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# ARE SCHOOLS SAFE HAVENS FOR CHILDREN?

## Examining School-related Gender-based Violence



**SEPTEMBER 2008**

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In Memory of  
Dr. Jacqueline (Jackie) Kirk  
1968-2008

For her courageous and tireless work in making  
schools safer and more gender-equitable  
learning environments for all children



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Finally, while the report includes a broad look at the literature on school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), new information on what is being done to investigate and address SRGBV is being released frequently. Please send any updates or new information to Julie Hanson Swanson at [juswanson@usaid.gov](mailto:juswanson@usaid.gov).

## ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CEDPA	Centre for Development and Population Activities
CERT	Centre for Educational Research and Training
CRIN	Child Rights Information Network
DevTech	DevTech Systems, Inc.
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
EDC	Education Development Center, Inc.
EGAT/WID	Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade, Office of Women in Development
EI	Education International
EMIDA	Education pour le Mieux-être de l'Individu et le Développement de l'Afrique
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IDHRB	Institutional Development of Human Rights in Bangladesh
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PRB	Population Reference Bureau
PSI	Population Services International
PTA	Parent teacher association
Safe Schools	Safe Schools Program
SRGBV	School-related gender-based violence
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All children deserve a school environment that is safe and nurturing – one that will allow them to grow, thrive, and maximize their full potential. Yet many students in the developing world face a different daily reality. The physical, psychological, and sexual violence they experience in and around school compromises their ability to fully realize the benefits of education. It impacts whether students enroll in and attend school and whether they are engaged, motivated, and able to concentrate and learn while there. Gender violence can occur in classrooms, dormitories, boarding houses, administrative buildings, teachers’ residences, other parts of school grounds, and on the way to and from school. It can have short- and long-term impacts on students’ health and well-being, including reproductive health problems, broken bones, cognitive impairment, substance abuse, depression, and suicidal behavior, among others.

Despite these consequences, there is limited understanding of the depth and breadth of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) in the developing world. This report reviews the literature on SRGBV in order to improve understanding about its causes, prevalence, and consequences. It examines how gender norms, poverty, and a culture of violence contribute to SRGBV. The report explores violence that is perpetrated by both male and female students and teachers. While much of the literature focuses on sexual violence, this report also highlights the prevalence and impact of physical and psychological abuse. It examines barriers to preventing and responding to SRGBV, including silence around the issue, inadequate laws and codes of conduct, enforcement problems with existing laws, shortages of teachers and guidance counselors, and flaws in the design and implementation of existing interventions. The report also presents examples of what is being done to address SRGBV, including legal and policy changes, training for teachers and school personnel, counseling and support systems for students, community engagement, and programming that addresses life skills and gender norms with boys and girls. The final section of the report presents recommendations for research and action at the national, institutional, local, and individual levels. Annexes highlight findings from select research studies reviewed for this report and practical tools for addressing SRGBV.

Although there is no global data on the prevalence of school-related gender-based violence, the literature reviewed for this report indicates that physical, sexual, and psychological abuse in and around schools is a worldwide problem. Addressing SRGBV is a critical element in ensuring that all children are able to attend school in an environment that allows them to flourish.



## INTRODUCTION

Gender violence<sup>1</sup> in and around schools is a worldwide problem with serious implications for the educational attainment, health, and well-being of girls and boys. It impacts student attendance and retention and students' ability to learn and achieve while in school. Physical, psychological, and sexual violence has short- and long-term consequences for students' health, ranging from bruises and broken bones to low self-esteem, emotional impairment, substance abuse, and reproductive health problems. The silence and stigma surrounding gender-based violence and abuse in developing countries can be devastating for children, leaving them feeling isolated and powerless to change their situation. For too many boys and girls in the developing world schools are not places of learning, nurturing, and support, but places of fear, self-doubt, and shame. Changing this reality requires an increased focus on the role gender violence plays in fostering inequitable classroom practices and unsafe learning environments for students. An increased attention to school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) can make a substantial contribution to ensuring that all boys and girls are able to fully realize the benefits of an education.



Children attend school in Nigeria.  
© 2000 Liz Gilbert/David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Courtesy of Photoshare

### THE DEFINITION OF SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

*School-related gender-based violence results in sexual, physical, or psychological harm to girls and boys. It includes any form of violence or abuse that is based on gendered stereotypes or that targets students on the basis of their sex. The underlying intent of gender-based violence is to reinforce gender roles and perpetuate gender inequalities. It includes, but is not limited to: rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment, bullying, and verbal harassment. Unequal power relations between adults and children and males and females contribute to gender violence. Violence can take place in the school, on school grounds, going to and from school, or in school dormitories and may be perpetrated by teachers, students, or community members. Both girls and boys can be victims as well as perpetrators (DevTech forthcoming).*

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

Despite the critical importance of addressing SRGBV, there is limited understanding of both the depth and breadth of such violence, and the causes and consequences for children and society. This report reviews the literature on school-related gender-based violence in developing countries in an effort to improve understanding of its causes, prevalence, and consequences. It is a synthesis and analysis of literature on SRGBV and an introduction to interventions that are addressing the problem. The report discusses the context in which SRGBV takes place and examines barriers to prevention and response. It includes recommendations for action at the national, institutional, community, and individual levels.

<sup>1</sup> The terms “gender-based violence,” “school-related gender-based violence,” and “gender violence” are used interchangeably throughout the report.

Although much of the evidence focuses on the sexual nature of gender-based violence in schools, this report also draws attention to psychological and physical abuse. The under-reporting of the emotional and physical forms of school-related gender-based violence belie their pervasiveness, obscuring the extent to which such violence and abuse are considered a normal part of students' lives. This report hopes to bring greater clarity to this issue in all of its manifestations. As such, the literature review focused on violence occurring in primary and secondary schools, on the way to and from schools, in teachers' homes, and in school dormitories. It also included peer-to-peer and adult-to-student situations.

This report is a follow-up to a 2003 report commissioned by USAID's Office of Women in Development (EGAT/WID), which reviewed information on the prevalence and consequences of SRGBV and strategies that were being implemented to address the problem.<sup>2</sup> It builds on a draft developed in 2005 by the Wellesley Centers for Women under the leadership of Development & Training Services, Inc.

## THE CONTEXT: WHY DOES SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE HAPPEN?

School-related gender-based violence takes place in a context of gender inequality and specific cultural beliefs and attitudes about gender. Furthermore, poverty and a culture of violence also contribute to gender-based violence in schools. Appreciating these contextual factors is critical to achieving a fuller understanding of SRGBV and its consequences for students.

### GENDER NORMS

Around the world, girls and boys are influenced by gender norms that shape their behavior. From early on, they are conditioned to adopt certain behaviors, preferences, and attitudes considered appropriate for their sex. These traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity are often deeply entrenched. In many societies, males learn to be dominant and aggressive while females learn to be passive and submissive. Domineering and controlling behavior becomes part of the expected role for males in society. They learn that the exertion of control via harassing verbal abuse, emotional manipulation, physical abuse, and even violent sexual behavior is appropriate. These constructs contribute to gender violence, as children learn that violence is considered an acceptable form of expression, and a viable means of asserting control. Adolescents, in particular, are vulnerable to traditional gender role patterns as they struggle to make the transition from childhood to adulthood and to fit in both at school and in the larger society.

Within many cultural contexts, young men are expected to be strong, competitive, and goal oriented and are pressured to prove their manhood through sexual encounters and physical violence (Barker 2002). "Boys tend to engage in physical fighting and assault against each other as they seek to live up to stereotypes of males as powerful and strong" (UNICEF 2003a). In a review of reproductive health programs and research that focused on boys and men, Varga (2001) observed how males felt that masculinity was acquired through sexual conquests or with displays of physical violence. In some countries, manhood, sexual relations, and violence are intertwined. For example, in Jamaica, young men learned to control their female peers through violence and by withholding monetary support, which inevitably led to violence becoming a common part of sexual activity (DevTech 2005).

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<sup>2</sup> See Wellesley Centers for Women and Development & Training Services, Inc. 2003. *Unsafe Schools: A Literature Review of School-related Gender-based Violence in Developing Countries*. Washington, DC: USAID.

Equating masculinity with the sexual conquest of women is so strong in some cultures that boys who do not fulfill this norm for masculinity may fear punishment. For example, some boys in Ghana challenged each other to a 24-hour “rape contest.” One boy later confided in a local NGO staff member that he was ashamed of having participated, but he was even more afraid of the bullying that might have happened to him if he had not. Being labeled “unmasculine” was more of a threat in his eyes than being a rapist (DevTech 2004c). As this example demonstrates, boys may deflect violence onto others when faced with threats to their masculinity. A study in Malawi found that boys would beat girls who used abusive language towards them (CERT and DevTech 2008). Rigid norms about gender and sexuality may also result in homophobia and homophobic violence. Boys who do not live up to a stereotypical vision of manhood may be victims of violence themselves, suffering verbal or physical abuse for behavior other



A young male studies at a primary school in Pakistan.  
© 2006 Jacob Simkin, Courtesy of Photoshare

boys find unmanly. Girls who do not live up to societal norms about sexuality may also suffer physical, psychological, or sexual violence to punish or “cure” them for not being “real” women. Ultimately, these social pressures on boys and men legitimize violence as a normal part of relations between and among males and females (African Child Policy Forum 2006a).

While much of the literature focuses on how gender norms contribute to violence against females, results from a study in Malawi provide some insight into the gendered nature of abuse conducted by girls. Boys in the Malawi study commented that girls attempted to force boys into sexual relationships, often for some material gain, and that they stole from younger students and engaged in verbal abuse (CERT and DevTech 2008). This provides an indication that girls, who often have little power in many societies, may be using violence to exercise power and control where they can. This may be reflected in girls bullying or abusing weaker or younger girls or boys, or female teachers using violence to control male and female students in class.

Gender norms and rigid notions of masculinity and femininity also contribute to SRGBV by supporting stigma and silence around the issue. Males are supposed to be strong and accept violence, whereas females are often portrayed as deserving of violence. Discussing their victimization is taboo in many societies, thus allowing perpetrators to continue victimizing others.

## POVERTY

Poverty has been linked to the prevalence of gender-based violence in schools and the connection is manifested in a number of ways (Hallam 1994; Mirsky 2003). Low wages for teachers may lead them to feel entitled to labor or sexual favors from students – as a benefit to supplement their low wages. A study conducted in West Africa found that in the formal education system “sexual exploitation of girls for personal pleasure or larger benefits [was] seen as compensation” (Massart 2007).

Poverty may also mean that essential goods, school fees, or extra tutoring are out of reach for many students. Girls, in particular, may be vulnerable to engaging in exploitative sexual relationships with teachers in order to meet these educational needs. Even if students voluntarily enter into relationships where they exchange sex for goods or services, the power, age, and economic disparities between girls and older males means that these types of transactional relationships are a form of gender-based violence (Luke and Kurz 2002). Despite the apparent agency of their actions, girls may be vulnerable to exploitation in cross-generational relationships such as these due to their poverty and lack of choices (Hope 2007). Teachers are not the only individuals with whom girls may engage in exploitative relationships to receive an education. A report from Jamaica found that bus drivers offer free rides to school girls who provide them sexual favors (Amnesty International n.d.). The financial and material

benefits girls receive from such relationships may also serve to discourage parents from objecting to or stopping them. A study in Jamaica found that some parents knew about and encouraged sexual relationships between girls and taxi drivers (Chambers 2003). In Papua New Guinea, school teachers who had impregnated students paid parents not to report the incidents (Fox 1999).

A study in Malawi found a connection between poverty and other forms of violence at school. “Older boys wanting money and food” and “hunger” were listed as causes of SRGBV by both students and teachers (CERT and DevTech 2008). It was cited as both a reason that boys beat boys and a reason why they beat girls. Sixty-two percent of teachers in the Malawi study listed poverty/hunger as a factor contributing to SRGBV (CERT and DevTech 2008). Poverty, and hunger, can be compelling forces encouraging boys and girls to use violence to obtain what they want, or need, from those over whom they have more power.

## A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE

Violence is a daily reality for many students around the world. They are exposed to violence through political unrest, armed conflict, gang activity, and familial violence, all of which can have a powerful impact on violence in schools. “The levels and patterns of violence in schools often reflect the levels and patterns of violence in countries, communities, and families” (Pinheiro 2006b). For example, in societies where violence is common, gang violence is also more common in schools (Pinheiro 2006b). Several studies point out that boys are exposed to violence from an early age. One study in Brazil found that boys, age nine and younger, witnessed a much wider range of violent acts than girls (Junho Pena and Correia 2002). These patterns of violence contribute to SRGBV if violent behaviors become normalized and children learn to consider violence and abuse as acceptable means of expression. “If [school personnel] engage in abusive behavior and show disrespect for the rights, comforts, and safety of others, then children will follow their example” (Pinheiro 2006b). High levels of violence in society are part of a backdrop against which SRGBV takes place.

Being a victim of violence is a contributing factor to becoming a perpetrator of violence in the future. There is growing evidence that corporal punishment leads children to become bullies in school and abusers as adults (Mpundu 2004; Pinheiro 2006b). Witnessing or being a victim of violence teaches children about the use of power and models behavior that children may grow up to replicate. Naker’s 2005 study of schools from five districts in Uganda found that the most damaging aspect of physical violence perpetrated by teachers was its unpredictable nature. Abused children reported learning that adults abuse their authority, often without serious consequences (Naker 2005). “By being victims, perpetrators, and witnesses of violence, children learn that violence is an acceptable way for the strong and aggressive to get what they want from the comparatively weak, passive, or peaceful” (Pinheiro 2006b).

The instability surrounding conflict and political unrest, particularly for refugees and internally displaced people, increases boys’ and girls’ vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. A report from an investigation conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Liberian refugee camps revealed that there were cases of school-related sexual abuse in which teachers and school staff – mostly male – demanded sex in exchange for good grades. Generally, UNHCR found that the unstable atmosphere in refugee camps was



A girl practices writing at a refugee camp in Kenya.

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ripe for sexual abuse and the exploitation of students (United Nations 2002). Although sufficient data are currently unavailable on gender violence and schools in conflict settings, the violent environment clearly affects students and is a major variable to be considered by policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

## THE EVIDENCE ON SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

### WHAT TYPES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE OCCUR?

#### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves violence or abuse by an adult or another child through any form of forced or unwanted sexual activity where there is no consent, consent is not possible, or power and/or intimidation is used to coerce a sexual act. Sexual violence and abuse include direct physical contact, such as unwanted touching of any kind or rape.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of the legal age of consent, sexual activity between teachers, or other school personnel, and students is considered abuse because of the age and power differentials between the two. Sexual violence can also be perpetrated verbally, through sexually explicit language or any repetitive, unwanted sexual attention such as teasing or taunting about dress or personal appearance, or if the students are forced to watch pornography or listen to sexually explicit language. In South Asia, for example, the public sexual harassment of girls and women is widely perpetrated and unrecognized as a form of abuse. This harassment is referred to as “eve teasing” and may be both verbal and physical.

#### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes any act in which physical force is used and intended to cause discomfort or pain, however slight. It also includes forcing others (physically or verbally) to engage in actions that cause physical injury or discomfort. Girls and boys may experience physical violence or abuse by an adult or another child. Physical abuse commonly involves hitting, smacking, slapping, or spanking children, with the hand or with an implement. However, it can also involve having children hit each other; kicking, shaking, scratching, pinching, or biting a child; pulling on a child’s hair or ears; forcing a child to strip or stay in uncomfortable positions; preventing a child from using the bathroom or eating; burning or scalding a child; washing a child’s mouth out with soap; or forcing a child to swallow hot spices (Committee on the Rights of the Child 2006). Two commonly used types of physical abuse, corporal punishment and exploitative labor, are highlighted in further detail below.

#### Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is the use of physical force for control or discipline, for correcting or changing behavior, or for educating or bringing up a child (Save the Children 2003). It is a degrading form of violence that has negative physical and psychological effects on students, including pain, injury, humiliation, helplessness, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Harber 2004; Halford et al. 2004). Corporal punishment is widely tolerated around the world as the way adults instill discipline in and exercise control over children. A favored method of discipline, it is perceived as “taming” the unruly child, training the presumptuous child to take his or her ‘proper place’ in the social order, and hardening the unseasoned

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<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this report rape includes forcible penetration of any kind, including penetration with objects, and forcible sodomy. Rape, as defined in this report, can be perpetrated against males and females, by individuals known to the victim or strangers. Individual studies cited in this report may use different definitions of rape. Where additional clarification is required, the original source should be consulted.

child to the difficult, brutal, and abrasive world” (Pinheiro 2006b). One study in East Africa found that physical abuse was most common between the ages of 10 and 13, in order to control children at an age when they are thought to be most adventurous and rebellious (African Child Policy Forum 2006a). Since it is commonly accepted as a routine way of raising and disciplining children, it is frequently not perceived as a form of violence.

Corporal punishment is often meted out differently to boys and girls, and for different reasons. Data from various studies showed that, in general, boys experience more physical punishment than girls (Boyle et al. 2002; Alexandrecu et al. 2005). A young school boy in Zambia noted that he “was told to dig five pits for trying to help [someone] out who had missed the lesson the previous day, while his female classmate, who was chewing gum in class, was shouted at by a teacher for being ‘a foolish girl and stupid’” (Soneson 2005). A study conducted in Durban, South Africa showed that boys were expected to be able to tolerate the violence of corporal punishment as a badge of their masculinity (Kent 2004). The study found that corporal punishment, in effect, became a technique for grooming boys and teaching them to act like men by tolerating pain. Though boys may experience more corporal punishment, girls are not immune. Corporal punishment was the most frequently cited type of abuse by girls participating in a study in Malawi (CERT and DevTech 2008). Whether perpetrated against girls or boys, corporal punishment is a frequently used method of maintaining control of students in the educational setting.

*“We feel like we are totally at the mercy of our teachers as they beat us for good and bad reasons,” 12-year-old Ethiopian girl (African Child Policy Forum 2006c).*

### **Exploitative Labor**

Teachers or other school personnel may assign classroom or school chores to students related to school upkeep, such as fetching water for cleaning, working in the school garden, or cleaning school grounds. Tasks may also be assigned as punishments, or to serve the personal needs of teachers or school personnel. Girls and boys participating in a study in Malawi reported that they were given chores and personal errands to do for teachers (CERT and DevTech 2008). When chores force students to miss class time, expose students to dangerous or unhygienic substances, or are beyond a child’s strength, this is abusive behavior on the part of teachers (Beazley et al. 2006).

Chores and classroom duties may be assigned differently to girls and boys, in terms of frequency, difficulty, and prestige of assignment. For example, boys may be allowed to ring the school bell for assembly while girls have to do more arduous and time-consuming work such as cleaning the floors. These unequal work burdens are harmful and perpetuate inequitable gender norms and should be included in any comprehensive analysis of gender-based violence (Leach and Humphreys 2007; UNESCO Bangkok 2006). Exploitative labor and unequal work burdens form part of a larger pattern of abuse and disrespect for students that demoralizes them and compromises their ability to learn and thrive in the school environment.

### **Psychological Abuse**

Psychological abuse – threats, belittling statements, bullying, and emotional manipulation – is a form of violence that may have devastating, life-long consequences for victims. Psychological abuse includes the verbal abuse directed at individual children and the fear generated by watching the physical punishment of other children (Ennew and Plateau 2004). Children are acutely sensitive to verbal abuse, with research showing that children often perceive psychological abuse as more hurtful than physical abuse (Beazley et al. 2006). Psychological abuse is often gender based, as perpetrators may employ different approaches or use different insulting terminology with girls and boys. In Pakistan, for example, teachers called students’

mothers and sisters offensive names (UNICEF and Save the Children 2005). In Ghana, girls reported being teased about their bodies as they began to mature physically (DevTech 2004c). Boys, however, may be teased for exhibiting effeminate behavior or for being perceived to be homosexual or engaging in behaviors perceived to be homosexual in nature.

Bullying is a common form of psychological abuse in schools and is almost always sexual or gender based (Pineiro 2006b). It is distinguished from other types of violence in that it represents a pattern of behavior, rather than isolated events (Pineiro 2006b). It usually refers to actions carried out by fellow students, and is sometimes dismissed as relatively innocent, harmless play. It is much more than that; students who experience bullying on a regular basis suffer from low self-esteem and may avoid school in order to avoid their abusers. In the most severe cases, bullying can cause life-long psychological ill-health. Bullying includes the forms of psychological abuse mentioned above, and it can also extend into physical violence (Harber 2004). Despite its pervasiveness and impacts, psychological abuse often is not recognized by students, communities, educators, and governments as a form of school-related gender-based violence.

## WHERE DOES SRGBV OCCUR?

Gender violence in all its forms takes place throughout the school, both during class and after school, and on the way to and from school. Abuse can occur while walking to and from school or at bus stops and taxi stands (“Gender violence in schools: Zimbabwe” n.d.; DevTech 2005). A study conducted in northern Pakistan found that the reason girls were forbidden to leave the village (to attend school or for other activities) was “because travel was perceived as dangerous ... due to the potential of sexual harassment at the bus stop or in the vehicles” (Khan 1998). In an ActionAid International Uganda study (2004), almost 40 percent of the respondents indicated that they had experienced gender violence on the way to and from school.



A girl from a floating village in Cambodia heads home from school.  
© 2005 Eric Thompson,  
Courtesy of Photoshare

Abuse can take place in classrooms, dormitories, boarding houses, administrative buildings, teachers’ residences, and other parts of school grounds. Sexual abuse, in particular, is perpetrated in empty classrooms and hallways, teachers’ rooms and houses, dormitory facilities, and lavatories, as well as in the woods or bushes near the school. In Brazil, a study found that school lavatories were areas of abuse where boys followed girls to force them to have sex or to touch them inappropriately. In addition, the walls of the lavatories were often covered with lewd remarks and obscene drawings (Abramovay and Das Graças Rua 2002). School lavatories have been identified as high risk areas in African settings as well (Human Rights Watch 2001; DevTech 2004b, 2004c). Any area where students are during the school day or on the way to or from school is a potential area where gender-based violence may occur.

## WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF SRGBV?

There is no global data on the prevalence of SRGBV. However, the literature provides ample evidence that in countries around the world girls and boys are experiencing school-related sexual, physical, and psychological violence. There are limitations, however, in terms of understanding the extent of different types of violence. The majority of studies and interventions have focused on sexual violence against girls and there is less literature on physical and psychological violence, as it affects boys or girls. There is also very little on school-related gender-based violence perpetrated by females. The examples below are

illustrative and provide a snapshot of the extent of sexual, physical, and psychological violence in and around schools.

### **Sexual violence**

Sources estimate that 60 million girls and 29 million boys are sexually assaulted at or on the way to school each year (Mlamleli et al. 2001; Salter and Schechtman 2007).

Studies from around the world highlight the problem:

- A national study in South Africa found that teachers carried out 32 percent of reported child rapes (African Child Policy Forum 2006a).
- Fifty percent of respondents in one Malawi study said that their private parts had been touched without permission, by teachers or male students, and that they had been subjected to various forms of violence by male teachers, including sexual abuse, forced relationships, beatings, and severe punishments (OCHA 2006).
- Pakistan's Minister of State for Religious Affairs reported that 2,000 complaints of sexual abuse by clerics in religious schools had been registered in 2003 (Raza 2004; Murphy 2005).
- A study in Nepal found that 9 percent of children had experienced kissing of sensitive parts, oral sex, or penetration. Eighteen percent of the perpetrators of this sexual abuse were teachers (United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children 2005c).
- Burton's 2005 study in Malawi, which looked at violence in schools and in the home, found that boys experienced "significant" levels of sexual violence (forced penetrative or non-penetrative sex, oral sex, or forced touching of genitalia/breasts).
- A regional consultation in Latin America found that girls in the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, and Nicaragua experienced sexual coercion by teachers, including threats that their grades would suffer if they failed to cooperate (United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children 2005b).
- In Brazil, 9 to 12 percent of girls from grades 5-12 had experienced sexual violence or rape near schools (Abramovay and Das Graças Rua 2002).

### **Physical violence**

- Current estimates indicate that half the world's children live in countries where corporal punishment is not yet banned (Pinheiro 2006a).
- Surveys in Egypt found that 80 percent of school boys and 67 percent of school girls experienced corporal punishment in schools (Durrant 2005).
- In Barbados, 95 percent of boys and 92 percent of girls said that they had experienced caning or flogging in school (Durrant 2005).
- In two districts in Togo, 88 percent of girls and 87 percent of boys reported experiencing physical punishment (Birch 2006).
- A study covering four provinces in Cameroon found that 97 percent of students had been physically punished (EMIDA 2000).

### **Psychological violence**

- In Ethiopia, one survey found that 61 percent of school girls had experienced several kinds of psychological abuse in school including being shouted or glared at (70 percent), being insulted (54 percent), and being frightened or threatened (47 percent) (African Child Policy Forum 2006d).
- Data from studies in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda indicate that psychological violence against girls is highest between the ages of 14 and 17. Male and female teachers ranked second only to strangers as the most common perpetrators, ranging from 23 percent in Kenya to 18 percent in Uganda (African Child Policy Forum 2006b).

- In Mumbai, India, a study documented that 39 percent of female high school students complained about “eve teasing,” the public sexual harassment of girls at their school (Sharma 2003).

## WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS?

School-related gender-based violence can be perpetrated by students, teachers, school personnel, bus and taxi drivers, and community members. SRGBV is perpetrated by both males and females. Power imbalances in society perpetuate the use of violence, whether it is psychological, sexual, or physical. Those with power are more inclined to use force to establish their authority. Hierarchies of power commonly flow from adult males to adult females, from adults to adolescents, and from adolescent boys to adolescent girls, with the least powerful being young children, especially young girls (UNICEF and Save the Children 2005).

Abuse by classmates and peers is far more common, but it is often the dramatic cases of abuse by teachers that finally draw public condemnation. In a study conducted in Dodowa, Ghana teachers accounted for 5 percent of those forcing female students to have sex. One-third of the 50 teachers interviewed for the study reported that they knew one or more teachers who had had sex with students (Afenyadu and Goparaju 2003). Sexual abuse by teachers was also identified in a report from African Rights and was believed to be “more widespread than most institutions care to admit” (Hallam 1994).

Male and female teachers also use violence and abuse to mete out punishment, though they do so in different ways (Dunne et al. 2005; Dunn, Humphreys, and Leach 2006; Humphreys 2003). In Zimbabwe, most students reported that male teachers beat them more than female teachers, who more often used verbal abuse, such as belittling statements, vulgar language, and negative labeling (“Gender violence in schools: Zimbabwe” n.d.; Shumba 2001, 2002). A detailed study from Malawi found that students reported that male teachers were the perpetrators of their most recent incident of being whipped 61 percent of the time, whereas female teachers were perpetrators 17 percent of the time (DevTech and CERT 2007).

While female-perpetrated violence has been studied less than violence perpetrated by males, examples from a study conducted in Malawi indicate that there are a number of ways in which female students and teachers are perpetrating violence against females and males. Boys in Malawi reported that females made unwanted sexual advances toward them, including peeping at their private parts when they visited the toilets or physically touching them. “A few groups of both boys and girls also noted that girls did, on occasion, proposition boys and attempted to force them into a sexual relationship” (CERT and DevTech 2008). An ActionAid International study (2004) conducted in Uganda also found that girls sexually harassed boys through physical contact and by making sexual advances. Girls in Malawi also engaged in other types of abuse, with teachers and parents reporting that girls often fought amongst themselves. Girls and boys reported that “girls tend[ed] to be more involved in stealing from younger pupils, verbal abuse (insulting and mocking both girls and boys), and gossiping (including hurtful stories about pupils’ friendships and sexual activities)” (CERT and DevTech 2008).

These examples highlight the importance of recognizing that the sex, age, position, or status of individuals should not be ignored when considering who may be potential perpetrators of school-related gender-based violence.

# THE CONSEQUENCES OF SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

There is compelling evidence that SRGBV has short- and long-term consequences for girls and boys, including physical and psychological damage and serious social repercussions. SRGBV can result in physical injury, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, or psychological ill-health. It can also put children at greater risk of educational failure through absenteeism, dropping out, and lack of motivation for academic achievement. All forms of SRGBV – sexual, physical, and psychological – impact children’s development, health, and schooling.

## POOR HEALTH

School-related gender-based violence can lead to a range of physical and psychological health problems that can last a lifetime. The impacts include impairment of emotional development and longer-term mental distress and ill health (Pinheiro 2006b). Physical violence can be mild or serious and result in wounds, bruises, fractures, internal injuries, and head trauma. Physical violence, whether from repeated occurrences or one-time incidents, can result in both short- and long-term health problems. The sexual health manifestations of SRGBV range from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections to risk-taking behaviors, including early onset of consensual sex, multiple partners, and the non-use of condoms. Sexual abuse, which includes exploitation as well as forced sexual relations, can increase girls’ and boys’ risk of being infected by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Worldwide, adolescents have a higher risk of HIV infection than other age groups (Kumar, Larkin, and Mitchell 2001). Increased exposure and forced sex only serve to magnify this risk.

While the sexual health impacts often receive the most attention, perhaps even more insidious are the psychological outcomes of gender-based violence, which range from symptoms of anxiety and depression to suicide attempts. A study in Cameroon found that corporal punishment blocked the development of social skills, and that victims feared giving free expression to their ideas (EMIDA 2000). Repeated verbal abuse has also been shown to undermine self-esteem (Mlamleli et al. 2001). Girls in one study in South Africa said they felt “exploited, worthless, alone, scared, sick, powerless, and guilty,” after experiencing psychological violence in school (Haffejee 2006). Low self-esteem can cause life-long problems, which may include eating disorders, substance abuse, compulsive behaviors, and sexual risk taking. Fear and low self-esteem may not only lead to ill health, but may also impact children’s ability to live their lives and flourish as they grow older.

### SELECTED CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

#### Physical health consequences

- abdominal/thoracic injuries
- bruises and welts
- burns and scalds
- central nervous system injuries
- fractures
- lacerations and abrasions
- damage to the eyes
- disability

#### Sexual and reproductive health problems

- sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- unwanted pregnancy
- infertility

#### Psychological consequences

- alcohol and drug abuse
- cognitive impairment
- criminal, violent, and other risk-taking behaviors
- depression and anxiety
- developmental delays
- eating and sleeping disorders
- feelings of shame and guilt
- hyperactivity
- poor relationships
- poor self-esteem
- post-traumatic stress disorder
- psychosomatic disorders
- suicidal behavior and self-harm

Source: World Health Organization 2002

## LOSS OF BENEFITS FROM EDUCATION

Gender-based violence may limit children's opportunities to attend school or complete their schooling, to succeed as individuals during their school years, and to take advantage of their schooling throughout their lives (Jejeebhoy and Bott 2003). Gender violence results in being unable to concentrate, not wanting to participate in class, receiving lower grades, losing interest in school, transferring to a different school, or even leaving formal schooling altogether.

The literature highlights many examples of the impact of sexual abuse, and most of the studies discuss its impacts on girls. In Benin, a study found that 43 percent of primary students and 80 percent of secondary students said they knew of girls who had dropped out of school due to sexual abuse (Wible 2004). Studies of adolescent males have also found an association between being raped and a variety of behaviors including absenteeism from school (WHO 2002).

*"Some teachers are known to harass girls who refuse to have sexual relationships with them in such ways as being refused exit permits, [being] punished for [a] petty offence for no clear reason at all, [or being] ill treated in class," secondary school student from Malawi (Kadzamira et al. 2001).*

Corporal punishment and psychological violence also affect school attendance and performance. A study of students in Pakistan found that corporal punishment was a major reason for student dropout (UNICEF and Save the Children 2005). The same study also found that many students drop out of school because of the abusive language used by teachers (UNICEF and Save the Children 2005). In Lesotho, corporal punishment was found to discourage both girls and boys from attending school (Abagi 2003). A study of Palestinian children in camps in Lebanon found that 68 percent of boys and 58 percent of girls who dropped out of school cited reasons that included harsh treatment (Alexandrecu et al. 2005). In Uganda, female students reported that teachers' use of derogatory language with regard to their physical appearance and intellectual ability resulted in a loss of confidence that affected their concentration and performance in school (ActionAid International Uganda 2004).

Gender violence impacts school attendance and retention, and students' ability to learn while in school. It can also impact the efficacy of the messages being presented, especially in areas such as HIV prevention education. In light of the AIDS pandemic, schools are increasingly seen as avenues for presenting health and life skills information to students. However, the contradiction between schools as sites of sexual violence and as places of instruction regarding prevention can limit their effectiveness in educating young people about HIV and AIDS (Leach et al. 2003).



A child writes on a wooden slate in India.  
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For teachers and school personnel to effectively deliver information, guidance, and support to students on sensitive issues such as HIV and AIDS, students must respect and trust those providing the information. Yet, a growing number of studies reveal that students do not have the requisite trust and respect for teachers to make these programs effective. One study found that students could identify which teachers engaged in inappropriate sexual activity in their school, resulting in those teachers having no credibility when teaching HIV prevention (James-Traore et al. 2004). A study in Kenya found that almost a quarter of

students surveyed did not think teachers made good role models for sexual behavior. One of the main reasons cited for this was the contradiction between what many teachers said and did (Boler et al. 2003). A government teacher training representative observed that “[t]he same teachers who are supposed to pass information to children seduce them” (Boler et al. 2003). As a result, boys and girls are losing out not only on traditional educational content, but also on life skills and health information that could impact their long-term health and well-being.

*“The punishment and beating in school are really discouraging. It makes one feel less interested in the morning about school. When you enter the gate you wonder, oh, my god! Who is going to make me feel inferior today?” high school girl in Maseru, Lesotho (Abagi 2003).*

Finally, there is anecdotal evidence that the strategies girls or their parents use to accommodate gender violence are also negatively impacting girls’ education. Parents’ concern about their children’s safety – particularly their daughters – may lead them to pull their children out of school or deny them other educational opportunities. A study in Bangladesh reported that many parents felt forced to marry off their underage daughters as a way to protect them from “eve teasing” and any attendant sexual violence (IDHRB 1996). In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, parents’ fears about their daughters being sexually abused while traveling long distances to school is a key reason why girls drop out (Mensch and Lloyd 1998; Sathar and Lloyd 1993; World Bank 2005). In rural Africa, there is some indication that the fear of sending girls, but not boys, to teachers’ homes deprives girls of coaching opportunities that are critical to educational success (FEMSA n.d.). Girls in South Africa were found to avoid certain subjects if they were taught by known harassers (Abrahams 2003). One assessment found that some girls chose to come late to class because boys touched them inappropriately in the classroom before teachers arrived. This resulted in the female students being punished by their teachers for tardiness (DevTech 2004b). Violence and the strategies used to avoid it are clearly having a significant impact on the education of boys and girls.



A young girl talks about teen pregnancy at an elementary school following a play about teen pregnancy prevention.

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## BARRIERS TO PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

To be effective, SRGBV programs must address two components: prevention and response. Prevention includes training programs for students, parents, community members, and teachers, and involves redefining gender relations and norms of masculinity and femininity that put children at risk. Responding to SRGBV includes supporting and ensuring the safety of victims and holding perpetrators accountable through criminal prosecutions, public inquiries, compensation programs, civil action, community-based settlements, or customary legal systems. Barriers to effective prevention and response programs are both cultural and institutional.

## SILENCE

There is widespread silence in schools and communities surrounding SRGBV. Victims often do not report the abuse due to a fear of reprisal from the perpetrators. Children may not report abuse because they feel that parents and guardians may not be supportive or that they may not believe them. If the victim or the victim's parents complain to school authorities, the complaint often falls on deaf ears, as authorities do not want to acknowledge such abuse. A retired Kenyan school teacher observed that “[s]chools find sexual abuse embarrassing and often times will attempt to sweep it under the carpet” (*The East African Standard* 2001).

Victims may also remain silent about abuse because of shame or a fear of embarrassment if the incident becomes public. Fear and shame are barriers to reporting and, therefore, to ensuring that victims receive the necessary support. However, the silence caused by fear and shame is also a barrier to discussing SRGBV and developing effective prevention efforts.

## LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

How laws define abuse is critical in using the law to combat gender-based violence in schools. In Bangladesh, Article 10 of the 2000 Women and Children Repression and Prevention Act stated that making obscene comments or gestures toward women was a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment. However, the act was later significantly amended to state that individuals could only be charged with a crime if the sexual abuse was physical. Therefore, girls and women who were victims of verbal “eve teasing” no longer had any legal recourse for this type of abuse (Jahan 2005). A narrow definition of SRGBV not only creates problems with prosecution, but it also diminishes the importance of the types of SRGBV not covered. The inability to prosecute offenders discourages victims from reporting abuse and seeking support. It creates the appearance that certain types of violence are acceptable, establishing a hierarchy of crimes and victimization. This can hamper efforts to develop comprehensive SRGBV programs by making it more difficult to advocate for changes at the institutional and community levels.

Problems also arise when the actors or institutions specified in a law are limited. Jamaica enacted a Child Care Protection Act that outlawed corporal punishment in early childhood education programs and in government-run facilities, such as children's homes managed by the Ministry of Health. Since public schools were not explicitly covered by the act, there remained a lack of clarity among school personnel about the forms of redress available when corporal punishment was used (DevTech 2005). In situations such as these, school or ministry officials may feel constrained in their actions. They may be overly cautious in implementing new policies and interventions, choosing not to act rather than overstepping their authority. Alternately, they may lack the authority and credibility needed to bring together the different actors necessary for implementing interventions. Failure to include schools among the institutions covered by laws or policies makes it difficult for ministries of education and individual schools to develop effective prevention and response systems.

Laws related to gender or sexual stereotypes can also hinder efforts to prevent and respond to SRGBV. “In many countries, homosexual activity is a criminal offence ... with the result that bullying and other forms of violence towards these groups receives little official attention, and are driven underground” (De Groulard et al. 1998). Students who are abused based on actual or perceived sexual behaviors or orientation may not seek legal recourse, even where it is available. Criminalization can increase stigma and lead to silencing individuals who may be victims of physical, psychological, and sexual violence.

## ENFORCEMENT

Poor, inadequate, or inconsistent enforcement of existing laws and codes of conduct can be a serious impediment to the development of effective prevention and response systems. A Togolese law, which was promulgated in 1984, mandates prison terms for those who impregnate girls regularly enrolled in school. Many teachers were charged with violating this law, but with the advent of democracy in the 1990s, it was no longer effectively enforced (Neylon pers. comm.). In Cameroon, a 1998 law banned corporal punishment. However, a study covering four provinces that was published two years after the ban found that teachers continued to use corporal punishment for disobedience, “cheekiness,” and academic mistakes (EMIDA 2000). If victims are not confident that perpetrators will be punished, there is no incentive for them to report violations and face the potential shame, embarrassment, and even reprisal. If perpetrators believe they can act with impunity, there is nothing to discourage them from continuing to commit violence.

A lack of enforcement of professional codes of conduct results in similar barriers to SRGBV prevention and response. Professional codes of conduct must be enforced for students to gain confidence in their teachers and school administrators. Afenyadu and Goparaju (2003) found that most students do not report cases of abuse to school authorities because the personnel to whom they would have reported were often perpetrators themselves. Assessments conducted in three countries by the Safe Schools Program (DevTech 2004a, 2004b, 2004c) found similar trends regarding the enforcement of codes of conduct. If students do not trust school administrators, they will not report abuse and may not receive the support they need.

*“Who would I tell in the school administration if it is a teacher who has harassed me? They will protect their teachers and tell me to be serious in my studies and to stop bothering teachers,” female student, Benin (Wible 2004).*

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERVENTIONS

Response systems that are complicated, confusing, or difficult to access discourage victims from seeking needed support. For example, the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the Supreme Court of Justice, developed procedures to support victims of sexual violence and harassment. However, students cannot report abuse through the schools; they must file a report with the institution most appropriate for addressing the particular type of abuse they have suffered. Such a process often involves having to access information that is not readily available to young children (Save the Children Norway 2005). Victims can become easily frustrated or intimidated by confusing support systems or procedures.

Interventions must not only be well designed, but they must be accompanied by the necessary resources to ensure they are implemented effectively. In South Africa, corporal punishment was banned in 1996, but no training support or resources were provided to teachers. Banning the practice without providing teachers with alternate approaches to classroom management is ineffective (Marlet and Boni 2003). Bans need “to be accompanied by effective initial and in-service training in behavior



A girl learns the English alphabet at a school in India.  
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management” (Pineiro 2006b). If teachers do not have other tools for maintaining classroom order and discipline, they may resort to verbal or physical abuse. Appropriate laws and policies are critical for addressing SRGBV, but failing to back them up with the necessary training and resources inhibits the ability of schools and individuals to address the problem.

## TEACHER SHORTAGES

Teacher shortages can lead parents and school officials to accept abusive teachers. It was reported in Kenya that a teacher, who had made several girls pregnant, was pardoned because there was no one to take over his science class. The local parent teacher association believed that firing the teacher would have a negative impact on the performance of the school (Mulama 2004).

Fears of potential teacher shortages can also contribute to schools and communities failing to discipline teachers who perpetrate gender-based violence. A study on education governance, HIV, and AIDS in Malawi found that a lack of enforcement against perpetrators may have been due to high levels of absenteeism and the deaths of educational administrators at all levels (Chawani and Kadzamia 2004). The authors reported that 40 percent of the school attrition due to deaths was attributable to AIDS-related illnesses. Administrators may overlook teachers’ conduct because they fear being unable to replace teachers if they were to fire or transfer perpetrators.

Teacher shortages, or the fear of shortages, are a barrier to effective prevention and response programming because they allow perpetrators to act with impunity. By failing to prosecute perpetrators, students come to understand that other adults condone or accept this violence, and their victimization.

## GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Without trained guidance counselors in schools, there may be no one who is equipped to help children deal with the aftermath of abuse. Children in Uganda who had been abused reported that they needed counseling about sexual abuse in order to recover, but that they did not receive adequate assistance from adults (Save the Children Norway 2005). In Ethiopia, schools do not have guidance counselors to provide immediate attention to victims of gender-based violence in schools (DevTech 2004a). In Jamaica, many schools do not have guidance counselors, and those that do still face a number of constraints. Counselors have limited time to spend supporting students because they are often assigned additional teaching and/or administrative tasks (DevTech 2005). If counselors do not have the time needed to provide the necessary support, students may not see them as a viable outlet for reporting abuse and seeking assistance. The Jamaican study also indicated that students lacked trust in guidance counselors, believing the counselors gossiped about them (DevTech 2005). Trust is key to encouraging students to report abuse and seek support. If students do not believe that counselors will maintain confidentiality, they may worry about the repercussions of an incident becoming public. They may fear reprisal from the perpetrator, shame in facing their parents, or the embarrassment of other students or school staff knowing what occurred.

## WHAT IS BEING DONE?

School-related gender-based violence and its negative consequences are receiving increased attention globally. Donor organizations, private foundations, international nongovernmental organizations, and university-based researchers are collaborating with national and community-based organizations to address gender violence directly. This section briefly discusses some of the initiatives that have been undertaken, highlighting promising efforts to address the problem.

## LEGAL AND POLICY CHANGES

Many countries are effectively using the legal system or national-level policy guidance to respond to the challenge of gender-based violence in schools. For example, 106 countries around the world have banned corporal punishment in schools (Mpundu 2004; Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children 2008). In Benin, a law was passed in July 2006 to address sexual harassment in schools, workplaces, and homes (Johnson 2006). Other countries have developed clear policy frameworks to define, prohibit, and/or penalize acts of gender-based violence in schools. In 2004, The Gambia developed a policy to punish adults who sexually harass students in schools (UNICEF 2005). South Africa's Department of Education has issued guidelines aimed at reducing the sexual abuse of students by teachers (United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children 2005a). Legal and policy changes such as these provide the necessary framework for prosecuting perpetrators, but they also help raise awareness of the issue of gender-based violence in schools.

## TRAINING TEACHERS AND OTHER SCHOOL STAFF

Teachers are key allies in efforts to reduce gender-based violence in schools because they have the power to change their behavior and to influence the behavior of students and other school personnel. A number of interventions have focused on training teachers to understand and respond to SRGBV.

USAID's Safe Schools Program recently completed piloting a teacher training manual in Ghana and Malawi. The manual, *Doorways III: Teacher Training Manual on School-related Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response*, was designed for use as part of a week-long training program for upper primary and lower secondary school teachers. The manual covers: attitudes towards young people; gender; violence and school-related gender-based violence; human rights, safe and supportive classroom environments; responses to gender-based violence; and action planning. It is accompanied by similar training programs developed for students (*Doorways I*) and community volunteer counselors (*Doorways II*).

Another manual, *Opening Our Eyes: Addressing Gender-based Violence in South African Schools*, was designed for in-service training at the school or district level for teachers, school managers, and school governing boards (Mlamleli et al. 2001). The materials, developed with educator input, include interactive workshops to heighten awareness of gender-based violence and harassment, and the linkages between sexual abuse and HIV. The School of Public Health of the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, conducted a pilot pre-service training program to develop a model for incorporating gender-based violence prevention into the school curriculum. One lesson learned from the project was that for teachers to play an effective role in addressing gender-based violence in schools, they first need to understand and confront their own attitudes and experiences regarding gender-based violence (Rooth 2002).

Several training efforts have extended beyond teachers, focusing on a "whole school" approach that includes training for all school personnel, including administrative and custodial staff (Open Society Foundation for South Africa 2001). The Secretariat of Education in Colombia, in cooperation with Save the Children UK, developed a violence prevention program for 15 educational institutions. Program components included creating awareness among teachers, aides, and school administrators; teaching self-protective behaviors to male and female students; and working with local networks to educate communities about the assistance available to them when responding to sexual abuse cases (Save the Children Norway 2005). In Zimbabwe, teachers and administrative personnel are trained in detecting sexual abuse, maintaining confidentiality, providing referrals, and counseling children. In addition, school staff members learn about the types of documentation needed to prosecute cases, the path each case must take as it works its way through the school system, and the intricacies of the referral process. For teachers

to have time for these new roles, the administration has lightened the teaching load to allow time during the school day for activities associated with the program and has provided space for confidential counseling.

## COUNSELING AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR STUDENTS

Some strategies for making schools safer for children include deploying well-trained guidance counselors. In Tanzania, a guardian program was established by the Tanzania-Netherlands Project to Support AIDS Control in Mwanza Region. As part of this program, a female teacher was selected by her colleagues to be a guardian to female students. This teacher was trained to raise the issue of exploitation with her charges and to take on a counseling role for these girls. An assessment of the guardian program revealed that the presence of a guardian significantly increased the chances of female students asking for support from guardians or other female teachers when confronted with sexual violence or harassment. Guardians reported to school boards, courts, and district authorities on rape cases, most of which were perpetrated by male teachers and men from the community. Educational authorities removed at least two teachers from their schools after they were accused of raping students. The evaluation noted that the program generated much greater awareness of the sexual abuse of female students by teachers, and that the negative publicity of being accused of abuse probably acted as a deterrent to other teachers (Mgalla, Boerma, and Schapink 1998).

## PREVENTION AND SUPPORT THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Two promising strategies have been used to engage communities in addressing SRGBV: using community members as classroom assistants and establishing community education committees. Some programs have trained female community members as classroom assistants to help protect students from abuse and to create a school environment conducive to learning. Introducing a female presence in the classroom is intended to balance a primarily male teaching force, which has made girls vulnerable to transactional sex for good grades. The female assistants act as a deterrent to teachers by serving as witnesses to any misconduct and by reducing opportunities for teachers to be alone with students. The International Rescue Committee initiated a classroom assistants program at refugee schools in Guinea and Sierra Leone. An assessment of the programs in both countries indicated positive changes in teachers' behaviors. Girls reported that they felt that the classrooms were more welcoming and supportive of learning. Boys also reported that the assistants made the classroom experience more comfortable (Kirk and Winthrop 2005).



A village president in India addresses community issues at a monthly meeting of the village welfare committee.

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Community education advisory committees offer another way to reduce gender-based violence in schools. Initiated as part of the USAID-supported Basic Education System Overhaul II project in Ethiopia, the committees are composed of mostly female students, a female teacher advisor, other teachers, and one or two mothers. Committees have responded to physical, sexual, and psychological violence using a multi-pronged approach. Efforts included developing strategies to protect girls on the way to and from school, initiating girls clubs to provide safe places for them to discuss violence, reporting threats to the health and safety of students to school directors and PTAs, and teaching boys and girls how to treat each other

respectfully. Assessments have revealed that the committees are an effective way of curbing violence against girls. The program also resulted in an increase in attendance and improved attitudes and behavior on the part of boys. Similar councils have been set up in 6,000 schools in Peru, as mandated by the Ministry of Education. The councils arrange for seminars on children's rights, including discussions about corporal punishment (Karkara and Jabeen 2005).

## PROMOTING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Engaging children is critical because adults need to be able to see their own behavior through the eyes of children in order to understand how children experience violence. Activities that have engaged children have not only deepened the understanding of how children perceive gender-based violence in schools, but these activities have also improved the day-to-day life in schools. Students in Swaziland used photographs to highlight safe and unsafe spaces in their school, including the latrines. UNICEF then used this information to link water and sanitation projects to anti-violence efforts (Mitchell et al. n.d.).

Similarly, a study called *Friday Absenteeism in a Rural KZN School* used photos to highlight reasons for poor attendance, which included violence in the school. The children's findings were then presented to the community as the basis for action (Mitchell et al. n.d.). To raise awareness of the harm of "eve teasing" in Nepal, Save the Children UK (2003) initiated a project in which girls mapped unsafe places in their village. Sharing the maps with education officials, village leaders, other adults, and boys helped community members realize that what they formerly thought was just "innocent teasing" was actually abusive and discriminatory (Save the Children UK 2003). Using participatory activities such as these is an effective way of working with children to get them to open up about their experiences with violence. Understanding where they experience violence and abuse, who the perpetrators are, the extent of the violence, and how it impacts them will help increase awareness and facilitate the design of interventions.



Rural children in Jamaica make their way home from school.  
© 2001 Karen Hardee, Courtesy of Photoshare

## LIFE SKILLS TRAINING WITH STUDENTS

Studies indicate that life skills<sup>4</sup> curricula can help adolescents examine attitudes and social norms such as discrimination and peer pressure, which can create a more enabling environment for girls and boys and empower them to address violence in schools (USAID 2002; Moser and van Bronkhorst 1999). One program in Nepal delivered life skills and leadership training through school clubs. The intervention built up girls' self-confidence and enabled them to stand up against gender abuse. In an assessment of the program, teachers expressed surprise at how once-timid girls, who used to accept harassment in silence, now reported abusive behavior (Save the Children Norway 2005).

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<sup>4</sup> "Life skills" refer to a large group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills that can help individuals make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them lead healthy and productive lives.

*"I used to think that being a girl I don't have the right to protest when boys and men misbehave with me. But after joining the child club I came to know that I have all the right to feel safe all the time. I can protect and protest whenever someone tries to harass or abuse me. My body is mine and I have the right to protect it," Nepalese girl (Save the Children Norway 2005).*

## WORKING WITH BOYS

The literature highlights a growing number of programs that work specifically with boys and men on issues related to violence. Many of these programs engage boys as partners in reducing violence against girls, while others are broader in focus and work with boys to address the rigid gender norms that contribute to violence.

Engaging boys as strategic allies is increasingly being used as a strategy for reducing violence against girls. In Uganda, boys accompany girls home from school to minimize harassment (FAWE Uganda 2005). A similar project in South Africa has also involved boys in addressing girls' security and safety while traveling to and from school. Having boys escort girls to and from school not only helps protect girls; it also helps boys better understand the impact violence has on girls' lives and why it is unacceptable (UNICEF 2003b). It is important, however, that programs such as these guard against promoting another form of unequal power relations in which boys' role is to protect girls (Girard 2003). Programs must protect girls without perpetuating stereotypes that contribute to gender inequality and reduce female independence.

*"I used to think that boys have the right to tease and harass girls and it was kind of entertainment for us. We could never feel how painful it must have been for girls. But after I joined the 'safer environment for girls group' I realized that we have been torturing and hurting girls and am ashamed of my past behavior. Now I have stopped harassing and teasing girls and if I see other boys doing that I protest immediately," 12-year-old boy, Nepal (Save the Children Norway 2005).*

Other programs are broader in focus, working with boys to address the rigid gender norms and narrow definitions of masculinity that can have a negative impact on their lives and the lives of others. Boys are under tremendous pressure to meet the roles and norms society expects of their sex and this can result in anger, self-punishment, low self-esteem, and violence, often against fellow students. A narrowly constructed male identity provides limited opportunities for boys to express their masculinity and often condones or encourages displays of power over girls and other boys as appropriate behavior. Over the last 10 years, a number of programs have worked to introduce boys and young men to expanded images of masculinity in order to help them respond to the pressures they face. While most do not specifically address SRGBV, their approaches provide models for developing school-based initiatives. These programs open the door to self-reflection, create safe spaces to rehearse new behaviors, and provide role models for equitable and nonviolent behavior (Barker and Ricardo 2005; Population Reference Bureau 2003; UNICEF South Africa 2005). Several of them are highlighted below:

- *Let's Talk Men*, produced by the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, is a series of four educational films with facilitation guides that depict positive images of masculinity. The films and guides, which have been disseminated throughout South Asia, have encouraged dialogue on

gender stereotypes and raised awareness among adolescents about the consequences of violence (Seshadri 2002).

- In Latin America, the Program H Alliance pioneered an approach that helps young men reflect on gender norms in relation to sexuality, reproductive health, fatherhood, and violence. For many participants, the program was the first time they had ever reflected on gender inequities. An evaluation of Program H found clear improvements in attitudes about gender, gender-based violence, and sexual behaviors (Schueller, Finger, and Barker 2005; Pulerwitz et al. 2006; Barker et al. 2006). The Program H approach was also adapted for use in India, where positive changes in attitudes regarding gender norms and masculinity were found (Verma et al. 2006).
- The Better Life Options Program for adolescent boys in India utilized a variety of strategies to target in and out-of school youth with life skills activities. The program helps boys mature into self-confident, productive, responsible, and healthy adults. Program evaluations revealed that, as a result of the program, boys had an increased sense of responsibility towards their families and that they no longer felt inclined to engage in “eve teasing” (CEDPA 2002).
- In Egypt, a successful non-formal program for young men aided in the development of skills related to anger management, communication, decision making, and life planning. An evaluation conducted in 2004 found that boys who had completed the course had more gender-equitable views on the treatment of boys and girls, male-female interactions, and gender-based violence (CEDPA 2005).

While many of the programs working with boys do so to prevent them from becoming perpetrators of violence, programs that address masculinity can also provide an entry point for discussing violence against boys. Providing safe spaces for reflection and facilitating discussions about gender-based violence may help reduce the stigma that prevents many boys from discussing their victimization and the consequences it has for them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### ADDRESSING THE GAPS IN RESEARCH

The number of studies on violence in and around schools is increasing; however, there exist several methodological gaps that need to be addressed to generate a more holistic understanding of the complexity and prevalence of SRGBV. More work is needed to develop a globally accepted definition of gender-based violence as it relates to schooling. Although the concept is starting to expand beyond sexual violence, other forms of school-related gender-based violence, especially psychological abuse, remain invisible in the research. Quantitative studies are needed on the prevalence of physical and psychological gender-based violence, and their impacts. More research is needed on male victims of SRGBV and female perpetrators.

Research also needs to move beyond descriptive studies to examine relationships between cause and effect. More work using longitudinal designs is important for understanding the long-term effects of gender violence on health and educational outcomes. Studies of school-related gender-based violence that consider broader issues of gender inequality, limited economic opportunities, and the dynamics of the local contexts in their analysis are particularly important. Furthermore, there is a dire need for programmatic evaluations. Many interventions addressing school-related gender-based violence are being implemented, but most have not been evaluated, leaving educators and development practitioners guessing about good practices, models, and lessons learned.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Addressing school-related gender-based violence requires a proactive, holistic, and multifaceted approach with specific attention to gender equality and human rights. Interventions should address both prevention and response. Prevention efforts must address the gender norms and culture of violence that put children at risk, while response interventions should encompass reporting and referral procedures along with health care, psychosocial assistance, security, and legal justice for victims. The recommendations below are based on the literature reviewed for this report.

### National Level

National governments need to provide policy leadership and guide the development and implementation of strong policies and procedures at every level of the school system. Government efforts should include programs to prevent violence and programs to support victims. Programs must engage all stakeholders in order to promote an overall enabling environment (Leach et al. 2003). These stakeholders include school administrators, teachers, other school staff, parents, students, the police, child protection agencies, other government offices, and relevant NGOs.

Protecting children from school-related gender-based violence requires developing a comprehensive package of child-centric legislation (Naker 2005). This package should include legislation that addresses all forms of physical, sexual, and psychological violence, injury, or abuse, including corporal punishment, bullying, hazing, traditional harmful practices, minimum age of consent and marriage, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and child labor. Addressing gender violence in schools in a comprehensive way also requires that governments strengthen data collection systems on all forms of violence against girls and boys and that they develop a national research agenda on SRGBV (Pineiro 2006b). In addition, governments can act by working with international agencies to address the education needs of children in emergency situations by implementing education programs that are based on principles of gender equality and nonviolence.

Nongovernmental organizations can support government efforts or encourage governments to act by undertaking national advocacy campaigns to change attitudes and beliefs related to SRGBV and advocating for the enactment and enforcement of legislation and policies.

### Institutional Level

Educational institutions ranging from the central ministry to teacher training colleges, teachers' unions, and individual schools can take action in the areas of prevention and response. Of particular note is the need for a code of conduct that guides the behavior of teachers and other school personnel. Equally important is the need for primary and secondary schools to institutionalize life skills curricula that more fully incorporate issues related to gender violence protection. These efforts must also include training that better enables teachers to identify and respond to gender-based violence in their schools.

### Ministries of Education

- Establish an organizational culture in which gender equality and respect for the rights of the child are core values.
- Ban corporal punishment and promote alternative classroom management practices and disciplinary procedures.
- Promote gender equality and role models that break the traditional molds that define masculinity and femininity.

- Implement a code of conduct for teachers, school personnel, and students that expressly prohibits gender violence in all its forms and includes a system for addressing violations of the code. Distribute the code of conduct widely, including distribution to parents and students.
- Provide guidelines to schools detailing the appropriate response to student allegations of gender-based violence by teachers, fellow students, or community members. Guidelines should be publicly available, widely distributed, and incorporate:
  - procedures through which students can make confidential complaints
  - mechanisms for the prompt and effective investigation of complaints
  - mechanisms for prompt and appropriate disciplinary action, including due process protections for alleged perpetrators
  - procedures for referral to the criminal justice system, if criminal conduct occurred
  - procedures for referral to medical, legal, and counseling support services for victims, if needed
  - measures to protect complainants from retaliation
- Institute mechanisms to hold schools accountable for failure to respond to allegations of SRGBV or to cooperate with the criminal justice system.
- Build schools that minimize students' travel time and ensure that dormitories are safe.
- Revise curriculum to model nonviolence and promote gender equality.

### **Teacher Training Institutes**

- Develop comprehensive pre- and in-service training programs for teachers, headmasters, school administrators, and guidance counselors that include topics such as:
  - democratic, participatory, and gender-sensitive teaching methodologies
  - alternatives to corporal punishment
  - tools for preventing and responding to gender-based violence in schools
  - responsibilities for enforcing codes of conduct
- Encourage teachers to view themselves as protectors of children by placing greater emphasis on ethical standards of behavior.
- Strengthen the focus on gender equality in teacher preparation by helping teachers understand the negative effect of school-related gender-based violence on the ability of girls and boys to succeed in school. Provide teachers with strategies to challenge and stop gender discrimination and all forms of violence against students.
- Instill in teachers the ability to create an environment of respect for their students and other teachers.
- Create opportunities for teachers to explore their own attitudes and personal experiences regarding gender-based violence, sexuality, HIV, and AIDS in safe environments so they can be more effective in working with their students and colleagues.



Young males studying at a school in Pakistan.  
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### **Teachers' Unions**

- Educate members about the national code of conduct and reinforce teachers' roles as protectors of children's rights.
- Develop a professional ethics code.

- Provide in-service teacher training on gender-sensitive, nonviolent classroom management techniques to union members.
- Enforce violations of the code of conduct or the declaration of professional ethics with members.
- Conduct outreach with members about regulations governing professional conduct and the use of corporal punishment.

## **Schools**

- Develop a clear strategy that targets school-related gender-based violence, based on a whole school approach.
- Promote a more supportive school culture by facilitating the reporting of abuse, reducing bullying and corporal punishment, providing effective counseling, and encouraging constructive and equal relationships between students.
- Conduct safety audits of the school grounds to better identify unsafe areas. Ensure that toilet facilities are sanitary, located in a safe place, and secure.
- Cooperate with the child protection system, health services, and the police to support students who experience SRGBV.
- Establish forums for students to express their voices and take action, such as student councils, children’s committees, children’s clubs, or support groups.
- Establish parent-teacher-student associations that report students’ concerns, advocate on students’ behalf, and promote peer education.
- Enforce codes of conduct for teachers and school personnel. Work with students and community members to establish codes of conduct, if national-level policies do not exist.

## **Local Level**

Communities must come together to foster awareness of the various forms of school-related gender-based violence; learn how to identify such violence; and develop strategies to protect children. Strategies that draw on the authority of traditional leaders to promote positive change are more often accepted and sustained by the community over the long term. The literature also shows that it is important to involve children in designing and implementing community-based approaches.

Communities can:

- Facilitate school-community linkages by establishing advisory committees that include community leaders, police, health services, social services, faith-based groups, parents, children, and school staff to address gender inequality and gender violence.
- Form effective PTAs or school management committees that will hold schools accountable for guaranteeing a safe and secure learning environment.
- Become more aware of how the various forms of gender-based violence have a negative impact on the well-being of children.
- Monitor the quality of the learning environment.
- Ensure that parents are aware of codes of conduct and reporting procedures.



Girls in class in Afghanistan  
Alejandro Chicheri/World Food Programme,  
Courtesy of USAID

- Institute appropriate responses to allegations of school-related gender-based violence that are not dealt with effectively by schools.
- Identify and execute strategies to make the commute to and from school safe.
- Work to identify community or cultural beliefs and practices that may contribute to promoting violence or reinforcing traditional gender norms that contribute to violence.

## Individual Level

Recommendations for addressing school-related gender-based violence with individual girls and boys rest on the foundation laid by the successful implementation of recommendations made at the previous levels.

Girls and boys can:

- Contribute to a school environment that promotes respect between teachers and students and among fellow students.
- Report incidents of gender-based violence to a school official or other trusted adult.
- Form peer groups to discuss issues facing students, including school-related gender-based violence.
- Speak out against verbal abuse and bullying to let other students know that it is unacceptable.
- Refrain from teasing, taunting, or bullying fellow students, or talking about them in a derogatory or condescending way.
- Participate in clubs, trainings, or other activities to learn more about issues of violence in school, gender norms, etc.
- Inform teachers or school officials of areas at or near school where they feel unsafe or threatened.

## CONCLUSION

While additional research is needed to understand the full scope of school-related gender-based violence, the literature reviewed for this report indicates that the problem is pervasive. Gender-based physical, psychological, and sexual violence has life-long consequences for girls and boys. These consequences include poor physical and mental health as well as increased rates of absenteeism and school dropout. The literature reveals both a growing global commitment to addressing SRGBV and a growing number of promising interventions. Further work in this area will be key to ensuring that all children are able to realize the benefits from education.

## ANNEX 1: SELECT FINDINGS FROM QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE STUDIES AND ASSESSMENTS REVIEWED FOR THIS REPORT

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
Bangladesh	National	Secondary analysis using data taken from a nationally representative survey of young people ages 10-24 conducted in about 20,000 households	Nahar, Q. and S. Amin (n.d.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls were 50 percent less likely to be beaten in school than boys.</li> <li>The odds of being beaten at school decreased as adolescents grew older.</li> <li>The type of school had significant effects on the odds of being beaten at school. Adolescents who studied in <i>Madrasha</i> (religious schools), had a 30 percent greater change of being beaten compared to those studying in secondary schools.</li> </ul>
Benin	Large provincial towns	Participatory learning and action workshops with female students and some parents; interviews with 30 primary and secondary female students, ages 11-19	Wible (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forty-three percent of female primary students and 53 percent of female secondary students reported witnessing or experiencing inappropriate touching, offensive jokes or gestures, pressure for sex, and pressure for dates.</li> <li>A large majority of primary and secondary female students believed that at least some teachers were having sex with students.</li> <li>Female secondary students reported that most girls became involved with teachers due to a fear of bad grades or reprisals, or because they wanted a good grade or money.</li> <li>Forty-three percent of female primary students and 80 percent of female secondary students knew of girls who dropped out of school due to gender-based violence.</li> </ul>
Botswana and Ghana	Rural, peri-urban, and urban	Six schools in each country (three high achieving and three low achieving schools); educational statistics and qualitative data	Dunne et al. (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite the wide-scale use of corporal punishment and other forms of discipline, teachers did not usually report gender-related violence; they dismissed it as normal adolescent behavior.</li> </ul>
Botswana	North-west district	560 male and female students were surveyed	Rossetti (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sixty-seven percent of girls reported sexual harassment by teachers.</li> <li>Although Botswana provides 10 years of free education, 11 percent of the girls surveyed were seriously considering</li> </ul>

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
				<p>dropping out due to ongoing harassment by teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twenty percent of girls reported being asked for sexual relations, half of whom complied for fear of reprisal on grades and performance records.</li> </ul>
Brazil	13 state capitals (Manaus, Belém, Fortaleza, Recife, Maceió, Salvador, Goiânia, Cuiabá, Vitória, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Porto Alegre, and Florianópolis) and the Federal District	National-level study using questionnaires and focus group discussions with 33,655 students, 3,099 teachers, and 10,255 students	Abromavay and Das Graças Rua (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A significant number of youth indicated that sexual violence in its many forms affected both girls and boys, but that it was more frequently males that harass females.</li> <li>• Students' descriptions of sexual violence ranged from "games" to rape, but most commonly referred to "jokes" or remarks made by teachers and other students. Most of their descriptions referred to remarks made by males toward females.</li> <li>• Nine to 12 percent of girls from grades 5-12 had experienced sexual violence or rape; knowledge of such happenings made girls fearful of attending school and even caused them to drop out.</li> <li>• Teacher absenteeism was one of the direct consequences of violence perpetrated on teachers. Seven percent of the teachers participating in a Rio de Janeiro study reported that teacher absenteeism was due to school violence. Teachers also tried to transfer to schools where teaching was safer.</li> </ul>
Cameroon	Urban	1,688 secondary school students from 10 institutions; self-administered questionnaire with a 98.7 percent return rate (data not disaggregated by sex)	Mbassa Menick (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual abuse was reported by 16 percent of the sample.</li> <li>• Approximately 15 percent of the respondents reported that incidences of sexual abuse (involving unwanted touching, caressing, and rape) occurred at schools.</li> <li>• Approximately 30 percent of attacks were perpetrated by students (from the victim's own or other schools).</li> <li>• Eight percent of attackers were teachers.</li> </ul>
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa and the regional states of Oromia; Amhara; Tigray; and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples	1,873 young adults between the ages of 18 and 24; qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, including structured interviews, focus group discussions, and story telling/narrative research	African Child Policy Forum (2006d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children had their own way of understanding violence, which differed significantly from adults. While a large proportion of adults considered physical and humiliating punishments as acceptable ways to discipline children, children recognized these types of punishments as excessive and unacceptable.</li> <li>• Children stated that violence was an act that caused harm to them.</li> <li>• Children indicated that while violence was widespread, the</li> </ul>

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
				<p>primary settings for physical and psychological violence were at home and in school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children felt that mild forms of physical and psychological violence were tolerable. They clearly stated, however, that sexual violence and grave physical punishments were objectionable and unacceptable.</li> </ul>
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa and the regional states of Oromia; Amhara; Tigray; and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples	1,873 young adults between the ages of 18 and 24; qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, including structured interviews, focus group discussions, and story telling/narrative research	African Child Policy Forum (2006c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large majority of children did not consider physical punishment as an effective means of disciplining children.</li> <li>• Between 70 and 80 percent of respondents reported experiencing psychological or physical violence at school.</li> </ul>
Ethiopia	Urban and rural	Open-ended interviews and semi-structured focus groups with 26 key stakeholders and organizations	DevTech (2004a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological abuse took place in the home, community, and school, and was carried out by parents, elders, classmates, and teachers. It inspired fear and parents sometimes reacted by taking girls out of school.</li> <li>• Psychological abuse demoralized girls and undermined their confidence to do well in school.</li> <li>• Boys bullied and insulted one another.</li> <li>• Sexual abuse was perpetrated in many forms, such as rape, abduction, and marriage by abduction. Sexual abuse included cross-generational sex and sexual harassment by teachers and other students.</li> <li>• Corporal punishment was the main form of physical abuse experienced by both boys and girls.</li> </ul>
Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda	Urban (capital cities in each country)	Random sample of 500 young women ages 18-24 from each country	African Child Policy Forum (2006b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Uganda, 49 percent of beatings of female students were conducted by male teachers.</li> <li>• A large proportion of the girls surveyed considered the physical and humiliating abuse committed against them as acceptable. In Uganda, 59 percent of the girls who were beaten thought that the explanation given to them was reasonable.</li> </ul>

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
Ghana	Four districts (Cape Coast, Sunyani, Afram Plains, and Bawku)	Mixed methods study using structured interviews, focus group discussions, and record review; stratified random sampling of 490 secondary school students younger than 18 (362 girls and 128 boys), 49 head teachers, and 116 parents	Brown (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was virtually no sexual abuse prevention and response training for school staff, teachers, or students.</li> <li>• Grievance procedures were nonexistent or inadequate.</li> <li>• The Code of Professional Conduct of the Ghana Education Service was not widely known by parents or the general community.</li> </ul>
Ghana and Malawi	Rural and urban	In Ghana, interviews with 48 girls and 27 boys ages 11-17; in Malawi, interviews with 106 female students and 65 male students ages 10-18; focus group discussions	Leach et al. (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abuse by teachers negatively affected the learning environment.</li> <li>• Abusive behavior fed on poverty and ignorance.</li> <li>• Girls, parents, and teachers were ambivalent toward teachers having sex with female students.</li> </ul>
Jamaica	Urban and rural	Document review and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and agency representatives of 20 government organizations, five international donors and organizations, and 15 NGOs	DevTech (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological abuse: Girls experienced verbal abuse in the home, school, and broader community.</li> <li>• Sexual abuse: Children experienced sexual abuse in the home, community, and school. At school, girls experienced sexual harassment, inappropriate touching, and pressure from teachers and peers to engage in sexual relationships. Boys were seen as sexually aggressive, and there was pressure on boys to engage in sexual activity early and often as a means of proving manhood.</li> <li>• Physical abuse: Both boys and girls were physically punished in the home or the school. Children played out this violence in the classroom and schoolyard. Boys were more likely to receive harsh punishment in school. In school, boys were more likely to receive corporal punishment, particularly from female teachers. Boys who did not measure up to masculinity norms or who appeared feminine were also subjected to violence.</li> </ul>
Malawi	National	A nationally representative sample of 4,412 children (two-thirds girls) were interviewed using a quantitative questionnaire	Burton (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost one quarter (24 percent) of Malawian children were scared when walking to school due to a fear of being attacked (71 percent) or bullied (13 percent).</li> <li>• More than one quarter (27 percent) of children personally knew someone who experienced a problem on the way to</li> </ul>

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
				<p>school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One fifth (19 percent) of children had encountered problems on the way to school.</li> </ul>
Malawi	Urban and rural	Document review, open-ended interviews, and semi-structured focus groups with 35 key stakeholders and organizations	DevTech (2004b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological abuse took place in the home, community, and school, and was inflicted by parents, community members, classmates, and teachers. It caused girls to be demoralized and undermined their confidence to do well in school. Verbal sexual abuse by male peers and teachers also demoralized girls.</li> <li>• Bullying was the primary form of psychological abuse affecting boys.</li> <li>• Sexual abuse took place in school, with girls being raped or having their breasts and buttocks touched by peers.</li> <li>• Girls were raped and coerced into sex with teachers through threats or humiliation.</li> <li>• Boys experienced physical abuse in the form of fights.</li> <li>• Both boys and girls were subjected to corporal punishment by teachers.</li> </ul>
Malawi	Machinga District	952 students participated in participatory action and learning workshops; focus group discussions with more than 2,000 participants; 370 key informant interviews	CERT and DevTech (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept of gender-based violence was not clearly understood.</li> <li>• Boys and girls were victims as well as perpetrators of gender-based violence.</li> <li>• Incidents of violence occurred in the classroom, on school grounds, and on the way to and from school.</li> <li>• The main perpetrators of gender-based violence at school were boys and teachers, with certain groups of community members responsible for abuses that occurred while students traveled to and from school.</li> <li>• Boys and girls both indicated that students drop out due to a fear of SRGBV. Boys and girls fear punishments and girls also fear attempted rape and other consequences from refusing teachers' propositions.</li> <li>• Students identified the most common form of abuse in schools as corporal punishment. This included caning, whipping, painful touching, and assigning harsh physical labor (for example, digging a hole for a latrine or uprooting a</li> </ul>

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
				<p>tree stump).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions of safe and unsafe schools were identified through school maps drawn by parents, teachers, and students. In more than half of the schools, girls identified toilets, boreholes, classrooms, and football grounds as areas where they felt unsafe. Similarly, boys identified toilets, boreholes, and the main roads as unsafe places.</li> </ul>
Malawi	Machinga District	Interviews using pre-coded, structured questionnaire with a random sample of 800 boys and girls enrolled in grades 4-8 and 288 teachers from 40 schools participating in the Safe Schools Program	DevTech and CERT (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students reported that verbal abuse and being physically bullied or attacked on the way to school made schools unsafe and unwelcoming. More girls than boys stated that the possibility of sexual molestation and rape made schools unsafe and unwelcoming.</li> <li>• Between 44 and 48 percent of students reported experiencing physical violence at school. Students reported experiencing beating (71 percent), whipping (69 percent), and grabbing (53 percent).</li> <li>• Sixty-one percent of students reported that male teachers were the perpetrators of the most recent whipping incident. Female teachers whipped boys almost twice as much as girls.</li> <li>• Between 30 and 35 percent of students reported being threatened or having experienced verbal abuse in school.</li> <li>• Seventy percent of students reported that the perpetrators of their most recent incidents of verbal abuse were fellow students: male students were named the perpetrators in 47 percent of the incidents and teachers were identified in 23 percent of the incidents.</li> <li>• Students reported several kinds of sexual abuse at school. Slightly more than one percent of students reported rape and 12 percent reported incidents of peeping at private parts. Most, but not all, reports of male teacher misbehavior involved female students, including: having sex with students (96 percent), propositioning students (94 percent), directing sexual comments toward students (91 percent), and sexually touching students (87 percent).</li> </ul>

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
Pakistan	North-west Frontier Province	Participatory learning and action techniques and consultations with 3,582 children, 1,231 parents, and 486 teachers	UNICEF and Save the Children (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender-based violence took place in schools and included teachers making sexual overtures, using abusive language, administering corporal punishment, and requiring students (especially girls) to do chores at teachers' homes.</li> </ul>
Peru	Rural	Non-random sample; qualitative interviews	World Education (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fears of violence against girls while traveling long distances to school, especially while menstruating, led families to keep their daughters at home. This practice contributed to absenteeism, grade repetition, and dropping out of school.</li> </ul>
South Africa	Gauteng	17 focus group discussions with 140 adolescent girls between the ages of 13 and 17 at nine schools	Haffejee (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls experienced a sense of helplessness and did not feel like they had any control or autonomy at school; boys dictated much of their behavior and their movement.</li> <li>Boys' threats of violence and actual violence mimicked adult males' use of such tactics and appeared to be a way to enforce control and force girls into submission.</li> <li>Girls in this study were asked how they felt in the face of this harassment, intimidation, and violence, responding that it made them feel exploited, worthless, alone, scared, sick, powerless, and guilty.</li> <li>The young women interviewed indicated that they had received minimal and, in most instances, no information on gender-based violence.</li> </ul>
South Africa	Urban and semi-rural	Participatory action research methods, including focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and visualization techniques among 81 girls (16 years and older) from three schools and other relevant school personnel	Abrahams, Mathews, and Ramela (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls reported that boys frequented toilet areas (both inside and outside), to pressure the girls into giving them food, cigarettes, and money.</li> <li>Male educators used various strategies and opportunities to gain sexual access to the girls in the study, including sending girls to an empty laboratory or computer room and using the home of an unmarried colleague.</li> <li>While experiences of sexual violence with both male and female students and educators as perpetrators were a major concern of the girls participating in the study, no incidents of sexual harassment were reported to have occurred in the toilets.</li> </ul>

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
South Africa	Rural, greater Durban area	Ethnographic study	Kent (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school space was described as extremely gendered, with separate areas frequented by only men, and very little women-only space.</li> <li>• Girl students had no private space, except the female toilets, which did not provide any privacy due to missing doors. Even female staff had no space that was not intruded upon by male teachers or staff.</li> <li>• The use of corporal punishment was widespread and frequent.</li> </ul>
South Africa		Participatory action research methods, including focus group discussions, mapping, photography, and in-depth interviews among 81 girls (16 years and older) attending three public schools; additional interviews with educators, security personnel, and caretakers	Abrahams (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual harassment in schools was common and the perpetrators were both male educators and male students.</li> <li>• Harassment by male students occurred in all areas of the school environment, and boys used any opportunity to touch and grab girls' breasts and genitalia and often took the girls' money or food, using bullying tactics.</li> <li>• Harassment by male teachers was reported in all three schools. Fear of retaliation prevented girls from identifying teachers who were perpetrators. To avoid incidents, girls never walked around the school alone or near the male staff room. They also avoided certain classes.</li> <li>• Sexual harassment by boys had less impact on the girls than the sexual harassment by teachers.</li> </ul>
South Africa and U.S.	Urban	Comparative study of 261 male and female students from four secondary schools in an urban township outside of Johannesburg and 342 students in a Chicago high school; questionnaire	Fineran, Bennett, and Sacco (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seventy-nine percent of South African and 83 percent of American students reported experiencing sexual harassment by peers in school.</li> <li>• Seventy-eight percent of South African and 73 percent of American students reported sexually harassing peers in school.</li> <li>• Girls and boys in both countries had similar victimization and perpetration rates for sexual harassment and for sexual violence. South African girls and boys perpetrated and experienced more physical violence than American students.</li> <li>• Girls in both countries felt more threatened or upset by sexual harassment and violence than boys. This had a negative effect on the girls' perception of the school environment.</li> </ul>

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
South Africa	KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, and the Western Cape; mainly urban schools	Non-random sample; qualitative human rights documentation of the impact of gender violence on girls' education and health	Human Rights Watch (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many girls who have been victims of sexual violence at school left for some time, changed schools, or dropped out for fear of continued abuse from those who abused them.</li> <li>• Other consequences of sexual violence included an inability to concentrate on schoolwork, negative and confused beliefs about self, exposure to sexually transmitted infections, and unintended pregnancy.</li> </ul>
Southeast and East Asia and the Pacific	Cambodia, Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Philippines, and Vietnam	A total of 4,364 children and adults took part in the research, 76 percent of whom (3,322) were aged between 5 and 18 years	Beazley et al. (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporal punishment was widely used in all eight countries.</li> <li>• There was considerable dissonance between what adults said they think and what children say adults do.</li> </ul>
Tanzania	Rural and urban	Interviews at 42 schools that had guardians and 22 without guardians, involving 1,219 schoolgirls, 42 guardians, 44 female teachers, and 65 head teachers	Mgalla, Boerma, and Schapink (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six percent of all girls in the study reported sexual harassment by teachers as a common problem. Half of the girls in the schools with a guardian program reported this problem to the guardian, while none of the girls in schools without a guardian program consulted a female teacher for such problems.</li> </ul>
Uganda	Rhino refugee camp	Female and male secondary students (sample size and research method not reported)	Mugisha (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ninety percent of female students interviewed reported being harassed by male students, which affected their studies.</li> </ul>
Uganda	Five districts	Stories and opinions of 1,406 children (719 girls and 687 boys) and 1,093 adults (520 women and 573 men) from five districts in Uganda were examined along with questionnaires, focus group discussions, narrative role plays, key informant interviews, and journal writing	Naker (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 28 percent of male and female children experienced physical violence at school.</li> <li>• More than 21 percent of male and female children reported that emotional violence occurred mainly at school.</li> <li>• More than 24 percent of male and female students reported that sexual violence occurred at school.</li> <li>• Children reported learning from this experience that adults with authority abuse their power without consequences.</li> <li>• A majority of male and female students (73.9 percent) encouraged teachers to engage in a dialogue about how to relate more equitably to children.</li> </ul>

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
Uganda	Five districts	Review of school attendance records in 15 selected schools; interviews conducted with 153 primary, secondary, and tertiary institution students; 80 respondents participated in focus group discussions; 235 respondents participated in interviews and self-administered questionnaires (46.8 percent female and 53.2 percent male)	ActionAid International Uganda (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In schools, harassment of girls was common and included: explicit use of sexual language; writing love letters to girls and asking for sex; boys assaulting girls when they refused their advances; sexually-oriented teasing and jokes about gender-specific traits; physical contact and touching of private parts; promising high grades; and sexual remarks about dress.</li> <li>• Sexual harassment of boys by girls also occurred through making sexual advances and contact.</li> <li>• Corporal punishment included caning, slapping, kicking, and child labor.</li> <li>• Twenty-three percent of respondents reported that gender-based violence occurred at school. Teachers were identified as perpetrators by 17 percent of the respondents. Causes of violence included poverty (31 percent), peer pressure (22 percent), ignorance of the rights of children (11 percent), pornography and the media (6 percent), and lack of guidance and counseling in schools (4 percent).</li> <li>• Dropping out of school was identified by 43 percent of the respondents as the main impact of gender-based violence; dropouts due to sexual violence were 55 percent for secondary school girls, 19 percent for primary school girls, and 17 percent at tertiary institutions.</li> </ul>
Zambia	National	Quantitative survey of 2,321 boys and girls from all nine of Zambia's provinces; qualitative survey of 384 children from four provinces; and a study of 225 students from five schools in Lusaka	Soneson (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Though prohibited by law, corporal punishment was still practiced by a large number of teachers in Zambia as a way of disciplining students.</li> <li>• Although the study found no statistically significant difference between boys and girls, there was a small but consistent trend of boys being subjected to corporal or physical punishment more often than girls. Older boys were often given punishments that included heavy labor.</li> <li>• Older girls experienced verbal abuse to a greater extent than boys.</li> </ul>
Zimbabwe		Mixed-methods study; content analysis of one reported case of emotional abuse by a teacher on primary school	Shumba (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One case of emotional abuse was reported between 1990 and 1997 in which a male teacher verbally abused and threatened to impregnate all 25 female students in his class</li> </ul>

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
		students; questionnaire administered to random sample of 300 male and female primary school teachers; and random sample of 150 male and female primary school teacher trainees		<p>of 40.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional abuse took the form of shouting at students, scolding them for mistakes, using vulgar language, public humiliation, and attaching negative labels to students such as ugly, foolish, or stupid.</li> <li>A majority of male and female teacher trainees (67 percent) and male and female teachers (71 percent) believed that it is female teachers who emotionally abuse students.</li> <li>A majority of male and female teacher trainees (85 percent) and male and female teachers (81 percent) believed that teachers' shouting at or scolding students for a mistake was not acceptable.</li> </ul>
Zimbabwe	Rural; six administrative jurisdictions	Review of teacher-perpetrated child sexual abuse cases that occurred from 1990-1997	Nhundu and Shumba (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One hundred and ten cases of child sexual abuse were reported – 50 percent were reported by school authorities and 50 percent by victims.</li> <li>One hundred and eight (98 percent) of the victims were girls; all of the perpetrators were male teachers.</li> <li>Penetrative sex was the most prevalent (70 percent) type of sexual abuse.</li> <li>The modal age for sexual abuse was 12 years, which represented 46 percent of reported cases.</li> <li>Teachers with the least experience (0-5 years), who comprised 63 percent of the study sample, were most likely to sexually abuse school children.</li> <li>Seventy-eight percent of the 32 cases handled by the courts resulted in convictions. Eighty-three percent of all the teachers who were perpetrators were dismissed from the teaching service.</li> </ul>
Zimbabwe	Six provinces	Archival study and content analysis of 212 sexual abuse cases, 33 physical abuse cases, and 1 emotional abuse case perpetrated by teachers in which a formal charge had been brought	Shumba (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Male teachers made up the majority of reported perpetrators. The abuse took the form of sexual intercourse; fondling breasts, buttocks, or thighs; kissing; hugging or caressing; rape and attempted rape; and showing students pornographic material.</li> <li>The majority of perpetrators of physical abuse were male. Physical abuse took the form of beating, caning, whipping, hitting, slapping, punching with fists, and kicking.</li> </ul>

COUNTRY	LOCATION	SAMPLE POPULATION AND METHOD	STUDY CITED	RELEVANT FINDINGS
Zimbabwe	Rural and urban	112 girls and 59 boys, aged 13-15, from three co-ed and one all-girls junior secondary school; in-depth interviews	Leach, Machakunja, and Mandoga (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In mixed-sex schools, 47 percent of students reported that abuse took the form of aggressive sexual behavior, intimidation, and assault by older boys; sexual advances by teachers; and corporal punishment and verbal abuse by male and female teachers.</li> <li>• Younger girls were especially fearful of sexual advances. In the all-girls school, sexual abuse was not perpetrated in school, but rather, around the school.</li> <li>• Fifty percent of girls reported unsolicited sexual contact on the way to school by strangers.</li> <li>• Ninety-two percent of female students reported being propositioned by older men; some of which turned into sugar daddy relationships.</li> </ul>

## ANNEX 2: TOOLS

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