



This brief analyzes one of the four major themes in USAID education programming in Sub-Saharan Africa: community engagement, conflict- and crisis-response, gender-based violence, and systems strengthening. These themes were identified through the basic education PPR narratives submitted for fiscal year (FY) 2019. Eighteen Sub-Saharan African countries provided FY 2019 PPR narratives for basic education activities: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. In some cases, countries also reported on education activities under other PPR narratives, such as youth, gender-based violence (GBV), gender, or inclusive development. When possible, these programs are included here, which has resulted in the inclusion of Zambia and Zimbabwe. Programs that did not clearly describe a school-based component in the PPR narratives were excluded, so there may be some relevant programming not captured here. The most frequently mentioned themes across PPR narratives were community engagement, conflict- and crisis-response, and systems strengthening. GBV is elevated as a fourth theme because it is a major priority for USAID and because school-based GBV programs are frequently described in the GBV and gender PPR narratives, even when not included in the basic education narratives. Each thematic area is divided in two sections: 1) background on the theme and its importance, and 2) a snapshot of USAID’s work in these areas, including a list of programs, high-level observations about the nature of the work, and summaries of exemplar projects. Country PPR narratives provide more information on all programs described here.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE | Sub-Saharan Africa

Gender-based Violence Prevention in Education Programs

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is a global phenomenon the education sector must address. This violence, which is defined in USAID’s 2018 Education Policy as “threats of physical, sexual, or psychological violence or abuse that are based on gendered stereotypes or that target students on the basis of their sex” is a violation of children’s rights, and a significant barrier to their access to and participation in education (United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative [UNGEI] 2019).

SRGBV adversely affects children of all genders; boys experience higher rates of corporal punishment, while girls more often face sexual violence, harassment, psychological bullying, and cyber-bullying (UNESCO and UN Women 2016). Sexual violence and harassment are of particular issue for girls. Worldwide, around 120 million girls (1 in 10) under the age of 20 have experienced sexual violence (UNESCO and UN Women 2016). Some areas in Africa specifically have reported high rates of sexual harassment. For example, in research from the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitor Educational Quality (SACMEQ), 41 percent of school principals surveyed in Sub-Saharan Africa acknowledged sexual harassment between pupils in their schools (cited in UNESCO and UNGEI 2015). In this region, girls with disabilities are even more vulnerable to sexual violence (African Child Policy Forum [ACPF] 2011). Additionally, data from seven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa from the Violence Against Children Survey show that the perpetrator of the first incident of sexual violence is more likely to be a classmate or schoolmate than an authority figure (teacher, policy/security person, neighbor, or religious leader) (UNESCO 2019).

SRGBV compromises a child’s well-being, and has physical, emotional, cognitive, and educational consequences. Children who have experienced SRGBV are more likely to have poor school performance, be absent from school, or drop out of school (UNESCO and UN Women 2016, USAID 2018, U.S. Government [USG] 2018). In fact, SRGBV is one of the factors that causes 62 million girls aged 6–15 to be out of school (USG 2018). Furthermore, “evidence suggests that SRGBV can also have long-term and far-reaching consequences for young people who have witnessed such violence, as they may grow up to repeat the behaviour that they have ‘learned’ and to regard it as acceptable” (UNESCO and UN Women 2016). Besides SRGBV, other forms of GBV can also affect girls’ educational attainment. For example, parents, teachers, school administrators, and girls themselves often cite child marriage—defined as marriage before the age of 18—as a reason for school dropout, and early marriage is strongly correlated with a girls’ non-completion of secondary school (Wodon et al. 2017). The Sub-Saharan African region includes 17 of the 20 countries with the highest rates of marriage before the age of 18, ranging from Niger with 76 percent of girls married by age 18 to Liberia with 36 percent (UNICEF 2019).

Notably, all forms of GBV are the product of sociocultural and structural inequalities, and thus, are not “inevitable.” Attitudes toward this violence have significantly changed over time in many areas and can continue to change (Messner et al. 2015).

SRGBV is a pressing issue addressed in the Sustainable Development Goals (Education [4], Gender Equality [5], and Violence against Children [16.2]), as well as in the USG Strategy on International Basic Education and the USAID

Education Policy (UNESCO and UN Women 2016, UNGEI 2019, USAID 2018, USG 2018). The USG commits to working with partner countries and stakeholders to prevent GBV in and around schools, and USAID states that learning environments should not be places of danger (USAID 2018, USG 2018).

USAID Gender-based Violence Prevention in Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa

In FY 2019, at least 15 Sub-Saharan African countries had education programs that addressed SRGBV.

COUNTRY	USAID ACTIVITY WITH GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION
Democratic Republic of the Congo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCELERE! 1 (A!1) • Counter-Gender Based Violence (C-GBV)
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yetu Community Philanthropy Initiative
Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated Quality Education (AQE) • Learning Links
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give Girls a Chance to Learn (AMAA) • Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement (MERIT)
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls Leadership and Empowerment through Education (GLEE)
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEPFAR DREAMS
Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing Education in Northeast Nigeria
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Children Read • Passerelles
Sierra Leone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of Women through Empowerment and Response (POWER)
Somalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative Basic Education (ABE)
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Affairs Section
South Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-based GBV Prevention Clubs • Integrated Emergency Education Services (IEES)
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waache Wasome (“Let them Learn”) • Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS) • PEPFAR DREAMS • Tusome Pamoja
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA)
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEPFAR DREAMS

*Based on FY19 PPR Narrative Responses

USAID’s Approaches to Gender-based Violence prevention in Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa in FY 2019

- Disseminating information and improving knowledge of SRGBV
- Building capacity for schools and communities to prevent, respond to, and manage incidences of SRGBV
- Working to empower children and adolescents to support and protect themselves and one another

Examples of USAID-supported Gender-based Violence Prevention Work in Sub-Saharan Africa

In **Tanzania**, USAID’s **Waache Wasome (“Let Them Learn”)** activity helped to form Protect Our Youth clubs in 36 secondary schools. The clubs, which help build protective communities around these youth, empower the adolescent members with information, skills, and support networks to better navigate risks such as SRGBV. The Waache Wasome activity also held a 3-week computer coding camp for girls, where girls learned computer skills they then used to develop websites and mobile applications to disseminate messages about GBV and other issues girls face.

USAID’s **Give Girls a Chance to Learn** activity in **Malawi** conducted advocacy that led to increased reporting of SRGBV cases, counseling for girls affected by SRGBV, and 309 girls returning to school after having dropped out.

In **Uganda**, USAID’s **Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity** worked with students, teachers, and community members to build their capacity to be catalysts in transforming gender norms to reduce incidences of SRGBV. The activity also cooperated with schools and communities to strengthen the structures for managing, investigating, and responding to cases of SRGBV.

In Liberia, the **Accelerated Quality Education (AQE)** activity worked to create safe learning spaces by 1) systematically articulating what a safe learning environment is, 2) creating a teacher code of conduct, 3) including SRGBV themes in the curriculum, 3) rehabilitating learning sites to make them safe and secure, and 4) exploring partner engagement activities.

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