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Education Data Brief: Global Prevalence of School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV)

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DISCLAIMER

Produced by Dexis Consulting Group for the United States Agency for International Development

ACRONYMS

DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GSHS	Global School-based Student Health Surveys
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SMSG	Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General
SRBGV	School-Related Gender-Based Violence
TIMSS	Trends in Mathematics and Science Study Surveys
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Cultural, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VACS	Violence Against Children Survey
WHO	World Health Organization

EDUCATION DATA BRIEF: GLOBAL PREVALENCE OF SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SRGBV)

This Education Data Brief provides an overview of the global prevalence of School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV), using recent data to illustrate the scope and scale of SRGBV worldwide. In addition, the Data Brief provides country-level statistics when available, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. The Data Brief is divided into two primary sections: the Prevalence of SRGBV and the Impact of SRGBV. Following overall figures, the Prevalence of SRGBV section presents data and information organized by: bullying and other forms of non-sexual intimidation; sexual violence; physical violence; and high-risk groups. The Impact of SRGBV data is organized by impact on educational outcomes; impact on physical and mental health outcomes; relationship of exposure to prolonged toxic stress and developmental/cognitive outcomes; impact on early child marriage and early pregnancy; costs of SRGBV; and data on reporting and referrals.

PREVALENCE OF SRGBV

OVERVIEW STATISTICS

- Globally, an estimated 246 million children and adolescents experience school violence and bullying in some form every year.ⁱ
- Estimates suggest that the share of children and youth impacted by bullying and school violence range from 10% to 65%, depending on the country, study and definition used.ⁱⁱ

BULLYING AND OTHER FORMS OF NON-SEXUAL INTIMIDATION

Inclusive of name calling, peer exclusion, verbal intimidation, physical violence and cyber bullying

- Worldwide, close to 130 million (slightly more than one in three) students between the ages of 13 and 15 experience bullying.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Approximately one in three girls between the ages of 13 and 15 worldwide experience bullying on a regular basis.^{iv}
- In 12 of the 67 low- and middle-income countries with available data, more than half of adolescent girls said they recently experienced bullying.^v
- Global School-based Student Health Surveys (GSHS) data from 85 countries, ranging from 2003 to 2014, show that the share of youth, ages 13 to 15, that reported having been bullied on one or more days in the past 30 days ranged from 7% in Tajikistan (2006) to 74% in Samoa (2011). Trends in Mathematics and Science Study Surveys (TIMSS) data from 2011 found higher rates of bullying among 11 to 15-year-olds surveyed, with a reported 78% in Ghana and 81% in Botswana being bullied in the past month or more.^{vi}
- In a 2016 United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) opinion poll of 100,000 children and young people from 18 countries around the world, approximately two-thirds of respondents reported having been victims of bullying.^{vii}
- A study compiling World Health Organization (WHO) GSHS datasets from 19 low- and middle-income countries between 2003 and 2006 found that 34% of students ages 11 to 13 reported being bullied in the previous month, and 8% reported daily bullying.^{viii}
- Data from the 2016 UNICEF U-Report/Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General-Violence Against Children (SRSG-VAC) opinion poll found that of children who have

been bullied, 30% reported having told an adult, 30% told a friend or sibling, fewer than 10% told a teacher, and 30% told no one.^{ix}

- A 2008 survey in Ghana found that 31% of senior high school students were physically attacked one or more times during the preceding 12 months, while 40% of those surveyed reported being bullied one or more times during the past 30 days.^x
- In a survey of Nairobi, Kenya public schools, between 63% and 82% of the 100,000 students surveyed reported various types of bullying, while a survey in South Africa found that more than half of respondents had experienced bullying once or twice in the last month.^{xi}
- Bullying is pervasive in Botswana, Ghana, and South Africa, where in each country approximately 80% of the students of the sample population reported that they had been victimized by some form of bullying. About 80% of students surveyed are bullied monthly while almost 50% of students are bullied weekly.^{xii}

CYBERBULLYING

- The prevalence of cyberbullying is a growing concern. Available statistics suggest that the share of children and adolescents globally who are affected by cyberbullying ranges from 5% to 21%^{xiii}
- A 2013 survey in the United States found that 15% of children in grades 9 to 12 were bullied electronically in the past year. Girls were more than twice as likely to report having been victims of cyberbullying than boys, at 21% and 9% respectively.^{xiv}
- The 2012 National School Violence Study in South Africa, a representative sample of secondary school students, found that one in five said they had experienced some form of cyberbullying within the last year.^{xv}

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Inclusive of sexual abuse, transactional sex, sexual name calling, rape

- Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) data indicates that unwanted sexual touching is the most commonly reported form of child sexual abuse globally.^{xvi} The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) survey found that in six countries, including Kenya, Uganda and Zambia, over 40% of school principals reported that pupil–pupil sexual harassment had occurred either ‘sometimes’ or ‘often.’ Teachers were also reported to be perpetrators, with an average of 39% of school principals stating that teacher–pupil harassment had occurred in their schools.^{xvii}
- An analysis of data SACMEQ data shows that two out of five school principals in Southern and Eastern Africa report that sexual harassment occurred between pupils in their primary schools.^{xviii}
- In Kenya, one in five women and men who experienced sexual violence before the age of 18 reported that the first incident occurred at school. However, women were significantly more likely to say it happened while travelling on foot compared to men the same age, at 27% and 14%, respectively.^{xix}
- In South Africa, a recent national survey found that 8% of secondary school girls had experienced severe sexual assault or rape in the previous year while at school.^{xx}
- In Zambia, a school-based survey found that close to 11% of boys and 4% of girls experienced sexual comments from teachers.^{xxi}
- In Zimbabwe, women between the ages of 18 to 24 were significantly more likely than their

male peers to report that their first experiences of sexual violence before age 18 occurred on the way to or from school, at a rate of 19% and 7%, respectively.^{xxii}

- In Tanzania, approximately 23% of females and 15% of males between the ages of 13 to 24 reported experiences of at least one incidence of sexual violence during childhood while traveling to or from school.^{xxiii}
- In South Africa, a 2011-2012 nationally representative survey found that around 1 in 20 secondary school students, approximately 5%, reported at least one act of unwanted sexual contact at school in the year preceding the survey. Girls were much more likely to report having been recently sexually violated at school than boys, at rates of 8% and 1%, respectively.^{xxiv}

TRANSACTIONAL SEX

- In Mozambique, in a Ministry of Education study, 70% of girl respondents reported knowing that some teachers use sexual intercourse as a condition for promotion between grades.^{xxv}
- Sexual coercion and abuse by teachers in exchange for better marks has been documented in Latin America and Africa. The coercion of girls who cannot pay for school-related expenses into sexual relationships by male teachers has been documented in Africa.^{xxvi}
- In Ghana, 75% of children cited teachers as the main perpetrators of violence in school; in Senegal, the figure was 80%. Violence can be manifested as inappropriate sexual relationships between male teachers and female students, transactional sex to cover school fees and the cost of school materials, sex for grades, and excessive use of corporal punishment.^{xxvii}
- In the VACS carried out in Swaziland in 2007, in which only females were sampled, about 2% of young women aged 13 to 24 said that a teacher or principal offered money, gifts, food, shelter or better grades in exchange for sex at some point in their lives.^{xxviii}

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Inclusive of corporal punishment, exploitative labor, public humiliation

- A 2014 UNICEF report shows that among adolescent boys, peers and teachers were the most common perpetrators of physical violence. Among adolescent girls, parents and other caregivers were the most common perpetrators of physical violence. In some countries, teachers were mentioned by a substantial proportion of girls, including 48% in Uganda, 42% in Kenya and 32% in Nigeria.^{xxix}
- According to Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) data for 36 available countries, in four sub-Saharan African countries, teachers were the most commonly reported perpetrators of physical violence among non-married girls, with 34% in Ghana, 47% in Kenya, 58% in Uganda, and 39% in the Tanzania. Among boys between the ages of 15 to 19 who have experienced any physical violence since age 15, teachers were named as the perpetrators in 34% of the instances in Uganda, 29% in Mozambique, 21% Cameroon, and 19% in Ghana.^{xxx}

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

- Some 732 million school-aged children, half the global population between the ages of 6 to 17, live in countries where they are not legally protected from corporal punishment at school.^{xxxi}
- Among younger adolescent girls between the ages of 10 to 14, nearly two out of three are subjected to corporal punishment on a regular basis, including at home and at school, based on 33 countries with available data.^{xxxii}

- The first national study on child abuse in India in 2007 found that more than two in three children reported experiencing physical abuse, including corporal punishment. Outside of the family, teachers were reported as the main perpetrators.^{xxxiii}
- Boys and children from poorer families and lower castes experience the highest rates of corporal punishment. A study carried out by Young Lives in Andhra Pradesh, India, where corporal punishment has been banned, found that 82% of boys and 72% of girls between the ages of 7 and 8 had experienced physical punishment in school in the past week.^{xxxiv}
- In each of the countries covered by the Young Lives study, namely Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam, boys were more likely to experience school corporal punishment than girls.^{xxxv}
- Interviews with students in Barbados, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe have revealed that school corporal punishment was painful, and that it made the adolescents hate their teachers, have difficulty concentrating and learning, perform less well in school, and avoid or even drop out of school for fear of being beaten.^{xxxvi}
- An examination of the prevalence of school corporal punishment in 63 countries found that nine countries had corporal punishment rates of over 90% of students, including Botswana, Cameroon Uganda, and Tanzania, while 11 countries have rates between 70% and 89%, including Benin, Ghana, and Togo.^{xxxvii}

PREVALENCE DATA FOR SPECIFIC HIGH-RISK GROUPS

Inclusive of students with disabilities, LGBT students, marginalized populations, conflict and crisis environments

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- In the United States, female students who received special education services were found to be 4.8 times more likely to be bullied than their peers without disabilities.^{xxxviii}
- In a survey of 3,706 primary schoolchildren from Uganda, 24% of 11- to 14-year-old girls with disabilities reported sexual violence at school, compared to 12% of non-disabled girls.^{xxxix}

LGBT STUDENTS

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students consistently report a higher prevalence of violence compared to their non-LGBT peers. A 2014 study in New Zealand found that lesbian, gay and bisexual students are three times more likely to be bullied than their heterosexual peers, and transgender students are five times more likely to be bullied than non-transgender peers.^{xi}
- In a 2012 study in the United States of high school students, girls were more likely than boys to report being victims of cyberbullying in combination with school bullying, at a rate of 11% and 8% respectively. Among youth who self-identified as non-heterosexual, 23% reported being victims of both cyberbullying and school bullying, compared with only 9% of those who identified as heterosexual.^{xii}
- A recent United Nations Educational, Cultural, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) evidence review found that the proportion of LGBT students experiencing school violence and bullying ranged from 16% in Nepal to 85% in the United States.^{xiii}
- Data collected in Norway in 2015 found that between 15% and 48% of LGBT students were bullied compared to 7% of heterosexual students.^{xiiii}

- In Asia, studies show that the proportion of LGBT students who experience bullying in school ranges from 7% in Mongolia to 68% in Japan.^{xliv}
- Students who are not LGBT but are perceived not to conform to gender norms are also targets of homophobic violence, and in some countries up to one-third of other students who do not appear to conform to gender norms experience homophobic and transphobic violence in school.^{xlv} In Thailand, for example, 24% of heterosexual students experienced violence because their gender expression was perceived as non-conforming.^{xlvi}

MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS

- Children affected by HIV and AIDS are at an increased risk of sexual violence and of being targeted for bullying. A study of over 6,700 secondary school students in Zimbabwe found strong evidence that orphaned children, particularly those who had lost both parents, were more likely to experience forced sex than non-orphans.^{xlvii}
- Most vulnerable children and adolescents, including those who are poor; from ethnic, linguistic or cultural minorities; from migrant or refugee communities; or have disabilities, are at a higher risk of school violence and bullying.^{xlviii} Analysis of SACMEQ data shows that in Kenya, where almost one-half of all school principals reported pupil–pupil sexual harassment, there was a 40-percentage point difference between schools serving children from the poorest or richest backgrounds.^{xlix}
- In the Young Lives project, children from poor families were consistently found to have experienced higher rates of bullying.^l
- The Action Aid Sexual Violence Against Girls project found that sexual exploitation can be related to poverty, with girls being coerced into sexual relations by male teachers to support their school costs.^{li}

CONFLICT AND CRISIS ENVIRONMENTS

- During conflict, when institutions, accountability structures and social networks are weakened, girls and boys are at greater risk of being sexually violated.^{lii}
- Teenage girls may be particularly exposed to sexual violence and harassment when parts of their schools are used as barracks or bases by armed forces, armed groups, or police. Fears of such abuse can cause girls to drop out, be pulled out, or not enroll in higher years of studies.^{liii}
- In countries where sexual violence is used as a weapon of war, the outcome is severe. For girls, the consequences of rape (which include psychological trauma and stigmatization) put their right to education at risk for the rest of their lives.^{liv}

IMPACT OF SRGBV

IMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

- A recent study conducted systematic reviews and meta-analyses that identified 67 and 43 studies respectively from 21 countries, to estimate the relationship globally between different types of violence in childhood on educational outcomes. The study found that children who have experienced any form of violence in childhood have a 13% predicted probability that they will not graduate from school. Males who are bullied are nearly three times more likely to be absent

from school and girls who have experienced sexual violence have a three-fold increased risk of being absent.^{lv}

- A global review found that emotional violence increases a child's risk of dropping out of school twofold. Girls who have experienced emotional violence in childhood are at a 2.5 times increased risk of experiencing negative educational outcomes (grade repetition, taking remedial classes, etc.) than girls who have never experienced emotional violence.^{lvi}
- Violence in childhood has a significant impact on children's academic achievement on standardized tests. Based on a recent global review, children who experience violence before the age of 18 have a 9% predicted probability of performing poorly in school compared to their peers who have not experienced childhood violence.^{lvii}
- In a survey of gender-based violence in Malawi, 61% of girls who experienced gender-based violence said it affected their school performance.^{lviii}
- Victims of school violence and bullying are more likely to miss school, have lower grades and drop out of school, which can negatively impact academic achievement, future education opportunities, and employment prospects.^{lix}
- The 2006 United Nations World Report on Violence against Children notes that verbal abuse, bullying and sexual violence in schools are commonly reported as reasons for lack of motivation, absenteeism and drop-out.^{lx}
- Corporal punishment can play a factor in school drop-out. For example, in a study in Nepal, 14% of school drop-out was attributed to corporal punishment and fear of teachers.^{lxi}
- A 2010 study in the United Kingdom found that 16-year-olds who were bullied at school were twice as likely to be without education, employment or training, and to have lower wage levels, at age 23 and 33, than those who were not bullied. In turn, these young men are three times more likely to suffer from depression and five times more likely to have a criminal record.^{lxii}
- A UNESCO evidence review found that, in Thailand, 31% of students who had experienced homophobic teasing or bullying reported absence from school in the past month, and in Argentina, 45% of transgender students dropped out of school.^{lxiii} It was reported that LGBT students had poorer academic performance than their heterosexual peers in Australia, Chile, Denmark, El Salvador, Italy and Poland.^{lxiv}
- In Nigeria, a study found that children who attended a school that allowed school corporal punishment (slapping, pinching, hitting with a stick) had lower receptive vocabulary, lower executive functioning, and lower intrinsic motivation than children who attended a school that did not allow corporal punishment.^{lxv}

IMPACT ON PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

- A survey in Swaziland found that females between the ages of 13 to 24 years who had been exposed to childhood sexual violence were three times more likely to contract HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, or have an unwanted pregnancy, than those who had not been exposed.^{lxvi}
- Young people involved in physical fighting are more likely to experience lower life satisfaction and lower psychological well-being, as well as poorer family and peer relationships.^{lxvii}
- Recent studies suggest that victims of school bullying are at increased risk of poor health, as well as lower wealth and social-relationship outcomes in adulthood, even after controlling for family hardship and childhood psychiatric disorders.^{lxviii}
- An analysis of data from 30 industrialized and transitional countries found that only 27% of

children who were bullied, and bullies, stated that they enjoyed excellent health, compared with 36% of other children. Similarly, 29% of children who were bullied, and bullies, said they had a very satisfied life, compared with 40% of other children.^{lxxix}

- A study documenting rates of injury related to school corporal punishment found that school children in Zambia reported pain, physical discomfort, nausea, and embarrassment as well as feeling vengeful.^{lxxx}
- In Tanzania, nearly a quarter of 408 primary school children surveyed said they experienced corporal punishment so severe they were injured.^{lxxxi}

RELATIONSHIP OF EXPOSURE TO PROLONGED TOXIC STRESS AND DEVELOPMENTAL/COGNITIVE OUTCOMES

- Exposure to violence at an early age can impair brain development and damage other parts of the nervous system, as well as the endocrine, circulatory, musculoskeletal, reproductive, respiratory and immune systems, with lifelong consequences.^{lxxii}
- Toxic stress can lead to short-term changes in observable behavior, as well as less outwardly visible yet permanent changes in brain structure and function. Growing evidence associates adverse childhood experiences to greater risk for a variety of chronic diseases well into the adult years.^{lxxiii}
- Involvement in school bullying can be a predictor of future antisocial and criminal behavior. Being bullied is also linked to heightened risk of eating disorders and social and relationship difficulties.^{lxxiv}
- Students who are bullied are more likely than their peers to be depressed, lonely, or anxious and have low self-esteem.^{lxxv}
- Several studies, cited in a recent UNESCO review of evidence, indicate that children and young people who have experienced homophobic bullying are at an increased risk of anxiety, depression, fear, stress, low self-esteem, loneliness, self-harm and suicidal thoughts.^{lxxvi}
- A study in the United Kingdom that traced children bullied between the ages 7 and 11, found lasting effects 40 years later, including in school qualifications, family support, cognitive tests and physical health.^{lxxvii}

IMPACT ON EARLY CHILD MARRIAGE AND EARLY PREGNANCY

- Sexual abuse, leading to pregnancy, can happen in school in the form of SRGBV inflicted on girls by male students or teachers. A survey by the Ministry of National Education of Côte d'Ivoire, for example, found that approximately 50% of teachers reported having sexual relationships with students, with figures as high as 70% in one region.^{lxxviii}
- Pregnancy-related SRGBV also includes bullying and teasing perpetrated by classmates and teachers toward pregnant girls and adolescent mothers.^{lxxix}
- Child marriage is closely related to early and unintended pregnancy and school dropout, and it can sharpen the dynamics of gender inequality.^{lxxx}
- DHS/Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) data from 78 developing countries over the period 2000 to 2011 show that 63% of girls reporting being married before age 18 had no education, compared with 45% with primary education and 20% with secondary education.^{lxxxi}
- Some countries have policies that expel or exclude pregnant girls from school. Where girls do remain in school or return after childbirth, they may face bullying and verbal abuse by classmates and teachers.^{lxxxii}

COSTS OF SRGBV

- In the East Asia and Pacific region, it is estimated that the economic costs of even some of the health consequences associated with child maltreatment were equivalent to between 1.4% and 2.5% of the region's annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP).^{lxxxiii}
- Youth violence in Brazil alone is estimated to cost nearly \$19 billion every year, of which \$943 million can be linked to violence in schools.^{lxxxiv}
- The estimated cost to the economy in the United States of violence associated with schools is \$7.9 billion a year.^{lxxxv}
- Analytic work supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) shows that SRGBV alone can be associated with the loss of one primary grade of schooling, which translates to an annual cost of around \$17 billion to low- and middle-income countries.^{lxxxvi}
- A study has shown that, each year, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria lose \$974 million, \$301 million and \$1,662 million, respectively for failing to educate girls to the same standard as boys, and violence in school is one of the key factors contributing to the under-representation of girls in education.^{lxxxvii}
- A Plan International study in India calculated that the costs to society of children dropping out of school as a result of school corporal punishment were between \$1.5 and \$7.4 billion in lost benefits to society each year, which is equivalent to between .13% and .64% of GDP in India alone.^{lxxxviii}

DATA ON REPORTING AND REFERRALS

- DHS asked girls and women whether they sought help from any source to end the violence and, if so, from whom. Findings from 30 countries confirm that most adolescent girls who experience violence do not seek help. In all 30 countries, more than half of girls between the ages of 15 to 19 who experienced physical and/or sexual violence said they did not ask anyone for assistance.^{lxxxix}
- Based on data from 30 countries, only 1% of adolescent girls who have experience forced sex reached out for professional help.^{xc}
- A baseline survey conducted in Uganda, as part of the Good Schools Study, included 3,706 children participants from 42 schools, and found that first-line response to children's reports of abuse was poor, despite having some referral structures in place. From the baseline survey, 529 children (14%) were referred. Girls were more likely to be referred and to meet criteria for a serious case, than boys, at a rate of 9% and 4% respectively. A total of 104 referrals (20%) resulted in some concrete action, though only 20 cases (3.8%) had met all criteria for receiving an adequate response. Nearly half (43%) of referred children had ever sought help by disclosing their experiences of violence prior to the baseline survey.^{xci}

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