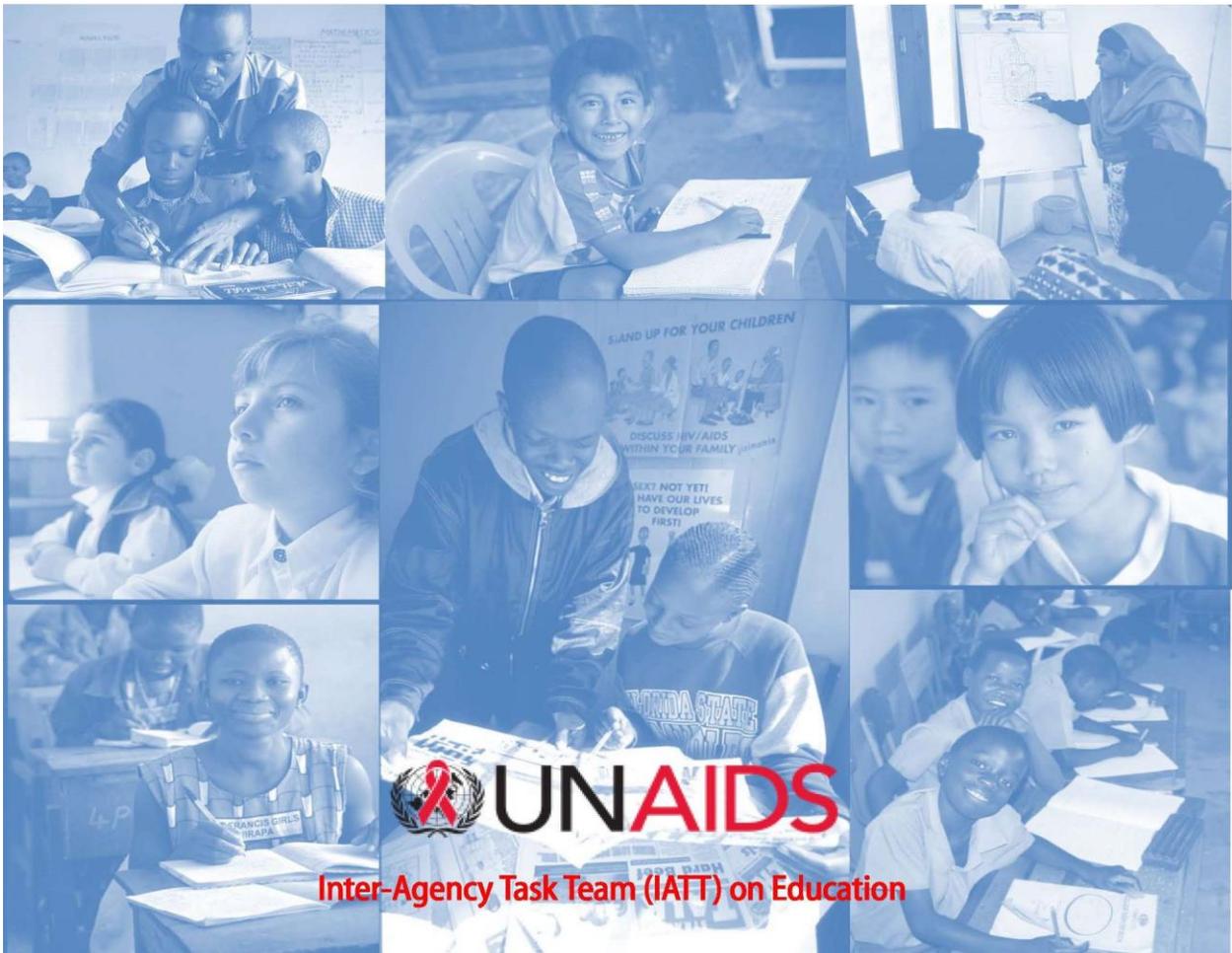


# Empowering the school community to prevent and respond to school-related gender-based violence

*A project of the UNAIDS IATT on Education*



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## Executive Summary

Gender-based violence in and around schools is a violation of learners' rights and a barrier to achieving a quality education for all. While there is wide recognition that school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is a problem<sup>1</sup> and many efforts are in place to address it,<sup>2</sup> persistent barriers remain to systematic and effective responses.<sup>3</sup> UNAIDS lists gender-based violence as a driver of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV); gender-based violence is caused by a range of influences both in and mostly out of school. Therefore, commensurate school-based responses are complex by definition. This document is designed to bring attention to the dynamics of the school community and infer policy implications to support that community. The UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on Education and School Health, under the direction of the Secretariat at UNESCO, conducted a research project that consisted of a literature review, a large-scale global teacher organization survey, and focus group discussions in multiple regions of the world. The intent was to look specifically at the conditions which teachers and administrators need in order to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

The findings revealed a complicated and fragmented picture. The majority of teacher organisations are doing work or plan to do work on SRGBV. But the focus groups showed that participants lacked a clear understanding about the meaning and causes of gender-based violence. Encouragingly, in many quarters, there is a desire to learn and do more expressed. Participants and respondents called for leadership, training, and better data collection and reporting mechanisms. The physical environment and social climate were also cited as concerns and addressing these necessitates a comprehensive plan at the school and district. Many teachers reported a desire to teach their learners about gender-safe relations, but noted that this requires curricula materials, pedagogic training, and space and support within the teaching timetable. It was also recognised as important for the codes of conduct of the teaching profession to be upheld, and for these codes to be drafted, publicised, and – most critically – enforced. Recognising that the majority of males are not perpetrators,<sup>4</sup> a call to promote positive peer male influence was made. It was believed that peers at all levels in the school community can work to normalise gender-safe behaviours and empower bystander interventions.

A recurring tension that came out of this study was the relationship between the school and the community, especially as it pertains to strong influences beyond the school's scope of influence, such as the war in the Ukraine, gang-related activity and HIV in South Africa, and economic inequality in Bolivia. Given the clear suggestions of respondents and participants, it can be inferred that the majority felt that although schools must contend with significant external forces, they have a role to play in preventing and responding to gender-based violence, and there is a strong belief that schools should be safe places regardless of what happens in the community.

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<sup>1</sup> UNGEI – UNESCO. 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Plan International. 2013.

<sup>3</sup> EFA – GMR. March Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Jewkes, R. et al. 2011.

While the call to address and respond to SRGBV has many champions<sup>5</sup> and the description of activities in this document is not altogether new,<sup>6</sup> this research has gained some unique insights that should be useful to SRGBV and HIV prevention efforts. By taking a bottom-up approach, which starts with understanding the context of the teacher and administrator and developing policy implications from there, this research provides a clear picture of what needs to be done within school communities. It shows that a series of isolated interventions or programmes is insufficient. Rather, comprehensive, systematic, and systemic efforts are needed. Taken together, the suggestions from the literature review, the survey, and the focus groups give us the information to develop a comprehensive action plan for multiple levels. This is expressed graphically and clearly on the SRGBV Theory of Change (Diagram III). This theory recognises the multiple levels of influence within a school environment and the requisite actions needed to effect change on each. The constellation of actions constitutes a comprehensive and coordinated response to SRGBV, and, more broadly, contributes to a school agenda that promotes health.

For all these to come together into a cohesive and comprehensive action plan requires resources, changes in understanding and behaviour, and changes in education systems. In light of these barriers, as grievous as SRGBV is, it is not enough to implore people to act: governance is needed to support action. While fostering change in the school is highly ambitious, it is not unattainable; there is a rich literature on change management and organizational learning within the education sector<sup>7</sup> that can be drawn on. In these areas, transformation begins by motivating people to take action, providing a coherent approach that all school community members can contribute to, fostering cultures of learning and evaluation, and ultimately achieving significant behaviour and systemic change. The change process can be complicated and there will be setbacks and barriers along the way, so the entire process needs to be driven by resolute guidance and direction to anticipate and overcome any difficulties. This process is elaborated in the Drivers for Change Management on SRGBV (Diagram IV). The main conclusion is that a culture of good governance – through leadership, transparency, accountability and participation – will empower all members of the school community to promote health.

IATT members and other development partners can contribute by supporting efforts to:

1. Foster leadership and political commitment and will in governments.
2. Support awareness-raising activities and training programmes for education sector stakeholders, including teachers and administrators.
3. Develop curricula for interactive teaching methods in gender equality, violence prevention, and life skills.
4. Promote and enforce codes of ethics and legal reforms against all forms of violence in the schools.
5. Ensure infrastructure and school facilities are safe and secure.
6. Collect data and conduct research to understand the magnitude of the issue and monitor progress.
7. Involve learners, parents, and community members in the transformation of gender relations at school.

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<sup>5</sup> See the Global Partners Working Group on SRGBV convened by UNESCO and UNGEI.

<sup>6</sup> Plan International. 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Fullan et al. (2009) and Senge et al. (2012).

As explained at the outset, SRGBV is a complex issue to understand, prevent, and mitigate and thus the response is complex. It requires a large number of actions and players. This research is intended to provide an impetus by describing *what* needs to be done through a comprehensive action plan and *how* to go about by describing the change management process. This research focuses on the policies and programmes for the school community, it is a complement to the efforts from donors, technical agencies, global civil society and other partners who all have a role to play in the SRGBV response. Action must no longer be delayed. The education sector needs to instil a sense of urgency when dealing with the prevention of violence in schools and the education sector.

## Background

This research began with the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Education and School Health symposium in 2014. The IATT recognises SRGBV as a key driver of the HIV epidemic. As such, the IATT organised a symposium in 2014 in Cape Town, South Africa, with the aim of better understanding good practices in violence prevention and mitigation. At the symposium, which included visits to schools and community centres, a range of issues pertaining to the causes of gender-based violence and examples of good practices in the response were discussed. While there were many discouraging stories of abuse, crime and sexual violence, there were also stories of leadership, perseverance and transformation. However, the positive factors revealed limitations: they were episodic, highly contextual and thus difficult to replicate. There were good programmes in place – for example, training, curriculum and community involvement – but without broader support at the systems level, it was posited that these programmes would likely remain disconnected and unable to contribute to a larger movement of health promotion within the education sector.

*“Left unchecked, sexual violence in schools has a negative impact on the educational and emotional needs of girls and acts as a barrier to attaining education... Rape and other forms of sexual violence place girls at risk of contracting the HIV/AIDS virus [which has in turn] taken its toll on the educational system and disrupted education ... especially for girls.”*

Human Rights Watch (UN Women, WAGGGS)

An observation by one teacher participating in the symposium encapsulated the central issue: with the increasing pressure on the singular focus to meet learning outcomes, the holistic well-being of learners is sacrificed. The symposium participants concluded that it was imperative for teachers to be given a mandate to promote a holistic approach to education that incorporates health promotion, social and emotional learning, and the creation of safe learning environments. While this is notionally the charge of teachers and administrators, the reality is quite different: over-crowded classes, high-stakes testing, and violence in the home and community are some of the major factors that militate against health promotion through schools, and thus a reduction of SRGBV. The question then arose: how can the education sector reverse this trend and reclaim what should be a fundamental objective of education – to promote health and human development?

The Global Partners Working Group on SRGBV, convened by the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) and UNESCO, is in the process of working with UN Women to develop Global Guidance on SRGBV for the education sector. This research is a complementary effort with a focus on policy implications for the school community that will inform the Global Guidance and will potentially be replicated in part.

Following are several definitions and notes on SRGBV to frame the discussion contained in this report.

“School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is defined as acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in or around schools and educational settings as a result of harmful gender norms and unequal power dynamics between genders. It includes acts of bullying, sexual or verbal harassment, non-consensual touching, rape and assault. Although both girls and boys can be targets of SRGBV, girls are the most vulnerable.”<sup>8</sup> Plan International states that SRGBV “refers to acts of sexual, physical or psychological violence inflicted on children in and around schools because of stereotypes and roles or norms attributed to or expected of them because of their sex or gendered identity. It also refers to the differences between girls’ and boys’ experience of and vulnerabilities to violence.”<sup>9</sup>

“GBV in school settings is a global phenomenon that knows no geographical, cultural, social, economic, ethnic, or other boundaries. It occurs across all societies and represents a violation of human rights.”<sup>10</sup> Violence is unacceptable at school and teachers and other education sector staff should be empowered to address it, not only to create and maintain a safe learning environment, but also to ensure that good quality education is provided. However, efforts to eliminate gender-based violence (GBV) in and around schools remain limited, despite governments supporting international frameworks to protect children from all forms of violence.

Furthermore, “Gender-based violence is a significant barrier to education and a factor in HIV transmission. Tackling gender-based violence can improve school attendance and academic performance and reduce the risk of HIV.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, GBV is a major obstacle to the achievement of gender equality, a contributor to the

*“Gender inequalities increase the risk of violence by men against women and inhibit the ability of those affected to seek protection.”*

World Health Organization (UN Women, WAGGGS)

transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), a significant factor in unintended pregnancy, and is a barrier to fulfilling the right to a quality education as it can limit girls’ and boys’ access to school, increase school drop-out rates, as well as decrease the enjoyment of education. School-related gender-based violence is one of the worst manifestations of gender discrimination and seriously undermines attempts to achieve gender equality in education.<sup>12</sup>

In 2013, UNESCO and UNGEI developed a discussion paper<sup>13</sup> that presented the key issues in addressing SRGBV in advance of a regional meeting<sup>14</sup> in the Asia Pacific region. UNESCO commissioned a background research paper on policies and practice in relation to SRGBV.<sup>15</sup> UNESCO’s research, along with recommendations from other initiatives such as Plan International’s “Because I am a Girl”

<sup>8</sup> Definition extracted from the *Joint Statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women* issued by UN Secretary-General’s Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) the partners of the UN Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI), of which UNESCO is a partner, together with Education International (EI) at the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

<sup>9</sup> Greene, M., Robles, O., Stout, K. and Suvilaakso. 2013.

<sup>10</sup> See page 1: Leach, F., Máiréad D. and Francesca S. 2014.

<sup>11</sup> UNESCO. 2012. Good Policy and Practice in HIV and Health Education. Booklet 7.

<sup>12</sup> Leach et al. 2012.

<sup>13</sup> UNGEI – UNESCO. 2013.

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO, UNGEI and Plan International organised a regional consultation meeting on SRGBV in Asia- Pacific in November 2013 that brought together ministries, researchers, UN and civil society to improve understanding of the issues surrounding SRGBV and to identify steps to reduce incidents of SRGBV and mitigate its effects in the region. A report on regional perspectives on SRGBV has been published.

<sup>15</sup> See page 1: Leach, F., Máiréad, D. and Francesca, S. 2014.

campaign, have highlighted the role of the education sector in the prevention of and response to SRGBV, and the need for effective policies and regulation, reporting and response mechanisms, well supported and trained personnel, and gender-transformative teaching and learning practices. A number of organisations and donors are demonstrating increased interest in working on this topic, and to respond to the lack of coherent or coordinated action in terms of implementation or in advocacy and research, a Global Partners' Working Group on SRGBV has been formed.<sup>16</sup>

At the 196<sup>th</sup> Executive Board Session of UNESCO held in March 2015, UNESCO Member States adopted a decision<sup>17</sup> to condemn all forms of gender-based violence and promote the creation of safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for children. The decision invites the Director-General to submit a roadmap to combat school-related gender-based violence at its next session. This first-ever UN decision on gender-based violence at school acknowledges its negative consequences on children's health, learning, school attendance and school completion.

In April, the 2015 Education For All Global Monitoring Report (EFA-GMR), which monitors progress towards the six EFA Goals, indicated with regards to Goal 5 on gender parity and equality that: "Global and national advocacy has led to improvements in girls' education and progress in reducing gender gaps. However, policies that tackle child marriage and school-related gender-based violence need to be strengthened."<sup>18</sup> It also noted that "recent years have seen a growing focus on gender-based violence in the wider school environment."<sup>19</sup>

At the 2015 World Education Forum, held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, participants endorsed the *Incheon Declaration* that states in Article 8: "We recognize the importance of gender equality in achieving the right to education for all. We are therefore committed to supporting gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning environments; mainstreaming gender issues in teacher training and curricula; and eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence in schools."<sup>20</sup>

## Methodology

The UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Education, convened by UNESCO, held a symposium in partnership with the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the University of Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa in February 2014 entitled *The Role of Schools and the Education Sector in Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence*. By the end of the symposium, participants identified specific areas of research and guidance that are needed to advance the work. The IATT symposium highlighted that the efforts to eliminate GBV in and around schools remain limited. Furthermore, the gap between the existence of rules and codes of conduct and daily practice was pronounced. While it was acknowledged that many schools had

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<sup>16</sup> In August 2014, a coalition of governments, development organizations, civil society activists and researcher institutions formed a Global Partners' Working Group on SRGBV to collaborate in ending gender-based violence in and around schools.

<sup>17</sup> UNESCO Executive Board – 196<sup>th</sup> Session.

<sup>18</sup> EFA – GMR. *2015 Global Monitoring Report – Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*. p. 153. Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015. p. 153.

<sup>19</sup> *Idem* p. 174.

<sup>20</sup> Incheon Declaration – Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality and lifelong learning for all.

preventive and protective response measures in place, they were often not widely known, supported, or enforced.

An additional concern raised was that teachers' and administrators' (e.g., head teachers and regional inspectors among others) job descriptions and accountability did not adequately address gender-based violence prevention and response. This is coupled with strong pressure on those professionals to cover the curriculum and focus on learning outcomes, which has a *prima facie* logic. However, this focus comes at a cost: it does not leave adequate resources to address the broader learning environment, nor does it afford teachers the curricular flexibility to address norms and attitudes that enable SRGBV to occur. The symposium concluded that by building on social norm approaches<sup>21</sup> and critical pedagogy<sup>22</sup> the school culture can be changed to empower the majority to promote health, enforce protective measures, and support victims of school-related gender-based violence. The symposium ended with the question:

*What are the necessary conditions and mechanisms for school administrators and teachers to effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence in school settings?*

This section reviews the methodology used to answer the question. The research objective is to identify ways to strengthen the education sector's leadership to prevent and respond to gender-based violence by empowering school administrators and teachers. This includes interrogating the central role of the employer as well as other systemic issues, such as policy, affecting the day-to-day operations in the school and relations with parents and the community.

To answer the research question, the IATT Secretariat conducted three phases of research as a follow-up to the 2014 symposium. The first phase was a review of existing English literature on gender, violence and bullying, education sector change theory, teacher training, and school management to identify factors causing and affecting SRGBV. While not exhaustive, the literature review covered books, reports, policies, peer reviewed articles and grey literature (see References section).

The second phase consisted of a survey implemented between September 15 and November 24, 2014. The survey was conducted by IATT member Education International and was on the subject of Implementation of the EI Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP 2013–2015). This voluntary survey available in English, French and Spanish, was sent to more than 300 teacher union affiliates of Education International. EI agreed to add some questions specific to SRGBV to help inform the IATT's research project. The survey was available online and

*“Schools should have a separate workplace policy that addresses violence that may occur between members of faculty and staff.”*

(Fleck-Henderson, A.)

<sup>21</sup> Berkowitz, A. D. 2004.

<sup>22</sup> “Critical pedagogy is a philosophy of education and social movement that combines education with critical theory”. Kincheloe, Joe; & Steinburg, Shirley (. 1997).. *Changing Multiculturalism*. Bristol, PA: Open University Press. p. 24. Critical pedagogy is the term used to describe what emerges when critical theory encounters education.

“Critical pedagogy encourages educators to not only be aware of injustices but to take action to transform the practices and structures that perpetuate them. Ultimately, critical pedagogy seeks to provide education that is democratic, emancipatory, and empowering to students.” NYU Department of Art and Art Professions.

through an email attachment. The overall response rate (excluding partial responses) was 125 members, representing nearly one-third of their global membership. The EI survey provides a snapshot of teachers' union involvement and needs, but it is limited to the unions that are self-reporting involvement in SRGBV activities, such as awareness-raising and training. The survey administrator coded and tabulated the open-ended responses and shared a summary report with the IATT Secretariat. This report informed phase three of the research project.

The third phase was the most original contribution of this research. It followed up the literature review and the survey with in-depth focus group discussions (FGDs). The FGDs were unique in that they allowed respondents to explore the issues surrounding school-related gender-based violence in their contexts to draw meaningful approaches to SRGBV. Teachers and administrators in five countries (Bolivia, the Philippines, Senegal, South Africa and Ukraine) participated. The countries were selected using a purposive sampling technique where the criteria were leadership and demonstrated experience in addressing gender-based violence as identified by EI headquarters. The FGDs were largely organised by teachers' union focal points recommended by staff at EI headquarters, who in turn identified participants for each FGD and translated the protocol. The plans. It was not possible to include a country from the Middle East , North Africa (MENA) region in the FGDs within the given timeframe; however, MENA is included in the form of a regional desk review and analysis by consultants in Palestine, which was then translated into English for inclusion in this study.

A protocol was developed by the IATT Secretariat in order to facilitate the FGDs and was translated where required. The FGD methodology used structured group reflection and analysis techniques that build on the dynamics of participants to explore opinions and perceptions and generate new ideas. It is interactive and dynamic and thus affords the opportunity to dig deeply into issues and explore complexity, which characterises the issue of gender-based violence. In addition, as responses are anonymous, it offers a freedom of expression. The first questions asked were used to open up on this delicate subject and develop an agreement of what SRGVB is. The discussion questions were informed by the literature review and the EI survey, but allowed room for participants to validate the findings and relate them to their work. Though different in approach to the focus groups, the MENA desk review provided specific insights on SRGBV in the region.

While the FGDs have provided a sufficient sample to answer the research question, it is important to acknowledge there were only five countries as part of the sample; some variation from the original version of the protocol may have occurred due to the translation process and discussions were guided by the protocol questions, although open questions did provide the opportunity for flexibility. While this methodology did allow for depth of discussion, it also leads to a loss of comparability. This is a worthwhile trade-off given the complexity of the response and richness of discussion it generated.

Together, the three research phases provided sufficient evidence to answer the research question and to identify ways to strengthen the education sector's leadership to prevent and respond to GBV.

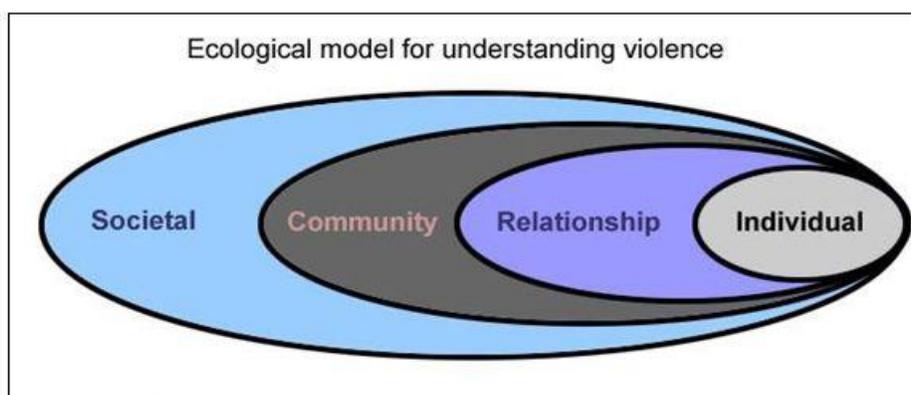
## Findings

This section describes the key findings from each phase of research: the literature review, the survey, and the focus groups.

### **Literature Review**

The approach to the study of school-related gender-based violence requires researchers to put violent phenomena into context. Schools are part of the community. While schools can influence the community, in the case of violence it is often largely affected by it. Therefore, understanding how these influences work and locating schools within a broad context can help us understand how to take action in the education sector. An ecological model that takes into consideration all the factors that are interlinked and interact at different levels is useful for this purpose: “The ecological framework treats the interaction between factors at the different levels with equal importance to the influence of factors within a single level.”<sup>23</sup> The ecological framework is helpful to understand the issue in a holistic way and also to identify the needs. As an illustration the following figure provides examples of risk factors at each level.<sup>24</sup>

**Diagram I Ecological model for understanding violence**



Source: Heise et al., 1999; Krug et al., 2002; CDC, 2004

At the district and school level, a safe physical school environment is one important element that includes a safe social environment and safe passage to and from school. This relation is well explained in a “theoretical framework for school order and safety [...] should accommodate ecological levels, transactional processes over time, culturally driven phenomena, and risk and protective factors, in addition to school-based influences.”<sup>25</sup> Laws can enforce and promote policies and codes of conduct at the school level. There are examples of how schools can be the agent for transformative social change with action to “demand that gender identity and sexual orientation be added to the lexicon of anti-harassment protection in public education.”<sup>26</sup> This advocacy

<sup>23</sup> WHO. Violence Prevention Alliance. The ecological framework webpage:

<http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/ecology/en/><http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/ecology/en/>

<sup>24</sup> WHO. Violence Prevention Alliance. The ecological framework webpage: <http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/ecology/en/> *Idem*.

<sup>25</sup> Cornell, D.G., and Mayer, M.J. 2012. Vol. 39(1), p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Knotts, 2009. p. 597.

includes collecting data on SRGBV to assess the effectiveness of laws and responsiveness of staff, as well as the accountability measures of systems in place.

It is important that teachers and school administrators have a common understanding of SRGBV. Only then can “its effects lead us to reflect on this phenomenon, in order to look for alternatives to prevent it and improve coexistence between students and teachers.”<sup>27</sup> The education sector may have some difficulties developing a common approach to defining and detecting gender-based violence as a specific kind of violence in school settings.<sup>28</sup> Many factors – such as local social norms, intercultural and intracultural differences – complicate system-wide policies and programmes to address SRGBV.<sup>29</sup>

Despite these complexities, policies and measures need to be put in place to help teachers and administrators prevent and respond to SRGBV. For example, empowered teachers have the skills and space to foster a healthy climate at school. They introduce opportunities for learners to express their voice, they can be supportive and enable learners to develop empathy, a sense of respect for the rights of others, and the skills to develop and maintain healthy and equitable relationships. To this end, UNESCO encourages the education system to play a critical role in teaching respect for all. Teaching Respect for All (TRA) “promotes an educational response to counter discrimination and violence through strengthening the foundations of mutual tolerance and cultivating respect for all people, regardless of colour, gender, class, sexual orientation, national, ethnic, or religious orientation/identity.”<sup>30</sup>

But teaching is only one part of creating a healthy learning environment. Another key recommendation that emerged from the research on ensuring safe learning environment was the need for “a coherent system of

*“I feel really scared during the day I do not go to the toilet. If I do I will ask a friend to stand watch so nothing happens. Usually the toilets are full of gangsters smoking dagga and if you go alone they will try to rape you.”*

15 year-old female learner, Western Cape  
(Wilson F.)

supports to create a climate that encourages respectful non-violent relationships and addresses all forms of gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, sexual misconduct and stalking.”<sup>31</sup> Finally, the review highlighted that a special focus on positive peer male influence is also needed, as the majority of males are not perpetrators of gender-based sexual violence.<sup>32</sup> They can thus work to normalise the gender-safe behaviours of the majority and empower bystander interventions: “Addressing the antecedents of violence and

bullying in school can also improve the quality of education for boys and promote positive masculinity. Working with men and boys, as well as empowering young women and girls, is crucial to tackling violence and promoting positive gender norms and attitudes. Education can reach both boys and girls in a trusted and safe environment to make improvements to the health and safety of all learners, in school and outside school.”<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Nashiki, 2012. p. 90.

<sup>28</sup> Alfonso, A.E. P. 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Anderson-Fye, E. 2010.

<sup>30</sup> UNESCO. 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Fleck-Henderson, A. 2013.

<sup>32</sup> Jewkes, R. et al. 2011.

<sup>33</sup> UNESCO. 2012. Good Policy and Practice in HIV and Health Education. Booklet 7.

## Teacher Union Survey

In addition to the literature review, IATT member Education International implemented a survey of their members on gender equality. Several questions on gender violence were included and the responses provided global insights into the reality at the school level. Teachers' unions have a key role to play in addressing school-based violence. They have legitimacy and a strong tradition of mobilisation, enabling them to take the lead on improving national systems that will protect both students and teachers.<sup>34</sup> The EI findings provide a snapshot of the unions' current situation and possible needs with regards to SRGBV. The survey results highlight that over half of the 125 unions responding to the survey (51.7 per cent) are currently involved in SRGBV initiatives, with the highest responses coming from Africa, the Arab Countries Cross-Regional Structure<sup>35</sup> and Latin America. The unions identified a number of current core activities related to SRGBV, including:

- Awareness-raising of union members, students, parents or school governors;
- Development and dissemination of materials and training on SRGBV for learners, parents, community members and education sector staff;
- Participation in coalitions;
- Partnerships with local authorities;
- Improvement of infrastructure and transport; and
- Formation of solidarity networks for support and advocacy.

The survey also revealed the existence of a wide range of activities, from days of activism on violence against women, campaigns against female genital mutilation, forced marriages and dishonour abuse, to involvement in policy through the drafting of laws on bullying.

When asked what kind of support would be needed from their employers (i.e., the school, Ministry of Education, etc.) to empower their members to address SRGBV in an effective and sustainable way, the respondents identified a clear and succinct list. A majority wanted their government to provide leadership and support to the education workforce on the issue. This was expressed in several ways, including for example requests for training programmes conducted by expert resource persons, and the provision of leave for teachers. Most also considered that professional guidance for teachers, and information materials for parents and the community would be useful. Respondents also highlighted as a priority staffing schools with psychologists or nurses, the incorporation of SRGBV into the school curriculum and the strengthening of resources available to teachers and guidance officers. Many respondents felt there was a need for written codes of ethics or conduct on bullying or violence at school, at the district or national level. Others considered it would be necessary to introduce legal reforms or new laws on the criminalization of

*“Teachers use [girls’] weakness to exploit them. If she fails, the teacher usually uses the word ‘see me’, which means ‘come, let’s negotiate’, and usually this ends into having sex for grades.”*

Male Teacher, Liberia (Antonowicz L.)

<sup>34</sup> Save the Children Sweden, Plan West Africa, ActionAid, UNICEF. 2010.

<sup>35</sup> EI's Arab Countries Cross Regional Structure (ACCRS) was established by the EI Executive Board in 2011 and includes 32 affiliates in 13 countries and territories in the region: Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Somalia, Tunisia and Yemen.

violence against women and to ensure their effective implementation. The final set of recommendations centred on improved infrastructure and school facilities, including sanitary and accommodation facilities for teachers and students and ensuring that the school psychologist or guidance officer had suitable office space for confidential meetings. From these responses, the EI researchers put together the following five categories that capture the support expressed by the teachers' unions globally:

- Government political commitment and will;
- Training programmes and information materials;
- Incorporation of issue of SRGBV into school curriculum;
- Written codes of ethics / legal reforms / clauses in collective agreements; and
- Improved infrastructure and school facilities.

The survey highlighted specific types of support required to address SRGBV. Also of note, respondents stated that gender sensitization programmes for the Ministry of Education, support to encourage the Ministry to work in partnership with the unions on the issue, and support for the effective implementation of laws on gender-based violence are required.

#### ***Focus Group Discussions and Regional Desk Review***

The Focus Group Discussions and the MENA Regional Desk Review were designed to delve deeper into the issues brought out by the literature review and EI survey. The idea was to explore complexity and context by drawing on the power of a select group of informed stakeholders to gain insights into the barriers and possible solutions and thus answer our research question with more accuracy. Findings from the FGDs and desk review suggest that the participants – be they teachers, psychologists or education sector administrators – all need similar support but to different degrees depending on their local education system and their specific environment.

It is important to mention that participants acknowledged that the problem could not be solved by the education sector alone, and placed the issues in a broader context, recognizing the role of social norms and the environment. Salient themes emerging from FGDs on the core factors of gender-based violence include:

- Gender-based violence is not frequently perceived as a problem of the education sector;
- The dominant discourse in education and society is androcentric;
- Attempts to challenge gender norms are often met with social resistance;
- There is a lack of a common view for learners on what is “good” and “bad” as there are conflicting messages sent from different actors: parents, school, church, TV...);
- Mass media provides an influence that promotes tolerant attitudes towards violence against women;
- There is a lack of positive behavioural role models in the family and community;
- Social media often exacerbates negative feelings and stereotypes;
- Government policy on gender issues is frequently haphazard – attention is drawn to the issue then the government decides to shift to other priorities;

- At the school level, there is a lack of clearly defined priorities aimed at addressing gender-based violence;
- There is an inadequate legal system to address gender-based violence (weaknesses of law and enforcement);
- No clear and direct mechanisms for reporting and referring to the criminal justice system exist; and,
- School facilities are not gender-safe (separate latrines for girls and boys and monitored for safety).

After assessing the causes of violence, respondents noted different measures already in place in their education system. These include:

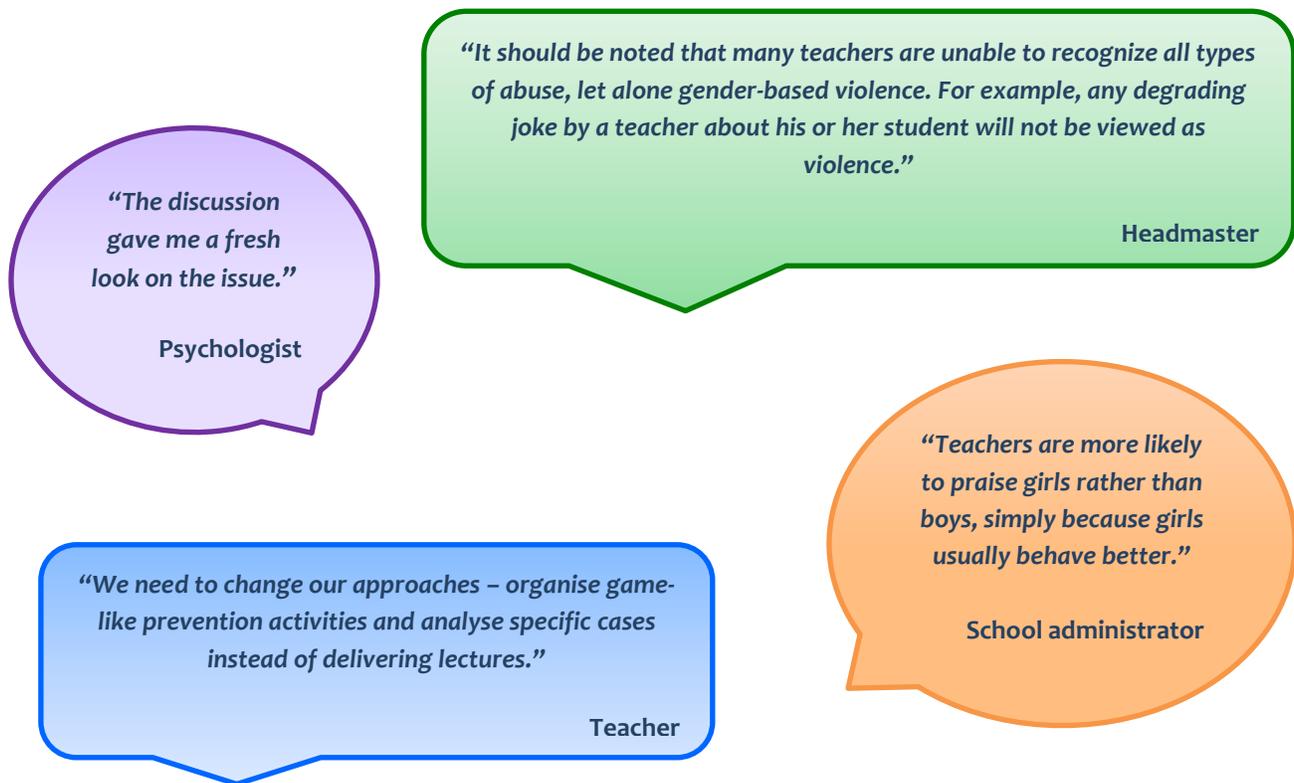
- Life skills / life orientation sessions in scheduled class hours;
- Parent–teacher meetings;
- Counselling and psycho-social support;
- Collaboration with district police officers and social workers;
- Implementation of peer education initiatives and programmes;
- Establishment of school codes of conduct;
- Extra-curricular classes aimed at building skills and communication and awareness of human rights and gender equality issues);
- Partnerships with health advisory committees for HIV; and
- Joint disciplinary trainings for school psychologists and administration.

The respondents indicated that despite these existing measures more was needed to effectively respond to SRGBV. Suggestions at the individual level were called for to help teachers and school administrators identify their own socially constructed gender biases. Most participants shared their ideas of what SRGBV is and recognised that discrimination, verbal and physical attacks, may occur based on social class and norm, gender perception, and peer pressure. But consensus never emerged on how to define clearly gender-based violence and how to address and respond to it. The understanding of “gender-based violence” was initially viewed through the prism of the participants’ knowledge of other forms of violence and entrenched stereotypes. Some education staff could be at fault for reproducing these stereotypes, and regrettably, perpetrating acts of violence themselves.

The analysis shows that teachers need to be sensitised about the constructions of gender and how violence manifests in order to first check their own beliefs and behaviours. They then need the adequate skills and confidence to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. While many respondents expressed interest in classroom activities for their learners, they expressed concerns about the additional time required since they already have a large curriculum to cover. Some good practices that emerged included the use of interactive skill-building pedagogy to build life skills, discipline and constructive class management. However, the participants requested implementation support through training, integration within the curriculum and a clear mandate. Some of the participants made the link with sexuality education as a possible entry point where gender issues in general and SRGBV could be discussed. Also, the need for community involvement was highlighted, as was the fact that optional courses with outside experts could spur the discussion and increase understanding.

In the **UKRAINE**, the participants in the FGD, there were three psychologists. It was pointed out that having the assistance of a psychologist in a school was very useful to help to unpack the issues and guide the school to healthy solutions to SRGBV. Not every school had this option, which also highlights the socio-economic disparities between schools since some may be better equipped to implement programmes to address SRGBV. Participants discussed the comments regularly made in the school setting that reinforce gender stereotypes, such as *“Why are you crying like a baby-girl?”* or *“Is this how girls (or boys) behave?”*

The re-introduction of religious study in the curriculum, and the current armed conflict were raised as strong influencers on gender relations in society, recalling traditional stereotypes and inequality. Respondents noted that teachers often take sides, reprimanding boys and siding with girls without trying to understand the circumstances, further reinforcing the unequal power dynamics and reproducing marginalisation. While some of the measures mentioned above were successful, there was consensus that more needed to be done. Additional support was requested and a psychologist-proposed positive learning approach to rights, health, and gender equality was needed. This suggests large-scale change required in the curriculum and related teaching methods.



In **SOUTH AFRICA**, schools operate in an already very violent context, fuelled by drugs and gang activity. Many learners face violence in the home. In South Africa, gender-based violence is a key driver of the HIV epidemic. Poverty has created the conditions for transactional sexual activity, making young women vulnerable to coercion and violence. In addition, *shebeens*, informal bars serving alcohol around the clock, contribute to a

violent culture. The situation is aggravated when parents are absent, due to the need to work often far away. This means that some learners end up either living with extended families or alone, which limits supervision and role models that can act as a mitigating factor for violence.

One of the main requirements identified by the participants was the need to work with communities, as what happens in the community has more influence on learners than a teacher will. Teachers are competing with other role models – for example, criminality is glorified in the entertainment media. Teachers are facing a crisis of legitimacy in the face of these social pressures. Teacher respect and prestige is a crucial element to create the change and to provide the discipline needed to enable a better learning environment. While learners need to be loved and respected, so do teachers – but current circumstances are working against this.

*“Today kids will tell you, you are not his father or you are not his mother...”*

Educator

*“It doesn’t matter how best you can in terms of teaching your learners about gender, human rights, and gender equality as long as problems in the community are not solved.”*

Gender convener

*“All the initiatives I am taking in the school are not working; school cannot be able alone to deal with all.”*

Education convener

*“It is just social; boys are raised to know that girls are a weaker sex...”*

Teacher

In **SENEGAL**, discussions revealed the key role of Senegalese culture. Traditions concerning family and gender are well entrenched. Participants felt that the social construction of “gender” and that of SRGBV had to be deconstructed and reformatted beyond perceptions of the Senegalese population beyond what is perceived as 'normal' for children or adults reformed. It is therefore essential to take into account traditional cultural practices to enable parents to take ownership of the educational content and not feel as if it were imported from outside. The key to overcoming the current negative situations seems to be in the hands of the communities. Cases of teacher-perpetrated sexual violence were explained by both the inadequate teacher pre-training that does not instill the necessary professional values and skills and by parental resignation in monitoring their own children. In addition, the case of Casamance (southern Senegal) was highlighted as an especially complicated situation because of previous decades of conflict.

Corporal punishment, although prohibited in schools, is still used by some teachers to manage classes, many with 100 students or more. Parents frequently practice the same punishment at home and thus contribute to the violence. This routine violence is considered the basis for other types of violence. Additionally, there is a culture of valuing hyper-masculinity that is persistent across age groups. This culture supports normative policing and gender domination. Ancestral practices of early and forced marriage are not likely to be challenged as long as the parents of girls see it as a viable alternative to schooling. The guarantee of social stability and the consolidation of family ties are the priorities cited in relation to the rights of the child.

*“It is the child's position in society that needs to be reconsidered. We always think that the child cannot understand and so we hit him!”*

Teacher

*“What we do against gender-based violence should not be limited to actions by non-governmental organizations; we need measures in the system starting with pre and in-service teacher training.”*

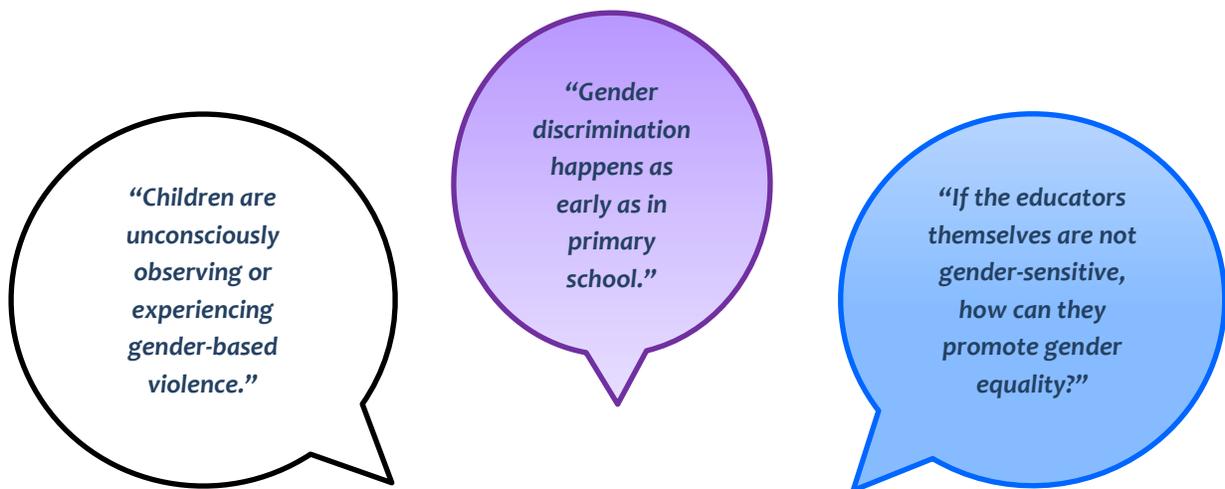
Teacher trainer

*“Students internalise the prevailing gender social norms experienced in the home, and therefore accept SRGBV as normal especially for girls as they are supposed to be submissive.”*

Inspector

The measures in place cannot enable a good response from teachers and administrators and while the legal framework is in place, enforcement is low. The participants said that difficult teaching conditions put stress on teachers and contribute to a cycle of abuse and punishment. They insisted on the importance of the Ministry of Education to allocate funds to make schools safe, as well as the crucial need to talk with parents to generate communication between parents and children within the context of local traditions. During the discussion, the participants considered the term “gender” as the difference between girls and boys, which fits better the Senegalese culture and they felt that efforts coming from the West to redefine gender would upset ancestral African socio-cultural practices. The participants pointed out that the media perpetuates a poor image of the educational system and is not supportive of teachers that go against tradition. For these reasons the participants felt there was a need to rethink the concept of SRGBV to fit within the local culture.

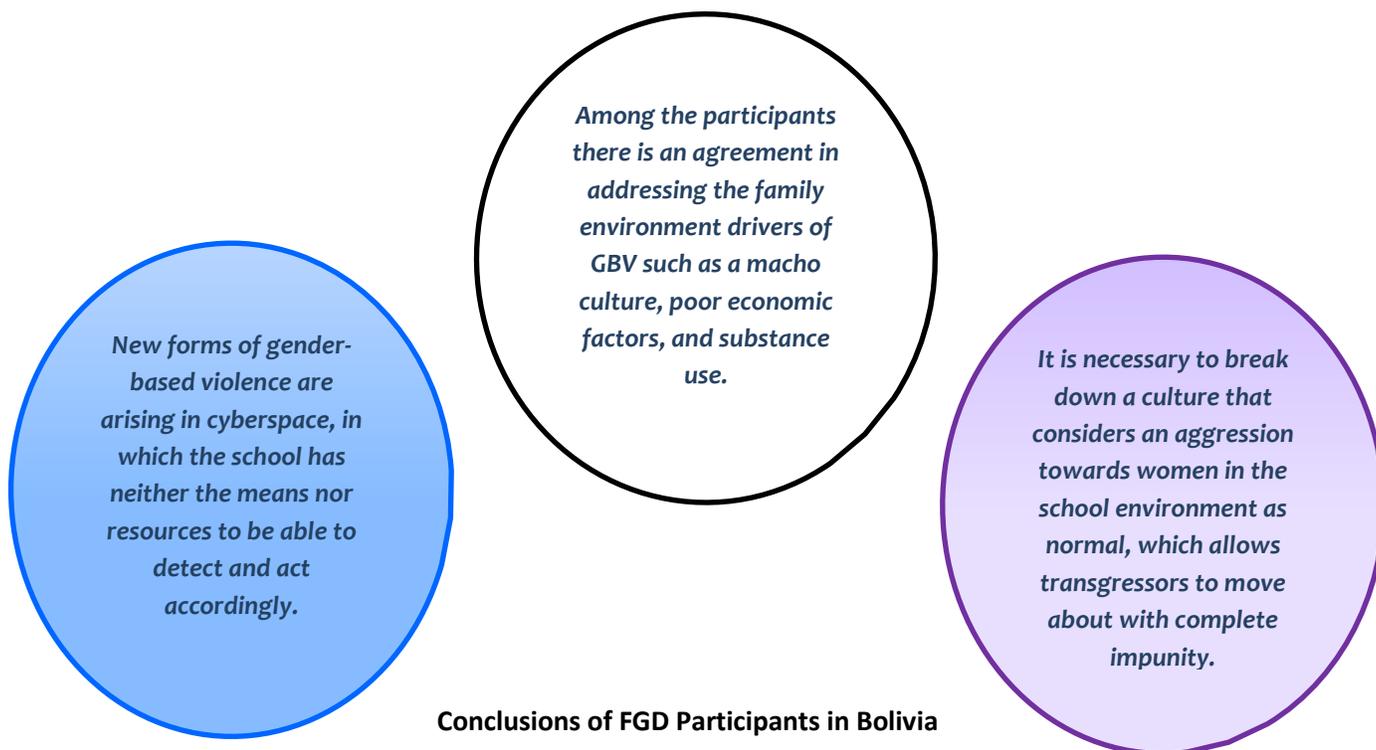
In the **PHILIPPINES**, respondents recognised that gender discrimination is pervasive in the education sector and that it is a seed of violence. It was pointed out that girls often have limited options with regards to what subjects to take and are not encouraged to pursue diverse fields of study or career paths. Although there are many highly skilled women in top positions, there is a perception that it is a “man’s world.” Participants realised through the discussion that incidents they had witnessed in the past should actually be categorised as gender-based violence, and that while the problem is widespread there is very little recognition of the problem as gender-based violence, and that the skills to respond to it are lacking. The respondents raised the fact that the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community has been advocating for the education sector to address SRGBV.



Administrative staff in the Philippines

Despite many efforts at advocacy, mobilization, and partnership building to eradicate gender-based violence in school settings, there are still a troubling number of cases reported. The participants recognised the need for incorporating the issue of gender into the school curriculum. The participants felt that the school must be in the forefront of society, as a leader in growing the understanding of the causes and impact of gender-based violence especially among women. They further emphasised that teachers must lead by example to deepen learners' sensitivity on the issue of gender. Most of the participants also mentioned the importance and role of policies, especially with regards to curriculum development.

In **BOLIVIA**, gender-based violence was recognised by the participants as an issue embedded in a colonial legacy of violence and inequality, especially towards indigenous persons. Gender-based violence manifests in many ways in the present-day school community, and is driven by a culture of macho behaviour, including persistent discrimination and rape. Of particular concern was the rising incidence of cyber violence, which has provided another forum for harassment, abuse and the female objectification. It was also observed that acts of SRGBV are downplayed or hidden by some school staff so as to avoid harming the reputation of the school.



Participants noted that while there were many laws in the country that could be applied to gender-based violence in schools, none mentioned the issue specifically. This will require advocacy to raise awareness and enforcement to apply what is already on the books for an SRGBV response, particularly as the disciplinary rules at the school level are not adequate. Several needs were identified, including curricula, training, codes of conduct, and inter-sectoral cooperation.

An effective strategy for change that the participants identified is the creation of student brigades and advocacy groups. These professional and peer-led groups can raise awareness, solve problems, and change the culture of the school. They have the potential to use creative initiatives, such as theatre performances or festivals, to reach the school community. The advocacy groups can be interdisciplinary (for example can include (psychologists, lawyers, and social workers, in addition to education sector staff) and serve functions both in and out of school. Further, participants recognised that it is important to provide safe places for members of the school community to discuss issues, share experiences, and express opinions. Similar strategies can also be extended to parents and guardians. It is also important that data be collected and shared with the school community so that people can understand the magnitude of the issue.

The desk review in the **Middle East and North Africa** showed that this region encountered comparable problems to those represented by the FGDs in this study. As mentioned in other areas, healthy family life – free from domestic violence – is an issue that affects school, but is beyond its control. The situation was further complicated in some countries as a result of armed conflict and displaced persons. More research and data are needed to raise awareness and adequately address the problem. Essentially, each country needs education policy change, curricula development, teacher training, and parental involvement to address SRGBV.

It was recognised that each country in the region had its own weaknesses and strengths, achievements, and challenges. It would be useful to promote networking and exchange of expertise to build collective capacity. One idea that was raised is to change the public perception by engaging media to promote pro-social stories to supplant the negative images. Social media can also play a positive role if used in a way to raise awareness and advocacy for healthy relations and challenge negative stereotypes.

### **Synthesis**

The data revealed a broad tension between tradition, modern culture, and the role of education. Although the context was different in each of the countries participating in the FGDs, participants all touched on some aspect of this tension. Education is anchored in an ideal of human development and the rights of children. SRGBV is universally recognised as a violation of this ideal and right and thus a violation of the profession. Gender is constructed and contested – often violently – locally, and, the school is a local entity. Thus it follows that the education sector needs to devolve power to the local level so that it can be most responsive. Regardless of the contextual variations, several themes emerged for global action as summarised in the 15 action points below.

1. Relevant school policies with resources for implementation to support a clear understanding of gender-based violence and mechanisms for addressing and responding to such violence;
2. Commitment by the education sector to address SRGBV with political and financial support;
3. Legal action to address SRGBV;
4. Recruitment of additional staff (e.g., internal and external experts) to support teachers;
5. Integration of SRGBV in pre-service teacher training, including media literacy and methods for constructive engagement with media outlets to promote positive examples;
6. Methodological recommendations on the topic – e.g. which grade to start, as well as some lesson plans for violence prevention training and the provision of requisite teaching materials;
7. Introduction of gender and life-skills in the curriculum;

8. More autonomy for schools in terms of development and implementation of gender programmes;
9. Development of effective violence prevention systems in schools, including safe spaces for school community members to discuss issues;
10. Support for implementation of existing efforts, including data collection;
11. Capacity-building of teachers, administrators and school psychologists when possible;
12. Reporting and monitoring mechanisms;
13. Interactive trainings for all those involved in educational system, including students, teachers and parents that could be intercollegiate optional courses;
14. Awareness campaigns at national and school levels; and
15. Involvement of children/learners, parents and communities through committees, teams and other structures.

## Analysis 1: What needs to be done

The information gathered through the literature review and the insights and suggestions of teacher organizations through the survey and the focus group discussions brought out the magnitude of SRGBV and the need to deal with it on a number of different levels. SRGBV is a social problem and as such it requires a social response that is commonly understood and coordinated across different sectors of society. Because of its multidimensional and multi-sectoral implications, the problem must be addressed in a holistic and systematic way.

As described in the previous chapter, the findings show that the response to SRGBV needs more political

*“The curriculum will play a big role in not only stopping violence against girls and young women but also speaking out loudly about it.”*

Girl Guide leader, Malta (UN Women, WAGGGS)

leadership, training for education staff, learning materials, codes of conduct and infrastructure improvements. To illustrate the complex interplay of the issues, a conceptual framework and a theory of change were developed. These graphics represent the multidimensional and multi-sectoral process, from barriers to interventions that explain how to approach the subject in a comprehensive way. The conceptual

framework represents a general description of the context and possible key interventions, while the theory of change establishes a more concrete action plan to facilitate an SRGBV response within the school communities.

With this approach, barriers were identified that must be overcome, and interventions and responses are proposed that would ensure concrete and effective results in the prevention and response to this type of violence. The combination of issues and factors described in the theory of change serve as an effective assessment tool to guide the planning of the SRGBV response in the education sector, with an emphasis on the school community.

### ***A holistic approach to the problem***

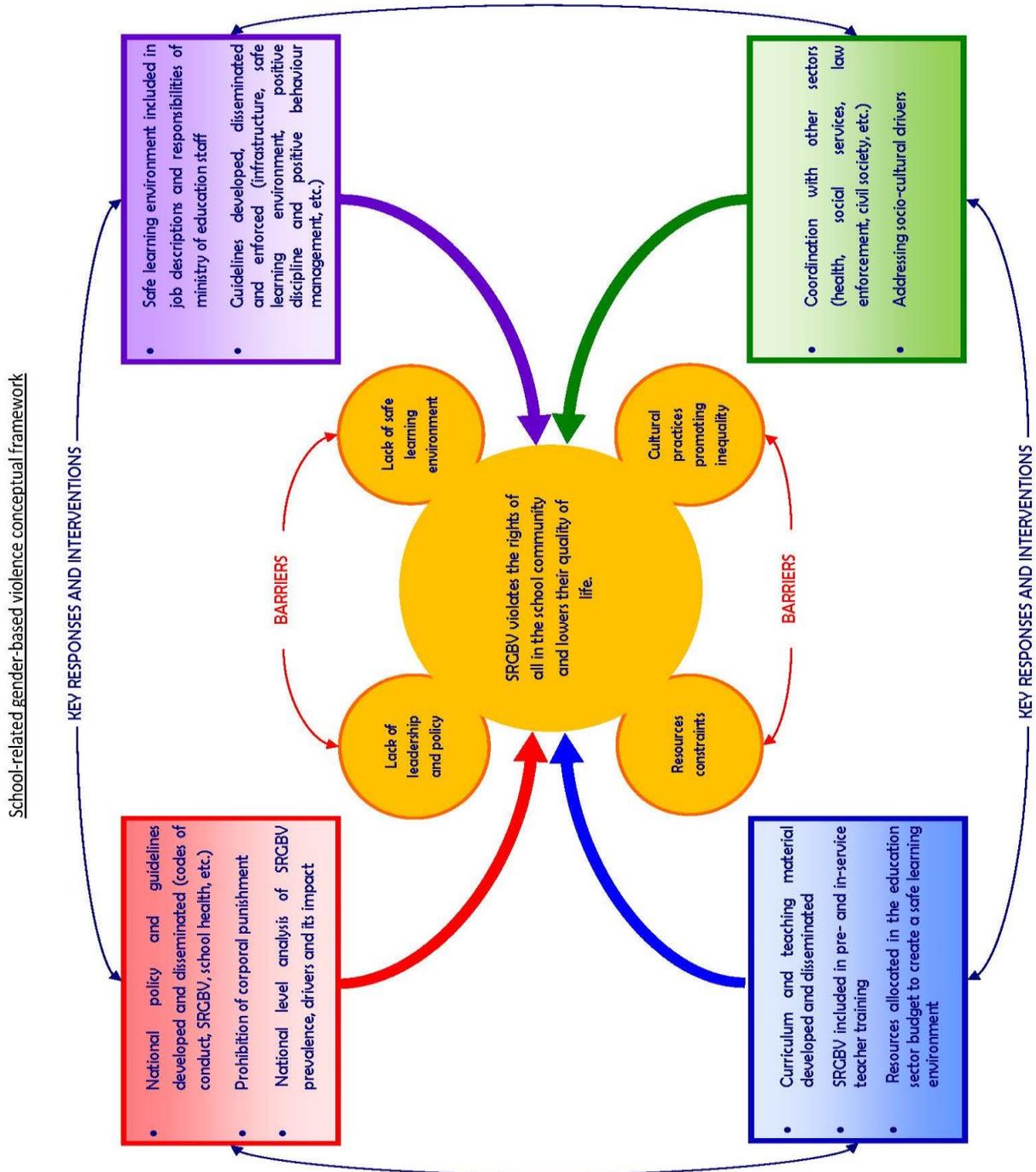
The first graphic is a conceptual framework describing four major factors limiting the work of preventing and responding to SRGBV. The first barrier described is the lack of leadership and political will and commitment in the education sector to address SRGBV. This is a barrier at the national level. Too often, policies and guidance to prevent and respond to SRGBV in the education sector are inadequate. Respondents called for policies to be created, disseminated and adequately enforced. These can come in the form of codes of conduct, health guidelines, and prohibition of corporal punishment, curriculum and other concrete regulations ensuring gender equality and non-violence for all in the school community. These policies should be supported by ongoing monitoring and evaluation efforts.

The second barrier is the lack of standards and guidelines to ensure a safe physical infrastructure and a safe social environment. The physical environment includes gender segregation of sanitation facilities, monitored school grounds, and should extend to safe passage to and from school. The social environment, by contrast, is one where all in the school community are upholding codes of conduct and supporting gender equality and health promotion. It is essential that national, district and school authorities in the education sector adopt standards and guidelines supported by a legal framework, adequate funding and administrative support to implement.

The third barrier is the lack of resources to respond to the problem. Curricula and training are essential, but the teaching materials are frequently not adequate for the task. Often they are didactic, abstract and unconnected to the lives of learners. Teachers need training and space within the teaching day to conduct culturally appropriate lessons to help learners construct meaning about gender relations and the skills to protect their rights and the rights of others. This includes countering discrimination, preventing violence and promoting health. The lack of budget allocations and technical support to teachers and administrators makes implementation in this regard limited and difficult. Learning materials are needed, training for teachers and administrators, and support for implementation is also needed – and all these should be supported by programme monitoring and evaluation and accountability mechanisms.

Finally, the fourth barrier addresses societal influences and cultural practices that encourage gender inequality and promote violence. This is one of the most complex barriers to overcome. The school community is a product of its environment and the behaviours of community members often reflect this environment. SRGBV is a multidimensional problem that transcends the education sector; it is therefore necessary to coordinate efforts with other sectors to work for social change.

Diagram II School-related gender-based violence conceptual framework



This conceptual framework describes the general context for SRGBV and all the factors that are related to the issue. It provides a broader overview of the problem to increase awareness of the complexity and to place action within a context. It highlights the responses needed at a high level and helps to determine a starting point to address and respond to SRGBV. A more detailed and actionable theory to create change at the school level will be developed in the following section.

### ***A theory of change towards a concrete action plan***

Starting from the premise that school administrators and teachers do not have the necessary conditions and mechanisms to prevent and respond effectively to gender-based violence in schools, a second graphic was developed – a Theory of Change for the purpose of action planning. This graphic offers a specific assessment and planning perspective and aims to contribute with concrete solutions. The implications are for all levels (national, district and school), which are required to promote a positive change, though the locus of control is at the school level. The graphic underscores the fact that isolated interventions are insufficient to adequately address SRGBV. Rather, a comprehensive effort is needed as described in detail in Diagram III.

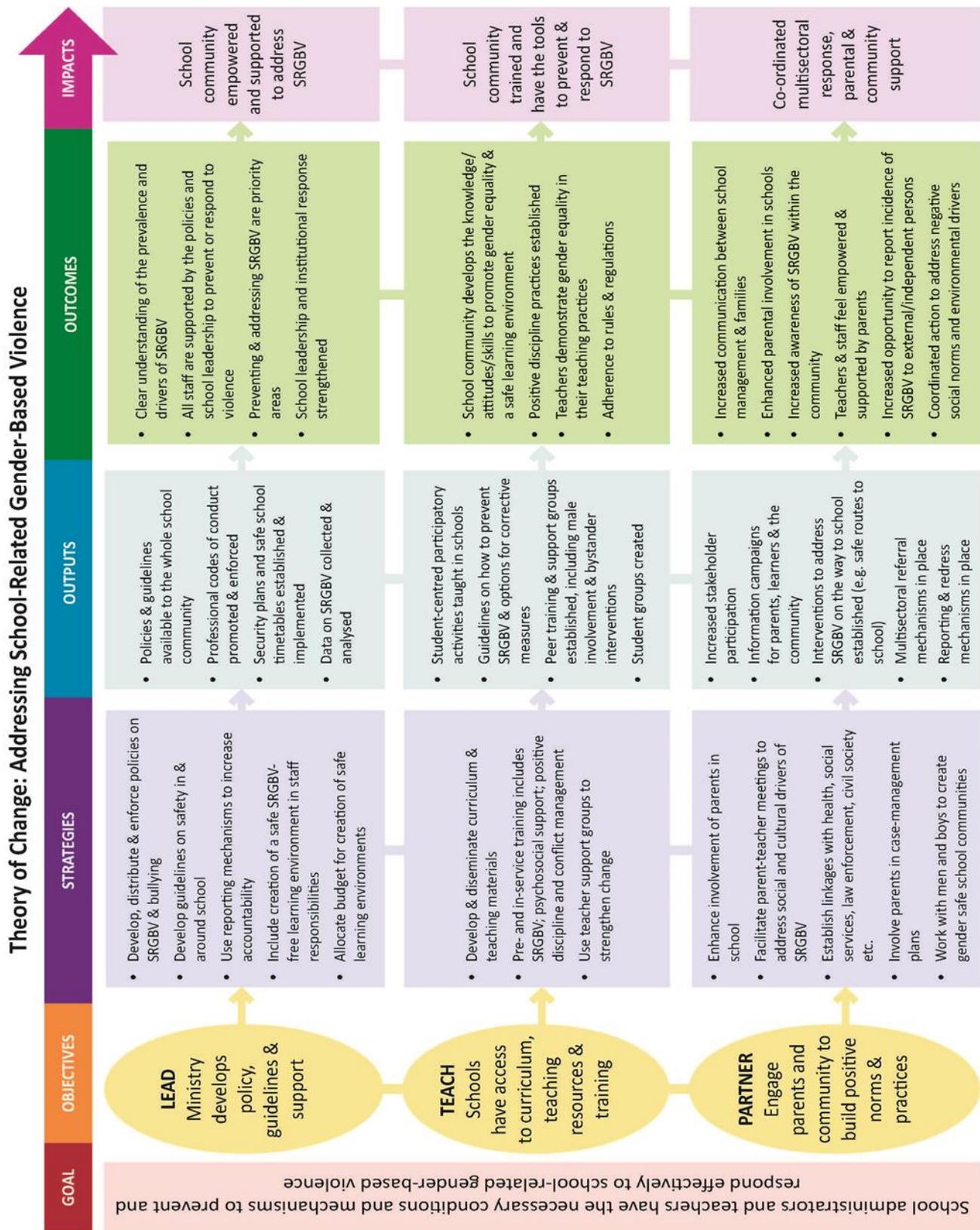
*“If the teacher hits me, everything immediately goes from my head. Even if I had lots of ideas before, the moment he hits me, I lose everything – I can’t think.”*

Primary school student, Togo  
(Antonowicz L.)

The theory proceeds from the stated goals through to objectives, strategies, outputs, outcomes and expected impacts. The objectives have been grouped in three factors: leadership, guidelines, policies and institutional support at the school level; the curriculum, teaching materials and training; and, finally, sensitization, awareness, parental support and cultural influences supporting gender inequality.

In response to each of these barriers, concrete interventions and responses (purple) have been identified as well as the results produced (outputs in blue) and their effects (outcomes in green) that may be obtained from action. It is believed that in this way the education sector will have a significant impact (light blue) and that school communities will be empowered, supported and trained school communities will to respond to and effectively prevent SRGBV.

Diagram III Theory of Change: addressing school-related gender-based violence



The purpose of the SRGBV Theory of Change is to lay the foundation for a clear and comprehensive assessment and action planning approach. On a single page, planners can see gaps in their response and develop policies and programmes to address each. The linkage with outputs and outcomes will assist in developing accountability frameworks through monitoring and evaluation. The diagram's specific planning perspective contributes to the school community with concrete solutions.

The Theory of Change is not intended to be a single recipe to solve the SRGBV problem, but rather a tool to move education sectors towards comprehensive action with recommendations in the major domains of the sector. The causes and dynamics of gender-based violence vary by context and thus the responses need to be locally appropriate. Still the wide range of data that has informed this work has afforded the opportunity to see major themes emerge that are common in most contexts. While each SRGBV response will be different, there are several principles that bind them all together. These are presented in the theory of change and serve as a departure point for assessment and planning with an aim towards positive change in the education sector on SRGBV.

## Analysis 2: How it needs to be done

The previous section has detailed what is needed in preventing and mitigating SRGBV and stressed that it requires a coordinated multidimensional and multi-sectoral response. These have been described in parts, but scant attention was paid to the ecology of the school and the interlinking factors that need to be addressed and mechanisms in place to support gender-safe schools. Problems of this nature are not suited “to purely technical or specific responses.”<sup>36</sup> The education sector operates within long timeframes and knowledge, skills, and experience are diffuse among different stakeholders. No single person's experience or viewpoint is entirely complete – therefore system-wide thinking is needed. Schools are part of complex systems with established patterns of management. There are many patterns of influence at the school level, some direct and others indirect. “If you try to fix this system by intervening only to change the formal structures, your efforts will backfire. Indeed, an effectively operating (school community) is one where people recognise the webs of invisible influence, seek to strengthen them, and feel responsible to everyone connected to them. When that web breaks down, children fall through the cracks and get lost.”<sup>37</sup>

The status quo is unacceptable and a culture of governance is needed for health promotion that stresses leadership, accountability, and transparency among all members of the school community. This culture of governance is anchored in a vision that is rights-based and gender-equitable, but at the same time is adaptive to local context. “Some may fear that allowing (the school community) to pursue their ‘vision’ in schools means letting people do whatever they want, abandoning rigour and lowering educational standards. Nothing could be further from the truth. When administrators and teachers focus on narrow and pragmatic questions, such as classroom management, increasing attendance and graduation rates, and improving test scores, then students may internalise those diminished visions and live with unnecessarily low horizons. Improving the

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<sup>36</sup> Senge et al., 2012. p.125.

<sup>37</sup> Senge et al, *Idem*. p.24.

numbers and providing safe learning spaces are legitimate goals, but they cannot replace the power of a larger school vision, personal and shared, as the driving force behind improving schools.”<sup>38</sup>

While the SRGBV literature is largely quiet on the issue of school change, there are frameworks to draw on from the school management literature, where several drivers emerge. Fullan et al.<sup>39</sup> have described eight drivers in particular to sustain positive change. These are to engage individuals’ moral purpose, building capacity, understanding the change process, developing cultures for learning, developing cultures of evaluation, focusing on leadership for change, fostering coherence, and cultivating tri-level development. The combinations of these are requisite for changes in the education sector. This document concludes that a culture of governance is needed in the SRGBV response to promote health and gender equity. The drivers served as a starting point and were tailored to meet the needs of the SRGV response – i.e., describing how this culture of governance can be achieved. Our adaptation of the list is below.

*Engage individuals’ moral purpose:* this addresses the question of why. It explains why stakeholders need to address SRGBV, and is the foundation for all the other drivers. The means of achieving this objective will be dependent on local context. The main idea is that engaging all members of the school community with a moral purpose ensures a commitment to change and provides the strength and motivation to do the right thing, though it is often difficult. This is central to creating the vision described above.

*Building capacity:* this requires new knowledge, skills, and competencies both of the stakeholders as well as the systems in which they operate. It follows that once people have the motivation to address SRGBV; they need to have the means to do so, individually and collectively. That is to say efforts must go beyond raising awareness about SRGBV or providing skills to mitigate an incident. These efforts must be complemented by a system that is equally capacitated to support application of knowledge and skills in daily practice.

*Understanding the change process:* this requires that leadership stay committed to efforts against SRGBV in the face of uncertainty and setbacks. Change is not always linear; it can often be discursive, difficult, and confusing for those involved, which can be expressed as backlash to the process. Leadership must foster a sense of ownership through feedback, adjustment and empowerment so that all those involved can overcome the barriers and progress collectively.

*Developing cultures for learning and evaluation:* this is about learning from peers about what works in addressing and responding to SRGV such as implementing a lesson, interacting with parents, or dealing with a violent incident. This stage is central in turning knowledge into action. It is empowering to all members of the community as they develop a voice and a vehicle to learn and apply local solutions to local problems. This research has suggested that there are multiple understandings to gender-based violence. This underscores the importance of data collection to build common understanding of what gender-based violence is, its causes, and the contextual factors that contribute to it. This will help to

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<sup>38</sup> Senge et al *Idem.* p. 28.

<sup>39</sup> Fullan, Cuttress and Kilcher et al. 2009.

galvanise a vision and develop locally appropriate responses. This factor is more than a single activity or a series of activities; it is about a culture of collecting data and sharing experiences, then informing decisions with that information. It can serve accountability to external stakeholders while serving validity with internal stakeholders.

*Focusing on leadership for change:* in this case, leadership is not about an individual who charismatically motivates people to address SRGBV. The initiative for change refers to the steady and committed leaders who can innovate, capacitate, inspire, and adjust. The effect of this type of leadership ramifies in the system and can thus be sustained. It is optimal when leaders are able to make plans, learn from implementation, listen to stakeholders and then articulate changes and learnings into revised plans with sufficient coherence. To revisit a main point of the findings, gender-based violence is complex and requires a complex response. This calls on leadership and an enduring commitment to equity and health throughout the education sector.

*Cultivating tri-level development:* this is about systems-level approaches to SRGBV. These approaches include the school with its proximal management and governance systems, district systems, and finally more distal systems – perhaps at the state or national level. While the influence of any one person is limited to effect change at all levels of the system, an understanding of the context in which people, live, learn, and work; how these systems function and how decisions and actions can ramify branch out within must be understood in order to manage the desired change.

*Empower the bystander:* there is a burgeoning work in school-based violence prevention on the important role that the bystander plays in preventing and mitigating violence. This approach is best established in work specific to bullying but many lessons can be applied to address SRGBV specifically. The aggressor and the victim are the focus of most prevention and mitigation strategies. However, often the bystanders – including those who tacitly support SRGBV through inaction – comprise a significant portion of the school community. They are central to creating a climate that is free of gender-based violence. Many of the measures around policy, training, and accountability have already been described in this document. The key here is the recognition that most people are not violent and that leadership must work with the majority to normalise non-violent behaviour. This is achieved by involving all persons in the response.

*Schools with the locus of control:* too often SRGBV is dealt with at the conceptual level, removed from school-level interactions. This research has brought to light a range of issues relevant in the day-to-day life of the school community. One example is the importance of role models. Additionally, it found that an interactive, skills-based pedagogy that focuses on life skills and situations that learners face is both relevant and geared for the development of healthy behaviours. Teachers and administrators should strive for restorative practices as an ethos for the class and the school. “The primary aim of restorative practices is the development of positive relationships and peaceful resolution of conflict,” which is in contrast to punishment and retribution.<sup>40</sup> In other words, the approach is more about health promotion

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<sup>40</sup> Meyer and Evans. 2012.

rather than just disease prevention. This approach has been discussed in behaviour management research and it has found resonance with life skills and health education. In these, critical incidents are used as teachable moments for building social skills, such as empathy; personal skills, such as anger management; and cognitive skills, such as decision-making. The implications for implementation extend to pre-service and in-service training, curriculum development, learning assessment, and administrative accountability among others. In the main, systems are needed to build capacity and support each school system – and each individual in that system – to respond to the situation locally.

Each of these drivers is aimed at the transformation of gender relations in the school towards equity and equality. Gender equity and equality threaten the established positions of power and authority in society. It is important for leaders to impress upon the school community that making the school safer is not about taking power from one group at the expense of another, which is an unhelpful way to frame social change. Rather, the aim is for all in the school community to learn and work together in a healthy and empowering environment for everyone.

The prior section proposed a theory of change to inform action planning for a multidimensional and multi-sectoral response. However, bold and innovative action plans are not new to the education sector and, sadly, bold and innovative plans that fail are all too common.<sup>41</sup> This document asserts that many of these efforts are made without appreciating how school systems work and the change management process itself. While the previous section described what needs to be done, it is incumbent upon us to not fall into the same trap. By building on the insights of teachers and administrators and analytically reviewing the literature, the authors have found frameworks and approaches to work with and modify that explain how to prevent, address and respond to school-related gender-based violence.

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<sup>41</sup> See the high profile experience in reforming schools in Newark, New Jersey: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/05/19/schooled.>, 2015. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/05/19/schooled> Accessed on October 26

**Diagram IV Drivers for change management on SRGBV**

Drivers for change management on SRGBV



## Conclusion

This research has shown that gender-based violence in school settings is a priority concern in many sites. There is an understanding that SRGBV is a barrier to progress on HIV targets and global development goals in education. More than half of the 125 unions who responded to the Education International survey indicated that they were working on the issue and the overwhelming majority expressed interest in conducting activities on this in the future. This suggests that the time is right for this research.

This document recognises all the work done by educators, advocates, academics, development partners and other stakeholders in the area of school-related gender-based violence. A range of promising policies and practises have been shared in publications and global fora. This document has attempted to bring these together and articulate a comprehensive action multi-level action plan that is commensurate with the problem (as described in Diagram III). A key insight gained from this research was that all these efforts cannot operate in isolation. A culture of governance is needed to bring coherence to action through leadership and accountability. Each of the drivers of change described in the previous section reflects that idea and is designed to bridge theory with practice.

This research is inspired by the stories of teachers and administrators who work each day to create safe spaces for their learners, often in difficult circumstances. The school is affected by its setting, and often gender-based violence is a product of that setting. Factors such as HIV, war, gender bias in cultural practices, crime, and poverty, among several others are part of the SRGBV picture. While these are well beyond the scope of influence of the education sector, let alone that of an individual teacher or administrator, the education sector must devise the best ways to make sense of them and respond effectively. The lesson inferred from the research is that despite the limits the education sector can do more, and do better, in this regard.

This document has been clear about the key actions that are required: define the issue; galvanise a vision; capacitate staff at each level; make linkages to community stakeholders and services; develop, promote and enforce codes of conduct and policies; and use transformative teaching methods. As well, systems are needed to build capacity of staff, provide them freedom to respond to their concerns in and around the classroom, provide support to its members on a daily basis, and demand accountability from all on the issue of SRGBV. Change at the scale of systems is slow and often uncertain and uncomfortable, which increases the chance of resistance. This is why understanding the process of change management is important. As was made clear by the survey and focus group respondents, change starts with leadership and political will, but must then cascade to all levels of the education sector with individual capacity-building and systemic support. This document intends to inform these efforts. In this way, teachers and administrators will have the conditions necessary to prevent, address and respond to school-related gender-based violence.

## Annexes

### Guidance on Conducting a Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a great method for building on the dynamics of colleagues to explore opinions and perceptions and generate new ideas. It is interactive and dynamic and thus affords the opportunity to dig deeply into issues and explore complexity, which characterises the issue of gender-based violence. Focus groups are also effective at interpreting survey findings and in this case, specifically interpreting the Education International survey on the implementation of the EI Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP 2013–2015).

This protocol is designed for 7–10 participants. Each participant should be a teacher or administrator who is familiar with the issue of gender-based violence in school settings. Measures should be taken to ensure a diverse group (male/female, urban/rural, junior/senior teachers, etc.). The focus group discussion should last about four hours. A series of open-ended questions are provided along with some tips on how to conduct a focus group.

Note to facilitator: It is the facilitator’s job to keep conversation on track and foster a positive non-judgmental environment where all participants feel comfortable and able to participate. There are set questions provided but feel free to use probe questions to accomplish this. For instance, ask for examples to illuminate an observation, ask participants to interrogate the causes of the example, invite competing ideas, rephrase ideas and ask participants to respond by correcting or amending or verifying, ask for participants to summarise a portion of the discussion. During brainstorming portions of the discussion it may be helpful to capture ideas on a chalkboard or flip chart so that participants can visually relate the concepts.

The facilitator should pay attention to verbal and non-verbal communication to sense how participants are feeling. If needed, the facilitator should adjust tone, pace and phrasing of questions so that all participants are comfortable. Finally, the facilitator should be sure to lead the group to complete all questions on the protocol in good time.

Note to note taker: The note taker should ensure that ground rules for the focus group are written clearly and posted for all to see during the discussion. The note taker should also record major themes, ideas, comments and observations regarding group dynamics and take direct quotes whenever possible. Following the session the note taker should clean and check the report and review it with the facilitator before sending it back to Education International and UNESCO. It is best to write the final report of the session electronically in a word processing file. It will also be appreciated, if participants agree, to send images of the group, of the schools, and any other supporting documentation.

#### ***Focus Group Discussion Protocol***

Welcome

- State the purpose and explain the background and intent of the research
- Explain the steps to preserve confidentiality and secure a safe space:
  - One’s participation is totally voluntary

- One's name will not be used in any reports about the FGD. Explain that you might be taking notes of direct quotes but will not attribute these to individuals in the report.
- If the discussion will be recorded state so
- Each participant will receive \_\_\_ to compensate for your time
- One may discontinue participation at any time, either by leaving the room or by not answering the question without penalty or loss of benefits
- The discussion will last approximately four hours
- Consider providing participants with a signed (by the facilitator) and dated consent form stating the bullets above
- Establish ground rules. Examples include:
  - One person will speak at a time.
  - While generating ideas, withhold debate and criticism.
  - Treat everyone's ideas with respect.
  - In disagreement, focus on facts and not on personalities.
  - Honour time limits.
  - Minimise disruptions.
- Introduce an ice-breaking activity to create a positive group atmosphere. The subject of gender-based violence is sensitive and participants may not feel at ease to discuss it openly at the very beginning of the session. Examples include:
  - The Little Known Fact: ask participants to share their name, school and one little known fact about themselves.
  - True or False: ask your participants to introduce themselves and make three or four statements about themselves, one of which is false, which the others must guess.
  - Interviews: ask participants to get into pairs. Each person then interviews his or her partner then introduces their interviewee to the rest of the group.

Proceed to discussing and responding to the 11 discussion questions below.

1. How do you define gender-based violence? Consider:
  - Verbal
  - Physical
  - Social exclusion
2. Think back to a time when there was an incident of gender-based violence in your school community.
  - What prompted the violence?
  - How did people respond?
3. What are the causes of gender-based violence in our communities?
4. How does gender-based violence affect the school community?
5. What is currently in-place to 1) prevent and 2) mitigate gender-based violence at the school level?
6. How would you rate each of the measures that are in place (on a scale of 1–10, for example)?
  - What makes the successful measures work?
  - What can be improved with the others?
7. Describe the role that teachers and administrators have in:
  - Upholding the successful measures;
  - Improving failures; and
  - Addressing gaps.

8. What support do teachers and administrators need to be empowered to prevent and respond to gender-based violence? Probe the group to consider each of these levels (see Annex 3 for question probes for each):
  - National level policies, programmes, leadership, etc.
  - District- and school-level measures of leadership, mandate, accountability, etc.
  - Individual levels such as awareness, capacity, support, etc.
    - Teacher/administrator
    - Learner
    - Parents/community members
9. Considering question number 8 above (What support do teachers and administrators need to be empowered to prevent and respond to gender-based violence?), please rank, by order of importance, each of these categories:
  - Government political commitment and will
  - Training programmes
  - Informational materials
  - Incorporation of issue of SRGBV into school curriculum
  - Written codes of ethics /legal reforms/ clauses in collective agreements
  - School guidance offices
  - Improved infrastructure and school facilities
10. Have we missed anything important that can help us answer the research question: What are the necessary conditions and mechanisms for school administrators and teachers to effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence in the school settings?

#### Closing

- Summarise the main action points and conclusions
- Identify any further information needed
- Ask the participants for the feedback on the session, for example:
  - Were the questions helpful?
  - Did the discussion lead to new thinking?
  - What can be improved for other FGDs?
- Thank participants for their time
- Offer to share the report with them and notify them that UNESCO will send copies of the final six-country study to all the participants for discussion and dissemination

## Question Probe Guidance

<b>Illustrative factors affecting gender-based violence in and around schools</b>		
<b>National Level</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National leadership on gender-based violence</li> <li>• Poverty and other social vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Networking to promote lessons learned and good practices within the education sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protective and punitive legislation</li> <li>• Enforcement of laws at all levels of the justice system</li> <li>• Data on gender-based violence collected and disseminated</li> <li>• Systemic violence and civil strife</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural practices, traditional and contemporary, which promotes inequality &amp; hyper-masculinity</li> <li>• Media that reinforces the negative images</li> </ul>
<b>District and School Level</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leadership to articulate a vision to address gender-based violence in all forms</li> <li>• Safe physical school environment</li> <li>• Safe social environment</li> <li>• Skill-building, health-promoting curriculum</li> <li>• Extra-curricular activities / safe school teams to promote equity and the gender-based violence response</li> <li>• Safe passage to and from school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data on gender-based violence collected and disseminated at local level</li> <li>• Polices and codes of conduct promoted and enforced</li> <li>• Staff accountability measures</li> <li>• School management committees including parents and community</li> <li>• Prohibition of corporal punishment</li> <li>• Partnerships with civil society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to law enforcement, health and social services</li> <li>• Training for teachers on skill-building pedagogy, policy and enforcement for gender-based violence responses</li> <li>• Administrative support for staff</li> <li>• Mandate for teachers to act</li> <li>• Policies for equity and inclusion</li> <li>• Conflict resolution and school re-admission procedures</li> </ul>
<b>Individual Level</b>		
<p><b>Teacher/Administrator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands and can recognise gender-based violence in the school setting</li> <li>• Has the skills and confidence to prevent and respond to gender-based violence</li> <li>• Has been trained in and values the code of conduct</li> <li>• Models behaviours on school grounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses interactive skill-building pedagogy to build life skills</li> <li>• Exercises constructive class management and discipline practices</li> <li>• Empowered to be creative and seize teachable moments with learners to address precursors of violent behaviours</li> <li>• Mandated and incentivised to act on gender-based violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported by administration (peers) to act on gender-based violence</li> <li>• Protective measures are in place to help teachers and administrators who intervene</li> <li>• The school is a safe space socially and physically</li> <li>• Supported to conduct community outreach to parents/guardians</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learner:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and recognition of gender-based violence in the school setting</li> <li>• Leadership and involvement in programmes and school policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to express their voice</li> <li>• Healthy and equitable relationships between learners (skills of empathy and respect for others rights and school rules, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive peers</li> <li>• Freedom to be one's self</li> <li>• Media and cultural literacy</li> <li>• Awareness of one's rights (e.g., right for protection and equity in the school setting)</li> </ul>

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