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ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE IN PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND ISSUES OF ITS ADAPTATION TO THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

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Abstract. The article analyses international experience in preventing violence against children: the WHO INSPIRE technical package, Sweden's legal ban on corporal punishment, the Nordic Barnahus model, Finland's KiVa anti-bullying programme and the Parenting for Lifelong Health programme for parents and caregivers. These approaches are compared with the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the Protection of Children from All Forms of Violence" of 14 November 2024, and the main directions for adapting them to the national context are substantiated. The paper concludes that core components of evidence-based programmes should be preserved, implementation quality monitored, results evaluated at the pilot stage, and local institutions used as delivery channels.

Keywords: violence against children; prevention; INSPIRE; Barnahus; bullying; parenting programmes; corporal punishment; child protection system; social work; Uzbekistan.

BOLALARGA NISBATAN ZO'RAVONLIKNI OLDINI OLISH BO'YICHA ILG'OR XORIJIY TAJRIBA VA UNI MILLIY SHAROITGA MOSLASHTIRISH MASALALARI

Annotatsiya. Maqolada bolalarga nisbatan zo'ravonlikning oldini olish bo'yicha xalqaro tajriba tahlil qilinadi: Jahon sog'liqni saqlash tashkilotining INSPIRE texnik paketi, Shvetsiyaning jismoniy jazoni qonun bilan taqiqlash islohoti, Shimoliy Yevropaning «Barnahus» modeli, Finlyandiyaning KiVa buling (bullying)ga qarshi dasturi hamda «Parenting for Lifelong Health» ota-onalarni qo'llab-quvvatlash dasturi. Xorijiy yondashuvlar O'zbekistonning 2024-yil 14-noyabrdagi «Bolalarni zo'ravonlikning barcha shakllaridan himoya qilish to'g'risida»gi Qonuni bilan solishtiriladi va ularni milliy sharoitga moslashtirishning asosiy yo'nalishlari asoslab beriladi. Xulosada dalillarga asoslangan dasturlarning asosiy tarkibiy qismlarini saqlash, joriy etish sifatini nazorat qilish, sinov (pilot) bosqichida baholash va mahalliy institutlardan foydalanish zarurligi ko'rsatilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: bolalarga nisbatan zo'ravonlik; profilaktika; INSPIRE; Barnahus; buling; ota-onalik dasturlari; jismoniy jazo; bolalarni himoya qilish tizimi; ijtimoiy ish; O'zbekiston.

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ПЕРЕДОВОЙ ЗАРУБЕЖНЫЙ ОПЫТ ПРЕДУПРЕЖДЕНИЯ НАСИЛИЯ В ОТНОШЕНИИ ДЕТЕЙ И ВОПРОСЫ ЕГО АДАПТАЦИИ К НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫМ УСЛОВИЯМ

Аннотация. В статье анализируется международный опыт предупреждения насилия в отношении детей: технический пакет ВОЗ INSPIRE, реформа Швеции по законодательному запрету телесных наказаний, северная модель «Барнахус» (Barnahus), финская программа противодействия буллингу KiVa и программа поддержки родителей «Parenting for Lifelong Health». Зарубежные подходы сопоставляются с Законом Республики Узбекистан от 14 ноября 2024 года «О защите детей от всех форм насилия», обосновываются основные направления их адаптации к национальным условиям. Сделан вывод о необходимости сохранять ключевые компоненты программ с доказанной эффективностью, контролировать качество внедрения, оценивать результаты на этапе пилотирования и опираться на местные институты.

Ключевые слова: насилие в отношении детей; профилактика; INSPIRE; Барнахус; буллинг; программы для родителей; телесные наказания; система защиты детей; социальная работа; Узбекистан.

INTRODUCTION. Violence against children is a issue of global significance in terms of public health, human rights, and social stability. According to UNICEF and partner organizations, approximately one in two children aged 2–17 worldwide experiences some form of violence each year [3]. This issue is also highly relevant for Uzbekistan: based on data from a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey conducted by UNICEF, 62 percent of children aged 1–14 have experienced violent disciplinary methods (physical punishment, psychological aggression); in the first nine months of 2023, 1,240 cases of violence against minors were recorded, 417 of which were sexual violence.

1. INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child obliges States Parties to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence. General Comment No. 13 (2011) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child establishes as a principle that no form of violence can be justified and that every form of violence is preventable; furthermore, the prevention of all forms of violence through primary prevention, including public health, education, and social services, is highlighted as a primary priority [1]. The Comment also emphasizes that the child's right to be heard and their participation must be central elements of protection strategies [1].

At the practical level, the most widely used framework globally is the INSPIRE technical package, developed in 2016 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners (including the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF, UNODC, USAID, the World Bank, PEPFAR, Together for Girls, PAHO, and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children) [2]. It comprises seven strategies based on the best available evidence: (I) implementation and enforcement of laws; (N) norms and values; (S) safe environments; (P) parent and caregiver support; (I) income and economic strengthening; (R) response and support services; (E) education and life skills [2]. In 2020, WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, and partners published a global status report on INSPIRE based on a survey of

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over 1,000 decision-makers across 155 countries; according to the report, while many countries are taking specific measures, officials themselves evaluate these efforts as insufficient to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals [3]. Thus, in examining international experience, the focus is not merely on standalone programs, but on the integrated system in which they operate.

The term INSPIRE, encountered in the field of child violence prevention, refers to the INSPIRE Framework developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and partner organizations. INSPIRE is a set of evidence-based strategies for preventing and addressing violence against children, introduced in 2016 by WHO and international partners.

The INSPIRE model is vital for social work professionals because it serves to:

- Identify children subjected to violence.
- Protect the rights of children.
- Conduct social work with families.
- Provide psychological and social support.
- Organize interagency cooperation.
- Prevent the recurrence of violence.

2. ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE

2.1. Legislative and Social Norm Changes: The Swedish Experience

In 1979, Sweden became the first country to explicitly prohibit all physical punishment of children by caregivers under law. According to research by J. Durrant, the objectives of the policy were to shift public attitudes, enhance early identification of children at risk, and ensure early and supportive intervention for families; analysis of official statistics indicated a decline in support for corporal punishment, improved identification of at-risk children, unchanged prosecution rates, and an increasingly supportive and preventive character of social service interventions [4]. Subsequent research by J. Durrant and S. Janson also evaluated that child abuse in Sweden decreased over several decades, with legal reform and public awareness playing key roles [5].

However, these findings were not universally accepted: R. Larzelere criticized Durrant's conclusions, arguing that shifts in attitudes toward corporal punishment in Sweden had begun prior to the law; the Swedish government also attributes these changes not solely to the ban, but to a combination of factors, including a well-developed welfare system, maternal and child health services, and universal preschool education [6]. A vital lesson emerges from this: the ban alone is not sufficient; rather, it is the harmony between legislative prohibition, public awareness campaigns, and family support services that yields sustainable results.

2.2. Response System for Child Victims: The «Barnahus» Model

«Barnahus» (Icelandic for «children's house») is a child-friendly, multidisciplinary, and interagency model for children who have experienced or witnessed violence. Inspired by the Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) model in the United States, it was established in Iceland in 1998 [10], and subsequently adopted in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark [7]. The essence of the model is that the child does not travel between various agencies; instead, professionals come to the child:

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forensic/investigative interviewing, medical examination, therapy, and family counseling services are integrated under one roof [10]. The core rationale behind this approach is to protect the child from repeated interviews—multiple and unstructured interrogations cause harm to both the child and the investigation by potentially distorting the child's statement [10]. Prior to the implementation of Barnahus in Norway, children were called to police stations or courtrooms for such interviews, with virtually no specialized measures in place to reduce secondary traumatization [8]. Evaluative research in Sweden indicates that premises must be child-friendly, yet structured so as not to overly encourage play or distraction [8].

The quality of the model also depends heavily on the interviewing technique: scholars analyzing the Barnahus experience emphasize that structured, evidence-based interview protocols, such as the NICHD protocol, are essential for improving services for children [9]. Furthermore, Nordic experience highlights operational challenges—such as geographical distances, inter-agency information sharing, and determining whether the center's focal point should be the criminal case or the child's overall well-being [7].

2.3. School Anti-Bullying Interventions: Finland's KiVa Programme

KiVa is a school-wide program developed under the commission of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. It conceptualizes bullying as a group process and focuses on changing the role of bystanders (witnesses); the program encompasses universal actions (for all classes) and indicated actions (specifically for identified cases) [12]. A large-scale randomized controlled trial in Finland involving 8,237 students from Grades 4–6 across 78 schools demonstrated that the program was effective in reducing bullying and victimization [11]; the odds ratio (OR) for victimization was approximately 0.68 [12]. However, a pragmatic cluster randomized controlled trial conducted in Wales, UK (22 primary schools, 3,214 students) did not observe a statistically significant effect (adjusted OR 0.76; 95% CI 0.55–1.06); authors noted that lesson durations were shorter than recommended and that the implementation of whole-school elements was inconsistent [12]. This demonstrates that transferring an effective program to another country does not automatically guarantee success; implementation fidelity is a critical determining factor.

2.4. Parenting Support: «Parenting for Lifelong Health» Programmes

«Parenting for Lifelong Health» (PLH) is an initiative aimed at creating a suite of non-commercialized parenting programs for low- and middle-income countries that do not require specialized staff, costly equipment, or high literacy levels [13]. In South Africa, the adolescent program «Sinovuyo Teen» was evaluated across 552 families in 40 communities: delivered in 14 sessions by trained community facilitators, research evaluated it as promising for reducing violence, improving parenting practices, and enhancing family functioning [13]. A 12-session PLH program for parents of children aged 2–9 was tested with 296 caregivers and showed promising results in increasing positive parenting and reducing harsh (violent) discipline [14]. A key limitation is that this evidence stems primarily from the South African context; hence, these programs require rigorous re-testing when adapted to different cultural settings [13, 14].

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3. CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM AGAINST VIOLENCE IN UZBEKISTAN

The landmark document in this domain in Uzbekistan is the Law «On the Protection of Children from All Forms of Violence», signed on November 14, 2024, and entering into force on May 15, 2025 [15]. The Law was passed by the Legislative Chamber on May 31, 2024, and approved by the Senate on August 15, 2024 [15]; it consists of five chapters and 51 articles. The Law expanded the recognized scope of violence from three forms (physical, sexual, psychological) to six, incorporating neglect, exploitation, and harassment (bullying). The National Agency for Social Protection was designated as the authorized state body; the Law mandates a 24/7 national helpline, protective orders for child victims, and the provision of free legal and other assistance [15]. In educational institutions, corporal punishment and other harsh or humiliating treatment are explicitly prohibited as disciplinary measures. To implement the Law, departmental and interagency standards alongside case management protocols are planned for introduction, together with psychocorrective program regulations for perpetrators. Through related legislative amendments, liability for violence against children has been strengthened, and state-funded legal representation is guaranteed for minor victims of sexual violence. Additionally, the Strategy for Protecting Children from Violence for 2026–2030 was approved by Presidential Decree . The draft law was submitted for public discussion jointly by the National Agency for Social Protection, the Ministry of Justice, and UNICEF; UNICEF welcomed the adoption of the Law by the Senate as a crucial step for the country's children.

It is also essential to highlight the specific contextual challenges. As noted by a representative of the National Agency for Social Protection, although schools and families are often aware of incidents of violence, indifference frequently prevails, and cases are not reported to guardianship or law enforcement agencies. This underscores the critical importance of the «norms and values» strategy within INSPIRE, as well as robust mandatory reporting mechanisms.

4. ISSUES OF ADAPTING INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE TO THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

The table below synthesizes the international practices analyzed above, potential implementation challenges in Uzbekistan, and proposed adaptation directions. The listed challenges and recommendations represent the analytical conclusions of the authors and warrant empirical evaluation.

International Practice	Potential Challenges	Adaptation Directions
Prohibiting Corporal Punishment & Raising Awareness (Sweden) [4, 6]	Legal prohibition exists, but daily child-rearing practices and public attitudes change slowly; indifference to reporting	Combine prohibition with positive parenting methods, public awareness campaigns, and school–family collaboration; evaluate impact through periodic surveys.
Multi-disciplinary Single-Location Support — Barnahus [7, 10]	Information sharing and responsibility division across agencies (social protection,	Establish pilot centers in 1–2 regions; operate based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and

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International Practice	Potential Challenges	Adaptation Directions
	interior affairs, healthcare, judiciary); specialist shortages; remote regional distances [7].	case management; train specialists in structured interview protocols (e.g., NICHD) [9]; minimize repeat interviews.
School Bullying Prevention — KiVa [11, 12]	Program effectiveness depends on cultural setting and implementation fidelity: no statistically significant effect observed in Wales [12].	Translate and culturally adapt while preserving core elements (teacher training, classroom lessons, altering bystander roles); evaluate in pilot schools with control groups; monitor implementation fidelity.
Parent Support Programmes — PLH [13, 14]	Evidence originates from other regions; necessary to recruit participants and train community facilitators.	Deliver through existing local networks such as Mahalla and family polyclinics (family doctor points); adapt to local language; conduct small-scale randomized or quasi-experimental trials.
Monitoring & Data Systems (INSPIRE, 2020 Report) [2, 3]	Child violence data is fragmented across various ministries/agencies; data may lack comparability.	Establish a unified indicators framework, baseline and target values; harmonize survey data with administrative records [3].

The analysis presented in the table yields the following core principles:

- Adaptation is not simple copy-pasting: as demonstrated by the KiVa case, an effective program may fail in a new environment; core active components must be retained while language, examples, and delivery channels are contextualized [12].
- Every new program must first undergo pilot testing and rigorous evaluation; INSPIRE similarly pairs strategy deployment with systematic monitoring and evaluation [2, 3].
- Legal prohibition achieves its goals only when paired with preventive support services (parenting programs, counseling, helplines) [4, 6].
- Children's voices and participation must be an integral component of the evaluation process [1].
- Professional capacity building (social workers, teachers, investigators, medical staff) and interagency mechanisms are fundamental prerequisites for enforcing the law [9].

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CONCLUSION

International experience demonstrates that preventing violence against children cannot be accomplished through isolated measures, but rather through an integrated alignment of legislation, social norms, school- and family-based preventive programs, and responsive protection systems for child victims. The Swedish experience illustrates the unity of law and public education, the «Barnahus» model exemplifies child-centered interagency response, KiVa demonstrates transformation of the school environment, and PLH offers an accessible, scalable model for parent support. Uzbekistan's 2024 legislation creates a solid legal foundation for many elements of the INSPIRE framework; the primary task now is to reinforce it with practical services, professional capacity building, interagency coordination, and evidence-based evaluation. In introducing international programs, pilot testing, monitoring implementation quality, and utilizing local delivery channels are strongly recommended.

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