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THE SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

A QUALITATIVE STUDY TO EXAMINE SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN MALAWI

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY TO EXAMINE SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN MALAWI

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CDSS Community Day Secondary School

CERT Centre for Educational Research and Training (Malawi)

CPO Child Protection Officer

DEM District Education Manager

FGD Focus Group Discussion

GBV Gender-Based Violence

LEA Local Education Authority

MOE Ministry of Education

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

PEA Primary Education Adviser

PLA Participatory Learning and Action

PTA Parent Teacher Association

SDC School Discipline Committee

SMC School Management Committee

SRGBV School-Related Gender-Based Violence

SSI Semi-Structured Interview

STI Sexually Transmitted Infection

SWA Social Welfare Assistant

USAID U.S. Agency for International Development

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GLOSSARY

ambalare   A name to mock children who have not been initiated, despite being old enough to have undergone initiation.

chamba   Marijuana

ganyu   Day laborer. Short-term labor relationships are common in Malawi for a range of tasks including piecework, weeding, and daily crop maintenance.

madrasah   Madrasah (or madrassas) are Islamic schools that usually teach a religious curriculum rather than the Ministry of Education curriculum, or combine elements of the government prescribed curriculum but add some elements of religious teaching.

simba   The place where the initiation ceremonies occur.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Safe Schools Program (Safe Schools) is a five-year project under the U.S. Agency for International Development, Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade, Office of Women in Development. The objective of Safe Schools is to create safe environments for both girls and boys that promote gender-equitable relationships and reduce school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) by working in partnership with children, youth, parents, teachers, schools and communities.[1]

This report summarizes the results of the participatory learning and action (PLA) research activity conducted in October and November 2005 to help raise awareness, involvement, and accountability at national, institutional, community and individual levels of SRGBV in the Machinga District in the Southern Region of Malawi. Altogether, 952 pupils participated in the PLA workshops. The focus group discussions included more than 2,000 participants. In addition, 370 key informants including traditional leaders, initiation counselors,[2] members of school management committees and parent teacher associations, head teachers, government Primary Education Advisers, religious leaders, members of the school disciplinary committees (where these existed) and club patrons[3] were interviewed.

Key Findings:
- Based on the most common responses from pupils, parents and school committee members, the concept of gender-based violence is not clearly understood. Many of those in the study emphasized general ill treatment—physical abuse, punishment or denial of rights—without any specific mention of gender dynamics. While teachers, and head teachers in particular, had a clearer understanding of the concept of gender and gender-based violence, many concentrated on physical or sexual violence, without recognizing the different forms of psychological violence such as emotional or verbal abuse.

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[1] School-related gender-based violence results in sexual, physical or psychological harm to girls and boys. It includes any form of violence or abuse that is based on gendered stereotypes or that targets students on the basis of their sex. It includes, but is not limited to: rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment, bullying and verbal harassment. Violence can take place in the school, on the school grounds, going to and from school or in school dormitories and may be perpetrated by teachers, students, or community members. Both girls and boys can be victims as well as perpetrators.

[2] An initiation counselor oversees the ceremony that boys and girls undergo at the onset of puberty, just before marriage. The initiation often consists of explicit instructions on the sexual aspect of marriage.

[3] A club patron is the adult who is responsible for overseeing clubs that are set up at schools.

- Focus group discussions revealed that boys and girls are victims as well as perpetrators of gender-based violence. Incidents of violence occur in the classroom, on school grounds, and on the way to and from school. The main perpetrators of gender-based violence at school are boys and teachers, with certain groups of community members responsible for abuses that occur while pupils travel to and from school.

- When asked to discuss the effect of SRGBV on victims, boys and girls indicated that pupils drop out of school from fear of punishment that can be categorized as SRGBV and, in the case of girls, experience further consequences for refusing teachers' propositions, in some cases attempted rape. Echoing pupils' perspectives, the majority of teachers agreed that high absenteeism and dropping out were common outcomes of gender-based violence in schools.

- Pupils identified the most common form of abuse in schools as corporal punishment. This includes caning, whipping, painful touching and assigning harsh physical labor (for example, digging a hole for a latrine or uprooting a tree stump).

- Perceptions of safe and unsafe schools were identified through school maps drawn by parents, teachers and pupils. In more than half of the schools, girls identified toilets, boreholes, classrooms and football grounds as areas where they felt unsafe. Similarly, boys identified toilets, boreholes and the main roads as unsafe places. For both boys and girls the reasons for identifying places as unsafe ranged from health and hygiene and personal safety (especially the danger of dilapidated structures and flooding rivers) to issues directly related to SRGBV and abusive behavior experienced at home and school.

- The most common pathway for reporting abuse at the classroom level is for the victim or observer to report to a school monitor (usually a fellow student who has been elected by classmates) or take the matter directly to a teacher. At the community level, SRGBV is taken up by the victim or the parents, who approach the School Management Committee or Parent Teacher Association, or take the matter directly to the traditional leader or village headman. Each school and community has its own criteria for deciding when a matter is to be handled by specific authorities. It should be noted that all schools and communities in this study agreed that a substantial number of SRGBV cases were not reported.

- There are several actions taken against perpetrators of SRGBV. When the offense is grave, such as having a sexual relationship with a pupil, the Primary Education Advisor[4] is asked to transfer the teacher to another school. However, evidence from the study indicates that

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[4] A Primary Education Advisor serves as a liaison between individual schools and the local District Office of the Ministry of Education.

transferring teachers does not solve the problem because the teachers often continue their behavior at the new school.

- Pupils, teachers and parents had different views on the effectiveness of the response to SRGBV. In most cases, pupils stated that reporting systems were ineffective and the actions taken by authorities were unsatisfactory. In contrast, almost all teachers said that reporting systems were effective and that penalties for abuse were appropriate. Some communities felt well represented by School Management Committees or Parent Teacher Associations, and, when these groups are strong and active, accountability measures were quite effective. Others, however, felt that reporting systems and punitive measures were not effective and stated that they were not fully involved as parents, especially when the School Management Committee, Parent Teacher Association and village headman were not strong leaders.

Conclusion

Although this study reveals a lack of knowledge about school-related gender-based violence in communities in the Machinga District of Malawi, all of the schools in the study have some kind of reporting structure in place in the event that violence against children occurs. Increased sensitization about children's rights to pupils, teachers and parents in addition to cataloguing possible sanctions that can be imposed on perpetrators is a possible entry point for reducing SRGBV in schools and in the communities around the schools. Introducing guidance and counseling services at the school level for both perpetrators and victims might also help to reduce the incidence of abuse in schools.

Properly addressing SRGBV requires interventions that tackle both the "push factors"—the abusive nature of schools and the exploitative, gendered attitudes of teachers—and the "pull factors" of home life by soliciting support and understanding of parents and the wider community.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The Safe Schools Program (Safe Schools) is a five-year project implemented by DevTech Systems, Inc. (DevTech) and funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The objective of Safe Schools is to create safe environments for both girls and boys that promote gender equitable relationships and reduce school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) by working in partnership with children, youth, parents, teachers, schools and communities.[5] Reducing SRGBV is critical due to its negative effect on school participation, attendance and achievement, and the health and well-being of children.

Safe Schools' activities are intended to develop prevention and response systems for SRGBV.[6] Specifically, the program intends to:

- Increase advocacy at the national level to prevent SRGBV.
- Improve systemic prevention and response mechanisms at the institutional level (Ministry of Education).
- Increase SRGBV prevention and response at the community level.
- Improve self-efficacy at the individual level.

As part of the Safe Schools Program in Malawi, DevTech subcontracted the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) to undertake research activities to generate baseline information to guide the program activities, which would then help raise awareness, involvement and accountability at national, institutional, community and individual levels. In the first phase, CERT's participatory learning and action (PLA) activities led to community action plans and then guided the development of instruments for the second phase of research, a baseline survey targeting pupils and teachers from each of the 40 selected primary schools. The research activities contributed to the Safe Schools strategic objective of developing and implementing prevention and response systems for SRGBV in the selected schools and also provided critical

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[5] Please note that the terms *gender-based violence* and *gender violence* will be used interchangeably.
[6] Response includes supporting the victim; ensuring the safety of the young person experiencing the abuse; and holding the perpetrator accountable through criminal prosecutions, public inquiries, compensation programs, civil actions, community-based settlements or customary legal systems. Response systems are made up of reporting mechanisms that enable victims and/or their advocates to report crimes or violations of a teachers' code of conduct, for example, and referral systems in which students are directed to the services they need, such as emotional support and counseling, medical treatment and services, and legal aid for victims and their families. Response systems encompass reporting procedures, health care, psychosocial assistance, security and safety and legal justice (formal and traditional).

information to achieve the goals of the program at the national level. This report presents the findings from the first phase of research, the PLA study.

OVERVIEW OF THE SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM IN MALAWI

The Safe Schools Program in Malawi is a response to widespread SRGBV that has been well documented in Malawian schools (Burton, 2005; Leach, Fiscian, Kadzamira, Lemani and Machakanja, 2003). This recent research conducted in Malawi and elsewhere shows that schools are not necessarily safe for children, especially for girls. Inside primary and secondary schools, children—particularly girls—are victims of abuse often perpetrated by male pupils and teachers. Outside the school and within the larger community, girls also fall prey to their peers and older men ("sugar daddies"). Girls are also subjected to abusive behavior in the home. Gender violence negatively affects girls' educational attainment and progress (Pinheiro, 2006). The health consequences are devastating, including unwanted pregnancy, exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and psychological ill-health (Global AIDS Alliance, 2004). Yet, little or no effort has been made to systematically confront SRGBV, a major obstacle to learning and a barrier to girls attaining a quality education.

Nonetheless, responding to gender-based violence cannot be limited to girls. Boys are victims as well as perpetrators of violence (Burton, 2005). It is necessary to address harmful expressions of masculinity and gender inequality at all levels in order to reduce gender-based violence and promote gender-equitable relationships. Tackling SRGBV requires a holistic approach where stakeholders at all levels work together to create safe learning environments based on dignity and mutual respect for their own and others' rights and that enable both sexes to participate fully to improve educational outcomes and reduce negative health outcomes. The pervasiveness of gender violence in schools indicates that existing regulatory and legal frameworks have not been effective.

The Safe Schools Program has identified six interventions in two key thematic areas (prevention and response).

1. Create an advocacy network to improve awareness of SRGBV at the national level.
2. Strengthen teachers' codes of conduct and the reporting of violations within the Ministry of Education (MOE).
3. Strengthen response services for SRGBV victims.

4. Strengthen curricula and teaching methods related to SRGBV prevention and response.

5. Raise awareness, involvement and accountability of the community with an emphasis on action planning.

6. Provide opportunities and support to children to build healthy relationships through school-based life skills activities and life skills after school clubs.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As stipulated in the scope of work for the PLA activity, CERT would:

- Assist in the development of selection criteria for schools in the Safe Schools Program.
- Develop research design and protocols including tools, data collection and an analysis plan for the PLA activities in the schools.
- Develop training modules and conduct training for PLA facilitators.
- Provide support and spot-check facilitators during fieldwork.
- Guide the development of a baseline survey in all Safe Schools intervention schools to collect information for ongoing monitoring and program evaluation.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is organized into six chapters. The first chapter, the introductory section, presents an overview of the Safe Schools Program in Malawi and the objectives of the PLA research component. The second chapter describes the research methodology. Chapter 3 provides a detailed analysis of how different groups (pupils, teachers and parents) understand and identify the different types of SRGBV. It also explores whether certain types of SRGBV are more prevalent at specific times of the year. Chapter 4 presents a comprehensive review of the different perspectives (by girls, boys, parents and teachers) of safe and unsafe schools, based on reports from focus group discussions (FGDs) and the PLA activities. It also provides a detailed description of safe and unsafe places that boys and girls identified by mapping their schools. Chapter 5 provides insights into pupils' perceptions of the causes and consequences of SRGBV, as well as perspectives of teachers, parents and other key informants about factors contributing to SRGBV. Lastly, Chapter 6 offers an insight into the response systems within the schools, which are primarily reporting processes, addresses their effectiveness, and identifies their shortfalls.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

THE RESEARCH APPROACH

The PLA component forms the foundation for community action planning. The information collected was used by the community through social mobilization activities including community action plans to address SRGBV.

CERT (2007) used a PLA methodology in working with communities to identify and understand the nature (physical, sexual or psychological), causes and effects of SRGBV that girls and boys experience in schools. This information was then used to develop a community action plan to map out the reporting and response systems.

The PLA activities addressed the following key questions:

- Have pupils experienced or observed violence at their schools? If so, what kind?
- What are the contributing factors and the consequences?
- What was the response?

THE SCHOOLS IN THE STUDY

Forty (out of 154) primary schools in 10 education zones in the Machinga District were selected to participate in the Safe Schools Program in 2005. All 40 schools were coeducational. The selection was based upon criteria agreed upon by the Safe Schools Malawi office and the CERT researchers; it included consideration of each school's affiliation (such as religious or local education authority [LEA]), location (rural, urban or peri-urban), and school population (see Table 2.1). Of the 40 schools, 30 percent were LEAs and 70 percent were affiliated with religious groups (Roman Catholic, Church of Central Africa-Presbyterian, Anglican or Muslim Association) closely reflecting the national distribution of schools. Seventy percent of the schools were located in rural settings, 22 percent were located in peri-urban settings—usually a trading center—and 8 percent were located in an urban setting. The teaching force varied in male/female composition, and as is typical in Malawi, the rural schools had fewer female teachers, while many of the urban schools had more female than male teachers. Only 4 of the schools had more female teachers than male teachers; 7 had an almost equal number of male and female teachers; the other 29 schools had more male than female teachers, 3 of these schools had no female teachers at all.

CERT carried out PLA activities in all 40 schools in the Safe Schools Program (30 intervention schools and 10 control schools). However, during the PLA activities, no distinction was made between intervention and control schools.

Table 2.1 Characteristics of Primary Schools Selected for PLA Activities

Affiliation	No. of schools	Rural	Urban	Peri-urban
Roman Catholic	**16**	10	1	5
Local Education Authority	**12**	9	2	1
Church of Central Africa Presbyterian	**7**	6	0	1
Muslim Association	**3**	2	0	1
Anglican	**2**	1	0	1
Total	**40**	**28**	**3**	**9**

FIELDWORK ADMINISTRATION

CERT coordinated the PLA activities under the leadership of two researchers: Esme Kadzamira and Catherine Moleni. They were assisted by 43 facilitators, consisting of 32 university graduates or Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) school leavers with previous research experience, three Social Welfare Assistants (SWAs) from the Ministry of Gender and Community Services,[7] and eight Child Protection Officers (CPOs) from the Machinga District Assembly. The original plan included experienced counselors and social workers from the Machinga District Social Welfare Office on the research team; however, there were only two SWAs for the whole district. The original plan also considered providing professional counseling services to children who were victims of gender violence if such cases were encountered during PLA activities. However, because of the research methodology, pupils met in groups and they tended to talk in general terms about abuse rather than about their personal experiences.

A five-day training workshop was organized for 47 facilitators (including 10 fieldworkers from Machinga District) out of whom 43 PLA facilitators were selected and 4 were chosen as alternates.[8] The workshop exposed and sensitized the facilitators to the concepts of gender awareness and gender-based violence; it also introduced the PLA methodology and tools to be used in the study. On the third day the participants conducted a field test in four schools near Zomba, after which the research instruments were further refined.

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[7] Two SWAs were from Machinga District and one was from Zomba District.
[8] More facilitators were trained in anticipation of attrition. During fieldwork it was necessary to replace two facilitators who were not performing as expected. In addition, one team was given an extra facilitator because of its slow progress.

The research team was divided into 10 teams, each led by a supervisor, most of whom were university graduates and/or had previous research experience. The fieldwork took place over 23 days during October and November 2005. Each of the 10 teams covered four schools; on average, they spent two and a half days at each school.

SELECTION OF SAMPLES

The coverage of the study was extensive (see Table 2.2 for distribution of participants by activity and group). Altogether, 952 pupils participated in the PLA workshops (54 percent girls). The FGDs included more than 2,000 participants: 961 pupils (49 percent girls), 824 parents (56 percent female), and 239 teachers (33 percent female). In addition, 370 key informants including traditional leaders, initiation counselors,[9] members of the School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA), head teachers, government Primary Education Advisers (PEAs),[10] religious leaders, members of the school disciplinary committees where these existed and club patrons[11] were interviewed from both the community and the school, one third of whom were female. In all cases the samples for the PLA activities were non-random, although efforts were made to ensure representation from male and female participants as well as from different ages and standard grades for the pupils.

In each school, 10 to 20 boys and girls were selected for the preliminary PLA activities, which were conducted in a workshop. The pupils were selected from Standards 3 to 7; only those who were older than age 10 were included in the sample[12]. Nearly 1,000 pupils participated in these PLA workshops. A further non-random sample of pupils was selected to participate in the FGDs, using the same criteria as the preliminary PLA activities; nearly 1,000 pupils participated. In addition, more than 200 teachers participated in a focus group discussion. It was not possible to have separate FGDs for male and female teachers because most schools had very few female teachers and the overall number was too small to divide into two groups. Permission was obtained from the Ministry of Education; students were told they could refuse to answer any or all questions and at any point excuse themselves from the focus group discussion.

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[9] An initiation counselor oversees the ceremony that boys and girls undergo at the onset of puberty, just before marriage. The initiation often consists of explicit instructions on the sexual aspect of marriage.

[10] A Primary Education Advisor serves as a liaison between individual schools and the local District Office of the Ministry of Education.

[11] A club patron is the adult who is responsible for overseeing clubs at schools.

[12] Standard 8 pupils were not included because they had taken their national examinations and were no longer at school when the fieldwork was conducted.

Parents and guardians from the communities were also targeted. Permission to conduct interviews in the community was obtained from the village headmen, who also assisted the teams by calling for a meeting at a pre-arranged day and time. More than 800 parents and guardians participated in the focus group discussions. In addition, key informants—religious leaders, traditional leaders, initiation counselors, head teachers and members of the SMC/PTA—were also invited for semi-structured interviews (SSIs). Head teachers helped to identify key informants from school; village headmen helped to identify key informants from the community.

Table 2.2 PLA Participants by Activity

Target group	PLA workshop	Focus group discussions	Semi-structured interviews	
			male	female
Female pupils	519	472		
Male pupils	433	489		
Female parents		459		
Male parents		365		
Female teachers		78		
Male teachers		161		
Initiation counselors			29	33
Religious leaders			37	6
Club patrons			14	8
Discipline committee members			23	22
Head teachers			38	2
Traditional leaders			40	0
SMC/PTA members			61	47
PEAs			7	3
Total	**952**	**2,024**	**249**	**121**

DATA COLLECTION

The PLA tools and techniques adopted for this study were based on a refined version used in similar studies in Malawi and other countries.[13] Three PLA techniques were used to collect data on school-related gender-based violence: visual tools (mapping, abuse spider, cause and consequence tree and seasonal calendar), focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with key informants at the school and in the community.

Visual PLA Tools

Four PLA tools that were visual, highly participatory and enabled pupils to express themselves freely were used during workshops organized for pupils. The workshop was conducted either in a classroom or in a secluded area at the school, away from interference from school officials or

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[13] These include a study by Leach, Fiscian, Kadzamira, Lemani and Machakanja (2003) that was conducted in Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe on abuse of girls in schools.

other pupils. Between 10 and 20 pupils were selected to participate; girls and boys met in separate workshops. Two female facilitators facilitated the girls' workshop and two male facilitators facilitated the boys' workshop. After the initial introductions, the purpose of the workshop was explained and the pupils were guaranteed confidentiality. Icebreakers, such as dances and songs, were used to make the pupils feel comfortable. Each group of boys and girls was then broken into two smaller groups to ensure that all participants had an opportunity to participate in the activities. Thus, in total, 160 PLA sessions were held with the pupils in the 40 schools. The pupils made drawings on the ground, using sticks and other locally available materials; on the floor, using chalk; or with flipchart paper and colored marker pens.

Mapping was the first PLA tool used during the workshop. The pupils were asked to draw a map showing the major features of their school (such as classrooms, playgrounds, toilets) as well as the roads and paths leading to their villages. After drawing the maps, the pupils were asked to place blue dots on places where they felt safe and red or orange dots on places where they felt unsafe, as shown in Figure 2.1. Then the pupils were asked to give their reasons for their choices of safe and unsafe places. This approach allowed for discussion of SRGBV to arise spontaneously from the pupils.

Figure 2.1 Map from Namandanje School, Machinga District. *Blue dots signify places where pupils felt safe, red dots signify places where pupils felt unsafe.*

Abuse Spider: In the second activity, participants drew an abuse spider with each leg representing the type of abuse that happens in and around the school or home (see Figure 2.2). Then, each pupil in the group was given an equal amount of dots or seeds to rank the identified abuses according to their perceived frequency and severity.

Figure 2.2 Abuse Spider from Namandanje School, Machinga District

Cause and Consequence Tree: In the third activity, the facilitators selected the most prevalent and gender-based abuses identified using the abuse spider. Then, they asked the pupils to draw a cause and consequence tree, with the roots of the tree indicating the cause of the abuse and the branches representing the consequences of such abuse (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3 Cause and Consequence Tree, Namandanje School, Machinga District.
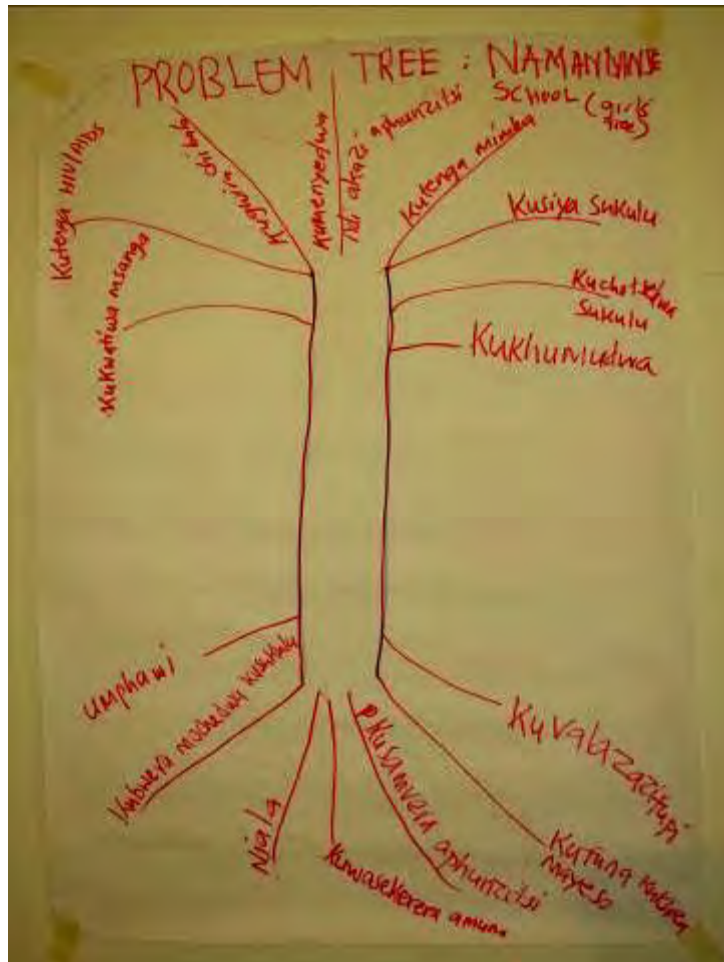
Seasonal Calendar: The final activity during the PLA workshop was the drawing of a seasonal calendar to depict the seasonal variations and rank the most serious types of violence that were identified through the abuse spider. In the majority of the cases, the pupils chose to follow the school calendar; they identified abuses that are most prevalent in each of the three school terms and gave reasons why certain abuses are more common in one term than in the other terms (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4 Seasonal Calendar, Namandanje School, Machinga District.
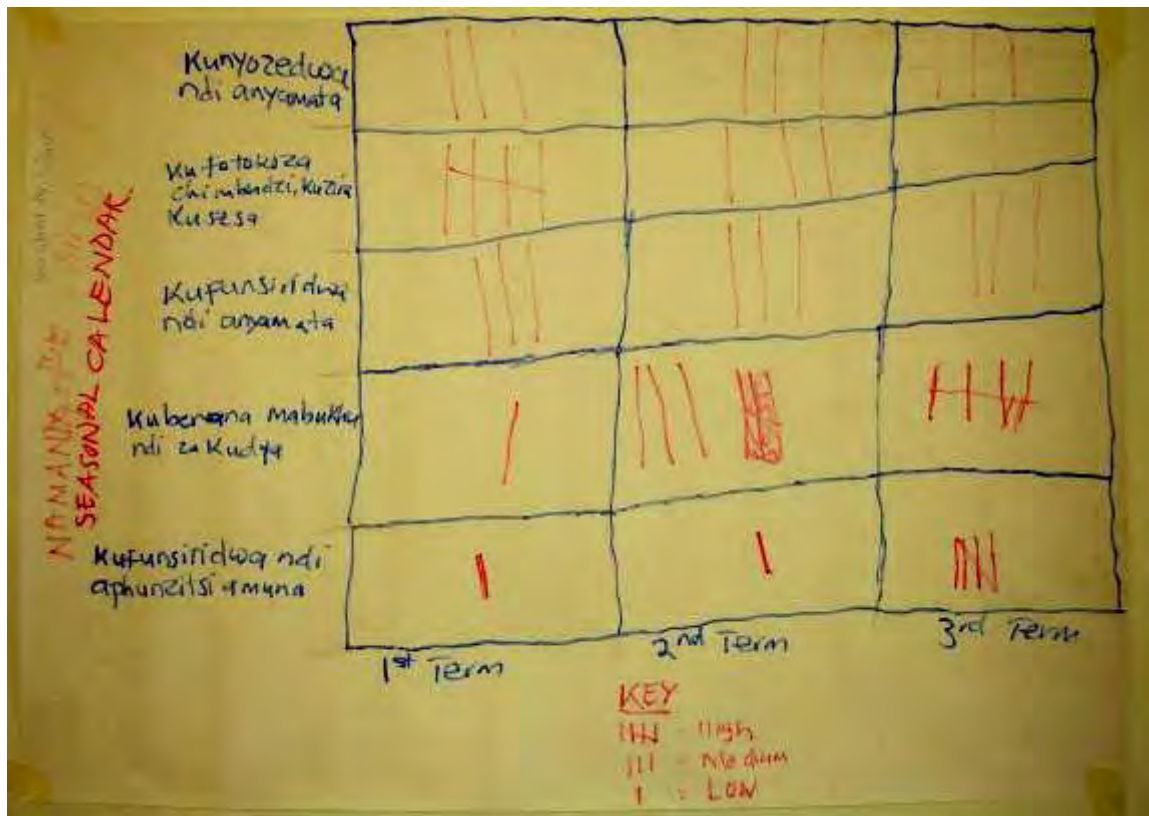
Transect Walk: In some of the schools, the PLA workshop was followed by a transect walk where facilitators walked with pupils from school to their homes. This walk was encouraged in cases where the school maps had identified the road to and from school as unsafe in order to verify and learn more about what the pupils encountered when traveling to and from school.

Focus Group Discussions

Three sets of focus group discussion (FGD) guidelines were prepared for pupils, parents or guardians and teachers (see Appendix B). Before each FGD session, the facilitators introduced themselves, explained the purpose for the visit and asked permission to take notes and use a voice recorder. Participants were assured confidentiality. The FGD guidelines had three

common areas. First, they explored the participants' perceptions of a safe and welcoming school and whether they thought that their school fit this perspective. Second, they assessed participants' understanding of school-related gender-based violence. In particular, facilitators asked participants to talk about the types of SRGBV in their school and in the homes, the factors that contributed to SRGBV, and the impact of SRGBV on victims. Third, they explored participants' perceptions about the response systems and their awareness of existing regulations on teacher conduct. Also, specific topics were included to accommodate group differences. For example, teachers were asked to reflect on the current curriculum and its response to SRGBV, while pupils were asked for their perceptions on life skills as a classroom subject and how they thought it helped them to respond to SRGBV. Additional questions explored the issue of corporal punishment. Parents' guidelines included questions about the roles and responsibilities of the community in dealing with SRGBV issues.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews (SSIs) were conducted with key informants using two sets of guidelines. The first set of SSI guidelines was prepared for PEAs, school managers (head teachers and SMC members) and club patrons. The purpose of the SSIs was to explore the history and background of the school and its links with the zone, district and other collaborators at the local level; explore informants' recognition and understanding of what constitutes SRGBV, their community involvement with issues relating to SRGBV, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of response systems. The second set of SSI guidelines targeted traditional leaders (village head men, group village head men and traditional authorities), religious leaders and initiation counselors. Both sets of guidelines addressed socio-cultural issues and prevalent attitudes toward schooling, including the community's perception of information about SRGBV being disseminated at initiation ceremonies.[14]

SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Overall the PLA fieldwork was successful. Schools and community members were receptive and welcomed the team members warmly. In schools, teachers were cooperative and willing to assist the research teams while they conducted the research activities. In communities, traditional leaders assisted the team members with arrangements for FGD meetings and by identifying key

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[14] Initiation ceremonies are intended to train boys and girls in acceptable behaviors for adulthood, including sex. Traditionally, initiation counselors advise boys and girls on acceptable codes of behavior as the initiates mark the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood. The practice is common in most parts of Malawi. In some cases the initiates are encouraged to have sex upon graduation as a way of putting into practice the knowledge they have acquired (Janssen, 2002–06).

informants within the community. PLA activities, especially mapping, proved to be a powerful tool for identifying abuses that boys and girls experience within the school, home and when traveling to and from school. The qualitative approach allowed participants to gain an in-depth insight into how and why children's rights are violated and to understand the complex interplay of cultural and economic factors contributing to SRGBV in a more exhaustive manner than would have been obtained from a survey approach.

However, given the highly sensitive nature of the research, several challenges were encountered that may have resulted in underreporting of abuse cases, especially abuses that happen within schools and are perpetrated by school officials. In most cases the research teams tried their best to overcome these challenges. There was evidence, for example, that some teachers—particularly those who were perpetrators of SRGBV—were very uncomfortable with the study. Supervisors in several schools reported that teachers questioned pupils and asked them to reveal what was being discussed in the FGDs; some even went to the extent of warning pupils not to reveal anything to the research team because the teachers' jobs would be at stake. To overcome these challenges, researchers ensured that activities with pupils took place before FGDs with teachers. This sequence reduced the level of interference from the few teachers who had something to hide. Also, children who had parents or guardians who were teachers at the school where the PLA activities were taking place were not included in the study, as they might have felt uncomfortable to join in discussions that could include issues relating to teacher behavior (not just teacher-pupil relationships, but classroom behavior and verbal abuse). In addition, other children in the group might not have felt free to talk openly.

The research methodology, which used group interviews, was another challenge. It became apparent during teacher interviews that some teachers were very apprehensive to discuss the violence happening within their schools when the teachers who were responsible were part of the group discussions. In one school, the research team noted that teachers felt uneasy discussing corporal punishment because of the presence of a teacher who had fractured a pupil's arm while administering corporal punishment.

While the PLA approach proved to be a powerful tool for identifying abuses experienced by boys and girls in the home and school, the techniques adopted were not entirely successful in getting participants to open up about issues concerning initiation ceremonies. It was observed in some cases that participants, especially initiation counselors, froze up when this issue was

discussed; they were reluctant to reveal what guidance is provided during initiation ceremonies even though pupils, parents and teachers in particular consistently linked SRGBV to initiation ceremonies.

CHAPTER THREE: IDENTIFYING SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

INTRODUCTION

The initial perceptions of pupils, teachers and parents on what constitutes gender-based violence (GBV) were discussed during the FGDs. Key informants were also asked about their understanding of gender-based violence. Participatory learning and action activities with male and female pupils focused on identifying the various types of gender-based violence and abuses that took place at their schools. Key informant interviews and FGDs supplemented these activities and provided perspectives on possible perpetrators from head teachers, SMC members and initiation counselors, as well as pupils, teachers and parents.

DEFINITION AND UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

During FGDs, pupils, teachers and parents were asked what they understood by the term *gender-based violence*. Some respondents offered their own conceptualization of the term, but many simply offered examples of what they thought constituted gender-based violence. Responses suggest that the concepts of gender and gender-based violence are not fully understood by most of the respondents, although discourse on gender, girls' education and human rights has clearly influenced the understanding of some respondents.[15] Respondents' understanding of violence generally encompassed both physical and sexual violence, and, to a lesser extent, verbal abuse, but also extended to include issues of early marriages, denial of rights, child labor and domestic chores, particularly when the abuse led to limiting girls' access to education. Interviews with SMC and PTA members and village heads reflected similar perspectives as those of parents. Head teachers generally had a greater understanding of the concept of gender-based violence than other respondents, including other teachers, which might be explained by the influence of an earlier, initial Safe Schools orientation of head teachers by project staff. Several initiation counselors also offered their views on GBV, although several could not offer a definition of GBV; some were resistant to discuss possible factors contributing to GBV.

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[15] Several of the schools and communities participating in this study had been exposed to sensitization and training activities of various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and development agencies that are dealing with issues such as traditional gender roles, HIV/AIDS and human rights.

Box 3.1 Definition of School-Related Gender-Based Violence[16]

> **School-related gender-based violence** results in sexual, physical or psychological harm to girls and boys. It includes any form of violence or abuse that is based on gendered stereotypes or that targets students on the basis of their sex. It includes, but is not limited to: rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment, bullying and verbal harassment. Unequal power relations between adults and children and males and females contribute to gender violence. Violence can take place in the school, on the school grounds, going to and from school or in school dormitories and may be perpetrated by teachers, students or community members. Both girls and boys can be victims as well as perpetrators. Such violence can affect the well-being of students, putting them at greater risk of educational failure through absenteeism, dropping out and lack of motivation for academic achievement. It also impacts their mental and physical health, resulting in physical injury, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (including HIV/AIDS) or emotional/psychological ill-health.

Pupils: In general, pupils attempted to define gender-based violence in relation to perceived abuses against children; many of their responses described situations at school. This response reflects the wording of the translated term of gender-based violence that was used in discussions with the pupils, which emphasized violence between boys and girls. Responses also may have been influenced by the context of the study, in that the FGDs took place at their school. Girls seemed more able to articulate their views, with some groups giving several examples of their perceptions of gender-based violence. Six of the 34 groups of boys were clearly unsure of the meaning of gender-based violence and were unable to offer any response.

Based on the most common responses from pupils (see Table 3.1), the concept of gender-based violence is not clearly understood. Rather, most pupils described it simply in terms of general ill treatment, physical or verbal abuse, and, in several cases, the denial of rights, irrespective of whether the child is a girl or boy. In addition, a few groups specified examples—such as forcing children to get married early and giving them heavy workloads and chores—that, according to three groups of girls, limit children's participation in school. In many cases, however, these abuses were not further described or clearly articulated. Pupils spoke of, for example, "bad things that are done to children."

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[16] This definition of school-related gender-based violence is based on the Safe Schools Program conceptual framework and includes a synthesis of internationally recognized UN and UN Specialized Agency (such as WHO) definitions from the fields of education, health and child protection.

Table 3.1 Pupils' Definitions of Gender-Based Violence (961 pupils; 49 percent girls)

Gender-based violence is…	Pupils' Perspectives		
	Boys *n=34* *PLA Groups*	Girls *n=38* *PLA Groups*	Total *n=72* **PLA Groups**
Teachers inflicting harsh, hazardous or inappropriate punishment, particularly corporal punishment (beatings).	5	10	**15**
Any ill treatment or violence against children, a boy or a girl: beating, bullying, shouting at them.	6	8	**14**
Violation of, or failure to recognize, children's rights.	6	3	**9**
Teachers pressuring girls into a sexual relationship, often by using punishment.	1	6	**7**
Not sure.	6	2	**8**
Teachers favoring girls with lighter punishment.	4	1	**5**
Forcing a girl or a boy into marriage.	1	4	**5**
Boys beating girls when they refuse to have sex with them.	1	3	**4**
Parents denying children the right to education by forcing them to do household chores, particularly during school.	0	3	**3**
Abuses/problems that pupils face at school.	2	0	**2**
Giving pupils work they can't manage because of their age.	2	0	**2**
Violence between boys and girls at school campus.	0	2	**2**
Boys and girls doing similar work/chores.	1	1	**2**
Persecuting the wrong person.	0	2	**2**
Beating women.	0	2	**2**
When a young girl is proposed to or raped by older men.	1	0	**1**
The practice of forcing people to do things unwillingly because they are either male or female.	1	0	**1**
When boys are given work to do while girls are just sitting.	1	0	**1**
Inappropriate touching of girls by teachers and boys.	0	1	**1**
Being chased by older youth (school dropouts) when traveling to or from school.	0	1	**1**

Both girls and boys highlighted punishment given out by teachers as a common example of gender-based violence, with corporal punishment (beatings and whipping) most frequently cited by girls. While these groups did not indicate that girls (or boys) were the particular victims of such punishment, it is worth noting that a few groups of girls did describe teachers' use of punishment to force girls into a sexual relationship or as a consequence of refusing their advances. At Chinduzi School, one group of girls described gender-based violence as

> *Being given corporal punishment or being chased out of class by a teacher for refusing to fall in love with him.*

At only 12 of the 40 schools visited did boys and girls define GBV in terms of people receiving differential treatment based on their sex. Both boys and girls at these schools noted that people could face abuse or be forced to do things unwillingly "because they are either male or female."

At Mpombe School, for example, one group of girls perceived gender-based violence as a situation where

> *One sex is being favored while the other is being ignored or uncared for…so your rights are denied just because you are male or female.*

A few groups of boys related this concept of differential treatment to their own school experiences, observing that some teachers appear to "favor girls" by giving them different punishment than boys, punishment that is often less physically demanding. One group of girls concurred, noting that, at their school, boys were told to dig rubbish pits while girls mopped their classrooms. Interestingly, while several groups noted that giving girls and boys different chores as punishment was gender-based violence, girls at one school argued that expecting girls and boys to be able to do the same sort of physical work without considering their age or sex was itself gender-based violence.

In addition to the example of teachers pressuring female pupils into sexual relationships, pupils gave further examples that clearly indicate an understanding that GBV relates to sexual violence, such as rape, inappropriate touching of girls by boys and teachers (such as on the breasts or buttocks), and sexually motivated beatings of girls by boys.

Parents: Few parents attempted to define gender-based violence, but, instead, offered a range of examples to illustrate their understanding of the concept (see Table 3.2). The examples given varied greatly, but many of them concerned pupils and school-related issues.

More parents than pupils mentioned examples that highlight gender issues common in Malawi, such as the unequal distribution of workloads and chores among girls and boys, an issue that is often raised in relation to girls' access to education. Interestingly, only men cited this example. Several groups of women spoke of violence against women, with examples predominantly from domestic violence, such as men beating their wives, failing to give them money or food, or even evicting them from the family home. During key informant interviews, several SMC members also offered such ill treatment of women as examples of GBV.

Table 3.2 Parents' Definitions of Gender-Based Violence (824 parents; 56 percent female)

Gender-based violence is…	Parents' perspectives		
	Fathers *n=39* FGD	Mothers *n=38* FGD	Total ***n=77*** *FGD*
Ill-treatment or physical abuse of children, both boys and girls, such as beating them without good reason.	3	7	**10**
Teachers inflicting harsh punishment, inappropriate to the age of the child or the offense, including corporal punishment.	1	8	**9**
Forcing someone/child to do something she or he doesn't want to do.	6	0	**6**
Ill-treatment of wives and violence against women.	1	5	**6**
Violation of someone's rights to the extent that his or her future is affected.	3	1	**4**
Unequal distribution of work loads between boys and girls, with household chores to girls only.	4	0	**4**
Parents preventing children (boys and girls) from going to school, often due to too many household chores.	2	2	**4**
Rape.	2	1	**3**
Forcing girls into early marriage while too young/still at school.	1	2	**3**
Pupils bullying each other.	3	0	**3**
Child labor.	1	1	**2**
Lack of support for children's needs.	1	1	**2**
Boys proposing to and harassing girls.	2	0	**2**
Teachers pressuring girls into sexual relationships.	2	0	**2**
Verbal abuse of girls and boys.	0	2	**2**
Teachers impregnating schoolgirls.	2	0	**2**
Torturing someone, either male or female.	2	0	**2**
Sexual relationships between boys and girls.	1	1	**2**
Teaching children bad behavior.	1	1	**2**
Victimizing vulnerable groups, people who are unable to defend themselves.	0	2	**2**
Assigning work by looking at one's sex.	0	1	**1**
Boys beating girls.	1	0	**1**
Violence done to pupils at school depending on their sex.	1	0	**1**
Men not assisting wives with household chores.	1	0	**1**

Despite some responses clearly showing an understanding of what constitutes gender-based violence, four of the five most common responses parents gave, like the pupils, emphasized general ill treatment—physical abuse, punishment or denial of rights—without any specific mention of gender. Parents were more concerned about the teachers' severity of punishment and inappropriateness according to the child's age, than by the child's sex. Also, several groups of male parents spoke of "forcing someone to do something they don't want to do," often specifically in relation to children. In fact, respondents often appeared to stress that their examples related to boys and girls equally. At Mpiranjala School, male parents defined gender-based violence as:

> *Prevention of children, both boys and girls, from going to school because of household chores and child labor.*

Other parents spoke of "torturing someone, whether male or female" or "beating both boys and girls."[17] Thus, some responses indicate a misinterpretation of the term "gender," in this context, to mean *regardless* of whether one is male or female, rather than *because* one is male or female. The remaining responses given do, however, illustrate situations of gender-based violence, mostly sexual in nature, such as rape, forcing girls in sexual relationships or marriage, and teachers impregnating schoolgirls.

School Management Committee Members: Similarly, during key informant interviews with SMC members, many respondents spoke of gender-based violence simply in terms of general abuses and violations of basic rights—such as corporal punishment perpetrated by both parents and teachers, denial of food to children, verbal abuse, forced marriages (for both boys and girls) and child labor—without describing differential treatment of girls and boys. Although, in the case of child labor, a few respondents did highlight gender norms related to unequal division of labor, with girls and women expected to do more household chores. However, only one or two SMC members could clearly articulate GBV, describing it as "violence that happens to a person, because they are either male or female." The remaining examples were clear cases of sexual violence: rape, male teachers threatening and propositioning girls, and boys insulting and embarrassing girls in class with sexual comments and inappropriate touching. Several respondents noted that GBV was only physical in nature, dismissing verbal and emotional abuse as violence.

Teachers: When teachers were asked to discuss their understanding of gender-based violence, a greater proportion were willing to offer a definition compared to parents, although some specific examples were also given, often relating to children or the school context (see Table 3.3).

Teachers in more than half of the FGDs clearly understood the concept of gender, relating it to differential treatment of men and women or boys and girls. In the context of gender-based violence, the two most common responses were related to violence against a particular sex or the biased treatment of one sex over the other. As with pupils, some teachers felt that assigning different chores or punishment to boys and girls was gender-based violence, because it reflected "unfair" treatment, while a small minority believed that giving equal punishment to children regardless of their sex was itself gender-based violence. This contradiction reflects confusion

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[17] Interestingly, some groups appeared to emphasize that beating children was a form of violence if done "without good reason," rather than a straightforward violation of the child's rights.

over approaches to gender in some schools, where, in the wake of the government's moves to ensure that teachers promote gender equality in school activities, many teachers now give similar chores and punishment to both boys and girls, where previously some tasks would have been considered inappropriate for one sex or the other or too physically demanding for girls.

Table 3.3 Teachers' Definitions of Gender-Based Violence (239 teachers; 33 percent female)

Gender-based violence is…	Teachers' views *n=38 FGD*
Violence, abuses or harmful practices that happen between boys and girls or men and women, because of being a particular sex.	7
Showing bias and favoritism to one sex, thus denying equal opportunities to both sexes.	7
Teachers giving harsh punishment to pupils, beyond their age.	4
Male teachers proposing to girls; teacher–pupil relationships.	3
Violating child rights (child labor, lack of food).	3
Early marriages.	3
Violating one's rights based on sex.	2
Assigning chores/punishment to boys and girls because of their sex.	2
Sending girls to sell things at the market during school time.	2
Parents asking their children to do hard work beyond their age.	2
Any form of violence or abuse against children, at home or school.	2
Bullying in school.	1
Giving equal punishment to both boys and girls.	1
Inferiority complex among girls.	1
Parents forcing girls/boys to have relationships at school.	1
Verbal insults to pupils.	1
Discriminating against disabled children.	1
Pupils (boys and girls) having relationships.	1

Like other respondents, several teachers understood gender-based violence simply in terms of general abuses against children, such as harsh school punishment regardless of age, verbal insults, or heavy workloads or chores that might keep children out of school. Two groups of teachers noted that girls specifically were asked to go on errands to markets during school time. Teachers also said that teachers propositioning schoolgirls was an example of gender-based violence.

The majority of head teachers interviewed showed a clear understanding of the concept of gender-based violence. One head teacher described it as

> *Being treated wrongly, injured or oppressed because of your sex, whether you are male or female.*

Other head teachers spoke of unequal treatment of boys and girls, citing examples from classroom situations (such as insults directed at girls and harsher punishment given to boys), and the different roles given to boys and girls—both at school and at home—based on societal gender norms, specifically the unequal sharing of chores so that the greater burden falls on girls.

All head teachers agreed that GBV could be psychological—emotional and verbal—as well as physical. The majority of head teachers gave examples of GBV related to physical or sexual violence, most commonly boys beating girls and male teachers propositioning and having sexual relationships with schoolgirls. However, a few head teachers still do not appear to have a clear grasp of what constitutes gender-based violence: some cited examples of corporal punishment and child labor without any gender dimension. One head teacher described GBV as "violence or abuse that occurs between people regardless of their sex." While all forms of violence are unacceptable, such responses indicate that while head teachers—and, to a lesser extent, teachers—understand GBV, more work is required to ensure that teaching staff recognize what is gender related so that appropriate responses can be taken.

Initiation Counselors: Interviews with initiation counselors revealed that most had little or no understanding of what does and what does not constitute gender-based violence; several initiation counselors could not offer any examples of GBV. As with parents and SMC members, many initiation counselors simply described general abuses regardless of gender: corporal punishment by parents and teachers, denying children food, shouting at children, and giving them too much work for their age (such as working in tobacco fields). Only one counselor made reference to gender norms related to workloads, and, while several were concerned that children were being encouraged to marry early, this was seen as an issue for both boys and girls. The main examples of GBV they gave were rape and forced sex, teachers propositioning girls, inappropriate touching of girls, and boys beating girls. Several initiation counselors agreed that violence could also be psychological, although this was often linked to general abuse. Only one initiation counselor noted that insulting people because they are male or female is a form of GBV. A few initiation counselors appeared not to be aware that pupils might be in danger of violence while traveling to or from schools.

PREVALENCE OF SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
Types of Abuse in Target Schools
During PLA activities with boys and girls, "abuse spiders" were used to help pupils identify the types of abuse they saw at their schools and to rank the abuses according to their perceived prevalence. Facilitators did not, at this stage, prescribe which types of abuses did or did not constitute GBV, but allowed pupils to mention all those abuses that they had experienced or observed at or on their way to school. As such, some abuses appear to be examples of general forms of abuse or bullying, but more detailed analysis of the prevalence of the abuse indicates

that some abuses are of more concern for one sex than the other. Further analysis of the perpetrators and the victims also adds insight into whether abuses are indeed gender based.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 and Tables 3.4 and 3.5 present the findings from the abuse spider ranking exercise carried out with girls and boys, respectively. The tables show the number of times (and the percentage) a particular type of abuse was cited and the number of groups that ranked that particular abuse according to its importance at their school (that is, by ranking the abuse number 1 through 9, 1 being the most important and 9 the least important).

Figure 3.1. Abuse Cited by Girls' PLA Groups (Data analyzed by number of groups; n=800
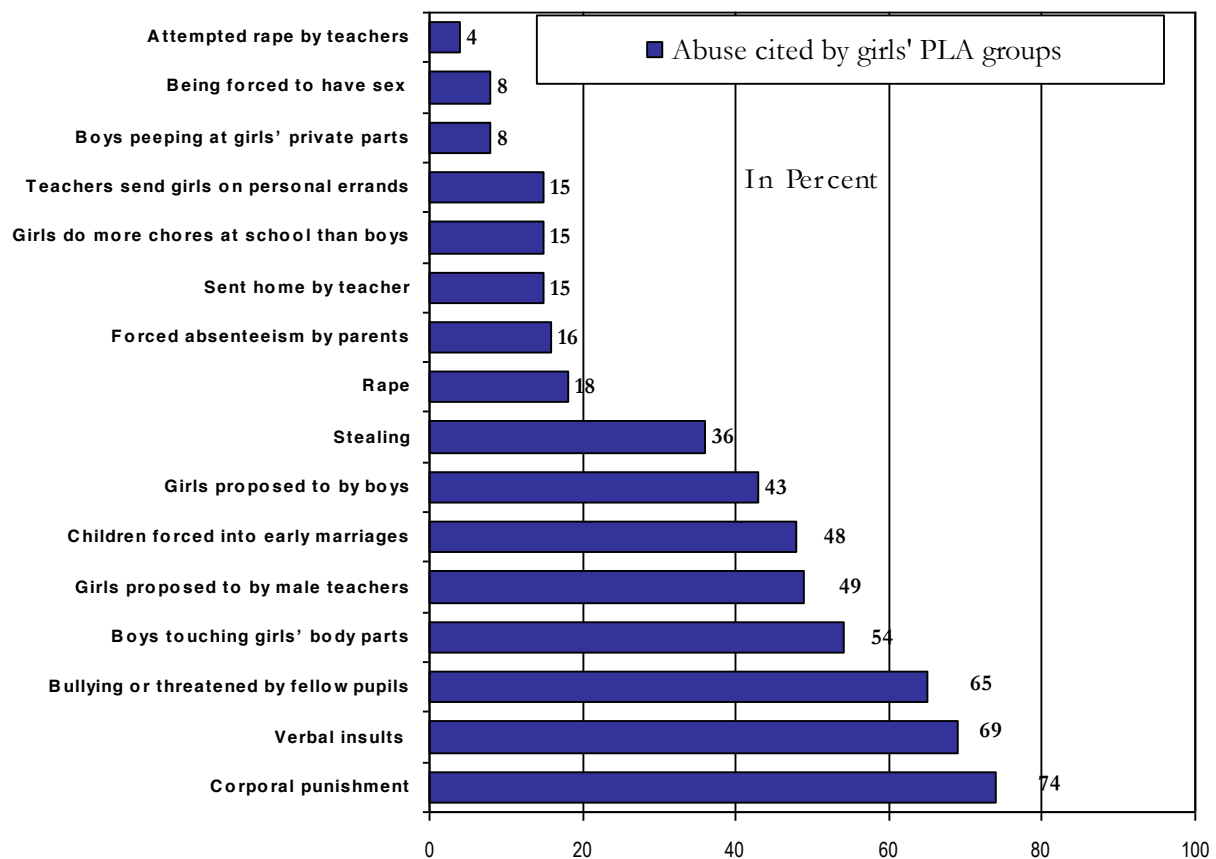
Figure 3.1 and Table 3.4 show that corporal punishment is the abuse most frequently cited by girls (74 percent of the girls' PLA groups). Of those girls' groups that mentioned corporal punishment, two-thirds ranked it among the top three abuses; it was also the type of abuse most frequently ranked number one. Although also concerned about corporal punishment, boys were more concerned about punishment that presents a health risk, such as cleaning out feces left by community members in classrooms during the night. Verbal abuse (name-calling, mockery and

insults, often of a sexual nature) by both fellow pupils and teachers also appears as a common type of abuse that pupils face at school. Indeed, in the study, verbal abuse was cited by 69 percent of girls' PLA groups and of those groups, more than half (53 percent) ranked it among the top three types of abuse. Bullying (being beaten and physically threatened by fellow pupils) was cited by 65 percent of the girls' groups, although relatively few groups gave bullying the highest ranking. During the FGDs, pupils observed that boys often beat girls when they rejected boys' love proposals (attempts to initiate a sexual relationship). Along with bullying, many groups of girls gave specific examples of fellow pupils, often older, snatching food and stealing money, pens, books and such. Stealing was reported by more than one-third (36 percent) of girls' PLA groups, although its severity appears less than the other most commonly cited forms of general bullying and abuse at school; only two groups ranked it number one.

Table 3.4 Type of Abuse and Its Importance Ranking Cited by Girls in PLA Groups (n=80)

Type of abuse	Frequency of ranking by importance (number of groups)									Total	Percent
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**n**	**%**
Corporal punishment.	15	11	13	9	6	4	1	0	0	59	74
Verbal insults and mocking by teachers and fellow pupils.	12	10	7	10	8	5	2	1	0	55	69
Being bullied, beaten and physically threatened by fellow pupils.	7	10	14	10	5	4	2	0	0	52	65
Boys touching girls' breasts, buttocks and body parts.	11	7	8	5	3	7	1	1	0	43	54
Girls being proposed to by male teachers.	10	8	2	7	5	4	1	2	0	39	49
Children being forced into early marriage.	8	8	8	4	7	3	0	0	0	38	48
Being propositioned by boys.	8	1	12	9	4	0	0	0	0	34	43
Other pupils stealing food, pens, books and money.	2	8	5	5	4	3	2	0	0	29	36
Being denied food at home.	4	1	3	7	1	1	0	0	0	17	21
Excessive household chores.	2	1	2	4	5	1	0	2	0	17	21
Rape.	3	4	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	14	18
Forced absenteeism from school by parents.	4	2	1	3	2	1	0	0	0	13	16
Being sent home from school by teachers.	1	1	1	5	3	0	1	0	0	12	15
Girls doing more work/chores at school than boys.	1	3	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	12	15
Teachers sending girls to do personal errands and chores for them.	0	2	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	9	11
Parents beating girls.	0	1	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	7	9
Boys peeping at girls' private parts.	0	1	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	6	8
Boys/men coercing girls to have sex with them.	1	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	6	8
Teachers not attending classes.	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	8
Girls being chased away from homes for misbehavior.	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	5	6
Girls being forced into prostitution by parents.	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	5
Propositions from community members.	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	4	5
Attempted rape by teachers.	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	4

Several types of abuse that are clearly gender based were frequently cited by girls' PLA groups. Inappropriate, sexual touching of girls by boys, was cited by more than half (54 percent) of the girls' groups and ranked higher than examples of physical violence from fellow pupils, suggesting that inappropriate touching is a common feature of school life for many girls.

Almost half of all girls' PLA groups (49 percent) noted occurrences of teachers propositioning girls and attempting to pressure them into sexual relationships. Although, where cited, relatively

fewer groups ranked teachers propositioning girls higher than boys propositioning girls; more than half (51 percent) ranked teachers propositioning girls among the top three types of abuse in terms of importance, while 62 percent of the girls' groups that cited boys as the perpetrators ranked it among the top three types of abuse. This ranking perhaps suggests that both types of abuse are common in many schools and that propositioning by boys might take place more frequently or be of greater concern to girls. More seriously, 14 groups cited incidents of rape (18 percent) and 6 girls' groups cited being coerced into having sex (8 percent), usually (according to FGDs) by boys; and 3 groups listed attempted rape by teachers as a type of abuse in their school.

Many of the girls' PLA groups cited other school-related abuses that appear to be linked to gender, including girls being given more chores at school than boys and girls being sent on personal errands by teachers. These abuses are likely to cause girls to feel inferior or unfairly treated—thus to experience psychological abuse—and, when teachers send schoolgirls on personal errands, they often put them at risk of gender-based violence while traveling to or from school. Girls are also vulnerable to advances from male teachers if the errands or chores take them to teachers' houses. It is interesting to note, however, that the number of boys' groups (9 percent) that cited personal errands or chores requested by teachers was similar to the number of girls' groups (11 percent) suggesting that this type of abuse is common for both boys and girls (see Tables 3.4 and 3.5).

Another frequently cited example of gender-based violence, though not directly related to education, is when parents or guardians force girls to marry at an early age and, by extension, to leave school. Almost half of all girls' PLA groups (48 percent) cited forced marriage as a type of abuse at their school; eight groups gave it the highest ranking. The practice of parents requiring pupils to be absent from school (such as to assist with household duties or with agricultural practices in the fields) was also cited by 13 (16 percent) of the girls' groups as a type of abuse, although it is not clear whether this absenteeism relates specifically to girls. Table 3.5 shows that 34 (43 percent) of the boys' PLA groups cited household duties (chores, farming and *ganyu*[18]) as negative effects on their schooling and perceived this as a form of abuse.

Similar to the girls, the boys' PLA groups ranked verbal abuse from both fellow pupils and teachers as one of the most common forms of abuse in schools, cited by 81 percent of the boys' groups, of which one-third (33 percent) said the abuse was perpetrated by teachers. During the

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[18] *Ganyu* refers to short-term labor "day laborer" relationships that are common in Malawi for a range of agricultural tasks including piecework, weeding and creating ridges in the soil for crops to be planted.

FGDs, boys at several schools noted that teachers often insulted pupils—both boys and girls—who failed to answer a question correctly in class by telling them they should "just leave school and get married." Verbal abuse among fellow pupils is often related to boys mocking each other for not having girlfriends, according to boys' FGDs.

Figure 3.2 and Table 3.5 show that corporal punishment was cited by 65 percent of the boys' PLA groups as a common abuse in schools. Corporal punishment was most frequently ranked by both boy's and girls' groups as the number-one abuse. While 25 percent of the girls' groups that cited corporal punishment ranked it the number-one abuse, 37 percent of boys' groups that cited it gave it the highest ranking, which suggests that corporal punishment might be of more concern to boys. During the FGDs, several boys noted that class monitors whip fellow pupils. In addition to corporal punishment, 55 percent of the boys' groups described excessive and hazardous punishment as a prevalent abuse at their schools and ranked its importance relatively high. According to the FGDs, such punishment includes excessive physical labor (such as digging pit latrines), removing feces from classrooms and mopping out toilets, which is viewed with particular concern if cleaning the toilets of the opposite sex.

Figure 3.2. Abuse Cited by Boys' PLA Groups (Data analyzed by number of groups; n= 80)
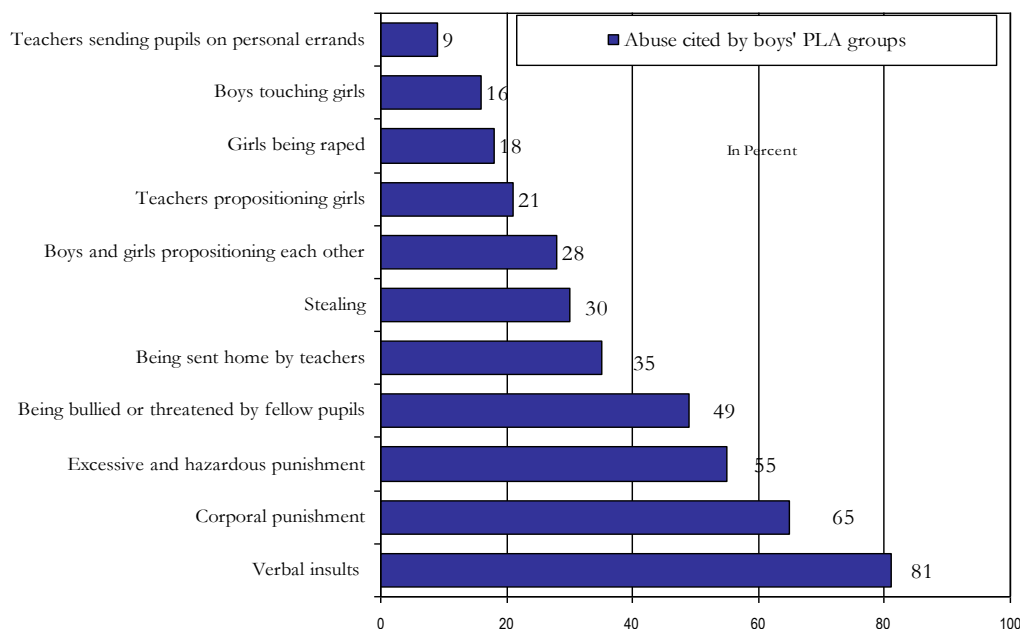
Forty-nine percent cited bullying and physical violence between pupils, compared to 65 percent of the girls' groups, perhaps reflecting girls' greater concern over this type of abuse, particularly in relation to sexually motivated beatings. A similar number of boys' (30 percent) and girls' (36 percent) groups cited stealing food and other items as abuse, although boys ranked this abuse

much lower than girls, suggesting that boys perceive stealing as less important than girls. Other frequently cited school-related abuses include favoritism and being sent home from school during class time by teachers. The latter—which, according to FGDs is often when school-requested monetary contributions have not been paid—was cited by more than one-third (35 percent) of all boys' PLA groups, while only 12 out of 80 groups of girls (15 percent) listed being sent home as a type of abuse, suggesting that perhaps such incidents are more common among boys. Focus group discussions indicate that boys often view teachers as favoring girls, such that "[male] teachers are in love with the girls and thus give the boys harsher punishment."

Table 3.5 Type of Abuse and Its Importance Ranking Cited by Boys' PLA Groups (n=80)

Type of abuse	Frequency of ranking by importance (number of groups)									Total	Percent
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	*n*	%
Verbal abuse, insults and mockery from pupils and teachers.	13	10	13	14	8	1	6	0	0	65	81
Corporal punishment.	19	10	5	4	7	6	0	0	1	52	65
Excessive punishment and those hazardous to pupil's health.	9	11	9	10	2	2	1	0	0	44	55
Bullying, teasing and fighting among pupils.	4	12	3	8	4	5	1	2	0	39	49
Academics being disturbed due to household chores, farming and *ganyu*.	8	5	7	2	5	5	1	0	1	34	43
Cruelty by parents.	2	1	3	7	6	3	5	3	1	31	39
Sent back home from school by teachers.	4	8	6	5	3	2		0	0	28	35
Favoritism among teachers.	1	1	9	8	2	3	1	0	0	25	31
Stealing and snatching of food, pens, pencils and books by fellow pupils.	1	3	2	5	4	3	4	1	1	24	30
Boys propositioning girls/ girls propositioning boys.	0	3	3	6	4	2	2	2	0	22	28
Parents forcing pupils to get married.	1	5	1	3	3	3	2	2	0	20	25
Teachers propositioning girls.	4	6	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	17	21
Girls being raped.	3	2	2		2	3	1	0	1	14	18
Boys touching girls on the breasts and buttocks; using mirrors to see girls' underwear.	0	1	1	4	2	1	2	2	0	13	16
Teachers not attending classes.	1	4	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	11	14
Dropping out of school due to poverty.	2	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	8	10
Teachers denying pupils their rights.	1	0	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	7	9
Teachers sending pupils on personal errands.	0	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	7	9
Being sent home due to nonpayment of monetary contributions requested for school for development.	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	6	8
Child labor (chores, work at market).	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	8
Teachers tearing pupils' notebooks.	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	4	5
Bullying and teasing by school dropouts.	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	4	5
Experiencing peeping at girls and boys toilets.	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3

Specific examples of sexual violence were cited far less frequently by boys than by girls, except for rape; 18 percent of boys—the same percentage as girls—listed rape and gave that abuse similar ranking. All of the boys' examples of sexual violence were of abuses perpetrated against girls, except for two groups of boys who cited that girls peep at boys' private parts when boys visit the toilets. Not surprisingly, boys propositioning girls and grabbing or touching girls in a sexual manner were cited far less frequently by boys than by girls; propositioning girls was cited by 28 percent of the boys, compared to 43 percent of girls; sexual grabbing and touching was cited by just 16 percent of boys compared to 54 percent of girls. Boys also cited teachers' propositioning of girls less frequently, (only 21 percent of boys compared to 49 percent of girls). The reasons for these differences are not clear, although it could be that boys know less about these incidents, that it is of less immediate concern to them, or that girls are over-reporting.

The boys' PLA groups cited other types of abuse, including several general concerns about teacher behavior and school administration, such as teacher absenteeism, teachers tearing up pupils' exercise books, and teachers sending pupils on personal errands during class time, particularly boys who come to school with bicycles. Boys also cited home-related abuses, including cruelty and ill treatment by parents, and young girls being forced to get married.

Perpetrators of School-Related Gender-Based Violence
As an extension to the information gathered from PLA activities on the types of abuse present in schools, FGDs with pupils, teachers and parents discussed examples of gender-based violence—and the perpetrators—at school or while traveling to or from school. During interviews, key informants were also asked to identify the main perpetrators of gender-based violence. Focusing on the perpetrators helped respondents to think more critically about the different types of SRGBV and will hopefully assist in isolating entry points for interventions in the otherwise complex arena of abuse.

The focus group discussions revealed that, according to the perceptions of respondents, the main perpetrators of gender-based violence at school were boys and teachers, with certain groups of community members responsible for abuses that occur while pupils traveled to and from school. Girls were generally viewed as victims rather than as perpetrators of gender-based violence, with teachers and parents observing that girls simply get involved in fights among themselves. However, a few groups of girls noted that such fights sometimes involved fights "due to jealousy over boys." Girls beating boys was not cited by any of the groups. Girls and

boys generally acknowledged that girls tend to be more involved in stealing from younger pupils, verbal abuse (insulting and mocking both girls and boys), and gossiping (including hurtful stories about pupils' friendships and sexual activities). A few boys stated that girls teased boys who had returned from initiation ceremonies, even going as far as trying to peep at the boys' private parts when they were in the toilet or trying to touch them; none of the girls acknowledged this. A few groups of both boys and girls also noted that girls did, on occasion, proposition boys and attempted to force them into a sexual relationship. However, these examples did not emerge during the ranking exercise described earlier, suggesting that such situations are rare. No groups cited any form of sexual violence between boys, although a few groups of boys observed that fellow boys mocked them if they did not have a girlfriend, while others mentioned that boys who had not been through initiation ceremonies were teased by those who had.

All groups indicated that boys frequently threatened and physically abused girls, often, as noted earlier, if they refused boys' "love proposals." All groups also cited this propositioning of girls by boys as a form of gender-based violence, further suggesting that these proposals are unwanted attempts to intimidate and force girls into sexual relationships.

Teachers observed that boys often grab girls' breasts; this was confirmed in the FGDs with boys. Other types of sexual violence—such as touching girls' genitalia or peeping up girls' skirts when they stood to answer questions in class[19] or when in the toilet—were only cited by boys and girls, suggesting that perhaps such actions were less obvious to teachers or teachers didn't perceive them as serious abuses. Sexual activities between boys and girls were not generally viewed as abuse *per se*, although boys were blamed as perpetrators of rape and pregnancy among schoolgirls.

Boys' FGDs acknowledged that boys often snatched desks and chairs from girls, forcing girls to sit on the floor; teachers and girls noted that boys laughed at and mocked girls when they failed to answer questions correctly in class. Boys were also the perpetrators of abuses such as stealing pens, money and books from girls and tearing up girls' exercise books. Teachers and girls also noted that often girls mopped and cleaned classrooms, either as a deliberate practice by the teacher or because boys refused to do the task.

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[19] Classrooms often do not have a sufficient number of desks and pupils must sit on the floor.

In addition to inflicting corporal punishment on pupils and allowing class monitors to whip fellow pupils, teachers were frequently cited as perpetrators of verbal and sexual abuse. During FGDs, girls explained how teachers mocked and insulted pupils in class, often using abusive language and making sexual comments, particularly when addressing girls. A few head teachers agreed that teachers—both male and female—insulted pupils, but made no specific mention of sexual comments directed at girls. Male teachers were cited as perpetrators of sexual molestation (grabbing girls' breasts or touching girls inappropriately during class or at other times). All FGD groups (pupils, teachers and parents) blamed male teachers for propositioning girls at school; both teachers and parents noted that teachers were involved in sexual relationships with their female pupils. Similarly, the majority of key informants acknowledged that teacher–pupil sexual relationships existed, although a few initiation counselors and even one or two SMC members argued that if the girl gave her consent, then it did not constitute GBV.

Nonetheless, all head teachers and most SMC members interviewed stated that teacher–pupil relationships were SRGBV, qualifying this by saying that it was against professional ethics, that teachers should be viewed as parents/guardians of pupils, that it violated the girls' rights and their access to education, and that the teachers were abusing their position of power by lying to the girls, who enter into a relationship with them out of fear or in exchange for gifts or false promises. Some groups of girls noted that male teachers would deliberately fail girls if they refused to have sex with them. This abuse of power was just one strategy used by teachers to force girls into a sexual relationship. Girls in particular noted with concern that teachers sent girls on personal errands or to do chores at the teacher's house, which made them vulnerable to teachers' advances (see Box 3.2). Parents also noted that male teachers sometimes discriminated against particular boys if the teacher perceived a boy to be interested in the same girl. One SMC member explained,

> *Boys are beaten by* [male] *teachers because the boys can propose* [to] *the girl that the teacher also wants.*

This scenario might be the reason for many boys' complaints that teachers favor girls and give harsher punishment to boys. No group mentioned boys being sexually abused by male teachers; only one FGD cited the example of a female teacher propositioning a boy.

Box 3.2 Case Study: A Girl Impregnated by a Teacher at Malundani School

A 16-year-old girl dropped out of school because a teacher made her pregnant. Both her parents teach at the same school as that teacher. According to the girl, before she became pregnant the teacher had impregnated another girl from the same school. He had several other girlfriends at the school. In her words,

"He gave me K 1,000 [US $9.00] and told me to find him at home after knocking off. We had sex, he used a condom and told me that I would not get pregnant. He even promised to marry me. This happened several times. We were in a relationship for a month and some days. Other girlfriends used to threaten me that if they would see me again with the teacher they would beat me up. I did not realize that I was pregnant until my mother told me so. When I told the teacher, he asked me not to reveal to anyone that he was the one responsible. He said if I revealed, I would be arrested. My parents tried to find out from me the man responsible for my pregnancy but I could not reveal because I was afraid of being arrested.

My father was very angry with me and disowned me. My mother comforted me and told me not to worry as such things do happen. I was then sent to my mother's home village in Zomba. I delivered my baby in August this year (2005). The baby is now two months old.

I did not get any support from the school or community. Even his father never came to see his child. My plans are to continue with school probably next January (2006)."

In all of the FGDs, participants stated that most school-related abuses perpetrated by parents limit girls' and boys' access to education. SMC members and head teachers noted that parents could also perpetrate acts of GBV, particularly by forcing pupils, especially girls, into early marriages. Interestingly, and in contrast to other groups, several initiation counselors specified women as the main perpetrators of SRGBV for sending girls out to have sex in exchange for money to sell produce at markets rather than go to school. Some head teachers also noted that older men in communities also pressured girls into sexual relationships in exchange for gifts or money.

Several groups of boys, girls and parents also noted that parents forced children to do household chores or farming activities rather than attend school or that they forced children to stop school permanently to earn money for the family. It is not clear from the discussions whether they perceived such scenarios as disproportionately affecting boys or girls.

During FGDs, community members from the surrounding villages were also cited as perpetrators of abuses against pupils, usually when they were traveling to or from school. These abuses included insulting and name-calling of girls, propositioning girls, attacking girls, and rape. Community members involved in such activities were said to be mainly older youth and school

dropouts who hung around the school routes, as well as other men in the community. Boys' groups also indicated that they were concerned about verbal abuse from school dropouts and older boys. A few groups of parents also noted that sexual abuse and rape of girls took place in the home by stepfathers or other adult males. In addition to male perpetrators, several groups of girls noted that teachers' wives also insulted girls and called them names, such as prostitutes.

CONCLUSION

The responses from this study suggest that the concepts of gender and gender-based violence are not fully understood, although discourse on gender, girls' education and human rights has clearly influenced the understanding of some parents and teachers. Further, these findings show that more needs to be done to increase stakeholders' understanding of gender and gender-based violence. For head teachers, even an initial, brief orientation to the Safe Schools Program increased their understanding of gender-based violence, SRGBV, and gender dynamics and their impact at school.

CHAPTER FOUR: PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THAT MAKE SCHOOL UNSAFE

INTRODUCTION

Perceptions of safe and unsafe schools were identified through school maps drawn by boys and girls selected from standards 3–7 and through FGDs with parents, teachers, boys, and girls. [20] In some cases a transect walk from the school into the community was done to verify what was highlighted in the maps. [21] The school maps were drawn separately by groups of girls and boys and were, in most cases, the first PLA activity carried out in each school. The pupils were asked to put blue dots on the areas on the map where they felt safe and red or orange dots on areas where they felt unsafe. Then they were asked to give reasons why they felt safe and unsafe in those areas. This approach allowed for SRGBV issues to arise spontaneously rather than being imposed by the research agenda through direct questions.

PUPILS' PERSPECTIVES OF UNSAFE AREAS

Table 4.1 summarizes areas identified as unsafe in the school and surrounding areas. Each school had two maps, one made by girls and one by boys. The maps revealed many areas in and around the school where pupils felt unsafe and also where they were exposed to different kinds of abuses and violations of their rights, some of which were gender based. In more than half of the schools, girls identified their toilets, borehole, classrooms and football ground as areas where they felt unsafe. Similarly in more than half of the schools boys identified toilets, boreholes and the main roads as unsafe. Their reasons for identifying these places as unsafe are quite revealing, ranging from health and hygiene and personal safety (especially the danger of dilapidated structures and flooding rivers) to issues directly related to SRGBV and abusive behaviors that they experienced at home and school and affect their education. The abuses revealed through the mapping exercises included physical violence in the form of whippings and beating by teachers, fights between pupils, physical attacks, verbal abuse and sexual abuse—ranging from sexual harassment to rape—by fellow pupils, teachers and members of the community. In addition, pupils raised several issues that were not necessarily abusive behavior, but nonetheless were of concern, resulting in their perception of an area as unsafe. These issues were related to school sanitation (the availability and condition of toilets; boreholes, taps and sources of drinking water) as well as obstacles on the way to school due to physical and geographical barriers (such as flooded rivers, forests and graveyards) that cause emotional distress and fear.

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[20] Standard 8 pupils were not included because they had taken their national examinations and were no longer at school when the fieldwork was conducted. Therefore it was not possible to include them as originally intended.
[21] During the FGDs students were guided through understanding and defining safe and unsafe schools locations by the FGD facilitators.

Table 4.1 Unsafe Places Identified by Pupils

Place	Girls' Maps		Boys' Maps	
	n=40 schools (maps)	%	n=40 schools (maps)	%
Classrooms	36	90.0	19	47.5
Borehole	25	62.5	21	52.5
Girls' toilet	25	62.5	10	25.0
Football ground	21	52.5	15	37.5
Path/road to school	18	45.0	11	27.5
Boys' toilet	17	42.5	27	67.5
Main road	16	40.0	20	50.0
Graveyard	13	32.5	7	17.5
Woodlot/forest	11	27.5	8	20.0
Netball ground	10	25.0	6	15.0
Bridge	10	25.0	3	7.5
Teachers' houses	8	20.0	9	22.5
Head teacher's office	5	12.5	13	32.5
River	4	10.0	11	27.5
Hill	4	10.0	9	22.5
Under a tree	2	5.0	9	22.5

The reasons for areas cited as unsafe have been grouped into six areas identified on the pupils'
maps: classrooms, school compound and surroundings (including head teacher's office, staff
room, and teachers' houses), toilets, school playgrounds (netball and football grounds),
borehole/tap area, and the road to and from school (see Tables A1 to A9, Appendix A).

Figure 4.1 Top Five Unsafe Places Identified by Girls (Data analyzed by number of maps
made by girls' groups and boys' groups; n= 40 maps made by girls, and 40 maps made by boys)
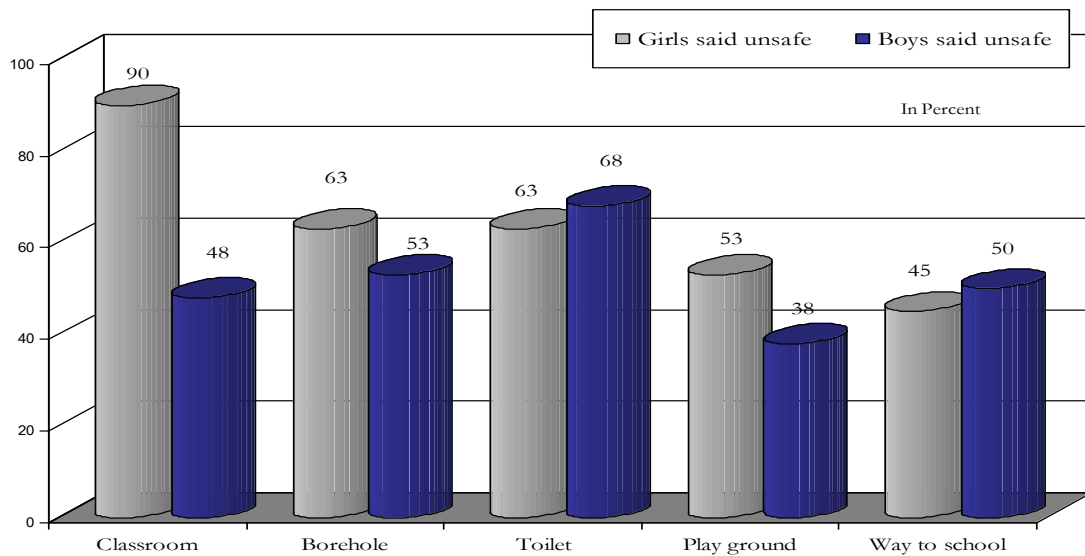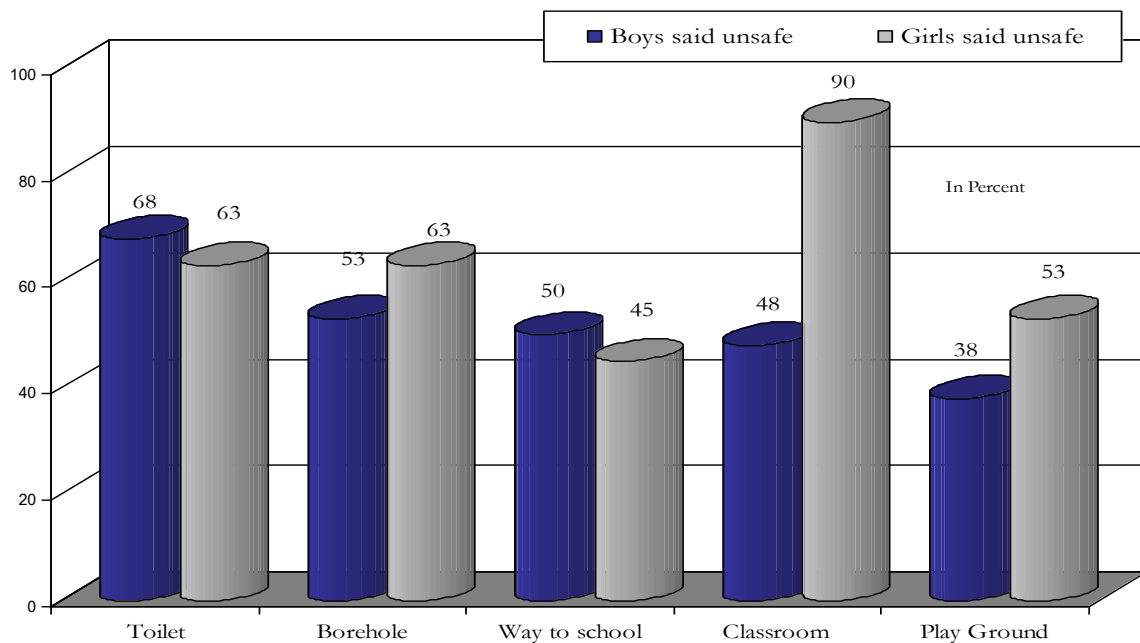
Figure 4.2 Top Five Unsafe Places Identified by Boys (Data analyzed by number of maps made by girls' groups and boys' groups; n= 40 maps made by girls and 40 maps made by boys)

Reasons Pupils Cited Classrooms as Unsafe

In almost all schools in the study, the classrooms were identified as unsafe. However, as shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2, 90 percent of maps done by girls identified classrooms as unsafe, whereas only 47.5 percent of maps done by boys identified classrooms as unsafe. This is important because pupils spend most of their school time in the classroom. It also strongly suggests that pupils' learning is affected when they do not feel secure and comfortable in the classroom. Classrooms are considered unsafe because of bullying, fighting and harassment between pupils; food snatching; verbal insults; corporal punishment; discriminatory and harsh treatment administered by teachers; danger posed by building disrepair and deterioration; and the lack of basic furniture, such as desks (see Table A1, Appendix A).

For girls, classrooms were unsafe because there they were subjected to potentially damaging gender-based practices, such as touching and groping, unsolicited sexual advances that are often aggressive, sexual verbal abuse, assault, and intimidation perpetrated mostly by older male pupils, as well as teachers and older girls. According to girls, most of the gender-based violence that occurred within classrooms happened when teachers left the class unsupervised. In other cases GBV happened in the presence of teachers who are either unaware of—or who choose to ignore—what is happening.

In almost all of the schools, girls stated that the most common act of violence in the classrooms was touching, groping and pinching of breasts and buttocks, as indicated by the following examples:

At Mpiranjala School, girls reported that the Standard 5 and 6 classrooms were unsafe because older boys in these classes,

> *touch and grope girls' breasts whenever they feel like* [it] *and do not even care whether girls like it or not. Those girls that try to resist get beaten up.*

At Mpombe School, girls stated that the Standard 6 classroom was unsafe because during breaks and at the end of the day, boys stand in the doorway and try to touch girls' breasts and buttocks as they leave the classroom.

At Nakusupa School, girls stated,

> *We do not like the sitting plan in our classrooms whereby boys and girls are mixed together and sit on the same desks because when teachers are not present in the classroom boys touch our breasts.*

In addition, girls frequently reported cases of assault by boys in the form of beatings, especially after girls turned down their love proposals.

At Kaombe School, the Standard 5, 6 and 7 classrooms were unsafe because boys beat girls whenever the teacher left the room. Similarly, at Nathendo School, one of the girls' PLA groups stated that boys beat girls for refusing to share their food and for snubbing their proposals of love.

It is interesting that boys, to some extent, are aware of their role as perpetrators of gender-based violence against girls. In several of the schools the boys stated that classrooms were unsafe for girls because of their actions:

> *Classrooms are unsafe places because boys propose love to girls, even touch their breasts.*
> Boys' PLA, Liwonde School.

Classrooms are unsafe because it is where they are forced to stay quiet, are whipped, and it is where they touch girls' breasts and buttocks.
Boys' PLA, Machinga LEA School.

For girls, intimidations and verbal insults from both boys and teachers were also commonplace and made classrooms unsafe:

We get rude remarks from teachers as well as boys who say, "You are old enough to get married.
Girls' PLA, Mpalangwazi School.

The standard 4 classroom is not safe because we are ridiculed by the headmistress. When we fail to answer questions correctly she says, "You do not respect me, why don't you just go and get married to fishermen… you must be admiring baby shawls of girls who have dropped out of school."
Girls' PLA, Mpombe School.

Girls also perceived classrooms to be unsafe because of unsolicited sexual advances, mainly from boys, but teachers were also cited as perpetrators in some of the schools. At Nkasaulo School, for example, the girls' PLA group stated that boys threatened to beat girls when they rebuffed their love proposals. At Kawiriwita School girls stated that the Standard 7 classroom was unsafe because boys proposed love to girls in this classroom. The girls' PLA groups at Chinkwenzule School and Chamba School stated that teachers sent girls out of classes as a punishment for turning down their proposals.

For boys, the most frequently cited reason for feeling unsafe in classrooms was harsh punishment from teachers. It appears that punishment is administered differently to boys and girls, with boys perceiving that they receive harsher treatment. At Malundani School, one of the boys' PLA groups stated that classrooms were not safe places because some teachers beat pupils for not tucking in their shirts or for coming to school late. In several of the schools, boys observed that girls were given lighter punishment for the same offense. At Matope School, the boys' PLA group reported the Standard 3 and 4 classrooms were unsafe because the teachers were harsh and excessively beat them. Although the girls' PLA groups also reported teacher beatings as a reason why classrooms were unsafe, boys reported twice as many beatings as girls, including pulling ears, twisting ear lobes, pinching, beating and whipping with sticks and blackboard rulers. Boys also complained of harsh and unfair punishment when they were found in the wrong; some of this punishment was humiliating and caused emotional and psychological

distress. Boys at Masanje School reported that the Standard 6 classroom was unsafe because the teacher was fond of requiring forced labor, such as farming in the teachers' gardens during the rainy season or sweeping the large schoolyard.

According to boys, teachers use offensive language in class to humiliate pupils:

> *In Standard 6, the teacher mocks older pupils who fail to answer questions correctly by saying, "You are too old for school, why don't you just go and get married?"*
> Boys' PLA, Mpombe School.

Boys also stated that classrooms were unsafe because teachers openly favored girls by giving them lighter punishment for the same offenses as boys:

> *A Standard 6 teacher is very cruel; he chases pupils away from school when they are late for lessons. Boys are the main victims.*
> Boys' PLA, Chinyasa School.

> *The class teacher only beats boys when they fail in class exercises or to answer a question.*
> Boys' PLA, Puteya School.

At Liwonde School, boys also stated that they were intimidated by the way female pupils and teachers dress (mini-skirts and see-through attire), which disturbs them and makes classrooms unsafe.

Lack of learning resources was another reason classrooms were identified as unsafe. Boys in Chikala School reported that classrooms were unsafe because they were not comfortable sitting on the floor; there were no desks in junior classes. For girls, lack of desks and sitting on the floor presented additional challenges, as the following experience from Namisundu School suggests:

> *Because of the way girls dress, they have problems standing up in class since they sit on the floor. They have difficulties in sitting properly and ensuring that they are properly covered up. As a result, some boys take advantage and try to peep through their dresses if they happen not to have sat down properly. In Standard 3,*

a girl who did not properly cover herself up when sitting was mocked by boys who said they were watching a free video show.

Girls' PLA, Namisundu school.

Reasons Pupils Cited the School Compound and Surroundings as Unsafe

In addition to classrooms, areas around the school compound were frequently identified as unsafe, usually for the same reasons given for classrooms. These areas included the head teacher's office and staff room, teachers' houses and the assembly grounds (see Table 4.1). The head teacher's office and staff room were also frequently identified as unsafe, which is troubling given that pupils go to these places to report grievances. Teachers' houses, for example, were said to be unsafe for the girls because that was where teachers took advantage of them and made unwanted sexual advances, such as proposing, asking for sex and committing rape.

The girls' PLA group at Chikala School stated that teachers asked girls to fall in love with them at teachers' houses. At Msalabani School girls reported that when they went to teachers' houses to ask for water to drink, some teachers took advantage and asked them to have sex with them. At Chinkwenzule School, the girls' PLA group stated that teachers raped girls at their houses, though no specific recent case of rape was provided. A major reason boys cited teachers' houses as unsafe was that they were out of bounds and that when boys were found there, they were chased away or punished.

As mentioned, it is common for teachers to use pupils to carry out domestic chores for their households, usually as punishment. Both boys and girls also said that they received insults from teachers or their wives at a teacher's house, so they cited it as an unsafe place. Boys were accused of stealing from teachers' houses, while girls were usually confronted by teachers' wives who suspected them of having affairs with their husbands.

Reasons Pupils Cited Toilets as Unsafe Places

In the majority of the schools, both girls' and boys' toilets were marked as unsafe places.[22] The reasons varied greatly, including fear of harassment, health concerns and hazardous conditions due to the toilets being in a constant state of disrepair. In some of the schools, there were too few toilets for the level of enrollment or the toilets were located in an isolated or hidden area. In a number of schools, toilets were identified as unsafe because they were not used properly

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[22] In most schools, there is no plumbing system; therefore, toilets are usually pit latrines with a small covering for the hole.

(usually by the younger pupils) and pupils felt that they could contract an infectious disease if they used them. In some schools, pupils were forced to use nearby bushes or toilets from surrounding villages.

Girls in particular face gender-related violence at or near the toilets, such as unsolicited sexual advances from male pupils (and less frequently, community members), assault, harassment, and rape (see Box 4.1).

Box 4.1 A Case of Rape at Toilets at Namandanje School

Both the girls' and boys' PLA groups marked toilets as a place where they felt unsafe because of the rape that had recently occurred there. A Standard 2 girl was raped near the toilets by a boy from the nearby village. It was said that the toilets were close to Namichimba River, which marked the area unsafe and dangerous because it was a hideout for perpetrators.

At Nkasaulo School, girls labeled their toilets as unsafe because they were in the same block as they boy's toilets. It was reported that boys peeped into the girls' toilet and at one point a boy attempted to rape a girl at the toilet. Boys at this school also stated that their toilet was unsafe because boys' and girls' toilets were only separated by a wall. When they saw girls on the other side, boys had to wait for the girls to leave the toilet area because they felt uncomfortable using the toilets while girls were around. At Liwonde School the girls said that the toilets were unsafe because the toilets for boys, girls and teachers were in one block. Sometimes boys followed them and proposed love to girls or touched their breasts. At Namisundu School girls' and boys' toilets were also located in the same area, which made the girls feel shy and unsafe. The girls reported that boys peeped into their toilets when they used them and wrote offensive things on the walls.

School practices also contributed to why pupils cited the toilets as unsafe. In several of the schools girls and boys frequently cleaned the toilets as a punishment. Boys were told to clean the girls' toilets and girls told to clean the boys' toilets. At Machinga LEA School, both the girls' and the boys' PLA groups labeled their toilets as unsafe because pupils of the opposite sex were always present to clean the toilets as a form of punishment. Peeping into either girls' or boys' toilets was also widespread. Usually girls reported boys peeping at them when they are using their toilets, but boys also complained that girls or younger boys peeped at them when they were using their urinals. In the majority of the schools, toilets were said to be unclean and unhygienic because toilets were either full, too few, not cleaned regularly, or not properly used by pupils. As a result, in most of the schools there was a fear of getting infected by communicable diseases or the floors in the pit latrine collapsing.

Reasons Pupils Cited School Playgrounds as Unsafe

In the study, pupils cited school playgrounds, which included netball and football fields, as another site for SRGBV (see Table A2., Appendix A). Pupils reported frequent bullying and fighting there, usually taking place in the absence of teachers. Based on pupils' responses, the school playgrounds are normally unsupervised, thus giving perpetrators the opportunity to commit SRGBV related offenses, sometimes violently, as this report from Mpombe School demonstrates:

> *Our netball pitch* (field) *is not safe because it is at a distance from the school blocks and the teacher cannot easily monitor what is going on there. Many fights between boys and girls go unnoticed on the netball pitch.*
> Girls' PLA, Mpombe School.

At Likwenu School, both boys' and girls' PLA groups stated that the school playground was a battleground where pupils fought to settle quarrels after class.

Girls reported that the school grounds were unsafe due to acts of SRGBV perpetrated by fellow male pupils. Theses acts included touching of breasts, peeping at girls' private parts, tripping, snatching of food and threats, especially after rebuffing boys' love proposals. For boys, the school grounds were unsafe because of bullying and fighting (mostly among boys) and verbal insults.

According to the study, most of the gender-based violence at the school grounds is perpetrated by male pupils; the victims are usually girls, though younger boys and girls also face bullying and teasing from their older counterparts. Boys were usually ready to admit their roles as perpetrators of some of the acts of violence, as the following statement from a boys' PLA group suggests:

> *The football ground is a place where we fight for partners. We also wait for girls, mainly with the intention of proposing love to them or to beat them if they had quarreled in class.*
> Boys' PLA, Machinga LEA School.

The school playgrounds were also identified as an unsafe by both girls and boys because of the excessive and physical punishment that takes place there. Punishment ranged from being told to sweep and clear the school grounds to uprooting tree stumps, which usually meant missing lessons for the entire day. There was also evidence that much of the violence at the school

grounds happened during or after matches when there was a lot of fighting, insulting and stone throwing, particularly when one's team was losing. In some schools, boys reported that they forced younger boys to practice karate and pupils got injured in the process.

Reasons Pupils Cited the Borehole/Tap Area as Unsafe

The borehole/tap area in the majority of the schools was a source of confrontation between boys and girls and, more especially, with members of the community in schools where these resources are shared (see Table A4, Appendix A). It is a place where out-of-school youth were reported to hang around and wait for girls to touch or grope their breasts or buttocks and to propose love to them. For example, boys from Chinyasa School reported that they took advantage of the scramble for water at the borehole to touch girls' breasts. The major problem experienced at the borehole/tap area was congestion that resulted in pupils quarreling with community members or among themselves.

In many schools, there is only one water source at the borehole so, when there are many users, a line forms to access the water. This sometime leads to GBV either at school or in the community because often pupils ask to be given priority in the lines so that they can avoid being late for class.

Reasons Pupils Cited Traveling to and From School as Unsafe

The mapping exercise revealed that the journey to and from school makes pupils, particularly girls, vulnerable to hazards that were a source of concern to the pupils and, in some cases, their parents. The reasons the road to and from school was cited as unsafe ranged from personal safety and security—such as fear of wild animals and snakes, fear of being swept away by flooding rivers, and fear of being hit by vehicles and bicycles—to different forms of violence— physical, psychological, and sexual—that pupils encountered on the way to and from school (see Box 4.2 and Table A5, Appendix A). In 28 out of the 40 schools, girls reported that they encountered abuse and violence on the way to and from school. Some of the boys' PLA groups also confirmed these violent acts are usually targeted at girls, though boys, too, were sometimes victims of the violence.

According to the study, woodlots, bushes, bridges, graveyards and forests were all sites of gender-based violence, especially for girls (see Box 4.2). It was reported that girls were accosted on the way to school by either unknown men and boys or older males from the community or boys who took advantage of the secluded areas to beat, propose love, insult or threaten girls,

touch or grope their breasts and buttocks, rape, or attempt to rape them. Primary schools that were close to secondary schools such as Chinkwenzule, Likwenu, Machinga, Mpiranjala, Namandanje, Nsanama, and Puteya faced additional problems from secondary school students, particularly boys, who proposed love to primary school girls and intimidated or threatened them when they turned down the proposals.

Box 4.2 SRGBV Experienced While Traveling to and From School, Reported by Girls.

- *The graveyard is unsafe because thugs attempt to rape girls especially during the rainy season. Unknown men ands boys also propose to girls and ridicule them when they turn down their proposals.* Chamba School.
- *On the road from Majiga to Chamba there is a teacher [name withheld] who proposes love to girls on their way home. Boys mock girls and tell them that they are wasting their time at school, rather they should just get married.* Chikala School.
- *The paths to Tira, Kumban, and Sitola villages are unsafe because some thugs waylay pupils. One pupil was murdered last year near Sitola village. Girls are waylaid with the intention of raping them.* Chinguni School.
- *At the market vendors propose love to girls. If they refuse to go out with them they tell the girls not to use that road again.* Kawiriwita School.
- *Girls are waylaid and sexually harassed by boys from Malosa secondary school. Boys from Likwenu Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) propose to primary school girls and make bad comments about girls' bodies.* Likwenu School.
- *During the rainy season, tall overgrown maize provides cover for people who attempt to rape schoolgirls.* Mpombe School.
- *In 2003, a 5-year-old Standard 1 girl was brutally murdered outside the school fence. Her eyes and private parts were plucked off. This incident makes a lot of pupils to be absent from school during the rainy season.* Liwonde School.
- *Some people have been murdered or raped at the rail bridge especially during the rainy season. At the old People's Trading Center shop, drug users congregate and harass.* Mgodi School.
- *Secondary school boys sit under the bridge to peep at girls' private parts and they also force them to hug them. If girls refuse they are beaten.* Puteya School.

Boys also reported that the roads to and from school were unsafe. However, their concerns were about physical safety, especially the fear of being hit by cars on busy roads (there were several incidents reported of pupils killed by passing vehicles) and fear of wild animals and snakes. Girls expressed the same concerns, but these were among the many other SRGBV concerns. For example, at Likwenu School, boys reported that teachers sent them to collect firewood (for teachers' houses) and grass (for fencing teachers' gardens and houses) from Malosa hill, where they were vulnerable to attacks by wild animals such as baboons. Similarly, at Machinga LEA School, boys reported feeling unsafe at Kasiyamwini hill because of baboons and hyenas, where teachers sent them to cut trees for firewood for their houses. Boys also reported facing intimidation and harassment on the way to and from school from school dropouts and secondary school students. The fear of robbers and thugs killing people and removing body parts

caused fear and anxiety among boys and girls in several of the study schools. This fear is based on the incident at Liwonde in 2003 when a pupil was killed and her body mutilated. During fieldwork it became very clear that the killing still caused anxiety among pupils and parents. In some of the schools, concerned communities arranged for pupils to travel in groups after school.

The PLA session provided opportunities for boys to open up and frankly discuss their roles as perpetrators of some of the violence against female pupils. At Chinkwenzule School, for example, the boys in one of the PLA groups openly admitted that at Chambota hill on the way to school they took advantage of the isolated place to touch girls' breasts. The boys also stated that on the way to school drunken men troubled girls by either verbally harassing them or touching them.

PERCEPTIONS OF A SAFE AND WELCOMING SCHOOL

During focus group discussions, pupils, teachers and parents were asked to give examples of the qualities of a safe and welcoming (i.e., child-friendly) school. Their responses touched on a wide range of issues, from safety and security to school quality and learning environments. It is important to note that in almost all of the 40 schools in the study, male and female pupils, teachers and parents did not categorize their school as a safe and welcoming place. The majority of community leaders including religious leaders, initiation counselors, and village headmen, as well as SMC/PTA members also felt that their school was not safe and welcoming. The main reasons for this was that the teachers mistreated, insulted and beat pupils; that teachers propositioned and bribed girls with good grades and money in exchange for sexual favors; that teachers' bias against boys forced the boys to transfer to other schools; that teachers used pupils to run personal errands; and that alcohol, drug abuse and teacher absenteeism contributed directly and indirectly to the unsafe environment at some of the schools. Table 4.2 presents the most frequently cited characteristics of safe and welcoming schools.

Table 4.2 Pupils', Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of a Safe and Welcoming School, by Focus Group Discussion

Characteristic of a safe and welcoming school	Girls FGD n=40		Boys FGD n=40		Mothers FGD n=40		Fathers FGD n=40		Teachers FGD n=40	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Availability of adequate sanitation (water and toilets).	16	40.0	16	40.0	22	55.0	17	42.5	23	57,5
Sufficient number of teachers to ensure supervision of pupils.	13	32.5	13	32.5	12	30.0	17	42.5	14	35.0
Effective school management.	2	5.0	6	15.0	8	20.0	13	32.5	3	7.5
Teachers are not harsh, do not beat pupils and are not violent.	14	35.0	11	27.5	5	12.5	1	2.5	0	0
Boys and girls are treated equally.	12	30.0	7	17.5	1	2.5	3	7.5	4	10.0
There is no harsh, unfair punishment.	5	12.5	10	25.0	7	17.5	4	10.0	1	2.5
Teachers do not propose love to girls.	12	30.0	4	10.0	2	5.0	5	12.5	1	2.5

Across all of the FGDs, respondents stated that a safe and welcoming school should have properly built and well-maintained structures and sanitation facilities, sufficient teaching and learning materials, a well qualified staff with adequate housing within the school compound. Girls' and boys' groups expressed more concern about personal security and safety than the parents' and teachers' groups. In particular, pupils stated that safe and welcoming schools were violence-free schools.

Girls perceived a safe and welcoming school as one that was free of violent and abusive behaviors—such as fighting, unwanted touching and sexual violence—and where teachers were not harsh; did not give corporal, unfair and harsh punishment; and where there was no discrimination against girls or boys. In 30 percent of the schools in the study, girls stated that a safe and welcoming school was one where teachers did not propose love to pupils, compared to 10 percent for boys. The presence of female teachers was also seen as an important attribute of a safe and welcoming school and was noted by several of the girls' groups.

For boys, the most frequently cited characteristics of a safe school were similar to the girls' list but included no unfair and harsh punishment (25 percent) and the availability of adequate toilets and safe drinking water (40 percent).

Safe and welcoming schools were also another important characteristic cited by all groups, including the community leaders, interviewed. One group of parents suggested that a safe and welcoming school was one where there was community policing of the roads and paths leading to the school to protect children and is where teachers treat pupils as their own children. Some of the initiation counselors defined a safe school as one where boys did not socialize with girls;

this is perhaps not surprising in an area with a high population of Muslims. One group of mothers suggested that a safe and welcoming school should have separate classroom for boys and girls to avoid harassment, which was also expressed by several of the girls' groups. One group of fathers suggested that a safe school should have boarding facilities for girls because the village was not a safe place for girls. This is interesting given that some respondents stated that girls were frequently exposed to a range of abusive practices at school boarding facilities. A higher frequency of SMC and PTA groups stated that safe toilets were an important characteristic of a safe and welcoming school, perhaps because they were aware of the problem where toilet areas had become unsafe for girls.

It is interesting to note that head teachers and teachers almost always emphasized the important role that community leaders and parents should play in making schools safe and welcoming for pupils, yet head teachers and teachers appeared not to see their own role in making schools safe havens for pupils. Generally speaking, teachers were more concerned with issues surrounding school quality—such as infrastructure and teaching and learning materials—rather than with the safety and security of pupils under their care.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted several areas around the school where pupils do not feel safe and where they experience physical, psychological and sexual violence perpetrated by fellow pupils and teachers as well as members of the community. The mapping of safe and unsafe areas around the school helped to reveal the nature and scope of SRGBV within schools and has highlighted the important fact that schools are generally unsafe for pupils, particularly girls. Within their classrooms, on the school playgrounds and school compound, at the toilets, and on the road to and from school, pupils—particularly girls—were exposed to physical, psychological and sexual violence. In particular, the mapping exercise demonstrates that the journey to and from school is hazardous to pupils, especially girls. A range of abusive practices has been documented within the schools, most of which were either criminal or not officially sanctioned including: rape, corporal punishment, harsh and excessive punishment, and lack of appropriate social distance between teachers and pupils. Pupils' experiences and perceptions of safety suggest that they do not feel safe and secure within their schools. In fact, they are usually abused by the people who have been entrusted with their care—namely teachers and head teachers—who are either some of the perpetrators of violence in the schools or who condone such behavior by failing to curb these practices within their schools.

These findings have implications for educational policy and practice in general and school management in particular. As evidenced by the pupils' responses, schools that are severely understaffed are unsafe for pupils—especially girls—because the teachers cannot provide adequate supervision to protect pupils both in and outside of the classroom. Future school management policy should consider incorporating issues of safety and creating child-friendly schools with closer involvement of the community and other stakeholders—such as the police and traditional leaders—to make traveling to and from school safe for all children. Innovative ways need to be identified to improve school sanitation, for example, by having buckets for drinking water for each classroom to get around the problem of congestion at the local borehole.

CHAPTER FIVE: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

INTRODUCTION

During PLA activities, separate pupils, parents and key informants were asked to draw "cause and consequence trees," detailing their perceptions of the causes of SRGBV that they discussed in the PLA activities. On the same diagram they then listed the consequences of those particular examples of SRGBV. This additional analysis helped to bring to light how many schools operate under a highly gender-biased environment.

For example, although pupils stated that corporal punishment is widespread, its use in schools in Malawi is against government regulations. It also contradicts the establishment of a welcoming school environment and friendly, learner-centered relations between teachers and pupils that are essential for effective learning.[23] This study further indicates that pupils, parents, teachers and community members view excessive, harsh punishment (including corporal punishment) as both a cause and a consequence of gender-specific attitudes and gender-based violence. A few of the boys' and teachers' groups noted the cultural belief, often perpetuated in schools, that because most boys are physically stronger than girls they can endure harsher punishment, especially physical labor. Reflecting this belief that girls are weaker, one SMC member stated that girls should be given lesser, "'female' punishment such as sweeping," yet other SMC members saw unequal punishment meted out to boys and girls as a form of SRGBV. Many boys perceive that girls are given lesser punishment because they are "favored" by teachers; boys frequently blame this on the teachers' interest in propositioning girls or their current sexual involvement with the girls.

PUPILS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF SRGBV

Teachers' perceived favoritism toward girls leads boys to feel frustrated toward girls—perhaps then justifying their own abuses of girls—and to lose interest in school. Physical punishment of boys also promotes resentment and negative attitudes toward male authorities at the school; boys are made to feel inferior and, in effect, emasculated by the more powerful male teachers. Responses from boys indicate that enmity between boys and male teachers can result from competition and jealousy over girls, with teachers ultimately having the power to punish or chase boys from the class. Girls' responses, however, show that teachers also use punishment to intimidate, threaten and exert their power over girls, particularly when girls have refused their

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[23] UNICEF has developed a framework for rights-based, child-friendly educational systems and schools that are characterized as "inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, effective with children, and involved with families and communities - and children"
http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7260.html#A%20Framework%20for%20Rights-Based,%20Child-Friendly

sexual advances. Both boys and girls indicate that pupils drop out of school from fear of punishment and, in the case of girls, suffer further consequences of refusing teachers' propositions.

The gender stereotyping of girls as sex objects is perpetuated and reinforced by teachers, boys, parents and even girls themselves. According to girls, teachers frequently mock and insult them in class, often making inappropriate comments that are sexual in nature about their appearance or age, particularly as girls reach puberty. If a girl is unable to answer a question in class, she is often told, "What are you doing here, failing to learn? … You are old enough now, why don't you just go and get married?" At Liwonde Primary School, girls note that teachers call them "ugly like a dog" and comment on their clothing, saying they dress like prostitutes. Such comments from male teachers are often directed at girls who have refused their propositioning or at girls they suspect have a boyfriend. Boys do not escape comments; also at Liwonde, boys are told by female teachers, "Your voice is as deep as my husband's." These comments embarrass pupils, often leading them to shy away from participation in class and to be frequently absent.

In addition to making frequent sexual innuendos, male teachers initiate sexual relationships with girls, often using their power of authority or relative wealth to pressure girls into having sex with them. Male teachers not only assign girls to do chores at their homes—due to a stereotypical belief that girls are better suited for domestic tasks—but, according to girls, as a ruse to isolate them in private place where they can proposition girls and force them to have sex. Also, according to both boys and girls, male teachers try to entice girls with money or gifts or threaten to fail the girls' exam papers if they refuse. However, girls' responses reflect a perception that they themselves are to blame—for wanting money, good grades or favor in class. Similarly, although some girls acknowledge that such sexual attention is a result of the male teachers' desire for sex, they also blame themselves, either because of something in their appearance or behavior that evokes desire in others. All groups of respondents indicate that girls often wear "seductive" clothing, such as miniskirts, which, in the Malawian context are simply dresses or uniforms that reach as high as the knee. Other girls wear thin blouses, with or without a bra. Far from being a personal choice, girls often wear these "revealing" clothes due to poverty and a lack of proper clothing, not out of a desire to draw attention. From discussions with respondents, this attire is perceived as sufficiently provocative for girls to expect teachers—and boys and older men—to sexually harass them. At one school, boys believed that male teachers initiated affairs with girls

because girls did not sit properly in class and teachers could see up their skirts. Interestingly, in a discussion that centered on female teachers propositioning boys, this behavior was perceived as being caused solely by the teacher.

Male teachers are seen to have the power to demand sexual favors from girls. The immediate consequences of girls who refuse teachers' sexual advances are apparent to pupils: the girls concerned might be subjected to frequent and excessive punishment, including corporal punishment; frequent insults and taunting in class; failing grades on their test and exam papers; and being sent out of class. Such dynamics between male teachers and their pupils perpetuate oppressive and exploitative attitudes toward girls and reinforce a sexual socialization process that can lead to a normalization of aggressive male behavior and an expectation of submission from girls (Leach et al., 2003). Certainly, this study shows that boys are frequently physically and verbally abusive toward girls who assert themselves at school by refusing boys' demands for sex, refusing to share their food with boys, refusing to copy notes for boys, or by out-performing boys in class. During PLA activities, boys also noted that girls were frequently beaten by boys in retaliation for insulting them.

Responses from pupils, teachers and parents indicate that boys attempt to dominate physical and verbal spaces in the classroom. At several schools, groups of boys noted that they would snatch desks and chairs from girls, forcing them to sit on the floor so that, in the context of cramped classrooms, they had difficulties keeping themselves adequately covered up when they stood to answer questions. Teachers noted that where boys and girls shared desks, boys often took the opportunity to molest girls. Girls also described how boys shouted at them as they attempted to answer a question in class and that they were mocked and insulted if they were unable to answer a question correctly. One possible reason for this behavior is boys' frustration with girls who have refused their love proposals. This behavior, especially when compounded with similar attitudes from teachers, discourages girls from participating in class, prevents them from concentrating in class, and often leads to, according to girls, feelings of shame, poor performance and absenteeism. Teachers can also provoke further animosity between boys and girls by reinforcing aggressive behavior. At Nathendo School, teachers encourage girls to "boo" boys if they answer a question incorrectly; at a few schools, girls noted that teachers encouraged boys to beat girls to settle quarrels.

Much of the violence that boys perpetrate against girls is a consequence of girls' refusal to enter into a sexual relationship. Moreover, a boy's interest in a girl is often expressed through cloaked aggressive behavior. Frequent molestation of girls—grabbing their breasts or other unwanted touching—is seen as a sign by both boys and girls of a boy's desire to "propose love." When these and other strategies—such as sending love letters or threats of beatings—fail, boys might resort to rape. This is supported by the findings, where several groups of boys agreed that the rape of a girl was due to boys' frustrated desire for sex. The boys believed that boys and men were unable to abstain from sex. Thus, the blame for rape is not placed on boys alone, because it is "just in their nature," and because of the belief that such abuse is often provoked by the girls' behavior (their appearance and clothes, that they look "ready for marriage," that they are seen chatting frequently with boys, and even that they are found in unsafe places, such as overgrown paths or near the boys' toilets). Similar causes are given for older youth or adult males in the community who attack girls on the way to or from school. As highlighted earlier, such attitudes appear to be held by both boys and girls, although a few boys also noted that such acts are caused, in part, by the boys being drunk or under the influence of drugs. Some responses from girls, teachers and parents also indicate that boys' sexually motivated abuses of girls are influenced by traditional beliefs and practices that pressure boys to have sex immediately after initiation—and their frustration from failing to do so.

According to boys, girls perpetuate unwanted sexual advances toward boys. During the FGDs, boys spoke of girls peeping at them in the toilets and touching boys' genitalia. Their main reason was girls' curiosity about initiation and to see boys' genitals. The consequence, again according to boys, is that the girls are vulnerable to rape by the boys. Where girls were said to attempt to force boys into sexual relationships, the boys reasoned that girls wanted sex and that "they wanted money for snacks at school." Girls indirectly echo this reasoning, saying that in addition to pressure from friends, poverty or "a love for money" sometimes leads them into having sex. Thus, girls become involved in transactional sex—whether with boys, teachers or other adult males—aware that they can use their bodies as commodities in return for food or favor.

Most boys and girls are well aware of the serious consequences of becoming involved in sexual activities, whether forced or consensual: infection with HIV/AIDS or other STIs; early pregnancies, including complications during delivery; and being forced into an early marriage. Despite such knowledge, none of the discussions alluded to young people practicing methods of "safer sex." In the case of girls being impregnated by teachers, some girls noted that teachers

often refused responsibility for the child. Pupils also described how girls who were forced to have sex would be injured and suffer psychologically such as being afraid to come to school, losing interest in their education, suffering from low self-esteem, and dropping out of school. One group of girls, discussing the frequent molestation and sexual advances by boys, said that such constant abuse disturbed girls so much so that they might have thought of committing suicide.

In addition to the obvious consequences for pupils' physical and sexual health and their psychological well-being, a major consequence of the persistent abuse many pupils face in schools is low participation and poor attendance. Increasing absenteeism often culminates in pupils exiting school permanently due to pressures from home and the community. Echoing pupils' perspectives, the majority of teachers in the study (70 percent) agreed that high absenteeism and dropping out were common outcomes of gender-based violence in schools. Addressing these scenarios requires interventions that tackle both the "push factors"—the abusive nature of schools and exploitative, gendered attitudes of teachers—and the "pull factors" of home life, by soliciting support and understanding of parents and the wider community.

TEACHERS' AND PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SRGBV

In separate FGDs, both parents and teachers, when asked for their perspectives on the main factors that contribute to SRGBV, focused almost solely on home and community-related factors. As shown by the pupils' experiences and observations, the responsibility of schools and teachers in these matters cannot, and should not, be ignored. In addition, in the views of many, communities must also be actively engaged if SRGBV is to be tackled effectively.

Both parents and teachers emphasized the strong influence of traditional and religious beliefs. The consensus of the majority of FGDs held with parents (73 percent) and teachers (62 percent) was that children's attendance at initiation ceremonies contributes to cases of SRGBV. Many believe these rites of passage encourage initiates to become sexually active and, because on graduation they believe themselves to be mature, become disrespectful of school rules and lose interest in schooling. Parents complained that during initiation ceremonies, which keep pupils out of school for several weeks, children were exposed to highly sexualized, obscene language. In addition, girls may be initiated into sex by an older, often unknown, man (*fisi*). Upon completing

the initiation ceremony boys are instructed to have sex immediately to prove their maturity—a practice known as *kuchotsa fumbi* (literally "removing dust"). Pupils suggested that this belief contributed to boys' aggressive sexual advances toward girls. It is not clear from the study whether those girls who attempt to molest boys or initiate sexual relationships are themselves products of the initiation camps.

The majority of head teachers and SMC members supported this finding, citing initiation ceremonies as promoting incidents of SRGBV, not only because they encourage pupils to become sexually active, but because initiation ceremonies perpetuate the cultural norms and gender stereotyping of girls and women as inferior and submissive to men, even to the extent that they are expected to submit to men's sexual advances. While a few initiation counselors denied that cultural beliefs and practices such as initiation contributed to SRGBV, others agreed that particular aspects of initiation—such as girls being initiated into sex (*kusesa fumbi*)—promoted gender-based violence. In addition, one initiation counselor noted,

Girls are being told things that they should not be told at their age, such as how to handle a man in bed …and told that refusing sex is unfair.

These comments clearly suggest that some initiation counselors are well aware of the harm caused by certain aspects of initiation ceremonies. It should be noted that initiation ceremonies are also a possible entry point for promoting awareness of SRGBV. Aspects of the initiation ceremony that violate the rights of youth could be removed or adapted to incorporate gender-sensitive messages, without counselors and others feeling that the whole fabric of initiation is being threatened.

A few groups of parents—both men and women—and some SMC members cited traditional dances as a contributing factor to gender-based violence, noting that these dances, which take place at night, provided an opportunity for young people to meet and were sexually exciting. Pupils did not mention these dances, perhaps because they did not attend, did not perceive them as related to school or that such activities were more likely to be consensual. Other leisure pursuits mentioned as contributing to SRGBV include children, usually boys, watching videos that are often adult in nature.

As with dances, both parents and teachers mentioned certain religious activities such as prayer nights and choir practice as factors that contributed to SRGBV because they put girls in vulnerable situations where they could be propositioned or molested by boys or older men.

Fourteen groups of teachers (36 percent) cited cultural beliefs as a factor that contributed to SRGBV such as household chores being seen as girls' duty, boys being expected to do more physically demanding work, and the perception that girls are inferior to boys (see Appendix A for more detail on the causes and consequences of SRGBV). There was no mention, however, of how schools—and teachers' own attitudes— reinforce such stereotyping. In addition to socio-cultural beliefs relating to gender, 10 groups of teachers (26 percent) and 6 groups of predominantly male parents (8 percent) stated that parental attitudes toward education could lead to forms of abuse, mainly related to curtailing their children's access to education. However, the teachers noted a gender dimension—observing that girls' education was not deemed important in villages in the area, instead, girls were expected to get married at a young age. One group of women explained that when a daughter got married, parents were held in high esteem and could benefit from gifts from others in the community.

According to the study, poverty and a lack of food security are two of the main factors leading to SRGBV.[24] Indeed, poverty was mentioned by parents (25 percent) and teachers (62 percent), as well as all groups of key informants during the FGDs. In relation to gender-based violence, parents—predominantly male guardians—emphasized that children, girls in particular, were forced to marry early so that they were less of a burden on the household. While newly married couples will be seen as relatively independent of their parents, the matrilineal arrangement in the villages often ensures that parents can benefit from the presence of a son-in-law to assist with food production. From discussions, it is clear that some parents force girls into marriage if a relatively wealthy man can be found. In other cases, girls are pressured into having sex with older men in the communities—or even teachers—so that the family can benefit. Girls might also take this route independently of parents' wishes to support themselves. Because sex is likely to lead to pregnancy—or because parents fear the possibility of pregnancy—there is again the likelihood that girls will be forced to marry to prevent a child from being born outside of marriage and becoming an additional burden on the girls' parents. In such scenarios, most girls find it extremely difficult to continue with their education and drop out of school. Boys, however, are perceived as old enough to maintain their own household, again shifting the burden away from

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[24] At the time of the study, many communities complained of severe food shortages. Distribution of food aid was taking place in some areas.

parents. Similarly, older boys and girls often feel strong pressure from the taunts and insults of teachers and fellow pupils who tell them to leave school and marry.

Other factors contributing to SRGBV, mentioned by parents and teachers, echo those of pupils, such as favoritism by teachers (three groups), girls refusing boys' propositions (three groups), girls dressing "seductively" (six groups), and men's or boys' sexual appetites (three groups). All groups of key informants also highlighted girls who wear "miniskirts" as a contributing factor to SRGBV; one SMC member even suggested that girls wore miniskirts as a deliberate policy to "seduce boys as they travel home." Other factors mentioned by a few key informants included beer drinking by boys and men, girls' sense of inferiority, ignorance and poor upbringing by parents, specifically families where "children grow up hearing obscene language at home." Two groups of parents noted that there was a lack of adequate punishment for perpetrators, although they related this to the teachers' failure to discipline pupils involved in sexual relationships. No mention was made of means to curb the behavior of teachers.

CONCLUSION

These findings show that several types of abuse in schools, which at first might not appear to discriminate against one particular sex, do have a basis in gender norms and perpetuate gender stereotyping. Much of the blame for abuse, especially sexual violence, is placed on the girls because of their appearance or behavior, thus objectifying girls as sexual beings responsible for evoking desire in others. The consequences of girls' refusals are apparent to pupils: the girls concerned are often subjected to frequent and excessive punishment, frequent insults and taunting in class, receive a failing grade on a test or exam paper, or are sent out of class. Similarly, much of the violence boys perpetrate against girls is a consequence of boys' desire to initiate a sexual relationship and the girls' refusals to agree to their demands.

The implication of the varying perspectives of the causes and consequences of SRGBV is that interventions must address community-based issues in addition to school-related factors if they are to successfully tackle SRGBV. Dialogue should be opened up with initiation counselors and religious leaders; parents and community members should be sensitized and mobilized to work with schools to minimize children's exposure to risk. School administrators need to be made aware of their responsibility to stamp out abuse and to tackle the perpetrators of an often violent, gendered and oppressive school culture. Teachers are often seen as key instruments for change, but this study clearly shows that teachers' attitudes and behavior are not only a

significant obstacle to stamping out abusive behavior in schools, but that they can reinforce and perpetuate the problem. More importantly, teachers do not see themselves as enforcers of gender-based stereotypes in school or as perpetrators of SRGBV. All teachers should be given opportunities to reflect on their own gender-related experiences and beliefs. Pupils will ultimately benefit from schools that cherish the needs of both boys and girls and that allow for frank and open dialogue regarding their concerns.

CHAPTER SIX: RESPONSE TO SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

INTRODUCTION

Many forms of school-related gender-based violence have been documented in the previous chapters. This chapter focuses on response with an emphasis on the reporting structures that are available at the school and the community levels when SRGBV cases occur. It presents the perspectives of pupils, teachers, parents and the SMC/PTA members on how different cases have been treated and the effectiveness of existing structures to make schools safer for pupils. This chapter also offers reasons that some cases were perceived as being successfully resolved, while others were seen as not handled satisfactorily. Finally, the chapter provides an analysis of the effectiveness of the response systems existing within the schools and offers insight into the possible pathways for schools and communities to follow to effectively respond to different forms of SRGBV. It is important to note that the following descriptions are based on the experiences of parents, students and teachers and do not necessarily reflect Ministry of Education policy or procedures.

REPORTING STRUCTURES AT SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LEVELS

An array of pathways for reporting SRGBV has emerged from the numerous focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews conducted with pupils, teachers, head teachers, members of School Discipline Committees (SDCs), SMC/PTAs, parents and community leaders for the 40 schools. Most of the pathways have been put in place by school authorities and agreed upon by communities, but others arose spontaneously after violence was reported.

At the school level several reporting pathways were identified. The most common pathway for reporting abuse at the classroom level is for the victim or observers to report to a school monitor (usually a fellow student who has been elected by classmates) or directly to a teacher. The monitor might take appropriate action to resolve the issue between the victim and perpetrator. However the monitors have a limited range of responses, power and authority to resolve issues of violence, as illustrated by a case at Mlirankhandwe School. A pupil reported a case to the class monitor, who punished the perpetrator. Unhappy with the treatment he had received, the perpetrator then reported the punishment to an older brother in an upper standard at the school. The brother then beat the class monitor for disciplining his younger sibling. Clearly, there is a limit to how much pupils can depend on monitors in case of violence. Nonetheless, most monitors are aware of their limits and report serious cases to teachers, who proceed with an appropriate response. When the case is grave or extreme, the teacher reports it to the head teacher for a response.

When the matter is outside the head teacher's jurisdiction, it is reported to the school discipline committee (SDC), which then decides on an appropriate response. It is important to note that the roles and responsibilities of the SDC are blurred; specific guidelines on how SDCs should function are not provided to the schools. It appears that in the majority of cases the SDC is responsible for dealing only with issues that involve pupils as perpetrators. At this level there are cases that require the presence of either the perpetrator only or both victim and perpetrator. Parents are usually asked to be present to help resolve the issue. There are also cases where the head teacher and the school discipline committee require the intervention of the SMC to resolve an issue. For example, at Chinyasa School a Standard 4 boy stoned a Standard 4 girl unconscious. Parents and the SMC were called to resolve the issue and the girl was given first aid by teachers until she regained consciousness. In rare cases the matter is brought to the attention of the Primary Education Advisor (PEA), who in turn reports to the District Education Manager (DEM) with recommendations. However, the DEM might accept or rescind the recommendation from the PEA depending on how the issue has been handled at the different levels of the reporting structure.
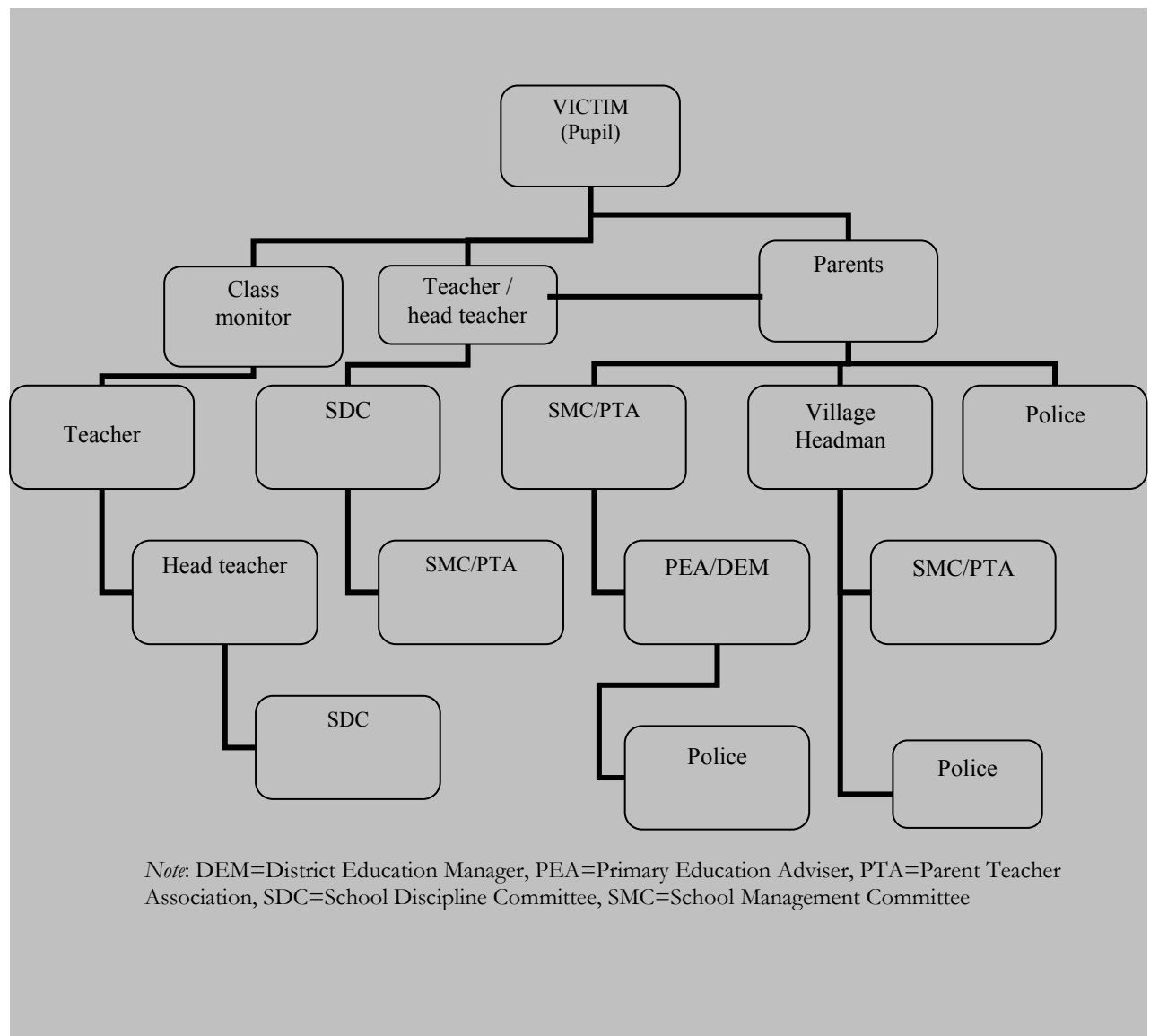
A few schools mentioned that pupils also report to class monitors when they fall victim to SRGBV at the school level, but it is not clear how much clout they have over other pupils. These class monitors report to the head teacher for appropriate action. Other schools indicated that a class teacher reports to the section or department head. There are also a few cases where the class teacher or the section head reports to the deputy head teacher, who decides on the appropriate punishment for the perpetrator. Usually the deputy head is the chairman of the SDC and, therefore, may engage the committee to resolve an issue. The head teacher, SMC/PTA and PEA usually report very severe cases to the police. In all the schools in the study, it was reported that victims sometimes decide to report violations to much higher authorities, usually because the victim believed these higher authorities could enact a more effective restitution or retribution than, for example, the head teacher at their school.

On the other hand, many victims of SRGBV report their plight to parents, but not to school authorities. In such cases, the parents may take the issue directly to teachers, head teachers, SMC/PTA or village head men. From there, the authorities follow the appropriate reporting pathways. There are a variety of reasons that pupils decide to report to parents rather than school authorities, but this usually happens when the perpetrator is a teacher or school authority.

When the perpetrator of SRGBV is a teacher, the victim has several options. The first is to report directly to the head teacher to take appropriate action. The second option is to report to parents, who take up the matter to the headmaster or the SMC/PTA. This however, can have disturbing consequences. For example, parents at Kaombe School beat the wife of a Standard 6 teacher because the teacher was having an intimate relationship with a schoolgirl from their village. In this case, the teacher was merely transferred to another school by the Primary Education Advisor.

At the community level, cases of SRGBV are taken up by the victim or the parents, who approach the SMC/PTA or go directly to the village headman. When the perpetrator is not at school, the victim and the parents report to the SMC/PTA; it is then reported to the village headman. Alternatively, the parents might report directly to the village headman who metes out an appropriate punishment. The SMC/PTA might also take the matter to the police, depending on the severity of the crime. Figure 6.1 shows possible pathways for reporting SRGBV at different levels.

Figure 6.1 Reporting Structures at the School and Community Levels

Note: DEM=District Education Manager, PEA=Primary Education Adviser, PTA=Parent Teacher Association, SDC=School Discipline Committee, SMC=School Management Committee

Based on the study findings, each school and community has its own criteria for deciding when a matter is to be handled by specific authorities. Therefore, cases of SRGBV are treated differently in different communities.

Finally it should be noted that all schools and communities in this study agreed that a substantial number of SRGBV cases were not reported. Many reasons account for this and are discussed later in this chapter.

ACCOUNTABILITY APPROACHES FOR SRGBV PERPETRATORS

Accountability responses to SRGBV were reported during the PLA study conducted at the 40 schools participating in the study. These approaches are categorized here according to the

perpetrator: pupil, teacher or community member. This section presents some of the common actions taken against perpetrators and how the victims are treated.

Pupils as Offenders

The FGDs revealed several ways in which SRGBV is handled in cases of pupils who are offenders. The pupil is rebuked and warned not to repeat the violence. He or she is sometimes asked to apologize to the victim and the two are reconciled. In other cases the teacher punishes the perpetrator, mostly through light manual labor assumed to be commensurate with the nature of violence, such as sweeping, mopping the floor or cleaning toilets. However, sometimes the pupil is whipped. There are also reports of harsh punishment such as digging pit latrines and uprooting tree stumps around the school. At Chinyasa School, a Standard 7 boy was asked to apologize to victims in the presence of his parents and was later made to dig a pit latrine for using foul language to insult Standard 6 pupils. There are times when parents of the perpetrator and those of the victim are called to the school to discuss the case; at the end the parties agree what punishment should be given and what should happen to compensate the victim. Other crimes warrant suspension for a few days; in extreme cases offenders are expelled from school, especially when it involves criminal offenses. Even with these retributive and punitive measures, pupils observed that many cases that were reported went unresolved and nothing happened to the offenders. Pupils indicated that they were unsatisfied with the light punishment given by school authorities in cases of SRGBV.

Teachers as Perpetrators

When the offender is a teacher, the school disciplinary committee and the head teacher decide the punishment for most cases. For minor offenses, the teacher is asked to apologize to the pupil or parent. However, parents also reported that teachers were generally not held accountable for the severity of their actions. For example, a teacher under the influence of alcohol at Masanje School excessively beat a pupil but was merely reprimanded even after parents complained about the issue. When the offense is extreme, such as having a sexual relationship with a pupil, the PEA is asked to transfer the teacher to another school. However, evidence from the study indicates that this does not solve the problem because the concerned teachers continue their behavior at the new school.

However, pupils and parents felt that teachers and head teachers tended to protect errant teachers and did not report them to PEAs for appropriate action. It was difficult to obtain

specific examples in the FGDs about teachers who had been dismissed. The pupils and parents have the perception that nothing happens to the wayward teachers because many cases occur, but teachers are not transferred or dismissed. It was clear from the study that where teachers are having intimate relationships with pupils and the relationship is consensual or the relationship results in marriage between the teacher and pupil, the school system and authorities are reluctant to take any further action despite the fact that the relationship clearly violates the Teachers' Code of Conduct.

Community Members as Perpetrators

Three possible methods for accountability were identified when the offender is not a pupil or a teacher. First, the village headman and his counselors will rebuke and reprimand the offender, and usually a fine is exacted. Second, parents of the victim and the parents of the offender settle the matter, where the latter apologizes and the families reconcile. Third, the offender is referred to the police if the case is severe. Some reports indicate that some of the cases are not resolved by either the school or the community, which has a very negative impact on how pupils perceive their safety in terms of SRGBV.

Response to Victims

At school, victims of SRGBV are often comforted by teachers and other school authorities. In cases of rape, the victim is referred to the hospital and the police. If the violence is severe, especially causing bodily harm, there are cases where the parents of the offender have been asked to take care of the victim until the wounds heal. Girls who have been made pregnant are referred to traditional birth attendants or to the hospital and advised that they should report back to school after delivery.

Although some support is provided to victims, in the majority of the cases, pupils and parents report that there are few established support mechanisms in the form of guidance and counseling for victims, and most are expected to overcome the trauma on their own. For example, a girl who was raped at the toilets at Namandanje School was left alone without being taken to a hospital. Pupils lamented that there were times when even parents and teachers dismissed pupils' claims of having been victimized.

EFFECTIVENESS OF RESPONSES TO SRGBV

Pupils, teachers and parents had different views of the effectiveness of the response to SRGBV. In most cases pupils stated that the reporting systems were not effective and the actions taken by authorities were unsatisfactory. In some cases the pupils stated that they did not feel free to report cases of SRGBV, mainly because nothing was done to the perpetrators and there were no changes in behavior at the school.

Pupils stated that the response systems were effective when they had confidence in the teachers, head teachers and school management committees who were handling their grievances. The pupils were comfortable and free to approach the authorities when they had fallen victim to such abuse. They were also confident that some form of action would be taken against the perpetrators.

In contrast to the pupils' viewpoint, almost all teachers said that reporting systems were effective and that the penalties for SRGBV and related abuse were appropriate. They offered that pupils were free to report to authorities and that they encouraged victims to report. According to the teachers, pupils were sensitized about SRGBV and related issues through the teaching of life skills at school.   In addition, clubs, the police and NGOs visit schools to sensitize pupils on their rights as children and as learners.

Communities were divided on the issue of the effectiveness of the reporting structures and the appropriateness of retribution for reported cases of SRGBV. Some communities felt that they were well represented by SMC/PTA and, when these groups were strong and active, accountability measures were quite effective. They mentioned village headmen who fined perpetrators and SMC/PTA who reported to PEAs or DEM and demanded sanctions against pupils or teachers who were perpetrators of abuse. Communities that thought that the reporting systems and the punitive measures for SRGBV were not effective stated that they felt they were not fully involved as parents especially when the SMC/PTA or the village headmen were weak or aloof to school matters. Community members said that they did not know school regulations and, therefore, had very little say in what should happen to perpetrators. They also cited examples of parents who confronted perpetrators of abuse directly without first reporting to authorities, as signs of a loss of confidence in the authorities.

On the part of authorities, lack of awareness of child rights and what constitutes SRGBV—and the consequences SRGBV has on pupils' educational and health outcomes also impede effective response. There was a general perception among many of the teachers that girls who had sexual relationships with teachers did so willingly and, therefore, there was no need to take punitive measures against teachers involved. In addition, some cases of SRGBV were treated as light offenses. For example, the general perception was that teachers propositioning girls did not warrant any specific response on the part of the school. This lack of response resulted in pupils feeling that the schools do not assist them effectively. For example, at Puteya School, a girl who had been propositioned by a teacher and reported the case to her parents who then took the matter to the SMC, was not assisted because the head teacher convinced the SMC that the teacher was "only joking." The matter ended there with no specific action taken against the teacher.

FACTORS AFFECTING EFFECTIVENESS OF RESPONSE TO SRGBV

The FGDs with pupils, parents, teachers and SMC/PTAs revealed a multitude of reasons why the overall response to SRGBV can be effective or ineffective. As mentioned, pupils are more likely to report cases of abuse when they feel comfortable and free to do so. This happens when the pupils have confidence in the teachers, head teachers, parents and SMC/PTA. Pupils are likely to report when they trust the authorities will respond to their grievances and a noticeable change will occur. Therefore, the teachers, heads, SMC/PTA and village headmen need to be strong and active and must have demonstrated that they do not condone abuse or violence.

As indicated by their responses, most pupils feel their reporting does not result in meaningful action by the authorities and, therefore, they do not report most cases. Victims also might not report because they are threatened by the perpetrators. Other cases involved bribing or taking advantage of the ignorance of the girls or their parents by lying, as the case in Machinga Local Education Authority (LEA) presented in Box 6.1 illustrates. At Liwonde School, pupils stated that teachers ridicule girls who had report cases of SRGBV by claiming they liked being victimized sexually or accusing them of provoking boys by wearing miniskirts. Some girls stated that they do not report sexual violence because they are too shy to discuss it with their parents or teachers. Exacerbating the situation, teachers and head teachers often ask intimate questions of the victim before they take action, which can make the victims feel threatened or scared. Girls also stated that did not feel comfortable reporting sexual violence to male teachers. This is a very

real problem for girls in rural schools where there are no female teachers; in this study 15 percent of the 40 schools had no female teachers.

Box 6.1 When Reporting Fails: A Case Study of a Girl Impregnated by a Teacher at Machinga LEA School

The village headman reported that a teacher from Machinga LEA School impregnated a girl from the village. The teacher accepted responsibility for the pregnancy and agreed to provide support for the child, which he eventually did.

The girl was an orphan who was being looked after by her grandmother. The grandmother did not allow the headman to report the case to the school authorities because she argued that it was a taboo in her culture to talk about a pregnancy before the baby was born. The grandmother refused to press charges against the teacher because of the fear that this would result in her granddaughter having a miscarriage, which is a prevailing belief in her culture. The grandmother preferred the case be discussed only after the girl had delivered the baby.

After delivery, the girl enrolled in Form One (Grade 9) at Likwenu Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) where she met the same teacher who had since been transferred from Machinga LEA to Likwenu CDSS. She was impregnated a second time.

The NGO that was supporting her education by paying school fees stopped assisting her. Now she is just loitering in the village with her two children. Community members believe that the grandmother is a witch, explaining why the village headman did not pursue the case further. People also suspected that the grandmother might have deliberately bewitched the girl and blamed those pursuing the case for any tragedies that might have followed.

There are also times when teachers, parents and other authorities dismiss victims as liars or blame them for provoking the incident. This results in the teachers, head teachers or parents rebuking the victims instead of assisting them, which further discourages victims from reporting. In some cases the victim feels there is not enough evidence to incriminate the perpetrators and, therefore, does not report the abuse. Sometimes victims do not report for fear of bringing shame to the perpetrator or enmity between the families of the victim and the perpetrator. When the case involves a girl who falls in love and has sexual relations with a teacher or a community member—which constitutes abuse of the girl since she is a minor—it is likely that the girl will not report the affair to authorities. Many such cases go unreported and remain unresolved.

A serious concern is when abuse or violence goes unreported because victims feel nothing will happen to the perpetrator. The majority of the pupils in FGDs highlighted that they felt nothing happened even if the cases were reported. At Malundani School a teacher impregnated a Standard 4 girl and married her. Later he made another Standard 6 girl pregnant. The same

teacher still has affairs with other girls, but he has not yet been punished. At Chinguni School at least five teachers—including the head teacher—are alleged to have affairs with schoolgirls, but no action has been taken against them. As a result, pupils do not feel there is adequate protection from SRGBV at the school. Some pupils indicated that they were not aware of reporting or protective measures against SRGBV. Clearly, pupils need to be sensitized on their rights and access to reparation, restitution and retribution at the school level.

Reports also indicate that responses are not effective because the authorities might be lenient or they do not take SRGBV seriously. Aged parents or SMC/PTA composed of elderly people were perceived to have little clout over perpetrators of abuse. When teachers or community members are the perpetrators, teachers tend to defend each other—especially head teachers—because they are friends. Several schools reported teachers having sexual relationships with pupils, while continuing to teach with no punishment. There are cases when teachers give money to victims or the parents of the victims to silence them. Teachers and community members sometimes marry schoolgirls at the insistence of parents. At Napere School, parents of a girl who was pregnant by a teacher opted that the teacher should marry the girl rather than being dismissed. Many parents were dismayed that teachers who harass pupils were merely transferred to other schools rather than being held accountable for their actions.

Cultural factors and beliefs have also impeded the effectiveness of the response system at the school level. Fear of witchcraft and other cultural beliefs, such as pregnancy not being discussed before the birth of the child, affects the ability of schools to gather the necessary evidence to take disciplinary measures against the perpetrators and respond effectively to cases of SRGBV.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the concepts of gender and gender-based violence are not fully understood by pupils, teachers and community members. Increased sensitization about school-related gender-based violence and child's rights for pupils, teachers and parents, in addition to cataloguing possible sanctions that can be imposed on perpetrators is a potential entry point for reducing SRGBV in schools and in the communities around the schools. Guidance and counseling services at the school level for both perpetrators and victims seem to be absent; introducing these services might do much to reduce abuse in schools. Increased support to clubs and NGO or community-based organization activities that can sensitize pupils on their rights and responsibilities, as well as available reporting structures, might also be effective if properly monitored.

Teachers also need a thorough understanding of SRGBV. Pre-service and in-service courses should keep teachers continually up-to-date on contemporary issues regarding children's rights so that they are able to handle cases of abuse effectively at the school level. In all of the schools in the study, teachers worked in classrooms with large numbers of children. As a result, control of violence between pupils is difficult; many incidents go unnoticed and little attention is paid to others because they are considered petty and tedious to handle. Attaining an acceptable teacher–pupil ratio will certainly open more avenues for controlling SRGBV in schools.

Lastly, communities need to be more integrated into schools. The FGDs with community members demonstrated that many School Management Committees do not have the capacity to effectively deal with cases of SRGBV—either due to a lack of understanding of school policy and regulations, or ineffective leadership within the Committee or at the school. Working with communities, through theater for development activities or the creation of community action plans, is one way that increased awareness of and effective reaction to SRGBV can be realized.

While this study highlights several issues of concern to Malawi's pupils, teachers and communities, it also identifies strengths upon which efforts can be built to ensure that schools in Malawi are safe, that all boys and girls have equal opportunities to learn, gain skills through classroom and extracurricular activities, and are psychologically, sexually and physically safe from threats, harassment or harm in all parts of school.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Pupils' Reasons Why Classrooms Are Considered Unsafe

Girls' reasons	Boys' reasons
▪ Boys propose love to girls when teachers are not there and beat girls when rebuffed. ▪ Boys steal girls' books, pens and pencils and snatch their food. ▪ Boys touch girls' breasts and buttocks when teachers are not present. ▪ Boys place mirrors on the floor to peep at girls' underwear. ▪ Teachers boycott classes. ▪ Teachers use offensive language. ▪ Boys mock girls by drawing their private parts on the board. ▪ Fighting among pupils especially in Standard 1. ▪ Girls are booed if they fail to answer a question. ▪ Pupils are given corporal punishment. ▪ Teachers proposition girls and harass them when they do not accept the proposals. ▪ Boys stand at the classroom door and only allow boys to go in. When a girl tries to pass through she is harassed. ▪ Teachers whip, pull ears and beat pupils. ▪ Teachers punish the whole class for an offense committed by one person. ▪ When people defecate in the classrooms, girls are asked to clean up the mess. ▪ Girl class monitors are beaten up if they include boys on the list of noisemakers. ▪ Verbal insults from boys, including offensive songs. ▪ Girls share desks with boys, which exposes girls to harassment when teacher is not present.	▪ Boys are sent out of class for making noise, while girls are not. ▪ Class teacher is very cruel; sends pupils out of classroom when they are late. It's mostly boys who are victims. ▪ Boys propose love to girls and even touch girls' breasts. ▪ Girls have seductive dress. The way girls and female teachers dress (miniskirts, long slits and see-through clothes) disturbs boys. ▪ A lot of fighting in class. ▪ Teachers abandon classes. ▪ Teachers are very cruel; they whip with rulers and sticks and kick pupils. ▪ Teachers insult and intimidate us. ▪ Girls laugh at us when we fail to answer questions. ▪ Teacher favors those who perform and assist them more than slow learners. ▪ Female teachers favor girls and give boys punishment. ▪ Corporal punishment makes classrooms unsafe. ▪ Punishment is given to the whole class for an offense committed by one person. ▪ Pupils are sent out of class for making noise or reporting late for class after break. ▪ Pupils fight over books, which are in short supply.

Table A2. Pupils' Reasons Why the Toilets Are Considered Unsafe

Girls' reasons	Boys' reasons
▪ Boys peek at girls when girls are using the toilets and embarrass them. ▪ Rules and regulations forbid them from using teachers' toilets and they are punished if they are found there. ▪ Boys harass girls when passing near their toilets, calling them prostitutes. ▪ Toilets are unclean, hence pupils are reluctant to use them because they are afraid of contracting diseases. ▪ Girls', boys', and teachers' toilets are all in one block and girls do not feel safe going to the toilet because boys follow them and propose love to them or touch their breasts. ▪ Boys are sent to mop the girls' toilet as a form of punishment. ▪ Girls are sexually harassed at the boys' toilet when they are given punishment to mop the boys' toilet. ▪ Toilets have no doors and hence no privacy. ▪ Once a boy from a nearby village raped a Standard 2 girl near the toilets. ▪ A boy attempted to rape a girl at the toilets. ▪ Girls' and boys' toilets face the same direction, which reduces privacy and makes girls uncomfortable. ▪ Walls have derogatory graffiti.	▪ Boys are told to clean toilets as punishment ▪ Boys are told to do maintenance work at teachers' toilets as a form of punishment and threatened with forced transfer if they don't do the work. ▪ Toilets have no doors; therefore, pupils do not feel secure to use them. ▪ Boys are punished if found passing through the girls' toilet. ▪ There are always girls present trying to mop boys' toilets as punishment. ▪ Strangers come and beat boys at the toilets. ▪ Pupils are punished if they delay coming back to class from the toilets. ▪ Boys' and girls' toilets are only demarcated by a wall; this makes boys feel shy and uncomfortable, especially when they see girls on the other side.

Table A3. Pupils' Reasons Why School Playgrounds Are Considered Unsafe

Girls' reasons	Boys' reasons
▪ Couples meet at the ground, so if a girl goes there she is booed because they think she is looking for a boyfriend. ▪ Younger girls are often beaten by older girls. ▪ Sports teacher is male, so girls do not participate in the games freely. ▪ This is where boys beat girls for rebuffing their love proposals. ▪ Boys put down mirrors close to where girls are standing so that they can see their private parts. ▪ Girls are chased from football pitch by boys who say it is not for girls. ▪ Girls are beaten and forced down (tripped) to the ground.	▪ They fight over girls at this place. ▪ They wait for girls mainly to propose love to them or beat them if they had quarrels in class. ▪ They are subjected to harsh punishment such as uprooting tree stumps. ▪ There is a lot of bullying at the football pitch. ▪ Boys practice fighting.

Table A4. Pupils' Reasons Why Borehole/Tap Area Is Considered Unsafe

Girls' reasons	Boys' reasons
▪ Boys beat girls when they go to drink water. ▪ Male school dropouts from the village stop here and propose love to girls. ▪ Long queues at the borehole/tap result in quarrels and exchange of verbal insults between pupils and community members. ▪ The place is dirty and unhygienic. Pupils are afraid of catching infectious diseases. ▪ Other people mess up the place but only pupils are made to clean it. ▪ Boys jostle girls so that they should be the first to drink water. ▪ Congestion at the borehole results in receiving punishment for reporting late for classes. ▪ Boys deliberately touch girls' buttocks and breasts as they scramble for water. ▪ Fights erupt between boys and girls as they fight for water. ▪ Boys peep at girls when they bend or squat to drink water. ▪ Boys do not let the girls use the tap if they did not share their food with them.	▪ The place is not clean and hygienic. ▪ Villagers monopolize the place and deny pupils access to the water. ▪ Teachers' wives rebuke pupils at the borehole or tap. ▪ Out-of-school youth wait for girls at the borehole as they leave school. ▪ At the borehole, boys take advantage of the scramble for water to touch girls' breasts. ▪ Community members insult or shout at pupils when they want to use the borehole/tap. ▪ Women dominate the borehole for the whole day. ▪ Boys and girls fight over turns to drink water, resulting in injuries.

Table A.5 Pupils' Reasons Why the Road to School Is Considered Unsafe

Girls' reasons	Boys' reasons
▪ At the graveyard, some men attempt to rape girls especially during the rainy season. ▪ Strangers (both boys and men) propose love to girls and ridicule them when they refuse. ▪ Bullied by boys whose love proposals girls have rebuffed. ▪ Secondary school students waylay, threaten and sexually harass girls when passing their school. ▪ Propositioned by boys. ▪ Harassed by drunkards and *chamba* smokers. ▪ Secondary schools boys sit under the bridge and look up to see girls' underwear. They also force girls to hug them and if girls refuse they are beaten.	▪ During the rainy season when maize is high, men chase pupils and attempt to rape girls. ▪ Boys waylay girls. ▪ Drunkards trouble girls, touch their bodies and verbally harass them. ▪ At a hill, boys and girls have sex. Boys take advantage of the place to touch girl's breasts when looking for fiber. ▪ Pupils are teased and waylaid by secondary school students who scare them. ▪ At a bridge, boys peep at girls' private parts. ▪ Boys watch pornographic and violent films at the trading center and want to practice what they saw and end up forcing girls to have sex with them. ▪ Boys and girls fight on the road.

Table A6. Boys' Perspectives on the Causes and Consequences of SRGBV

Type of Abuse	Causes	Consequences
AT SCHOOL		
Teachers give boys harsh or excessive punishment, including chasing them from class	-Making noise and being rude in class -Coming late to school or class -Being absent for several days -Refusing to do chores or light punishment -Boys not tucking in shirts, wearing long shorts, poor dressing and bad haircuts -Failing a question or exercise in class -Rudeness of some boys -Girls are proposed to by teachers -Teachers know that boys have a girlfriend -Revealing details of teachers' love affairs with girls -Touching girls' breasts -Fighting and insulting fellow pupils -Enmity between a teacher and particular boy	-Missing lessons, since punishment is done during classes -Boys get injured or feel pain -Sometimes they fall sick and fail to go back to school the following day -The pupils get depressed and feel discouraged -Boys drop out of school for fear of punishments -Transfer to another, more distant school -Failing exams due to inadequate learning -Hating the teacher - - -Boys leave school to do piecework and/or get married
Boys fight and bully each other	-Provoked by others' use of abusive language -Boys are aggressive -Older boys wanting money and food -Stealing writing materials -Quarreling over girls -Seeing other boys touching girls' breasts -Boys revealing to fellow boys love relationships -Gossiping	-Absenteeism by boys due to fear or injuries -Lack of concentration in class due to fear and shame -Poor performance in class and exams -Injuries
Boys beat girls	-Boys want to steal food from girls -Girls refusing love propositions -Boys perceive girls to be weak -Lack of natural wisdom -Girls using abusive language or shouting at boys without reason	-Boys are punished [if reported] -Boys miss classes [doing punishment] -Girls are forced into sexual relationship with boy -Boys are cautioned by girl's parents -Girls fight back or use abusive language -Girls drop out of school
Girls fight with boys	-So that boys should give them money	-Injuries
Boys propose to girls	-Peer pressure -Boys failing to control sexual desires -Girls' beauty -Being used to one another (boys and girls), hence touching breasts -Parents need assistance from the in-laws -Poverty leads girls to look for money	-Boys and girls start sexual relationship -Contract HIV/AIDS -Early pregnancies/marriages -Boys beat girls if the boy is rebuffed -Shyness of girls when they are in class -Failing examinations due to lack of concentration -Dropping out of school -Illiteracy levels grow high -Girls start deviant behavior such as prostitution
Boys molest girls, for example, touch girls' breasts	-Being frequently close to girls -Boys think they are entitled to it -Girls not dressing properly -Girls moving provocatively -Girls walking at odd hours -Girls want money -A sign of proposing love	-Punishment for the boys, for example, trial at the headmaster's office or expelled -Being questioned and cautioned by the girl's parents -Beginning a sexual relationship -Girls are shy and drop out of school -Quarrels/fights with other girls
Boys put mirrors on the ground to see underneath girls' dresses	-Mischief	-Laughing at the girl -Abusive language/swearing [by girls]

Type of Abuse	Causes	Consequences
Boys rape girls	-Seductive dressing or makeup of girls -Boys'/men's desire for sex; inability to abstain from sexual acts -Smoking *chamba* -Drinking beer -Boys' love propositions not accepted by girls -Girls travel in unsafe places (in bushes) -Boys want to disgrace the girls	-Girls are injured -Unwanted pregnancies -Girls drop out of school -Becoming infected with HIV/AIDS
Pupils (girls) peep at boys when urinating or touch boys' private parts	-Lack of brick-walled toilets -Curiosity of girls after boys have been initiated	-Boys panic when they want to relieve themselves
Girls touch boys' private parts	-Curiosity of girls after boys have been initiated -Forced by friends	-Rape of girls
Girls force boys into love affairs; call them impotent if they refuse	-Girls lustful for sex -Girls wanting money for food at school	-Boys feel insulted by girls -Shame on the part of the girls if rejected -Boys impregnate girls -Boys infect girls with STIs/contract HIV
Male teachers have sexual affairs with female pupils	-The girls look beautiful/wear seductive makeup -The teachers give girls false promises or money -Teachers threaten girls that if they refuse they will fail exams -Teachers copy from other teachers -Some girls chat with/seduce teachers -When girls do not sit properly in class, teachers can see up their skirts -Girls from poor families need money -Girls' desire for sex	-The girls do not concentrate in class -Pregnancy/early marriages -Girls drop out of school -The girls contract STIs/HIV -The parents suffer in the end -Teacher might lose job
Female teachers propose love to boys	-Teachers just being immoral	-Contracting diseases such as AIDS
Girls mock, insult and laugh at boys	-Girls show that they are not intimidated by boys -Girls try to attract attention of boys -In retaliation for touching girls' breasts -In retaliation snatching girls' food -In retaliation for insulting the girls -Envying each other -Accidentally bumping into them -Girls look down upon boys -Wanting to discourage a boy from schooling	-Boys don't feel free in class -Fights and enmity between boys and girls -Lack of concentration in class -Anger
Teachers shout at and insult pupils	-Getting salaries late -When pupils fail in class -When pupils have done something wrong (fighting, quarreling with fellow pupils) -To show their power over pupils -Teachers' temperamental behavior -Age of pupils (older pupils are mocked and told to leave school) -Poverty of pupils -Teachers claim to know more than pupils	-Absenteeism of pupils -Pupils became sad -Pupils secretly exact revenge by giving nicknames to teachers -Loss of concentration in class and fail exams -Pupils transfer to another school -Pupils drop out of school
Enmity between boys and teachers	-Boys reveal teachers' love affairs -Boys write anonymous insulting letters to teachers -Quarrels between boys and teachers over a girl -Jealousy	-Teachers refuse to teach and pupils are not given enough lessons -Teachers force boys to reveal their love affairs -Teachers punish boys or chase them from class
Teasing and discriminating against boys who are not initiated	-Do not have morals	-Boys feel forced to go for initiation

Type of Abuse	Causes	Consequences
Girls are favored in class/at school	-Teachers have sexual relationships with girls -Teachers are family friends or relatives of the girls -Teachers want to entice girls to do household chores for them -Teachers want to embarrass or disappoint the boys -Donors view girls as more at risk than boys, so girls benefit more from educational projects	-Boys are frustrated/discouraged and drop out of school -Girls are not given punishment -The boys miss classes doing punishment -Poor performance -Teachers fail boys in class -Girls are passed to next classes without problems, though failing exams -Girls are discouraged from working hard -Boys drop out of school due to lack of support, as most are poor though intelligent
Teachers send boys on errands during class time	-Teachers want boys who have bicycles and can travel fast -Teachers wish to abuse pupils and use them as if they're their own children -Laziness of teachers	-Leads to road accidents -Boys miss lessons because errands are during class time -Boys fail exams due to inadequate learning -Boys leave bicycles at home and come late for school
IN THE COMMUNITY		
Parents force pupils (girls and boys) into marriage	-Poverty in the family so parents need to be relieved -Parents look for support from the affair -Envying having good things -Peer pressure from friends whose sons are married -Way to avoid premarital pregnancy for a girl -To increase labor force at household level -Parents running away from their responsibility	-Girls live an unhappy life -Girls grow old while still young -Children drop out of school -Girls have pregnancy complications/difficulties when giving birth -Lack of employment for boys -Increased illiteracy level in an area
Parents give boys chores during or before school time/ doing piecework to support themselves	-Poverty in households -Shortage of labor at household level, needed to help in gardens -Parents' ignorance, regarding school as less important -They are just harsh -Cultural beliefs that boys are strong, can cope with lots of chores, and can work to support themselves -Parents go to work in estates with boys accompanying them	-Boys often miss classes -Teachers send boys back from school/give boys harsh punishment due to coming late -Performance goes down and they fail exams -Friends laugh at absent pupils -Boys are embarrassed and drop out of school -Boys become ruder due to frustration -Boys drop out and go for early marriages -High levels of illiteracy and ignorance in the area
Boys forced to have sex (to *remove dust* ritual)	-Bad advice from initiation camps -Girls touch boys close to the boy's private parts	-Start of love affair -Boys contract HIV/AIDS -Boys impregnate girls
Parents teaching boys bad behavior	-Lack of interest in school on the part of parents -Drunkenness of parents	-Boys start smoking *chamba* -Boys get involved in drinking beer -Drop out of school.
Parents pressure boys to leave school	-Hunger/poverty at home -Ignorance about importance of school -Parents want pupils to get married -Parents force pupils to look for piecework (*ganyu*) and help provide food at the home	-Pupils get employed while too young -Early marriages -Pupils worry, fail exams and lose interest in school -Boys drop out of school -Problems of illiteracy -Unemployment due to lack of knowledge
Parents don't give boys money to buy learning materials	-Poverty -They think that boys will use money meant for learning materials on other things	- Poor performance in class and failed exams

Table A7. Girls' Perspectives on the Causes and Consequences of SRGBV

Type of Abuse	Causes	Consequences
AT SCHOOL		
Teachers give harsh or excessive punishment to girls	-Refusing teachers' love proposals -Being rude to teachers -Caught fighting or bullying -Making noise and misbehaving in class -Being absent from classes -Refusing to do a light punishment -Coming late to school or from the break -Teachers trying to show their authority over the pupils -Not understanding/failing to answer questions in class	-High absenteeism -Girls do not participate or concentrate in class, which might make them fail examinations -Pupils are injured or sick -Girls transfer to another school to avoid harsh punishment -Sometimes girls just decide to go back home and meet troublesome boys on their way home who insult, molest or rape them
Boys beat girls	-Boys are frustrated after girls have turned down their love proposals -Girls deliberately provoke boys and take chances -Girls shout at boys without any reason -Teachers encourage boys to beat girls as a way of settling quarrels with girls -Girls refuse to copy notes for boys -Girls refuse to share food -Natural hatred between boys and girls -Jealousy -Accidentally bumping into each other	-Girls get hurt and sick from being beaten -Girls fear coming to school -Girls lose interest in school -Girls feel threatened and can stop attending school -Boys are punished/chased out of class or sent home
Boys steal girls' pens; tear or steal girls' books; snatch food, etc.	-Girls refuse to lend pens/copy notes -Some boys are aggressive and rude -Girls' refuse boys' love proposals -A lack of resources among pupils -Hunger -Girls refuse to share food with the boys	-Girls are afraid to go to school -Girls are hurt physically or beaten -Girls fear eating food openly -Girls feel hungry when food is snatched -Girls lose concentration in class and fail exams -Young girls refuse to go to school -Boys get punishment or become disabled because the victim put a spell on the thief
Boys touch girls' breasts, buttocks, hips and waist	-Boys touch as sign of proposing -Girls seduce boys -Failure by boys to control their desires and passion for girls -Boys enjoy touching girls' breasts -Boys just want to harass and provoke the girls -Girls' physical appearance; they look old enough for marriage -Girls dressing provocatively such as transparent clothing that shows the breast -Boys just playing -Lack of discipline by boys -Boys are just boastful -Rudeness	-Pain in the breasts -Girls are embarrassed, uncomfortable, and feel ashamed -Girls are disturbed, lose concentration and fail to participate in classroom activities -Poor performance in class and failing exams -The boys involved propose to girls -Girls accept boys' proposals -Boys' passion for girls' increases, leading to rape -Girls feel threatened and can stop attending school -Fighting between girls and boys -Girls begin to enjoy this and they become promiscuous or provoke boys deliberately
Boys follow girls to toilets	-Boys want to propose to the girls -Boys want to see private parts of girls -Girls' toilets are too close to boys' toilets	-Girls feel insecure -Boys laugh at, insult and mock girls after they have seen their private parts -Girls lack concentration in class due to mockery/insults -Boys are punished
Boys peep at girls' private parts using a mirror placed under girls' skirts; boys draw private parts on board	-Boys frustrated for failing to have sex immediately after initiation (*kuchotsa fumbi*) -Curiosity to see the girls' underwear or private parts	-Girls lack concentration in class due to humiliation and mockery -Boys disrespect girls -Girls feel ashamed as boys talk about the kind of underwear a girl has

Type of Abuse	Causes	Consequences
Boys proposition girls and force girls into sex	-Girls chat frequently with boys -Girls seduce the boys by dressing provocatively (such as miniskirts) -Boys' passion for girls -Girls are beautiful -Girls look old enough for marriage -Behavior of the girl -Being in an unsafe place (for example, sent to mop the boys' toilets)	-Girls are beaten if they refuse -Lack of interest in school -Contract HIV/AIDS and STIs -Unwanted pregnancies -Forced out of school -Forced to marry early -Psychologically disturbed and think of committing suicide
Fellow girls force prostitution	-Girls try to assert themselves over boys -Pressure from friends -Poverty	-Fail tests and examinations due to low self-esteem -Education future is doomed
Teachers propose love to girls	-Teachers want sex -Teachers want to use the girls as concubines -Teachers lack self-respect and self-control -If the girl is beautiful -Girls wear provocative clothes and makeup -Girls seduce teachers -Girls want to pass exams -Girls chat frequently with teacher -When a girl is intelligent and behaves well in class teachers start proposing love to her -Selfishness of the teachers	-Attempts of rape if girls refuse love -Teachers are embarrassed and bitter if rejected -Girls are emotionally disturbed -Girls are intimidated and insulted by the teachers if they turn down the proposal -Teachers give girls harsh punishment if they refuse -The girls fear the teachers and cannot concentrate in class -Girls are often absent -Girls sometimes drop out of school for fear of being raped -Poor performance in classroom activities -Teachers fail girls in exams if they refuse -The teacher shows an examination paper to their loved ones -Girls fall in love with teachers
Teachers are in sexual relationship with girls	-Teachers are promiscuous and want sex -Teachers are not married -Girls seduce teachers -Girls lustful for sex -Girls want to be favored in class -Girls want to pass exam -Girls want money and other materials, hence teachers want to take advantage of this	-Early marriages -Girls are impregnated and teachers refuse responsibilities afterwards -Contract HIV/AIDS resulting in early death -Girls start to love money and they become prostitutes -Parents beat girls at home -Psychological effect on the girl because she is still young
Teachers insult pupils in class	-Pupils make noise -Pupils are unable to answer a question correctly or they fail tests -Pupils come late for school -Girls wear miniskirts -Girls refuse teachers' love proposal -Failure to pay school fund -Teachers suspect that a girl has a boyfriend	-Lack of interest resulting into low participation in class -Girls are disturbed and lack concentration in class -Girls are afraid to go to school and are often absent -Pupils drop out of school -Enmity between the teacher and the girls -Teachers believe that girls want to seduce them, then chase girls from class
Boys insult, mock, and laugh at girls (often using sexual/abusive language)	-Girls refuse boys' love propositions -Jealousy of a girl who is performing well and a desire to distract her from studies -A means of proposing love to girls -Boys are just rude and arrogant -Girls fail to answer a question or fail exams -Girls provoke boys -Boys like talking about their sexual exploits -To show as if those laughing know better than the person answering	-Girls feel ashamed in presence of their friends -Girls are discouraged from performing well to avoid being in the spotlight -Girls are always worried -Girls fight with boys -Low participation/concentration in class -Lack of interest in school -Girls are frequently absent from school -Girls drop out of school
Boys sneak love letters into girls' things on the way to and from school	-Boys want girls to be accused by their parents that they are not working hard at school and they are busy with intimate relationships	-Shyness -Psychological disturbances -Concentration in class goes down
Boys disturb and	-Boys punish girls for refusing love	-Girls fail to write exercises properly

Type of Abuse	Causes	Consequences
bully girls when they work in class, e.g., refuse to share textbooks	-Boys want girls to fail exams and repeat classes -Boys are jealous of girls and do not want to help the girls to prosper -Boys lose interest in lessons -Rudeness	-Girls fail to concentrate in class -Girls are not able to participate in class -Girls fail exams because of inadequate studies
Teachers assign chores at teachers' houses to girls during class time	-Intention of proposing to the girl -Teachers capitalize on girls' ability to do house chores -Come late from break -Punishment for misbehaving in class or coming late -Teachers show authority over pupils	-Some girls feel shy and drop out of school -Teachers propose to girls at their homes -Lack of full participation in classroom activities because the girls are tired -Transfer to another school to avoid excess work
Girls are the only ones to sweep classrooms	-Boys believe that sweeping is for girls -Teachers are afraid of boys and deliberately avoid telling boys to sweep classrooms	-Psychological/emotional disturbance -Low concentration in classroom activities -Feeling of inferiority
Favoritism by teachers	-Teachers wants to have a sexual relationship with the girls	-Girls accept and get pregnant
IN THE COMMUNITY		
Older boys and adult males in the community, including secondary students and school dropouts proposition, threaten, chase and sexually molest/rape girls	-Girls turn down their love proposals -Girls' beauty and physical appearance -Girls' improper dressing (miniskirts) -Boys' rudeness and unruly behavior -Men desire to touch breasts -Boys/men are filled with lust that just comes to them at once and they can't control it -They want to disgrace the girl -Girls knock off late because of punishment and have to walk home alone -Girls are enticed by material help from men -As instructed, boys want to have sex at initiation camps to fulfill their ritual obligations -Most men are drunkards -Girls have to walk through overgrown areas and forest	-Pregnancy -Contract HIV/AIDS -Girls are psychologically disturbed -Girls' private parts get injured -Girls fear going to school, so they are usually absent -Emotionally affected and lack concentration in class -Girls get injured or are sick and are absent from school -Girls drop out of school -Offender is reported to the chief and imprisoned
Parents force girls to get married or into love affairs for money	-Poverty and hunger in families, so that parents do not manage to take care of their children and want to be relieved of their responsibility -Parents want support from a son-in-law -Fear for girl's future -Girls' behavior (having a love affair) -Parents fear that when girls reach puberty they will be impregnated at the parents' home -Poor performance in class -Parents do not know the benefits of education -Refuse to do household chores	-Teenage pregnancies -Girls suffer from raising unwanted children -Some children want to commit suicide -Girls find troubles in a marriage -Complications when giving birth to the extent that a girl can die -They bear unhealthy children -Unwillingly drop out of school -Pupils are chased out of homes if they refuse to marry -Contract HIV/AIDS -Once married, continue living in poverty -Beaten by parents
Parents force girls to attend initiation ceremonies	-Cultural beliefs	-Failing tests and examinations -School dropout/absenteeism
Being forced to help in household chores/baby-sit while others are learning	-Parents threaten to deny them food -Heavy workload during harvesting and weeding season (farming season) -Parents' laziness -Parents are not interested in education -Parents say girls should also work at home	-Absenteeism of pupils -Failing exams -Being late for classes then being whipped by teachers -Failing homework -Girls lose interest in school and drop out
Parents are verbally abusive after children are late from school	-Extracurricular activities at school (sports) -Punishment by teachers -Parents think that the girls were with boys -Anger	-Low self-esteem -Lose interest in going to school so as not to disappoint parents -Drop out of school
Parents and	-Hunger/poverty prevents parents from giving pupils	-Pupils worried, fail exams and lose interest in

Type of Abuse	Causes	Consequences
guardians pressure girls to leave school	sufficient support -Girls expected to marry early -Parents do not realize the benefits of education -Because they are orphans -Cultural beliefs on workload patterns; girls are expected to do more house chores than boys	school -Pupils drop out -Early marriages -Lack of knowledge and interest in education -Problems due to illiteracy
Relative, stepfather or guardian rapes girl	-Lack of self-respect/self-control by the stepfather -When they are drunk -Lack of care because they are orphans	-Lose interest in life as well as schooling -Girls are impregnated -Girls contract HIV/AIDS and other STIs
Parents beat girls	-Madness -Not listening to what parents say (*mwano*) -Misbehaving -Failing in class	-Injuries -Girls refuse to go to school -Transfer to another school -Forced to get married

Table A8. Parents' Perspectives on Factors That Contribute to SRGBV

Factors contributing to SRGBV *(with selected illustrative comments taken from focus group discussion participants)*	Frequency of responses		
	Fathers *n=37* FGD	Mothers *n=34* FGD	Total *n=71* FGD
Initiation ceremonies ▪ Girls are expected to have sexual intercourse with men after "graduating" or going through initiation, boys are to sleep with girls or older women (*kusasa fumbi*). ▪ Children are encouraged to have sex as a sign of maturity. ▪ Small children are sent to *simba* and they learn bad things. ▪ Initiation counselors use obscene language that children copy. ▪ If a boy is not initiated, he is mocked by friends and called "*ambalare.*" ▪ Initiation ceremonies keep children away from school while fellow pupils are learning. ▪ Pupils lose interest in school because they want to practice what they have learned at initiation. ▪ Initiated children feel that they are grown up; hence they become rude toward elders who in turn beat them.	33 (89%)	19 (56%)	52 (73%)
Religious beliefs and practices ▪ Some religions do not allow girls to go far with education. ▪ Some religious beliefs go against school rules. ▪ Some religions pray during working days so children do not go to school; they learn inadequately. ▪ Some parents force their children to drop out of formal school and attend *madrassas* (Islam). ▪ Members of choirs are asked to sing in funerals, even during school time. ▪ Church choir practices and festivals act as meeting places for boys and girls who later start sexual relationships. ▪ Some children are forced to fast during Ramadan, although young.	14 (38%)	5 (15%)	19 (27%)
Poverty/hunger ▪ Girls are forced into sexual relationships with rich men and prostitution to get money for the family. ▪ Pupils snatch food from others. ▪ Parents encourage children into early marriages so they are no longer a burden on family. ▪ Children are forced to drop out of school and help their parents to earn money, such as selling things at the market or piecework.	9 (24%)	9 (26%)	18 (25%)
Ignorance of parents ▪ Parents believe that if children only go to school they will be lazy, hence they tell their children to go to the field before going to school. ▪ Parents lose interest in the education of their children. ▪ Parents do not know or see the importance of education and do not encourage children to go to school.	5 (14%)	1 (3%)	6 (8%)
Forced marriages ▪ Social belief that when a daughter gets married, the parent is held in high esteem by the society. ▪ Parents want a son in-law to be working for them, thus making them food secure. ▪ There is a belief that once girls have developed breasts they are ready for marriage, hence forcing them into early marriages.	5 (14%)	1 (3%)	6 (8%)
Traditional dances ▪ Dances encourage promiscuity because they are at night and men/boys touch women/girls around the waist, thus arousing their sexual desires. ▪ Boys take advantage of dances to propose to girls. ▪ Certain traditional dances (such as *mazoma*) excite men sexually. ▪ Girls meet boyfriends and sugar daddies at dances.	2 (5%)	2 (6%)	4 (6%)
Cultural belief ▪ Household chores are for girls only, so they are given more chores and schooling suffers.	1 (3%)	3 (9%)	4 (6%)

Factors contributing to SRGBV *(with selected illustrative comments taken from focus group discussion participants)*	Frequency of responses		
	Fathers *n=37* *FGD*	Mothers *n=34* *FGD*	Total *n=71* *FGD*
Girls refusal of boys' love proposals	0 (0%)	3 (9%)	3 (4%)
Lust for girls by men/male teachers	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (3%)
Video shows teach immoral behavior to pupils.	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (3%)
Inappropriate dressing by girls ▪ Provokes insults and proposals from teachers and boys.	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (3%)
Lack of adequate punishment to perpetrators ▪ Teachers fail to discipline pupils when there is immoral behavior between boys and girls.	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (3%)
No regular supervision by PEAs (primary education advisers).	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Girls have to travel long distances to school through unsafe areas and can be molested by boys/men.	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	1 (1%)

Table A9. Teachers' Perspectives on Factors That Contribute to SRGBV

Factors contributing to SRGBV *(with selected illustrative comments taken from focus group discussion participants)*	Frequency of responses *n= 39* FGDs
Initiation ceremonies ▪ The teachings associated with initiation; for example, children are told that they will no longer be called by their first names, so when they come to school and a friend calls their former names, it leads into bullying and even fighting. ▪ Girls are encouraged to get married/to have sex after initiation ceremonies. ▪ Initiation takes place when schools are in session. ▪ Boys learn obscene language. ▪ Boys are told to have sex as a symbol of maturity; this also encourages them to rape girls. ▪ Boys become rude and do not respect teachers after initiation ceremonies.	24 (62%)
Poverty/hunger ▪ Girls get involved in sexual relationships; they are forced into prostitution to raise money for the family. ▪ Rich men take advantage of poor girls. ▪ Parents send their children to sell things at the market while their friends are learning. ▪ Some pupils lack learning materials and clothes, and they come to school hungry; hence, they are tempted to snatch other pupils' food and steal other items.	24 (62%)
Cultural beliefs ▪ A belief that household chores are for women, so parents give girls more work than boys. ▪ The culture separates tasks for boys and girls (for example, girls baby-sit siblings). ▪ Tendency that boys can do more physically demanding jobs. ▪ Boys believe they are superior to girls. ▪ Girls are sidelined in the families who say they are not heirs of the family's wealth. ▪ A traditional (matrilineal) practice, *chikamwini*, gives fathers little power over their children's education. ▪ A traditional practice, *litiwo*, forces girls to get married by their parents so that the mother receives gifts from her friends during the girl's first pregnancy.	14 (36%)
Religious beliefs and practices ▪ Religious groups shy away from teaching children about the facts of life at a tender age. ▪ Choir training is held during school time. ▪ Prayers conducted on Fridays disturb pupils from learning. ▪ Some men/boys take advantage of nights of prayers to proposition/molest girls. ▪ Some religions stop their members from obeying some of school rules (such as cutting hair). ▪ Pupils attending *madrasahs* do not concentrate in conventional schools. ▪ During Ramadan, some children fast for long periods, making them lose concentration in class because of hunger. ▪ In some religious circles there is also a belief that women cannot be leaders. ▪ Boys and girls do not want to mix in school activities due to religious beliefs.	13 (33%)
Parents/community attitudes to education ▪ A belief in the villages that school is not a necessity, but for pleasure. ▪ A belief in the villages that girl children cannot learn beyond Standard 8. ▪ A belief among the Yao tribe that girls cannot be educated. ▪ A belief that educating a girl child is a waste of resources because she will get married and the husband will take care of her financial needs. ▪ Parents are not interested in their children's education. As a result they encourage them to get married.	10 (26%)
Girls dress seductively, which attracts boys and teachers to become sexually aroused, leading to raping girls.	4 (10%)
Favoritism by teachers	3 (8%)
Lack of civic education on human rights and democracy	3 (8%)
Seating plan ▪ When girls and boys share a desk, the boys start proposing to the girls. ▪ Culture where boys would not want to sit close to a girl is a problem when making sitting plan.	3 (8%)
Orphanhood	3 (8%)
Peer pressure	1 (3%)

Factors contributing to SRGBV *(with selected illustrative comments taken from focus group discussion participants)*	Frequency of responses *n= 39* FGDs
Boys like touching girls' breasts.	1 (3%)
Smoking of *chamba* by men/boys	1 (3%)

APPENDIX B

Protocol for Focus Group Discussions
There are a total of three focus groups for each group of adults and children. The separated male and female groups meet simultaneously and are then brought together for a mixed meeting. The separated groups have seven to ten participants for a final mixed group of 14 to 20 people.

Purpose:
Find out
- How the community/children understand the term abuse.
- How they want to see the school.

Introductory Protocol for This Exercise
- Begin with the traditional greeting and state that the interview team is here to learn.
- Seek permission to write and or take pictures.
- Set the rules for the discussion (no right answers, everybody share in the discussions, not competitive, everybody's view counts, etc.).

Guiding Questions

Working with Children

<u>Girls:</u>
1. What is the meaning of safe/friendly?
2. In what ways do they affect girls' schooling?
3. What is the meaning of unsafe/unfriendly?
4. In what ways do they affect boys'/girls' schooling?
5. What is your understanding of abuse?
6. Give examples of abuse.
7. How often does it happen?
8. Describe the reporting system.
9. Describe referral systems.
10. What are the attitudes of boys that prevent girls from going to school?
11. What are the attitudes of girls that prevent boys from going to school?
12. What are the attitudes of adults that prevent children from going to school?
13. What are the attitudes of teachers that prevent children from going to school?
14. What are the contributing factors of abuse?
15. What do children do at night?
16. What are the attitudes of adults toward children staying out late at night?
17. What makes a man a man?
18. What makes a woman a woman?
19. Is it easy for you to talk to your parents/teachers/elders?
20. What are some of the things that you talk about?
21. What are some topics/things that you would like to talk about?
22. Apart from parents/teachers/elders, is it easy for children to talk to other people about their problems?
23. What role do teachers play in your lives?
24. How do you solve your school problems?
25. What is your understanding of rights?
26. What are the effects/consequences of abuse/violence?

27. How does behavior change?
28. What skills do you need to overcome violence/abuse?

Boys:
1. What is the meaning of safe/friendly?
2. In what ways do they affect girls' schooling?
3. What is the meaning of unsafe/unfriendly?
4. In what ways do they affect boys'/girls' schooling?
5. What is your understanding of abuse?
6. Give examples of abuse.
7. How often does it happen?
8. Describe the reporting system.
9. Describe referral systems.
10. What are the attitudes of boys that prevent girls from going to school?
11. What are the attitudes of girls that prevent boys from going to school?
12. What are the attitudes of adults that prevent children from going to school?
13. What are the attitudes of teachers that prevent children from going to school?
14. What are the contributing factors of abuse?
15. What do children do at night?
16. What are the attitudes of adults toward children staying out late at night?
17. What makes a man a man?
18. What makes a woman a woman?
19. Is it easy for you to talk to your parents/teachers/elders?
20. What are some of the things that you talk about?
21. What are some topics/things that you would like to talk about?
22. Apart from parents/teachers/elders, is it easy for children to talk to other people about their problems?
23. What role do teachers play in your lives?
24. How do you solve your school problems?
25. What is your understanding of rights?
26. What are the effects/consequences of abuse/violence?
27. How does behavior change?
28. What skills do you need to overcome violence/abuse?

Mixed Group:
1. What is the meaning of safe/friendly?
2. In what ways do they affect girls' schooling?
3. What is the meaning of unsafe/unfriendly?
4. In what ways do they affect boys'/girls' schooling?
5. What is your understanding of abuse?
6. Give examples of abuse.
7. How often does it happen?
8. Describe the reporting system.
9. Describe referral systems.
10. What are the attitudes of boys that prevent girls from going to school?
11. What are the attitudes of girls that prevent boys from going to school?
12. What are the attitudes of adults that prevent children from going to school?
13. What are the attitudes of teachers that prevent children from going to school?
14. What are the contributing factors of abuse?
15. What do children do at night?

16. What are the attitudes of adults toward the children staying out late at night?
17. What makes a man a man?
18. What makes a woman a woman?
19. Is it easy for you to talk to your parents/teachers/elders?
20. What are some of the things that you talk about?
21. What are some topics/things that you would like to talk about?
22. Apart from parents/teachers/elders, is it easy for children to talk to other people about their problems?
23. What role do teachers play in your lives?
24. How do you solve your school problems?
25. What is your understanding of rights?
26. What are the effects/consequences of abuse/violence?
27. How does behavior change?
28. What skills do you need to overcome violence/abuse?

Working with Adults

Females
1. What are the qualities of a safe school?
2. Follow up: Which qualities affect girls/boys?
3. What is your understanding of abuse?
4. Give examples of abuse.
5. How often does it happen or occur?
6. Describe existing reporting systems.
7. Describe existing referral systems.
8. What is the role of community leaders when school children are abused (this is also called response)?
9. What are the attitudes of boys that prevent children from going to school?
10. What are the attitudes of girls that prevent children from going to school?
11. What are the attitudes of teachers that prevent children from going to school?
12. What are the attitudes of adults that prevent children from going to school?
13. What are the contributing factors of abuse?
14. What do children do at night?
15. What makes a man a man?
16. What makes woman a woman?
17. How easy is it for children to communicate with parents?
18. What do children talk about with parents?
19. What role do teachers play to curb abuse in school? Prevention, etc.
20. How are children's problems solved?
21. What is your understanding of the rights of the child?
22. What are the effects/consequences of abuse/violence on children's education?
23. What skills do children need to overcome the effects of abuse? Avoidance of dangerous situations, negotiation skills, etc.?

Males
1. What are the qualities of a safe school?
2. Follow up: Which qualities affect girls/boys?
3. What is your understanding of abuse?
4. Give examples of abuse.
5. How often does it happen or occur?

6. Describe existing reporting systems.
7. Describe existing referral systems.
8. What is the role of community leaders when school children are abused (this is also called response)?
9. What are the attitudes of boys that prevent children from going to school?
10. What are the attitudes of girls that prevent children from going to school?
11. What are the attitudes of teachers that prevent children from going to school?
12. What are the attitudes of adults that prevent children from going to school?
13. What are the contributing factors of abuse?
14. What do children do at night?
15. What makes a man a man?
16. What makes woman a woman?
17. How easy is it for children to communicate with parents?
18. What do children talk about with parents?
19. What role do teachers play to curb abuse in school? Prevention, etc.
20. How are children's problems solved?
21. What is your understanding of the rights of the child?
22. What are the effects/consequences of abuse/violence on children's education?
23. What skills do children need to overcome the effects of abuse? Avoidance of dangerous situations, negotiation skills, etc.?

Mixed
1. What are the qualities of a safe school?
2. Follow up: Which qualities affect girls/boys?
3. What is your understanding of abuse?
4. Give examples of abuse.
5. How often does it happen or occur?
6. Describe existing reporting systems.
7. Describe existing referral systems.
8. What is the role of community leaders when school children are abused (this is also called response)?
9. What are the attitudes of boys that prevent children from going to school?
10. What are the attitudes of girls that prevent children from going to school?
11. What are the attitudes of teachers that prevent children from going to school?
12. What are the attitudes of adults that prevent children from going to school?
13. What are the contributing factors of abuse?
14. What do children do at night?
15. What makes a man a man?
16. What makes woman a woman?
17. How easy is it for children to communicate with parents?
18. What do children talk about with parents?
19. What role do teachers play to curb abuse in school? Prevention, etc.
20. How are children's problems solved?
21. What is your understanding of the rights of the child?
22. What are the effects/consequences of abuse/violence on children's education?
23. What skills do children need to overcome the effects of abuse? Avoidance of dangerous situations, negotiation skills, etc.?