

UNICEF envoy David Beckham sets sights on new goal: ending bullying in Indonesia's schools

To help the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) tackle bullying in Indonesia – where one in three children have been physically attacked in school – David Beckham has visited the country to meet youth who have faced peer violence.

"I spent time with an amazing young girl, Sripun, who was voted by her peers to take part in an anti-bullying programme to help [stop violence in schools](#)," said Mr. Beckham who is a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, after his trip to see how the [7: The David Beckham UNICEF Fund](#) is supporting Indonesian schools.

The 15-year-old told Mr. Beckham how she has become a leader in her school to prevent bullying, and shared her story on the football legend's Instagram.

"She's a change-maker and is now helping to create positive learning environments for other students to feel safe," he said. "This has increased her confidence and she's hopeful that other students won't have to go through the same bullying experience she did."

The '7 Fund' is supporting UNICEF programmes in Indonesia, El Salvador, Nepal and Uganda to help children break down barriers and unlock their incredible potential. It is tackling bullying, violence, child marriage and missed education – making sure children, especially girls, get the opportunity to realize their true potential.

Peer violence and bullying are among the top challenges facing young people in Indonesia, where more than one-in-five children aged 13-15 have been bullied – some 18 million in all.

Moreover, another one-in-three have been physically attacked in school. This violence increases the risk of poor mental health among children and leads to early school drop-out.



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UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador David Beckham plays soccer with students and teachers at the SMPN 17 school in Semarang, Indonesia.

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The '7 Fund' is supporting programmes that empower youth to speak out when they experience or witness violence.

Mr. Beckham saw first-hand how schools in Indonesia are taking a student-focused approach by involving not only those who have been bullied, but children who have previously bullied others.

Under this approach, a peer nominated group is trained on issues of bullying and taught how to create positive environments. At the same time, teachers learn how to use positive discipline so classrooms remain violence-free.

Mr. Beckham learned that 7,000 children have already benefited from bullying prevention programmes in Indonesia, with early pilot programmes indicating nearly a 30 per cent reduction in bullying.

"I feel very proud to see how my 7 Fund is helping UNICEF tackle bullying and

violence in schools in Indonesia, and is ultimately keeping children, especially girls, safe in their schools so they can continue their education and hope for a better future," concluded the Goodwill Ambassador.