# GLOBAL STUDY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN – IN AND AROUND SCHOOLS

Save the Children

# CONTENT

# BACKGROUND

A decade has passed since the results from the United Nation's Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children were presented in 2006. More than three years had been dedicated to this global effort to paint a detailed picture of the nature, extent and causes of violence against children – involving numerous stakeholders and children themselves in the process. The study concluded that violence against children happens everywhere, in every country and society and across all social groups. While some violence is unexpected and isolated, most violent acts against children are carried out by people they know and should be able to trust, such as parents, teachers and schoolmates. Violence against children includes physical violence, psychological violence, neglect and maltreatment. Although consequences of violence may vary, the short- and long-term repercussions for children are very often devastating for their health, well-being and development.[1] Schools have the responsibility to promote development and education, in a child-friendly and safe environment. Schools have the potential to provide an ideal arena to break patterns of violence, by promoting skills to resolve conflict and contributing to long-term educational attainment. The present study, commissioned by Save the Children Sweden with generous financial support from the IKEA foundation, wishes to shed additional light on violence against children and its particular effects on children's possibilities to feel safe, learn and develop – in schools and beyond.

This is a summary based upon the Global and In-country research report which was prepared by Emerging Market Consulting.

## Purpose

The purpose of the study was to explore the extent and consequences of violence against children, in and around the school environment and children's ability to enrol, attend and learn in school. The three in-depth country studies of China, Indonesia and Rwanda were preceded by a global literature review and a review of violence reduction intervention evaluations. Study findings on prevalence, consequences, risk and protective factors – and recommendations based on these findings – will guide forthcoming Violence Free School programmes.

## Scope and definitions

The study encompassed a Documents review (with a global remit) focusing on products stemming from academic research and evaluations carried out by academia as well as NGOs, UN and other relevant actors. For the countries specifically targeted with the explorative approach (China, Indonesia and Rwanda) the document review also included laws, regulations and policies with a particular bearing on violence against children in the school environment.

Throughout the study "children" were defined as boys and girls below the age of 18, in keeping with the definition of children specified by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).[2] This definition was primarily used for the Documents Review, while the definition was narrowed down additionally in the explorative country studies to capture children in primary schools more specifically, thus encompassing children in grades reflecting the system in each country included.

The study examined four forms of violence against children, while acknowledging that clear boundaries are difficult to define and children rarely experience only one form of violence. For the purpose of the study however physical, psychological, sexual and negligence/maltreatment have been used as a framework. *(For more elaborate details on these definitions, see the full report appendix 1.)*

1) UN Study on Violence
2) United Nations (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child. United Nations General Assembly. A/RES/44/25. New York: United Nations General Assembly.

Likewise, "school contexts" within the Documents Review included both formal and informal educational settings, while the explorative country studies included children, school staff and parents of children attending formal schools only. In the explorative country studies reference was made to "in and around school contexts" to capture the dimensions of violence occurring nearby the school environment or while children travel to and from school.

## Methodology and limitations

The Documents Review was based on a systematic, word-search approach to the PubMed database containing resources on violence against children, including: school-based prevalence studies; studies assessing the outcomes resulting from child violence in schools or at homes and in the community; and, evaluation research of relevant school-based interventions. The review gathered global empirical evidence on *prevalence*, the multifaceted *impact of violence* on children's general well-being, academic performance, school attendance and enrolment/drop-out rates, as well as experiences from tested *prevention and response initiatives* in and around the school environment.

Apart from being relevant from a thematic point of view, the eligible documents needed to have undergone a peer-review process, being published and available in English. For the explorative country studies additional documents were considered eligible, based on the discretion and language support of Save the Children staff in China, Indonesia and Rwanda. *(For a more elaborate account of the research inclusion criteria, see full report page 8.)*

The Documents Review included 36 academic studies in the research analysis. Resources from the UN, NGOs and other relevant organisations and actors amounted to 15 documents. An innumerable amount of resources were reviewed and discussed amongst the research team and Save the Children staff in relation to the explorative country studies.

During the explorative country studies a number of in-depth interviews and participatory mappings were carried out with children. Mapping activities were conducted as group exercises, in which children drew their communities, and discussed child protection risks and other concerns in their communities. Coloured stickers were used to identify places that were "safe" and "unsafe", and facilitators led children

in follow-up discussions to explore these issues in greater depth. School staff (in particular teachers) parents and other key informants (civil servants or other professionals holding education-related positions) were interviewed or taking part in focus-group discussions. Beyond prevalence and impact, these activities included exploration of existing policies, procedures and approaches used within schools, families and communities to prevent and respond to violence against children. All respondents were also probed for input relating to the violence at home and in the communities, and potential linkages to and effects on children's possibilities to benefit from education.

The bulk of findings presented in this summary revolves around the testimonies of parents, teachers and children themselves – in particular those individuals who generously shared their experiences during the country studies. Country-level research in China, Indonesia and Rwanda included 220 in-depth interviews with school children, 57 participatory mapping activities with in-school children, 58 focus group discussions (FGDs) with teachers and school administrators, 195 in-depth interviews with parents, and 49 in-depth interviews with key informants. Country-level quantitative research consisted of a school-based survey of 520 teachers respondents using convenience sampling across a total of 53 schools in China (143 respondents across 8 schools), Indonesia (176 respondents across 28 schools) and Rwanda (201 respondents across 17 schools). *(For a comprehensive presentation of findings from the quantitative survey, see appendix 5 in the research report.)*

## Limitations

### DOCUMENT REVIEW (GLOBAL)

In the 36 peer-reviewed, academic articles included, there was a significant *representation* of peer-reviewed articles in high-income countries, while resources from the UN, NGOs and others, focused largely on low- and middle-income countries. Moreover here are very few *longitudinal studies* available on violence against children **and** its effects on education.

The criteria used for the selection of resources did not yield any results relating to violence against children in schools in *emergency contexts.*

### COUNTRY-SPECIFIC DOCUMENT REVIEW (COUNTRY-SPECIFIC)

The document review shows an extensive overall gap in literature pertaining to violence against children in

and around schools in **Rwanda**. While peer-violence in the form of 'bullying' is examined in some resources in **China** and **Indonesia**, teachers' violence has so far not been documented and researched. When policies exist (mostly in Indonesia) there is yet no documentation available regarding compliance. Other significant research gaps exist in relation to interventions with the aim of reducing violence, prevalence of different forms of violence and the impact on violence against children on education outcomes (enrolment, attendance and academic performance).

## QUALITATIVE DATA

Activities to solicit information on sensitive issues, directly from children and adults, have to be carefully designed. Subsequent analysis of the information provided has to consider and strike a balance between what is said, as well as what is possibly left out – without over-interpretation. Parental consent was also a prerequisite for children's participation in interviews, which possibly affected the representation of children.

## QUANTITATIVE DATA

Survey questions always stand the risk of being misinterpreted or unclear for respondents. Additionally, when translating concepts between English and the national languages concerned, nuances and cultural differences can be lost and concepts form a different meaning. This may impact on individual country analysis, as well as possibilities to compare results between countries.

# FINDINGS

## Global Literature Review
Global studies show widespread violence towards children in schools in a number of different forms. Below is summary of the findings from the review, which aims to capture *prevalence* (including different forms of violence) and the *impact* of violence against children.

### Prevalence

#### PHYSICAL VIOLENCE
Corporal punishment in schools is largely undocumented in high-income countries. Some high-income countries have also introduced explicit bans on corporal punishment in schools. Corporal punishment has however, been exposed as persistent and institutional throughout low- and middle-income countries. Despite a number of reports throughout the literature, rates of school corporal punishment are not commonly collected.

A study from 2015[3] highlights the differences in corporal punishment depending on the child's age. Three countries (Ethiopia, Peru and Vietnam) and two states in India (Andhra Pradesh and Telangana) were included. The likelihood of a child experiencing corporal punishment at 8 and 15 years of age was measured. Figures were highest in India (80%) at age 8, followed by Ethiopia (40%) Peru (30%) and Vietnam (20%). The exact same pattern, although with a significant decrease in likelihood, was found among children aged 15 in these countries. (India 33%, Ethiopia 12,5%, Peru 6,7% and Vietnam "negligible"). This highlights the fact that resorting to violence against young children tends to largely persist and remain a concern also for older children.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE
The Document Review indicates that peer-to-peer-violence (also frequently called 'bullying') – is common in all societies, regardless of income-level. In a recent study from Peru, using nationally representative survey data of all school-aged children[4], almost 70% of boys between 9 and 17 years, stated having experienced psychological violence from their peers. In Great Britain, peer-to-peer violence (not disaggregated by type of violence) identified 12.1% of students experiencing mental violence victimization, 16.4% having been bullies, and 5.2% have been both bullies and victims.[5] In a cross-sectional prevalence study emotional abuse of 105 teachers and 128 middle school students in Northwest Italy, teachers did not perceive their behaviour as abuse, yet 98% of students showed perceptions of having being abused when surveyed about emotionally abusive behaviours.[6]

#### SEXUAL VIOLENCE
Of the 61 documents included in the review, 15 articles focused specifically on School-related Gender-based Violence, of which 10 were based in sub-Saharan Africa and 3 were peer-reviewed academic studies.

A survey conducted by Concern Worldwide (2013) included 300 students and 90 teachers from 10 schools across Malawi. Almost half (46%) of the surveyed students had experienced at least one incident of either physical or verbal sexual violence during the past year. Strikingly, 29% of students and 36% of teachers stated it was sometimes 'a girl's fault if a student of teacher touches her private parts'.

A smaller study of 13 to 17 year old girls in Zimbabwe[7], confirmed that almost half of them had experienced unsolicited physical contact from boys. Furthermore, 14 out of 73 girls admitted to being propositioned by a teacher and testified to knowing other girls who had been approached. Almost all girls included in the study (92%) said they had been propositioned by adult men to engage in sexual relationships. This sort of grooming usually took place on the way to or from school. In half of the cases the proposition went beyond verbal contact to physical contact.

A study in Benin highlighted that primary school girls were more likely to experience inappropriate touching in school than secondary school girls (60% and 50% respectively) while girls in primary and secondary schools were equally likely to receive inappropriate requests (50% of girls surveyed).[8]

A study in Sierra Leone[9] concluded that sexual harassment from teachers was the primary impediment for girls' attendance in schools.

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*3) Ogando Portela & Pells, 2015*
*4) Fry et al. 2016*
*5) A longitudinal birth cohort study of 2,232 children between the ages of 5 and 7 years (Bowes et al., 2009).*

*6) Longobardi et al. 2015*
*7) Leach, Machakanja & Mandoga, 2000*
*8) Wible, 2004*
*9) Robinson, 2015*

## NEGLECT

The Document Review revealed that violence against children in the form of "neglect" is an extensively under-examined topic, rarely included in parallel with other forms of violence against children. In two studies, in Iran[10] and Cyprus[11] respectively the topic has however been explored. In Cyprus more than half of the children included in the study (grades 4 to 6) experienced neglect. In Iran, the proportion was 80% among 11-year olds and 53% among 17-year olds.

## Impact of violence against children

### IMPACT ON GENERAL WELL-BEING AND DEVELOPMENT

Studies have pinpointed several important findings, in terms of the consequences of violence against children. Oftentimes, these consequences are most clearly manifested in the school environment, regardless of where violence is mostly experienced by children. Some of these findings are:

- Childhood neglect leads to behavioural problems in the classroom.[12]

- Different social and emotional outcomes can be related to different forms of violence during childhood. In one study, physically abused children received significantly higher scores in terms of behaviour disorders than neglected children.[13] In another, disciplinary referrals and number of suspensions increased in later school years for neglected and abused children, but not for non-maltreated children.[14]

- Children exposed to intimate partner violence between their parents were more likely perceived as having "behavioural problems" according to the same parents and an increased likelihood of bullying others.[15]

- All forms of violence against children correlate with internalisation of disorders, such as depression,[16] and are risk factors for violent delinquency.[17]

## Impact on Enrolment and Attendance

Violence against children has a significant impact on school enrolment and attendance, which can be seen in reported drop-out rates and rates of absenteeism.

Exposure to gender-based, sexual violence was the reported cause for 43% of primary school dropouts and 80% of secondary school drop-outs among girls studied in Benin.[18] In Ethiopia, more than 300 parents were asked, and 40% stated that the violence against girls specifically discouraged them from ensuring that their daughters get access to school.[19] School attendance patterns are naturally associated with enrolment; children who experience abuse of any form in and around schools are more likely to have lower attendance rates. In Ethiopia, the impact of violence against girls and boys, in primary as well as in secondary schools, was studied to measure effects on absenteeism. While it had a slightly greater impact on boys' absenteeism in primary schools, the situation had changed in secondary schools were girls were much more likely to be absent due to experiences of violence.[20]

The relationship between violence at school and absenteeism is not seen only in low-income contexts. One in four students, in a study in United States, stated that harassment leads them to not participating in or wanting to attend school.[21] Another, large-scale study among 6th graders in the United States found absenteeism 39.7% higher among children who reported having experienced some form of violence compared with those who had not. A recent, longitudinal study from Canada, could establish linkages between the severity of physical violence experienced (at home) with the average number of years in school. Children who had experienced *severe, moderate* and *no* physical violence as children, studied for 14.49, 15.33 and 15.35 years respectively.[22]

## Impact on Academic Achievement

Violence against children, in and around schools, strongly impacts on academic achievement. Several studies have examined the impact of violence by linking it to results in standardised tests. The results from standardized science test amongst grade 4 and grade 8 students in Botswana, Ghana, and South Africa showed that experiences of being 'bullied' indicated lower levels of acquiring science skills in the test. Likewise, a study found that past-week physical violence, committed by school staff, was associated with students reporting difficulties on standardized test scores.[23] Physical violence perpetrated by school

10) Stephenson et al. 2006
11) Theoklitou, Kabitsis & Kabitsi, 2012
12) Manly et al. 2013
13) Kurtz et al. 1993
14) Kendall-Tackett & Eckenrode, 1996
15) Peek-Asa et al. 2007
16) Ahmed et al. 2015; Sugar 1990; Wodarski et al. 1990

17) Crooks, 2007
18) Wible, 2004
19) Save the Children, 2008
20) Save the Children, 2008
21) Lipson et al. 2001
22) Tanaka et al. 2015
23) Devries et al. 2014b

staff was also shown to be negatively associated with both mathematics and vocabulary standardized tests in studies conducted in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam.[24]

However, all studies included in the review, which assessed links between academic achievement and exposure to violence against children *at home,* were conducted in the United States and Canada. In these countries lower academic achievement was measured in terms of for example verbal intelligence;[25] special education status;[26] grade repetitions;[27] math and reading tests;[28] school grades;[29] including a study compiling a composite index of overall school performance;[30] Few studies have attempted to assess educational outcomes in relation to the form of violence experienced. One study however, assessed the correlation between physically abused, neglected and non-maltreated children on language and math skills respectively, in which physically abused scored lowest, neglected children second lowest and non-maltreated children did best.[31] A small study in Georgia (USA) indicated that children experiencing physical abuse and neglect were much more likely to having to repeat a grade (55% and 60% respectively) than non-maltreated children (2%).[32]

In conclusion, various types of violence, regardless of the person committing the violent act and regardless of location, are all associated with factors leading to poor academic achievement, as demonstrated with results from various countries and regions. This is a breach of several rights unconditionally accorded to children in the Convention on the Rights of the Child – from their right to development, to obtain quality education and to be protected from all forms of violence – to mention just a few.

## Global-level Programmes Review – Interventions and Evaluations

The Document Review identified a number of school-based programmes/interventions which are described below. At least one evaluation has been carried out in relation to each, the results of which are presented after each intervention. Programmes/interventions have been grouped into four categories. The fourth and final category consists of

Programmes/Interventions in China, Indonesia and Rwanda – countries which were researched more thoroughly in this study. There were no eligible program interventions identified in the document review in Rwanda. *(A full summary table of included **global** intervention evaluations can be found in Appendix 3, and for **research country** intervention evaluations in Appendix 4 in the full report.)*

### 1) PROGRAMMES TO REDUCE TEACHER AND SCHOOL-STAFF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

**Good Schools Toolkit** (Uganda) Containing school-based interventions focused on reducing corporal and humiliating punishment in the forms of physical and mental violence towards children, including specific behaviour-change techniques for school-staff and students.

*Evaluation findings:* An evaluation carried out in Uganda found that staff physical violence towards children saw significant past-week and past-term average decreases. Further, post-intervention data showed a 60% reduction of physical violence. However, there were no significant impacts of the intervention on increased student mental health and wellbeing according to standardized tests. There were also no observed significant correlations of the impact on academic achievement.[33]

**Schools Positive Behavior Management Program** (Barbados and Dominica), known as the Child Friendly School initiative in Dominica, aimed to curb physical violence perpetrated by teachers in schools through sensitizing teachers and principals in alternative methods of discipline by provision of teacher training support, and support to both students and parents (including outreach activities).

*Evaluation findings:* The intervention has created some success in encouraging alternative methods to physical punishment. It has also promoted student positive behaviours through provision of rewards and incentives. The program has led to increased gender sensitivity among some teachers in terms of engaging with students. However, the unauthorized use of physical and mental violence through demeaning and hurtful punishments remains widespread.[34]

24) Ogando Portela & Pells, 2015
25) Barnett, Vondra & Shonk 1996
26) Ibid.
27) Chapple & Vaske 2010; Kendall-Tackett & Eckenrode 1996; Kurtz et al. 1993; Rowe & Eckenrode 1999
28) Coohey et al. 2011; Kinard 2001
29) Kendall-Tackett & Eckenrode 1996; Manly et al. 2013
30) Kurtz et al. 1993; Wodarski et al. 1990
31) Kurtz et al. 1993
32) Wodarski et al. 1990
33) Devries et al. 2015
34) Daniel, Evelyn & Wood, 2012

**Creating Safe Places for Learning in Schools** (Jamaica) Intervention aimed to reduce school staff physical violence through promotion of fostering skills more aligned with child rights. School staff, parents and students learnt how to better manage anger, mitigate conflict and violence with the ultimate aim of creating a safer school environment.

*Evaluation findings:* The Ministry of Education Jamaica (MOE) and UNICEF (2011) has evaluated the programme and found that 49% of student respondents believed physical violence had decreased in their school, 26% perceived the levels of physical violence level unchanged and 15.2 % said it had increased. (8.8% said they did not know). Half of all students (boys and girls) said physical violence was still used by teachers as a means for punishment in their schools, which was consistent with the 53% baseline rate.

## 2) CLASSROOM CURRICULUM INTERVENTIONS

Three school curriculum interventions focused on reducing peer-violence among students.

**Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention** (Kansas and Illinois, United States) is a universal classroom curriculum designed for grade 6 students and has been implemented in schools in Kansas (6 schools) and Illinois (24 schools).

*Evaluation findings:* Multilevel analyses of the programme concluded that intervention schools were 42% less likely to self-report physical violence than control schools, yet there was no significant intervention effect on psychological violence in the form of verbal/relational bullying, homophobic teasing, nor on sexual violence.[35]

**Fourth R** (Southwest Ontario, Canada) is a universal curriculum for grade 9 students aiming to prevent violent delinquency, improve sexual health, and reduce sexual violence. It consisted of 21-classroom based sessions focused on awareness and skills development relating to relationship dynamics common to sexual violence in dating, unsafe sex, substance use, and peer physical violence.

*Evaluation findings:* Violent delinquency associated with exposure to previous violence was lower in intervention than control schools. The differential impact on youth with histories of violent exposure is believed to be a result of the curriculum focus on healthy relationship skills.[36]

**Gender-sensitivity curriculum** (Thailand) aimed to enhance positive attitudes on gender roles and prevent sexual violence. The curriculum was conducted in 11 sessions and encouraged students to express their feelings, and promoted skills to reduce physical and sexual violence.

*Evaluation findings:* Student surveys showed a significantly improved attitude score on gender roles in the intervention school vis-à-vis control schools.[37]

## 3) MULTI-SECTOR INTERVENTIONS

Two programmes were multi-sectoral interventions aimed at curbing violence against children through action from policy advocacy to direct case-specific psychological interventions.

**Children at Risk** (Dallas, Unites States) targets intervention in "high-risk" schools and communities through involvement with multiple stakeholders. The program had evolved from a video demonstration (of the effects of domestic violence on children) to a one-day workshop covering topics of bullying, gang violence, sexual assault, sexual abuse, domestic violence, dating violence, living with addicted parents, neglect, and abuse. The programme involves teachers, counsellors, nurses, administrators, and law-enforcement personnel.

*Evaluation findings:* Participants surveyed demonstrated a substantial increase in knowledge after regarding knowledge of domestic and community violence after training sessions, according to post-training scores.[38]

**Safe Schools** (Ghana and Malawi) aims to identify traditional definitions of gender roles and the types of violence perpetrated in schools. The model tackles all scales of intervention, from national advocacy for improved policies, to institutional Ministry of Education training, community mobilization, individual counselling and prevention. Training manuals were provided for students, teachers and community counsellors on issues surrounding basic listening skills and children's rights and responsibilities to prevent and respond to school-related gender-based violence incidents.

*Evaluation findings:* There was a significant increase in teacher awareness on how to report violations (from 45% to 75%). Post-survey showed that almost all teachers (96%) now believed whipping

35) Espelage, 2013
36) Crooks et al. 2011

37) Chamroonsawasdi et al. 2010
38) Walker & Smith, 2009

of boys was unacceptable (up from 76%). Awareness on issues surrounding sexual harassment of girls had significantly increased. Furthermore, students were more confident that they had the right to claim protection from mistreatment.[39]

## 4) INTERVENTIONS IN CHINA AND INDONESIA (NONE ELIGIBLE IN RWANDA)

**Child Friendly Islamic Boarding School** (Indonesia) was first piloted in 3 boarding schools in Garut, Indonesia in 2008 and later expanded to 5 schools.[40] The program aims to develop a child protection system within the Islamic education environment.

*Evaluation findings:* The program was shown to improve students' knowledge of their rights while changing behaviour regarding 'punishment' practices within the schools (grades 8,9, 11 and 12). Despite improvements in child protection, there was still evidence of unspecified form of violence against children in the boarding schools perpetrated by both teachers and other students.

**Whole School Approach** (Hong Kong, China) The programme couples curriculum development and advocacy with the aim of reducing violence in and around schools. It includes psychological violence from peers in the form of 'cyber-bullying'. The programme increases bullying awareness, develops curricula activities across all grades and actively engages parents. The approach stipulates clear punishment for engaging in bullying conducts and emphasis on routine reviews of school policy.

*Evaluation findings:* An evaluation from 2015 found the 'whole-school' program to have clear benefits to curbing psychological violence, but was not able to provide a quantitative judgement due to the complex, holistic nature of the programme.

**Safe and Friendly Schools Led by Children** (Yunnan Province, China) aimed at reducing physical and psychological violence among students.[41] The Safe and Friendly Schools intervention activities include: 1) improving school facilities; 2) raising stakeholder awareness through trainings (teachers, parents and students); 3) building child groups to record program development and report child protection issues; and, 4) support the school to provide for children with special needs.

*Evaluation findings:* 1) Right to Play (2013) highlighted qualitative evidence that children are deeply involved in the whole-school program and can increasingly self-manage their behaviour.[42] Qualitative data further suggests that physical and verbal violence has decreased, including between teachers and students, older and younger students, and students with and without special needs. 2) Zhang, Qui & Wu (2015) evaluated the effectiveness of interventions to curb emotional violence in Bao'an District, Shenzhen. Prior to the intervention, the incidence of psychological violence was 78.7% among all groups, and 67.0% after the intervention. Moreover, the intervention groups demonstrated a higher level of recognition of psychological compared with control groups.[43]

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39) USAID 2008
40) UNICEF, LSAF & T.d. Homes 2011
41) Right to Play 2013
42) Right to Play 2013
43) Ibid.

# COUNTRY RESEARCH

The in-country research consisted of a comprehensive Country Document Review, which followed the same eligibility criteria as the Global Document Review, looking specifically for documentation on *Prevalence* and *Impact* of violence against children in China, Indonesia and Rwanda. The country research also generated information on the interventions and related evaluations, which were presented in the previous chapter. A three- country overview of documentation relating to prevalence and impact are presented below. The main findings are presented in concert with the qualitative and quantitative findings from each country.

The Global and Country Document Review also identified a number of topics deserving additional attention. These have been explored as **Emerging Issues** and main findings will be presented according to relevance under each country heading. The emerging themes were:

1) Culture of respect in schools
2) Gender equity in schools
3) Functioning schools
4) Proactive stance against violence

## Overview of documentation relating to Prevalence (China, Indonesia and Rwanda)

A limited number of studies have been conducted assessing prevalence rates of violence against children. There are no studies available on prevalence rates in Rwanda. Three studies in Indonesia focused largely on 'bullying' rates. Violence from teachers was touched upon in one study. In China, studies with prevalence rates have investigated physical and/or psychological violence from teachers and peers. One study investigated physical violence as punishment from teachers; one study investigated verbal violence from teachers; and eight studies from China investigated bullying in schools. An overview of prevalence rates from these studies is provided in the table below:

| PREVALENCE | CHINA | INDONESIA | RWANDA |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Physical violence** | 53.1% of students reported physical punishment from teachers before the age of 16 [44] | No studies available | No studies available |
| **Psychological violence** | No studies available [45] | No studies available | No studies available |
| **'Bullying' (peer violence)** | 23.6% of students self-reported involvement in physical and/or psychological violence. 9% self-reported victimization of the same. [46] | Fewer students 'bullied' in 2015 compared to 2007 (Boys 55.3%, girls 44.7% in 2007) and, boys 24.0%, girls 13.0% in 2015). Bullying rates outside Java and Sumatra significantly higher (boys 30.6%, girls 23.1% outside Java and Sumatra and boys 19.6%, girls 16.2% and boys 23.0%, girls 18.7% in Java). [47]<br><br>Violence against girls more common in rural areas compared to urban areas. Physical violence more common among boys, psychological violence more common among girls. [48] | No studies available |
| **Sexual violence** | No studies available | No studies available | No studies available |
| **Neglect** | No studies available | No studies available | No studies available |

44) Chen and Liao 2005
45) No studies on actual prevalence, but a study found that Verbal violence from teachers (all school aged children in Beijing) occurred primarily during later primary school (grades 4 and 6.)

46) Zhang et al. 2015
47) Ministry of Health and Education, Indonesia 2007 and 2015.
48) Narhetali et al. 2015

## Overview of documentation relating to Impact (China, Indonesia and Rwanda)

In terms of documentation from China, Indonesia and Rwanda related to the impact of violence against children, eligible documentation was generally sparse and unevenly distributed. China presented five studies investigating the impact of physical violence by teachers and peer violence (physical and/or psychological). Two studies examined the impact of psychological and sexual violence on girls specifically. There were no studies conducted on the impact of violence against children outside school in Indonesia and in Rwanda. Three studies conducted in China investigated the impact of violence at home. One study in Rwanda examined the impact of psychological violence against girls only, and another study examined the impact of sexual violence against girls. *(For a full summary of the studies see appendix 4 in full research report.)*

## China

### IN-COUNTRY RESEARCH FINDINGS

In terms of **regulations and national policies** related to violence against children, the Steering Committee of the People's Republic of China has implemented policies on a national-level. They focus largely on interventions aiming at reducing children's exposure to violence. This has resulted in a special program to strengthen the legal education in Chinese schools and the strengthening of rules and regulations to decrease bullying. In 2015, the Steering Committee also passed a law that requires educational institutions to report if they have found cases of domestic violence. The efficiency of the law has not yet been evaluated.

Teachers involved in the in-country research, stated that they are nowadays forbidden to resort to corporal punishment of students – a previously frequently used means of instilling discipline. Teachers expressed their frustration with this new regulation, as they felt it prevented them from eradicating peer violence. One key informant summed up the problem as follows, "In case of bullying or violence in the school, the perpetrator is protected according to the law, rather than the victim…" Teachers described confusion, as children were still suffering from domestic violence by their parents "whose guardianship cannot be deprived". Parents, however, expressed relief that the school regulation had changed in this respect. From their point of view, their children experienced a safe school environment with classmates and teachers who "cared" about their children.

### FORMS OF VIOLENCE

In China, **physical violence** was mentioned rather casually by adult respondents and always with the caveat that it was "rare." The quantitative data, based on teachers' perceptions, suggest that punishments (physical or "other") from teachers are more common than peer-violence. Nearly all examples of physical violence were described by adults as being afflicted on a student who was perceived as particularly "weak or different from other children". Child respondents, however, mentioned in-school physical violence as a common occurrence. They spoke of corporal punishment, such as "beating on hands" often with a "bamboo whip" and "smashing with books." One student mentioned that their teacher "was too serious about this" because sometimes [the disciplined student's] hands were swollen with red marks. Child respondents also spoke of experiencing physical violence from peers if they did well in class, or if they told on another student to the teacher.

In terms of violent upbringing methods, one parent who had attended a parenting trainings said, "The psychologist said the children could only be educated by persuasion instead of physical punishment. We try to not to beat him, but sometimes we will if he deserves it." School personnel claimed that they had no knowledge as to what happened to children outside of school and had no insight into home-based violence. Their low opinion of parents' skills indicates that they believe children experience a lot of violence outside of school rather than in school. This is however contrary to what Chinese children report.

**Psychological violence** was most often discussed in terms of *teachers* insulting students as a means of ameliorating student performance. Psychological violence from *peers* did not come up very often in interviews with children. Parents however reported instances of children being bullied by other students.

China was the only country where respondents discussed **sexual violence** as a problem facing both genders, and the only country to include LGBTQ issues as well. As one key informant, an NGO worker, stated, there are "reports of boys suffering sexual abuse…we need to publicize the concept, which shall be educated with sexual knowledge jointly." Another key informant, a government worker, added that, "more boys become victims of…sodomy." Female students found the topic of sexual violence quite traumatic and were particularly nervous about the toilet areas, potentially suggesting they are a

particular location of concern. One key informant, a social worker, stated, "Some girls dare not to talk about their sexual experience, because they are ashamed and afraid to be destroyed if it is disclosed. The same key informant called the fact that the victim is punished and shamed, rather than the perpetrator, an "ideological problem" Parents did not echo any of these concerns.

Reports of **neglect** were almost non-existent. Some teachers and children spoke of children being left alone at home and unaccompanied on their way to and from school. These incidents, however, were not mentioned as examples of violence. Some parents stated that leaving a child alone may make the child feel "alienated" or expose him or her to certain risks but did not see it as a form of violence.

### WHERE VIOLENCE TAKES PLACE – AND NOT
Students generally felt most safe inside buildings, such as in their homes, the hospital, and the police station. Students were overall divided about the safety of their school grounds and buildings. One key informant, an NGO worker, echoed these concerns; "The violence against children often occurs in the teacher's office and places which cannot be monitored." Parents, however, universally expressed confidence that their children were safe inside the school grounds.

Students seemed to be most afraid of dangerous events outside of buildings. Parents reported walking their children to school and around the neighbourhood in general. As one parent mentioned, "we would accompany his usual walk after homework because we are afraid of him being kidnapped." Issues of human trafficking came up uniquely in China as a concern across all respondent groups.

### ROOTS TO VIOLENCE IN POVERTY?
School personnel connected poor parenting techniques to violent behaviour amongst children. One teacher stated that, "In general, [students] violate others due to learned bad behaviours or habits." Teachers, however, shied away from attributing poor parenting skills to poor parents exclusively. For example, a group of teachers spoke of many cases of students in "families in a poor economic situation" who had been badly beaten by their parents, but they were also well-aware that rich families "exhibited the same excessive violent behaviour". Key informants also denounced any link between poverty and violence against children, with one government

worker saying, "Victim profile of child abuse in school is not relevant with their economic status. We [have] found many rich kids become victims." Parents occasionally mentioned poverty as being unfortunate for children, telling stories of poor relatives whose children was not properly taken care of; however, they never discussed poverty in connection to violence. Children did not discuss poverty at all, even when pressed specifically by the interviewer to do so.

The quantitative research data supports the conclusion that family poverty was seen by respondents as a *risk factor*, rather than root cause to violence against children.

### VIOLENCE PREVENTION
Chinese schools appear to rely on a culture of vigilance to prevent violence in schools, although on an *informal* basis. Students reported watching out for people who might be dangerous or situations that might be unsafe. They also reported a willingness to tell their parents when or if someone did something to them that was inappropriate or harmful. Teachers described a thorough and effective system of reporting in school. One teacher described their system as follows, "There is no aggressive behaviour in our school. In case of [a] quarrel, lots of children will inform the teacher of it. We set the supervisors such as young pioneers, team leaders, squadron leaders, monitor and discipline supervisors in many classes, who will report such case to the teacher." Many teachers, parents and students stated that schools are willing to involve the police, if needed, in serious incidents. Teachers also spoke of "supporting" students who were new to the school help them fit into the school culture and of paying careful "attention" to the behaviour of other students to prevent them from being victimized. The vigilance of teachers was a common theme which students confirmed, saying that teachers "listened" to them well.

Schools also engaged in parent outreach to prevent violent conflict between parents and students and to ensure students were coming to school "socialized" to mitigate the risk of violence in school. As one teacher in a focus group stated, "Our village office educates parents to change their somewhat simple and rude education on children." The idea that parents are essentially incompetent when it comes to raising their children, was a common perception among teachers. Teachers expressed frustration over the fact that parents were not particularly helpful in preventing violence at schools. Although training

programs for parents were available, teachers still expressed a desire for increased training to parents – although the existing ones were not considered particularly effective.

## REPORTING VIOLENCE

In China, reporting of violence against children seems to be almost non-existent, except in the most severe cases. As one key informant, a social welfare worker, summarized, "A child suffers the sexual violence, his parents think that it will be okay if they keep it a secret, if they speak out they cannot stay in the original place any more…[or] because they are afraid of disgrace." One key informant, a therapist, even argued that reporting was in fact counter-productive. She stated, "Domestic shame should not be made public. He may recognize that it is a bad thing or his practice is wrong, he may think about some methods to correct their misbehaviours to make his family more harmonious."

Students generally believed they should tell adults when dangerous or violent things happen to them, but did not report specific instances of actually doing so. Parents mentioned that students would be quite reluctant to report bullying incidents to anyone. Teachers reported letting the students work out the issue among themselves, and only prioritized reporting if students could not resolve the conflict. Parents were mostly unable to describe the reporting system in-school or out of school. Rather than reporting cases of violence, parents tended to have retaliatory reactions and did not pursue any formal or informal justice mechanism. For example, one teacher told a story about parents who physically assaulted the principal after learning their daughter had been raped by a teacher.

## IMPACT

Findings from the document review in China, shows that students who had experienced **physical violence** from *teachers* had elevated symptoms of for example interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility and paranoia. Similarly, students who had experienced **bullying** reported similar symptoms including worries about future emotional well-being (particularly reported by girls). In addition, victims showed decreased rates of academic success, with 11.9% reporting that they wished to drop-out or change schools.[49]

Among the three countries selected for in-depth exploration, studies on the impacts of violence against children at home on children's wellbeing and education were only found in China. One study found that authoritarian behaviour in *mothers* resulted in less physical violence towards children when compared with authoritarian behaviour in fathers. Authoritarian behaviour of both parents resulted in confusion, frustration and feelings of insecurity among children. This increased the risk for so called "deviant social behaviours" and peer rejection in the school.[50] Studies had also found that poor parenting methods influences academic performance negatively.[51]

**School performance** was mentioned by all respondent groups as likely to suffer as a result of violence. As one child explained, when children are victims of violence, "They will be too sad, melancholy and absent-minded, and they also won't listen to the teacher, so that they have fallen behind in their study." Teachers reported few problems with school attendance. However, any failure to attend was immediately addressed through contacts with the child's parents. Student dropout was seen as an extreme reaction. As one key informant, an education researcher, stated, "In case of serious cases of violence, the children will drop out." Another key informant, an NGO worker, echoed this, stating, "Many children do not want to get to school and drop out after suffering the violence. I know lots of such cases…which have occurred recently. Most of them are forced to drop out."

Teachers tended to trivialise the severity of peer violence, and also to some extent violence against children from adults, and its impact on children's **well-being** – particularly among young children. They insisted that peer-based violence resulted in student dropout only in the most severe cases. For example, one teacher stated, "In Grade 1 and Grade 2 in primary school, students are just playing. I hit you, you beat me. They don't have deep thoughts." Another teacher stated that when peer-based violence of any type occurs "They certainly feel a little uncomfortable and angry, but the feeling is slight." In relation to adult perpetrators, one key informant, a social welfare worker, summarized, "The [child] does know that it is a kind of violence and does not think that it is a kind of violence or important. After beating the children, the parents do not think that it is a kind of violence and take it for granted." One parent took this statement even further, sharing, "The safety problem of children is all right now. The problem is that they are too effeminate. They cannot be beaten and scolded just like before, while they are also precocious earlier and sensible when they are still young."

49) Zhang et al. 2015
50) Chen, Dong & Zhou 1997
51) Guo (2003) and Feng et al. (2015)

Based on the quantitative data, violence in and around schools was found to have the least impact on enrolment and dropout rates. This suggests that regulation which requires children to remain in school are effective, while alleviating the risk and perceived effects of violence against children are considered secondary to obtaining education.

### EMERGING ISSUES

Notably, and despite the reported strained relationship between teachers and parents, the quantitative data suggest that "school is a welcoming place for parents" (equal to Indonesia in this respect). On the other hand, it is reported to be less welcoming for children. Teachers however, describe themselves being more respectful towards students, than student are towards their peers, let alone towards teachers.

China's schools are geared for children′s academic achievements, but this does not necessarily translate into a more child-friendly environment. The quantitative data indicates the highest level of teacher training, but lower on children′s ability to report incidents of violence safely. This goes for peer violence, as well as violence from teachers. The sample schools showed low levels of prioritizing students and ensuring they feel welcome in the school environment. The research found that China overall has the lowest rate of violence in schools, however, given the discrepancy between teachers' and students' perceptions on in-school violence, this finding should not be overstated. Notably, although teacher respondents rank the risk and incidence of different forms of violence against children relatively low, they are convinced that children are afraid of coming to their schools.

In relation to the perceived ability to provide gender equal opportunities, participation and treatment, China ranks slightly lower than both Indonesia and Rwanda.

## Indonesia

### IN-COUNTRY RESEARCH FINDINGS

In terms of **regulations and national policies**, the document review revealed 10 policy documents relevant to violence against children in and around schools in Indonesia. Despite the policy environment, there is a significant gap in documentation on the efficacy of such regulations. *(For more details on these policies see appendix 4 in full research report).* Further, very few documents provide any specific policy pre-

scriptions; rather, the regulations provide sweeping calls for prevention.

Recently, national government regulations have tried to address the legality of school-based violence in particular. One teacher shared, "Now there is a regulation from the government that we are not allowed to hit children, we are just allowed to…guide students when they misbehave." In the case of a child exhibiting violent behaviour at school, teachers reported using public humiliation rather than corporal punishment. In practice it means that there is an obvious risk that physical violence are replaced by psychological violence as means for punishment. This believed "progress" also includes self- and peer administered punishments in an attempt for adults to stay clear of the violent forms traditionally used and criticised.

### FORMS OF VIOLENCE

In Indonesia, **physical violence** was commonly perpetrated by parents as a means of ensuring obedience from their children. As one parent stated, "Parents usually scold their children with physical contact." Teachers described cases of badly beaten students coming to school. Another teacher spoke of the frequent physical fights among students who would "fight until [they were] bleeding." Physical violence by teachers as a means of punishment was also reported by students and parents, but often denied by teachers. One parent, for example, described how on one occasion "[Several] teachers got angry and hit [some children] till they bled [using a] wooden stick." One student described a peer who was absent "because the previous day the teacher hit him – that made him sick." The quantitative data, based on teachers' perceptions, suggest that punishments (physical or "other") from teachers are more common than peer-violence.

A range of **psychological violence** was reported, with children "mocking" and "making fun" of each other to purposefully cause "humiliation" in a way that often escalates to relatively serious physical violence, such as "punching" and "slapping." Children spoke with fear of the level of bullying in school and used the word "scared" quite frequently. One student was afraid to go to the toilet because someone would "hide his book or pen" . The same student described frequent fighting among students, without any recourse to teachers. One key informant, an NGO worker, highlighted this in particular, stating, "We often times neglect verbal abuse, identifying [it] as [a] way of joking among children, but actually it

is the cause of brawl and low attendance to school." From children, there was almost no mention of psychological violence by adults (teachers or parents).

The topic of **sexual violence** was only briefly touched upon, although respondents acknowledged that it takes place. In this respect, forced marriages were a particular concern. One key informant, an NGO worker, expressed that he thought that there was an overemphasis on sexual violence in Indonesia, stating, "[Sexual violence] is always an issue but in the past we don't necessarily talk about let alone report it. Therefore, I think it is unfair to focus so much on sexual violence as if other types of violence are less dangerous for children. Our current data showed higher risk among girls. But whether it is true or not, we need to further investigate."

**Neglect** / negligent treatment was mentioned only by key informants as a result of poverty and abandonment. The quantitative data, based on teachers' perceptions, demonstrate that Indonesian teachers reported that neglecting students was common among teachers.

**Gender**

Quantitative data showed that teacher respondents believed girls to be more at risk of violence in Indonesia. Boys were mentioned as particularly violent across all types of violence in contrast to girls. The most consistent gender differences mentioned was with regards to boys' and girls' reactions to violence. As one key informant from the District of Education stated, "girls tend to be afraid and keeping silent, while boys usually scream out or run away to avoid something bad." Despite the fact that girls were seen as "weaker", respondents reported that boys and girls were equally likely to be victimized and equally prone to take risks related to safety. Boys and girls themselves provided similar responses to interviewers' questions, although one group of female students mentioned a particular version of gendered violence where girls felt, "Unsafe in classrooms, because sometimes when we misspeak, the kids would get mad and want to hit us girls. Sometimes they would write our names along with inappropriate things on the walls…sometimes they write negative things… about love and stuff."

## WHERE VIOLENCE TAKES PLACE – AND NOT

Some children felt areas of their school or community were unsafe and spoke of feeling continuously "uneasy." Paths in wilderness and urban areas were seen as particularly unsafe. Feelings of "unease" among children in public spaces were not reflected in adults' responses. Parents reflected the children's feelings of unease only in relation to children, on their way to school, having to go through areas where "criminals might loiter". Parents felt that children were safe once they were inside their school. Places of worship and the schoolyard were most frequently considered safe by children.

## ROOTS TO VIOLENCE IN POVERTY?

In Indonesia, poverty was mentioned repeatedly by key informants as a critical risk factor for violence. One key informant discussed how poverty makes children vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation referring to a recent case. Another key informant said: "Parents are working furiously but they could not…get money, while children are demanding their needs, so that parents get angry [and are] hitting the children." Parents spoke occasionally about other families' poverty as a precursor to violent behaviour. For example, one mother told a story of a child who came from a poor family and extorted and beat her son for money. Another respondent from the District of Education discussed this economic risk factor in terms of reporting, stating that, "Victims whose families are educated, they tend to report the case, but victims who are minor, usually their problems aren't completely solved." Children did not discuss poverty at all, even when pressed specifically by the interviewer to do so.

The quantitative research data supports the conclusion that family poverty was seen by respondents as a *risk factor*, rather than root cause to violence against children.

## VIOLENCE PREVENTION

There is a relatively antagonistic relationship overall between Indonesian parents and teachers, each directing blame over to the other for violence in schools. Most parents had direct, negative experiences of teachers resorting to violence towards their children. One parent stated, that the "teacher said something that hurt [my] child's feeling[s]… [he is] almost unwilling to attend this school anymore because of it." Almost all parents said they had gone to school to reprimand the teacher for behaving violently. Parents also complained that teachers did not adequately supervise their children to prevent peer violence. This antagonism impedes cooperative preventative efforts of violence against children.

Most school personnel reported that they had not been trained in violence prevention, nor did they mention any formal strategies for violence prevention. Instead, focus was on "counseling" and "advising" students perceived to deviate in some way, hoping that the "moral" and "spiritual" pressure would convince students to correct their behaviour. They reported sharing principles with students such as, "It's improper to ridicule others, we should respect them." Most schools surveyed seemed to have a religious bent, with one teacher stating, "Here [we] educate for goodness, and we also have our motto here, we are a Christian school." Parents seemed to apply the same moral advising. Students' responses reflected this, with nearly all reporting that their teachers and parents gave them advice of some sort.

Though teachers reported that parents could receive training on preventing and addressing violence against children, parents were not familiar with such possibilities. Violence prevention and response in Indonesia is largely based on a system of informal moral and religious appeal. Findings suggest that such systems risk falling short of recognising and granting children sufficient protection.

## REPORTING VIOLENCE

Indonesia lacks a solid formal reporting system for violence against children. When one key informant, an NGO worker, was asked why violence goes unreported, he summarized the situation as follows, "The real issue is we do not have good and effective reporting mechanism. So why bother making [a] report if we know it won't be followed up [on]?" There is a general lack of formal community-based, as well as school-based, reporting systems, while the informal systems existing in schools are marked by the conflicting perspectives of parents and teachers. Parents expressed a preference for resolving conflicts between children within the community using a restorative justice approach rather than involving the police. One parent explained that in the past, for example, "When the kids were fighting or someone got injured, we just took them to the Public Health Center and paid for the medical charge, that's it." Most teachers expressed frustration with parents' reaction to violence against children and believed they were uncooperative with school-based efforts to respond effectively, including facilitating reporting efforts. There were cases of parents who had violently retaliated against teachers for separating fighting students. One teacher shared, "When children hurt one another, we ask parents to not

interfere. Therefore, we make rules that parents who disobey the rules will receive sanctions." In line with this theme, children actually reported hiding violent events from their parents to prevent conflict between parents and teachers.

The quantitative data reveals that teachers´ perceptions of the frequency of all forms of violence against children were substantially higher than in China and Rwanda. However, teachers in Indonesia are less likely to encourage children to report violence, as well as themselves be supportive of bringing issues forward through existing reporting mechanisms (including contacting the police).

## IMPACT

In Indonesia, student **drop-out** was mentioned by both parents and teachers as a consequence of violence in school. As one key informant from the district of education stated, when a child experiences "humiliation or violence, he doesn't want to come to school." One teacher mentioned that when violence occurs at school, a child "will not attend school because they are afraid of their friends." A few teachers noted that the consequences of violence were particularly severe for poor students or those living in orphanages. Violence against children in Indonesia was found to have the highest comparative impact on attendance, dropout and enrollment rates, which is most likely a consequence of elevated violence and decreased reporting levels.

In terms of children's **well-being**, the socioemotional toll that violence takes on children was apparent to all respondents, not least for children themselves, who repeatedly mentioned the "fear" violence created in children. As a key informant who worked for the UN explained, "We have much evidence of horrific consequences of violence towards children, from minor injury to suicide. We also have media documentation showing that children commit suicide due to bullying here in Indonesia." Similarly, one key informant from the District of Education stated, "When children experience violence at home, then they will be stressed…at school."

## EMERGING ISSUES

Notably, and despite the reported strained relationship between teachers and parents, the quantitative data suggest that "school is a welcoming place for parents" (equal to China in this respect) Teachers perceive their respect towards students as high (highest among the countries included), but levels of

respect between students, as well as students' respect for teachers, are perceived as almost at the same level. The same teachers also state to place the highest value on and understanding for children's rights, compared with China and Rwanda.

In relation to the perceived ability to provide gender equal opportunities, participation and treatment, Indonesia ranks slightly higher than China, but lower than Rwanda.

## Rwanda
### IN-COUNTRY RESEARCH FINDINGS
In Rwanda, the only relevant **policy** was Law N°54/2011 of 14/12/2011 Relating to the Rights and the Protection of the Child. The law does not provide specifics but stipulates that child education must not consist of traumatization. Further, the Ministry in charge of children must specify necessary educational measures to ensure non-violent disciplinary punishments that ensure the care of children.

### FORMS OF VIOLENCE
Among Rwandan respondents, **physical violence** was most often described in terms of beatings, especially by guardians or teachers. Teachers claimed not to use corporal punishment, but most students stated the contrary in interviews. They generally reported that teachers "tell us to be quiet and beat us if we don't listen". Normally, teachers would beat disruptive students with a light stick. One student stated he/she felt unsafe at school because of "getting beaten because of doing something wrong." Teachers reported meting out equal punishments to both boys and girls when they misbehaved in school. The quantitative data, based on teachers' perceptions, suggest that punishments (physical or "other") from teachers are more common than peer-violence. Compared to violent punishment by teachers, physical violence among peers was considered relatively minor, usually involving "pinching", "scratching", or "throwing minor objects at each other". Children often stated that they would not be friends with anyone who was physically violent towards them.

Respondents spoke of **psychological violence** used by teachers as "harsh words" that "harass" students, while depicting students "hurl[ing] insults" that "threaten" each other. Teachers and children also spoke of psychological violence perpetrated by parents, which indicates that children may be mimicking their parents' violent behaviour.

**Sexual violence** was predominantly described as rape, and more specifically, as happening against "[girls] who became pregnant because of violence." It was seen as one of the most serious forms of violence across each of the respondent groups, and as a form of violence that targeted only females, with the risk of a girl being raped increasing as she grows older. So called "girl-centered" violence was perceived as being more consequently addressed by law enforcement than other forms of violence. For example, one key informant from the Rwandan National police stated that, "When the case is serious police, intervene and the law is applied, for example, gender based violence and sexual violence."

There was very little mention of **neglect** / negligent treatment, except by key informants who occasionally talked about it in the context of a parent failing to support their child adequately or neglecting to provide health care or schooling.

### WHERE VIOLENCE TAKES PLACE – AND NOT
Children stated that the market place was fundamentally unsafe, due to the large quantity of alcohol consumed by adults in that area. During the mapping activity children also marked "the house" as unsafe. According to children, walking to school in a large group seemed to mitigate this fear. There was a consensus among respondents that school was a safe place as well. One parent stated that schools "are safe for all students," while one teacher stated, "On their way home, children may fight. But there is no violence [in] school." In general, students agreed that they felt safe in school because the teachers ensured their safety. The one location most consistently considered safe by children was the church.

### ROOTS TO VIOLENCE IN POVERTY?
School personnel and students mentioned poverty in their comments as a possible reason for lower school attendance, enrolment and achievement in school. They also mentioned poverty as a potential precursor of neglect / negligent treatment. One key informant from the district of education stated, "For the poor child, it is so hard for him or her because of lacking school materials, insufficient food and clothes and any basic need [and] this lead makes him/her feel lonely and ashamed." There was no mentioning of the possibility that poverty might spawn violent behaviour in the child. In relation to violence, children did not discuss poverty at all, even when pressed specifically by the interviewer to do so.

The quantitative research data supports the conclusion that family poverty was seen by respondents as a *risk factor*, rather than root cause to violence against children.

## VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Violence prevention in Rwanda is first and foremost school-based. As a key informant stated, "Some parents they don't know more about violence, they think violence it's only rape. They forget that denying for children' materials that's not violence! We have work to do, to make sure that all parents are aware of fighting any form of violence against children." Rwandan schools have violence reduction curriculums to promote "harmony" and to help students be vigilant for violence before it occurs.

Rwandan teachers were oriented towards supporting students and expressed the importance of listening to children as a way to prevent violence from happening or to stop it from continuing. One teacher stated, "When you listen to [the] child; you may discover other information from him/her which helps you deal with her/his issues." Students noticed this responsiveness overall, one student stated, "Sometimes you get better advice from the teacher than your parents, and that makes you happy." Parents were grateful that schools and teachers took such an active role in reaching out to parents and children to prevent violence. All key informants echoed these themes on a macro level, emphasizing the collaborative approach to problem-solving that school personnel were encouraged to take in order to both prevent violence.

## REPORTING VIOLENCE

Rwandan schools have a formal violence reporting system in place. As one teacher explained, "every child knows that anytime he or she is violated [he or she] has to report it to the teachers. When necessary teachers [then] take it to the school head and the headmaster may also report it to parents or police [depending on] the type of violence [that] occurred." Consequently, measures taken to prevent or find remedies for a child being violated, are painstakingly dependent on an adult's (teacher's) perceptions of the severity of the event and willingness to take action.

The formal reporting system in Rwandan schools is bolstered by many teachers who have an understanding of how to coax information about violence from their students, and a willingness to help students to "handle problems" and to alert the police

when necessary. There is no specific training offered to teachers, but some general guidelines have been widely shared with schools. Teachers recognized that children may have difficulty in reporting sexual violence in particular. For example, one teacher stated that children, "Can have fear to report that because they think that if they report a perpetrator of sexual violence he can be punished seriously" and may instead sometimes receive money from perpetrators to keep silent about the abuse. In their responses, parents appeared to lean towards similar informal "restorative justice"-systems (payment for property damage or healthcare bills by the perpetrator). This approached were considered beneficial for children, and parents felt comfortable reporting any incidents of violence against their children to village chairmen or local authorities. Parents were aware that children are likely to hide incidences of sexual violence in particular, but could not think of solutions to that problem.

## IMPACT

In terms of impact on **education**, student drop-out and absence from school were the most commonly mentioned impacts of violence, mentioned by children.  One key informant, an NGO worker, summarised the consequences for child victims of violence in Rwanda as follows, "Even though he / she [may be] intelligent violence may reduce his [/her] performance for sure. In addition there are some who prefer to drop out!" Teachers and parents saw the risk of drop-out primarily in relation to physical violence. School drop-out due to unwanted pregnancy was mentioned as a common consequence of sexual violence. Parents claimed that, in general, girls showed the effects of violence more strongly than boys, but boys were "naturally" more inclined to dropout than girls when violence occurred.

Teachers discussed the cycle of violence created by violence at home, where the same children would turn into perpetrators at school. One teacher summarised, "Sometimes children may fight among them[selves] when they are going back at home; and you find that child comes report to you that he/she has been beaten." Children were acutely aware of the negative impact that violence has on children, particularly if not appropriately addressed. One student stated, for example, "if the victimiser is at school, [the victims] are always haunted by fear." Rwandan students felt confident in receiving emotional and practical support, both from adults and other children, if they experienced violence. One student detailed that

when students, "Hurl insults at one another and/or fight…[children] intervene and condemn their behaviour. Adults, on the other hand, take the two parties aside to investigate the case and the one who is found to have started the conflict has to apologise."

While Rwanda reports on comparatively amicable relationships between teachers and parents, the quantitative data suggests that school is not perceived by teachers as a "welcoming place for parents". Instead, Rwandan sample schools rank as the most "welcoming place for children" among the countries researched. Teachers describe them being more respectful towards students, than students are towards their peers, let alone towards teachers.

Notably, although teacher respondents rank the risk and incidence of different forms of violence against children relatively low, they are convinced that children are afraid of coming to their schools.

In relation to the perceived ability to provide gender equal opportunities, participation and treatment, Rwanda ranks slightly higher than Indonesia and China.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter summarises the conclusions and recommendations from the Research report. *(For an exhaustive account of Conclusions and Recommendations see chapter 6 and 7 respectively in the full report.)*

Physical and psychological violence ('bullying') perpetrated by peers, are believed to be the most common **forms of violence** against children in the wider school context. However, physical punishment perpetrated by teachers is also documented as a rampant concern. Among respondents involved in the country research, physical violence was the form of violence most frequently mentioned followed by psychological violence. Notably, respondents are aware of the fact that children are often being exposed to more than one form of violence. Various forms of violence, regardless of culprit or location, are all associated with a myriad of consequences for children's general wellbeing, possibilities to thrive and benefit from education. Consequences range from direct injury, to life-long struggles with physical and psychological health and even death.

Beyond well-being in school, and in terms of pure **academic performance**, the study has highlight-ed solid evidence of violence having an impact on subject learning (maths, science, vocabulary, reading etc.) based upon scoring in for example standardised tests. The study also confirmed that school **enrolment and attendance** rates are likely to drop as a result of exposure to any form of violence. Due to the strong emphasis on education (not least in the countries specifically studied here) the likelihood of children *enduring* a harsh school environment, although lacking the preconditions to truly take stock of education, is also a factor for everyone working with child rights to consider in programming. Drop-out and attendance rates may not reveal all dimensions necessary to break cycles of violence and prevent children from internalising their experiences, stay in school and suffer in silence. The subsequent results can be the same for attendees as well as drop-outs; lower graduation rates and more negative health and life outcomes overall.

The study shows that **neglect and maltreatment** is still an under-researched topic, although relatively often referred to by respondents as having damaging and violent consequences. Neglect is likely to affect younger children more tangibly than older children, as their protection and guidance needs are more extensive. Older children may have developed resilience and coping skills, although experiences of neglect in early childhood linger with them.

Not surprisingly, *violence in schools* has gained more attention than violence outside the school setting, let alone in the *private sphere of homes*. Undoubtedly, many dimensions of violence against children are yet to uncover. Nevertheless, the school arena provides an incomparable access to children and insights into their daily lives – in schools and beyond. Schools in many countries are catching up with developed country schools when it comes to expanding the focus on academic achievement to also include a so called compensatory task. The spheres of schools and homes are increasingly overlapping when schools are expected to make up for potential deficits at home, offer remedies and raise non-violent citizens. While teachers in Rwanda appear to be a praised group of professionals, with clear-cut boundaries to parents and homes, findings from China and Indonesia demonstrate how expectations on roles affect parent-teacher relations, ranging from mutual blame to outright hostility. Similar testimonies are nowadays echoed in many societies around the globe. This confusion around roles is likely to persist well into a future when all forms of violence against children,

in all settings, are completely banned in legislation. Questions on the most ideal forms of supporting children's development will seek their answers.

Many societies still have a long way to go, however, to recognise and dissmiss violent forms of bringing up children as what they truly are, rather than love and care is imperative. Neither should peer violence be accepted as inevitable attributes of childhood. Perceptions have started to slowly shift, which can be seen in both policy and preference, as concerns how children should be "**disciplined**" and what they are granted to learn in terms of their rights to protection from violence. This knowledge raises children's own expectations. In some countries this progress has led to a backlash against what is often perceived as a foreign "rights- agenda" on par with parents/adults rights and cultural and religious beliefs. In compliance with the most pertinent concerns regarding physical punishment, teacher respondents in this study have revealed a shift to "public humiliation" of children instead. This believed "progress" also includes self- and peer administered punishments in an attempt for adults to stay clear of the violent forms traditionally used and criticised.

Culture, tradition, legality and the fact that many adults who become parents today have experienced violent forms of upbringing, are factors more likely to affect their own child-rearing approaches, rather than their socio-economic status. While **poverty** should be taken into account as a risk factor, it cannot be ascribed full explanatory power for the pervasiveness of violence against children. Violence against children happens everywhere, in every country and society and across all social groups. The study shows that children themselves are not prone to accept poverty as an explanation.

**Legislation, regulations and policies** are not the ultimate answer to abolishing violence, yet, they are necessary preconditions for schools, communities and people to be guided in the right(s) direction. While such initiatives depend on certain degrees of popular support to be accepted at all, they also need to challenge current thinking and ways of doing things. The study concludes that very few of the documents reviewed provide any specific policy prescriptions. Instead, most of them contain sweeping calls for prevention: Not least large countries, with decentralised systems of governance, struggle with making the wealth of policies known and practical for those people expected to ensure their implemen-

tation. Indonesia is a case in point. The study has once again highlighted the familiar gaps between on the one hand, policy-makers' visions and implementers' realities, and on the other hand, the perspectives of children vis-à-vis adults.

Calling for **trainings** on violence prevention topics, including for parents on their behalf, is a common theme among respondents. Interestingly, Rwandan respondents, who considered themselves least trained and most left to figure out interventions themselves, ranked comparatively better that Chinese and Indonesian respondents in terms of pro-active, violence prevention efforts – according to the quantitative data. Teachers in Rwanda also (self-)reported a higher level of knowledge of reporting procedures, higher ability to keep students safe, and more frequent teaching on appropriate behaviour and norms, when compared to China and Indonesia. For good and/or bad, Rwandan respondents were also less likely to identify violence against children at home.

The study found few differences based on **gender** in terms of violence against children. Violence was generally consistent across genders; however, quantitative data showed that teacher respondents believed girls to be more at risk of violence in Indonesia. Sexual violence was also primarily considered a girl-centred issue in Rwanda, while respondents in China acknowledged also vulnerability of boys in this respect.

### Burera, Rwanda:
Click on the picture below to watch a film (8 min) about the **Positive discipline project** (external link).

# RECOMMENDATIONS:

I.   Multi-sectoral approaches at all levels are essential in raising awareness and mitigating violence against children in school and community contexts. Multiple studies advocate for school-based interventions to incorporate stakeholders in the wider community. Further, schools must be proactive in ensuring monitoring and reporting of all types of abuse and promote student involvement in interventions.

II.   Interventions should have an increased focus on mitigating out of school violence. Programme development should map existing stakeholders in the community and link school-based violence prevention programs to community-based child protection mechanisms. Mapping should be complemented with awareness campaigns, thereby promoting multi-sectoral collaboration. Focus should expand from violence in schools, to also encompass the large amount of violence against children that occurs at home and in the community, to combat the roots of violence in children's lives and the negative outcomes for children's lives.

III.   The literature review uncovered a number of specific considerations for school-based programs to reduce violence against children and mitigate harmful consequences:

    a.   Early teenage years are shown to have the most problematic outcomes for children who have been exposed to violence, suggesting that interventions should target pre-teen age children.

    b.   Low attendance and suspensions are associated with violence against children at home or in the community, and could therefore be used as a cue for interventions outside of school.

    c.   Programming should account for children with internalised disorders as they are associated with violence against children, yet are often left undetected.

    d.   School-based campaigns should promote student awareness of all types of violence and child rights.

    e.   School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) programming should incorporate gender specific support groups and student groups working with school and community authorities.

    f.   Outreach services should provide parental and home support for suspected cases of violence against children at home or in the community.

IV.   Training of school staff should include teachers, headmasters and other essential duty bearers within the school setting to refrain from acts of violence. A system should be implemented for teachers and students to refer to when they witness or experience acts of violence that would provide counseling and recourse for the victims. Encouragingly, teacher respondents universally expressed a desire for more support on a coordinated level.

V.   Teachers, parents, and children need to understand that there is no act of violence too small to be monitored and extinguished, and there must be a zero tolerance policy for violence. There was a tendency to trivialize some forms of violence against children; consequently, a large amount of violence is left unreported and a large number of children suffer in silence. Along these lines, there should be clear stances against the idea that children who have certain attributes are just inevitably more likely to be victimized. It does not matter whether children are weaker (China), poorly parented (Indonesia), or female (Rwanda); they should be entitled to equal protection.

VI.   Each country program should also take into account the UNCRC Concluding Observations when developing programs to respond to acts of violence in and around schools.