#NoMoreExcuses

It’s time to end the normalisation of sexual violence against children.

Sexual violence against children is a global human rights violation of endemic proportions. It can result in immediate, severe and long-term physical health conditions, significant emotional and mental health issues, and family/community abandonment and marginalisation. It can take the form of harassment, touching, incest, rape or exploitation. It happens everywhere – in the home, schools, community and public institutions. It occurs in both developed and developing countries.

The Facts

- 15 million girls worldwide have experienced forced sex (UNICEF)
- Based on data from 30 countries, only 1% of the above number ever sought professional help (UNICEF)
- 120 million girls worldwide have experienced forced sex or other forced sexual acts. By far the most common perpetrators of sexual violence against girls are current or former husbands, partners or boyfriends (UNICEF)
- Young women (10-24 years old) are twice as likely to acquire HIV as young men the same age. In sub-Saharan Africa, despite making up just 10% of the population, one out of every five new HIV infections happens among adolescent girls and young women (Avert)
- HIV disproportionately affects women and adolescent girls because of vulnerabilities created by unequal cultural, social and economic status (Avert)
- 34 million adolescent girls and 31 million primary school-aged girls are not in school (UNESCO)
- Every year, 12 million girls are married before the age of 18 (Girls Not Brides)
- In sub-Saharan Africa, almost four out of 10 young women were married before their 18th birthday. Child marriage often results in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupts schooling, limits the girl’s opportunities and increases her risk of experiencing domestic violence (Girls Not Brides)
- 7.3 million girls become pregnant before the age of 18 each year (Plan International)

Case study: Malawi

United Purpose began working in Malawi in 1988, and we are proud to have made significant, lasting improvements to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Sexual violence against children unfortunately remains a persistent problem in some places in Malawi. In some remote communities in the south of the country, deeply rooted cultural practices can involve adolescent girls (after the arrival of their first period) being forced to have sex with an older man. Girls in Malawi are eight times more likely to be infected with HIV than their male peers – and 33% of girls who experienced physically forced or coerced sex before age 18 became pregnant (Together for Girls).