Baseline Study

Ending School Related Gender-Based Violence in Nsanje District, Malawi

Prepared for Concern Worldwide
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Photo credit: The girls photographed at a primary school in Nsanje are not necessarily victims of SRGBV. Their verbal permission was granted to use this photo in the report. Photograph taken by Noelle Rancourt, March 2013.

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April 2013
## Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>COC</td>
<td>Code of Conduct</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>Child Protection Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>District Education Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCDO</td>
<td>District Community Development Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>DHO</td>
<td>District Health Officer</td>
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<td>DSWO</td>
<td>District Social Welfare Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender Based Violence</td>
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<td>GPI</td>
<td>Gender Parity Index</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEST</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEA</td>
<td>Primary Education Advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSLCE</td>
<td>Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent Teachers Association</td>
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<td>SMC</td>
<td>School Management Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRGBV</td>
<td>School Related Gender-Based Violence</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Malawi is considered to have low human development, sitting at 170 out of 186 countries on the Human Development Index. It ranks 124th on the Gender Inequality Index, with a value of 0.57, reflecting gender inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. Malawi is not expected to meet Millennium Development Goals 2, for universal primary education, and MDG 3 on gender equality and women’s empowerment.1

School related gender-based violence is a problem affecting girls and boys in primary schools that has not been quantified. It was articulated as a concern in the 2010 Concluding Observations of the Committee for the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW), including the lack of reporting mechanisms available to victims of violence, and over the persistence of sexual abuse and harassment of girls in schools. In particular, it has urged the Government of Malawi to ensure zero tolerance with regard to sexual abuse and harassment in schools, to ensure perpetrators are appropriately punished, and to strengthen its readmission to school of pregnant girls and mothers. SRGBV is a barrier to the right of girls and boys to safe, quality primary education, it also violates their right to gender equality, and to bodily integrity.

Despite several legislative developments in Malawi toward greater gender equality, there is yet no overarching national framework for action to address gender inequality, and institutions and actors are highly fragmented. Lack of coordination, capacity, and clear roles and responsibilities among dutybearers hinders effectiveness of GBV prevention and response capacity.2

The Ending School Related Gender-Based Violence in Malawi Project

Concern Worldwide has initiated a project called Ending School Related Gender-Based Violence in Malawi to run from 2012 to 2015. It builds upon the previous Concern Worldwide Program, Promoting Equal Access to Quality Primary Education for Girls and Most Vulnerable Children in Nsanje (2010-2013). The new project is funded by the United Nations Trust Fund Against Violence Against Women, and has a budget of USD $1.07M. It will be co-implemented with Theatre for Change.

The goal of the new program is that the right of girls to access quality primary education, free from all forms of violence and discrimination, be actively promoted by schools, communities and the State in Nsanje District.

The expected outcomes of the program are:

1. A safe learning environment for girls is ensured in 17 primary schools in Nsanje
2. Strengthened multi stakeholder coordination for an effective response to and prevention of GBV in schools and communities
3. Strengthened implementation of national commitments to address SRGBV

The Baseline study

1 2010 Malawi Millennium Development Goals Report, p.ix
2 Concern Worldwide, Project Application: Ending School Related Gender-Based Violence in Malawi, United Nations Trust Fund Against Violence Against Women, 5 July 2012
The baseline study is intended to quantify and contextualize indicators at the outset of the project, in order to measure change attributable to the intervention, in 2015. Fieldwork was undertaken in 10 March and 4 April 2013 in Nsanje District. Ten schools were sampled from Concern's 17 project schools. Student and teacher questionnaires were administered to assess knowledge, attitudes and experiences of SRBGV. Focus group discussions were also held with girls and boys in 5 schools. The baseline results can be generalized to those students aged 10 and above, and teachers in the 17 schools involved in the intervention.

Baseline indicators measured by the survey

**Outcome 1: A safe learning environment for girls ensured in 17 schools in Nsanje by 2015**

- 89% of students (90% of females; 89% of males) and 90% of teachers (93% of females; 89% of males) believe that children have the right to say no to teachers who want to touch their breasts, thighs, buttocks of private parts.
- 20% of teachers who witnessed a violation of the Code of Conduct in the past 12 months reported it (50% (2 of 4) females; 16% or (4 of 25) males).
- 29% of students, and 36% of teachers say it is sometimes a girl's fault if a student of teacher touches her private parts (36% of females; 23% of males).
- 40% of students (42% of females; 36% of males) and 34% of teachers believe it is not ok for a girl to refuse to have sex with a boyfriend.
- 56% of students report some form of physical violence on school grounds or on the way to and from school in the past 12 months (53% of females; 59% of males).

**Output 1.2 Child protection and positive discipline guidelines in line with national legislation and international instruments functioning in schools in Nsanje.**

- 67% of students report some form of severe punishment by a teacher in the past 12 months (59% of females; 74% of males).
- 27% of students believe it's ok for teachers to do one or both of the following: whip or assign strenuous physical labour to pupils (24% of females; 30% of males).
- 37% of teachers believe it's ok for teachers to do one or both of the following: whip or assign strenuous physical labour to pupils (38% of females; 37% of males).

**Outcome 2: Strengthened multi-stakeholder coordination for an effective response to and prevention of GBV in schools and communities**

- 46% of students have experienced an incident of sexual violence in the past 12 months, whether verbal or physical (44% of females; 48% of males).
- 93% of teachers, and 77% of students (79% of females; 76% of males) believe that girls should be allowed to return to school after giving birth.
- 33% of teachers, and 28% of students (33% of females; 23% of males) believe that boys and girls are of equal intelligence.
- 95% of teachers believe that men and boys can prevent physical and sexual violence.
78% of students believe that male pupils can prevent physical and sexual violence against women and girls (77% of females; 79% of males)

83% of students believe that male teachers can prevent physical and sexual violence against women and girls (83% of females; 84% of males)

66% of students who experienced some form of violence in the past 12 months said they told someone about it (75% of females; 60% of males)

**Output 2.1 Joint action plan implemented by all stakeholders to prevent, detect, and address SRGBV and increased capacity to respond**

37% of teachers can accurately state where to report a violation of the Code of Conduct

**Outcome 3: Strengthened implementation of national commitments to address SRGBV**

66% of teachers report having administered a severe form of punishment in the past 12 months

**Recommendations**

For initiation in the short term, to be integrated into planned activities:

1. Support the formation of sex-segregated peer support and action groups in schools.
2. Support student-led participatory action research on those areas of research identified in the study,
3. Close gaps in student needs for sexual reproductive health knowledge and male and female condoms.
4. Provide additional skills development in psycho-social counseling for CPCs and teachers, and support a process whereby students select trusted teachers to become school counselors.
5. Provide skills upgrade in positive discipline and for teachers, and recognition of excellence in classroom management and integrity, with the involvement of students.
7. Promote accountability of teachers and parents to students, starting with a dialogue around issues raised in this report.

The remaining recommendations could be considered in the longer term:

8. Engage with MOEST on ways of promoting whistle-blowers and providing protection and strengthening supervision.
10. Address the underlying causes of driving female and male risky sexual behavior through income generation activities for mothers’ groups and girls’ groups.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Gender-based violence is defined as «any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.» The term has become broadly used to refer to «any harm that is perpetrated against a person’s will, and that results from power inequalities that are based on gender roles.»

School related gender-based violence (SRGBV) may manifest itself implicitly, in gender bias in curriculum, staffing and teaching practices and other structural elements of the education system; or more explicitly, in gendered forms of verbal abuse in interactions between peers and teachers, the administration of punishment, early marriage and other harmful traditional practices, and in other physical and sexual forms of violence. Children may experience SRGBV in classrooms, on school premises, in teachers’ homes, on the journey to and from school, or in their home villages. There is evidence that girls are disproportionately affected by gender based violence; and males are more often the perpetrators; however, boys can also be victims of GBV, and girls can also be perpetrators. Furthermore, the extent to which boys and men are affected by GBV is not known. SRGBV is rooted in gender inequality. It affects the dignity and bodily integrity of girls and boys, their right to gender equality, and to access safe, quality education.

Girls and boys do not passively experience violence, but navigate social pressures and risks in their daily lives to protect themselves and to preserve and promote their immediate and future wellbeing.

Malawi is among the least developed countries, sitting at 170 out of 186 countries on the Human Development Index. It ranks 124th on the Gender Inequality Index, with a value of 0.57, reflecting gender inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. The Explanatory Note for Malawi on the 2013 Human Development Indicators summarizes the situation:

Twenty two percent of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 10.4 percent of adult women have reached a secondary or higher level of education compared to 20.4 percent of their male counterparts. For every 100,000 live births, 460 women die from pregnancy related causes; and the adolescent fertility rate is 105.6 births per 1000 women age 15-19.

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3 In 1993, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
5 USAID, Technical Brief: Bringing the Dual Impact of Gender-Based Violence and HIV to an End, July 2012
7 Leach, Fiona and Sara Humphreys, (2007) Gender Violence in Schools: Taking the ‘girls as victims’ discourse forward (to be published in Gender and Development)
Female participation in the labour market is 84.8 percent compared to 81.3 for men.9

Malawi is not expected to meet Millennium Development Goals 2, for universal primary education, and MDG 3 on gender equality and women's empowerment.10

Gender balance in primary school has improved, but a disparity favouring boys remains, with a Gender Parity Index (GPI) value of 0.95.11 The pattern of primary school dropout increases with years in school, with 3% dropping out after standard 1, and 17% dropping out after standard 8.12

Child marriage, while falling, is prevalent, with one out of five teenage girls (20%) age 15-19 in a formal marriage, and another 4% in an informal union.13 Fewer girls nowadays say they have had early sexual initiation, compared with women of older cohorts; 12% of girls 15-19 have had sex at age 15, compared with 22% of women age 45-49 who had done so by that age. In contrast, boys nowadays are more likely to have had sex by age 15 than girls and older male cohorts; 26% boys age 15-19 have had sex at age 15, compared with 10% of men age 45-49.14 The DHS also reports that men are therefore more likely to become sexually active during their teenage years, but also more likely than women to delay marriage, however the reasons for this social change are not explored.15

Figure 1. Map of Malawi, Magellan Graphix, 1997
HIV is prevalent among 11% of adults age 15-49. However, the rate is higher among women (13%) than men (8%). This gendered rate is reflected among the youngest cohort, with 4.2% of women age 15-19 HIV positive, compared to 1.3% of men.

Nsanje is one of 28 districts, and lies in the southernmost tip of the country. It has the highest proportion of women with no education (32.5%, compared with 13% of men in Nsanje and with 18.9% of women nationally). The Southern Region scores slightly above the national average on women’s participation in the decisions that affect her personal circumstances; 20.9% of women participate in 4 out of 4 decisions that affect her personal circumstances (compared to 19.9% nationally), while 16.9% participate in none of them (18.9% nationally).

Nationally, capacity to respond to SRGBV is weak. Corporal punishment is illegal in schools, under Article 19 of the Constitution, which prohibits corporal punishment in connection with any « any proceedings before any organ of the state ». However, in practice, use of corporal punishment continues to be widespread. A Compulsory Education Bill is under discussion, and in February 2013 was referred by the National Assembly to the Parliamentary Committees on Education and Legal Affairs. Following a review of the Education Act 1962 in 2009, the Government had recommended that the revised Act include explicit prohibition of corporal punishment.

Malawi signed onto the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1987, but has yet to domesticate it into Malawian law. There have been important legislative developments including the Domestic Violence Act, and other pending bills including the Gender Equality Bill, the Decease Estates Wills, and Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations, intended to improve the protection and promotion of women’s property rights and safety.

Notwithstanding these efforts, the 2010 Concluding Observations of the Committee for CEDAW express concerns, including the lack of reporting mechanisms available to victims of violence, and over the persistence of sexual abuse and harassment of girls in schools. In particular, it has urged the State Party to ensure zero tolerance with regard to sexual abuse and harassment in schools, to ensure perpetrators are appropriately punished, and to strengthen its readmission to school of pregnant girls and mothers.

There is yet no national framework for action to adress gender inequality, and institutions and actors are highly fragmented. In Nsanje, although GBV pathways exist and encompass institutions such as the police Victim Support Unit, the Department of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health and the District Education Management Office. Lack of coordination, capacity, and of clear roles and responsibilities hinders effectiveness of GBV prevention and response capacity.

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16 DHS Malawi, 2010, p.190
17 Ibid., p. 273
18 Major decisions include own healthcare, major household purchases, purchase for daily household needs, and visits to family or relatives
19 DHS Malawi, 2010, p.229
20 Article 19 (4) Constitution of The Republic of Malawi
22 Not possible to access final content of the Bill.
23 Concern Worldwide, Project Application: Ending School Related Gender-Based Violence in Malawi, United Nations Trust Fund Against Violence Against Women, 5 July 2012
1.2 Ending School Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV Project)

The Ending School Related Gender-Based Violence in Malawi project was initiated in 2012 and will run to 2015. It is funded by the United Nations Trust Fund Against Violence Against Women, and has a budget of USD $1.07M. It will be co-implemented with Theatre for Change.

It builds upon the efforts of the previous Concern Worldwide Program, Promoting Equal Access to Quality Primary Education for Girls and the Most Vulnerable Children in Nsanje (2009-2013), in the Mlonda and Mpatsa education zones. Outcome 2 of the former project sought to “Increase the protection of pupils in targeted zones, with a special focus on safer learning environments for girls.”

The overarching goal of the new program is for the right of girls to access quality education, free from all forms of violence and discrimination, be actively promoted by schools, communities and the State in Nsanje District.

The expected outcomes of the program are:

1. A safe learning environment for girls is ensured in 17 primary schools in Nsanje, through: support for student councils empowered to assist with primary prevention and response, and functioning child protection and positive discipline guidelines in line with national and international standards.

2. Strengthened multi-stakeholder coordination for an effective response to and prevention of GBV in schools and communities, through: joint action plan implemented by all stakeholders to prevent, detect and effectively address SRGBV, combined with behaviour change among men, women, girls and boys to reduce GBV in communities.

3. Strengthened implementation of national commitments to address SRGBV, by: supporting national and local authorities to have access to model approaches and knowledge products for SRGBV, as well as strengthened teaching curricula and methodologies in National Teacher Training Colleges and Police Training Schools.

1.3 Purpose and scope of the baseline

The purpose of the baseline assessment is to develop an understanding of current practices, attitudes, and knowledge affecting the prevalence of SRGBV, and to report on project indicators.

The specific objectives are to:

- Measure forms and prevalence of SRGBV in a sample of schools
- Measure knowledge of students and teachers about child rights and HIV
- Assess attitudes towards gender equality held by girls, boys and teachers
- Explore perceived barriers and opportunities for ending GBV in schools

An endline survey will be conducted in 2015, and the results of the two surveys compared to measure project impact.

The baseline assessment focuses on gender-based violence in and relating to the school environment. It will be beyond the scope of the survey to measure attitudes and experiences of gender-based violence in the wider communities, or carry out a gender analysis of teaching methods and curriculum, or within policing practice.
2. METHODOLOGY

The research design involved quantitative and qualitative aspects. A research protocol was developed and agreed with Concern Worldwide before commencing the study.

2.1 Ethical protocol

The study adhered to ethical principles outlined in the research protocol.

The process of informed ethical consent was managed at several levels. Schools were notified verbally in advance. Parental permission was sought by head teachers, who utilized their networks to verbally inform parents of the purpose and date of the study, granting them the opportunity to exempt their children. On the day of the survey, children were described the purpose and format of the study in their classrooms by pairs of enumerators. It was explained to them that their names would not go on record, nothing in the report would identify them, and that they could agree to withdraw from the study at any time during the day. Enumerators would then ask students if they wanted to help with the study, before commencing sampling. This was then repeated for every child who chose to participate, before commencing the survey, to ensure comprehension.

Concerns that the research process could cause mental stress to students forced to relive traumatic experiences, or who feared reprisals from perpetrators, were mitigated by ensuring clear procedures for informed consent, privacy and the friendly and frank approach of enumerators. Child Protection Committees at each school were also briefed and addressed children in each participating class, to reiterate their role and willingness to talk if any child should require adult support after the survey. This exercise therefore also helped to reinforce, among CPCs and the student body, the role of CPCs in a very practical way. However, as is explained below, it was found during the course of this exercise that in many cases CPCs lacked the necessary skills to play an effective and child-friendly role. Finally, research of this nature with children in particular was justified on the basis that harm being caused to students was much less than that caused by the existing prevalence of SRGBV.

The ethical closure to the study involved a debriefing meeting with the research team, including Primary Education Advisors. Alarming findings, and issues students specifically asked the team to take up with the administration were discussed.24 Acting in the best interest of the child, PEAs committed, within the obligations of confidentiality, to take up emergent issues at head teacher meetings the following month. Further recommendations are made at the end of this report.

2.2 Quantitative research

Student sampling

Nsanje District has a total of 107 primary schools, and a student population of 73,273 (48% girls; 52% boys)25. The program targets 17 of these schools, and reaches nearly

24 The issues students specifically requested to report to PEAs were A) theft of school materials including exercise books and porridge, and B) excessive use of suspensions as a punishment. Concern Worldwide Program Staff who were present at the meeting committed to follow up with PEAs on the outcome of meetings with head teachers on the issues raised.

25 Based on estimated from 2011 EMIS data
12,000 students. Data collection took place over five days. Ten of the 17 targeted schools were randomly selected to participate in this study.

At each school, 15 boys and 15 girls were randomly selected, creating a total sample size of 300. This ensures a 90% confidence level with 5% error.

Due to the high rate of absenteeism, students were selected on the day of the study. For ethical reasons, and in order to capture the cohort most likely to experience sexual violence, and to be able to take part in a standard survey process, only students 10 years of age or older, and from Standards 4-8 were eligible for selection.

Teacher sampling

Nsanje has a population of 997 primary school teachers, of which 766 (77%) are men and 231 (23%) are women. Each school has an estimated 9 teachers, for an estimated total of 153 teachers in the 17 program schools. We aimed to interview up to 9 teachers at each of the 10 selected schools, ensuring a mix of both male and female participants.

Survey and team preparation

The survey was developed by Concern Malawi Education Program staff, in collaboration with the consultant, based on the USAID Safe Schools Program survey questionnaire.

Enumerators from Nsanje District were selected to reduce language barriers, and to provide a local perspective on findings. Two survey teams collected all the survey data, composed of two male survey leaders from Concern, and six enumerators (4 female and 2 male). Two days were allocated for training of enumerators. Survey translation into Chichewa and pre-testing were incorporated into their training.

Research management

To meet a demanding data collection schedule, five teams worked simultaneously: Two administered surveys in two schools at a time, one administered focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with head teachers, one collected school statistics, and another managed data input.

The day started with introductions to the head teacher, followed by the CPC. Enumerators, team leaders and CPC members would then go class by class, from Standard 4 to 8, briefing students on the purpose and process of research, and sampling among those interested students, by putting names into a hat or bag. Interviews would then be held, one to one, in secluded areas on the grounds of the school. Team leaders would carry out most, or all of the head teacher interviews, and also collect the completed surveys. Meanwhile the qualitative team (at one school only) would assemble students sampled for focus groups, and carry out discussions away from the school. At the end of these sessions, they would interview the head teacher.

Daily briefings were held with both school teams, as well as the data entry enumerators, to manage data collection and entry issues, and to share and seek input on the direction of the qualitative research process.

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26 The survey was translated into Chichewa, which is widely used, rather than into Sena, the language spoken on a daily basis by students of the area, in order for Concern Worldwide program staff to maintain the quality assurance.
2.3 Qualitative research

The qualitative focus group process drew upon child-friendly methodology outlined in UNICEF’s Participatory Assessment Tool, as well as some of the questions found in the USAID Safe Schools Program Baseline.

Focus groups were used to triangulate surveys, and to provide a greater understanding of concerns, agency, and dynamics. Discussions with sex-segregated groups of no more than 10 students were carried out in five schools. Simultaneous translation was provided to allow the consultant to select and adjust questions based on feedback from the participants.

Given the sensitive nature of the topic, the quality of discussions depended upon the comfort level of students in the small group setting. To some extent, we were able to contribute to this environment through skilled facilitation, using an interactive and flexible process to encourage girls and boys to talk more freely. Participatory methods were used to create a positive group dynamic and to help put children at ease discussing the topic: these included varying combinations of warmers and energizers such as singing and dancing, clapping and stone games, and activities involving maps, story telling, acting and discussion.

Substantively discussions were initiated by asking students about what makes a school a safe place, or asking them represent typical examples of SRGBV through stories or maps. These reference points were then used to direct discussion and to probe into certain areas of importance.

Students were asked about their own experiences, but frequently also spoke of the experiences of other students. Students who shared their own experiences were also engaged on their feelings and responses to a given situation. An important aspect of facilitation was to build a supportive rapport between students. Those students who shared personal experiences undertook a personal risk; it was therefore critical to establish norms of emotional support within these groups, by publicly recognizing the courage of students to speak openly and honestly about sensitive experiences. This technique was used with success in several groups, and the resulting group dynamic was positive and action-oriented.

Interpreting silences was another critical facilitation technique, which guided the length and direction of discussions. A question could meet silence in a group because, despite their interest in listening and discussing, students were afraid to initiate discussion. Silence could also denote a matter that students were not prepared to discuss. Interest, tensions, fear and restiveness were watched for in the body language of students to guide the process.

Because there was no time for action planning, an ethical closure to discussions involved a shift towards positive experiences, to avoid a scenario where students left the group feeling unsettled by the discussion. Students were given space to talk about things in their day-to-day lives that make them happy and why, and about their hopes for the future. They also always had the chance to ask questions and seek information.
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Profile of schools

Two Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), who supervise schools for Mlonda and Mpatsa Educational Zones, respectively, assisted the research team to collect school statistics. Complete school records were available for 7 of the 10 schools we attended, and headcounts were taken at 9 schools.

Data on enrolment was provided by Concern Worldwide, recorded for September 2012 (Annex 2). It shows a steady decline of enrolment as years progress, with a steeper decline for girls in these schools.

Figure 2. Enrolment for 10 schools in Nsanje District, 2012

PEAs collected headcount data at each school, for each standard, on the day of data collection. In other words, headcounts were taken for every weekday. Attendance rates were found to be as low as 25%, with an average headcount of 45% (45% for boys, and 47% for girls).
Figure 3. Average attendance (headcount) for 9 schools in Nsanje District, April 2013

Data was also collected on Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE), which is the exam that students sit at the end of primary in order to determine their eligibility for entry into secondary school. Data was not available to determine the percent who were qualified to sit, but of those who did sit, these are the pass rates.

Figure 4. Students who sat 2012 PSLCE at 7 schools, Nsanje District
Out of 419 enrolled students in standard 8, a total of 396 students sat the exam in 2012 (at the 7 schools for which data is available). Of these, 121 (30%) were girls and 281 (70%) were boys. Only 191 passed; 35 girls (28.9% of those who sat) and 156 boys (55.5% of those who sat). In contrast, nationally, 61.8% of girls who wrote the exam passed, and 74.9% of boys who wrote the exam passed. (See Annex 4 for data table). Gender discrepancies in pass rates for most schools are stark, as much as 44 percentage points in one school.

Figure 5. PSLCE pass rate for 7 schools in Nsanje District, 2012

PEAs recorded a total of 111 teachers at the 9 schools, 86 (77%) male and 25 female (23%). This gender balance falls well below the national average for 2011, where female teachers make up 47.5% of teachers, but above average for Nsanje District in 2011, where female teachers make up 23% of the staff body.

3.2 Profile of survey respondents

The survey collected data from 293 students, from 10 different schools. Twenty five to 30 students participated from each school. Fifty four percent of respondents were male and 46% were female. Students ranged in age from 10-21; the average age of students was 14. Only 23% of the student respondents are members of school clubs (28% of females; 18% of males). Of these, 30% are members of the AIDS Toto Club, 10% are members of girls clubs, 1% from wildlife clubs, 2% from debating clubs and 17% from other clubs, including football, netball, health and sanitation, student council and youth clubs.
Table 1. Student respondents by school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chigumukire</td>
<td>30 (10.4%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td>17 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chirimba</td>
<td>29 (10.0%)</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
<td>20 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khope</td>
<td>27 (9.4%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td>14 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mgoza</td>
<td>25 (9%)</td>
<td>14 (10%)</td>
<td>11 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misamvu</td>
<td>30 (10.4%)</td>
<td>15 (11%)</td>
<td>15 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpatsa</td>
<td>29 (10%)</td>
<td>14 (10%)</td>
<td>14 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mthawira</td>
<td>29 (10.1%)</td>
<td>15 (11%)</td>
<td>14 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndiola</td>
<td>28 (10.7%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td>15 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyamithuthu</td>
<td>30 (10.4%)</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td>17 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phokera</td>
<td>30 (10.4%)</td>
<td>15 (11%)</td>
<td>15 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>287 (100%)</td>
<td>134 (100%)</td>
<td>153 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Age distribution of student survey respondents

![Age distribution of student survey respondents](image)

A total of 63 surveys were carried out with teachers; eight heads and 55 teachers. Male teachers make up 79% of the total (49), and female teachers, 21% (13) with an average age of 36. Only thirty six percent of teachers are qualified teachers, 20% are Open Distance Learning Teachers (ODL), 6% are Volunteer Teachers.28

27 Discrepancies in the total count of students are due to minor errors in data collection (skipped questions) and data entry, and are not large enough to affect overall percentages.

28 **Qualified Teachers** have a Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) and have successfully completed a two year pre-service professional training at a primary school teachers training college. **Open Distance Learning** teachers are those who receive in-service training at college during holidays, completing assignments while schools are in session. Some are already also qualified primary school teachers. **Volunteer Teachers** are non-MSCE holders, some of whom have attempted MSCE before. They have no teaching training at all. Some may have basic training provided mostly by NGOs.
3.3 Forms and Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence

3.3.1 Corporal punishment, negative discipline and exploitation of labour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67% of students report some form of severe punishment by a teacher in the past 12 months (59% of females; 74% of males).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66% of teachers report having administered a severe form of punishment in the past 12 months (38% of females; 73% of males)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27% of students believe it’s ok for teachers to do one or both of the following: whip or assign strenuous physical labour to pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19% of teachers (15% of females or 2/14; 20% of males or 10/14) believe it’s ok to whip a boy or girl to maintain discipline at school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Different types of punishments were divided into three categories: mild, moderate, and severe. The definitions for the types of punishments can be found in Table 2.

Table 3. Definitions of levels of punishment used in the analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mild</th>
<th>Withdrawal of privilege or support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal from sports or cultural activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment of additional school work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being asked to stay after class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate restrictions of movement (e.g. being asked to sit or stand in a corner for a not unreasonable length of time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Addition of regular chores, excluding heavy labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>Denial of basic physical needs (e.g. toilet, food, water)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restriction of movement for an inordinate length of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any form of corporal punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any form of public insult or shaming by the teacher, or by students on behalf of the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any strenuous or heavy labour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were asked about the kind of punishments they have received at school in the past 12 months. Results of student responses in regard to frequency of types of punishments are found in Table 3. Eighteen percent of students reported they have been punished in the past 12 months by mild forms of negative discipline, such as the withdrawal of privilege or support, 34% of students have been punished with mild restriction of movement and the vast majority, 60%, say they have been assigned additional chores, such as sweeping, mopping classrooms, working in the school garden or fetching water.

In the past 12 months, 67% of students report some form of severe punishment by a teacher (59% of females; 74% of males). Twenty percent of these students have been
punished through denial of basic physical needs, 24% by unreasonable restriction of movement, 53% by corporal punishment, 38% by insult or public shaming, and 35% by strenuous or heavy physical labour (Table 3).

Table 4. Frequency of different types of punishment experienced by students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of punishment</th>
<th>Percent of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>18% withdrawal of privilege or support, or detention (19% of girls; 18% of boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>34% mild restriction of movement (26% of girls; 41% of boys) 60% assigned additional chores (59% of girls; 62% of boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>20% denial of basic physical needs (17% of girls; 23% of boys) 24% unreasonable restriction of movement (18% of girls; 29% of boys) 35% heavy or strenuous labour (28% of girls; 41% of boys) 38% insult or public shaming (36% of girls; 39% of boys) 53% corporal punishment (44% of girls; 61% of boys)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The disproportionate and unfair nature of some punishments was a heavy concern to students in almost all schools. Refusing students school meals because of lateness was a particularly dismaying punishment for hungry students in one school, especially in cases when their porridge is thrown away. Being told to return home because one's trousers are dirty is an especially humiliating and discouraging experience for students who may only have one pair of clothing.

A form of punishment not captured in the questionnaire, but which emerged as a major concern in focus group discussions, were suspensions. Suspensions were frequently mentioned to be a common punishment for lateness and absenteeism, regardless of whether these were legitimate or unavoidable. The resulting missed class time is often doubled. Suspensions were a grave concern in particular to senior male students, who described how teachers frequently disciplined their colleagues by telling them to stay home until exam time. This practice causes a significant degree of stress to students studying for exit exams to secondary school, who will miss classes and study group opportunities during this period.

Heavy labour punishments also have the effect of causing students to miss essential class time. Numerous stories emerged during focus groups with boys about being told to carry bricks or build latrines for lateness, absence or offence. In one case a boy who missed a day when he was sick had to carry bricks and was not finished with the job until class was finished. In another, in a different school, a boy who wrote a love letter to a girl was made to carry 200 bricks.

Other chores assigned routinely or as punishment can be time consuming, or concerning to student health and safety. Small girls in one school talked of being made to sweep and collect the defecation from vacant classrooms with their bare hands (no soap observed in school latrines). In the one school where this issue was discussed, girls estimated they spend three out of eight segments of the school day on chores, while senior boys in focus group estimated only two.
In some schools boys and girls both believed that boys are punished more harshly than girls. A boy in a focus group observed: «Teachers sometimes give lighter punishments to girls with big breasts.»

**Teacher experiences of administering punishments**

Teachers were asked which punishments they tend to administer to students when attempting to enforce discipline in the class or school.

Forty four percent (27) of teachers have reportedly administered some form of corporal punishment in the past 12 months. These include 31% (4) of female teachers, and 47% (23) of male teachers.

There is some gender bias in the administration of punishments against boys, cutting across all forms of punishments, but especially with regard to heavy labour.

**Mild punishments:** Twenty three percent of teachers administer mild forms of punishment to discipline students, such as withdrawal or support and detention.

Fifty seven percent of teachers say they rarely administer mild punishments (1-2 a year), 36% do so often (3-4 months), and 7% do so very often (1-4 times a month).

Thirty six percent of all teachers who administer this punishment (14) say they punish boys only with moderate restriction of movement, while 64% administer this punishment to both boys and girls.

**Moderate punishments:** Sixty nine percent of teachers have applied some form of moderate punishment. Specifically, 36% apply moderate restrictions of movement, and 66% increase normally assigned chores.

Eighty six percent of all teachers who apply moderate restrictions of movement as punishment (22 in total), do so to both boys and girls. Only 9% (2 teachers said they punish only boys this way, and only 5% (1 teacher) said only girls. Ninety seven percent of all teachers assigning additional chores to punish students (35 in total) say they apply this punishment to both boys and girls equally.

**Severe punishments:** Sixty six percent of teachers (38% of females; 73% of males) report having administered a severe form of punishment in the past 12 months. Five percent of teachers say they have denied basic physical needs as a punishment, and 7% have restricted movement by locking students in a classroom or other confined space for an inordinate length of time. Forty four percent of teachers report having administered a form of corporal punishment in the past 12 months (31% of females; 47% of males). The highest proportion of teachers (48%) said they have assigned heavy, strenuous labour to students, followed by 26%, who say they have whipped or caned students, and 18% who have grabbed hair, and pinched or twisted earlobes.

Gender bias in the administration of severe punishments is most visible with heavy labour, where 21% (6) to boys only, in contrast to 79% (22) apply this form of punishment to both boys and girls. Cases of bias in punishment towards boys were also reported by teachers who reported administering corporal punishment. Three out of eleven teachers (27%) who reported having grabbed students (pulling hair, pinching, twisting ear lobes), said they only do this to boys. One out of five teachers (20%) who reported pushing or tripping students said he/she only did this to boys. Two out of
sixteen teachers (13%) who reported whipping or caning students said they only do this to boys.

### Table 5. Frequency of different types of punishment administered by teachers in the past 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of punishment</th>
<th>Percent of teachers reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mild</strong></td>
<td>23% withdrawal of support (38% of females; 19% of males)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 36% of teachers apply to boys only; 64% apply to both boys and girls equally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate</strong></td>
<td>36% mild restriction of movement (31% of females; 38% of males)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 86% of teachers apply to both boys and girls; 9% (2) punish only boys and 5% (1) punish only girls this way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66% assigned additional chores (62% of females; 67% of males)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 97% of teachers who assign additional chores to punish do so to both boys and girls equally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severe</strong></td>
<td>66% (38% of females or 5 of 13; 73% of males or 36 of 49) report having administered a severe form of punishment in the past 12 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5% (2) apply denial of basic physical needs (0% of females; 6% of males) <em>No gender bias in administration</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6% unreasonable restriction of movement (15% of females; 4% of males) <em>No gender bias in administration</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48% heavy or strenuous labour (15% of females; 56% of males) <em>Gender bias: 79% (22) apply to both boys and girls; 21% (6) to boys only</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44% corporal punishment (31% of females; 47% of males)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 18% grabbing (pulling hair, pinching, twisting ear lobes) (15% females; 19% of males) <em>Gender bias: 73% (8) apply to both boys and girls; 27% (3) to boys only</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 8% pushing or tripping (8% of females; 8% of males) <em>Gender bias: 80% (1) apply to both boys and girls; 20% (1) to boys only</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 26% whipping or caning (23% of females; 27% of males) <em>Gender bias: 88% (14) apply to both boys and girl; 13% (2) to boys only</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 8% beating or fighting (hitting, slapping, punching, kicking) (8% of females; 8% of males) <em>No gender bias in administration.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In one school, students in both boys’ and girls’ focus groups explained that all the students in their class had been whipped by four different teachers that very morning. One girl, we were told, simply left the school crying. The teachers had been trying to determine the identity of the student who had written obscene language in the latrines.
At the end of the line up of teachers stood one teacher who would record the names of culprits volunteered by students, after they had been whipped repeatedly.

**Teacher exploitation of child labour for personal purposes**

Teachers were asked whether they sometimes ask pupils for assistance with chores outside the classroom. Overall, 39% of teachers reported sometimes asking students for assistance with chores outside of school (46% of females; 37% of males). They most commonly requested assistance with fetching water. Twenty five percent of teachers (15) said they ask students to fetch water for them, 5% (3) said they ask students to cook or clean for them, 3% (2) said they ask students to fetch firewood for them for their home use.

**Attitudes towards corporal punishment and negative discipline**

There is a high level of tolerance of corporal punishment by both students and teachers. Among students in particular, attitudes reflect a slight gender bias towards the greater acceptability of punishment of boys. Twenty percent of students believe it is ok for teachers to whip boys, whereas 16% believe it is ok for teachers to whip girls. In contrast, the same proportion of teachers (16%) believe it is ok to whip a boy as believe it is ok to whip a girl.

Table 6. Attitudes toward corporal punishment and negative discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions on punishments</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is ok for teachers to whip boys to maintain discipline in school or class</td>
<td>20%(60)</td>
<td>18%(24)</td>
<td>22%(35)</td>
<td>16%(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is ok for teachers to whip girls to maintain discipline in school or class</td>
<td>16%(47)</td>
<td>12%(16)</td>
<td>20%(31)</td>
<td>16%(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is ok for teachers to punish boys with hard labour, such as digging latrines</td>
<td>15%(45)</td>
<td>15%(20)</td>
<td>15%(24)</td>
<td>24%(15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is ok for teachers to punish boys with hard labour, such as digging latrines</td>
<td>6%(17)</td>
<td>6%(8)</td>
<td>6%(9)</td>
<td>16%(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree that boys and girls should receive the same punishments at school</td>
<td>53%(157)</td>
<td>51%(70)</td>
<td>54%(84)</td>
<td>9%(5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is lower tolerance of heavy physical labour as a punishment, though this reflects a greater level of gender bias. Fifteen percent of students believe it is ok for teachers to ask boys to do hard physical punishments, such as digging pit latrines, whereas only 6% believe it is ok for teachers to punish girls in this way. There is no major difference in perceptions by sex. Similarly, 24% of teachers think it is ok to punish boys by digging latrines, 16% say it's ok for girls to dig latrines.

Teachers, however, expressed more strongly the opinion that boys and girls should receive the same punishment at school. Fifty three percent of students disagree that boys and girls should receive the same punishments at school, compared to only 9% of teachers.
**The limits of student obedience**

Thirty five percent of students believe they do not have the right to disagree with teachers. A substantially higher proportion of boys (40%) say they don't have the right to disagree with teachers, compared to 29% of girls.

As much as 34% of teachers disagree with the statement « students have the right to disagree with teachers », reflecting the high prevalence of authoritarian notions of classroom management that seek to control student behaviour.

Six percent of teachers agreed with this statement that students have the right to insult teachers, reflecting a level of confusion with the intersection of the rights of students and teachers.

**Discipline challenges**

In order to better ascertain the barriers to creating a protective environment for students, teachers were asked about the challenges they may encounter in enforcing discipline. Teachers were given statements describing the use of corporal punishment, combined with their level of difficulty in maintaining discipline and asked to identify the statement best describing their position. Thirty two percent of teachers agreed with the statement « I never use corporal punishment and I sometimes struggle to maintain discipline among students »; 29% identified with the statement « I sometimes use corporal punishment to maintain discipline among students »; 21% agreed with « I never use corporal punishment and I have no problem maintaining discipline among students »; while 13% agreed that « I never use corporal punishment and I frequently struggle to maintain discipline among students » (Table 7).

**Table 7. Frequency of discipline challenges according to teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Challenges</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I never use corporal punishment and I frequently struggle to maintain discipline among students</td>
<td>14% (2)</td>
<td>13% (6)</td>
<td>13% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never use corporal punishment and I sometimes struggle to maintain discipline among students</td>
<td>29% (4)</td>
<td>34% (16)</td>
<td>32% (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never use corporal punishment and I have no problem maintaining discipline among students</td>
<td>14% (2)</td>
<td>23% (11)</td>
<td>21% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes use corporal punishment to maintain discipline among students</td>
<td>29% (4)</td>
<td>28% (13)</td>
<td>29% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>7% (1)</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
<td>3% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7% (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (14)</td>
<td>100% (47)</td>
<td>100% (62)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Head teachers initially downplayed the use of corporal punishment in schools, and in some schools blatantly denied its obvious use, as well as the use of suspensions for minor infractions. As this head teacher explained:

*No offence merits whipping. The Education Policy (forbids it). For a serious offence, e.g. abusive language to a teacher or student, the punishment would be to call the*
discipline committee and SMC to counsel that learner in the presence of parents and the punishment would be slashing within the school campus... A typical punishment for latecoming is extra class work given at the end of the day... If the student is absent for a legitimate reason, the only protocol is to make a follow up. If they are sick, we don’t punish them.

All head teachers, however, would later admit the occasional, limited use of whipping and hitting, in the context of an overall considerable reduction. On reflection, the view emerged that teachers lack alternative techniques for disciplining students.

A significant challenge of adapting to new methods of discipline is the mindset that the role of the school is to institutionalize students to become responsible and obedient, through control of their behaviour. One head teacher explained his perspective:

He [the student] cannot change his behaviour. It's a matter of shaping the child to do what you want.

A number of teachers and head teachers also expressed the concern that disproportionate emphasis on the rights of students would threaten their sense of responsibility, as is captured in the following statements:

[There is a] misunderstanding of the human rights towards the learners. If he or she comes late? They can say ‘I have a right to education.’

As you can see, the learners of these days are taking democracy as a strange thing. They do what they want. [Teachers] spoil them. Most of the time teachers leave learners to relax themselves.

3.3.2 Physical violence

Key indicator

56% of students report some form of physical violence (mild, moderate or severe) on school grounds or on the way to and from school in the past 12 months (53% of females; 59% of males)

Students were asked if they had ever experienced specified acts of physical violence.

Overall, 56% of students report some form of physical violence on school grounds or on the way to and from school in the past 12 months (53% of females; 59% of males).

Different types of physical violence were divided into two categories: mild, and severe. The definitions for the types of punishments can be found in Table 8.
Sixty nine percent of students said they have experienced a form of mild violence. Of these, 92% had had this experience in the past 12 months. Sixty eight percent of males and 70% of females report an experience of mild physical violence. These rates were highest for schools in Misamvu (83%), Mpatsa (79%), Nyamithuthu and Phokera (77% respectively). Eighty six percent of these mild incidents was perpetrated by males.

Forty six percent of students say they experienced moderate forms of violence, 90% in the past 12 months. Forty nine percent of males, and 42% of females report an experience of moderate violence. Highest reports of moderate violence came from schools in Mpatsa (62%), Phokera (60%) and Mthawira (52%). Eighty-eight percent of these moderate incidents were perpetrated by males.

Thirty nine percent of students have experienced a severe form of violence, 96% in the past 12 months. Thirty five percent of females, and 42% of males report an experience of severe physical violence. Severe violence was reported most at schools in Nyamithuthu (53%), followed by Mpatsa (48%) and Misamvu (47%). Ninety two percent of these severe incidents were perpetrated by males.

The most common perpetrators of this violence were teachers (48%), followed by fellow pupils (20%) and 20% by other perpetrators not connected to the school. In general, males committed 69% of all physically violent incidents.

### Table 8. Definitions of levels of physical violence used in this analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percent of students reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mild</strong></td>
<td>Minor acts of aggression (e.g. pinching, pushing, grabbing and shoving)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sudden angry or violent outbursts or brief reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate</strong></td>
<td>More lasting and hurtful violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beating, hitting, slapping, spanking, tripping and kicking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excluding the use of weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severe</strong></td>
<td>Intended to inflict pain and fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of weapons (e.g. whips, canes or other objects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other forms of torturous abuse (e.g. kneeling on a sharp surface, or holding heavy objects for a long period)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 9. Frequency of forms of physical violence experienced by students in the past 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of physical violence</th>
<th>Percent of students reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>69% of students report an experience of mild violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 92% of these had this experience in the past 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Experienced by 68% of males, and 70% of females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 86% of reported incidents were perpetrated by males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>46% of students report an experience of moderate violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 90% of these had this experience in the past 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Experienced by 49% of males, and 42% of females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 88% of reported incidents were perpetrated by males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>39% of students reported an experience of severe violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 96% of these had this experience in the past 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Experienced by 35% of females, and 42% of males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 92% of reported incidents were perpetrated by males</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students discussed multiple forms of physical violence in focus groups.

Corporal punishment by teachers was raised as a major concern by students in most schools. Extreme cases described by boys involved schools where teachers are said to routinely inflict cruelty, pain and fear on students, such as banging heads together or against walls, placing pens between the fingers and pressing fingers together, pulling cheeks and lips together, forcing students to walk over sharp surfaces on their knees, and in one case, a teacher injuring a boy's private parts. Blood and injury is sometimes an outcome of corporal punishment. Several male students in different schools talked about lasting bruises and cuts as a result of being whipped by teachers. In a case from previous academic year, a student's ears were said to have been made to bleed as a result of hard slapping by the teacher.

Fighting among students that takes place on school grounds and in classrooms can be particularly violent when students are inadequately supervised. In on large and crowded school, students described violent and sometimes bloody fights between students occurring over desks, porridge and at the water pump. Understaffing may be an issue in the maintenance of discipline in largely populated schools such as this one.

The walk to and from school holds a high risk of violence, particularly for girls in certain schools. A common scenario involves a boy asking a girl to meet him after school. Refusal results in the threat of a beating, and frequently in an ambush and actual beating. In one school, we were told that beatings can result in serious injuries: «sometimes loosing a tooth, bruises on the leg, swelling on lips, blood from the nose». The injuries described were said to have been inflicted on two girls in the current academic year. The shared language references used by girls in multiple schools to describe these scenarios suggest the existence of a learned and systemic enactment of masculine expectations by boys.

### 3.3.3 Psychological violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65% of teachers (86% of females; 57% of males) and 58% of students (56% of females; 60% of males) say teachers choose boys and girls equally to answer questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36% of teachers (64% of females; 26% of males) and 47% of students (49% of females; 45% of males) believe boys and girls receive positive comments from teachers with equal frequency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 % of teachers (31% of females; 20% of males) and 33% of students (33% of females; 31% of males) believe boys and girls receive equal numbers of negative comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26% of teachers (29% of females; 26% of males) and 51% of students (51% of females; 52% of males) believe boys and girls participate equally in class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Psychological violence is another form of gender-based violence that may result in anxiety, depression or trauma. The use of negative discipline by teachers, through verbal abuse such as ridicule and humiliation, undermines the integrity or gender identity of a person, this can affect a student's self-worth, their peer relations, and even discourage them from attending school.
In one school, boys, gave examples of humilitating and highly gendered forms of insults and verbal abuse by teachers that have undermined them in front of their peers and caused them undue stress.

«Teachers make jokes about learners...they don’t encourage [us] to learn...For example, some learners are poor. [Teachers will say] ‘You, you wanted to show off and you only have one shirt and one pair of trousers! ’ [or towards girls] ‘Ah, you! Just go and get married.’»

«In my case, I arrived late, and the teacher said ‘Why were you late? As if you have things at home. Were you late because you were driving cars? Or is it that you fly at night like a witch?!’...I feel demotivated and embarassed, because friends laugh at me even at break time.»

**Discrimination and participation in the classroom**

Psychological violence may also take the form of more latent patterns of discrimination. Students and teachers were asked to describe the status of gender relations in the classroom, revealing patterns of discrimination.

Only 58% of students (56% of females; 60% of males) believe teachers choose boys and girls equally to answer questions, compared to 65% of teachers (86% of females or 12 of 14; 57% of males or 27 of 47) who say boys and girls are chosen with equal frequency. However the remainder of students are split fairly evenly in their perceptions, whether teachers are biased towards girls or boys, with respondent sex having not great influence on their perspective. More teachers perceive discrimination against girls, with 26% saying boys are chosen more often and 10% saying girls are.

Most students (47% - 49% of females; 45% of males) believe boys and girls receive positive comments from teachers with equal frequency, in contrast to 36% of teachers (64% of females or 9 of 14; 26% of males or 12 of 46) who think this. Most teachers (44%) believe boys are favoured with positive comments, while 26% of students believe girls are favoured and 23% believe boys are favoured.

With regard to negative comments and insults by teachers, each sex feels it is most victimized, with 25% of girls believing girls receive more negative comments, and 39% of boys believing boys receive more negative comments. Overall, 33% of students believe boys and girls receive equal numbers of negative comments, 28% believe boys receive more negative comments and 19% believe girls do, and 28% don't know about any difference. In contrast, 41% of teachers say girls get more negative comments, 31% say boys do. Only 22% of teachers (31% of females or 4 of 13; 20% of males or 9 of 45) say both equally.

Most students (51% - 51% of females; 52% of males) believe boys and girls participate equally in class, 31% believe girls participate more, and 17% believe boys do. In contrast, only 26% of teachers (29% of females or 4 of 14; 26% of males or 12 of 47) say both girls and boys participate equally, while 60% say boys and 13% say girls participate more.

One form of systemic discrimination highly concerning to male students that was voiced in a focus group in one school was the issue of male students in Standard 8, in particular, being discouraged from repeating a year if they failed their exit exams, essentially denying them the opportunity to graduate and be eligible for secondary.
3.3.4 Sexual violence

**Key indicators**

| 45% of students have experienced an incident of sexual violence in the past 12 months, whether mild, moderate or severe (42% of females; 48% of males) |
| 89% of students (90% of females; 89% of males) and 90% of teachers (93% of females; 89% of males) believe that children have the right to say no to teachers who want to touch their breasts, thighs, buttocks of private parts |

Different types of sexual violence were divided into two categories: mild, and severe. The definitions for the types of punishments can be found in Table 10.

Table 10. Definitions of levels of sexual violence used in this analysis

| Mild | Uncomfortable or embarassing sex-related situations (e.g. obscene remarks or gestures, unwelcome jokes) Being made to watch pornography or sexual acts |
| Moderate | Inappropriate bodily contact with sexual overtones (e.g. brushing, pinching, inappropriate kissing, fondling or touching) Sex-related situations with a physical manifestation that make a person feel uncomfortable, violated or afraid (e.g. being forced to undress, or being forced to touch, kiss or caress someone in a sexual way) |
| Severe | Unwanted sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal or oral) Physically forced or socially pressured May involve a body part or a foreign object May be committed by one or more people |

Forty four percent of students say they have experienced a mild form of sexual violence, and for 92% of these it happened in the past 12 months. Thirty six percent of females and 46% of males have experienced mild sexual violence, revealing a highly prevalent practice of sexual harassment. Eighty seven percent of teachers who have witnessed these kinds of incidents believe most sexual comments and jokes are directed at girls.

Moderate forms of sexual violence are understood to cross the line of person's bodily integrity. Seventeen percent of students say they have experienced a moderate form of sexual violence, 94% in the past 12 months. Fourteen percent of girls, as well as 20% of boys have experienced this, however teachers are only aware of this happening to girls.

Thirteen percent of respondents say they have experienced a severe form of sexual violence, 96% in the past 12 months. Eleven percent of females and 14% of males have experienced this, but teachers only mentioned one case where this happened to a boy. In a number of cases, boys mentioned being pressured to have sex by girlfriends, but also by grown women.

The majority of reported sexual violence (61%) was perpetrated by fellow pupils, followed by by young community members (15%), teachers (13%), adult family members (6%), head or deputy head teachers (2%), and boyfriends or girlfriends (1%). Severe sexual violence, in contrast, was committed primarily by fellow pupils (57%),
young community members (11%), boyfriend/girlfriends (9%), adult community members (6%), teachers (3% - 1 case), and head teachers (3% - 1 case).

Overall, more boys are affected by all forms of sexual violence. This is likely due to a combination of factors. This may reflect the pressures that boys face to become sexually active, including teasing, harassment and abuse. It is also possible, given the culture of silence observed in some focus group discussions on sex and sexual violence, that not all girls spoke up about their experiences.

Table 11. Frequency of forms of sexual violence experienced by students in the past 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of sexual violence</th>
<th>Percent of students reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>44% of students report an experience of mild sexual violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 92% of these it happened in the past 12 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Experienced by 36% of females and 46% are males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>17% of students report an experience of moderate sexual violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 94% in the past 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Experienced by 14% of females and 20% of males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>13% of students report an experience of severe sexual violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 96% in the past 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Experienced by 11% of females and 14% of males</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student discussion on sexual violence**

Unwanted sexual touching is a common problem that affects both girls and boys. Girls talked about boys who are fond of touching girls’ breasts, and were emphatic about how they wish this behaviour could stop, but at the same time were not hopeful that it could:

« Boys cannot change, therefore we can do nothing. No matter what we do, the boys can’t change their behaviour. [Are some boys respectful?] Yes, some are respectful. »

Girls can also be the perpetrators of unwanted touching, grabbing the private parts of boys to try and initiate sexual liaisons. One senior student explained how this happened to him:

_We were in class copying notes while others were on break. She said ‘Ah you. What do you feel?’ I said ‘Nothing. This is school and I cannot be doing those things.’ She said, ‘You have to, after all, we come from the same village.’ I said, ‘Yes, but I don’t do those things.’ She did it [touched his private parts] and kids started peeping in the window. She didn’t mind, and said, ‘Never mind. We have to do it.’ She wanted us to have sex in the classroom, and I was refusing. We were wrestling physically til I told her, ‘If you continue this I’ll report you to the teacher.’ Then she started apologizing… I was disappointed. Ever since I was born that has never happened to me._

Sexual exploitation of students, especially girls, by teachers who abuse their authority to pressure students into sexual relations, was a common problem at most schools. Some teachers are known to sexually harass girls, touching their breasts, or in one case asking a student to reveal the colour of her underwear. A common scenario is for a teacher to create a pretext for privacy with the student, asking her to carry books or tidy a room, students also mentioned cases of teachers who touch girls in front of other students. The nature of comments said to be made by teachers demonstrates an attitude that
profoundly objectifies girls and which views them as not having rights over their own bodies: « They [teachers] will be saying: ‘Ah you. Why are you preventing us from touching those things [breasts]. As if you bought them! »

Box 1. Refusing a teacher’s love proposal (Case 1)

Refusing a teacher’s love proposal

One brave girl in a focus group overcame the giggles of other girls in the group and boldly spoke out about her experience. This is what she narrated:

One day I came very early and was sweeping in the office. There were very few learners present.

As I swept, a teacher came in and said "Hi!" and I also said "Hi!" The teacher said when I was through I should go to where he was (sitting on a chair, behind his desk). I went to where the teacher was sitting, then he said: 'How do you feel?'

I responded ‘about what?’

The teacher said 'Ah you know it. As old as you, you say you don’t know?’

'Know about what?', I said.

'Ah no, with your age you should know.'

'I can’t know about what!'

Then the teacher said 'I can’t hide anything. What i wanted to say is that I love you.'

I said, 'What do you mean you love me?'

He said, ‘I want a love relationship with you.’

I said, 'No I don’t want, because I want to continue my education.'

Then he said, 'Education? I’m already educated! Don’t refuse. Don’t you want to eat the money that I’m receiving?'

I told him, 'I don’t want those things. I’m young and you’re an old person. I don’t want you to impregnate me.'

He said, 'Even if I impregnate you, I will marry you. I will be feeding you and I can manage to feed you from the 1st to the 30th of the month.'

I said, 'I still don’t want.'

'That is being foolish, you want to be having love relationships with fellow learners instead of with us teachers.'

'What will people say if they hear I am in love with a teacher here?'

'I’m leaving.'

'OK but you have to tell me later'.

I told him, 'There’s nothing I can tell you later on.'

Later, on a different day, I met him in our village. He said ‘Ah you, you are being foolish’ I said ‘If you continue, I will report you to an NGO’ The teacher said ‘Don’t report to an NGO, I’ll not do it again’. This happened last term.

Numerous past and current examples of teachers proposing love to girls were shared in focus groups. In one school, girls estimated that as many as 5 teachers at their school had approached 9 girls about having relationships. In the previous academic year, a head teacher shared his awareness of a situation where 12 ODL teachers were involved in relationships with girls in the school, and were actually competing with each other in a kind of conquest.
Girls felt a high level of insecurity in some schools, feeling unsafe in more places than they felt safe, as described on maps. Particular areas were the road to and from school, the head teacher’s office, the teacher’s house, wooded areas and other areas. In one school, girls were concerned about the presence of a nearby secondary school where older boys took an interest in the girls at the primary school. Girls in some schools also explained that rape by boys can happen on the way to or from school. When asked what they meant, in one school a girl clarified:

«The boys make the girl fall down so they can have sex with her.»

Cases of rape of girls by boys on the bush path that were described to enumerators as part of the survey appear to be part of wider dynamics of bullying and intimidation by boys of girls who reject proposals of love.

Several accounts of unwanted sex were also revealed by boys, who had been pressured or coerced into having sex by women and girls in their villages.

**Transactional sex**

Students were asked about transactional sex with teachers specifically, only 1% (4) said they have had sex with a teacher for food, money, items or school marks in the past 12
months. The number of students who might be having transactional sex with other students was not asked, but is believed to be higher.

Students described a context with a high prevalence of transactional or exchange sex, especially between students. Often, when asked why a girl might have sex, the first response, by girls and boys, was 'money'. Older boys clarified that this was not always an explicit impersonal transaction, but more of a request to share resources. Side by side, is the view of a girl, and a boy, from different focus groups in different schools:

« Some girls say the advantages of relationships are: you’ll get soap, oils, sugar and biscuits. »

« When boys have money, and girls see it, girls beg them for it and say 'Give me, then we will have sex.' »

Some girls face a combination of social pressures to have sex, including by parents who are not able to adequately provide for them. Whereas girls have sex to receive something, boys must give something in exchange. Students agreed, broadly, that the underlying reasons for these roles is that boys are able to make money more easily than girls can, because of their ability to do hard physical labour. In addition, boys also have greater amounts of free time to leave the home and seek casual labour jobs. Boys are known to exploit their advantage, as one explained:

« When there is no school feeding, learners are hungry. Some boys buy cucumbers and give them to girls so they can coax them into sex. »

Girls who engage in transactional sex do so as much to meet basic needs of food and school supplies, as for the small luxuries or vanities that might be available, as they are sometimes accused of doing. As one boy related the situation:

« Girls accept relationships because they don’t have pens. »

All of this speaks to a pattern of risky sexual behavior that is driven, in large part, by inequitable access and control of resources. Girls appear to have learned, over time, that the one currency they do hold that is of value to the men and boys who can help them, is their bodies. While much of their own labour is unrewarded, through relationships with boys and men, they are able to meet needs that they may not be able to meet with their own labour. It is important to note that this complex issue cannot be reduced to economics; further study to understand its nature and prevalence should be built into the project.

Teachers’ awareness of sexual violence

Twenty eight percent of teachers say they know of a teacher who has made sexual comments or jokes to students, and 7% know of a teacher who has made inappropriate and overtly sexual contact with a pupil. Only 4% report that they know of a teacher who has pressured a student into sexual intercourse, yet as many as 25% reportedly know of a teacher who has had a love affair with a student. This discrepancy suggests that teachers do not consider intimate relationships with the students who are minors and who depend upon them for their academic success, to be inappropriate. Sixteen percent know of a teacher who has impregnated a student.

In terms of the incidents of sexual violence that teachers are reportedly aware of having happened at their school: only 21% of the sexual comments and (13 incidents), 3% of
moderate sexual violence incidents (2 incidents), and 10% of severe sexual violence incidents, happened in the past 12 months (6 incidents).

Box 3. Sex and notebooks

**Sex and notebooks**

There is a link between the theft of learning materials and transactional sex in Nsanje. Students in a number of schools requested that we communicate with the authorities the problem of teacher’s stealing textbooks, pens and porridge meal. They cited as evidence, shopkeepers leaving the school with cartons of books, and seeing the books and pens sold in local shops.

The link between this and the exploitation of students, especially girls, is evident. Parents who do not have the money to buy supplies, such as pens and exercise books, tell their daughters to find other means of getting them. Girls who go to school hungry and do not receive their allocation of porridge accept food bribes for sex offered by males.

In focus groups, students overwhelmingly felt that head teachers were aware of the ongoing incidents of sexual exploitation between teachers and students. However, when asked about this issue, head teachers tended to treat this as a non-issue, or as a resolved issue of the past:

*There is nothing of that nature...We don't have such cases because all these teachers have been oriented. They know the consequences of doing that.*

*We have ODL teachers who have just joined us from secondary. The life in secondary is what they continue. So we counseled them and now they've stopped. There are no current [student-teacher] relationships.*

One head teacher attributed the reason why girls might ‘entice’ teachers into relationships is because of their high status in communities:

*A teacher is a star in the village, so if parents see teachers, especially teachers coming from college who don’t have wives, they tend to say why can’t this teacher marry my daughter? Marry me? Because maybe of poverty.*
3.4 Attitudes, Gender Norms and Beliefs about Rights

**Key indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33% of teachers (43% of females or 6/14; 30% of males or 14/46) and 28% of students (33% of girls; 23% of boys) believe that boys and girls are of equal intelligence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89% of students (90% of females; 89% of males) and 90% of teachers (93% of females; 89% of males) believe that children have the right to say no to teachers who want to touch their breasts, thighs, buttocks or private parts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40% of students (42% of females; 36% of males) and 34% of teachers (36% of females; 33% of males) believe it is not ok for a girl to refuse to have sex with a boyfriend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93% of teachers (92% of females; 93% of males) and 77% of students (79% of females; 76% of males) believe that girls should be allowed to return to school after giving birth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unequal gender norms - about the ‘essential nature’ of boys and girls, and about the roles they must conform to, and about their entitlements in society - underpin the practices of gender-based violence described in the above sections. Students and teachers were, therefore, also asked questions to ascertain the prevalence of typical gender related biases and stereotypes.

Sixty one percent of students believe boys are more intelligent than girls (53% of girls believe this, and 67% of boys). Only 28% of students (33% of girls; 23% of boys) believe that boys and girls are of equal intelligence. An equally large proportion of teachers (61%) said boys are more intelligent, while only 33% (43% of females or 6 of 14; 30% of males or 14 of 46) say both are equally intelligent, and 7% say girls are.

Sixty six percent of students believe boys are more likely to fight than girls (69% of girls and 62% of boys believe this). In some schools, the belief that boys are more likely to fight was as high as 75% and 81%. An even greater proportion of teachers shared this opinion, with 92% saying boys are more likely to fight (Table 12).

Gender norms about the role of girls in the home are strongly held by both students and teachers. Forty four percent of students believe boys and girls should share equal responsibility for housework. Thirty seven percent of boys and a substantially greater proportion of girls (55%) believe that girls should help the family with most of the housework. In four schools, over 50% of student respondents felt that girls should bear most of the responsibility for housework. Sixty one percent of teachers say both should do housework, while 39% believe girls should carry this responsibility (Table 12).

A substantial proportion of student and teacher respondents also emphasize the role of boys on the farm. Fifty eight percent of students believe that boys and girls should help the family equally with farm work, while 37% believed boys should help more with farm work. There is no major difference in perception based on respondent sex. Eighty two percent of teachers say both boys and girls should do farmwork, while 18% say boys should (Table 12).
On the positive side, the impact of awareness raising on gender equality in school attendance is evident. Eighty percent of students believe it is equally important for girls and boys to go to school, while only 13% believe it is more important for girls to attend. Only 6% believe it is more important for boys to attend. There is no major sex-related differences in perceptions. Ninety two percent of teachers say it’s equally important for both boys and girls to attend school, 5% say it's more important for boys, and 3% say it's more important for girls (Table 12).

Table 12. Student and teacher perceptions on gender-related roles and responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role or responsibility</th>
<th>Teachers' Perceptions</th>
<th>Students' Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps with housework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help family with farm work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More intelligent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More likely to fight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School is more important for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students and teachers were also asked questions to assess the consistency between their belief in child rights, and their attitudes towards claims of those rights in practice (Table 13).

Seventy seven percent of students (79% of females; 76% of males) believe that girls should be allowed to return to school after giving birth, while 22% percent of students (boys and girls equally) disagree. In contrast, 93% of teachers (92% of females or 12 of 14; 93% of males or 41 of 44) agree that girls have this right, compared to 5% of teachers who disagree. There is greater intolerance of male students who impregnate girls. A greater proportion of students however (58%) believe that male pupils who impregnate female pupils should be made to leave school, temporarily or permanently. Sex has no major affect on this perception. This reflects inconsistency in the belief in the right of boys and girls to education in the context of student pregnancy.

On the surface, there is a high level of awareness of the right of an individual to make decisions about her or his own body. Ninety four percent of students and 97% of teachers agree that students have the right to say no to sex.
However, the gap between knowledge of rights in theory, and in their application, is wide. As many as 40% of students believe it is not ok for a girl to refuse to have sex with a boyfriend. Girls feel this pressure more strongly, with 42% believing they cannot refuse sex to a boyfriend, compared with 36% of boys who hold this belief. It should also be noted that there is a range in the prevalence of this view between schools (41%-53%). Nearly as many teachers (34%) (33% of males or 15/46; and 36% of females or 5/14) say that it is not ok if a girl refuses sex with her boyfriend (Table 13).

Eleven percent of students disagree that they have the right to say no to other children, as well as to teachers, who want to touch their thighs, buttocks or private parts (13% girls, 10% boys). Ten percent of teachers similarly disagree that students have the right to refuse teachers who want to touch their thighs, buttocks or private parts (10% of males or 5/47; and 7% of females or 1/14), while 8% disagreed that students have the right to refuse other children (Table 13).

Table 13. Teacher and student perceptions on the rights of students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Teachers’ Perceptions</th>
<th>Students’ Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls who give birth should be allowed to return to school</td>
<td>Yes 93%(41) 5%(2)</td>
<td>92%(12) 8%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male pupils who impregnate girls should leave school, temporarily or permanently</td>
<td>Yes -</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students have the right to say no to sex</td>
<td>Yes 96%(45) 4%(2)</td>
<td>100%(14) 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is ok for a girl to refuse sex with her boyfriend</td>
<td>Yes 67%(31) 33%(15)</td>
<td>64%(9) 36%(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students have the right to disagree with teachers</td>
<td>Yes 64%(30) 34%(16)</td>
<td>64%(9) 36%(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students have the right to say no to teachers who want to touch their thighs, buttocks or private parts</td>
<td>Yes 89%(42) 11%(5)</td>
<td>93%(13) 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students have the right to say no to children who want to touch their thighs, buttocks or private parts</td>
<td>Yes 91% 9%</td>
<td>93%(13) 7%(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Accountability for SRGBV

Key indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36% of teachers (64% of females; 28% of males) and 29% of students (36% of females; 26% of males) say it is sometimes a girl's fault if a student or teacher touches her private parts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66% of students who experienced some form of violence in the past 12 months said they told someone about it (75% of females; 60% of males)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37% of teachers can accurately state where to report a violation of the Code of Conduct (15% of females; 43% of males)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% of teachers who witnessed a violation of the Code of Conduct in the past 12 months (30 cases) reported it (50% of females; 16% of males)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the schools had any formal reporting documentation or system to record and follow through upon cases of SRGBV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.1 Tolerance and blame for GBV

Students are less tolerant of sexual violence than teachers, in particular of the sexual exploitation of students by teachers. While only 3% of students believe it is ok for a teacher to impregnate a girl as long as he marries her, 11% of teachers say this is acceptable.

At the same time, attitudes that blame the victims of sexual assault are prevalent among students and teachers alike. They also reflect a gender bias against girls that is held in greater proportion by teachers and by girls themselves. Twenty nine percent of students believe it is sometimes a girl's fault if a teacher touches her private parts, compared to 36% of teachers. A similar proportion of students (30%) believe it is sometimes a boy's fault if a teacher touches his private parts, while in this case, only 25% of teachers believe this. Girls also expressed a greater tendency to blame victims: 36% of them feel that girls can be at fault if touched by teachers, and 39% of girls also believe a boy can be at fault if touched by teachers, compared to 23% of boys who feel this way in both cases.

Attitudes towards gender justice

In order to probe the notions of justice and child protection in cases of sexual violence, students and teachers were asked what immediate action should be taken against a teacher who has been reported to be having a sexual relation with a pupil. The responses reveal a wide range of opinion on the best course of action, but very little tolerance of impunity. Sixty eight percent of students believe teachers should be dismissed and not allowed to teach again, suggesting low level of tolerance. However, 11% are satisfied with a warning, 9% with the teacher being reassigned, and 1% of students believe there is no problem with this behaviour. Nine percent feel the teacher should be suspended pending an investigation (Table 14).
In contrast, 33% of teachers say the teacher perpetrator should be dismissed and not allowed to teach again; 32% say the teacher should be given a warning and allowed to return to school, 21% say suspended pending an investigation and 11% say reassigned to another school (Table 14).

### Table 14. Teacher and student attitudes toward gender justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes to gender justice</th>
<th>Teachers’ Perceptions</th>
<th>Students’ Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It’s ok for a teacher to impregnate a girl as long as he marries her</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13%(6)</td>
<td>7%(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>87%(41)</td>
<td>93%(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is sometimes a girl’s fault when a student or teacher touches her private parts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28%(13)</td>
<td>64%(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>72%(33)</td>
<td>21%(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is sometimes a boy’s fault when a student or teacher touches her private parts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26%(12)</td>
<td>21%(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>70%(32)</td>
<td>57%(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A teacher is discovered to be having an inappropriate relationship with a student. What immediate action should be taken?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissed and not allowed to teach again</td>
<td>36%(17)</td>
<td>21%(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred</td>
<td>11%(5)</td>
<td>14%(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given a warning and allowed to return to school</td>
<td>34%(16)</td>
<td>29%(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended pending an investigation</td>
<td>19%(9)</td>
<td>29%(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing, there’s no problem</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.5.2 Outcomes and reporting of SRGBV

Boys are physically injured more frequently than girls as a result of SRGBV, but girls are injured more seriously. Forty eight percent (86) of students who reported an experience of physical or sexual violence sustained an injury; in 27% of cases these were serious injuries, such as broken bones, teeth, or injuries requiring stitches or time to heal. Forty four percent of girls who had experienced a form of physical or sexual violence were injured, and 60% of these injuries were serious. In contrast, 54% of boys were injured, 18% were injured seriously.
3.5.3 Student reporting of violence

There is a persistent culture of silence around SRGBV. Of those students who experienced some form of violence in the past 12 months, only 66% said they told someone, and 34% told no one. Girls were more likely to confide in someone (75%) compared to boys (60%). Those people they turn to include adult relatives (10% compared to 90% who don’t), school staff members (10% compared to 90% who don’t), friends (7% compared to 93% who don’t). Only 2% of cases of violence were reportedly shared with the CPC (compared to 98% which were not). No student mentioned going to the police or to a health worker.

Students who said they told someone about the violence were asked what happened to the perpetrator. Twenty one percent said nothing happened to the perpetrator, in 8% of these cases the perpetrator was disciplined, 5% said the perpetrator was counseled, 2% victim punished, 2% victim counseled 5% didn’t know.

Despite the reluctance to report violence, students have a growing awareness of the existence and role of the CPCs. Seventy nine percent of students say they know a member of the CPC.

Girls explained a number of scenarios where they might keep silent about an incident of GBV. One girl explained that if a girl is dealing with a relationship problem, such as a proposal of love from a teacher, it is best not to tell other girls:

« It is best for girls to report to parents, because girls will say ‘No, you are lying! or ‘You are in a relationship!’, or they will tell others. »

While another girl who had dealt with this heavy problem, explained that she did not tell any adults about it, because they would not understand her decision to refuse the love of a teacher, and would accuse her of foolishness. Girls in this school also explained that normally they would wait to see if the teacher repeats his misbehaviour before reporting to anyone.

Students also fear reprisals from teachers if they report teachers, particularly on issues of sexual exploitation. They felt they could draw support from the presence of other girls coming together and talking frankly with teachers, and the wider community felt this would be good, but they feared reprisals of teachers. If they were able however to make this happen without the threat of punishment, however, then they would.

3.5.4 Barriers to accountability

Service providers involved in preventing and responding to SRGBV include, at the district level, the District Health Officer, the District Social Welfare Office, the police, the District Community Development Office and CSOs. At the community level, Child Protection Committees have been established to provide front-line response, also interacting with various school governance structures, such as parent teachers’ associations and mothers groups, community police fora and other CBOs. Within schools, teachers themselves in theory play a critical role in responding to known or suspected cases of abuse.
Ignorance about professional conduct and reporting procedures

Within schools, the lack of established reporting pathways, and ignorance about professional conduct and reporting procedures is a barrier to safe schools.

None of the schools had any formal reporting documentation or system to record and follow through upon cases of SRGBV.

Teachers were asked questions on their knowledge and formal training on the Teacher’s Code of Conduct. Seventy four percent of teachers have heard of the Teachers’ Code of Conduct (COC), while only 49% have seen a copy of it. Thirty one percent of teachers say they have received training on COC, consisting of 38% male teachers, and 8% of female teachers.

Teachers were also asked to state the correct reporting pathway within the education system, if they were to become aware of violation (an inappropriate relationship) between a student and various members of the school and Ministry which were listed. Overall, 37% of teachers (15% of females or 2 of 13; 43% of males or 21 of 49) accurately stated where to report a violation of the Code of Conduct. Many teachers were also confused about the reporting structures and protocols, some mentioning the need to report to the CPC, PTA or NGOs in the case of abuses by senior staff members of their district, and some simply did not know. In other cases, teachers specified that their opinion that matters reported to committees rather than to individual officials would be dealt with more effectively and transparently. Specifically, 59% of teachers know to report cases of abuse by fellow teachers to the Discipline Committee or Head Teacher, 30% of teachers know to report cases of abuse by the head teacher to the Primary Education Advisor (PEA), 37% of teachers know to report cases of abuse by the PEA to the District Education Manager, 47% know to report cases of abuse by the DEM to the Division Manager.

Twenty five percent of teachers say they have seen a violation of the Code of Conduct in the past 12 months, however of these, only 20% reported the violation (50% of females or 2 of 4; 16% of males or 4 of 25). Partly this may be due to a level of ignorance about reporting pathways.

Climate of impunity

Despite the level of ignorance about reporting procedures, the nature of verbal exchanges between those teachers who seek to sexually exploit girls, and the girls to whom they propose love, as quoted earlier in this document, suggests that some of these teachers are not acting so much in ignorance of the actual rules of the Code of Conduct, as they are acting in cynical disregard of it.

Although the scale of impunity was not possible to assess, the lack of significant consequences and climate of collaboration where teachers protect each other, is likely to contribute to this attitude.

When impunity prevails, cases may even be dismissed. One boy who tried repeatedly to report a case of physical violence by a teacher to the CPC said he had been threatened by the CPC that if he continued press the matter, the head teacher would transfer him. He speculated that the CPC had a patronage relationship with the head teacher, who would pay them « so that they seal their mouths and do not report. »
Lack of leadership in schools to uproot SRGBV

Leadership to uproot SRGBV and make schools safe is lacking. Some head teachers have tried to move their schools forward from episodes of gross sexual exploitation through staff meetings and school assemblies, but have not maintained this dialogue in an ongoing or appropriate way. Especially with regard to sexual violence and exploitation, head teachers conceive of their role as reacting to problems, rather than actively investigating rumours of abuse. Greater upward and downward accountability is required for them to manage this change effectively.

Judgemental attitudes and lack of knowledge of CPC members

Despite their growing awareness of the CPC and its role (79% of students are aware), many continue to be reluctant to report cases. In the community where girls told us of 5 known rape cases in the current school year, the CPC told us they had not received a single report of GBV by either girls or their parents.

A considerable barrier to an effective response mechanism concerns child protection within the referral pathway, and specifically, the role of the CPCs. The Education Program had previously made strides in training some CPCs on child protection issues, on their roles and responsibilities, and on introducing the use of case reporting. However, there is evidence that CPCs do not understand their roles and responsibilities, and that the judgemental attitudes of most members deter reporting. One occasion, a CPC addressed and attempted to counsel a focus group of girls:

Learners should not be seducing teachers, putting on short dresses or skirts. You should continue your education and emulate teachers and other workers...It's your fault (that you are abused) that you put on short skirts...You should be respecting your teachers.

An additional, related barrier to the effectiveness of CPCs is their understanding of the reporting process. CPC members do not appear to grasp the need to move together with the survivor. In one focus group, a student asked the CPC member what would happen if she reported the abuse of a teacher. The response however, that the CPC would immediately call a meeting with the teacher, PTA, SMC, and herself, was daunting. Up until this point, it had not occurred to the CPC member that the process might be scary to a child, and that the members should be sensitive to this, and consult with the survivor about her/his options before moving ahead.

Unclear reporting pathways and protocol

Pathways for reporting abuse have been drafted by stakeholders in the Ministry of Education, Health and the police Victim Support Unit, with support by Concern Worldwide. However, these do not currently take into consideration all of the necessary linkages between schools, CPCs, the police, judiciary and victims. In practice, the system relies on a report being by the victim, or her/his representative to the CPC. There is no unified protocol, requiring investigation or criminal prosecution of grave cases of abuse when the victim may fear coming forward.

Lack of legislation criminalizing child sexual exploitation

This problem is exacerbated by the absence of clear legislation for the prosecution of sex-offenders who hold a position of power over an individual, or of a national referral protocol for the treatment of survivors of SGBV contributes to a climate of impunity for teachers who physically and sexually assault children. In practice, disciplinary
procedures for the education system and the criminal process do not intersect, and teachers suspected or found to be guilty of abuse are often reassigned, or voluntarily seek out transfers to other schools.

3.6 How students navigate SRGBV

In focus groups, students explained some of the ways in which they navigate school related gender-based violence, in order to protect themselves. Much of this happens outside of formal reporting channels.

Girls repeated that pregnancy and school dropout as a threat to their future wellbeing, but described other girls who are more concerned with their immediate wellbeing, seeking money, small items and popularity from relationships.

« When you have a love relationship you are fashionable, you have money. »

Girls navigate their friendships to give and cultivate support and to minimize unwanted pressures. If a girl starts having sex for money, her friend will counsel her, especially if she is seeing someone much older, « to find someone her own size. »

Inversely, it is also common for girls to be invited into love relationships through girlfriends who are already in relationships. If the girl who is propositioned is not interested in having a relationship, it appears common that not only will she reject the offer, but that she will reject the friendship of the girl who issued the invitation, in order to preserve her future wellbeing:

It happened to me, a close friend in Standard 6, she had a lover. The lover has a friend. My girlfriend said my lover’s friend would like to propose love to me, and she wanted me to accept so we four could move together. I told my friend I don’t want that, and if she wants this relationship she should look for someone else. ...I said I want to continue my education. My friend said ok, we can still be friends. But I told her I felt I can no longer continue the friendship with her...I was not happy with her for asking me.

The friendship ultimatum may also be issued by the girl already in a relationship, as another girl explained:

If you refuse, it’s the end of the friendship...[She said to me] ‘Do you love me or not? If you love me you must accept the friend of my boyfriend....Because you are saying you are a daughter of God and faithful learner, you should continue [down that path].

These power dynamics between girls breed further mistrust, erode support networks and risk leave girls feeling isolated. Girls who do decide to become involved in relationships become cut off, or cut themselves off from potential support networks of other girls. This effect is likely to be emphasised in the absence of formal and effective support groups for girls, further marginalizing vulnerable girls. Further research is needed on these specific dynamics and their consequences for girls.

Girls also mentioned various ways in which they will mitigate risks of physical and sexual violence. Walking home with other girls is sometimes, but not always, a deterrent to harassment and beatings by boys. Girls at one school who fear rape will avoid particular teachers and refuse, or strategically limit their assistance to teachers who request their help with housework.
For the most part girls do not believe in their power to influence the attitudes and behaviours of the boys and men who cause them problems, and so they frequently respond with avoidance. As one girl explained: «These teachers are not able to control their sexual desires.»

This problem extends to sexual relations, where boys dislike and refuse the use of condoms:

*Boys say 'If you love me, we will not use a condom, but if you don’t love me we will use a condom.’ So the girl will go without, to prove her love.*

One girl felt strongly that access to female condoms would help her in her predicament of controlling her sexual and reproductive options, «I wish I could see them [female condoms, in the store].»

Girls who have the least economic power face added barriers to accessing condoms, which they cannot normally purchase without assistance, and which are normally distributed free of cost to women, but not to girls of their age.

Boys also face significant peer and adult pressure to become sexually active, linked to the enactment of traditional norms of masculinity that are highly focused on fertility.

*Parents and village people say 'Ah this boy is useless, we can’t hear any issues of this one running around with girls. He is barren.' If a boy is being a boy, there must be stories of him moving around with girls. Because of that, a boy will impregnate a girl, so he can prove he is not barren.*

Boys and girls reinforce social expectations of sexually aggressive male behaviour:

*[Boys will say] 'You are barren, you can’t make someone pregnant!' It happened to me. I was disappointed and stopped moving around with that one.*

*A girl will meet a boy in the village after they have knocked off. They will greet, and she will go after to meet her friends and say, 'That one is useless, I was with him and he said nothing. He's not a man, he's a boy.' [We] have heard it. [Boys are] useless if they don't ask for sex.*

Boys may choose to avoid this pressure, or to fulfill these expectations in order to gain social status.

*A boy born in the same year who has a child is a grown up person. So he wants to do it so he can be grown up also.*

The dynamics leading up to a boy’s initiation of a love relationship with a girl are similar to those described for girls, whereby he will be encouraged by a friend already in a relationship. It is not clear to what extent the same power dynamics of friendship ultimatums also apply.

While a girl’s popularity may be linked to her ability to acquire goods through a relationship, a boy’s social status is enhanced by his ability to provide for a girlfriend:

*Having a girlfriend makes you popular, the amount of money they give to their girlfriends...Yes, boys do discuss these things.*
Because the fulfillment of love proposals is linked to the establishment of masculine status, rejection, particularly emasculating forms of ridicule, are perceived as attacks on their masculine identities which boys feel they must defend. Boys explained that one of the reasons boys can beat girls is that they provoke them, embarrassing them by refusing them disrespectfully in public with comments such as, «You don’t even bathe and you want to propose love!» or «If you want to do that go propose to your mother.» However it is important to emphasize that many boys also handle rejection respectfully, without aggression.

Use of condoms can be another battleground where boys can feel they are being asked to surrender masculine power. One boy took offence at the notion of a partner request to wear a condom. He said he would not wear a condom if asked to «Because if she’s too proud I will leave her. I don’t want her to shout rape. So I will leave her with her pride.»

Boys, as well as girls, perceive males as having inherently sexualized natures that they are incapable of controlling. The consequences of this essential nature are therefore also, to some extent, seen as inevitable. This places blame for personal feelings and reactions entirely on girls, and absolves boys of any responsibility. Boys in one focus group talked about the distraction of girls who wear short skirts and seek male attention, saying that girls can sometimes compel boys «through their dressing» to do things they don’t want to do.

At the same time boys in several schools remarked on the increasingly sexually assertive behaviour of girls who are driven by self-interest, and simultaneously presented a disempowered notion of boys, who are incapable of refusing sex:

*Previously there was rape because girls said no to sex, but now girls want it, so there is no rape.*

*Girls are becoming more promiscuous... Because they envy their friends who have money because of sex.*

*Girls frequently have sex because they need money.*

At one very large school where senior students board in the months leading to their final exams, boys explained a specific dynamic in their school which aids them to survive and thrive. By seeking the company of other like-minded boys, and forming groups, they support and insulate from unwanted pressures that distract them from their schooling. Members of these groups have learning discussions, buy things together and share their resources. The informal groups they form at this school sometimes have names, and rules. One boy talked about his group, named after a proverb:

*[We call our group] ‘Whoever has travelled has gone mad’ [a proverb] meaning there will be no food left for the person who leaves, and this group eats what they find on the spot. We have learning discussions, and do and buy things to be popular, for example we eat well, we support each other and share. There are rules, for example, ‘no stealing from one another, no one fond of having girl relationships - though some do but not too much, when we want to take something we should get permission, when you want to go, tell your friends.*

Boys also expressed a high level of awareness and dismay regarding the abuse of girls by other boys, teachers and adults. Boys in ones school agreed with that teachers who
propose love to girls are unfair competitors (who already have wives) and who sometimes try to undermine their masculine credibility in public (See section 3.3.3 on Psychological Violence).

Boys in one school also expressed discouragement about the lack of outrage and action being taken to halt these abuses.

_We get very disappointed and when we want to talk about it [teachers proposing love to girls], teachers punish us. We are disappointed because people are not doing anything about the problem of teachers proposing love to girls._

The same boys were also very hopeful and emphatic about their desire to take action to improve the situation of girls in their communities:

_We would love to have girls [in the villages] have an education... We would love to do activities to help protect the girls._

### 3.7 Knowledge of HIV/AIDS

Knowledge of HIV/AIDS was measured using the standard indicator for comprehensive knowledge, and defined in the Demographic Health Survey 2010. In order for an individual to have comprehensive knowledge, that person must know that consistent condom use and having just one uninfected faithful partner can reduce the chance of getting the AIDS virus, and must know that a healthy-looking person can have the AIDS virus. She or he must also reject the two most common local misconceptions about HIV transmission—that HIV can be transmitted by mosquito bites, and that HIV can be transmitted by supernatural means.²⁹

Knowledge of HIV is very low – only 36% of students (29% of females; 34% of males) and 53% of teachers (46% of females; 55% of males) have comprehensive knowledge about HIV. Given the added problems of accessing condoms, exploitative and transactional sex dynamics, and the power struggles faced in negotiating safe sex practices, his places students, especially girls at risk of infection.

Schools are obliged to teach the national life skills curriculum, which covers HIV/AIDS prevention. However, students in a focus group explained that because the curriculum is taught in English, many students struggle to comprehend lessons.

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²⁹ DHS Malawi 2010
Table 15. Student and teacher knowledge of HIV/AIDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of HIV/AIDS</th>
<th>STUDENTS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>TEACHERS</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have heard of HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>89%(262)</td>
<td>86%(118)</td>
<td>92%(143)</td>
<td>100%(63)</td>
<td>100%(13)</td>
<td>100%(47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reject the misconception that AIDS can be contracted from mosquito bites</td>
<td>79%(214)</td>
<td>83%(101)</td>
<td>77%(113)</td>
<td>93%(57)</td>
<td>92%(12)</td>
<td>94%(44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know that AIDS can be reduced by using a condom every time they have sex</td>
<td>74%(202)</td>
<td>82%(100)</td>
<td>68%(101)</td>
<td>77%(47)</td>
<td>62%(8)</td>
<td>81%(38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know that people can reduce their chances of getting AIDS by having just one uninfected partner who has no other sex partners</td>
<td>74%(201)</td>
<td>72%(88)</td>
<td>76%(112)</td>
<td>84%(51)</td>
<td>85%(11)</td>
<td>83%(39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reject the misconception that AIDS can be contracted from eating with an infected person.</td>
<td>82%(226)</td>
<td>84%(103)</td>
<td>81%(122)</td>
<td>93%(55)</td>
<td>92%(11)</td>
<td>93%(43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know that chances of contracting AIDS can be reduced by abstaining from sex</td>
<td>77%(211)</td>
<td>75%(92)</td>
<td>79%(118)</td>
<td>90%(53)</td>
<td>77%(10)</td>
<td>93%(42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reject the belief that witchcraft can cause AIDS</td>
<td>92%(249)</td>
<td>94%(115)</td>
<td>90%(133)</td>
<td>93%(54)</td>
<td>100%(13)</td>
<td>91%(40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know that a healthy looking person can have AIDS</td>
<td>74%(201)</td>
<td>72%(89)</td>
<td>76%(111)</td>
<td>87%(53)</td>
<td>92%(12)</td>
<td>85%(40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reject the belief that sex with a virgin can cure AIDS</td>
<td>80%(218)</td>
<td>85%(104)</td>
<td>77%(113)</td>
<td>97%(58)</td>
<td>92%(12)</td>
<td>98%(45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive knowledge of HIV</td>
<td>36%(106)</td>
<td>39%(52)</td>
<td>34%(54)</td>
<td>53%(33)</td>
<td>46%(6)</td>
<td>55%(27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.8 Interpreting the results, and areas of future research

The results of the research can be generalized to students of the same cohort within the 17 target schools of the program, rather than to all students of the wider Nsanje District.

Furthermore, consideration should be given to the bias inherent in selecting students on the morning of the survey. The random sample is therefore representative of students who attended school, rather than those who were absent. This may reflect systemic bias against those out-of-school children who are likely to be among the most vulnerable children and young people.

Several factors should be taken into consideration when designing the endline study for the intervention:

• A future increase in reported experiences in SRGBV may reflect greater social acceptability of discussing topics considered to be private, provocative or shameful, as well as a greater willingness of students to open up about their experiences. It may not necessarily mean an actual increase in levels of violence. It will be important to contextualize data with qualitative research assessing stakeholder opinions as to changes in the nature of discussions on SRGBV between and among students, teachers and community members observed over the duration of the project.

• The evaluation of the project should include a control group of students and teachers not participating in the project but matched based on similar circumstances, in order to enable a comparison in levels of knowledge, attitudes and experiences with those affected by the project. In addition, attribution to Concern’s intervention can be strengthened by identifying and prioritizing different potential influences on project outcomes in different locations, and by making judgements open to scrutiny by stakeholders.

In addition, further areas of research relating to SRGBV that emerged during the study include:

• The nature and prevalence of transactional sex, and contributing factors, including hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity.
• Unmet needs for contraception, condoms and SRH education among students.
• The role of friendships and peer networks in preventing and promoting prevalent forms of SRGBV.
• The gender division of labour of students at school – assessing the proportion of time that girls and boys spend on chores, compared to actively learning or working on lessons and assignments.

Participatory action research led by students on the above topics could be integrated into the intervention, and contribute to project outcomes. Student-led research initiatives of this format could allow not only description of gender relations as they are, but reflection on why they are this way. They could also provide students the space and structure to reflect upon their shared values and visions for the future. Some of the other issues students may want to reflect upon include reasons why girls and boys feel pressure to have sex with boyfriends and girlfriends, reasons why so many students and teachers blame the victim of sexual harassment, and reasons for other experiences of SRGBV most prevalent in their schools. In this respect, the research becomes part of the intervention, by creating a process through which students can start to change social norms. PAR can also empower them to plan for action, and to identify and hold all duty
bearers accountable for providing a safe school environment for girls and all vulnerable children.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations should be considered for initiation in the short term, to be integrated into planned activities:

1. **Support the formation of sex-segregated peer support and action groups in schools.** Girls and boys need their own fora where they can safely discuss their problems, explore their identities, feelings and reactions, foster mutual understanding and support, and self-organize for action. The existence of coherent groups for girls and boys can help to lead change in social norms among students, to break the silence surrounding abuse and exploitation, and to demand accountability. Facilitated interaction of mature female and male groups by trained outside facilitators (e.g. Theatre for Change) can also help narrow the gulf in perceptions of the opposite sex, and to improve gender relations between the sexes, and to undertake joint advocacy. It is important for these structures to model gender equality, and to avoid hierarchical structure whereby a ‘chairlady’ is subordinate to the ‘chairman’.

2. **Support student-led participatory action research** on those areas of research identified in the study, to probe further the underlying causes and barriers to eliminating SRGBV. This type of research process would contribute to the outcomes of the intervention, by creating a process through which students can start to change social norms. PAR can also empower groups of students to plan for action, and to identify and hold all duty bearers accountable for providing a safe school environment for girls and all vulnerable children. Concern Worldwide could provide the technical support and material resources to design and carry out a research process, as well as to allocate funds and technical support to assist students in implementing priority actions (e.g. the publication of advocacy materials, logistics for meetings).

3. **Close gaps in student life skills and condom needs.** There is need to improve curriculum and teaching methodologies on HIV prevention as well as skills for negotiating respectful relationships and general sexual and reproductive health. Students at one school had identified a problem in the teaching of curriculum in English, a language which left many of them confused. This issue may need to be addressed in the national curriculum, and in teacher training. There is also an unmet need for female and male condoms among senior students, as requested by students in a focus group discussion. As a girl at one school said « I wish I could see them [female condoms, in the store]. »

4. **Provide additional skills development in psycho-social counseling for CPCs and teachers.** CPCs have already had basic training in the concepts of child protection and human rights. However, they require more practical, applied learning opportunities in order for members to begin to value and internalize non-threatening and respectful ways of speaking with children about abuse issues. This was particularly evident in the case of a school in which girls shared their knowledge of 5 rapes in the current school year, and yet where the CPC had had no reported cases. In addition, students require a counseling resource with whom they can speak in confidence, and seek advice, without fear of triggering a
public report and enquiry. Trusted female and male teachers who are chosen by students could be trained for this role.

5. **Provide skills upgrade in positive discipline and for teachers, and recognition of excellence in classroom management and integrity.** The baseline validated a great need for skills training in positive discipline techniques for teachers. The mindset of teachers needs to be changed, especially the damaging tendency by some to equate a need for greater student ‘responsibility’ with the apparent belief that students are there to serve teachers. Beneath this tendency is a fear of loss of status and control. Teachers who exemplify successful learner-centred teaching styles and integrity should be recognized and profiled. Incentivizing professional performance by teachers could be done, for example, through a student-voted teacher of the year, who can then receive a small bonus or token or recognition. Concern and Theatre for Change could help PEAs to structure and resource this process, including by coordinating discussions with student bodies on the qualities of a good teacher, and by monitored the voting process.

6. **Support the development of a referral protocol for victims of sexual and gender based violence.** The current system, which relies on survivors of violence reporting their cases to the police contributes to impunity of large numbers of perpetrators who fly under the radar of the criminal justice system. As recommended by the CEDAW Committee, zero tolerance for sexual abuse in schools requires perpetrators to be appropriately punished. This requires an enhanced coordination mechanism that links schools, CPCs and other community school structures, and local police Victim Support Units. A protocol is needed to define grave offences, the principles and procedures for dealing with child victim cases, the referral pathways to be followed, and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. Concern should establish that no such process currently exists, before initiating this process in Nsanje. A successful model in Nsanje could perhaps be scaled up nationally in the future. Concern could play an advisory role, assisting to structure and resource the process, ensuring that children make a meaningful contribution to the process and resulting protocol. Alternatively, or simultaneously, Concern could engage key Ministries to initiate such a coordination protocol at the national level, to be implemented throughout the country.

7. **Promote accountability of teachers and parents to students, starting with this report.** Initiate a dialogue with all school, community and government stakeholders using the findings in this report. In particular, allow students an opportunity to understand the findings, to help plan the format and tone of the meeting, and to prepare group statements and recommendations in advance. Students could play a number of roles in this process, including organizing meetings, facilitating dialogue, note taking, making presentations, but most importantly in planning a process where they feel they will be able to make a meaningful contribution.

The remaining recommendations could be considered in the longer term:

8. **Engage with MOEST on ways of promoting whistle-blowers and providing protection and strengthening supervision.** While simultaneously promoting a new teaching paradigm, including through training on the Code of Conduct (which only 49% of teachers have seen) and Positive Discipline, those teachers who witness and object to the abuses of children should be supported in coming forward, within their schools, and directly to the Ministry, when they feel that
their concerns are being ignored, or if they fear retaliation. Concern Worldwide could be involved in this by advocating to the government, and by promoting this idea to schools themselves, and among the communities.

9. **Advocate for legislation to criminalize child sexual exploitation.** The sexual exploitation of a student by a teacher is an offence that is particularly grave because of the asymmetry of power and dependency involved in the relationship. However this does not appear to be specifically criminalized in legislation (e.g. in the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, or in the Childcare, Protection and Justice Act). A thorough review of legislation and policy should be undertaken, with a view to establishing the strengths and weaknesses of the current legal regime. Ultimately, if laws are deemed to fall short of the task of child protection against child sexual exploitation, the goal would be to draft a law criminalizing this practice. This initiative falls outside the scope of the current project, but is an important factor in its success, insofar as the weight of national legislation may be a significant force in changing social norms and practices. The possibility of a future project that includes this outcome should be explored by Concern.

10. **Address the underlying causes of driving female and male risky sexual behavior.** In particular, synergistic pilot projects to promote the economic empowerment of women and girls, for instance through mother’s groups. Women who are able to generate revenue are more likely to be able to meet the needs of their daughters, and to help stem the economic drivers of transactional sex. For example, possible joint income generating projects could be explored with Concern's Food, Incomes and Markets program, in partnership with mother’s groups or girl’s clubs. Groups could use a portion of food or regular income for projects, to help meet the basic needs of girls and other highly vulnerable children. Ideally this would be done in combination with action research and reflection on transactional sex.