a manner that cannot be easily repaired.” Interventions must begin early in order to help children develop higher-order thinking skills, empathy, impulse control, anger management, peaceful conflict resolution and assertive communication.

Teachers and parents may feel it is necessary for a child to experience pain in order to learn. But a significant amount of research has shown the very opposite: that the use of corporal punishment may hinder learning, encourage or lead children to drop out of school, and generally undermine the purposes of education as articulated in Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 29 states that education shall be directed towards the development of the child’s mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace and tolerance.

As well as constituting a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, school corporal punishment can also impair the child’s enjoyment of the right to education and may undermine the purpose of education as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The convention is the most widely ratified international human rights treaty, and Sudan was among the first countries to sign and ratify it. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, which is responsible for making authoritative interpretations of the rights contained in the convention and for reviewing the compliance of signatories, has stated categorically that all forms of corporal punishment are incompatible with the protections given to children under the convention.

When children display persistent problems these are usually connected to the extended social unit or family and are therefore best addressed by involving the school and family. Counsellors should be available at all schools since family interventions can address a child’s misbehaviour and render costly special placements unnecessary. Furthermore, school counsellors are in a unique position to appreciate the effectiveness of family guidance approaches with children.

As part of this study, children were asked if there were any reasons preventing them from inflicting corporal punishment on adults. The children initially felt this very difficult to answer but found it easier after discussing the reasons that made adults punish them.

The following two graphs show the factors that prevent children from using violence against adults and why adults would, in the majority of cases, refrain from hitting each other.

5. Conclusion

According to Pransky (1991), “our behaviour is shaped by conditions in our environment, particularly as we grow. This is the essential piece to the puzzle. The way our children are treated within their important environments will largely determine the shape they will be in and how they will behave”.

In line with this statement, all children are stakeholders in the quest to prevent violence in their critical early years. They deserve the opportunity to “fly” and reach their highest potential; we must not allow them to become hidden casualties. School counsellors are beginning to find family guidance an effective and needed skill. Moreover, family counselling represents a distinctive alternative for resolving persistent problems at schools. Family counselling training has a short history and re-training opportunities for school counsellors wanting to engage in family counselling have been limited. This study has highlighted the need for such training and one possible direction in which to proceed. With appropriate training, administrative support and flexible work hours, school counsellors can provide an effective and efficient service to children, their families and schools.

The routine and severe corporal punishment described in this study violates Sudanese law and international human rights standards. According to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, school corporal punishment is incompatible with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Other human rights bodies also participated in this study and identified some forms of school-based corporal punishment as cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment that interferes with a child’s right to receive an education and to be protected from violence.

In the study, children identified many alternatives to corporal punishment that could safeguard their rights and existence. In response, the study makes a wide range of recommendations that all institutions, bodies and agencies should consider in order to meet and respect the needs and rights of children in all strata of society.

6. Recommendations

6.1 To the Sudanese government

Activate school regulations that provide for the abolition of corporal punishment in all schools.

The Attorney General should introduce a bill to parliament abolishing corporal punishment of children in all institutions. The bill, once passed into law, should comprise a separate article to the Sudanese Child Act of 2004.

Support programmes should be introduced to educate parents, teachers and society about the harm of corporal punishment and the existence of effective alternatives.

6.2 To the Ministry of Education

Sudan's Ministry of Education should:

- Adopt and disseminate widely a policy prohibiting the use of corporal punishment in schools.
- Conduct campaigns to raise awareness about regulations on corporal punishment and the ministry's reported policy against its use.
- Hold training workshops for teachers on methods of disciplining students that do not result in physical harm. Additional instruction should be provided to school administrations on the adverse effects of corporal punishment and alternatives to it.
- Educate parents and students about their rights under the existing regulations, hold special meetings at which these rights are explained to parents and pupils, and disseminate copies of the regulations widely.
- Establish an independent complaints system for corporal punishment and a follow-up system for investigations and the reporting of cases to education administrations and parents' committees.
- Support the capacity of each school to provide counselling and guidance service programmes, to learn about children's family conditions and backgrounds, and to work with children's parents to resolve poor behaviour or performance. Those conducting guidance and counselling programmes should receive professional training.
- Set up a counselling service programme for teachers. This service should be offered by professional counsellors to provide guidance and support to teachers at risk of venting personal frustrations upon their pupils.
- Ensure that instruction on classroom management techniques forms part of teacher-training programmes. Such instruction should include information on the harms of corporal punishment and alternatives to it. Instruction on alternatives to physical discipline should be a mandatory and significant part of the teacher-training curriculum.

6.3 To school administrations

School administration should:

- Refrain from disciplining students corporally.
- Adopt classroom management techniques, such as positive reinforcement, that do not rely on the use of physical punishment.
- Educate and support other teachers to refrain from using physical discipline. Allow students who complain about corporal punishment to continue attending classes and ensure that such students are not harassed or threatened.

- Report cases of corporal punishment to the Ministry of Education and school authorities.

6.4 To national and international human rights organisations

Organisations working on programmes of child rights should:

- Inquire into corporal punishment in schools and make their best efforts to encourage its abolition in all contexts.
- Investigate corporal punishment of children in schools and determine whether school corporal punishment does constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.
- Investigate the use of corporal punishment in schools and its impact on children and on the right to education.
- Fund and conduct workshops to train teachers on the various alternatives to corporal punishment for disciplining children in schools.
- Establish school-based child rights groups, clubs or organisations within schools to teach students about their human rights, including the right to be free from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and all the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

6.5 Children advocating for policy change

Children advocacy group

The study recommends that an advocacy group of children be set up to disseminate the belief that societies should ensure that children can exercise their right to be involved in decisions that affect them, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The main goal of a children advocacy group is actively to promote positive social change at all levels of society by attracting the community's attention to issues that affect the child's well-being and directing decision-makers towards a solution.

Objectives:

The group's objective is to broaden public and political support for policy reform by:

- Motivating policymakers to embrace and promote alternatives and reforms to current local, state or national policies that relate to the children's academic, social and economical situations in such a way that it will be beneficial to all stakeholders of children's programmes.
- Supporting and empowering community based organisations (CBOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and communities working in the areas of children development and on issues related to policy reforms.
- Promoting better awareness and understanding of policy issues related to child violence/abuse.
- Expanding awareness and understanding of the extent to which some policies are responsible for most problems associated with violence against children.

Components of the advocacy programme:

- Community mobilisation on issues of violence against children.

- Production of information, education and communication on child violence/abuse.
- Public awareness programmes to be conducted by children on issues on child violence/abuse.
- Behavioural change communication.

Partnership

The kinds of partnerships that the children advocacy group seeks to support and encourage include those between:

- Children and other children
- Adult organisations and children's organisations
- Children's organisations and youth organisations
- Adult workers and children's groups
- Children and their parents
- Community groups and children

The organisation's overall goal is to enable Sudanese children and young people to access and exercise their rights and to participate in all policy and decision-making on issues that affect their rights. This of course extends to their sexual and reproductive rights. Save the Children Sweden will achieve this vision by promoting and defending the rights of young people in Sudan through empowerment and support.

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ⁱ This is glue that is used to repair flat tyres. It has a strong smell and is commonly used by street children.

Save the Children Sweden in Eastern and Central Africa

Save the Children Sweden started working in Eastern and Central Africa in 1965. Today, the organisation has offices in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Nairobi, Kenya; and Khartoum, Sudan. Save the Children Sweden has long-term child-rights based development programmes in Ethiopia and Sudan, and it supports local partners in Kenya, Eritrea, Somaliland and Uganda.

The organisation focuses on building the capacity of local people, community-based structures and organisations. In Eastern and Central Africa, it works with more than forty different non-governmental organisations and government bodies. In addition, it has adopted a direct implementation approach in southern Sudan and in the refugee camps of western Ethiopia and North Darfur.

All of the work in the region focuses on children's rights, and tackles issues that affect marginalised children. The core of the work focuses on children affected by conflict, discrimination, abuse, exploitation, and HIV/AIDS. Save the Children Sweden's focus also includes education, child participation and good governance in the best interest of the child.

The major task facing child rights advocates today is making the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child a reality for all children. The exchange of experience and know-how are proactive ways to work towards this goal, which is why Save the Children Sweden makes its books and reports available for the world. Welcome to visit our child rights bookshop on the internet, www.rb.se/bookshop

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- where all children have hope and opportunity

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Save the Children Sweden
SE-107 88 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel +46 8 698 90 00
Fax +46 8 698 90 10
www.rb.se info@rb.se

Eastern and Central Africa Region

<i>Regional/Kenya office</i>	<i>Ethiopia office</i>
Box 19423	Box 3457
202 KNH – Nairobi, Kenya	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel +254 20 386 5888/90	Tel +251 11 321 0960
Fax +254 20 386 5889	Fax +251 11 321 4234

info@ecaf.savethechildren.se

Northern Sudan office
Box 6134
Khartoum, Sudan
Tel +249 183 256 415/16
Fax +249 183 241 589

Southern Sudan office
Box 19423
202 KNH – Nairobi, Kenya
Tel +254 20 386 5888/90
Fax +254 20 386 5889



Save the Children
Sweden