

Middle East and North Africa regional report on corporal punishment

Submission for the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children

Introduction

In February 2002, Sara's teacher asked her to write number "3" on the blackboard. The four-year-old Sara did not write it correctly. Her teacher pushed and kicked her until she bled. The parents of the child went to a Lebanese newspaper and reported the incident.

This incident ... is not an isolated event. Corporal punishment is still practiced against children in most schools in Lebanon in different degrees and conditions. The widespread [use] of corporal punishment is symbolic of the current state of the Lebanese educational system and the structure of public administration. It is also representative of the state of the current domestic legislation and the social contexts from which corporal punishment derives its legitimacy.

Thus begins a 2004 report commissioned by Save the Children Sweden (SCS) which presents an analysis of the legal and administrative context of corporal punishment in schools in Lebanon.¹ Yet the problem is not restricted to Lebanon or to schools. Across the region, children's right to respect for their human dignity and physical integrity are being routinely breached. Corporal punishment is inflicted on children in the home, in schools, in penal systems and in alternative care settings.

In some cases, the use of corporal punishment represents a failure in the implementation of domestic laws which prohibit corporal punishment of children. But in many cases – particularly in the home – the failure lies in the laws themselves, as corporal punishment is permitted or even specified as a form of "discipline" or "punishment" of children. Rarely are the rights of children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to protection from all forms of violence, including corporal punishment, upheld in national laws and their implementation.

The example from Lebanon demonstrates that partial reform is insufficient. Here, corporal punishment in public schools is prohibited by a 2001 Ministerial memorandum and was banned in 1993 in schools for Palestinian refugees run by the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). In private schools, which comprise around 50% of all schools and which enrol 30% more students than public schools, policy on corporal punishment is left to the discretion of individual schools. However, in all schools corporal punishment is lawful under article 186 of the Code of Criminal Law, which permits "[d]isciplinary blows inflicted on children by their parents and school teachers in the traditionally practiced manner". The religious character of this article may be the reason for its retention, since Islamic *Shari'a*

¹ Halabi, Z. & Nassar, H. (2004), *Corporal Punishment in Lebanon: The Role of Public Administration* (Beirut, Lebanon: Save the Children Sweden)

does allow corporal punishment as a disciplinary tool, a point mentioned in several *hadith*.²

Article 2 of the Lebanese Code of Civil Procedure provides that courts “shall abide by the principle of the hierarchy of rules” whereby in the event of contradiction between international conventions and domestic laws “the former has priority on the latter”. But in practice reference to international conventions is not widespread among Lebanese courts. In any case, so long as corporal punishment is traditionally and socially accepted in childrearing, only cases with the most serious outcomes are ever likely to reach the official channels leading to the courts.

Until article 186 of the Lebanese Code of Criminal Law is amended or repealed, parents and teachers will continue to be able to legally defend their use of corporal punishment on children. Similar provisions in the laws of other countries must also be addressed. Until domestic laws in all countries across the region – and worldwide – include explicit, unequivocal prohibition of all forms of physical and humiliating punishment of children in all contexts, children will continue to be vulnerable to attacks on their physical and mental integrity.

Research

The research that has been undertaken in Lebanon and Yemen is reported below in relation to the different settings in which corporal punishment occurs. However, it is important to remember that it is often the same children who occupy these different settings and, therefore, that children experience corporal punishment in multiple settings and at the hands of adults in a variety of roles in their lives.

Physical and humiliating punishment in the home

A number of studies in 2004 explored and compared children’s and parents’ views of discipline and punishment, and the means used, in **Yemen**.³ These studies were summarised and a synthesis of the main findings in a report commissioned by the Save the Children Sweden and produced in 2005,⁴ and on which the following summary is based.

Samples in the studies ranged in size from 33 to over 1,300 respondents from urban and rural areas. Children included boys and girls aged 6-15 years, though most were aged 12-15 years. Adults included teachers, parents, caretakers and local community leaders. The majority of parents interviewed were mothers. Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires completed by children,

² In a hadith recorded by Muáz bin Jabal, the prophet said “*let your rod be hanging on them (children), as a warning and to chastise against neglect of their duties towards God*” (Ahmad; Tabraani-Kabeer). Furthermore, the Prophet has often been reported to have said, “*Enjoin prayer on your child when he is seven years old and beat him if he neglects it after he reaches ten years of age*”. The Prophet, however, advised, “*When one of you beats anyone, he should avoid striking the face*” (Abu Dawood)

³ Alyaheri, A. (2004), *Mental health, education and corporal punishment among Yemeni school-aged children* (London: King’s College, Institute of Psychiatry); Dhubhani, N. (2004), *Violence against children in Yemen*; Kamel, H. (2004), *Violence against Children in Yemen*, Internal Mission Report (Save the Children Sweden); The Social Workers’ Association (2004), *Children’s Right in Protection and Security. No discrimination ... No punishment* (Alhota, Lahij Governorate, Yemen: Department of Education)

⁴ Habasch, R. (2005), *Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children in Yemen* (Save the Children Sweden)

parents and caretakers. Qualitative data was gathered through focus groups of parents, children in schools, children in families, children in alternative care institutions and homes for orphans, street children, counsellors, social workers in "juvenile delinquency" institutions, caretakers and teachers. In addition, individual interviews were conducted with children, local community leaders, children, parents, teachers, and staff of juvenile care centres. Qualitative data also consisted of drawings and writings of children.

The research revealed that physical and humiliating punishment of children is widespread in Yemen. In relation to corporal punishment in the home:

- Almost 90% of children reported physical and humiliating punishment as the main method of discipline.
- The most common method of punishment was reported as beating (with the hand or other objects), followed by verbal abuse. Other methods include tying feet, pinching and biting, pulling hair or ear, hitting on the head and standing under the midday sun. Both parents and children focus groups confirmed that the most prevalent method of discipline was beating the child, and this was more common in rural than in urban areas.
- The frequency of physical and humiliating punishment is higher for children in rural than in urban areas. Girls are more exposed to physical punishment than boys, particularly in rural areas. Boys are exposed to more severe physical punishment, such as hitting with a stick, particularly in urban areas. Girls in both urban and rural areas tend to experience more verbal abuse than boys. More girls in rural than in urban areas are physically punished; more girls in urban than in rural areas are verbally cautioned.
- In most cases, parents were identified as those who carry out the punishments, followed by elder brothers. Girls were more likely to report punishment by mothers and boys by fathers. In focus groups with children, fathers were consistently reported as the most violent, followed by eldest brothers, particularly in rural areas. According to parents' reports, mothers are more commonly the main person carrying out the punishment in urban areas than in rural areas.
- For girls, especially from rural areas, the main reason for being punished is not obeying parents' orders; for boys the main reasons are not doing homework or keeping up with household chores. This was the finding from both parents and children.
- Parents reported that the age of their children when first punished is 5-7 years, although in rural areas children as young as 1-3 years are punished. All parents reported that punishment ends when children reach adolescence or around the age of 15 years.
- When asked about their children's reaction during and after punishment, more than one third of parents stated that during the punishment the child accepts the punishment. According to children in focus groups, one explanation for this is that responding back to their elders is considered a sign of disrespect.
- When asked whether punishment is the appropriate method disciplining, a significant number of parents agreed, regardless of occupation, educational

level or rural/urban divide. In contrast, when asked about ideal methods of bringing up children, half of the parents believed in cooperation, encouragement and in explaining errors and their consequences, with one fifth citing physical punishment. The majority of parents considered that the punishment effectively corrects a child's behaviour, but one third reported that it has no effect and that the child becomes more difficult.

Other factors influencing children's vulnerability to physical and humiliating punishment and other violence were revealed by the research:

- Poverty creates an environment conducive for the development of violence. Early marriage has been found to contribute to poverty, and in one study more than half (51.6%) of wives had been married when they were aged 10-16 years.⁵
- Family break-up results in an increased level of violence against children, and this had particularly been the case for children in social care institutions.
- Violence increases with increasing family size (tentative finding).
- Socio-economic status of the family is correlated with the use of violence, with low status being linked with increased violence.⁶
- There was a significant correlation between low educational level of parents and their use of violence against children.⁷ Mothers with lower levels of education were more likely to use physical punishment. There was no correlation between parents' level of education and the type of punishment inflicted on children.
- There was a strong association between children's mental health and the use of physical punishment, with three quarters of children subjected to physical punishment being likely to develop a psychiatric disorder.
- A correlation between increased use of physical punishment and decreasing educational performance was revealed, with harsh physical punishment in the form of hitting with a stick or belt contributing significantly to low levels of educational performance by children.

Children in social care institutions and children who were orphaned were found to be particularly vulnerable. A study of 33 children (mostly boys) from social care institutions in the cities of Sana'a and al-Hadeida in Yemen found that almost three out of four had experienced high levels of violence within their families, and almost half reported having been beaten by their fathers. In focus groups, children stated that they were often subjected to extremely violent abuse and mistreatment by their fathers and step-mothers in particular.

A visit to the children's home outside of Sana'a also found that many children had been on the streets because of violence at home, especially from fathers, brothers and uncles. Children reported that the reasons for punishment included their refusal to work or beg or coming home late. Methods of punishment included verbal abuse, hitting, threatening with pistols and burning with hot water.

⁵ Alyaheri, A. (2004), op. cit.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

Research involving separate samples of male and female orphans in Yemen found that orphan boys had been exposed at home to harsh treatment, abuse and hitting and were forced to leave home. Reasons for being punished were reported as failure at school, running away from home and refusal to work in the market or guard the sheep. Punishments reported by girl orphans included abuse, hitting and deprivation of food.

In **Lebanon**, the report of a field study carried out by the Lebanese University stated that physical domestic abuse is widespread as a means of discipline and is generally used in raising children because of the common belief that it is effective. In a similar vein, a study of a Kindergarten population of Palestinian refugee children residing in Lebanon found that 67.9% of children were subjected to beatings at home.⁸

Physical and humiliating punishment in schools

In relation to corporal punishment in schools, the SCS study in **Yemen** referred to above found:⁹

- More than 90% of children reported that punishment is the most commonly used method of discipline in schools. Of the children from social care institutions, more than half of those who attended school were exposed to beating by teachers.
- More than half of the children interviewed reported having been hit with a stick. As in the home, boys are exposed to more severe forms of hitting. In addition to beating with the hand or an object, forms of punishment in schools included verbal abuse, throwing pieces of chalk at children, burning and cauterizing, and putting a ruler between the child's fingers and pressing the fingers against it.
- No differences were found between rural and urban areas, although this was contradicted in focus groups with teachers.
- At schools, most punishment is carried out by teachers. Others include classroom assistants and the school director.
- The main reason for punishment is not doing homework, followed by misbehaving in class and not obeying orders of teachers or school staff.
- Twice as many parents from rural as from urban areas believed in the appropriateness of physical punishment in schools.
- The main reason for running away from school was being hit by the teacher.

There is a lack of research pertaining to corporal punishment in schools in **Lebanon**, although severe incidents of corporal punishment are reported in the press and anecdotal evidence suggests that these incidents are not isolated occurrences. In a recent study sponsored by UNICEF and quoted in the Second Supplementary

⁸ Khaidi, A. (2000), *Domestic Violence Among Some Palestinian Refugee Communities in Lebanon: An Exploratory Study and Ideas for Further Action* (Association Najdeh)

⁹ Habasch, R. (2005), op. cit.

Report on the Rights of the Palestinian Child in Lebanon, it was revealed that the majority of children who drop out of school leave because of school connected reasons – failure in school, de-motivation and harsh treatment were noted by 67.5% of boys and 57.6% of girls.¹⁰ In addition, verbal abuse and harsh treatment by teaching staff are reported frequently and appear to be practiced on a wide scale, although parents and children are reluctant to take action.

Physical and humiliating punishment in other settings

The SCS study in **Yemen** found that in the local community, mediators leave it to the family to punish children in cases of small problems.¹¹ In more severe cases, children may be sent to a corrective institution or police station. In some cases, community leaders reported themselves beating the child, stating that they were like the child's family.

Of the children from social care institutions, one third reported experiencing "severe treatment" in the institutions, and a further third reported experiencing "moderate treatment". Children reported being beaten for wrong-doing, most commonly by hitting with a stick.

Children's views on physical and humiliating punishment

SCS has gathered and compiled children's views on corporal punishment from students in different schools in **Lebanon**. The following testimonies are taken from interviews with Palestinian refugee children undertaken by SCS's partner organisation, Naba'a. The children consulted were primarily those from UNRWA schools aged 9-14 years old who have suffered from corporal punishment at home and in school, though only their perspectives in relation to school are quoted here:

1. What happens when you misbehave at school?

"They tell me to write my lesson over and over, sometimes I get hit"

"They hit me with a stick or with karate moves"

"The teacher swears at me, or hits me with a stick on the back of my hand, or presses a pencil in between my fingers"

"The teacher presses down on me"

"The teacher hits me with a karate move, one teacher hits me on the head with a stick"

¹⁰ Reported in Halabi, Z. & Nassar, H. (2005), op. cit.

¹¹ Habasch, R. (2005), op. cit.

2. What do you feel when you are hit?

"Humiliated"

"I feel like a joke in front of my friends"

"My friends make fun of me"

"Sad, insulted, worried"

3. When you are not consulted about decisions that concern you in school, what do you feel?

"I feel like a victim"

"I feel my opinion doesn't count"

"I have no rights"

"I don't count"

"I feel imprisoned"

"I've been badly treated"

4. How would you like to be treated when you do something wrong?

"I prefer that they make me understand by speaking to me"

"[They] should tell me my faults and what the right way is"

"Show me the right way"

In research in **Yemen** by the Social Workers' Association, children revealed brutal forms of punishment, as illustrated by the following:¹²

"They have been hitting me since I was 7. My dad cauterized me. I don't like to be burned and I don't like to be punished in this way...."

"My brothers beat me with a stick at home. My father beats me and jails me in a hot pepper store. He also hits me with a rope and leaves me in the hot sun for 15 minutes. My brothers, too, agree with my father and tell him that I misbehave and I have to be disciplined. My family treats me in this way for the first time and they'll do it with those who come after me."

Other views reported include:

"They must talk to us, with the tongue. God gave us the tongue to use it for talking. They have to discuss with us and teach us, because teaching during childhood is like engraving on a stone."

"Hitting is a backward means in the society. It's used by parents and teachers in a very brutal manner. This is not an educational means that cannot be understood by the mind of the child. Hitting is, therefore, not a good way for education."

¹² The Social Workers' Association (2004), op. cit.

"Hitting is an unhealthy way for children. It results in isolating the children and they go to the streets which is not a good way. A good way is when parents sit up and talk to their children. Talking not hitting as a means for punishment."

"I felt that my parents hit me and I feel depressed and sad when someone hits me. I don't [see] why they hit me like this? Why? They don't have ways other than hitting? Why don't they deal with us by talking? Why don't they express their anger by talking? Why they've hitting only?"

"They treat the children of the teachers and the brilliant ones in a better way, better than us, and when we put our hands up and give a wrong answer they blame and mock us, they don't give us another chance."

"I don't like to be put in a critical position by talking and be criticized and blamed publicly."

The research found that children reported different coping strategies in different settings. In the home, children commonly sought help from grandparents. More girls than boys coped by submission, and more girls than boys seemed to run away from home as a coping strategy. In contrast, at school almost three quarters of the children reported submitting when harassed. In social care institutions, the most frequently reported strategy was submission. Others included trying to escape from the institution, being aggressive towards peers, insulting teachers and supervisors, or repeating the behaviour for which they had been punished. Children who complain go to the director of the institution or to the social counsellor but most children stated they would only complain if the punishment was too harsh or repeated. Reasons for not complaining were children's belief that it is ineffective, that they do not know anyone who would be fair with them, and that they are "used" to the punishment.

In the studies examined for the SCS report,¹³ more than half of the children exposed to violence at home expressed feeling anger and to a lesser extent frustration. There was no difference between urban and rural areas, but there was a disparity between girls and boys, with girls more likely to feel a desire to withdraw at home or run away to a relative. Children exposed to physical punishment at school reported feeling frustration, particularly girls, and to a lesser extent sadness and anger. A significant number of children reported depression. Far fewer reported anger although a significant number of children reported the desire for revenge.

When children were asked about the appropriate way of dealing with them at home and at school more than half expressed the wish to be understood and supported. In the case of schools, children explicitly stated that they wanted teachers to respect students. Regional disparities were apparent with more rural than urban children responding to the need for compassion and understanding, both at home and at school, particularly girls.

Of the reactions of children in social care institutions to the use of physical punishment, half felt that they did not deserve to be punished, because the

¹³ Habasch, R. (2005), op. cit.

punishment, according to children either did not fit the misdemeanour, was an inappropriate method of punishment or because the punishment was thought to be too severe. There was a high rate of frustration and anger among these children. There was also a high rate of depression, and in focus groups children reported that they felt suicidal and wished they could die.

Good practice

Lebanon

Save the Children Sweden (SCS) has been leading the campaign against corporal punishment in schools in Lebanon since 2003. The four main objectives outlined by SCS in its campaign against corporal punishment in schools are:

1. *Awareness and Mobilisation* – Collaboration with the Higher Council for Childhood, the Training Centre for Community Development, other NGOs and professionals, especially with the development of a National Plan of Action on violence against children and the Ambassadors of Peace project (see below).
2. *Legal and Administrative Reform* – Addressing the inconsistencies, contradictions, incoherence and discriminatory nature of domestic laws, and public administration.
3. *Extensive Child Participation* – SCS has consulted with girls and boys throughout its projects on corporal punishment in schools, and has created programmes and activities to prepare children for active participation in both local and national events that concern them. SCS has also listened to children's accounts of corporal punishment to better understand the effects of school corporal punishment on them (see above).
4. *Advocacy* – preventing abuse of girls and boys and emphasising their human rights to care, justice and dignity, through a series of planned activities to persuade key actors to make changes in policies, programmes and behaviour and focusing on changes within the community, within the school system, within organisations and within the local and national government, as well as within the global community.

These campaign objectives are to be achieved in collaboration with the Higher Council for Childhood and its main implementing partner the Training Centre for Community Development.

The **Higher Council for Childhood** (HCC), created in 1994, constitutes a national framework for cooperation between governmental bodies, NGOs and international agencies in order to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Lebanon. One of its major goals is to draft and implement the National Strategies for Childhood. In collaboration with several NGOs and governmental bodies, the Council has begun to develop a strategy to address corporal punishment of children. In 2004, the HCC commissioned the Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect as a consultative body, comprising 15 NGOs, professionals and SCS. SCS and their partner organisation the Training Centre for Community Development (see below) provide technical support and advocate for change

regarding corporal punishment. The Committee's work has been further institutionalised through its contributions to the National Plan of Action. SCS's contribution to the Plan on corporal punishment is based on the opinions and voices of children and their recommendations of how to solve the problem of corporal punishment. Children trained in the Ambassadors of Peace Programme (see below) are to contribute in part to the National Plan of Action. The Plan was due to be launched at the end of May 2005. The Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect has begun the process of mapping out existing research, programmes and NGOs working in the field of violence against children in order to network and share experience for collaboration on advocacy on decision-makers and authorities.

The **Training Centre for Community Development** (TCCD) was formed in April 2003 as a Lebanese cooperative working on the implementation of social development programmes, and consists of trainers, teachers, coordinators and an administrator. The cooperative is politically and religiously unaffiliated and cooperates with a number of non-governmental and governmental organisations in Lebanon. SCS has been working with TCCD as an implementing partner in Lebanon since June 2003.

Ambassadors of Peace Lebanon

The key programme initiated by TCCD to help prevent corporal punishment in schools is the project "Ambassadors of Peace Lebanon". Originally initiated in Canadian Schools, it was adapted to the Lebanon experience to implement peaceful conflict resolution in schools, with the eventual aim of abolishing corporal punishment in schools and ultimately in homes. Launched in Lebanon in 2002, the project includes work with students, school staff, and parents. Projects are run in schools in and around the coastal city of Saida, plus one school in Beirut, chosen in order to represent a large cross section of boys and girls from different socio-economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds, and including private, public and UNRWA schools.

The goals of the Ambassadors of Peace (AOP) programme are to:

1. decrease corporal punishment against children in Lebanese schools and subsequently society through the promotion of a child-friendly learning environment, learning without fear and discipline in conformity with the child's dignity;
2. educate on human rights values within the school system (respect by teachers, school authorities and students of participation rights, rights to physical and psychological integrity);

3. give the existing focus groups in Lebanon tools that make it possible for participants to become more peaceful individuals by understanding the AOP curriculum. This includes teachers, students, parents and other interested parties.

The essence of the curriculum consists of human rights and conflict resolution training that examines individuals and their interactions with their surroundings through six main themes:

1. Non-violence
2. Human rights
3. Democratic practice
4. Respect (for environment, self and others)
5. Anti-discrimination
6. Participation

Participants in focus groups are helped to understand that corporal punishment decreases when a person: accepts that violence exists; learns how to break the conflict-anger-aggressiveness-aggression-violence pattern; accepts that different people have different personalities and therefore different perceptions; and learns how to communicate, finds solutions and chooses a solution that works.

The project comprises five phases (see following table). It also includes summer camps to reinforce the ideals and values the children have learnt. Since 2003, TCCD has trained 4,969 people, including 109 teachers, directors, 362 parents and other adults, and 3,723 children from different ethnical, religious and social groups. According to the target groups, violence has decreased and the atmosphere is more peaceful than before in the schools. As a result of the overall impact of the AOP programme, TCCD has been given access to training parents on child-raising.

Phases of the Ambassadors of Peace Programme	
Phase	Content
1 Training of teachers and supervisors involved in the follow up of the project.	Minimum of 36 hours. Components include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the physical and psychological needs of the child; - the educating role of teachers; - style of authority; - rules for healthy discipline; - acceptable behaviour vs unacceptable behaviour; - levels of tolerance; - punishment and alternatives; - expression of anger; - training evaluation.
2 Raising awareness about violence and peace amongst teachers and supervisors.	Minimum of 4 hours. Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ways to create relationship with students; - increase student awareness on violence, peace and important values for a peaceful world; - discuss the results of violence manifestations; - discuss the meaning of conflict – how does it start, what kinds of reactions are possible, what are the solutions? - identify personal needs; - identify personal values; - discussion of non-violent behaviour; - discussion of peaceful behaviour in school.
3 Training of students.	Subjects are to be discussed/adapted to the students, but they include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognising manifestations of violence; - role play; - evolution of conflict toward violent behaviour; - notion of needs with the Maslow Pyramid; - values; - ways of conflict resolution without involving an intermediary; - ways to integrate non-violent behaviour; - reference persons (trusted persons to involve when students cannot resolve arguments peacefully themselves); - training evaluation.
4 Training of certain students to become ambassadors of peace in elementary schools.	Minimum of 12 hours. Also involves meeting with the ambassador's parents, since the participation of the parents is important to support and encourage the child in the process of non-violence. <p>Objectives of training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discussion of activities that the ambassadors will do with elementary school children; - share a minute of peace and discuss its significance; - letting students practice their activities through various means, e.g. theatre, songs, etc; - discussion of the student's activities, of presentation of the activity material, of day to day behavioural manifestations of peace; - evaluation of training.
5 Program evaluation	Evaluation of the impacts of the programme to be carried out with the teachers, supervisors and children, through a

	combination of continuous monitoring, regular meetings and discussion, questionnaires, testimonies and the development of students' attitudes.
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Progress

By the end of 2004 the following had been achieved:

Awareness raising and mobilisation

- AOP programmes running in 11 schools and two summer camps, and 1,690 students trained to become ambassadors of peace and to take part in future local/national/regional processes;
- ambassadors have trained elementary school students in schools and in 2004 SCS supported several organisations with youth in middle management as models in developing more child-led organisations and programmes, including training children in other NGO programmes;
- training in the AOP programme of more than 250 teachers from public, private and UNRWA schools, and parents;
- advocacy work by ambassadors in 5 villages in the south in 2003, to promote peace and spread the AOP message against corporal punishment through music, singing, dancing, theatre and other methods;
- compilation by ambassadors of an intercultural music CD, performed by the children themselves and to be used as an advocacy and awareness raising tool;
- during 2004, TCCD was recognised by the Ministry of Education and given permission to train all public schools in Lebanon;
- creation of a school-based staff development programme for psychological support in the field of therapeutic activities, to improve the mental and physical health of the children and their parents;
- as a result of advocacy work by TCCD and SCS, the HCC and the Renee Moawad Foundation have agreed to organise and plan a workshop about how to solve the problem of corporal punishment in schools where UNRWA and the Ministry of Education, together with other members of civil society, will devise an action plan to combat corporal punishment in schools. This is the first time that the HCC will include UNWRA in this type of work.
- the HCC has become increasingly conscious of taking children's rights into account and has consulted SCS to review official criteria, programmes or decrees to ensure that they are rights-based, especially on the issues of child participation and violence.
- TCCD's work with children and teachers has led to more peaceful schools and an improvement of children's educational results. This has triggered parents during 2004 to become more interested in TCCD and opened up the doors for TCCD to conduct training in homes as well.

Legal and administrative reform

- The paper commissioned by SCS entitled "The Role of the Public Administration in Implementing a Ban on Corporal Punishment", outlining the legal and administrative loopholes (and referred to above), was

disseminated widely to all stakeholders including governmental bodies. It was launched in the media in 2004 and made the HCC as well as the Child Rights Committee in the Lebanese Parliament aware of the importance of legal and public administrative reform regarding physical and psychological punishment. The First Lady invited SCS to speak about violence to Ministers and civil society, and SCS has also been invited by the HCC, medical professionals and civil society on several occasions to talk about the problem of violence and possible solutions. The paper will serve as a base for SCS's, HCC's and TCCD's conference on school reform and corporal punishment due to have taken place in early 2005, but disrupted by recent political upheaval.

Child participation

- Children from various backgrounds have participated in the various elements of the AOP project. The effects of the AOP project include increased self esteem, self-awareness, and increased capacity to overcome adversity. Expressions from children reflecting these developments were inadvertently recorded after AOP programmes. Examples include:

"I learned what violence is. I will never hurt my friends or sisters anymore."

"I was uncomfortable with myself and nervous. Now, I am now more aware of my abilities and I am less nervous."

"I wasn't expecting to learn so much. I never thought that insulting was a form of violence! I am going to try and implement what I have learnt in my everyday life."

In addition, the summer camps have become more inclusive (inviting children from the poor neighbouring areas in which the summer camps are held), and have taken on children's participation as a theme for discussion and training.

- SCS carried out interviews with Palestinian refugee children together with SCS's most recent partner organisation Naba'a, highlighting children's voices and opinions about their situation at UNRWA's donor conference for development and support to Palestinian refugee children. TCCD consults its child members regularly, and adapts its programmes and projects accordingly. For example, in the AOP project on April 19th 2005, at one school in Saida students in the 7th grade prepared, planned and then implemented, with the supervision of TCCD, a project aimed at raising awareness about corporal punishment, and transmitted to the school the knowledge and activities that had been communicated to them.
- One of the AOP project's main components is the role the child plays in transmitting the non-violence message to other children that they meet in schools, youth associations and clubs in their locality. This has also

resulted in inter-community dialogue between groups of children that would otherwise be unlikely to meet. The children have expressed a need for more of these encounters and have also shown more openness to children different from themselves. To date, TCCD has facilitated peer to peer dialogue and training in several schools, youth centres and local and international NGO projects aimed at youth.

The AOP programme continues to work with the aim of expanding and integrating into more organisations, institutions and schools in Lebanon. Future programmes and partnerships of TCCD and others, which will expand SCS's support to further its good-practice programmes/projects, include:

1. the creation of a specialised student committee by TCCD throughout schools in Lebanon, including UNRWA schools;
2. the creation by TCCD of a library and learning centre, as a centre for continuous learning and exchange of ideas concerning corporal punishment, and an international and national networking system concerned with corporal punishment;
3. the creation by TCCD of a Lebanese University training programme which, in addition to providing qualified personnel from the field of Social and Behavioural Sciences, aims at training and advocating to future young professionals the anti-corporal punishment message;
4. training of children and others in the municipality of Saida, which has given TCCD open access and working space, so that TCCD may improve the quality of life for the people of Saida. TCCD has also been asked to do this inter-municipally. In addition, the municipality has asked TCCD to supervise and train all Lebanese University students that require training from the Saida municipality to complete their medical-social degrees;
5. collaboration from September 2005 between SCS and the Arab Resource Collective (ARC) in a child policy protection workshop, which aims to answer the question: "what measures should be taken by NGOs/institutions (schools, nurseries, clubs etc) working with children to ensure their safety and security?" The concept of protection that the workshop will cover extends to issues of privacy, discrimination, all forms of exploitation, brutal treatment, sexual abuse, war, violent attacks, etc;
6. SCS sponsorship from 2005 of the NGO Nada'a to implement the *School without walls* project, which seeks to support children, aged 9-12 years old, who are most at risk of dropping out of school in the UNRWA school system, especially those at high risk of dropping out due to the frequency of corporal punishment suffered in UNRWA schools. The project works with both teachers and parents to holistically support the children. It aims to cover three UNRWA schools, including a total of 1,446 children, 48 teachers and 128 families. It aims to reinforce the teachers' skills, hold parental workshops, and support children in areas of most need, and includes teaching children about their rights;
7. the *National Awareness Raising Seminar on Violence against Children in Schools in Lebanon, "Towards creating a Safe School Environment for*

Children". Intended for March 2005 but postponed due to political upheaval, the seminar is to be sponsored jointly by the HCC, SCS and the Renee Moawad foundation. Its objective is to advocate against corporal punishment in the education system and make participants (including people from the media, NGO, governmental and private sectors) aware of the impact of corporal punishment against children and their responsibility in eliminating it. It also aims to advocate for long-term media coverage/partnership to encourage a change of attitude in the general public.

Evaluation

This evaluation comprises the opinions of approximately 50 pupils from two different schools:

- Appreciation: 92-100% of the students highly appreciated the meetings; the main reason stated was that they had gained new knowledge through the training, and that it made it possible for them to freely express their opinions. They also thought that they might be able to use this knowledge in their personal lives.

- Implementing new knowledge: 58-84% had had the occasion to apply the new knowledge gained from the meetings in their home environment and with their friends.

- Changes in class: 61-80% believed that there had been positive changes in the class at various levels. These changes were attributed to the fact that they now knew how to solve problems that had arisen, and the fact that they now think before acting and verbally solve the conflicts instead of fighting. A majority of the students believe that only a minority of the other pupils have changed their immediate attitudes but that there will be a greater positive change in more time.

- Discussing conflict resolution: 77-96% spoke about the concept of peace on a daily basis with their family and with their friends. For a majority of the pupils, people around them were very interested in the subject. According to the students, their parents appreciated that their children had taken part in raising awareness training. Unfortunately, some of the students' friends "laughed" at the idea.

- New perceptions:

" Before we were unaware of the consequences of using violence. Now, we want to try to stop it."

" All of my friends have changed their attitude towards peace and violence, especially after a long explanation about the importance of peace and the necessity of carrying this message in our life in order to create a peaceful society."

Throughout the training the students stated that they have become attentive to alternative solutions to violence and are also well aware of their capacity in changing their environment. Fewer than 20% stated that their perception on violence had not changed, and some did not answer the question.

- General comments: The evaluation that was completed by all of the pupils included many positive comments regarding the training by the training team:

"Before, I did not know how to handle a violent situation..."

"Now, I realize that I can stop violence..."

"I did not know the consequences of using violence..."

"My classmates were very happy to meet people who work on this subject especially since they come from a violent environment."

"I have a different idea about violence now. Before, I did not think it was possible to replace violence with peaceful actions."

Training as ambassadors of peace

In total, 28 pupils who were trained to be ambassadors of peace filled out a questionnaire, and their views are reflected below:

- Recognition from other students: The majority stated that they were treated the same way by their classmates as they were before they became ambassadors for peace. 30% felt that the other students were proud of them, however, and that they were treated with more respect. A minority said that some of their classmates laughed at them and ignored them.

- Training: The ambassadors of peace became aware of the fact that they were responsible towards the other students and society at large. They expressed the fact that they were able to inform and convince children around them:

"Today, I realized that I am responsible towards the society. This responsibility is a need and humanity's duty."

"Peace is a mission and it passes on from one person to another."

"We can offer our help to others and we can create peace in the society."

- Perceptions of peace: The ambassadors also expressed having acquired an understanding of the concept of violence and peace.

"Peace is something you acquire step by step by loving, taking care of other people and building a world of love and dialogue."

"Before, stopping wars was important. Now it is everything to me."

"Peace is not only between countries but in our people and their relation with others."

"All is not to take by violence; one should not make decisions quickly, but have dialogue, to help collaborate together."

- Perceived benefits from being an ambassador of peace: Having responsibilities was seen as the most important aspect of being an ambassador of peace according to the students. The ambassadors saw the advantage of having people around them who have confidence in them. Most stated that it is an honour for them to be ambassadors of peace since it includes giving information to young people and trying to convince them to be peaceful and not violent:

"I want to learn together with other students what peace and violence is, so that more pupils can become ambassadors of peace."

- Elements mostly retained: A majority retained the different stages of carrying out violence as well as the various forms that violence can take. Some recalled general meetings and activities with the trainers themselves.

Yemen

SCS and its partners have undertaken a number of programmes addressing violence against children, including corporal punishment, in Yemen:

- SCS has designed a multi-year programme aimed at eliminating violence and abuse of children, including corporal punishment and other humiliating and degrading treatment, focusing on legal reform and the enforcement of laws prohibiting violence and abuse of children, training, education and awareness-raising, advocacy and the promotion of children's participation. Partners include the Ministry of Education and Social Affairs, UNICEF, WHO, OHCHR, the Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood, and Juvenile Justice Authorities. Key target groups are children and teachers in public, private, semi-private and UNRWA schools, law enforcement officials, parents, social workers, staff of the Ministries of Education, Justice, Labour, Human Rights and Social Affairs, religious and community leaders, medical professionals, parliament, UN staff, decision-makers and the media.
- *Violence against Children* is a project initiated by SCS and being implemented together with the Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood. Objectives include conducting research on violence against children in homes, schools and social institutions. Two awareness raising workshops on violence against children were held in May and June 2004 in Sana'a, and the Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood conducted lobbying meetings targeting key persons in government ministries to stop violence against children and to facilitate the completion of the UN Study on Violence Against Children questionnaire.
- In the context of a survey on students' behavioural problems as a result of their exposure to violence, conducted by the Yemen Mental Health Association, with UNICEF support, three workshops were held for teachers, social workers and child rights NGOs. The project aims to give psychosocial support to students, to improve the students' situation in school and at home and to establish data for future follow up. A major component of the project consisted of the establishment of four behavioural assistance units in four schools in four districts in Aden, each of which has two psychologists.
- With SCS support, Oxfam and the Yemen Mental Health Association have established a helpline which aims to follow up on violence and sexual abuse cases and provide psychosocial support to children.
- The *Corporal Punishment and its Effect on Children in Schools* project, supported by SCS, aims to examine types of physical punishment at schools

and its effect on school performance, and will be followed up by training of students and teacher in behavioural approaches in schools.

- The project *Highlighting Children Voices on Corporal Punishment in Schools and Homes* includes programmes on raising awareness of parents and teachers, with the main objective of improving children's participation and promoting their expression of views about violence against children. To this end, the Social Workers Association and SCS compiled children's voices and discussed them in a workshop.
- In February 2004, SCS supported a workshop held in the parliament and attended by members of the parliament, NGOs and governmental institutions. Violence against children in prison and juvenile centres was discussed and a committee formed to work on legal reforms.