Stop Violence Against Girls in School

A cross-country analysis of baseline research from Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique

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Acronyms

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CHRAJ Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice

DEO District Education Officer

EFA Education for All

FCUBE Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education

FGD Focus Group Discussion

FGM Female Genital Mutilation

FPE Free Primary Education

GAD Gender and Development

GES Ghana Education Service

GMR Global Monitoring Report

GNECC The Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition

GPI Gender Parity Index

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

MOE Ministry of Education

NER Net Enrolment Ratio

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

PTR Pupil Teacher Ratio

SMC School Management Committee

STI Sexually Transmitted Infection

SVAGS Stop Violence Against Girls in School

UNCRC United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

WID Women in Development

Acknowledgements

The cross-country report stems from coordinated baseline studies carried out by research teams in Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique. Their contribution has been immense, including:

Foreword

This report provides a synthesis of research undertaken as part of ActionAid International's Stop Violence Against Girls in School project in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique. The research was conducted by national research partners in all three countries, including the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition in Ghana, Own & Associates in Kenya and the University of Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique, with support from the Institute of Education, University of London, who played an overall coordination and advisory role. In each country, field level data was collected with the assistance of community intervention organisations working on the project, notably Songtaba in Ghana, Girl Child Network in Kenya and AMUDEIA in Mozambique. This report was compiled and written by Dr Jenny Parkes and Jo Heslop of the Institute of Education.

The Stop Violence Against Girls in School project is a 5-year initiative, financed by the UK's Big Lottery Fund, which aims to empower girls, enabling them to enjoy their rights to education and participation in a violence free environment. Previous research undertaken by ActionAid and other organisations has identified violence as one of the key obstacles that prevents the realisation of girls' rights to and in education and therefore this initiative is taking a multi-faceted approach to tackling the problem, combining community-based interventions as well as advocacy and research in order to better understand and change the root causes of the violence and discrimination that affect girls' everyday lives.

Findings from this research indicate that many of the challenges that girls face, stem from deep-rooted power inequalities at all levels which, by reinforcing patterns of gendered discrimination render them vulnerable to various forms of violence and abuse, deny their rights and thus significantly limit their horizons.

Until gender-based violence and discrimination against girls is fully acknowledged and addressed as one of the root causes of the violations of girls' most fundamental rights, not only will it be impossible to reach globally agreed education targets, but it will also remain impossible for girls to develop to their full potential.

This report provides insights into some of the key factors preventing the realisation of girls' rights to and in education in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique and aims to serve as a catalyst for further reflection, research and action aimed at bringing about positive transformations in girls' lives in those three countries and beyond.

Julie Juma
Acting Head of Education
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Executive summary

This report presents findings from baseline studies carried out in three districts in Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique for Stop Violence Against Girls in School, a five year project (2008-2013) led by ActionAid with support from the UK's Big Lottery Fund. The study aimed to provide a baseline with which to measure and evaluate change over the course of the project, as well as building in depth knowledge of gender, violence and education in the project areas in order to inform decision making about community intervention, advocacy and research priorities in the project, and contributing to the international literature on gender violence in schools. The research questions which framed the study are:

1. What are the constraints upon and opportunities for combating gender violence, discrimination and inequalities within legislative and policy frameworks and their implementation, at national, state and local community level?

2. What patterns of violence do girls experience in schools, homes and communities? How are these situated in girls' everyday interactions and relationships? How are these linked to the political, social and economic context?

3. What are the gendered patterns of enrolment, completion and achievement in the project schools? What variations are there between the schools, and how do these compare with district and national patterns? What are the links with gender relations and violence?

4. What mechanisms are there for girls to contest violence, to express their perspectives and to influence decisions about matters that concern them? How can these be expanded?

Data was collected in 2009 in 13 primary schools and communities in Ghana, 16 in Kenya and 15 in Mozambique. A total of 2757 respondents participated in the baseline study, including girls and boys, teachers and head teachers, parents, SMC members, community leaders and women's group leaders, District Education Officers, District Health Officers and Police. The studies combined quantitative and qualitative methods, and a desk review of the legal and policy frameworks. Research was conducted by research institutes in each of the three countries (see acknowledgements) and national baseline reports were developed. This report looks across the findings of the three country contexts, situating findings within the international literature, identifying common themes and setting out implications for the project specifically and more broadly for policy, practice and research.

Key findings:

a. Legislative and policy frameworks

All three countries have made significant strides in recent years with improving girls' access to basic education, and with strengthening legislation on gender and violence. However, changes at national level are feeding through to local level in very uneven ways. Lack of clarity and consistency in national laws and policies do not give district education authorities, schools and other justice and welfare services the tools to take decisive action.

The project areas share high levels of poverty and poor access to services. Wenje, in the Coast Province of Kenya, and Nanumba, in Northern Ghana, are remote districts far from the capital. Manhiça, in Mozambique, is less remote, but most households still lack access to piped water and electricity. The gendered division of labour in all three areas is embedded in socio-economic conditions in which children's labour is required to support the family, and girls have to clean, fetch firewood and water, cook and care for younger children, as well as working at the farm or market. Child marriage is a common practice, teenage pregnancy is rife, and in the pastoralist community in Kenya, female genital mutilation continues to be practised.

The rhetoric of change seems a distant reality for girls and their communities in the project districts across all three countries, with ineffective structures, training and resources to implement policies at local level.

b. Patterns of violence

Girls in the three project districts experience multiple forms of violence, with 86% of girls in the project area in Kenya, 82% in Ghana, and 66% in Mozambique reporting some form of violence in the past 12 months. Physical punishments are very common at home and at school, and are frequently taken for granted by girls and boys, despite recent legislative changes. The differing patterns in the three countries signal both continuities and changes in attitudes and practices in response to legal and policy changes. The legal status of corporal punishment may discourage teachers from openly advocating the practice, but it appears to have minimal impact on classroom practice, raising questions about how to implement laws prohibiting corporal punishment. At home, physical punishments are often used to reinforce the gendered division of labour.

Sexual violence takes place more often out of school, and is perpetrated mainly by community members and boys. Girls in the project area in Kenya appear to be more vulnerable to many forms of sexual violence, and are more outspoken about violence than girls in Mozambique and Ghana. Protecting family honour, shame and embarrassment, and fear of repercussions hinder girls from talking about violence. Girls are expected to refrain from any sexual activity, and yet sexual harassment in the form of unwanted sexual remarks and touching is common. Sex in exchange for goods is seen as a direct consequence of poverty, and by some respondents as symbolising the disruptive effects of modernity on girls' behaviour. Girls are seen both as victims and to blame for the violence they experience.

c. Gender and schooling

While increasing numbers of younger girls are enrolling in the project schools, in the later years of primary school girls' enrolment drops, most markedly in the Kenyan schools where the number of girls in the last class of primary school in 2009 was almost ten times lower than in the first year. Poverty intersects with gendered inequalities in creating barriers to schooling for girls, with girls missing out on schooling because of household chores and childcare, farm work, inability to pay school fees, early pregnancy and marriage. In the schools themselves, particularly in the project areas in Kenya and Ghana, there is a shortage of well qualified women in teaching and management positions, and gendered attitudes favouring boys, gendered division of labour, and poor conditions and resources hinder girls' capacity to enjoy, achieve and thrive in school.

d. Challenging violence

Girls in the three project areas rarely report violence. A combination of factors influence this: girls may not always understand some acts as violent or wrong (especially in cases of punishments by adults and more subtle forms of sexual and psychological violence), but often they do not report because their experience tells them that no action will be taken, or if it is it may not serve their interests. Girls in the Kenya project site are more likely to speak out than girls in the other sites, a factor perhaps related to the existence of more established girls' clubs and to the engagement of boys in gender clubs where violence against girls is discussed and challenged. School policies and procedures for dealing with violence against girls are lacking, and teachers and girls lack knowledge of laws and national policies. While teachers report that issues of gender and violence, sexual and reproductive health, and negotiation and life skills are addressed through the curriculum, this does not appear to translate into girls being able to act to challenge violence. Within school spaces conflicting messages may be conveyed to girls, with girls' clubs emphasising assertion and speaking out, and curriculum delivery emphasising compliance and abstinence, making girls responsible for controlling their own and boys' sexuality.

Training on issues relating to gender and violence, often carried out by ActionAid, its partners and other NGOs, has been well received by schools and communities, but the weak translation into effective school systems for addressing violence signals a need for a more effective whole school approach. Girls are most likely to report violence to their mothers or other female relatives, but if action is taken at all it is likely to involve negotiation with the family of the perpetrator,

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often resulting in girls being forced to marry against their will, or payment of fines in the cases of pregnancy. If outside intervention is sought it is most likely to be through informal traditional systems with similar results. Community justice systems do not always appear to work in the best interests of the girls, and only a tiny minority of cases are reported to SMCs, DEOs or police, or lead to counselling, care or health advice. Formal structures suffer from lack of resources, training and insufficient referral and follow-up systems. Communication and collaboration between community and official welfare and justice systems is poor, and there is a clear need for building more robust response systems.

Conclusions

The report paints at best an uneven picture, and frequently a bleak picture of violence and inequalities in girls' lives and communities. The conclusion summarises cross-cutting issues across the three project sites, and discusses the implications of variations in the findings between the sites in relation to mismatches between discourse and practice, the effects of modernity on gender and violence, and the building of effective partnerships. The report concludes with recommendations for international, national and district level advocacy, local school and community interventions and future research.

1. Introduction

This section introduces the baseline research carried out in Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique for ActionAid's Stop Violence Against Girls in School project. We begin by outlining the aims of the study, and its location within the broader five year project, and within current debates on gender, violence and education. We go on to introduce the conceptual framework and key research questions underpinning the study.

1.1 Background to Stop Violence Against Girls in School

According to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, all children have the right to a good quality education that respects their human dignity and promotes the development of their potential. They also have the right to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. This Convention has been one of the most widely and rapidly adopted of all conventions and since it came into force in September 1990, it has been ratified by 193 countries (including all but 2 of the member-states of the United Nations), meaning that these countries agreed not just to the principles enshrined within the document but also to bringing their national laws in line with its provisions.

In addition, widespread commitment to achieving the aims of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All objectives, including universal basic education for all by 2015 and gender parity and equality in schools across the world, signifies consensus about the importance of education and the need to ensure certain fundamental rights for children, with a particular concern for girls and addressing inequalities.

Nevertheless, despite such consensus, and despite progress made with 52 million fewer children out of school now than in 1999, much remains to be done, particularly with regard to girls' education. Indeed, nearly 70 countries failed to reach the goal of gender parity in education by 2005, and of the 67 million children currently out of school, 53% are girls (UNESCO 2011).

Moreover, not only are huge numbers of girls seeing their rights to education being denied outright, but many of those who do manage to go to school find that the education they receive is far from being delivered in a way that promotes either their human dignity or development of their potential. In many contexts, under-resourced and over-crowded classrooms, poorly-trained or untrained teachers, bullying, insults, physical punishment and sexual harassment and incidents of abuse both in and on the way to school are everyday realities which prevent those girls who do go to school from benefiting from their rights in education (UNESCO 2003).

ActionAid believes that violence against girls in and around the learning environment, if left unaddressed, will prevent the achievement of universal primary education and the elimination of gender disparities in education. Therefore, building on best practice already being developed in a number of country programmes, in 2008 ActionAid initiated a multi-country project called Stop Violence Against Girls in School with support from the UK's Big Lottery Fund.

This project, which is being implemented simultaneously in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique, over a 5 year period aims to empower girls to be able to enjoy their right to education and participation in a violence-free environment. It aims to do this through achieving 4 key outcomes by 2013:

1. In Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique, a legal and policy framework that specifically addresses violence against girls in school exists and is being implemented at all levels

2. Violence against girls by family members, teachers and peers in the intervention districts is reduced by 50% from baseline statistics

3. In the portfolio intervention districts, enrolment

of girls is increased by 22%, girls' drop out rate decreases by 20% and substantial progress is made towards gender parity in education

4. 14,000 girls in the portfolio intervention districts demonstrate the confidence to challenge the culture of violence in and around schools, report incidents and create peer support networks.

Although it is being implemented in three different countries and although the intervention areas in each country are very different from each other, the project combines common strategic approaches to achieve its aims: research, advocacy and community-based initiatives. The project hopes that the combination of research, community-level initiatives and advocacy will not only serve to generate new knowledge and facilitate a better understanding about the causes and effects of violence against girls, but also will work to tackle the inequalities which expose girls to violence and prevent them from realising their rights to and in education.

The baseline study aims to make a valuable contribution to international knowledge about the impact of violence on girls' education through the implementation of a shared research design and analysis process across three countries in East, West and Southern Africa. A key feature of the study is the innovative relationship between research, advocacy and community intervention, with the baseline findings informing project design over the next four years.

1.2　Project partnership

ActionAid prioritises work through national and local partner organisations and this project is being implemented by seven different national partner organisations with expertise in advocacy, community interventions and research across all three countries in collaboration with ActionAid programmes in each country. The baseline study was conducted by research partners Own and Associates in Kenya, the Faculty of Education of the University of Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique, the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) in Ghana, and the Institute of Education, University of London. The Institute of Education was responsible for developing, in a collaborative manner with national

partners, a strong theoretical framework and research design, as well as providing peer review support to partners and facilitating the cross-country analysis of research outcomes.

1.3　Aims of the baseline study

Research partners worked together to design and conduct a coordinated baseline study. Qualitative and quantitative data has been collected in the three project areas: Wenje District, a rural area in the Coastal Province of Kenya; Nanumba District, a rural area in Northern Ghana; and Manhiça, a peri-urban area near Maputo in Mozambique.

The aims of the baseline research are to:

1. Provide a baseline from which to measure and evaluate change over the life of the project;

2. Elicit accurate data and identify current trends and patterns of violence, discrimination and inequalities in girls' lives in project districts;

3. Identify perspectives and find out experiences of girls, boys and key stakeholders in relation to problems of violence, discrimination and gendered inequalities, and to identify existing personal, social and material resources for girls to contest violence.

4. Situate these within the district, national and international contexts;

5. Identify priority concerns in order to inform decision making about future research, community intervention and advocacy priorities.

1.4　Debating gender, violence and education

Developing a baseline study to investigate violence against girls in three districts of Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique has generated wide-ranging discussions on gender, violence and education among the research teams. Here we outline some of the debates in the international literature which have helped to frame the research design for the baseline study.

A key approach to thinking and action about gender, education and development since the 1970s has been the WID (Women in Development) framework, which stresses expansion of education for girls and women, linked to economic growth and efficiency (Aikman and Unterhalter 2005). Recently reflected in the MDGs and EFA goals, the emphasis has been on getting girls into school. From the late 1980s however, alongside the emphasis on access has been a focus on educational processes that may be hindering children's access to school, with increasing attention drawn to violence in and around schools.

However, while there has been a growing awareness that girls across the world experience multiple forms of violence in their everyday lives, research in this area is often difficult to interpret and translate into policy and practice because of lack of clarity about what is meant by violence. Violence is a complex and contested term, with different theoretical lenses producing different kinds of research and action.

The project is located at the intersection of three strands of research on violence against girls, which focus on acts and individuals, on institutions and social relations, and on interactions. The first strand focuses on acts and individuals, and includes emotional and psychological harm, as well as physical violence. Much of this research has been concerned with finding out the incidence and prevalence of acts of violence. The UN Secretary-General's World Report on Violence Against Children sets out to document the nature, extent and consequences of violence against children, examining not just extreme acts of violence, but also repeated acts of minor, everyday violence, including physical violence and psychological violence, such as humiliation, insults, neglect and discrimination (Pinheiro 2006). The report details how most violence is perpetrated by people known to children, including, parents, boyfriends and girlfriends, schoolmates and teachers. In homes, children may experience sexual abuse, and physical, harsh and humiliating punishments in the context of discipline. In schools, children are exposed to corporal punishment, as well as humiliating forms of psychological punishment and bullying. Though corporal punishment has been outlawed in 102 countries, often the ban is not adequately enforced (Pinheiro 2006). Fighting and bullying are frequently practised by children, with marginalised groups often targeted for bullying.

Pinheiro's review outlines the devastating long and short term consequences of violence for children, including greater susceptibility to social, emotional and cognitive impairments and health risk behaviours, and mental health problems including depression and anti-social behaviours.

While much of the literature on violence against children ignores the gender dimensions, there is an important strand of research which has drawn attention to gender violence (Leach et al 2003; Mirsky 2003; Save the Children 2008). A growing body of evidence is coming from Sub-Saharan Africa, where concerns about violence against girls and women began to emerge in research into the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Jewkes et al 2002; Dunkle et al 2004; Morrell et al 2009). These studies have identified very high levels of coerced sex, with girls forced to have sex by boyfriends or older men, including teachers (Human Rights Watch 2001; WHO 2002; Koenig et al 2004). As well as the health risks, like sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS and pregnancy, such violence has adverse effects on girls' attainment and psychological well-being, including poor concentration and depression, missing and dropping out of school (Dunne, Humphreys and Leach 2006). In much of this work, girls and women are viewed as victims, and boys and men as perpetrators.

This growing body of work focusing on acts of violence has been important in revealing forms of violence that were previously hidden. It has been influential in leading policy-makers to implement actions to prevent, punish or protect the vulnerable from violence, through, for example, setting up school security committees, or domestic violence refuges. However, this emphasis on acts of violence has been criticised for paying insufficient attention to the social conditions that produce violence (USAID 2003).

Other studies, however, associated with the GAD (gender and development) framework, have been deeply concerned with gendered power structures of inequality. This second strand of research shifts the focus from acts of violence, and the individual perpetrators and victims, to a focus on institutions, and the ways in which institutions and social structures produce violence. For example, educational policies that deny girls access to school, criminal justice systems that fail to protect all citizens, or

infrastructures disrupted by recent wars and conflicts may create the conditions for violence against girls to flourish or to go unremarked (Machel 1996; Jacobs 2000; Harber 2004; Bahun-Radunovic and Rajan 2008). Actions to address institutional violence involve transforming social structures, through for example legislative reforms, an approach that has been called 'equity-from-above' (Unterhalter 2007).

This shift in focus from acts and individuals to social structures expands the meaning of the term 'violence' but at the same time it may create problems of operationalisation for research and action. It becomes very difficult to set boundaries or thresholds around what is or is not violent, and to decide what is the object of investigation in a study of violence against girls. This approach may downplay the complexity of gender dynamics in the formation of identities and practices, neglecting the active, fluid and changing ways in which girls and boys interpret and engage with violence.

A third strand of research focuses on interactions, and looks at the ways in which violence is enacted within and through everyday relationships. It is concerned with the lived experience of violence, inequality and discrimination in classrooms, homes and communities. It explores how girls understand and engage in social relationships, how violence enters into these relationships, and how girls resist violence. It also examines how boys, parents and teachers may support girls' resistance (Bhana 2005; Parkes 2007; Dunne 2007). Instead of focusing on differences between men and women, this work examines the complex and diverse ways in which gendered identities are negotiated and struggled over. Work on girls exchanging sex for favours or grades, for example, has drawn attention to the blurred boundary between consensual and coerced sex (Luke and Kurz 2002). Where economic resources are lacking, girls might actively seek sex with older men as a way of gaining important material goods, but increasingly studies are revealing how such practices are associated with a lack of freedom for girls to negotiate their sexuality, and with aggression and physical force (Djamba 2004; Teni-Atinga 2006; Chege 2006).

Many of these studies have found that violence against girls is frequently not reported. Girls may stay silent out of feelings of shame, fear of repercussions, or from the knowledge that they will be ignored, since such acts are taken for granted and normalised (Chege 2006). Schools are sites where gendered inequalities are often perpetuated and violence may be ignored or normalised (Mirembe and Davis 2001). But they are also spaces where change can happen, and teachers can have a crucial role in challenging inequalities. These studies, with their focus on struggles and conflicts in everyday relationships, emphasise dialogue and discussion, or 'equity-from-below' (Unterhalter 2007) and thus privilege the voices of girls themselves.

Critiques of this interactional approach concern the difficulties of translating this work into policy. While the focus on acts and individuals has helped to expose high rates of previously hidden violence, and the focus on institutions highlights legislative and systemic weaknesses, the focus on interactions, with its emphasis on complexity and difference, has had much less impact on policy making. At the same time, as the research using institutional and interactional lenses shows, ignoring the gendered inequalities, social conditions and everyday relationships can only ever present part of the picture. The baseline study aims to synthesise and build on the strengths of each of the three approaches.

1.5 Research on gender, violence and education in Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique

Though not extensive, there is an emerging literature on gender, violence and education reporting on research that has been carried out in Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique, which highlights some common concerns.

Physical punishments in school have also been documented in studies in Ghana and Kenya, drawing attention to how corporal punishment can be used to 'toughen' boys, as well as to enforce female submission (Dunne and Leach 2005). Sexual violence in schools has increasingly been identified as a serious concern in all three countries, drawing attention to the immense constraints on girls negotiating their sexuality. Studies have documented aggression of older male pupils when girls reject their proposals of 'love', and of male teachers coercing girls to have sex,

often in exchange for grades (Leach 2003; Dunne and Leach 2005; Chege 2006; Tena-Atinga 2006; Huber, 2007). Poverty is closely linked to gender violence, with older men and boyfriends supplying much needed material goods. Coercion is complex in such situations, as identified in a study in urban Ghana where, for girls living on the streets, sexual exchange could provide a form of protection from rape by unknown men (Oduro 2011). Research in Mozambique has identified the constraints on married women, where domestic violence is legitimised by family ideologies in which men are expected to exert control and reporting violence poses a threat to women's identities as wives and mothers (Arthur and Mejia 2007). In some of the most marginalised rural communities in Ghana or Kenya, increased access to schooling may be shifting aspirations of young people, but still not expanding spaces for decision-making (Casely-Hayford 2009). A recent study of Kenyan Maasai schoolgirls, for example, found girls used their identities as 'schoolgirls' as a way to challenge gendered expectations about FGM, marriage and family, though FGM and early marriage remain entrenched practices (Switzer 2010).

Another theme of recent studies has been the disjunctions between policy and practice on gender, violence and schooling. In Ghana for example, political will expressed at the national-level stakeholders to address gender and violence is not translating into local-level action (Wetheridge 2008). In Kenya, the language of gender and rights does not filter through the layers of education bureaucracy and concern tends to be limited to gender parity (Unterhalter et al 2010). In Mozambique, cases are rarely brought to authorities, with girls fearful of the repercussions of reporting, or viewing violence as normal and inevitable (Arthur and Mejia 2007). What is clear from the research in these countries, as elsewhere, is that gendered inequalities and poverty create conditions for multiple forms of violence against girls. There remains a huge gap in our understanding about how to challenge gendered inequalities and violence against girls. While projects like SVAGS are setting out explicitly with this goal, the evidence base from research is lacking.

1.6   Conceptual framework for the study

The conceptual framework for this project builds on the three research approaches to violence against girls discussed in section 1.4 and on ActionAid's work on gender (ActionAid 2008). At the centre of the project are girls themselves, and their everyday relationships with other girls and boys, with families, with teachers and with others in their communities. While much violence experienced by girls takes place within these relationships, schools, families and neighbourhoods are also important sites for teaching and learning about safety and empowerment. Side by side with this central focus on girls and interactions, we are concerned with the gendered power relations in which girls live their lives, where aspects of the local, national, regional and global political economy produce violence and limit their space for action within families, schools and communities, as well as being arenas with opportunities for change. Finally we are concerned to document the types and levels of acts of violence experienced by girls, since this information can be valuable to signal change. By combining these three approaches, we can begin to understand why and how change may be happening.

We have synthesised these into a "conceptual framework" to guide a common understanding of gender, violence against girls, rights and empowerment, as depicted in the diagram below. This diagram portrays the four main spheres (political, economic, socio-cultural and health; and policy frameworks), that interact with the overarching sphere of education to produce violence against girls in and around school. Girls are at the centre, situated within the context of every day interactions (the inner ring) and institutions (the outer ring) that form part of their lived experience. Examples of acts of violence, and conditions producing violence, are depicted within the circles according to their "distance" from the girl (i.e. institutional environment on the outside to everyday interactions in girls' lives nearer the middle). Unequal power relations based on gender, age and socio-economic background are central to this framework of violence against girls in schools.
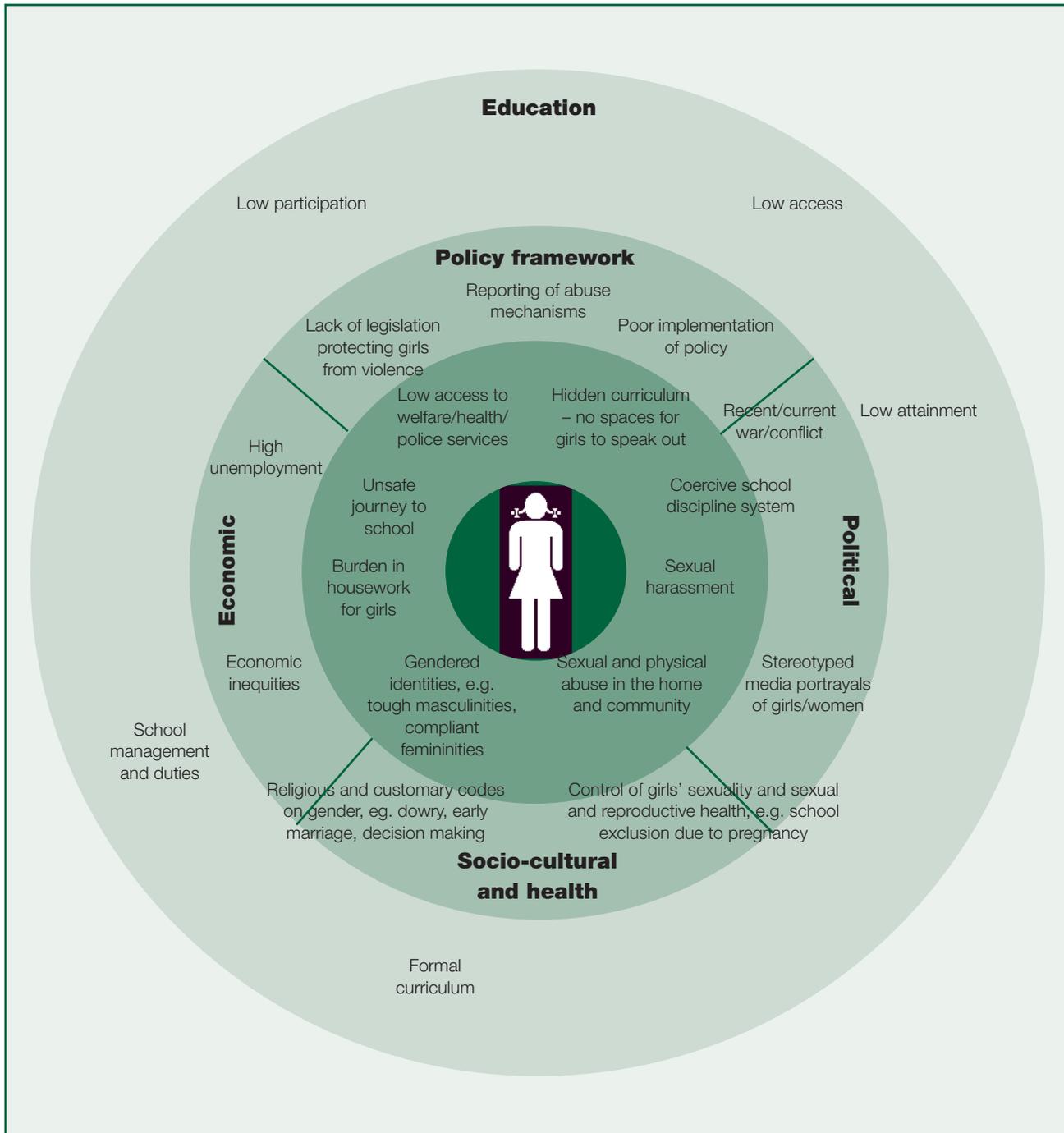
Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the Stop Violence project

The conceptual framework has underpinned the design of the baseline study, guiding the development of the research questions and data collection tools. The findings will enable us to understand the connections between acts of violence, interactions and social conditions in girls' lives, and thus inform how best to design initiatives to support girls and reduce vulnerability.

We also developed and agreed definitions of concepts that are central to the study and the project more broadly. These are set out below.

Violence against girls: This project defines acts of violence against girls as those set out by the UN Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women:

"The term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Accordingly, violence against women encompasses but is not limited to the following: (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;(b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;(c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs" (United Nations General Assembly 1994).

Gender:

While girls' and boys' experiences of violence may be very different, we do not believe this is because of inherent differences. We understand femininity, masculinity and gender to be socially constructed and hence changeable. This means that our assumptions about what it means to be a boy or a girl are guided by historical and social relations which influence the beliefs and practices that come to be taken for granted and understood as true, fixed and unchanging. In many parts of the world these assumptions have come to include notions of male superiority and female subordination, and have produced inequitable gender relations. Even if males may often be more powerful and privileged than females, there are multiple gender identities. For example, there are many different ways to be a man, some are more valued than others, and men experience pressure to conform to these dominant norms. Not all do conform, but many who don't experience discrimination and disadvantage. However, ideas about gender do change over time and place, and we believe that through advocacy, community level intervention and research it is possible to work together with girls and their communities to challenge gendered assumptions that produce inequality, discrimination and violence.

Rights and Empowerment:

At the centre of our concern are the agency, judgement and action of girls in and around schools. While we seek to understand the social conditions and relations that constrain girls, we aim to understand the processes through which girls enhance their capabilities to safety and bodily integrity, and more broadly to claim rights and human dignity, achieve education, and to work to transform unjust structures. We understand empowerment as developing girls' individual and collective agency, through working with girls and other actors, including boys, to raise critical consciousness of girls' rights and social justice; increase the extent to which girls regard themselves as central players to ensure the realization of these rights so as to increase life choices through building support, solidarity and networks within a collaborative 'action space'.

1.7   Key research questions

Four overarching research questions were developed for the baseline study. These broadly link to the four outcomes of the project (see page 2), as well as drawing from the conceptual framework. Through addressing these questions we hope to gain an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of violence, its social context, and of the actions needed to contest violence in girls' lives.

1. What are the constraints upon and opportunities for combating gender violence, discrimination and inequalities within legislative and policy frameworks and their implementation, at national, state and local community level?

2. What patterns of violence do girls experience in schools, homes and communities? How are these situated in girls' everyday interactions and relationships? How are these linked to the political, social and economic context?

3. What are the gendered patterns of enrolment, completion and achievement in the project schools? What variations are there between the schools, and how do these compare with district and national patterns? What are the links with gender relations and violence?

4. What mechanisms are there for girls to contest violence, to express their perspectives and to influence decisions about matters that concern them? How can these be expanded?

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2. Methodology

In this section, we describe the methodology, outlining the cross-country approach to research planning and analysis.

2.1 Research design

To develop a coordinated, streamlined approach to the baseline study across the three countries, workshops were held in Nairobi (September 2008), Accra (March 2009) and London (August 2009). ActionAid country programme managers, community intervention partners and advocacy partners also made important contributions to the design and planning of the study. The first phase of research design was analysis of the research context. The conceptual framework was developed through discussion of key terms, issues and debates in the international literature, as well as the early discussions within the project. In each country, research partners reviewed the research and context of gender, violence and education at national and local level, and carried out a scoping exercise to collect initial education and socio-economic data from secondary sources for each school to enable appropriate research design and sampling. A legal and policy analysis was also undertaken. Key phases included:

September 2008-March 2009
Development of research design

March 2009-July 2009
Data collection

August 2009-August 2011
Data analysis and report writing

In order to gather information at all levels specified in the conceptual framework, including acts of violence, everyday interactions in girls' lives, and gendered power relations, we agreed that a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods would help to ensure rigorous, credible and persuasive research. This mixed methodology aimed to provide in-depth data about violence against girls, and to generate findings which were measurable in order to inform advocacy work and to be able to measure change over the duration of the project.

Building on the key research questions, we developed a series of research instruments. While these were tailored specifically for this project, where appropriate we drew on existing tried and tested instruments including, for example, USAID's Quantitative Research Instrument to Measure School-Related Gender-Based Violence (USAID 2006) and UNICEF's Participatory Assessment Tool (PAT). Aware of the risk of under-reporting and misreporting, we paid careful attention to the wording of questions avoiding terms like 'rape', 'abuse' and 'violence' that are loaded and open to interpretation and instead asked questions about specific acts (such as being beaten or slapped), places (such as home or school or church), and people (such as teachers, parents or other pupils). A broad range of perspectives were elicited, including those of girls and boys in schools and girls out of school, teachers, head teachers and School Management Committee (SMC) members, parents and community members. A range of methods were used, with information from girls, for example, being collected through structured questionnaires, qualitative interviews and focus group discussions.

Draft instruments were piloted in a community neighbouring the research site in each country, and further revisions made on the basis of feedback from participants and researchers. Final revisions were made following trialling in schools during the research training workshops in each country. The baseline study used the following instruments:

1. Pupils' quantitative instrument
2. Pupils' qualitative interview
3. Girls' Focus Group Discussion
4. Teachers'/Head teachers' survey
5. Head teacher qualitative interview
6. School records instrument
7. School Management Committee/Board interview
8. Parents' focus group discussion
9. Interview with Community leader/Women's group leader interview/District Education Officer/District Health Officer/Police

2.2   Sampling

In order to provide a baseline from which to measure the impact of the project and to assist with planning community interventions, advocacy work and future qualitative research studies, all project schools participated in the study. We decided not to use a control group of schools for a number of reasons. Firstly, there were ethical concerns about conducting research without accompanying support, for example, unearthing high levels of violence against girls in control schools but being unable to provide any community intervention to respond. Secondly, we could not control for other programmes that may be implemented (for example, by other NGOs) in control schools, which may distort the results. Thirdly, our resources were insufficient for a full-scale community randomised trial and numbers of participating schools are small. Therefore using control schools was likely to add very little to the research results.

Quantitative and qualitative data was collected in all schools (Instruments 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 – see Table 1): 16 schools in Kenya, 15 in Mozambique and 13 in Ghana. In addition, selected data was collected from a special school (school for the deaf) in the project site in Kenya. In addition, four communities in each country were selected for additional qualitative data collection using in-depth qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with girls and boys in school,

and with girls who were out of school (instruments 2 and 3 – see Table 2). These communities were selected to reflect demographic variations within the project areas (see country reports for details). In addition, district level stakeholders were interviewed (see Table 3). In total 2757 respondents participated in the baseline study.

All too often research only includes the voices of the more powerful or influential members of communities, and children and marginalised groups are not represented in research. Within each school and community, we aimed to gather data from a wide range of participants including for example mothers as well as fathers, and women's group leaders as well as community leaders. Tables 1, 2 and 3 detail the groups of participants involved in the research. Although we felt it was important to hear boys' perspectives, girls' voices were prioritised, with an increased sample size of girls and with focus groups of girls in and out of school to provide an additional forum for girls to express their views. In order to ensure that younger as well as older children were included, three age cohorts were included – 8-10 years, 11-13 years, and 14-17 years. Although the focus was on basic education, the large numbers of over-age girls in the schools warranted the older category. Sampling bias was reduced through randomly selecting children for inclusion using class registers.

Table 1: Data collected in each school

No.	Instrument	Total per school	Total sample across all countries
1	Girls: Quantitative interviews	24	1082
1	Boys: Quantitative interviews	12	519
5	Head teacher: interview	1	44
6	School records instrument	1	45
4	Teachers: Survey	5	238
8	Parents: Focus group discussion	1 (5 parents)	220 (44 FGDs)
7	School Management Committee: interview	1	44
9	Community leader: interview	1	41
9	Women's group leader: interview	1	42

Table 2: Data collected in four schools in each country

No.	Instrument	Total per school	Total sample across all countries
2	Girls: qualitative interview	6	78
3	Girls: focus group discussions in school	3 (21 girls)	252 (36 FGDs)
3	Girls: focus group discussion out of school	1 (7 girls)	70 (10 FGDs)
2	Boys: qualitative interview	6	75

Table 3: Data collected at district level in each country

No.	Instrument	Total per school	Total sample across all countries
9	District health officer: interview		3
9	District education officer: interview		3
9	Police: interview		2

2.3   Ethics and safety

The research protocol was developed to ensure rigour and high standards of ethical conduct (Appendix 1). The study was granted ethical approval by the Institute of Education's Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

While it is important that all research is conducted according to ethical principles, in research on sensitive subjects like violence, and research with children and young people, this is particularly important because of the risks of causing harm or distress and because of the power imbalance between the researcher and participant. Children are often used to being judged and disciplined and may feel obliged to answer all questions even if they do not want to, or they may hide their views in favour of presenting an account of their experiences which they feel is more "acceptable" to adults.

At all stages of the research, we aimed to respect participants, to treat people fairly, and to safeguard their welfare, minimizing risks and assuring that benefits outweigh risks. Interviews were carried out by same sex researchers, and confidentiality was assured. Interview schedules included clear instructions about informed consent with participants told that they could withdraw at any time.

Researching the topic of violence increases the risk that violence will be disclosed during the research process. While in some contexts it may be possible to follow local child protection procedures, this is problematic in contexts where official support and reporting mechanisms are absent or inadequate. There may also be a tension between maintaining confidentiality and passing on information when a researcher considers a child to be at risk of severe harm. In each country, researchers consulted with local partners to find out support and reporting mechanisms, and each child participating was given information about what to do if they ever needed help to resolve a case of violence.

Confidentiality is especially important when conducting research on violence against girls, as the act of revealing violence may put participants at more risk of violence.   Maintaining privacy is important for encouraging open expression of views but it can be both practically difficult and occasionally harmful when, for example, a neighbour/relative wants to know what is being hidden. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research including during data collection, analysis, data storage and reporting. We tried to ensure privacy during interviews.

It is very important that children are not coerced into participating in research against their will. All participants, including children, were given clear information about the project, were able to be able to choose not to participate, and to withdraw at any time. Researchers sought permission to carry out the research in schools according to existing procedures in each country in addition to seeking permission by school and community leadership at each school location.

2.4 Researcher selection and training

Research teams were recruited to reflect the gender and language mix of the sample of research participants. Research assistants were recruited from the local area where possible. Researchers on the other hand rarely came from the project areas, but were required to demonstrate skills and experience to coordinate supervise and support research teams and conduct focus group discussions and qualitative interviews. Wherever possible, research teams interviewed participants of the same sex, and we ensured that only female researchers would ever interview girls.

Research training included familiarisation with the research protocol and with the conceptual framework including an orientation on concepts of violence, gender and gender inequality and children's rights, and issues around violence against girls in schools. All researchers practised use of instruments in a workshop setting and in a school.

Support mechanisms were put in place during field research to help researchers manage their safety and wellbeing and to monitor progress and quality of the research.

2.5 Data analysis

Immediately following the data collection, lead researchers wrote preliminary reports giving their immediate impressions of the data collected. A data analysis workshop provided an opportunity to plan a data analysis framework in detail and practise data analysis techniques.

SPSS data sets were developed for inputting quantitative data, and a list of table headings was agreed for the quantitative analysis. Coding frames were developed. Data was checked and cleaned, and any coding errors were amended before data analysis began. Qualitative interview data was recorded using an Excel spreadsheet, and this proved a useful organisational tool enabling researchers to look at responses by question, theme or by individual participant. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were transcribed, using notes and tape recordings made during the FGDs.

Data was stored in a way so as not to identify individuals' responses, for example, by coding questionnaires, participants, schools and communities rather than using names, and by securing data so that only those who need to access the data for the project can do so. In order to maintain confidentiality, care was taken to avoid disaggregating data in a way that could identify individuals, groups or communities. This sometimes meant providing codes for schools in the baseline report. If specific data needed to be presented in the analysis (such as in a case study) then it was sometimes necessary to remove or change certain details that may identify them, as long the meaning of the data was not affected by doing this.

The detailed analysis was organised broadly by research question, so that quantitative and qualitative analysis took place simultaneously, sequenced as follows:

- The political, social and economic context
- Gender and education
- Violence against girls in schools and communities
- Contesting violence

Descriptive statistics using SPSS were used to analyse quantitative data. The qualitative analysis examined in depth similarities and differences between the accounts of different groups, considering, for example, variability in the perspectives of girls in and out of school, or between girls and boys of different ages, or between children and adults. The analysis also examined variability within each group, looking, for example, at why two girls might have very different perspectives. The analysis also considered how responses varied from school to school, and how socioeconomic characteristics of a school or

community might influence the responses. As well as being analysed independently, the qualitative and quantitative data were also looked at together. For example, where quantitative findings raised questions, these were investigated further in the qualitative analysis, and the qualitative data was used to help understand and explain emerging patterns in the quantitative data.

To enhance the trustworthiness and rigour of the analysis, we developed procedures for cross-checking between researchers, in which the international research partners reviewed and provided critical feedback on inputted data, tables, and draft report sections.

Preliminary findings were presented and discussed at a workshop in Maputo, where community, advocacy and research partners, as well as ActionAid project personnel contributed to analysis of the findings in country groups. This helped bring out possible reasons for patterns emerging in the data and helped guide the direction of the remaining analysis, as well as helping project implementers to plan their interventions appropriately.

Finally, findings were shared in depth at workshops in each country in 2010-2011 where research, community intervention and advocacy partners looked at, validated and discussed findings in depth and developed project strategies to respond to findings. These baseline findings are already informing work in the three project sites.

2.6   Limitations

There are a number of limitations in the baseline study, some of which are discussed in the country reports. Here we focus on the limitations across the three countries.

It is important to bear in mind that the projects are operating in specific locations in each country and care should be taken not to over-generalise. The findings in these project schools may not apply to schools at national level, or even to other schools in the district. However, through reporting on the situation in one location, the studies aim to highlight

these as examples which may have much broader relevance for interventions to support girls.

Many studies investigating sensitive, taboo subjects have described the silences, when participants are reluctant to speak of painful or incriminating events (see Ellsberg et al. 2001; Mullender et al. 2002). Sometimes girls might be afraid of the harm that could arise should they participate in research, such as when Kenyan girls out of school refused to meet researchers, afraid of being punished for missing school, or when girls agreed only to meet researchers in secret, for fear of violent repercussions by their husbands. Gathering data sensitively, using a range of data collection methods went some way towards addressing this, but it was not possible to gather data over a period of time, gaining trust and familiarity with young people before interviewing, and so it is likely that violence is under-reported in this study. Nor was it possible to follow up questions later, although a strength of the study is that its connection with the broader project means that future research as well as community interventions will be able to address questions raised during the baseline study.

Impact evaluation studies aim to examine the effects of an intervention by collecting data before an intervention begins. Because ActionAid is already working with most of the project schools, it is likely that the programmes are already influencing the perspectives of participants, making it very difficult to measure accurately the effects of the project. The research teams have addressed this by building into the analysis an assessment of type of and amount of project delivery (by ActionAid and others), and it is important when interpreting the findings to take into consideration that varying amounts of support for schools and communities are already in operation.

In all the countries, data was collected in local languages, requiring that instruments were translated from English, and then back to English for the final reports. Although efforts have been made for accuracy, it is likely that some nuance will have been lost through translation.

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2.7   Conclusion

A phased, collaborative process was developed to enable all project partners to contribute to the research design, implementation and analysis and to ensure the baseline study was appropriate to context. It was important for the baseline study to build on the three strands of existing research on violence to ensure that we are able to develop a rich understanding of the context of violence in girls' lives. The research design was therefore concerned with understanding and measuring acts of violence, as well as paying attention to the everyday interactions that girls are engaged in, and the broader socio-economic context and institutions that surround girls. The findings are described and discussed in detail in the three country-level reports, with emerging themes across all three countries synthesised in this cross-country analysis.

3. A gendered analysis of socio-economic, legal and policy contexts: from national to local

3.1 Introduction

This section discusses study findings relating to the legal and policy contexts in the three countries, and traces links with the socio-economic conditions at national and local level. We address the following research question:

What are the constraints upon and opportunities for combating gender violence, discrimination and inequalities within legislative and policy frameworks and their implementation, at national, state and local community level?

Overall, we found a mixed picture in the three countries in which massive legislative and policy changes at national level are feeding through to local level in very uneven ways. We begin by outlining some of the most significant changes in national legislative frameworks concerning education, gender and justice, and go on to consider the socio-economic contexts in the project districts. Finally, we will ask why it is that the rhetoric of change seems a far distant reality for girls and their communities. ◦

3.2 A decade of legal and policy change for girls

All countries have made significant strides with improving access to basic education, facilitated by commitments to free primary education since at least 2003. All three countries are doing significantly better in term of girls' enrolment than the average for sub-¬Saharan Africa which is 71% (UNESCO 2010). Table 4 illustrates the magnitude of these improvements in girls' net enrolment rates. The biggest gains have been seen in Mozambique, which has moved from less than half of girls accessing primary school to more than three-quarters. Gender gaps have also been reduced, with Ghana and Kenya now seeing gender parity in enrolment. Mozambique, having started from a much wider gender gap ten years ago, has moved closer to gender parity, but gaps remain. Deployment of teachers has not kept up with this massive expansion in access, with the pupil teacher ratios (PTRs) increasing in all countries. This has been particularly the case in Kenya where PTRs have risen from 32:1 in 1999 to 47:1 in 2008.

Table 4: National indicator trends 1999-2008

Enrolment	1999			2008		
	Moz	Ghana	Kenya	Moz	Ghana	Kenya
Girls' Primary NER	46	58	63	77	77	82
Primary NER GPI	0.79	0.96	1.01	0.94	1.01	1.01
Pupil-teacher ratio	61	30	32	64	32	47

Source: UNESCO 2011

Table 5 presents data on how girls progress through and beyond primary school in the three countries. The highest completion rates for girls (and smallest gender gaps) are in Ghana. However, in all three countries the data clearly shows that, despite widening access, many girls do not complete primary school, and many less than boys. Girls' completion rates in Mozambique are particularly concerning, and they also highlight how gender gaps widen with each level of schooling. At secondary school gender gaps widen further, with just over half of girls enrolled in secondary school in Ghana and Kenya and less than one in five in Mozambique.

Table 5: National education indicators 2008

	Moz[1]	Ghana[2]	Kenya[3]
Primary Completion Rate girls (baseline report)	65 (EP1[4]) 39 (EP2[5])	83	76
Primary Completion Rate GPI (baseline report)	0.81 (EP1[4]) 0.75 (EP2[5])	0.93	0.88
National - girls' Secondary NER (GMR 2011)	18	52	56
National Secondary NER GPI (GMR 2011)	0.75	0.89	0.92

1 *Ministry of Education and Culture 2010, cited in Eduardo Mondlane University, 2011*

2 *EMIS 2001-2009 (GES), cited in GNECC 2011*

3 *MoE 2008, cited in Own and Associates 2011*

4 *EP1 = Grades 1-5 of primary school*

5 *EP2 = Grades 6-7 of primary school*

These gender gaps raise questions about the gendered environment of the school as well as external economic and gendered barriers that affect girls' schooling, particularly as they enter their teenage years and face expectations of marrying early, and associated pregnancy and child bearing. Sexual activity, whether consensual, coerced or forced often results in girls becoming pregnant, all too often putting an end to their education. For example, in Mozambique pregnant students have to attend night school which means they may have to travel at night to another school further away that offers night classes, which make them more vulnerable and adds costs, all of which may mean they chose to drop out. Table 6 shows that nationally, girls in Mozambique start sexual activity earlier, have a higher risk of HIV, marry earlier and begin child bearing earlier, than girls in Ghana and Kenya. There are evidently wide disparities across regions of the three countries, so it is important to be cautious in drawing conclusions from national figures. The next section will take a deeper look at the districts in which the study is located and see how they differ from the national context.

Table 6: National indicators on sex, fertility and violence

	Ghana	Kenya	Mozambique
% 19 year old women who have begun childbearing	28.9	36.2	65.2
Median age at first marriage	19.8	20.0	17.5 (20-49 yr olds)
Median age at first sex (20-49 year olds)	18.4	18.2	16.1
Median age at first birth (25-49 year olds)	20.7	19.8	18.9 (20-49 yr olds)
HIV prevalence (15-24 year olds) (UNAIDS 2010)	1.3	4.1	8.6

* Unless otherwise stated all indicators refer to women aged 15-49 (Source: DHS: Ghana 2008; Kenya 2008-09; Mozambique 2003).

All three countries are signatories to key global and regional instruments, including UNCRC, CEDAW and the African Charters on the Rights of Women and on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Laws and policies relating to children, education, and violence against women and children have expanded and strengthened in recent years, and each of the countries has a Government department specifically concerned with women and children. Women continue to be underrepresented in Parliament, with fewer than 10% of parliamentarians female in Kenya and Ghana. In Mozambique almost 40% of parliamentarians are women, higher than most industrialised countries. But, as is well documented in many contexts (e.g. Tinker 2004), this does not necessarily translate into increased status for women.

Since 2000, each of the countries has developed policies on gender (2001 in Ghana, 2006 in Mozambique, 2007 in Kenya). Ghana and Kenya have Children's Acts (still to be ratified in Mozambique), and Mozambique has a National Action Plan for Children and a Family Law. All the countries have recently passed acts on Domestic Violence or Sexual Offences (2006 in Kenya, 2007 in Ghana, 2009 in Mozambique). Together, these acts seek to protect children and women from violence. They outlaw rape and sexual abuse, FGM and child marriage.

However, the legal and policy reviews raise concerns about lack of clarity in the laws. In Kenya for example, the law does not specify the sentence for carrying out female genital mutilation (FGM). In Ghana, there is a need to consolidate the dispersed legislation into one act to protect children from violence. There are often inconsistencies in the various legal and policy frameworks. For example in all three countries there are laws and legal sanctions against rape and defilement of under 18s, yet the national teachers' Code of Conducts, whilst disallowing sexual relationships between teachers and pupils, do not link at all to legal frameworks and either do not mention sanctions or suggest a variety of possible sanctions including transferring of teachers to other schools or suspending teachers. The lack of clarity and consistency does not give district education authorities the tools to take decisive action.

Policies on supporting the education rights of pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers have different

status in each of the three countries. In Ghana there is no policy. In Mozambique the policy stipulates girls leaving mainstream education and attending night school, where distances can be long and girls often fear for their safety. In Kenya a policy exists but implementation is very uneven, guidelines are not available in schools and policies are not known about in many communities (Wanyama and Simatwa 2011).

Legislation on corporal punishment varies across the three countries. In Kenya, since 2010 it is unlawful in home and school (Article 29 of Constitution (2010)). In Mozambique it is lawful at home, but the National Action Plan and a Government Directive advise teachers against corporal punishment in school, though there is no explicit protection in the law. In Ghana it remains legal in both home and school.

Despite the strides made in policy development on children's rights and gender, common to all three countries is a lack of polices that address gender violence in schools as a focus area and attempt to align or develop frameworks where there are gaps and inconsistencies.

3.3 Gendered inequalities and poverty: continuity and change at local level

Wenje, the project focus area in Kenya, is a division in Tana River District in Coast province. It is a remote community near to the Somali border in East Kenya, and is populated by the Wardei who adopt pastoralist livelihoods and Pokomos who tend to work in agriculture. The people of Wenje are Muslim and Christian. Nanumba, the project area in Ghana, shares some similarities with Wenje. Nanumba (previously one district, now Nanumba North and Nanumba South) surrounds the town of Bimbilla, in a remote part of Northern Ghana, which experiences higher poverty levels and greater gender gaps than the south of the country: 76% of the population live below the middle poverty level (DHS 2008); and the GPI in primary schools is 0.81 compared with a national average of 0.92 (GSS 2009). People in Nanumba adopt Christian and Muslim religions. Manhiça contrasts somewhat, being a densely populated rural (often referred to as peri-urban) area around the main trunk road running north from Maputo, about 100km from the capital. Livelihoods mostly consist of farming,

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but there are some other forms of employment, for example a sugar factory close by, and many boys and men go to work in neighbouring South Africa. This community is less closed-off with more mobility and interaction outside. With this come high levels of HIV: one-quarter of women accessing antenatal care are HIV positive (DHS 2008). People practise forms of Christianity and animism in Manhiça.

Despite these variations the three districts share high levels of poverty and poor access to services. Over half the adult population are illiterate in all three project areas, and even in relatively more urbanised and accessible Manhiça 88% of households have no access to piped water and electricity (UNICEF 2009).

Poverty and other forms of social inequality magnify gender disparities in access to school (Lewis and Lockheed, 2007; UNESCO 2009; Unterhalter, North and Parkes 2010). Richer girls in Mozambique, for example, are almost three times as likely to complete grade 6 as poor girls (Filmer 2008). Girls' lives in these three contexts are hugely affected by poverty. Socio-economic conditions affect their access to school and their experiences of multiple forms of violence. The difficulties they face may be exacerbated in particular periods, during times of drought in Kenya, or in the aftermath of ethnic conflict in Ghana: "parents have

not recovered fully financially from the Nanumba - Konkomba war, which started from this town" (mothers FGD, Ghana). These periods create pressure points for families and a particular burden falls on girls, who may have increased responsibilities in the home while their parents seek livelihoods, or who may be forced to marry to bring income through dowry.

A sexual division of labour is deeply entrenched in all three contexts, and is embedded in socio¬economic conditions in which children's labour is required to support the family. Girls in all three contexts do household chores like cleaning, fetching firewood and water, cooking and caring for younger children. They also go to market and work on the farm, though farm work and labour outside the home is more frequently associated with boys. Some parents spoke of the division of labour as being natural, with for example boys' physical strength meaning that they were more suited to construction work. Some parents recognised that the division of labour was inequitable:

"At home, by tradition, the girls are responsible for preparing food, setting tables, fetching water, washing bowls, washing clothes, and fetching firewood. The boys look after animals and work on the farm. The girls have more to do because they are being trained for marriage in future" (fathers' FGD, Ghana).

Sometimes girls' access to education and care was affected by practices in which they were removed from their family homes in order to live with relatives or for marriage. In Ghana, for example, girls and parents complained of harsh treatment associated with the tradition of sending girls to live with aunts:

"Many girls live with their aunties and are made to do majority of the household chores. The aunties contend that it is not their responsibility to care for the schooling of the children of their brothers and sisters" (fathers' FGD, Ghana).

In Ghana many girls and parents talked about girls dropping out of school to go to the cities in southern Ghana to work as street porters ("kayayo") to earn income, where they are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. In the pastoralist community in Kenya, girls are disadvantaged in a different way, as the custom states that girls cannot be separated from their family, which meant that while boys can stay with relatives and continue to attend school, girls have to accompany their parents in search of pasture (fathers' FGD, Kenya).

Child marriage is a common practice in all three contexts. Parents' views about the practice varied, with some parents in Kenya explaining that forced marriages take place in secret, known only to the parents and community leaders, as a way for parents to receive a dowry. One mothers' group in Kenya saw religion as responsible for girls' lacking education, and in contrast blamed modern life for encouraging promiscuity, leading to HIV/AIDS. District health officers in Ghana and Mozambique talked of high levels of teenage pregnancy, and in Ghana of how pregnant school girls either left school or underwent illegal and unsafe abortions.

3.4 Disconnects and disruptions: the costs for girls

The communities in this study frequently seem far removed from the decisions made at government level (Unterhalter et al 2011). The challenges of addressing the socio-economic and gender divisions are immense, but there are efforts towards local change. Each of the countries has plans for local implementation of some policies that support the protection of girls from violence, through for example in Mozambique at local level there are bureaux for victims of domestic violence, girls' counselling offices at police stations and hospitals and gender units in schools; domestic violence units have been set up in Ghana, and in Kenya there are gender desks in police stations and victim support units. But plans are unevenly and inadequately implemented. For example, in Kenya there have been concerns that the legal protection is concentrated in urban areas, and that law enforcement institutions at local level lack the political will to implement law. In Ghana the structures and capacity to implement legislation are weak. Victims of domestic violence have to pay for medical examinations, and in some areas the Child Panel set up to protect children has only met once in the three years since inception. Overall, although there has been marked progress in all three countries, there are problems with resourcing and training to develop effective structures for implementation at the local level. Implementation of legal, educational and welfare reform at local level has been uneven. The implications for girls are considered in the rest of this report.

4. Violence: patterns and meanings

PHOTO: ASMARA FIGUE/ACTIONAID

4.1   Introduction

This section discusses findings from data collected in the study on patterns of violence experienced by girls and boys in the three project sites, addressing the following research questions:

What patterns of violence do girls experience in schools, homes and communities? How are these situated in girls' everyday interactions and relationships? How are these linked to the political, social and economic context?

In all three project sites, physical punishments were very common at home and at school, with these forms of physical violence frequently taken for granted by girls and boys, despite recent legislative changes. The differing patterns in the three countries signal both continuities and changes in attitudes and practices in response to legal and policy changes, raising questions about how to implement laws prohibiting corporal punishment. Study findings also draw attention to the linkages between sexual violence and gender inequalities. Girls were expected to refrain from any sexual activity, and yet sexual harassment in the form of unwanted sexual remarks and touching are common. Girls were seen both as victims of and to blame for the violence they experienced.

4.2   Violent childhoods

Overall, our data shows that violence is widespread in the project areas in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique, with the vast majority of girls reporting having experienced some form of violence during the previous 12 months. Findings, detailed in Figure 2 below, suggest that violence against girls is highest in the project area in Kenya, with 85.7% of girls reporting some form of violence during the period in question. Violence is reported by almost as many girls in Ghana (81.5%) and fewer in Mozambique (66.2%). These overall patterns are closely related to the patterns of girls experiencing physical violence in the three countries, as these are the most common forms of violence, and so the lower violence rate in Mozambique may be primarily due to fewer girls reporting being caned. Sexual violence was less commonly reported by girls in the study, but still by a significant minority of girls (between two and three in ten). Patterns were similar across countries, although a little lower in Ghana. In contrast though, there was a lot of variation in how much forms of psychological violence was reported. Whilst around a third to half of girls in Mozambique and Kenya said that they had been insulted, more than nine in ten girls in Ghana spoke of being insulted. Threats made against girls were also much more common in Ghana.
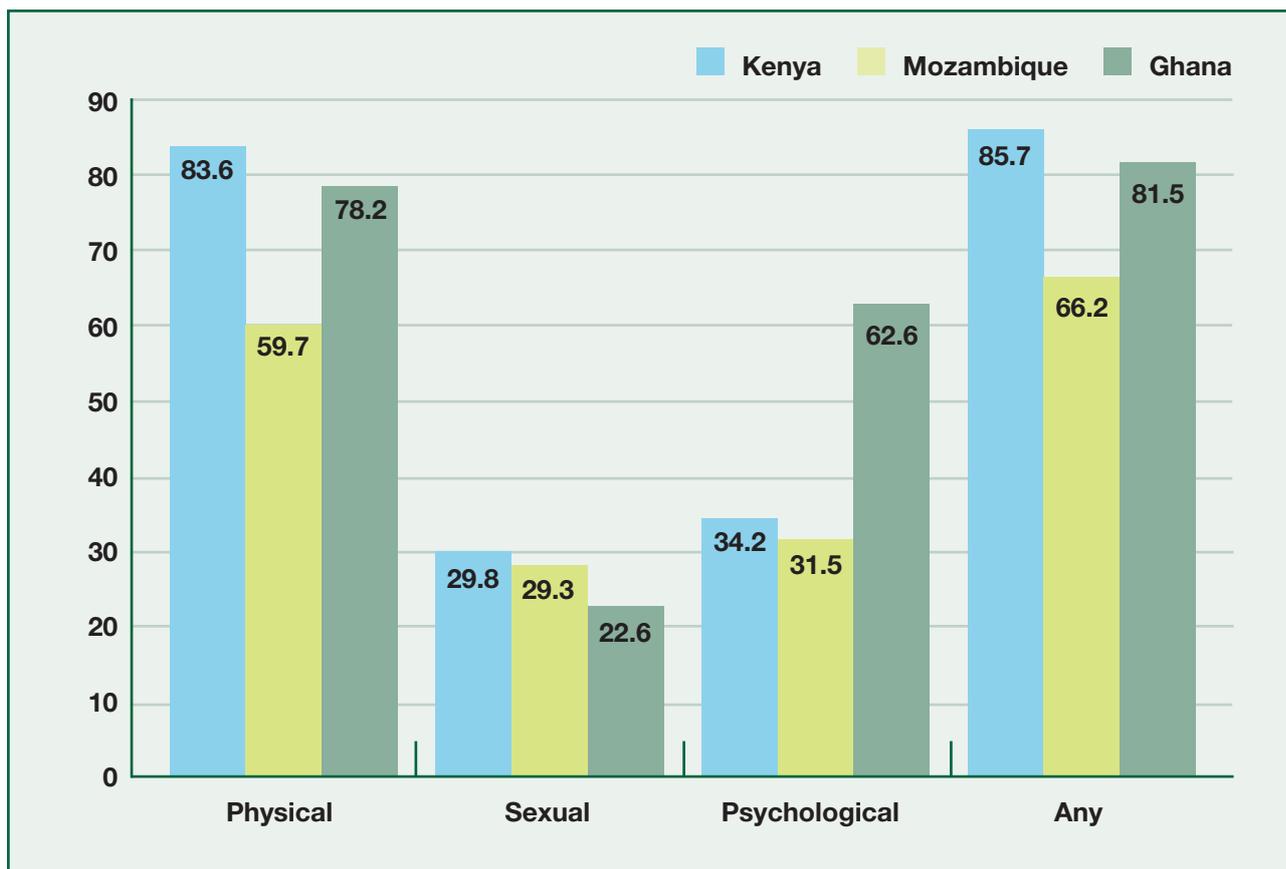
Figure 2: Proportion of girls reporting that they have experienced violence in the past 12 months

In the qualitative interviews, when girls were asked to talk about any kind of violence that they had experienced, there was a marked difference in response from girls from the three countries. In Ghana in the individual interviews, almost all the girls talked only about physical punishment. In the focus groups, however, most of the groups said that sexual violence, including touching of their breasts, and rape and defilement were common. In individual interviews in Mozambique, girls also spoke mainly about physical punishment, although also notable is that many girls did not respond to questions. Again, in the focus groups they sometimes spoke of sexual violence at school. Meanwhile, in Kenya the majority of girls, even the youngest age group, and in both individual interviews and focus groups, talked about sexual violence, usually by boys at school. There is a sense from responses in the three countries that girls in Kenya may be more outspoken about, or aware of, and able to articulate and criticise violence they are experiencing, whilst in Mozambique girls are much more muted about all forms of violence.

There may be several reasons for the discrepancies between the quantitative and qualitative data. With violence sometimes unrecognised and frequently seen as private and taboo, it is likely that violence is underreported. Focus groups may be more conducive to sharing experiences, but they might also elicit talk about violence that has been heard about rather than experienced by girls in the group, and so extreme acts known about in communities might be more prominent. It is also easier for girls to talk about others' rather than their own experiences on sensitive issues which might cause pain, embarrassment or shame, preventing girls from speaking out (Price and Hawkins 2002). In these studies, we suspect that underreporting by girls was occurring, and future studies in which researchers spend extended periods with girls in communities may be able to elicit a fuller picture.

Researchers were careful to try to be specific when asking about violence to maximise consistency in responses and avoid as much as possible different

interpretations of terms. The different types of physical, sexual and psychological violence asked about are set out in Table 7 below. Children were also asked to name other forms of violence that did not fall under the categories given, but few mentioned any and numbers were too low to provide comparisons. Figures 3, 4 and 5 portray the proportion of girls and boys who reported in the study that they had experienced each of these forms of violence in their lives. They illustrate that whipping/caning is very high and the most common form of violence in all countries, though it was reported a little less in Mozambique. Beating was also commonly reported in all three countries. It is particularly high in Ghana,

and lower in Mozambique. Kneeling as a form of punishment is also very common in Ghana. These findings illustrate how both girls and boys experience multiple forms of physical violence in their lives. The graphs also show again how most forms of sexual violence are reported more by girls in Kenya than the other two contexts, with 10% of girls said they had been raped, and 10% had exchanged sex for goods. Meanwhile girls in Ghana are particularly vulnerable to forms of psychological violence. Overall, girls tend to be more vulnerable to sexual violence and boys to physical violence. However, gender differences are not that great.
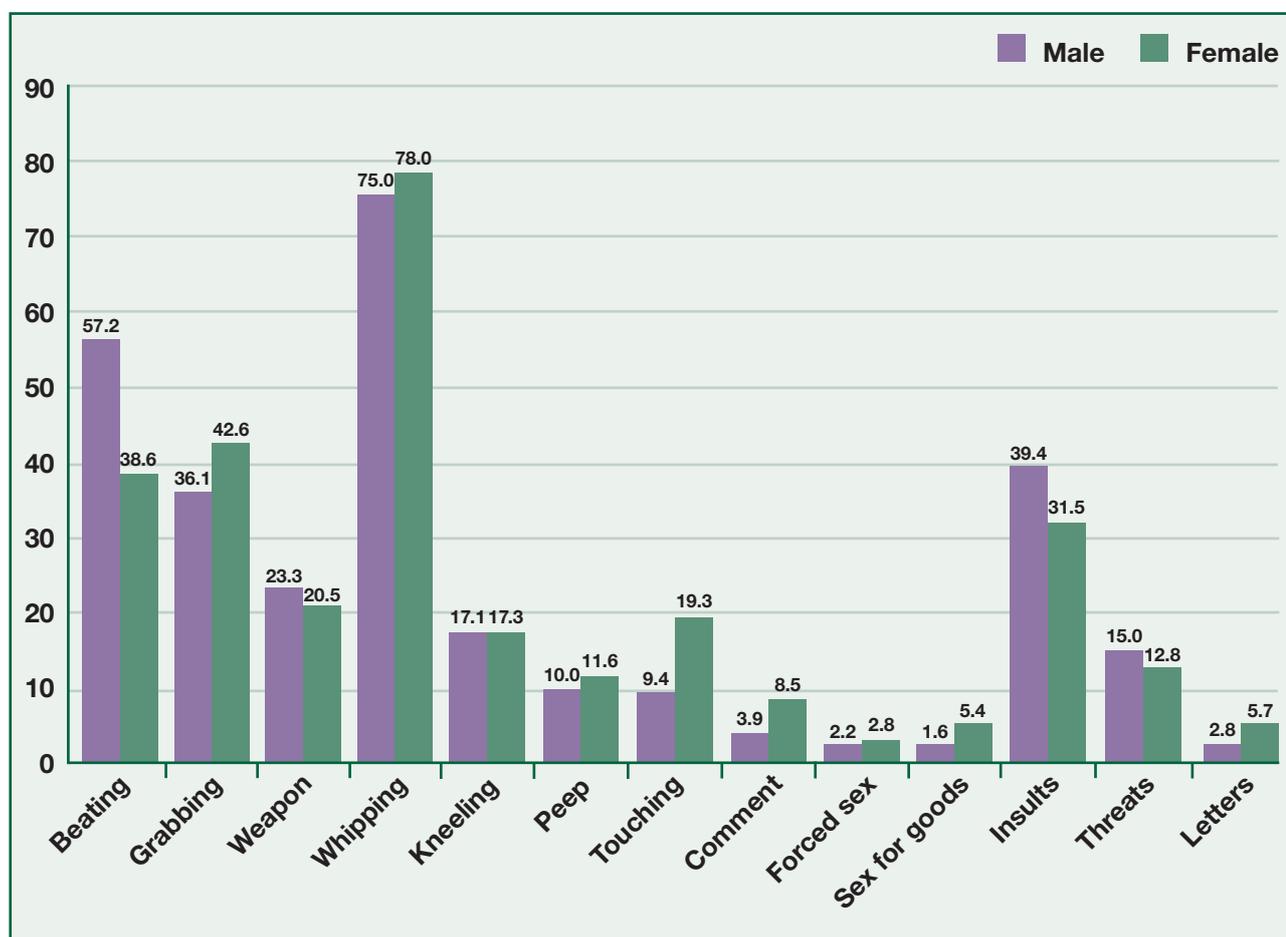
Figure 3: Proportion of pupils reporting that they have experienced violence, Mozambique
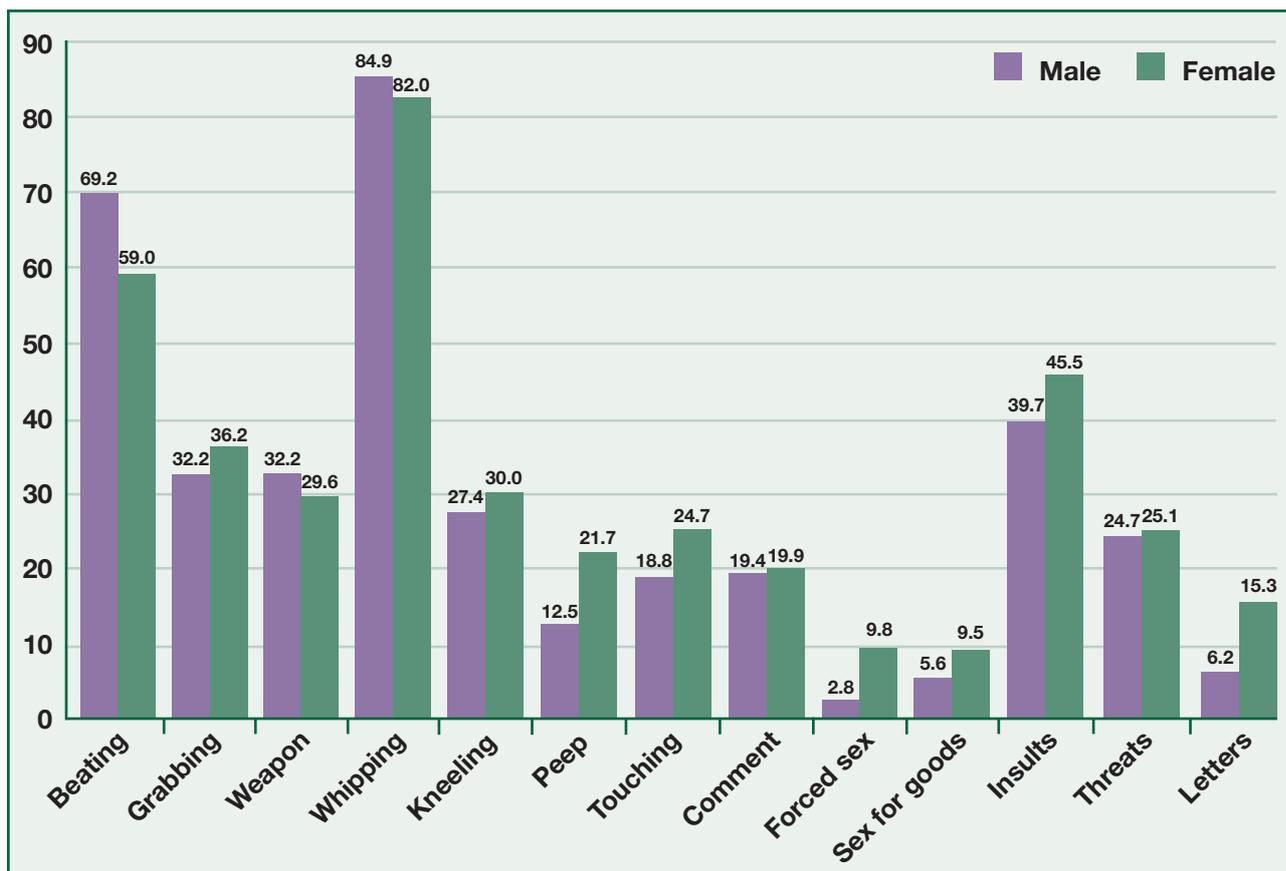
Figure 4: Proportion of pupils reporting that they have experienced violence, Kenya
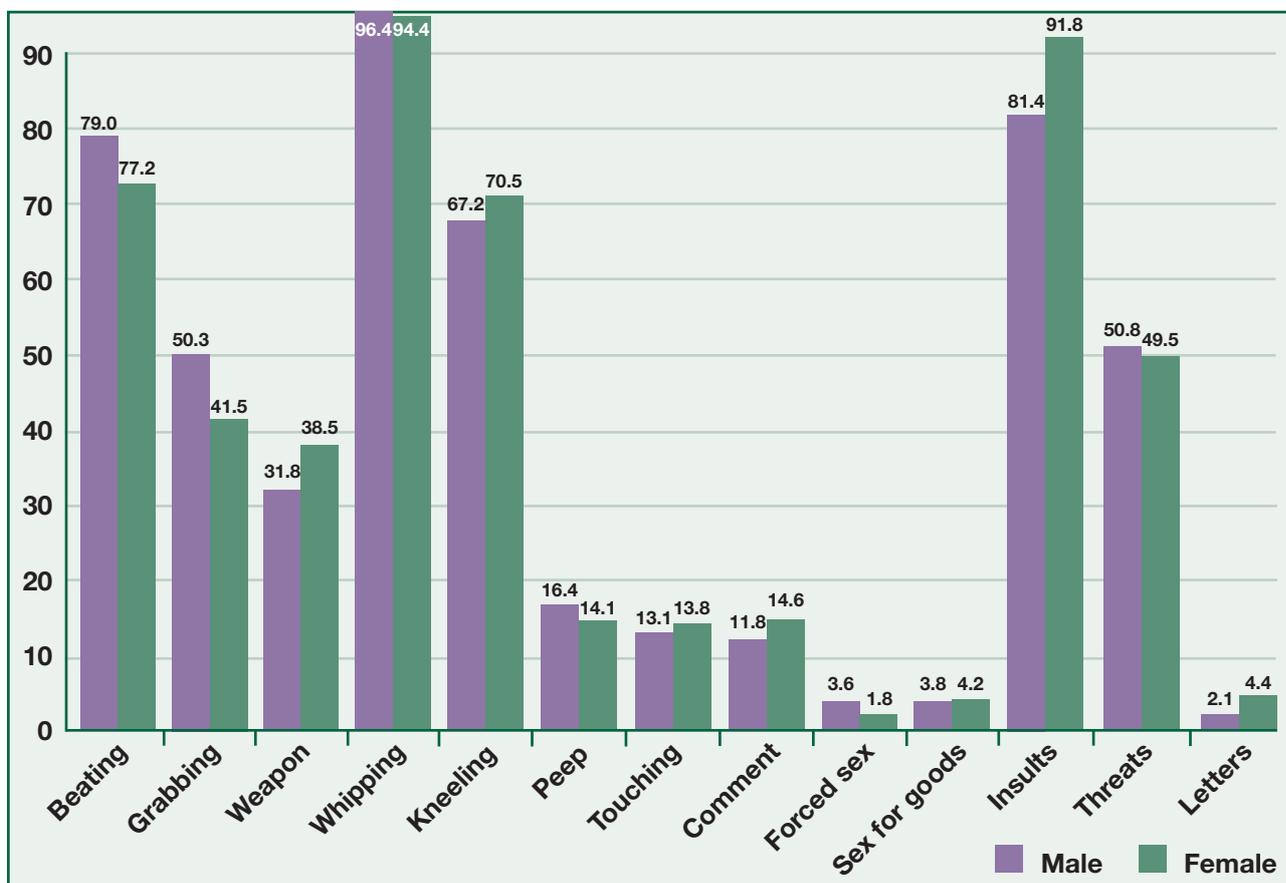
Figure 5: Proportion of pupils reporting that they have experienced violence, Ghana

Table 7 below provides a summary of patterns emerging from the data collected. Possible reasons behind these patterns will be looked at in the rest of this chapter.

Table 7: Cross country patterns in incidences of violence

Short term	Explanation used in questioning	Some headline patterns highlighting comparisons between countries and between girls and boys on reported prevalence of violence
Beating	Beating or fighting (punching/ kicking/slapping)	Much lower in Mozambique and highest in Ghana More for boys in all countries Less variation between boys and girls in Ghana No clear patterns by age
Grabbing	Grabbing (pulling hair, pinching, twisting ear lobes)	Similar in all countries Not a big gender difference
Weapon	Use of weapon (sticks, stones, knives)	Very similar in Ghana and Kenya, lower in Mozambique; not a big gender difference
Whipping	Whipping or caning	75-95% in all 3 countries; a little lower in Mozambique.
Kneeling	Being made to kneel/squat for a very long time	Very high in Ghana - nearly 7/10. Nearly 3/10 in Kenya and less than 2/10 Mozambique
Peeping	Peeping (in toilets, mirrors, under desk)	Similar rates for boys in all 3 countries But for girls it's twice as high in Kenya than Ghana and Mozambique
Touching	Touching/pinching breasts, buttocks, or private parts	Kenya 25%; Mozambique 19%; Ghana 11% for girls. Boys - quite similar across the 3 countries
Comments	Sexual comments	Much higher for both boys and girls in Kenya than other countries, then Ghana, then Mozambique Bigger gender difference (more girls) in Kenya
Forced sex	Forced/unwanted sex	Lower in Mozambique and Ghana for girls (2-3%), and 10% in Kenya
Sex for goods	Forced/coerced sex in exchange for food, gifts, grades, or money	Higher for girls in Kenya (10%)
Insults	Insulting, name calling, or shouting	More than twice as high in Ghana (girls 80%, boys 90%) than for Kenya and Mozambique Boys slightly higher than girls
Threats	Threatened, intimidated, or frightened with harm or punishment	Twice as high in Ghana - similar patterns to insults but a little lower
Letters	Receiving threatening or unwanted letters	Quite low. Reported by girls more than boys. Highest in Kenya, then Mozambique, then Ghana

These findings bear some similarities to other studies of violence in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, a USAID study in Malawi found high levels of physical violence, though corporal punishment levels were slightly lower than in our studies (USAID 2007). Interestingly they found that boys were disproportionately affected by physical and psychological violence, while in our studies though some forms of physical violence affected boys a little more, overall the rates were high for both girls and boys. As in our study, both girls and boys in Malawi were affected by sexual violence, with girls reporting experiencing higher rates of inappropriate touching and peeping. Also consistent with our study, there was a discrepancy between the qualitative and quantitative data, with sexual violence reported much more often in their focus groups.

The types of violence girls and boys report experiencing changed somewhat with age. Most types of physical violence appear to be experienced less by girls and boys in older age groups in Kenya. In contrast they tend to be experienced more (particularly by girls) in higher age groups in Mozambique. In Ghana there are no clear patterns.○

Sexual violence tended to be reported more by girls in older age groups, who are reaching sexual maturation, in all three countries, in particular touching, sexual comments and forced or coerced sex in exchange for goods. In Ghana this was the case with all forms of sexual violence. However, significant numbers of girls in the 8-10 age group reported peeping and touching - around 7-11% of girls in Ghana and Mozambique. Meanwhile 24% of the youngest girls in Kenya reported peeping and 16% touching, and in Kenya peeping was reported the most by this age group. Psychological violence also seems to increase with age in all three countries. This may be in part linked to teachers and parents using less physical and more verbal forms of punishment as girls get older.

Girls were asked where the most recent incident of violence they experienced, in the last 12 months, had taken place. Table 8 below reveals that it was more likely that the most recent incident occurred in the home or community than in the school in all three contexts. However, this difference was greatest in Ghana whilst violence seems to take place almost equally in and outside of the school in Kenya.

Table 8: Location of violence against girls

Percentage of girls who experienced violence by location in the last 12 months location in the last 12 months	Mozambique	Ghana	Kenya
School	24	28	34
Home or community	33	49	39

Findings showed that it is not just the type of violent act but the perpetrator and purpose of violence that determines how it is enacted, understood and responded to. The next few sections will look at these themes in more detail.

4.3   Corporal punishment in school: persisting practices in a shifting policy context

Girls named male teachers as the most frequent perpetrators of corporal punishment in all three country project sites, with around two thirds of cases of whipping carried out by male teachers against both○

girls and boys in Ghana and Mozambique. Female teachers were much less likely to use whipping, particularly in Ghana where fewer than one in twenty cases were perpetrated by female teachers. This may be partly due to the low proportions of teachers who are female, and also because of gendered norms regarding delivery of physical punishments in schools. In Kenya, however, both male and female teachers were implicated. Some studies have found that boys receive more and harsher forms of corporal punishment (USAID 2007; Jones, Moore and Villar-Marquez 2008). In our studies, both girls and boys reported being punished this way, and in the qualitative interviews most girls and boys said similar punishments were used for girls and boys. In Kenya

and Mozambique, these included beating and chores like fetching water, cleaning toilets or cutting trees. Occasionally children said that chores were gender differentiated, with for example boys sent to dig, while girls were sent to fetch water. In Ghana, both girls and boys talked of caning, being told to kneel for long periods and weeding. In none of the countries was there evidence that punishments in school were markedly less harsh for girls.

It is striking that in Kenya, where corporal punishment is outlawed, and in Mozambique where there are codes of conduct against using corporal punishment, acceptability appears to be much lower amongst both teachers and pupils than in Ghana, where there are no laws or codes about corporal punishment. Even more striking are the cases of violence reported to the study by head teachers. In the 13 schools in the study in Ghana over 5000 cases of violence (including all forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence) were reported as taking place in the past year, many cases including whipping (see table 9 below). Meanwhile in Kenya and especially Mozambique, head teachers were largely silent, with many reporting only one or two cases, usually between pupils, and not implicating teachers in perpetrating any form of violence. It should be noted here that slightly different interpretations of the question asked may be partly ○

responsible for this massive difference. In Ghana head teachers did not know how many cases had occurred as they did not keep count; researchers encouraged them to estimate how many occurred in a week and estimates were multiplied up for one year. In Kenya and Mozambique cases were only considered as having occurred if they had been reported and recorded. Even considering this it suggests that head teachers in Ghana are more likely to report numerous cases of violence in their schools than those in Kenya or Mozambique. However, the proportions of girls reporting whether they had been whipped are not markedly different between the three countries. It appears that the legal status of corporal punishment may be changing attitudes around acceptability (or may at least discourage teachers from openly advocating for it), but is having minimal impact on the practice of corporal punishment. It is possible that the expansion of class sizes and pupil-teacher ratios has made it more difficult for teachers to maintain control (Jones et al 2008). A study in Mozambique found that teachers tended intrinsically to link the use of corporal punishment to pupils progressing, believing that students will not learn without it (VSO 2001), suggesting that some teachers in the Stop Violence study may be 'saying the right thing' rather than what they really believe.

Table 9: Pupils reporting or questioning corporal punishment

	Mozambique	Ghana	Kenya
Percentage of girls questioning corporal punishment	81	13	28
Percentage of boys questioning corporal punishment	40	15	36
Percentage of teachers questioning corporal punishment	66	48	89
Number of VAGS cases reported to the school	11	5739	43
Proportion of girls reporting whipping	78	94	82

While for many children, corporal punishment in school appears to be a taken-for-granted, normalised practice, the qualitative data shows how many girls and boys, especially in Kenya, do not passively accept these forms of discipline, but that there are diverse views on legitimacy. Even where they see punishment as warranted, girls and boys set boundaries around what is legitimate or not, taking into consideration the authority of the perpetrator, the harshness of the act, and the reason for the punishment. Similar variations were evident in the views of children in all three countries, with children sometimes referring to the need for corporal punishment to deter from wrongdoing, or as a learning tool. But girls and boys also criticised these forms of punishment, suggesting that talking to children was a better form of punishment. The views of these two children from Kenya illustrate these varying perspectives:

"We should only be beaten when we make mistakes" (13 year old girl, Kenya).

"We should not be beaten if we make mistakes. Punishments are not good. We should just be warned and talked to" (9 year old girl, Kenya).

Forms of punishment like doing chores that could be considered psychological violence were less likely to be questioned, and often seen by children as preferable to beating and caning. Psychological violence in the form of insults and threats was more commonly experienced in the home or community than in school, and children rarely viewed teachers as the main perpetrators of psychological violence.

4.4 Sexual violence by school peers and teachers

Sexual violence more commonly took place outside the school setting in all three countries. While unwanted touching and sexual comments sometimes ⊙

took place in school, often involving other pupils, forms of forced sex and sex for goods almost always was reported as taking place in the home or community. The quantitative data revealed a surprising amount of same sex sexual touching, which was attributed in Ghana to a game involving tickling sensitive areas, and sometimes giving sexual connotations to those who respond quickly to touch, who are said to be a 'bad' boy or 'bad' girl. In the qualitative interviews, however, the incidents of sexual violence described by girls always involved boys or men.

A number of studies have drawn attention to the extent to which teachers are perpetrating sexual violence, raising serious concerns about schools' capacity to protect girls from violence (Human Rights Watch 2001; Leach et al 2005; Jones et al 2008; Huber, 2007; Akpo 2008). Our findings, detailed in Table 10, show that teachers in these contexts were rarely named by girls as perpetrators of sexual violence, at least in the project sites in Mozambique and Ghana.

Table 10: Proportion of girls who experienced each type of violence who named teacher as perpetrator of most recent incident

	Peeping	Touching	Comments	Forced Sex	Sex for goods
Kenya	27.8	21.0	12.1	3.1	3.1
Mozambique	2.4	0.0	0	0	0
Ghana	3.6	1.9	0	0	0

Girls were asked to name the perpetrator of the most recent incident they experienced, and so the small number mentioning teachers does not mean that these forms of violence have never happened. Girls spoke out more about their teachers in Kenya compared to Ghana and Mozambique; this could be linked to girls talking more openly about sexual violence, but it also suggests that girls are more vulnerable in the project schools in Kenya.

However, in focus groups with girls in school and with girls out of school, sexual violence involving teachers was mentioned in all three countries. One group of 14-17 year old girls in Mozambique reported that as a form of punishment the teacher says they have to sleep with him; and a group of girls who were out of school in Kenya explained: ⊙

"Teachers start sexual relationships with girls but they don't want anybody to know. Teachers send girls to go and perform personal errands for them in their homes" (Out of school girls, Kenya).

It may be that girls do not recognise some forms of sexual advances by teachers as abusive, and so our quantitative data may under represent the extent of practices like exchanging sex for grades or merits.

Pupils and teachers were asked about their attitudes to teachers seducing pupils. Table 11 reveals that surprisingly in Kenya, where data suggests teachers are more likely to be perpetrators, teachers are most likely to advocate dismissing teachers who commit such acts. It is Mozambique where children and teachers, particularly male teachers, are least likely

to advocate dismissing teachers who seduce schoolgirls. This may be linked to attitudes expressed commonly in Mozambique placing blame on girls for sexual activity, or could be a result of girls' relative silence on sexual violence. It may be that girls in Mozambique are less likely to recognise and name such acts as violent.

Table 11: Percentage of respondents who think teachers who have a sexual relationship with a pupil should be dismissed and not allowed to teach again

	Mozambique	Ghana	Kenya
Male teachers	40	68	65
Female teachers	52	60	73
Boys	53	80	67
Girls	53	86	67

4.5   Gender and punishment in the home

Corporal punishment at home was a common practice in all three contexts, and was often used to instil a gendered division of labour. In Mozambique, some parents seemed aware that such practices were not supported by organisations like ActionAid, but they viewed beating children as necessary to control behaviour and education:

"You (referring to the team members) just came here because you are doing work for ActionAid. But you know that there is no way we can improve the situation of girls in schools and communities without beating our children. When we beat them, they can report to the police and we will be arrested. But do you think is it wise for parents to be arrested for beating their own children?" (fathers' FGD, Mozambique).

In Kenya, parents said that mothers administered these punishments for girls, and fathers for boys, and one group of fathers appeared to recommend harsher punishments for boys: "we cannot beat girls on the buttocks because girls are weak naturally". In Ghana, while most parents said that the same kinds of punishments were meted on girls and boys, two of the fathers groups felt that punishments for girls needed to be harsher to prepare her for adult life:

"Both girls and boys are advised first on any wrong doing, but we cane them if they persist in it. The girls, though, receive severer discipline because they are being prepared for marriage in

a different house, so they have to be hardened to cope with any challenges they may encounter in their matrimonial home "(fathers' FGD, Ghana).

"The reason for severer discipline for girls is that a female needs to be humble" (fathers' FGD, Ghana).

Not all parents, however, used physical punishments:

"Some of us discipline our girls by advising them to desist from wrongdoing but some of us do so by beating, insulting or refusing to provide them with food" (mothers' FGD, Ghana).

In Kenya and Ghana, parents said that refusing food was a form of punishment. Insults were common amongst mothers in all three contexts, perhaps because while fathers had more control over public spaces, mothers controlled the private space at home, and used verbal forms of discipline.

It was not only parents who used physical punishments in the community. In Ghana, girls were often sent to live with and work for aunts, and they complained of particularly harsh treatment in these circumstances. In Kenya, girls out of school complained that once they married their parents' beatings later replaced by the beatings of husbands and in-laws. These findings illustrate how across the three project sites, poverty and gender intersect in practices of punishment.

4.6 Sexual violence at home: taboos and silences, forced marriage and FGM

With the family viewed as private and sacred, it is not surprising that very few girls spoke of sexual violence perpetrated by family members. There were, however, a small number of cases of forced or exchange sex involving family members mentioned in each country. In the Kenya context, for example, the researcher's field notes from a focus group with schoolgirls recorded:

> "Girls face threats of rape from relatives, especially male relatives, uncles, when mothers are away from home. One girl said: 'he comes to my room at night and tells me that if you refuse to have sex with me I will stab you and I don't care'. Another reported: 'Others wrap your mouth with pieces of cloth so that you can't make noise'" (14-17 year old girls' FGD, Kenya)

The threat and fear entailed in such incidents, the personal risks to safety in disclosing and taboos around incest are likely to silence girls, and it is impossible to know how common such incidents are in these communities. Sometimes research participants used euphemisms and innuendo, with comments like a boy "did bad things to me" or "touching a girl" difficult to interpret without further clarification.

Focus groups seemed to be the research space where girls were most likely to discuss violence in the home, and girls in these groups spoke with feeling about their antipathy towards forced and exchange marriage. Many of the girls in our out of school groups had dropped out of school because they had been forced to marry. Girls in Ghana talked of being insulted and coerced into forced marriages, with threats of forced sex and beatings if they refused. One head teacher in Ghana told of a class five girl who was pulled out of school for exchange marriage against her wishes by her brothers. In Mozambique, a police officer told how parents forced their daughters to marry in order to gain an income from the son-in-law through 'lobolo' (bride price). A group of girls out of school in Kenya decided to speak in secret to the researchers for fear of repercussions by their husbands, and girls there complained of violence within the marital home:

> "One of us had to divorce the husband because of being battered everyday while at the age of 18 years she has 3 kids. They divorced two months ago in March 2009. Husbands do not respect the wives because they see us like children; we are insulted by our husbands."
> (out of school girls' FGD, Kenya)

This highlights how age and gender intersect to exacerbate girls' unequal power in marital relationships.

While most of the communities in the study did not practise female genital mutilation, in one pastoralist community in Kenya, the health officer explained that 80% of girls undergo FGM around age 5. Pastoralist girls out of school were highly critical of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and spoke of the continuing pain during sexual intercourse with husbands, menstruation and childbirth, and of the older community members' resistance to change:

> "Those who are cut bleed a lot because you are only given some liquid herbs to put on the wound and it is painful. We don't think the FGM is good because it is painful and we won't advise anyone to do it"
> (11-13 year old girls, Kenya).

Practices like FGM and early marriage may be seen as a way to protect a girl's honour and chastity, but in this study girls were clearly unhappy about such practices.

In analysing the views of parents, there seems to be a tension between tradition and modernity, with forms of violence and gendered inequality permeating both. The more remote communities, and pastoralist communities may adhere more closely to traditional and religious practices, like forced marriage, and, in Kenya FGM. In Mozambique and in some of the communities in Ghana and Kenya with more access to the media, parents question the effects of modernity in the communities, and on their children. Some parents lament the influence of pornographic videos, and complain of the disrespect for elders and sexual activity of the young unmarried girls and boys, blaming girls for attracting sexual violence through for example the way they dress. Violence cuts across all communities, but the way it is understood and addressed within communities is bound up with the

context of religion, tradition, modernity and economic pressures.

4.7 Violence in the community: Journey to school

The journey to school was often seen as unsafe, with girls in Mozambique saying that roads were not safe, and girls in Ghana referring to the risk of being attacked on the way to the bore hole, and especially when going to the toilet where they were concerned that men might grab them and force them to have sex. Girls in Kenya also spoke of the dangers of being attacked by men and boys when they go to the toilet, and of the risks of sexual attack. Often incidents involving school boys happened outside school, and girls, particularly in Kenya, spoke about their vulnerability when having to go to the toilet in the bush, or to walk home:

"Sometimes girls are grabbed by boys and taken to the bushes. I don't know what they do to them. Sometimes boys touch the breasts of Std 6 girls" (9 year old girl, Kenya).

"One day a boy approached me from the back and touched my breasts. This happens to other ⊙

girls in school and in the village. Sometimes they touch other girls' buttocks and thighs on our way to school. They hide in the bush and scare us, sometimes they also approach us and we run away" (13 year old girl, Kenya).

Girls in Kenya and Ghana talked of the risk of wild animals on the journey to school, snakes in Ghana and lions and buffaloes in Kenya. In Kenya they feared attack by bandits in the area, though parents felt this risk had subsided in recent times. In Ghana, a legacy of tension between the two local ethnic groups was viewed occasionally as generating mistrust.

Parents in Kenya and Ghana also feared for their daughters' safety in the bush, either on long journeys to school, or when the lack of toilets meant they had to go to the bush to relieve themselves.

While girls in all three countries sometimes felt unsafe, the rural communities of Kenya and Ghana, in which children often had very long journeys to school, were more likely to inhibit school attendance (see Table 12). As in other studies (Centre for Educational Research and Training and DevTech Systems 2008); Porter et al 2011), the nature of the terrain creates different risks, with remote rural settings particularly difficult for children.

Table 12: Girls' linking absenteeism with unsafe journey to school

	Mozambique	Ghana	Kenya
Proportion of girls stating that unsafe journey was a reason girls do not go to school	1	11	10

4.8 Exchange sex: Protection, prohibition and blame

Sex exchanged for goods was reported by girls occasionally in all three countries, most often in Kenya, where one in ten girls said they had exchanged sex for goods. Their experiences were closely linked to poverty, with girls out of school in Ghana and Kenya saying they were coerced by boys and men to have sex in exchange for money, and this happened in school and in the community. Girls out of school in Ghana also said that poverty sometimes drove them to migrate to towns to engage in sex work. In Mozambique, men from the local sugar ⊙

factory lured girls with promises of money or goods. A police officer explained:

"Some girls give themselves to older men, at night, so that they can buy school material and pay transport to go to school" (police officer, Mozambique.)

Girls' roles in this exchange were viewed with ambivalence by parents and community members. While some clearly viewed girls as victims with little power in the transaction, forced into these practices by poverty, others saw girls as to blame, whilst others seemed to hold both these views at the same time.

Men's lust and pornographic videos were seen as contributing to the problem, and girls were also seen as responsible through dressing in a way that attracted the opposite sex. While in all three contexts, girls' sexual activity was associated by parents with unruliness and indiscipline, this seemed particularly common in Mozambique:

> "The main problems happen with girls, because when they start dating they no longer pay attention to school and don't have a positive performance. Girls are the problem, because they don't listen to what their parents and teachers say. Girls are frequently pregnant at a young age and end up dropping out"
> (parents' FGD, Mozambique).

> "Girls like money a lot; they go after older men and these men end up committing sexual abuse" (father, Mozambique).

> "I think these men have diseases just from being always with women; that is why they commit such acts. There are other cases where children like to ask for money, and when the man sees that the child is always asking for money, he uses the situation to take the girl to his house and rapes her"
> (Women's Group Leader, Mozambique).

These extracts illustrate how girls are seen as greedy, unruly and lacking in respect for their elders, and while men are not exonerated from the sexual violence, it is girls who are seen as tempting them into the violent acts. While girls spoke more openly about dating in Mozambique, in all three contexts sexual activity by unmarried girls was viewed as problematic. An SMC member in Kenya, asked about sexual violence, explained:

> "Only older children have these problems since they are developmental problems, and the need to satisfy sexual urge by children. Boys and girls when they reach a certain age undergo body changes and feel like they can just involve in sexual matters, and this is violence"
> (SMC member, Kenya).

This quote seems to imply that any teenage sexual activity is violent, though who the victim is remains unclear. These blurred boundaries around consent are a challenge for a project addressing violence against girls (particularly for older teenage girls) and protecting girls' rights, including the right to experiment with sex in a secure environment. As other studies show (e.g. Luke and Kurtz 2002; Heslop 2008) girls in many contexts actively and strategically seek out sexual relationships, but where there are large age and status inequalities in these relationships girls may have little real choice. Data suggests that there are stronger moral codes on sexuality, perhaps related to religious and cultural teachings, in the project sites in Kenya and Ghana than in Mozambique. This can also include more controls on male behaviour - for example the Wardei community in Kenya "forbids men from disturbing girls" and consequences for men are severe – suggesting that girls may have more protection from sexual violence in these contexts. Girls may be less likely to be blamed for sexual violence because of less acknowledgement of girls' intentional sexual activity, but with this may come less freedom for these girls.

Girls' bodies become collateral in exchange in different ways. Tradition dictates that girls' bodies are exchanged in marriage, with maternity and marriage considered valued accomplishments, making it difficult for married girls to complain (Arthur and Mejia 2007). Modernity opens up new contexts for exchange, with the lure of money, clothes and their accompanying status creating new pressures, and possibly opportunities for girls in a context of economic hardship (Luke and Kurtz 2002). In this study, such exchanges evoked conflicts, with girls expressing resistance to 'tradition' and parents criticising girls for signs of 'disrespect'. One group of girls drew attention to these disjunctures and contradictions in a succinct way when asked the causes of violence, simultaneously attributing violence to unjust institutions and blaming girls themselves:

> "…poverty, traditions and beliefs, and sexy dresses" (14-17 year old girls Ghana).

5. Gender and Schooling

PHOTO: SVEN TORFINN/PANOS PICTURES/ACTIONAID

5.1   Introduction

In order to understand and address violence against girls, it is important to analyse their experiences of schooling. Previous studies have discussed how schooling may protect girls from forms of violence, but at the same time schools may perpetuate and exacerbate violence (Harber 2004; Davies 2004; Leach and Mitchell 2006; Dunne 2008), as seen in the previous section. This section addresses the following research questions:

What are the gendered patterns of enrolment, completion and achievement in the project schools? What variations are there between the schools, and how do these compare with district and national patterns? What are the links with gender relations and violence?

In the three project districts many girls, especially in the older primary grades, were denied access to school while others often had to miss school because of the requirement to provide labour for families. At the same time, there has been progress in increasing access in the early years. But how 'girl-friendly' are schools? In this section, after discussing patterns of enrolment and attendance, we will consider this question by discussing the school as a gendered institution, and by considering attitudes to gender of members of the school communities.

5.2   Access to school: moves to gender parity in the early years

In line with national trends (see earlier section 3.1 above), girls' enrolment in the project schools has increased in recent years, as shown in Table 13 below. It was only possible to collect data from project schools for the past three years, and the slight reduction in girls' enrolment in the Kenyan project site may be due to fluctuation and not be indicative of an overall downwards trend. Head teachers in all three countries gave a number of explanations for the increased access to schooling for girls. These are also detailed in Table 13. Support for poorer families in the form of free schooling or feeding programmes together with sensitisation programmes in communities about the value of girls' education were key factors across the project areas. Head teachers in Mozambique felt that girls and boys were increasingly motivated to stay at school. In Ghana, where there have been significant problems with recruiting and retaining female teachers (Casely-Hayford 2007; 2011), improving teaching conditions through provision of housing was a further factor.

Table 13: Head teacher explanations for increase in enrolments

Ghana	Kenya	Mozambique
Actual enrolment change 2006-2008		
Increased by approximately 13% from 2073 to 2346	Not increased; slightly dropped by 7% from 2182 to 2030	Increased by approximately 10% from 4087 to 4514
Head teacher explanations for increase in enrolments:		
• introduction of the school capitation grant (reducing parental contributions?) and FCUBE in general • provision of teachers' housing which has reduced teacher absenteeism • community education campaigns with parents (sometimes part of a Ghana Education Unit enrolment drive) • school feeding programme • more female teachers in Kindergarten	• FPE • school feeding programmes • NGO work (ActionAid) • improved pass rates (providing more motivation to attend?)	• sensitising children on rights to education • increased access (reduced distances) to schools • less girls getting pregnant • less boys seeking work in South Africa

Despite these overall improvements, as shown in Table 14 below, in all three countries in the project schools there is a clear drop in enrolment as girls get older and move through primary school. This is most stark in Kenya, where the numbers in the last class of primary school are almost ten times lower than in the first year.

In Ghana and Mozambique there are almost half as many girls in the last year as the first year in primary school. The gender gap between girls and boys enrolled widens as girls move up the school, most markedly in Kenya but also in Ghana. There is not a clear trend in Mozambique, although it does fluctuate.

Table 14: Enrolment by class 2008

	Kenya		Mozambique		Ghana	
	Girls enrl	GPI enrl	Girls enrl	GPI enrl	Girls enrl	GPI enrl
Class 1	467	1.09	702	0.95	504	0.98
Class 2	331	0.97	723	1.01	441	0.88
Class 3	284	1.03	696	1.02	380	0.87
Class 4	320	1.04	684	0.95	390	0.88
Class 5	265	1.18	513	0.89	349	0.97
Class 6	132	0.79	476	1.11	282	0.82
Class 7	124	0.67	404	0.9		
Class 8	59	0.44				
Total	2030	0.96	4514	0.96	2346	0.91

The possible reasons for these enrolment patterns are discussed in the next section.

5.3 Barriers to girls' schooling

It is clear that girls face a wide range of barriers to their schooling. Figure 6 below shows that the biggest barriers, as expressed by girls themselves, are linked to gendered roles (household chores, looking after younger children), poverty (parents can't pay school fees and farm work), and issues related to sexuality and gender violence (early pregnancy and marriage). Girls in the project areas in Ghana were the most likely to articulate barriers to schooling, whereas girls in Manhiça, Mozambique were much less likely to do so. Notably, significant numbers of girls in Kenya (few in

Ghana and none in Mozambique) cited menstruation, sexual harassment and inadequate toilets as being a barrier to schooling. Whilst our research found toilets to be inadequate in all three countries, they were notably better in Kenya than Ghana where many schools have no toilets at all. Again, it is possible that these responses are linked to girls' increased awareness and outspokenness in Kenya about the problems they face, as well as to interventions by ActionAid Kenya and other NGOs with for example latrine building, water catchment and sanitary towel distribution.
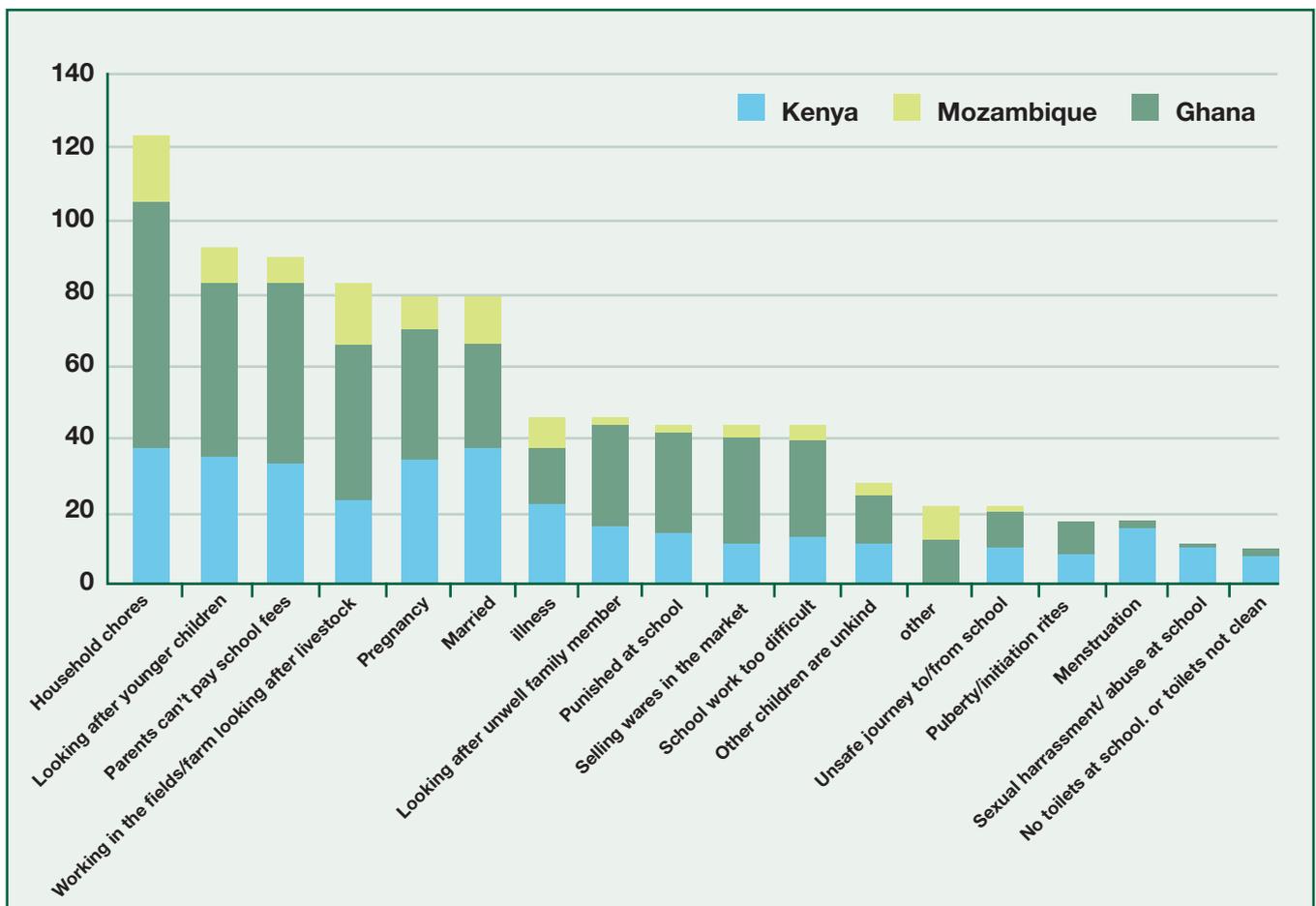
Figure 6: Girls' responses as to why girls do not attend school

In all three countries, girls who had dropped out of school explained to researchers that pregnancy was a key reason they were unable to attend school. In Kenya and Ghana, in particular, pregnancy was also linked with child marriage, whilst exchange-marriages – when two families exchange their daughters in marriage – was a concern for girls in Ghana. In all three countries, poverty was a critical factor affecting girls' attendance at school: girls had to supply labour in the home, farm or market, and were withdrawn from school because families were unable to pay for fees, uniforms, equipment, or, in the case of Kenya, sanitary pads. In the pastoralist community in Kenya, this was particularly marked during periods of drought when girls said they had to help the parents look for food and money. In Ghana, girls and their parents mentioned difficulties "during the lean season". Girls in Kenya said that girls' education was not valued by parents. Girls in Mozambique and

Kenya said they did not attend school because of sexual harassment, abuse and punishment at school although these reasons were not widely cited in Ghana.

Parents also acknowledged the barriers and the importance of working with schools to improve girls' education. Like other participants, they talked of the need to sensitise, or persuade parents of the value of education. In some cases, girls' own views were subsumed in order to fulfil a custom of for example, sending a girl child to a relative (like the custom of sending a girl to live with a paternal aunt in Ghana). At the same time, the reasons parents keep girls and boys out of school were often linked to economic hardship beyond their control. As one group of fathers in Ghana explained, "Some of the girls have to look after their younger brothers and sisters so that we, the parents, can work on the farm to feed the family". Parents may want their daughters to have an education, but their children's labour may at times be necessary to the survival of the family.

Boys were much more likely to cite the need to spend school time carrying out income generating activities, such as working in farms, herding cattle and selling goods in the markets. The findings demonstrate how boys and girls are socialised into their respective productive and reproductive roles at an early age: boys are much more likely to undertake duties that reinforce a notion of providing for and materially supporting the family whilst girls are more likely to undertake care duties.

5.4 Gender profile of teaching and management

The expansion of access to school in developing countries has generated a crisis in provision of teaching staff (Unterhalter, North and Parkes 2010). While the overall pupil-teacher ratios are lower in the project areas in Ghana and Kenya than in Mozambique, these mask wide variations between schools. In the project schools in Ghana for example the pupil-teacher ratio varied from 10:1 in one school to 88:1 in another. In remote rural communities, where teachers may face poor conditions, isolation and gender discrimination, it may be difficult to recruit and retain women teachers (Casely-Hayford 2011). In line with these findings, the rural communities in Ghana and Kenya of our studies had fewer female teachers than the more accessible communities in Mozambique, where there is a national teacher training institute nearby, better local facilities and the project area is within easy reach of the capital.

Differences in the type of education qualifications awarded in the three project countries make it difficult to draw comparisons with regard to teacher levels of qualification. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers in the project schools in Ghana and Kenya, particularly women, lack a professional teaching qualification. This is in contrast to the majority of teachers in the project schools in Mozambique who seem to have received some level of professional teacher training, and where more women than men have a degree. This seems to be having an impact on women's access to leadership positions, with more women in school management positions and more female head teachers in our Mozambique sample than in Ghana and Kenya (see Table 15).

Table 15: Gender profile of teaching and management

	Mozambique	Ghana	Kenya
Percentage of women teachers	49	20	34
Percentage of women/girls on school management committee	56	28	30
Pupil teacher ratio	51	39	43
No. of female head teachers in project schools	5/15	1/12	1/11
% of girls reporting violence in school in the past 12 months	24	28	34

The presence of women teachers is often thought to be a source of protection for girls against violence (Kirk 2006). The study areas in Mozambique had the most women on the SMC and more and better qualified women teachers of the three countries, but also had the highest pupil teacher ratio. Meanwhile, the project schools in Ghana had the lowest participation by women in school governance, the least qualified women but also the lowest pupil teacher ratio. Whilst Mozambique seems, in many ways, to be less overtly discriminatory with regard to gender (for example many women in parliament and participating in the labour market including teaching, and girls doing as well as boys in school – all of which may be influenced by Mozambique's Socialist history) in the study area there was also less violence reported, although the difference is not great. However, there was also a sense in the interviews with girls in Mozambique that they were less able to articulate their concerns than girls in Ghana and especially Kenya, and so we suspect that violence is particularly underreported in Mozambique.

We investigated this further through looking at school-level correlations. Our data across the three countries suggests no clear relationship between the proportion of women teachers in schools and violence reported by girls. Correlations were carried out between proportions of women teachers and types of violence experienced: overall the study showed that the higher the proportion of women teachers in schools, the less ⊙

the psychological violence experienced by girls. There was no clear relationship with sexual and physical violence. In fact, data in Mozambique and Ghana suggest that more women teachers may be related to higher rates of physical violence, a finding that is difficult to explain and may be coincidental. It appears that the nature of the relationship between these factors is complex and is different for each project district and country.

5.5   The gendered school environment

5.5.1 Gender, achievement and attitudes

While there is limited research on gender and achievement in Sub-Saharan Africa, research in OECD countries indicates that the gender gap is reducing in many countries (Arnot, David and Weiner 1999). Studies in Southern and Eastern Africa reported insignificant gender differences in reading test scores at grade 6 in most countries, including Kenya and Mozambique; in maths scores, boys scored higher in both countries (IIEP 2004). Table 16 shows that in the three project sites of our studies, pass rates were generally low, particularly in Kenya. In Mozambique there was gender parity in project schools, but in Kenya boys outperformed girls in examinations, with gender gaps widening in upper primary in Kenya and Ghana. Actual pass rates are particularly low in the Kenyan site.

Table 16: Gender and exam pass rates

		Mozambique	Ghana	Kenya
Last class of lower primary	**Percentage of girls enrolled who pass all subjects**	63	78	26
	GPI pass rate	1.02	1.03	0.72
Last class of upper primary	**Percentage of girls enrolled who pass all subjects**	61	64	47
	GPI pass rate	1.03	0.74	0.63

There is no consistent pattern across the three project areas linking pupil and teacher attitudes towards intelligence with recorded levels of pupil achievement, although, in all three countries, the majority of male pupils state that boys are more intelligent than girls (as shown in Table 17 below). However, in Mozambique, more positive attitudes of teachers and pupils with regard to gender equality in the classroom than those expressed in Ghana and Kenya do seem to be indicative of greater equality in girls' and boys' achievements (as indicated by pass rates). Nevertheless, despite gender parity in pass rates, over half of boys and a significant number of girls interviewed in Mozambique still claimed that boys were more intelligent than girls.

Table 17: Pupils' and teachers' views on gender and intelligence

	% saying boys are more intelligent				
	Gender	Kenya	Moz	Ghana	Cross country
Pupils	Male	62	53	62	59
	Female	27	21	41	30
Teachers	Male	13	13	28	18
	Female	27	7	7	14
All respondents		32	24	34	30

Overall, across the three project areas, female respondents had more positive attitudes about girls' intelligence than male respondents, and teachers appeared to have more positive attitudes than pupils. However, a significantly high number of girls interviewed in Ghana believed that boys are more intelligent than girls, and over a quarter of women teachers in Kenya also think that this is the case. This last point is perhaps interesting in light of the finding detailed in Table 18 below, that significantly fewer girls in Kenya than in the other two countries, particularly Mozambique, thought that teachers equally encourage girls' and boys' participation in the classroom.

Table 18: Girls' views on teacher gender bias in questioning approaches

	Moz	Ghana	Kenya
Percentage of girls who think that teachers do not show bias in their Questioning approaches	84	77	68

As one Kenyan school girl stated:

"Girls are mostly gossiped about by teachers in the staffroom and they never tell the girls about their mistakes. This makes girls very bitter, intimidated and causes a decline in their performance in class" (12 year old girl, Kenya).

The qualitative data gives a mixed picture of pupils' views about gender and performance. Many children in the three countries talked of girls and boys doing equally well, though in Mozambique, boys were seen as better at technical drawing, and in Kenya, children, and particularly boys, tended to see boys as doing better at mathematics. Some children attributed the differences to intrinsic differences in their approaches to learning:

"Boys are good in mathematics, reading and writing but girls are good in science. Girls are not good in maths because they require more explanations to understand while boys are quick in grasping ideas" (10 year old boy, Kenya).

In Ghana, some children felt that girls' and boys' performance in maths, science, reading and writing was equal, but others saw boys as achieving more highly, particularly in science and maths. Often they linked this to the gendered division of labour at home:

"Both boys and girls perform well in maths and science, reading and writing. Allah created us and gave us equal brain. It is only the time and attention given that differs" (8 year old boy, Ghana).

"I think both boys and girls perform well in maths, science, reading and writing, drawing and almost all the subjects but what I have realised is that boys are more serious and spend a lot of studying whiles girls are engaged in other activities in their houses" (14 year old boy, Ghana)

"Boys are brighter in all the subjects than girls. Girls do more work at home so they don't learn but boys do nothing at home, other than playing, eating or learning" (13 year old girl, Ghana).

PHOTO: JANE HAHN/PANOS PICTURES/ACTIONAID

The statements here seem to illustrate both recognition of gender injustice and some slippage into essentialised explanations, for example, boys being 'more serious' and 'brighter'.

5.5.2 Girls' problems in schools

Ghanaian pupils' awareness of the gendered division of labour was also clear in their responses to questions about how girls and boys are treated at school and home. In the schools in Kenya and Mozambique, children talked of the gendered division of labour at home, but in school they felt girls and boys were treated the same. In the project area in Ghana, however, girls and boys took for granted gendered divisions of labour both at home and at school. Different roles were attributed to different levels of strength, or to the need to prepare children for their adult roles:

"In the school girls sweep classrooms and fetch water while boys sweep compound and weed. Boys and girls should be treated differently because God did not create them the same. Boys are stronger and should do more work"
(10 year old girl, Ghana).

Some recognised these as unfair because of the higher workloads of girls. While the differences were most marked in the home setting, they talked about how their labours impacted on their school performance:

"In the home roles assigned to girls and boys are different. Boys support their parents at farm, taking care of livestock and weeding around the house. Girls cook for the family, fetch water, wash bowls, caring for the young and sell market wares. In the school, boys sweep the school compound, weed and trim flowers whilst girls sweep the classroom and offices, do cleaning, fetch water for teachers to drink. Looking at what I have said so far the girls are suffering too much and I think it affects them negatively in their performance"
(14 year old boy, Ghana).

Table 19 summarises the problems for children, and particularly girls, described by girls, boys and head teachers. In all three project areas, poor facilities and conditions in school were concerns for children. Inadequate toilets were mentioned in all three countries, though the study found that provision of toilets for girls was better in Mozambique and poorest in Ghana, as table 20 overleaf shows.

Table 19: Problems for pupils, particularly girls, in school

Ghana	Kenya	Mozambique
• Schooling conditions - overcrowded classrooms, no toilets or inadequate toilets, lack of school furniture and books; lack of recreation facilities • Teaching and learning - teachers absent/not teaching, children unable to understand/ speak English, poor academic performance • School chores e.g. Girls having to walk long distances to fetch water for school, or gardening at teachers houses during school time • Corporal punishment including caning and kneeling • Sexual abuse and threats from male pupils and teachers • Household chores and market work interfering with schoolwork • Pregnancy and early marriage • Traffic accidents	• Schooling conditions – lack of sanitary pads and unclean toilets; insufficient books; lack of clean water; inadequate cooking facilities; no gate (poor security?) • Teaching and learning – overworked teachers; teachers not providing constructive feedback to girls; children fight • School chores - Teachers send children on errands • Punishment - teachers caning girls; Children sent home for lack of uniform/parents cannot afford uniform • Sexual harassment/assault by boys • Long distances to school	• Schooling conditions -lack of desks, lack of toilets, lack of exercise books and pens, prefabricated classrooms in disrepair • School chores -especially girls sweeping classrooms • Corporal punishment • Early pregnancy and dropout • lack of school security (no guard, men coming to harass/ seduce girls) • long distance to school

Table 20: Toilet provision for girls

Number of schools reporting:	Mozambique	Ghana	Kenya
Separate, functioning toilets for girls	14/15	6/13	10/16

There were also concerns about teaching quality, including demands on children to carry out chores like sweeping or cleaning teachers' homes, as well as corporal punishment. Sexual violence in school or on the journey to school was also raised as a concern for girls, with implications for school security. Finally, problems faced at home, with heavy workloads and being forced to leave school because of pregnancy and early marriage, affected girls' capacity to achieve in school. Harsh socio-economic conditions and gendered inequalities intersect in and around the school environment to hinder girls' opportunities to enjoy and thrive in school.

6. Challenging violence

6.1 Introduction

This report has painted at best an uneven picture, and frequently a bleak picture of violence and inequalities in girls' lives in schools and communities across the three country sites. In this section, we explore spaces where girls are able to speak out against violence, and where families, schools, communities and official justice and welfare systems support them in challenging violence. We address the following questions:

What mechanisms are there for girls to contest violence, to express their perspectives and to influence decisions about matters that concern them? How can these be expanded?

What is evident throughout is how few these spaces are, and that even when such spaces or mechanisms do exist they have limited functionality.

6.2 Girls staying silent or speaking out

Girls rarely reported violence. These findings are similar to other studies in sub-Saharan Africa, where low levels of reporting and lack of policies relating to violence were noted (Centre for Educational Research and Training and DevTech Systems 2008; Jones et al 2008). In all three project sites, asked about their responses to the most recent incident of violence they had experienced, the majority of girls took no action. Girls were most likely to take action in Kenya and least likely in Mozambique.

Table 21: Percentage of girls reporting violence to others

	Moz	Ghana	Kenya
Percentage of girls who have experienced violence who reported it, in any way	6	15	35

There are several reasons why girls were reluctant to report violence. Many of the incidents they described were forms of punishment, and in these cases girls sometimes felt that the punishments were justified as forms of correction, or else that there was no point in reporting as they would not be listened to, or would be blamed and risk further punishment. Since most girls were not aware of any policies on corporal punishment or codes of conduct for teachers, then they did not know who they could report to, in what circumstances, and what redress they might expect. Often they felt there was no point in reporting, since no further action would be taken or that it would be no help.

A 10 year old girl in Ghana for example explained:

Girl: *I was late for school and a male teacher caned my palm.*

Interviewer: *Why do you think it happened?*

Girl: *Mother was sick so I was asked to cook for my younger siblings before going to school.*

Interviewer: *What did you do about it?*

Girl: *I did nothing because I didn't know what to do. It is not good to report your teachers. If they are angry, they will leave the school and school will have no teacher.*

This extract clearly illustrates the dilemmas girls face even when they recognise punishments as unjust. In this case, she was aware both that reporting the teacher might risk further punishment, and that antagonising the teacher risks leaving the children with no teacher at all.

When girls did report violence, the people they turned to varied between the three project sites. Girls in Kenya reported to a wide range of people (adults and peers, male and female, in their school and in their family). They were most likely to go to female

family members and female teachers in cases of physical and sexual violence, and family members when reporting psychological violence. Girls in Ghana tended to report mostly to family members - more to males in cases of physical violence and females to report sexual violence – although they sometimes reported to school staff and peers. In Mozambique, girls very rarely reported cases to anyone except female family members. Often they saw no point in reporting, since it was a form of correction:

> *"No, because I never find the need, the teacher beats me so that I can pay attention and learn"* (10 year old girl, Mozambique).

Some, however, said they would report to a family member, suggesting that some girls at least were aware that teachers were not supposed to use corporal punishment.

In the Ghana site too, most girls saw no point in reporting physical violence, but those few girls who talked of experiences of sexual violence tended to report to an adult. One girl told her teacher when a boy touched her breast, another told her father. But another girl, who had been raped and forced to marry the rapist, said she could tell no one:

> *"Whom do I tell? Nobody would listen to me because everybody thinks it is the normal thing to do"* (17 year old girl, Ghana).

Girls in the Kenya site talked more often about peer violence, including beatings and sexual violence perpetrated by boys. They were more likely to speak out about these forms of violence, often reporting to parents or teachers, or they talked of screaming and running away:

> *"One day on my way to school a boy approached me from behind and touched my breasts. He insisted on touching me but I ran away and screamed. I went and reported to my mother, who told me to go and tell my teacher. The boy was called by the teacher and asked why he did it. He had no reason and he was beaten or caned"* (14 year old girl, Kenya).

In all three research sites, few girls said they had been told what to do after a violent incident, though occasionally they said they were told to tell their teachers. Asked if they knew if the school had any rules about how teachers and pupils should treat each other, most knew of no rules. Girls in Ghana and Mozambique sometimes referred to rules about pupil behaviour, but none knew of rules governing teacher behaviours:

> *"I know that boys and girls should respect teacher. There are no rules for teachers"* (13 year old girl, Ghana).

> *"There are regulations, but I don't know what they say"* (15 year old girl, Mozambique).

Girls in Kenya occasionally referred to rules concerning teachers, including the duty to teach, and rules on corporal punishment and on sexual abuse. One girl also mentioned the requirement for teachers to use aid money appropriately to improve schools:

> *"Yes teachers are supposed to use funds from NGOs like ActionAid to better the school for the sake of pupils. That teachers should not have sexual relationships with girls and should not cane pupils to hurt them"* (16 year old girl, Kenya).

The reference to ActionAid here may signal that the project was already influencing pupil knowledge at the time of the baseline study, and this may possibly help to explain the increased likelihood of girls speaking out in this project site, while these girls were still in a minority.

6.3 The school as a site for challenging violence

As discussed in 6.2 above, the finding that most girls do not report violence signals that schools have a long way to go in providing safe, supportive spaces for girls.

6.3.1 School responses to reports of violence
Where action was taken in schools, head teachers explained that it usually took the form of advising or punishing pupils who had fought or attacked each other. In Ghana, they sometimes spoke of following up violence against girls by using corporal

punishment, and we know from the children's accounts that beating and caning were common responses to reports of violence in all three sites. Head teachers very rarely referred to taking any action against teachers, since they did not view them as perpetrators of violence and girls rarely made reports on teacher perpetrated violence. For example, in the Kenyan site where girls are more likely to report, 30 girls in the study said they had reported their last incident of beating to a female teacher. Of these the pupil was punished in 20 of the cases, and in 5 no action was taken. In one case the girl was punished herself. In the remaining 4 cases various further reporting channels were followed (to family members or community leaders), but not to official channels. Three of these four cases involved another student and one a male family member. None of the 30 cases that girls reported to teachers involved beating by a teacher, even through teachers were widely cited as perpetrators by girls. It seems that the purpose of the violence and the status or perceived legitimacy of the perpetrator is highly important in determining girls' responses. Beating by teachers is often seen as a legitimate form of controlling the child. These findings support those found in other studies – for example the Safe Schools research in Malawi found that 72% of girls beaten by boy pupils reported it, compared to 18% beaten by teachers (Centre for Educational Research and Training and DevTech Systems 2008).

Cases of rape were also not followed up and acted upon. For example, in Kenya, four cases of rape were reported to teachers. The three cases reported to female teachers resulted in the girl herself being punished. In the one case reported to the male teacher no further action was taken. Again, in all cases reported to teachers the perpetrator was a pupil.

Head teachers spoke occasionally about taking action to intervene with families who had withdrawn their daughters from school for marriage or mistreated them at home. In Ghana, one head teacher explained that when he found out that the frequent burden of carrying water at home led a girl to keep falling asleep at school:

"The head teacher noticed it, investigated, and followed up by talking to the guardian. The girl is relieved since then" (head teacher, Ghana).

Another head teacher in Ghana tried to intervene in a case of exchange marriage, when a 13 year old girl was given in marriage by her parents in exchange for a wife for their son:

"A member of the community reported to the head teacher. The head teacher talked to the father and threatened to report to GES but the girl has not been returned"
(head teacher, Ghana).

The SMC also played a role in liaising between home and school in such cases. In Mozambique for example, one SMC member spoke of discussing non-violent methods of discipline at home:

"The SMC always tells the community that violence is not the best method to educate, even when the parents advise the teachers to beat the pupils to discipline them. The SMC advises to resort to dialogue"
(SMC member, Mozambique).

In contrast, another SMC member spoke of sensitising communities through using corporal punishment to discipline boys:

"Yes, by sensitizing and establishment of internal rules in order to stop violence: for example the cases of out of school boys who came to disturb girls here, have finished because we took them and beat them with a broom"
(SMC member, Mozambique).

The discrepancy between the accounts of headteachers and girls about whether and how schools took action to support girls seems mainly to relate to head teachers seeing their role as to manage pupil behaviour, often through forms of punishment, rather than to address girls' concerns about forms of punishment themselves. As the example above from Mozambique shows, there was little consistency between school leaders about how to deal with violence, and this may be related to the inadequacy of school level policy or lack of knowledge amongst teachers of current policies within the wider education system.

6.3.2 Training and policies in schools

While there seem to be some encouraging training initiatives in schools, school policy frameworks are weak (see Table 22 below), suggesting that the positive findings on training are not feeding effectively into school level practice.

Table 22: School level training and policy on violence and gender

	Moz	Ghana	Kenya
Number of schools reporting:	(15)	(13)	(16)
* VAGS Policy	0	0	2
* Teachers' Code of Conduct	14	11	13
* Teachers trained in any issues related to gender & VAG	12	10	12
* SMC members trained on issues related to gender & VAG	7	6	8

Training for teachers on issues to do with violence, gender, rights and HIV/AIDS is widespread in the project schools in all three countries, and was often viewed positively by head teachers as increasing teachers' awareness about children's welfare, or about reporting mechanisms beyond school. SMC members also participated in training, though less often. Training mainly took the form of workshops or seminars led by ActionAid's partners or other NGOs, usually attended by one or two staff members from a school. Some head teachers explained how the teachers went on to share their learning within the local community:

> "The head teacher and two other teachers attended a training workshop on violence and gender education organised by GRAMEEN. This was useful as the community was also later educated in this by the teachers later" (head teacher, Ghana).

> "This training was very important because I didn't know the causes of violence against girls. Now I am more skilled on the issue, it was really very useful because I can apply it at the village or at home" (head teacher, Mozambique).

Sometimes, head teachers spoke of how staff had learned ways of educating girls about how to protect themselves:

> "Some of the staff have had training on violence against girls, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS. The VAG training has helped to educate the girls on how to avoid dangerous places like the dance hall and video studio. The SRH has helped to equip girls with skills to protect themselves from unwanted/forced sex. Staff acquired skills to help children to guard against HIV/AIDS from the training " (head teacher, Ghana).

While this can be seen as helping girls to challenge violence, also notable is how the onus is placed on girls to protect themselves, rather than on how to change the attitudes of men and boys perpetrating the violence.

Occasionally their reflections seemed to endorse rather than challenge violence and gendered inequalities. One head teacher in Ghana, for example, explained:

> "The training was on violence against children. Now the knowledge of what constitutes violence discourages the use of violence in this school. The perpetrators are caned" (head teacher, Ghana).

It seems therefore that teachers are receiving different messages from the training, though whether this is because of the training itself or because of the interpretation by teachers, is unclear.

What is however clear, is that the training is not yet translating into effective school level policy and practice to address violence against girls. Teachers were asked about their knowledge of laws and national policies, and head teachers also talked about school level policies.

Table 24 shows that the majority of teachers in all country sites did not know of any laws or national policies, though teachers in Ghana were more likely to be able to name a law/policy. Head teachers were asked about school rules and policies on violence against girls. None of the head teachers in Ghana or Mozambique and only two in Kenya had written rules, but some spoke of unwritten rules, often relating to pupil behaviour. They generally spoke in quite vague terms about rules on pupils fighting. Only occasionally did they refer to rules about teacher conduct or about rules to protect girls from sexual violence:

> *"We have non-written rules. E.g. No one should enter the urinal of the opposite sex. No one should go the house of a teacher of the opposite sex alone"*
> (head teacher, Ghana).

Table 23: Teacher identification of legislation against violence

	Moz	Ghana	Kenya
Percentage of teachers able to identify specific legislation aimed at preventing VAG	2	36	19

6.3.3 Working with girls and boys in school to challenge violence

All too often schools are places where gender stereotypes, inequalities and patterns of male domination are perpetuated (Mirembe and Davis 2001; Jha and Page 2009; Stromquist and Fischman 2009). Research is limited on how to ensure the school curriculum promotes gender equality. The 2004 Global Monitoring Report proposes that the school curriculum should address gender stereotypes, sexual violence, expanding subject choices, and equitable teaching styles. Marshall and Arnot (2008) argue for the creation of the 'modern female learner citizen', with teaching that challenges dominant knowledge forms and both raises awareness about gender subordination and recognises diversity. Atthill and Jha (2009) view a gender-responsive school as aware of existing gender inequalities and helping pupils to gain skills, knowledge and attitudes to promote equality and respect for diversity.

In the three project sites, there were a number of school based spaces for discussing issues of violence directly with girls and boys, through the class curriculum, assemblies, and in girls' and boys' clubs. In Mozambique there were also Ministry of Education gender units at schools, with a female teacher given a specific responsibility for gender issues, although reports from staff indicate that they lack training and guidance.

Girls' clubs are seen as a safe space for girls to meet, discuss and support each other in their concerns, and for collective empowerment, and are a key strategy for ActionAid in empowering girls at school. Participation in girls' clubs is markedly lower in Mozambique, where girls are least likely to report violence (see table 24 below). Girls' participation is highest in Kenya, where girls' clubs have been going for longer, where boys are also mobilised in supporting issues concerning girls in nearly all project schools, and it is in this site where girls are more outspoken. This suggests that these spaces may be supporting girls to speak out about violence.

Table 24: Girls' clubs

	Moz	Ghana	Kenya
Percentage of girls belonging to Girls' Clubs	9	67	73
Number of schools with Girls' Clubs	7/15	13/13	16/16
Number of schools where boys are engaged in activities that challenge VAG & support girls through participation in gender clubs	6	5	14

Teachers in the three project sites reported that gender and violence are incorporated within the class curriculum (see Table 25 below). Head teachers were asked about whether the school curriculum included negotiation and life skills. In Ghana, these issues were discussed in three ways. Citizenship education dealt with rights and responsibilities. RME (Religious and Moral Education) dealt with moral behaviour. Science, incorporating life skills, dealt with personal hygiene. In Kenya too, head teachers reported that the issues were covered in a range of curricular areas, though some mentioned that they lacked depth, with teaching "haphazard" or "not detailed enough". In Mozambique these issues are covered in Civic and Moral Education. While life skills is viewed as part of the curriculum, in none of the countries are children taught about negotiation. It is also not clear to what extent gender concerns are incorporated into these curricula.

Table 25: Gender and violence in the curriculum

	Moz	Ghana	Kenya
Number of schools reporting lessons taking place on issues related to gender & VAG	14/15	12/13	16/16

Asked what skills children needed to challenge violence, head teachers spoke of needing to learn about assertiveness and rights, to avoid dangerous people and places (and in the case of Kenya drugs), and to report violence:

> *"They should know their rights and responsibilities. Must be sensitized to know whom and where to report to if they are abused or threatened with abuse. They need to be encouraged to have the confidence to report people who abuse them or attempt to do so"* (head teacher, Ghana).

They also spoke of the need to "refrain from immoral habit" (head teacher Ghana). There seem to be some different interpretations of what constitutes 'moral behaviour', but often it related to sexual activity. Some head teachers seemed to endorse abstention as the key message of sexual and reproductive health. A head teacher in Ghana talked of the role of the Reverend Minister in advising on moral issues. A head teacher in Kenya spoke of the combined efforts of religious leaders and school staff in advising on abstention:

"During assemblies we do advise the children, especially the girls, on the disadvantages of pre-marital sex, similarly during girls forums, they are weekly advised and through religious leaders" (head teacher Kenya).

Again, this quote illustrates how the responsibility is often placed on girls to control their own and boys' sexuality. In Mozambique, the abstention message was softened, with several head teachers referring to conveying the message of "sex for later", and one head teacher spoke of teaching young people about condoms:

> *"The teacher working with issues of promotion of girls education sensitizes the girls to prevent this type of situations, protecting themselves with negotiation skills before, for instance, sex, in a sense that they use condoms and do not let themselves be fooled by men"* (head teacher, Mozambique).

There seems to be more recognition in the Mozambique site of the reality of extra-marital sex in this context. At the same time, girls in Mozambique

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were heavily criticised for sexual activity and seen as responsible for sexual violence, allowing themselves to be seduced out of greed. Girls were therefore seen as in need of moral teaching both to avoid men's trickery and to reduce their desire for material acquisitions:

> *"Well...the skills, it is necessary that the child knows what her rights are as a child and as a girl; to master those which are the factors of that abuse. For example, we have seen cases of girls when they meet an individual with material richness, they don't resist. They must know that the richness is not the end of a good life"* (head teacher, Mozambique).

> *"Capacity building to know that a given action is dangerous and be able to implement that teaching. Not to allow men to fool them with goods"* (head teacher, Mozambique).

It seems that even within school spaces conflicting messages may be conveyed to girls. While girls' clubs may be emphasising assertion and speaking out, delivery of the school curriculum may be emphasising compliance and abstention. In the Mozambique context where girls are exposed a little more to modernising forces, these contradictory messages still resonate.

6.3.4 Ideas and perspectives on what should change for girls in schools

Table 27 summarises the views of parents, head teachers and girls themselves about how schools could be improved. What is immediately evident is how the EFA discourse focusing on getting girls into school is emphasised, especially by head teachers, at the expense of attention to more subtle forms of discrimination and violence. This supports findings from Kenya and South Africa, which found that 'gender work' tended to be limited to a focus on gender parity at school within the education sector (Unterhalter et al. 2010). Meanwhile, girls in Kenya seem to articulate a wider range of solutions, including political solutions, than those in Mozambique and Ghana.

Across the three studies, parents made some similar suggestions about how to improve school for girls. They spoke of the need to improve school conditions, the need to create more girl-friendly policies, and of the role of parents in supporting girls' education:

> *"Educating parents on the importance of education will encourage them to send their children to school. I also think providing the children with their all their school needs will motivate many to return to school. I feel that sharing the household chores between girls and boys will relieve many of a girl child to go to school"* (mothers' FGD, Ghana).

Parents in Kenya and Ghana advocated schools allowing girls who have given birth to continue with their education. This supports findings from recent research in Kenya which found that parents seek re-entry for their daughters. The study also found that parents have little knowledge of re-entry guidelines (Wanyama and Simatwa 2011).

Table 26: What would improve school for girls and help to end violence?

	Kenya	Ghana	Mozambique
Parents	• Food, water, toilets, sanitary pads, fences • Single sex and boarding schools for girls • Recruit female teachers • Allow girls back to school after giving birth • End FGM • Parents should work closely with schools • Persuade parents on the value of education	• Bicycles for girls • Recruit and attract female teachers by improving roads, build teachers' quarters • Allow girls back to school after giving birth • Parents should work with schools • Sensitise parents on the value of education	• Bicycles for girls • Recruit and attract female teachers by improving roads, build teachers' quarters • Allow girls back to school after giving birth • Parents should work with schools. • Sensitise parents on the value of education • Parents contributing to schools, either financially, in kind or through labour, e.g. constructing classrooms • Parents giving girls time to study • Teachers to talk with parents about teenage pregnancies • Teachers not to prey on girls • Schools and parents, as well as police, local leadership and NGOs to come together to discuss violence and ways to stop it.
Head teachers	• Provision of girls clubs, scholarships, motivational speakers, encouragement to study science, older successful girls as role models • Boarding facilities, desks, toilets, fences, sanitary towels • Sensitise parents on value of education for girls	• Improve access by sensitising parents on need for girls' education • Encourage girls education through role models – local nurses, teachers, police officers, and older girls • Improve school buildings, water, food, toilets • Advocate for local secondary school • Increase membership of girls clubs	• Sensitise community leaders, parents and pupils on official and community justice systems. • Educate girls about violence and how to protect themselves
Girls	• Separate toilets for girls, sanitary pads, access to water, bicycles for girls, fences • Boarding schools for girls (Wardei community) • End physical punishments at school • Provide counselling and support following violence. • Girls clubs, and clubs for women (girls out of school) • Adult education (girls out of school) • End child labour; end forced marriage • End FGM – through sensitisation, harsh punishments, alternative sources of livelihood	• More books, uniforms, food; improve toilets • More regular teachers, more women teachers • End caning and kneeling in school • Quizzes for girls and boys e.g. on reproductive health	• Build new classrooms and improve school buildings, improve toilets and build separate toilets for girls • Ensure there are functioning girls clubs • Build secondary schools close to communities

6.3.5 Conclusions on school section

Schools in this study are constrained spaces for girls to challenge violence. Although there are some positive developments, in the girls' clubs, boys' clubs, and training opportunities for teachers and SMC members, policy at the level of school is weak, and practices and perspectives are confusing, conflicting and often serving to exacerbate gender inequalities. It is difficult to know why the messages from training, from ActionAid and others, do not appear to be translating well into action to challenge violence in schools. It may be that one off workshops with school representatives are less effective than school based discussions, in which all members of teaching and SMC staff could engage in debates on these difficult issues around the nature of childhood, sexual activity and violence. It may be too much of a challenge for lone teachers to change a school ethos by themselves. Possibly some of these messages are getting lost in translation as they move to school level. It may also be that the content of the training does not deal enough with whole school approaches, including how to develop an ethos of caring, equality and non-violence amongst the whole school community. A study on gender violence in UK schools has defined the 'whole school approach' as having three components: a focus on institutional and policy development; awareness raising and support for staff; and awareness raising and support for pupils (Womankind 2010). While the training opportunities are going some way to raise awareness of staff and pupils, it may be valuable to reflect on the kind of support that is provided to help staff deal with change, and on whether the project is doing enough to address institutional and policy development in school.

6.4 The family and community challenging violence? Care, duty and protection

As discussed above, the majority of girls spoke to no one about their experiences of violence, but when they did report, it was mothers and other female relatives to whom they were most likely to turn for help. At home, there were varying outcomes, as in these examples from Kenya:

"Sometimes we tell our relatives like sisters or aunts before we talk to our parents. The relatives are more sympathetic, listening and can advise you on what to do when we have a problem" (8-10 year old girls, Kenya).

"The girls report to their mothers and aunties but the mothers and aunties tell them that they are not telling the truth. Parents tell girls that those boys shouldn't be taken serious as they are just brothers joking with them" (14-17 year old girls, Kenya).

"Girls are given so much work at home and can't read, we are exploited, while boys just roam around. Mothers force their daughters to go fetch firewood in the bushes and even if the girl senses danger the mother does not listen. When she goes and is raped, she comes home and tells her mother. The mother says you went for it why couldn't you make noise. But because you fear curses from the mother you just keep going back" (14-17 year old girls, Kenya).

Some girls said that their female relatives offered them advice, but sometimes girls complained that their disclosures led to further punishment, as in these examples of mothers' responses when girls told them of sexual violence. Perhaps in the instances above, the women themselves felt helpless about how to protect their daughters from some forms of sexual violence, and so displaced their anger onto the girls themselves. In Ghana, there were similar reports of girls being punished when they told family members they had been sexually abused. Girls in all three contexts were sometimes seen as inviting sexual violence through their own unruliness, or, as one fathers group in Kenya put it: "their mode of dressing attracts the opposite sex leading to sexual harassment". Community leaders too seemed to view girls both as victims of predatory male sexual violence, and also as out of control in engaging with sexual activity. The onus was placed on girls to change their own practices, rather than on men and boys, as in this example:

"Children should be taught how to say no to gifts from unknown persons. Then not visit men or teachers at odd hours in their homes" (community leader, Ghana).

Participants in girls' focus groups also complained bitterly about how their parents colluded with forms of

violence, including beating them and forcing them to marry. In all three sites, girls were forced to marry in their teenage years. In Kenya, a fathers' focus group explained:

> *"The girl child is just for marriage, so having her married is the best thing"* (fathers' FGD, Kenya).

Marriage brings certain benefits for the family. In Mozambique, parents reportedly forced their daughters to marry in order to benefit from a son-in-law. While there are signs that the practice of early marriage is reducing, and some parents challenge the practice, it is still seen to provide material benefits. A fathers' group in Kenya for example explained that daughters are forced to marry in exchange for material goods, and that it is done in secret with the knowledge of both parents and the community leader. In Ghana, although some community leaders suggested that early forced marriages are reducing, they are still commonplace, along with exchange marriages, in which two families exchange their daughters in marriage. Early marriage may also be seen by parents as a way of protecting daughters from experimental sexual activity, risk of pregnancy outside marriage and the financial burden and shame that this can bring.

Female genital mutilation is also a practice that is changing but still persists in the Kenyan site, with few parents in our focus groups challenging the practice.

Parents explained that many cases of violence against girls are resolved by the families themselves, with fathers or mothers going to talk with the parents of perpetrators. Sometimes this led to an exchange of money. While pre-marital sexual activity was frowned upon, especially in Kenya and Ghana, action only seemed to be taken when the girl became pregnant, if the boy or man refused to marry her. In Mozambique, cases of rape were also dealt with within the family, since they were seen to bring shame upon the family and so kept hidden. A police officer explained that parents resolved such cases through exchange of money, alcohol or livestock.

Where the families were unable to agree a solution themselves, the community leaders were consulted to arbitrate. In Ghana for example, when girls were beaten by men for refusing their sexual advances,

their parents went to the chief's palace. In one case, this led to payment of a fine; in another the chief referred the case to the police, leading to arrest and payment of compensation. One girl declared that she was satisfied with the outcome of such arbitration:

> *"A boy touched my breasts. I reported to my father and he went to his house to warn him. The perpetrator's father retorted that his son did that because he had to prove his manhood. A fight ensued and the case ended up in the chief's palace for arbitration. He and his father were made to apologise to my father and me, and that was okay"* (17 year old girl, Ghana).

Some parents, like many of the girls themselves, were unhappy with the effectiveness of community justice in dealing with violence against girls, seeing the system as perpetuating the unequal gender relations:

> *"Reporting to the elders does not solve the problems because they only ask the parties to forgive each other. The chief is not also keen to end early marriages"* (mothers FGD, Kenya).

> *"It's now obvious we parents are least supportive: most times we shield the perpetrators because we are related and we wouldn't want outsiders to know anything about such happenings"* (mothers' FGD, Ghana).

Among the pastoralist community in Kenya, community redress included a clear punishment system which some parents saw as an effective deterrent:

> *"Wardei traditions prohibits men from disturbing girls. Those found guilty of such an offence face heavy punishment (pay five cows) and therefore boys are really scared"* (fathers' FGD, Kenya).

Often however, the punishments did not seem to be in the interests of girls themselves. In one case in Ghana for example, when a primary school girl was raped by a boy from a senior high school, the Chief ruled that the boy must pay 20 cedis (about 8 GBP), 2 fowls and a goat to the Chief, and that he should take care of the girl for a period of time.

6.5 Welfare and justice systems

Reporting mechanisms are very weak in all three countries. Of the 842 girls who reported experiencing some form of violence in the study, only a handful of cases were referred through official channels. Only a tiny minority of cases tend to be reported to the SMC, DEO or police (see table 27). This is particularly the case in Mozambique, where the only cases reaching these channels were two cases of beating and one of whipping which were referred to the school

management. In Kenya a significant number of cases of forced/coerced sex in exchange for goods were reported to the SMC and DEO. These findings suggest that if girls report violence at all they tend to go to family members, but then cases do not get into the formal system or back to the school. In Wenje, Kenya, more girls go to teachers and this is likely to be how more cases get reported to SMCs and the DEO.

Table 27: Percentage of cases reported by girls that reached official reporting channels[6]

	Physical	Sexual	Psychological
Ghana	1-3% reported to SMC, 0-0.5% to police, 0 to DEO	0-7% reported to SMC, 0-14% (1 rape case) to police, 0-2% to DEO	0-6% (letters) to SMC, 0 to police 0-0.3% to DEO
Kenya	0-3% to SMC and police, 0-2% DEO	0-37.5% (12 cases of sex for goods reported to school mgt) to SMC, 0-3% police, 0-12.5% DEO (4 cases of sex for goods)	0-4% SMC, 0-2% police, 0-1% DEO
Mozambique	0-1% reported to SMC, 0 to police or DEO	0 to anyone	0 to anyone

6 This table aims to summarise and simplify a large amount of data. The percentages show the range of reporting rates for the sub-categories of violence, e.g. beating and grabbing, within the overall violence category, e.g. physical violence.

As Table 28 below shows, a tiny minority of girls who experienced violence were supported with care, counselling or health advice: approximately one in a hundred Kenyan girls and less than one in two thousand in Ghana and Mozambique.

Table 28: Percentage of cases reported by girls that were followed up by counselling, care or health advice

	Moz	Ghana	Kenya
Percentage of VAG survivors who received counselling, care or health advice	0.04	0.05	1.05

There are a number of reasons why families so rarely involve welfare and justice services beyond the community. Firstly, there was limited access to health clinics and police services, especially in the more remote areas of Kenya and Ghana. Related to this point, there was uneven knowledge of the services that might be able to provide support. Girls rarely mentioned other agencies, though while

in one community in Ghana girls who were out of school said they had no idea where they could go for help, in other communities they named a number of organisations who might be able to help in cases of violence, including mentors, Community Advocacy Teams (CAT) members (CATs are structures established by ActionAid Ghana which bring together community leaders and those from

the formal education, welfare and justice sectors to respond to violence), community leaders, police and health workers. Parents usually viewed the family or community as the site for dealing with problems of violence. In Kenya, parents rarely mentioned other agencies as possible avenues for support or redress. In Ghana and Mozambique, some parents were aware of procedures to address violence, but they were reluctant to use them. Fathers in Mozambique said that they would first speak to the parents of the perpetrator, and if a solution was not reached, they would go to the chief of the block, area secretary, local authorities, town head, and finally "head of the office and the people's court". In Ghana, parents named a number of organisations to which they can take cases of violence. Community elders are often mentioned, as well as CAT, Assembly Man, and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), and NGOs:

> *"We are aware that when girls are abused they can report to the chief, the Social welfare, CHRAJ, the Nanumba Youth Association and the police at Bimbilla. However, almost all the time, abuses are treated as domestic issues and are settled between families. This is because we are one people and belong to one big family"* (fathers' FGD, Ghana).

> *"Parents in Mozambique spoke of their concern about damaging the reputation of the community, and in Ghana they said "abuses are not usually reported to the police because of the sense of belongingness we cherish in this community"* (mothers' FGD, Ghana).

In all three project sites, outside agencies appeared to be seen as a potential threat, encroaching on the moral and judicial norms of the local community. In reporting violence, a girl therefore has to think beyond her own needs as an individual to the implications for her community.

In addition, some interviewees raised concerns about the quality or type of support provided by these services. Health services were rarely seen as sources of support, and in Kenya parents complained that they charged money to examine girls (for example in post-rape examinations and provision of post exposure prophylaxis (PEP), if they are available at all,

and in pre/post-natal services), and saw the fact that in some cases they supply condoms as encouraging promiscuity. Parents in all three countries voiced criticisms of the police, with parents in Kenya and Ghana referring to how police demanded money from complainants or victims, and parents in Mozambique criticising them for not taking cases to court. There was however some awareness of the difficulties police face when parents withdraw their complaints, making it difficult to follow through prosecutions, and one group of parents in Ghana told of effective police action when a 7 year sentence was given to a man who had raped a girl. In general, however, across the three project areas in discussions with girls and their parents we found few examples of good practice in the official systems, with parental concerns relating to poorly resourced services, corruption, and at times a disconnect between officials and communities in the understandings of gender and violence.

Cases were more likely to reach SMCs than welfare and judicial systems, with perhaps parents (or girls themselves) regarding these as more accessible and part of the community. SMCs and head teachers tended to focus their responses when asked about action on violence on 'community' issues, such as early marriage, rather than on the role they had to monitor and address violence taking place within their schools. Perhaps this is linked to the emphasis on EFA discourse, and awareness of early marriage as a barrier to school enrolment. SMCs have little guidance or training in the appropriate ways to handle cases of violence. Some talked of training by NGOs and a minority mentioned training through the Ministries of Education, but they tended to focus on raising awareness of violence and the role of the SMCs in passing this awareness on to parents and children, rather than in developing functioning response systems. This seems to be reflected in the way SMCs and head teachers see and enact their roles and responsibilities around gender violence.

However, a few SMC members saw that they had an important role in bringing perpetrators to justice through investigating and referral of cases to DEOs, police and other agencies (such as CHRAJ in Ghana). Some made agreements but failed to act on them:

PHOTO: JANE HAHN/PANOS PICTURES/ACTIONAID

"The SMC support decisions including those to protect girls but do not implement them. One such decision is to report any perpetrator to GES district office" (head teacher, Ghana).

Some cases were only referred to SMCs if the head teacher could not handle them. Others said that SMCs dealt with cases, referring difficult ones to village elders. And others said that they referred through the official channels within the education system but had little response:

"When a case is reported the Head teacher writes a letter to confirm that the victim is a pupil, cases are reported to the SMC, Provincial Admin, Children officer and police but no action is taken" (head teacher, Kenya).

"We reported six cases to ActionAid who responded by doing some follow ups. The office of the District Education Officer is 50-50 and the police is adamant. The law needs to be clear on how such cases can be dealt with, all these are stakeholders I have reached but very little has been done about them" (head teacher, Kenya).

Some did report responses and follow up through official channels when they referred cases:

"Yes. The DEO has helped us to solve a conflict between a teacher and the family of pupil he caned, when the level of conflict rose beyond the strength of the school management. There is now a healthy relationship between the teacher and the pupil and his family" (head teacher, Ghana).

"A girl in school was asked to marry a man. The girl refused but the parents insisted. The matter got the attention of the Girl Education Officer of this office. The Girl Child Officer reported to me. I sent a team to investigate and the parents were spoken to, to allow the girl to go to school or face the law. They eventually stopped" (DEO, Ghana).

Those responsible have little support and training themselves. For example, both the DEO and DHO in Ghana reported no training specifically on dealing with violence, although the DEO had received some training in gender.

Attempts to respond are hampered by dysfunctional systems and communication channels between the various agencies that are involved in handling cases, so that sometimes efforts made by one individual or agency are curtailed by inactions by others, as this example illustrates:

"Reported pregnancy cases to the DEO through the chief's camp, who later would take the case to the Children's Officer after enough evidence. The children's officer then call the parents to the parties involved, but when the matter reaches the police, it disappears. Similarly the medical personnel have not been helpful, after examining the case they say the parties are mature and the case disappears" (head teacher, Kenya).

These examples highlight the complexities of ensuring robust response systems which follow legal and policy frameworks and serve the interest of girls. They also highlight the need for effective and timely collaboration between agencies and training for those with responsibilities in child protection issues.

6.6 NGOs and creating conditions for change

At the time of the baseline study, NGOs were already working in the communities studied, though with different levels and histories of support. Work before the baseline study had supported girls' rights in education in different ways and led to the development of the Stop Violence Against Girls in School project to address concerns around gender violence and discrimination in strategic ways. Implementation of the Stop Violence Against Girls in School project was just beginning at this time. ActionAid was known to many participants but views about its role varied. Head teachers in all three countries, for example, referred to how ActionAid, often in collaboration with partners like AMUDEIA in Mozambique and Songtaba in Ghana, had led training workshops for teachers on violence, children's rights, and sometimes on sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS:

"We were trained by NGOs on skills on violence against children and reporting mechanisms. We were able to use the skills acquired to rescue a girl who was being exchanged in marriage by reporting to CAT members who also liaised up with the chief through dialogue and the girl was saved" (head teacher, Ghana).

This head teacher signals a key role for ActionAid and partners in linking up the school, community and official systems. The District Health Officer in Mozambique talked of a technical group, comprised of ActionAid, together with AMUDEIA, some teachers and community members had been training head teachers and communities on violence.

Community members also referred to ActionAid's role in training, and to sensitising communities about the value of education. Some viewed ActionAid's role as to provide material support, for example, providing sanitary towels (Kenya) or scholarships for girls (Ghana), or school buildings (Kenya). Parents in Kenya for example felt that their role was to provide equipment or build school toilets. This presents a challenge for the project, whose goals may be different from the priorities of communities for material goods in resource poor contexts.

ActionAid was also mentioned during interviews with girls and boys. Children in Mozambique rarely mentioned ActionAid, but in Ghana, girls and boys referred to how ActionAid and NGO partners assisted girls with school bags, books and uniform. In Kenya, however, girls saw ActionAid personnel as sources of support and advice. Asked who she could talk to about her problems, one girl replied:

"Teachers. Parents, Action Aid and women I trust in the village" (14 year old girl, Kenya).

A boy seemed to resent the attention given to girls, and the exclusion of boys:

"Girls sometimes discuss their problems with ActionAid personnel as well as teachers. Boys have no avenues at school and therefore talk to their parents e.g. if a certain teacher hates him" (15 year old boy, Kenya).

PHOTO: ASMARA FIGUE/ACTIONAID

Another boy pointed out the problems of confidentiality when using the school as a site for talking about violence:

"ActionAid visited the school twice but girls were not able to express their problems because teachers were in attendance"
(10 year old boy, Kenya).

In Kenya too, head teachers and community leaders talked of ActionAid's role in assisting with specific cases of violence and forced marriage, through helping access to legal channels. For example, in the focus group discussions, Kenyan girls said that cases of rape, pregnancy and forced marriage were sometimes referred to ActionAid, who then sometimes took cases to the police. One group suggested that ActionAid helped when the Chief had failed to act, but another said that cases taken up by ActionAid were still not followed through. Another group saw organisations like ActionAid providing both material and psycho-social support:

"Organization, when these cases are reported to them, should take the appropriate action for justice. Girls and boys should be guided and counselled e.g. by ActionAid – They should also distribute sanitary pads to us each month. It will stop cases of girls sleeping with men to get money for sanitary towels and body oil"
(14-17 year old school girls, Kenya).

ActionAid's role in establishing and supporting girls' clubs was mentioned in all three countries, and one group of Kenyan girls out of school, who were therefore denied access to school based girls' forums and girls' clubs, suggested:

"We could start a women's group that ActionAid would support" (out of school girls, Kenya).

Overall, at the time of the baseline studies ActionAid, together with other NGOs, were already establishing a reputation within communities, particularly amongst adults, for training and material support. In Kenya, where they have been working for longer, they were also well known amongst school children for supporting girls in challenging violence. Efforts to build partnerships at community level seem to be providing a solid foundation for strengthening action to prevent and challenge violence and inequality.

For interventions challenging violence against girls to succeed, it is imperative to work with local community assets, notably girls themselves. Providing spaces to increase girls' agency, though a positive step, can increase potential harm if the social networks around girls are ignored (Blanchet-Cohen 2009; Parkes 2009). The findings of these baseline studies clearly signal the criticality of working at multiple levels to strengthen the capacity of girls, their schools and their communities to challenge violence.

7. Conclusions

There are many common themes emerging from the three baseline studies in Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique. Some of the findings support those of other studies in sub-Saharan Africa, including the high levels of corporal punishment at home and at school (Centre for Educational Research and Training and DevTech Systems 2008; Jones, Moore and Villar-Marquez 2008). As in other studies, sexual violence against girls was often perpetrated by boys and community members. However, our studies challenge assumptions about teachers as widespread perpetrators of sexual violence. In common with other studies, in these contexts there was a highly gendered division of labour, creating an uneven burden on girls and affecting their access to and achievement in school. As in other studies, aggression tends to be seen as 'normal' male behaviour, while domesticity and submissiveness are expected of females, and girls' bodies are seen as economic assets (Dunne 2007; Parkes 2007; Centre for Educational Research and Training and DevTech Systems 2008). Forms of violence are closely linked to poverty, with forms of punishment, early marriage, and transactional sex related to the demands on girls to provide support for their families in a context of economic hardship.

Across the three project sites, we see disconnects between legal and policy change and local implementation, with the communities seeming far removed from the rhetoric of change at government level. While EFA messages are clearly impacting at local levels with increasing access and reducing gender gaps at school, attitudes to gender and violence seem harder to shift despite some government efforts to challenge this through for example gender units within education services. Training by ActionAid and other NGOs is underway in schools and communities, and there is some evidence of attitude change, but, as other studies have found, apparent changes in awareness or knowledge are often not matched by changes in behaviour (Centre for Educational Research and Training and DevTech Systems (2008); Parkes and Chege 2010). For example, while head teachers talked of rules and procedures concerning violence, girls were not aware of or making use of them. Community justice systems were sometimes utilised to resolve conflicts between families in cases of pregnancy or violence against girls, but these often perpetuated the status quo rather than addressing the girls' concerns. Official welfare and justice systems suffer from inadequate resourcing, staff training and infrastructure. They were rarely used, sometimes because of distances or costs involved, and were often mistrusted. Effective examples of official and customary justice working together to support girls were few and far between.

Research teams faced similar challenges as other studies with underreporting (USAID 2007), and at times patterns in the data are difficult to interpret. Discrepancies between findings from different participants, or between different data collection methods raise problems of interpretation, but can also produce more robust analysis since they prevent us from forming too quick judgements. Often the contradictions between findings raise important questions about, for example, the nature of taboos and silences and shed light on power relations, identities and interactions in communities.

As well as finding many similar patterns across the three country sites, there have been some differences, though the complexity of these and the variation from school to school or community to community within each of the project sites, make generalised comparative statements problematic. Nonetheless, the comparisons raise difficult questions, which may merit further investigation and enquiry by project partners.

Firstly, the cross-country analysis raises questions about how to implement the outlawing of corporal punishment. Our analysis suggests that changes in legislation may have minimal effect on classroom practice, and can drive the practice underground.

A second issue raised by the cross-country analysis is how to manage change at community level.

PHOTO: ASMARA FIGUE/ACTIONAID

Changes associated with modernity and globalisation are impacting differently on communities, creating shifting forms of conflict and violence in girls' lives. In the remote pastoral community in Kenya girls view themselves as powerless against practices of FGM and early marriage, traditions which may be maintained in part to protect their 'honour'. In Mozambique, attitudes to girls' sexual activity may be a little more permissive, but still girls are blamed and held responsible for violence they themselves are the victims of.

Finally, there appear to be differences between the project sites in girls' own capabilities to challenge violence. While girls in Mozambique have more official spaces for decision making/participation, and are perhaps situated in a more favourable institutional context for the empowerment of girls and women, paradoxically they appear to be more silent about forms of violence. In Kenya, where our data suggests violence levels are high, girls seem to speak out more confidently than in Ghana or Mozambique. This is an area needing further investigation, but we consider that girls' clubs, and the development of clubs where boys can also speak about gender, violence and relationships, which are more established in the Kenya site, may have already begun to have an impact even at this early stage of the project. Should this be the case, there may be cause for some optimism about all three contexts, as the project activities begin to make a difference to attitudes and practices.

An important and challenging issue that this research has highlighted is the nature of the relationship between changing discourse and changing practice. As highlighted above there are examples of policies and interventions having an impact on the way gender and violence are talked about, for example on corporal punishment with teachers in Kenya and Mozambique, and FGM and other form of violence with girls in Kenya, yet these seem to be having little impact on changing practice. Whilst girls being able to openly condemn violence, at least with each other, is an important step in challenging violence in schools and communities, without wider change girls may be placed at increased risk of violence by speaking out in an unsupportive environment. This highlights the need and endorses the strategy of the project to work with multiple stakeholders at multiple levels and in particular to enhance dialogue and synergies between girls, boys, schools, families, community and traditional leadership, NGOs and formal systems in joint efforts to stop violence against girls in schools. Dialogue (whether it be within girls' clubs, boys' clubs, teacher training or community meetings for example) needs to go beyond rhetoric and to be deeply reflective, encouraging stakeholders to examine their own experiences and assumptions and how these impact on the work, relationships and gender inequalities and violence. These approaches should help develop and harness changes in discourse and translate them into changes in action.

Recommendations

Detailed recommendations at country and project area level are outlined in the country baseline reports. The following recommendations are cross-cutting, with implications for international, national and district level advocacy, local school and community interventions and future research:

- Lobby for more funds for girls' education and gender sensitive education, welfare and justice budgeting; for the allocation of adequate support for quality education, provision of trained teachers (including women teachers), and effective protection systems for girls, especially in remote or underserved areas.

- Ensure that initial teacher training curricula and in-service training for teachers, as well as for police and health officials, incorporate issues on gender, child rights and child protection. Teacher training should include alternative approaches to discipline.

- Work with Education Ministries to ensure that codes of conduct for teachers pay attention to VAGS issues, measures to protect children from violence in all forms and referral mechanisms in case of abuse. Ensure that sanctions for perpetrators are stipulated and are consistent with national laws protecting children from violence.

- Lobby for the drafting and adoption of re-entry policies by MOEs that will protect the rights of teenage mothers to education during and after pregnancy without subjecting them to discrimination or making them vulnerable.

- Work at school level to ensure codes of conduct are more visible and well understood well by children and adults alike.

- Work at school level to support the development of 'whole school' approaches to addressing violence and discrimination in schools; provide training and institutional support to strengthen school level policy, and to build awareness and support for staff and pupils on issues relating to violence and gender.

- Review curriculum content and pedagogy on managing relationships, gender and sexuality, sexual and reproductive health, violence and conflict resolution.

- Work with parents, community leaders and schools to address issues of forced marriages and exchange marriage, and, in the Kenyan project site, female genital mutilation.

- Work with children, parents, school staff, community leaders, government officials and service providers on sexual violence and sexuality, in particular addressing tendencies to blame girls for sexual violence. Engage men and boys, as well as women and girls through reflective and dialogic methods. Advocate for government and NGO action to address this as a key issue.

- Build dialogue and reflection within communities about gender roles and the meaning of childhood in a changing context of education for girls.

- Strengthen links between schools and communities to support the establishment of sustainable child protection networks and reporting systems that will ensure confidential reporting and follow up of any cases of abuse; continue to work with communities and officials to raise awareness of formal reporting systems and mechanisms, and to improve collaboration between religious, customary and civil systems for welfare and justice.

- Strengthen parent-school relationships; work with parents to ensure they understand and use channels to report violence cases or other concerns raised by their children through teachers and school management.

- Support provision of safe, confidential services for girls; where these exist, strengthen capacity and lobby for expanded provision; where these do not exist, work to develop pilot models and lobby for government support.

- Share information with communities about existing laws and policies aimed at protecting children (for example codes of conduct) and ensuring their rights to education.

- Conduct longitudinal research to examine and track the conditions and interventions that can best enable girls to build the confidence and capability to contest violence against them, protect themselves against violence and create an environment friendly to girls.

Appendix

Research Protocol: Stop Violence Against Girls in Schools in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique

The aims of the baseline research are to:

1. To provide data at the start of the project, which serves as a basis for measuring change over the life of the project (including providing data for project M&E frameworks);

2. To provide data to inform decision making about future research, community interventions and advocacy priorities;

3. To elicit accurate data and identify current trends and patterns of violence, discrimination and inequalities in education and girls' lives in project districts;

4. To identify perspectives and to find out experiences of girls, boys and key stakeholders in relation to problems of violence, discrimination and gendered inequalities, including access to and participation in education, and to identify existing personal, social and material resources for girls to contest violence;

5. To situate these within the state, national and international contexts.

The purpose of the research protocol is to outline how we will carry out the research in ways which are high quality, rigorous and ethical, as agreed in the research workshop held in Accra, March 2009. The protocol addresses three main areas: 1. Research design, 2. Ethics and safety, 3. Researcher selection, training and communication. In each section, we outline the key problems or challenges, and in italics the principles that have been agreed to guide our work.

1. Research design

Designing research which is rigorous, credible and persuasive

A key challenge researching violence with young people is to design studies that give accurate, reliable and transferable findings, and at the same time

that are able to tap into subjective experience and meanings. Quantitative research elicits broad trends and comparisons, and provides data that can easily be used to both measure change, to generalise and to inform advocacy/policy work. However, it is unable to capture perspectives and experiences of research participants, details of the context, and it does not explain how or why change takes place. Meanwhile, qualitative research elicits fine grained detail about experiences, perceptions and meanings and can help explain the quantitative data. It may be more effective for finding out about sensitive and taboo topics, and for tapping into some of the more subjective constructs that are difficult to measure, such as confidence and support (outcome 4 of this project).

The baseline study will combine quantitative and qualitative approaches, in order to provide in-depth data about violence against girls, and to generate findings which are measurable, in order to inform advocacy work and to be able to measure change over the duration of the project. The methodologies selected will be underpinned by the conceptual framework, M&E plans, project outcomes and research questions.

Verification: Trustworthiness, reliability and validity

The reliability or trustworthiness of the research refers to how consistent the information we gather will be if we use the same instruments with the same person. For example, are we likely to get the same response from a girl if she is asked the same question again? The factors that are likely to affect this are: the way the questions are asked; who is asking the questions; the environmental conditions (for example, whether she is at home, school or elsewhere, if there are people around, if she believes that her responses will be confidential or have any repercussions to her safety or wellbeing).

Validity is a contested term with different meanings in quantitative and qualitative research. In quantitative research it refers to the extent that the research will

measure what it is designed to measure. This may be affected by the instruments that are used or questions asked, the methodologies used and the researcher-participant relationship. Under-reporting of violence is a major risk for research on violence against girls. As well as providing inaccurate baseline data for the project, research that inaccurately reports low levels of violence could be used to question the importance of addressing violence in the project area. The way that questions are worded affects the rates of disclosure. Questions should avoid using terms such as 'rape', 'abuse' and 'violence' that are loaded and open to interpretation and instead ask specific questions about acts (such as being beaten or being forced to do something sexual she found degrading or humiliating), places (such as home or school or church) and people (such as teachers, parents or other pupils). In qualitative research, validity refers to the adequacy of the researcher to understand and represent people's meanings, giving as 'truthful' version of reality as possible.

We will maximise the accuracy, reliability and validity of the research through detailed analysis of the context before commencing the baseline study, and involving research participants and intervention partners in designing and piloting instruments, sensitivity to environmental conditions, and careful recruitment and training of researchers. A range of instruments (e.g. focus groups, interviews and checklists) will be used to increase reliability through using more than one way of gathering information (triangulation). Specific actions include:

- *Country context reviews – Research partners in each country will review existing data about the local, provincial and national contexts*

- *School and community profiles – Research partners will complete a checklist with information about each school and community*

- *Consulting communities/trialling – Researchers will hold focus groups and discussions with community members (e.g. group of girls at selected ages, group of teachers/headteacher, group of parents) in order to consult about content and terminology (including wording of questions) of draft research instruments. Instruments will then be revised before pre-testing.*

Sampling and controls

Although using both intervention and control schools (that are not involved in the intervention) in the baseline and endline research might help us to see whether any change over time is a result of the interventions, we have decided not to use control schools because of methodological and ethical challenges, including:

- Ethical concerns of research without support, for example, unearthing high levels of violence against girls in control schools but providing no community intervention to assist

- We cannot control for programmes that may be implemented (for example, by other NGOs) in control schools, which may distort the results

- Our resources do not allow a full scale community randomised trial and numbers of participating schools are small; therefore using control schools is likely to add very little to the research results.

All too often research only includes the voices of the more powerful or influential members of communities, and the views of children and marginalised groups are not represented. This needs to be taken into account when sampling, including choices of which schools, and which people to include in the research.

The baseline research will not include control schools, but schools for quantitative and qualitative research will be carefully selected, taking into account demographic characteristics and prior interventions. In particular, the School and Context profiling will enable careful selection of schools for qualitative instruments. The baseline research will gather data from a wide range of participants in schools and communities, including for example women's groups as well as community leaders. At the heart of the research will be girls' perspectives, and we will strive to listen to girls at all stages. When introducing the research in communities, we will try to maximise the participation of all groups, and the choice of methods will be sensitive to the needs of the participants.

Data analysis

It is important to avoid bias in the analysis and interpretation of data. There may be a possibility to over-interpret or to over-generalise on the basis of

limited information, and insufficient contextualisation of findings. For example, a statistic that suggests high levels of female school enrolment may be incorrectly interpreted as meaning there are no problems with gender inequalities in schooling; or an instance of sexual violence perpetrated by a teacher is difficult to interpret without understanding the school context, including gender relations within the school. While the qualitative information may strengthen the interpretation of quantitative figures, it is important to take into account the subjectivity of data. For example, people are likely to be selective about what they choose to tell about their experiences of violence; and group interviews have a tendency to bring out societal norms and to emphasise the views of dominant members of the group. Extreme instances that are widely known about in communities may be reported by many individuals, and so gain prominence in the data though they may be rare instances. In contrast, minor, everyday violences may be so taken for granted that they are not named by participants. Bias in reporting results in inaccurate representation and can misleadingly label groups, of for example teachers or communities.

Systematic and rigorous methods of data analysis will be developed which strive to provide an accurate and credible representation of violence against girls. To ensure data accuracy, once data has been input into a computer programme (e.g. SPSS) and before it is analysed it should be checked and cleaned (identifying incomplete or incorrect parts of the data and then replacing, modifying or deleting this 'dirty data'). As it is never possible to eradicate all bias, all reporting will include critical reflection on limitations and possible alternative interpretations. Bias in analysis will be reduced by developing procedures for cross-checking between researchers, and for consulting about draft reports with intervention and advocacy partners, and with communities. In our reporting, we will try to avoid negative stereotypes, for example by highlighting how inequality and conditions can contribute towards differences.

2. Ethics and safety

Power in the research process

While it is important that all research is conducted according to ethical principles, in research on sensitive subjects like violence, and research with children and young people, this is particularly important because of the increased risks of causing harm/distress and because of the power imbalance between the researcher and participant. Children are often used to being judged and disciplined and may hide their views in favour of presenting an account of their experiences more "acceptable" to adults. Children may also feel obliged to answer all questions, even if they do not want to, because they have been asked to by an adult.

At all stages of the research, we will aim to respect participants, to treat people fairly, and to safeguard their welfare, minimizing risks and assuring that benefits outweigh risks. We will use methods/ approaches to minimise power imbalances and help children to express themselves, such as participatory group activities and questions early in interviews that help young people feel at ease. We will ensure that less powerful members of communities, including women, participate in focus group discussions and interviews.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is especially important when conducting research on violence against girls, as the act of revealing violence may put participants at more risk of violence. For example, previous studies have reported that in schools/homes where abusive teachers/husbands have been suspicious that girls/ women may be reporting violence, the risk of further violence increases. Maintaining privacy is important for encouraging open expression of views, but it can be both practically difficult and occasionally harmful, when for example a neighbour/relative wants to know what is being hidden. Data should not be disaggregated in a way that could identify individuals, groups or communities. If specific data must be presented in the analysis (such as in a case study) then it may be necessary to remove or change certain details that may identify them, as long as this is recorded and does not affect the meaning of the data.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the research, including during data collection, analysis, data storage and reporting. We will try to ensure privacy during interviews. Data will be stored in a way so as not to identify individuals'

responses, for example by coding questionnaires/ participants and schools/communities rather than using names, and by securing data so that only those who need to access the data for the project can do so.

Informed consent

It is very important that children are not coerced into participating in the research against their will. Some research protocols advise gaining written consent from participants before undertaking research with them. However, the hazards are likely to outweigh the benefits of this approach, making participants feel intimidated or uncomfortable. Action Aid's Child Protection Policy states that parents should provide consent when any activities are carried out with children. However, in some cases this could lead to parents telling children how to participate in the research or not consenting to their participation (possibly skewing results if these children may be at more risk of violence). On the other hand, conducting research without parental approval could provoke a backlash if parents discover their child's participation without their knowledge or consent.

Informed consent means that all participants, including children, will be given clear information about the project, to be able to choose not to participate, and to withdraw at any time. Researchers will seek permissions to carry out the research in schools according to existing procedures in each country (e.g. permit from Education Department, or district). While written permission from parents is inappropriate where there are high levels of adult illiteracy, permission will be sought either through community discussions or via school staff.

Disclosure and safety of participants

Researching the topic of violence increases the risk that violence will be disclosed during the research process. While in some contexts it may be possible to follow local child protection procedures, this is problematic in contexts where official support and reporting mechanisms are absent or inadequate. There may also be a tension between maintaining confidentiality and passing on information when a researcher considers a child to be at risk of severe harm. Action Aid's Child Protection policy states that if violence is disclosed or suspected then the staff member should take detailed confidential notes;

report the case to their line manager who reports it to the country representative; and report the case to child protection agencies or authorities if there are concerns about the child's health, physical injury, sexual exploitation or criminal activity.

Researchers have a duty to ensure support and reporting mechanisms are in place if violence is disclosed during the research process. At the stage of consulting communities/trialling, it will be important to map out local support available and reporting mechanisms, including exploring the possible role of community intervention partners in providing ongoing support. Researchers will also consider whether it is desirable/feasible for a trained counsellor to accompany the research team.

Safety and wellbeing of researchers

Researchers may also face risks to their safety and wellbeing, either through witnessing violence or by the research process generating anger. They may experience distress by stories they are told, or their experiences conducting the research may reignite painful memories of their own experiences of violence.

Researcher training and support needs to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Researchers will work in small teams, and will be supported by the lead researchers during the fieldwork. There will be regular debriefing meetings during the research, allowing researchers to share what they are hearing and how they are feeling, along with opportunities to discuss these issues in private. Researcher training will include how to manage hostility and anger.

3. Researcher training, selection and communication

Researcher selection

Research guidelines recommend that researchers are not from the same community (for trust and confidentiality reasons), but at the same time care needs to be taken to select researchers who speak the local languages, and who are able to understand, or empathise with, the experiences of participants in research communities. Researchers from more privileged ethnic or class groups may be quick to judge and generalise about 'others'. This may be especially the case when researching violence against

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girls, where beliefs, perspectives and practices may differ. On the other hand, sometimes (for example in some qualitative approaches) having a different perspective may enhance a researcher's ability to critically explore participants' responses.

Recruitment strategies will address issues of gender, age, language and community. Same sex researchers/research assistants will be used for interviews where possible, and always for interviews with girls. Recruitment of researchers carrying out qualitative research will assess experience and capacity to discuss sensitive issues, have a non-judgemental approach and empathy with others.

Researcher training

Researchers involved in research on violence need training and support over and above that normally provided to research staff. This should include an orientation on concepts of violence, gender and gender inequality and children's rights, and issues around violence against girls in schools. The training needs to include opportunities for researchers to

reflect on both their own prejudices and experiences of violence and consider how these might affect the quality of their work and their welfare. Researchers also need full training in the research protocol, including research ethics and child protection procedures to be implemented during the research, and any other procedures identified. Researchers need an opportunity to practise with reflection their use of the research instruments. Support mechanisms need to be in place during field research to help researchers manage their safety and wellbeing and to monitor progress and quality of the research.

A programme of researcher training will be undertaken prior to the main data collection phase, led by the lead researchers in each country and members of the IoE team, and will address key concepts, processes and methods underpinning the research. It will include opportunities to practise use of instruments, to pre-test instruments in project communities, and will include ongoing opportunities for reflection and support.

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