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Sustainable  
Development  
Goals



# School Violence and Bullying

## Global Status Report

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# School Violence and Bullying:

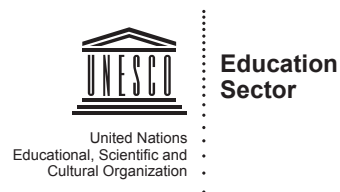
## Global Status Report

Presented at the International Symposium on School Violence and Bullying: From Evidence to Action, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 17 – 19 January 2017

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## UNESCO Education Sector

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.



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UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



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# Foreword

All forms of violence and bullying in schools infringe the fundamental right to education and unsafe learning environments reduce the quality of education for all learners. No country can achieve inclusive and equitable quality education if learners experience violence in school. School violence and bullying can also seriously harm the health and well-being of children and adolescents with the adverse effects persisting into adulthood.

This report has been prepared by UNESCO and the Institute of School Violence and Prevention at Ewha Womans University for the International Symposium on School Violence and Bullying: From Evidence to Action, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 17 – 19 January 2017. It aims to provide an overview of the most up-to-date available data on the nature, extent and impact of school violence and bullying and initiatives to address the problem.

The symposium is one of a series of international meetings UNESCO has organised to address school violence and bullying and it is intended to promote evidence-based action by educators, policy makers, professionals and practitioners in the education, health and other sectors. Consequently, this report aims to provide education sector stakeholders with a framework for planning and implementing effective programmes to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying as part of wider efforts to address violence against children.

The symposium represents an important opportunity for the international community to determine how it will take action to implement and follow up on the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children on protecting children and young people from violence and bullying, and to consider how to utilise existing data and evidence for monitoring school violence and bullying and the effectiveness of responses to it. UNESCO and the Institute of School Violence and Prevention at Ewha Womans University hope that this report will make a crucial contribution to raising awareness of the issue and to mobilising action to eliminate school violence and bullying.



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This Global Status Report on School Violence and Bullying represents a collaborative effort, made possible thanks to the support and advice received from many individuals and organisations. It was produced under the overall authority of Soo-Hyang Choi, Director of UNESCO's Division for Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development, with support from Christopher Castle, Chief of UNESCO's Section for Health and Education and developed by Kathy Attawell (consultant).

The Report benefits from substantial data drawn from numerous sources, particularly Protecting Children from Bullying - Report of the Secretary-General, UN (2016). Valuable additional inputs were provided by Jae Young Chung (Ewha Womans University), You Kyung Han (Ewha Womans University), Taehoon Kang (Sungshin University), Juhyoung Park (Gyeongin National University of Education), Joshua Ryoo (Kookmin University), and Tae Seob Shin (Ewha Womans University).

UNESCO and Ewha Womans University also extend a special thank you to our team of external reviewers, which included Susan Bissell (Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children), Wellington Ssekadde (Raising Voices), Yuichi Toda (Osaka University of Education), Catherine Jere (University of East Anglia), Eliza Byard (GLSEN) and Marta Santos Pais (Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children).

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# Acronyms

<b>CDC</b>	US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<b>DHS</b>	Demographic and Health Survey
<b>GSHS</b>	Global School-based Student Health Survey
<b>ICTs</b>	Information and communication technologies
<b>LGBT</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender
<b>MICS</b>	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
<b>SACMEQ</b>	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SRS</b>	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



# Summary

A 2012 report by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children<sup>1</sup> notes that 'more than one billion children around the world attend school. Many of these children enjoy their right to be taught in a safe and stimulating environment. For many others, however, schooling does not guarantee such opportunity. These girls and boys are exposed to bullying, sexual and gender-based violence, corporal punishment and other forms of violence... Many are also exposed to schoolyard fighting, gang violence, assault with weapons, and sexual and gender-based violence by their own peers. New manifestations of violence are also affecting children's lives, notably the phenomenon of cyberbullying via mobile phones, computers, websites and social networking sites.'

## The scope of school violence and bullying

- School violence encompasses physical violence, including corporal punishment; psychological violence, including verbal abuse; sexual violence, including rape and harassment; and bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Bullying, which is a type of violence, is a pattern of behaviour rather than an isolated event, and it has an adverse impact on the victim, the bully and bystanders. Bullying has been defined as 'unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.'<sup>2</sup> Bullying and cyberbullying are a key concern for children and adolescents.<sup>3</sup>
- School violence and bullying is perpetrated by other students, teachers and other school staff; violence that occurs on the way to and from school may also be perpetrated by members of the wider community. It is important to differentiate between violence perpetrated by peers and violence perpetrated by educational institutions or their representatives as this distinction influences both the impact of and the response to violence.
- There is some evidence to suggest that girls are more likely to experience sexual violence and that boys are more likely to experience corporal punishment, or more severe corporal punishment, in school than girls, although girls are not exempt.
- The underlying causes of school violence and bullying include gender and social norms and wider contextual and structural factors. Much school violence and bullying is related to gender; gender-based violence is violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering against someone based on gender discrimination, gender role expectations or gender stereotypes or based on differential power status linked to gender.
- The most vulnerable children and adolescents, including those who are poor or from ethnic, linguistic or cultural minorities or migrant or refugee communities or have disabilities, are at higher risk of school violence and bullying. Children and adolescents whose sexual orientation, gender identity or expression does not conform to traditional social or gender norms are also disproportionately affected.
- School violence and bullying can occur inside and outside the classroom, around schools, on the way to and from school, as well as online. In school, bullying often occurs in places such as toilets, changing rooms, corridors and playgrounds where children and adolescents are less easily seen or supervised by teachers and other school staff.

1 Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2012). Tackling violence in schools: A global perspective bridging the gap between standards and practice.

2 See for example [StopBullying.gov](http://StopBullying.gov)

3 This report uses the UN definition of children as those aged under 18 years and adolescents as those aged 10-19 years.

- Different types of violence and bullying often overlap. Children and adolescents may experience violence and bullying both at home and at school and in the real and virtual worlds. Those involved in bullying can be both victims and perpetrators. For example, those who report bullying others online commonly report also being bullied by others online and online victims are also often bullied in person.
- Many victims of school violence and bullying do not tell anyone about their experience. Reasons include lack of trust in adults, including teachers, fear of repercussions or reprisals, feelings of guilt, shame or confusion, concerns that they will not be taken seriously or not knowing where to seek help.
- School violence and bullying is often invisible to or ignored by teachers and parents. In some contexts, adults view corporal punishment, fighting and bullying as a normal part of discipline or growing up and are not aware of the negative impact it has on the education, health and well-being of children and adolescents.

### The prevalence of school violence and bullying

- School violence and bullying occurs throughout the world and affects a significant proportion of children and adolescents. It is estimated that 246 million children and adolescents experience school violence and bullying in some form every year.<sup>4</sup> Estimates of the proportion of children and young people affected by school bullying specifically vary between countries and studies<sup>5</sup>, ranging from less than 10% to over 65%. In the 2016 UNICEF U-Report/ Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children (SRSG-VAC) opinion poll, to which 100,000 young people in 18 countries responded, two-thirds of respondents reported that they had been the victim of bullying.
- A UNESCO evidence review found that the proportion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students (LGBT) experiencing school violence and bullying ranged from 16% to 85% and the prevalence of violence was between three and five times higher among LGBT students than among their non-LGBT peers.
- Cyberbullying is a growing problem. Most available data on the prevalence of cyberbullying is from surveys conducted in industrialised countries, and this suggests that the proportion of children and adolescents who are affected by cyberbullying ranges from 5% to 21% and that girls appear to be more likely to experience cyberbullying than boys.
- Available data suggests that physical violence is less common in schools than bullying, but much available data is from industrialised countries; anecdotal evidence suggests that physical violence is a serious problem in schools in other regions.
- Specific data on sexual violence in and around the school setting is limited, since many victims are hesitant to report acts of sexual violence for fear of being shamed or stigmatised or because they are concerned that they will not be believed or will face retaliation from their aggressor or aggressors. Nevertheless, available figures suggest that sexual violence and abuse in schools, perpetuated by staff and by other students, is a reality for many students, particularly girls.

### The impact of school violence and bullying

- School violence and bullying harms the physical health and emotional well-being of children and adolescents. Physical violence, including corporal punishment, can cause fatal or non-fatal injuries or other physical harm. Sexual violence increases the risk of unintended pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Reported physical effects of bullying include stomach pains and headaches and difficulty eating and sleeping. Those who are bullied are also more likely than those who are not bullied to experience interpersonal difficulties, to be depressed, lonely or anxious, to have low self-esteem and to have suicidal thoughts or to attempt suicide.

4 Plan International estimates that at least 246 million boys and girls suffer from school violence every year. This is based on the following calculation: the 2006 UN Study on Violence against Children reported that 20-65% of schoolchildren are affected by verbal bullying, the most prevalent form of violence in schools. Based on UNESCO's 2011 Global Education Digest report, 1.23 billion children are in primary or secondary school on any given day, so 20% of the global student population is 246 million children. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2011). Global Education Digest 2011: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World.

5 Note that different studies collect data using different timeframes, e.g. within the last 30 days or the last 12 months.

- The educational impact on victims of school violence and bullying is also significant. Victimisation by teachers or peers may make children and adolescents who are bullied, and bystanders, afraid to go to school and interfere with their ability to concentrate in class or participate in school activities. They may miss classes, avoid school activities, play truant or drop out of school altogether. This in turn has an adverse impact on academic attainment and achievement and future education and employment prospects. International learning assessments clearly show that bullying reduces students' achievements in key subjects such as mathematics.
- The school climate as a whole is affected by violence and bullying. Unsafe learning environments create a climate of fear and insecurity and a perception that teachers do not have control or care about students' well-being, and this reduces the quality of education for all students.
- Violence and bullying in and around schools also has significant social economic costs. The longer-term impact, on victims and perpetrators, can include increased risk of social and relationship difficulties, antisocial and criminal behaviour, lower qualifications and less likelihood of adequate social support. The economic impact is also substantial, including foregone benefit from early school drop-out and under-representation of girls in education.

### **The response to school violence and bullying**

- Available evidence shows that effective responses, that take a comprehensive approach and include interventions to both prevent and address school violence and bullying, can reduce school violence and bullying.
- Based on experience and good practice, comprehensive responses encompass: strong leadership; a safe and inclusive school environment; developing knowledge, attitudes and skills; effective partnerships; implementing mechanisms for reporting and providing appropriate support and services; and collecting and using evidence.
- More specifically, such responses include: enactment and enforcement of national laws and policies and of school policies and codes of conduct; commitment to creating safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments for all students; training and support for teachers and other school staff in positive forms of discipline and provision and delivery of relevant curricula and learning materials; collaboration with a range of stakeholders and active participation of children and adolescents; access to safe, confidential and child-friendly reporting mechanisms and support services; and research, monitoring and evaluation.
- Interventions that have focused on transforming the culture of schools, taking a strong stance against violence and supporting teachers to use alternative ways of disciplining children and managing the classroom have proven to be particularly effective.
- Although many countries are implementing a range of initiatives to tackle school violence and bullying, relatively few are taking a comprehensive approach, and this reflects the following key challenges.

### **Key challenges**

- Lack of legislation and policy or weak enforcement of existing legislation and policy to protect children and adolescents from violence and to strengthen accountability.
- Lack of strong school leadership and management and of implementation of school policies and codes of conduct to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying.
- Limited capacity and resources of education systems, schools and teachers.
- Limited training and support for head teachers, teachers and other school staff to equip them to prevent school violence and bullying, identify and respond to incidents and use non-violent approaches to discipline and classroom management.
- Lack of appropriate curricula and learning materials to address the underlying causes of school violence and bullying and to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills for non-violence.
- Lack of awareness among education policy makers, planners and professionals, families, communities and wider society of the harmful effects of school violence and bullying on the education, health and well-being of children and adolescents and of the benefits of non-violent schools.

- Social, cultural and gender norms that underpin some forms of school violence and bullying, condone or ignore the problem, and make it difficult to discuss or report school violence and bullying.
- Weak coordination between the education sector and other sector ministries, such as health, social services and child protection, and weak partnerships with other key stakeholders including civil society, trades unions, parents and communities.
- Limited involvement of children and adolescents in planning and implementing interventions to prevent school violence and bullying and to make schools safer.
- Lack of safe, confidential, child-friendly reporting mechanisms that are accessible to all children and adolescents and that take account of the barriers that some may face in reporting school violence and bullying.
- Lack of counselling and other support and weak referral mechanisms to health and other services for victims, perpetrators, bystanders and affected families.
- Limited evidence base, with relatively few examples of good practice, few evaluations of interventions and programmes to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying, and lack of evidence about effective strategies in different contexts.
- Limited data on the causes, nature, scale and impact of school violence and bullying, reflecting the lack of standard definitions and indicators, lack of comprehensive data collection, and under-reporting of school violence and bullying.



Families and communities must become aware of the effects of school violence and bullying on the health and well-being of children. michaeljung/Shutterstock.com

### Priorities for action

To address these challenges and support the achievement of Agenda 2030, priorities for action are:

- Strengthen leadership and commitment to eliminating school violence and bullying.
- Promote awareness of violence against children, the harmful impact of school violence and bullying and the benefits of violence-free schools.
- Establish partnerships, including the active participation of children and adolescents, to tackle school violence and bullying.
- Build the capacity of education staff to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying.
- Establish mechanisms to report school violence and bullying and to provide support and services.
- Improve data and evidence on the causes, nature, extent and impact of school violence and bullying and effective responses to it.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and rationale

School violence, which includes physical, psychological and sexual violence and bullying, occurs in all countries. The root causes include gender and social norms and wider structural and contextual factors such as income inequality, deprivation, marginalisation and conflict. It is estimated that 246 million children and adolescents experience school violence in some form every year.<sup>6</sup> Available data from Europe, North America and Australasia suggests that bullying is the most common form of school violence and, hence, this report considers bullying as a separate issue. However, physical violence, including corporal punishment by teachers, is common in many countries in other regions.

Violence and bullying in schools violates the rights of children and adolescents, including their right to education and to health. There is clear evidence that school violence and bullying has a negative impact on the academic performance, physical and mental health and emotional well-being of those who are victimised. It also has a detrimental effect on perpetrators and bystanders. By creating an atmosphere of anxiety, fear and insecurity that is incompatible with learning, it has a negative impact on the wider school environment. Schools often fail to deal with violence and bullying and common measures, such as expelling perpetrators, just transfer the problem elsewhere.

School violence and bullying also has wider social and economic costs as well as a long-term impact as the effects persist into adult life. Involvement in school bullying can be a predictor of future antisocial and criminal behaviour and social and relationship difficulties. In addition, school violence is a key factor contributing to under-representation of girls in education.

Urgent action is needed to address the global problem of school violence and bullying to ensure that all children and adolescents have access to safe and non-violent learning environments. Action on school violence and bullying is essential also to achieve the goals on quality education and good health and well-being for young people in Agenda 2030. These include, in particular, the Sustainable Development Goals on Quality Education (SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning), Gender Equality (SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) and Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages).

Agenda 2030 addresses violence against children as a cross-cutting concern, and includes concrete commitments under a number of goals and targets. In particular, under SDG 4, it highlights the importance of knowledge and skills on human rights and the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence (target 4.7), as well as the provision of child, gender and disability sensitive facilities and safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all (target 4.a). In addition, under SDG 16, on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, the 2030 Agenda includes a specific target to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children (target 16.2). Action to address school violence and bullying is also an essential component of other international conventions and commitments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which obliges states to ensure that children are protected from violence, and of child protection.

<sup>6</sup> Plan International estimates that at least 246 million boys and girls suffer from school violence every year. This is based on the following calculation: the 2006 UN Study on Violence against Children reported that 20-65% of schoolchildren are affected by verbal bullying, the most prevalent form of violence in schools. Based on UNESCO's 2011 Global Education Digest report, 1.23 billion children are in primary or secondary school on any given day, so 20% of the global student population is 246 million children. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2011). *Global Education Digest 2011: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World*.

The education sector, working in partnership with other sectors and stakeholders, including parents and the wider community, has a responsibility to protect children and young people from school violence and bullying by providing safe and inclusive learning environments for all students and taking steps to prevent and respond to violence and bullying in schools.

Schools also have the potential to create an environment where attitudes concerning violence and gender can be changed and non-violent behaviour can be learned. In addition to changing attitudes and learning behaviours, education has an essential role in shaping and transforming norms concerning gender and power that often underpin violence. Both the educational environment and the educational content that is taught and learned can contribute to this. Schools are also well placed to provide children and adolescents with the skills they need to communicate, negotiate and resolve problems peacefully, to inculcate values of tolerance, respect and solidarity and to promote non-violence in the wider community.

## ■ 1.2 Purpose and structure

This report has been prepared to inform the International Symposium on School Violence and Bullying in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in January 2017, co-organised by UNESCO and the Institute of School Violence and Prevention at Ewha Womans University. The aim of the symposium is to promote evidence-based action by educators, education sector policy makers, professionals and practitioners and by other sectors to deliver safe, non-violent learning environments and, in addition, to inform the development of global indicators to enable better measurement and monitoring of school violence and bullying.

The report focuses on violence and bullying in formal educational settings, in particular violence and bullying between students, and on actions that can be taken by the education sector and schools to prevent and respond to the problem. It aims to:

- Present an overview of the nature, extent and impact of school violence and bullying, consolidating existing data from key reports and the literature.
- Synthesise available evidence about effective responses, highlighting existing initiatives and actions and examples of good policy and practice.
- Provide guidance on priority actions.

The report builds on the work of UNESCO, the Institute of School Violence Prevention at Ewha Womans University and others on school violence and bullying, including school-related gender-based violence and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. It draws primarily on reports published by the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children and reviews of available data produced by UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO and others (see key information sources in the Bibliography).

Although the report is mainly aimed at education ministries and other relevant sector ministries, including health, social welfare and justice, and education policy makers, planners and professionals, teachers' unions and school management and staff, we hope it will also be useful for others with an interest in preventing and addressing school violence and bullying such as civil society organisations, parents' associations, organisations and networks of young people, and private sector organisations, in particular those operating in the information technology sector.

## 2. The problem

*This section summarises available evidence on the scope, extent and impact of school violence and bullying. It describes how school violence and bullying is manifested, the underlying causes and who is most vulnerable, the prevalence of school violence and bullying, including cyberbullying, and the effects on the education, health and well-being of children and adolescents.*

### 2.1 The scope of school violence and bullying

#### 2.1.1 What is school violence?

School violence includes physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and bullying; it is perpetrated and experienced by students, teachers and other school staff.<sup>7</sup>



Data from Plan International

Physical violence can be any form of physical aggression with intention to hurt, and it includes corporal punishment and physical bullying by adults and other children. Corporal punishment is any punishment in which physical force is used and that is intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort; it is often used to punish poor academic performance or to correct misbehaviour.<sup>8</sup>

Psychological violence includes verbal and emotional abuse, including in the form of isolating, rejecting, ignoring, insults, spreading rumours, making up lies, name calling, ridicule, humiliation and threats, and psychological punishment. Psychological punishment involves forms of punishment by staff that are not physical but that humiliate, denigrate, scapegoat, threaten, scare or ridicule a child or adolescent.<sup>9</sup>

7 Note that different organisations use different categories, e.g. some separate violence with an external dimension, such as gang-related violence, but these four categories reflect broad agreement on the main types of school-related violence. In addition, it is important to note that other community members may be perpetrators of violence against children on the way to and from school.

8 Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2012). Tackling violence in schools: A global perspective bridging the gap between standards and practice.

9 Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2012). Tackling violence in schools: A global perspective bridging the gap between standards and practice.



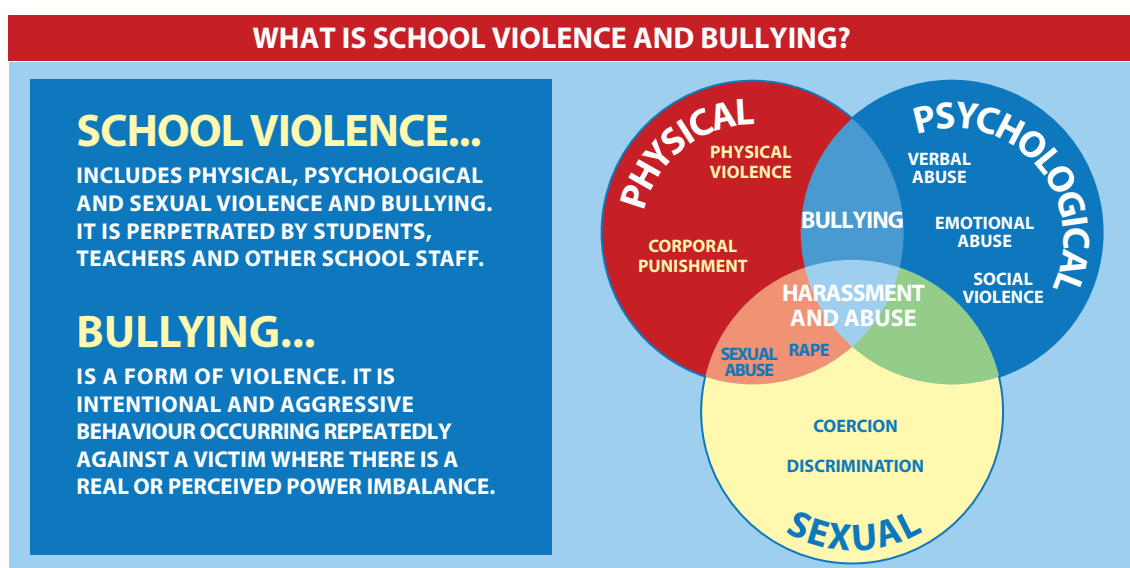
Sexual violence includes intimidation of a sexual nature, sexual harassment, unwanted touching, sexual coercion and rape, and it affects both girls and boys.

Bullying constitutes a pattern of behaviour rather than isolated incidents, and it often gets worse if it is unchallenged. It can be defined as intentional and aggressive behaviour occurring repeatedly against a victim where there is a real or perceived power imbalance and where the victims feel vulnerable and powerless to defend themselves. Bullying behaviours can be physical, including hitting, kicking and the destruction of property; verbal, such as teasing, insulting and threatening; or relational, through the spreading of rumours and exclusion from a group.<sup>10</sup>

- A study based on data from three national surveys in the USA<sup>11</sup> reports that the most common forms of bullying are: verbal insults, name calling and nicknames; hitting, direct aggression and theft; and threats, spreading rumours and social exclusion or isolation.
- In the Young Lives project<sup>12</sup> on childhood poverty, which followed 12,000 children in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Viet Nam over 15 years, children were asked about their experience of bullying at 15 years of age. Indirect and relational types of bullying, such as humiliation and social exclusion, were the most commonly reported; while verbal bullying was also common, physical bullying was the least common.

Bullying also includes online or cyberbullying, which brings an added dimension of risk and pain. Cyberbullying involves posting or sending electronic messages, including text, pictures or videos, aimed at harassing, threatening or targeting another person via a variety of media and social platforms such as online social networks, chat rooms, blogs, instant messaging and text messaging. Cyberbullying may include spreading rumours, posting false information, hurtful messages, embarrassing comments or photos, or excluding someone from online networks or other communications. It allows perpetrators to remain anonymous, can affect the victim at any hour and on any day, and messages and images can quickly reach a very wide audience.<sup>13</sup>

Online or in person, bullying is a key concern for many children.<sup>14</sup> This is confirmed by a 2014 report from Child Helpline International, which highlights that bullying is most often the reason why children and adolescents contact a helpline.<sup>15</sup>



10 Olweus, D., *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do (Understanding Children's Worlds)*, Wiley-Blackwell, 1993.

11 See National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the United States Department of Education, *Bullying Surveillance Among Youths: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements, Version 1.0*, 2014 (<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-definitions-final-a.pdf>).

12 Cited in United Nations (2016). Protecting children from bullying. Report of the Secretary-General.

13 See for example [http://srsq.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/documents/docs/A\\_HRC\\_31\\_20\\_EN.pdf](http://srsq.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/documents/docs/A_HRC_31_20_EN.pdf)

14 United Nations (2016). Protecting children from bullying. Report of the Secretary-General.

15 See [http://www.childhelplineinternational.org/media/149816/violence\\_against\\_children.pdf](http://www.childhelplineinternational.org/media/149816/violence_against_children.pdf)



## 2. The problem

### 2.1 The scope of school violence and bullying

#### 2.1.2 The underlying causes of school violence and bullying

The underlying causes of school violence and bullying include gender and social norms and wider contextual and structural factors.

Discriminatory gender norms that shape the dominance of men and the subservience of women and the perpetuation of these norms through violence are found in some form in almost every culture. Gender inequality and the prevalence of violence against women in society exacerbate the problem. Similarly, social norms that support the authority of teachers over children may legitimise the use of violence to maintain discipline and control.

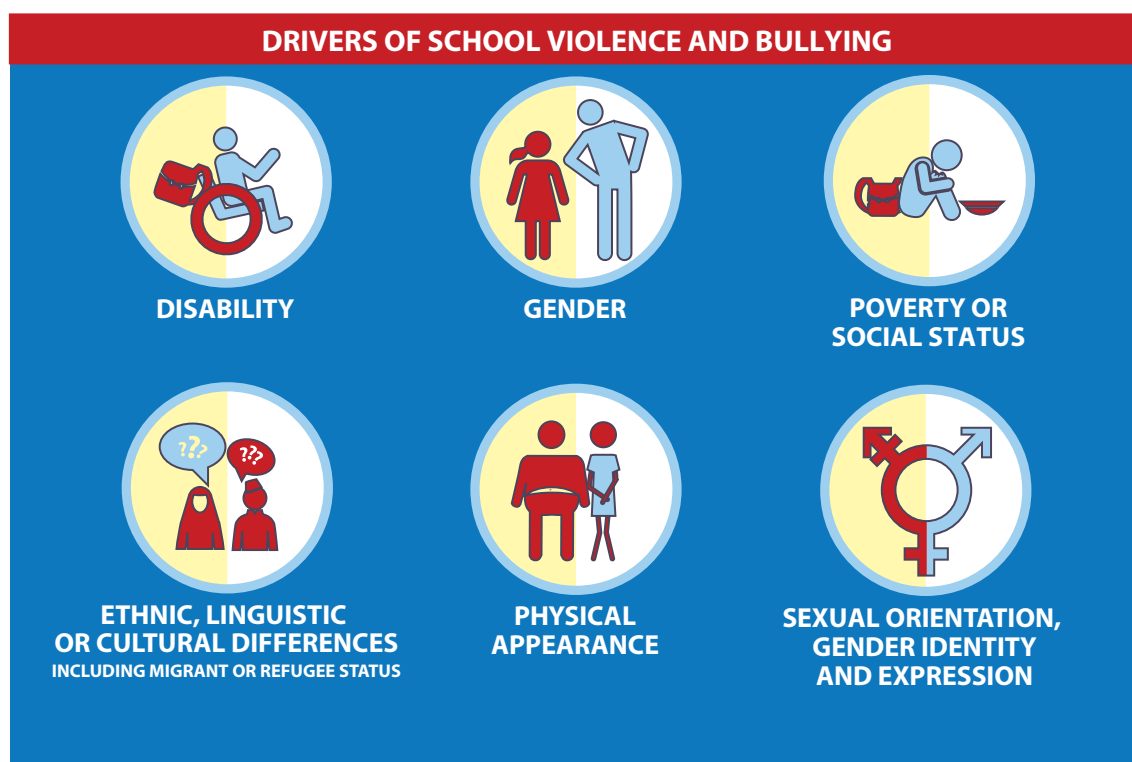
The pressure to conform to dominant gender norms is also high. Young people who cannot or who choose not to conform to these norms are often punished for this through violence and bullying at school.

Schools themselves can 'teach' children to be violent through discriminatory practices, curricula and textbooks. If unchecked, gender discrimination and power imbalances in schools can encourage attitudes and practices that subjugate children, uphold unequal gender norms and tolerate violence, including corporal punishment.

Schools and the education system also operate within the context of wider social and structural factors and may reflect and reproduce environments that do not protect children and adolescents from violence and bullying. For example, physical and sexual violence may be more prevalent in schools in contexts where it is also more prevalent in wider society. Studies suggest that sexual violence and harassment of girls is worse in schools where other forms of violence are prevalent, and in conflict and emergency contexts,<sup>16</sup> and that gang violence is more common in schools where gangs, weapons and drugs are part of the local culture.

#### 2.1.3 Children and adolescents at risk of school violence and bullying

Children and adolescents who are vulnerable for other reasons are often at greater risk of school violence and bullying.

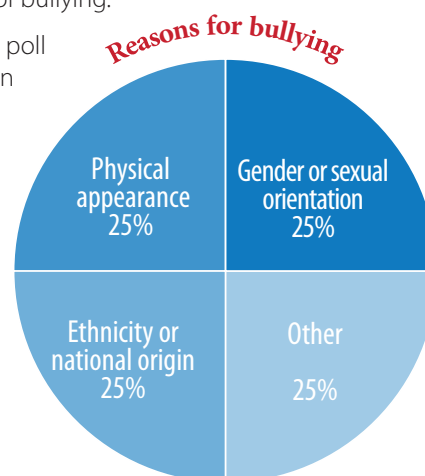


All children and adolescents are at risk of school violence and bullying, but those who are vulnerable because of factors such as poverty, social status associated with ethnicity, linguistic or cultural differences, migration

<sup>16</sup> See for example <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002321/232107E.pdf> and [https://doj19z5hov92o.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/resource/2012/11/5876-final\\_high\\_incidence\\_of\\_sgbv\\_15\\_may.pdf](https://doj19z5hov92o.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/resource/2012/11/5876-final_high_incidence_of_sgbv_15_may.pdf)

or displacement, and disabilities<sup>17</sup>, who are orphans or from households affected by HIV, may be more likely to be targeted. Studies, including the 2016 UNICEF study below, indicate that physical appearance, for example, being overweight or underweight, is often also a driver of bullying.

- In the 2016 UNICEF U-Report/SRSG-VAC opinion poll on the experience of bullying to which 100,000 young people in 18 countries responded,<sup>18</sup> among those who had experienced bullying, 25% reported that they had been bullied because of their physical appearance, 25% because of their gender or sexual orientation and 25% because of their ethnicity or national origin.<sup>19</sup>
- According to a 2016 UN report<sup>20</sup>, children in vulnerable situations, who face stigma, discrimination or exclusion, are more likely to be bullied in person and online.
- Children with disabilities, children who are socially excluded, who are out of school or who belong to minorities or are affected by migration are also less likely to be able to access the internet and thus learn about safety online. As a result, when they do have access, they are more at risk of cyberbullying.<sup>21,22</sup>
- Punishment by teachers may be more likely to target children and adolescents from stigmatised and marginalised populations, for example, refugee and migrant children may be punished for not being able to speak the language of instruction, and the UN Study on Violence against Children notes that in India, higher caste teachers may be more likely to denigrate and humiliate children from lower castes.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, a 2014 Human Rights Watch report cites examples of discrimination and physical violence by school authorities in four Indian states against Dalit, Muslim and tribal children; girls in particular risked being withdrawn from school due to parental concerns for their safety.
- Bullying of asylum seeking and refugee children and adolescents and those affected by migration has much in common with bias incidents, harassment and hate crimes in schools, which typically involve discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, religion or other identity factors. "Immigrant bullying" has been defined as "bullying that targets another's immigrant status or family history of immigration in the form of taunts and slurs, derogatory references to the immigration process, physical aggression, social manipulation or exclusion because of immigration status".<sup>24</sup>
- Children and adolescents who are socially and economically disadvantaged often face increased stress, discrimination and denigration in school. Poverty can contribute to a lack of self-esteem, and those who are victims of bullying, humiliation and abuse may feel powerless to speak out for fear that they will not be believed or that they will be blamed for having caused the incidents of violence.<sup>25</sup> In the Young Lives project, children from poor families were consistently found to have experienced higher rates of bullying. Other projects, for example, the Action Aid Sexual Violence Against Girls project, have found that sexual exploitation can be related to poverty, with girls being coerced into sexual relations by male teachers to support their school costs.



Data from Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2016). Ending the torment: Tackling bullying from the schoolyard to cyberspace.

17 Devries, K. M. et al. (2014). Violence against primary school children with disabilities in Uganda: a cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, No. 14, p. 1017.

18 Young people in Burkina Faso, Chile, Guinea, Indonesia, Ireland, Liberia, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Uganda, Ukraine and Zambia took part in the survey.

19 Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2016). Ending the torment: Tackling bullying from the schoolyard to cyberspace.

20 United Nations (2016). Protecting children from bullying. Report of the Secretary-General.

21 Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2016). Information and communications technologies: Maximizing children's potential protecting children from online violence, including sexual exploitation.

22 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002321/232107E.pdf>

23 Cited in UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.

24 Scherr, T. G. and Larson, J. Bullying dynamics associated with race, ethnicity, and immigration status. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, and D. L. Espelage (eds.), *Handbook of Bullying in Schools: An International Perspective*. New York: Taylor and Francis, 2010.

25 See ATD Fourth World, *Making Human Rights Work for People Living in Extreme Poverty: a handbook for implementing the United Nations Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*, World Franciscan International, 2015.

## 2. The problem

### 2.1 The scope of school violence and bullying

#### 2.1.4 The gender dimension of school violence and bullying

Gender-based violence constitutes acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence that are perpetrated as a result of gender norms, unspoken, unconscious or hidden attitudes that promote stereotypes and are enforced by unequal power dynamics.

Gender inequality, unequal power relations and toleration of violence towards women and girls underpin sexual violence experienced by girls in schools, including sexual harassment, coercion and rape.

Children and adolescents whose sexual orientation, gender identity or expression does not conform to traditional gender norms are also at increased risk of school violence and bullying. This is a specific type of gender-based violence that is perpetrated as a result of gender norms and unspoken, unconscious or hidden attitudes that promote gender stereotypes. For example, in some contexts, boys may be taunted about their lack of masculinity or girls about their lack of femininity.



Some data suggests that boys are more likely to perpetrate and experience physical violence. Photo from Accra, Ghana. Sura Nualpradid/Shutterstock.com

There is some evidence of differences in violence and bullying perpetuated and experienced by boys and girls, although this is not consistent. Some available data suggests that boys are more likely to perpetrate and experience physical violence and girls are more likely to perpetrate and experience psychological violence.<sup>26</sup> However, both types of violence occur among all children and adolescents and it is important not to overlook physical violence among girls and psychological violence among boys when monitoring the scope and prevalence of school violence and bullying. There is also evidence that girls are more likely to experience sexual

violence.<sup>27</sup> Based on available evidence, boys appear to be more likely to experience corporal punishment, or more severe corporal punishment in school, although girls are not immune.

- Data from the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS)<sup>28</sup> shows that boys are more likely to report fighting than girls, a pattern that generally holds true in all regions.
- A survey in the USA found that boys were more likely to experience physical violence at the hands of other students than girls.<sup>29</sup>
- The Young Lives project found that boys were at significantly greater risk of physical and verbal bullying, while girls experienced indirect and relational bullying at higher rates.
- A national survey in Malta found that 61% of boy bullies reported bullying others with physical violence compared with 30% of girl bullies; in contrast 43% of girl bullies reported isolating others compared with 26% of boy bullies.<sup>30</sup>
- A study in Australia found that boys were bullied more often than girls, particularly in secondary school. While boys and girls were subjected to teasing and name calling almost equally, boys were more likely than girls to be physically bullied and threatened. Girls were more likely to report being deliberately and unkindly left out of things. There was also a difference in the way they reacted: boys were less likely to admit to being bothered by it and, if they did, they said they felt angry; girls said that they felt sad and miserable.<sup>31</sup>

26 UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.

27 See UNESCO and UN Women (2016). Global guidance on addressing school-related gender-based violence.

28 See <http://www.who.int/chp/gshs/en>.

29 CDC (2016). Youth risk behaviour surveillance – United States, 2015.

30 UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.

31 Owens, L et al.. Sex and age differences in victimization and conflict resolution among adolescents in a South Australian school. *Aggressive Behaviour*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2005.

### 2.1.5 Types of school violence and bullying vary with age

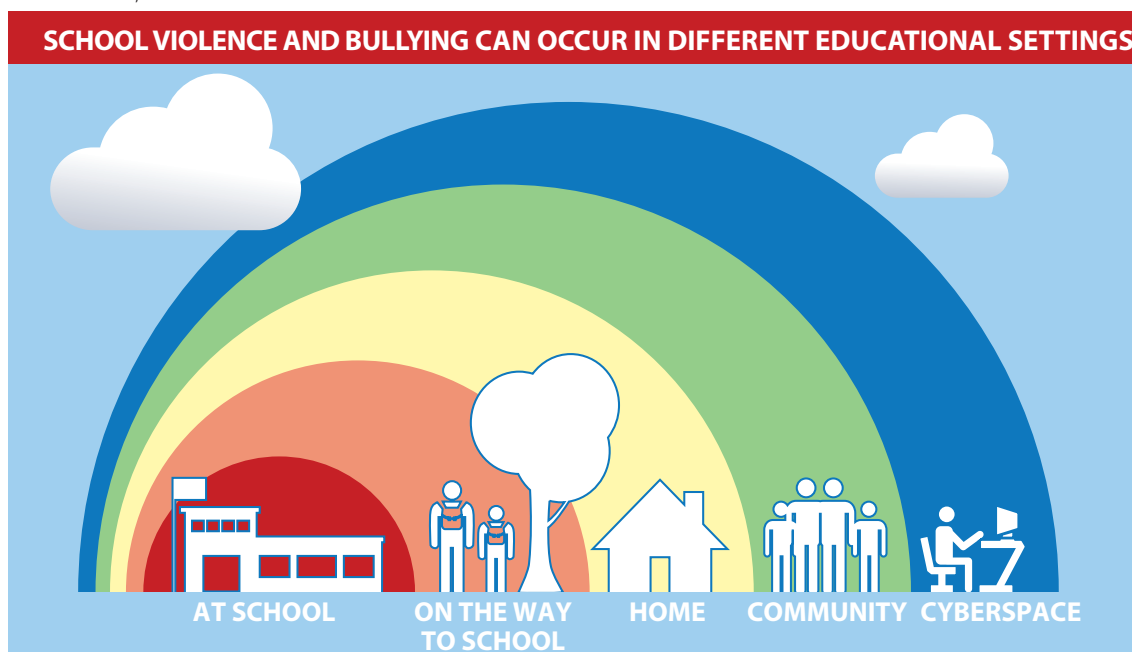
The incidence of different types of school violence and bullying appears to vary with age.

Data is limited, but available evidence suggests that physical aggression and bullying in person may decrease, whereas cyberbullying may increase, as children get older.

- The GSHS,<sup>32</sup> which collects data from those aged 11, 13 and 15 years, suggests that, in some countries, the prevalence of bullying declines between the ages of 11 and 15 years, but in other countries the opposite is the case.
- Data from three national surveys in the USA<sup>33</sup> shows that the most common forms of bullying, including verbal insults, hitting, theft, threats, spreading rumours and social exclusion, tend to decrease with age, with in-person bullying falling by nearly 50% between the ages of 14 and 18, while cyberbullying is reported to decrease at a lower rate, from 17% to 13%.
- Other research shows<sup>34</sup> that the incidence of bullying in the form of physical aggression is more frequent in primary school, whereas cyberbullying, which takes place more in middle through secondary school, increases among this latter age group.

### 2.1.6 Where school violence and bullying occurs

School violence and bullying can occur inside and outside the classroom, around schools, on the way to and from school, as well as online.



Violence, in particular physical violence among learners, and physical violence perpetuated by teachers and other staff, can happen in sight of other learners for example, in playgrounds or classrooms or in the context of school sports.

Bullying appears to be more likely to occur in places such as toilets, changing rooms, corridors and other locations where children and adolescents are less easily seen or supervised by teachers and other school staff. Teachers may also not recognise bullying or the codes, languages and practices children and adolescents use in harassing each other, and bullying that takes place out of their sight is difficult to identify.<sup>35</sup> In some cases, teachers permit or engage in violent and bullying behaviour themselves.

Children and adolescents may also experience violence and bullying around schools and on the way to and from school. According to a 2015 Republic of Korea Ministry of Education report<sup>36</sup>, 75.5% of school violence and bullying happens inside school and 24.5% happens outside school.

32 <http://www.who.int/chp/gshs/en>.

33 National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC and the US Department of Education, *Bullying Surveillance Among Youths: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements, Version 1.0*, 2014 (

34 World Health Organization. Health Behaviour in School Aged Children, a collaborative cross-national study. <http://www.hbsc.org/publications/factsheets/Bullying-and-fighting-english.pdf>).

35 Roman, M. and Murillo, F. J. Latin America: School bullying and academic achievement. *CEPAL Review*, August 2011.

36 Korean Ministry of Education (2015). The results of the 2nd survey on school violence in 2015.

**2.1.7 Children and adolescents can be both victims and perpetrators**

Some children and adolescents experience violence and bullying at home as well as at school and in both the real and virtual worlds. The boundary between the real and the virtual world is increasingly blurred as use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) becomes part of daily life for children and adolescents. Those who report bullying others online commonly report also being bullied by others online, and many online victims are also bullied in person.

Perpetrators of bullying often have underlying problems; those who bully may do so because of frustration, humiliation or anger or to achieve social status.<sup>37</sup>

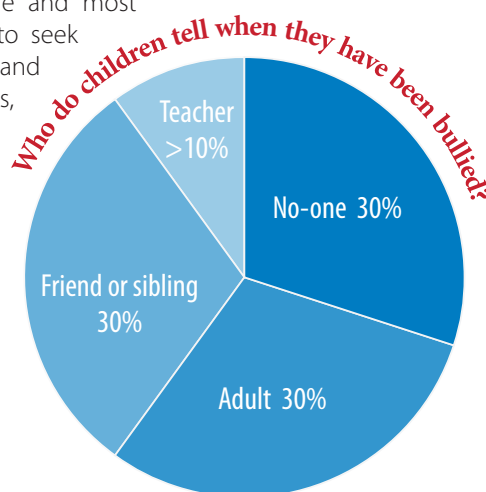
- The Cyberbullying Research Centre in the USA notes that many children and adolescents who report being victimised online also experience other forms of bullying. Similarly, the European Union (EU) Kids Online Survey of 25 European countries found that around half of online victims had also been bullied in person, a combination that is reported as being particularly distressing.
- Based on the results of the National Survey of Children’s Exposure to Violence in the USA, conducted in 2008,<sup>38</sup> “Of those who reported any direct victimisation, 64.5% reported more than one type. A significant number of children reported high levels of exposure to different types of violence in the past year: more than 10% reported five or more direct exposures to different types of violence”.
- Another study in the USA, in 2012, of 20,406 high school students found a substantial overlap between school bullying and cyberbullying, especially among vulnerable groups of students. Girls were more likely than boys to report being victims of cyberbullying in combination with school bullying – 11% versus 8%. Among youth who self-identified as non-heterosexual, 23% reported being victims of both cyberbullying and school bullying compared with only 9% of those who identified as heterosexual.<sup>39</sup>
- A 2016 UN report<sup>40</sup> shows that adolescent girls are often at risk of cyberbullying associated with sexual abuse, including sharing of messages or images of a sexual nature (sexting) and online intimidation and harassment (cyber-stalking), sometimes with a view to coercing victims into performing sexual acts (sexual extortion).

**2.1.8 Some victims of school violence and bullying do not tell anyone.**

Often children and adolescents who are most vulnerable and most need support are the least likely to report incidents or to seek help. Reasons for not telling anyone or reporting violence and bullying include lack of trust in adults, in particular teachers, fear of repercussions or reprisals, feelings of guilt, shame or confusion, concerns that they will not be taken seriously or not knowing where to seek help.

Children and adolescents often believe that adults, including teachers, do not see bullying, even when it is taking place right in front of them, or do not identify certain acts as bullying even though children do. When the perpetrators are teachers or other school staff, reporting violence or abuse is particularly challenging.

- Available evidence suggests that many victims of school violence and bullying delay disclosing their abuse.<sup>41</sup> Abuse or exploitation may also be perceived as normal, and fear and the belief that no one can help results in low levels of reporting.<sup>42</sup>



Data from Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2016). Ending the torment: Tackling bullying from the schoolyard to cyberspace.

37 United Nations (2016). Protecting children from bullying. Report of the Secretary-General.

38 Finkelhor, D et al. (2011). Polyvictimization: children’s exposure to multiple types of violence, crime, and abuse.

39 Schneider et al (2012).

40 United Nations (2016). Protecting children from bullying. Report of the Secretary-General.

41 UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.

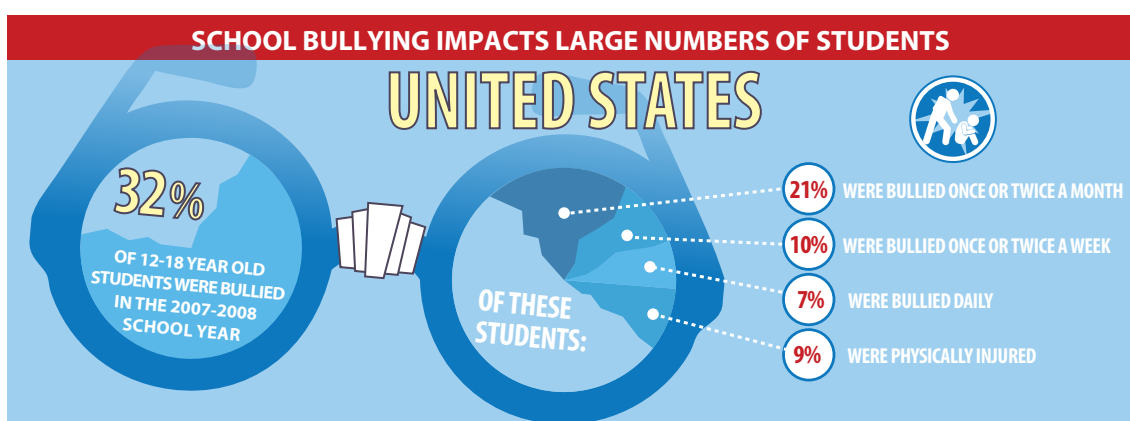
42 WHO (2016). Inspire. Seven strategies for ending violence against children.

- The 2016 UNICEF U-Report/SRSG-VAC opinion poll found that 30% of those who had been bullied did not tell anyone, 30% told an adult and more than 30% told a friend or sibling; less than 10% told a teacher. Reasons for not telling anyone included being afraid or ashamed, not knowing who to tell and thinking that bullying is normal.
- A 2016 UN report<sup>43</sup> shows that children and adolescents who are victims of bullying are not always willing to report these incidents to parents, teachers or other adults either because of fear of retaliation or, in the case of cyberbullying, because they are afraid of losing their computer, cell phone or internet access.

## 2.2 The extent of school violence and bullying

### 2.2.1 Bullying is widespread in schools throughout the world.

National estimates of bullying use different definitions and thus produce varying estimates, but available data consistently indicates that bullying is common in a wide range of countries and affects a considerable number of children and adolescents.<sup>44,45</sup>



Data from Suicide Prevention Resource Centre, Suicide and Bullying, Issue Brief, SPRC, 2011

- In the 2016 UNICEF U-Report/SRSG-VAC opinion poll to which 100,000 young people in 18 countries responded, two-thirds reported that they had been the victim of bullying.<sup>46</sup>
- Another UNICEF report found that bullying is a problem worldwide.<sup>47</sup> Data collected by various surveys from 106 countries showed that the proportion of adolescents aged 13-15 who say they have recently experienced bullying ranged from 7% in Tajikistan to 74% in Samoa. In 14 of the 67 low- to middle-income countries with available data, more than half of this age group said they had recently experienced bullying.
- A study compiling datasets between 2003 and 2006 from 19 low- and middle-income countries from the WHO GSHS found that 34% of students aged 11-13 reported being bullied in the previous month and 8% reported daily bullying.
- Research conducted between 2003 and 2005 in a number of developing countries for the GSHS found a wide variation in national experiences: in China, 17% of girls and 23% of boys aged 13-15 reported

43 United Nations (2016). Protecting children from bullying. Report of the Secretary-General.

44 See <http://www.who.int/chp/gshs/en>.

45 Srabstein, Jorge, C. and Leventhal, Bennett, L., "Prevention of bullying-related morbidity and mortality: a call for public health policies", Bulletin of the World Health Organization, Geneva, 2010.

46 Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2016). Ending the torment: Tackling bullying from the schoolyard to cyberspace.

47 UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.



## 2. The problem

### 2.2 The extent of school violence and bullying

having been bullied in the previous 30 days but in Zambia these figures were 67% for girls and 63% for boys.<sup>48</sup>

- Information from European countries suggests a similarly wide variation with 15% of girls and boys in Sweden aged 11, 13 and 15 reporting having been bullied within the past couple of months, but around 65% of girls and boys reporting this in Lithuania.<sup>49</sup>
- During the 2007-2008 school year in the USA, 32% of students between the ages of 12 and 18 reported being bullied. Of these students, 21% said they were bullied once or twice a month; 10% reported being bullied once or twice a week; and 7% indicated that they were bullied daily. Nearly 9% reported being physically injured as a result of bullying.<sup>50</sup>
- In a UNESCO study in 2006 in 16 Latin American and Caribbean countries, based on data from around 91,000 students aged 10-14, 51% overall reported experiencing some type of bullying in the last month, with national figures ranging from 13% in Cuba to 63% in Colombia. Being robbed was the most commonly reported experience, followed by being insulted or threatened.<sup>51</sup>
- In a 2011 study in France carried out by the International Observatory on Violence in Schools based on a national survey of 12,326 9-11 year olds, around 32% reported that they were sometimes victims of verbal bullying and 35% that they were sometimes victims of physical violence at school, in both cases mostly from other students.<sup>52</sup>
- The Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Survey in 2007, a national survey of students between aged 9 and 15 years, found that 27% reported experiencing frequent bullying, while 9% admitted to bullying others.<sup>53</sup>
- The same 2015 survey of youth in grades 9-12 in the USA mentioned above<sup>54</sup> found that 20.2% reported being bullied on school property and 15.5% reported being bullied electronically during the 12 months before the survey.
- The UN World Report on Violence against Children 2006 notes that in a survey in Laos, 98% of girls and 100% of boys reported that they had witnessed bullying in school and the victims were mainly girls or ethnic minorities.
- In a survey in Kenya of Nairobi public schools, between 63% and 82% of students reported various types of bullying, while a survey in South Africa found that more than half of respondents had experienced bullying once or twice in the last month<sup>55</sup>.



Bullying is common in a wide range of countries.  
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#### 2.2.2 Cyberbullying is a growing problem.

A crucial factor in the increase in cyberbullying is the rapid growth in children's access to the internet and other ICTs. A recent estimate suggests that one-third of internet users worldwide are below 18 years of age.<sup>56</sup> Children are going online at a younger age and in greater numbers, and the average age of first-time internet use is declining. Most available data on the prevalence of cyberbullying is from surveys conducted

48 See Pinheiro, Paulo Sérgio (2006). UN Study on Violence Against Children.

49 Pinheiro, Paulo Sérgio (2006). UN Study on Violence Against Children.

50 Suicide Prevention Resource Centre, *Suicide and Bullying*, Issue Brief, SPRC (2011).

51 Second Regional Comparative Explanatory Study (SERCE) (2006). OREALC/UNESCO Santiago.

52 Debarbieux, Eric, *A l'Ecole des Enfants Heureux... Enfin Presque* cited in Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2012). Tackling violence in schools.

53 UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.

54 CDC (2016). Understanding school violence [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/school\\_violence\\_fact\\_sheet-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/school_violence_fact_sheet-a.pdf)

55 Jones N., et al. 2008. Working Paper. Painful lessons: The politics of preventing sexual violence and bullying at school. PLAN/ODI.

56 Sonia Livingstone, John Carr and Jasmina Byrne, One in Three: Internet Governance and Children's Rights, Global Commission on Internet Governance, Paper Series No. 22, November 2015, p. 7

in industrialised countries, but internet use is growing across the world and it will be important for other countries to be proactive in monitoring the problem and putting in place measures to prevent and respond to this specific form of bullying.

- Between 2009 and 2011, the EU Kids Online Survey collected data from over 25,000 children and adolescents aged 9-16 years in 25 European countries, and 6% reported being bullied online and 3% admitted to having bullied others online. Respondents were, however, more likely to report having been bullied in person, with almost 20% stating that they had been bullied offline. Over half of those bullied online reported that they were 'very upset' or fairly upset', although 15% reported not being upset at all. Girls were more likely to report being very upset than boys.
- In Europe, where over 80% of those aged 5-14 years use mobile telephones,<sup>57</sup> it is reported that, between 2010 and 2014, the proportion of children and adolescents aged 9-16 years who had been exposed to cyberbullying increased from 8% to 12%, especially among girls and children at younger ages, and this age group is increasingly likely to be exposed to hate messages, pro-anorexia sites, self-harm sites and cyberbullying.<sup>58</sup>
- The 2007 Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study found that around 7% of students aged 9-15 years reported experiences of cyberbullying, with rates for girls and boys of 8% and 5% respectively. Experience of being victimised and of bullying others online increased with age, and bullying through social networking sites was more common than bullying via mobile phones as students got older.
- Analysis of Canadian data from the 2006-2007 HBSC included 1,972 high school students and found that around 14% had experienced cyberbullying in the previous two months. Rates were particularly high for girls, with 18% reporting that they had experienced cyberbullying compared to 8% of boys. About 12% of students said that they had bullied another student using a computer, email or mobile phone in the previous two months and boys and girls were equally likely to have done so.<sup>59</sup>
- The 2012 National School Violence Study in South Africa collected data on reported experiences of cyberbullying among a representative sample of secondary school students. One in five said they had experienced some form of cyberbullying within the last year; online fighting was most common and sexual cyberbullying was least common. Friends were the most common perpetrators of online fights, sharing of information, sending sexually explicit images or messages.
- In the USA, according to the 2013 Youth Risk Behaviour Survey, 15% of children in grades 9-12 were bullied electronically through emails, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites or texting in the past year. Girls were more than twice as likely to report having been victims of cyberbullying than boys, at 21% and 9% respectively.

57 See International Telecommunication Union, *Use of Information and Communication Technology by the World's Children and Youth*, Geneva, 2008.

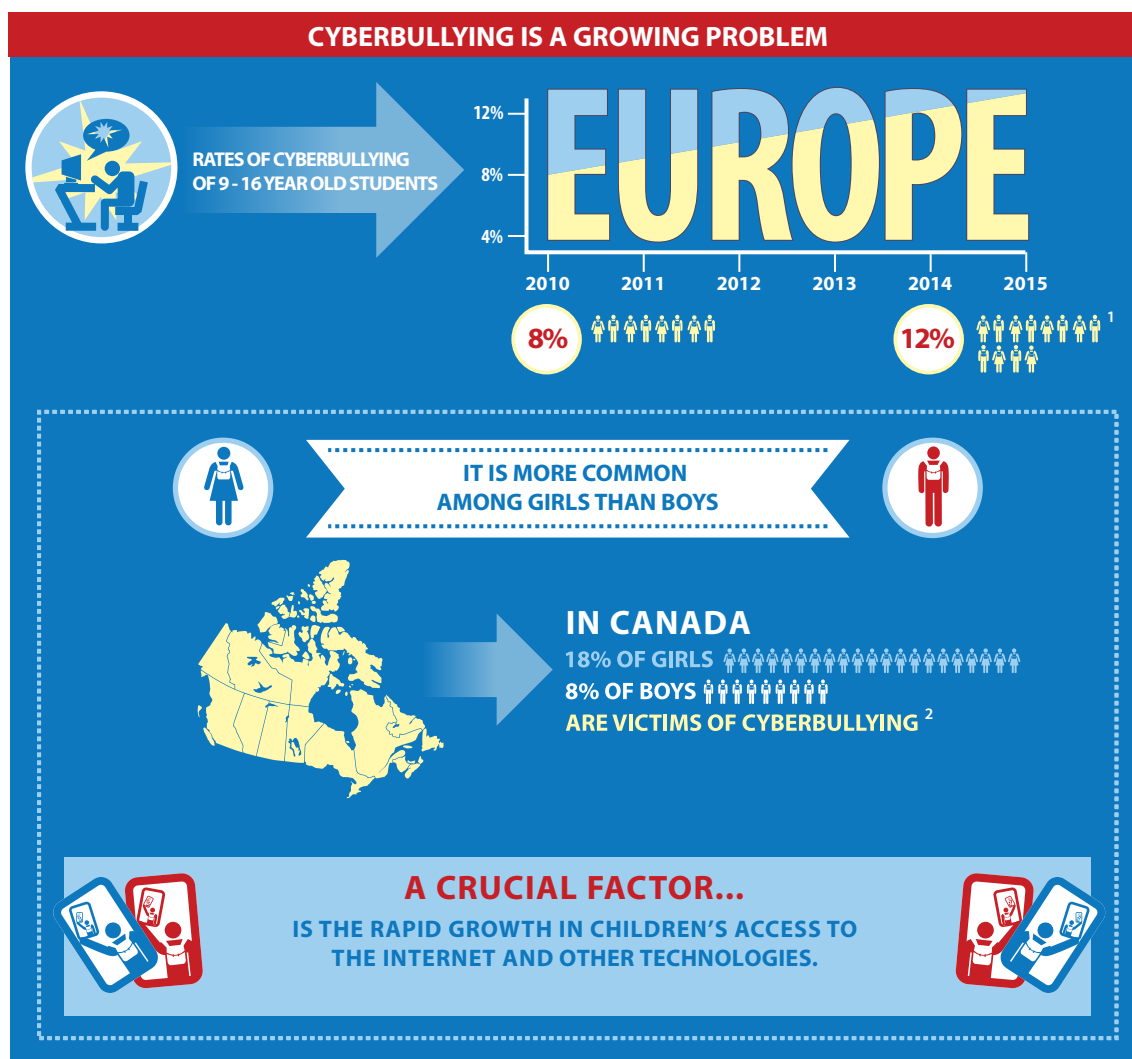
58 Livingstone, S., Macheroni, G., Olafsson, K. and Haddon, L., "Children's online risks and opportunities: comparative findings from EU Kids Online and Net Children Go Mobile", London School of Economics and Political Science, 2014.

59 Cappadocia, M. C., W. M. Craig and D. Pepler (2013) Cyberbullying Prevalence, Stability, and Risk Factors During Adolescence, *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 171-192 cited in Hidden in Plain Sight.



## 2. The problem

### 2.2 The extent of school violence and bullying



Data from:

1. Livingstone, S., Macheroni, G., Olafsson, K. And Haddon, L., "Children's Online Risks And Opportunities: Comparative Findings From Eu Kids Online And Net Children Go Mobile", London School Of Economics And Political Science, 2014.
2. Cappadocia, M. C., W. M. Craig And D. Pepler, 'Cyberbullying Prevalence, Stability, And Risk Factors During Adolescence', Canadian Journal Of School Psychology, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2013, Pp. 171-192.

#### 2.2.3 Children and adolescents whose sexual orientation, gender identity or expression does not conform to traditional gender norms

Children and adolescents whose sexual orientation, gender identity or expression does not conform to traditional gender norms are disproportionately affected by school violence and bullying.

Homophobic bullying targets lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students and gender non-conforming students who are not LGBT. LGBT students are more likely to experience homophobic bullying at school than at home or in the community, with psychological violence, including social exclusion and verbal bullying, most commonly reported.<sup>60</sup>

- A UNESCO evidence review<sup>61</sup> found that the proportion of LGBT students experiencing school violence and bullying ranged from 16% in Nepal to 85% in the USA and the prevalence of violence was higher among LGBT students than among their non-LGBT peers. For example, a New Zealand study in 2014 found that lesbian, gay and bisexual students were three times as likely to be bullied as their heterosexual peers and transgender students were five times as likely to be bullied. Data collected in Norway in 2015 found that between 15% and 48% of LGBT students were bullied compared to 7% of heterosexual students. In Asia, studies show that the proportion of LGBT students who experience bullying in school ranges from 7% in Mongolia to 68% in Japan.

60 UNESCO (2016). Out in the Open: Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity/ expression.

61 UNESCO (2016). Out in the Open: Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity/ expression.

- A survey in the USA found that 82% of LGBT students aged 13-20 had been verbally harassed at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation and over 33% reported that such abuse occurred frequently; 90% said they felt deliberately excluded or left out by other students and 38% reported being pushed or shoved.<sup>62</sup>
- In a recent study, 36% of young LGBT people reported having been cyberbullied at any point in their lifetimes and 17% had experienced this in the last month, significantly higher than the proportions reported for their heterosexual peers (20% and 7% respectively).<sup>63</sup>
- Students who are not LGBT but are perceived not to conform to gender norms are also targets of homophobic violence. In Thailand, for example, 24% of heterosexual students experienced violence because their gender expression was perceived as non-conforming and, in Canada, 33% of male students experienced verbal violence related to their actual or perceived sexual orientation including those who did not identify as gay or bisexual.<sup>64</sup>

#### 2.2.4 Physical and sexual violence

Physical and sexual violence also affect a significant proportion of children and young people.

Available data, much of it from industrialised countries, indicates that physical violence is less common in schools in these countries than bullying and is more likely to affect and involve boys than girls. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that physical violence, including corporal punishment by teachers and other staff, is a considerable problem in schools in some countries in other regions.

Specific data on sexual violence in and around the school setting is limited, since many victims are hesitant to report acts of sexual violence for fear of being shamed or stigmatised or because they fear not being believed or will face retaliation from their aggressor or aggressors. Nevertheless, available information suggests that sexual violence in schools is a serious problem in many countries, particularly for girls.

- In a survey of teachers and students in four southern African countries<sup>65</sup> (Swaziland, Namibia, Botswana and Lesotho) between 70% and 96% of respondents, in Swaziland and Botswana respectively, said that violence occurs in their school, including verbal and physical violence and violence based on gender expression. While verbal violence is reported to be most common, physical violence is also common, in most cases perpetrated by older boys against younger boys and younger girls. Violence related to sexual diversity was also reported in all four countries, ranging from 18% of respondents in Swaziland to 44% in Botswana.
- A nationally representative survey of youth in grades 9-12 in the USA in 2015<sup>66</sup> found that 7.8% reported being in a physical fight on school property in the 12 months before the survey, 5.6% reported that they did not go to school on one or more days in the 30 days before the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school, 4.1% reported carrying a weapon (gun, knife or club) on school property on one or more days in the 30 days before the survey, and 6% reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times in the 12 months before the survey.
- Although in most countries, boys are more likely to report being physically attacked at school than girls, in a 2012 nationally representative survey of secondary school students in South Africa cited in the UNICEF 2014 report,<sup>67</sup> around 6% of both boys and girls reported being physically attacked or hurt at school in the past year. In addition, 22% reported being threatened or robbed or assaulted at school.
- It is estimated that over half of all children worldwide live in countries where they are not legally protected from corporal punishment in schools. As of December 2014, 122 states had prohibited corporal

62 GLSEN (2012). The 2011 national school climate survey: The experiences of LGBT youth in our nation's schools. [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

63 Hinduja, S. and Patchin, J. W. Cyberbullying: Identification, prevention and response, Cyberbullying Research Center, 2014 ([www.cyberbullying.us](http://www.cyberbullying.us)).

64 UNESCO (2016). Out in the Open: Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity/ expression.

65 UNESCO (2016). Out in the Open: Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity/ expression.

66 CDC (2016). Understanding school violence.

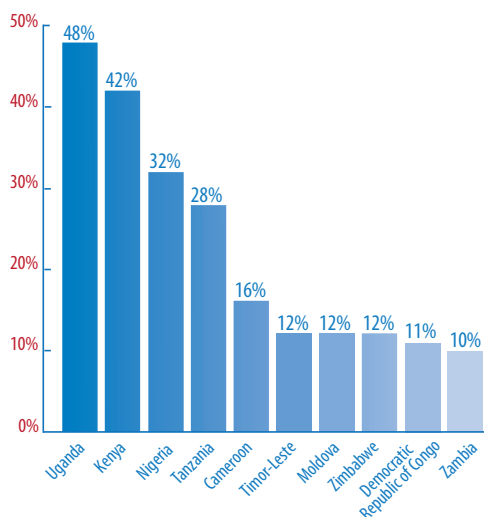
[http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/school\\_violence\\_fact\\_sheet-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/school_violence_fact_sheet-a.pdf)

67 UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.

punishment in schools but 76 countries have no such prohibitions.<sup>68</sup> The UN World Report on Violence against Children noted that corporal punishment is often used to punish poor academic performance or to correct misbehaviour, for example, citing evidence from studies in countries in the Middle East and North Africa of children being caned because of poor individual or collective examination results.

- Analysis of Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) data in a 2014 UNICEF report<sup>69</sup> shows that among adolescent boys, peers and teachers were the most common perpetrators of physical violence. Among adolescent girls, parents and other caregivers were the most common perpetrators of physical violence, but teachers were mentioned by a substantial proportion of girls in some countries, i.e. 48% in Uganda, 42% in Kenya, 32% in Nigeria, 28% in Tanzania, 16% in Cameroon, 12% in Timor-Leste, Moldova and Zimbabwe, 11% in Democratic Republic of Congo, and 10% in Zambia.
- A UNESCO background paper<sup>70</sup> cites a range of studies in India that highlight the high prevalence of corporal punishment in schools. For example, the first national study on child abuse in 2007 found that more than two in three children reported experiencing physical abuse, including corporal punishment, and outside the family, teachers were the main perpetrators. Boys and children from poorer families and lower castes experience the highest rates of corporal punishment. Although corporal punishment in schools in India was prohibited in 2009 for children aged 6-14 years, the practice has persisted. For example, a study carried out by Young Lives<sup>71</sup> in Andhra Pradesh where corporal punishment has been banned, found that 82% of boys and 72% of girls aged 7-8 years had experienced physical punishment in school in the past week.
- Around 120 million girls, or one in ten, under the age of 20 worldwide have experienced sexual violence. Although this data is not disaggregated according to where the violence took place, high rates of sexual harassment in schools have been reported in many countries.
- A joint policy paper published by the Global Monitoring Report (GMR), UNESCO and the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) in 2015<sup>72</sup> cites analysis showing that two out of five school principals in Southern and Eastern Africa report that sexual harassment occurred between pupils in their primary schools, according to data from the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ). In South Africa, a recent national survey found that 8% of secondary school girls had experienced severe sexual assault or rape in the previous year while at school.<sup>73</sup> According to data published in 2005, 6.2% of students in Germany and 1.1% in Belgium had experienced sexual abuse. In Canada, one in four girls in one survey had experienced sexual harassment at school.<sup>74</sup>
- The joint GMR, UNESCO and UNGEI policy paper also cites evidence of sexual harassment by teachers. For example, sexual coercion and abuse by teachers in exchange for better marks has been documented in Latin America and Africa, and coercion of girls who cannot pay for school-related expenses into sexual relationships by male teachers has been documented in Africa.<sup>75,76</sup>

**Proportion of adolescent girls reporting that teachers are perpetrators of physical violence**



Data from UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.

68 See Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children [www.endcorporalpunishment.org](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org) and <http://unesco.unesco.org/images/0023/002321/232107E.pdf> p7.

69 UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.

70 See <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002323/232399e.pdf>

71 See <http://www.younglives.org.uk>

72 GMR, UNESCO, UNGEI (2015). School-related gender-based violence is preventing the achievement of quality education for all.

73 Burton and Leoschut (2013) cited in <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002321/232107E.pdf>

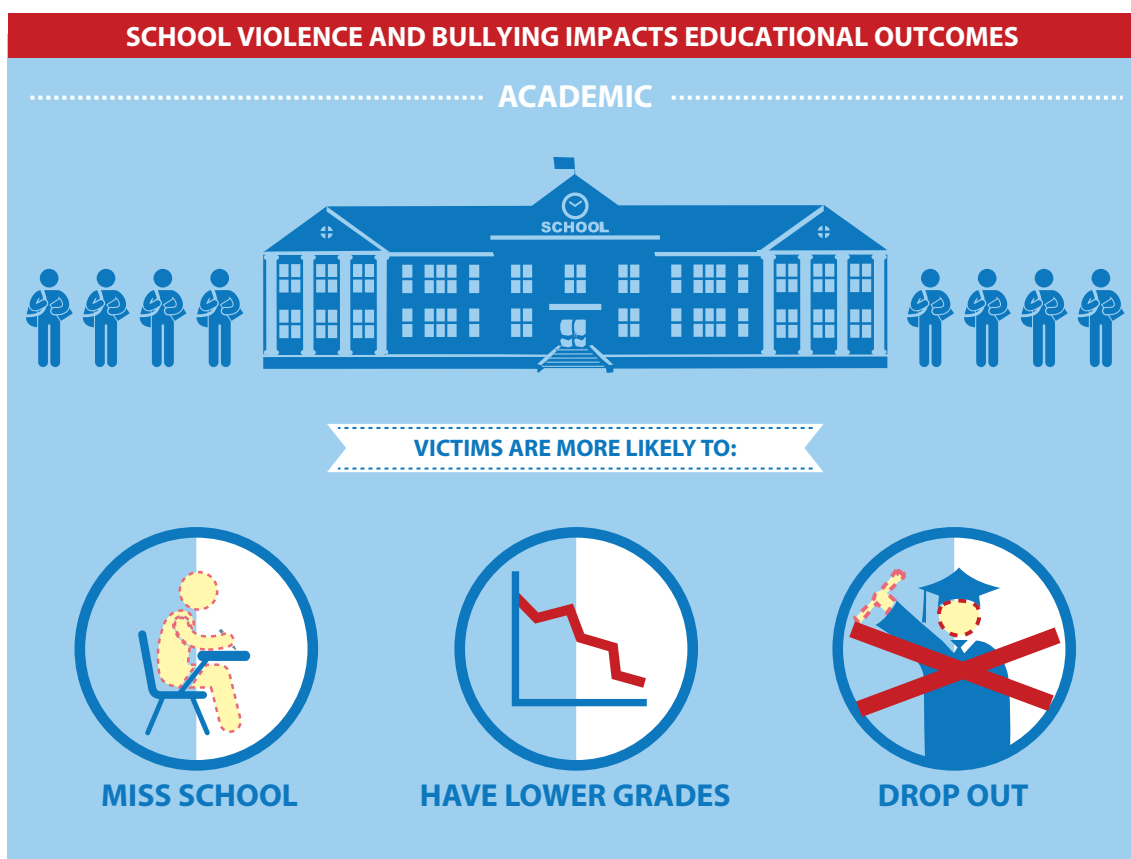
74 Cited in Plan, Learn without Fear: The global campaign to end violence in schools.

75 GMR, UNESCO, UNGEI (2015). School-related gender-based violence is preventing the achievement of quality education for all.

76 See <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002323/232399e.pdf>

- Experience of sexual violence at school or on the way to and from school is also common in some countries. For example, in Kenya, one in five women and men who experienced sexual violence before the age of 18 reported that the first incident occurred at school.<sup>77</sup>

## 2.3 The impact of school violence and bullying



### 2.3.1 School violence and bullying has a negative impact on educational quality and outcomes.

The educational effects on victims of school violence and bullying are significant. Violence and bullying at the hands of teachers or other students may make children and adolescents afraid to go to school and interfere with their ability to concentrate in class or participate in school activities. It can also have similar effects on bystanders.

The consequences include missing classes, avoiding school activities, playing truant or dropping out of school altogether. This in turn has an adverse impact on academic achievement and attainment and on future education and employment prospects. Children and adolescents who are victims of violence may achieve lower grades and may be less likely to anticipate going on to higher education. Analyses of international learning assessments highlight the impact of bullying on learning outcomes. These analyses clearly show that bullying reduces students' achievement in key subjects such as mathematics and other studies have also documented the negative impact of school violence and bullying on educational performance.<sup>78</sup>

Bystanders and the school climate as a whole are also affected by school violence and bullying. Unsafe learning environments create a climate of fear and insecurity and a perception that teachers do not have control or do not care about students' well-being, and this reduces the quality of education for all students.

<sup>77</sup> UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.

<sup>78</sup> See for example: [http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/Safe\\_Learning\\_and\\_Achievement\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/Safe_Learning_and_Achievement_FINAL.pdf), [http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/timss2011/downloads/T11\\_IR\\_M\\_Chapter6.pdf](http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/timss2011/downloads/T11_IR_M_Chapter6.pdf), <http://condevcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/The-Effects-of-School-Related-Gender-Based-Violence-on-Academic-Performance-Evidence-from-Botswana-Ghana-and-South-Africa.pdf>, Devries, K et al (2014). School violence, mental health and educational performance in Ugandan primary school children: a cross-sectional survey, *Pediatrics*, 133, e129–e137.

- A 2010 study in the UK<sup>79</sup> found that 16-year-olds who were bullied at school were twice as likely to be without education, employment or training, and to have lower wage levels at age 23 and 33, than those who were not bullied. In turn, young men who are not in education, employment or training, are three times more likely to suffer from depression and five times more likely to have a criminal record.
- A UNESCO evidence review<sup>80</sup> found that, in Thailand, 31% of students who had experienced homophobic teasing or bullying reported absence from school in the past month, in Argentina, 45% of transgender students dropped out, and poorer academic performance than their heterosexual peers was reported by LGBT students in Australia, Chile, Denmark, El Salvador, Italy and Poland.
- A 2012 report by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children<sup>81</sup> notes that “For both the bully and the student who is bullied, the cycle of violence and intimidation results in ... poor performance in school”. It also concludes that “... children who study in a violent environment achieve lower academic results than those who do not, and children who are bullied will often exhibit a marked decline in school achievement and a reluctance to participate in school activities. Moreover, their right to leisure, play and recreation can be compromised as they isolate themselves from other children and lose interest in hobbies and after-school activities”.
- The 2006 UN World Report on Violence against Children notes that verbal abuse, bullying and sexual violence in schools are commonly reported as reasons for lack of motivation, absenteeism and drop out. In addition, corporal punishment is also a factor in school drop-out in some countries. For example, in a study in Nepal, 14% of school drop-out was attributed to corporal punishment and fear of teachers.
- Violence-related barriers to girls’ education include sexual coercion and harassment, school drop-out because of unwanted pregnancies, risks on the way to and from school, and parents’ decisions to keep their daughters at home because of the risk of violence in or around school.<sup>82</sup> A UNICEF report<sup>83</sup> cites a nationally representative survey of primary school students in Ethiopia, which found that exposure to violence at school reduced girls’ class participation and school performance and increased drop-out rates. In addition, some countries have policies that expel or exclude pregnant girls from school. Where girls do remain in school or return after childbirth, they may face bullying and verbal abuse by classmates and teachers.<sup>84</sup>

*“Violence or the threat of violence may be such that children drop out of school or are kept at home by concerned parents. Consequently it impacts negatively on their chances of working their way out of poverty.”<sup>85</sup>*

#### **2.3.2 School violence and bullying harms the physical, mental and emotional health of children and adolescents.**

Physical violence can cause non-fatal or fatal injuries or other physical harm. Sexual violence carries the risk of HIV, other sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy and, in addition, exposure to violence and bullying at a young age can have longer-term negative health consequences.

Children and adolescents who are bullied are more likely than those who are not bullied to experience interpersonal difficulties, to be depressed, lonely or anxious, to have low self-esteem, and to have suicidal thoughts or to attempt suicide. School violence and bullying also has an impact on the mental and emotional health of perpetrators and of bystanders.

79 Ellery, F et al. (2010). Prevention Pays: the economic benefits of ending violence in schools. Plan international: UK, 10.

80 UNESCO (2016). Out in the Open: Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity/ expression.

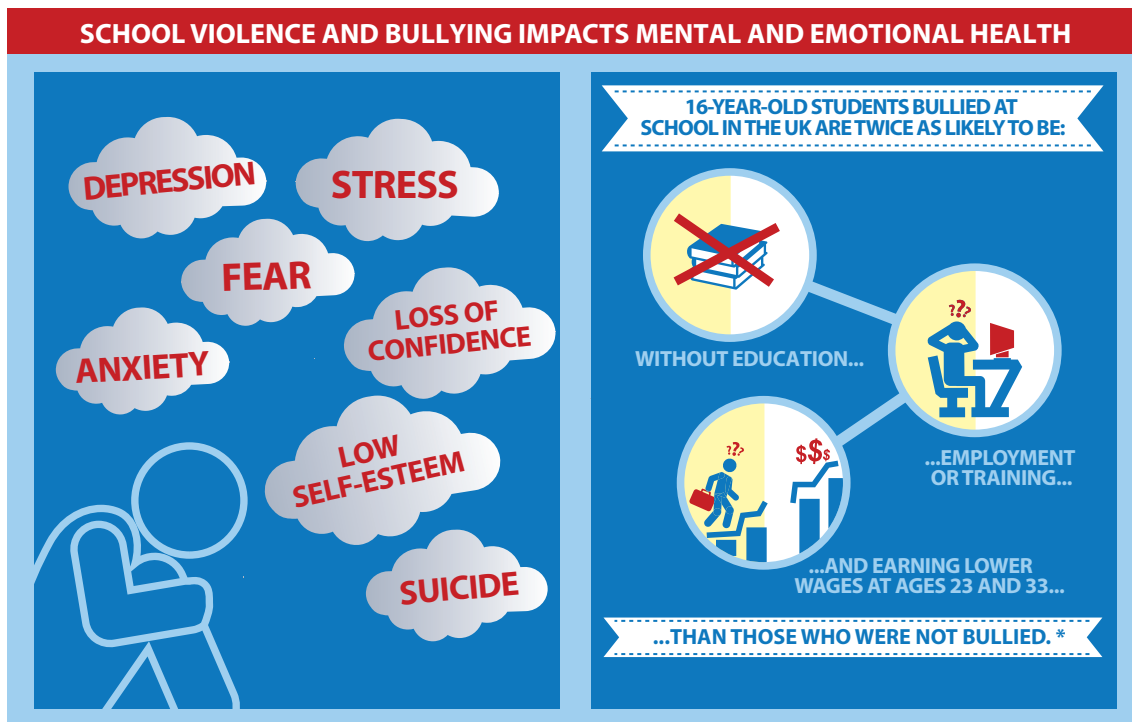
81 Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2012). Tackling violence in schools: A global perspective bridging the gap between standards and practice.

82 See Office of the Special Representative on Violence against Children, *Toward a World Free from Violence: Global Survey on Violence against Children*, United Nations, New York, 2015.

83 UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.

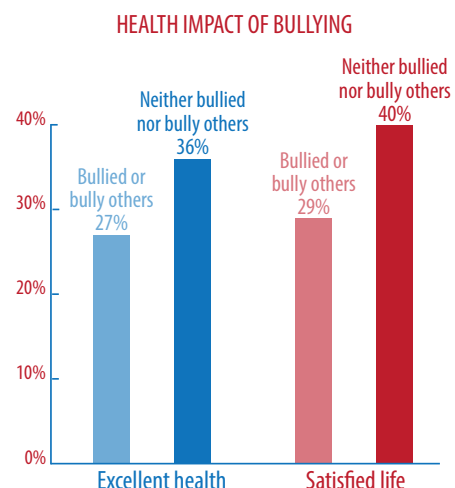
84 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230510E.pdf>

85 Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2012). Tackling violence in schools: A global perspective bridging the gap between standards and practice.



Data from Ellery, F., Kassam, N., & Bazan, C. (2010). Prevention Pays: The Economic Benefits Of Ending Violence In Schools. Plan International: Uk, 10.

- A 2016 US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report<sup>86</sup> highlights the impact of school violence on physical and mental health, noting that “Many young people experience non-fatal injuries. Some of these injuries are relatively minor and include cuts, bruises, and broken bones. Other injuries, like gunshot wounds and head trauma, are more serious and can lead to permanent disability. Not all injuries are visible. Exposure to school violence can lead to a wide array of negative health behaviours and outcomes, including alcohol and drug use and suicide. Depression, anxiety, and many other psychological problems, including fear, can result from school violence”.
- A recent UN report<sup>87</sup> notes that “bullied children’s mental and physical health is at risk: they may show signs of depression or have problems eating, sleeping or complain of physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches.” Students who are bullied are more likely than their peers to be depressed, lonely, or anxious and have low self-esteem.<sup>88,89</sup>
- A range of studies, cited in a recent UNESCO evidence review,<sup>90</sup> show that children and young people who have experienced homophobic bullying are at increased risk of anxiety, depression, fear, stress, low self esteem, loneliness, self harm and suicidal thoughts.
- The 2006 UN World Report on Violence against Children includes a study of the health impact of bullying in 28 European countries, which found adverse effects on physical and psychological health and that the more often children and adolescents were bullied the more symptoms of ill health they had. An analysis of data from 30 industrialised and transitional countries also found that children who were bullied, and bullies, were less likely



Data from 2006 UN World Report on Violence against Children

86 CDC (2016). Understanding school violence.

[http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/school\\_violence\\_fact\\_sheet-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/school_violence_fact_sheet-a.pdf)

87 United Nations (2016). Protecting children from bullying. Report of the Secretary-General.

88 Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2012). Tackling violence in schools: A global perspective bridging the gap between standards and practice.

89 <http://www.hbsc.org/publications/factsheets/Bullying-and-fighting-english.pdf> (retrieved 24 June 2015).

90 UNESCO (2016). Out in the Open: Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity/ expression.

than other children to say that they enjoyed excellent health (27% vs. 36%) and a very satisfied life (29% vs. 40%).

- Exposure to violence at an early age can impair brain development and damage other parts of the nervous system, as well as the endocrine, circulatory, musculoskeletal, reproductive, respiratory and immune systems, with lifelong consequences.<sup>91</sup>
- A 2011 meta-analysis of longitudinal studies on the impact of bullying on perpetrators<sup>92</sup> reports that the mental and psychological health of those who bully others is affected, and they have an increased risk of depression later on in life. Bully-victims can exhibit the poorest levels of functioning, including depression and other health problems, in comparison with those who report being bullied or perpetrating bullying.<sup>93</sup>
- Other studies have highlighted the detrimental effects on the emotional health of bystanders who witness bullying.<sup>94</sup>

#### 2.3.3 School violence and bullying has significant social and economic costs.

- The 2006 UN World Report on Violence against Children shows that victims of corporal punishment, both at school and at home, may develop into adults who are passive and over-cautious or who are aggressive themselves. Involvement in school bullying can be a predictor of future antisocial and criminal behaviour. Being bullied is also linked to heightened risk of eating disorders and social and relationship difficulties.<sup>95</sup>
- Other studies have shown the longer-term effects of bullying at school. For example, in a study of all children born in England, Scotland and Wales during one week in 1958, data on 7,771 children who had been bullied at ages 7 and 11 was studied. At age 50, those who had been bullied as children were less likely to have obtained school qualifications and less likely to live with a spouse or partner or to have adequate social support. They also had lower scores on word memory tests designed to measure cognitive IQ even when their childhood intelligence levels were taken into account and more often reported that they had poor health. The effects of bullying were visible nearly four decades later, with health, social and economic consequences lasting well into adulthood. For children, “peers are a much more important influence than has been realised. It is a terrible thing to be excluded by your peers”<sup>96</sup>
- The economic impact of violence against children and adolescents is substantial.<sup>97</sup> Youth violence in Brazil alone is estimated to cost nearly US\$19 billion every year, of which US\$943 million can be linked to violence in schools. The estimated cost to the economy in the USA of violence associated with schools is US\$7.9 billion a year.<sup>98</sup>
- Analytic work supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) shows that school-related gender-based violence alone can be associated with the loss of one primary grade of schooling, which translates to an annual cost of around US\$17 billion to low- and middle-income countries.<sup>99</sup>
- In the East Asia and Pacific region, it is estimated that the economic costs of just some of the health consequences of child maltreatment were equivalent to between 1.4% and 2.5% of the region’s annual GDP.
- In Argentina, the forgone benefit to society from overall early school dropout is 11.4% of GDP, and in Egypt, nearly 7% of potential earnings is lost as a result of the number of children dropping out of school.
- A study has shown that each year Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria lose US\$974 million, US\$301 million and US\$1,662 million respectively for failing to educate girls to the same standard as boys, and violence in school is one of the key factors contributing to the under-representation of girls in education.<sup>100</sup>

91 WHO (2016). Inspire. Seven strategies for ending violence against children.

92 Ttofi, M. M., Farrington, D. P., Losel, F., & Loeber, R. (2011). Do the victims of school bullies tend to become depressed later in life? A systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, 3(2), 63-73.

93 Veenstra, R. et al. (2005) Bullying and victimization in elementary schools: A comparison of bullies, victims, bully/victims, and uninvolved preadolescents. *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 41, pp. 672-682.

94 See UNESCO, “Stopping Violence in Schools: A Guide for teachers”, Paris, 2011.

95 UNICEF (2014). Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children.

96 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/children/10772302/Bullying-at-school-affects-health-40-years-later.html>.

97 WHO (2016). Inspire. Seven strategies for ending violence against children.

98 Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2012). Tackling violence in schools: A global perspective bridging the gap between standards and practice.

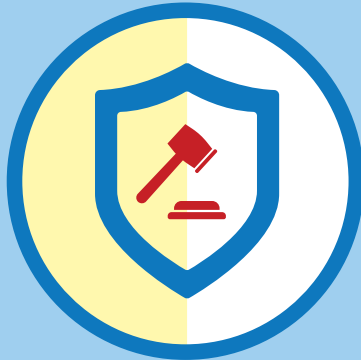
99 RTI International. (2015). What is the cost of school-related gender-based violence? USAID.

100 Plan (2008). Paying the Price, cited in Antonowicz, Laetitia, Too Often in Silence. A report on school-based violence in West and Central Africa.

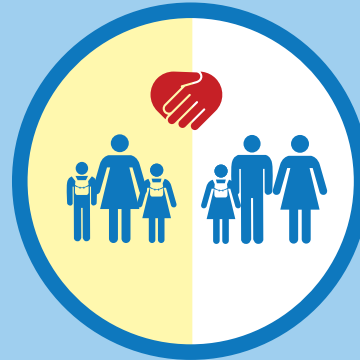


# 3. The response

## SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND BULLYING REQUIRES A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION SECTOR RESPONSE



SUPPORTIVE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT



PARTNERSHIPS, AND INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



EFFECTIVE POLICY, LEADERSHIP AND AWARENESS RAISING



EFFECTIVE REPORTING MECHANISMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES



GOOD DATA AND RIGOROUS MONITORING AND EVALUATION



CAPACITY BUILDING FOR TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



*The education sector, working with other sectors and other stakeholders, has a responsibility to protect children and young people from violence and to provide safe and inclusive learning environments for all students. School is also a place where attitudes to violence can be changed and non-violent behaviour can be learned; both the learning environment and the content of education can instil an understanding of human rights, gender equality, values of respect and solidarity and skills to communicate, negotiate and resolve problems peacefully. In addition, violence-free schools can also promote non-violence in the wider community.*

This section provides an overview of the key elements of a comprehensive education sector response to school violence and bullying and highlights examples of initiatives and actions to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying in a range of countries. Available evidence shows that responses that take a comprehensive sector (and whole-school) approach<sup>101</sup> and that involve interventions to both prevent and respond to school violence and bullying can make a difference.<sup>102</sup> Such an approach can not only reduce violence and bullying, but can also contribute to reducing truancy, improving academic achievement and enhancing children's social skills and well-being. An effective and comprehensive education sector approach to school violence and bullying encompasses all of the following elements:

- **Leadership** This includes: developing and enforcing national laws and policies that protect children and adolescents from violence and bullying in schools; and allocating adequate resources to address school violence and bullying.
- **School environment** This includes: creating safe and inclusive learning environments; strong school management; and developing and enforcing school policies and codes of conduct, and ensuring that staff who violate these are held accountable.
- **Capacity** This includes: training and support for teachers and other staff to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to use curriculum approaches that prevent violence and to respond to incidents of school violence and bullying; developing the capacity of children and adolescents; and developing appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills to prevent violence among children and adolescents.
- **Partnerships** This includes: promoting awareness of the negative impact of school violence and bullying; collaboration with other sectors at national and local level; partnerships with teachers and teachers' unions; working with families and communities; and the active participation of children and adolescents.
- **Services and support** This includes: providing accessible, child-sensitive, confidential reporting mechanisms; making available counselling and support; and referral to health and other services.
- **Evidence** This includes: implementing comprehensive data collection; rigorous monitoring and evaluation to track progress and impact; and research to inform the design of programmes and interventions.

Specific examples of actions taken in different countries related to the different elements of an effective and comprehensive response to school violence and bullying are highlighted below.

101 Whole-school approaches involve various stakeholders at the school level, as well as in the local community and government, in a range of different activities with the aim of making schools safer, more child-friendly and a better environment for children to learn.

102 See for example WHO (2016). Inspire. Seven strategies for ending violence against children, a package of evidence based strategies to prevent and respond to violence in childhood, including in schools.

## 3.1 Leadership

Protective national legislation is a key element of a comprehensive response to school violence and bullying. A supportive legal environment also includes laws that prohibit corporal punishment in schools. Laws help to convey a clear message to society condemning violence and are the foundation for a culture of respect for children's rights. Ensuring that laws protecting children and adolescents from violence and bullying in schools are enforced and translated into policy is critical. Lack of legislation and policy or poor enforcement of existing legislation and policy to protect children and adolescents from violence is a key challenge.

EXAMPLES OF COUNTRY ACTION ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND BULLYING		
<p><b>REPUBLIC OF KOREA</b></p>  <p><b>ANTI-SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND BULLYING LAW PROTECTS STUDENT HUMAN RIGHTS</b></p>	<p><b>AUSTRALIA</b></p>  <p><b>NATIONAL SAFE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK COMBATS BULLYING AND VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS</b></p>	<p><b>FINLAND</b></p>  <p><b>BASIC EDUCATION ACT CONFIRMS EVERY STUDENT HAS THE RIGHT TO LEARN SAFELY</b></p>
<p><b>JAPAN</b></p>  <p><b>BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMME ENSURES BULLYING IS NEVER IGNORED</b></p>	<p><b>CHILE</b></p>  <p><b>PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE CAMPAIGN PROMOTES HARMONY IN SCHOOLS</b></p>	<p><b>SOUTH AFRICA</b></p>  <p><b>DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DEVELOPED TEACHERS GUIDELINES AROUND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS</b></p>
<p><b>NORWAY</b></p>  <p><b>OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN PROMOTES YOUNG PEOPLE'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON ADDRESSING BULLYING</b></p>	<p><b>INDONESIA</b></p>  <p><b>YOUNG PEOPLE TEAM UP WITH THE GOVERNMENT ON AN ANTI-BULLYING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN</b></p>	<p><b>AFGHANISTAN</b></p>  <p><b>VIOLENCE FREE SCHOOLS PROJECT ADDRESSES PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT, SEXUAL ABUSE AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION</b></p>

Some countries have specific legislation pertaining to or addressing school violence and bullying.

- In 2004, the **Republic of Korea** established the anti-school violence and bullying law, on the prevention of and countermeasures against violence in schools<sup>103</sup> and the Act has since been revised to ensure it continues to respond appropriately. Its purpose is “to protect the human rights of students and raise students as healthy members of society through the protection of victim students, the guidance and education of aggressor students, and mediation between victim students and aggressor students”. It requires development of a master plan which includes research and education, support and rehabilitation, partnership between agencies and educational institutions and placement of school counsellors.
- In **the Philippines**, the Anti-Bullying Act provides the framework for national awareness-raising initiatives and school policies. It requires all elementary and secondary schools to adopt policies to address incidents of bullying, establish relevant mechanisms and reporting requirements, and outline sanctions for non-compliance.<sup>104</sup>
- In **Australia**, the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) was developed in 2003 to promote the national approach to combating bullying and violence in schools; the NSSF is legislated under the Schools Assistance Act 2004.<sup>105</sup>
- In **Finland**, the Basic Education Act Section 29 states that every student has the right to a safe school environment.<sup>106</sup> Under this law, education authorities are responsible for ensuring that students do not experience violence and bullying at school.
- Similarly, in **Sweden**, the 2009 Discrimination Act and 2010 Education Act prohibit any forms of discrimination and bullying in schools and, under the Education Act, schools have an obligation to investigate and report all incidents of bullying and to have an annual plan to prevent and address it. The Act also prohibits reprisals against those who report incidents of bullying and the right to damages if a school does not comply with the regulations.<sup>107</sup>
- In **Canada**, Ontario and Quebec have formal legislation regarding bullying in schools.<sup>108</sup> Ontario’s legislation pertains to all incidents of bullying and states the rights and responsibilities of ministries and school staff including teachers and school boards.<sup>109</sup> However, the law is effective only in public schools.<sup>110</sup> Quebec’s legislation defines bullying as “any direct or indirect behaviour, comment, act or gesture, including through the use of social media, intended to injure, hurt, oppress, intimidate or ostracise, and includes cyberbullying”.<sup>111</sup> According to the Act, school boards, public and private schools and the Ministry all have responsibility to make the learning environment healthy and safe.
- In **Chile**, Law No. 20.536 on School Violence in the General Education Law was passed in 2011.<sup>112</sup>
- In **Mexico**, the 2014 Law on the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents required authorities to establish strategies for the detection, prevention and elimination of bullying.<sup>113</sup> According to this law, public servants and school staff should be trained to be able to manage bullying and mechanisms that provide care, counselling and protection of children experiencing harassment or violence in schools should be established.

103 [www.law.go.kr](http://www.law.go.kr)

104 UN. (2016). UNGA A/71/213 *Protecting Children from Bullying-Report of the Secretary-General*. pp. 12 & 17.

105 <https://www.education.gov.au/state-and-territory-anti-bullying-policies>

106 Jimerson, S. R. et al. (2009). (Eds.). *Handbook of School Bullying: An International Perspective*. p.446.

107 UNESCO. (2016). *Out in the open: Summary report*. p. 41.; UN. (2016). UNGA A/71/213 *Protecting Children from Bullying-Report of the Secretary-General*. p.17.

108 <http://www.slaw.ca/2012/02/16/new-anti-bullying-laws-across-canada/>

109 [http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills\\_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2549&detailPage=bills\\_detail\\_the\\_bill&Intranet=](http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2549&detailPage=bills_detail_the_bill&Intranet=)

110 <http://www.prevnet.ca/resources/policy-and-legislation/ontario/for-educators>

111 <http://www.prevnet.ca/resources/policy-and-legislation/quebec/for-educators>

112 Plan International & UNICEF. *Toolkit and Analysis of Legislation and Public Policies to Protect Children and Adolescents from all Forms of Violence in Schools*. p.58.

113 UN. (2016). UNGA A/71/213 *Protecting Children from Bullying-Report of the Secretary-General*. p.16.

- In **Peru**, a law passed in 2011 ensures a safe school environment with mechanisms for the prevention, identification, response and elimination of bullying and cyberbullying in schools.<sup>114</sup> The Ministry of Education, school boards, staff and parents are all responsible and every school must appoint a psychologist to be responsible for the prevention and response to bullying. The Office of the Ombudsman oversees implementation of the law.

In many other countries, there is no specific legislation, but school bullying is covered by relevant laws which have a broader scope such as anti-discrimination, human rights and equality laws.

- In the **UK**, bullying is covered by The Education and Inspections Act 2006, Independent School Standard Regulations 2010, Equality Act 2010, Children Act 1989, Harassment Act 1997, Malicious Communications Act 1988, Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986.<sup>115</sup> Under these laws, schools have the responsibility to implement effective anti-bullying strategies and protect students from bullying.
- In **Ireland**, children and adolescents are protected from bullying under the Equal Status Act, Employment Equality Acts 1998-2008, Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and Education Act 1998.<sup>116</sup>
- In **Singapore**, the Protection from Harassment Act is relevant to bullying as it is “an act to protect persons against harassment and unlawful stalking and to create offences, and provide civil remedies related thereto or in relation to false statements of fact.”<sup>117</sup>
- In the **USA**, although there is no a single anti-bullying law at federal level, some laws such as The Improving America Schools Act and Safe And Drug-Free Schools And Communities Act<sup>118</sup> provide a framework. Bullying also overlaps with discriminatory harassment which is covered under federal civil rights law enforced by the Department of Education and the Department of Justice. Individual states have enacted laws and state education codes to prevent school bullying and protect children.<sup>119</sup>

Some countries have adopted specific legislation concerning cyberbullying or include cyberbullying in anti-bullying legislation.

- In **the Philippines**, the Anti-Bullying Act explicitly refers to cyberbullying.<sup>120</sup>
- In the **USA**, the State of California passed a bill in 2011 regarding bullying on social networking sites using mobile phones and other internet services, which enables schools to suspend those who are engaged with cyberbullying.<sup>121</sup>
- In **Australia**, the Enhancing Online Safety for Children Act 2015 is focused on tackling cyberbullying. It established a Children’s eSafety Commissioner<sup>122</sup> to lead efforts including establishing a complaints system and removing harmful materials from social media.<sup>123</sup>
- **New Zealand** adopted the Harmful Digital Communications Act in 2015, which aims to deter and prevent harmful communications, reduce their impact on victims and establish systems for quickly resolving complaints and removing damaging online material. It provides a broad range of remedies that a district court can order, including: taking down material; publishing a correction or an apology; giving the complainant a right of reply; or releasing the identity of the source of an anonymous communication.

114 UN. (2016). UNGA A/71/213 Protecting Children from Bullying-Report of the Secretary-General. p.17.

115 Department for Education (the U.K.). (2014). *Preventing and tackling bullying*. pp.4-5.

116 <http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Complaints-Bullying-Child-Protection-Discrimination/Complaints-about-schools.html>; Minister for Education and Skills (Ireland). (2013). *Action Plan On Bullying*. pp.52-56.

117 The Law Revision Commission (Singapore). (2015). *The Statutes of the Republic of Singapore - Protection from Harassment Act (Chapter 256a)*.

118 Park, J. H. & Cheong, J. Y. (2012). A comparative study on the legislative system and policy for school violence prevention between Korea and U.S. *The Journal of Elementary Education*, 25(4), 105-124

119 <https://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/index.html>

120 UNESCO. (2016). *Out in the open*. p. 75.

121 Office of the SRSO on Violence against Children. (2012). *Tackling Violence in Schools: A global perspective*. p.32.

122 <https://www.education.gov.au/cybersafety-schools>

123 UN. (2016). UNGA A/71/213 Protecting Children from Bullying-Report of the Secretary-General. p. 16.

## LEGISLATION PROHIBITING CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

Observational studies suggest laws that prohibit corporal punishment in schools can reduce the use of violent punishment against children and change attitudes. For example, a systematic review showed that legislative restrictions on corporal punishment in 24 countries were closely associated with decreased use of and support for this as a child discipline approach.<sup>124</sup> The UN Study on Violence against Children noted a clear trend away from corporal punishment in schools in all regions, most notably in Europe. Global progress is monitored by the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children.<sup>125</sup> An increasing number of countries have legislation that prohibits corporal punishment in schools, but legislation is poorly enforced in some countries, and in some countries there is no legislation in place.

Developing and implementing national policies to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying is also a critical component of leadership. The World Report on Violence against Children notes that: "Policies to tackle school violence should recognise that schools are, above all, places of learning and can play an important role in equalising power and eliminating abuses of power."

- The Department of Education in the **USA** has taken a range of policy actions to combat bullying and cyberbullying including: requiring public elementary and secondary schools to report incidents; helping to develop a standard definition of bullying; hosting bullying prevention summits; creating training modules for school bus drivers and classroom teachers; producing Indicators of School Crime and Safety; supporting the Stopbullying.gov website; hosting webinars on cyberbullying; and leading the *Asian American Pacific Islanders Bullying Prevention Taskforce* to explore the unique issues faced by these students.<sup>126</sup>
- Also in the **USA**, State Departments of Education provide model policy for school districts to establish their own policy. For example, Ohio Department of Education has an Anti-Harassment, Anti-Intimidation or Anti-Bullying Model Policy<sup>127</sup> which forbids any form of bullying behaviour in the classroom, on school property, to and from school, on a school bus or at school-sponsored events.
- In **Japan**, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government is implementing the Bullying Prevention Programme, which was developed in partnership with the NPO Tokyo Gakugei University Children's Institute for the Future and covers four themes: creating an environment where bullying is never ignored; understanding each other's differences; establishing favourable human relationships; controlling emotions in order to stop bullying.<sup>128</sup>
- In **Chile**, the *Convivencia escolar* campaign for peaceful coexistence in schools was launched in 2010 to promote greater harmony in all Chilean educational institutions in response to an increase in bullying in schools, and the Peaceful Coexistence in Schools Policy was finalised in 2011.<sup>129</sup>
- Under national legislation in **Denmark**, schools must formulate anti-bullying strategies in order to ensure that the educational environment is conducive to the child's well-being and the attainment of the highest possible level of development and learning.



Prohibition of corporal punishment in schools was identified as a priority in India in 2005. Photo from Raxaul, Bihar, India. Travel Stock/Shutterstock.com

124 WHO (2016). Inspire. Seven strategies for ending violence against children.

125 [www.endcorporalpunishment.org](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org)

126 <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/new-data-show-decline-school-based-bullying>

127 Ohio Department of Education. (2012). *Anti-Harassment, Anti-intimidation or Anti-Bullying Model Policy*.

128 [http://www.childresearch.net/papers/school/2016\\_01.html](http://www.childresearch.net/papers/school/2016_01.html)

129 <http://2010-2014.gob.cl/english/convivencia-escolar-peaceful-coexistence-in-schools-campaign/>

- The Department of Basic Education in **South Africa** has developed a range of policies and guidelines, including guidelines for teachers stating that sexual relations with learners are against the law, that action will be taken and that teachers must report colleagues to educational authorities, and if a child is under 16, to the police.
- In **India**, prohibition and elimination of corporal punishment in schools was identified as a priority in the 2005 National Plan of Action for Children.<sup>130</sup>

Implementation and impact of policies is, however, a challenge in many contexts, for reasons that include: a focus on acts of violence rather than the root causes, lack of support for local actors responsible for enforcement of policy, inadequate processes to ensure accountability, for example, of teachers who perpetuate violence against children, deeply entrenched gender norms and social acceptance of corporal punishment.<sup>131</sup>

## ■ 3.2 School environment

Strong school management, by school governing boards and head teachers, school policies on violence and bullying and related codes of conduct<sup>132</sup> for staff and students are fundamental to creating safe, supportive and inclusive learning environments and welcoming schools.

School governing bodies and management structures have a duty of care and need to convey a clear message that violence and bullying is unacceptable. Research shows that safe schools are characterised by strong management and effective school leaders.<sup>133</sup> A study of schools in Botswana and Ghana found that the most common feature of safe and high achieving schools was strong management and leadership<sup>134</sup>, while a study in Norway found a correlation between good classroom management techniques and reduced peer violence. Conversely, studies have shown a clear correlation between lack of firm intervention by head teachers, teachers and other staff and the prevalence of violence among students. Students and staff need to be confident that sanctions will follow transgressions, hence the critical need for school management to ensure that school policies and codes of conduct exist and are enforced.

School policies should identify staff responsibilities and actions to prevent violence and bullying and to intervene when necessary. Codes of conduct for teachers need to refer explicitly to violence and abuse, and ensure that penalties are clearly stipulated and consistent with legal frameworks for child rights and protection. In Kenya, for example, a range of penalties is available to discipline teachers in breach of professional conduct, including suspension and interdiction; new Teacher Service Commission regulations state that a teacher convicted of a sexual offence against a pupil is to be deregistered.<sup>135</sup> Codes of conduct and school policies and procedures to address violence and bullying should, ideally, be integrated into classroom lessons.

Schools that are welcoming to all students and staff are also characterised by an inclusive culture, reflecting: leadership that is committed to inclusive values and a participatory leadership style; a high level of staff collaboration and joint problem solving; and similar values shared with students, parents and the community. Research suggests that, in order to foster an inclusive culture, school leaders need to: fostering new meanings about diversity; promote inclusive practices within schools; and build connections between schools and communities. In such an environment, students are not only better able to recognise situations of violence or abuse, but they also feel more comfortable reporting incidents of violence or bullying they may have experienced or witnessed at school to a trusted teacher or other adult.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>130</sup> See <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002323/232399e.pdf>

<sup>131</sup> See <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002323/232399e.pdf>

<sup>132</sup> A code of conduct is a set of guidelines on standards of acceptable conduct and behaviour. Codes of conduct are typically developed at national level and apply to teachers and other staff, but can also extend to learners and parents.

<sup>133</sup> UNICEF (2006). World report on violence against children.

<sup>134</sup> Dunne M (2007). Gender, sexuality and schooling: Everyday life in junior secondary schools in Botswana and Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol. 27.

<sup>135</sup> See <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/gmr-2013-14-teaching-and-learning-education-for-all-2014-en.pdf>

<sup>136</sup> UNESCO-IBE. (2015). Curriculum development. See [www.ibe.unesco.org](http://www.ibe.unesco.org)



School staff also need to be alert to dark corners, poorly lit areas, unsupervised stairways and bathrooms where children may be bullied or suffer other forms of violence. Research from studies, such as those conducted for the USAID Safe School Program, highlight toilets as high risk areas for sexual violence; providing separate lockable toilets can help to address this. School grounds used by children before school, between classes and after lessons also need adult supervision.<sup>137</sup>

## ■ 3.3 Capacity

Head teachers, teachers and other school staff need training and support to increase their understanding of school violence and bullying and its underlying causes, to help them to prevent, identify and respond to incidents of violence and bullying among students, and to enable them to use positive non-violent classroom management techniques and non-violent approaches to discipline.<sup>138</sup>

Other strategies for tackling the root causes of school violence and bullying include promote girls and marginalised students into leadership positions, equal sharing of chores between girls and boys, employing more trained female teachers in schools where there is shortage, and community support for girls and other children at risk of school dropout.

- Under the Anti-Bullying Manifesto 2002, in **Norway**, two programmes have been supported by the central authorities. One of these, the Zero programme, developed by the University of Stavanger, has been implemented in more than 400 schools in Norway. Zero guides school staff on how to identify bullying, resolve bullying, prevent bullying and integrate anti-bullying efforts within general schoolwork. Zero involves students in actively working for an environment that is free from bullying and parents as supporters of these efforts.
- The KiVa programme in **Finland** emphasises investment in teachers and the overall school climate, stressing the importance of listening to children and ensuring that they have a voice. It recommends mandatory pre-service teacher training and training of all staff so they are equipped to take steps to prevent and stop bullying within the school setting.<sup>139</sup>
- UNICEF reports a range of initiatives to support teachers in different countries. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, protocols have been developed for teachers on how to identify, report and refer incidents of violence. In **Jordan**, over 4,000 school teachers and counsellors have been trained in classroom management skills and positive discipline. In **Argentina** and **Chile**, efforts have focused on teacher training, workshops for students and parental guidance, as well as clinical care for victims and bullies to prevent future incidents. In Lebanon, emphasis has been placed on teacher training on online safety and on the prevention and reporting of cyberbullying.
- In **South Africa**, the 2015 National School Safety Framework includes resources on the prevention and management of bullying and cyberbullying, homophobic bullying and gender-based violence. Implementation measures comprises training manuals and e-safety guidelines, the promotion of the national Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Change Campaign, the appointment of counsellors to provide psychosocial support in schools and of school patrollers to provide security in and around schools, as well as measures to ensure the early identification of bullies, restorative approaches and support for victims.
- Resources for inclusive classroom methods are available from the Council of Europe, UNESCO and Save the Children, among others. One such resource, produced by Save the Children **Sweden, South East Asia and Pacific**, is entitled *Positive Discipline: What it is and how to do it*.<sup>140</sup> The publication identifies seven key characteristics of positive discipline: it is non-violent and respectful of the child as a learner; it identifies long-term solutions that develop children's own self-discipline; it involves clear communication of parents'

<sup>137</sup> See UNESCO, "Stopping Violence in Schools: A Guide for Teachers", Paris, 2011.

<sup>138</sup> Positive discipline focuses on strengthening positive behaviour rather than punishing negative behaviour. Teachers reward positive behaviour with attention, work with students to agree positive rules and expectations, and sanctions for negative behaviour are applied to help children and adolescents to learn. See Rogers, B. (2009). Classroom behaviour: A practical guide to effective teaching, behaviour management and colleague support. London. SAGE.

<sup>139</sup> <http://www.kivaprogram.net>.

<sup>140</sup> Durrant, J. *Positive Discipline: What it is and how to do it*, Save the Children Sweden South East Asia and the Pacific.

expectations, rules and limits; it builds a mutually respectful relationship between parents and children; it teaches children lifelong skills; it increases children's competence and confidence to handle challenging situations; and it teaches courtesy, non-violence, empathy, human rights, self-respect and respect for others.

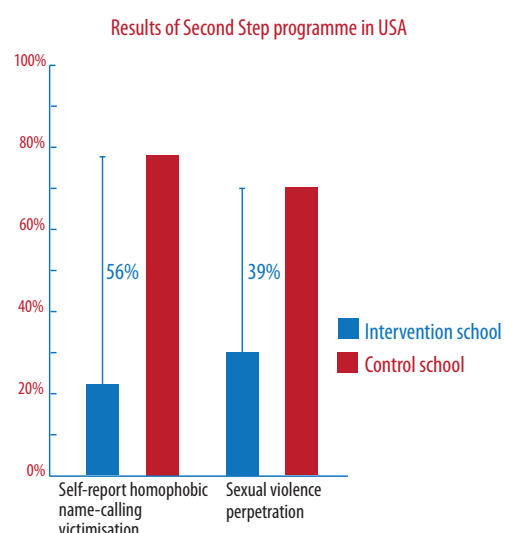
- In **France**, since 2010, all new teachers receive training on violence management. There are also resources available to teachers, including DVDs and internet sites designed to reinforce training, and a kit for training parents in violence management.

Education plays a vital role in preventing violence, within schools and in the wider community, through promoting the values of concern for others, respect for human rights, and a culture of peace and non-violence. The school curriculum and teaching methods can teach and reinforce the principles of non-violence, promote positive attitudes, behaviours and peer relationships and equip children and adolescents with the skills required for respectful communication in person and in cyber-space, negotiation and non-violent resolution of problems. Ideally, schools should start to address issues of violence and bullying through the curriculum at an early age. Education itself and the school environment can also help to develop protective factors, such as self-esteem, optimism, aspirations, problem-solving capacity and the ability to seek mentoring adult relationships, which reduce the risk of being victimised.

Curriculum approaches can encourage children and adolescents to question, negotiate and challenge violence and bullying and ensure that they recognise what constitutes violence and abuse. In some contexts, specific curricula have been used, while in others issues such as violence and gender inequality have been addressed through carrier subjects. Curriculum entry points include civics education, life skills education and comprehensive sexuality education. Life skills education can play a particularly valuable role in building the social and emotional skills children and adolescents need to prevent bullying and other violence, stand up for themselves, intervene constructively, talk rather than fight, and think about issues from others' perspectives. Some programmes, for example, Promundo and ReproSalud in Latin America, have focused on engaging boys in reducing physical and sexual violence; others have implemented peace and conflict resolution education, for example, in refugee camp schools.

Training for teachers should equip them with the skills to deliver curriculum approaches that promote the knowledge, attitudes and skills that children and adolescents need to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying. This needs to be supported by provision of appropriate curricula resources, textbooks and other learning materials that promote safe, healthy, equal and non-violent relationships and that do not reinforce unhelpful social and gender norms.

- The Second Step programme has been used with more than 8 million students in over 32,000 schools in the **USA**. The programme teaches life skills such as communication, coping and decision-making skills that help young people navigate peer pressure, substance abuse and bullying in-person and online. A two-year cluster-randomised clinical trial of Second Step was conducted with over 3,600 students aged 11-13 years at 36 middle schools in Illinois and Kansas. The study found that, at the end of the programme, students in Illinois intervention schools were 56% less likely to self-report homophobic name-calling victimisation and 39% less likely to report sexual violence perpetration than students in control schools.<sup>141</sup>
- In a 2014 report on violence prevention,<sup>142</sup> countries reported on the use of programmes to help children manage anger issues, resolve conflicts in a non-violent way and develop social problem-solving skills. Almost half of countries that reported had introduced specific bullying-prevention programmes and available evidence suggests that such programmes, including



Data from Espelage, D. et al. (2012). Bullying perpetration and subsequent sexual violence perpetration among middle school students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Vol 50, No 1 pp 60-65.

<sup>141</sup> Espelage, D. et al. (2012). Bullying perpetration and subsequent sexual violence perpetration among middle school students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Vol 50, No 1 pp 60-65.

<sup>142</sup> WHO, UNODC, UNDP, *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention*, Geneva, 2014, table 5.



peer-led interventions that teach the basic skills of active listening, empathy and supportiveness, can help to reduce overall rates of bullying and victimisation.

- In **Spain**, the SAVE project, which is being implemented in schools in Seville, addresses bullying at the policy level, the curricular level and the interpersonal level. At the interpersonal level, it focuses on working with pupils with social problems including bullying and interpersonal violence.<sup>143</sup>
- An analysis of studies<sup>144</sup> of school-based life skills and social and emotional training programmes showed that such programmes reduced fighting, hitting, bullying and verbal conflict by 25% when applied to all students and by 33% when applied to selected high risk groups of students. The Task Force on Community Preventive Services in the **USA** found that universal school-based life skills programmes decrease violence among children by around 15% across age groups. A cluster randomised controlled trial found that, after three years, students participating in a similar programme showed a 36% reduction in violent behaviour and a 41% reduction in bullying behaviour.

Bystander approaches involve learning and practising appropriate and safe bystander skills, such as how to identify, speak out about or engage others in responding to violence. Most school-based bystander interventions have focused on changing individual and peer attitudes and behaviours.

- Project PATHS, a youth development programme for junior secondary school students in **Hong Kong** focuses on helping students to develop the life skills necessary to become proactive helpful bystanders when they see bullying. It includes general awareness-raising on bullying, space for self-reflection and opportunities to rehearse new behaviour. Students begin by learning how bullying harms themselves and others, and learn skills to help protect themselves when being bullied. They also learn about the role that bystanders play and develop skills to be responsible bystanders in school bullying and cyberbullying.<sup>145</sup>

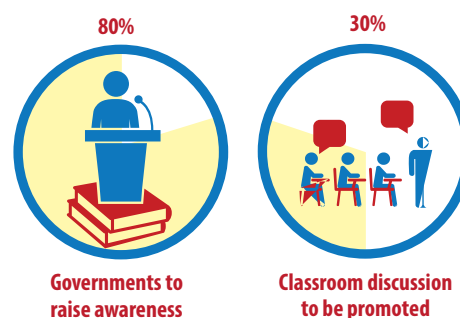
It is equally important to ensure that children and young people learn how to protect themselves and their privacy online, and to build on their capacity to develop strategies to deal with cyberbullying, such as blocking contacts, withholding personal details, finding safety advice online, blocking spam, changing their privacy settings and making selective use of websites.<sup>146</sup>

### 3.4 Partnerships

Raising awareness is an essential first step in building partnerships and coalitions to tackle school violence and bullying, as many adults are unaware of the extent of the problem and of its negative impact on the well-being of children and adolescents. School violence and bullying, and in particular cyberbullying, is also often invisible to or ignored by teachers and parents. In some contexts, adults view violence, including corporal punishment, fighting and bullying, as a normal part of discipline or growing up and do not appreciate the harm it does. It is also important to raise the awareness of children and adolescents themselves about school violence and bullying and its risks and consequences. For example, they are often aware of how to reduce online risks from strangers, but less aware of the risks from their peers.

- In the 2016 UNICEF U-Report/SRSG-VAC opinion poll to which 100,000 young people in 18 countries responded, participants had the opportunity to give

#### 2016 UNICEF U-Report/SRSG-VAC opinion poll results: What measures are needed to prevent and respond to bullying



Data from Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2016). Ending the torment: Tackling bullying from the schoolyard to cyberspace.

143 OECD. (2004). *Taking Fear Out of Schools: A Report of an International Policy and Research Conference on School Bullying and Violence*. 5p.

144 WHO (2016). Inspire. Seven strategies for ending violence against children.

145 Tsang, S. et al. (2011). Bystander position taking in school bullying; The role of positive identity, self-efficacy and self-determination. *Scientific World Journal* Vol 11 pp 2,278-86.

146 See Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2014). Releasing children's potential and minimizing risks: ICTs, the Internet and violence against children.

their views on what measures are needed to prevent and respond to bullying. More than 80% said that governments should raise awareness in order to stop bullying in schools and around 30% said that classroom discussion should be promoted.

- In **Canada**, initiatives to raise awareness of the issue of bullying include Concerned Children's Advertisers, a multi-year initiative to develop public service announcements on the theme of bullying,<sup>147</sup> and National Pink Shirt Day,<sup>148</sup> a day dedicated to raising awareness of the issue of bullying within schools and communities.
- In 2013, UNICEF launched its #ENDviolence initiative to increase the visibility of violence against children, including bullying and cyberbullying. It combines global communication with country action by UNICEF and national government and civil society partners. In countries such as **Albania, Bulgaria, Malaysia, New Zealand, Vanuatu and South Africa** it has helped draw attention to the prevalence and impact of bullying and cyberbullying, prompted action by governments, civil society and the private sector and identified key areas for further action and research.
- The *Basta de Bullying: No te quedés callado* campaign is a high profile bullying prevention initiative sponsored since 2012 by Cartoon Network **Latin America**<sup>149</sup> in cooperation with Plan International and World Vision that has reached 60 million households in the region. In addition, the initiative runs workshops to build the capacity of children, educators and parents to deal with bullying and to address the discrimination and gender and power relations that often underlie violent behaviours.



Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia - Children and adolescents should be involved in planning responses to school violence. udeyismail/Shutterstock.com

children and young people within and outside school.<sup>150</sup>

- In the **USA**, campaigns, such as *Take a Stand: Stop Bullying Now*<sup>151</sup> and *National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month*, raise public awareness.<sup>152</sup> A comprehensive website has been created that provides information on the nature of bullying and cyberbullying, who may be at risk and how bullying can be prevented and addressed. It includes advice for parents and children and information about how, when and where to report cases of cyberbullying.<sup>153</sup>
- In **the Philippines**, the Anti-Bullying Act provides the framework for national awareness raising and capacity-building initiatives, which include parent and family information sessions and orientation for professional groups and community leaders.
- In **France**, students, parents and the public can access information through a dedicated website,<sup>154</sup> which includes national anti-bullying policies and programmes.

147 <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/bllng-prvntn-schls/index-eng.aspx>

148 <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1035729>

149 <http://bastadebullying.com> and <http://www.chegadebullying.com.br>.

150 See <http://basica.sep.gob.mx/convivencia/index/html>.

151 OECD. (2004). *Taking Fear Out of Schools: A Report of an International Policy and Research Conference on School Bullying and Violence*. p.5.

152 <https://www.stopbullying.gov/blog/2016/10/4/october-is-national-bullying-prevention-awareness-month>

153 <http://www.stopbullying.gov>.

154 "Agir contre le harcèlement à l'École" (<http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid86060/agir-contre-le-harcèlement-a-l-ecole.html>).

- In the **Czech Republic**, a dedicated centre provides information on online risks, including on cyberbullying, cyber-grooming, cyber-stalking and the sharing of personal information through social networks and other potentially risky communications.
- In **Australia**, *Bullying No Way!* aims to help prevent and reduce cyberbullying through an educational website for Australian school communities and the public. It provides online curricula and other resources to support schools with bullying prevention work and cyber-safety resources and information for children, parents, and teachers.<sup>155</sup>
- In **New Zealand**, NetSafe provides information and resources about cyberbullying and Bullying-free NZ, an initiative of the Bullying Prevention Advisory Group comprised of 17 agencies, is dedicated to raising awareness and supporting schools by providing guidance to dealing with bullying and cyberbullying.<sup>156</sup>

Policy-makers, teachers, parents and other community members participate in and create the social and community norms and dynamics that are among the root causes of school violence and bullying. Changing these norms and dynamics requires coordinated efforts at all levels of society and across all sectors.

Comprehensive responses to school violence and bullying must, therefore, involve partnerships between the education sector and other sectors, civil society organisations, teachers and teachers unions, the media, parents, families and the wider community. Working with parents and communities is especially critical to reduce the risk of violence and bullying on the way to and from school as well as to reinforce promotion of non-violence in schools.

- Since 2013, the Ministry of Education in **Peru** has been coordinating a national education policy framework against school violence and the “*Escuela Amiga*” (Friendly School) policy works across multiple ministries.
- The Anti-Bullying Manifesto in **Norway** identifies measures to be taken by local authorities, and these include inclusion of anti-bullying interventions in schools. It identifies key stakeholders in preventing bullying, including the national government, association of local and regional authorities, trades unions, education unions and the national parents’ committee for primary and secondary education, and underlines that these parties will work together to ensure that legal provisions are implemented.
- In **Japan**, the 2013 Promotion of Measures to Prevent Bullying Act required schools to establish groups of teachers, staff and experts in psychology, child welfare and related fields to implement bullying prevention measures.<sup>157</sup> Schools are also obliged to strengthen their capacity to counsel and consult with children and young people.
- In **the Netherlands**, the 2015 anti-bullying law highlights the involvement of school leaders and the school community. Under the law, schools are responsible for creating a safe learning environment, for ensuring enhanced monitoring of implementation strategies and for placing a coordinator in every school to act as a contact point for children and parents.
- In **Costa Rica**<sup>158</sup> and the **Dominican Republic**,<sup>159</sup> the “*Convivencia Escolar*” programme aims to enhance peaceful and friendly relationships within the school environment based on mutual respect, social inclusion, safety and solidarity with the engagement of students, teachers and school staff, parents and local authorities. The programme has helped in the early detection of and prompt action to address tensions and conflicts and in the promotion of peaceful solutions through dialogue, mediation and restorative approaches.
- In **Ghana**, bullying was identified as compromising children’s safety in school. To tackle it, guidance and counselling have been issued for teachers, a toolkit has developed for families and communities, and the participation of children has been promoted.
- In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, oversight committees were established in target schools as part of the USAID Communication for Change Project in Katanga Province. The committees were made up of teachers, parents, students and school management and their role was to ensure school codes of

155 <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>

156 <https://www.bullyingfree.nz/who-are-we/>

157 Plischewski, H. & Tveitereid, K. (2008). *Policy overview of school bullying and violence among 8 members of the SBV network*. pp.23-24

158 See <http://www.mep.go.cr/sites/default/files/recursos/archivo/convivir.pdf>.

159 See [http://www.educando.edu.do/files/5914/1200/1735/Normas\\_de\\_convivencia\\_16-0\\_-014.pdf](http://www.educando.edu.do/files/5914/1200/1735/Normas_de_convivencia_16-0_-014.pdf).

conduct were enforced, refer victims of violence to the child protection police, a health clinic or a counsellor as well as to 'focal teachers' recruited from within the target schools to act as first responders.<sup>160</sup>

- Education International is working with teachers unions to tackle violence in schools. Following its 2015 resolution on school-related gender-based violence, Education International is working with UNGEI to build the capacity of seven African teachers' unions to use an action learning approach to end school-related gender-based violence.
- The Good Schools Toolkit developed by the non-government organisation Raising Voices in **Uganda**, which has been used in 600 schools, aims to: develop a collective vision for the school; create a nurturing learning environment; implement a more progressive learning methodology; and strengthen school governance. Implementation involves teachers, students, education officials, and the community in shaping the culture of the school.<sup>161</sup>
- Action Aid's Stop Violence Against Girls project in **East Africa** highlighted the importance of partnerships with communities and, in particular, the value of working in coalition with established local women's groups and child rights organisations, which can help to secure community support, enhance the effects of interventions, and increase their sustainability. The project found that these relationships can be especially important for discussion of sensitive issues, such as corporal punishment. Engaging traditional and religious leaders was also found to be an effective strategy to secure buy in and support for promoting gender equality and addressing violence.<sup>162</sup>
- UNICEF reports that 'walking buses' have been used in **Iraq** to ensure girls are safe on their way to and from school. Children are escorted on an approved route to school, with at least two trained adults acting as 'driver' and 'conductor'. The adults are parents, family members or community volunteers who are trusted by parents. There is some evidence that these walking buses have had a positive correlation with girls' attendance rates.
- In **Mauritania**, UNICEF worked with the Imams and Ulema Coalition for the Rights of Women and Children and other Imam networks to raise awareness about corporal punishment of children in schools. A national study was conducted to clarify the position of Islam vis-à-vis corporal punishment, which concluded that Islamic law protects the physical integrity of children and provided the basis for a fatwa that forbids verbal and physical violence in the educational system. Awareness-raising sessions were held to publicise the fatwa, with workshops across Mauritania, and it was distributed to more than 2,000 schools and religious centres.<sup>163</sup>
- Some countries are also working with the private sector, including the ICT industry, to tackle cyberbullying. For example, Facebook is working with specialists from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence on a Bullying Prevention Hub, "Put a Stop to Bullying", for adolescents, parents and educators, which includes practical information on how to block and report online bullying, how to communicate if a posting creates distress or anxiety and how to ask that it be taken down, as well as measures to manage privacy settings.<sup>164</sup>



In Ghana, bullying was identified as compromising learners' safety in school. Photo from Accra, Ghana. Anton\_Ivanov/Shutterstock.com

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has underlined the importance of participation of children in school life, the creation of school communities and student councils and the involvement of children in school disciplinary proceedings.

Experience shows that interventions to prevent school violence and bullying and to make schools safer are more effective when children and adolescents are involved in planning and implementing them. Student

160 C-Change (2013). C-Change final report. Washington DC. C-Change/FHI 360.

161 Raising Voices. <http://raisingvoices.org/good-school/>

162 See [http://www.ungei.org/files/Actionaid\\_Stop\\_Violence\\_Against\\_at\\_school\\_project-endline\\_full\\_report\\_Oct\\_2013-LOW.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/files/Actionaid_Stop_Violence_Against_at_school_project-endline_full_report_Oct_2013-LOW.pdf)

163 Antonowicz, L. (2010). Addressing violence in schools: Selected initiatives from West and Central Africa. SC, ActionAid, Plan, UNICEF.

164 See <http://www.facebook.com/safety/bullying>

involvement as partners can advance anti-bullying and anti-violence messages in a more meaningful way and harness the power of positive peer pressure to make violence and bullying unacceptable. In a UNESCO review of promising practices to address school violence, a UK Department for International Development multi-country study found that school environments that put children at the centre so that teachers listen to their concerns and needs are more likely to address violence than other schools.

Children and adolescents have the ability to protect themselves and others if they are given appropriate support and there is a strong student-teacher partnership. For example, teachers and students can work together to identify the places and times that present the most risk and design steps to reduce risk. Research in the USA suggests that the best initiatives are those where students and teachers work together to develop and implement strategies to make schools safe, as children can provide information about what is going on and usually have a better understanding of what is happening.

Students who are given responsibilities for keeping their educational environment safe and secure also feel more accepted within the school, experience fewer behavioural problems and have better educational outcomes. Successful school anti-bullying approaches are premised on the notion that bullying behaviour can be identified and redirected in a more positive direction.<sup>165</sup>

- The Government of **Indonesia**, in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including parents' associations and adolescents' networks, has launched a social media campaign to end all forms of violence in childhood. The campaign involves initiatives led by young people to raise awareness about bullying and to provide support to victims, including through an "End Bullying" manual to empower children and promote peer support.
- In **Norway**, the Office of the Ombudsman for Children of Norway promotes and disseminates "young people's recommendations" on how to address bullying behaviour<sup>166</sup>, which include: pupils should be informed of their rights; schools should employ school psychologists; teachers should listen more to pupils; schools should have regular "pupil reviews" where children can report bullying; and teachers should work on cases of bullying until they are resolved and be commended for handling them.
- In **Ireland**, the 2013 National Action Plan on Bullying promotes the development of school policies, including strategies to combat homophobic bullying and includes the responsibilities of schools and education services.<sup>167</sup> The Plan was informed by consultations with children and adolescents, who placed a significant emphasis on prevention, including the need for: all members of school communities, including children, to understand the various manifestations and consequences of bullying; schools to tackle the underlying causes of bullying by promoting a culture of respect for the dignity of every person; and children and adolescents to learn about and value diversity. The Plan called for: new anti-bullying procedures for schools; support for training and resource development for school management and for parents; adapted school inspection frameworks to gather more information on creating a positive school culture and tackling bullying; the creation of a new national anti-bullying website; support for awareness-raising campaigns; and research on the prevalence and impact of bullying linked to social media, on mental health and suicidal behaviour among young people and on effective support for children with special educational needs.
- Save the Children's Violence Free Schools project in **Afghanistan** has a strong emphasis on the involvement of children, particularly through their meaningful participation in school structures. The project focuses on the development and implementation of school-based child protection systems to protect children from violence and abuse including physical and psychological punishment and to prevent sexual abuse and gender discrimination. One of the key elements is the establishment of three different committees in each school: a child protection committee to directly address specific issues arising in the school; a parent, teacher and student association to facilitate dialogue among these groups and with the community; and a student council to promote communication among pupils, help them organise themselves and address issues affecting them.

165 "Bullying Prevention: Nature and Extent of Bullying in Canada", Government of Canada <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/blng-prvntn/index-en.aspx#a06>

166 Office of the SRSO on Violence against Children. (2016). Background paper on protecting children from bullying and cyberbullying. p.16.

167 Minister for Education and Skills (Ireland). (2013). *Action Plan On Bullying*. pp.108-112.



- In June 2015, the #PurpleMySchool campaign was launched by UNESCO, UNDP and Being LGBTI in **Asia**, with the aim of ensuring that educational settings are free from bullying and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. The campaign encouraged peers, teachers and parents to become allies of LGBTI students. Supporters were encouraged to wear, draw or make something purple and submit photos to the campaign website or share on social media using the hashtag #PurpleMySchool. Schools and universities have also supported the campaign through sports activities, games, wearing purple clothes, sharing purple stickers, candles, leaflets and balloons, and arranging visits by well-known LGBTI activists and celebrities.<sup>168</sup>

## ■ 3.5 Services and support

Effective, accessible, confidential child, age and gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms, and the knowledge that action will be taken in a way that does not put them at further risk, are critical for victims of bullying and for bystanders. Reporting mechanisms must be a core component of a robust national child protection system, acting as a resource for children and adolescents and also as a referral system for those in need of advice and assistance.

Examples of reporting mechanisms that have been used include telephone helplines, chatrooms and online reporting, 'happiness and sadness' boxes, and school focal points such as teachers. In some contexts, girls' clubs have been used as safe spaces for girls to raise concerns about and report sexual violence. Mechanisms must be accessible to all children and adolescents and take into account the barriers that some may face in reporting school violence and bullying.

- In Ontario Province, **Canada**, the Comprehensive Action Plan for Accepting Schools requires each school to have a safe and accepting school team and bullying prevention and intervention plan in place. A range of supportive resources, including a Kids Help Phone to provide counselling and referral information on bullying and internet safety, a guide to support parents in their understanding of bullying and cyberbullying and tools to enhance children's online safety and digital citizenship, have also been developed.
- Under its Action Plan for 2011, the Higher Council for Childhood in **Lebanon** introduced a child e-helpline with technical support from Italy's Telefono Azzurro service that helps children to communicate quickly with a team of professionals. It consists of a reporting mechanism, online technical support, as well as referrals and counselling.
- Plan **Kenya** and Childline Kenya set up a free 24-hour telephone helpline for children. Launched in March 2008, the service provides both preventive and support services through referral and school outreach facilities. The Department of Children's Services provides personnel to manage rescue operations, court procedures and the preparation of children's cases. The three-digit number associated with the service is memorable and free on all telephone technology.<sup>169</sup>
- In **the Netherlands**, the Kindertelefoon is an anonymous helpline for children under 18 to discuss a range of concerns, including bullying at school. Children can also chat to a trained volunteer from Kindertelefoon through the website in conversations lasting up to 30 minutes. A comparative study of the effect of contacting the organisation by phone or the confidential one-on-one online chat service found that children who contacted Kindertelefoon by both methods experienced a higher sense of well-being and a reduced severity of their problems.
- As part of Plan's Learn without Fear project in **Malawi**, 'happiness and sadness' boxes were introduced to improve reporting by children and adolescents of violence and abuse in school. Issues highlighted through the boxes included bullying, corporal punishment, denial of food and working at teachers' houses. A 2010 evaluation found that the boxes were an innovative and successful initiative. Of all the

168 See Purple My School campaign: <https://medium.com/being-lgbti-in-asia/purplemyschool-campaign-making-educationsafer-for-lgbti-students-9060a05413f4>

169 Plan's Learn without Fear Campaign: Campaign Progress Report, Plan, 2010.

project activities, participants rated the boxes most highly and both teachers and learners thought the boxes were an effective child protection and reporting measure.

- As part of the USAID Communication for Change Project in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, carefully selected female teachers, who had worked as mentors on a previous USAID project, were trained as focal points for students to report school gender-based violence. After boys complained that they felt uncomfortable reporting their experiences of violence to female teachers, the project included a male and female teacher in each school as designated 'focal teachers.'
- In **Bhutan**, UNICEF set up a child protection system in collaboration with Buddhist monasteries. Over 4,000 children live and study in monasteries, often sent by parents who cannot afford the costs associated with government schools. The new child protection system links the monastic orders with the police and state child welfare services. It provides children with a way of reporting violence, neglect, mistreatment or abuse. Child rights workshops are held for pupils, teachers and senior monks, and a child protection officer is housed permanently in the monasteries.

Safe, easily-accessible, child-sensitive, confidential and independent counselling and support should also be available for victims of violence and bullying, bystanders and perpetrators; in the case of the latter to help them address the problems that they face and that trigger their behaviour.

Strategies used include training teachers to be first points of contact and to provide advice, as 'guardians' or 'mentors', engaging specialist staff, such as school counsellors or social workers, to deal directly with the students involved, using community volunteers, and peer support. In some contexts, schools have established referral systems to link children and adolescents to health and other services.<sup>170</sup> Support also needs to be in place for teachers and other staff who are subjected to violence or bullying, by their peers or by students.

- The **Republic of Korea** has a One Stop Support Centre in the local general hospital that provides medical, legal and counselling support.<sup>171</sup> Initially established for the female victims of sexual crime, the scope of the centre has since been expanded to include victims of domestic and school violence. There is also a national network of Youth Counselling and Welfare Centres that provide counselling and other services for young people.<sup>172</sup>
- Guidance counsellors in **Jamaica** are trained to counsel students experiencing problems, including violence. They also have wider responsibilities for career and academic guidance and a report by the Jamaica Safe Schools programme noted that counsellors were over-burdened. Recent developments include developing and establishing accredited certification and an internationally regarded code of ethics for guidance counsellors.
- In the **USA**, an approach to working with troubled and violent children in schools called Collaborative and Proactive Solutions was piloted. Initial results were very promising with schools reporting 80% reductions in suspensions, disciplinary referrals and incidents of peer aggression. The approach places counsellors in schools to work closely with the most disruptive and aggressive children, developing strategies that work better than traditional punishments at addressing their needs and changing their behaviour.
- In **Ghana** and **Malawi**, trusted community volunteers were trained to work as counsellors for the USAID Safe Schools programme, which focused on gender-based violence in schools. Volunteers included village leaders, school staff and individuals from parent-teacher associations or community committees and they were trained in basic listening skills, children's rights and responsibilities and methods to prevent, respond to and report incidents of violence. They were also trained to provide student-friendly, confidential support and to refer students to service providers. During the final assessment, students, especially girls, reported that the counselling services had helped them. Education officials and head teachers also noted that the counsellors were not only helping victims but also dealing with conflict and anger management issues.

<sup>170</sup> See WHO (2015). Preventing youth violence: an overview of the evidence.

<sup>171</sup> <http://smartsmpa.tistory.com/1306>

<sup>172</sup> [http://www.mogef.go.kr/korea/view/policyGuide/policyGuide07\\_03\\_01.jsp](http://www.mogef.go.kr/korea/view/policyGuide/policyGuide07_03_01.jsp)



- In **Japan**, peer support and counselling is seen as a particularly effective way of dealing with *ijime*, a type of bullying that involves social exclusion of students. Various forms of peer support have been used including training older pupils to support younger ones, particularly those making the transition from elementary to junior school, and anonymous forms of peer support, including through an e-mail system. Some schools also use the Question and Answer Handout Method, where students anonymously submit problems in a box and peer supporters provide possible solutions via a handout or written newsletter, made available to all children.<sup>173</sup>



In Japan, peer support and counselling is an effective way of dealing with bullying. Photo from Japan. KPG\_Payless/Shutterstock.com

### RESTORATIVE APPROACHES

**Restorative processes include: a set of principles or values that define the role that such processes will serve within the community; training of key personnel in a restorative approach; strong communication strategies; group discussions that provide a forum for building trust and commitment to act; and voluntary attendance at meetings in order to bring all parties together, emphasising a whole-school and whole-community approach, in order to obtain a consensus.**

**In some contexts, schools use restorative approaches as an alternative to traditional disciplinary measures, such as suspension or expulsion, to help to reintegrate perpetrators back into the school community rather than aggravating the risk of isolation and recidivism.<sup>174</sup> Such practices include victim-offender mediation, group conferences and peacemaking or restorative circles. They can involve teaching conflict resolution, training student mediators to solve conflicts among their peers and setting up associations of parents and teachers to play a supportive role in the mediation process.<sup>175</sup> Available evidence suggests that such practices may have positive effects including: improvement in school attendance, climate and culture; greater community and parent engagement; decreased use of exclusionary discipline; increased student connectedness; and decreased levels of fighting and bullying.**

## 3.6 Data, monitoring and evaluation

Accurate, reliable and comprehensive data is needed on the prevalence, nature and causes of school violence and bullying to inform policy, planning and budgeting. Data is also essential to quantify the costs of school violence and bullying and returns from investment in prevention. Monitoring and evaluation are critical to understand what works in different contexts and strengthen the evidence base for effective interventions to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying. However, there are significant gaps in available data and evidence and this reflects a number of challenges:

- Lack of standard global definitions, for example, on what constitutes bullying.
- Low priority is given to data collection on school violence and bullying, especially in countries with limited education sector resources, and some types of violence are better tracked than others.
- School violence and bullying is often under-reported, so available information is limited and incomplete.

<sup>173</sup> James, A. (2011). The use and impact of peer support schemes in schools in the UK and a comparison with use in Japan and South Korea. Doctoral Thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London.

<sup>174</sup> Morrison B. (2006). School bullying and restorative justice: Towards a theoretical understanding of the role of respect, pride and shame. *Journal of Social Issues* 62(2) pp 371-392.

<sup>175</sup> See for example the Programme of National Coexistence in Education Centres in Costa Rica (<http://www.mep.go.cr/sites/default/files/recursos/archivo/convivir.pdf>).

- Lack of comparable data, for example, existing surveys cover different age groups and measure different behaviours and different time periods, e.g. being bullied in the past year, past 2 months, past 30 days.
- Lack of disaggregated data, by gender, age, disability and other characteristics.
- Lack of evaluation of interventions to determine effectiveness and modifications required to improve effectiveness.

These challenges make it difficult to estimate global prevalence or trends, or to generate precise, consistent and representative assessments. Some efforts are being made to address this. For example, UNICEF is promoting a global bullying database using recent data on its prevalence among 11-15-year olds from six survey programmes covering 145 countries.<sup>176</sup> The database will enable analysis of the prevalence of bullying by age and sex, show how prevalence rates are affected by the different definitions used by the survey programmes,<sup>177</sup> and contribute to the process of developing internationally agreed indicators to measure bullying and cyberbullying. However, there is an urgent need for agreed, standardised indicators and for effective mechanisms and tools to improve measurement and monitoring of school violence and bullying and future responses.

### ■ 3.7 Examples of programmes that encompass one or more of these elements of a comprehensive approach

In Finland, KiVa is a national anti-bullying programme for Finnish schools, a research-based programme that was developed by the University of Turku with funding from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.<sup>178</sup> The programme, which started in 2009 and has three main elements – prevention of bullying, dealing with individual cases, monitoring of change and feedback to schools – is being implemented by 90% of schools in the country.<sup>179</sup> The effects of the programme, which have been evaluated in a range of studies<sup>180</sup> show that national rates of bullying and victimisation have decreased since its introduction.

In Norway, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme is a model approach for reducing and preventing bullying. It informed the adoption of anti-bullying legislation to protect school children in Norway and Sweden.<sup>181</sup> Building on this, the Norwegian government adopted a Manifesto against Bullying, calling for collaborative action by a wide range of stakeholders and with concrete goals to promote and monitor progress. The programme has been implemented on a large-scale in primary and lower secondary schools in Norway since 2001<sup>182</sup> and has also been implemented in a range of other countries including Canada, Croatia, England, Germany, Iceland, Sweden and the USA. The programme works at school, classroom and individual levels and includes methods to involve and secure the support of parents and the community. It highlights the responsibility of adults and caregivers to ensure children's participation in decisions, to have the skills necessary to prevent bullying and to act as good role models.<sup>183</sup> School administrators, teachers and other staff are primarily responsible for implementing the programme, but it also emphasises the participation of all students, with those who are bullied and those who bully receiving additional individualised interventions. The aim overall is to improve peer relations and make schools a safer and more positive place for students to learn and develop<sup>184</sup>. The programme has been found to reduce bullying

176 WHO, Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children; WHO Global School-based Student Health Surveys; Trends in Mathematics and Science Study; Children's World Report (2015); Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education, (Second (2008) and Third (2015) Regional Comparative and Explanatory Studies.

177 See Dominic Richardson and Chii Fen Hui, UNICEF, Office of Research, Innocenti Research Centre, "Developing a global indicator on bullying of school-aged children", April 2016.

178 <http://www.kivaprogram.net/program>

179 <http://www.welivesecurity.com/2016/07/26/cyberbullying-finland-kiva/>

180 In Finland KiVa has been widely evaluated including in a large randomised controlled trial including 117 intervention schools and 117 control schools in 2011.

181 <http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/index.page>.

182 [http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus\\_history.page](http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus_history.page)

183 Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2012). Tackling violence in schools: A global perspective bridging the gap between standards and practice.

184 Heather Cecil & Stacie Molnar-Main (2015), *Journal of School Violence*, 14:4, 335-362.

## 3.7 Examples of programmes that encompass one or more of these elements of a comprehensive approach

among students, improve the social climate of classrooms and reduce related anti-social behaviours across gender and grade sub-groups.

Croatia's Safe and Enabling School Environment programme was implemented by UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport and the Education and Teacher Training Agency to protect children from school violence and bullying. It consisted of two parts – a public “Stop Violence among Children” campaign to raise awareness of aggression and bullying in schools and promote social change, and school-based interventions to prevent and address violence and make schools safe, including involving children in school policy making and actions to reduce violence. More than 4,500 teachers were trained and, between 2003 and 2011, 301 schools, mostly primary schools, implemented the programme. An evaluation in 2008 showed a reduction in the incidence of frequent bullying from 10% to 5% and a reduction in the number of children bullying others from 13% to 3%. Children and teachers were also better able to recognise bullying and better prepared to stop it, and more than 80% of students knew who to turn to for help. Similar programmes have subsequently been launched in Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Slovenia and Kazakhstan.

A key priority of the Government of Rwanda's 2014 Family Promotion Policy is the development and roll-out of a national child protection system in Rwanda. The system takes a multisectoral approach in preventing and responding to violence, neglect and exploitation of children. At the national level, areas where child protection authorities and the Ministry of Education are working together to make stronger linkages include: revising teachers' code of conduct and ensuring every teacher has the code of conduct; promoting peer-to-peer education through children's Speak Out clubs; strengthening counselling systems in schools; developing clear referral pathways in schools for reporting allegations and incidents of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in schools; and promotion of violence-free schools.

USAID's Safe Schools Program model, piloted in Ghana and Malawi from 2003 to 2008, aimed to reduce gender-based violence in and around schools through an integrated set of interventions at the national, institutional, local and individual level. These included: national awareness-raising activities with a range of stakeholders; revisions to the Teachers' Code of Conduct; teacher training to recognise, prevent and respond to gender-based violence; and community awareness-raising. The results included: a change in teachers' attitudes towards the acceptability of corporal punishment of boys; an increase in teachers' awareness of sexual harassment of girls and boys at school; and an increase in students' awareness that they have the right not to be hurt or mistreated. In Malawi, the number of teachers who said they knew how to report a violation of the Code of Conduct increased by over 30% and virtually all of those said they had a responsibility to report violations. The final report recommended that future programmes encourage sustainable, long-term change through a gender approach, a whole-school approach, redefining classroom discipline with teachers and parents, and stressing children's rights and responsibilities. The pilot has since been implemented in the Dominican Republic, Senegal, Yemen, Tajikistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>185</sup>

Plan International's Learn without Fear campaign, a global effort to end violence against children in schools, was launched in 2008. The campaign addressed a range of violence issues, including sexual abuse, neglect, verbal and emotional abuse, corporal punishment, bullying, peer-to-peer violence, youth gangs, harassment on the way to and from school, and the use of weapons in and around schools. It aimed to raise the profile of these issues among the public and persuade governments, schools and other key players of the need to act. The approach is based on a seven point plan:

- Working with governments to develop and enforce laws against school violence.
- Working with partners to develop reporting and referral mechanisms for children affected by school violence and advocating for the establishment or expansion of confidential child hotlines.
- Recognising children and young people as critical participants in the development of strategies and solutions to address violence in schools.
- Working with governments to establish data collection systems and carry out research to ascertain the scale and severity of violence in their schools.
- Ensuring that sufficient resources are earmarked by governments and international organisations to tackle violence in schools.

<sup>185</sup> See USAID and DevTech. 2008. Safe schools project final report in <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/gmr-2013-14-teaching-and-learning-education-for-all-2014-en.pdf>

### 3. The response

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#### 3.7 Examples of programmes that encompass one or more of these elements of a comprehensive approach

- Advocating with UN agencies, multilateral donors, development banks and international NGOs to increase support to governments to tackle violence in schools.
- Working with pupils, parents, school staff, education authorities and the community to expel violence from schools.

As of August 2010, the Learn without Fear campaign was operating in 44 countries. It has contributed to changes in legislation, the creation of safer schools and communities and increased awareness of the issue of violence in schools. In two years, anti-violence campaign messages reached 94 million adults and children through radio and television shows, leaflets, training sessions and workshops. Children have been involved in all aspects of the campaign, ranging from campaign planning in Malawi and Egypt to running radio shows in Senegal and participating in regional art collaborations in Asia. Over the same period, the campaign trained more than 19,000 teachers in non-violent teaching methods. As a result, 33 of the 44 countries report an increase in non-violent practices among educators. The campaign has also contributed to improvements in mechanisms that give children the opportunity to report incidents of violence in school in 27 of the 44 countries; in addition 36 countries have provided access to medical support for injuries related to school violence and 28 have also provided counselling services for affected children.

Other projects, mentioned earlier in this section, that have had a measurable impact, include Action Aid's Stop Violence Against Girls project in East Africa<sup>186</sup>, which reduced gender-based violence, and the Good School Toolkit project in Uganda, which reduced violence and corporal punishment in schools.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> See [http://www.ungei.org/files/Actionaid\\_Stop\\_Violence\\_Against\\_at\\_school\\_project-endline\\_full\\_report\\_Oct\\_2013-LOW.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/files/Actionaid_Stop_Violence_Against_at_school_project-endline_full_report_Oct_2013-LOW.pdf)

<sup>187</sup> See <http://raisingvoices.org/good-school/>

# 4. Priority actions

## SIX PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ADDRESS SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND BULLYING



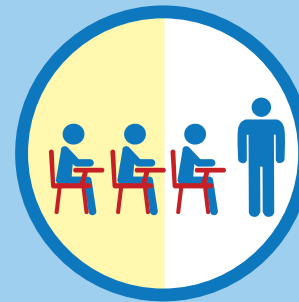
**STRENGTHEN LEADERSHIP**



**PROMOTE AWARENESS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND BULLYING**



**ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**



**BUILD CAPACITY OF EDUCATION STAFF AND LEARNERS**



**ESTABLISH SYSTEMS FOR REPORTING**



**IMPROVE DATA AND EVIDENCE**

*This section summarises the priority actions required to address key challenges and to tackle school violence and bullying so that all children and adolescents have access to safe and inclusive learning environments.<sup>188</sup> These priority actions are also critical to achieve Agenda 2030, in particular SDG 4 and SDG 16, and the aims of the recently established Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.<sup>189</sup>*

### **1. Strengthen leadership and commitment to eliminating school violence and bullying.**

Specifically:

- Enact and enforce clear and comprehensive national legislation to protect children and adolescents from school violence and bullying, including laws prohibiting corporal punishment in schools.
- Allocate adequate human and financial resources for effective implementation at all levels and support for those responsible for enforcing laws and policies such as local education authority and district officials.
- Develop and implement policies and codes of conduct for staff and students to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying at national, local authority and school levels.

### **2. Promote awareness of violence against children, the benefits of violence-free schools and the harmful impact of school violence and bullying.**

Specifically:

- Promote awareness of violence against children and the negative impact of school violence and bullying among policy-makers, education professionals and other staff, parents, children and adolescents.
- Promote non-violent approaches to discipline and classroom management.
- Implement interventions to change social attitudes and norms that condone or perpetuate violence against children and adolescents.
- Educate policy-makers, teachers, parents, children and adolescents about cyberbullying and steps that can be taken to prevent and respond to it.

### **3. Establish partnerships, including active participation of children and adolescents, to tackle school violence and bullying.**

Specifically:

- Establish cross-sector collaboration to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying.
- Develop and implement national programmes that identify the roles of all relevant stakeholders at all levels.
- Work with children and adolescents as equal partners in planning and implementing action to reduce school violence and bullying, including through building their capacity and the establishment of appropriate structures to facilitate their formal participation in school management.

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<sup>188</sup> See also WHO (2016). Inspire. Seven strategies for ending violence against children.

<sup>189</sup> See [www.end-violence.org](http://www.end-violence.org)

- Work in partnership with parents and communities to secure their support for measures to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying.

#### **4. Build the capacity of education staff and learners to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying.**

Specifically:

- Provide school governors and management committees, head teachers, teachers and other school staff with training and support to help them prevent, identify and respond to school violence and bullying.
- Ensure that training for teachers includes positive, gender-sensitive, non-violent approaches to discipline and classroom management.
- Identify opportunities to address violence and bullying, promote non-violence and develop related knowledge, attitudes and skills within the school curriculum and provide teachers with access to information, resources and supporting materials.
- Build the capacity of children and adolescents to recognise, prevent and respond to violence and bullying, including through building required knowledge, values and skills.

#### **5. Establish systems to report school violence and bullying and to provide support and services.**

Specifically:

- Establish safe, confidential, child-friendly, age- and gender-sensitive complaints and reporting mechanisms that enable victims and bystanders to safely report violence and bullying without fear of reprisals and ensure that all children and adolescents are aware of these.
- Provide safe, confidential, child-friendly, age- and gender-sensitive counselling and other support services for victims, perpetrators and bystanders.

#### **6. Improve data and evidence on the causes, nature, extent and impact of school violence and bullying and effective responses to it.**

Specifically:

- Agree on a robust and validated set of indicators and sound methodologies to gather data in order to enable consistent reporting and ensure that estimates of the prevalence of school violence and bullying are reliable and internationally comparable.
- Strengthen research on the nature and causes of school violence and bullying.
- Strengthen monitoring of bullying in countries where this has been less well tracked to date.
- Invest in monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of interventions.



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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Education  
Sector

School violence and bullying occurs throughout the world and affects a significant proportion of children and adolescents. It not only negatively impacts their educational outcomes, but harms their physical health and emotional well-being.

This report aims to provide an overview of the most up-to-date available data on the nature, extent and impact of school violence and bullying and efforts to address the problem. It was prepared by UNESCO and the Institute of School Violence and Prevention at Ewha Womans University for the International Symposium on School Violence and Bullying: From Evidence to Action, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 17 – 19 January, 2017.

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