

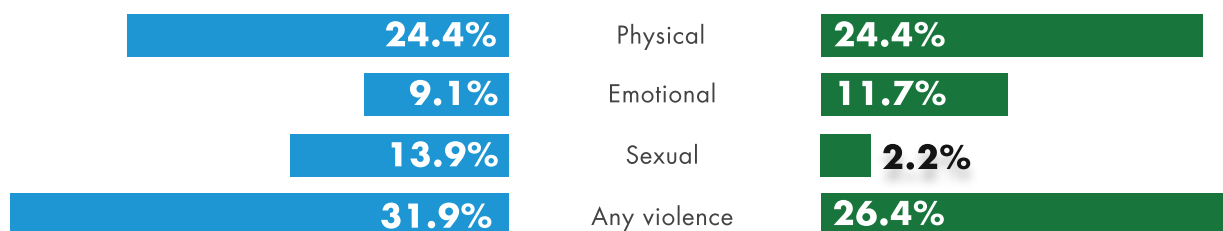
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN REFUGEE SETTINGS IN ETHIOPIA

Children and youth who have been affected by humanitarian crises may face an increased risk of violence. However, there is a significant data gap on the magnitude, nature, and consequences of violence against children in refugee contexts. The adaptation of the Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (VACS) for humanitarian contexts is an important step towards addressing this research gap and providing reliable data to inform response to violence.

Between 2023 and 2024, the Baobab Research Programme Consortium (RPC) conducted the Humanitarian Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (HVACS) in refugee settings in Ethiopia—the first of its kind in Ethiopia and second in the world—in partnership with the Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) and UNHCR. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Together for Girls provided technical support. The Baobab RPC is led by the Population Council Inc. in collaboration with the Population Council, Kenya and the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC). Read on for highlights from the data about the experiences of children and youth in 21 refugee camps in Ethiopia.

Violence affects too many children in refugee camps in Ethiopia

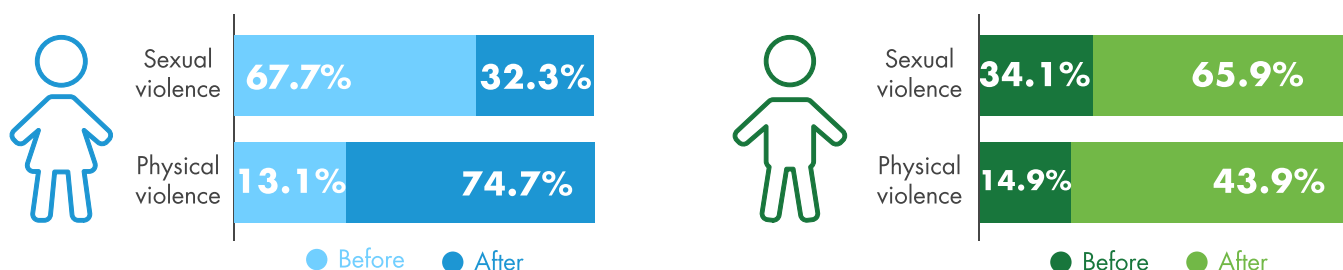
Girls are more vulnerable to sexual violence, while both **girls** and **boys** experience high prevalence of physical violence



Percentage of those who experienced physical, emotional, sexual or any type of violence before age 18

The first experience of violence often occurs after arriving in the camp

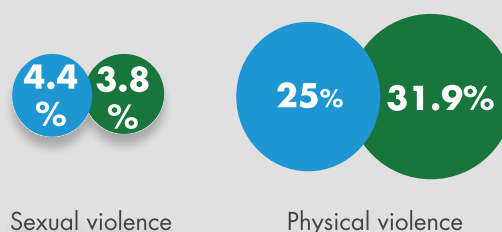
Percentage of those who experienced the first incident of sexual or physical violence before age 18 after or before arriving at the camp



Note: the sum does not add up to 100% because it was generated from multiple variables

Many children experienced violence in the past year

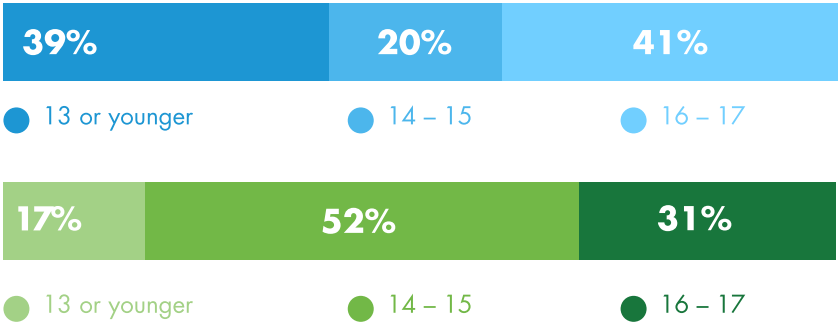
Percentage of children (ages 13-17) who experienced sexual or physical violence in the past 12 months



Sexual violence against children in refugee camps in Ethiopia

The age of first experience of sexual violence differs between girls and boys

Age at first experience of sexual violence among those who experienced any sexual violence before age 18



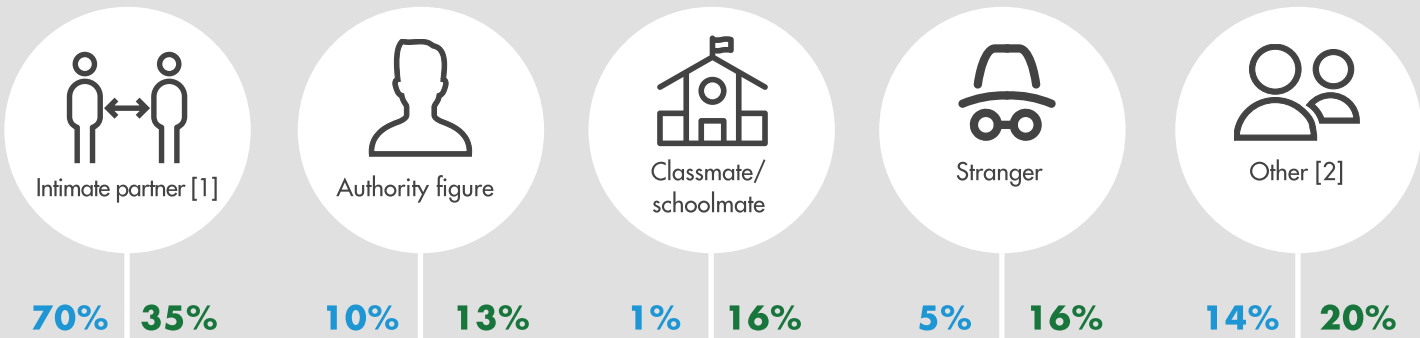
Childhood sexual violence takes many forms

Percentage of those who experienced different types of sexual violence before age 18



Perpetrators of sexual violence are often someone known to the child survivor

Perpetrators of the first experience of sexual violence among those who experienced any sexual violence before age 18



[1] Intimate partner includes: current or previous boyfriend, girlfriend, romantic partner, husband or wife
[2] Other includes: family member, relative, neighbor, and friend

Consequences of sexual violence and access to services

Girls often miss school due to sexual violence

Percentage of children (ages 13-17) who missed school due to any experience of sexual violence



43%

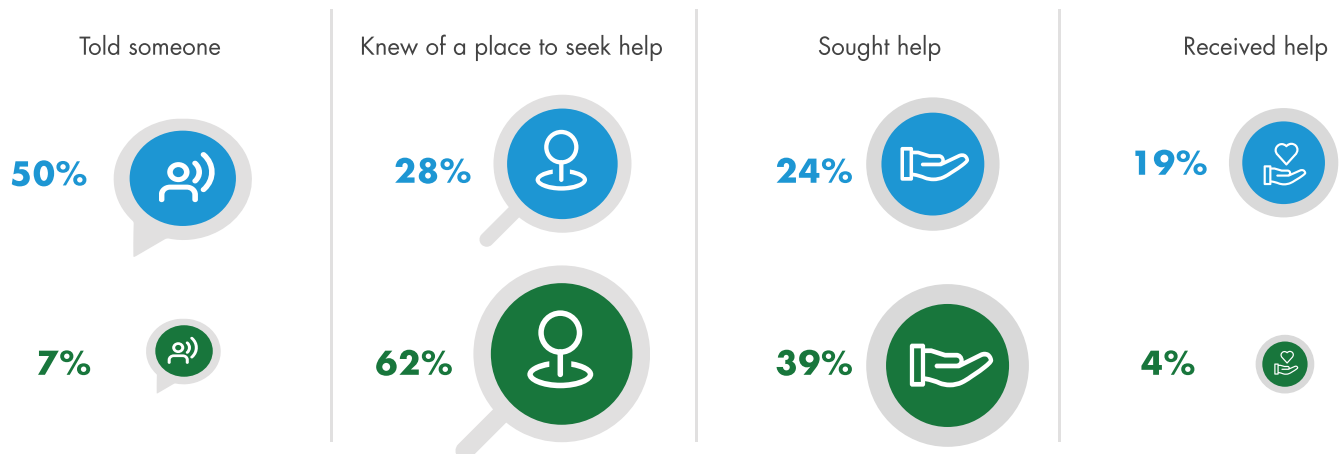
0.2%

Thoughts of suicide are more common among those who experienced childhood sexual violence

Percentage of those who ever thought about suicide by experience of sexual violence before age 18



Child survivors need additional support to access critical services



Percentage of those who have disclosed, sought, and received services for any incident of sexual violence



Refugee camps serve as a safe haven for those forced to flee their homes. Concerted efforts must be made to ensure that more children and youth know about the wide range of available services and how to access them. Prevention efforts should also be strengthened and scaled up.

Contextual factors for children living in refugee camps in Ethiopia



77%



86%

A high proportion of children are enrolled in school

Many may require support due to disability

Most common form of disability among children (ages 13-17)

Girls

5%

Serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses

9%

Serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions

5%

Serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs

5%

Difficulty dressing or bathing

7%

Difficulty doing errands alone

4%

Difficulty communicating (understanding or being understood)

15%

Any of the above forms of disability

Boys

3%

7%

6%

5%

7%

2%

13%

For **boys**, the proportion experiencing any sexual violence is higher among those with disability than among those without disability

Child marriage primarily affects **girls**

Among married **young women**, more than half were married before age 18, often to someone significantly older

Percentage of child marriage, including cohabitation



58% **18%**

Proportion ever married

57% **15%**

Proportion married before age 18

74% **7%**

Age difference 5 years or more

Boys face additional barriers

Food insecurity is more common for **boys**

Boys have higher prevalence of employment



10%



23%

Percentage of children (ages 13-17) who experienced food insecurity in the past month



6%



27%

Percentage of children (ages 13-17) who worked for money or other payment in past 12 months

All data among 18-24 year olds living in Ethiopia refugee camps, unless otherwise indicated. Childhood violence refers to violence that occurred before age 18.

Suggested citation: Baobab (Population Council, Population Council Kenya, & African Population and Health Research Center), Refugees and Returnees Service, UNHCR, Together for Girls (2024). Violence Against Children and Youth Survey in Refugee Settings in Ethiopia: factsheet.



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FOR Refugees & Returnees Service



Together
for girls
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

