

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador



Executive Summary

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Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Study performed by Plan Internacional Ecuador in collaboration with the USFQ

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The central objective of this study, lead by Plan Internacional with the support of Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) for its publication and diffusion¹, is to identify dominant cultural patterns that contribute to the violence within families and communities suffered by girls, boys, adolescents, men and women in the indigenous communities of the Central Highlands of Ecuador.

For this purpose, a mapping and analysis of the perceptions of violence and its practices was carried out in five provinces: Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, Azuay, Cañar, and Pichincha. The study gathers the opinions of boys, girls, adolescents, mothers, and local authorities regarding their understanding of gender violence, and how they experience it.

This study, of quantitative as well as qualitative nature, based within the axes of practices and perceptions, shows, alike other studies, that boys are the most exposed to physical violence, while girls majoritarily suffer sexual and psychological violence. Moreover, the study highlights the perception adults have that neither psychological nor physical violence are adequate methods to educate children and youth, although in practice, it is found that these are methods used too frequently. The confusion that mothers and fathers have with respect to the exercise of their rights and the application of discipline with their children is an issue that often emerges in this study.

¹

In its initial stages of research and initial results, this study counted with the support of FLACSO Ecuador.

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The **focus of this study** concentrates on the following four topics:

- The definition of experiences of violence suffered by the target population (indigenous girls, boys, adolescents, men, and women).
- The awareness of violence at family and community levels.
- The response to violence on the part of victims, their families, and their communities, within the frame of their cultural patterns and the perception they have about the capacity to act of communitary institutions and public systems
- The norms, programs, capacities and challenges faced by institutions that work for the protection of the target population against violence.

In order to analyze these four topics, this study has identified the perceptions and practices as well as their specific relation to four types of gender related violence: physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and symbolic violence.

The **qualitative and quantitative methodology** used in the execution of this study includes: surveys done on mothers older than 16 years of age living in the target zones of investigation; focus groups with community leaders, governmental as well as non governmental organizations involved in childhood and adolescence issues, which were grouped by provinces; and playgroups (of 8 to 20 people) consisting of boys, girls, and adolescents, divided in the following age groups: from 5 to 7 years, from 8 to 11 years, from 12 to 15 years, and from 16 to 18 years. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted.

In total, 388 mothers, 23 leaders, and 26 officials of institutions related to childhood and adolescence issues, were interviewed.

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PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF MOTHERS REGARDING VIOLENCE

Topic 1: PERCEPTIONS ABOUT VIOLENCE

1- PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

46.4% of mothers interviewed consider that girls are weaker than boys, while 47.4% consider that both are weak.

79.6% of the participants surveyed responded positively when asked if boys should learn how to defend themselves in a fight. Also, 84.3% believe that being exposed to physical violence does not make boys stronger.

Additionally, regarding the use of physical violence for self defense, the responses vary when referring to boys or girls. While a high percentage of participants (86%) responded that boys should not use physical violence to defend themselves, only 52% of participants believe that girls should not use violence in cases of self defense.

With respect to vulnerability to physical violence that boys confront as opposed to girls, women responded that almost no difference exists in the exposition that both boys and girls face regarding this type of violence. 42.5% responded that girls are more vulnerable to physical violence, while the majority, 57.5%, affirm they do not believe girls are more vulnerable than boys.

Perceptions about people who mistreat boys and girls the most, and reasons for violence.

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According to the responses of the mothers surveyed, the majority (62%) of incidents of physical abuse suffered by children, are produced due to behavioral and disciplinary issues. On the other hand, physical abuse also occurs for reasons related to anger (15% of responses), drunkenness (6.4%), to strengthen children (5.4%) and other reasons (2.8%).

With respect to physical maltreatment suffered by girls, and the reasons for it, the results are similar to those for boys. The majority of responses cited reasons regarding discipline for the use of physical violence towards girls (62%), while the “anger” category showed the second highest percentage of 16%. The other possible responses (drunkenness, strengthening children, etc) did not exceed 7%.

In contrast with boys whose fathers, mothers, and other family members present similar percentages as physical aggressors, the results show that in the case of girls, the mothers use physical violence (21%), more than the fathers (11%), for disciplinary reasons.

2- PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

The results regarding questions about psychological violence demonstrate that while both boys and girls suffer such forms of violence, girls are victimized more than boys.

With regards to threats, nearly three fourths of the women participating in the study reported that both groups face threats equally, while the rest of the participants who reported a difference between both groups, made evident that according to their perception, girls are three times more vulnerable to suffer threats, than boys.

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To the question of whether or not boys are less sensitive than girls, the majority of female participants (62%) confirmed that boys are not less sensitive, while 38% sustained that effectively, boys are less sensitive.

It is important to highlight that, although the majority (62%) of female participants indicated they believe that boys are as sensitive as girls, the majority (54%) answered that boys suffer less than girls when threatened or humiliated.

When comparing the responses given about perceptions related to the higher sensitivity of girls as opposed to boys, 60% of female participants do not believe that girls are more sensitive than boys.

From this, a conclusion can be drawn that 60% of the participants believe that boys and girls are similar in their level of sensitivity, while approximately 40% believe that boys and girls vary in their levels of sensitivity.

On the other hand, 60.3% the female participants consider that girls suffer more than boys when they are exposed to psychological violence, and that they do not become stronger the more they are exposed to violence (79.6%).

Where and Why does Psychological Violence occur

Regarding where psychological violence happens, the results show that it occurs majorly towards boys within the family and within friend groups for disciplinary reasons. In the case of girls, it is also more common within the family and among friends for the same reasons (8% higher than with boys).

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3- PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

With regards to perceptions about the frequency with which girls and boys suffer sexual violence, the results demonstrate that girls are more commonly victimized than boys, with figures of 58.5% and 38.7% respectively.

When asked about whether or not boys are knowledgeable as to what is sexual violence, 73.2% of the mothers who participated affirmed that boys in fact do not understand what it means. In the case of females, this percentage does not vary greatly, reaching a figure of 76.3%.

Concerning the perception that mothers have regarding boys and sexual violence, 62.9% of participants consider that boys do not suffer sexual violence. This figure shows a difference of 10 percentage points with the perception the boys themselves have on this type of violence.

Additionally, 82.5% of mothers who participated consider that girls can not avoid being victims of sexual violence. This demonstrates a high degree of vulnerability within this group, when compared to that of boys. As for boys, 54.9% of mothers affirmed that boys can not avoid being sexually assaulted.

Characteristics of Aggressors

According to the responses from the mothers, boys are majorly exposed to obscene words or phrases by their friends. In the case of rape, results have a worrying importance as 13.9% of opinions point to aggressors coming from within family and friends.

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In the case of girls, figures for groping and rape are 10 and 5 percentage points respectively, higher in relation to boys. The perpetrators of such acts are identified as friends, primarily, and family members secondly.

4- PERCEPTIONS REGARDING SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

In relation to symbolic violence, the mothers who took part in the study recognize the use of phrases that encourage stereotypes about masculinity in boys. 54.1% said to have used the phrase “act like a man”, and 72.4% also used in many cases the phrase “boys do not cry” to make their sons stop crying. Likewise, 73.2% of mothers admitted having used phrases such as “carishina, you do not know how to cook, you do nothing right”. The word “carishina” is a word in the indigenous Quechua language meaning a girl who does not act feminine and does not perform chores stereotypically assigned to women, such as cooking or cleaning. Additionally, 57.5% admitted having used phrases like “if you do not learn house chores, your husband will leave you”

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Topic 2: PRACTICES OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF VIOLENCE

1- PRACTICES OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Within the different types of physical violence against boys discussed with the mothers surveyed, whipping is cited with the highest frequency (32.5%), followed by the use of the stinging nettle (20.9%). This implies that practices of violence are still heavily loaded with symbolism. In fact, within the indigenous justice system, both the stinging nettle as well as the whip, are some of the ways used to re-establish order. In the case of girls, results are similar with a difference of one percentage point both in frequency and in reasons for use.

The reason for physical violence that occurs with the highest frequency (27.4%), once a month, is the one used so that boys behave well.

When physical violence occurs for disciplinary reasons, it is mainly manifested within the home (47.7%), and at school (18.8%).

2- PRACTICES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

The most common forms of psychological violence which boys are exposed to are: mocking (34.8%), insults (31.4%), and name calling (23.7%). In the case of girls, mocking shows a figure of 39.7%, and insults 35.3%. The place where this type of violence occurs most commonly towards boys is at school (36.6%), followed by at home (30.4%). The responses regarding girls, show a minimal difference between the home (33.5%), and school (34.8%).

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3- PRACTICES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The mothers who participated, consider that within the society, boys are exposed to sexual violence in the form of obscene words or phrases with a 26.8%, followed by groping with 11.1%. Results are nearly identical for the girls, with six percentage points higher with respect to groping, and nearly five percentage points higher concerning forms of rape in society.

In general terms, participating mothers consider that different forms of rape towards boys, can occur once in their lifetime, at a figure of 5.7%.

Reactions towards sexual violence against boys and girls

In the case of sexual violence against boys, the mothers believe that reactions should be more complete; 18.5% of them consider that boys must be defended, the aggressor must be denounced, and additionally the families, authorities, and leaders of the community should be informed.

11.1% of the women consider that no action should be taken, perhaps because they believe sexual violence, in these cases, is covered up. The trend is the same for girls.

Knowledge of prevention and denouncement methods

76.3% of the participating mothers, believe that girls do not have sufficient knowledge or understanding of what sexual violence is, and 82.5% believe that girls can not avoid falling victims to this type of violence.

Additionally it is important to mention that 82.2% of the mothers interviewed, affirmed that they were not aware of the different forms of denouncement in the case any aggression occurred within their familiar surroundings.

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CULTURAL PATTERNS: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Topic 1: THE PERCEPTIONS OF BOYS AND GIRLS REGARDING DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE

1- PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

In the focus groups, it became apparent that for both boys and girls, a clear relationship exists between “strength” and pertaining to a determined gender group, in this case the masculine group. Even the boys and girls ages 5 to 7 years, identified both young and adult men as physical aggressors. For this reason, the study interprets that the cultural patterns around the figure of “manly man” (potentially violent), have been taught and learned from very early ages.

Physical violence between peers (partners)

Physical violence within peer groups was evident in almost all focus groups, with the exception of the 5 to 7 years age groups, (who instead, affirmed being victims of physical violence on the part of their elders). Thus, a possible explanation for this, would be the reproduction of violence within the groups they socialize with in their schools and among their peers.

Perceptions about girls regarding physical violence

In general, “bad behavior” in girls, is mostly linked to them not completing the house chores. In addition, the perception girls have about marriage is strongly linked to the belief that “husbands beat their wives when they are drunk”, and that is why many of them would not want to marry too soon.

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Characteristics of aggressors according to girls

The girls interviewed, pointed to their mothers as being more aggressive or violent than their fathers. Additionally, they identified their older brothers as aggressors, which was not made evident in the surveys conducted on mothers. This could indicate a lack of knowledge of the mothers, or a cover-up due to cultural factors based on gender inequality on the part of the mothers towards their older sons.

Adolescents, both male and female, also explained the use of alcohol and drugs by adolescents as being “due to a lack of orientation at home” and because of “the migration of their parents”, thus they do not have “somebody to take care of them”, so they look for refuge. Their parents simply “send them money” and with it, they buy alcohol.

2- PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

Psychological violence was more notable amongst boys and girls when they spoke about their mothers, and about how girls and teen girls are treated especially in the home environment. Girls suffer psychological maltreatment especially when they “do not help at home”. In the province of Pichincha, psychological violence was also related to governmental institutions such as the Police. In Latacunga and in Cañar, abandonment, and thus “absence” was an invisible aggressor within the psychological violence, as will be discussed in the symbolic violence section.

3- SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The parents who were part of the focus group in Cañar affirmed that boys are frequently “taken” to brothels, sometimes even against their will. Although they exclude Cañar from this cases on the basis that “here these

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cases do not occur because there are no brothels”. There is a tendency to “legitimize” these facts because doing so could prevent teen pregnancies and the rape of young women.

The aggressors were identified as adult males. Girls were identified as victims of sexual aggressions on the part of their teachers. In the case of family members and acquaintances, aggression was perceived to be in general, towards women both single and married. The girls and female adolescents interviewed expressed their concern of being “on their own” on the streets, for fear of being sexually assaulted.

4- SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

In all provinces, young and underaged children perceive their elders with fear, and expose age difference as the central axis of inequality and violence.

Women are who acquire greater responsibility of reproducing cultural patterns, which is evident in the rigidity of their use of traditional clothing. Even among their female peers, there is greater pressure to fulfill these norms than amongst male adolescents.

Another aspect that could not be categorized as a type of violence, was abandonment and the lack of care and love on the part of their parents and adults. When speaking about this, the girls identified this reality as something they “dislike” and feel “saddened by”.

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Topic 2: VIOLENCE PRACTICES AGAINST GIRLS AND BOYS

1- PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Generally, in the studied areas, physical violence is carried out through blows, pushes or shoves, pinches, kicks, punches, and hair and ear pulling. In Chunasana, Cañar, participants mentioned that the parents fight, and that physical violence has led to the deaths of their wives because the husbands “hit them in the head and hit their children with a piece of wood”. In all five provinces acts of physical violence were made evident towards pregnant teens, for which a “black eye” is directly associated with “girls who get pregnant”.

The youth in the 17 to 18 year-old age group in the province of Chimborazo, sustained that violence is mainly originated within the family, and is later applied in other environments, like for example, at school or amongst friends. Especially during communitary festivities, fights between family members or acquaintances are recurrent, and boys and girls associate these incidents directly with the consumption and abuse of alcohol.

2- PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

Generally, in all five provinces, aspects of psychological violence most frequently mentioned by boys and girls from 5 to 11 years old, are: shouting, insults, and cries. Additionally, both males and females from this age group mentioned the throwing of objects on the ground; coarse, rude or unpleasant words; raising of voices, disparaging people, or even

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forcing the other person to do something against their will, as forms of psychological violence. Boys and girls expressed that shouting, mistreatment, and abandonment are experienced daily.

After the family, school is the primary environment in which psychological violence is manifested.

Boys' and girls' reactions tend to be equal when they suffer verbal aggression. Insults are very common especially between mothers and fathers and between them and their adolescent/young children within both, their close and extended families. Girls tend to silence or run away when they are presented with situations of psychological maltreatment. For example, when they are insulted or when they are made to feel bad with emotional blackmail because they "do not help at home"

3- SEXUAL VIOLENCE

"Caresses" and "groping" were made evident both, in the extended family (on the part of uncles or godfathers), as well as at school on the part of teachers. Girls denounced that adults undress in front of them as something that occurs normally within the family, community, or school.

As indicated by both boys and girls, there are multiple forms of violence that occur, such as being spied on under the door while in the toilet, having their skirts lifted, being caressed or asked to sit on the laps of men, and being touched in intimate parts of their bodies.

Community festivals and schools are named most often as the environments where sexual violence occurs. At school, groping or sexual advances carried out by teachers or older students, occur.

Boys and girls denounced school bathrooms as the places where their privacy rights are transgressed.

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INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE AND ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE

(see separately from testimonies)

CONCLUSIONES

This study demonstrates the direct influence of cultural patterns in violent practices, and how they are perpetuated across generations under the shield of “culture”: 1) Invisibilities (cover ups) 2) Environment and social agency 3) localized variables such as migration.

Ways to normalize Violence

The ways and codes to normalize violence, based on a system of gender inequalities, ethnicity, place of origin, age, class, amongst others, contribute to the invisibility of violence, which in turn, perpetuates, ratifies and reinforces this practice. For example, certain practices are interpreted under the idea of “love”, kinship, authority, friendship, and even trust, and are not seen as violent.

As analyzed, the perception of violence against one person entails a conjunction between such person, the family, the social group, the personal experiences, the psycho-affective balance, the cohesive social group, amongst the most important.

Change on a personal level is important but not sustainable, if it does not translate into a broader social change.

Environment and Social Capacity to Act

Apart from the family, the environment that surrounds children is of main importance for the development of any sort of capacity to act, on the part of boys, girls, and adolescents. The environment is made up of both formal and informal organizations related to sports, arts, music, religion,

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and community service. In these institutions, boys, girls, and adolescents can participate socially. Their participation in these types of activities has increased since 2004 up to the present.

The Family Unit and Localized Variables Such As Migration

Social transformations, amongst them the high migration rates of Ecuadorian citizens, have altered the configuration and roles of fathers, mothers, and other caregivers, such as relatives, and neighbors. This situation has created transnational families.

Practices and Cultural Patterns

Indigenous boys and girls present the lowest percentage rates of access to basic education. Regarding gender violence, “affection” and caring acts can hide violence. Girls especially, are more susceptible to gender violence, which while not evident at first glance, hides itself behind “demonstrations of love”, or “concern for them”.

A very important point to deepen and raise awareness, for both boys and girls as well as their parents, should be how to understand discipline without relating it to the practice of violence.

Symbolic violence is the least mentioned by the surveyed participants; it has become a normal practice and thus harder to visualize and identify. This situation demonstrates how cultural patterns that are acquired in a given context, ascribe to the man certain characteristics that would have to be defended or demonstrated in order for him to be considered a member of a group of peers and/or to differentiate himself from the “other” gender group, in this case feminine.

TESTIMONIES



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Province of Chimborazo

The consequences of **psychological violence** include: low self esteem, submission and isolation of children from their group of male and female friends and classmates. The police department points out that **psychological violence** occurs through the means of **underappreciation and insults**. The Ombudsman Office indicated that bullying has led to the death of numerous people because of the ridicule and mockery they receive on the part of others.

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Province of Chimborazo

Sexual violence (although in the targeted communities, none of the interviewed people pointed out cases of rape of male children or male adolescents) is given in the case of female adolescents, on the part of close relatives. In such cases, families resolve the issues internally, through a payment or the trade of animals. If such cases occur outside of their family unit, the female adolescents are **forced to marry**. Nevertheless, female adolescents suffer more because when they get pregnant they must withdraw from school and dedicate to the upbringing of their children. The places where female adolescents are more vulnerable to suffer **sexual violence** are desolate spaces, and dark places. Girls have to walk alone, which puts them in highly **vulnerable** positions to be raped. At the same time, in many cases, the police avoids getting involved. The places where different types of violence occur most commonly are: at school, at home, and along the way between one and the other.

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Province of Chimborazo

Men have all the strength, as I have said since the Spanish Conquest, us as women have been **inferiorized**, as if women... well us as women in our environment, because of being women, being indigenous, poor, illiterate, and on top of that because of religion, we are discriminated against, they inferiorize us, although **we are physically strong**, physically we have more strength than men.

(Council of Guamote Canton)

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Province of Chimborazo

If a woman raises her hand to a man she is already considered a woman who is **not respectful**. How many things they have said to us. Thus for this reason, although we may have strength it is not easy for us to stand up against men the way they do to us. For women it is difficult to do that because us as women, are culturally **dominated and inferiorized**. Even with religion the Bible tells us: the woman has to submit to the man, the Holy Bible in our hands tells us that women who want to know something should not speak it in public, they must ask it at home. All this has given us the idea in our heads, that we are inferior to men.

(Council of Guamote Canton)

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

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Province of Chimborazo

An official from the Council for Childhood and Adolescence points out how **physical violence** can be shown through kicks: “many times it is with the ease with which us as men, can go and throw a kick. This is another of the problems, that we simply go and **throw kicks** and we do not know where we hit the child, and the child could possibly end up with a fractured limb, or rib”.

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

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Province of Chimborazo

With regards to the issue of **sexual violence** towards boys, the Executive Secretary responded: “We have not had this here. What we have heard is that they had started to **touch a boy** inappropriately but these have only been stories to mess with teachers. We have not, thank God, had these cases, because if we did, it would be terrible to have these kind of problems.”

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Province of Chimborazo

“The masculine sex is the strongest one because from very early ages, within the family, they instill this in the children that way. In this manner, because of being little men they have a voice and a vote about the feminine sex and most importantly about the distribution of activities at home. Here, boys have a little more **privileges** regarding education, and the way they are treated. Girls are a little **discriminated** against for being weaker than boys. Likewise in the daily activities, in times past they used to teach girls to be the ones who took care of grazing the animals, to cook, do the laundry and clean while boys were the ones who had to be in the classrooms at schools.”

Official of the National Council of Childhood and Adolescence

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

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Province of Chimborazo

“In the cases we have investigated, the moment in which the physical aggression children suffer is shown, they start to become aware that an act of violence has been committed, however, the moment of actually following a legal process to denounce it, they find a way to negotiate with the teacher. They go and make an agreement and then **withdraw** from the process. That is one of the problems we had with one man who hit the child on the leg, he **broke his leg in two parts** and the father negotiated with the teacher and did not let us carry out the legal process. So even though we had all the information of the case, it was finally closes because it expired.”

Executive Secretary of the Council for Childhood and Adolescence, Guamote

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

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Province of Chimborazo

“I am given the impression that women like to be mistreated as they **assume violence is a normal issue**. There is an existing process where the aggressor is denounced by a woman, so he gets detained, but then she forgives him and he is freed and continues with the aggressions.” The official also affirmed that psychological and symbolic violence is “poverty”, because they can not pay the alimony for their children. When youngsters are put in jail for not paying the alimony, their parents have to bail them out but they must pay and it is difficult, for this reason, many youngsters must leave their hometown to work elsewhere. There are also cases like when a young married woman went to live in another city, Cuenca, because her community was pressuring her **to stay with her partner who mistreated her.**”

Official from the Ombudsman Office

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

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Province of Chimborazo

“In Riobamba there are cases of **suicide for having bad grades**. In the case of girls it happens because of mockery and teasing by their peers. Often young women are **prohibited from studying**, they are controlled, harassed, and quite often this is done by older men.”

Ombudsman Office

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

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Province of Cañar

The cantonal prosecutor considers that **sexual violence** is mostly suffered by girls. Migration of their parents is the cause for this kind of violence to happen because girls are left under the care of close family members who abuse them. With respect to **sexual violence towards children**, the prosecutor considers that: “ it is a lot worse for a boy, obviously, imagine a boy being assaulted by another male”.

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Province of Cañar

“From a very early age boys know that at home they have their mother and their father who sleep together. Boys know that their father and their mother are fruit of a marriage under the blessing of God. Boys assimilate this. On the other hand, if a boy gets **assaulted** by another male, imagine it... this would have grave consequences and because of this, lately the government speaks so much about the LGBT population. I know that there are many people that in their childhood were **raped** and today they have practically become homosexuals because they never had psychological orientation that would allow them to overcome this trauma. So, What do they want to do?, the same that was done to them they think they have to do to others, this is why to me, the impact is greater on a male than on a female”.

Cantonal Prosecutor Representative

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

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Province of Cañar

“In the case when sexual violence is committed by the fathers, brothers, or uncles, they they try to look for a third person whom to blame when the case of **rape** comes to public light. They try to cover them up, in this case, their husband or brother, mostly the husband. I think they act like this because husbands are being watched as the only providers of the family. So, if I denounce him I will be left without the sustenance of the family, and what is more, when he leaves home he **will come back to mistreat me**, so basically, I am losing the head of the home. In these cases we have had to intervene and insist so that the actual denouncement can be made.”

Official from the Cantonal Council for Childhood and Adolescence.

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

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Province of Cañar

“There have been cases, for which we have been called, in some far away indigenous communities, where it is presumed that the **father has abused his daughter**, and the daughter **has a disability**. When the mothers talk to the teachers and community directors, according to the orientation we give them, the woman is willing to place the denouncement but I believe it is the husband’s family, or the husband himself, or the woman’s fear of losing the sustenance of her family, or her fear of having problems with her husband’s family; that women **opt out of denouncing** and say it was simply rumors and they do not actually end up denouncing.

Official from the Cantonal Council for Childhood and Adolescence.

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Province of Azuay

The usual form of punishment, when boys and girls misbehave, is a bath in cold water and whipping with stinging nettle plants (this causes rashes and irritation on the skin). “**With the whip**, there are people here that use the whip to hit, the whip which is for sheep”. People here have **not had the capacity or the resources to know how to raise a child**. I believe that nobody teaches us how to be parents, but if we do not learn to do this the right way with the boys and girls, it gets very complicated.

Nabón Political Headquarters

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

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Province of Azuay

“One distinction between indigenous people and the mestizos is that the mestizo people actually do go to the competent authorities in the case they **suffer a violation** of their rights or rape, while the indigenous people mentioned, do not.”

Nabón Political Headquarters

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Province of Azuay

“In the case of a **sexual violation**, the perpetrator is whipped with stinging nettle and is sent to do community service work. How do you guarantee an adequate, good living, of your community when the perpetrators and rapists are free? Because tomorrow the rapists will go and rape, and they will be sent to cut wood and that is it. So this also happens here in the indigenous communities. The cabildos must realize they do not have the capacity, because the constitution does not entitle them to issue prison sentences. So, I believe there should be a coordination between the ordinary law and the indigenous law, so that these cases can be sent to the ordinary law and have **adequate sanctions**.”

Nabón Political Headquarters

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Province of Cotopaxi

According to one of the officers from the Council for Childhood and Adolescence of the Pujili Canton, another of the grave problems is that only **20% of indigenous girls have the opportunity to study**, which makes girls more vulnerable to different types of violence. Another variable of complexity is that which reproduces violence in institutions which are service providers such as health centers, since here **people are discriminated against because of their ethnicity**, in this case, for being indigenous.

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Province of Cotopaxi

The mothers are who denounce the most, and also the ones who **suffer the most mistreatment** and abuse. In some indigenous communities from this area, the fathers **do not want their daughters to study** (Cantonal Board). In one specific case, there was a denouncement against a teacher who was harassing and assaulting students. The aggressor remained at the school until the sanction of a judge was issued. Meanwhile, at the school “teachers say that the school is being discredited with such denouncements”

(Cantonal Board)

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Province of Cotopaxi

“As I have said, well, for these people sadly under the **indigenous justice**, only very few indigenous people present denouncements and go to the competent authorities in case their rights have been violated. They simply come to agreements between themselves with the leader of the community or the cabildo mayor and that is it. And like I have said, us, with the experience we have had, when we got there, we had knowledge of the case and were able to go to the prosecutor, but sadly **they didn't make the denouncement and there was nothing we could do.** So based on this problem the Community Ombudsman Office was put into place, because we must change the way of thought of the people”.

Official from the Cantonal Board of Cotopaxi

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Province of Pichincha

“Negligence is considered as another form of violence, apart from psychological violence.

Additionally, **physical and emotional abandonment due the migration** to other provinces and parishes at the center of the city cause parents to neglect their sons and daughters, and thus, nine year old girls already take care of their younger siblings. There are mothers who work in floriculture, and because they do not have caretaking options, they leave their kids locked in their houses. Girls between 9 and 15 years of age have responsibilities of adults, which do not correspond to their age. They are placed to work in the flower-growing sector, in the domestic service sector, in restaurants, markets, and more, while boys are sent to live on their own so they can study in Cayambe”.

Cantonal Board of the Province of Cayambe

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Pichincha San Roque

“In the afternoons most of the boys, girls, and adolescents have to return home but **not to do homework**, instead to sell, wander around, or go threshing. You can see mostly girls doing this type of work, while boys are sent to work as loaders, and are given more freedom to roam and go wherever they want just for the fact of being boys. Sometimes boys bring home money, and give it to their families.”

Promoter of the Center for Childhood and Adolescence (CENIT)

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Pichincha San Roque

“The difference between the treatment towards girls versus that of boys is very noticeable. Girls have to do everything, while boys are not obliged to do the same things, they are allowed to go for a walk. **Access to school is very limited**, most of the kids do not study. Girls dedicate themselves to sell fruits and vegetables, while boys work carrying loads. Girls and female adolescents are kept doing domestic work, or made to rise early to go to the market, they suffer a lack of sleep, and are taken advantage of by their parents. The parents have four to eight children and **they use all of them for labor.**

Promoter of the Center for Childhood and Adolescence (CENIT)

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Pichincha San Roque

The promoter of the Center for Childhood and Adolescence (CENIT) of San Roque, coincide in the fact that another problem is that **mothers do not denounce, and they stay silent** because denouncing violence is a stigma. According to the interviews, this behavior “comes from the idea of the “hacienda” as a common pattern and the language is a limitant, as the they speak Quichua”.

EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Guamote (Province of Chimborazo)

José Salvador Paucar, president of the Indigenous Parliament, states that in the Guamote Canton, there are 170 communities and one of the biggest problems in the canton is that of human **trafficking of boys and girls**: “here we see the problem of taking the children to other countries for trafficking, such as to Venezuela, or Colombia. They get paid between \$800 to \$1000. An effort is being made to educate the families to have control of their children. Kids are taken to work in those countries but the families do **not denounce it**. The high rates of migration to cities like Los Ríos, Ambato, Quito, and Guayaquil of youngsters who go in search of jobs in construction, is one way to visualize violence.

Leaders' Testimonies
EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Guamote (Province of Chimborazo)

José Salvador Paucar affirms that: “with respect to **sexual violence**, it occurs at festivals that take place in the month of August, at weddings, carnival festivities, and at New Year celebrations. At these parties, youngsters are the most vulnerable. “Also at community assemblies at night, young people go out, they stare at each other, they make jokes and drink alcohol which harms them. Then they have [sexual] relations and thus there are **teen pregnancies**.

Female teenagers these days like to get with one boy and then with another. Marriages occur at very young ages, among adolescents who are 12 to 15 years old. Young girls are expected to be virgins however the laws state that such issues about women should not be talked about.”

Leaders' Testimonies
EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Nabón (Province of Azuay)

Most of the female leaders assumed that, in actuality, violence has been reduced in comparison to years past because before “they used to give us black eyes”, and at school they used to “hit us in the head with a stick” “before, we used to endure like stupid girls”. The decrease in violence happens “**because us women now defend ourselves, we defend our rights under the laws**”, “before women were useless, now women work more than men so why should the man be the king?”.

Leaders' Testimonies
EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Province of Cañar

The leaders stated that one of the reasons for **physical violence exercised against women** and both male and female children within the family, is the consumption of alcohol, and sometimes also the consumption of illegal drugs on the part of the fathers. They also state that the anguish and desperation men experience due to the lack of work, cause them to become violent against his loved ones. They also mentioned that the lack of education and ignorance influence this attitude and that men are aware this **violence brings problems, angst, and desperation.**

Leaders' Testimonies
EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Province of Cañar

With regards to sexual violence, they comment that a lack of knowledge on the part of the parents contributes to the existence of **structural inequalities**. These are derived, for example, from not accepting sex education for their children because they believe that “they are awakening or instilling sexuality in the youth, and that it is necessary to be cautious when treating these topics.” Additionally, they affirm that “since migration rates are high, this brings as a consequence, that the parents who are far away buy phones and other electronic devices for their children, which combined with a lack of control, leads to boys, girls, and adolescents to look at pornographic content on the internet”. The leaders also commented that “there are mothers and fathers who make their children **skip school** to move the livestock, they believe this work corresponds to boys”.

Leaders' Testimonies
EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Province of Cañar

When referencing to **sexual violence**, the leaders pointed out that many times, boys are taken to brothels, **against their will**. “Here we have not seen these cases, because there are no brothels and maybe there should be, as a way to help prevent teen pregnancies and rape, because boys need a way in which to vent their instincts”.

Leaders' Testimonies
EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Province of Cañar

One of the community leaders believes that it is **absurd that parents do not make their children work**, because by working, boys and girls learn how to earn and make a living for themselves. “How are we going to live, how are we going to eat then” and states that boys and girls are better educated when they learn to work.

Leaders' Testimonies
EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY

Patterns of Violence Against Girls in Ecuador

Nabón (Province of Azuay)

The topic of violence is latent in the communities, they know that hits and blows (physical violence) are not acceptable, but that there are **other forms of violence** which have become a normal practice, and thus, such violent practices are **not visualized** and become ordinary. “There are no more blows and hits, these have been changed for words”

Leaders' Testimonies
EXTRACT FROM THE STUDY



Por la niñez en Ecuador

