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Imagine that you woke up this morning and the newspaper headlines said that scientists had discovered a new disease. The scientists went on to report that over 1 billion children throughout the world were exposed to this disease each and every year. Furthermore the scientists reported that, over the course of their lifetime, those exposed to this disease were at greater risk for infectious diseases like HIV; for mental illnesses like depression and anxiety disorders; also at greater risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer; and, if that wasn't enough, at greater risk for involvement in social problems such like crime and drug abuse..

If we had such a disease, that was entirely preventable, what do you think we'd do? The truth is we do have such a disease -- it's called violence against children. And one of the first things we would do is measure it and use those measurements to propel effective and sustainable action.

Violence against children has enormous human and economic costs for households, communities, national, and global economies, diverting billions of dollars from constructive societal spending. Investing in the prevention of violence against children, as called for by the Global Action Plan on Children in Adversity, is of critical importance, not only as a question of public health and human rights but also good economics.

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