

SAFE EDUCATION FOR GIRLS

Tackling School-Related GBV

**Irish Consortium on GBV
March 2020**

FOREWORD



Education is a fundamental human right. Children who receive a quality education are less likely to experience poverty and more likely to live healthy and productive lives. However, schools are not always the nurturing, educational environment that they should be.

Alarming, 246 million girls and boys experience some form of school-related violence every year. Girls in particular are disproportionately affected by sexual and gender based violence. We know that girls experience violence on their journey to or from school, endure gendered stereotypes in the classroom, and that in many countries girls who fall pregnant due to rape are unjustly expelled from school.

School-related gender based violence (SRGBV) is a threat to the fundamental human right of education. It is a gross abuse of power and stands between girls and their right to safe and equitable primary and secondary education.

I am struck by the words of the President of Ireland and Patron of the ICGBV, Michael D. Higgins, who said on International Women's Day 2020: 'As the 25th anniversary [of the Beijing Platform for Action] approaches, we in Ireland, along with our international community have an opportunity to make a reflection on the progress that has been made, but more importantly, on the challenges that still remain to be met.'

Indeed, we must keep our attention on the issue of SRGBV as we mark the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action this year. Now, during CSW64 and Generation Equality, is the time to speak out and say that access to education is not enough if girls' journeys to school are unsafe, if they experience harassment from peers or teachers or if they are forced to endure toxic learning environments.

This brief emphasises the importance of looking at GBV within education. Given that schools involve individuals, families, communities and government, affecting sustainable change in this area requires engaging a wide-range of stakeholders simultaneously. We must challenge the unequal power structures that exist within institutions and allows SRGBV to happen. We must stop this negative systemic behaviour.

It is clear where the challenges and gaps are. This brief spotlights the inspiring programmes and policies of ICGBV Members working to end SRGBV. Let us continue to work together and learn from each other in order to build on good practices ensuring that children, and girls in particular, are unhindered in their fundamental right to education.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Siobhán McGee". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Siobhán McGee

Chair, Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence
CEO, ActionAid Ireland

WHAT IS SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER BASED VIOLENCE?

School-related gender based violence (SRGBV) is defined as any act or threat of physical, sexual or psychological violence occurring in or around schools, committed on the basis of gender, gender stereotypes or perceived gender identity and enforced by power dynamics. SRGBV can occur on school grounds, en route to or from school and, with the increased utilisation of mobile phones and access to internet, in cyberspace [1]. It is estimated that every year 246 million girls and boys experience some form of SRGBV within the school context [2]. SRGBV presents a major risk to children, particularly girls, in accessing safe and quality education.

A global occurrence, SRGBV can be perpetrated by fellow students, teachers, school staff or members of the wider community. The key root causes include gender discriminatory norms, social norms and wider structural and contextual factors (see Figure 2, next page). Research to date shows that girls and boys experience SRGBV differently, with boys being more likely to experience physical violence, such as corporal punishment, and girls more at risk of being subjected to sexual and/or psychological violence. SRGBV represents an extraordinary abuse of power, especially when it is perpetrated—or even facilitated—by the very individuals and institutions that are entrusted with empowering girls and advancing gender equality and equal opportunity through education.

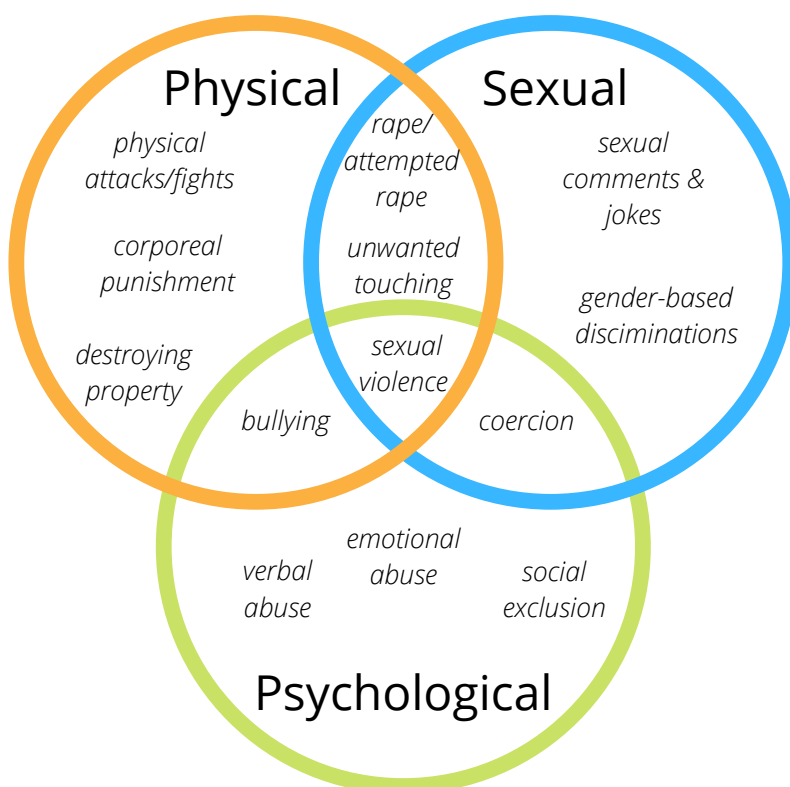


Figure 1: The physical, sexual and psychological forms of SRGBV

All forms of GBV have wide-ranging negative consequences and can cause life-long psychological, sexual or physical harm. This is no different when it comes to SRGBV, although the repercussions of SRGBV do manifest themselves in school-specific ways.

Figure 1 illustrates the ways in which physical, sexual and psychological forms of SRGBV overlap and intersect. Various forms of physical, sexual and psychological SRGBV can combine to create toxic environments where sexual comments, jokes or gender stereotypes are tolerated in schools. SRGBV can lead to student absenteeism or reduced educational outcomes. Sexual violence, rape, forced pregnancy or STI transmission can also lead to school dropout or unfair school expulsion.

Existing studies recognise the intersection of gender with other forms of vulnerability, noting that children may be at additional risk of SRGBV based on factors such as poverty, disability, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or

[1] UNGEI, 2018. A Whole School Approach to Prevent School-Related Gender Based Violence: Minimum Standards and Monitoring Framework. Available online: <https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Whole-School-Approach-to-Prevent-SRGBV-Minimum-Standards-Framework-UNG EI.pdf>

[2] UNESCO and UN Women, 2016. Global Guidance: School-related gender-based violence. Available online: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246691>

religion [3]. Finally, in contexts where there is a breakdown of essential services such as conflict-affected or humanitarian settings, students may also be at increased risk of GBV [4].

While the harms and most-at-risk groups of SRGBV are evident, what is less understood are the prevalence rates of the many and specific forms of SRGBV and how most-at-risk groups are specifically impacted. The reasons for this are multiple. There is a lack of consistency in national and programmatic definitions of SRGBV, rendering systematised or comparable measurement difficult. Adding to this challenge is that psychological and sexual forms of abuse, relative to physical forms of abuse like corporeal punishment, are typically less visible and are difficult to measure in safe and confidential ways, creating evidence gaps around these specific forms of SRGBV.

Strengthening indicators around SRGBV will be important in raising awareness and implementing measures to eliminate it. However, it should be recognised that prevalence rates around any form of GBV will inevitably remain difficult to understand due to a myriad of contextual reasons, including how the fear or possibility of not being believed or being ostracised from one's community negatively impacts reporting and investigative mechanisms. Young survivors of SRGBV in particular may also lack the life experience, awareness of their rights or language necessary to understand and articulate their experiences. Underpinned by power and gender dynamics, the devastating reality of SRGBV is that it is both perpetrated and perpetuated within environments that are meant to be educational and nurturing.

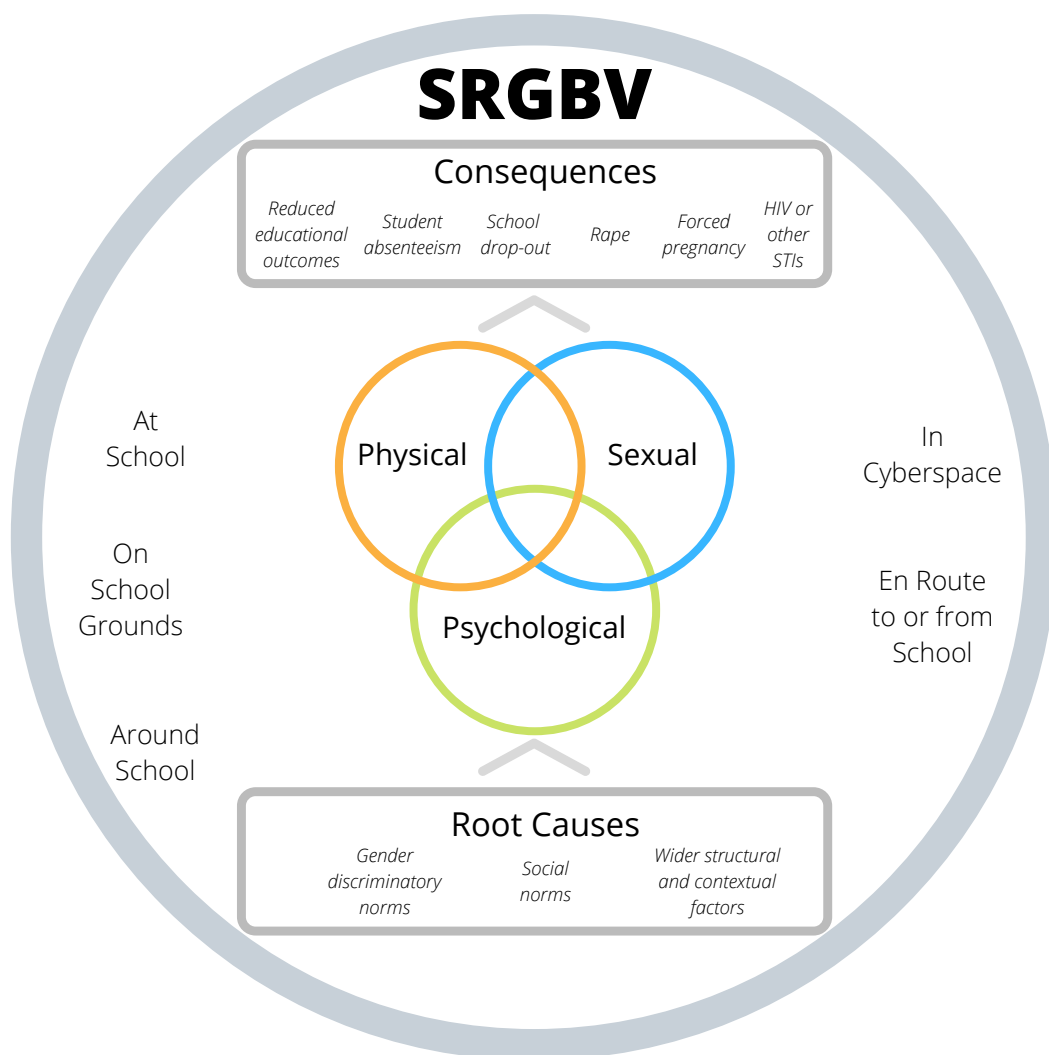


Figure 2: Root causes, forms and consequences of SRGBV. Source: ICGBV reproduction from UNGEI, 2019 & UNESCO and UN Women – Global Guidance on SRGBV

[3] UNGEI, 2019. Ending School-related Gender Based Violence: A Series of Thematic Briefs. Available online: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372247>

[4] UNGEI & UNESCO, 2015. Policy Paper 17: School-related gender-based violence is preventing the achievement of quality education for all. Available online: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232107>

World Vision Ireland's Education and Protection programme works to create a girl friendly environment in schools in Puntland

Girls in the Puntland State of Somalia are more likely than boys to repeat years in school [5]. This is due to multiple reasons, including managing their menstrual hygiene. If girls do not have access to safe, sex-segregated latrines at school when they have their periods, they may be absent from school or even drop out. They may also be more at risk of experiencing SRGBV.

World Vision Ireland's Protection and Education Programme in Puntland takes a multiple-stakeholder approach to providing a girl friendly and gender supportive learning environment, and this is seen as a key tool for combatting SRGBV.

Within World Vision Ireland's Education and Protection programme, there were activities on menstrual hygiene management (MHM). At one school in Mareeya in the Eyl district, separate latrines were built for girls and boys and a 5,000-litre water tank was installed. Nevertheless, the scarcity of available water throughout the year poses an ongoing challenge. Some schools rely on trucking in water and there is an awareness that without adequate access to latrines, girls may not be able to go to school at the time of menstruation. This challenge requires close monitoring to ensure that the positive progress on girls attending schools can be maintained.

In parallel to providing infrastructural projects, World Vision Ireland is working with a number of other stakeholders to ensure that schools are safe. This includes working with adolescent girls on activities such as making reusable sanitary towels, to ensure that girls will have the necessary supplies for menstruation. Teachers have also had training on topics including menstruation and gender based violence, and the community has been engaged via Community Education Committees (CECs).

This broader engagement of teachers, school actors and the community was essential due to the taboos around GBV and menstruation. Across Somalia, reporting cases of GBV can be difficult for women, and this is also the case regarding SRGBV. Involving CECs in the discussions around providing a girl friendly learning environment was not always easy, as they are predominantly made up of men, but raising awareness on the link between school attendance and MHM specifically was an entry point, as education in Puntland is highly valued among the community.

Engagement with CECs and the wider local government on the links between infrastructure, MHM and reducing SRGBV was a key success of World Vision Ireland's Education and Protection programme. Abdirahman Abdullahi, (GBV Technical Adviser, Ministry of Women's Development and Family Affairs) explained that in partnership with World Vision, "We have conducted massive campaigns against GBV. Menstrual kits are very important [in this]."

"Girls used to miss classes for a whole week [during their period], and some would drop out of school, because of lack of support and stigma. They lacked the confidence to return to school at the end of the menstrual cycle. They always felt that the boys and some male teachers would taunt them."

Hamd Ahmed Said,
World Vision Gender and Protection Officer.

[5] Puntland State Education Statistics Yearbook 2013/14. Available online: <http://pl.statistics.so/ministry-education-education-statistics-yearbook-20132014/>

WHAT ARE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO ENDING SRGBV?

The rights of children to an education free of violence are enshrined in numerous international agreements, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Policy and programmatic commitments, from the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have also played a role in furthering progress on eliminating SRGBV.

Beijing Platform for Action

The 1995 BPfA, adopted by 189 States as a roadmap for the achievement of gender equality, imagines a world where each woman and girl can exercise her freedoms and choices, and realise all her rights including the right to go to school and to live free from violence. In the 25 years since the adoption of the BPfA, there has been significant improvements in girls' access to education. With increased universalisation of primary and secondary education globally, enrolment of girls in primary schools has reached parity with boys in many contexts [6]. Yet, access to education is not a sufficient measure of success if any part of the educational experience is marked by violence within the school environment. There remains much work in order to ensure that girls' school experiences are free from violence, that girls have the opportunity to reach their full educational potentials and that the BPfA commitments are achieved.

Sustainable Development Goals

Eliminating SRGBV will also be key in meeting the SDGs in the Agenda 2030, specifically in achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (SDG 5), ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all (SDG 4) and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and providing access to justice for all (SDG 16). These SDGs, particularly SDG 4, built importantly on the MDGs by moving beyond access to education and adding language and indicators around quality of education.

Although there is no globally agreed upon indicator for SRGBV, a number of indicators in the SDG Agenda 2030 provide an opportunity to begin tracking progress, particularly indicator 4.a: 'Percentage of students experiencing bullying, corporeal punishment, harassment, violence, sexual discrimination and abuse'.

How is Agenda 2030 measuring SRGBV?

- Indicator 4.a.2 – Percentage of students experiencing bullying, corporal punishment, harassment, violence, sexual discrimination and abuse.
- Indicator 5.2.2 - Proportion of girls 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the last 12 months, by age group and place of occurrence.
- Indicator 16.2.1 - Percentage of children 1- 17 years who experienced any physical and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month.
- Indicator 16.2.3 - Percentage of young women and men 18-29 who experienced sexual violence by age 18.

[6] UNESCO, 2018. Global Education Monitoring Report Gender Review: Meeting our commitments to gender equality in education. Available online: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261593>

Ireland's Commitment to Adolescent Girls' Education

Ireland has expressed clear commitment to ensuring girls receive quality education. Ireland's international development policy *A Better World* establishes gender equality as a priority for Ireland's international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. *A Better World* commits to prioritising education for girls, particularly in emergencies, and scaling up support for both Women, Peace and Security and addressing gender based violence. The Government of Ireland has committed to providing at least €250 million for global education by 2024 with a focus on improving access to quality education for girls and education in emergencies.

The education of adolescent girls is a catalyst that can deliver on global commitments for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, building peace and security and achieving the sustainable development goals. Yet, more than 130 million girls worldwide are not in school with the majority, 96.5 million, excluded from secondary education. Despite increasing global gender parity in secondary school enrolment, in low income countries only 29% of girls complete lower secondary education while just 13% complete upper secondary, and there is a significant gender gap in learning with 53% of girls aged 15-25 able to read a simple sentence compared with 76% of boys the same age.

In many countries, as girls transition from childhood to adolescence they face increasing pressures to drop out of education, for reasons including cost, domestic responsibilities, sociocultural norms and expectations, early marriage and early pregnancy. Girls living with disabilities, from ethnic minorities or living in remote areas or conflict-affected settings face additional constraints.

In February 2020, Ireland launched the 'Drive for Five', A Global Call to Action for Adolescent Girls' Education at the United Nations in New York. Through the call to action event, Ireland worked with partners including the Global Partnership for Education and UN Women to put a spotlight on adolescent girls' education and call on all governments to commit to five transformative actions to get all adolescent girls into school and provide them with quality, relevant education in supportive, safe and healthy environments.

The event, which was attended by the UN Secretary General, UN WOMEN's Executive Director, Mary Robinson and Bono, generated a significant level of profile regarding the key actions that need to be taken to advance education for adolescent girls and in establishing Ireland's role as a key champion for the education of adolescent girls.

The Drive for Five

- 1 She has a desk:** Guarantee that every girl receives 12 years of free quality education.
- 2 She is confident:** Provide supportive school environments through gender-sensitive curriculums, mentoring, and menstrual hygiene facilities and work with boys and men to challenge negative social norms and eliminate harmful traditional practices.
- 3 She learns the skills she needs:** Strengthen teacher training and provide girls with quality, relevant education for life, employment and leadership opportunities.
- 4 She is safe:** Ensure that every girl is safe from violence in school and on the journey to and from school.
- 5 She is healthy:** Keep girls healthy and in school by providing adequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in all schools and ensuring all girls have adequate nutrition.

Concern Worldwide conducts a randomised control trial in Sierra Leone on the Safe Learning Model

A baseline study by Concern Worldwide shows a high prevalence rate of corporal punishment in the Tonkolili District of Sierra Leone: Seventy percent of girls and boys reported being whipped or caned regularly by teachers or parents. In parallel to this, the large majority of teachers actually rate schools as safe spaces for girls and boys, suggesting that physical punishment falls outside of existing social norms around safety.

A girl from the Tonkolili District explained that, “There are some teachers who send us to the bush to fetch firewood for their homes as a form of punishment...There are [also] times if we are not beaten we are asked to clean the school toilets”. While large gender differences in corporal punishment experienced did not come out of the pilot study, research to date shows that girls and boys experience corporal punishment differently, with girls more likely than boys to experience sexual harassment, exploitation or violence. The above quote from the girl from Tonkolili shows that certain forms of corporal punishment may heighten the risks faced by children (i.e. being sent away from the school to a location where they may be alone and more vulnerable).

In order to address negative gender norms and create safe and supportive learning environments for both girls and boys, Concern is implementing a holistic and transformative programme that addresses root causes of SRGBV at all levels of the socio-ecological model. One component of the whole-school approach focuses on school-level activities to prevent and respond to SRGBV. Within this component, along with working with children to develop social and emotional learning competencies, Concern is working with teachers and school administration, including school management committees, to engage in transformative and reflective sessions. In addition to a focus on gender, power dynamics and drivers of violence, the approach integrates participatory sessions with teachers and education staff on child rights, positive discipline and SRGBV referral pathways. Held over a number of weeks, the sessions bring together female and male stakeholders at the school level and provide an opportunity for dialogue and exchange to shift negative norms, attitudes and practices and address the root causes of violence.

These school-level activities working to prevent and respond to SRGBV are part of a larger, whole school approach and study. In partnership with University College Dublin’s School of Education, Concern is conducting a three-year randomised control trial (RCT) on the Safe Learning Model across 100 schools and communities in the Tonkilili District. The study, being implemented from 2018-2021, will test whether and how children’s educational progress will improve based on school and community support for gender equality and child wellbeing. The outcomes being measured include; literacy, child wellbeing, gender equality and gender based violence. The Safe Learning Model study takes a holistic and transformative approach and will test interventions based on the socio-ecological model in the three treatment arms below.

<u>Control Group</u>	<u>Treatment 1</u>	<u>Treatment 2</u>	<u>Treatment 3</u>
25 Communities	25 Communities	25 Communities	25 Communities
	Literacy activities <i>(e.g teacher training; in-classroom coaching and support; Teacher Learning Circles; new teaching and learning materials)</i>	Literacy activities + School-level SRGBV prevention/response <i>(e.g. School Clubs; Social and Emotional Learning; training for teachers, head teachers and the School Management Committee; Information, Education and Communication materials)</i>	Literacy activities + School-level SRGBV prevention/response + Community-level SRGBV prevention/response <i>(e.g. Life Skills Clubs; Community Conversations; Living Peace Programmes; Community Outreach and Engagement of Traditional Teachers; support/training for SRGBV referral and response)</i>

WHAT IS THE EXISTING GOOD PRACTICE ON PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO SRGBV?

Drivers of SRGBV are rooted in gender inequality which exist across the individual, family, school, community and societal level. Framing SRGBV in this way is rooted in the ecological model, which seeks to recognise and understand the interaction and pathways of drivers from the individual to the societal level.

The 'whole school' approach similarly engages various stakeholders at multiple levels—from the school and family level up to the community and governmental level—in order to make schools safe environments, free of violence. Underlying the whole school approach is an understanding that it is not possible to tackle SRGBV at the school-level alone. In that regard, eliminating SRGBV is as much about creating an enabling environment within schools to prevent violence as it is implementing wider community or legal structures like referral mechanisms to respond to GBV. School-focused efforts must be accompanied by wider policy and advocacy actions to be sustainable.

The Global Working Group to End SRGBV, hosted by UNESCO and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), and comprised of over 100 Members representing 50 organisations, has developed Minimum Standards to guide the whole school approach [7]. These Minimum Standards provide guidance to practitioners around eight core elements, with the first element underpinning all others.

Minimum Standards for a Whole School Approach

1. School Leadership and Community Engagement: ensure that parents, teachers, principals as well as community organisations and service providers such as the police are supported to prevent and respond to GBV;
2. Code of Conduct: develop codes which take a zero-tolerance approach and promote safe and positive school environments;
3. Teachers and Educational Staff Support: build capacity among school staff to effectively prevent SRGBV and understand how to identify or respond should it occur;
4. Child Rights, Participation and Gender Equality: adapt curricula to reflect child rights practices and ensure that student leadership is shared out among girls and boys;
5. Reporting, Monitoring and Accountability: create reporting pathways that include support systems and accountability mechanisms;
6. Incidence Response: put in place response mechanisms that include referral pathways;
7. Safe and Secure Physical Environments in and Around Schools: create sanitary, safe and secure school facilities and ensuring children come to and from school safely;
8. Parent engagement: involve parents in keeping children safe at school and at home

The Minimum Standards are not intended to be ranked or implemented chronologically. Rather, they represent the minimum actions necessary for practitioners in preventing and responding to SRGBV. Latest evidence, recommendations and challenges around these standards are presented in the Working Group's 'Series of Thematic Briefs on Ending School-Related Gender Based Violence.' UN Women and UNESCO have also underlined the importance of engaging educational stakeholders, including ministries of education and policymakers, with six guiding strategies for national action on SRGBV.

[7] UNGEI, 2018. A Whole School Approach to Prevent School-Related Gender Based Violence: Minimum Standards and Monitoring Framework. Available online: <https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Whole-School-Approach-to-Prevent-SRGBV-Minimum-Standards-Framework-UNGEI.pdf>

Interview: Oxfam Malawi are addressing GBV through after-school clubs in primary and secondary schools

This excerpt was developed by the ICGBV based on a conversation with Sarah Chisanje (Gender Programme Officer) and Charlotte Wezi Malonda (Women's Rights Programme Lead), Oxfam Malawi

ICGBV: Could you tell us about the after-school clubs that focus on preventing GBV?

They are called 'Anti-SGBV after-school clubs', and they were part of a programme in a northern district in Malawi that aims to raise awareness on SGBV among students. All after-school clubs looked directly at topics like: What is GBV? What does GBV look like in school? How do you prevent and react to it?

With our local partner GENET, these after-school clubs were implemented in primary schools (mostly with upper-primary school students) from 2016-2019 and in secondary schools from 2017-2020. After-school clubs for primary school students included girls and boys, but secondary school clubs were for girls only.

ICGBV: And were there parts of the programme that linked in with the community?

Yes, there were 'Mother Groups' created, which are made up of ten women who are available to respond to issues that girls may be facing. We also worked with the community to train up individuals to become Human Rights Defenders. All of these actors were trained about GBV and in creating safe schools.

ICGBV: What have you seen as a result of this programme?

The evaluation from after-school clubs in secondary schools is not yet complete, but evaluations from the primary school after-school clubs show positive educational outcomes. For example, enrolment rates of girls increased, more girls were passing school and fewer were dropping out. We also saw an increase in what we call 'active citizenship'—by this, we mean that we saw that girls and boys actually spoke out against GBV within their schools.

"With the secondary school after-school club, we aimed to create a sense of agency for girls to speak up for themselves and defend their rights. Whereas with the primary school students, it was aimed more toward girls and boys to create awareness on GBV and safe spaces."

*Sarah Chisanje,
Gender Programme Officer*

ICGBV: What are some of the challenges encountered during the programme?

One of the difficulties is gaps in national policy implementation. For example, there is a policy that allows girls to return to school after a pregnancy, but what we see is that there is a lot of work to be done around changing social norms and getting people to agree that girls should not be expelled from school due to pregnancy.

Another example is that in Malawi the legal response to reported GBV cases is slow, which can discourage survivors who want to see perpetrators brought to justice. In the context we are working in, informal community structures (such as local or traditional courts or by-laws) are actually more responsive than formal structures (such as national court systems) on issues of GBV. For example, on the issue of child marriage, we have seen that communities have strong by-laws against it and would dissolve any child marriages. So there is a disconnect between the informal and formal structures that needs to be joined up, but through this programme we positively see that strong local mechanisms put pressure on the more formal structures, for example through follow-up for survivors. This will be important in working toward schools free of GBV.

Plan International's Gender Responsive Schools Model responds to SRGBV with school counselling

In Hanoi, Vietnam, a pre-project survey carried out by Plan International revealed that 11% of school girls surveyed had experienced sexual abuse and that only a third of survivors actually reported abuse. Additionally, 71% of students in secondary school had experienced some form of violence in the six months prior to being surveyed, and 7% percent of girls and 5% of boys were sexually harassed or assaulted at school. Aiming to tackle these issues, Plan implemented the Gender Responsive Schools Model, which takes a holistic multi-stakeholder approach to promoting non-discriminatory practices within schools and society.



A secondary school student in a counselling session with Ms Cuc.

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One of the essential components of the Gender Responsive School Model is student counselling. Counselling offices were

set up in 20 secondary schools during the pilot phase, providing 7,800 students, of which 4,329 were girls, with counselling, as well as counselling to parents and teachers in need. Training was provided for one female and one male counsellor per school, and the counselling offices operate as follows:

1. The students can directly access the counselling office;
2. A mailbox outside the counselling office allows students to register for the counselling service in individual or group sessions, depending on the types of problems identified by students;
3. School counsellors presented the service to each class at the school and distributed questionnaires to identify topics that the students would like to focus on;
4. Students can be referred to counselling by head teachers and youth team leaders;
5. Young adult literature on counselling is placed in school libraries to raise awareness of the service while also reducing the stigma of entering the space.

Student counselling is only one part of the larger Gender Responsive Schools Model. The model works to tackle gender norms, build girls' agency, engage men and boys in changing social norms and create a broader enabling environment on the national and local level. Such aims require that Plan work with many stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers and the local community. Teacher activities include training teachers and students to raise awareness on reducing discrimination toward LGBTQI students; national-level activities have included conducting mass media campaigns on SRGBV and working with the Ministry of Training and Education.

Although the model initially targeted 20 schools in urban and peri-urban Hanoi, the Vietnamese Government and Department of Education and Training have recognised the low-cost model and scaled it up to over 1,500 primary, secondary and high schools in Hanoi, while Plan has scaled the project to more rural areas populated by ethnic minorities. The strong support from the government provides a powerful indicator to other ASEAN governments of the success of this type of model.

The project end-line survey revealed that 58.2% of girls feel safe and respected in school, compared with 18% at the baseline. The rate of pupils reported physical and psychological violence experience dropped remarkably from 31% and 63% at the baseline to 20% and 7% at end line, respectively.

WHAT CHALLENGES AND GAPS REMAIN?

While there is an important and growing body of research and evidence on SRGBV, challenges and evidence gaps remain. From a programmatic perspective, the whole school approach is essential yet complex to implement and monitor. The challenge lies in the number of stakeholders engaged and the many linkages between individual, local, school, and governmental actors. There is therefore a need for increased good practice looking at the pathways and connections between each level. Engaging the larger national policy space in every context is essential for sustainability. However, national education systems of many low- and middle-income countries are already grappling with teacher shortages, infrastructural challenges and lack of time and resources for additional training on new programmes or curricula.

Moreover, the topic of SRGBV—particularly regarding forms and consequences of sexual and psychological violence—is difficult to broach, affecting all levels of intervention. Changing social norms among individuals, schools, communities and government takes time and is likely to be met with resistance. Challenging forms of SRGBV requires identification of perpetrators and the dismantling of unequal power structures between individuals as well as within schools, institutions and communities.

The case studies within this brief highlight good programmatic practice on a number of topics: how menstrual hygiene management (MHM) can play a role in creating safe school environments, the impact of the whole school approach on educational outcomes, the role of school counselling in eradicating violence from schools and how after-school clubs can play a role in raising awareness on SRGBV. The brief also spotlights Ireland's policy commitments to adolescent girls' education. These case studies are an important contribution to the growing evidence base on what works to end SRGBV and to ensure that all children, particularly girls, experience education free of violence and reach their full potential.

Key Resources on SRGBV

[United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, 2019. Ending School-related Gender Based Violence: A Series of Thematic Briefs.](#)

[United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, 2018. A Whole School Approach to Prevent School-Related Gender Based Violence: Minimum Standards and Monitoring Framework.](#)

[UNESCO and UN Women, 2016. Global Guidance: School-related gender-based violence.](#)

[IASC, 2015. Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action \(Part 3.3 Education: Why Addressing Gender-Based Violence Is a Critical Concern of the Education Sector\).](#)

[UNICEF, 2006. World Report on Violence against Children \(Chapter 4, 'Violence against children in schools and educational settings'\).](#)



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