

School-Related Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone



Final Report

2010



**National Study on
School-Related Gender-Based Violence in
Sierra Leone**

September, 2010

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Acronyms

ACPF	The African Child Policy Forum
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRA	Child Rights Act
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CWC	Child Welfare Committee
EFA	Education For All
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSU	Family Support Unit
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
MOSWGCA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTAs	Parents and Teachers Associations
SCR 1325	Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
SLTU	Sierra Leone Teachers' Union
SSS	Senior Secondary School
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Development of Women
VCWC	Village Child Welfare Committee

Acknowledgments

We, members of the Coalition, would like to extend our gratitude to the Ministry of Education and Sports; the Ministry of Social Welfare, Genders and Children's Affairs; The Sierra Leone Police; District and Town Councils; School Management Committees; School Principals; members of Parent and Teacher Associations (PTAs), representatives of Health and Education Departments and other individuals who participated in this study. Our special thanks also go to the 1312 pupils, their teachers, the police officers and staff of the Family Support Units (FSUs) and parents who devoted their precious time to be interviewed and provide valuable information that enriched the study. Without the collaboration and assistance of these institutions and individuals, the study would not have been a success.

We are grateful to The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) for partnering with us and supporting us in efficiently carrying out the study within a very tight timeline. We are particularly grateful to Mr. David Mugawe, the Executive Director of ACPF and Mrs. Sarah Guebreyes, Head of Operations for their lead role in coordinating the project. Special thanks also goes to the ACPF technical team members of the project: Mr. Yehualshet Mekonen (Team Leader), Mr. Negussie Dejene, Mr. Belete Reta, and Ms. Saba Lishan who worked tirelessly in developing the methodology, preparing the study instruments, providing training to the field staff and analysing the data.

We are particularly indebted to the authors of the report, Mr. Yehualashet Mekonen, Dr. Fikreab Kebede and Mr. Belete Reta as well as to Mr. Negussie Dejene who developed the data entry template, summarised and analysed the data. Mr. Sahr A.K. Lamin deserves special thanks for efficiently coordinating the training, field data collection and data entry. Our thanks also go to the data collectors, facilitators and the data entry clerks for their devotion and good work.

Last but not least, we wish to thank all members of the Coalition for their commitment and partnership in initiating and implementing the project. A special acknowledgement goes to Mrs. Fadimata Alainchar, Plan Sierra Leone, for her outstanding support in facilitating the execution and follow up of the project. We are also grateful to Mrs. Wairimu Munyinyi of Concern Worldwide, Ms. Eliane da Conceicao of CRC, Mrs. Grace Harman of Plan, Mr. Tijani Hamza and Mr. Nuru Deen of Ibis for their support at all stages of the project. We are also indebted to Mr. Danny Harvey, Global Equality Advisor - Concern Worldwide for his valuable feedback and comments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence is a major threat to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Dakar Education For All (EFA) targets and overall social and economic development. There have been global and national initiatives aiming at addressing violence, particularly among children and promoting zero tolerance for violence. However, violence is still a major concern in many countries of Africa including Sierra Leone.

Violence on children has a gender dimension with varying degrees of risks, forms of abuse and contexts. It occurs everywhere: at home, at the work place, in the streets, within the community and in schools. This study explores violence related to school from a gender perspective. School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) includes any form of abuse and exploitation that is based on gendered stereotypes or that targets students on the basis of their sex.

A coalition of international NGOs working in education and GBV has been established in Sierra Leone in December 2009 comprising of Plan Sierra Leone, CONCERN Worldwide, IBIS and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). The member organisations of the coalition realise the dangers of violence on the education and wellbeing of students, particularly girls and work very closely with partners both from government and civil society organisations to prevent SRGBV as one of the strategies to enhance quality of basic education and reduce dropout rates. The main objective of this study is to contribute to efforts aiming at enhancing children's access to quality basic education and strengthening protection against GBV in and on the way to school. The results of the study will inform advocacy initiatives and development of interventions aiming at enhancing the protection against SRGBV.

The methodology

This study is based on a nationally representative survey of 1312 pupils, of which 645 are girls and 667 are boys, from 123 primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools in seven districts (Bombali, Kailahun, Koinadugu, Kono, Moyamba, Port Loko and Tonkolili districts) and the Western Area of Sierra Leone including Freetown. The research tools include a structured questionnaire, guidelines, semi-structured questionnaires and templates for case studies. Key stakeholders including school managements, teachers, local governments, healthcare providers, parents/guardians and civil society organisations were also involved in the study. The development of the tools, analysis and preparation of the report were carried out by the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF)¹.

A total of 1312 pupils (645 girls and 667 boys) were randomly selected from 123 primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools across seven districts and the Western Area to ensure national representation.

The legal and policy context

Following the end of the civil conflict, the Government of Sierra Leone has made commendable effort to put in place adequate legal and policy framework to prevent and protect its citizens including children against violence and exploitation. In addition to the Constitution of Sierra Leone, which provides the overarching legal framework to protect the fundamental human rights and freedom of individuals, Sierra Leone has ratified a number of human rights treaties including both the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).

¹ The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) is a pan-African policy research and advocacy organisation working to put children at the centre of the public and political agenda (visit www.africanchildforum.org).

These instruments are legally binding and oblige the Government of Sierra Leone to take appropriate legal and administrative measures to protect children from all forms of physical or psychological violence, neglect or exploitation, including sexual abuse and require school discipline to be consistent with the child's human dignity. Sierra Leone has also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which obliges the government, among others, to repeal all discriminatory provisions in the domestic laws and take measures to protect women and girls from abuse and exploitation.

Enactment of the Child Right Act in 2007 is an important milestone in the effort to realise the rights of children and protect them against abuse and exploitation in Sierra Leone. This comprehensive Act harmonises domestic legal provisions with the international standards and contributes to providing better legal protection to children from discrimination and violence. The Domestic Violence Act is also another important instrument that legally prohibits all forms of violence against individuals including children that contains a provision that allows the arresting of a perpetrator of domestic violence by any witness without a warrant. In addition to these legal instruments, there are many other policy and programmatic interventions that support the fight against violence and its root causes - poverty. The Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Education Sector Development and Justice Sector Development Programme are some of the critical initiatives that will have impact on violence.

These legal instruments and policy initiatives, though commendable, are surrounded by a plethora of challenges related to implementation. The effort made to lay a solid legal and policy foundation will be fruitless if not accompanied by rigorous and coordinated interventions that aim at strengthening their enforcement including allocation of sufficient funds and building the capacity of implementing agencies.

The effort made to lay a solid legal and policy framework would be futile if not accompanied by interventions aiming at strengthening enforcement.

Physical violence

There is a pervasive physical violence against pupils in Sierra Leone that takes place at all settings: at school (all levels of education), home and community. Nine in every ten pupils in primary and secondary schools have experienced at least one form of physical violence.

The study showed that the forms of physical violence vary by gender. While boys are more likely to experience physical assaults such as kicking, slapping or beating, girls experience hair pulling, pinching and grabbing. There are also differences in the prevalence and forms of physical violence by district. Physical violence was found to be higher in Koinadugu, Kono, Bombali and Port Loko districts.

Frequency of occurrence of physical violence is lower for the most severe forms of violence such as hitting by stone, stick or stabbing by knives. Most of the physical violence perpetrated on the pupils took place within the school settings, showing that corporal punishment is widely practiced in schools than in home or within the community. Eight out of ten of the boys and three-fourths of the girls, for example, said that they were whipped or caned in school.

Perpetrators of physical violence in schools include teachers, peers, senior pupil and principals. Within the home setting, mothers and elder sisters are the main perpetrators of physical violence. Strangers, whom the pupils have no acquaintance such as 'bike riders'² were also identified as main perpetrators of violence in the community.

² 'Bike riders' refers to the male motor cycle transportation service providers.

Sexual violence

Sexual violence is a widespread phenomenon in Sierra Leone where about two-thirds of the girls reported to have experienced at least one or more forms of sexual violence. The prevalence of sexual violence varies considerably by districts. The most common form of sexual violence is touching or pinching genitals which was experienced and reported by 42 per cent of the girls.

About 18 per cent of the girls have experienced rape and nearly half of the incidents involved physical assault, indicating the severity and seriousness of the problem. Most of these reported incidents took place in the 12 months preceding the survey and show that the problem is persistent. Such forms of severe sexual violence are more likely to take place within the home and community settings rather than schools. School-related rape contributed to 30 per cent of the cases. The most commonly cited places in connection with school-related rape include places on the way to and from school and school toilets.

Rape is more likely to take place within the home and community settings. But still, school-related rape incidents contribute to 30 per cent of the cases.

Perpetrators of sexual violence in schools include teachers, peers and senior students. Teachers in particular are the main perpetrators of sexual abuse and exploitation who force and coerce girl pupils into sexual intercourse in exchange for better grades, gifts or money. It was further noted that teachers retaliate for refusal of their love proposals by reducing girls' marks and insulting

Teachers are the main perpetrators of sexual abuse and exploitation that take place within the school setting forcing and coercing girl pupils into sexual intercourse in exchange for better grades, gifts or money.

them in classes and humiliating them in front of peers. Within the home and community settings, 'bike riders', NGO workers, and other elite elderly people who are usually referred to as 'Sugar Daddies' are the main perpetrators. 'Sugar Daddies', for example, contributed to about 15 per cent of all the sexual exploitation cases, making them the second most common perpetrators of such abuse only next to teachers.

Psychological violence

There are various forms of psychological violence, including insults and name calling, intimidation and threats. The study showed that more than 60 per cent of both boys and girls who encountered threats and intimidation in school. The main perpetrators identified are teachers. It was also noted that girls are prone to psychological violence as teachers use it as a way of intimidating them to accept their sexual proposal.

Threat of punishment is also the other form of abuse that intimidates the pupil. In many cases, teachers yell at students whenever students give wrong answer. Such practices make the pupil feel ashamed and result in lack of confidence to participate in class activities and affect their learning and educational performance. This seems the reason why one out of ten boys and girls in primary and secondary schools feel uncomfortable to ask their teachers a question in classroom even once.

Reporting and impact

Some of the challenges in addressing gender-based violence revolve around low level reporting, unfavourable attitudes, limited access to justice and delayed legal action. The study showed that half of the victims who experienced severe physical violence took no action to report the assault. It was also noted that reporting becomes even less as the perceived severity of the punishment is lower.

Half of the victims who experienced severe physical violence took no action to report the assault, indicating the low level of reporting.

In the case of sexual violence, reporting depends on severity of the abuse. Victims who experienced rape or forced sexual intercourse were found to be more likely to report the incident to their family members or the police. But still, four out of ten victims of rape do not report the incident to anyone.

Though School Management Committees (SMCs) and the Disciplinary Committee of Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) in most of the schools formulated bylaws to take punitive measures against the perpetrators, they do not have effective reporting mechanisms and many incidences end up unreported. In many cases, it is the parents, instead of the victims who report cases of abuse to relevant authorities, indicating that the reporting mechanisms in schools are not functional.

The Family Support Units established within the police department play key role in preventing violence. It was learnt that the FSUs are making efforts to introduce a child-friendly reporting mechanism that child victims can use to report abuse and exploitation. However, there is a discontent with regards to their performance and capacity in terms of handling the increasing incidences of violence. There are also reported cases of corruption where alleged offenders bribe and escape persecution. Such situations, if not addressed in time, create cavity and undermine the efforts to reduce SRGBV and enhance the quality of learning.

Gender-based violence has short- and long-term consequences on health, education and career opportunities. SRGBV impacts on pupils' ability to regularly attend lessons or compels them to completely dropout from school. About 28 per cent of the pupils know a student from their school who dropped out as a result of violence or intimidation experienced within or on their way to school.

There were 640 teenage pregnancies reported within a year in just only one district – Moyamba. Furthermore, 14 school dropouts were recorded in just one junior secondary school as a result of rape that occurred during the 12 months preceding the survey.

According to the administrative records from Moyamba district, for example, there were 640 teenage pregnancies reported within a year and 14 school dropouts were recorded in just one junior secondary school as a result of rape that occurred during the 12 months preceding the survey.

Psychological violence has also impact on the pupil that range from symptoms of anxiety and depression to suicide attempts. It also impact on their self-esteem, participation in the learning process and limits their career opportunities.

Recommendations

Creation of a safe-school environment that is free of violence and intimidation contributes to improving the quality of learning and reducing dropout rates. The following are key areas of action recommended to contribute to creating such an environment and enhancing protection against school-related gender-based violence.

Recommendations for the media

- The analysis of the pupil's perceptions and attitude on gender norms revealed facts that are of serious concern. There is, therefore, a need to develop targeted and continuous media programmes both within and outside schools that counterbalance misconceptions, promote positive attitudes towards gender roles and show the link and impact of unfavourable attitude on violence. The programmes could be designed in such a way that they trigger debate and discussion among the audience and would contribute in creating better understanding of the issues and steps needed to be taken to curb the problem.
- Mass media is also the most appropriate means to inform the general public including children on the various channels of reporting incidences of abuse and notify locations of service providers. To this end, mass media and community radio programmes specifically focusing on SRGBV could relay targeted messages that discourage resilience and encourage the reporting to bring perpetrators to justice.
- Organising roundtable discussion forums that would bring together key stakeholders (policy makers, victims, law enforcement bodies, service providers and influential citizens) to deliberate on challenges, opportunities and the way forward to create a common understanding and mobilise the public to effectively address the problem.

Recommendations for schools management

- Teachers are identified as the main perpetrators of violence against pupils. Inclusion of a training module for teachers on non-violent methods of disciplining is an important step in preventing abuses perpetrated by teachers. The module could also include other related components on evolving capacities of children, child participation and child protection to widen their scope of understanding on impact of violence vis-à-vis their physical, mental and behavioural development and overall wellbeing.
- To put in place pupil-friendly reporting mechanisms to encourage quick and open reporting of incidences of abuse established within places such as school mini-media, students' recreation facilities where children can report abuse and grievance at ease. The mechanisms need to have components that enhance transparency and effectiveness to follow-up and action on reported cases.
- Provide support and encourage the pupil to establish and strengthen student councils and clubs particularly in the areas of child rights, gender, reproductive health, child abuse and violence to increase their participation, instil the culture of rights and enhance their sensitivity to violence and discrimination.
- Many incidences of rape took place in and around toilets, largely because of their location. It is important to invest in renovating and keeping toilets safe and clean as well as in setting up separate facilities for girls where there are no such arrangements.

Recommendations for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and NGO's

- Support the establishment of child help lines where school children, parents and activists freely report cases of child abuses in general and SRGBV in particular. Such services, in

addition to contributing to revealing incidents of abuse, would also inform and encourage victims to access appropriate services and serve as connecting board to connect victims with service providers.

- Bridging the information gap between grassroots realities and policy makers. Periodical publication of a newsletter or devoting a column in one of the widely circulated print media that provide information on SRGBV statistics, actions taken and outstanding issues would influence implementing bodies to expedite action.
- Provide support to initiatives that aim at establishing centres for legal protection and psycho-social services to victims of violence.
- Many of the school girls from low income families are prone to sexual exploitation particularly by affluent elderly who lure them with money, gifts and even by buying meals. Creating income generating activities to economically empower families of such vulnerable girls would help to address the root cause of GBV.

Recommendations for the Government

Law enforcement bodies

- The study showed that the Family Support Units at district level have a number of challenges related to staffing, office space and resources. These constraints have limited their capacity to efficiently handle the growing numbers of cases of violence reported to them. The FSUs need to take step-by-step actions to fill these gaps and enhance their capacity to cope up with the growing problem. For this, the FSUs need to carry out needs assessments to identify feasible strategies to fill the gaps and maximise efficiency.
- Various stakeholders have expressed their frustrations over partial treatment and an environment of corruption within the FSU where affluent perpetrators are favoured. This calls for introducing transparent mechanisms for handling cases, follow-up and entertaining complaints from victims to ensure that justice is served.
- The Ministry of Justice needs to review and revise the Criminal and other relevant Codes that deal with any form of GBV, including those related to schools. It should align the Code with the current regional and international standards so as to ensure that perpetrators of SRGBV are given proportional punishment for their crime. Judges and magistrates need to be given induction training to familiarise them with key issues related to SRGBV, the magnitude and its impact as well as corresponding Penal Codes against perpetrators in order to increase their awareness and expediting persecution.

The executive and relevant ministries

- Invest in expansion of schools particularly at secondary levels to make schools easily accessible to students who travel a long distance and are prone to violence on their way to or from school.
- Set short-term and long-term goals to train and recruit female teachers and thereby balance the gender gap in the teaching staff and school managements at all levels.
- Put in place monitoring and evaluation systems with appropriate indicator matrices to track progress made on each of the sector development plans and identify bottlenecks to expedite implementation and achievement of concrete outcomes.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is not only a violation of human rights, but also an impediment to sustainable development. It has both short and long-term consequences that undermine the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Dakar Education For All (EFA) targets (WHO, 2010; Joint Consortium on Gender-based Violence, 2009).

GBV is a result of complex factors that revolve around societal norms and attitudes that propagate women as fundamentally of less value than men as well as other issues relating to gender inequities in terms of income, decision making and social participation that create power imbalance (WHO, 2009). It has also its genesis in a general acceptance of gender-based violence as it takes place within a context of existing social norms and gender inequities. These factors, coupled with weak law enforcement efforts, support and contribute to the perpetuation of the problem.

Following global campaigns on *Zero Tolerance for Violence*, gender-based violence in general and violence against children in particular are gradually getting recognition at both global and national levels as impediments to the realisation and promotion of their fundamental rights. Studies show that GBV is a widely prevalent phenomenon in Africa. The African Child Policy Forum's (ACPF's) studies carried out in three African countries (Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia), for example, showed that eight out of ten girls in these countries experience physical violence and an almost similar proportion are sexually abused (ACPF, 2006). The situation in West Africa is not different and literature shows that the problem is grave especially among the most vulnerable including girls and disabled children (Antonowicz, 2010; Plan, 2008; UNICEF, 2008; Population Council, 2007; UN, 2006).

Because of contextual differences in various societies, it is difficult to come up with a common definition. However, United Nations defines GBV as "*any act that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life*" (UN, 1993). GBV includes, but is not limited to, rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment as well as psychological abuse such as threats, intimidation, bullying, verbal abuse and harassment. Definitions of the terms used in this study are given in Annex I.

There are no specific places where GBV occurs, it happens everywhere: at home, at work place, in the streets, within the community and in schools. School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) includes any form of violence, abuse and exploitation that is based on gendered stereotypes or that targets students on the basis of their sex. It can occur within school premises or on the way to or from school. Widespread violence in the schools, including corporal punishment, sexual violence and harassment undermines children's ability to learn. It puts their physical and emotional wellbeing at risk, affects their performance in education and often causes them to dropout altogether (USAID, 2008); Human Rights Watch, 2005).

SRGBV is not a problem confined to the school settings but a complex societal issue where power relationships and discrimination practices in the community are reflected. It would be misleading to assume that gender-based violence in schools can be addressed without

considering the broader cultural and community contexts which construct social norms around hierarchy, discipline and conformity.

A coalition of international NGOs working in education and GBV has been established in Sierra Leone in December 2009 comprising of Plan Sierra Leone, CONCERN Worldwide, IBIS and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). The member organisations of the coalition realise the dangers of sexual abuse on the education and wellbeing of students and work very closely with partners such as the Ministry of Social Welfare, Genders and Children's Affairs and Ministry of Education Youths and Sports to engage in advocacy and bring about concrete changes in terms of reducing the incidences of SRGBV as a means to ensuring quality basic education.

In order to obtain evidences on the issue of GBV within the school settings and on the way to or from schools at "national" level, ACPF was approached through Plan Sierra Leone to carry out the study in seven districts and the Western Area of Sierra Leone including Freetown. The results would inform advocacy initiatives and development of interventions aiming at enhancing the protection of SRGBV and creating safe school environment. The study would also serve as a benchmark to assess and track the progress made by the coalition in the prevention of gender-based violence in schools.

This report is compiled on the basis of the findings from the quantitative and qualitative surveys and complemented through extensive reviews of legal, policy and other related documents. It explores the magnitude of SRGBV in its various forms, reviews the legal and policy framework put in place to provide protection, assesses attitudes and perceptions on gender roles and equality and its contribution to the perpetration of the problem.

The report is organised into eight chapters. This introductory chapter provides information on the objectives of the study, methodology and tools used for data collection. The following chapter (chapter 2) sets the context: it highlights the state of GBV and reviews legal and policy framework put in place to provide protection against it. Chapter 3 presents the results on gender norms and attitudes, gives an insight into the level of awareness about child rights and highlights perceptions among pupils on safety issues while commuting to school. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 show the findings in detail on physical, sexual and psychological violence, respectively. Chapter 7 briefly discusses actions and responses to the incidences of school-related violence. The last chapter (chapter 8) provides conclusions on the basis of the main findings and outlines key recommendations for each of the actors.

1.2 The Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to contribute to efforts aiming at enhancing children's access to quality basic education and strengthening protection against GBV in and on the way to school. The study seeks to generate reliable data and information on causes, forms, victims and perpetrators of GBV within the school settings that inform advocacy and design of appropriate interventions to reduce the incidences and its impact on education outcomes.

Box 1.1: Specific objectives of the study

- To assess the legal and policy framework related to children and GBV in Sierra Leone including local school and community bylaws in view of prevention efforts to reduce GBV in schools.
- To document the demographics of children affected by SRGBV.
- To identify the various mechanisms used to report and handle cases of SRGBV.
- To assess the impact of GBV on school enrolment, retention and completion of primary and secondary levels of education.
- To assess the capacity of relevant institutions at various levels that are responsible to prevent and respond to school-related GBV cases.
- To identify viable measures that need to be taken by various stakeholders to enhance prevention and protection of the pupil against SRGBV.

1.3. Scope and Coverage of the Study

The research is primarily based on a survey of nationally representative pupils of primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools. It also involved key stakeholders and institutions including school administration, teachers, local governments, healthcare providers, parents/guardians and agencies working on gender-based violence. The study was conducted in seven districts of Sierra Leone and the Western Area including Freetown. These include the four program districts of Plan Sierra Leone (Bombali, Kailahun, Moyamba and Port Loko districts) and three operational districts of the other member organisations of the coalition, namely Tonkolili District and the Western Area for CONCERN Worldwide, Kono District for IBIS and Koinadugu district for Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

1.4. Methodology

1.4.1 Sample design and sample size

The methodology for this particular study followed the standard scientific procedures of sample selection which resulted in sufficient cases of pupils distributed across geographic and educational levels that are representative of the situation at national level. The sampling plan involved two stages. At the first stage, schools were selected randomly from a comprehensive list of schools in each district based on probability proportional to size of students. The second stage of sample selection involved pupils at various classes/forms ranging from class 5 up until SSS-3. Furthermore, pupils from primary schools were sampled from classes 5-6 and those from junior secondary schools were selected from each of the forms (JSS 1-3). The same techniques and procedures were applied in senior secondary schools where pupils from SSS 1-3 (grades 10 to 12) were selected randomly. Again, to ensure the gender balance, two girls and two boys were randomly selected from each class/form.

Prior to the interviews, each of the selected pupils were first briefed about the study and asked for their consent in accordance with the ethical policy of ACPF and the other partner organisations. Those who consented were interviewed in private using the individual questionnaire developed for the study. In cases where the selected pupils were not willing to participate, replacement was made with another pupil of the same gender and class/form in order to maintain the sample size and ensure representation.

Accordingly, a total of 1,312 pupils from 123 schools (41 primary and 82 junior and senior secondary schools) were randomly selected across the seven districts and the Western Area (see Table 1.1). To ensure rural, urban and semi-urban representation, the schools were evenly distributed across these areas.

Table 1.1: Sample distribution of schools by type of school

School level	Number of schools	Number of sample students		Total
		Girls	Boys	
Primary	41	164	164	328
Junior Secondary Schools (JSS)	41	243	247	490
Senior secondary Schools (SSS)	41	238	256	494
Total	123	645	667	1312

The distribution of pupils by level of education and district is presented in Table 1.2. In each of the districts, 15 schools (five schools from each level, that is, primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools) were randomly selected. In Bombali district, where there were more schools than others, three more schools were added to take into account the larger proportion of schools and pupils in this district. Additionally, attempt was made to distribute the schools across rural, urban and semi-urban locations in each of the districts to capture differences by area of residence.

Table 1.2: Sample distribution of schools by district

District	Primary		Junior Secondary		Senior Secondary		Total pupil
	Number of		Number of		Number of		
	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils	
Bombali	6	47	6	71	6	74	192
Kailahun	5	40	5	60	5	60	160
Koinadagu	5	40	5	60	5	60	160
Kono	5	40	5	60	5	60	160
Moyamba	5	40	5	59	5	61	160
Port Loko	5	40	5	60	5	60	160
Tonkolili	5	41	5	60	5	59	160
Western Area	5	40	5	60	5	60	160
Total	41	328	41	490	41	494	1312

1.4.2 Research tools

A combination of tools was used to gather complementary information on issues related to gender-based violence in school settings. All these tools enabled ACPF to generate sufficient information to better understand the problem and come up with viable policy and implementation actions that contribute to the reduction of the incidence of school-related gender-based violence and enhancement of the quality learning. This, in turn, contributes to the efforts geared towards achievement of education related targets set-forth in the Millennium and Dakar Declarations.

The research tools and data collection approaches include:

- ◆ **A structured questionnaire:** this is the main instrument used to collect quantifiable information and includes detail questions intended to solicit pupils’ experiences of violence and other related background and attitudinal information
- ◆ **Guidelines, semi-structured questionnaires and templates for case studies:** these were the tools developed for the qualitative assessment of the situation of school-related gender-based violence. They were used to gather information from various stakeholders including school administrators, teachers, pupil, community leaders, policymakers, law enforcement bodies and service providers (number of participants involved in each of the qualitative data collection methods are summarised in Table 1.3).
- ◆ **Compilation of legal and policy documents:** this allowed review of the existing legal and policy framework put in place to provide protection against gender-based violence with a special focus on school setting
- ◆ **Gathering secondary data from various sources:** contextual analysis was made of the current situation in Sierra Leone based on the review of literature and data from secondary sources.

Table 1. 3: Numbers of focus group discussions, key informants interviews and case studies

Method of qualitative data collection	Total number of participants	Category of participants	Remarks
Focus group discussion (FGD)	180	Pupils of both sexes from JSS and SSS schools	Two FGDs of about 8 pupils per district
Key informants interview	117	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ School authorities, teachers and PTA members ■ Community leaders ■ NGO representatives ■ Family Support Unit staff ■ Health and education department officials ■ Gender and child affairs office ■ Town/district council, courts, etc. 	Interviews were carried out with the 13 key informants in each of the districts. The informants were representatives designated by the institutions.
Case studies	9	Victims of severe violence	One case study from each of the districts.

1.4.3 Ethical and safety issues

As the study involved children, extreme care was taken both in terms of sensitising the data collectors to adhere to the ethical guideline during the training and follow-up of the practical implementation during the actual data collection. One of the main duties of the data collection team and the coordinator was to ensure that the rights and dignity of children were not violated and that no harm will befall children as a result of their participation in the study. Each pupil was well informed about the project and its objectives in order to enable him/her to make an informed choice to participate or not to participate in the study. Additionally, as the data collection took place within the school settings, the authorities who have the overall responsibility for the protection of the pupil were asked for permission to approach and involve the pupil in the study. In short, ethical policies, guidelines and codes of conduct were adhered-to to ensure the safety of the responding pupils.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONTEXT: LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

'As a Government we owe it to the children of this country to ensure that their well being, survival and development are secured.'

~ Honourable Shirley Gbujama

Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs (Sierra Leone)

School-related gender-based violence is perhaps the most hidden, wide spread and socially tolerated forms of child rights violation. There are several underlying reasons why gender-based violence prevails in schools, the three are worth noting.

There is first of all a serious lack of appreciation of the grave consequences and unacceptability of gender-based violence in schools resulting in a total lack of awareness. The second reason is the limited analysis on the continuum effect of gender attitudes, values and norms from home to school and to the wider society. GBV related to school is a reflection of the existing gender biases with in the society at large. There is, therefore, a need to analyse the problem within the broader social fabric, rather than looking at the school setting in isolation. Thirdly, gender-based violence continues to prevail because of weak legal and policy frameworks and response mechanisms.

The challenges in addressing SRGBV are by and large associated with these three factors: fighting gender scripting and the culture of tolerance and acceptance to violence which contribute to the perpetuation of GBV, understanding the problem from a broader societal perspective and strengthening the practical implementation of laws and policies. This chapter mainly provides a synthesis of the legal and policy framework put in place to protect children from abuse and exploitation. The first section, however, is devoted to show the state of GBV in Sierra Leone in comparison with the situation in the West Africa in order to provide a full picture of the underlying contexts and enable readers better understand the results of the study.

2.1 How Serious is Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone?

Various studies on school related gender-based violence in West Africa show that the problem is an issue of great concern. To put it in a nutshell, both private and public schools in most countries of this region need to improve to become safe and protective environments for children (UNICEF, 2010; Antonowicz, 2010; Global AIDS Alliance, 2007; UN, 2006; The Child Protection Alliance, 2005).

Boys and girls are both affected by corporal punishment in almost all countries in West Africa. In Benin and Senegal, for example, nearly 55 per cent of children had been victims of corporal punishment in schools (Antonowicz, 2010). In Cameroon, 97 per cent of students reported experiencing physical violence as a form of punishment in school (UN, 2006). In addition, evidences from Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia and Togo show that obligatory chores – Conditions where boys work in teachers' farms or girls undertaking domestic chores in teachers' houses - increase children's vulnerability to other forms of violence and reduce the time they can dedicate to their studies, leisure and play, which are important to their intellectual and emotional development.

Bullying is one of the forms of psychological violence common in most West African countries. According to the global school-based health survey, it was found that six out of ten girls in Ghana and Benin were bullied in school (Jones et al., 2008).

Sexual abuse is another type of violence common within the school setting in the regions. It happens in toilets, classrooms, staffrooms, on the way to or from school and in teachers' houses. Sexual abuse is primarily perpetrated by men and the victims are mostly girls. The perpetrators vary from country to country. For example, in Ghana the main perpetrators are classmates, while in most other countries teachers are the main perpetrators of sexual abuse. Perpetrators could be connected to the school system (such as teachers, school staff and male pupils) or categorised as other men from the community (such as out of school boys, bus drivers, 'sugar daddies' and soldiers at check points).

In the case of Sierra Leone, interesting studies have been carried out on violence against girls both within and outside school settings. These studies show the gravity of the problem and show its link to learning outcomes. The study carried out by Concern Worldwide on school related gender-based violence to assess the cause, effect, and identify possible interventions to GBV against pupils in primary and junior secondary schools in Tonkolili district, Sierra Leone. Though qualitative in design, the study showed that corporal punishment was widely practiced in the district and that it is considered as unacceptable means of disciplining (Concern Worldwide, 2008).

Sexual abuse and exploitation was also found to be prevalent, particularly in the junior secondary schools where teachers are the main perpetrators of sexual abuse against girls. It was also reported that pupils who refuse to the sexual proposals and advances from teachers suffer physical assault, verbal abuse, are driven out of class and given low marks. The study indicated that sexual abuse is exacerbated by poverty, as girls from poor families succumb to money, gifts, or grade offers to satisfy their basic needs. Some parents also turn a blind eye to their daughters relationships with teachers or elderly rich men for economic reasons (Concern Worldwide, 2008).

The 2009 study commissioned by ActionAid International on gender-based violence revealed the high prevalence of violence and lower level of reporting abuses. Though the study was carried out in selected communities in Bo, Kambia, Kenema, Koinadugu, Kono districts and the Western Area of Sierra Leone and could not represent the national situation, it showed that more than 80 per cent of the girls interviewed reported to have experienced at least one form of physical violence and that rape and coerced sex were the most common forms of sexual violence. Despite such higher rates of incidences, the majority of victims did not report to anyone simply because they felt ashamed and feared that the reporting would only result in more punishment, blame and stigmatisation (ActionAid, 2009).

UNICEF's out-of-school study is yet another important study worth mentioning. The findings indicate that children involved in early or forced marriage, children who have been or are exposed to sexual abuse or exploitation, disabled children, the homeless and children withdrawn from armed conflict are among the categories that have a higher risk of dropping out of school or have already dropped out. This study illustrated the commitment of mothers in many communities to financially support their children's schooling and pay hidden school fees despite their meagre resources from sales of their small vegetable gardens or other petty trading activities (UNICEF, 2008). Children in the age group 11-15 years who were not attending school were more likely to live with their extended family members, indicating higher likelihood of abuse and exploitation of these children by their guardians.

Furthermore, the report on basic education in Sierra Leone compiled by the Campaign for Good Governance highlighted the alarmingly high rate of school dropout in the various districts. The main causes identified include early marriage, unwanted pregnancy mostly caused as a result of

sexual abuse related to school setting which reduces their chances of completing their education (Campaign for Good Governance, 2006). Other studies have also shown that the promise of good grades or the threat of failure was used by some male teachers to achieve sexual relations with students. Financial rewards also prompt students to engage in sexual relations, among others, with teachers and elderly rich men commonly known as ‘sugar daddies’. Negligent response by school administrators who often dismiss cases where school staff members perpetrate violence by blaming victim pupils or simply encouraging them to “stay away” from harassing teachers further facilitates the continuum of SRGBV (The Child Protection Alliance, 2005).

The other emerging reality from the review of literature in the country is that violence, particularly against girls, is increasingly being recognised as major human rights and development problem by all parties: the general public, development partners, policymakers and law enforcement bodies. This is an encouraging development that creates conducive environment to mobilise the public and mitigate the problem in a coordinated manner. Despite its recognition, violence is a highly prevalent phenomenon in the country. What is also an issue of concern is an inherent tendency to stigmatise survivors of violence and reluctance to prosecute perpetrators. These two factors are very critical in breaking the continuum of the problem and there is a need to exert a lot of effort to change these situations. Further, there is also a long way to go in changing attitudes, cultural norms and beliefs that play a major role in increasing vulnerability of girls to gender-based violence in all settings including schools.

From law enforcement perspective, the Justice Development Programme Report documents that one in ten of the criminal cases tried at a Magistrate Court in a given month was concerning cruelty to a child. Sexual offences were more frequent than domestic violence, ranking 5th and 7th, respectively, among the leading violent crimes recorded countrywide in 2005. The low level of reporting of child sexual abuse shows the culture of silence to GBV and child abuse. Further, it was learnt from the same report that more than half of the population do not think that the Police has the capacity to handle security in the community (The Justice Sector Coordination Office, 2008).

2.2 The Legal and Policy Framework Related to Gender-Based Violence

Comprehensive laws and policies are the prerequisite for the prevention and protection of children against violence. In the recent past, commendable efforts have been made by the government to put in place the appropriate legal framework in order to provide legal protection to children. This section shall review major international and domestic legal and policy instruments with regard to gender-based violence.

2.2.1 International legal framework in relation to GBV

The Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC)

Sierra Leone ratified the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) immediately after its adoption in 1990.¹ The CRC is the most important legal instrument with respect to violence against children due to the fact that it is legally binding on almost all members of the United Nations. It is therefore more powerful and more widely applicable than some of the other instruments. The general principles of the CRC emphasise that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration and the inherent right of every child to life and to survival and development.

At the same time, the Convention obliges the government to take appropriate legal and administrative measures to protect children from all forms of physical or psychological violence, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child² and requires school discipline to be consistent with the child's human dignity.³ Moreover, it calls for the protection of children from torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment⁴ and also obliges the government to take the necessary action to support children who are victims of violence in their recovery and social reintegration.⁵

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) is another important instrument ratified by Sierra Leone⁶. The Charter has provisions that recognise situations that are particularly relevant to the African context. It generally promotes the wellbeing of children and ensures that girls in particular do not suffer discrimination and prohibits any form violence against children. It further reflects the pressing need to consider the reality of Africa in order to address the priority needs of African children which, among other things, include HIV and AIDS pandemic, conflict, and access to education.⁷

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Another important document ratified by Sierra Leone and that has direct relevance with regard to gender-based violence is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Convention establishes an agenda of action for putting an end to sex-based discrimination. Accordingly, the government is required to repeal all discriminatory provisions in their laws and enact new provisions to protect citizens against discrimination. The government must also establish tribunals and public institutions to guarantee women's effective protection against discrimination and take steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination practiced against women by individuals, organisations, and enterprises. In relation to these, the convention contains specific provisions that call for ending violence such as by reducing the dropout rates of girls from school.

CEDAW acknowledges the need to protect girls from child marriage⁸ and recognises women's right to life, liberty and security as well as the right not to be subjected to torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The Convention also articulates the duty of the government to condemn violence against women and to protect women from sexual exploitation⁹, including where such violence is condoned by tradition or religion, and outlines measures that can be taken to protect women.¹⁰

Security Council Resolution 1325

The Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (SCR 1325) is worth mentioning in relation to gender-based violence in the context of Sierra Leone, as it recognises the vital roles women could play in post-conflict construction and peace building, and stresses the importance of their full participation in matters affecting their life. It also calls upon all parties to armed conflict to take specific measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and sexual violence.

2.2.2 Domestic legal framework related to GBV

The Constitution of Sierra Leone (1991)

The Constitution of Sierra Leone provides the overarching legal framework of the country. It recognises and protects the fundamental human rights and freedom of the individual.¹¹ At the same time, the obligation of every citizen to respect the dignity, rights and interest of other individuals is stipulated.¹² The Constitution also recognises and promotes the rights and wellbeing of vulnerable groups such as children, women and the disabled. It provides legal protection to all citizens from any form of punishments or treatment which is inhuman or degrading¹³.

However, the Constitution is ambiguous with regards to discrimination by sex. While gender equality is in principle recognised¹⁴, it apparently permits discrimination in relation to some matters such as ‘adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property on death or other interests of personal law’.¹⁵

The Child Right Act (2007)

Sierra Leone should be commended for issuing a more comprehensive Child Right Act in 2007 supplementing the constitutional provisions protecting children. The Act recognises, among other things, the right of children to dignity, respect and education. It also laid down rights and responsibilities of every parent to protect the child from neglect, discrimination, violence, abuse, exposure to physical and moral hazards and oppression.¹⁶ According to the Act, ‘no person shall subject a child to torture or other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment including any cultural practice which dehumanises or is injurious to the physical and mental welfare of a child; and no correction of a child is justifiable which is unreasonable in kind or in degree according to the age, physical and mental condition of the child and no correction is justifiable if the child by reason of tender age or otherwise is incapable of understanding the purpose of the correction.’¹⁷ In addition, the Act puts eighteen years as the minimum age for marriage and no person shall force a child to early marriage, to be betrothed or to be subject of a dowry transaction¹⁸.

In order to protect the rights of children effectively, the Act established structures at different levels. Accordingly, the National Commission for Children is designated at the national level to advise the government on policies and legislation review and to monitor and coordinate the implementation of the Act. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs (MOSWGCA) on the other hand has the overall responsibility to monitor, supervise and coordinate the activities of all child welfare committees established at grassroots level and to ensure the progressive advancement of children’s rights and welfare throughout the country. It is supposed to provide skill enhancement training and expert advice and guidance to such committees. Besides, it facilitates networking and information sharing of child welfare committees while it also prepares and submits to the Commission reports on the status and welfare of children in the country.¹⁹

At district level, the District Council is responsible for coordinating activities within its jurisdiction that are geared towards protection and promotion of the rights and wellbeing of children including against violence. It also investigates cases involving violation of child rights.²⁰ At Chiefdom level, Chiefdom Child Welfare Committees (CWC) are established, composed of a social welfare officer, a traditional leader, parents, a female and male child or young person, service providers, NGOs or CBOs, and religious community representatives. The committees are responsible, among other things, to render advice to the Village or Ward Child

Welfare Committees, to receive and attend to cases and issues referred to them. The Committees, in most cases, handle minor offences and refer severe cases such as murder, rape and serious injuries to District Councils.²¹It, however, lacks mandate to punish, imprison, and impose a fine, order damages, or any other sanctions.

At grassroots level, Village Child Welfare Committees have been established. These committees are comprised of elected representatives of traditional leaders, parents, the youth, service providers, NGOs or CBOs, and religious, community, as well as a social welfare officer. The Committee is responsible, among other things, for promoting awareness and reporting concerns on child rights, preventing domestic and gender based violence of any kind, and further monitor the advancement of the girl child education. While considering complaints and concerns in the village, the committee also refers any violations of child rights to the Chiefdom Child Welfare Committee if the matter is beyond its capacity.²²

At the same time, recognising the significant role of the police in relation to violence against children, the Act provides for the establishment of Family Support Unit (FSU) within the Police structure to deal with women and child victims of abuse as well as alleged child offenders and monitor proven child abusers.²³ In addition to domestic violence, the Family Support Unit (FSU) investigates cases involving abuses and cruelty perpetrated against women and children. The staff members of the FSU are specially trained in child-friendly investigative skills so as to enable them handle matters involving children and prosecute the case in a court of law. The Act also obliges service providers, parent and community members to report any form of abuse to Family Support Unit.

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act (2004)

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act established The Human Rights Commission with the objective of protecting and promoting human rights (including child rights) in the country. The Commission is comprised of five members of whom at least two shall be women. The Commission has the mandate to investigate or inquire into allegations of child rights violations and increase public knowledge on child rights. While the Act allows for payment of compensation to victims of violence or their families, the Commission is also entitled to render financial assistance and legal support to impoverished citizens. In addition, it facilitates better understanding of human right obligations among the duty bearers through publishing and disseminating guidelines and manuals. It also strives to bring together stakeholders, including NGOs and civil societies to promote human rights in the country.

The Commission also monitors and documents violations of human rights in the country and advises the government on periodic reports to which the country is a signatory to international treaties. It also reviews existing legislation, advises the government for compliance to international treaties and assists in drafting new laws that are relevant to promoting human rights in the country. To facilitate the functions entrusted to it, the Commission is mandated to appoint, among others, a committee for the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children.

The Domestic Violence Act (2007)

The Domestic Violence Act prohibits all forms of violence against individuals including children. It brings together the various provisions into one Act, harmonises inconsistencies and makes it relatively easier for implementation.²⁴ Physical or sexual abuse, economic abuse, emotional or verbal or psychological abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation are listed among others that may constitute domestic violence.²⁵ The Act contains a provision that allows the

arresting of a perpetrator of domestic violence by any witness without a warrant and to penalise perpetrators with a fine and imprisonment. It also provides for compensation to child victims of violence as well as their rehabilitation and reintegration in to the society.

The Education Act (2004)

The Education Act provides general guidelines regulating the education system. However, the Act lacks specific provisions relating to gender-based violence, teacher-pupil relationship and types of disciplinary measures that need to be taken for misconduct. The Act recognises that basic education is a right to every citizen and is compulsory. It is also entitles children to free access to education in government assisted primary and junior secondary schools.²⁶ The Minister of Education shall have the control and supervision of the education system and may, after due inquiry, take any steps he/she considers appropriate to restrain any action or intended action by a local authority or a proprietor, if he/she considers that such action is likely to impede the progress of education'. Furthermore, the Act states that 'the head teacher or principal of a school shall be responsible, subject in the case of a government school or assisted school, to any rule made by the Minister under this Act for the general control and supervision of the instruction and discipline and for the organisation of the classes therein.'²⁷

The Prevention and Control of HIV and AIDS Act (2007)

The Prevention and Control of HIV and AIDS Act is the other important instrument relevant to gender-based violence since it aims at preventing the further spread of HIV/AIDS. A high level political commitment is demonstrated since the President of the Republic chairs the National AIDS Council meetings. Apart from laying down precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the infection, the Act strongly condemns any act transmitting, either knowingly or recklessly, the virus to another person. Accordingly, it criminalises any such act and punishes the perpetrator with a fine up to Leones five million and/or an imprisonment up to seven years. Despite the elaborate provisions in the Act regarding the promotion of gender issues and human rights, the vulnerability of women and girls in particular remains a challenge to the national HIV and AIDS response. Equally challenging is the lack of a national prevention strategy dealing with HIV infection as a result of sexual abuse as well as the much needed national communication and dissemination strategy.²⁸

Local school and community bylaws

Local school and community bylaws also address gender-based violence in schools. School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) in Sierra Leone are supposed to formulate bylaws that would enable them to prevent and effectively respond to incidents of SRGBV. Some schools have drafted and put in place such bylaws, at times in collaboration with Disciplinary Committee of Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs). The bylaws also enable the provision of counselling and guidance to school children in general and to those victims of violence in particular.

2.2.3 National policies and programmes in relation to GBV

The Education Sector Plan (2007-2015)

The Education Sector Plan²⁹ acknowledges gender-based violence as impediments in promoting education and accordingly outlines strategies to address it through:

- ◆ Creation of a safe school environment for all children which includes establishing separate toilets for girls

- ◆ Improvement of girls' access to and completion of primary education with the aim of attaining gender parity
- ◆ Provision of nation-wide sensitisation on the issue of violence
- ◆ Revision of the terms and conditions of service for teachers to institute balanced penalties for child abusers and ensure better protection of students³⁰

Teachers' code of conduct

To promote a positive learning environment and the well-being of schoolchildren, the Government of Sierra Leone prepared a Code of Conduct for Teachers and other education personnel. The Code obliges teachers and other education personnel, among other things, to promote safe and conducive learning environment, ensure that learners are treated with dignity and respect and their rights fully protected, and guide learners to know their responsibilities towards teachers and other educational personnel. The Code promotes zero tolerance to all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse, physical and humiliating forms of punishment, psychological abuse, and child labour. It urges teachers to employ positive methods of disciplining and actively promote the concept of 'the best interests of the child' in every event. It further calls for their non-indulgent adherence to the various human rights instruments, including CRC, ACRWC, and CRA (Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports, 2009).

In case of any breach of the principles and standards in the Code, learners, fellow teachers, parents and other stakeholders are required to report verbally or in written form as soon as they become aware of an offence. Responsible bodies for receiving complaint and taking appropriate action, among others, include the school administration, guidance counsellor, the School Management Committees, Teachers Association, District Education Office, the Local Council, MSWGCA and Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports. The Code refers the laws of the country, regulations under civil and criminal laws and other relevant institutional policies and procedures for actions.

Justice Sector Development Programme (2005-2011)

The Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) aims at harmonising and modernising laws to ensure their consistency with international standards. A Law Reform Commission was established with responsibility of continuous review of the laws of the country and undertaking reform, development, consolidation or codification. The Commission is also mandated to take other initiatives and propose enactment of new laws in appropriate circumstances. In this connection, it drafted a law on Sexual Offences Act in 2004 and Prevention of Cruelty of Children (Amendment) Act in 2005. The Law on Offences against the Person (protection against child abuse and abortion) and The Law on Domestic Violence were also issued in 2005.³¹

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

Sierra Leone has made a remarkable recovery since the end of the civil war in the restoration of public services, including education.³² The government is committed to the global initiative of EFA and for every child to complete a course of primary education by 2015, the education target set forth in the MDGs (United Nations 2000).³³ As part of this effort, the government has prepared the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) to pursue economic, social, and public re-building. In more specific terms, the document contains statements that show the commitment of the government to take appropriate action with regard to gender based violence. Accordingly, it provides that '... strategies will focus on establishing a legal framework to address gender-based violence, increasing women's participation in decision-making and

reducing the exposure of women and the girl child in particular to sexual exploitation and abuse'.³⁴ It notes that the prevalence of violence is very much related to poverty. For instance, early marriage is widely practiced as it is often encouraged in Sierra Leonean societies due to economic difficulties which is resulting in girls not attending school. Besides, the PRSP highlights additional challenges to child poverty such as poor child protection services, and child powerlessness.³⁵ However, 'no meaningful efforts were made'³⁶ to address these issues despite the fact that the Child's First Policy and Gender Empowerment were accommodated in the PRSP'.³⁷ Expanding basic education and training are also highlighted but the document failed to explicitly deal with gender-based violence for the education sector plan.³⁸

Peace and Consolidation Strategy (PCS)

The PCS is a joint strategy of the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone intended to guide the transition to long-term development in Sierra Leone, building on the MDGs and the PRSP. Although the PCS hints at the exclusion of women from decision-making and the discriminatory justice sector, it does not make any direct reference to gender inequalities or the important role that women can play in the consolidation of peace. The PCS is mainly focused on the ongoing security problems in the country such as youth unemployment and the high rates of poverty, yet GBV is not mentioned as an issue linked to these concerns. GBV needs to be incorporated in the broader peace consolidation efforts and in the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy which serves as a policy framework to guide the peacebuilding and long-term development activities in the country.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Truth and Reconciliation Act of 2000 that established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) instructed that special attention should be given to the issue of sexual violence. The TRC report, published in 2004, includes an extensive background on the status of women and girls in all aspects of social, economic and political life as well as a number of specific recommendations pertaining to women and women's rights (see Annex 2). Several of these address the discriminatory structures that continue to exist in Sierra Leonean society, as well as the issue of reparations for the abuses suffered.

However, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has failed to develop a comprehensive strategy for implementing the TRC recommendations despite repeated commitments to do so. Given the focus on GBV within the TRC process, the report and its associated recommendations act as an important tool that could be used to lobby the government to address the discrimination that women continue to face in Sierra Leone, as well as to educate and inform the population about the far-reaching consequences GBV has on the lives of those affected.

Other Policy Documents

There are a number of policies at national level issued by the government of Sierra Leone that have direct relevance to gender based-violence. Notable ones include the Police Policy, the National Policy on Gender Mainstreaming and the National Policy on the Advancement of Women. The Police Policy specifically states that 18 years as the minimum age of sexual consent. If any girl child below 18 engages in sexual act, it would be considered as rape even if the perpetrator claims that it occurred with the consent of the girl child.³⁹ These documents and other official statements issued in relation to women demonstrate the commitment of the government to mitigate gender inequality and its effort to address GBV as a matter of priority.

It is clear from the foreground discussion that the Government of Sierra Leone has put in place adequate legal and policy framework to provide protection against GBV. Despite the achievements registered in enacting national legislation and promulgating policies to curb

gender-based violence, they suffer from various weaknesses such as: the limited awareness of the laws among duty bearers; the absence of provisions on specific forms of violence such as corporal punishment in the home and school environment. Finally, the effort made to lay a solid legal and policy foundation may be undermined if the enforcement aspect is not equally strengthened. In Sierra Leone, law enforcement remains a key obstacle due to a multitude of factors including capacity and insufficient budget allocation to ensure implementation.

2.3 Pervasive Poverty

Poverty is rampant in Sierra Leone and remains a major development challenge. It is particularly concentrated in rural and other urban areas outside the capital, Freetown. The revised UNDP Multidimensional Poverty Index categorises Sierra Leone among the ten poorest countries in the world (Alkire, S. and Santos, M. 2010). Despite remarkable strides and reforms following the end of the civil conflict, problems of poor infrastructure, including roads and energy, low capacity, youth unemployment, high maternal and infant mortality, widespread rural impoverishment, impact of the global economic downturns, and lapses in public financial management and governance still persist (World Bank, 2010).

It is estimated that two-thirds of the population in Sierra Leone live below the poverty line and the level goes as high as 80 per cent in rural areas, indicating the gravity of the problem in these parts of the of the country (World Bank). Poverty increases vulnerability and children from poor families are at higher risks of gender-based violence than others.

In the study, key informants and the pupil who participated in the FGDs noted that families in their respective communities are faced with numerous problems related to poverty. The problem is even grave among children in rural areas. It was indicated that many parents could not afford to cover school fees, house rent, learning materials such as text books and exercise books. This in turn compels, especially girls to be victims of sexual exploitation with affluent adults and teachers to fulfil their basic needs. The qualitative assessment showed that many girls ended up being pregnant and dropped out of school.

It was also observed that in many cases parents turn a blind eye to their daughters having relationships with teachers or affluent older men because of poverty. As pointed out by one of the School Management Committee members:

... Teachers themselves are a problem because they know which girls come from a poor family and he flashes money at the girl and says I will pay for your fees, the girl succumbs to the teacher and the mother keeps quiet because they need the money.

In view of this, empowering mothers and economically poor families is an important component of any strategy that aims at addressing gender-based violence. There are encouraging initiatives to alleviate poverty and the PRSP is one such example. Pro-poor macroeconomic policies and targeted interventions to reduce poverty among the most affected become paramount strategies to mitigate gender-based violence.

CHAPTER 3 GENDER, ATTITUDES AND VIOLENCE: THE CONNECTION

Only one in five of primary and one in ten of secondary level pupils think that both girls and boys should be treated equally in school.

~ ACPF's study on SRGBV in Sierra Leone, 2010

The relationship between gender and violence is complex. The different roles and behaviour of females and males, children as well as adults, are shaped and reinforced by gender norms within communities (WHO, 2009). These roles, ultimately, create inequalities whereby one gender becomes empowered to the disadvantage of the other. In the African context, gender-roles place women as subordinate to men and have a lower social status, while men have greater control and decision-making power. The power imbalance increases the risk and vulnerability of women and girls to physical, emotional and sexual violence by men. Their vulnerability also hinders them from removing themselves from abusive situations or making efforts to seek support, and thus, the vicious cycle of gender-based violence.

This chapter analyses the perceptions and attitudes of pupils in both primary and secondary schools on gender norms, equality and participation. The analysis enables us to see the extent to which pupils have positive attitudes towards gender norms and also gives an insight into the level of their awareness to the notion of gender equity. The chapter also presents findings related to the awareness of their rights and related misconceptions as well as their perceptions on safety while commuting to or from school. But, before going into the details of their perceptions and attitude, it is important to have some background information about the respondents. The following section gives a brief overview of who the respondents are on the basis of selected socio-economic indicators.

3.1 Background Characteristics of the Sample Population

Selected background characteristics of the sample pupils were analysed based on the information gathered from the quantitative survey. These include socio-demographic indicators such as age, economic status and social service indicators such as source of drinking water, types of toilet facilities used and materials of floor of their residence.

There are established methods of assessing socio-economic status of families. The most common is the Living Standard Measurement Survey (LSMS) developed by the Economic Development Research Group that uses sets of questions that solicit information on household poverty status. Such sophisticated approaches are beyond the scope of this study and, therefore, an attempt is made to show the economic status of the families where the children live by looking at the indicators mentioned above.

The study showed that about half of the pupil (both boys and girls) are in the age range of 13-17 years. More than a third of them are above 18 years of age. Perhaps this could be a manifestation of the aftermath of the civil war where over-aged children who did not have the opportunity to attend school then and enrolled at ages beyond the official school-age. The age difference of students particularly at the same level of education will have its own impact on the situation of violence.

Table 3. 1: Background characteristics of pupil by gender (in percentages)

Background characteristics	Girls	Boys	Total	Number of cases
Age				
Below 13 years	14.4	15.1	14.8	192
13 - 14 years	19.4	16.8	18.1	235
15 - 17 years	32.1	31.3	31.7	412
18 and above	34.0	36.9	35.5	461
Total	645	667	1312	1312

Access to clean water and adequate sanitation are among the measures used to assess the quality of life. They have significant effect on health and contribute to the overall wellbeing of children. In this study, access to clean water and adequate sanitation facilities were used in the context of showing the social and economic status of the families with whom the children are living. Accordingly, access to safe drinking water varied by area of residence. The major source of drinking water in semi-urban and rural areas, for example, is protected well, reported by 46 per cent and 41 per cent of the pupils, respectively. On the other hand more than 60 per cent of the respondents in urban areas have access to piped water, either in their dwellings or in their plots, somehow suggesting better status in this regard. The study also showed that about 19 per cent of the pupils from schools in rural areas, 13 per cent from semi-urban and 11 per cent from urban areas do not have access to safe drinking water (see Table 3.2).

Table 3. 2: Major sources of drinking water by area of residence (in percentage)

Source of drinking water	Area of residence			Total
	Urban	Semi-urban	Rural	
Piped water into dwelling	19.8	8.1	7.2	9.3
Piped water into yard or plot	41.3	6.4	5.4	10.6
Community standpipe	14.5	25.6	27.1	24.8
Protected well	12.8	46.0	40.8	39.2
Unprotected well	9.9	6.4	7.2	7.3
Borehole	-	2.7	3.0	2.4
Surface water (river/lake/dam)	0.6	4.2	8.4	5.7
Rain water	-	0.2	-	0.1
Bottled water	1.2	0.4	0.7	0.6
Other	-	-	0.2	0.1
Total number of cases	172	528	608	1308

More than 66 per cent of the respondents in the study area have access to improved sanitation facilities (latrine made of cement, Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrine and flush toilets). About a third of them reported that they use traditional pit made of mud and thatched roof whereas two per cent of them do not have any toilet facility at all. In urban areas about 37 per cent have flush toilet, which is used as an indicator of relatively better economic status, while nearly equal proportions in semi-urban and rural areas (about six per cent) have reported flush toilet facility. The study showed that latrines made of cement and thatched roof and ventilated improved pit are very common in urban, semi-urban as well as in rural areas of Sierra Leone (see Table 3.3).

Table 3. 3: Sanitation facility by area of residence (in percentage)

Sanitation facility	Area of residence			Total
	Urban	Semi-urban	Rural	
Flush toilet	36.6	5.7	6.1	9.9
Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrine	20.9	29.5	25.1	26.3
Latrine (Cement/ Iron-sheets)	29.1	28.7	27.1	28.0
Traditional pit (mud and thatched)	8.1	34.6	38.9	33.1
None	0.6	1.3	2.5	1.8
Other	4.7	0.2	0.3	0.8
Total number of cases	172	529	609	1310

The floor types of the dwellings of the pupils were the other indicators assessed. The majority of the pupils reported that the floors of their houses are made of polished wood or cement or tiles or other similar materials. In urban and semi-urban areas these types of floors are more common and indicate better status of household than natural floor such as earth or mud. Overall, quite significant number of respondents (about 36 per cent) reported that the floor of their houses are natural floor, which is almost equally significant in rural and semi-urban areas.

Table 3. 4: Floor types of the dwellings of the respondents (in percentage)

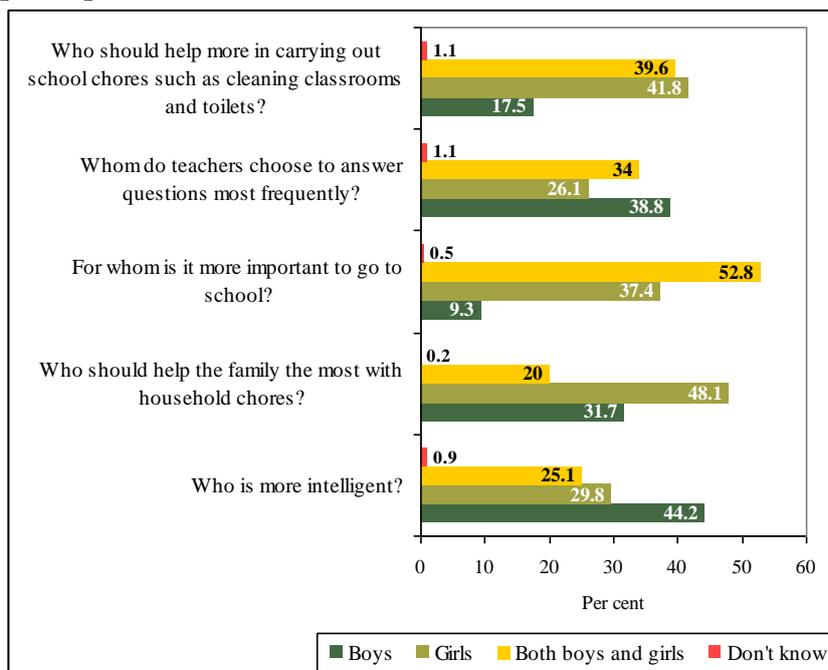
Types of floor	Area of residence			Total
	Urban	Semi-urban	Rural	
Natural floor (earth/mud)	21.1	33.7	42.7	36.2
Rudimentary floor (wood/broken brick)	14.0	12.3	10.1	11.5
Finished floor (polished wood, cement, tile, etc.)	64.9	53.6	46.7	51.9
Other	-	0.4	0.5	0.4
Total number of cases	171	511	602	1284

3.2 Attitude and Perceptions on Gender Roles

Attitudinal orientation and stereotyped statements are reflections of gender norms and perceptions towards gender roles. Negative attitude and misconceptions about gender roles and power relations between men and women can be factors that predispose to violent act and could create fertile ground for the perpetuation of gender-based violence. In the quantitative survey, attitudinal questions and gender stereotyped statements were used to assess awareness on gender matters and evaluate the extent to which they have positive attitude toward gender issues and equity.

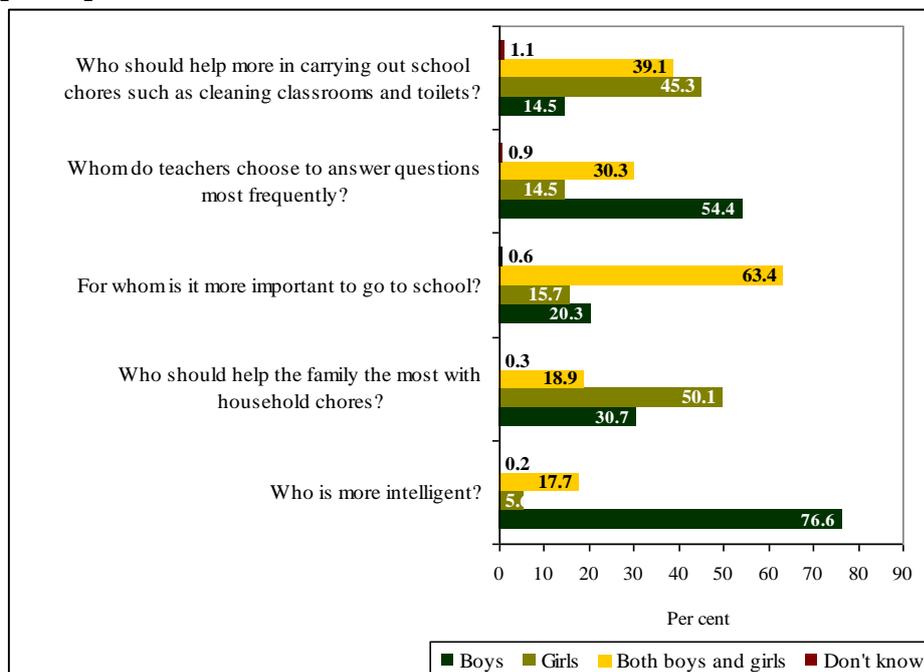
Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show the responses of girls and boys, respectively, for selected gender aspects related to their roles, capability and participation. One can easily see the low status given to women by the community and by the women themselves in Sierra Leone. About 44 per cent of the girls believe that boys are more intelligent than girls. This perception is even more inflated among boys where more than three-quarters of them think that boys are more intelligent than girls. Further, four out of ten of both boys and girls think that it is the duty of girls to clean classrooms and toilets compared to only 15 per cent who said it is the duty of boys.

Figure 3. 1: Responses of GIRLS on selected gender aspects related to roles, capability and participation



Such an attitude was also reflected in the qualitative research where some of the key informants reflected their perception that girls are meant to be wives and with a responsibility to take care of the home and give birth to children. They associate their argument with their belief that boys are more intelligent than girls. It is alarming to note such attitude that contributes to further inflame school-related gender-based violence and plays negative role in girl’s participation in school.

Figure 3. 2: Responses of BOYS on selected gender aspects related to roles, capability and participation



3.2.1 Attitude toward gender roles in handling household chores and farm activities

‘A woman should be married to a responsible man, have children, perform domestic work and be honest and dedicated to her husband and family - even when the husband is away - and also contribute to community development’.

~ An informant in one of the districts

ACPF’s study on SRGBV in Sierra Leone, 2010

About two-thirds of the pupils in both primary and secondary schools believe that girls should bear the responsibility of helping families with housework. Nearly half further think that helping with household chores again should be shouldered by girls. There exist a widespread gender bias within the population that women are physically weak and should discharge housework roles and responsibilities. Many of the key informants under the study also reflected similar opinion, indicating the prevailing attitude towards limiting women to limited activities within the confines of the house.

Labour intensive work is, as a norm, left to men. This attitude is also reflected in the study where eight out of ten pupils from both primary and secondary schools mentioned that helping families in farm-work should be carried out by boys. The study also elicited similar views in relation to the social roles of men from the key informants. Majority of them expressed that “*a respectable man in the community should be married to a wife or wives and control over the family by becoming a bread winner. He should become a role model in the community and observing the norms of the community.*”

3.2.2 School-related gender norms and attitude

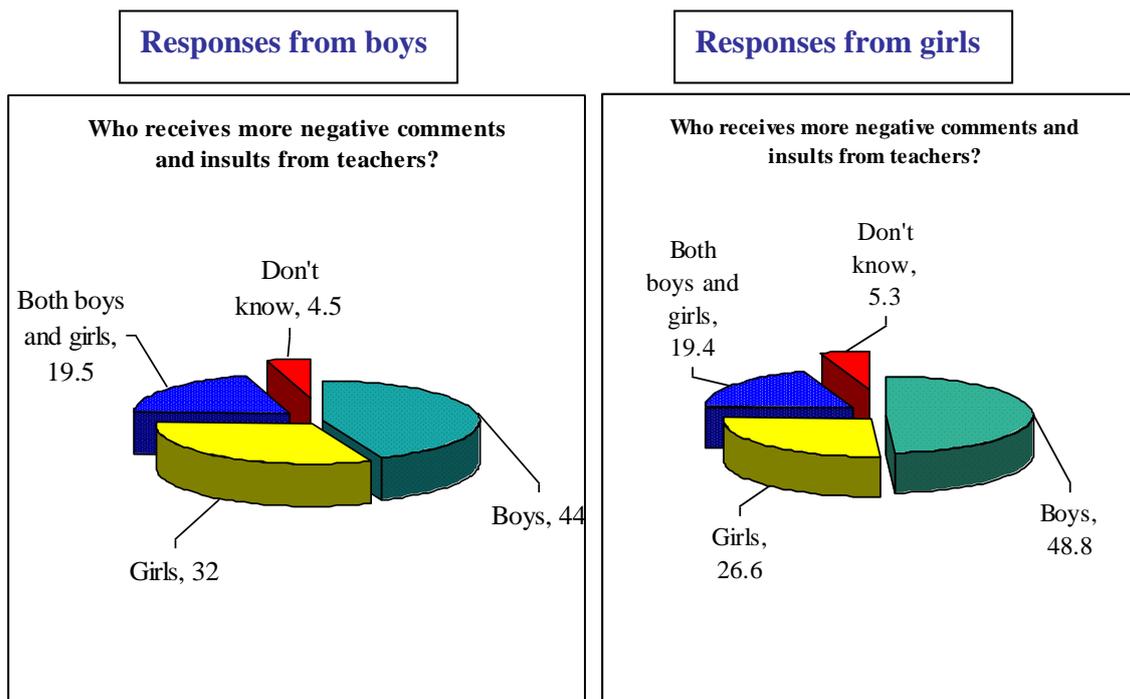
In Sierra Leone, there is a tendency of sending boys to school rather than girls. About 40 per cent of the primary and secondary school pupils do not think that equal opportunity for access to education should be given to both boys and girls. Nevertheless, many key informants and focus groups noted that there is recently a change in perception within the society with regards to the education of girls. They frequently mentioned that currently the communities strongly believe that the girl child should enjoy the same opportunity. Some informants also expressed their opinion that educating girls nowadays is becoming more rewarding because girls are more likely than boys to support their families financially and morally.

Alarmingly, teachers in primary and secondary schools are often showing less interest to girls to answer questions than their male students. To this end, only one in five girls was more likely to draw attention of their teachers. The same holds true when it comes to participation in classroom activities. Although nearly a quarter of primary and secondary children pointed out that both girls and boys are equally participating in school activities, over half expressed that it is the boys in both schools that enjoy their right to participation.

Only one in five of the primary school pupils and one in ten of the pupil from secondary think that both girls and boys should be treated equally in school. Their perception is not much different with regards to equal treatment to girls and boys within the family and the community setting where the preference is notably skewed towards boys.

Figure 3.2 shows perception of boys and girls on teachers’ treatment of students by gender. Half of the girls and 44 per cent of the boys think that teachers tend to give negative comments and insult to boys. Those who perceive that girls receive more negative comments and insults from teachers account for 32 per cent of the male pupils and 27 per cent of the female pupils.

Figure 3. 3: Pupils response to the question “who receives more negative comments and insults?” by gender (in percentages)



Far below half of the pupils both in primary (36 per cent) and secondary (31 per cent) schools reflected that both boys and girls should have the same job opportunity. Further, only a quarter of the respondents believe that men and women should be equally represented in the local government and national parliament and that they should have access to land, houses and credit. This perception of the pupil, however, is challenged by the views and opinions of adult informants. Many of the informants expressed that, if girls are educated, they will have similar or even better employment opportunity than the boys. According to their observation, in some instances girls are preferred to boys, perhaps due to the government’s policy of affirmative action, to get a job even when both have attained the same level of education. Some of the informants, for instance, reinforced this assertion and mentioned as an example a nearby hospital where nearly 90 per cent of the staff are women earning equivalent salary with men in similar positions. It can be deduced that gender equality in access to job opportunities could be achieved in relatively shorter period of time if efforts continue systematically and in a concerted manner.

Attitude towards school punishment

The study discovered that nearly one in four boys and one in five girls in primary schools believed that boys and girls should receive the same punishment at school. In addition, similar proportions of girls (29 per cent) from secondary schools have the same opinion as those in primary. Corporal punishment is considered as an acceptable form of disciplining pupils despite the prevailing government laws and regulations to abandoning the practice. Perhaps, to ensure the obedience of children, there are some practices that the community and even the children themselves consider as acceptable. In some schools, students expressed their frustration towards school authorities because teachers are administering more than three strokes as a punishment for breaking rules. But still, pupils consider corporal punishment as a legitimate disciplining method if administered ‘*within the limit*’.

Attitude towards boys and girls learning in the same school

The study shows that less than one-fifth of the pupil from primary and secondary schools felt that girls and boys should not be in the same school. Main reasons cited among the primary girls include boys fight over girls (18 per cent), boys distract attention to learning (nine per cent) and boys disturb in class (eight per cent). Boys on the other hand mentioned that teachers give more attention to girls (eight per cent), girls distract attention to learning (14 per cent). Similarly, girls from secondary schools identified boys fight over girls (13 per cent) and distract attention to learning (12 per cent) as their main justification to propose separate schools for boys and girls. High incidence of rape/sexual assault (seven per cent) and girls exchange sex for grades (three per cent) were the other arguments that have been cited.

Attitude towards pregnant girls

Pupils from both secondary and primary schools were equivocal in their opinion towards allowing a girl to staying in school in case she becomes pregnant. Yet, close to a quarter agreed with the idea that boys should leave school if found responsible for impregnating a girl.

3.3 Awareness of Child Rights

This section highlights pupils' knowledge with regards to basic child rights. The pupils were asked whether or not they were aware of their rights to selected aspects such as the right to adequate protection and education. As can be seen from Tables 3.5 and 3.6, there is almost a universal knowledge among both primary and secondary pupil about, for instance, their right to education and food. On the other hand, there are misconceptions where more than half of them think that teachers are entitled to beat and yell at their students. It is also startling to note that one-fifth of both primary and secondary pupils were unaware of their rights not to be hurt or mistreated by others and almost half of the pupils do not recognise their right not to be beaten by teachers. Furthermore, about five per cent of the pupil from primary and secondary schools were not aware of their right to say no to sex and an equal proportion think that teachers have the right to demand sex from their students. It is this group of the pupil that are at higher risk of being sexually exploited by the very teachers who are supposed to guide and mentor them.

Table 3. 5: Percentage of pupils who know selected child rights by their level of education

Rights of the child	Level of education	
	Primary	Secondary
Right to education	100	99
Right to food	99	98
Right to adequate rest and sleep	96	96
Right to say no to sex	95	95
Right to express ideas and opinions in the class	92	93
Right to play and recreation	91	97
Right to say no to teachers who want to touch your thighs, buttocks, or private parts	86	89
Right to say no to other students who want to touch your thighs, buttocks, or private parts	86	89
Right not to be hurt or mistreated	78	80
Right to disagree with teachers	35	47

Most of the key informants recognise children's rights particularly the right to education, to life, and participation. However, children's right to protection is not widely recognised and many of

the pupils have not mentioned it. There is a need, therefore, to emphasise this gap and create awareness on the right of children to be protected from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Entitlements in the national legal framework have corresponding obligations to the duty-bearers. But, many people do not know the duties and responsibilities of various organs of the government and, therefore, do not claim their entitlements. Awareness creation in this regard would also contribute to holding relevant bodies accountable. It also encourages the pupil to demand their entitlements and influence authorities for more action to break the continuum of SRGBV not only within schools, but also at broader societal level.

Table 3. 6: Percentage of pupil who expressed their beliefs or misconceptions on selected gender-based violence issues

Beliefs/misconceptions	Level of education	
	Primary	Secondary
Belief in pupils that they can help put an end to gender-based violence in schools	84	92
Belief in pupils that they can help change cultures that tolerate gender-based violence in schools	82	89
Teachers have the right to beat you in classroom	56	51
Teachers have the right to shout at you, insult you and call you names	18	13
Teachers have the right to touch your thighs, buttocks, or private parts	4	4
Male teachers have the right to demand sex from school children	4	5
Female teachers have the right to demand sex from school children	4	4

3.4 Safety Perceptions

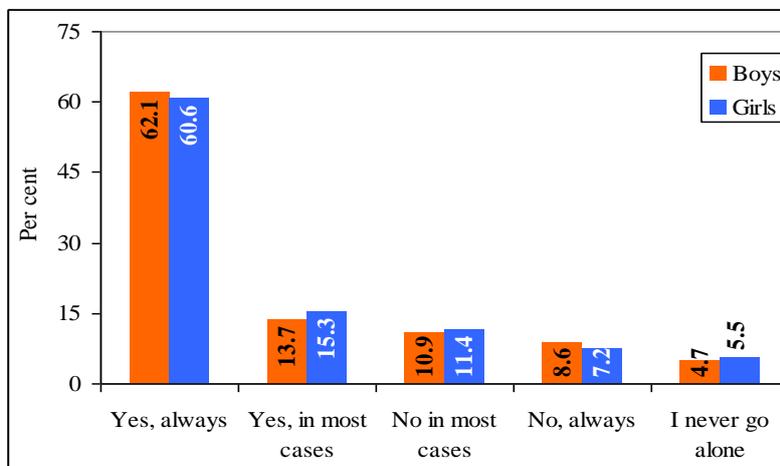
In order to assess the degree of security that the pupil feel while commuting to school, a set of questions were included in the quantitative survey to solicit information on pupils' perception of safety on their way to or from school. The results, classified by district, are presented in Table 3.3. In general, about 15 per cent of pupils feel insecure almost always as they commute to school. The pupil in Kono Tonkolili and Bombali are more likely to feel insecure to commute to school than those in the other districts. For example, a quarter of pupils in both primary and secondary schools in Bombali said that they do not feel safe almost always. Pupils in primary schools generally feel more secured than those in JSS or SSS and this could perhaps be related to the distance of the school from their homes.

Table 3. 7: Percentage distribution of pupil by their perception of safety while commuting to school by district

District	Perception on safety when commuting to school				Total cases
	Yes, always	Yes, in most cases	No, in most cases	No, always	
Bombali	62.8	12.0	12.0	13.1	191
Kailahun	65.0	21.9	9.4	3.8	160
Koinadugu	85.0	6.3	6.3	2.5	160
Kono	73.1	4.4	7.5	15.0	160
Moyamba	82.5	6.9	9.4	1.3	160
Port Loko	78.1	16.3	3.8	1.9	160
Tonkolili	59.1	17.6	10.1	13.2	159
Western Area	90.6	5.7	1.9	1.9	159
Total	74.3	11.4	7.6	6.7	1309

In an attempt to probe more on pupils' perception of safety, they were asked a follow up question to find out if they feel safe to walk alone while commuting to school. As can be seen from Figure 3.4, about 25 per cent of pupils do not feel safe to walk to school alone. The percentage of pupil who said that they do not feel safe to walk to or from school alone increases by about 10 percentage-points, indicating relatively higher degree of insecurity among the pupil of both primary and secondary schools to go or come from school.

Figure 3. 4: Percentage distribution of pupil by their sense of safety while walking alone to or from school



As for the reasons, six out of ten pupils from JSS and SSS mentioned physical assault and accidents as main reasons for feeling insecure to commute to school. Though lower in percentage terms, these same reasons were cited by the pupil from primary schools. About 15 per cent of the girls from both primary and secondary schools cited reasons related to sexual abuse (see Table 3.8).

Table 3. 8: Reasons for insecurity to commute to or from school by gender (in percentages)

Reasons	Primary level of education		Secondary level of education	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Physical assault	27.0	31.0	32.0	28.0
Accident	27.0	25.0	31.0	30.0
River/road/animals/weather	18.0	20.0	19.0	16.0
Insult/bullying	13.0	16.0	17.0	14.0
Traditional practice	15.0	15.0	17.0	16.0
Being abducted	15.0	14.0	11.0	14.0
Rape	7.0	11.0	10.0	14.0
Sexual assault	5.0	10.0	8.0	14.0

Conditions that make stay in school safe and welcoming were also explored in this study. Accordingly, the most commonly cited conditions relate to play with peers (39 per cent), being supervised by teachers (33 per cent) and availability and adequacy of learning materials such as text books, facilities (like laboratories, play ground) and other learning materials (21 per cent). There was no significant difference in the perception of safety within schools by gender and level of education.

Table 3. 9: Conditions that make stay in school safe and welcoming (in percentages)

Conditions	Primary Level education		Secondary level education	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Play with peers	40.0	39.0	43.0	40.0
Teachers supervise pupils	28.0	33.0	32.0	30.0
Availability/adequacy of texts, facilities and other learning materials	21.0	21.0	19.0	19.0
Behaviour and discipline of pupils	20.0	19.0	21.0	18.0
Equal treatment of boys and girls	17.0	18.0	14.0	13.0
Teachers do not propose love to pupils	7.0	10.0	8.0	7.0

CHAPTER 4

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

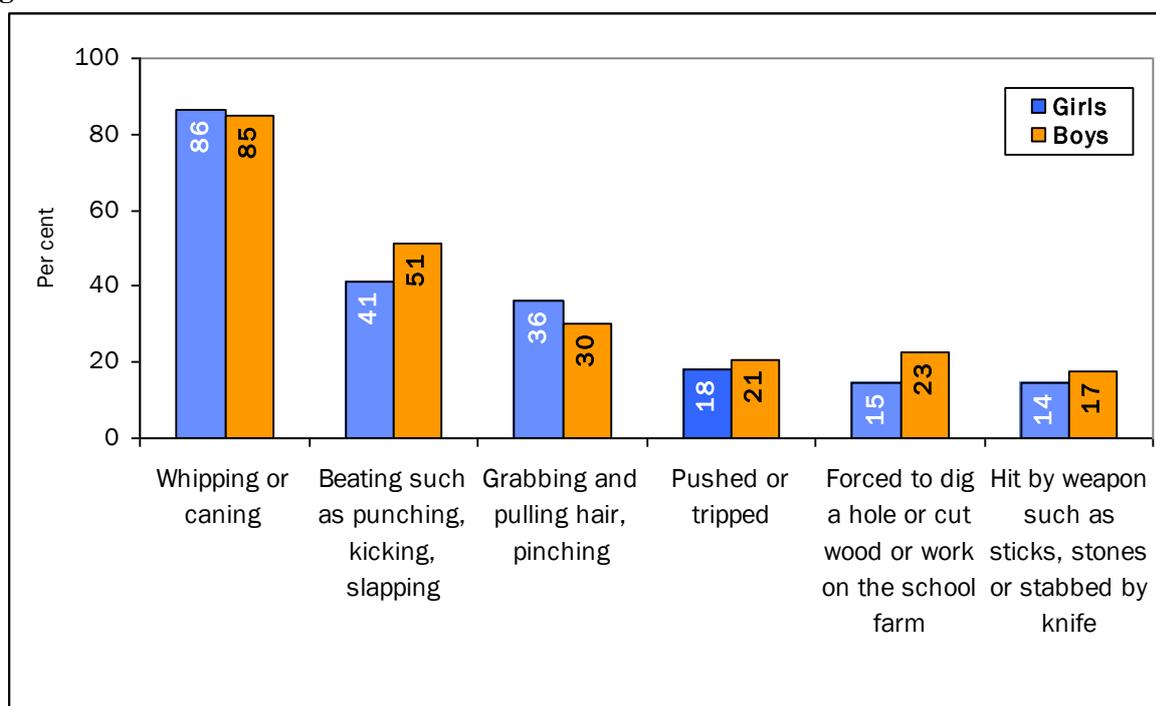
In the context of this study, physical violence refers to a deliberate use of force against a pupil in such a way that he or she is either injured or is at risk of being injured. This chapter highlights the main findings of the study in relation to this particular type of violence. It presents the various forms of violence that pupils experience within the school setting, their homes and communities. The chapter also briefly looks at the frequency of such happening to examine persistence of the problem and reveals the perpetrators inflicting the assault.

4.1 Prevalence, Forms and Frequency of Physical Violence

Several forms of physical violence were reported with varying degrees of severity. In this study, forms of physical violence include whipping/caning, beating (such as punching, kicking and slapping), grabbing, pulling hair, pinching, pushing or tripping, hitting with weapons such as stones, stick or stabbing with knives.

As shown in Figure 4.1, an overwhelming majority of both boys and girls reported to have experienced physical violence, indicating widespread prevalence of the problem within school, home and community settings. The majority of the pupils (about 86 per cent) have been caned or whipped – an indication of a common practice of corporal punishment in Sierra Leone. The forms of violence inflicted on the pupil somehow vary by gender. Boys, for example, are more likely to have been beaten, kicked or slapped than girls. In percentage terms, 51 per cent of the boys experienced such severe physical assault compared to 41 per cent among the girls. Girls, on the other hand, experience more grabbing, hair pulling and pinching. Boys are more likely to be forced to dig holes, cut wood or work on school farms than girls.

Figure 4. 1: Percentage of pupils that experienced physical violence by form of violence and gender



In general, 92 per cent of pupils have experienced at least one form of physical violence in their lifetime. The study has shown a slight variation in the prevalence of physical violence by district and area. It is particularly very high in Koinadugu, Kono, Bombali and Port Loko districts and comparatively lower in Moyamba and Tonkolili districts. Forms of physical violence also somehow differ by district. For example, 66 per cent of the boys in Western Area reported to have been beaten, kicked and slapped compared to only 28 per cent of their counterparts in Kailahun. Again, half of the girls in Koinadugu have experienced assaults such as grabbing, pulling hair and pinching compared to a proportion that is less by about half in Moyamba (see Table 4.1).

Similar results were found from the qualitative assessment where most of the pupil in the focus group discussions described that corporal punishment apparently is practiced in schools. Almost all key informants also agree to the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools. They in fact note that it is normally practiced in many of the schools and that it is usually perpetrated by teachers. Physical violence also occurs among students where older boys in most cases victimise younger ones.

Table 4. 1: Percentage of pupils that experienced physical violence by form of violence and district/area

District/ Area	Whipping or caning		Beating such as punching, kicking and slapping		Grabbing, pulling hair and pinching		Hit by weapon such as sticks, stones or stabbed by knife		Pushed or tripped		Forced to dig a hole or cut wood or work on the school farm	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Bombali	91.5	94.9	59.6	34.7	28.7	38.8	24.5	4.1	12.8	17.3	17.0	10.2
Kailahun	74.7	80.5	28.0	33.8	27.7	35.1	18.1	15.6	18.1	20.8	28.9	18.2
Koinadugu	96.4	96.1	44.6	42.9	60.2	49.4	16.9	24.7	36.1	26.0	33.7	20.8
Kono	94.0	97.4	51.2	35.5	23.8	27.6	27.4	26.3	25.0	18.4	23.8	17.1
Moyamba	74.4	69.2	56.1	47.4	14.6	26.9	7.3	7.7	9.8	5.1	19.5	14.1
Port Loko	91.1	92.6	48.1	39.5	32.9	30.9	20.3	9.9	24.1	23.5	32.9	19.8
Tonkolili	79.3	75.6	56.1	52.6	36.6	42.3	15.9	19.2	19.5	21.8	24.4	17.9
Western Area	76.3	81.3	66.3	46.3	15.0	37.5	7.5	11.3	22.5	13.8	-	-
Total	84.9	86.2	51.4	41.4	30.0	36.1	17.4	14.4	20.8	18.3	22.5	14.6
Number of cases	566	556	342	267	200	233	116	93	139	118	150	94

Prevalence of physical violence was also looked at by location of schools in terms of urban, semi-urban and rural categorisation. The definition of an urban area differs from country to country, but in most African countries it refers to a place where most of the residents are engaged in non-agricultural activities and the population size is more than five thousand (UNSD, 2005). Semi-urban areas are those areas with a population size of less than five thousand and the inhabitants are not predominantly engaged in the agricultural sector. These definitions were used for this study as well.

The study showed no significant difference in most forms of physical violence by urban, semi-urban or rural settings. However, pupils in schools located in rural and semi-urban areas are

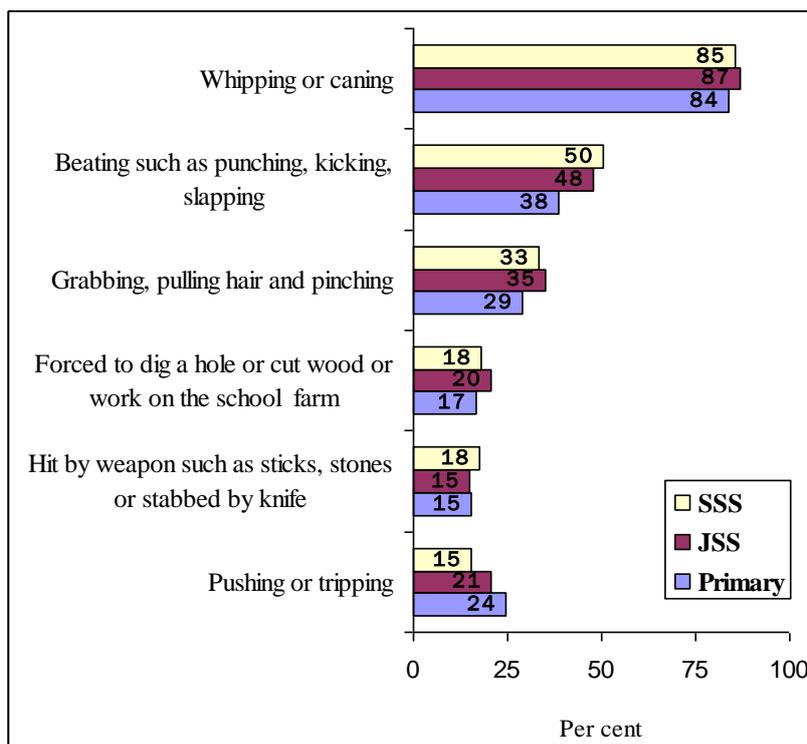
more likely to be forced to dig holes or cut wood or work on the school farm than their counterparts in urban areas. One in every five pupil in rural and semi-urban areas are forced to do such a physically demanding activities compared to only seven per cent in schools based in urban centres. There is also a difference in prevalence of the most severe forms of violence by area where about 17 per cent of pupils in schools located in rural and semi-urban areas reported to have been beaten by stick or stone or stabbed by knives compared to the 10 per cent prevalence in urban areas (see Table 4.2).

Table 4. 2: Percentage of pupils experienced physical violence by location of schools

Forms of physical violence	Location of schools			Total	
	Urban	Semi-urban	Rural	Per cent	Cases
Have you experienced whipping or caning	85.5	86.6	84.6	85.5	1122
Beating such as punching, kicking or slapping	46.2	47.4	45.7	46.5	609
Grabbing such as pulling hair, pinching	31.2	33.4	33.2	33.0	433
Pushed or tripped	17.9	20.4	19.4	19.6	257
Forced to dig a hole, cut wood or work on the school farm	6.9	20.0	20.7	18.6	244
Hit by sticks, stones or stabbed by knives	9.8	17.7	16.1	15.9	209

Physical violence was also analysed by level of education. The overall picture shows that physical violence is prevalent at all levels of education with negligible difference by level of education. More than eight out of ten pupils are caned or whipped irrespective of the level of education. As illustrated in Figure 4.2, there is, however, a slight difference in forms of physical violence by level of education. While kicking and slapping are more common at JSS and SSS levels, tripping and pushing are common at primary schools.

Figure 4. 2: Percentage of pupils that experienced physical violence by form of violence and level of education



Frequency of happening is inversely related to the severity of the form of violence. Highly severe assaults such as hitting by stone, stick or stabbing by knives have rare occurrences. Corporal punishment takes place very often. For example, one in every five pupils who were whipped or caned said that this happens often with a frequency of about three to four times a week.

Table 4. 3: Percentage of pupils that experienced physical violence by form of violence and frequency of happening

Forms of violence	All the time (3-4 times a week)	Very often (1-4 times a month)	Often (every 3 or 4 months)	Rarely (once a year)	Once
Whipping or caning	20.7	27.7	29.7	7.9	14.1
Beating such as kicking, punching or slapping	5.3	15.6	30.5	12.5	36.1
Grabbing such as pulling hair, pinching	10.9	19.2	23.8	15.5	30.7
Hit by stick, stone or stabbed by knives	2.4	5.3	15.8	12.4	64.1
Pushed or tripped	7.0	18.3	23.3	13.2	38.1
Forced to dig a hole/cut wood/work on school farm	10.2	18.9	28.7	17.6	24.6

4.2 Where Does It Happen and Who are the Perpetrators?

Identifying places where violence takes place allows designing appropriate intervention to mitigate the problem. One of the sets of questions asked related to the place of occurrence. In view of the objective of the study, ACPF classified the places in two broad categories: school-related and home or community settings. We have also unbundled the “school-related” category to provide specific information on places within the school settings where such violent acts take place. Table 4.4 shows the places where physical violence takes place for the most prevalent forms of physical assault.

Table 4. 4: Places where physical violence takes place by gender (in percentages)

Places	Whipping or caning		Beating such as kicking, punching and slapping		Grabbing, pulling hair and pinching		Pushing or stripping	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
School-related (combined)	76.3	81.8	43.4	48.0	58.4	58.0	69.5	76.3
School compound	51.3	52.3	22.5	24.6	30.5	36.5	32.2	31.7
In or while entering classrooms	14.2	15.0	3.7	4.1	3.9	2.5	3.4	1.4
On the way to or from school	9.4	13.3	12.4	12.0	19.7	12.5	18.6	19.4
Playground/Sports field	0.2	0.2	2.6	5.6	1.3	2.5	15.3	21.6
At the tap/borehole	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.0	0.0	1.4
In or around toilets	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	2.0	0.0	0.0
Principals office/staff room	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.0
Teacher house	0.4	0.0	1.9	0.3	1.3	0.5	0.0	0.0
Bushes/School garden	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0
During club activities	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.7
In the home/village	23.7	18.2	56.6	52.0	41.6	42.0	30.5	23.7
Number of cases	556	566	267	342	233	200	118	139

Most of the physical violence took place within the school settings. Corporal punishment is widespread in schools than in home or community settings. For example, of the pupils who have been whipped or caned, eight out of ten of the boys and three-fourths of the girls said this happened within school settings. Further analysis on specific places within the school compound shows that the school compound is the main place where physical violence takes place. The others places most commonly cited are within classrooms or while entering classrooms. Substantial proportions of them have also experienced physical assault on the way to school. Other places, such as sports field, toilets, principals' offices or staff rooms are not common places of physical violence (see Table 4.4).

The victims of physical violence were also asked about the perpetrators. They have mentioned a list of persons who inflicted the assault. Perpetrators differ by form of violence and ranges from close family members, to siblings and to strangers whom the pupils have no acquaintance. In school settings, there are a number of players including teachers, peers, senior pupil and principals.

Male teachers are the main perpetrators within the school setting who whip and can their pupil. This could be due to the fact that male teachers constitute the majority of the teaching staff and thus proportionally contribute to higher share of perpetrators under this category. Peers are the other category of perpetrators. Girls who experienced grabbing, pulling hair and pinching mentioned their peer as main perpetrators of the assault. Boys, on the other hand, have been victims of severe assault such as being hit by stone, stick and being stabbed by knives by their peers.

Table 4. 5: Perpetrators of physical violence by form of violence and gender of victims (in percentages)

Perpetrators	Whipping or caning		Beating such as kicking, punching and slapping		Grabbing, pulling hair and pinching		Hit by stick, stone or stabbed by knife	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
In school settings								
Teachers (Male)	63.8	72.3	14.6	16.7	6.9	8.0	4.3	0.0
Teachers (Female)	6.7	3.9	2.2	0.3	1.7	0.0	1.1	0.9
Peers (Male)	0.9	1.9	7.1	16.7	9.9	34.5	6.5	25.0
Peers (Female)	1.4	0.4	8.6	2.3	23.2	2.0	5.4	2.6
Friends (Male)	0.5	0.4	3.0	10.2	0.9	10.5	4.3	15.5
Friend (Female)	0.5	0.2	1.9	0.0	7.7	2.0	7.5	0.0
Senior students	0.4	0.2	3.0	4.1	8.6	5.0	3.3	7.8
School dropouts	0.5	0.2	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.5	1.1	0.9
Principals/Deputies	1.5	2.2	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.0	1.1	0.9
Within home or community								
A female adult member of the family	13.8	7.6	20.6	13.7	18.5	13.5	24.7	11.2
A male adult member of the family	6.5	6.7	12.7	18.1	5.6	9.5	9.7	10.3
Brother/male cousin	1.4	1.9	15.0	9.4	6.0	8.5	19.4	12.9
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	0.2	0.2	4.9	0.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	1.7
Sister/Female cousin	0.2	0.5	1.9	0.3	3.4	4.0	6.5	0.9
Community member	1.4	0.9	1.4	1.5	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.9
Other unknown persons	0.2	0.7	2.2	4.7	0.4	1.5	5.4	8.7
Number of cases	556	566	267	342	233	200	93	116

Within the family setting, female adult members, particularly mothers and elder sisters are the main perpetrators of corporal punishment. Male adult family members including fathers, brothers and male cousins are also the other groups of perpetrators though with relatively lower proportions.

The above findings also coincide with the results of the qualitative assessment where most participants noted the fact that physical violence occurs most in school compounds and at homes. The main perpetrators identified during the discussion include teachers, peers, community elders and 'bike riders'.

The reasons usually given by teachers to justify perpetration of corporal punishment on their pupils include, among others, coming late to classes, lack of attention and distraction during lectures. Such arguments seem to ignore the contextual realities within which pupils are living and undermine the critical factors behind such behaviours. Girls who in most cases carry the burden of the household chores, who may be hungry, tired of travelling long distances and accomplish numerous tasks before coming to school will have no option but to be late and have limited concentration. Therefore, assault and abuse would only further complicate and ruin their lives and would have no relevance in bringing about a solution.

In conclusion, the majority of the pupil at all levels of education experience physical violence related to school. Caning and whipping are particularly the most common forms of physical violence within school, indicating widespread practice of corporal punishment in schools in Sierra Leone. The forms of violence inflicted on the pupil vary by gender. While boys are more likely to have been beaten, kicked or slapped, forced to dig holes, cut wood or work on school farms, girls in most case experience grabbing, hair pulling and pinching.

Perpetrators of physical violence within the school settings include teachers, peers, senior pupil and principals. Male teachers in particular are the main perpetrators who whip and can their pupils. The justifications for the practice of corporal punishment within school include coming late to classes, lack of attention and distraction during teaching.

CHAPTER 5

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

“I tried to fight him, but I do not have strong feet (due to the polio). He raped me until I ...I was not able to attend school since then. The exam is going on and I am missing it. I ranked first in my class in the first term ...I am very annoyed and frustrated.”

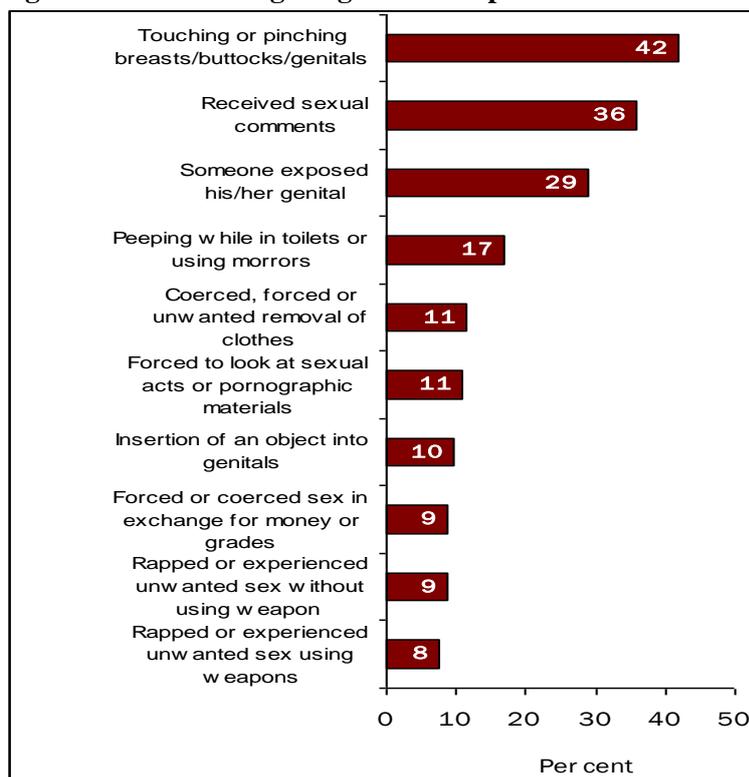
*~ A 12 year old JSS student in Kono district
ACPF’s study on SRGBV in Sierra Leone, 2010*

Sexual violence is one of the manifestations of gender-based violence committed particularly against girls and especially vulnerable ones such as those with disabilities. It refers to the act of forcing girls as well as boys to engage in a sexually motivated act without their consent. It is usually accompanied by other types of violence including physical and psychological. In this study, sexual violence comprises several forms with varying degrees of severity. It ranges from the extreme case of rape using weapons to the use of improper words and comments of a sexual nature. It includes forced or coerced sexual intercourse against ones will, exposition of genitalia and being forced to look at materials of sexual content and indecent sexual touching. The findings in this section highlight the prevalence, frequency and perpetrators of sexual violence among pupils in both primary and secondary schools.

5.1 Prevalence, Forms and Frequency of Sexual Violence

Sexual violence against girls in both primary and secondary schools is highly prevalent and indeed an issue of concern in Sierra Leone. Two-thirds of the girls interviewed reported that they have experienced at least on or more forms of sexual violence. As can be seen from Figure 5.1, the most common form of sexual violence is touching or pinching breasts, buttocks or genitals where 42 per cent of the girls reported to have experienced such an abuse.

Figure 5. 1: Percentage of girls who experienced sexual violence by forms of violence



About 10 per cent of the girls reported to have experienced the most severe forms of sexual violence in which they were forced into sexual intercourse and another eight per cent were raped after being physically assaulted using weapons. About 70 per cent of the rape cases took place in the 12 months preceding the study, indicating persistence of the problem. About ten per cent of the girls said that someone has attempted to insert objects into their genitals. Indecent sexual comments and exposing genitals in front of the girls are the other common forms of sexual abuse. These forms of violence signal the bitter realities of gender-based violence against girls in Sierra Leone and emphasise the need for a concerted effort to intervene and mitigate the problem particularly in light of reducing its impact on access to education of girls.

Sexual violence varies considerably among districts. Tonkolili district has a relatively higher percentage of victims in most of the reported forms of sexual violence. For example, 60 per cent of the girls in the district have been indecently touched or pinched on their breasts, buttocks or genitals compared to 23 per cent in Moyamba and 24 per cent in Western Area. When it comes to more severe sexual assault, Western Area has negligible cases of rape or coerced sex in exchange for gifts or money. Koinadugu is the other district with relatively higher incidences of sexual abuse in the form of forced removal of clothes and receiving improper sexual comments. Sexual exploitation seems to be relatively higher in Bombali and Kailahun where about 14 per cent of the girls reported to have been coerced to have sexual intercourse in exchange for gifts, money or better grades.

Table 5. 1: Percentage of girls who have experienced sexual violence by form of violence and district

Forms of sexual violence	Bombali	Kailahun	Koinadugu	Kono	Moyamba	Port Loko	Tonkolili	Western Area	Total	
									Per cent	Number of cases
Touching or pinching breasts/ buttocks/genitals	50.0	35.1	49.4	42.1	23.1	49.4	60.3	23.8	41.9	270
Received sexual comments	44.9	39.0	58.4	39.5	20.5	23.5	33.8	26.3	35.9	231
Someone exposed his/her genital	23.5	27.3	36.4	30.3	14.1	45.7	41.0	15.0	29.0	187
Peeping while in toilets or using mirrors	15.3	10.4	23.4	19.7	10.3	16.0	29.5	11.3	16.9	109
Coerced, forced or unwanted removal of clothes	7.1	13.0	22.1	9.3	5.1	14.8	15.4	5.0	11.3	73
Forced to look at sexual acts or pornographic materials	5.2	11.8	9.1	18.9	4.0	11.1	24.4	2.5	10.7	68
Insertion of an object into genitals	4.1	15.6	14.3	1.3	12.8	4.9	23.1	1.3	9.5	61
Raped or experienced unwanted sex without using weapon	11.2	10.4	11.7	13.2	9.0	0.0	12.8	1.3	8.7	56
Forced or coerced sex in exchange for money or grade	14.3	14.3	10.4	9.2	3.8	7.4	7.7	1.3	8.7	56
Raped or experienced unwanted sex using weapons	5.1	10.4	7.8	7.9	5.1	9.9	11.5	3.8	7.6	49

The analysis by area showed that girls in semi-urban areas and those in rural areas are more likely to be victims of sexual violence than pupils in urban centres. This happens almost to all forms of sexual violence including the most severe ones such as rape and coerced sexual intercourse. For instance, the incidence of coerced sex is less by half in schools based in urban

centres than those in rural and semi-urban areas. Further, about 39 per cent of pupils asked in semi-urban areas reported that they received sexual comment whereas pupils who received sexual comments in rural and urban areas are less by about 10 and 15 percentage-points, respectively (See Table 5.2).

Table 5. 2: Percentage of pupils who experienced sexual violence by area of residence

Forms of sexual violence	Area of residence			Total	
	Urban	Semi-urban	Rural	Per cent	No. of cases
Received sexual comments	24.3	39.2	29.3	32.6	428
Touching or pinching breasts/buttocks/genitals	18.5	38.7	30.4	32.2	422
Someone exposed his/her genital	15.6	33.2	26.6	27.8	365
Peeping while in toilets or using mirrors	9.2	14.5	18.4	15.6	205
Forced to look at sexual acts or pornographic materials	7.6	14.6	7.7	10.5	136
Coerced, forced or unwanted removal of clothes	5.2	10.4	9	9.1	119
Raped or experienced unwanted sex without using weapon	0.6	7.5	5.4	5.6	74
Forced sex or coerced sex in exchange for money or better grades	2.9	6.6	4.9	5.3	70
Insertion of an object into genitals	1.2	7	4.9	5.3	69
Raped or experienced unwanted sex using weapon	1.7	6.8	3.6	4.6	61

As can be seen from Table 5.3, the most frequent forms of sexual violence are indecent sexual comments and exposing of genitals. The percentage of the most severe forms of violence may seem smaller, but the numbers of girls who suffered from such abuses are significantly large. Given the severity of the assault, these numbers show the seriousness of the problem and call for immediate action to reduce incidences of such happenings.

Table 5. 3: Percentage of girls who experienced sexual violence by form of violence and frequency of occurrence

Forms of sexual violence	All the time (3-4 times a week)	Very often (1-4 times a month)	Often (every 3 or 4 months)	Rarely (once a year)	Once	No. of cases
Touching or pinching breasts/ buttocks/genitals	12.8	19.0	29.7	10.2	28.3	421
Received sexual comments	13.6	30.1	23.4	9.6	23.4	428
Someone exposed his/her genital	18.4	18.4	29.6	9.3	24.4	365
Peeping while in toilets or using mirrors	3.9	10.7	19.0	15.6	50.7	205
Coerced, forced or unwanted removal of clothes	1.7	13.4	13.4	19.3	52.1	119
Forced to look at sexual acts or pornographic materials	9.6	18.4	20.6	16.9	34.6	136
Insertion of an object into genitals	-	8.7	13.0	14.5	63.8	69
Raped or experienced unwanted sex without using weapon	3.3	8.2	9.8	13.1	65.6	61
Forced or coerced sex in exchange for money or grade	4.3	5.7	20.0	14.3	55.7	70
Raped or experienced unwanted sex using weapons	5.4	8.1	13.5	10.8	62.2	74

5.2 Places and Perpetrators of Sexual Violence

The place of occurrence of sexual abuse varies by forms of violence. In general, severe abuses such as rape are more likely to take place within the home and community settings rather than schools. However, incidences of school-related rape contribute to 30 per cent of the cases. Specific places related to school that are most commonly cited in connection with rape include places on the way to and from school and school toilets.

Table 5. 4: Places where sexual violence takes place by form of abuse (in percentages)

Places	Raped or experienced unwanted sex using weapons	Forced/coerced sex in exchange of food, gifts, grade, or money	Touching/pinching breasts, buttocks or genitals	Sexual comments
School-related (combined)	30.6	55.4	52.4	51.5
On the way to or from school	12.2	12.5	12.3	18.2
In and around toilets	8.2	1.8	0.7	0.9
School compound	2.0	19.6	23	22.5
Playground/Sports field	2.0	0.0	5.6	3.0
In and while entering to classrooms	0.0	0.0	4.8	3.5
At-the-tap/borehole	4.1	0.0	0.7	0.4
During club activities	0.0	5.4	1.5	1.7
Bushes/School garden	0.0	3.6	1.9	0.0
Teachers' house	0.0	8.9	1.5	0.4
Principal's office/staff room	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
In the home/village	69.4	44.6	47.6	48.5

Indecent touching and pinching breasts and genitals as well as comments of sexual nature are also more common within the school setting rather than within the home or the community (see Table 4.4). In the qualitative assessment, other places such as nearby houses of boy friends, guest houses, entertainment centres and bushes were noted to be the hot spots of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Perpetrators of sexual violence vary by form of abuse and setting. Within the school setting, there are a number of players including teachers, peers, senior students, principals and other staff members such as school guards. The study shows, for instance, that teachers are the main perpetrators of sexual abuse and exploitation. They force and coerce girls into sexual intercourse in exchange for better grades, gifts and money.

It was noted that teachers retaliate for refusal of their love proposals by reducing girls' marks. In many of the focus group discussions, an issue that emerged relates to the habit of some teachers to invite girls to their homes to do household chores and watch pornographic films. This ultimately leads to sexual abuse and exploitation. The other category of perpetrators of sexual abuse includes peers and older male students from senior classes.

Within the home and community settings, another sets of perpetrators emerge that include community elders, 'bike riders'³, NGO workers, and other elite elderly people who are usually referred to as 'Sugar Daddies'. These groups of perpetrators sexually exploit girls in exchange for money, clothes and access to costly entertainment facilities. The study showed that 'Sugar

³ 'Bike riders' refers to the male motor cycle transportation service providers.

Daddies' contributed to about 15 per cent of all the sexual exploitation cases, making them the second most common perpetrators of such abuse only next to teachers.

Box 5.1: Rape in the laboratory

School laboratories are shrines of curiosity and research that fascinate students and introduce them to the world of science. They are facilities of exploration and inspiration where ones mind boggles with actions and reactions and have no time for misdeeds. But the incidence in Koinadugu high school showed that laboratories can also be places of abuse and agony for those who were meant to be motivated and supported to excel in their education.

A 14 years SSS pupil in one of the schools in Koinadugu usually attends weekend lessons. A teacher in her school, who also happens to be a friend of her foster parents, takes care of her school expenses and as a result she considers him as her father. One Saturday, she attended her weekend lesson and the teacher asked her to meet him at the school laboratory after the lessons.

"I went straight to the school laboratory to meet him. No body was there. He asked me to remove my clothes. I said; 'what for' and he said; 'do it'. ...Then he removed my clothes and jumped on meI cried for help but nobody came to my rescue. I blacked out and I only came to my senses on the hospital bed."

The case was reported to the police and the abuser was jailed. But, for some reason, he is now out of jail and is being seen in the neighbourhood. Such circumstances put victims in higher risks of abuse and even life threatening assaults for revenge.

Source: Excerpt from the narration by one of the victims of rape.

According to key informants, the main factor contributing to the prevalence of sexual violence is poverty. It was noted that many students are unable to pay school fees and are forced to become 'sex slaves' of 'sugar daddies' or persons in high paying jobs. The end result of the relationship being pregnancy and dropping out of school.

Table 5. 5: Perpetrators of sexual violence by form of violence and gender of victims (in percentages)

Perpetrators	Forced or coerced sex in exchange for food, money, gifts or grade	Rape or unwanted sex with or without use of weapons	Touching or pinching of breasts, buttocks and genitals	Sexual comments
In school settings				
Male teachers	30.4	5.9	4.1	3.0
Male peers	7.1	8.9	16.4	10.8
Senior male pupils	3.6	5.2	10.1	10.8
Male school dropouts	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.4
Within home or community				
Boyfriend	10.7	7.4	30.1	29.0
‘Sugar Daddies’	14.3	3.7	0.0	0.0
Male friends	3.6	4.4	4.8	8.6
A male adult member of the family	3.6	2.2	4.9	3.9
Relatives such as male	1.8	0.0	1.5	1.3
Persons in the community	3.6	11.1	1.5	1.3
Other unknown persons	10.7	10.4	5.8	1.7
Number of cases	70	135	422	428

Lack of proper parental supervision and absence of effective legal measures against the perpetrators were identified as important factors contributing to high rate of incidences of sexual abuse. Some informants also mentioned that the punishment given to most perpetrators tends to be lighter when compared to the crime they have committed. They feel that such situations will contribute to the continuation of the practice, suffering of girl pupils and progress in their education.

In general, sexual violence is highly prevalent in Sierra Leone. Though extreme forms of sexual violence such as forced sexual intercourse or rape is common and persistent within the home and community settings, school-related occurrences of such abuses contribute to 30 per cent of the cases. Sexual abuse generally varies by district and location of schools. Girls in Tonkolili and Koinadugu as well as those learning in schools located in semi-urban and rural areas are relatively more likely to experience sexual violence than those in other areas.

Perpetrators of sexual violence also vary by form of abuse and setting. Within the school setting, teachers are the main perpetrators of sexual abuse who force and coerce girls into sexual intercourse in exchange for better grades and money. They retaliate by reducing marks and mistreatment.

Poverty is one of the main factors contributing to the vulnerability of girls into sexual exploitation. In a situation where parents are unable to pay school fees and provide adequate meals, the girls become more vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation by affluent males.

CHAPTER 6

PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

'It is common that teachers yell at students and throw such words as 'you fool!' 'You stupid' whenever a student gives a wrong answer. Such statements make a student shy and ashamed to answer any question again and resulting in trauma, fear and lack of confidence.'

~ A discussant pupil from the FGDs
ACPF's study on SRGBV in Sierra Leone, 2010

Psychological abuse or violence is sometimes referred to as the 'invisible plaque'. Unlike the other types of violence, it does not leave any visible physical evidence of occurrence and victims go through the pain without showing any sign or seeking counselling. There are various forms of psychological violence included in this study ranging from insults and name calling, to intimidation and threats.

Table 6.1 shows the percentage of pupils who experienced various forms of psychological abuse by gender and district. Prevalence of such abuses varies by district and gender. It was noted that boys generally are more likely to have experienced at least one form of psychological abuse than girls. Furthermore, there is also a difference in both prevalence and forms of psychological violence by districts in Sierra Leone. For example, nearly 40 per cent of the boys in Koinadugu reported to have been forced to do things out of their will, compared to only three per cent in Western Area and about 10 per cent in Moyamba. Additionally, girls are more likely to receive threatening or unwanted letters than boys. Such form of abuse is particularly common in Koinadugu and to a lesser extent in Kailahun and Tonkololi districts.

Table 6. 1: Percentage of pupil who experienced psychological violence by form of violence and district/area

District/Area	Experienced insulting, name calling, or shouting		Forced by teachers to do something that he/she did not want to do		Threatened, intimidated, or frightened with harm of punishment		Afraid to say no to someone		Forced by friends to do something he/she did not want to do		Received threatening/unwanted letters	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Bombali	69.1	58.2	34.0	29.6	8.5	8.2	18.1	9.2	10.6	8.2	6.4	10.2
Kailahun	41.0	37.7	28.9	28.6	20.5	19.5	15.7	17.1	14.5	16.9	10.8	23.7
Koinadugu	81.9	75.3	38.6	19.5	61.4	61.0	24.1	29.9	19.3	31.2	14.5	41.6
Kono	73.8	69.7	22.6	9.2	10.7	15.8	32.1	27.6	17.9	9.3	6.0	25.3
Moyamba	59.8	52.6	9.8	12.8	4.9	7.7	7.3	9.0	14.6	10.3	6.1	7.7
Port Loko	84.8	72.8	30.4	27.2	27.8	18.5	36.7	35.8	25.3	33.3	22.8	18.5
Tonkolili	68.3	65.4	32.9	28.2	23.2	24.4	34.1	32.1	32.9	34.6	11.0	21.8
Western Area	63.8	60.0	2.5	11.3	13.8	5.0	7.5	7.5	13.8	5.0	3.8	10.0
Total	67.8	61.4	25.2	21.1	21.1	19.5	21.9	20.7	18.4	18.3	10.0	19.4
No. of cases	452	396	168	136	141	126	146	133	123	118	67	125

Incidents of psychological violence were assessed by location of schools, that is, urban, semi-urban and rural areas. As observed in sexual violence, occurrences of psychological violence are higher in semi-urban and rural areas as compared with the urban areas. The most frequent psychological violence that occurred in these areas are insulting or shouting with a slight

difference in percentage-points by location. A fair number of pupils have also reported that they have been rejected or refused by someone with of course higher incidents in semi-urban areas followed by rural areas. As the study revealed, pupils from semi-urban and rural schools were more scared to say no to someone than pupils from urban schools. Likewise, incidents of threatening or intimidating pupils in semi-urban and rural schools are higher than their urban school counterparts (see the Table 6.2).

Table 6. 2: Percentage of pupils experienced psychological violence by area of residence

Forms of psychological violence	Area of residence			Total	
	Urban	Semi-urban	Rural	Per cent	No. of Cases
Experienced insulting, name calling, or shouting	61.8	65.8	64.4	64.6	848
Rejected by someone	9.2	22.6	14.4	17.1	304
Afraid to say no to someone	9.8	23.8	22.3	21.3	284
Forced by teachers to do something she/he did not want to do	13.3	25.3	24.1	23.2	279
Threatened, intimidated, or frightened with harm or punishment	12.1	23.0	20.4	20.4	267
Forced by friends to do something she/he did not want to do	14.5	21.4	16.9	18.4	192
Received threatening/unwanted letters	9.8	18.3	12.8	14.7	153

Psychological abuse mostly happens within the school setting. More than 60 per cent of both boys and girls who encountered threats and intimidation reported that it happened within their schools (see Table 6.3). The main perpetrators of psychological violence are teachers. In most cases, teachers force students to do thing that the pupils do not want to do. Threat of punishment is also another form of abuse that intimidates pupils. Poor performance in education is sometimes mentioned as one of the factors that contribute to such abuse. Girls are also prone to psychological violence as teachers use it as a way of intimidating them to accept their sexual advances. Refusal of such advances may result in being labelled as stupid and humiliated in front of peers.

Table 6. 3: Places where psychological violence takes place by gender

Places	Insulting, name calling, or shouting		Threatened, intimidated, frightened with harm or punishment		Afraid to say no to someone	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
School-related (combined)	55.1	58	61.9	61.7	57.1	48.6
School compound	30.8	35.0	42.1	44.7	35.3	25.3
On the way to or from school	14.9	13.3	3.2	2.1	3.0	3.4
In or while entering classrooms	6.1	4.9	9.5	12.1	13.5	15.1
Playground/Sports field	2.3	3.8	0.8	2.8	1.5	2.7
At the tap/borehole	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
In or around toilets	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4
Principals office/staff room	0.0	0.7	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.0
Teachers' houses	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.0	2.3	0.0
Bushes/School garden	0.0	0.4	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.7
During club activities	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.0
In the home/village	44.9	42.0	38.1	38.3	42.9	51.4

Some of the key informants highlighted the consequences of psychological violence as resulting into shyness and a sense of shame among the victims. They also noted that it is common that teachers yell at students shouting such words as ‘you fool!’ and ‘you stupid!’ whenever a student gives wrong answer. Such statements make a student shy and ashamed to answer any question again and resulting in trauma, fear and lack of confidence and ultimately results in poor educational performance and learning.

Table 6. 4: Perpetrators of psychological violence by form of violence and gender of victims (in percentages)

Perpetrators	Experienced insulting, name calling, or shouting		Threatened, intimidated, or frightened with harm or punishment		Forced by teachers to do something that he/she did not want to do		Persons who the pupil are afraid to say no to	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
In school settings								
Teachers (Male)	12.8	11.1	35.5	34.9	86.9	75.7	19.2	24.8
Teachers (Female)	0.7	1.0	2.1	3.2	2.4	8.1	2.1	4.5
Peers (Male)	35.8	8.6	21.3	7.1	0.0	0.7	19.9	6.8
Peers (Female)	4.2	25.5	0.7	7.1	0.0	1.5	0.0	11.3
Senior students (Female)	1.8	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5
Senior students (Male)	4.2	1.8	1.4	0.0	0.6	0.7	2.1	0.0
School dropouts (Female)	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
School dropouts (Male)	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Principals/Deputies	1.5	0.6	1.4	1.6	4.8	0.7	1.4	1.6
Within home or community								
A female adult member of the family	10.4	19.2	9.9	11.9	0.0	3.7	8.9	18.0
A male adult member of the family	7.3	5.1	8.5	6.3	2.4	4.4	15.8	10.5
Brother/male cousin	5.5	4.8	4.3	7.9	0.0	0.0	11.6	2.3
Sister/Female cousin	2.4	5.8	1.4	3.2	0.0	2.2	1.4	2.3
Friend (Female)	1.1	4.5	0.7	2.4	0.0	0.0	1.4	3.8
Friend (Male)	7.7	2.3	5.7	1.6	0.0	0.0	4.8	2.3
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	1.8	1.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	4.8	6.1
Community member	0.4	0.8	4.2	2.4	3.0	1.4	2.1	1.6
Other unknown persons	1.1	0.6	2.1	4.0	1.2	0.7	4.8	3.1
Number of cases	848		267		304		279	

The study has also shown that not all pupils feel comfortable in answering questions in class. This is more pronounced among girls (eight per cent in primary and six per cent secondary) than boys. Almost one out of ten boys and girls in primary and secondary schools happened to be uncomfortable of asking their teachers a question in the classroom even once. To this end, fear of insults/ridicules by teachers when asked questions (a reason mentioned by nine per cent of the pupil), fear of classmates’ reaction (mentioned by 16 per cent) and teacher’s unwelcoming gesture when asked questions were the underlying reasons for pupils in primary schools for not feeling comfortable to respond and give answers to questions raised in class.

CHAPTER 7

REPORTING, RESPONSES AND IMPACT

It was clear from the earlier discussions that some of the challenges in addressing gender-based violence revolve around low level reporting, limited access to justice and delayed legal action. This chapter goes deeper and looks into issues that relate to these topics. It presents the results relating to actions taken by victims of violence to seek justice and the prosecution of the offenders. Information was also sought on the responses and follow-up actions taken by responsible bodies to shed light on whether or not perpetrators are punished for their crimes and victims are morally compensated for their suffering. Attempt has also been made to substantiate and supplement the findings by linking them with the results of the qualitative assessment and findings of other similar research carried out in the country.

7.1 Reporting Incidents of Violence

The study showed that the majority of the victims of violence do not report the incidents they have experienced neither to law enforcement bodies nor to their family. There are several reasons for low reporting and largely they are related to weaknesses in enforcing the law, attitude and efficiency of services. Violent acts are accepted as normal practices both within and outside school in Sierra Leone and many people including members of the law enforcement bodies fail to consider them as serious criminal offence or violations of human rights. This situation is one of the major factors that discourages reporting of abuses. The discussions below show level of reporting by type of violence.

Actions taken by victims of physical abuse

Pupils who experienced physical assault were asked about their reaction and the responses or actions taken against the perpetrators based on their reporting. The majority of victims of physical violence did nothing to report or take action on the perpetrators. For example, nearly half of both boys and girls who have experienced severe physical violence took no action to report the assault (see Table 7.1). In cases where victims took the initiative to report, no action was taken by the responsible individuals or bodies and this includes parents, law enforcement bodies and school managements. Such situations discourage others from revealing cases of abuse and contribute to the perpetuation and persistence of the problem.

Even in cases of very severe physical assaults such as being beaten with stones, sticks or stabbed with knives, the proportion of victims who reported the incidence particularly to law enforcement bodies like the police was only five per cent. About two in every five of the victims reported the incident to members of their family. Nearly a quarter of the victims took no action to prosecute the perpetrators. Some of them (about seven per cent of the girls and four per cent of the boys) reported that they fought back in response to the assault (see Table 7.2).

Table 7. 1: Actions taken by victims of beating, kicking and slapping

Actions taken	Gender of respondents				Total	
	Girls		Boys		Number	Per cent
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent		
Did nothing	160	46.8	129	48.3	289	47.5
Told adult family member (M)	37	10.8	37	13.9	74	12.2
Told adult family member (F)	28	8.2	25	9.4	53	8.7
Told brother	10	2.9	11	4.1	21	3.4
Told Teacher (M)	22	6.4	10	3.7	32	5.3
Fought back	28	8.2	10	3.7	38	6.2
Informed the principal	14	4.1	9	3.4	23	3.8
Reported to a male teacher	7	2.0	6	2.2	13	2.1
Told sister	6	1.8	5	1.9	11	1.8
Stayed out of school	0	0.0	4	1.5	4	0.7
Told friends/peers	4	1.2	6	2.2	10	1.7
Avoided the person	0	0.0	3	1.1	3	0.5
Reported to the police	6	1.8	2	0.7	8	1.3
Reported to the FSU	0	0.0	2	0.7	2	0.3
Got medical help	1	0.3	2	0.7	3	0.5
Told school counsellor (F)	0	0.0	1	0.4	1	0.2
Informed the community leader	5	1.5	1	0.4	6	1.0
Told PTA member	2	0.6	1	0.4	3	0.5
Told religious leader (F)	0	0.0	1	0.4	1	0.2
Avoided the place	4	1.2	1	0.4	5	0.8
Total	342	100.0	267	100.0	609	100.0

Reporting violent acts becomes less as the perceived severity of the punishment is lower. For example, more than 80 per cent of the pupils who were caned or whipped did not take any action at all. About four per cent reported to male family members mostly to fathers. Reporting the incidences to the school administration or other bodies was very low and negligible.

Table 7. 2: Actions taken by pupil who were hit by stones, sticks or stabbed with knives

Actions taken	Gender of respondents				Total	
	Girls		Boys		Number	Per cent
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent		
Did nothing	22	19.0	27	29.0	49	23.4
Told to a male adult family member	20	17.2	22	23.7	42	20.1
Told to a female adult family member	22	19.0	15	16.1	37	17.7
Reported to a male teacher	17	14.7	2	2.2	19	9.1
Fought back	8	6.9	4	4.3	12	5.7
Informed the principal	4	3.4	7	7.5	11	5.3
Reported to the police	6	5.2	3	3.2	9	4.3
Told to a male community leader	5	4.3	-	-	5	2.4
Got medical help	-	-	3	3.2	3	1.4
Avoided the place	2	1.7	1	1.1	3	1.4
Told friends/peers	4	3.5	-	-	4	1.9
Told brother	-	-	2	2.2	2	1.0
Reported to a female teacher	-	-	2	2.2	2	1.0
Reported to FSU	1	0.9	1	1.1	2	1.0
Stayed out of school	1	0.9	1	1.1	2	1.0
Told sister	2	1.7	-	-	2	1.0
Told school counsellor	-	-	1	1.1	1	0.5
Told religious leader	1	0.9	1	1.1	2	1.0
Told them to stop	-	-	1	1.1	1	0.5
Avoided the person	1	0.9	-	-	1	0.5
Total	116	100.0	93	100.0	209	100.0

Actions taken by victims of sexual violence

As in the case of physical violence, pupils who experienced sexual abuse were asked about their reactions to the incidents. The results for victims of forced sexual intercourse are summarised in Table 7.3. As can be seen from the table, nearly 40 per cent of those who were raped did nothing to report the abuse. Of those who reported, most of them informed their family members.

Table 7. 3: Actions taken by victims of rape or unwanted sexual intercourse

Actions	No. of cases	Per cent
Did nothing	21	37.5
Told adult family member (F)	12	21.4
Told friend/peer (F)	5	8.9
Reported to the police	3	5.4
Told adult family member (M)	3	5.4
Avoided person	3	5.4
Informed the principal	2	3.6
Got medical help	2	3.6
Told brother	1	1.8
Informed the community leader	1	1.8
Fought back	1	1.8
Stayed out of school	1	1.8
Threatened to report	1	1.8
Total	56	100

The proportion of those who took action in response to the sexual abuse was very low for some forms of sexual violence. For example, 60 per cent of those who were coerced into sexual intercourse did not report the incidence to anyone. About five per cent said that they informed to their family members or teachers.

In the qualitative assessment, it was noted that parents, at times, misunderstand and undermine the physical assault accompanying rape and blame victims for the incident. In one of the case studies, a victim of rape informed her uncle about the incident, but her uncle was not interested to report the case to the police because he believed that she had consented to the act and thought that whatever happened to her was entirely her fault (see Box 7.1 for the detail). As a result, the victim could not do anything against the perpetrator who roams freely in the streets as if nothing happened.

Box 7.1: Willing to be raped?

“I am 17 years old girl and live with my uncle. I became a victim of rape when I was walking back home from my school. One evening, a stranger came out from the bush and asked me where I am going. He then rushed on me from behind.... and threatened to kill me if I make any attempt to scream.....and he raped me ... Immediately after the incident, I could not walk by my self due to the severe pain. Luckily, my friends were around and took me to my house. I told my uncle what had happened to me. But he said that it was entirely my fault. I was ashamed when my uncle made a remark in presence of my friends about my shamefulness for consenting to have sex with the perpetrator. My uncle was not interested to take any action. Feeling helpless, I never told the case for any one either. Since my uncle didn't believe any of my words, the rape was never reported to the police and therefore I have no choice but to endure the pain for the rest of my life.”

Source: excerpt from the one of the case studies on victims of rape

Actions taken by victims of psychological violence

The pattern of reporting cases of psychological abuse is not different from the other two types of violence (physical and sexual violence). As can be seen from Table 7.4, most of the pupils did not take any action against those who intimidate and threaten them. About 20 per cent of the girls and nearly 16 per cent of the boys who were intimidated and threatened for punishment reported the incidence to their parents. Only very few cases were reported to the police or the FSU. There is a general tendency to take the other forms of psychological violence less seriously compared to particularly physical and sexual assaults.

Table 7.4: Actions taken by pupils who were intimidated and threatened

Actions	Boys		Girls	
	No. of cases	Per cent	No. of cases	Per cent
Did nothing	69	48.9	61	48.4
Told to a male adult family member	12	8.5	15	11.9
Told to a female adult family member	10	7.1	11	8.7
Reported to a male teacher	9	6.4	8	6.3
Reported to a female teacher	8	5.7	5	4
Avoided person	6	4.3	3	2.4
Informed the principal	4	2.8	6	4.8
Stayed out of school	4	2.8	1	0.8
Told sister	3	2.1	2	1.6
Told them to stop	3	2.1	2	1.6
Told brother	3	2.1	1	0.8
Reported to the FSU/police	3	2.1	1	0.8
Avoided place	2	1.4	3	2.4
Informed the community leader	1	0.7	1	0.8
Fought back	1	0.7	1	0.8
Others	3	2.1	5	4.0
Total	141	100.0	126	100.0

7.2 Implementation of the Laws

Confidence in the performance of the law enforcement bodies to serve justice within a reasonable time span is an incentive in its own right for victims of violence to report and follow up the case until the perpetrator is punished for the crime committed. Lack of confidence, on the other hand, discourages reporting and contributes to the perpetuation of the problem. There is also a danger in that perpetrators benefit from the weaknesses and are encouraged to continue their violent act.

The detail review of the legal and policy framework presented in chapter 2 showed that the existing laws of Sierra Leone provide adequate legal protection against violence. The major challenge, however, is enforcement of these laws and policies. This section highlights problems associated with investigation and prosecution of crimes involving gender-based violence.

Challenges related to investigation

Physical and sexual abuses on children are usually considered as a private matter that need to be resolved within the family and are not reported to the police as crimes that require investigation. In many cases, traditional leaders and community members intervene to arbitrate and halt investigation, particularly when the investigation leads to a serious criminal offence. The other challenges in investigating crimes against children relate to the extremely slow process and

complex bureaucratic steps involved. Victims, in most cases, are discouraged by such barriers and compelled to discontinue the follow up. The capacity of the police is also another important factor that determines the timeline and outcome of the investigation.

An important actor mandated to investigate and prosecute cases involving gender-based violence within the police department is the Family Support Units (FSU). The FSUs were established within the Sierra Leone Police Force in 2001 and they have been contributing a lot in handling gender-based violence in collaboration with the social workers of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. The FSUs are seen as a progressive, innovative response to the problem of domestic violence, and they serve as a good practice in fighting domestic violence that other countries such as Liberia are emulating. According to the available data, the work of FSUs between 2004 and 2005 resulted in 21 convictions of perpetrators of gender-based violence, with prison terms ranging from 6 months to 22 years.

However, continued organizational obstacles within the police remain to be addressed. For example, although the FSUs aim at maintaining confidentiality, the limited office space in many police stations often have forced the staff to conduct interviews in an open space. This situation puts the victim at risk and may deter some individuals from reporting or testifying about incidents of violence. Furthermore, the FSUs have limited staff and could not follow up all cases particularly rural areas.⁴ At the same time, due to the excessive costs of medical examination, most of the victims of sexual violence could not afford to pay medical bills and thus making it difficult to gather evidence for prosecution. There are also limited counselling services available to victims of abuse. The social workers from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs could not carry out their duties adequately due to lack of logistics.⁵

At community level, investigation mechanisms practiced are more often child insensitive. It appears that some of the reconciliation and mediation efforts made could be explained as imposition on the victim. For instance, in a case of rape committed by a teacher against a 14 year pupil, individuals representing the perpetrator visited her with money, gifts and food stuff and pleaded with her to forgive the perpetrator. Responsible officers from FSUs are also involved in family mediation which can be positive, but can also encourage families to settle their differences informally, which may not be in the interest of the victim.⁶

Support extended by NGOs is also mentioned by most informants. To mention but few: guidance and counselling services initiated to address the prevailing effects of SRGBV; 'Mothers' Club' introduced by Plan Sierra Leone and UNICEF; and assistance to take cases of abuse to the court and helping victims financially as well as morally. Though these initiatives are contributing in reducing the impact of SRGB, the interventions are far from sufficient in view of the magnitude of the problem throughout the country.

During prosecution and trial

The judicial process in connection with violence is hindered by the reluctance of witnesses to testify in court due to stigma and fear of retaliation. Transportation constraints and delays in trials due to frequent adjournments are the other reasons that compel victims to abandon the case. Corruption is also another factor in altering decisions to the benefit of the perpetrators.⁷

⁴ Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone: Mapping Challenges, Responses and Future Entry Points By Karen Barnes with Peter Albrecht and Maria Olson August 2007; International Alert

⁵ National Child Justice Strategy for Sierra Leone July 2006

⁶ Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone: Mapping Challenges, Responses and Future Entry Points By Karen Barnes with Peter Albrecht and Maria Olson August 2007; International Alert

⁷ National Child Justice Strategy for Sierra Leone July 2006

There is no a better measure of the inefficiency of the judicial process in handling cases of violence than the conviction rate issued in 2009. Amongst 1,000 cases of sexual assault filed in 2009, none of the perpetrators were punished. Additionally, the official statistics from the FSU did not list a single conviction in any of the 927 cases of sexual abuse reported in 2009.⁸ Further, there is limited access to psychosocial and legal services for victims. It is reported that trials in the High Court could take years before the commencement of proceedings and thus frustrating victims and their families and encouraging perpetrators continue their abusive behaviour.

Some of the key informants also mentioned that punishment which is usually disproportional to the crimes committed is also contributing to the prevalence of violence against children. For instance, teachers who have sexually abused school girls are only dismissed from school and with no jail term.

Responses from different stakeholders

School Management Committees (SMCs) and the Disciplinary Committee of Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) in some schools formulate bylaws to take punitive measures against the perpetrators. But in most cases they do not have effective reporting mechanisms and many incidences end up unreported. However, informants from schools management disagree and argue that there are child-friendly reporting mechanisms put in place in schools. On the contrary, many informants indicated that usually it is the parents, instead of the victim pupils who report cases of abuse to relevant authorities. They mentioned that the reporting mechanisms available in schools are not functional and they argue that in actual fact the systems put in place are not child-friendly.

The individual case study collected in one of the districts substantiates this assertion. According to this particular case, the victim girl who was sexually abused by her teacher mentioned that she did not report the abuse to the school authorities because she was afraid to do so. It is only her mother, after observing symptoms of sexual abuse such as loss of appetite and weight, who had reported the case to authorities. It is, therefore, more likely that many sexual abuses pass unnoticed and not reported to school authorities or other law enforcing bodies. At times, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MOSWGCA) receives reports directly from the victim students or their family members and guides them to approach the relevant law enforcement bodies like the police. The above scenarios show the need to revisit the systems and enhance the effectiveness of the reporting mechanisms that schools claim to have put in place to identify cases of abuse.

Focus groups of high school students stressed that abuses perpetrated by teachers are not reported because victims are afraid of retaliation by the perpetrators and could also find themselves expelled from school for doing that. It was also indicated that usually cases of abuse are reported only when the girl is impregnated or is falling sick. At times, students believe that the SMCs are in defence of the teachers for what ever act they do. Conversely, FGDs held with students also revealed instances where reported cases of sexual abuse were effectively handled by the SMC. According to the testimonies of some of the key informants, it was noted that the handling of cases depends, almost at all levels, on the social status of the perpetrators. For example, if a teacher is accused of sexual violence, he could persuade and negotiate with parents of the victim in order to close the case. Again, boys from affluent families could likewise escape liability for their crime.

⁸ FREETOWN, 22 June 2010 (IRIN)

There are also a number of humanitarian organisations in Sierra Leone who have introduced guidance and counselling services to address the prevailing effect on child victims. One of the provisions in the bylaws stipulates termination of employment contract when a teacher rapes or impregnates a pupil. As for ‘consensual’ sexual intercourse or physical violence, lighter punishment that often involves suspension for a certain period is imposed on perpetrators. The SMCs may resolve the case by mediation and compromise.

7.3 Impact of GBV

Gender-based violence has short- and long-term consequences on both boys and girls. In addition to the physical and psychological suffering, gender-based violence has long lasting health consequences, negative impact on completion of education and disrupts their career potentials. In the qualitative assessment, it was noted that many girls were forced to drop out of school because of sexual violence that resulted in unwanted pregnancy (see Box 7.2).

Box 7.2: Pregnant at 13

I am 13 years old living with my mother. I was raped by a boy friend at the age of 13. My friend used to buy me lunch, pay school fees and text books since I was 11 years old. I never knew his wicked intention. One day, in the absence of my mother, he asked me to come to his house.....and we had sex. At the time, he used some kind of force and I cried out because of the severe pain. After some time, I was pregnant. I was ashamed to tell anyone about it. But when my mother noticed the sudden dropping of my weight, she took me to a hospital and discovered that I am pregnant with four months. With anger, my mother filed a complaint at the police station against the boy but eventually I was told that the case was dropped... Finally, due to my young age I had to give birth to a child through caesarean operation... I am ashamed of myself to be a mother at my age, size and height.

The mother of the victim states that she is worried about her only child because it will be difficult for her to be a mother at her tender age and pursue her education. She is also concerned that the perpetrator/the boy is coming to her house now and then and is threatening her with abusive language presumably angered by her futile attempt to incriminate him by reporting him to the police.

Source: Narration from a victim of sexual the statements of family members affected by gender-based violence (Mother of a Parent

The other major consequence of SRGBV is inability to regularly attend in class or complete dropout from school. An ideal measurement of the impact of violence on school dropout requires identifying out-of-school dropouts, asking them about the main cause that compelled them to quit school and calculating the proportion of causes related to violence. However, in this study, the approach was school-based and attempt was made to examine the impact of school-related gender-based violence on dropout by asking the pupil if they know of a girl or a boy who dropped out of their school due to violence or intimidation of assault or punishment. The responses for girls and boys are presented in Table 7.5. Accordingly, about 28 per cent of the respondents reported that they know girls from their school who dropped out as a result of violence or intimidation they had experienced within or on their way to school.

Table 7. 5: Per cent of students reported they know students that dropped out from school due to school related violence

District/ Area/ School level	Students reported that they know a girl from school that dropped out due to school related violence		Students reported that they know a boy from school that dropped out due to school related violence	
	Cases	Per cent	Cases	Percent
Bombali	34	17.9	34	17.7
Kailahun	55	35.3	49	31.2
Kionadugu	35	22.6	40	25.8
Kono	71	45.5	62	40.0
Moyamba	31	19.5	25	15.8
Port Loko	50	31.3	55	34.4
Tonkolili	63	40.1	54	34.2
Western Sierra Leone	17	10.7	19	11.9
Urban	35	20.5	35	20.3
Semi-urban	164	31.5	157	30.1
Rural	157	26.1	146	24.3
Primary schools	45	14.0	50	15.4
Junior secondary schools	142	29.3	117	24.2
Senior secondary schools	169	34.7	171	35.1

The proportion of the pupil who knew boys who dropped out due to reasons related to violence is slightly lower (26 per cent). The percentages were relatively higher in Kono district than others. It was further observed that dropout rate, as measured through the pupils' observation, is higher in senior secondary schools. According to the administrative records from Moyamba district, there were 640 teenage pregnancies reported within a year. Furthermore, 14 school dropouts were recorded in just one junior secondary school as a result of rape that occurred during the 12 months preceding the survey.

In the present study, for instance, a 14 year old victim of rape narrates that, as a result of rape by a teacher, she is suffering from fistula and could not attend to school.⁹ Sexual abuse could also result in unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections including early onset of consensual sex, multiple partners, and the non-use of condoms. Given the high prevalence of transactional sexual relationships in Sierra Leone it is not surprising that early-pregnancy is being seen as a huge problem in all communities.¹⁰ In most of study sites, the most worrying problem mentioned by many of the key informants is the significant number of girls getting pregnant at a tender age and experiencing serious health problem.

Violence could also have psychological impact on victims ranging from symptoms of anxiety and depression to suicide attempts. A victim of rape in one of the study sites, for instance, is ashamed to walk out of her home and she is so desperate that she wishes that she were dead.¹¹ Corporal punishment and emotional abuse undermine self-esteem and lead to limited participation of the pupil in the learning process and, ultimately, affecting their performance and ability to compete in their career.

⁹ Narration, , Kondu Secondary School, Kono District

¹⁰ Concern report

¹¹ Narration, , Kondu Secondary School, Kono District

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of issues emerged from this study. Gender-based violence both within and outside school settings is widespread in Sierra Leone. The forms of violence differ by gender and location. Corporal punishment seems to be considered as an acceptable measure of disciplining children in Sierra Leone. While boys are prime victims of physical violence, girls are targeted for sexual abuse and exploitation. It takes place in laboratories, classrooms in school principals' offices, in the nearby bushes or on the streets. Pupils in districts like Koinadugu experience more physical violence and those in Tonkolili are more likely to experience sexual abuse. The perpetrators range from their peers to teachers and from 'respected' elders in communities to strangers and 'bike riders'.

Interestingly, GBV is gaining recognition among all stakeholders as one of the impediments in the efforts towards the realisation of human rights including child rights and sustainable development. Commendable efforts are being made to address GBV from different perspectives: law and policy, expediting implementation, sensitisation to change negative attitudes and support to victims.

This chapter presents the main conclusions and recommendations. The first part reiterates the main findings and conclusions of the study. The second part outlines key recommendations for action that emerged from the analysis.

8.1 Conclusions

Pervasive physical violence

School-related gender-based violence is persistent in Sierra Leone. It ranges from minor assaults such as pushing or tripping to a severe forms like hitting by stick or stone and even stabbing with knives. No gender group is spared from physical assault while virtually every pupil, with few exceptions, at every level of education is evenly victimised. The practice of corporal punishment is widespread particularly in districts like Koinadugu, Kono, Bombali and Port Loko. It is regarded as an acceptable disciplining method. Most physical abuses take place within the school compounds as well as on the way to or from school. Teachers are the main perpetrators of corporal punishment. The other category of perpetrators includes peers and 'bike riders'.

Widespread sexual violence

Sexual abuses of severe forms like rape, coerced sex in exchange of gifts or money or better grades, insertion of an object into genitals are widely perpetrated in Sierra Leone schools where girls are the primary targets. Rape in particular involves unprotected sexual intercourse that puts the victims at higher risks of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections as well as exposes them to unwanted pregnancy which potentially could jeopardise their education and career opportunities. Most victims were abused on the way to or from school. The school compounds do not guarantee protection either. Sexual abuse occurs everywhere within the school compound: in the toilets, laboratories, classrooms, head teacher's offices and staffrooms.

High incidences of psychological abuse

Insulting and name calling are the most recurring forms of psychological abuse. Intimidation and threats of punishment are also common across all schools in all the districts covered by the

study. Significantly higher proportions of pupils are also forced by their teachers to do something that they do not want to do. This is common in both primary and secondary schools. Disproportionate incidents are encountered in Koinadugu and Port Loko districts, particularly against pupils in secondary schools. There is also a general tendency to consider psychological abuse as a minor offence compared to the other two types of violence.

Shortfall in effective response mechanisms at grassroots

The government made efforts to create an enabling environment for communities to take the lead in addressing and preventing gender-based violence and child rights violations through the establishment of Village Child Welfare Committee (VCWC). Capacity issues and inadequate guidance and follow-up are undermining the effectiveness of VCWC in combating SRGBV.

Though most schools have put in place complaints reporting mechanisms, the study shows that these mechanisms are barely functional as they are not child-friendly and not used by the pupil. As a result, many cases of abuse remain unnoticed and unreported. Even in cases where there are functional reporting systems, the school management committees (SMCs) respond only to severe forms of violence such as rape and stabbing with knives committed within the school. In the study, it was noted that the SMCs usually do not have organised mechanisms to refer cases to relevant law enforcement bodies and even in cases where they do there is limited effort to follow-up and expedite the prosecution. At times, these committees tend to protect teachers and blame victim pupils and are lenient to take punitive action against the offenders.

Unfavourable attitude and widespread misconception

Sierra Leone is largely a traditional society where male superiority and violent forms of disciplining children are widely accepted and practiced. The contribution of girls and women to end intergenerational child poverty is not yet well reckoned by the large segment of the public. The prevailing perception of school children that teachers' have the right to demand abusive favour from pupils, if unchecked, could create fertile ground for the further exploitation and abuse. Advocating for child rights and bringing perpetrators of SRGBV to justice is overshadowed by a culture of silence.

Limited capacity of Family Support Units

The Government of Sierra Leone has taken concrete measure to bring justice at grassroot level by establishing FSUs within the police force. The human resource capacity and the staff expertise and skills in these units are not adequate to effectively prevent and respond to GBV including those related to schools. The 'child-friendly reporting mechanism', though an encouraging initiative, is not yet fully operational in a number of districts. As a result of this, the Unit mainly deals with rape cases and neglects other forms of violence. The units have also made limited contribution and effort to liaise with schools to make schools safe. The linkage between the SMC/PTAs to VCWC and FSU thus far has not been strong enough to harmonise and boost efforts, if any, against SRGBV.

Gaps between legislature and practice

The review of legal and policy instruments showed that the government has made commendable effort to provide legal protection against child abuse and exploitation. It has taken concrete steps to harmonise the laws with international standards and enhance the realisation of child rights and wellbeing. However, there is still a long way to go to enhance the implementation of these laws and policies. Most of the implementing agencies lack adequate budget and experience shortage of skilled human resource to effectively discharge their responsibilities. These challenges

undermine the capacity of these institutions to effectively address GBV both within and outside the school system.

Efforts are being made by the government to strengthen implementation capacity. For example, establishments of institutions such as the MOSWGCA, the National Commission for Children and FSUs within the police are manifestations of the government's effort and commitment to expedite implementation and bring about concrete changes in terms of reducing violence and vulnerability as well as improving the overall wellbeing of children. It has also put in place implementation plans to ensure the achievement of the MDGs and EFA targets which, if taken into action, would complement the efforts being made by the other agencies and contribute to addressing GBV.

8.2 Recommendations

Improving the quality of learning and ensuring retention of students particularly girls up to the last classes/forms of all levels of education require the creation of a safe-school environment that is free of violence and intimidation and where the pupil concentrate only on their lessons. This section outlines key areas of action to enhance protection against school-related gender-based violence and ensure safety of the pupil through efforts that go beyond school and embrace the society at large and involve as many actors as possible. The recommendations are made for each of the responsible bodies in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

Recommendations for the media

- The analysis of the pupil's perceptions and attitude on gender norms revealed facts that are of serious concern. Such perceptions and attitudes are the main factors behind the perpetuation of gender-based violence and, therefore, there is a need to develop targeted and continuous media programmes both within and outside schools that counterbalance misconceptions, promote positive attitudes towards gender roles and show the link and impact of unfavourable attitude on violence. The programmes could be designed in such a way that they trigger debate and discussion among the audience and would contribute in creating better understanding of the issues and steps needed to be taken to curb the problem.
- Mass media is also the most appropriate means to inform the general public including children on the various channels of reporting incidences of abuse and notify locations of service providers. To this end, mass media and community radio programmes specifically focusing on SRGBV could relay targeted messages that discourage resilience and encourage the reporting to bring perpetrators to justice.
- Organising roundtable discussion forums that would bring together key stakeholders (policy makers, victims, law enforcement bodies, service providers and influential citizens) to deliberate on challenges, opportunities and the way forward to create a common understanding and mobilise the public to effectively address the problem.
- There is a clear lack of awareness with regards to the provisions of most of the Acts that provide for protection of children against abuse both among the service providers and victims. The same situation is also observed with regards to the duties and responsibilities of the various organs of the government that are responsible and accountable for providing protection services. Awareness creation on these areas will add clarity on 'who does what' and the related procedural issues will contribute to influence these bodies to take timely actions and enhance accountability.

Recommendations for schools management

- The study showed that in most forms of violence, teachers are the main perpetrators of violence against pupils. Inclusion of a training module for teachers on non-violent methods of disciplining is an important step in preventing abuses perpetrated by teachers. The module could also include other related components on evolving capacities of children, child participation and child protection to widen their scope of understanding on impact of violence vis-à-vis their physical, mental and behavioural development and overall wellbeing.
- To put in place pupil-friendly reporting mechanisms to encourage quick and open reporting of incidences of abuse established within places such as school mini-media, students' recreation facilities where children can report abuse and grievance at ease. The mechanisms need to have components that enhance transparency and effectiveness to follow-up and action on reported cases.
- Provide support and encourage the pupil to establish and strengthen student councils and clubs particularly in the areas of child rights, gender, reproductive health, child abuse and violence to increase their participation, instil the culture of rights and enhance their sensitivity to violence and discrimination.
- Enhance the involvement of parents in school matters to improve communication with school management, families and the community at large to ensure strong cooperation, flow of information and coordinated action against incidences of violence.
- Many incidences of rape took place in and around toilets. This is largely because toilets are placed afar for hygienic reasons. It is, therefore, important to invest in renovating and keeping toilets safe, clean. It is also important that separate toilet facilities be set up for girls in schools where there are no such arrangements.
- Arrangement of private lessons need to consider the safety of the pupil. Such lessons should not be schedule at late hours putting particularly girls at risk of sexual and physical violence.

Recommendations for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and NGO's

- Support the establishment of child help lines where school children, parents and activists freely report cases of child abuses in general and SRGBV in particular. Such services, in addition to contributing to revealing incidents of abuse, would also inform and encourage victims to access appropriate services and serve as connecting board to connect victims with service providers.
- Bridging the information gap between grassroots realities and policy makers. Periodical publication of a newsletter or devoting a column in one of the widely circulated print media that provide information on SRGBV statistics, actions taken and outstanding issues would influence implementing bodies to expedite action.
- Provide technical and financial support to PTAs/SMCs and student counsellors to improve their capacity in efficiently handling cases of SRGBV.
- Provide support to initiatives that aim at establishing centres for legal protection and psycho-social services to victims of violence.

- Enhance the partnership among the various stakeholders working on violence and put in place a mechanism to exchange experiences, avoid duplication of activities and enhance coordination to leverage efforts for better outcomes.
- The study identified employees of various NGOs as one of the categories of perpetrators who sexually exploit girls. This, therefore, calls for instituting and/or reinforcing zero tolerance policy within NGO/CSO and demonstrate the commitment of both the institution and staff to creating safe and violence-free communities.
- Many of the school girls from low income families are prone to sexual exploitation particularly by affluent elderly who lure them with money, gifts and even by buying meals. Creating income generating activities to economically empower families of such vulnerable girls would help to address the root cause of GBV.

Recommendations for law enforcement bodies

- The study showed that the Family Support Units at district level have a number of challenges related to staffing, office space and resources. These constraints have limited their capacity to efficiently handle the growing numbers of cases of violence reported to them. The FSUs need to take step-by-step actions to fill these gaps and enhance their capacity to cope up with the growing problem they are mandated to address. For this, the FSUs need to carry out needs assessments to prioritise the bottlenecks, identify feasible strategies to fill the gaps and maximise efficiency.
- Support the staff of FSUs to enable them improve their skills to introduce child-friendly and gender sensitive approaches of reporting and investigation of cases.
- Establish strong working relation between FSU with PTAs, SMCs, students' councils and clubs for information exchange and follow-up of cases of SRGBV.
- Various stakeholders have expressed their frustrations over partial treatment and an environment of corruption within the FSU where affluent perpetrators are favoured. This calls for introducing transparent mechanisms for handling cases, follow-up and entertaining complaints from victims to ensure that justice is served.
- The Ministry of Justice needs to review and revise the Criminal and other relevant Codes that deal with any form of GBV, including those related to schools. It should align the Code with the current regional and international standards so as to ensure that perpetrators of SRGBV are given proportional punishment for the crime and the victims are morally compensated. Additionally, fresher training to judges and magistrates on the magnitude and impact of SRGBV and the corresponding Penal Codes against perpetrators would enable to increase their awareness on the seriousness of the issue and contribute to expediting persecution.

Recommendations for the Government and relevant ministries

- Enactment of laws and putting in place policies are the first steps in the provision of legal protection, but the effort becomes futile if these laws and policies are not effectively implemented. The government should equally be committed to enhance the implementation of the various laws and policies through provision of the necessary financial and human resources to build the capacity of relevant ministries and agencies to enable them to follow-up and coordinate proper implementation

- Investment in expansion of schools particularly at secondary levels to make schools easily accessible to students who travel a long distance and are prone to violence on their way to or from school.
- Set short-term and long-term goals to train and recruit female teachers and thereby balance the gender gap in the teaching staff and school managements at all levels.
- Put in place monitoring and evaluation systems with appropriate indicator matrices to track progress made on each of the sector development plans and identify bottlenecks to expedite implementation and achievement of concrete outcomes.

Box 8.1: Summary of the recommendations

The recommendations can be summarised into five priority areas of action.

Firstly, campaigns targeting the general public needs to be waged to mitigate misconceptions about gender roles, break the silence on GBV and encourage reporting of incidences.

Secondly, initiatives aiming at creating safe school environment and zero tolerance to GBV needs to be promoted through enhancement of school governance that involves putting in place transparent and efficient systems of reporting grievance and facilitates follow-up and action. The initiatives should be complemented with projects focusing on teachers' skills building as well as improving accessibility and quality of facilities.

Thirdly, the capacity of law enforcement bodies such as the FSUs and the Judiciary System needs to be strengthened through allocation of adequate budgets and training of the staff to improve their efficiency in service delivery.

Fourthly, investment needs to be made to expand education services particularly in rural and semi-urban areas with a special focus on secondary level education to reduce vulnerability of, particularly, girls to violence on their way to or from school and avoid time wasted in travelling long distances.

Lastly, poverty was identified as one of the main reasons that contributes to sexual abuse and exploitation of, particularly, girls. The government should therefore put in place pro-poor budgets and macroeconomic policies as well as carrying out extensive income generating activities to empower families of vulnerable children to enable them provide basic needs for their children and cover their school-related expenses.

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Annex I: Definitions

The conceptual understanding of violence against children as well as gender-based violence varies depending on the cultural and socio-economic conditions of different societies and practitioners. Hence, one may not find a universally accepted definition either to violence against children or gender-based violence. However, this study makes use of the definitions and terminologies that are widely used by leading international institutions such as the United Nations.

The **child** as contained in Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC):

‘Every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.’

A woman in this document refers to:

‘Females of all ages, including girls unless specified otherwise.’

Gender in this study refers to the definition adopted by UNIFEM:

‘The economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female in a particular point in time. Also refers to the socially constructed relationship between women and men and the attributes, behavior and activities to which each is expected to adhere. Gender differences are determined and reinforced by cultural, historical, ethnic, religious and economic factors. Gender roles differ over time and between cultures, but may be changed. Gender is often wrongly conflated with "sex", which refers to the biological differences between women and men.’¹²

Violence refers to the definition recognised by the World Health Organisation:

‘The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.’¹³

Gender-based violence refers to:

‘Violence directed against a person because of his or her gender and expectations of his or her role in a society or culture. Gender-based violence highlights the gender dimension of these types of acts; in other words, the relationship between females’ subordinate status in society and their increased vulnerability to violence. It is important to note, however, that men and boys may also be victims of gender-based violence, especially sexual violence.’¹⁴

Physical and psychological violence refers to the definition adopted by Save the Children Alliance:

‘Physical and psychological punishment is the use of physical force or humiliating/degrading treatment causing some degree of pain or discomfort, in order to discipline, correct, control, change behavior or in the belief of educating/bringing up the child. Physical punishment can take many forms including hitting the child with a hand or other object, kicking, shaking or throwing the child, pinching or pulling the hair, canning or whipping. Psychological punishment takes various forms such as humiliation, threat, neglect, degradation, demeaning and ridicule.’

Sexual violence is the umbrella term to refer to:

¹² *Ending Violence against Women and Girls Programming Essentials*, UNIFEM, March 2010, p. 2, 88.

¹³ As quoted in *Sticks, Stones and Brutal Words: The Violence Against Children in Ethiopia*, The Africa Child Policy Forum, p. 8, 2006; E. G. Krug et al. (eds.), *World Report on Violence and Health* (Geneva, World Health Organisation, 2002), p. 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 88.

‘Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, force, threat or surprise by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.’¹⁵

Two forms of sexual violence are referred in this report:

Sexual Abuse covers:

‘Acts or threats of physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. This includes, but not limited to: attempted or committed rape, any forced and non-consensual sexual act, as well as sexual behavior that the victim finds humiliating and degrading.’¹⁶

Usually sexual abuse is *‘committed by an adult against a child (or by an older child against a younger child), and it includes inappropriate touching, carried out using force, perpetrated under duress or by taking advantage of a situation of superiority. Sexual abuse can include verbal or physical harassment with sexual connotations, inappropriate touching, sexual assault or rape. The abuse is often followed by verbal threats aimed at preventing the child from reporting the incident.’¹⁷*

Sexual exploitation refers to:

‘Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.’¹⁸

Corporal and Degrading Punishment is defined by the Committee on the Rights of the Child as:

‘Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light.’¹⁹

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 91.

¹⁶ As quoted in *Ending Violence against Women and Girls Programming Essentials*, UNIFEM, March 2010, p. 91.

¹⁷ UNICEF, Plan West Africa, Save the Children Sweden West Africa and ActionAid, 2010: <http://www.e4conference.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/14en.pdf>, p. 22, accessed on 22/07/2010.

¹⁸ As quoted in *Ending Violence against Women and Girls Programming Essentials*, UNIFEM, March 2010, p. 91.

¹⁹ UNICEF, Plan West Africa, Save the Children Sweden West Africa and ActionAid, 2010: <http://www.e4conference.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/14en.pdf>, p. 18, accessed on 22/07/2010.

Annex II: The Questionnaire

NATIONAL RESEARCH ON SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SIERRA LEONE (2010)

The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF)
in collaboration with Plan Sierra Leone and
Coalition of International NGOs Working in Education/Gender-Based Violence

Questionnaire

I. IDENTIFICATION DETAILS

No.	Name	Code
ID 1. District:	_____	<input type="text"/>
Codes: Bombali = 1 Kailahun = 2 Koinadugu = 3 Kono = 4 Moyamba = 5 Port Loko = 6 Tonkolili = 7 Western Area = 8		
ID 2. Area (Is the area urban, semi-urban or rural?)		Urban = 1 Semi-urban = 2 Rural = 3
ID 3. School:	_____	<input type="text"/>
ID 4. Level of education:		Primary = 1 Junior secondary = 2 Higher secondary = 3
ID 5. Name of consenting person:	_____	
ID 5. Name of respondent Pupil (optional):	_____	<input type="text"/>

Date of Interview:	DD	MM	YR	
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Name of interviewer: _____	Signature: _____			

Time interview started: ____:____	Time interview Completed: ____:____
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Coordinator's Name: _____	Signature: _____		
Date of Check:	DD	MM	YR
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Note for the interviewer:

Please remember that throughout the questionnaire, instructions for you (the interviewer) are presented in bold and underlined text after the word "Interviewer:" in which case it is not going to be read out to respondents. The rest will be read out to respondents.

Consent:

TO THE PRINCIPAL OF THE SCHOOL (For all children participating from the school)

INTERVIEWER SAY:

Hello, my name is [**Name of interviewer**] and I am working for [**Name of partner operating in the district**]. Currently, we are undertaking a national study in collaboration with other partners to study school-related gender-based violence including within school and on the way to or from school in selected schools across Sierra Leone. The results of this project will help to better understand the situation faced by children and seek ways to improve the teaching and learning environment. I would like to ask some of the pupils from your school in connection to this issue. Everything the pupil say will remain private and confidential and they can stop the interview at any time. No one in the neighbourhood or the authorities will have access to what the pupil tells me and will be allowed to skip any questions he/she does not want to answer.

If you have any questions that you would like answered by the project coordinator, I can give you a number to call the *Country Coordinator* and speak to him.

May I now ask your consent to allow me to interview the selected pupils?

Yes = _____ Continue the interview

No = _____ Go to the next school

TO THE PUPIL

INTERVIEWER SAY:

Hello, my name is [**Name of interviewer**] and I am working for [**Name of partner operating in the district**]. Currently, we are undertaking a national study in collaboration with other partners to study school-related gender-based violence including within school and on the way to or from school in selected schools across Sierra Leone. The results of this project will help to better understand the situation faced by children and seek ways to improve the teaching and learning environment. I would like to ask you some questions about your life and views in relation to gender-based violence related to your school. Everything that you tell me will remain completely private and nobody will have access to this information. You can stop the interview at any time or skip any questions that you do not want to answer, and I would like to reassure you that no one in your family, the teachers, your peers or the authorities will know what you tell me.

If you have any questions that you would like answered by the project coordinator, I can give you a number to call the Country Coordinator and speak to him/her.

Do you give your consent to be interviewed for this study?

Yes = _____ Continue the interview

No = _____ Go to the next sampled pupil in the school

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

No.	Question	Answer Codes
101	Interviewer: record the gender of the respondent pupil	Boy = 1 Girl = 2
102	How old are you? Interviewer: record in completed years	
103	What is your religion?	Christian = 1 Muslim = 2 Other (Specify) _____ = 3
104	What is your ethnicity?	Mende = 1 Temne = 2 Limba = 3 Kono = 4 Mandingo = 5 Krio = 6 Fula = 7 Kuranko = 8 Sherbro = 9 Susu = 10 Loko = 11 Kissi = 12 Yalunka = 13 Vai = 14 Other (Specify) _____ = 15
105	<u>Interviewer: observe and record the disability status of the pupil</u>	Non-disabled = 1 Physically disabled = 2 Visually disabled = 3 Hearing/speech disability = 4 Intellectual disability = 5 With multiple disability = 6
106	Is your biological father alive?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't know = 3
107	Is your biological mother alive?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't know = 3
108	Whom do you currently live with?	Both parents = 1 Mother only = 2 Father only = 3 Mother and stepfather = 4 Father and stepmother = 5 Grand parents = 6 Aunt/Uncle = 7 Siblings (brother/sister) = 8 Other relatives = 9 Non-relative = 10 Live by my self = 11 Live in an institution/care centre = 12 Other (specify) _____ = 13

No.	Question	Answer Codes
109	Do any members of the household where you are currently living have the following items?	Yes No
	1 - Paraffin Lamp?	1 2
	2 - Electricity?	1 2
	3 - Bicycle?	1 2
	4 - Motorcycle?	1 2
	5 - Car?	1 2
	6 - Radio /cassette /CD player?	1 2
	7 - Television?	1 2
110	What is the main source of drinking water in your house?	Piped water into dwelling = 01 Piped water into yard or plot = 02 Community standpipe = 03 Protected well = 04 Unprotected well = 05 Borehole = 06 Surface water (river/lake/dam) = 07 Rain water = 08 Bottled water = 09 Other (specify) _____ = 10
111	What type of toilet facilities do you have at home?	Flush toilet = 1 Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrine = 2 Latrine (Cement/ Iron-sheets) = 3 Traditional pit (mud and thatched) = 4 None = 5 Other (specify) _____ = 6
112	What is the floor of the house you live in made of?	Natural floor (earth/mud) = 1 Rudimentary floor (wood/broken brick) = 2 Finished floor such as polished wood, cement, tile, etc. = 3 Other (specify) _____ = 4

II. SAFE SCHOOLS

I will now ask you about your school environment

201	Which grade are you currently attending? Interviewer: record the grade in numbers	Grade = <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
202	Are you a member of any school club?	Yes = 1 No = 2 → 2
203	What type of club do you belong to?	Media/Drama = 1 Creative Arts/Sports = 2 Gender = 3 HIV/AIDS = 4 Boys/girls scout = 5 Red Cross Society = 6 Child/Human Rights = 7 Life skills/guidance = 8 Other (specify) _____ = 9
204	When is the last time you attended the club?	Within past 5 days = 1 Within past month = 2 More than one month = 3

No.	Question	Answer Codes	
205	Do you always feel safe when you commute to school?	Yes, always = 1 Yes, in most cases = 2 No in most cases = 3 No, always = 4	
206	Do you feel safe to walk alone to or from your school?	Yes, always = 1 Yes, in most cases = 2 No in most cases = 3 No, always = 4 I never go alone = 5	
207	What makes travelling to and from school unsafe for pupils?		
	<u>Interviewer: circle code '1' for all responses mentioned and "2" for those not mentioned</u>	Yes	No
	A. Physical assault	1	2
	B. Being abducted	1	2
	C. Sexual assault	1	2
	D. Rape	1	2
	E. Insult/Bullying	1	2
	F. Grabbing breast/buttocks	1	2
	G. Theft/confiscation	1	2
	H. Accident	1	2
	I. Interschool conflict/strike	1	2
	J. Traditional practice (Secret Societies)	1	2
	K. River/road/animals/weather	1	2
	L. Other _____ (specify)	1	2
208	Do you always feel safe while you are in school?	Yes, always = 1 Yes, in most cases = 2 No in most cases = 3 No, always = 4	
209	What makes a stay in school safe and welcoming?		
	<u>Interviewer: circle code '1' for all responses mentioned and "2" for those not mentioned</u>	Yes	No
	A. School has no incidents of fighting, rape and touching	1	2
	B. Teachers do not beat pupils	1	2
	C. There is no bullying	1	2
	D. Play with friends	1	2
	E. Teachers supervise pupils	1	2
	F. Boys and girls are equally treated	1	2
	G. Teachers do not send pupils for personal errands	1	2
	H. Teachers do not propose love to pupils	1	2
	I. Boys do not propose love to girls	1	2
	J. Pupils are well behaved and disciplined	1	2
	K. School is clean and has playing fields and sports material	1	2
	L. School has latrines	1	2
	M. Adequate textbooks, learning materials and facilities	1	2
	N. Other (specify) _____	1	2

III. SCHOOL RELATED GENDER BASED VIOLENCE →

No.	Question	Answer Codes		
301	I will read out some questions related to your school life. For each question tell me “yes” if you agree and “no” if not.	Yes	No	Don't Know
	Is it ok for teachers to whip boys to maintain discipline in school or class?	1	2	3
302	Is it ok for teachers to whip girls to maintain discipline in school or class?	1	2	3
303	Is it ok to ask boys to do hard physical punishment such as digging or cutting wood	1	2	3
304	Is it ok to ask girls to do hard physical punishment such as digging or cutting wood	1	2	3

No.	Statement	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
305	I will read out the following statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the statements.			
	A boy sometimes need to beat a girlfriend who misbehaves	1	2	3
306	A girl sometimes needs to beat a boyfriend who misbehaves	1	2	3
307	Pupils calling fellow pupils name doesn't really hurt them	1	2	3
308	Teachers calling pupils names doesn't really hurt pupils	1	2	3
309	If a girl refuses a boy's proposal for relationship, he can continue to send her love letters	1	2	3
311	It is ok for a boy to tell a girlfriend whom to chat or not to chat with	1	2	3
312	It is ok for a girls to tell a boyfriend whom to chat or not to chat with	1	2	3
313	It is sometimes the girl's fault if a male pupil or teacher sexually harasses her	1	2	3
314	It is sometimes the boy's fault if a female pupil or teacher sexually harasses him	1	2	3
315	Girls like it when boys touch or grab their breast or buttocks	1	2	3
316	Boys like it when girls touch or grab their genital or buttocks	1	2	3
317	It is ok for a teacher to impregnate a girl as long as he marries her	1	2	3
318	Teachers who have a sexual relationship with a pupil should be dismissed and not allowed to teach again	1	2	3

Interviewer: Read out each of the following questions and circle and/or fill the appropriate codes from the code-book in the space provided.

319	I will now ask you whether you have experienced any of the following acts of physical violence.			→	
	Have you experienced beating such as punching, kicking, slapping?	Yes = 1	No = 2	→ 320	
	1. How often did this happen to you?				→ For the codes refer to the code-book
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?				
	3. Who did this?				
	4. What did you do?				
	5. Why did you do that?				
	6. What happened as a result of your action?				
7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?					

No.	Question	Answer Codes	Skip
320	Have you experienced grabbing such as pulling hair, pinching, twisting arms and ear lobes?		Yes = 1 → No = 2 → 321
	1. How often did this happen to you?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
321	Have you been hit by weapon such as stones, sticks or stabbed by knives?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 322
	1. How often did this happen to you?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
322	Have you received whipping or canning?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 323
	1. How often did this happen to you?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
323	Have you been pushed or tripped?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 324
	1. How often did this happen to you?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
324	Have you been forced to dig a hole or cut wood or work on the school farm?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 325
	1. How often did this happen to you?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		

No.	Question	Answer Codes	Skip
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
325	I will now ask you whether you have experienced any of the following acts of sexual violence: Have you been raped or experienced unwanted sex (vaginal, anal or oral) by someone using weapon or threat of death?	Yes = 1 No = 2	→ 326
	1. How often did this happen to you?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
326	Have you been raped or experienced unwanted sex (vaginal, anal or oral) by someone not using a weapon or threat of death?	Yes = 1 No = 2	→ 327
	1. How often did this happen to you?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
327	Have you experienced a forced sex or coerced sex in exchange for food, gifts, grades or money?	Yes = 1 No = 2	→ 328
	1. How often did this happen to you?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
328	Did some one insert an object into genitals?	Yes = 1 No = 2	→ 329
	1. How often did this happen to you?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		

No.	Question	Answer Codes	Skip	
329	Have you experienced a coerced, forced or unwanted removal of clothing?	Yes = 1 No = 2 →	330	
	1. How often did this happen to you?			<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?			
	3. Who did this?			
	4. What did you do?			
	5. Why did you do that?			
	6. What happened as a result of your action?			
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?			
330	Have you experienced a peeping while you were in toilets, mirrors, etc?	Yes = 1 No = 2 →	331	
	1. How often did this happen to you?			<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?			
	3. Who did this?			
	4. What did you do?			
	5. Why did you do that?			
	6. What happened as a result of your action?			
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?			
331	Did some one touch or pinch: FOR GIRLS: your breasts, buttocks or genitals? FOR BOYS: your buttocks or genitals?	Yes = 1 No = 2 →	332	
	1. How often did this happen to you?			<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?			
	3. Who did this?			
	4. What did you do?			
	5. Why did you do that?			
	6. What happened as a result of your action?			
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?			
332	Did someone expose his/her genital?	Yes = 1 No = 2 →	333	
	1. How often did this happen to you?			<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?			
	3. Who did this?			
	4. What did you do?			
	5. Why did you do that?			
	6. What happened as a result of your action?			
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?			
333	Did you receive sexual comments?	Yes = 1 No = 2 →	334	
	1. How often did this happen to you?			<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?			
	3. Who did this?			
	4. What did you do?			
	5. Why did you do that?			
	6. What happened as a result of your action?			

7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?

No.	Question	Answer Codes	Skip
334	Have you been forced to look at sexual acts or pornographic materials?	Yes = 1 No = 2	335
	1. How often did this happen to you?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
335	In the future, what would you do if an act of sexual violence was committed against you at school?		
	<i>Interviewer: The codes for this particular questions are indicated in page 1 (item 6) of the code-book.</i>		

336	I will now ask you whether you have experienced any of the following acts of psychological violence: Insulting, name calling, or shouting?	Yes = 1 No = 2	337
	1. How often did this happen to you?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?	16	
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
337	Have you been threatened, intimidated, or frightened with harm or punishment?	Yes = 1 No = 2	
	1. How often did this happen to you?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
338	Have you been afraid to go to school?	Yes = 1 No = 2	
	1. How often did this happen to you?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	2. What was the reason?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
339	Have you been afraid to participate in class?	Yes = 1 No = 2	340
	1. How often did this happen to you?		For the codes
	2. What was the reason?		

7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?			<i>refer to the code-book</i>
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No.	Question	Answer Codes	Skip
340	Have you been afraid to say 'no' to someone?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 341
	1. How often did this happen to you?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
341	Have you ever received threatening/unwanted letters?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 342
	1. How often did this happen to you?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
342	Have any of the teachers forced you to do something you didn't want to do?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 343
	1. How often did this happen to you?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
343	Have any of your friends forced you to do something you didn't want to do?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 344
	1. How often did this happen to you?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		
	6. What happened as a result of your action?		
	7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
344	Have you been rejected or refused by someone?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 345
	1. How often did this happen to you?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Where did the most recent event occur?		
	3. Who did this?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. Why did you do that?		

6. What happened as a result of your action?		
7. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		

No.	Question	Answer Codes	Skip
345	In the future, what would you do if an act of psychological violence were committed against you at school? <i><u>Interviewer: The codes for this particular questions are indicated in page 1 (item 6) of the code-book.</u></i>		<i>For the codes refer to (item 6) in page 1 of the code-book</i>
349	Now, I would like to ask you other questions.		
	Who proposed love or promised to you from the following? A male pupil	Yes = 1 No = 2	→ → 350
	1. Was this wanted or unwanted?	Wanted = 1 Unwanted = 2	→
	2. How did the person propose Love?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	3. What did he/she say or promise?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. What did the person do in response		
6. Did this happen in the last 12 months		→	
350	A female pupil	Yes = 1 No = 2	→ → 351
	1. Was this wanted or unwanted?	Wanted = 1 Unwanted = 2	→
	2. How did the person propose Love?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	3. What did he/she say or promise?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. What did the person do in response		
	6. Did this happen in the last 12 months		→
351	A male teacher	Yes = 1 No = 2	→ → 352
	1. Was this wanted or unwanted?	Wanted = 1 Unwanted = 2	→
	2. How did the person propose Love?		For the codes refer to the code-book
	3. What did he/she say or promise?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. What did the person do in response		
	6. Did this happen in the last 12 months		→
352	A female teacher	Yes = 1 No = 2	→ → 353
	1. Was this wanted or unwanted?	Wanted = 1 Unwanted = 2	→
	2. How did the person propose Love?		For the codes refer to
	3. What did he/she say or promise?		
	4. What did you do?		

5. What did the person do in response			the code- book
6. Did this happen in the last 12 months			

No.	Question	Answer Codes	Skip
353	A male Director/Deputy	Yes = 1 No = 2 → 354	
	1. Was this wanted or unwanted?	Wanted = 1 Unwanted = 2	
	2. How did the person propose Love?		<i>For the codes refer to the code- book</i>
	3. What did he/she say or promise?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. What did the person do in response		
	6. Did this happen in the last 12 months		
354	A female director/deputy	Yes = 1 No = 2 → 355	
	1. Was this wanted or unwanted?	Wanted = 1 Unwanted = 2	
	2. How did the person propose Love?		<i>For the codes refer to the code- book</i>
	3. What did he/she say or promise?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. What did the person do in response		
	6. Did this happen in the last 12 months		
355	A male PTA member	Yes = 1 No = 2 → 356	
	1. Was this wanted or unwanted?	Wanted = 1 Unwanted = 2	
	2. How did the person propose Love?		<i>For the codes refer to the code- book</i>
	3. What did he/she say or promise?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. What did the person do in response		
	6. Did this happen in the last 12 months		
356	A female PTA member	Yes = 1 No = 2 → 357	
	1. Was this wanted or unwanted?	Wanted = 1 Unwanted = 2	
	2. How did the person propose Love?		<i>For the codes refer to the code- book</i>
	3. What did he/she say or promise?		
	4. What did you do?		
	5. What did the person do in response		
	6. Did this happen in the last 12 months		
357	Please answer the following questions regarding punishments you may have received at school.	Yes = 1 No = 2 → 358	
	Have you ever been punished?		
357.1	1. Type of punishment you received?		<i>For the codes refer to the</i>
	2. How often did you receive?		
	3. Did this take place before, during or after classes		

4. Who gave you the punishment			<i>code- book</i>
5. Did this happen in the last 12 months			

No.	Question	Answer Codes		Skip
357.2	1. Type of punishment you received (<u>If no other punishment, skip to 358</u>)			<i>For the codes refer to the code- book</i>
	2. How often did you receive the punishment?			
	3. Did this take place before, during or after classes			
	4. Who gave you the punishment			
	5. Did this happen in the last 12 months			
357.3	1. Type of punishment you received? (<u>Record the 3rd type of punishment</u>)			<i>For the codes refer to the code- book</i>
	2. How often did you receive the punishment?			
	3. Did this take place before, during or after classes			
	4. Who gave you the punishment			
	5. Did this happen in the last 12 months			
358	Has a staff member ever asked you to do any of the following chores? Hard physical labor such as digging latrines, tree stumps, slashing, etc.?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 359	<i>For the codes refer to the code- book</i>
	1. How often do you do?			
	2. Did this take place before, during or after classes?			
	3. Who asked you to do the chores?			
	4. Did this happen in the last 12 months?			
359	Other chores around school compound such as sweeping, mopping classrooms and toilets?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 360	<i>For the codes refer to the code- book</i>
	1. How often do you do?			
	2. Did this take place before, during or after classes?			
	3. Who asked you to do the chores?			
	4. Did this happen in the last 12 months?			
360	Working in school garden?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 361	<i>For the codes refer to the code- book</i>
	1. How often do you do?			
	2. Did this take place before, during or after classes?			
	3. Who asked you to do the chores?			
	4. Did this happen in the last 12 months?			
361	Construction at teacher's house?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 362	<i>For the codes refer to the code- book</i>
	1. How often do you do?			
	2. Did this take place before, during or after classes?			
	3. Who asked you to do the chores?			
	4. Did this happen in the last 12 months?			

No.	Question	Answer Codes	Skip
362	Chores at a teacher's house (cooking, fetching water, cleaning)		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 363
	1. How often do you do?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Did this take place before, during or after classes?		
	3. Who asked you to do the chores?		
	4. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
363	Work at teacher's garden?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 364
	1. How often do you do?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Did this take place before, during or after classes?		
	3. Who asked you to do the chores?		
	4. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
364	Sent to run teacher's errands?		Yes = 1 No = 2 → 365
	1. How often do you do?		<i>For the codes refer to the code-book</i>
	2. Did this take place before, during or after classes?		
	3. Who asked you to do the chores?		
	4. Did this happen in the last 12 months?		
365	Do you know a boy from your school who has dropped out due to violent attack, threat, abuse, bullying, name calling or related problem?		Yes = 1 No = 2
366	Do you know a girl from your school who dropped out due to violent attack, sexual abuse, threat, bullying, name calling or related problem?		Yes = 1 No = 2

IV. GENDER NORMS AND SCHOOL PARTICPATION

No.	Questions	Options and codes			
		Boys	Girls	Both boys and girls	Don't know
401	Who do you think is more intelligent?	1	2	3	4
402	Who should help the family the most with house work?	1	2	3	4
403	Who should help the family the most with household chores?	1	2	3	4
404	Who should help the family the most with farm work?	1	2	3	4
405	For whom is it more important to go to school?	1	2	3	4
406	Who should help more in carrying out school chores such as cleaning classrooms, and toilets	1	2	3	4
407	Who should help more in carrying out school chores such as slashing?	1	2	3	4
408	Who should be given preference to desks?	1	2	3	4
409	Whom do teachers choose to answer questions most frequently?	1	2	3	4
410	Who participates more in class activities?	1	2	3	4

411	Who receives more negative comments and insults from teachers?	1	2	3	4
412	Who receives more positive comments from teachers?	1	2	3	4

Now I am going to read you a list of statements. For each statement tell me whether you agree or disagree.

No.	Statements	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Don't Know	
413	Girls and boys should be treated equally in school	1	2	3	4	
414	Girls and boys should be treated equally within the family	1	2	3	4	
415	Girls and boys should be treated equally in the community	1	2	3	4	
416	Girls and boys should have the same job opportunities	1	2	3	4	
417	Men and women should be equally represented in the local government and national parliament	1	2	3	4	
418	Men and women should have equal access to land, houses, and credit	1	2	3	4	
419	It is normal for boys to be more aggressive than girls	1	2	3	4	
420	It is normal when young children tease each other in a sexual way	1	2	3	4	
421	Do you feel comfortable answering questions in class?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't Know = 3				→423
422	Why do you feel uncomfortable to answer questions in class?	My classmates ridicule/laugh at me = 1 The teacher ridicules/laughs at me = 2 Don't know the answer/No time to read = 3 Pay little attention/to much worry = 4 Don't understand lectures = 5 Language barrier = 6 I feel shy to raise hand = 7 Because of my disability/physical condition = 8 Other (specify) _____ = 9				
423	Do you feel comfortable asking the teacher question in class?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't Know = 3				→425
424	Why do you feel uncomfortable to ask your teacher?	He/she never welcomes questions = 1 Insults/ridicules when asked = 2 I understand the lectures = 3 Fear of reaction from classmates = 4 I feel shy to ask questions = 5				
425	Should boys and girls receive the same punishment at school?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't Know = 3				
426	Do you believe that girls and boys should not be in the same school?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't Know = 3				→428 →428

No.	Question	Answer Codes	Skip
427	Why do you feel that way?	Boys fight over girls = 1 Girls fight over boys = 2 Teachers give more attention to girls = 3 Teachers give more attention to boys = 4 High incidence of rape/sexual assault = 5 Girls distract attention to learning = 6 Boys distract attention to learning = 7 Boys disturb in classes = 8 Girls disturb in classes = 9 Girls exchange sex for grade = 10 Other (specify) _____ = 11	
428	Should girls be allowed in school if they are pregnant?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't Know = 3	
429	If a male pupil impregnates a female pupil, should he have to leave school?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't Know = 3	
430	Do you know a male pupil who impregnated a female pupil in your school?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't Know = 3	
431	Do you know a teacher who impregnated a female pupil in your school?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't Know = 3	
432	Is it the boy's fault if he receives a love proposal from a female pupil or teacher?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't Know = 3	
433	Is it the girl's fault if she receives a love proposal from a male pupil or teacher?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Don't Know = 3	

V. BASIC CHILD RIGHTS

Now I am going to read you a list of statements. For each statement tell me whether you agree, disagree, or don't know					
	Statement	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Don't know
434	You have a right to education	1	2	3	4
435	You have a right to food	1	2	3	4
436	You have a right to adequate rest and sleep	1	2	3	4
437	You have a right to play and recreation	1	2	3	4
438	You have a right not to be hurt or mistreated?	1	2	3	4
439	You have the right to express ideas and opinions in the classroom?	1	2	3	4
440	You have the right to disagree with teachers?	1	2	3	4
441	Teachers have the right to shout at you, insult you and call you names	1	2	3	4
442	Teachers have the right to beat you in classroom	1	2	3	4

443	Teachers have the right to touch your thighs, buttocks, or private parts	1	2	3	4
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No.	Question	Answer Codes			
450	You have the right to say no to teachers who want to touch your thighs, buttocks, or private parts	1	2	3	4
451	You have the right to say no to other students who to touch your thighs, buttocks, or private parts	1	2	3	4
452	Male teachers have the right to demand sex from school children	1	2	3	4
453	Female teachers have the right to demand sex from school children	1	2	3	4
454	You have a right to say no to sex	1	2	3	4
455	Do you believe that pupils can help change cultures that tolerate gender based violence in schools?	1	2	3	4
456	Do you believe that pupils can help put an end to gender-based violence in schools?	1	2	3	4

Now I need to ask you some questions about sexual activity in order to gain a better understanding of some issues related to school life.

457	Have you ever had sexual intercourse?	Yes = 1 No = 2 → 500			
458	How old were you when you first had sexual intercourse?				
459	Was the first sexual intercourse either forced, coerced, tricked, or unwanted?	Yes = 1 No = 2			
460	Did you use any method to delay or avoid getting pregnant during your last sexual intercourse?	Yes = 1 No = 2			
461	Was a condom used the last time you had sexual intercourse?	Yes = 1 No = 2			

VI. HIV/AIDS RELATED QUESTIONS

No.	Question	Answer Codes	Skip
500	Now I would like to talk about something else. Have you ever heard of an illness called AIDS?	Yes = 1 No = 2	→ 504
501	Is there anything a person can do to avoid getting AIDS or the virus that causes AIDS?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Dont know = 3	→ 503 → 503
502	What can a person do to avoid getting AIDS? Anything else? <u>Interviewer: record all mentioned.</u>	Yes No	
	A. Abstain from sex	1 2	
	B. Use condoms	1 2	
	C. Limit sex to one partner who is HIV/AIDS negative	1 2	
	D. Limit sex to one partner	1 2	
	E. Limit number of sexual partners	1 2	
	F. Both partners go for HIV voluntary counselling and testing	1 2	
	G. Avoid sex with prostitutes	1 2	
	H. Avoid sex with person who have many partners	1 2	
	I. Avoid sex with homosexuals	1 2	
	J. Avoid sex with persons who inject drug intravenously	1 2	
	K. Avoid blood transfusions	1 2	
	L. Avoid injections	1 2	
	M. Avoid sharing razors/blades	1 2	
	N. Avoid kissing	1 2	
	O. Avoid mosquito bites	1 2	
	P. Seek protection from traditional practitioner/ Prayer	1 2	
	Q. Other(specify) _____	1 2	
503	Does having sex with a virgin cure HIV/AIDS?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Dont know = 3	
504	Do you think family life skills education should be part of the school curriculum?	Yes = 1 No = 2 Dont know = 3	→ END → END
505	Why do you think that family life skills education should be part of the school curriculum?	Promotes responsible behaviour = 1 Contributes to the quality of education = 2 It is a child's right = 3 Promotes positive sexual behaviour = 4 Prepares students to become good parents = 5 Other (specify) _____ = 6 Don't know = 7	

Thank you for your cooperation!

Annex III: Guideline for Qualitative Study

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE COLLECT DATA FROM TEACHERS ON SCHOOL RELATED GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Part I: General Instructions

This tool contains open-ended questions. You are expected to record the response of the interviewee in the blank space provided for this purpose.

Part II: Introduction

1. Name of district _____
2. Name of school _____
3. Sex _____
4. Education level _____

Part II. Questions on prevalence

2.1. Discussion about education in general

1. In your opinion, do people in this community think that girls should have exactly the same education as boys? Why or why not?

2. How are the benefits of education different for girls and boys? Why?

3. What challenges do families in this community face when they send their children to school?

4. Do parents of girls face different challenges than parents of boys when they send them to school? Why?

B Basic child rights understanding

1. What is your understanding of the rights of the child?

2. What is your understanding of the duties of the child?

C Gender roles

1. What makes a man a man?

2. What makes a woman a woman?

D Prevalence of gender based violence in school

1. What is your understanding of school related gender based violence?

2. Please give examples school related gender based violence?

3. Where does it happen?

4. How often?

5. Who are the main perpetrators?

6. Who are the most vulnerable victims? How frequently are they exposed?

7. What are the negative effect of school related gender based violence on the victims?

E. The role of different actors in child protection

1. What kind of preventive measures are available in schools towards school related gender based violence? (e.g. code of ethics and other mechanisms)

2. What actions are usually taken whenever violence happens in school (Give examples with cases especially cases related to pregnancy, rape, corporal punishment?)

3. Is there a difference on how the cases are handled when the perpetrator is teacher, student or director? Is it possible to give example?

4. What is the role of community leaders when school children are abused?

5. What is the role of community leaders when school children are abused?

6. What is the role of community leaders when school children are abused?

7. Is there effective reporting system for victims of violence in schools and the police?
Please Describe.

8. What programmes and services in school offered by NGOs support/help victim children of gender based violence? How effective are they?

9. What programmes and interventions are planned and implemented to address school related gender based violence? How effective are they?

F. Statistical information: fill in as appropriate to your organisation

Name of the respondent organisation _____

Mandate _____

District/region _____

1. Number of cases Reported cases of school related violence in the past 12 months (estimate)

2. Number of reported cases that are effectively addressed by your organisation in the past 12 months(estimate)

3. Number of school drop out as a result of violence in schools. (estimate)

4. Number of victims requesting support as a result of school related violence. (estimate)

Qualitative study tool 2. GUIDELINES FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN

District _____

School _____ No. of students participating _____

Name of facilitator of the discussion-----

Purpose

The purpose of the interview is to have a general discussion about education in this community and abuses that occur in and around school. There is no right or wrong answer. Please share your true opinions and feelings with us. This discussion is confidential, so please feel free to be honest.

Materials

pen

notebook

voice recorder if possible

1. Introduction

- a) Welcome each participant as they arrive and introduce yourself.
- b) Introduce the subject, objectives and purpose of the study as well as the FGD.
- c) Ask the consent of each participant to take part in the discussion.
- d) Suggest the following ground rules and ask the participants if they want to add any.
 - Respect the ideas of every group member.
 - Keep what comes up in the group discussion confidential.
 - Take turns talking one-at-a-time.
 - Listen to the person talking.

2. Discussion questions on school-related gender-based violence

1. What do you understand by school related gender based violence and what acts do you consider as violence against children in school?
2. Do you consider violence as a serious problem in the life of children?
3. What are the most common forms of violence (sexual, physical, and psychological) that are committed against children in your school?
4. Who are the common perpetrators?
5. What kind of violence does the school community consider acceptable or inappropriate?
7. Which groups of children (in terms of age, gender, and level of education or living situation) are most vulnerable or exposed to the different kinds of violence-physical, psychological and sexual?
8. What do you think are the major factors contributing to the continued prevalence of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children in your school?
9. What are the perceived or actual effects of violence on children in relation to their survival, development and participation?
10. Do you think effective measures and interventions are being taken by school authorities, police and civil society etc to address the problem of school related gender based violence? Why?
11. What measures and interventions should be taken to address the problem of school related gender based violence effectively? By whom?

Qualitative study tool 3. GUIDELINES FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH TEACHERS

District _____

School _____ No. of students participating _____

Name of facilitator of the discussion-----

Purpose

The purpose of the interview is to have a general discussion about education in this community and abuses that occur in and around school. There is no right or wrong answer. Please share your true opinions and feelings with us. This discussion is confidential, so please feel free to be honest.

Materials

- pen
- notebook
- voice recorder if possible

1. Introduction

- a) Welcome each participant as they arrive and introduce yourself.
- b) Introduce the subject, objectives and purpose of the study as well as the FGD.
- c) Ask the consent of each participant to take part in the discussion.
- d) Suggest the following ground rules and ask the participants if they want to add any.
 - Respect the ideas of every group member.
 - Keep what comes up in the group discussion confidential.
 - Take turns talking one-at-a-time.
 - Listen to the person talking.

2. Discussion questions on school related gender based violence

1. What do you understand by school related gender based violence and what acts do you consider as violence against children in school?
2. Do you consider violence as a serious problem in the life of children?
3. What are the most common forms of violence (sexual, physical, and psychological) that are committed against children in your school?
4. Who are the common perpetrators?
5. What kind of violence does the school community consider acceptable or inappropriate?
6. Which groups of children (in terms of age, gender, and level of education or living situation) are most vulnerable or exposed to the different kinds of violence-physical, psychological and sexual?
7. What do you think are the major factors contributing to the continued prevalence of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children in your school?
8. What are the perceived or actual effects of violence on children in your school?
9. Are there legislations and bylaws addressing school related gender based violence in your school?
10. Do you think effective measures and interventions are being taken by school authorities, police and civil society etc to address the problem of school related gender based violence?
11. What measures and interventions should be taken to address the problem of school related gender based violence effectively? By whom?

Qualitative study tool 4. GUIDELINES FOR CASE STUDY FOR VICTIMS OF SCHOOL RELATED VIOLENCE

District _____
School _____ primary ____ Secondary _____
Name of facilitator of the discussion-----

Purpose

The purpose of the interview is to have a detailed description of violence experienced by students in and around school.

Materials

- pen
- notebook
- voice recorder if possible

Introduction

The interviewer shall make a brief introduction about the objectives of the study. As well as the meaning, forms, causes and effects. He will then ask the child to relate actual or fictitious stories on violence that occurred to a child. Children should be asked about sexual violence they personally experienced.

Content or outline of the story

1. Profile of the victim and the perpetrator (education level, family background, economic back ground etc)
2. Nature of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator
3. Description of the violent act (where, how and when it happened)
4. Measures taken by the victim
5. Physical and emotional effects of the violence on the victim
6. Whether or not the victim have obtained effective remedy

End notes

- ¹ The government of Sierra Leone has also ratified the Optional Protocol on The Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Pornography; the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in 2001 and 2002 respectively.
- ² Article 19.1
- ³ Article 28.2
- ⁴ Article 37
- ⁵ Article 39
- ⁶ Child Right Act, 2007, Supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette Vol. CXXXVIII, No. 43, dated 1st September 2007, p. 2.
- ⁷ The African Child Policy Forum 2006, *Born to High Risk: Violence Against Girls in Africa*, 2006, p. 60-61.
- ⁸ Article 16.2
- ⁹ Article 6
- ¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 61.
- ¹¹ Section 15 of the Constitution
- ¹² Section 13 of the Constitution
- ¹³ Section 8, 9 of the Constitution
- ¹⁴ Section 8 of the Constitution
- ¹⁵ Government of Sierra Leone (1991) the National Constitution of Sierra Leone. Section 27 (1, 4). <http://www.statehouse-sl.org/constitution/> - as cited in International Alert (2007), *Addressing Gender Based Violence in Sierra Leone: Mapping Challenges, Responses and Future Entry Points*, Karen Barnes with peter Albrecht and Maria Olson, August 2007; p. 21.
- ¹⁶ Section 26; The Child Right Act
- ¹⁷ *Ibid*, Section 33
- ¹⁸ *Ibid*, Section 34, 46
- ¹⁹ *Ibid*, Section 51
- ²⁰ *Ibid*, Section 58, 62
- ²¹ *Ibid*, Section 49
- ²² *Ibid*, Section 48
- ²³ Child Right Act, 2007, Supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette Vol. CXXXVIII, No. 43, dated 1st September 2007, p. 30.
- ²⁴ Part II - Section 4; The Domestic Violence Act
- ²⁵ *Ibid*; Part II - Section 2
- ²⁶ Child Right Act (Section 3), Supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette Vol. CXXXV. No. 19, dated 1st April 2004.
- ²⁷ The Education Act, Supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette Vol. CXXXV. No. 19, dated 1st April 2004.
- ²⁸ National HIV/AIDS Secretariat, *Sierra Leone Summary UNGASS Progress Report*, 2010, p. 7, 9, 13.
- ²⁹ Sierra Leone - Education Sector Plan: a road map to better future 2007-2015, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007
- ³⁰ Sierra Leone - Education Sector Plan: a road map to better future 2007-2015, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007, p 8, 22, 25.
- ³¹ Justice Sector Development Programme, Sierra Leone, *Justice Sector Review*, 2006, p. 15, 16.
- ³² The World Bank (2003)
- ³³ Education in Sierra Leone: present challenges, future opportunities, African Human Development Series, The World bank, 2007; p. 15.
- ³⁴ International Alert, 2007, *Addressing Gender Based Violence in Sierra Leone: Mapping Challenges, Responses and Future Entry Points*, Karen Barnes with peter Albrecht and Maria Olson, August 2007; p. 27.
- ³⁵ Education in Sierra Leone: Present challenges, future opportunities, African Human Development Series, The World bank, 2007, p. 7.
- ³⁶ IMF ;Annual Report ;2008,
- ³⁷ Sierra Leone: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper—Progress Report, International Monetary Fund, July 2008, IMF Country Report No. 08/250.
- ³⁸ The PRSP Objectives for the education sector are: (a) promoting and expanding access to basic education with a focus on the girl child, qualitative improvement and teacher education, (b) promoting tertiary training, especially technical and vocational skills in specialised disciplines, to meet the human resource needs for poverty reduction programmes, (c) improving the learning environment, (d) improving planning and management of the sector through capacity building and, (e) promoting HIV/AIDS prevention education at all levels in the education system. Sierra Leone - Education Sector Plan: a road map to better future 2007-2015, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007, p. 17.
- ³⁹ The African Child Policy Forum, 2010, *Harmonisation of laws in Western and Central Africa*, unpublished.