



VIOLENCE PREVENTION & RESPONSE

AS PART OF EMERGENCIES AND
HEALTH PROGRAMMING IN HAITI



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the following people who contributed their expertise, time, and personal experiences to this report.

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Seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity, and Universality.

BACKGROUND

In 2010, the large-scale earthquake that struck Haiti took hundreds of thousands of lives, while countless others lost their loved ones, their homes, their livelihoods and their sense of safety and security. Years after the disaster, the physical and psychosocial consequences continue to be felt by women, men, girls and boys of all backgrounds across the country.

Among the many needs during and after the earthquake was the predictable problem of addressing safety from violence.

“

When a disaster strikes, people can lose everything and go into survival mode. Families are often torn apart when they are displaced. This makes them more vulnerable, particularly young girls... They can end up being exploited,

”

says Nadia Lafleur, the representative of a local women’s organization that has partnered with the Red Cross. This is an essential observation that all humanitarian agencies and local actors can learn from.

For the Haitian Red Cross and its partners, including the Canadian Red Cross, the task of improving safety through child protection and gender-based violence prevention and response has been built into programming from early in the response.

In response to the earthquake, the Haitian Red Cross in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has supported communities to implement violence prevention projects that focus on child protection and the prevention and response of gender-based violence.

The project was implemented in earthquake affected areas as well as in remote, rural and urban areas. The main locations of the projects were in **Léogane, Jacmel, Les Nippes**, and the capital city, **Port-au-Prince**. A specific focus of the project was to support communities in hard to reach or insecure locations.

Efforts to support communities to be safe have included:

- Youth-led protection and psychosocial activities in displacement camps;
- Capacity building within schools to create protective environments free of violence;
- Integration of violence prevention and response into community-based health programming for adults;
- A listening project to understand the perspectives of children and youth on protection from violence in emergencies; and
- Improving internal protection systems within the Haitian Red Cross and education to volunteers and staff.

REACH

More than

420,000 people

were reached through violence prevention and response messages

125 teachers

from 43 schools

were supported to create systems to prevent and respond to violence

HAITI

A map of Haiti with a light blue background. The landmass is shown in a light red color. Four specific regions are highlighted in a darker red color. Each highlighted region has a white callout box with a red pointer indicating its location. The callout boxes contain the names: 'LES NIPPES' (pointing to the western coast), 'LÉOGANE' (pointing to the central coast), 'JACMEL' (pointing to the southern coast), and 'PORT-AU-PRINCE' (pointing to the northern coast).

PORT-AU-PRINCE

LÉOGANE

LES NIPPES

JACMEL

THE PROBLEM

Unfortunately, multiple reports and surveys have found that since the earthquake the public safety, particularly of young people and women, has been threatened by violence in all its forms: physical and sexual abuse, exploitation, harassment, discrimination and rejection by other survivors and the very people who are supposed to be there to help them.^{1,2,3}

After the earthquake in 2010, reports based on assessments from a number of Haitian and international agencies revealed that interpersonal violence, especially sexual violence, within the camps for internally displaced people (IDP) in Port-au-Prince posed an extreme humanitarian threat. The threat was highest for children (girls and boys) and women, with the risk continuing even one and a half years after the earthquake.

“

People get used to violence without realizing that they are victims or the ones committing it. Violence is being normalized. That's the cycle of violence... People end up thinking that some deserve what they get, that the girl's skirt was too short, and what not. They find excuses for what's happening, to justify violence...But that's not the real reason.

”

Max Renaud Lubin, Senior Program Coordinator, Violence Prevention, Haitian Red Cross in the Sud-Est department

In one survey,

14%



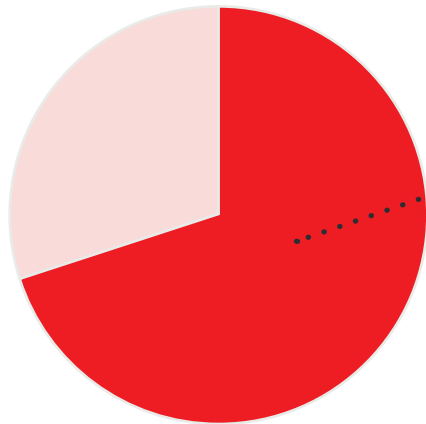
of women in IDP camps reported one or more experiences of sexual violence since the disaster.⁴



Another survey found that,

60%

of women and girls interviewed said that they feared sexual violence against them or members of their household;



70%

reported fearing sexual violence more now than before the earthquake.⁵

A study from the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** found women and adolescent girls engaging in transactional sex — where sex is exchanged for access to protection, food, health care or other basic services — within IDP camps in Port-au-Prince was widespread more than one year after the earthquake, and was exacerbated by precarious and vulnerable conditions. Of the women and girls who participated in the study,



100%

had been directly involved in or witness to transactional sex.⁶



LISTENING PROJECT

PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE IN EMERGENCIES: THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Purpose:

In 2015, the Haitian Red Cross, in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross, held discussion groups with young people from Haiti's Sud-Est department to hear what they had to say about their sense of protection and safety since the earthquake. The purpose was to gain a better understanding of young people's needs and capacities following a natural disaster.

Methodology:

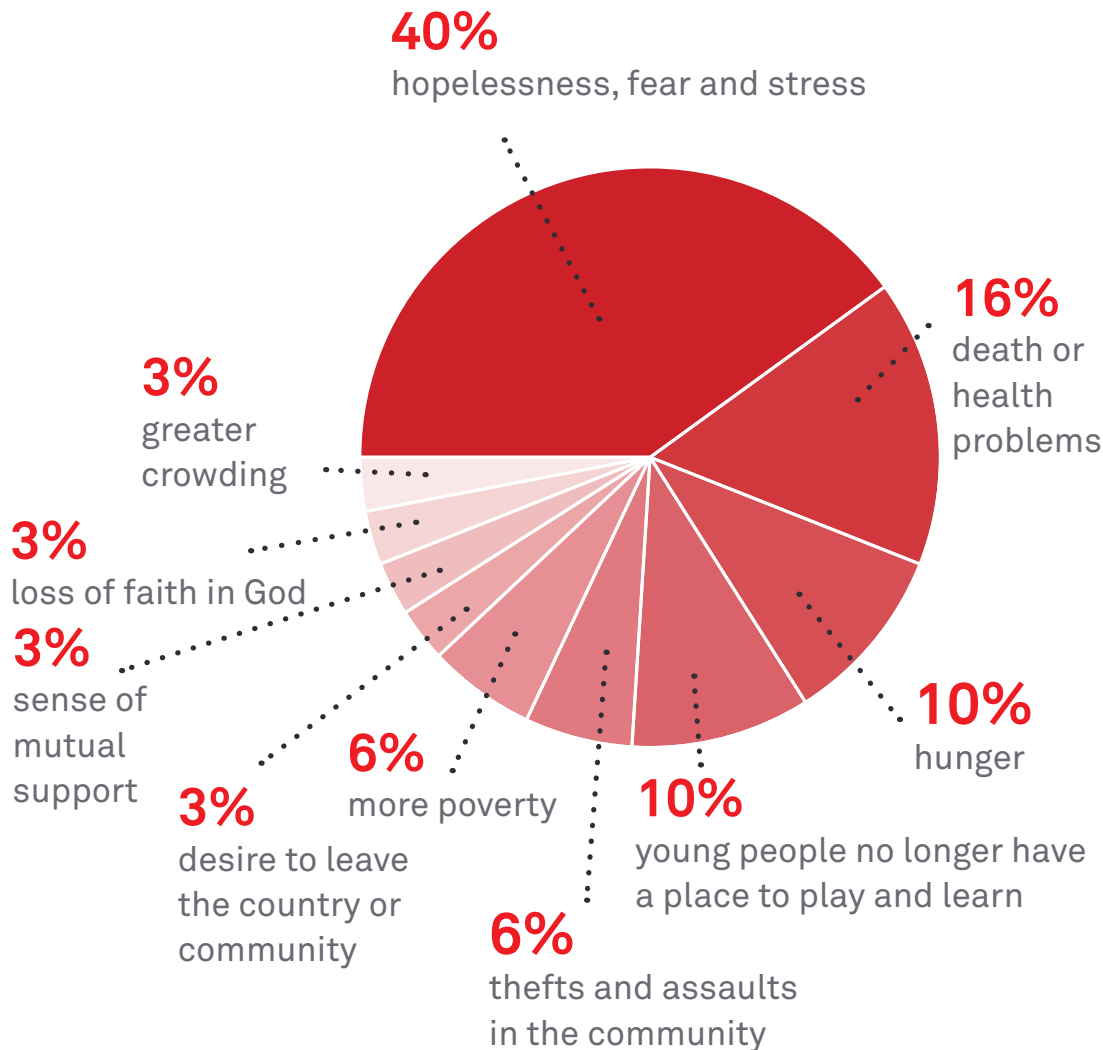
- Six discussion groups were organized. A total of 85 respondents (43 girls and 42 boys) aged 13 to 25 were selected by their teachers.
- Each contribution to every question was treated as a response. Each response was then analyzed and compiled.
- Two Red Cross facilitators guided the discussion groups in Creole by asking a series of scripted questions.
- Responses were translated by the facilitators along with an observer, who compiled and analyzed the data.
- The discussion groups were split based on the participants' gender and location.
- Three different sites were selected for these discussion groups: a school in an urban area, a school in a rural and remote area, and a community centre on the outskirts of town but in a hard-to-reach area.
- Five more in-depth interviews were conducted (in French) with adults working with youth.



Findings:

HOPELESSNESS, STRESS AND FEAR ARE ELEVATED AFTER A DISASTER

When we asked young people what changes they see in their behaviour and in the behaviour of others after a disaster strikes, they told us...



The adults working with youth told us...

50% report a rise in violence, stress and aggression in the community after emergencies.



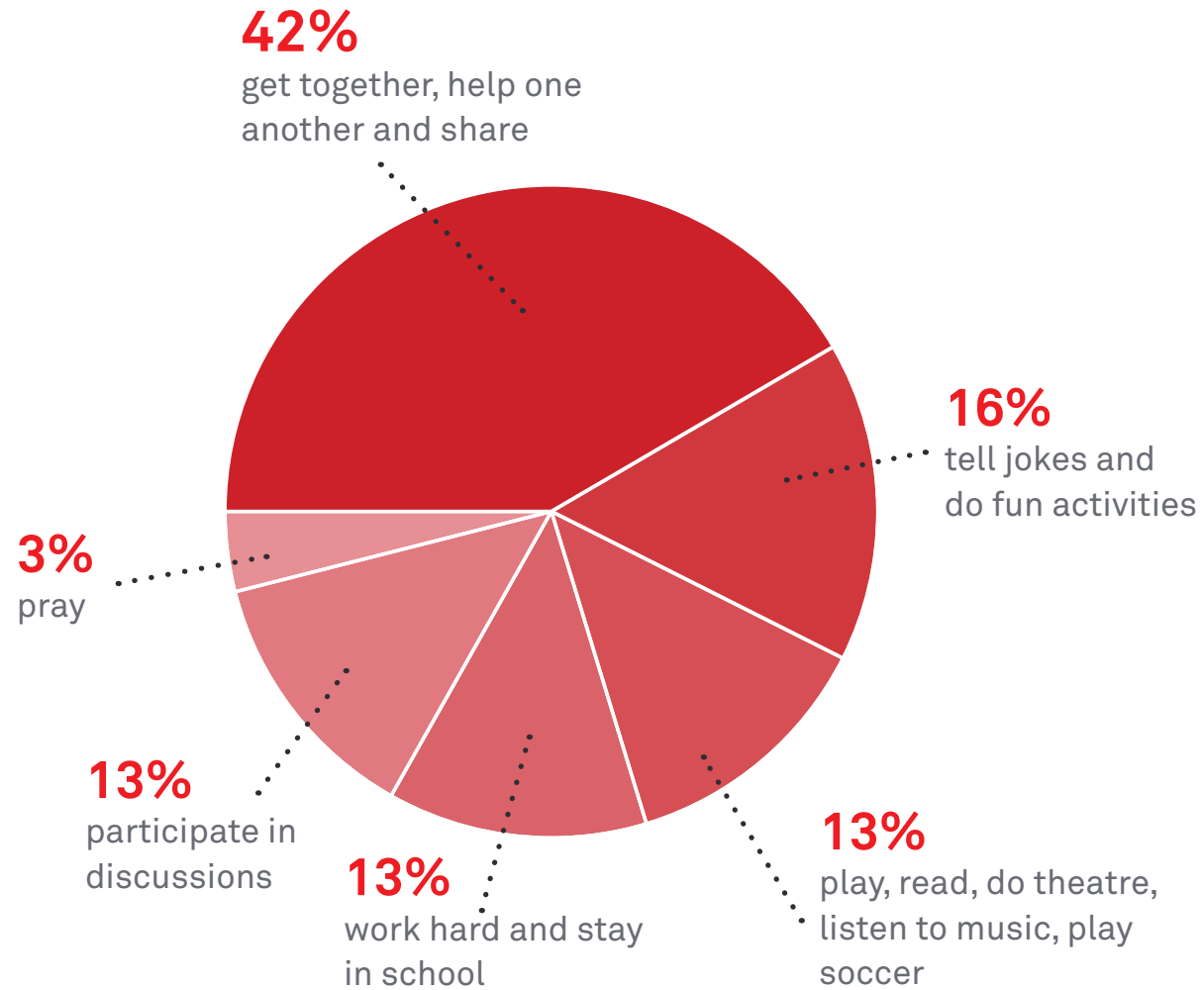
There are insufficient resources and a lot of poverty. And when a disaster strikes, everything is worse. Everyone is more stressed out, children and adults alike. And everything is lost... Children also sometimes lose trust in their parents because they do not feel protected by them. Times are hard.



Noel Philicien, Founding Director of ECOCADRE community school, Marigot commune

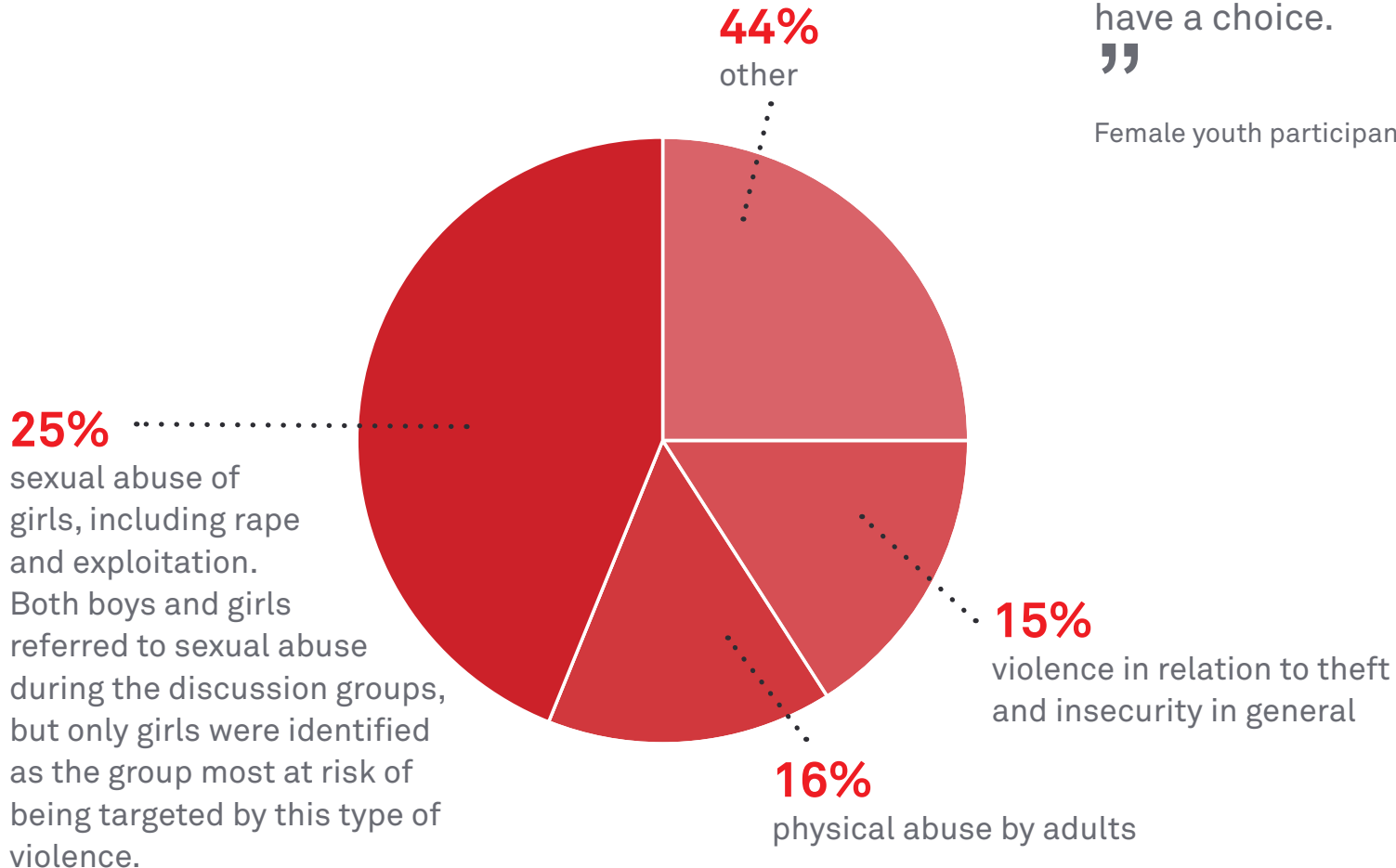
TACTICS FOR COPING WITH STRESS

When we asked young people about their coping strategies to overcome challenges and cope with distress in emergencies, they told us...



THE RISK OF VIOLENCE INCREASES

When we asked young people about the dangers associated with violence against girls and boys after a disaster, they told us...



25% sexual abuse of girls, including rape and exploitation. Both boys and girls referred to sexual abuse during the discussion groups, but only girls were identified as the group most at risk of being targeted by this type of violence.

“ Girls might be having sex to get help in return or even protection. When there’s no money or good jobs after a disaster, women and girls sometimes need to turn to transactional sex. They don’t always have a choice. ”

Female youth participant

The adults working with youth told us...

The risk factors of violence reported by adults working with youth:

37%

say physical, verbal and sexual violence against boys and girls is a direct risk.

16%

other

5%

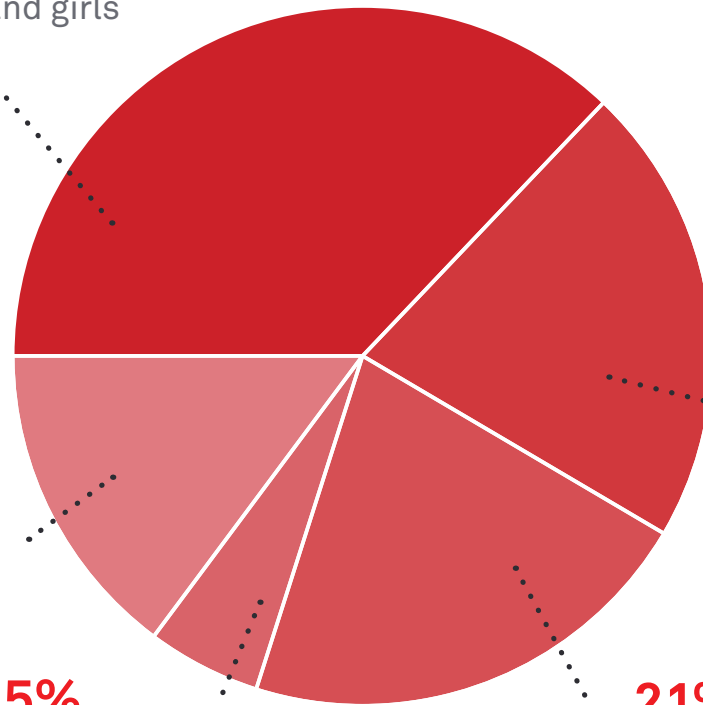
say a lack of supervision and protection of young people is a concern.

21%

suggest extreme poverty and exploitation are risks.

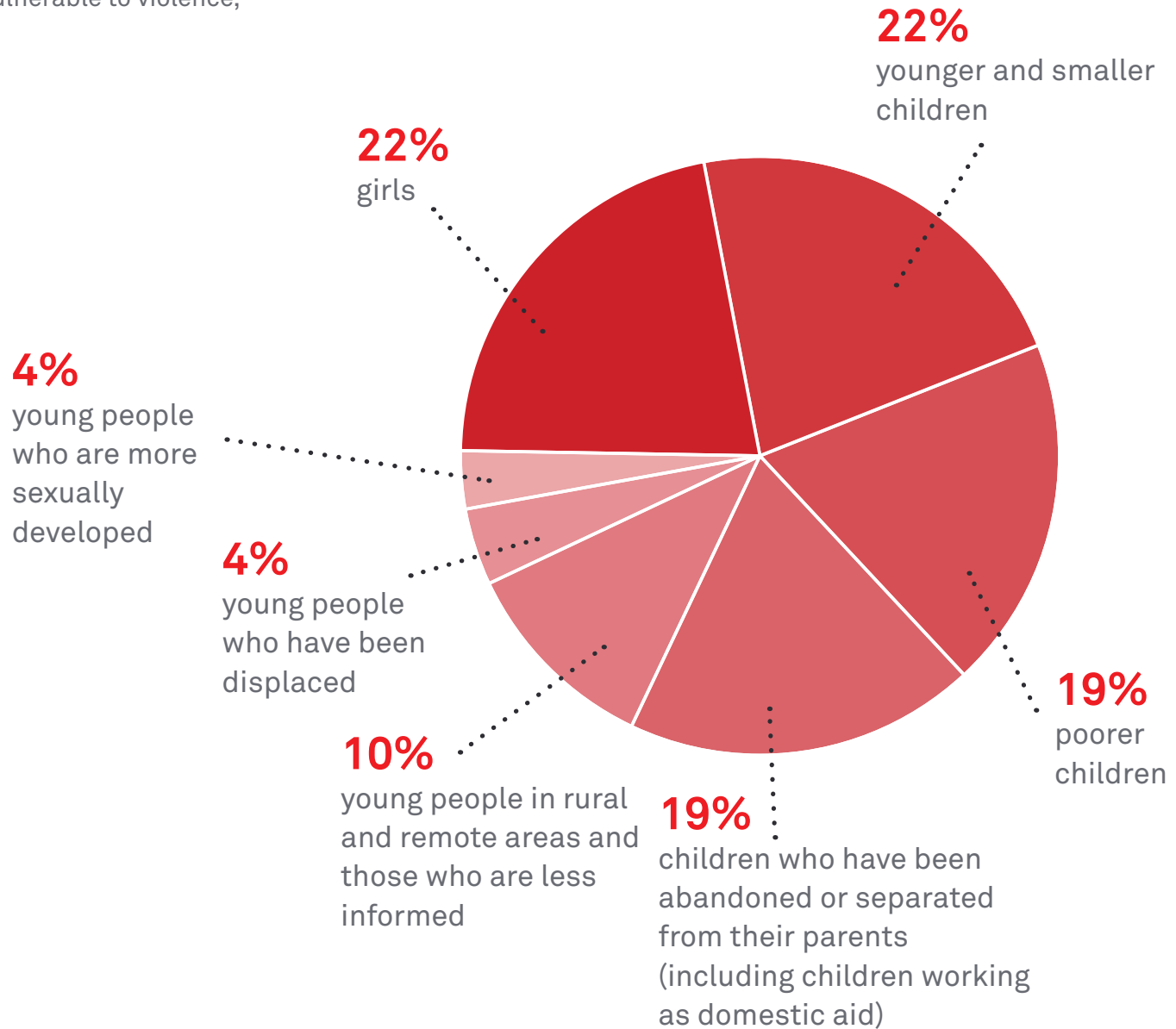
21%

report population displacements and temporary relocations as a risk.



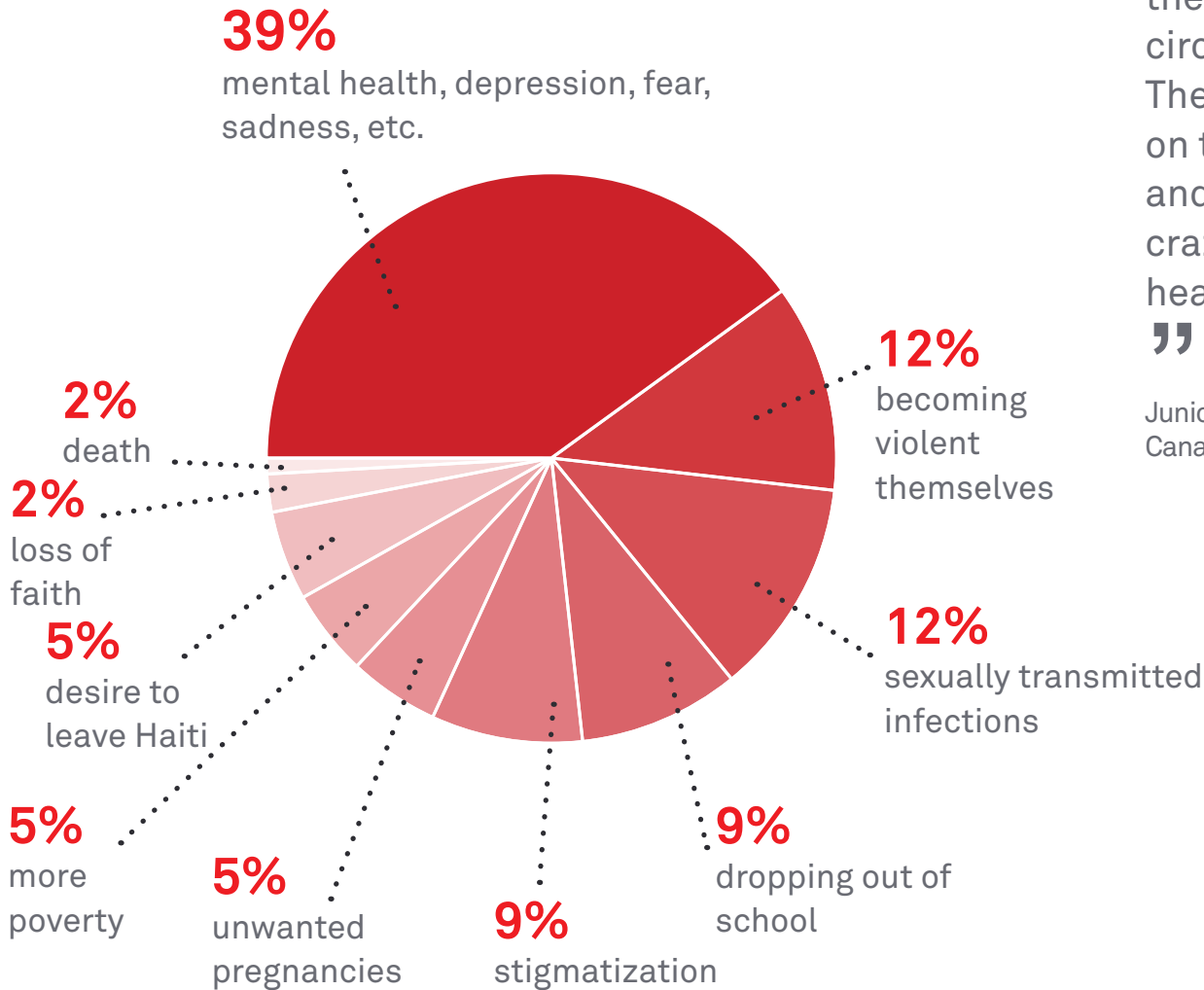
CHILDREN AND YOUTH MOST AT RISK OF VIOLENCE IN EMERGENCIES

When we asked young people about the groups they perceived to be most vulnerable to violence, they told us...



MULTIPLE AND FAR-REACHING IMPACTS OF VIOLENCE IN EMERGENCIES

When we asked young people about the varied impacts of violence, they told us...



“

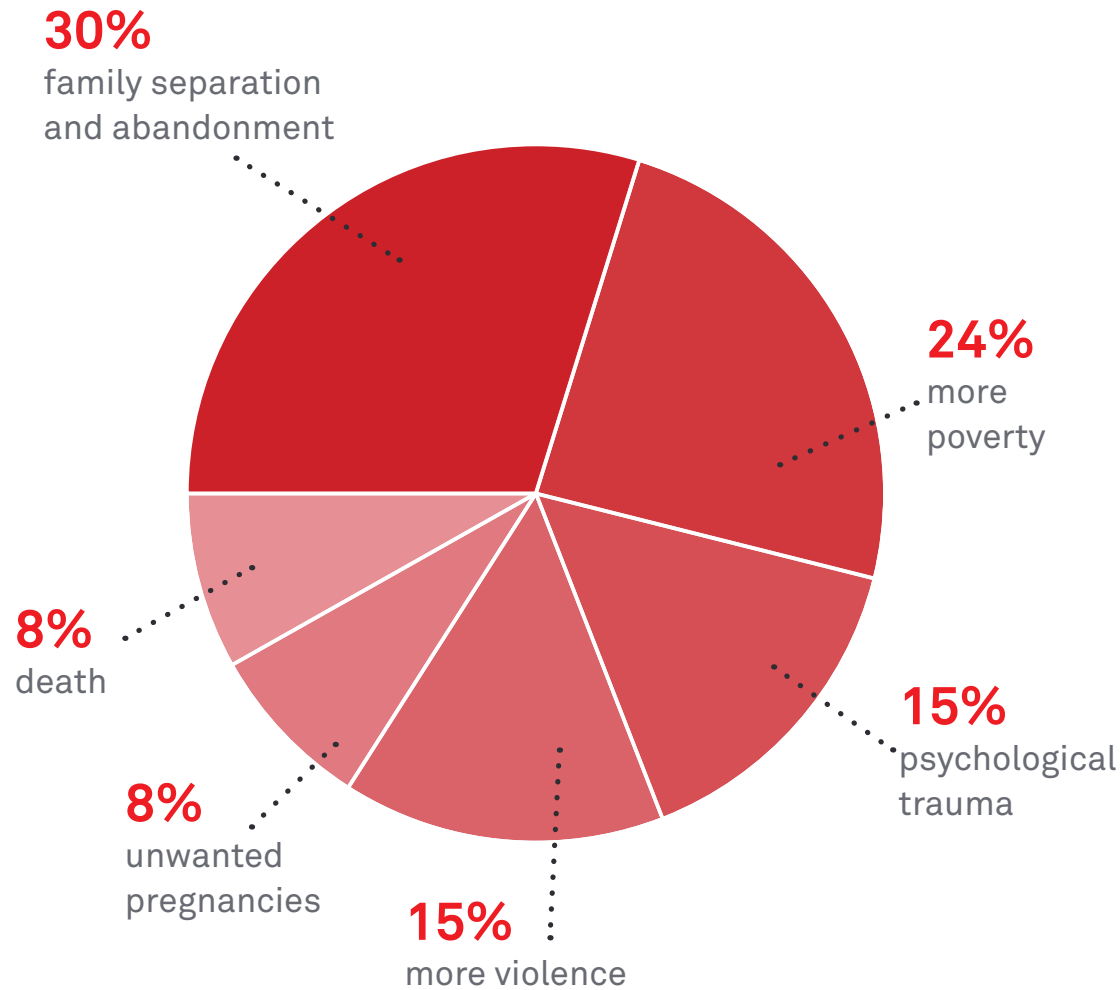
Pain, suffering, death, abandonment... that's what violence leaves behind. Young girls sometimes need to leave home after being raped and so find themselves in even more vulnerable circumstances, without protection. There is also physical damage, wounds on the body, diseases that come later, and it can get so bad that it will drive you crazy. Violence often ends up filling your heart with hate.

”

Junior Printemps, Community Mobilizer, Violence Prevention, Canadian Red Cross in Sud-Est department, Haiti

The adults working with youth told us...

The most common impacts of violence in emergencies against children and youth are...



“

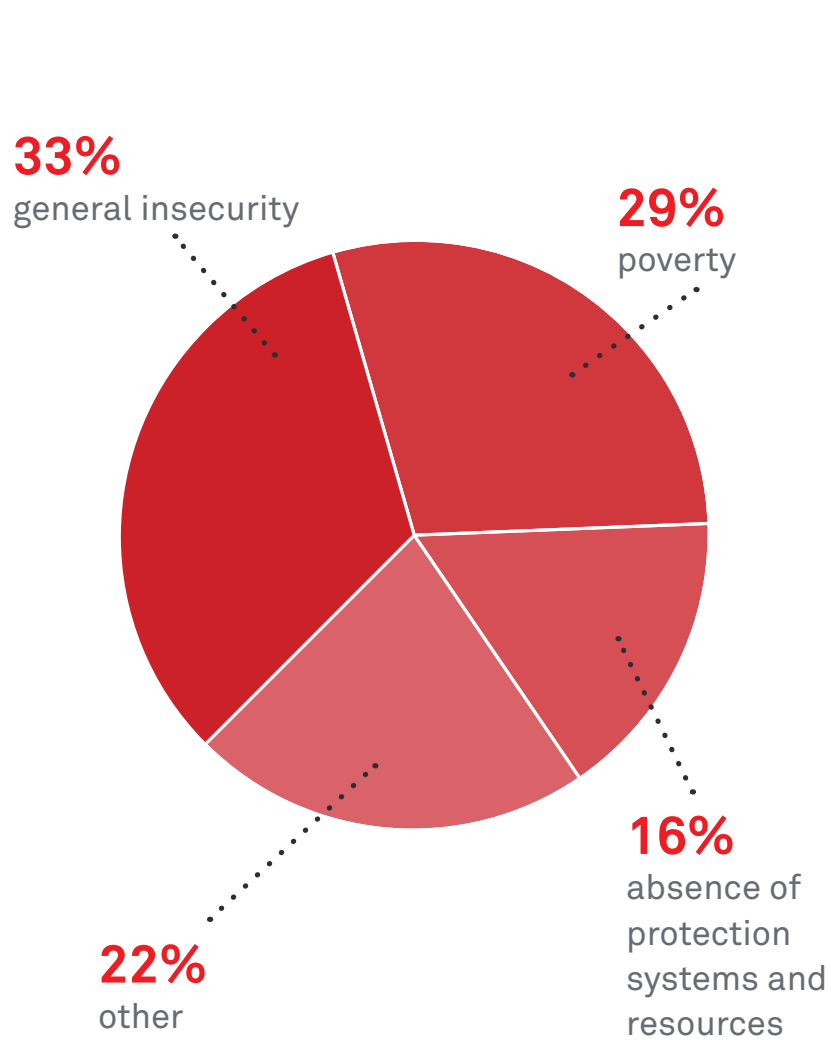
Girls are often at risk of early pregnancy, perhaps even more so when a natural disaster strikes because sometimes this leads to exploitation, and people have little here. And young girls are not well informed. Information sessions on sexual education and disease transmission would be an important thing to have. When a girl gets pregnant, it can be difficult for her health and, afterwards, she will often not continue going to school. It's not looked on very positively here.

”

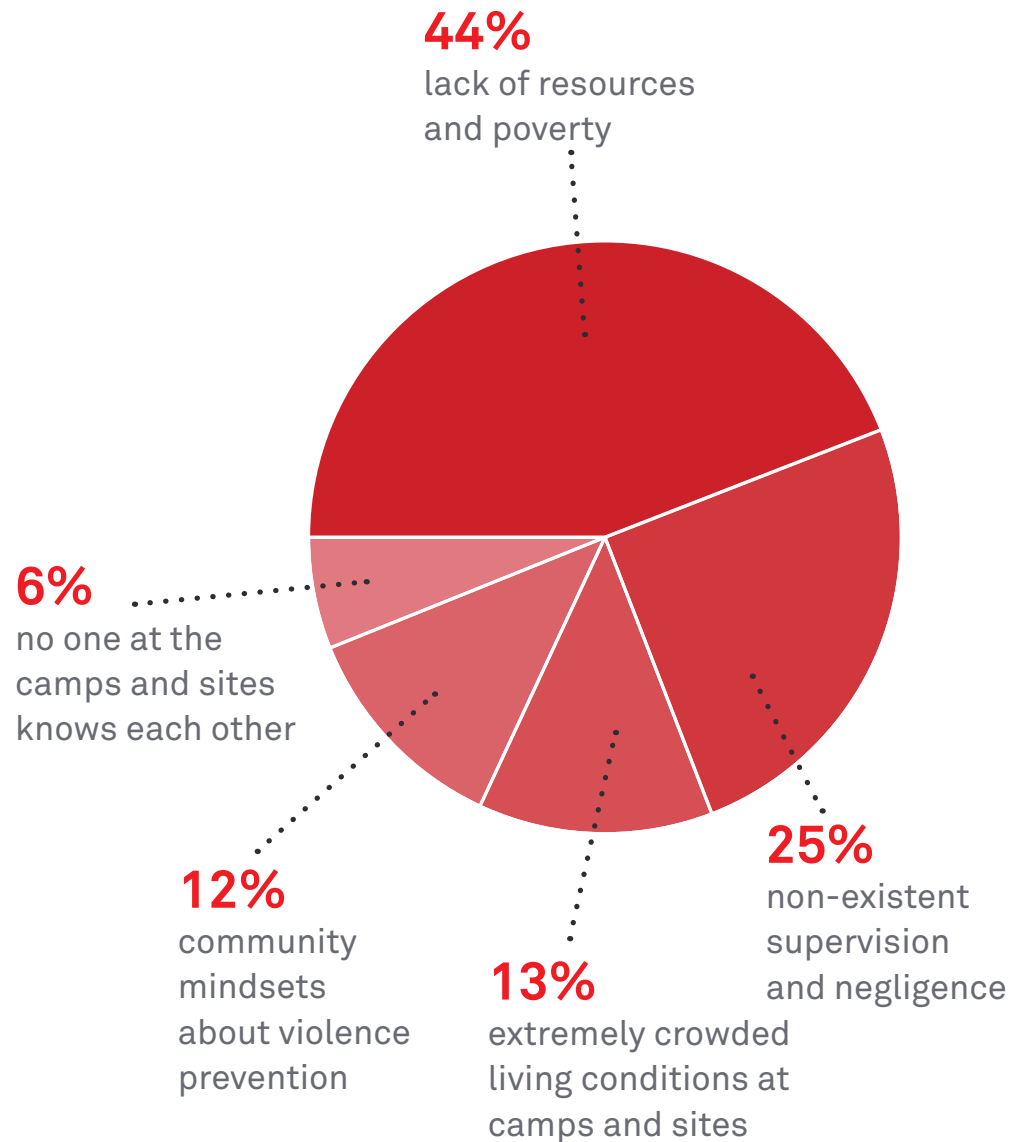
Rejouis Jean-Maxis, Pastor at the Hananeel church, Mont-Fleuri

BARRIERS TO PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN EMERGENCIES

When we asked young people about the key obstacles to their protection in emergencies, they told us...

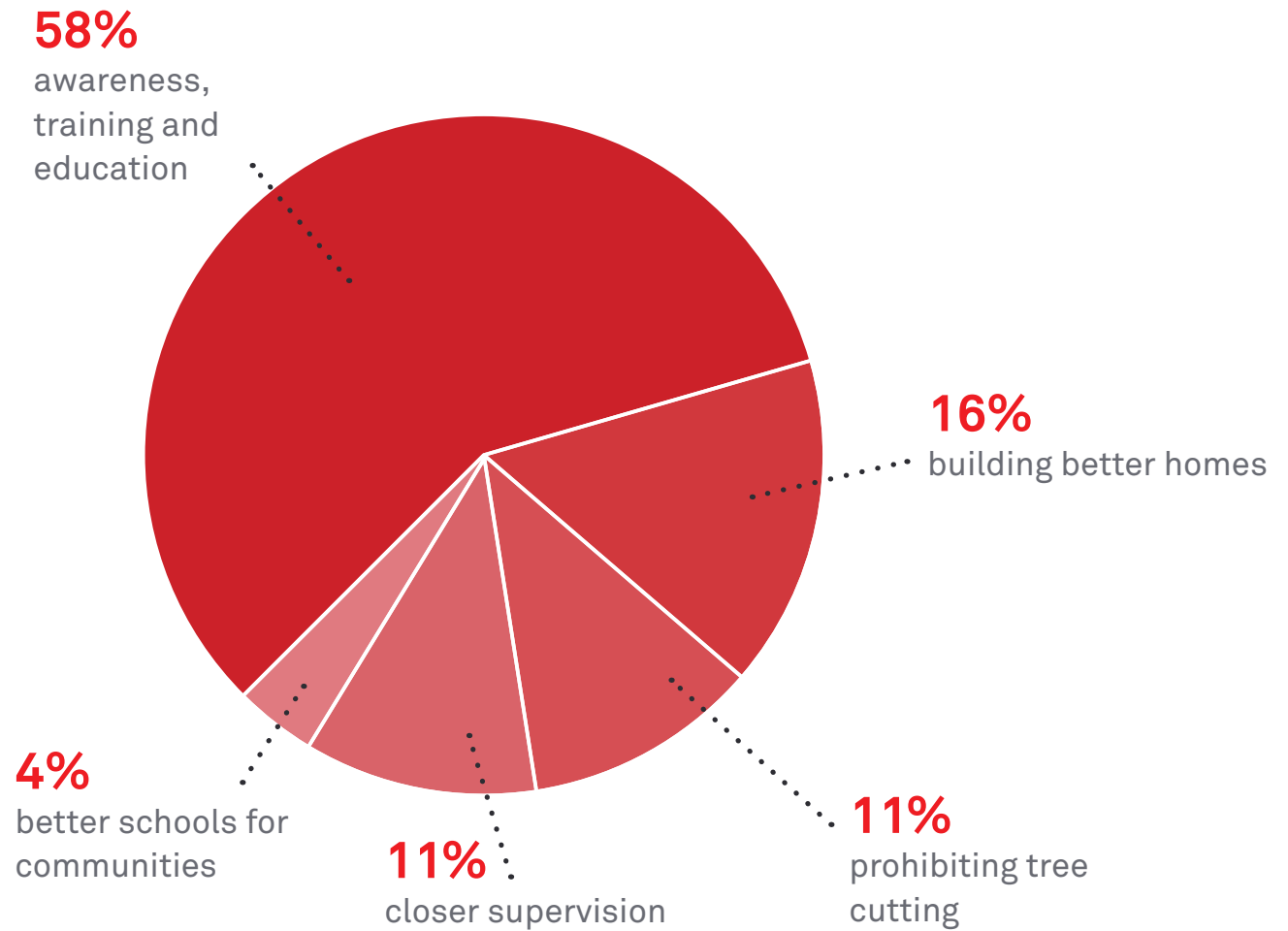


The adults working with youth told us a number of factors reduced protection of girls and boys in emergencies

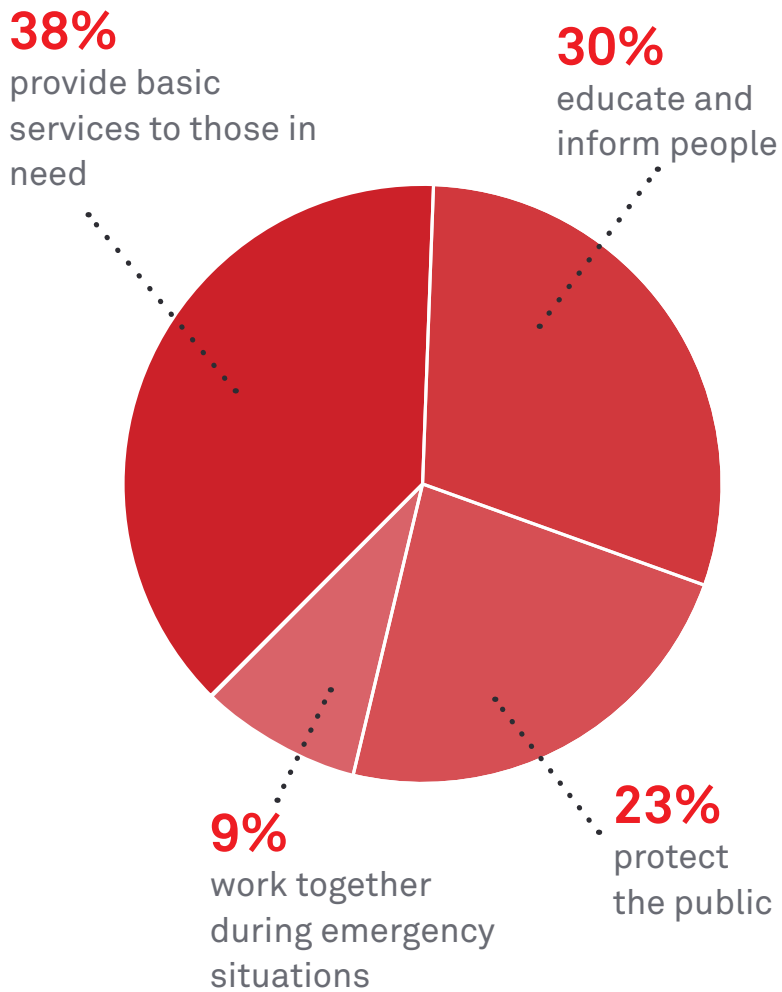


PRIORITY PREVENTION AND PREVENTION ACTIONS

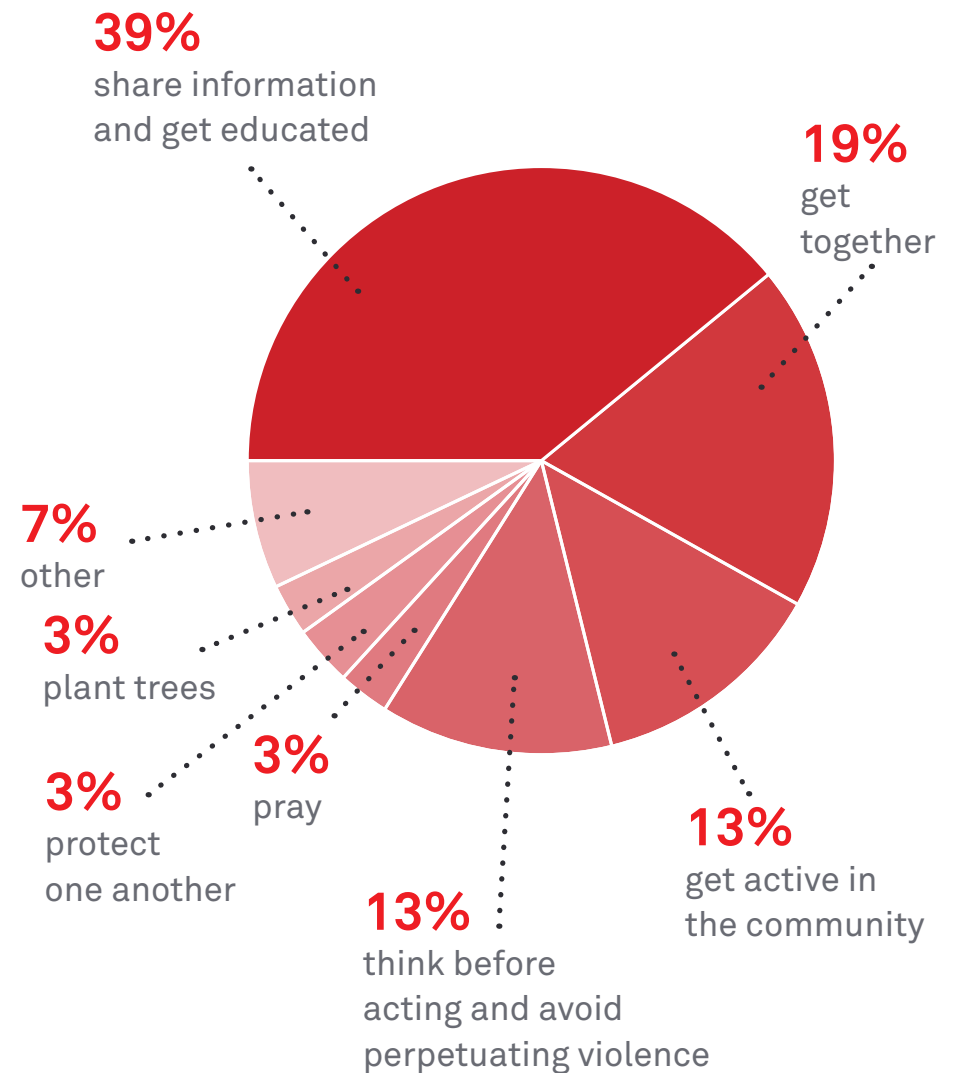
When we asked young people to highlight several actions that can be taken to protect them from violence before emergencies occur, they told us...



Several priorities to protect children and youth during emergencies were also noted:



Young people identified actions to make entire communities safe from violence:



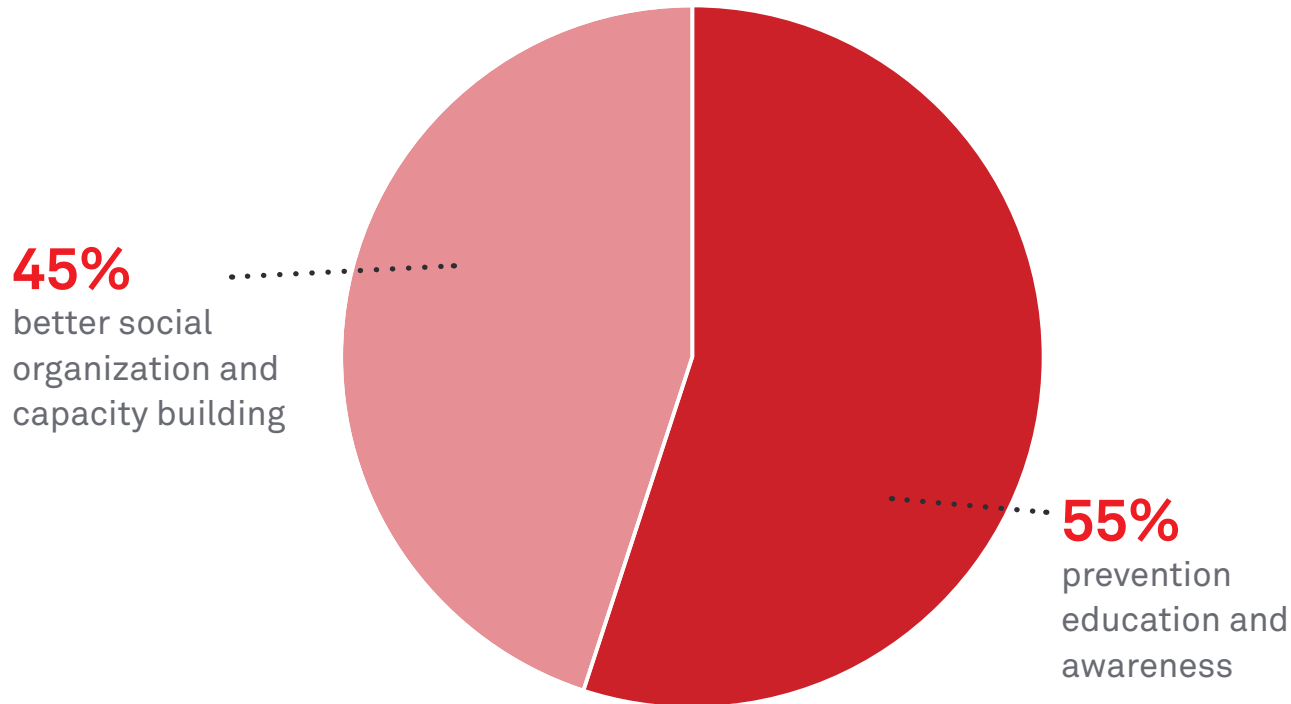
The adults working with youth defined a couple of critical actions that can be taken prior to emergencies to enhance the protection of children and youth from violence.

“

We are able to do things for ourselves!
Young people need to keep going to school to build a safer future for themselves. It's so important!

”

Female youth participant



CASE STUDY

YOUTH-LED PROTECTION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN DISPLACEMENT SETTINGS

“

I wanted to help other children in my area and share what I learned at Haïti en Scène.

”

“We will never forget the incredible performance of one girl during a community event. She had written perfect choreography. Her performance blew me away. Everyone in the community was so proud of her and we applauded wildly. She was very proud of her performance and the audience’s reaction. I too am more optimistic and have much more self-confidence. Haïti en Scène has changed us,” says a female youth from an IDP camp in Port-au-Prince. She, along with 350 other girls and boys, were participants in the youth-led Haïti en Scène project.

Haïti en Scène was a local initiative, funded with support from the Canadian Red Cross and the French Red Cross, to support resilience in communities living in displacement camps after the 2010 earthquake. The situation in the camps had many hardships, *“children from our community do not live comfortably. Many of them do not go to school or eat three meals a day. When it rains, the water leaks into our tents and even when it is sunny we cannot stay inside. Life in a tent is a bitter existence”* says a youth participant. However, children



and youth, aged 6-20 years, overcame these barriers in order to participate and reach out to others.

The project was implemented in 10 camps using a psychosocial approach centered on forum theatre, sports, and community engagement that were designed and implemented by disaster-affected children and youth for other young people and adults. Messages of the project included preventing and responding to violence, enhancing self-confidence, promoting gender equality, and increasing personal empathy. Youth participated in focus group discussions on the various key messages which they then integrated into their training on theatre that took place three times a week for three weeks. The child and youth participants then conducted a series of activities, most notably,

theatre performances in camps and a production at the national stadium on the first anniversary of the earthquake that was opened by the country's First Lady.

Haïti en Scène not only helped provide youth with a forum to start to heal from the earthquake but also to learn new skills and ideas, and to engage with others, *"Sometimes when I am at home, I feel a little down. But when the time for workshops arrives, I get excited because it's my only way to relax and practice my skills. That's why I encourage other shy children to come de-stress and develop their talents too,"* says a male participant.

In addition to the psychosocial activities in the camps, the Red Cross partners funded an evaluation to measure the impact of such activities on young people and their communities. The objective of the evaluation was to understand the effect of psychosocial activities on social integration of youth and violence prevention in targeted communities.

A total of 350 people participated in the baseline focus groups (51.7% girls, 48.3% boys). The average age for both boys and girls was 16. A total of 332 people participated in the endline focus groups (53% girls, 46% boys). The average age for both boys and girls was 17.

The external evaluation found that disaster-affected children and youth who participated in the project reported greater confidence in their future and self-value than young people who had been identified for the initiative but were unable to participate. For instance, the evaluator notes, *"Both boys and girls unanimously agree that Haïti en Scène cultural and artistic activities contributed significantly to*

the participants' well-being and happiness on both personal and social levels."

The project also increased the understanding of violence prevention tactics and decreased the acceptance of violence as a legitimate way to solve problems, *"The children show overall progress in their understanding of violence, its causes, and possible solutions, project evaluation found. Haïti en Scène seems to have once again contributed, especially by way of discussions on the subject."*



Findings:

- Baseline children feel less impacted by their living conditions.
- They are optimistic about the future and more aware of their value and potential.
- They engage and get along more easily with each other and with adults.
- They contribute increasingly to their community, especially by sharing their knowledge and helping others.
- They are frequently exposed to violence and most have witnessed violent situations.
- They seem to have become more sensitive to violence and less tolerant towards it.
- Most are prepared to defend themselves or intervene in violent situations.
- They know they can fight violence through cultural and artistic activities, jobs, and education.
- They greatly value Haïti en Scène and say that it helps them to develop their talents, learn new behaviours, stay positive, and even improve their self-esteem and sense of security.
- Most children who left Haïti en Scène partway through did so because of a parent's decision, employment, or illness.
- Children who had to leave Haïti en Scène had lower levels of happiness and self-confidence than the other children.
- Children who had to leave Haïti en Scène were less socially engaged.
- Children who had to leave Haïti en Scène had a weaker understanding of violence prevention.

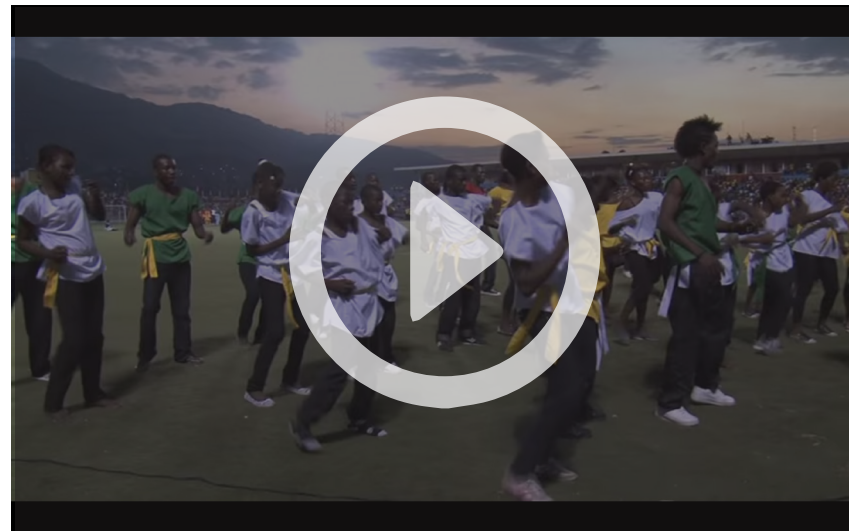


As a graduate of the project noted at the end of the project,

“

I have already helped to improve the community. Haïti en Scène activities are finished, but I still get together with local children and teach them to sing and dance. I wanted to help other children in my area and share what I learned at Haïti en Scène.

”



CASE STUDY

PARTNERING TO IMPROVE MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH THROUGH SCHOOLS

“

Women and girls' rights are an important topic, because very often girls don't have the same rights as boys.

”

“In Haiti, natural disasters happen often. And during and after disasters, if young people are displaced, the level of stress goes up a lot” says Nadia Lafleur, who is responsible for the Shelter House from the NGO Fanm Deside. “There are also many problems related to promiscuity in camps. The risk is that teenagers will very quickly become adults. Often, families are divided when they are displaced. This makes children more vulnerable, especially the young girls. They can be exploited by the people who know that the family has been divided.”

Fanm Deside is a women's organization founded in 1989 in Jacmel in the Sud-Est. The objective of the organization is to collaborate with other community groups to promote social changes for women in Haiti in order to contribute to a stronger country. In the Sud-Est, 35 women's groups are affiliated with Fanm Deside. Together they form the Women of the Sud-Est Network.



In 2014, Fanm Deside, with support from the Red Cross, developed a micro-project to promote women and girls' rights, gender equality as well as violence prevention in three communes: Marigot, Cayes-Jacmel and Jacmel. Amélie Doyon, a Canadian Red Cross Violence Prevention Advisor, explains, *“The stressors on families and communities have continued to be a risk for violence since the earthquake. The partnership between Fanm Deside and the Red Cross has allowed us to expand our reach and build on each of our strengths.”*

The project consisted of school-based awareness sessions for boys and girls. Through discussions with young people, Fanm Deside quickly realized that boys were mainly responsible for sexual harassment

and that the boys saw their actions as a game, as a way to get attention from the girls. Yet, the boys did not understand or reflect on the harmful impact of their actions. Furthermore, girls worried that if they would complain about the sexual harassment to their parents, the girls would be disciplined rather than the boys because parents would perceive the girls as responsible for provoking the harassment. However, the conversations with boys and girls allowed young people to have a better understanding about sexual harassment to discuss solutions in their own schools.



Through the project, 36 school principals and teachers from primary and secondary schools participated in training sessions on sexual harassment and gender equality. Lafleur emphasizes, *“Women and girls’ rights are an important topic, because very often girls don’t have the same rights as boys in the Haitian society. For example, if a girl gets pregnant, very often she won’t be allowed to go back to school. This has a big impact on her opportunities in life.”* Doyon, who has been involved in projects with youth in Haiti since 2011, reflects, *“If we are going to make real and lasting change, we must start with young people and shift the harmful gender beliefs that allow girls to be harassed and boys to think it is okay to demean girls. In our experience this means we need to take very local action and work together as communities.”*

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In Non-Violence
**Edikasyon
se sel vaksen
kont zak
Vyolans**

Pinga youn
moun anplis
mouri aKoz
Vyolans

Fanm ak tif
yo se pot
mitan

Konbat zak
vyolans se
devwa tout
Moun...

VERITE Yo
ven pòm
Se K...
ti gwoup
un devwe
chanje
ond lan

Vyolans
Kouraje
Vyolans

Si nou kapab
Previ Vyolans
nou kapab
Evite!

MAM AK GADAN
E Fè youn Sati
is youn apremant
ak Zak...
Vyolans

ginez
nde
Violence



VIOLENCE IS PREVENTABLE!

