

Armed Violence and Sustainable Development Awareness for Schools

[International Youth Day](#) on August 12 is an opportunity to reflect on the impact of gun and gender-based violence on youth and children around the world. For this day, IANSA has developed three signs that can be printed and placed in schools and other learning centers all year round.

Gun violence and young people

Gun violence can be present in [every stage](#) of childhood, and affects emotional, cognitive, and physical development, as well as family and community environments. During the pre-natal period and early and middle childhood, the presence of a gun in households, schools, or community spaces put children at risk of injury or death from accidental discharge. In adolescence, children can suffer intentional or unintentional gun injuries or death, as well as direct gun violence or threat of violence towards to gain respect and assert independence. Moreover, gender roles and social norms link masculinity with physical force and violence, putting both adolescent boys and girls at risk. The UN [MOSAIC Module 06.20](#), “Children, adolescents, youth and small arms and light weapons” has more background on the impact of gun violence on youth.

The Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, all United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda provides a shared blueprint for peace for people, now and into the future. The Agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. Each goal has a set of targets to reach by the year 2030.

Here are some of the goals and targets:



- [SDG 4](#) concerns quality education. Target 4.A calls for the provision of safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

Armed violence—whether in the context of conflict or crime--disrupts learning environments around the world and puts students and educators at risk.



- [SDG 5](#) seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and Target 5.2 aims to eliminate all forms of all violence against all women and girls. Guns are commonly used in acts of violence and intimidation against women and girls, in both the context of conflict and crime.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires the involvement of all people, including educators, students, parents.

What schools can do:

- Post a “Gun Free Zone” sign inside your school that asserts the right of children to have a peaceful future and present.
- Post an SDG 5.2 sign inside your school to help raise awareness of the global goal of ending violence against women and girls, and to show your school’s support for this goal.
- Post an SDG 4.A sign inside your school to help raise awareness of the global goal of fostering learning environments that are safe and free of violence.
- Hold a small training for all school faculty members to ensure that they are aware of the Sustainable Development Goals, and aware of how gun violence affects children.

Contact:

For additional information about the SDGs or gun violence, please contact Rose Welsch of International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) at rose.welsch@iansa.org.

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10 Facts about Armed Violence and Youth

1. Children exposed to gun violence often suffer from both short-term and long-term psychological effects.
2. The proliferation of armed conflict has led to an increase in youth recruitment by violent extremist groups. This means that more and more children are exposed to GBV, gun violence, and war.
3. Young males aged 15-29 bear the greatest risk of death and injury by gunshot. 73% of direct conflict deaths among persons aged 0-29 were from this group.
4. Children are indirectly affected by armed violence through displacement, death or injuries in their family, and reduced access to social services such as hospitals and schools.
5. Nearly 2,900 American children and teens are shot and killed each year, while an additional 15,600 are shot and injured annually. In the United States, firearms are the second-leading cause of death for children and teens.
6. Keeping a gun in the home increases the risk of suicide among adolescents. A gun in the home is 43 times more likely to kill a friend or family member than a burglar or other criminal.
7. According to the Center for Disease Control, there was a 7% increase in the rate of nonfatal gunfire injuries among American youth aged 12-17 between 2001 and 2014, and an 8% increase for American youth aged 18-24.
8. Stress related to gun violence affects student performance and well-being in schools
9. Different stages of adolescence (early, middle, and late) affect the impact of gun violence on both girls and boys in different ways.
10. Schools and universities are often abandoned and repurposed for military use in times of armed conflict, leaving children and adolescents without a place to receive an education during and after conflict.

List of Sources

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