

# SMALL VOICES BIG DREAMS 2011

A Global Survey of Children

## ChildFund Alliance Members

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*“Children are a wonderful gift. They have an extraordinary capacity to see into the heart of things. . .” – Bishop Desmond Tutu*

That observation by Bishop Desmond Tutu lies at the heart of this ambitious undertaking, the second annual ChildFund Alliance global survey. *Small Voices, Big Dreams* seeks to extract wisdom from thousands of young children from throughout the developing world, to give voice to those whose opinions are so often muted by the grown-up world around them. Too often overlooked are their insights: what do children need, fear and hope for?

While the member countries of the ChildFund Alliance are attuned to these understated voices every day, this comprehensive survey gives us a broader understanding of what is on the minds of 10-to-12-year-old boys and girls. From their answers to six questions—posed to almost 4,600 children in 44 countries—we can discern a great deal, and the resulting data will be valuable in helping us set priorities and shape programs that will make a difference in these children's lives.

The pages to follow amplify children's collective wisdom, and foremost among their insights is the priority they place on education. Children in developing nations recognize the single most effective means for breaking the cycle of poverty is through learning. Like so many children around the world, they want to go to college and aspire to become teachers and doctors. And while we learn that they feel safest at home, they also are concerned about the safety and security of their countries, about disease and poverty, and about the violence that threatens their wellbeing.

Children all around the world share so much in common, and yet, this year's survey includes the responses from close to 1,000 children in eight developed countries—responses that reflect both a commonality with children in the developing world and some striking differences. The contrasts, some predictable perhaps, are nonetheless fascinating.

What I think you will conclude from *Small Voices* is that Bishop Tutu was correct. This “extraordinary capacity” for insight delivers revealing truths about the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable children, and these truths will continue to guide our important work.

Jim Emerson  
Secretary General, ChildFund Alliance

# Table of Contents

Section	Page
Executive Summary/Key Findings .....	5
Survey Results: <i>What would you do as president [leader] to improve children's lives?</i> .....	6
Quotes from Children: <i>What would you do as president [leader] to improve children's lives?...</i>	7
Survey Results: <i>If you could grow up to be anything you wanted, what would you be?</i> .....	8
Quotes from Children: <i>If you could grow up to be anything you wanted, what would you be?</i> .....	9
Survey Results: <i>If you could spend the day doing anything you wanted, what would you do?</i> .....	10
Quotes from Children: <i>If you could spend the day doing anything you wanted, what would you do?</i> .....	11
Survey Results: <i>Where do you feel safest?</i> .....	12
Survey Results: <i>When you think about staying safe and healthy every day, what is the one thing you worry about most?</i> .....	13
Quotes from Children: <i>When you think about staying safe and healthy every day, what is the one thing you worry about most?</i> .....	14
Survey Results: <i>If you were the president [leader] of your country, what is the one thing you would do to protect children?</i> .....	15
Quotes from Children: <i>If you were the president [leader] of your country, what is the one thing you would do to protect children?</i> .....	16
Results in Africa .....	17
Results in the Americas .....	18
Results in Asia .....	19
Results in Developed Countries .....	20
Survey Methodology .....	21
About ChildFund Alliance/About Ipsos Observer .....	22

## Executive Summary

The second annual *Small Voices, Big Dreams* global survey asked approximately 4,600 children ages 10 to 12 in 44 nations around the world—including 36 developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas—six open-ended questions:

- What would you do as president of your country to improve children's lives?
- If you could grow up to be anything you wanted, what would you be?
- If you could spend the day doing anything you wanted, what would you do?
- Where do you feel the safest?
- When you think about staying safe and healthy every day, what is the one thing you worry about the most?
- If you were president of your country, what is the one thing you would do to protect children?

A few overarching themes emerged from the survey. First, children throughout the developing world want to learn, understanding that the single most effective means for disrupting the cycle of poverty that surrounds them is through education. When asked what they would do to improve the lives of the children of their country, one in two said they would improve their schools or build more of them. That answer was four times as popular as “increasing access to food,” which was cited by one in 10 children, even at a time of a world food crisis. As for their career aspirations, more than 40 percent of kids in the developing world want to be teachers or doctors.

The second significant insight related to their health and safety. While an overwhelming number of children feel safest in their home or with their family or parents, two in five said they would improve the safety and security of their country, mostly by doing a better job at arresting and prosecuting criminals and increasing the size of the police force. One fifth are concerned about contracting a disease or getting ill, while two in seven are worried about either hunger and poverty or war, terror or violence.

## Key Findings

Among the top-line results of the 2011 *Small Voices, Big Dreams* survey are these findings:

*Asked what they would do if they were president [leader] of their country to improve kids' lives...*

- 49.3% said they would improve education
- 10.5% said they would help them get more food

*Asked what they wanted to be when they grew up, if they could be anything...*

- 22.5% said they wanted to be a teacher
- 20.2% said they wanted to be a doctor

*Asked what they would do if they could spend the day doing anything...*

- 33.9% said they would play with friends, play football/soccer, or play games
- 16.7% said they would study or do homework

*Asked where they feel safest...*

- 61.4% said at home
- 22% said with their family/parents

*Asked what they worry about most when it comes to their health and safety...*

- 22.9% are worried about contracting a disease or getting sick
- 14.4% are worried about hunger and poverty

*Asked what they would do as president [leader] to better protect children...*

- 43.1% said they would improve the safety and security of their country, mostly by improving the arrest and prosecution of criminals
- 25.4% said they raise awareness in support of issues affecting children, such as child abuse

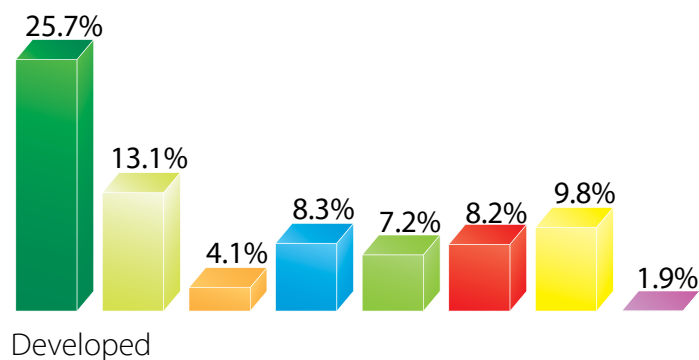
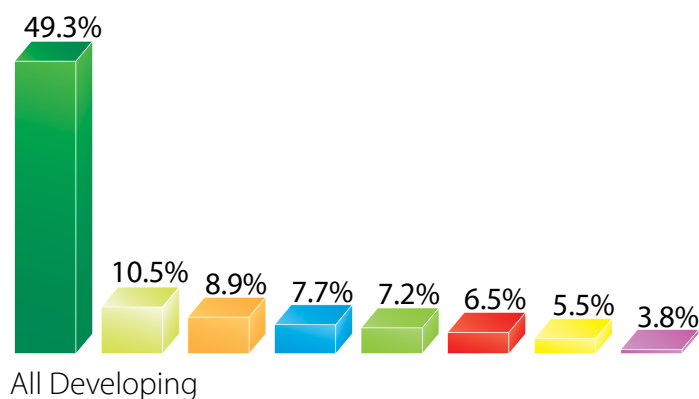
## Survey Results

What would you do as president [leader] to improve children's lives?

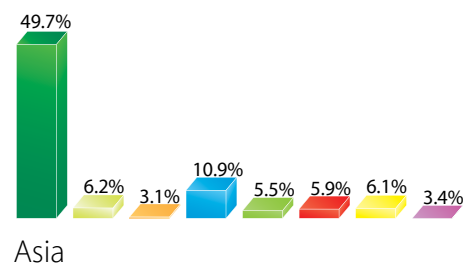
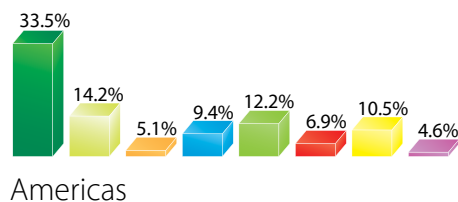
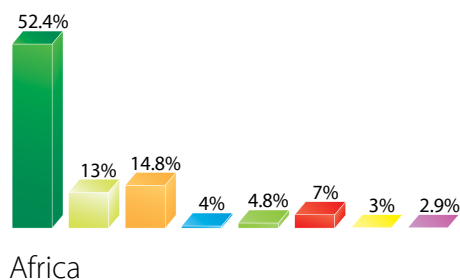
- Improve education
- Make more food available
- Improve healthcare
- Support/protect them
- Provide shelter
- Provide parks and recreation
- Improve safety/security
- Provide clothing



**"I would take all children to school, to have education." (Age 12, Angola)**



### Results by Region





"I'd give the street children a home and put them in school." (Age 11, Brazil)



"If I were president I would do much work on food security in order to stop hunger of children." (Age 12, Ethiopia)



"I will not be able to become the president of Afghanistan as a woman doesn't have right to be the president of Afghanistan." (Age 11, Afghanistan)



"I'd put an end to world poverty." (Age 11, Brazil)

"I will create an opportunity for those who have no access to education." (Age 11, Ethiopia)

"I'd take the children off the streets." (Age 12, Brazil)



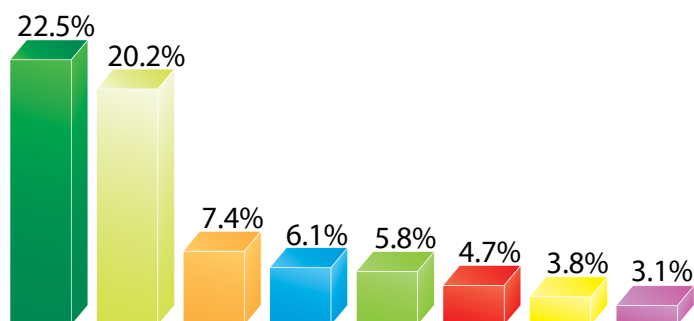
"I will build nice schools and will provide notebooks and pens to all children." (Age 10, Afghanistan)

## Survey Results

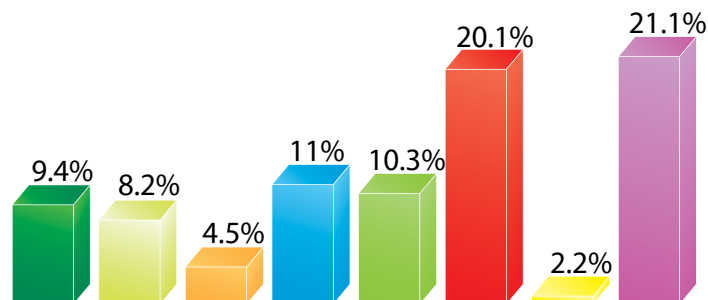
If you could grow up to be anything you wanted, what would you be?



**"I want to become a doctor to save other people's lives." (Age 11, Vietnam)**

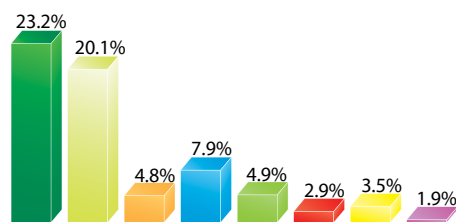


All Developing

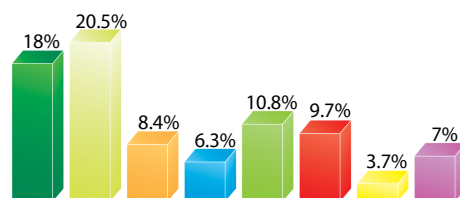


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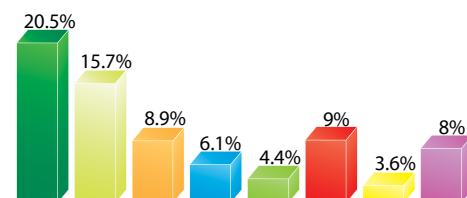
## Results by Region



Africa



Americas



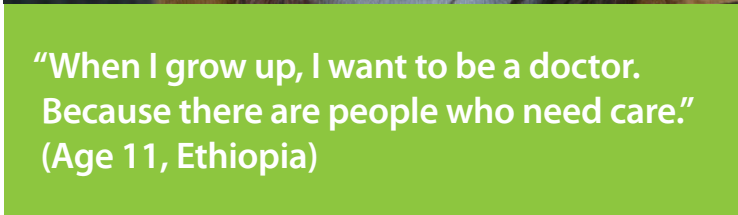
Asia





**"I would like to be the president." (Age 11, Nicaragua)**

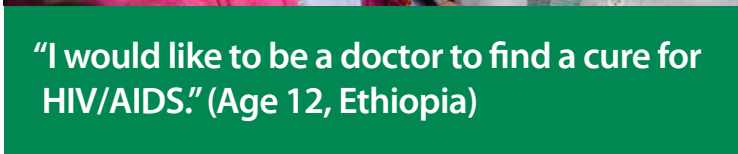
**"I am an orphan I don't think I will become anything." (Age 10, Afghanistan )**



**"When I grow up, I want to be a doctor. Because there are people who need care." (Age 11, Ethiopia)**



**"I don't think I will become anything, because I am not at school." (Age 12, Afghanistan)**



**"I would like to be a doctor to find a cure for HIV/AIDS." (Age 12, Ethiopia)**



**"I want to be a judge to provide children their rights." (Age 12, Afghanistan)**



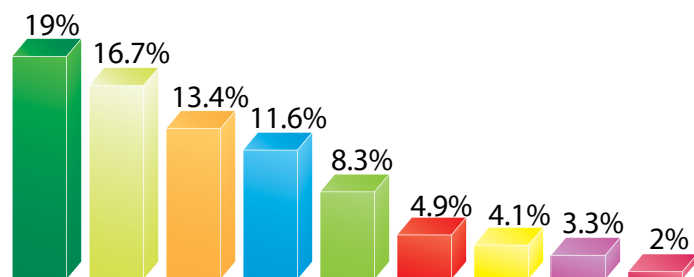
**"I would like to be a policewoman to reduce crime and protect my people." (Age 11, Ethiopia)**

## Survey Results

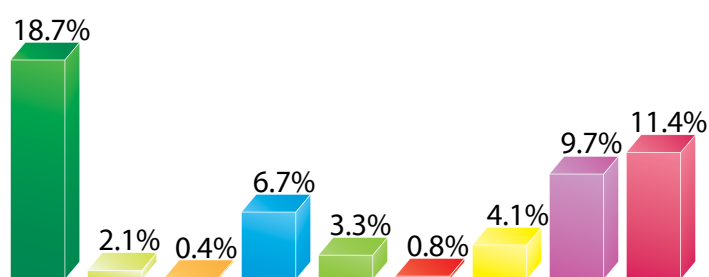
If you could spend the day doing anything you wanted, what would you do?



**"I would spend the day playing and helping my mother with household chores." (Age 12, Nicaragua)**

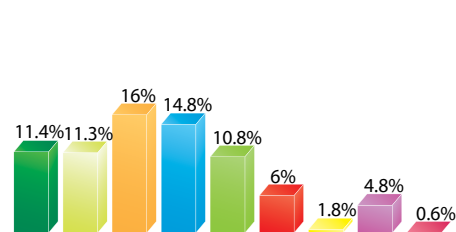


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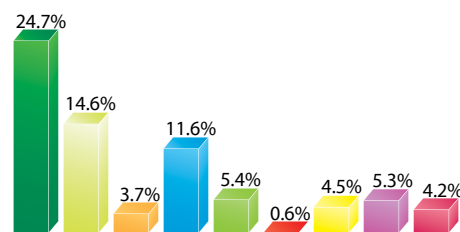


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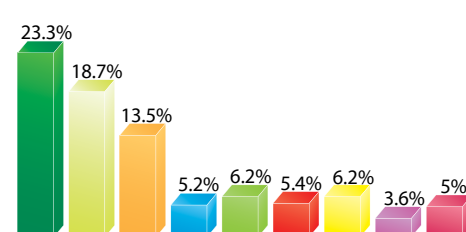
## Results by Region



Africa



Americas



Asia



**"I will study and play." (Age 11, Afghanistan)**



**"I'd spend the day playing and studying."  
(Age 12, Brazil)**

**"I'd study, as I love to do it." (Age 11, Brazil)**

**"I would like to spend a day by reading  
books." (Age 10, Ethiopia)**



**"I would like to take a rest in a free and  
green place full of flowers and plants, a  
beautiful landscape." (Age 10, Bolivia)**



**"I would like to make drawings and  
paintings." (Age 12, Bolivia )**

**"I would like to go to America and visit  
America all day long." (Age 12, Ethiopia)**



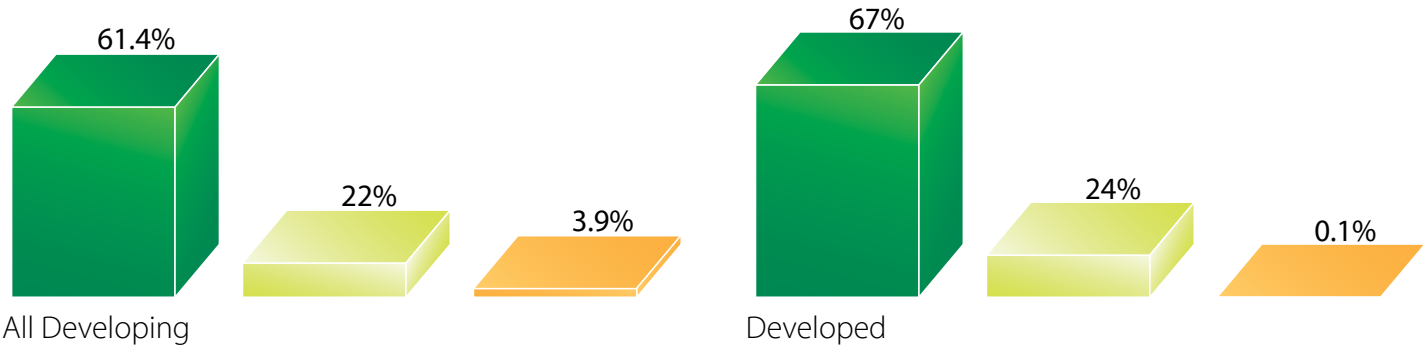
Survey Results

Where do you feel safest?

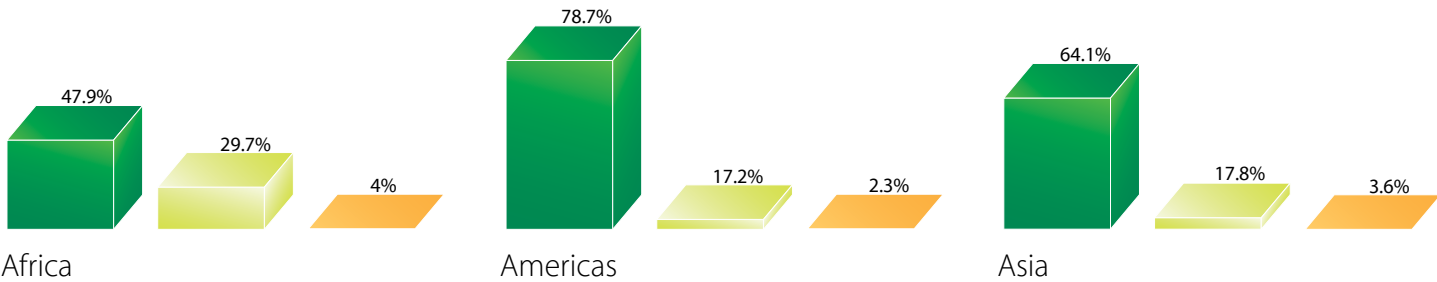
- At home
- With parents/family
- In village/town



“I feel safest at home with my parents.”  
(Age 12, Laos)



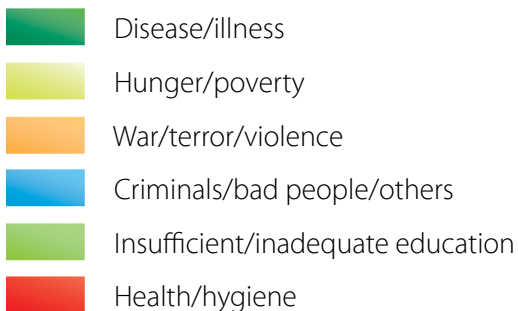
Results by Region



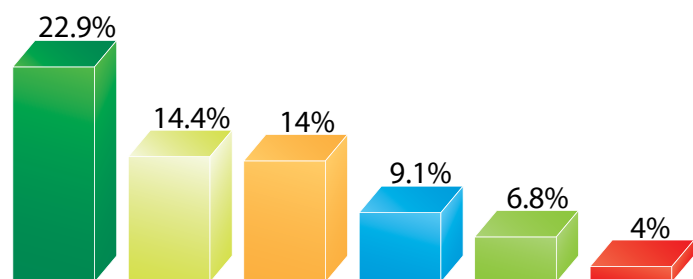


## Survey Results

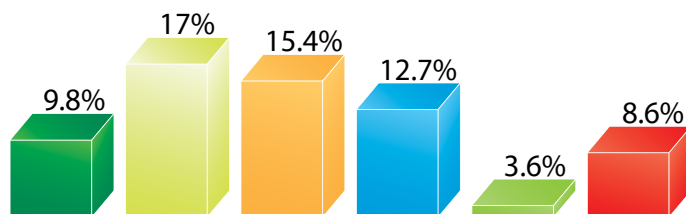
When you think about staying safe and healthy every day, what is the one thing you worry about most?



**“Getting sick and that my parents have not enough money to get me treated.”**  
(Age 10, Vietnam)

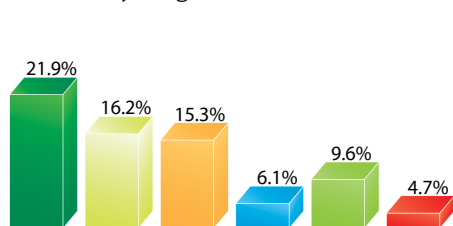


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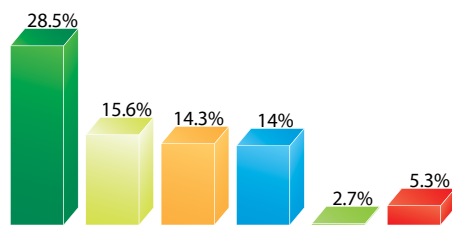


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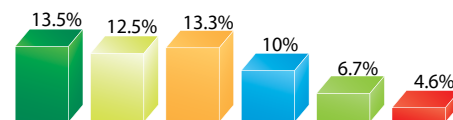
### Results by Region



Africa



Americas



Asia

"Human actions of chopping down trees and throwing rubbish everywhere because it will cause storms, flood, polluted environment and we have to drink dirty water." (Age 10, Vietnam)



"Not being able to go to school." (Age 10, Vietnam)



"I worry about getting sick because there are not good hospitals." (Age 10, Bolivia)

"To have a mom and a dad who take good care of me." (Age 12, Brazil)



"One thing I mostly worry about is HIV/AIDS." (Age 11, Ethiopia)

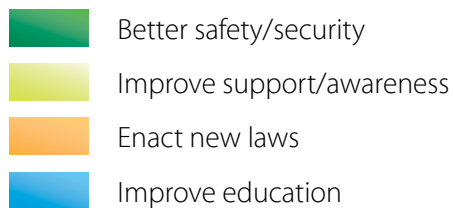


"I am worried because our country is not a safe country because there are many criminals. It is not safe to walk out on the streets, they are everywhere." (Age 12, Bolivia)

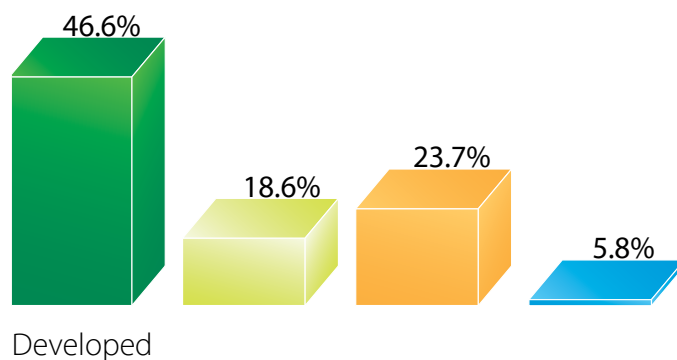
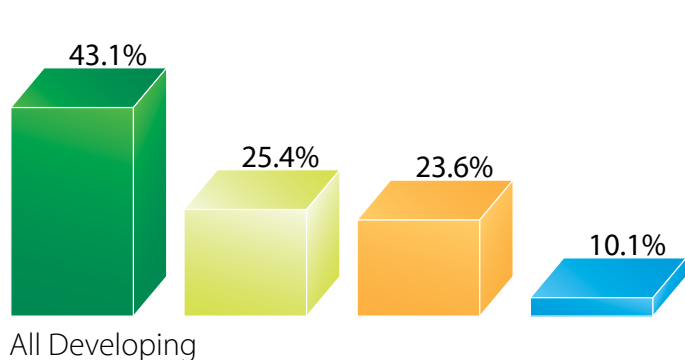


## Survey Results

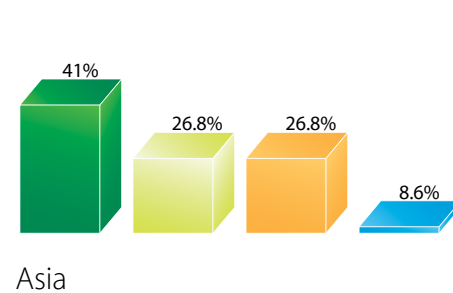
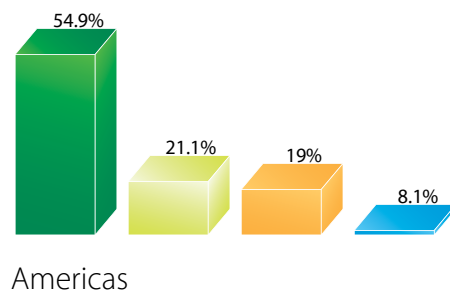
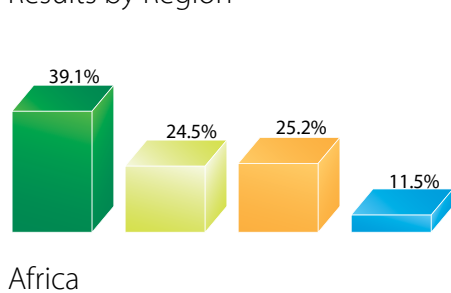
If you were the president [leader] of your country, what is the one thing you would do to protect children?



**"If I were a president of my country, I would punish the people who abused the children." (Age 11, Ethiopia)**



### Results by Region





**"I would hire more police officers to protect children." (Age 12, Nicaragua)**



**"I would educate children so that they can prevent violence." (Age 10, Nicaragua)**

**"I would create and uphold a law against parents who hurt their children." (Age 10, Nicaragua)**

**"I will enforce laws that would protect children from all forms of violence." (Age 11, Sierra Leone)**

**"If I were president of my country, I would arrest those people who abused the children." (Age 12, Ethiopia)**



**"I'd take care of the grandmas because they are important in our lives." (Age 12, Brazil)**

**"I would have more police men in every neighborhood in order to avoid robberies and kidnappings." (Age 10, Bolivia)**

**"I'd create an institution for people who suffered violence so they could talk to the psychologist." (Age 11, Brazil)**





## Results in Africa

The following table lists the most popular answer for each of the six questions for each of the participating countries in Africa.

- 1 What would you do as president [leader] to improve children's lives?
- 2 If you could grow up to be anything you wanted, what would you be?
- 3 If you could spend the day doing anything you wanted, what would you do?
- 4 Where do you feel safest?

- 5 When you think about staying safe and healthy every day, what is the one thing you worry about most?
- 6 If you were the president [leader] of your country, what is the one thing you would do to protect children?

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Angola	Improve education 67.2%	Teacher 36.2%	Play/visit with friends 25.9%
Benin	Improve education 42.7%	Teacher 33.0%	Study/homework 17.5%
Burkina Faso	Improve education 36.3%	Teacher 46.9%	Study/homework 19.5%
Cape Verde	Improve education 37.7%	Doctor 17.9%	Play/visit with friends 18.9%
Ethiopia	Improve education 50.0%	Doctor 52.0%	Play/visit with friends 20.0%
Ghana	Improve education 58.0%	Doctor 29.0%	Housework 20.0%
Guinea	Improve education 62.0%	Doctor 27.0%	Play soccer/football 29.0%
Kenya	Improve education 44.6%	Teacher 21.8%	Read 20.8%
Liberia	Improve education 67.7%	President/Prime Minister/King 23.2%	Read 31.3%
Mali	Improve education 62.7%	Doctor 36.3%	Housework 19.6%
Mozambique	Improve education 69.0%	Teacher 39.7%	Housework 51.7%
Senegal	Improve education 46.7%	Teacher 19.0%	Play/visit with friends 24.8%
Sierra Leone	Improve education 48.0%	Professional 20.0%	Read 19.0%
The Gambia	Improve education 64.0%	Teacher 28.0%	Read 23.0%
Togo	Improve education 55.1%	Doctor 17.3%	Play soccer/football 16.3%
Uganda	Improve education 42.7%	Doctor 31.1%	Read 21.4%
Zambia	Improve education 53.0%	Teacher 36.0%	Housework & Play sports 20%
	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6
Angola	At home 55.2%	Disease/accident/death 48.3%	Better safety/security 39.7%
Benin	At home 68.0%	Hunger/poverty 34.0%	Better safety/security 33.0%
Burkina Faso	With parents/family 42.5%	Insufficient education 26.5%	Support/awareness 24.8%
Cape Verde	At home 60.4%	Disease/accident/death 23.6%	Better safety/security 41.5%
Ethiopia	At home 30.0%	Disease/accident/death 34.0%	Better safety/security 62.0%
Ghana	In village/town 43.0%	Disease/accident/death 42.0%	Better safety/security 33.0%
Guinea	With parents/family 35.0%	Disease/accident/death 32.0%	Better safety/security 34.0%
Kenya	At home 56.4%	Disease/accident/death 45.5%	Better safety/security 46.5%
Liberia	At home 53.5%	Disease/accident/death 34.3%	Better safety/security 35.4%
Mali	With parents/family 39.2%	Disease/accident/death 38.2%	Better safety/security 22.5%
Mozambique	At home 82.8%	Disease/accident/death 74.1%	Better safety/security 60.3%
Senegal	At home 56.2%	Disease/accident/death 67.6%	Better safety/security 40.0%
Sierra Leone	With parents/family 75.0%	Disease/accident/death 56.0%	Better safety/security 55.0%
The Gambia	At home 58.0%	Disease/accident/death 30.0%	Improve education 31.0%
Togo	With parents/family 82.7%	Health/hygiene 38.8%	Better safety/security 32.7%
Uganda	At home 55.3%	Disease/accident/death 44.7%	Better safety/security 41.7%
Zambia	In village/town 36.0%	Disease/accident/death 43.0%	Better safety/security 74.0%

## Results in the Americas

The following table lists the most popular answer for each of the six questions for each of the participating countries in the Americas.

- 1 What would you do as president [leader] to improve children's lives?
- 2 If you could grow up to be anything you wanted, what would you be?
- 3 If you could spend the day doing anything you wanted, what would you do?
- 4 Where do you feel safest?
- 5 When you think about staying safe and healthy every day, what is the one thing you worry about most?
- 6 If you were the president [leader] of your country, what is the one thing you would do to protect children?

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Bolivia	Improve education 35.8%	Doctor 23.4%	Study/homework 26.3%
Brazil	Improve education 35.9%	Doctor 22.8%	Play/visit with friends 28.3%
Dominica & St Vincent	Improve education 39.2%	Doctor 17.6%	Read 23.5%
Ecuador	Improve education 33.0%	Doctor 28.2%	Play/visit with friends 30.1%
Guatemala	Improve education 42.0%	Teacher 40.0%	Play/visit with friends 20.0%
Honduras	Improve education 49.0%	Teacher 32.0%	Play/visit with friends 22.0%
Mexico	Improve education 46.1%	Teacher 29.4%	Play/visit with friends 34.4%
Nicaragua	Improve education 37.0%	Doctor 33.0%	Play/visit with friends 34.0%
Paraguay	Provide shelter 27.0%	Professional athlete 27.0%	Play/visit with friends 37.0%

	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6
Bolivia	At home 78.1%	Disease/accident/death 60.6%	Better safety/security 51.8%
Brazil	At home 81.4%	Miscellaneous 37.9%	Better safety/security 51.0%
Dominica & St. Vincent	At home 73.5%	Hunger/poverty 30.4%	Better safety/security 43.1%
Ecuador	At home 94.2%	Disease/accident/death 55.3%	Better safety/security 42.7%
Guatemala	At home 75.0%	Hunger/poverty 30.0%	Better safety/security 58.0%
Honduras	At home 79.0%	Disease/accident/death 71.0%	Better safety/security 73.0%
Mexico	At home 84.3%	Disease/accident/death 80.4%	Better safety/security 62.7%
Nicaragua	At home 93.0%	Disease/accident/death 82.0%	Better safety/security 60.0%
Paraguay	At home 77.0%	Disease/accident/death 65.0%	Better safety/security 71.0%

## Results in Asia

The following table lists the most popular answer for each of the six questions for each of the participating countries in Asia.

- 1 What would you do as president [leader] to improve children's lives?
- 2 If you could grow up to be anything you wanted, what would you be?
- 3 If you could spend the day doing anything you wanted, what would you do?
- 4 Where do you feel safest?
- 5 When you think about staying safe and healthy every day, what is the one thing you worry about most?
- 6 If you were the president [leader] of your country, what is the one thing you would do to protect children?

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Afghanistan	Improve education 55.3%	Teacher 17.5%	Study/homework 22.3%
India	Improve education 64.0%	Teacher 26.0%	Play/visit with friends 45.0%
Indonesia	Improve education 69.0%	Teacher/Doctor 26.0%	Study/homework 44.0%
Laos	Improve education 55.9%	Car/truck/bicycle owner 16.7%	Farm work/visit farm 30.4%
Philippines	Improve education 53.5%	Teacher 31.7%	Housework 31.7%
Sri Lanka	Improve education 84.0%	Teacher 42.5%	Play/visit with friends 60.4%
Mongolia	Support/protect them 27.7%	Arts 17.9%	Play/visit with friends 23.2%
Thailand	Improve education 58.7%	Teacher 29.8%	Housework 54.8%
Timor-Leste	Improve education 75.0%	Doctor 25.0%	Study/homework 32.0%
Vietnam	Improve education 53.0%	Teacher 27.0%	Study/homework 26.0%

	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6
Afghanistan	At home 46.6%	Hunger/poverty 28.2%	Better safety/security 24.3%
India	At home 50.0%	Hunger/poverty 31.0%	Improve education 27.0%
Indonesia	At home 92.0%	Natural occurrences 49.0%	Better safety/security 63.0%
Laos	At home 41.2%	Disease/accident/death 64.7%	Support/awareness 25.5%
Philippines	At home 66.3%	Disease/accident/death 44.6%	Better safety/security 34.7%
Sri Lanka	At home 78.3%	Nothing 68.9%	Better safety/security 80.2%
Mongolia	At home 50.0%	Environment 56.3%	Better safety/security 36.6%
Thailand	At home 94.2%	Disease/accident/death 51.0%	Enact new laws 27.9%
Timor-Leste	At home 64.0%	Disease/accident/death 22.0%	Better safety/security 32.0%
Vietnam	At home 46.0%	Disease/accident/death 28.0%	Support/awareness 30.0%

## Results in Developed Countries

The following table lists the most popular answer for each of the six questions for each of the participating developed countries.

- 1 What would you do as president [leader] to improve children's lives?
- 2 If you could grow up to be anything you wanted, what would you be?
- 3 If you could spend the day doing anything you wanted, what would you do?
- 4 Where do you feel safest?
- 5 When you think about staying safe and healthy every day, what is the one thing you worry about most?
- 6 If you were the president [leader] of your country, what is the one thing you would do to protect children?

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Australia	Improve education 30.7%	Professional athlete 23.4%	Play/visit with friends 24.1%
Canada	Miscellaneous 27.5%	Arts 25.0%	Games/computer 20.0%
Denmark	Miscellaneous 25.7%	Arts 22.9%	Play/visit with friends 19.1%
Ireland	Improve education 25.8%	Arts 29.7%	Play/visit with friends 17.5%
Korea	Improve education 35.9%	Arts 21.4%	Play/visit with friends 24.2%
New Zealand	Make more food available 24.3%	Professional athlete 23.4%	Play/visit with friends 18.9%
Sweden	Improve education 27.5%	Professional athlete 21.6%	Travel 23.5%
US	Improve education 25.5%	Professional athlete 16.6%	Play/visit with friends 21.7%

	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6
Australia	At home 68.6%	Disease/accident/death 32.1%	Better safety/security 54.0%
Canada	At home 73.8%	Disease/accident/death 26.3%	Better safety/security 45.0%
Denmark	At home 64.8%	Disease/accident/death 30.5%	Better safety/security 43.8%
Ireland	At home 67.1%	Disease/accident/death 24.5%	Better safety/security 40.0%
Korea	At home 80.6%	Disease & Inadequate education 27.2%	Better safety/security 75.7%
New Zealand	At home 55.0%	Disease/accident/death 33.3%	Better safety/security 36.0%
Sweden	At home 63.7%	Nothing 32.4%	Better safety/security 25.5%
US	At home 59.4%	Criminals/bad people/others 25.5%	Better safety/security 54.7%



## Survey Methodology

The *Small Voices/Big Dreams Survey* was undertaken by the ChildFund Alliance from July through September 2011. Identical six-question surveys were administered on a one-on-one basis by ChildFund staff to approximately 100 children ages 10 to 12 in 36 developing nations in Africa, Asia and the Americas as well as 8 developed nations who participate in ChildFund programs. A total of 4,592 children were surveyed, which includes 3,613 children in developing countries and 979 children in developed nations. (All six questions were open-ended, meaning the children were not given a list of answers from which to choose.) ChildFund translated and submitted the results to Ipsos Observer, a global research firm, which tabulated and compiled the results. The margins of error, at 95 percent confidence, are: total surveys (+/- 1.4%), developing countries (+/- 1.6%), and developed countries (+/- 3.1%).

## About ChildFund Alliance

The ChildFund Alliance is a network of 12 child development organizations whose work encompasses more than 15 million children and their families in 58 countries. With a focus on child-centered development programs that are undertaken in partnership with more than 1,400 local communities, the Alliance puts more than \$503 million (USD) to work each year to help deprived, excluded and vulnerable children. The programs seek to bring positive outcomes for children in every stage of their lives, from infancy to adulthood. ChildFund also responds to humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters with precise focus on the special needs of children in the midst of crisis.

## About Ipsos Observer

Founded in Paris, France, in 1975, Ipsos is the only independent, publicly-listed research company that is controlled and managed by research professionals. Ipsos is a leading global research company focusing on six core specializations: Advertising, Marketing, Media, Opinion and Customer Relationship Management research, and Data Collection and delivery. With offices in 64 countries, Ipsos conducts research in more than 100 countries. Working both on a global scale and in local markets, our expert teams give our clients the benefit of high value-added business solutions including qualitative, forecasting, modeling, market knowledge and consumer insights.



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