



VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEGREȘTI TOWN

Sociological research, in the broad sense, refers to obtaining and analyzing objectively verified information to build scientific explanations for facts, phenomena and social processes.

Thank you

This research would not have been possible without support from WorldVision Romania's Iasi –Vaslui County Area Office, local authorities in Negresti (Vaslui County) and local media.

We would like to thank media representatives - Mrs. Maria Florea (TVR Iasi, Romanian public TV network), Mr. George Onofrei (Radio Hit) and Mr. Ovidu Mihaiuc (Digi 24 Iasi) – for sharing their perspective on the issue of violence in the media.

We are grateful for the support offered by members of Negresti Child Protection Community Advisory Commission who actively participated in interviews and focus-group discussions and by representatives of Nicolae Iorga Technological High School and Mihai David Elementary School in Negresti, who allowed us to interview students and parents.

A special thank you goes to the Negresti Youth Center for hosting our meetings.



Research coordinator:
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CONTEXT

Whether we realize it or not, violence is everywhere: physical, verbal, mental or sexual, neglect, ill treatment, abuse, trafficking, labor exploitation, certain practices and traditions. All these threaten children's development.

Family and community violence or violence in school (bullying) are well-known. Therefore, there is an acute need for campaigns aiming to reduce effects and consequences on children and young people.

In March 2017, World Vision launched a five-year global campaign – It Takes a World to End Violence Against Children. The campaign aims to positively impact the lives of vulnerable children, significantly contributing to

ending violence against them and reaching the Sustainable Development Goals.

Romania is a PATHFINDING member state, along with El Salvador, Mexico, Jamaica, Indonesia, Paraguay, Tanzania, Sweden, Uganda, Sri Lanka and The Philippines. Governments in these countries have taken on national commitments as part of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.



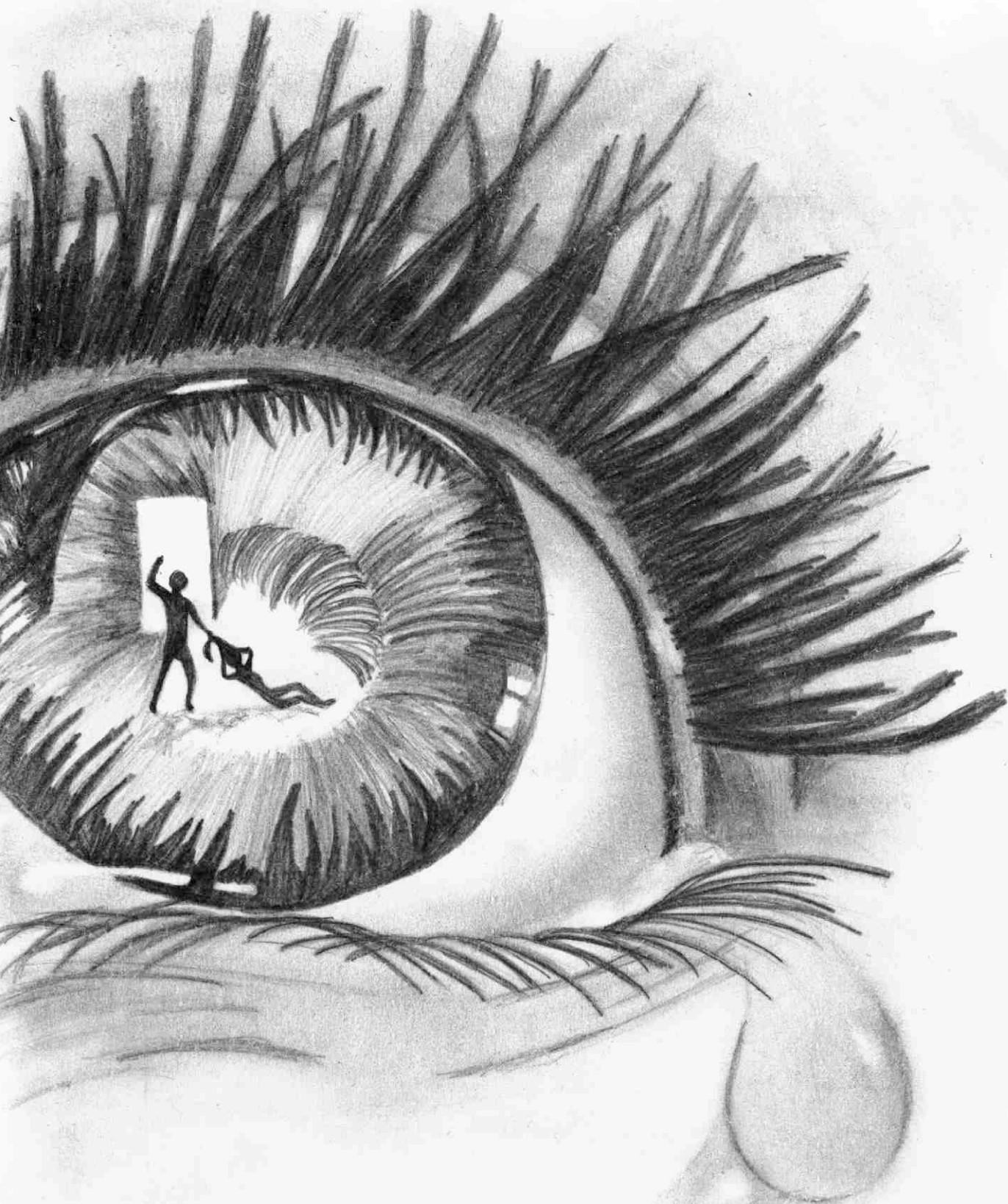
It takes a world
to end violence against children

A working group has been created and recognized by the Coordination Council and it is being run by the National Authority for Protection of Child Rights Protection and Adoption. The group includes NGO representatives like UNICEF, The Romanian NGO Federation for Child (FONPC), Save the Children, World Vision Romania and other partners. Romania will play a special role in the region by acting, in the next five years, as a social laboratory testing innovative pilot programmes that will be evaluated by international committees and replicated globally.

World Vision Romania is one of the 80 countries that have joined the It Takes a World to End Violence Against Children global campaign. Through its projects and programmes developed mainly in rural areas, World Vision Romania is addressing the issue of family

violence by directly involving communities, through their representatives, in putting an end to violence against children.

Children and young people will play a special part in this campaign through children's local initiative groups and, at a national level, through the Children's Consultative Council.



drawing by: Alexandra Năstasă

Between April – July 2017, as part of the It Takes a World to End Violence Against Children global campaign, a group of 14 children (World Vision Romania and TiN volunteers from Negresti town, Vaslui County) have run a research in Negresti. The aim was to assess the impact of violence in the media (through different TV programs but also through information and imagery circulating online) on children and young people's development.



This research aimed to raise the alarm, within communities, on the risks that children are subjected to when exposed to violent information. Another aim was to design and implement activities to promote the findings and conclusions of the research.



Before launching the research, we have organized a series of meetings to choose instruments: focus-groups, interviews and questionnaires, providing the necessary quantitative and qualitative data.



- 290 questionnaires have been applied: 219 questionnaires addressed to young people aged 11 to 18 and 71 to parents who had children in that age range.
- Three representatives of the local media have been interviewed - Mrs. Maria Florea (TVR Iasi), Mr. George Onofrei (Radio Hit) and Mr. Ovidu Mihaiuc (Digi 24 Iasi).



- One focus-group was organized and it included child protection professionals from the General Direction of Social Assistance and Child Protection in Vaslui County, church, school, local authorities representatives and WorldVision Romania staff.



drawing by: Alexandra Năstăsă - VIOLENCE IS NOT JUST PHYSICAL

The data collection process was followed by a series of working sessions where we've analyzed, debated and selected the main research themes emerging from both qualitative (interviews and focus-group) and quantitative (questionnaires) data.



After analyzing the data, based on the information we had, we identified four major themes:



- 1.Types of violence and transmission sources
- 2.Relationship between the child's age and the risk of manifesting violent behaviors
- 3.The role of adults in preventing and acting against violence in the media
- 4.The role of children in preventing and acting against violence

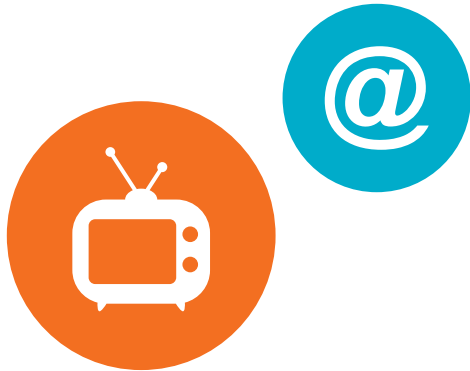


TYPES OF VIOLENCE AND TRANSMISSION SOURCES

Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data revealed that both children and adults (parents and representatives of the media) mention the media as the main source of information for children and young people.

Per our research,83,4% of children and 83,8% of adults use the internet as the main source of information. However, when asked what media source promotes violence the most, 92% of both categories see television as the main channel disseminating violent information.

Also,40% of the parents and 52% of the children see the internet as another source promoting violence.

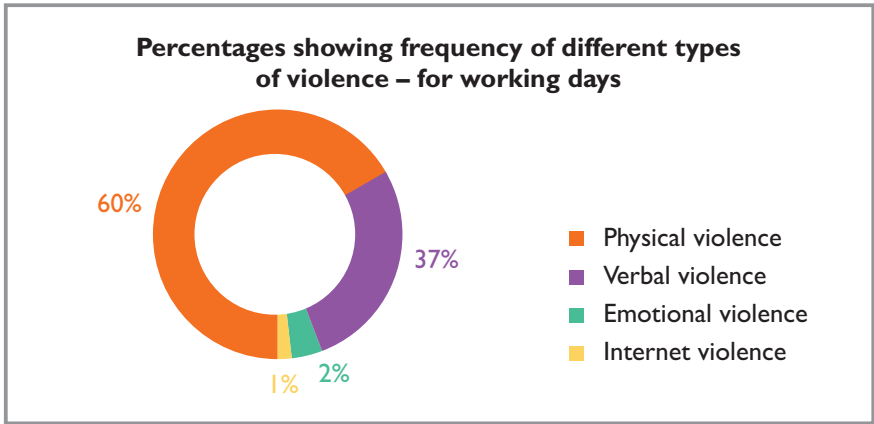


Recommendations:



Another interesting observation in the research was that most of the respondents,both children and adults, couldn't notice less obvious forms of violence like emotional violence of bullying.

This issue can be addressed by running information sessions for both young people and adults explaining the various types of violence.



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHILD'S AGE AND THE RISK OF MANIFESTING VIOLENT BEHAVIORS

Our research showed that some of the things promoted in the media, especially those of violent nature, do have a subliminal influence on both children and young people and directly affect their development and, later, their behavior.

By looking at the quantitative date collected through questionnaires applied to children and adults, we found that children and adults see violent information from different perspectives. While 69% of the children seem to be aware of the risks faced when exposed to violent information, only 19% of parents say that they are aware of these risks.

When looking at the age range when children and adults are more at risk of internalizing certain behaviors, respondents had different opinions. 31% of the parents believe that 6 to 10-year-olds are more prone to imitating behaviors, while 49% of children think 11 – 14 is a more critical age range, also because they believe that this is the time when children feel the need to belong to a group.

Recommendations:



Mrs. Maria Florea, journalist and TV programs producer warns about the dangers of violence shown in cartoons, especially since these are addressed to a very young audience. Many times, there is a lot of aggression and violence both in terms of behavior and language hidden behind the apparent humor.

Mrs. Florea believes that a potential solution would be for parents to join their children in watching different programs and to filter out what is inappropriate. It would be almost impossible to completely restrict children's access to all programs, especially when the child is well integrated in the community.

Mrs. Gabriela Pitaru, who leads the Day Centre in Negresti, is of a similar opinion – that parents should



spend more time actively participating in activities together with their children, like playing in the park.



THE ROLE OF ADULTS IN PREVENTING AND ACTING AGAINST VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

Our research showed that adults are responsible for children's growth and development, and that they need to manage children's access to inappropriate violent information and to involve children in discussions about this type of information.

Child protection specialists raise the alarm especially around online safety, but also on the dangers of certain types of TV programs with a violent focus – news and entertainment programs, movies and even cartoons.

Quantitative data collected through questionnaires showed that 86% of parents and 71% of children think that violent information should be restricted. However, media representatives remind us that television is essentially a business and that it is regulated by the Romanian National Audiovisual Council.

They also made the point that the true power lies with the parents who should more carefully monitor the types of programs their children are watching.



Recommendations:

Media representatives also spoke about the role played by the Ministry of Education in informing and educating children and young people, through the national curricula. Journalist George Onofrei says that “the power is in the hands of the parents.” He believes that parents need to act as role models, ensuring that the family environment is free of violent behaviors and that parents should enforce control but never through physical violence or punishment.

Ideally, parents should direct free time towards playing with children outdoors and avoiding media altogether. Psychologists say that children below the age of two should not have access to computers, TVs, smart phones or tablets as these devices can impair

development. Later, when children are six or seven years old, access can be allowed gradually but still limited to one or two hours a day.



THE ROLE OF CHILDREN IN PREVENTING AND ACTING AGAINST VIOLENCE

Media representatives believe that children can play an important role in preventing and fighting against violence in the media, especially since they can understand the risks and can get involved in different types of activities.

- Mrs. Maria Florea, programs producer for TVR Iasi, talked about the fact that young people pay more attention to information coming from their peers than from adults.
- Mr. Ovidiu Mihaiuc, TV programs producer for Digi 24 Iasi, thinks that young people's opinion

should be considered and that they should be heard if they plead for restriction of certain programs if these programs are infringing on children's right to be protected from violent information.

Recommendations:

Mr. George Onofrei (Radio Hit) talked about children and young people's involvement in activities and campaigns focusing on disseminating information relevant to their peers. This would support children's development and would help them design a set of values useful to any adult.

Mr. Ovidiu Mihaiuc advises children and young people to get involved in as many campaigns as possible, especially since they are more creative than adults and have more free time and access to information.



GENERAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH

There was a special focus on the level of involvement of parents in children's lives, especially looking at the role of parents in monitoring how and where children are getting their information. Looking at the main themes of the research, parents believe that they are sufficiently involved, while children seem to think that parents need to be even more involved.

Children, young people and media representatives interviewed recommend that parents spend more time with their children and that they more carefully monitor access to information.

It is also vital that children are given more options in spending free time and that access to television and the internet should be limited.

Following this research, we, the children in Negresti, realized that promoting violent information and behaviors through the media has a major impact on us. Therefore, both children and parents should be part of more information campaigns about access to violent programs. If media outlets do not follow the rules, petitions and complaints signed by children and young people should be addressed to the appropriate authorities such as the Romanian National Audiovisual Council.



MĂRTURIILE NOASTRE



Arlett Evelyn Faifer

This research group has been a second family to me, an environment where I grew in different ways and a place where observations motivated all of us to become better!



Gilda Elizabeth Faifer

I conquered my fear of public speaking as part of this research group, I learned new things and developed new abilities. Thank you!



Teodora Grîu

I got to know myself and those around me, I developed many abilities and I lovingly and enthusiastically discovered the mysteries behind an actual research along with my second family.



Luiza-Maria Vieru

This research has been a challenge. I learned to work as part of a team and I had the opportunity to conquer barriers that I otherwise couldn't have overcome.



Alexandra Nastasă

Being part of this research helped me realize what a great impact the media has on us. I found that there is more and more violence in the media and that this has a great influence on us, even without us realizing it.



Monica-Elena Cazan

Being part of this research group meant a lot to me and I learned so much from this experience. During these four months, I managed to get over my fear of public speaking, I learned to accept other opinions, I enjoyed expressing my own and I met wonderful people that taught me a great deal.



Patricia Hînceanu

Being part of the TiN group and the research we've worked on together have been some of the best experiences of my life. Thanks to this group, I understood that my opinion (regardless of what it may be) matters and that these wonderful people will support me no matter what. Thank you so very much!

**Bianca Cocea**

What we did was a great experience and it helped me get over my fear of public speaking.

**Georgiana Teiu**

As part of this group, I learned that it is not easy to do a research project, but I also had the pleasure of working with great people that helped me and always supported my opinions. Thank you!

**Mălina Manolache**

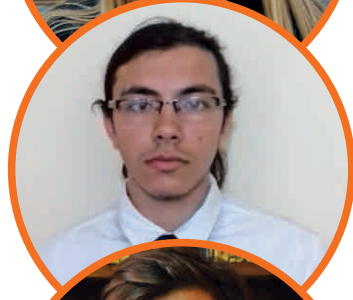
In the few months that I've been part of this group, I learned to express my opinion even if it was different from everyone else's, I've learned to work with others and to communicate better with those around me. I met wonderful people and made new friends. I felt like I was doing something useful and I was thrilled when my ideas and opinions were taken seriously. I hope we can work together again.

**Alexandra Andreea Gavriluță**

This research has been a learning opportunity for me and has allowed me to develop my vision in a friendly and encouraging environment.

**Giorgiana-Florentina Harbuzariu**

The group I was part of has been a form of development, a place where we combined our ideas and learned a lot of new and useful things. It helped me discover myself and learn that, only as a team and with a lot of devotion, I could achieve what I wanted.

**Victor Gabriel Gologan**

This research has been a new experience for us all. Working in teams and the games we played as part of our meetings helped us uncover and make the best of everyone's abilities, helping us feel refreshed after a long day at school.

**Alexandru Petru Scafaru**

For me it was so much more than a work group, we were a team, a group of friends where I could easily express my opinions. I learned new ways of working and looking at a problem and, through this research, I saw myself evolve together with the group and move past new challenges.

**Lucian Constantin Ciohodaru**

Working with this wonderful group has been an unforgettable experience. We've learned new things, we cooperated, we had fun... we were a family. I hope this research raised the alarm on the issue of violence in the media and leads to a stricter legislation that can better protect children.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We are a group of 15 young people with ages 13 to 18 and, together, we have worked on this research project. We were happy to apply questionnaires, organize a focus-group and interview media representatives. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in this data collection process: children, parents, teachers, members of the Community Advisory Commission, and journalists.

In the future, we would like to run information campaigns around preventing violence, create partnerships with other youth groups interested in this theme and ask local and national public figures to join our efforts.

