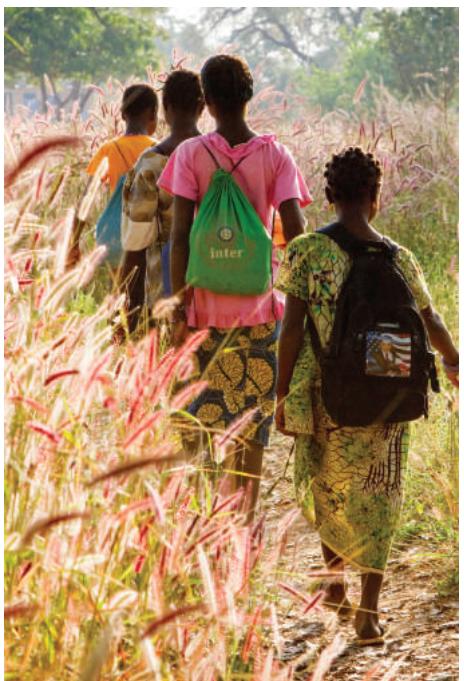


# Ending School-Related Gender-Based Violence

A Series of  
Thematic Briefs



## **Global Working Group to End School-Related Gender-Based Violence**

The Global Working Group to End School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) was created in 2014 to respond to SRGBV by raising awareness and finding solutions to ensure schools are safe, gender-sensitive and inclusive environments, where boys and girls can learn to unleash their full potential. The Group has expanded to more than 100 members representing 50 organizations, including humanitarian actors, civil society organizations, and regional and national offices.

[www.ungei.org/srgbv](http://www.ungei.org/srgbv)

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# Introduction

**School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV)** refers to acts or threats of sexual, physical, or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes and enforced by unequal power dynamics (see figure 1).<sup>1</sup>

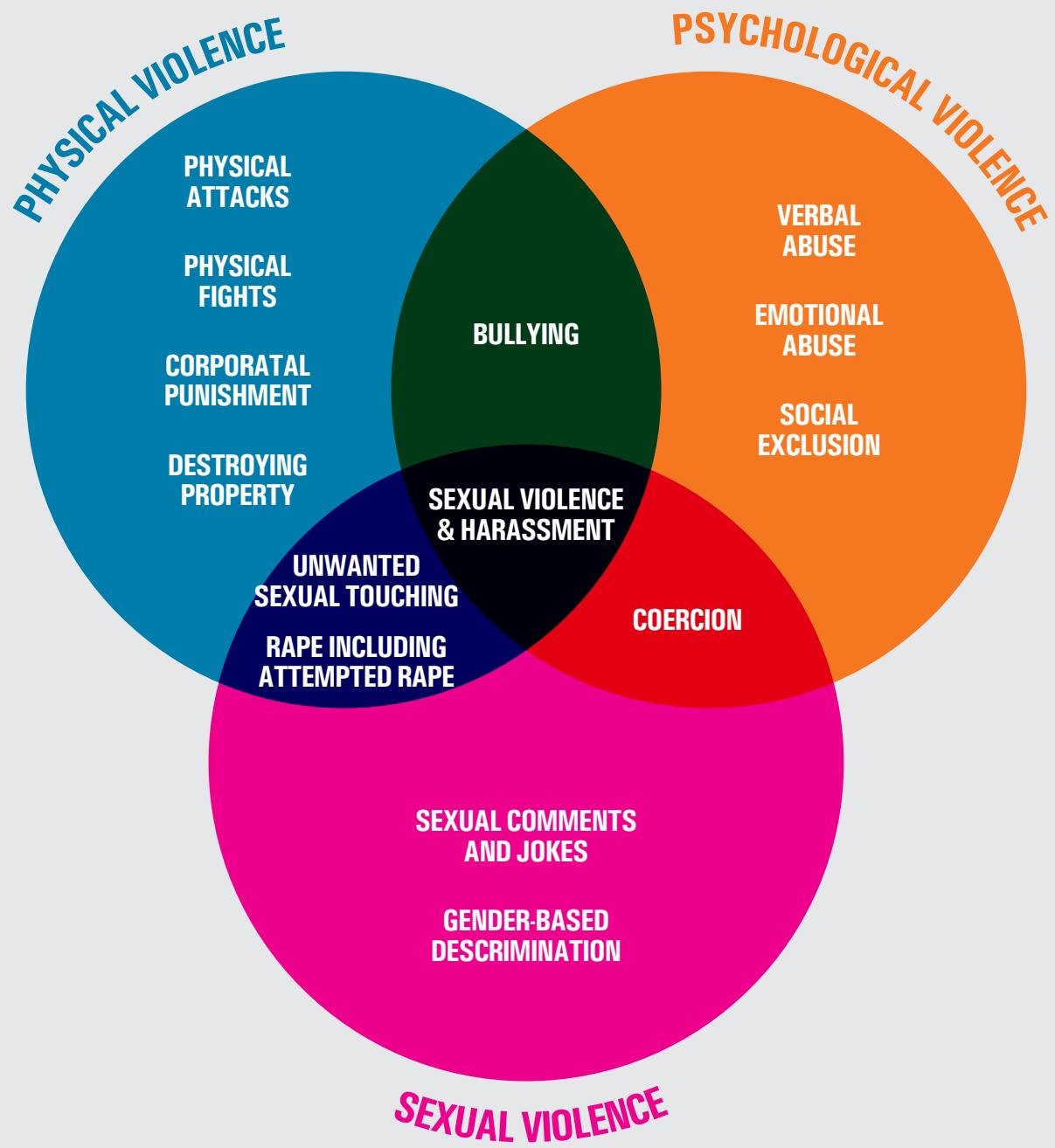
Violence in schools is widespread, and discriminatory gender norms are one of the key driving factors. This means that it is essential to apply a gender lens when developing violence prevention and response approaches. As with all forms of violence, school-related gender-based violence violates children's rights and is a significant barrier for girls' and boys' access to and participation in education.<sup>2</sup>

There has been increasing recognition of SRGBV as a pressing issue requiring global attention if the Sustainable Goals 4, (Education), 5 (Gender equality) and 16.2 (Violence against children) are to be met. Much work remains to be done requiring accelerated and multi-dimensional prevention and response efforts.

This series of **thematic briefs** is targeted at policy makers and practitioners. It aims to summarize the latest learning and evidence synthesized from two regional workshops on how best to prevent and address SRGBV held in West and Central Africa and East and Southern Africa. The challenges and recommendations are relevant to any form of school violence, whether driven by gender or not, and as such form a valuable resource for all policy makers and practitioners working in this field.

The briefs in this series include *1. Applying a whole school approach to preventing school-related gender-based violence; 2. Engaging teachers to create safe and gender-responsive learning environments; 3. Shifting harmful gender norms through curricular approaches; 4. Establishing safe and confidential reporting mechanisms; 5. Investing in data and evidence to inform the response to SRGBV; and 6. Integrating SRGBV into national policies and education sector plans.*

Figure 1: Violence in schools takes many forms, many of which are rooted in gender norms and inequality



## **Brief 1:**

**Applying a whole  
school approach to  
prevent school-related  
gender-based violence**

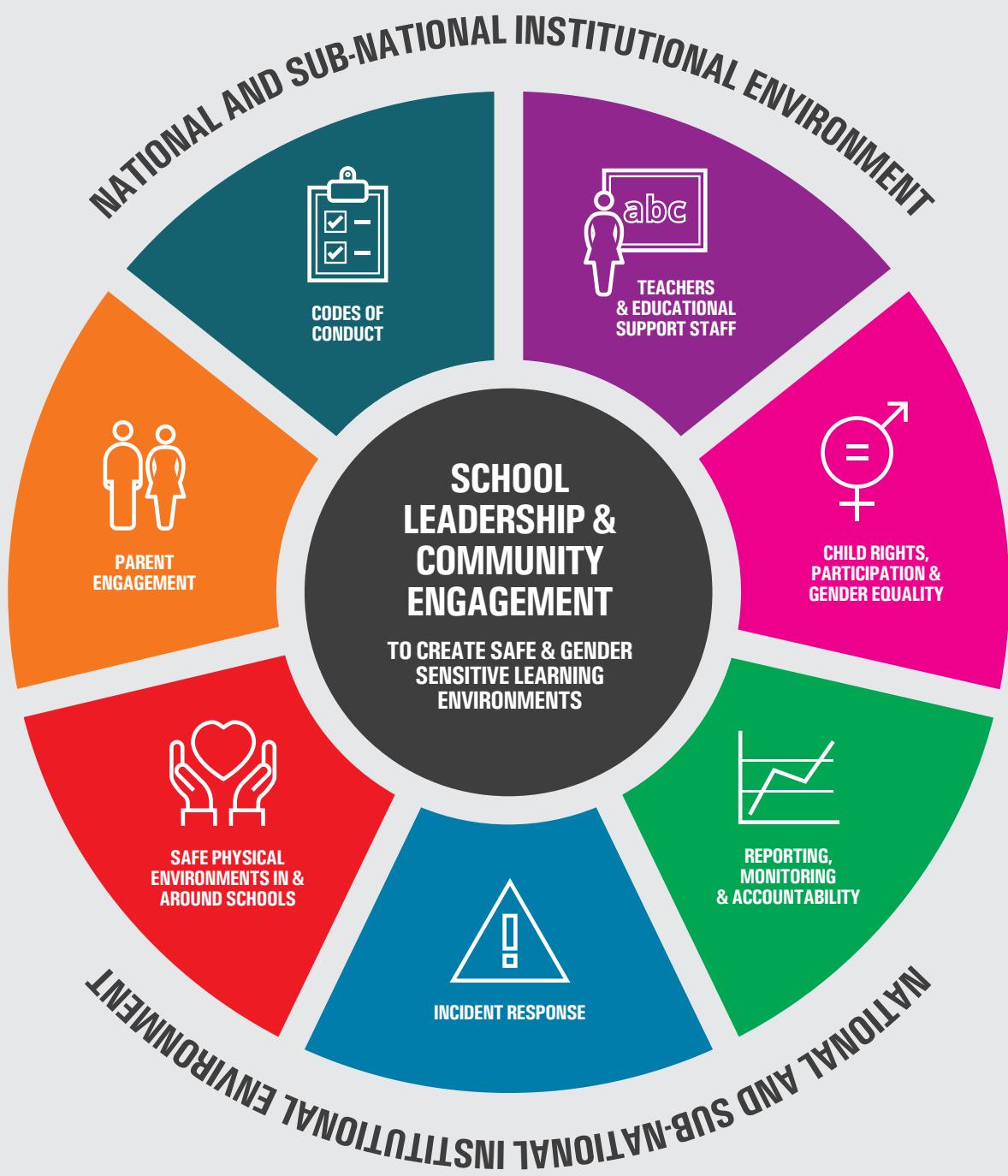
# What is a whole school approach?

A ‘whole school approach’ refers to a set of interventions that work at multiple levels, within the school and the community, to prevent and respond to SRGBV. Evidence suggests that effective whole school approaches address a range of areas simultaneously. These include those related to the school environment, culture and pedagogical approaches.<sup>3</sup>

A whole school approach requires strong leadership, and engages parents and the broader community.<sup>4</sup> The need to apply a comprehensive whole school approach is widely recognized as best practice in working holistically to promote student health and wellbeing and echoes evidence from other school-based health and violence prevention initiatives.<sup>5,6</sup> Addressing one part of the problem in isolation is less effective because violence prevention relies on a broader enabling environment of support. Meaningful and sustained change requires a multi-dimensional approach that addresses the drivers of violence, as well as changing institutional practices that perpetuate unequal power dynamics, discrimination and gender stereotypes.<sup>7</sup>

UNGEI’s Whole School Approach Minimum Standards and Monitoring Framework outlines eight inter-related domains to establish a safe, gender-responsive and inclusive learning environment. These are: (1) effective school leadership and community engagement; (2) establishing and implementing a code of conduct; (3) capacity building of teachers and educational staff; (4) empowering children with knowledge of child rights, participation and gender equality; (5) improving reporting, monitoring and accountability; (6) addressing incidents; (7) strengthening physical learning environments; and (8) engaging parents (see figure 2).<sup>8</sup>

Figure 2: Whole school approach to prevent and respond to SRGBV



# What have we learned about implementing an effective whole school approach?

## Strengthen school leadership

The support and leadership of school principals and governing bodies is essential in driving activities that establish a culture of non-violence and respect in the school. A strong and committed school leadership team can ensure that codes of conduct are implemented (see example 1.2), reporting and incident response systems are monitored, and actions taken as necessary.

Successful policy implementation at the school level also requires support from the provincial education authorities, the school management and principals, as well as focal point teachers who receive training.<sup>9</sup>

## Work on shifting gender and social norms along with school culture

Establishing a school culture that actively promotes respectful relationships and positive discipline has shown to help reduce violence. This can be done through engaging teachers (see Brief 2), employing curriculum-based approaches (see Brief 3) and promoting open dialogue.

Efforts to shift harmful norms take time and concerted efforts. Studies of previous

initiatives have shown mixed results. For example, an evaluation of the Good Schools Toolkit, guiding a whole school approach to SRGBV in Uganda found that despite efforts, harmful norms around using violence against students remained in some schools.<sup>10</sup>

Another study found that social norms in the wider community continued to affect the vulnerability of certain groups, in particular girls, who were found to participate less and continued to be at risk of experiencing violence. The study underscored the need to address negative gender norms that keep girls from participating in school activities and cause them to be punished when they are late for or tired at school because of their household responsibilities.

Early findings from the longitudinal study of the Journeys SRGBV prevention programme in Uganda (see example 1.1) showed that harmful norms, when addressed through participatory processes and dialogue, can and do shift the school community culture toward more equitable gender attitudes.<sup>11</sup>



## **Engaging with youth, communities and parents is critical**

Implementing school-based activities intended to shift negative social and gender norms can result in resistance from parents and community leaders and potentially put children at risk of further violence at home.

Putting a whole school approach into practice requires consulting with and gaining the support of the entire school community—including parents, community and religious leaders, and local community-based organizations, youth organizations and activists—to identify, prevent, and respond to SRGBV. This is particularly crucial for responding to severe abuse and violence and to safeguard students against backlash (see example 1.1).

Parents and community members can be active participants in planning activities to create safe and gender-responsive learning environments through student bodies, Parent Teacher Associations or School Management Committees.<sup>12</sup> Findings from a study of school culture and climate in Malawi and Uganda suggested that a positive school culture fostered the social-emotional learning of both staff and students. This, in turn, led to improved relations among staff, students, and the community. One of the most valued aspects of a positive school culture reported by participants in this study was cooperation between teachers, parents, students and school management committee members to solve school and community issues, including prevention of SRGBV.<sup>13</sup>



### Example 1.1

## Journeys Programme

### Uganda

The Journeys programme implemented in primary schools in Uganda takes an integrated approach to building a positive school climate and preventing SRGBV. An extracurricular activity programme for students is delivered within a broader set of activities seeking to engage multiple stakeholders in positive school change, including community members, teaching and non-teaching school staff, and students themselves.

The programme for pupils presents a set of extracurricular activities to be led by 'teacher patrons.' Students engage in participatory activities and games designed to trigger discussions on gender, rights, equality, personal and learning challenges, problem solving, and peer support. This includes activities exploring the many forms of violence that pupils witness or personally experience when they are at school or travelling to and from school.

The programme for community members is intended to enable community 'change agents' to facilitate activities that deepen community members' understanding of the nature and extent of SRGBV and support them in working together to establish a school and community where inclusiveness, a sense of belonging, and positive child support is normal. In the programme for teachers, selected school change agents organize and facilitate the activities, bringing all school staff together

regularly to take them through the Journeys activities and support them in their efforts to realize their vision for a safe and caring school.

This programme is unique in that rather than focusing on training or sensitization, it builds critical awareness skills, such as guided reflection, participatory processes and dialogue, and prototyping to allow social change actions to emerge naturally. In this way, it facilitates a process in which community members are directly involved in naming the issues that need to be addressed and developing and implementing strategies to create a safe and caring school and community.

Initial research findings support the idea that school climate plays a central role in fostering social and emotional learning, shaping attitudes that are more favourable to gender equality, and preventing all forms of SRGBV.<sup>14</sup>

Journeys was developed and is being monitored in partnership with the Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports/Gender Unit by RTI International, with support from USAID.



## Example 1.2

# Good Schools Toolkit

### Uganda

Produced by Raising Voices, the Good School Toolkit aims to help teachers and administrators create a violence-free learning environment where students can develop their skills and confidence and become constructive, creative and thoughtful members of their community. While the primary goal of the initiative is to address corporal punishment in schools, the kit takes a holistic approach, aiming to achieve three objectives:

- To equip teachers for increasing student confidence and success
- To create a learning environment that is safe and respectful
- To support the administration in becoming more transparent and accountable

Specific behaviour-change techniques for staff, students, and administration include setting school-wide goals; developing action plans and timelines; encouraging empathy by creating opportunities to reflect on experiences of violence; providing new knowledge to teachers on alternative non-violent discipline; and providing opportunities for teachers to practise new behavioural skills. Reinforcement of new information and ideas, feedback on progress, and modelling of new techniques and behaviours is provided by visits and phone calls from the programme support team. In addition, children participate actively,

and form committees and groups related to different activities. Schools reward successful achievement of their goals and action plan deliverables by having celebrations. The model builds social support for positive behaviours by engaging multiple groups including teachers, school administration, students and parents.

A control study of the toolkit's outcomes in Uganda found that prevalence of past week physical violence was lower in the intervention schools than in the control schools. Students in intervention schools reported feeling safe and supported and experiencing less corporal punishment.<sup>15</sup> Secondary outcomes were safety and wellbeing in school, improved mental health status and scores on educational tests.

While studies have concluded that the intervention is highly effective at reducing violence against children in school, the focus was on short-term outcomes and it was noted that the overall prevalence of violence remained high. It was acknowledged that schools would require additional intervention and support to bring about effective and sustained change.<sup>16</sup> Following positive evaluation of the programme in primary schools, Raising Voices is now working with the government to adapt and pilot the toolkit in secondary schools which face a higher prevalence of violence.



# Challenges

- ?(Whole school approaches can be complex to implement because of the range of activities and stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, school leadership, and community members) that are needed to work together and build a positive school environment.)
- (L)A significant investment of time and resources is needed to help teachers, students, education staff and principals work together within school management committees and parent-teacher groups.
- (🔗)Whole school approaches require effective coordination between the education system and child protection services, police and judiciary at the district level and in schools, which can be challenging if not mandated by policy or in contexts where services are weak.
- (😢)Sustaining a positive school environment is often driven by the commitment of the school principal and administration, which can be disrupted by job transfers or school budgetary constraints.
- (⌚)Monitoring activities and evaluating the effectiveness of whole school approaches can be challenging because of the multiple pathways of change that can occur. This has resulted in a limited evidence base on implementing whole school approaches.



# Recommendations

-  Implement a whole school approach that is tailored to the needs and priorities identified by the school community and strengthens the school system to prevent and respond to SRGBV.
-  Accompany school-based activities with community engagement, awareness-raising, mobilizing, and advocacy work with community leaders, women's organizations, youth groups and religious leaders to help create a sense of ownership among stakeholders.
-  Work with education authorities at the district and national level to ensure that school-level systems for reporting (see Brief 4) and school action plans to address SRGBV (see Brief 6) have adequate resources and are monitored.
-  Invest in monitoring, accountability mechanisms and gathering relevant data on whole school approach models that contribute to reducing violence and are sustained.



## **Brief 2:**

**Engaging teachers  
to create safe and  
gender-responsive  
learning environments**

# Why is it important to engage teachers to address SRGBV?

Teachers have a critical role to play in fostering a safe and gender-responsive environment for students within schools. School environments reflect the societies in which they are embedded, which means that social norms about violence, gender roles, as well as unequal power dynamics between adults and children, women and men, and boys and girls will be evident in the classroom as well.

Teachers are and often have the potential to be change agents and champions against school violence in their schools and communities. In reality, a majority of teachers are not perpetrators of violence but operate within a bigger, complex system, which brings with it several stress factors. Some examples are: unsupportive school leadership and administrators; pressures to deliver curricula alongside other administrative duties; limited scope for professional development and growth; and separation from family and friends in rural posts.<sup>17</sup> A range of strategies are needed to equip teachers to use positive discipline and create classroom environments that are nurturing, participatory and gender-equitable. More examples of promising approaches are needed on what motivates teachers to change their practices and how to

support their social emotional well-being as possible victims of violence themselves.

The use of violence to discipline or control students' behaviour is seen as acceptable and even necessary by parents and community members in some contexts. Studies find that teachers will often uphold prevailing social norms and gender inequality and use violence against boys and girls. They may also have illicit and abusive sexual relationships with students. These abusive behaviours may take place even when there are school policies and national laws that prohibit them.<sup>18</sup> Education systems and teacher training establishments do not necessarily equip teachers to challenge these norms or have mechanisms that support teachers and educators who witness or experience discrimination, violence and abuse. One Nigerian study found widespread sexual harassment and abuse of female teachers in teacher training institutions, suggesting that abusive behaviour and discriminatory attitudes may be learned before teachers enter the classroom,<sup>19</sup> reflecting deeply embedded structures of gender inequality.

In the conversation about school violence, it is easy to view teachers as perpetrators or merely as vehicles for delivering behaviour change curricula to students. Moving beyond this perspective makes it possible to promote teachers' capacity to be mentors, roles models, and more effective teachers, while enabling them to recognize the gender violence in their own lives.

# What have we learned is effective for equipping teachers to create gender-responsive and safer learning environments?

## Reflective processes that allow teachers to consider their own views and experiences of violence

Work with teachers on addressing sensitive topics such as gender-based violence has shown that teachers' self-reflection is a critical component. Facilitating opportunities for teachers to examine their attitudes and values about violence and gender is important. In

addition, providing a safe space in which teachers can feel comfortable to deal with their own biases and experiences of violence serve as a protective measure. It has been shown to have a transformative effect and lead to greater understanding of the deep-rooted structural inequalities and norms that give rise to gender-based violence (see example 2.1).<sup>20</sup>

## Building empathy and teachers' confidence

Asking teachers to think about the impact that beating or verbal abuse might have on a child can help them develop empathy towards students. Exercises where teachers consider scenarios that involve a child experiencing violence allow teachers to view the event from a child's perspective and have a greater impact on shifting attitudes. An experimental study conducted by the International Rescue Committee with the Behavioural Sciences team in the Nyarugusu Refugee Camp in Tanzania found this approach to be effective. The group of teachers who participated in the empathy-based modules were also asked to affirm a positive self-image of themselves as individual teachers, and contrast that with certain negative behaviours and practices that they might use with their students.<sup>21</sup> Building teachers' empathy towards their students and



encouraging them to identify with the skills and self-image that they value can strengthen teachers' confidence to try innovative methods in the classroom. It is also helpful to draw on the available data to highlight the effect of positive discipline and participatory teaching approaches on students' well-being and learning (see Brief 5).

## Enabling peer learning and building networks of peer educators

Transferring knowledge and skills about new methodologies often requires investing time and resources in mentoring that are not always readily available. A peer learning approach allows a pool of facilitators or teachers to share and learn from each other. For example,

in an initiative led by UNICEF Togo, a group of teachers went through a process of learning child-centred, participatory teaching methods, and came together at regular intervals to share and learn from each other about their classroom practices. This created a network of support and peer learning with teacher-led modelling. It also helped transform social norms around use of violent discipline toward new and positive ways of teaching and learning. The project demonstrated that focusing on children and participatory classroom practices led to reduced rates of violent discipline and shifted power dynamics between teachers and students. Building teacher networks within a country can also address the shortage of local trainers to implement new methodologies, by drawing on already-trained teachers to mentor their peers.



### **Example 2.1**

## **Using a self-reflective process to enable education unions to take action to end SRGBV**

### **Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia**

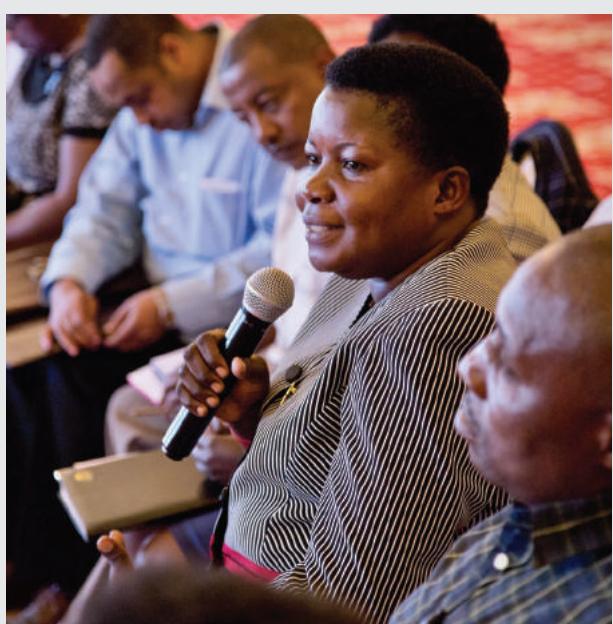
The Gender Action Learning process (GAL) is an approach developed by Gender at Work to address women's rights and gender equality within organizations.<sup>22</sup> Gender at Work used this model with nine teachers' unions in sub-Saharan Africa (Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia) to promote critical reflection and spark change projects to address gender inequality and violence. Because unions represent large parts of the teaching profession in most countries, they provide a powerful forum for educators to respond to SRGBV.

'Change teams', comprising four or five members from different levels of the union structure, developed an experimental intervention to address SRGBV within their union and participated in a peer learning process over two years. Through storytelling

and collages, facilitators encouraged reflection on the history, culture, and programmes of the unions, and on the conditions and contexts of gender norms and violence in women's and men's lives.

As a result of the reflection process, the teams developed 'change experiments', receiving mentoring and capacity building to help them test and adapt their experiments. The change projects have ranged from strengthening women's leadership and representation within the union structure and union policy reform to end SRGBV to working with school clubs and pilot schools to empower teachers and students to end SRGBV. Several individual stories of transformation showed how teachers shifted from corporal punishment to use empathy and positive discipline in their classroom practices.

Since 2016, 396 union staff and members have been directly engaged in actions to address SRGBV, reaching over 30,000 individuals. One outcome of the GAL process has been a ripple effect on unions that did not participate in the initiative but have decided to address SRGBV as part of their core work. All of the unions are members of Education International, the global federation of education unions.



## **Well written codes of conduct provide a necessary structure for teachers to address SRGBV**

Codes of conduct should be developed in collaboration with teachers, communities and a range of stakeholders to ensure that they are a tool for supporting teachers and school personnel to promote a positive learning environment. Codes, when well developed and disseminated, can promote responsibility and ownership for the highest levels of professionalism, whilst also clarifying expectations for behavioural norms and actions (see example 2.2). Consequences should be agreed by all parties during development of national codes, and clearly laid out to respond to cases of violence or abuse.

## **Adaptation of new tools or methodologies by and with teachers**

Tools and methods from a different context must be adapted by and with the teachers who will use them (see Brief 3). Particularly when dealing with topics related to gender-based violence, gender norms, and discriminatory

practices, inviting local experts who understand the gender and social dynamics and traditional and cultural values of the community helps with finding appropriate language and examples to illustrate the concepts. Materials on SRGBV that are adapted in consultation with the curricula department of the ministry of education, teachers union members, and national curriculum experts have a better chance of being used by teachers within the classroom environment.

## **Strengthening leadership support and enabling environment for teachers**

Teachers can play an instrumental role in establishing a safe and gender-responsive learning environment, from engaging school management committees to reporting incidents of violence. However, support from school leadership and administrators (see Brief 1) is vital for them to be effective. Insights from the Good Schools Toolkit show the importance of leadership development for school principals in establishing a school culture that promotes respectful and equitable relationships between students and teachers.



## Example 2.2

# Implementing a school code of conduct in Ethiopia

A national Code of Conduct on Prevention of School-Related Gender-Based Violence in schools was developed by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, with support from UNICEF and consultations with members from the Ethiopian Teachers' Association, civil society organizations, and representatives from the health, education, gender, justice, and police sectors. The code addresses gender-based violence by school staff or students and includes guidance on sexual harassment, which was not part of the existing administrative disciplinary guidelines in schools. The code also specifies that a seven-member committee representing gender clubs, students, teachers, parents, administration, and leadership should be in place in each school and meet regularly.

The code is being rolled out in all regions across the country by distributing printed copies and conducting intensive training at the provincial level for teachers who will serve as gender focal points in their schools. Each gender focal point is responsible for training others on the code, monitoring the implementation of the code at the school level, taking part in the SRGBV committee, and facilitating the gender clubs. Students and student parliaments have helped disseminate and raise awareness of the code.

A study led by researchers at the Institute of Education, University College London examined the implementation of the code in six selected schools. The study found good evidence of the potential for codes of conduct on SRGBV to be effective and made the following recommendations to strengthen implementation:

- Codes of conduct should go beyond punishment for violations, to building on and enforcing positive and preventive actions in and around schools.
- Codes should address a wide range of violence in and around school, such as bullying, corporal punishment, and child marriage, ensuring alignment with other national policies and laws.
- Guidance for responding to the range of mild to severe forms of violence perpetrated by students and teachers should also uphold rights to education and safety for all students.
- Resources are needed to support schools with training, consultation, and girls' club activities, which can be supplemented by partnerships with other government departments and civil society organizations.
- Strengthen capacity for record keeping and monitoring at the school level and make linkages with child protection, mental health, and other services in the community.



# Challenges

-  Teachers may be at risk or feel vulnerable raising issues that challenge existing gender norms and patriarchal practices in the community and may face resistance or retaliation.
-  Changing the way teachers see themselves and their role as educators does not happen quickly — it takes time and specialized support.
-  Resources may be limited — including time, funds, skilled trainers, and learning materials — to help teachers develop the skills and capacity they need to address SRGBV.
-  Consultative processes for reaching agreement and developing tools such as a Code of Conduct requires an investment of time and commitment to success from all stakeholders.
-  Without appropriate incident response mechanisms in and around schools and support for victims, teachers may not feel safe talking about SRGBV with students for fear of eliciting emotional responses or raising student expectations about the school's capacity to respond.



# Recommendations

-  Integrate topics related to SRGBV in pre- and in-service teacher training so that these are not unfamiliar ideas and teachers have a range of skills and the capacity to address SRGBV.
-  Work with teachers' unions and other stakeholders to revise codes of conduct and promote these as a key tool to support teachers' professionalism and practice. Unions can be an important ally to advocate for the adoption and implementation of codes of conduct, and for teacher training and response services to address SRGBV, which affects both students and teachers.
-  Ensure teachers are trained on how to manage incidents in a confidential, survivor-centered way and appropriate reporting and response mechanisms are in place (see Brief 4) in the school with strong connections to community-based child protection mechanisms.
-  Enable teachers to use curriculum-based approaches within school-wide efforts to promote a gender-responsive, respectful, and non-violent classroom environment (see Brief 3).
-  Ensure teachers are supported and do not feel vulnerable by engaging a range of stakeholders (see Brief 1) including school management, communities, religious leaders, youth and women's groups.
-  Build a community of teachers who can support each other and share their classroom practices and challenges in addressing SRGBV in their schools. This also contributes to shifting norms when more than one teacher at the school is using new methods or practices.



**Brief 3:**

**Shifting harmful  
gender norms through  
curricular approaches**

# Why use curricular approaches to shift harmful gender norms?

Gender norms refer to beliefs, behaviour, and practices that define what it means to be a man, woman, girl, or boy in a community or society. Norms are also dictated by a person's social status and income, ethnicity or race, disability status and gender identity. These norms often create boundaries and expectations around what girls and boys should wear, how they should behave, their education, the kind of work they can do, and whether and whom to marry. For example, gender and social norms in many cultures create expectations that women and girls should be gentle, passive, and compliant, while men and boys should be dominant, aggressive, and assert control.<sup>23</sup> Harmful gender and social norms are recognized to be key to driving and sustaining gender-based violence.<sup>24</sup>

The authority to maintain these norms often lies in the hands of adults.<sup>25</sup> Institutions such as the school, the family, religious institutions, and informal social groups also play a role in reinforcing norms and power structures and can keep gender discrimination and violence hidden.<sup>26</sup> For example, teachers may inadvertently reinforce gender norms through the content that they teach and the way that they interact with male and female students (see Brief 2). The gender dynamics behind school bullying and violence can also remain

hidden, but where data is available, gender norms have a strong influence on the kind of bullying that is experienced and perpetrated both between peers and between teachers and students.

While schools can be a site in which gender norms may be reinforced and where gender-based violence can occur, schools are also a strategic site in which to actively promote a gender-responsive, respectful, and non-violent culture. Curricula are an important component of the educational process that can engage young people in discussion and reflection about their roles in society and help them develop positive gender attitudes and norms. This, in turn, can help empower them to recognize violence and abuse, how to protect themselves from harm, and take action to avoid harm to others.<sup>27</sup> Curricular interventions also provide the opportunity to develop positive perceptions of gender, reflect on what it means to be masculine, feminine, or non-binary (not exclusively masculine or feminine), and increase understanding and acceptance of sexual and gender diversity.<sup>28</sup> A growing body of evidence suggests that well-designed and delivered curricular interventions can help shift harmful social and gender norms, promote gender equality, and reduce rates of GBV and other forms of anti-social behaviour.<sup>29</sup>



# What have we learned about using curricular approaches and safer learning environments?

## Work with local experts to adapt curriculum content and delivery to the local context

Several promising curricular resources exist that can be adapted to different contexts. Engaging with multiple stakeholders when adapting programmes or curricula helps to ensure the content is responsive and that gender terms and meanings are used appropriately in the context. Pilot testing a

curriculum with students and other young people is especially valuable for gaining insight into the issues girls and boys face, as well as widely-held attitudes and norms. It also helps to foster ownership and assists young people to understand and become advocates on gender issues and SRGBV.

## Ongoing training and mentoring of facilitators who deliver the curriculum are essential

Training for teachers or facilitators who will be delivering the curriculum is the foundation for work on gender norms. Experience-based learning<sup>30</sup> about working to address gender norms suggests that it is critical for facilitators to reflect and challenge their own biases to build teachers' understanding of the concepts and their confidence in using participatory methods. Ongoing training and support are recommended. In addition, positive behaviour management training can help teachers manage participatory activities, and also contributes more broadly to positive disciplinary practices within the school.



### Example 3.1

## Connect with Respect

### Eswatini, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor Leste, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Connect with Respect is an example of a curriculum-based approach to prevent SRGBV. The resource is designed for delivery in schools with students aged 11 to 14 years and can be integrated into an existing school curriculum or delivered as a stand-alone programme. Connect with Respect has seven topics that help students understand important concepts such as gender, gender-based violence, and rights, as well as promote social and emotional learning and communication skills for respectful gender relationships.

Connect with Respect enables teachers to guide discussions about violence-prevention with students, in part by using carefully constructed learning activities and scenarios. They assist students in questioning harmful attitudes and practices without resorting to blaming or naming, and without needing to call on their personal stories. Practical and relevant learning activities help students engage in discussions about the topics, think critically about social and gender norms, and rehearse positive communication strategies. This includes activities such as sharing in pairs, small group discussion, and role play.

In both the Southern and Eastern Africa region and the Asia Pacific region the programme was introduced with a participatory process to

adapt it to the local context. Representatives from education and health ministries, school staff, civil society organizations, and teacher training institutions came together to review the resource and help ensure the content was responsive to the cultural context and reflective of the different forms of SRGBV that play out in schools. In addition, teachers were trained to further adapt the resource to be responsive to the needs of students in their specific context. This process has shown to be important in putting the issue on the agenda of various stakeholders and fostering ownership of the programme. The Connect with Respect resource is available online and is currently being implemented in four countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa region and three countries in the Asia-Pacific region with support from UNESCO and UN Women.



## **Integrate SRGBV as a topic in existing programmes or curricula**

SRGBV issues can be woven into existing curricula on a range of topics (see example 3.2). For example, several evaluated interventions that have included SRGBV or GBV have been delivered through curricula on comprehensive sexuality education, life skills education, healthy relationships, gender equality, bullying and other forms of violence, and bystander programmes.<sup>31</sup> Content delivered through extra-curricular activities such as safe spaces and girls' and boys' clubs have also shown promise in several contexts.<sup>32</sup>

## **Curriculum-based interventions need to use interactive and participatory methods to be effective**

Research has found that using participatory approaches to providing students with opportunities to rehearse and apply skills in a safe space (that can then be applied in day-to-day life) may make curricular or extra-curricular interventions more successful.<sup>33</sup>

## **Curriculum-based approaches are an entry point into further efforts**

Curriculum-based approaches can be a useful entry point into further efforts to address SRGBV. In several countries, the process of introducing and adapting curriculum has helped to shed light on this critical issue and triggered a range of other interventions.

### Example 3.2

## Youth Living Peace

### Brazil and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Youth Living Peace was designed as an educational programme for adolescent girls and boys to address the root causes of violence and prevent sexual and gender-based violence against girls (aged 13-19). Through a curriculum delivered via group and individual activities, the approach encourages girls and boys to challenge and shift attitudes and behaviours about gender equality, use of violence and self-efficacy. The approach had a strong psychosocial and counselling support component to enable adolescents to heal from trauma and break away from harmful gender norms and break intergenerational cycles of violence.

Youth Living Peace was implemented with the intention to scale and institutionalize this individual level work. School-wide campaigns and advocacy with key stakeholders in schools, government, and civil society organizations was part of the intervention to embed policies and programming to prevent and respond to violence against adolescent girls and boys.

Coordinated by Promundo and implemented by Instituto Promundo (Brazil) and Heal Africa (DRC), the programme reached over 9000 community members, 1150 adolescents, 125 education professionals and 87 government representatives.

An external evaluation of the programme after three years of implementation in Brazil and DRC generated the following:

- 28% decrease in female participants who reported having been insulted or humiliated in the last three months and 37% decrease in experiences of verbal and psychological violence among male participants.
- An increase from 88% to 100% of teachers who would report a case of abuse to child protection/social services.
- In DRC, girls reported more self-confidence and had more opportunities to play active roles at school after participating in the programme.
- In DRC, the Ministry of Education operationalized the Youth Living Peace curriculum within the Division of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education Plans, to address gender issues, reproductive health, sexuality and relationships.



# Challenges

-  Curriculum-based discussions about unequal gender norms with students within the school environment can empower them to challenge these at home and in the community. Without sufficient community-based awareness and dialogue, this may also put them at risk of backlash and violence from community leaders or family members.
-  Shifting gender norms is difficult and time-consuming and often also requires a wider shift in discourse across the country. Some norms are more difficult to shift because of social expectations, for example around marriage and housework. Teachers and curriculum facilitators may also have their own values and biases and may need support to reflect on this and build an understanding of the hidden nature of the problems and the harm associated with gender norms and gender-based violence.
-  Teachers can find it difficult to integrate new content due to pressure to complete the required syllabus or simply due to large class sizes and lack of materials.
-  Teachers and facilitators may have also experienced gender-based violence themselves and may require support to be able to deliver violence prevention curricula without experiencing secondary trauma (see Brief 2).
-  Using a range of participatory methodologies that make curriculum-based interventions effective requires certain skills and capacity. Teachers may not always feel comfortable adapting these methods when they are used to traditional methods.
-  Measuring shifts in norms can be challenging because it requires time and investment in the process of capacity development, mentoring and curriculum delivery.



# Recommendations

-  Embed curricular interventions as part of broader whole school efforts. The messages conveyed through curriculum-based approaches will be reinforced when they are situated within broader efforts to promote a positive school environment including trusted reporting mechanisms (see Briefs 1 and 4).
-  Work with the curricula department within the ministry of education to identify entry points to deliver content on SRGBV (for example, lessons on guidance and counselling, values education, reproductive health etc.). This enables ownership within the ministry and creates opportunity for it to be integrated in formal curricula.
-  Invest in workshops for teachers and school staff to foster a common understanding of social and gender norms that perpetuate SRGBV and develop teachers' skills and capacity to lead discussions about norms with students.
-  Facilitate extra-curricular activities such as girls' and boys' clubs and school-community events as forums to introduce messages on gender norms, social cohesion and respectful relationships, which complement school-based efforts.
-  Invest in working with teachers' social and emotional needs and ways to address these, given that teachers may have their own experiences of violence and trauma (see Brief 2).
-  Monitor the implementation of curriculum-based programmes including mechanisms to track shifts in attitudes and behaviours over time.



**Brief 4:**

**Establishing safe  
and confidential  
reporting mechanisms**

# Why strong reporting mechanisms in schools?

Reporting systems enable victims/witnesses and their advocates to report crimes or violations. Safe, easily-accessible, confidential reporting mechanisms are important in terms of addressing SRGBV so that in the event of an incident, victims and witnesses can safely report violence and abuse, and know that there will be services to support them, if they wish (see figure 3). Such mechanisms are critical for holding perpetrators of SRGBV to account for their actions and ensuring that the perpetrator can do no more harm to students or the community. They are also essential for ensuring that those experiencing violence can be provided with the support and services they may require.

Ministries of education and schools need to establish appropriate reporting mechanisms and have an agreed protocol for dealing with reports of SRGBV. Links with local support networks as well as formal services are essential.

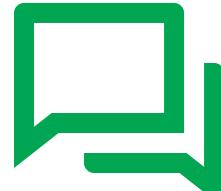
Figure 3: Examples of reporting mechanisms



**SCHOOL-BASED FOCAL POINTS**



**TELEPHONE HELPLINES**



**CHAT ROOMS & ONLINE REPORTING**



**'HAPPINESS & SADNESS' BOXES**

# What have we learned about effective reporting systems?

## Involve a range of people, including students, in the design of reporting mechanisms and procedures

Reporting mechanisms should be designed in close consultation with students, school staff and relevant community stakeholders. Students may identify barriers to reporting that adults would not, so consulting them in the development and trial of reporting mechanisms is a way of ensuring that what is designed makes young people feel comfortable utilizing them. In the design of the Rapid Pro reporting mechanism in Senegal, a range of stakeholders were consulted including students and teachers (see example 4.1). Involving students in the design, also helps ensure that they are familiar with the process and know what to expect in terms of the response.

## Consider accessibility to all students

Reporting mechanisms must be accessible to all students and consider the particular barriers that students with special needs, or those from minority groups or highly stigmatized groups – such as children who identify as LGBTIQ+ – may face in reporting violence.<sup>34</sup>

## Protect confidentiality of victims and witnesses

A major barrier to students coming forward with cases is their fear of facing negative repercussions. A study of countries in Southern Africa found that victims of sexual violence tend to experience hostility and animosity after reporting sexual violence, and often leave school for prolonged periods, change schools, or drop out of schools entirely. On the other hand, the students and teachers responsible for the violence receive little in the way of repercussions for their actions.<sup>35</sup> A 2018 study in Ethiopia found that sexual violence is rarely reported as students do not think their concerns will be taken seriously or are afraid of repercussions.<sup>36</sup> These examples are testament to the need for confidential and non-judgmental and safe mechanisms for reporting. Protecting people who report violence is central to ensuring their safety and will make reporting mechanisms more likely to be used.

## Link reporting mechanisms to a strong system of support and referral

Research shows that another reason students rarely report violence or abuse is because experience tells them that no action will be taken.<sup>37,38</sup> There is a need to ensure that there are protocols in place to guide an appropriate response. In Senegal, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF have worked together to establish a framework for the detection and management of risk situations affecting a student (see example 4.2) which provides clear and practical steps that school staff are responsible for taking when they receive a report of violence. Research from RTI found that clear guidelines outlining reporting protocols and pathways,

can act as a highly protective factor for young people, reducing the prevalence and increasing the accountability of those responsible for violence perpetration.<sup>39</sup>

## **Ensure school staff are familiar with reporting protocols and referral pathways**

In some countries, guidelines or teacher codes of conduct are being developed. However, these need to include clear reporting protocols and referral pathways. Effective implementation of guidelines requires training for teachers in recognizing students who need support, providing an appropriate response and understanding their responsibilities as duty bearers under national policy and legislation. It is also useful if school staff are familiar with focal points at referral services.

## **Strengthen reporting and communication between the education sector and child protection systems**

Coordination between different sectors, including health, child protection and social services, is central to ensure that cases are referred appropriately.<sup>40</sup> In some schools, efforts are made to establish a link between guidance and counselling staff, external social workers and other officials for referral when appropriate.<sup>41</sup> Evidence from Zimbabwe and Tanzania found that clear, safe, and supportive reporting mechanisms (such as suggestion boxes, girls clubs, or community protection committees) linked to community protection systems also strengthen students' confidence and lead to better reporting and resolution of child abuse.<sup>42,43</sup>



## **Foster a sense of accountability in school staff**

It is important to establish a sense of accountability in school staff to provide appropriate follow up of cases. In less serious cases, this may mean simply checking in with the student to ensure they are okay or referring to a school counsellor or teacher focal point. In more serious cases, this may mean formally reporting the case. Reporting of suspected abuse of children can be either on a voluntary basis or mandatory by law. Mandatory reporting of violence and abuse is a fraught issue; incentives to do so and sanctions for not doing so need to be carefully thought through, while keeping the interests and protection of the child as a central concern.<sup>44</sup>

## **Partner with efforts to change norms around violence and help-seeking**

Perceptions of violence will influence whether it is identified and reported. In research from

countries in East and Southern Africa region, girls cite 'not viewing the abuse as a problem' and fearing that they will get into trouble or be abandoned as key reasons for failing to report following an incident of sexual abuse.<sup>45,46,47,48</sup> Given that violence is often perceived as a 'normal' part of school life, and thus under-reported, efforts to strengthen reporting mechanisms need to be partnered with efforts to change deeply ingrained social and cultural norms that normalize, condone or justify violence, and encourage reporting and help-seeking (see Brief 3).

## **Link reporting mechanisms to data collection systems**

Consider how the reporting mechanisms are linked to data and monitoring systems in order to collect data to inform overall prevention and response interventions. In Senegal, the Rapid Pro tool not only ensures that cases are responded to but provides real-time data on incidents (see example 4.1).



### Example 4.1

## Rapid Pro: A confidential reporting tool linking schools with services

### Senegal

In Senegal there was growing concerns about under-reporting of cases of violence and abuse against children (including within school). This was partly linked to an issue of the general population being unaware of services and/or unable to navigate the service system. In an effort to establish a safe and confidential reporting system, RapidPro – an open source SMS-based platform – was identified. RapidPro functions not only as a tool to strengthen reporting and referral, but it also facilitates case management and produces real time data. The tool was designed using a participatory process, engaging a range of stakeholders, including potential future users. While this process takes time, it fosters strong commitment and ownership and recognizes communities as an essential part of the care network.

A cohort of ‘informants’ have been selected and trained from an existing network of trusted community members and service providers who are already in regular contact with children. These ‘informants’ are able to send an SMS to a free number (staffed 24/7), registering a case. The system then collects information on the case, such as the age

and sex of the victim and type of violation. A report is sent to a specialized service staffed by trained social workers who manage the response. To date, over 700 informants have been established, including teachers, women’s group representatives, police, security personnel and service providers.

Measures have been put in place to protect the confidentiality of both victims and informants, adhering to national data protection laws. Only the welfare service in charge of case management and UNICEF have access to the data collected.

In the first ten months of the initiative 1,192 cases had been reported, with an increase in child protection case referrals of 44% compared to the previous six months.

While not yet formally evaluated, RapidPro has proven to be useful for people, simple to use, accessible, cost-effective and easy to put in place. In addition, the tool systematically produces reliable data in real time, on cases reported and handled without increasing workload of child protection professionals. In addition, the initiative has raised awareness of child protection issues and strengthened relationships between service providers.<sup>49</sup> An evaluation is planned for 2020.



## Example 4.2

# Guidelines for the detection and management of risk situations affecting a student

## Senegal

The Ministry of National Education in Senegal has led the development of guidelines (or a manual) through a consultative process involving educational authorities at national and provincial levels and teaching staff.<sup>50</sup> Published in 2019, the manual provides a frame of reference for action and practical guidance for anyone working in the education sector to detect and manage internally, or in liaison with other institutions, situations of distress or danger to a student occurring in schools and their vicinity. The aim is to ensure that each staff member in the school plays his or her role and that any student at risk can be detected, supported with basic initial care, referred for specialized care to social services, health services and/or judicial services, according to the needs and gravity of the incident.

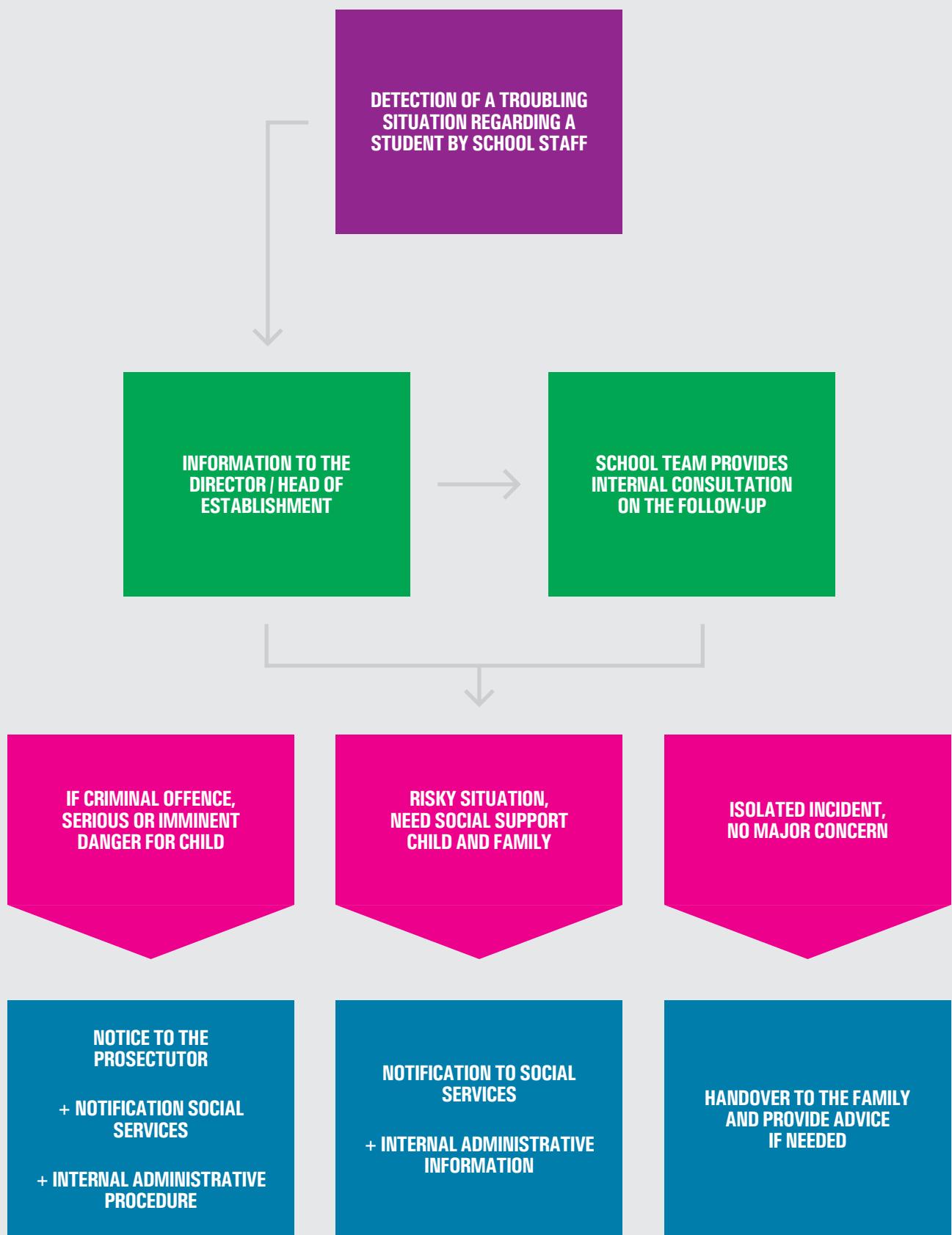
The school is viewed as frontline in identifying children in distress and central to reporting incidences of violence perpetrated both within and outside schools. Teachers are in daily

contact with students, and are in the best position to identify, in their early stages, signals of distress or danger to a student. Making sure teachers are capable of early detection and reporting situations of abuse or violence is key to protecting children and safeguarding their fundamental rights. The guidelines recognize that students, particularly girls, are subject to sexual harassment from peers in schools, which has far-reaching consequences for their well-being, for instance, HIV transmission, early and unwanted pregnancy, school drop-out and long-term psychological trauma. It acknowledges that teachers play a crucial role in detecting and thus appropriately responding to SRGBV.

The guidelines emphasize the best interest of the child and make reporting of any form of violence or abuse obligatory. They help teachers identify signs of suffering or discomfort manifested by students by providing a list of the different signs of distress that can alert teachers. The guidelines provide practical steps that should be taken by staff members and, depending on the nature of the incident, specify whether teachers should notify social services, judicial services, health services or the family (see figure 4).



**Figure 4: Examples of reporting mechanisms**



### Example 4.3

## Namibia's National Safe Schools Framework

Namibia's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) was developed jointly by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) and UNICEF to strengthen the provision of healthy, supportive and conducive teaching and learning to address the concerning levels of violence in Namibian schools.<sup>51</sup>

The Framework identifies seven standards to help Namibian schools create conducive teaching and learning environments. The Framework provides key stakeholders with detailed practical guidance on how to carry out their responsibilities for creating and maintaining safe schools, including pointing out where laws govern the conduct of teachers (for example in mandatory reporting on child protection cases).

The sixth standard refers to effective prevention of and response to violence and self-harm. The Framework outlines the importance of well-defined reporting and referral procedures, including teacher codes of conduct. The Framework encourages students, parents, teachers and the school community to report any incidents or concerns. It emphasizes the importance of privacy and provides practical tips to teachers for approaching a student in need of support.

Stakeholder engagement and collaboration was critical to the development of the Framework. Consulting with a range of ministry representatives, students, school personnel and the wider community strengthened the sense of ownership, inclusivity, transparency, appropriateness and clarity of the Framework.

The government emphasizes that the successful implementation of the NSSF requires a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach. The education sector needing to work closely with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW), the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) and the Ministry of Safety and Security (MoSS).



# Challenges

-  Experience shows that the establishment of safe, effective and confidential mechanisms faces a range of practical and ethical challenges. Extreme caution needs to be taken to ensure that reporting mechanisms do not potentially expose victims to further harm or negative repercussions.
-  Violence often is perceived as a 'normal' part of school life – deeply ingrained social and cultural norms that condone or justify violence. This may mean that students and staff have difficulty recognizing physical and sexual abuse,<sup>52</sup> let alone seeking help.
-  There are significant challenges to establishing safe and confidential reporting systems. These include questions around who to report to, methods to ensure confidentiality, and pros and cons of maintaining anonymity and the ability to provide support. This means that in many countries, systems for reporting are weak or non-existent.<sup>53,54</sup>
-  Children are often reluctant to report violence against them. This may be because they fear negative repercussions, because their experience tells them that no action will be taken or because they are discouraged by parents or caregivers who may seek compensation or an informal settlement rather than go through official reporting channels.
-  Students face barriers when it comes to reporting violence perpetrated by teachers. In many cases, reporting bodies comprise only members of the school community, and students may face perceived or real barriers to their reports being dealt with appropriately.
-  In many settings, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected communities, referral services, including health, social services and child protection are often absent or inadequate.<sup>55</sup>



# Recommendations

-  Multi-stakeholder collaboration across education, child protection, law enforcement, young people and community is critical to create user-friendly and effective mechanisms.
-  A clear framework, owned by the ministry of education, gives structure and guidance to all schools and personnel. This also enables reporting and referral systems to be well-resourced, strengthened and working in collaboration with other government departments (see Brief 1).
-  Balance efforts to improve reporting with work to address the root causes and drivers of violence and shift harmful norms so that students and teachers recognize acts of violence and feel supported in reporting them (see Briefs 2 and 3).
-  Formulate and implement strong guidelines and/or school codes of conduct that provide clear responsibilities for reporting and referral, and enshrine students' right to a safe and quality education.
-  Use innovative and multiple reporting channels, including those that allow anonymity and do not require reporting face-to-face (e.g. using technology).
-  Use curriculum-based approaches to teach help-seeking skills, the ability to say no and distinguish acts of violence (see Brief 3).
-  Invest in research to strengthen the evidence base on what a good, functioning reporting system looks like in low and middle-income countries.



**Brief 5:**

**Investing in data and  
evidence to inform the  
response to SRGBV**

# Why strengthen efforts to gather data and evidence on SRGBV?

Data and evidence can make it easier to take targeted, national-level action to address SRGBV, as well as to invest in strategies that have proved effective. While SRGBV is widely recognized as a major problem, the full scale and impact remains unknown. Research on school violence and bullying has neglected to explore the role of gender norms. Yet, as with violence in wider society, many forms of school violence are deeply rooted in unequal gender relations, social norms, and discriminatory practices.

Data and evidence are powerful advocacy tools. Data that show the scope and consequences of school violence, including gender-based violence, can influence education ministers, political leaders, and policymakers to invest in prevention and response efforts.

Routine data collection to monitor the size and impact of SRGBV, identify those most affected, and monitor interventions makes it possible to direct resources more efficiently.

Researchers have highlighted three different forms of data needed to inform policy and programme implementation:

- data that helps with understanding the nature of SRGBV and how it is shaped by national and local laws and policies and prevalent norms;
- monitoring data to make the government aware of whether prevention practices exist at school level, such as curriculum-based programmes or clubs, teachers trained, response and reporting systems, and how these are functioning;
- evaluations or impact assessments of interventions (by government, non-governmental organizations, and partnerships) to determine whether strategies are being implemented effectively and having the desired outcome. This helps to identify the most promising and successful interventions to replicate and scale-up. They can also be used to guide legal and policy reform, help ensure effective and targeted services, and assess the impact of policies and programmes.<sup>56</sup>



**Figure 5: What do we know?**



Almost one in three students (32 percent) report being bullied by their peers at school at least once in the last month.



School bullying and violence affects girls and boys in different ways. Girls are more likely to experience psychological violence and sexual violence and harassment. Boys are more likely to experience physical violence and corporal punishment.



Data from Global School Health Surveys shed some light on the gendered nature of school violence and bullying in sub-Saharan Africa.



Male

Female

#### Percentage of students who were victims of school violence



47%



50.5%

BULLYING



44.6%

PHYSICAL FIGHTS



31.9%



36.6%



35.8%

PHYSICAL ATTACKS

#### Percentage of students who were bullied, by type



25.4%



18.7%

PHYSICAL



10%

SEXUAL



9.1%



5.2%



6.5%

PSYCHOLOGICAL  
(SOCIAL EXCLUSION)

#### Percentage of students who were bullied, by driver



11.7%



17.5%

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE



16%

RACE, NATIONALITY OR COLOUR



10.8%



9.3%



RELIGION

Source: Secondary analysis calculations based on HBSC data



Over 700 million school-aged children live in countries where they are not fully protected by law from corporal punishment at school.

# What have we learned about measuring SRGBV?

## Use a range of gender-sensitive indicators

Indicators to measure SRGBV need to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools. While quantitative indicators provide information about certain forms of violence, qualitative indicators can help to generate data about more sensitive issues and identify the associated gender and social norms. There is no international consensus about standard indicators to monitor and evaluate SRGBV programming. However, it is agreed that indicators should be based on a clear definition of SRGBV, which encompasses the dimensions of violence and attention to gender, in line with international standards, and reflect local realities.<sup>57</sup> In addition, a variety of indicators are needed to help paint an overall picture of the problem. Three types of indicators are needed to measure SRGBV-related interventions (see figure 6).

## Disaggregate data by sex

Given that we know that some groups are more vulnerable to SRGBV than others, it is critical to disaggregate data by, at a minimum, sex, location and age. Disability status, sexual orientation and gender identity,<sup>58</sup> and type of violence should also be disaggregated in order to get a full picture of the problem, identify the most vulnerable groups, and target interventions where they are most needed and appropriate.

## Be aware of ethical considerations

Close consideration should be paid to ethical and safety risks when carrying out data collection on SRGBV. Researching SRGBV requires asking people to reflect on their own experiences of violence and runs the risk of causing direct or secondary trauma, compromising the safety and security of participants, and breaching confidentiality and disclosure agreements. It is important to consider safety and support mechanisms when interviewing children, adolescents, and adults about their experiences of violence in school settings. Ensure that if children disclose experiences of violence during data collection, there is a support system in place to respond (see Brief 4).

## Take into account methodology

There are a number of challenges in gathering accurate data on incidents of SRGBV. The data collection methods used influence what information is disclosed. In addition, reporting on cases of violence relies on the researcher and informant having a shared understanding of violence. But understandings of violence are subjective and sit within a cultural context. Where data rely on reporting through official channels or self-reporting through research and surveys, a child's understanding of and recognition of violence, researchers' biases and skills, and the sensitivity of the issues being discussed all impede reporting. As such, there are major concerns about the accuracy and validity of data on GBV, including in schools, particularly in the face of taboos and silence around many forms of violence.<sup>59,60,61</sup>

## **Consider using participatory methods and technology to bring a gender perspective**

Some types of violence are more easily tracked than others, for example, physical and corporal punishment versus psychological and sexual violence. Quantitative data are in high demand but must be viewed with caution given that SRGBV is under-reported. Qualitative researchers have tried to address both ethical and methodological challenges by using a range of creative and participatory research methods. These methods address power imbalances and can generate rich data to help understand the meanings and context of violence. Research has also found that using technology-based data collection tools can help generate more accurate responses. For example, gathering data with computer devices is linked to more honest responses and higher disclosure of experience and perpetration of sexual violence.<sup>62,63</sup>

## **Existing data can be a good starting point for advocacy and action**

There is limited research that looks specifically at patterns of SRGBV. Global estimates based on national data sets (such as the Global School Health Survey, Violence Against Children Surveys, and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys) give an indication of the prevalence of certain forms of violence such as bullying and physical fights and provide a justification for scaling up and strengthening prevention and response efforts (see figure 5). Many existing data collection instruments on violence in schools, such as the Global School Health Survey, do not ask about gender-based violence or provide enough analysis of gender and other variables. However, there may be national level data (see figure 6) and qualitative studies on violence and gender norms that can be used to understand the nature of violence in schools and advocate for effective action. Applying a gender analysis to existing administrative data, police records, and school-based incident reports can also provide insights into patterns and existing response mechanisms.



## Figure 6: Example indicators and tools

The UNGEI whole school framework to prevent SRGBV proposes three types of indicators to measure SRGBV-related interventions. A number of existing instruments exist.

| EXAMPLE INDICATORS  | EXISTING INSTRUMENTS   |
|---|--|
| <b>1) Prevalence of violence indicators that measure trends over time</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of students (M/F) who have experienced physical bullying in the past 30 days/since the beginning of the school year</li> <li>• % of teachers (M/F) who have administered corporal punishment to a student in the past 30 days/since the beginning of the school year</li> <li>• % of students (M/F) who have experienced sexual harassment in the past 30 days/since the beginning of the school year</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global School Health Survey</li> <li>• Violence Against Children Surveys</li> <li>• Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys</li> <li>• SDG indicator 4.a.2 “percentage of students experiencing bullying, by sex”</li> </ul> |
| <b>2) Process indicators measuring practices and programmes at the school or provincial level</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of schools that have a code of conduct on SRGBV</li> <li>• # of teachers who have skills in positive disciplinary techniques</li> <li>• # of school boards of management that adequately monitor reporting of violence and accountability</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Management Information System (differs by country – see example 5.1)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3) Indicators on drivers that measure shifts in norms and attitudes</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of teachers (M/F) who believe that women and girls need to be responsible for keeping themselves safe</li> <li>• % of students (M/F) who believe that a woman's role is to take care of her home and family</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale</li> <li>• The Gender Beliefs Scale</li> <li>• The Gender Norm Attitudes Scale</li> <li>• Global Early Adolescents survey</li> </ul>   |

### **Example 5.1**

# **Introducing questions about violence into routine national-level data collection in schools**

## **Côte D'Ivoire and Ethiopia**

Several countries have established an Education Management Information System (EMIS) to manage and provide basic administrative data about their education system. EMIS information is useful for research, policy and planning, monitoring, and decision-making about the distribution and allocation of educational resources and services.

The EMIS has potential to be used to record and track cases of violence in schools. Although there are many challenges with this system, including timeliness, reliability, and accuracy of data, some countries are showing initiative by using the system to collect data on incidents of violence occurring in schools. With support from UNICEF, the Ministry of Education in Ethiopia has introduced a Violence Reporting Template (VRT) designed to be completed at the school level each term. The form collects information on the number of cases of different forms of violence, perpetrators, and outcomes of cases. The tool is likely to contribute to keeping SRGBV on the agenda

for action in schools and there is potential for it to be developed and adapted for use in other countries. Some adaptations to the tool format and development of guidance for completion would help enhance the quality and usefulness of the data generated.<sup>64</sup>

In Côte d'Ivoire, having recognized that violence in schools was a pressing issue but that no data collection mechanisms were in place, UNICEF worked with the Ministry of National Education, Technical, and Vocational Training (MENETFP) to integrate simple questions on SRGBV into routine data collection tools. Initial efforts yielded disappointing results, with only 10 percent of regional directorates submitting data. In response, initiatives were taken to generate more ownership of the process, with stakeholders engaged to review indicators and data collection tools, training provided to regional directorates, and the creation of child protection working groups in schools to coordinate efforts. Routine questionnaires completed annually by all schools now include variables on violence in schools. The data generated includes the number of students who are victims of violence disaggregated by level of education and by type of violence. The data are disseminated and shared nationally which gives it high visibility and supports accountability. The data reveal important trends, which is crucial for developing effective prevention and response efforts.



# Challenges

-  National reporting and data tracking systems are often non-existent or weak. Such systems are usually at their lowest capacity in areas and countries affected by crises and conflict and in remote locations where SRGBV likely has a higher prevalence.<sup>65</sup>
-  Many existing data collection instruments on violence in schools (e.g. the Global School Health Survey) do not ask about gender-based violence or provide sufficient analysis of gender and other variables.
-  Even where reporting systems exist, the reality is that most violence goes unreported or unrecognized, particularly where social and gender norms make it hard for children or adults to report or recognize certain behaviours and actions as violence. This means that many forms of violence are likely underreported.<sup>66</sup>
-  Where data rely on reporting through official channels or self-reporting, a child's understanding of and recognition of violence, researchers' biases and skills, and the sensitivity of the issues being discussed may all impede accurate reporting.
-  Some types of violence are more easily tracked than others (e.g. physical and corporal punishment versus psychological and sexual violence).
-  In terms of monitoring the effectiveness of interventions, measuring behaviour change is difficult. Behaviour change can take time and attitude change cannot be taken as a proxy for behaviour change. Many studies measure short-term effects. Monitoring for long-term change and impact of SRGBV interventions can be constrained by short project cycles and funding mechanisms.



# Recommendations

-  Invest in qualitative and quantitative research such as situational analyses, needs assessments, or exploratory research to collect data on forms of SRGBV, common norms and attitudes, and existing policies and practices.
-  Integrate key indicators on SRGBV prevention, policies, and practices into existing national education administrative data collection systems where they exist.
-  Build capacity to collect and analyse data at school, district, and national level, ensuring that data collected at the school level feeds into a central system.
-  Advocate to integrate questions related to SRGBV into existing global data collection instruments like the Global School Health Survey, Violence Against Children Survey and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.
-  Ensure that data is shared through the appropriate streams so that it can be used to inform policy and programming and to enhance advocacy efforts.
-  Ensure a solid monitoring and evaluation framework is included in the design of any intervention seeking to prevent or respond to SRGBV. It should assess impact, as well as whether the intervention is relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable.
-  Invest in understanding the drivers of violence and measuring behaviour change so that programmes can address the root causes of violence.



**Brief 6:**

**Integrating SRGBV into  
national policies and  
education sector plans**

# Why incorporate SRGBV into national policies and education sector plans?

Addressing school violence, including gender-based violence, requires effective national laws, policies, and procedures aimed at preventing violence against children, promoting gender equality and protecting children from violence, in all settings where it takes place - families, schools and communities. Laws and policies signal a government's commitment to violence response and prevention, providing a framework for creating safe learning environments and a foundation for addressing SRGBV.

In relation to SRGBV, the way laws and policies are framed, operationalised and strengthened can either support or undermine equality between men and women. For example, do policies about harassment or bullying place the responsibility on the perpetrator or the victim, and how do practices at school reflect this norm? Do existing laws about rape respect the rights of married women to bodily integrity — that is, the ability to make decisions about their bodies and be secure against assault?<sup>67</sup> In reviewing existing laws and policies, this analysis can help determine whether laws and policies need to be amended to better support prevention of SRGBV and promote gender equality more broadly.

The Global Guidance on Addressing School-Related Gender-Based Violence states that governments can demonstrate leadership at the national level by:

- developing and implementing laws to protect children from violence, ensure accountability and treat all children equally;
- adopting a comprehensive, multi-sectoral national policy and action plan to prevent and respond to SRGBV;
- strengthening connections between the education system and child protection policies, procedures and systems; and
- reforming the education system for a stronger, more holistic response.

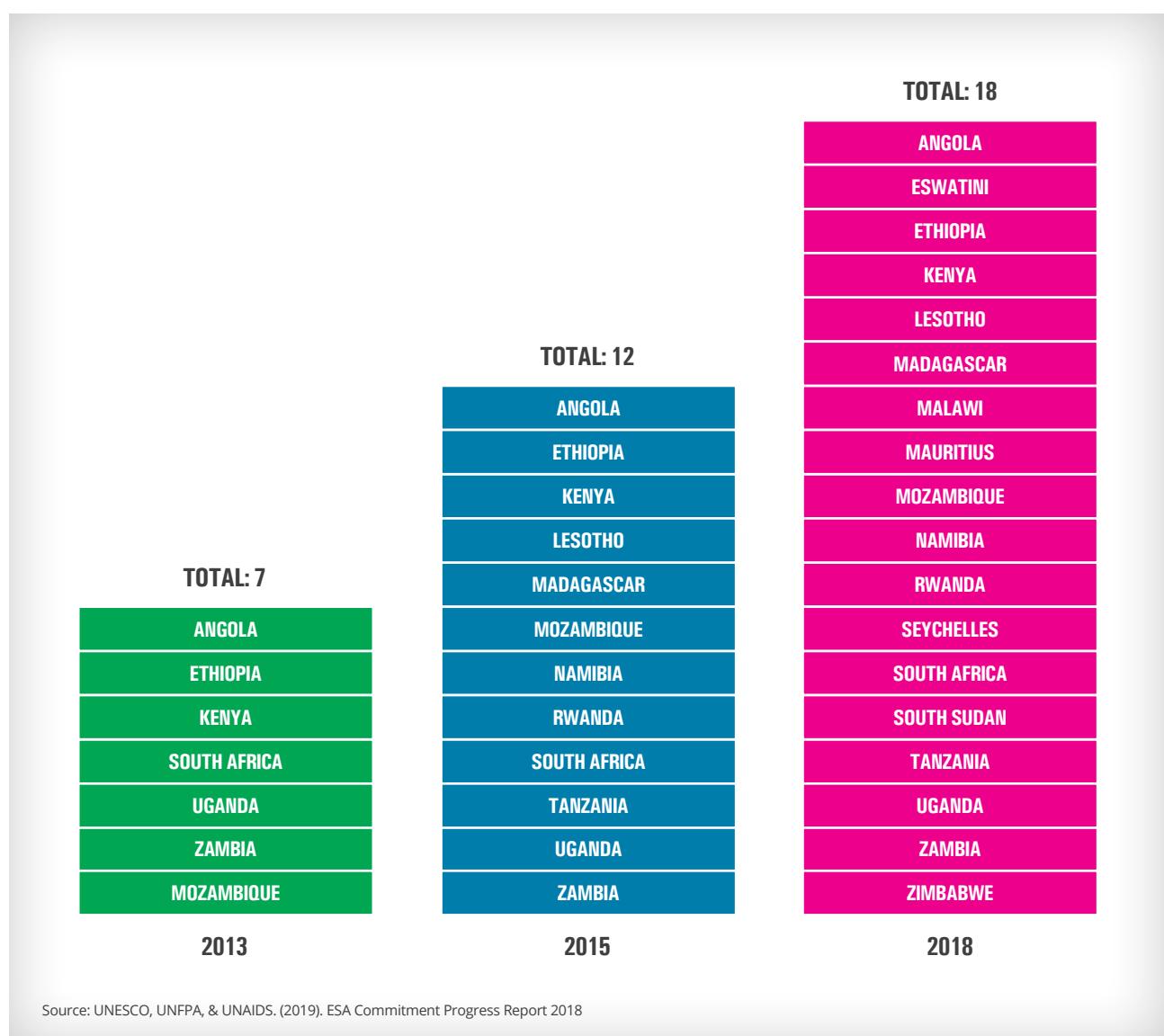
The multi-dimensional nature of SRGBV requires working with many different ministries and government departments, including education, health, gender, child and social welfare, justice, finance and social protection. There are often gaps in implementing policies at the national, provincial, district, or school



levels because the various individuals and groups involved do not coordinate their efforts. This is often true not only within the government but also among multilateral and bilateral agencies, donors and civil society organizations. Strategies to address SRGBV at the district or school level can begin with a review of existing policies and programmes that are being implemented either by the education ministry or civil society to provide a comprehensive picture of ongoing work and identify gaps.<sup>68</sup>

**Figure 7: Countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa region whose education sector policies address SRGBV**

Within the education system, sector plans often address issues of girls' access to and retention in school, with violence in and around school as one of the key barriers. Integrating SRGBV prevention and response strategies and addressing gender and social norms, within Education Sector Plans (ESP), provides an entry point for implementing programmes at the provincial, district and school level (see figure 7). ESPs may include activities to address specific forms of violence, and school-based strategies for prevention such as codes of conduct, curriculum-based approaches, and strengthening reporting and child protection systems in schools.



# What have we learned about integrating SRGBV in education sector plans?

Many governments are showing leadership by integrating prevention and response strategies into policy. For example, in 2018, of the 21 countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa region, 18 reported ESPs that address SRGBV, part of an upward trend from seven in 2013 and 12 in 2015.<sup>69</sup>

It is important to remember that legal and policy frameworks by themselves are not enough to address SRGBV. In some contexts, good national laws and policies exist but are not being implemented or enforced or have inadequate budget allocations. For instance, even where there are national-level policies on codes of conduct for teachers and other education staff, many schools are either unaware of them or have no incentive or support to implement them. More effort is needed to make education authorities at provincial and local levels, members of the broader community, parents, caregivers, school staff and students aware of existing policies on SRGBV. For example, part of a school action plan may be to adapt a nationally-developed code of conduct and include specific strategies to address SRGBV in the school.



## **Implementation of policies related to SRGBV requires coordination between multiple ministries and sectors**

Cross-sectoral platforms at the national level support work on SRGBV by coordinating efforts among the ministries of education, women and child welfare, and health, as well as non-governmental organizations, donors and civil society organizations. This has been effective where stakeholders were brought together in working groups, committees, or national coalitions to discuss SRGBV, as part of broader efforts on girls' education, violence against children, or child marriage and early pregnancies.

## **Education ministries lead the way in integrating SRGBV in education sector plans**

ESPs can address SRGBV by including costed action plans with prevention and response activities for the national, provincial and school levels. ESPs from Zambia and South Africa (see examples 6.1 and 6.2), include indicators to

track progress on the action plans. These are a good start for translating policies into real action at the school level.

## **National EMIS (Education Management Information Systems) provide a good opportunity to collect data about how well policies are being implemented**

Collecting data about SRGBV through the national EMIS, although challenging in many contexts, has potential (see Brief 5). EMIS can be used to generate data on how well national policies on gender-based violence, child protection and codes of conduct are being implemented in schools. Collecting and managing data about sensitive issues like sexual and gender-based violence and abuse requires strong response and protection measures that are often not in place at the school level. Monitoring progress on reporting and response protocols and prevention activities at the school level can be easier to manage and enable better data collection and reporting.



### Example 6.1

## Integrating SRGBV into an education sector plan and translating this into local action

### Zambia

In Zambia, SRGBV has gained increasing attention, particularly since 2011 when the Anti-Gender-based Violence Act and Education Act generated a large amount of media attention. In the same year the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women) Committee commended legal reforms in Zambia aimed at eliminating gender discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, including these two acts. More recently, the Ministry of General Education has incorporated SRGBV into the 2017-2021 Education Sector Plan, including costed activities to address SRGBV. In 2016 a Code of Ethics for the Teaching Profession in Zambia was developed, which spells out broad principles, basic values and behavioural standards for teachers.

Recognizing the need for a range of partners to be involved, strong links have been established among the government, teachers' unions and non-governmental organizations, providing a foundation for developing collaborative initiatives on SRGBV. Zambian teachers' unions

are engaged in national efforts to address SRGBV. Education International, in conjunction with the Government of Canada and UNGEI, have been working with the two teacher unions — Zambia National Union for Teachers (ZNUT) and the Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia (BETUZ) — to strengthen their approach to gender and SRGBV specifically. In 2017, ZNUT amended their constitution to include the issue of SRGBV. They have formed 'change teams' in each province comprising teachers who act as change agents, sensitizing parents and teachers on SRGBV.

This is an example of local action resulting from a strong national level strategy. The existing legislative and policy framework, structures to support policy implementation, and the range of initiatives underway in Zambia provide the foundations for further efforts to address SRGBV.

The work is not without its challenges, however. The government recognizes that SRGBV is a critical issue, but it is one of many competing priorities. In addition, the 'gender portfolio' is often an add-on responsibility for officials, which means that gender work can often be undermined or neglected.



## **Example 6.2**

# **Strengthening SRGBV prevention and response efforts in South Africa**

## **South Africa**

Gender-based violence (GBV) is recognized as one of the greatest social issues affecting South Africa, and schools are no exception. The government has invested in data collection which sheds light on the ongoing issues of violence in schools, including psychological abuse, robbery, physical assaults, gang violence, corporal punishment, sexual violence, and bullying. They have responded with a commitment to promote human rights, including the right to a safe learning environment, through strong educational policies.

A National School Safety Framework was developed in 2015 to serve as a management tool for provincial and district officials responsible for school safety. It gives a mandate to principals, senior management team members, school governing body members, teachers and students to identify and manage risk and threats of violence in and around schools.<sup>70</sup> The Framework is seen as critical for empowering all responsible officials in understanding their responsibilities regarding school safety.

Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Sexual Violence and Harassment have been developed and distributed to schools to support them in responding to cases of sexual harassment and violence against students. The guidelines set out clearly how public schools should treat victims of sexual harassment and violence and the steps that must be taken to deal with those who have or are alleged to be perpetrators.

The department has also released a handbook for students on how to prevent sexual abuse in public schools, entitled 'Speak Out - Youth Report Sexual Abuse'. The purpose of the handbook is to equip students with knowledge and understanding of sexual harassment and sexual violence, its implications, ways to protect themselves, and where to report. The handbook also provides contact details for a range of services.

As in many other countries, while the policy and legislative environments are encouraging, a key challenge is effective implementation of policy and programmes that can help address the issue of violence in children's lives. Recognizing that ongoing systems for reporting incidents of violence are needed to assess the success of new policies, the Department of Basic Education is promoting accountability with protocols for schools to report incidences of corporal punishment and sexual violence.



### Example 6.3

## Challenges of translating policy into practice

### Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, the government has developed strong national policies to address SRGBV in schools. For example, the National Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls' Education, an implementation plan attached to the current Education Sector Plan (2012-2021), calls for a 50 percent reduction of SRGBV by 2021. In 2015 an extensive law addressing all forms of violence against women and girls was incorporated and in 2018 Burkina Faso passed a new law and criminal code that makes it illegal for educational staff to have sexual relations with a student under the age of 18.

However, research with a range of stakeholders found that knowledge about and support for these policies is lower at the provincial and district levels, and implementation in schools has faced a range of challenges.<sup>71</sup> This study looked at the barriers to implementation of policies at the school level and found that teachers' attitudes towards gender-based violence, including sexual violence, tend to remain aligned with norms around gender, marriage, and consent, rather than the rights-affirming definitions outlined in the policy. For a minority of teachers who saw the benefit of the policy and wanted to see change, many felt that they were unable or unwilling to go against strong social norms for fear of social

consequences. At all levels, there was a general lack of accountability for implementing the strategies set out in laws and policy.

This research highlights the need for policies to be developed in a way that takes into account prevailing social and gender norms, which can create obstacles to implementation. In addition, a strong implementation strategy and budget allocations are needed so that education stakeholders at all levels, not least teachers and school staff, understand their roles and commitments under the policy and are able to fulfil these roles and commitments without risking social consequences or intimidation. Implementation needs to include capacity building and be sensitive to the realities of teachers' own status in society, understanding that efforts may be needed to shift their own existing attitudes and practices (see Brief 2).



# Challenges

-  Issues such as SRGBV are often added to the portfolio of existing government staff who already have a substantive portfolio. When gender advisors or gender units are established to address SRGBV, they often lack enough resources to function effectively.
-  The education system has many competing priorities and pressures. Advocates for addressing and responding to SRGBV may come up against a range of other priorities that compete for time, funding and energy.
-  National laws and policies are often not enforced at the provincial level because of financial and human resource constraints within ministries as well as the lack of coordination between related line ministries.
-  Policy implementation is rarely systematically monitored, which makes it difficult to know if implementation is taking place. To date, few countries have integrated SRGBV-related indicators into national systems to track progress on prevention and response practices.
-  Even when a strong policy or action plan is in place, institutions such as schools reflect the norms and practices prevalent in the local community and may not embrace shifts that challenge these norms (see Brief 3).
-  There is limited high quality evidence from low and middle-income countries on what works to prevent and respond to SRGBV, which is needed to inform policies and policy implementation.



# Recommendations

-  Strengthen links between central and local education authorities to enable dialogue and joint planning and implementation among national, provincial and local actors.
-  If recruiting dedicated government staff to lead the SRGBV portfolio is not possible, prioritizing SRGBV within their work plans and budgets can help tracking and reporting.
-  Create opportunities, through sector working groups or local education groups, for youth, teachers' unions, and other non-government groups to participate in developing action plans, joint monitoring and accountability activities. Use on-going joint sector monitoring to assess the impact of policy implementation related to SRGBV (see Brief 5).
-  Integrate efforts to address SRGBV into on-going education sector strategies aimed at improving learning and advancing gender equality. This could include curriculum-based approaches such as life-skills education or comprehensive sexuality education (see Brief 3) and teacher training and development (see Brief 5).
-  Invest in collecting, analyzing and sharing data on SRGBV, which can be used to inform policy and practice.



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