



Photo: Save the Children

Salam*, 10, and her brother Rami*, 13, learning at home in a camp in North West Syria

CHILD FRIENDLY
**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

More than 2.3 billion children worldwide live in one of the countries that put in place some restrictions, like lockdowns and school closures, because of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ Most children are not at a high risk of being hurt by the virus, but they are impacted by different effects that the virus is having.

“

We are **not living** our childhood.”

– 12-year-old girl, Syria

Children that are already vulnerable – like poor children, girls, children with disabilities, and refugee children – have been most affected by the effects of COVID-19. Progress that governments and organisations have made towards making the world a better place for children, through the Sustainable Development Goals, is at risk of being lost because of the effects of the virus.

To find out about how children and their families have been affected by COVID-19, Save the Children carried out a global survey of children and their parents or caregivers. We spoke to more than 31,500 parents and caregivers and more than 13,000 children across the world, making this the largest survey of children and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report focuses on our responses from children and parents and caregivers that Save the Children work with. In this group, we spoke to more than 17,500 parents and caregivers and more than 8,000 children in 37 different countries.

Survey participants

COUNTRIES

37

PARENTS

17,565

CHILDREN

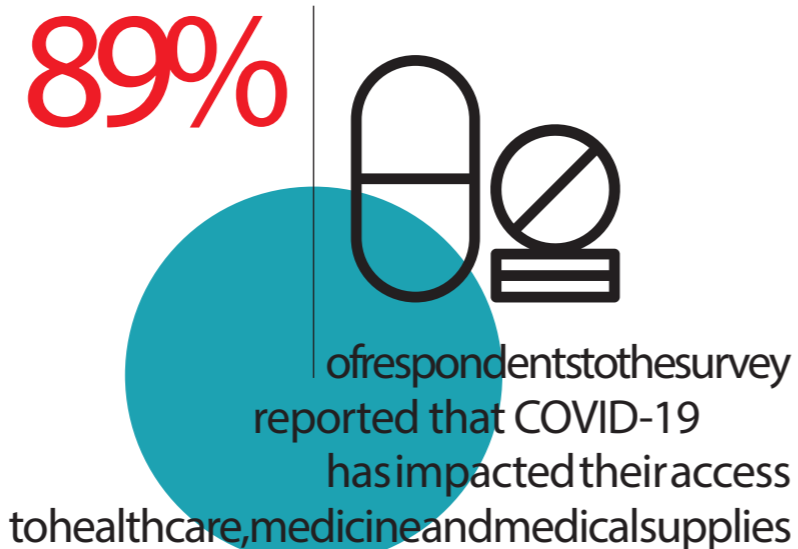
8,069

Children's Agenda for Action

Children have their own rights, which are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. These rights need to continue to be upheld at all times, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. When we spoke to children, they demanded that leaders uphold these rights.

Children demanded that governments take action on education, including re-opening schools and improved distance learning. They also asked governments to focus on responding to the pandemic, and increase access to healthcare, and asked for poorer families to be prioritised by governments and given economic help.

Children also asked governments to protect them from violence, which is increasing as a result of lockdowns, and to listen to children and let them participate in decision making on issues that affect them.



Health and nutrition during the pandemic

With a lot of countries moving health resources to focus on COVID-19 and lockdowns preventing people from going to seek medical help, many children may die from preventable causes, such as pneumonia, malaria and diarrhoea, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has also caused shortages in food, and has caused many households to lose some or all of their income, making them poorer. This means that many children may not have enough food to eat, which might lead to an increase in hunger and malnutrition.

When children's parents and

caregivers responded to the survey, more than 89% said that COVID-19 has impacted their access to healthcare, medicine, and medical supplies. Even more families that had children that have disabilities or chronic health conditions found it hard to access healthcare.

62% of parents and caregivers said that they are finding it hard to provide their families with meat, dairy products, grains, fruits and vegetables. 52% of these parents and caregivers said that this was because food is too expensive.

Save Our Education

COVID-19 has disrupted many children's education because of governments closing schools, and children needing to learn at home. Save the Children predict that at least 10 million children will not return to school when they reopen, and that girls and poorer children will be more likely to not go back.²

For children that do go back to school, a lot of them will have missed out on months of learning, and will be behind in their education. This will affect the poorest children that do not have online technology, like computers and mobile phones, at home, and are less likely to have help at home.

More than 8 in 10 children that we spoke to felt that they were learning little or nothing at all. This was higher for children living in poor households, displaced children, and girls. Less than 1% of children from poor households said that they have access to the internet to learn when at home, even though a lot of distance learning relies on the internet.³

40% of children from poor households said that they need help with their schoolwork, but they have no one to help them. Two thirds of parents and caregivers reported that their children received no contact from teachers since schools closed. Children that do not have help with their learning will be even further behind when schools reopen.

Fewer than
1%



of children from poor households said they have access to the internet for distance learning

Child poverty and social protection

With governments putting lockdowns in place, COVID-19 quickly caused economic problems in many countries. Save the Children predicts that the number of children living in poor households could increase by 117 million in 2020.⁴ Child poverty stops children having access to vital services like health and education, and can mean that they are more likely to suffer violence, like child labour and child marriage.

More than 3 in 4 parents and caregivers that we spoke to said that they had lost income since the start

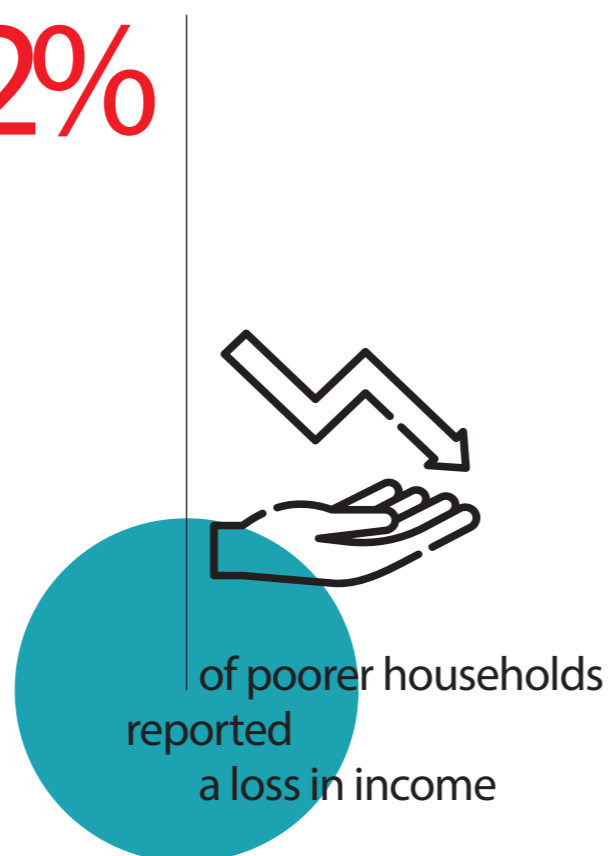
of the COVID-19 pandemic. Poorer households were more likely to lose income than non-poor households. People living in urban areas were more likely to lose their job compared to those in rural areas.

Lots of countries have put in place financial help due to COVID-19, called social protection. Social protection means that governments support adults and children, especially the poor and vulnerable, with money and other things, like school meals. Social protection is

important to make sure that children don't suffer from hunger and have access to other services like school and healthcare.

Even though countries have put this in place, 70% of parents and caregivers that we spoke to that had lost money because of COVID-19 were still not receiving social protection.

82%



Protecting children from violence

Many children were already experiencing violence before the COVID-19 outbreak. But, the COVID-19 pandemic will make the risk of violence against children even higher, particularly for girls, poor children, children with disabilities, and children living in conflict.

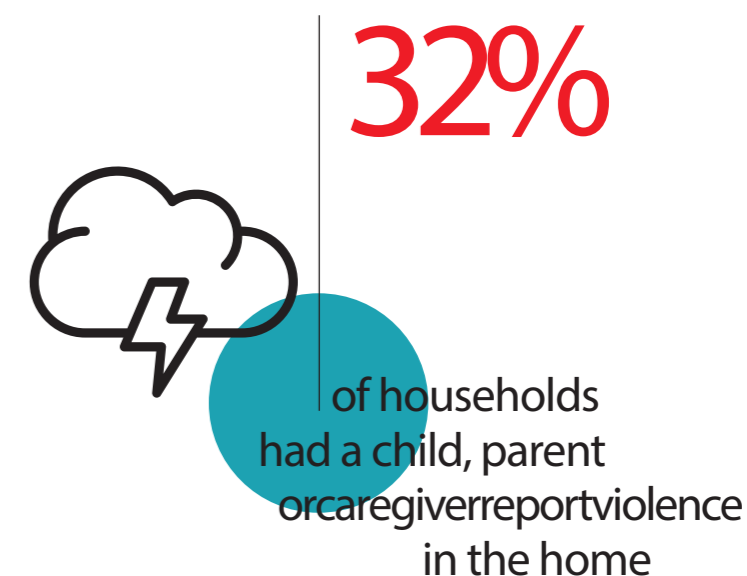
In our survey, 32% of households had a child, parent or caregiver who said that there had been violence in their home since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This increased for children out of school – 17% of children said that there was violence at home when schools were closed, but 8% of children said that there was violence at home when schools were open

and they were attending.

The pandemic has also meant that more girls have had to do more chores and care for family members. 63% of girls reported an increase in household chores, and 52% reported an increase in time spent caring for siblings and other family members since the start of the pandemic. Girls said that this stopped them being able to study.

32%



Recommendations

Save the Children are asking global and national decision-makers and leaders to come together to protect a generation of children around the world. This must be done by making sure that all children:

- Have access to health and nutrition systems throughout the pandemic
- Have access to learning whilst out of school, and are able to return to school when it is safe to do so
- Have access to social protection schemes to protect them from child poverty
- Are protected from violence and have access to services to protect them and help them to recover from violence, like mental health services
- Are listened to and involved in decision-making processes, as included in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For the full list of recommendations, please [see the full report](#).

Endnotes

- 1 UNICEF, (2020). Don't Let Children be the Hidden Victims of COVID-19 pandemic <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/dont-let-children-be-hidden-victims-covid-19-pandemic>
- 2 Save the Children, (2020). Save our Education: Protect every child's right to learn in the COVID-19 response and recovery https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17871/pdf/save_our_education_0.pdf
- 3 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, (2020). World Education Blog, Distance Learning Denied <https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2020/05/15/distance-learning-denied/#more-12982>
- 4 Save the Children UK, (2020). Coronavirus' Invisible Victims: Children in Monetary Poor Households <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/blogs/2020/coronavirus-invisible-victims-children-in-monetary-poor-househol>