

Research to Policy Brief:

The Impact of Corporal Punishment in Peruvian Schools



Peru is one of the countries in the world that has yet to legally prohibit the use of physical and humiliating punishment against children and adolescents in all settings, including schools. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) not only prohibits the use of corporal punishment in any setting, but requires that States 'take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity' (Article 28).

The Multi-Country Study on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children has found that corporal punishment in schools in Peru leads to a series of detrimental effects including poor academic performance, dislike of school and declining psychosocial well-being.

Working in collaboration with the Young Lives Study, findings from longitudinal data in Peru show¹:

- **3 in 10 young children (age 8) were subjected to corporal punishment in school**, with 88% of these children experiencing corporal punishment in public schools.
- Violence in schools, including physical and verbal abuse by teachers and peers, is **the number one reason children give for disliking school**. This may contribute to grade repetition and slow progression through school. Children physically punished in school at age 8 are 10 percentage points **more likely to have repeated a grade by age 12**².
- Violence affects children from all backgrounds. However, **children from more disadvantaged households** are significantly more likely to be punished in school.
- Children who were physically punished by their teachers have **lower self-esteem at age 8**.
- Large and significant **negative associations are found** on the maths and vocabulary scores at age 12 of children who reported experiencing corporal punishment at age 8.

Legislation is an important first step in eradicating the use of corporal punishment in schools in Peru and in creating a safe and enabling environment for all children to learn.

Findings from: The Multi-Country Study on the Drivers of Violence Affecting Children led by the UNICEF Office of Research and the University of Edinburgh

Peru Country Lead: Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations

Longitudinal Data and Analysis from: The Young Lives Study led by the University of Oxford

Peru Young Lives Lead: GRADE

¹ Preliminary findings from: Ogando Portela, M.J. and K. Pells (forthcoming) *Risk Factors and Effects Associated with the use of Corporal Punishment in Schools: Longitudinal Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam*, Florence, Italy: UNICEF Office of Research.

² The regression analysis controls for child and household characteristics and previous maths test scores, and compares children living in the same geographical cluster.



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