SUMMARY REPORT

ARE SCHOOLS SAFE AND EQUAL PLACES FOR GIRLS AND BOYS IN ASIA?

Research Findings on School-Related Gender-Based Violence

FEBRUARY 2015
PROMOTING EQUALITY AND SAFETY IN SCHOOLS IN ASIA

Plan

ICRW International Center for Research on Women
where insight and action connect

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The study has been a participatory effort of teams across organisations and countries, united by their concern for the multiple forms of gender-based violence and discrimination faced by young adolescents as they seek education to better their lives.

The Plan Asia Regional Office invited the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) to carry out this five-country research in Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam. At the ICRW the study was led by Nandita Bhatla, and supported by Pranita Achyut, Hemlata Verma, Nizamuddin Khan and Sunayana Walia.

We would like to thank Sophanna Ek, Yenny Widjaje, Shusil Joshi, Sofia Naveed, and Lan Le Quynh in the Plan Country Offices and Tanushree Soni (the former Regional Gender Specialist) for their contribution in designing the study, finalising data collection tools and organising data collection. Special thanks go to Alexander Munive (Global Girl Innovation Programmes Manager) at Plan for his contribution towards designing and implementing the study and in finalising the report.

We acknowledge the inputs of Emeritus Professor Fiona Leach whose comments and insights have greatly enriched the report.

Nandita Bhatla, Pranita Achyut, Nizamuddin Khan, Sunayana Walia (ICRW) and Alessandra Tranquilli (Plan International). 2015. “Promoting Equality and Safety in Schools”. Bangkok. Plan International.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
SRGBV	School-related gender-based violence
NGOs	Non-governmental organisation
CBO	Community-based organisation
CO	Country Office
FGD	Focus group discussion
IRB	Institutional Review Board
SMC	School management committee
PTA	Parent-teacher association

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2014, as part of the **Promoting Equality and Safety In Schools** Initiative, Plan International and the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) undertook research in five countries in Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam), to assess the prevalence, nature, response and reporting of various forms of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) in, around and on the way to school. We spoke to more than 9,000 girls and boys across these countries about their experiences of violence and gender equality in schools. The findings from this research have been pivotal in designing an effective programme that responds to the real needs, priorities and interests of girls and boys in these countries.

SRGBV includes any form of violence based on gender stereotypes or that targets students on the basis of their sex. It includes, but is not limited to, rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment, bullying and verbal harassment.

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The research has found that students' inequitable gender attitudes are a main driver of SRGBV, with boys having more regressive gender attitudes than girls. The high prevalence of violence in schools and at home (including emotional violence) makes students feel unsafe and increases the likelihood of their perpetration of violence. When analysing the situation in schools, the research findings highlight that violence is perpetrated by both peers and teaching/non-teaching staff. The research also found that bystander intervention is low, indicating the normalisation of violence as an accepted way to discipline students or resolve conflict amongst peers. The reporting of violence to duty bearers is low due to fear of repercussions and lack of coherent response mechanisms.

Research findings point to the need for focusing on gender equality in education and the need for a multi-level approach addressing barriers at the individual, community, school and policy levels if we are to tackle SRGBV in a sustainable way. Programming to achieve gender equality and prevent gender-based violence is as much about empowering girls as it is about redefining masculinity and ideas of manhood. School focused efforts must be accompanied by policy and advocacy as well as community-based awareness building.

This document presents a summary of the research findings. The Summary Report highlights the programmatic framework, which was developed from the research findings, that aims to make education systems in Asia gender responsive with zero tolerance to SRGBV. A more comprehensive report that includes detailed country profiles and primary data can be accessed through this link: http://plan-international.org/where-we-work/asia/publications/PEASS-2015-report

INTRODUCTION

Access to a quality and gender-responsive education is still a challenge for millions of girls and boys in Asia. Girls and boys face considerable impediments that hinder them from fulfilling their full potential. Among these challenges is school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). SRGBV, which can take various forms such as physical and sexual abuse, harassment and bullying, limits girls' enrolment, undermines their participation and achievement, and increases girls' absenteeism and dropout rates. In addition, boys are brought up in environments that promote harmful gender norms, roles and stereotypes, justifying aggression and violence as desirable masculine behaviours.

In April 2013, the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) highlighted the limited data and research on the nature and manifestations, scale and consequences of SRGBV at the global level; as well as limited compilation of evidence on programme and policy approaches to tackle this issue. As a response, Plan decided to conduct research in five countries in Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam) as part of its innovative **Promoting Equality and Safety in Schools** (PEASS) programme. Plan, together with the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), embarked on this ambitious research project aimed at:

- assessing the magnitude and nature, response and reporting of different forms of SRGBV, both in school and on the way to school/ around school, and what encourages or impedes this response;
- understanding the perceptions of adults (parents, school authorities) towards SRGBV and the mechanisms to report and respond to it; and
- recommending an overall programmatic framework for addressing SRGBV, including key strategies and indicators for measurement.

This report summarises the main findings from the research and gives an overview of the programmatic framework and strategies which Plan will adopt to address SRGBV within the region and contribute to making education systems in Asia gender responsive with zero-tolerance to SRGBV.

METHODOLOGY

At the outset, a desk-based review of legislative policies and programmes related to SRGBV, including those being implemented by Plan, was undertaken in each of the five countries. This was followed by the primary data collection phase that took place between October 2013 and March 2014, in which data was collected from over 9,000 students (both girls and boys aged 12 to 17) studying in grades 6 to 8 and a range of relevant stakeholders, including teachers, headmasters, parents and representatives of NGOs/CBOs.

The sites for each country, schools and grades were selected in consultation with Plan Country Offices (COs), provincial and district authorities. The sites included Hanoi (Vietnam), Siem Reap (Cambodia), Sunsari district (Nepal), Umerkot district (Pakistan), and Jakarta City and Serang district (Indonesia).

This study used a quasi-experimental design with a mixed method of data collection. The tools included a self-administered questionnaire for students (approximately 1,500 questionnaires from 30 schools in each country), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with students to create school safety maps using participatory tools such as open ended stories; Plan's developed and widely used School Equality Scorecard in select schools; FGDs with teachers and parents; and Key Informant Interviews with Principals.

Analysis of data was done using a comparative data analysis framework. This study received approval from country-specific ethical boards and ICRW's Institutional Review Board (IRB). As part of the research protocol submitted, potential risks were anticipated, and specific mechanisms were detailed in order to mitigate these risks.

Countries of research for Promoting Equality and Safety in Schools programme in Asia

WHAT IS SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SRGBV)?

The definition of SRGBV has been contested over time. Throughout this research, SRGBV is understood as including any form of violence:

- based on gendered stereotypes or that targets students on the basis of their sex;
- where the underlying intention is to reinforce gender roles and perpetuate gender inequalities;
- including, but not limited to, rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment, bullying and verbal harassment;
- that takes place in the school, on school grounds, going to and from school, or in school dormitories;
- that may be perpetrated by teachers, students or community members; and/or
- where both girls and boys can be victims as well as perpetrators.

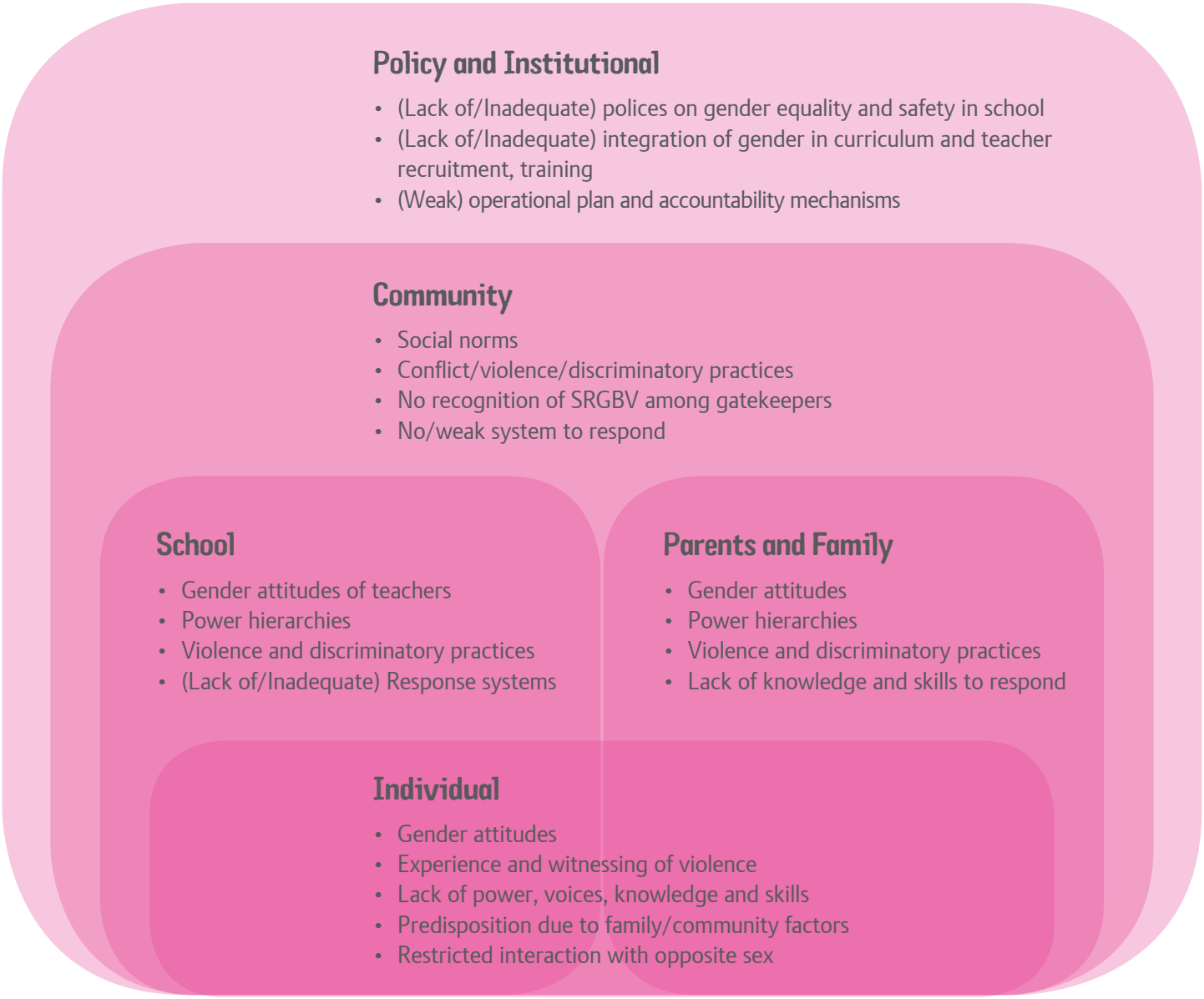
WHAT ARE THE DRIVERS OF SRGBV?

The drivers of SRGBV are complex and interrelated, and include social, economic and cultural factors that influence norms and behaviours at the individual, community and societal levels. This section provides a broad overview of the drivers of SRGBV across Asia. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the drivers of SRGBV using a social-ecological framework. The social-ecological framework is a useful tool for categorising these drivers, as it shows the various drivers at the individual, community, political and societal levels.

Power hierarchies, social norms and violence are inextricably linked as societies use violence as a tool to maintain power and perpetuate inequality. In the immediate environment of an individual child, inequitable gender norms and discriminatory practices seen at home, in school and in the community shape and reinforce the child's individual attitudes towards gender roles and violence. These norms justify the use of violence and discrimination based on gender, and promote norms around masculinity, which in turn encourages aggression and

justifies gender-based violence. The exposure to violence, or various forms of conflict and strife, in these social institutions normalises violence in many ways and conditions an individual towards violent behaviour. These norms, although universal, find different expressions and manifestations in different cultures and contexts, and thus, can be differentially experienced by girls and boys across countries. As violence is normalised, systems to recognise it and respond to it become inherently weak, and often non-existent. In such scenarios, speaking out about these issues is often met with apathy, resistance, or worse, blame. Thus, there exists a cycle of violence that keeps getting reinforced within the micro environment of an individual, through factors operating at the meso and macro levels, and this recognition is the first step towards preventing and addressing violence. The systemic or structural understanding of gender-based violence necessitates that efforts for change must target social and legal systems, as well as individuals.

FIGURE 1
Drivers of SRGBV at multiple



SRGBV IN ASIA: KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

The primary data collected during the research from students, teachers, principals and parents provides insights into specific drivers for SRGBV in the contexts described below.

Overall, 7 out of 10 children have experienced violence in schools.

Prevalence of violence is very high

Violence is very common and highly prevalent in schools across the five countries researched. Girls and boys in Indonesia reported the highest levels of SRGBV in school (84%), while in Pakistan girls and boys reported the lowest levels of SRGBV (43%). The research suggests that such a high prevalence of violence acts as a critical driver of SRGBV, as the exposure of students to frequent incidents of violence by peers and adults leads, over time, to normalisation of violence, with students internalising this as the accepted way to resolve issues and conflicts.

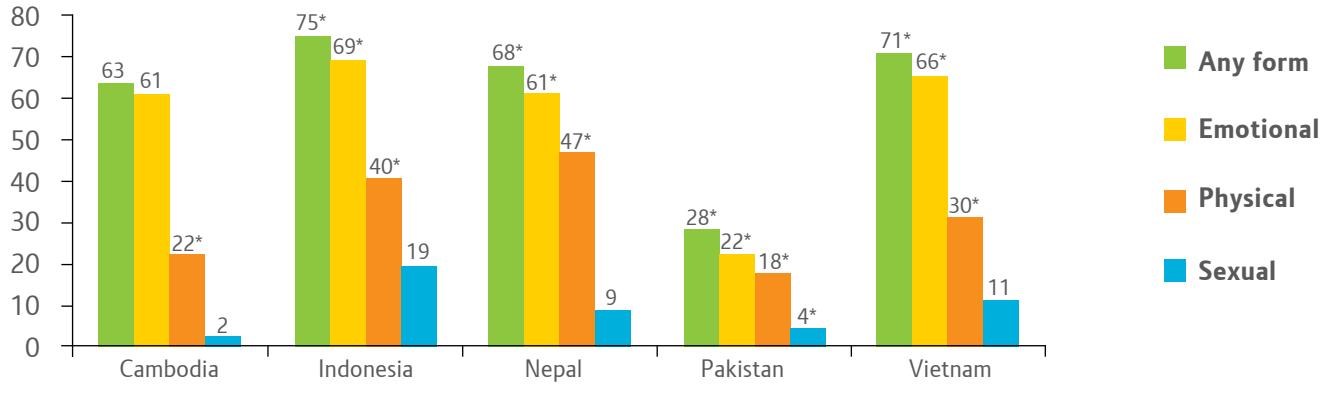
High rates of emotional violence

High prevalence of emotional violence within the last six months was reported in all countries, and students note this as a prominent factor that makes schools unsafe. This finding needs specific attention, as response mechanisms to react against violence tend to become so blind to these comparatively subtle forms of violence, that they are often ignored as 'harmless' incidents experienced as part of growing up.

Physical violence is the second highest form of violence experienced by students who participated in the study. In all the study countries, a significantly higher proportion of boys reported facing physical violence in school than girls.

Overall, prevalence of sexual violence is low in some countries, particularly in Cambodia and Pakistan. It is important to note, however, that these incidents might also be under-reported due to fear of repercussions. There is no substantial difference between the proportion of girls and boys reporting of sexual violence in these countries.

FIGURE 2
Experience of Violence in School in last 6 months



Proportions for boys and girls are significantly different at p<0.05

Violence is perpetrated by both peers and teaching/ non-teaching staff

Students experience and witness violence perpetrated by teachers and non-teaching staff, which in turn becomes a strong driver of SRGBV. The research found various types of violence across all five countries, though there is a wide variation in physical and emotional violence perpetrated by teachers or school staff, and by peers. Of the students who reported experiencing violence in school in the last six months, nearly half reported teaching/non-teaching staff as the perpetrator in Pakistan, 33% In Indonesia, and 42% in Nepal. A fifth of the students reported this in Cambodia and Vietnam. Across all five countries, significantly higher proportions of boys mentioned teachers or school staff as perpetrators compared to girls.

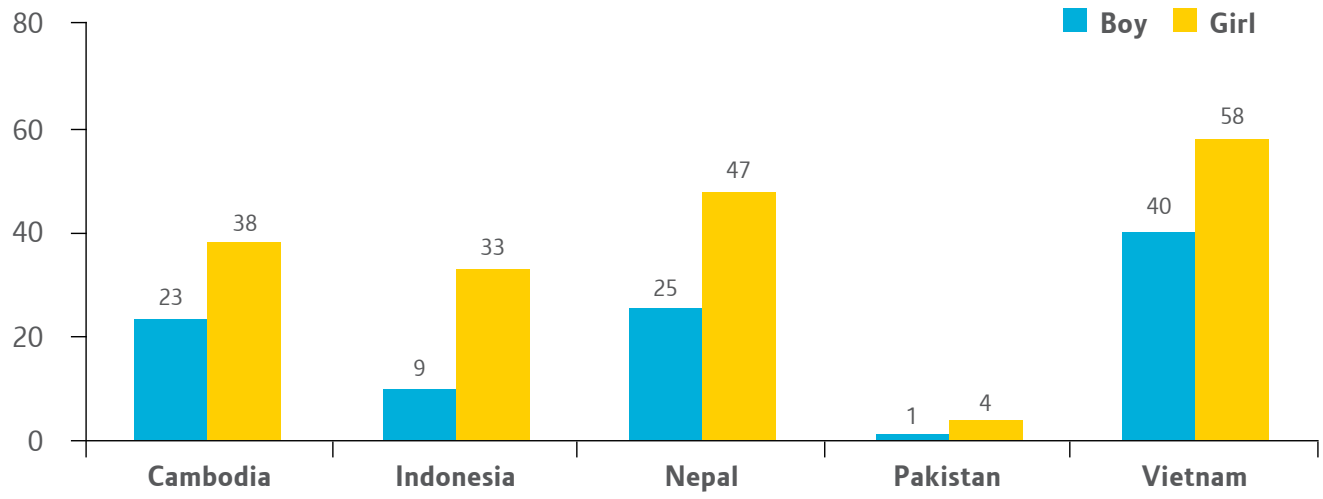
The percentage of students reporting experiencing peer-based violence across the five countries ranged from 33% in Vietnam to 58% in Cambodia. Only in Indonesia was a significant difference noted by sex, where more boys (59%) reported violence by a peer as compared to girls (44%).

Inequitable gender attitudes of students is a driver of SRGBV

Inequitable gender attitudes among students emerged as one of the main drivers of SRGBV in all five countries. The proportion of students with highly equitable gender attitudes (calculated using a gender attitude scale designed for this research) varies from 49% in Vietnam to 2% in Pakistan. Most of the students fall into the 'moderately equitable' category. Figure 3 shows the proportion of students reporting equitable gender attitudes, by sex and across the countries.

Few students in Asia support gender equality.

FIGURE 3
Percentage of students with a high equitable gender attitude



In Pakistan and Vietnam, children exposed to domestic violence had more regressive gender attitudes.

Boys have more regressive gender attitudes than girls

Apart from the student's sex, no other single factor consistently emerged as a strong determinant of gender attitudes across countries. Across all five countries, girls report more egalitarian and equitable attitudes as compared to boys. The more regressive that boys' gender attitudes are, the more significant the barriers are to achieving gender equality in schools. When analysing various factors impacting on gender attitudes, it was noted that in three countries (Vietnam, Pakistan and Indonesia), a mother's education has a positive impact (i.e. the higher a mother's education level is, the more equitable gender attitudes her children will have). However in Cambodia, the opposite is true.

Exposure to parental violence and regressive gender attitudes increase the likelihood for the perpetration of violence

Students in Pakistan and Vietnam who were exposed to their father beating their mother at home were more likely to have a low gender-equitable attitude. Students who have seen parental violence at home are more likely to perpetrate violence in school in all the countries. A more egalitarian gender attitude decreases the likelihood of perpetration of violence in all countries, except in Pakistan.

Students do not recognise the harmful consequences of violence

Between 30-50% of students reported no specific consequence of the violence they experienced in school in the last six months, with the exception of Vietnam. Respondents reported that consequences included feelings of sadness or depression, fear of attending school, and limited ability to concentrate on their studies. In Nepal, missing school and injuries were also reported.

A third of students from Cambodia reported that they felt sad or depressed, while 15% mentioned that they feel afraid of attending school. While significantly more girls (36%) than boys (28%) report feeling sad or depressed, more boys (19%) report fear of attending school in Cambodia than girls (12%).

In Indonesia, more girls (32%) than boys (12%) reported feeling sad or depressed.

Bystander intervention is low, indicating a high tolerance for violence

There is considerable variation in witnessing and responding to violence across all five countries. The rate of children witnessing violence happening to other students in school ranges from 51% in Indonesia to 5% in Pakistan. Bystander intervention was low across all countries, with one third to two thirds of students reporting not taking any action.

FIGURE 4
Witnessing and response to violence in school in last 6 months

	Witnessed violence in school in the last 6 month	Response to witnessing violence in school in the last 6 months
Cambodia	14%	55% Did nothing 26% Tried to stop 14% Reported to teacher
	11%	55% Did nothing 26% Tried to stop – Reported to teacher
Indonesia	50%	44% Did nothing 45% Tried to stop 9% Reported to teacher
	52%	38% Did nothing 49% Tried to stop 19% Reported to teacher
Nepal	16%	37% Did nothing 43% Tried to stop 21% Reported to teacher
	15%	34% Did nothing 43% Tried to stop 21% Reported to teacher
Pakistan	7%	64% Did nothing 18% Tried to stop 1% Reported to teacher
	3%	73% Did nothing 5% Tried to stop – Reported to teacher
Vietnam	42%	45% Did nothing 36% Tried to stop 23% Reported to teacher
	42%	44% Did nothing 27% Tried to stop 28% Reported to teacher

School is considered an unsafe space

With the exception of Pakistan, close to half of the students in the other four countries have concerns regarding the safety of their school. Multiple sites in schools are considered unsafe by students due to fear of violence, including emotional violence and inadequacy of school infrastructure such as the state of school toilets. Harassment, lack of responsiveness and the use of punishment by teachers as a form of discipline are also noted as factors contributing to feelings of insecurity. Figure 5 is an example of the participatory mapping of school sites that are unsafe done by students in Vietnam.

"Male pupils should be in charge of harder activities and strenuous work, such as carrying heavy items, taking the doors off the wall for washing....[while] female pupils clean the glass windows."

– A teacher from Vietnam using gender stereotypes

School is a place where gender-based discriminatory practices and behaviours exist

The research found evidence of gender stereotyping within the school environment that acts as a driver of SRGBV, as it perpetuates gender discriminatory social norms.

The levels at which girls and boys play together was reported in varying proportions across the countries. One third of respondents in Nepal to nearly two thirds in Pakistan claimed that girls and boys don't play together.

Different participation levels between girls and boys in sports and in the classroom reflects gender discriminatory practices as well as unequal gender roles wherein students are encouraged to behave 'in accordance' with their gender. Teachers are uncomfortable with girls and boys behaving like each other, and take it upon themselves to teach them 'the right way'.

"She fears that teachers will not take her complaint. Similarly, she does not tell her parents as she feels that they might stop her from going to school."

– A girl from Pakistan explaining why one of her friends did not report a case of SRGBV

Reporting of violence to duty bearers is low

Even though a high proportion of children feel unsafe in school, they are unlikely to feel confident about challenging violence or seeking help from an adult. In each of the five countries, less than one third of students reported violence experienced from teaching/non-teaching staff in school to any adult, either at school or at home. Considerable variation is noted across countries, as illustrated by Figure 6. It is important to note that even when students report experiences of violence, action taken by the duty bearers is low.

FIGURE 5

Mapping of unsafe sites and forms of violence experienced in school

BOYS GIRLS BOTH

CLASSROOMS

Fear of robbery and stealing; corporal punishment; teasing; punching, kicking by teachers; making students stand behind the classroom as punishment

Fights and quarrels; teasing; using foul language; hitting by students; bullying

Physical violence; verbal abuse; touching girls' buttocks; teachers punishing by asking students to stand at end of the classroom; teachers making negative comments about students who commit mistakes and publicly criticising the student in class and with other teachers; staring; boys pulling shirts

STORAGE ROOM

Sexual abuse

INSTRUMENT STORAGE ROOM

Fear of robbery and stealing

CANTEEN

Fights; sexual abuse; bullying; quarrels; pick-pocketing; bumping into each other; touching and spanking girl's buttocks while standing in queue; pulling hair; teasing; smoking; groping; drug abuse; use of foul language

PLAYGROUND

Fights

TOILETS

Fights

Sexual abuse; forcing to strip; being locked inside

Peeping; taking pictures and posting on Facebook; proximity between girls and boys toilets; proximity to canteen; being pulled into male toilets and beaten up or groped; boys exposing their private parts; smoking by boys; vulgar acts by boys around toilets; fear of being groped; bullying; boys swearing at girls

SCHOOL LOBBY

Fights; bullying; teasing for having feminine characteristics

Touching girl's thighs; pinching on cheeks by boys; tripping

SCHOOL ENTRANCE

Sexual abuse; group fights between girls; physical violence; fear of being kidnapped; bullying; commenting

Physical violence by school guards; physical violence between students (over girlfriends and boyfriends)

CYCLE PARKING

Fear of robbery and stealing

fights and quarrels

Note: Students also reported rumors on Facebook; Facebook fights turning into physical fights on school campus; physical violence by school guards and by boys from outside; name calling; teasing for dressing badly; bullying by school boys; physical fights between boys groups and girls groups; posting bad pictures and offensive comments on Facebook; pulling girl's bra straps by boys; kicking, punching and pulling hair by girls; being touched by boys on cheeks; boys throwing cigarette butts on girls. These generally happen at any place on school campus and compromise the feeling of security among boys and girls.

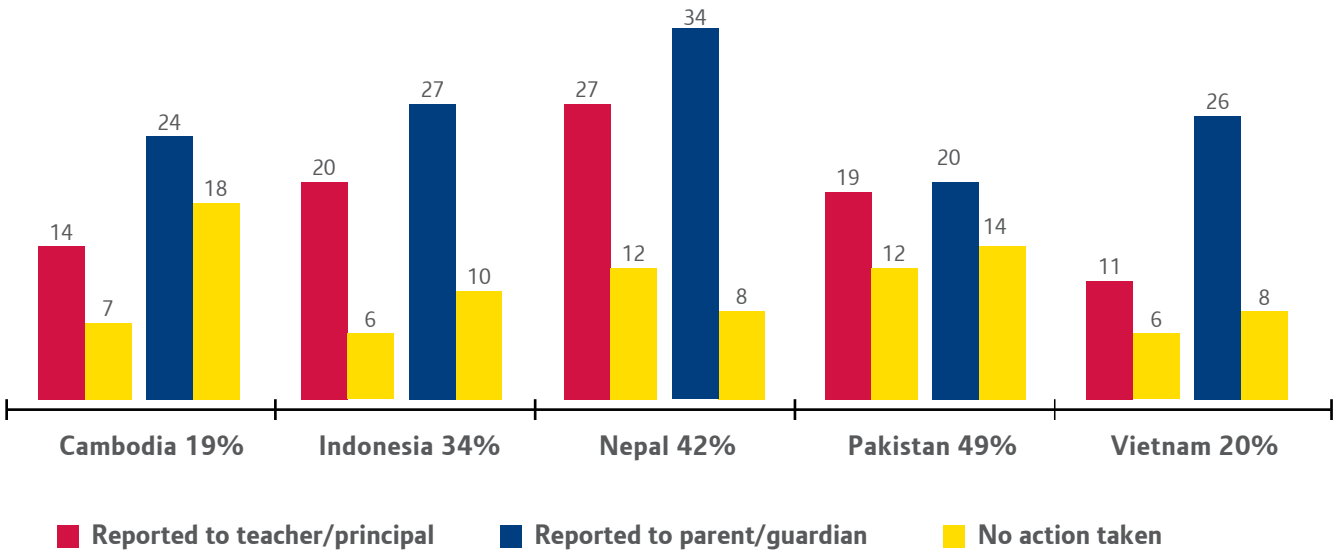


FIGURE 6
Reporting of violence perpetrated by teacher/school staff in school to duty bearers, and action taken on complaint

Students' lack of trust and confidence in reporting mechanisms

Across all five countries, there is no structured, coherent response mechanism that exists to respond to SRGBV. In addition, attitudes of key duty bearers do not seem to encourage students to report cases of violence. There is clear acknowledgment among both teachers and parents that children would usually not share incidents of violence with them due to fear of being blamed. The lack of action taken by parents could be due to limited interaction with schools, a tendency to blame the child, or even feelings of apprehension of taking on the power of teachers and the school.

A lack of trust and confidence in school structures and fear of being blamed may discourage students from reporting perpetrators who are teachers, non-teaching staff or fellow students. This situation gives excessive and unquestionable power to school authorities and normalises peer-based violence, leading to repression of students' voices.

In Vietnam, girls are socialised to be passive and submissive

Deeply rooted cultural norms and practices

In all countries surveyed, cultural values and practices influence gender norms, roles, and behaviours for men and women in society. For example in Cambodia, customary laws such as ChbabProh and ChbabSrey describe codes of conduct for men and women and are taught in school at an early age, with boys and girls having to recite these laws out loud on a daily basis. The code for men instructs them to behave moderately, to be knowledgeable and resourceful, to work hard and to protect their property. The code for women explicitly assigns a lower status to females, prohibits them from voicing their opinions, and advises women at all times to respect and obey their husbands and avoid embarrassing them. Specific norms in Indonesia treat children

as powerless, thus relegating children to the bottom of the power structure. Physical punishment as a means of disciplining children is widely accepted by parents as well as teachers. Similar situations are seen in Nepal and Pakistan, where children are taught that they must learn to obey elders, with physical punishment being considered necessary to children's upbringing, to facilitate learning and to instill discipline in the children. Vietnamese society portrays males as having tính cách nóng, or 'hot characters', (hot-tempered and lacking in self-control). Females, in contrast, are believed to have tính cách lạnh, or 'cool characters', enabling them to adjust to all situations and maintain harmony in the family. Girls are therefore socialised to be passive and submissive.

Inadequate gender focus in policies and weak implementation of policy and legal frameworks

At the policy level, the focus on gender equality and gender-based violence varies within educational settings across the five countries. In Vietnam, there are specific laws and government structures prohibiting corporal punishment, sexual abuse and emotional abuse of children, while Pakistan has the least developed policy responses to SRGBV. Across the five countries, education policies mention gender equality and SRGBV in varying degrees, and the mechanisms for operationalising it are often unclear. Gender-focused reviews of these policies and associated legal systems are a critical need. The operationalisation of the ban on corporal punishment is inadequately enforced or monitored in countries with a specific legal ruling. In Cambodia for example, gender mainstreaming is claimed to be implemented as a rule in all sectors, yet teachers' lack of gender awareness is raised as an issue of great concern (Sadev, 2010). It was argued that gender equality is a concept that is familiar by name only or is misunderstood to mean gender parity; some teachers have never heard of gender-sensitive teaching methodologies, nor do teacher trainers know about it. Lack of infrastructure and pedagogical skills are other explanations for this issue.[1]

Though the policies of the Indonesian government recognise that children need to be protected from violence, existing laws do not explicitly prohibit physical punishment in schools and other public institutions. In Nepal, the Education Act (1971, amended in 2004) and the Education Regulation (2003) do not actively discourage physical punishment for children, though the Child Act prohibits harsh punishment.[2] There is evidence of code of conducts for teachers being developed, however evidence of its implementation is lacking. Further, a lack of clarity of legal instruments is noted in Pakistan. Despite prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, it is widely practiced in Pakistan (UNICEF, 2001). Pakistan's Criminal Procedure Code also states that beating a child is illegal. However, there are other discrepancies and clashes between different laws which leave no option for an institutional remedy for student victims of violence in schools.

[1] 2009, Revitalizing higher education in Sub Saharan Africa, united nations university report project accessed at http://archive.unu.edu/africa/files/UNU_RevitalizingHigherEducation.pdf

[2] Lawfulness of corporal punishment. .http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/progress/ reports/nepal.html. Published 2007.

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy interventions and programmes must be supported by sufficient and credible data on the nature and scope of school-related gender-based violence. The findings from this multi-country research provide compelling evidence to urgently prioritise programming on school-related gender-based violence in Asia. Patriarchal norms prevailing in social institutions will continue if we are not made aware of them and taught how to challenge them. This recognition has to permeate both policy-making as well as socialisation processes. As children start recognising and challenging these norms, and speaking out against violence, support must be provided at the school, community and government levels to offer adequate and efficient response systems that are regularly monitored and periodically evaluated.

In concurrence with the findings, policies and programmes to prevent and respond to SRGBV must be comprehensive, integrated, multi-sectoral and long term. These policies and programmes need to address barriers at all levels, including at the individual, community and family, as well as institutional and policy levels. The main recommendations emerging from the research are as follows:

Policies and laws:

- Undertake comprehensive reviews of all education-related policies and advocate for inclusion of gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence in policies and operational plans.
- Strengthen legislative frameworks to ensure that they explicitly protect all children from violence, including SRGBV.
- Institutional arrangements, procedural protocols and codes of conduct must be mandated by policy. These should clearly outline appropriate and proportionate sanctions for SRGBV.

Services and structures to ensure protection:

- Establish a response mechanism that is school based. It can build on existing forums within the school and have specialised services, such as that of a trained professional counsellor or child protection expert. Teachers and existing student support platforms could be, however, the first step of response for which they require specific training. A referral system with legal, social and psychological support must be set up to support the reporting and response to specific complaints.
- Map existing stakeholders in the community and link school-based mechanisms to community-based child protection mechanisms.
- Teachers and school administrators must be well trained, equipped and supported to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in and around schools. Include gender transformative content in teacher trainings and other school-based orientation forums for teachers and parents.

- Identify specific infrastructure changes that can contribute to enhanced safety in schools, such as clean and functional separate toilets for boys and girls located in different parts of the school, presence of security guards and counselling rooms.
- Raise awareness of positive discipline and alternative non-violent child rearing approaches with both teachers and parents.
- Strengthen the interface between schools, parents and the larger community through engagement with school management committees and parent-teacher associations. Have school-initiated awareness and capacity-building events on the issue of SRGBV to re-energise their interaction.
- Law enforcement, judiciary and child protection authorities, the transportation sector, and civil society organisations must be partners in addressing the vulnerability of children to and from school grounds.
- Identify key teachers and school-based management structures or bodies, such as School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), and build their capacity to recognise and address SRGBV.
- Use existing forums, such as school/child clubs, as platforms to include children in raising and challenging SRGBV and provide specific training to the mentors who lead them.
- Conduct safety audits with the participation of children to regularly monitor school infrastructure and check the physical aspects of a 'safe' school.

Behaviours and attitudes:

- Recognise girls and boys as key participants in developing solutions to address school-related gender-based violence.
- Engage with young girls and boys using a gender-transformative approach. This approach is based on evidence that construction, and reconstruction, of gender and harmful notions of masculinity need to be addressed. Gender norms and roles start forming at a young age through various socialisation processes.[3] The gender-transformative approach involves using a combination of the cognitive-affective approach and life skills to engage girls and boys in collective critical self-reflection and enables them to recognise and challenge inequitable gender norms and the use of violence in their everyday lives. A pivotal feature of this approach is that it goes beyond knowledge provision to creating safe spaces for discussion, to challenge entrenched beliefs and behaviours, and has been found to be effective in changing attitudes.
- Undertake curricula review and revision both for students and teacher training institutes, but go beyond the review to have specific transformative programmes that enable individuals to recognise 'everyday acts' that are acts of violence, and challenge them.

[3] We are cognizant of the need to initiate various activities and programmes from an early age, which increases prospects of sustainable and successful intervention. However, this is not the focus of the current programme which focuses primarily on adolescents.

- Engage teachers (and non-teaching staff) proactively; build perspective and skills to have equitable attitudes and abilities to respond to SRGBV appropriately. Provide hands on support to teachers. Currently, discourse on gender and violence is not integral to school or teachers' training curriculum.
- Ensure inclusion of gender analysis, as well as an understanding of different forms of SRGBV, as a necessary and inclusive part of school curricula through classroom-based sessions or Group Education Activities for both girls and boys and school-based campaigns.
- Given that boys appear to have more rigid and stereotypical attitudes, conduct specific sessions targeted at boys on positive masculinities.
- Use examples of positive role models to suggest practical possibilities and viable alternatives of change and egalitarian processes.
- Focus on emotional forms of violence through school-based campaigns such as 'stop verbal abuse day' to publically denounce certain forms of behaviour in schools.
- Organising school and community-based meetings and campaigns to engage with community-level stakeholders, including community groups, religious leaders, and women/girls groups and men/boys groups/clubs.

Policies and programmes to achieve gender equality and prevent gender-based violence need to be as much about empowering girls as they are about redefining masculinity and ideas of manhood. Widely accepted ideas of masculinity and power have the use of violence at their core, where boys are groomed for engaging in violence from a young age and revel in the use of power 'over others'. As long as this notion of violence remains central to relationships, including between peers, with adults, and in future adult relationships, the move to prevent gender-based violence will remain incomplete.

Institution-based and systemic processes that reinforce and perpetuate inequities and violence need to be recognised and challenged. School-focused efforts must be accompanied by policy advocacy and community-based awareness building. It is desirable that school-based programmes be set-up in communities that have strong rights-based community organisations so that the efforts can be complemented and synchronised. Gender equality and gender-based violence need to be an explicit focus in all education policies, and incorporated as a 'learning' component within the school curriculum. The community-based component not only creates a larger public discourse on gender equality and non-tolerance of violence, it will also improve safety on the way to school. The process of questioning and changing attitudes and behaviours needs a peer supportive environment and institutional backing. It also needs to be monitored rigorously to ensure that outcomes are realised and evidence of change is generated.

Following data analysis, a theory of change and programme framework for responding to SRGBV was developed, which are presented in Figures 7 and 8 below.

FIGURE 7
Theory of Change

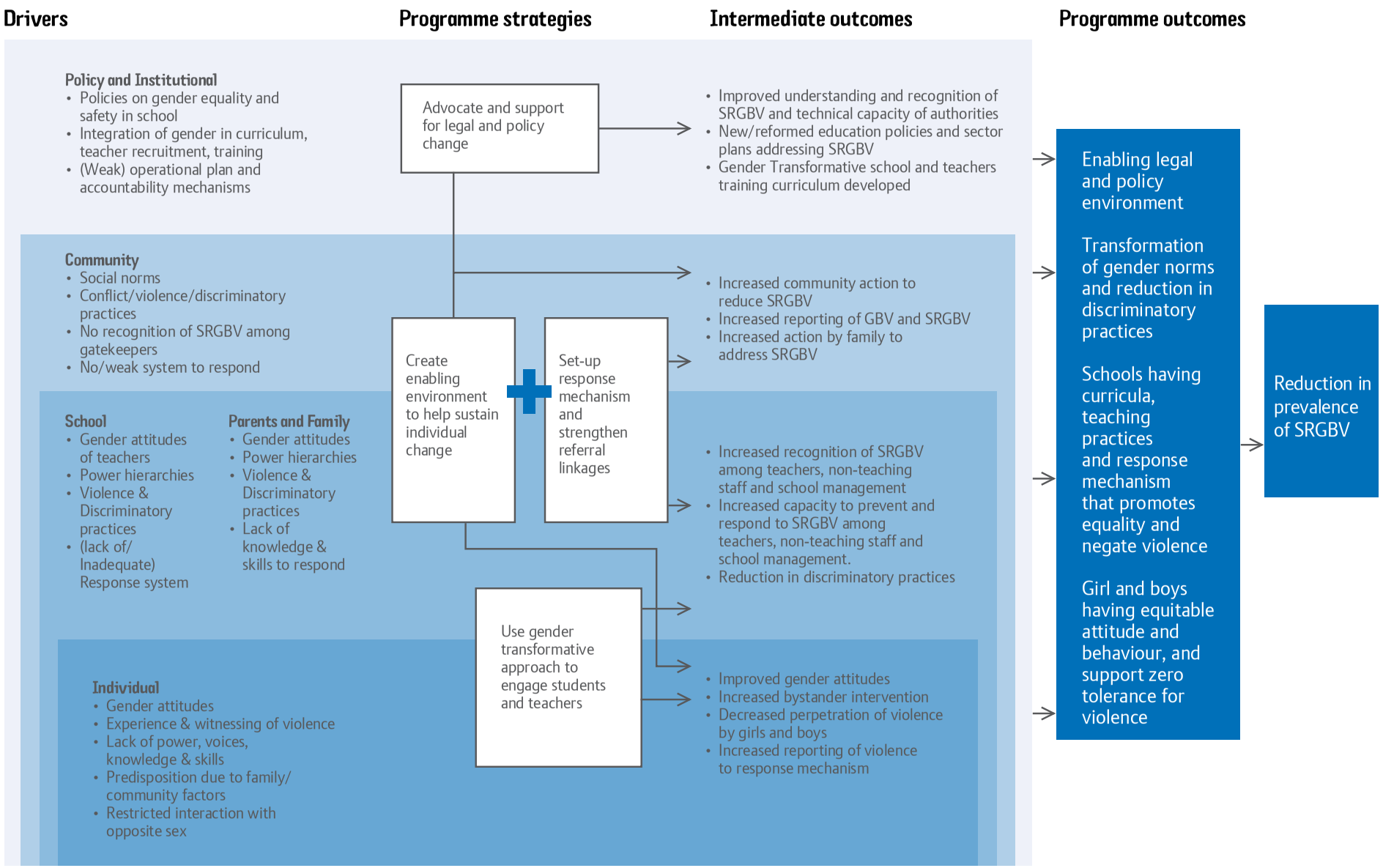
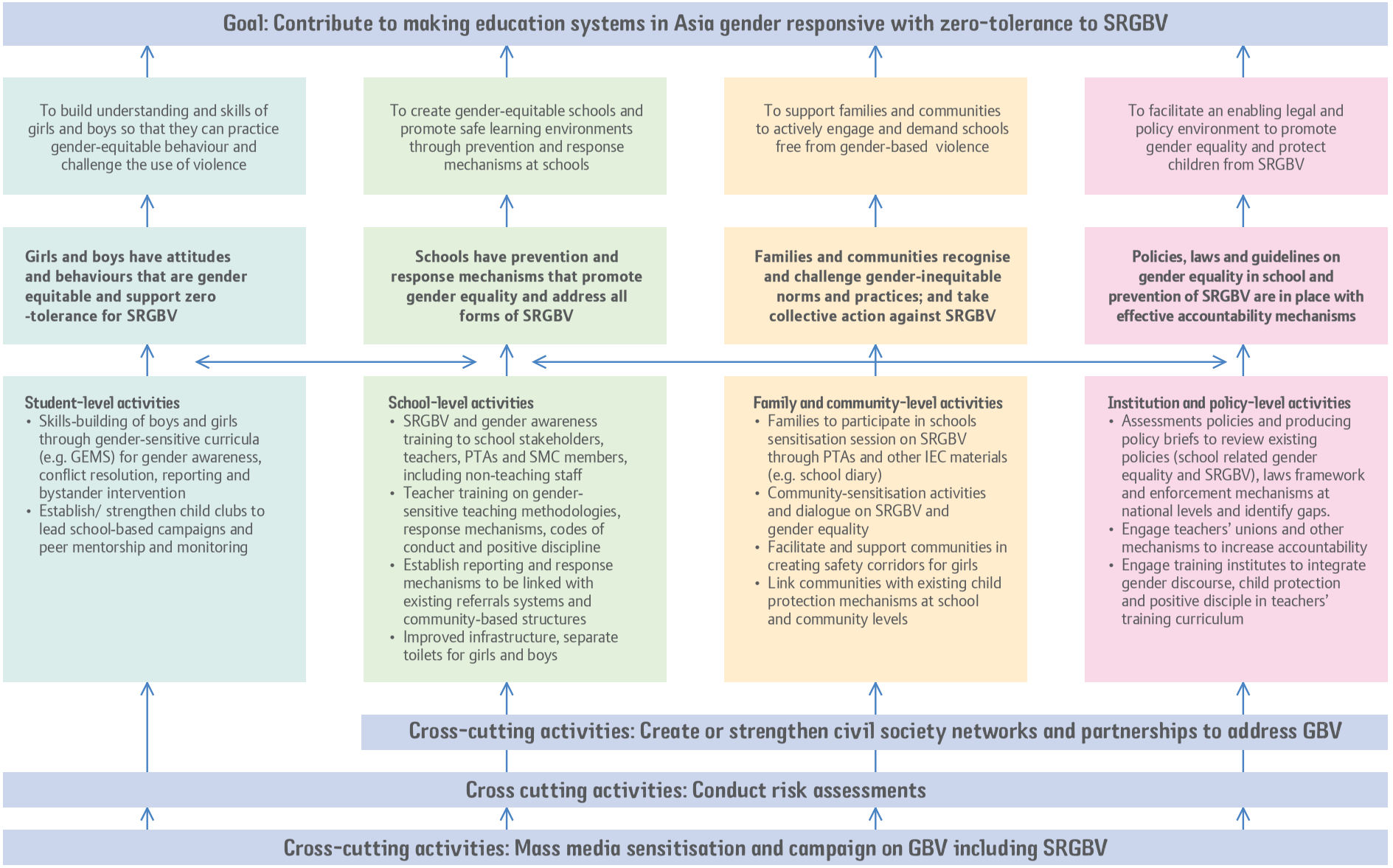


FIGURE 8

PEASS Programme Framework



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This theory of change will guide the development of specific programmatic interventions under the Promoting Equality and Safety in Schools (PEASS) initiative. Plan will continue to support countries to raise more funding to ensure that schools in Asia have zero-tolerance towards SRGBV and standardise a gender-responsive approach to education, adhering to the Promoting Equality and Safety in Schools Framework.

In addition, Plan will give priority to marginalised children, including girls, children with disabilities and from ethnic minorities, with equal opportunities to participate in Promoting Equality Safety in Schools programming.

Plan Asia Regional Office will continue to promote Equality and Safety in Schools on global and regional platforms by coordinating with UN agencies and other key partners in order to build capacity in the education sector at all levels.

Global Girls Innovation Programme

Plan because I am a Girl

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February 2015