
2-1-2025

Violence against children and youth in refugee settings in Ethiopia: Factsheet

Baobab Research Programme Consortium

Follow this and additional works at: https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/hubs_humanitarian
How does access to this work benefit you? Click here to let us know!

Recommended Citation

The Baobab Research Programme Consortium. 2025. "Violence against children and youth in refugee settings in Ethiopia: Factsheet." Nairobi: Population Council, Inc.; Population Council, Kenya; and African Population and Health Research Center.

Licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](#)

This Fact Sheet is brought to you for free and open access by the Population Council.

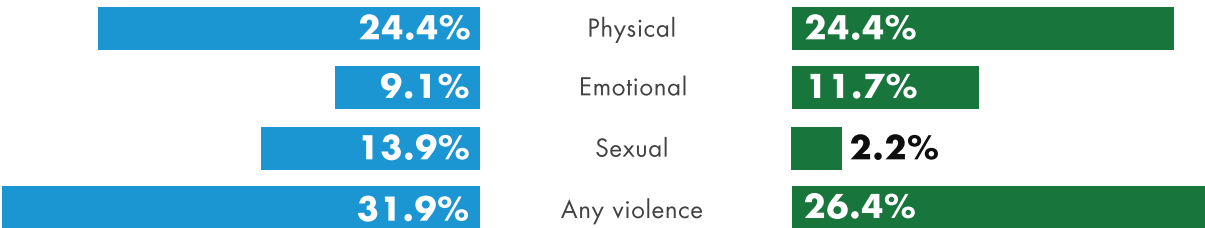
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN REFUGEE SETTINGS IN ETHIOPIA

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.

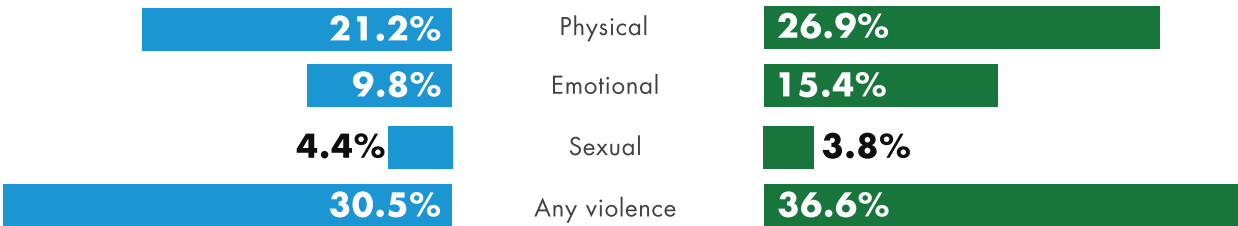
Between 2023 and 2024, the Baobab Research Programme Consortium (RPC) conducted the Humanitarian Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (HVACS) in refugee settings in Ethiopia—the first of its kind in Ethiopia and second in the world—in partnership with the Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) and 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). Below is a summary of highlights from the data on the experiences of 1,937 females and 1,536 males aged 13 to 24 in 20 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

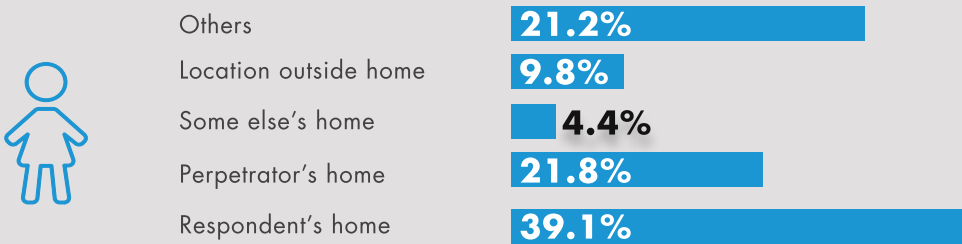


Percentage of those who experienced physical, emotional, sexual or any type of violence before age 18 among 18-24 year olds



Percentage of those who experienced physical, emotional, sexual or any type of violence in the past 12 months among 13-17 year olds

The first incidents of sexual violence occurred in the survivor's or perpetrator's home



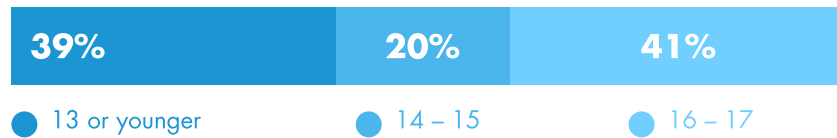
Location of the first incident of sexual violence before age 18 among 18-24 year old girls who experienced sexual violence

Note: The distribution for male sexual violence is unreliable because of the few cases and is not included in the figure above

Sexual violence included having experienced one or more incidents of i) unwanted sexual touching, ii) unwanted attempted sex, iii) physically forced sex, or iv) pressured (threats, harassment, luring, tricking) sex in childhood perpetrated by anyone.

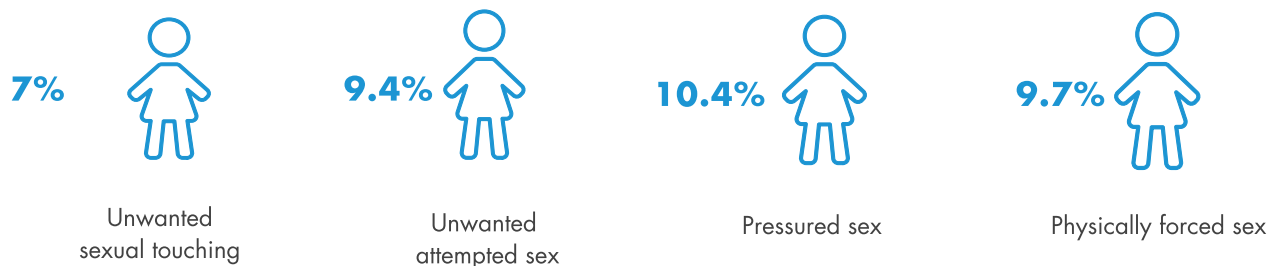
Sexual violence against girls in refugee camps in Ethiopia

Most **girls** experienced the first incidents of sexual violence before age 16



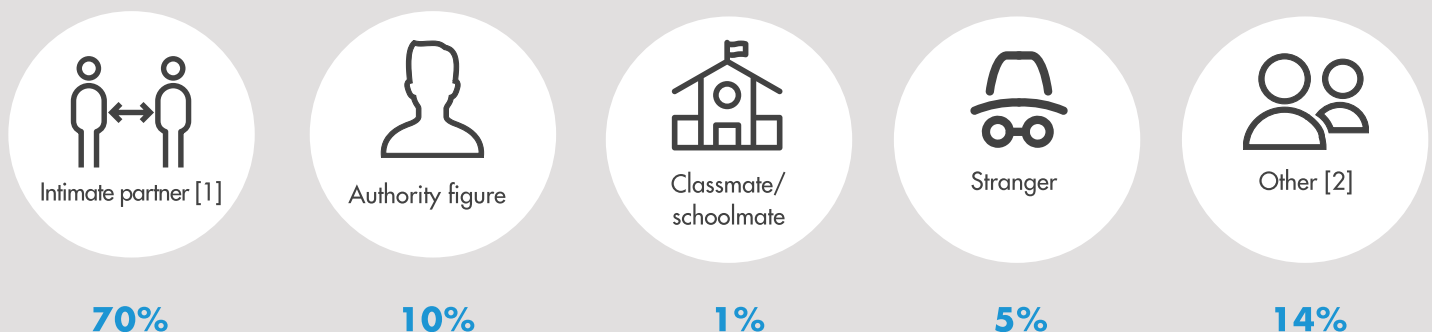
Age at first experience of sexual violence among girls who experienced any sexual violence before age 18 among 18-24 year olds

Childhood sexual violence takes many forms



Percentage of girls aged 18-24 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 incident of sexual violence prior to age 18 among 18-24 year old girls who experienced sexual violence

[1] Intimate partner includes: current or previous boyfriend, romantic partner, or husband

[2] Other includes: family member, relative, neighbor, and friend

Note: The distribution for male sexual violence is unreliable because of the few cases and is not included in the figures above

Sexual violence included having experienced one or more incidents of i) unwanted sexual touching, ii) unwanted attempted sex, iii) physically forced sex, or iv) pressured (threats, harassment, luring, tricking) sex in childhood perpetrated by anyone.

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%

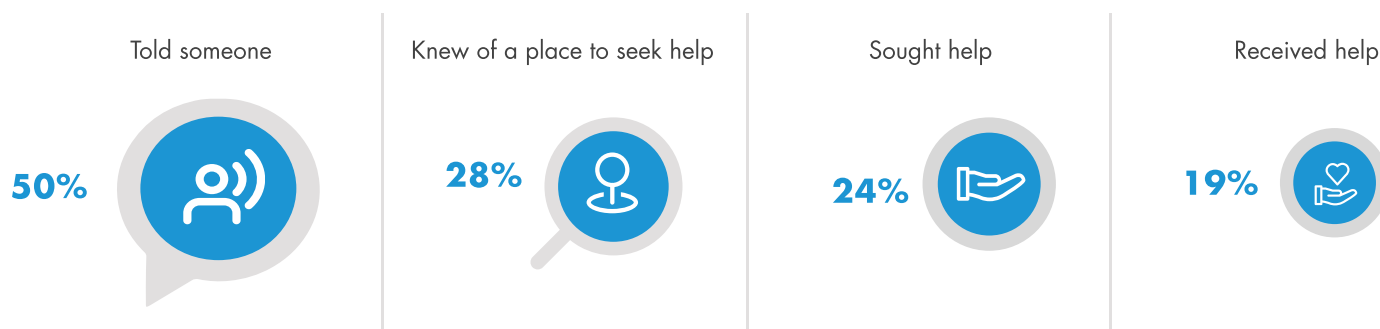
0.2%

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 among 18-24 year olds

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 among 18-24 year old girls

Note: The distribution for male sexual violence is unreliable because of the few cases and is not included in the figure above



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.

Sexual violence included having experienced one or more incidents of i) unwanted sexual touching, ii) unwanted attempted sex, iii) physically forced sex, or iv) pressured (threats, harassment, luring, tricking) sex in childhood perpetrated by anyone.

Contextual factors for children living in refugee camps in Ethiopia



77%



86%

A considerable proportion of children are enrolled in school

Many may require support due to disability

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%

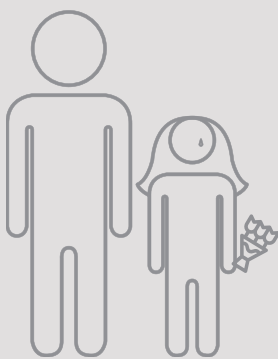
13%

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

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



58% 18%

Proportion ever married

57% 15%

Proportion married before age 18

74% 7%

Age difference 5 years or more

Percentage of child marriage, including cohabitation

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.



የኢ.ፌ.ዲ.ሪ. የሰላምና ጥበቃ አገልግሎት
FDRE Refugees & Returnees Service



Together for girls
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

