

# VIOLENCE IN THE AMERICAS WHAT MUST BE DONE?

Violence affects a large proportion of the population in the Americas



The Region has the **highest homicide rate in the world (17.9 per 100,000)** – 3 times the global average. **Youth aged 15 to 29 years**, particularly young men and boys, are especially vulnerable.<sup>1</sup>

**An estimated 58% of children** experience physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse every year<sup>3</sup> in Latin America and the Caribbean.

**1 out of 3 women** has experienced **violence by an intimate partner**.<sup>2</sup>

**Elder abuse** is estimated at 12% in the Region, though numbers may be higher.<sup>4</sup> Globally, only 1 in 24 cases are reported.<sup>5</sup>

THE COSTS ARE ENORMOUS: THE MOST VISIBLE CONSEQUENCE IS DEATH, BUT MANY MORE WOMEN, MEN, BOYS AND GIRLS SUFFER INJURIES AND ILL HEALTH AS THE RESULT OF VIOLENCE

## WE KNOW ENOUGH TO ACT NOW<sup>6</sup>

Violence does not just “happen” – it can be prevented, and its social roots can be addressed.

1



**Challenge harmful social norms** that make violence acceptable

2



Prevent **early exposure to violence**, especially in childhood

3



Foster the development of **safe, stable and nurturing relationships**

4



Strengthen **access to education** and build life skills

5



**Reduce alcohol and drug use**

6



**Limit access to weapons**, including guns and knives

7



Promote **safe environments** and urban upgrading, including addressing “hot spots”

8



Improve **economic security**

9



Reduce **social inequality**

10



Provide **quality health services** and strengthen referral to other essential services

Of course, no single sector will be able to reduce violence alone –but health has a critical role to play.<sup>7</sup>

## TOGETHER WE CAN END VIOLENCE IN ALL ITS FORMS!

**PAHO**



Pan American Health Organization



World Health Organization  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE AMERICAS

[www.paho.org/violence](http://www.paho.org/violence)

References: (1) World Health statistics 2019. Geneva: WHO; 2019. (2) Intimate partner violence against women in the Americas. Washington DC: PAHO; 2018. (3) Hillis S, et al. Global prevalence of past-year violence against children: a systematic review and minimum estimates. *Pediatrics* 2016;137(5):e2015407. (4) Von et al. Elder abuse prevalence in community settings: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet Global Health* 2017;5(2):e147-156. (5) Fact sheet: Elder abuse. Geneva: WHO; 2018. (6) Violence prevention: the evidence. Geneva: WHO; 2010. (7) E.g.: RESPECT women: preventing violence against women. Geneva: WHO; 2019. WHO, PAHO, CDC, Global Partnership to end Violence against Children, PEPFAR, Together for Girls, UNICEF, UNODC, USAID & World Bank. INSPIRE: seven strategies for ending violence against children. Geneva: WHO; 2016.