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Gender-based violence at school in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa

Understanding its impact on girls' school attendance to combat it more effectively

Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships

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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS, DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL IN FRENCH-SPEAKING SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA:
UNDERSTANDING ITS IMPACT ON GIRLS' SCHOOL ATTENDANCE TO COMBAT IT MORE EFFECTIVELY

genre en ACTION

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FRENCH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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FOREWORD

→ This report has been produced by Marie Devers, Paule Élise Henry and Élisabeth Hofmann from the *Genre en action* network, together with Halim Benabdallah. It is the result of a collective investigation carried out as part of the **working group on "gender-based violence at school"**, whose secretariat is provided by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The working group comprises such French and African partners as Plan international, Action Aid, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), the African Union's International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (CIEFFA), *Organisation nationale pour l'enfant, la femme et la famille* (ONEF) in Côte d'Ivoire, *Association d'appui et d'éveil Pugsada* (ADEP) in Burkina Faso, *Association pour la promotion de la femme sénégalaise* (APROFES), *Observatoire des relations de genre au Sénégal* (ORGENS), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Women and representatives of the education ministries of Senegal and Burkina Faso.

The group facilitated the production of a number of reports and held a workshop in Dakar on 17-18 May 2011 **at which practical recommendations were drafted for more effective inclusion of gender-based violence in education policies**.

SUMMARY

→ This report addresses a topic that needs to be urgently considered if girls' integrity is to be respected and the objectives of education for all to be met. **Gender-based violence at school – whether sexual, physical or psychological – affects girls in many African schools,** as shown by reports and testimonies from grassroots volunteer groups and schoolteachers. It is clearly linked to the dimension of social relations between men and women as well as unequal power between genders.

Combating school-related gender-based violence as a factor of girls' poor school attendance is one of the greatest challenges that Africa must face if it is to enrol all its children in school by 2015. It is a matter of urgency to make this violence visible and reject it so as to provide girls with real opportunities for success, whether social, economic or political, and to help make school an institution that defends the values of equality and non-violence.

To overcome the problem of the invisibility of school-related gender-based violence, considerable data collecting work needs to be done.

Given the inadequacy or absence of mechanisms for observing or monitoring the phenomenon, or appropriate instruments for making school-related gender-based violence visible, it is crucial to collect reliable data rapidly at the national level in each African country. One of the major current challenges is to compile the information already available among various stakeholders (government and civil society) to devise effective public policies that can end those practices and monitor the effectiveness of the measures taken.

The topic of gender-based violence at school is still taboo and extremely difficult to assess or recognise. In addition, such violence is trivialised, as illustrated by the impunity its perpetrators almost always enjoy.

At present, there are four main obstacles that inhibit the victims (or survivors) of violence from speaking out, making a complaint and making full use of legal and social procedures for gaining redress for their injured rights: insufficient knowledge of these rights; ineffectiveness of the judicial system; absence of any support service; stigmatisation of victims and survivors.

To end impunity, current legal frameworks, both statutory and regulatory, need to be reformed and standardised, and other standard-setting frameworks promoted to ensure that the law is actually enforced.

The constitutions of most African countries proclaim that access to quality education is a right for all children and a responsibility for governments. This is why it is incumbent on governments to ensure access, continued attendance and success for all children in a quality education system, within a secure environment both inside and outside school, as an integral part of the community. Consequently, governments must also promote and guarantee zero tolerance for school-related gender-based violence.

The current inadequacy of the laws punishing violence against women, the gaps in those laws (such as sexual harassment and rape at school), the inconsistencies between national laws and international commitments to women's rights, the lack of implementing decrees for those laws that do exist and the inadequate

enforcement of existing legislation all prevent the perpetrators of violence from being punished. Friends and relatives often hide the violence or avoid talking about it. As it is not prosecuted, it is trivialised and thus more likely to be repeated.

This turns school into an "unsafe" place for many girls, where children and girls are denied their rights.

Measures to prevent and address gender-based violence at school must be rapidly adopted and implemented.

Stopping school-related gender-based violence requires a psychosocial, medical, legal and judicial approach. Some of these approaches are beginning to be implemented in a few countries, thanks largely to the work of civil society. Yet overall, there are few support services for girl victims, who continue to face difficulties of access because of the persistent stigmatisation of victims of violence, the distance to health centres and the behaviour of healthcare staff.

INTRODUCTION

→ Although educational establishments are recognised as places of learning, personal development and empowerment, schools are too often places of discrimination and violence, particularly against girls. In 2004, the UNICEF report on the state of the world's children pointed out that "[t]he abuse of girls – sexual, physical and emotional – by teachers is a common problem"[1]. In 2006, the United Nations Secretary General's report on violence against children also described frequent school-related violence, such as corporal punishment, bullying, mistreatment and sexual abuse. Ground surveys in schools in sub-Saharan Africa also show that gender-based violence is a widespread, daily occurrence and mainly affects girls.

The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, defines violence against women as "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 in private life".

At school, gender-based violence comprises many dimensions: economic ("transactional" sex), socio-cultural (taboo on sex, lack of sex education, unequal gender relations) and health-related. It may be sexual, psychological or physical, taking a wide variety of specific forms, occurring inside or near school, and may be perpetrated by teachers, other school staff or adults near the school or male pupils. It has a direct effect on girls' attendance, often causing them to leave school after actual gender-based violence or for fear of it, since parents are afraid of gender-based violence that may be prejudicial to their daughters.

The extent of gender-based violence is therefore one of the major obstacles to girls' school attendance. This type of violence is less well documented than violence in general, and it even seems to be trivialised. Yet despite such trivialisation, school-related sexual abuse often remains a taboo issue, making it difficult to be identified, recognised, dealt with and prosecuted.

The prevalence, frequency and intensity of violence in schools have not as yet been the subject of extensive, systematic research in West and Central Africa. There is no comprehensive system in the region for reporting acts of school-related violence, which makes the extent of the problem particularly difficult to assess. Some data are, however, beginning to be collected. The studies available on this topic do not cover all levels of education, all sociological situations or all countries. But the information available contains a wealth of lessons to be learned and it consistently reveals that the situation in the region's schools needs to be improved if they are to become safe, protective environments for children, especially girls.

Although there are many international and regional legal instruments for child protection, they receive little political backing and lack the resources for effective implementation. School-related gender-based violence is not sufficiently recognised as a cause of dropping out of school in "education for all" policies and programmes.

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1. UNICEF annual report 2004, p. 87.

VARIOUS FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL

→ School-related gender-based violence covers all forms of violence or abuse based on gender stereotypes or aimed at girls on the basis of their gender. It takes various shapes: sexual violence, physical violence and psychological violence.

1. Sexual violence

→ Sexual violence refers to any sexual act committed or attempted by using coercion, force, threat or surprise. It comprises sexual abuse, attempted sexual abuse or rape, groping, explicit sexual allusions and sexual exploitation.

Sexual abuse (sexual violence from a position of superiority) and sexual exploitation (sexual abuse for economic, social or political gain), also known as transactional sex, are highly frequent forms of violence perpetrated inside and near the educational establishments of the region, according to the information available. Such sexual violence often occurs as a result of gender-based norms and processes of socialisation that are prevalent in parts of West and Central Africa. Sexual abuse means any act or attempted act of a sexual nature committed by an adult against a child (or by an older child against a younger), notably groping, by using force, constraint or a position of superiority. Sexual abuse may include verbal or physical harassment with sexual connotations, groping, sexual assault or rape.

Sexual exploitation refers to any abuse of one's position of authority or trust or of another's vulnerability for sexual purposes, rewarded in cash or kind given to the child or some other person, or by the social and political advantages gained through the abuse. It concerns mainly transactional relations such as higher assessment or marks given for sexual acts, or sexual relations in return for the payment of school fees or supplies.

Disadvantaged girls are likely to engage in transactional sexual relations with their teachers, school staff or other adults in order to fund their studies or support their families. Sexual favours from pupils appear to be a sort of compensation for the low economic resources of teachers and other school staff.

2. Physical violence

→ Girls may be the victims of physical violence such as corporal punishment or forced labour. Physical violence includes any act in which physical force is used with the intention of causing discomfort or pain. It also includes the use of physical or verbal force to make an individual undertake actions causing physical injury. Girls may suffer this violence from an adult or another child, mainly boys.

Although most West and Central African countries officially prohibit the use of corporal punishment by law in educational establishments, the information available shows that corporal and degrading punishment is common practice in most of the region's countries. Both girls and boys are victims of such punishment from teachers. It involves the use of sticks, whips, belts and other objects, blows to the head, slaps to the face and placing the child in an uncomfortable position. Insults and threats are other forms of degrading punishment, often followed by blows.

This violence generally occurs in a situation covered by a culture of silence. In addition to deeply rooted socio-cultural factors, some systemic causes also explain why corporal punishment is common practice. Inadequate training of teachers in pedagogy and their poor working conditions have a negative effect on their degree of preparation and explain why they are unable to manage with non-violent forms of punishment.

With respect to "forced labour", it appears that domestic chores and tasks may be allocated to girls and boys unequally in terms of frequency, difficulty and prestige. Girls are often restricted to the hardest work, like cleaning floors. These tasks may be given as punishment, and meet the personal needs of teachers and school staff. The unequal work burden is harmful and perpetuates unjust gendered representations[2]; it may be explained by age- and gender-based categorisations.

The chores given to children at school or in teachers' homes may be characterised as exploitation if it occurs against their will. Girls are particularly exposed to forced chores in and near schools. The frequency of compulsory chores makes girls more vulnerable to other forms of violence and reduces the time they can spend on learning, rest or play.

3. Psychological violence

→ Psychological violence takes various forms and includes verbal violence, intimidation and emotional manipulation. The most frequent forms are insults, threats (to punish the child physically, etc.) and other forms of neglect, in particular the lack of close attention, refusal to correct the pupil's homework or repression of the child's emotions. This form of violence is not systematically documented but the information received cites public threats and humiliations as frequent practices in schools.

Psychological violence is often based on gender. Intimidation is a common form of psychological violence in schools and is almost always gender-based[3]. A female pupil is considered to be the victim of intimidation when she is repeatedly exposed over time to negative actions from one or more fellow pupils[4]. Intimidation may also come from teachers and school staff.

Girls are also bullied. Bullying covers a wide range of actions, such as insults, false accusations intended to get the victim into trouble with the authorities, damage to or theft of personal property, threats and intimidation.

The gendered representations in school curricula and teaching material may reproduce gender-based prejudices and cause discrimination within the school that may also be considered to be psychological violence.

Psychological violence differs from other types of violence by being more insidious and may become the behavioural norm for teachers and school staff. This is because those adults may intimidate pupils by disguising it as discipline, for example.

Some research shows that children are often more sensitive to psychological violence than to physical violence[5]. For example, girls who are routinely intimidated suffer from low self-esteem and sometimes try to drop out of school to escape bullying.

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2. Leach and Humphreys, 2007.
3. World Report on Violence against Children, United Nations, Geneva, 2006..
4. *Olweus' Core Program Against Bullying and Antisocial Behavior: A Teacher Handbook. Research Center for Health Promotion* (Hemil Center). Bergen, Norway, 2001.
5. Beazley et al. 2006.

DIMENSIONS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL

➔ School-related gender-based violence reflects existing inequalities between women and men and is also a way for boys to assert their "manhood" and the social identity they have been taught. Such behaviour relates to the wider dimension of social relations between women and men. The dominant collective and individual stakeholders that direct and shape social roles and identities therefore bear some responsibility for such violent behaviour.

School-related gender-based violence is not disconnected from violence in other parts of children's lives: in the family, the community and society at large. It comprises social and cultural norms about authority, hierarchy, gender-based discrimination and discipline. School-related gender-based violence is particularly serious because it occurs within an institution that ought to be exemplary in the values and norms it teaches, transmits and respects in order to educate the female and male citizens of the future.

Thymée N'Dour[6] considers that school-related gender-based violence comprises many dimensions – economic, socio-cultural and health-related – connected to two further dimensions: that of teachers' violence against their pupils, and the gender-based dimension of male violence against female pupils and even teachers.

Violent relations involve power relations[7]. Transactional sex, or sexual relations for money or gifts, reveals the asymmetrical relationship between teachers offering good grades in return for sexual favours and pupils who wish to complete their education. In Burkina Faso, it is known as MST (*moyenne sexuellement transmise* – sexually transmitted grade, initialised in French as STD or sexually transmitted disease). Pupils and adults in educational establishments recognise that it is common practice[8].

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6. *Les violences de genre en milieu scolaire en Afrique subsaharienne*, Thymée N'Dour, études DGCID, 2006.
7. United Nations Secretary General's report on violence against children, 2006.
8. *Violences et climat scolaire dans les écoles secondaires du Burkina Faso*, Joseph Dougoudia Lompo, doctoral thesis in education science, University of Bordeaux 2, 2005.

WHERE SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE OCCURS AND WHO COMMITS IT

➡ School-related gender-based violence occurs inside school, during and after class, and on the way to and from school. All the places where pupils may be during the school day or on their way there are potential locations for gender-based violence to occur. Sexual abuse in particular is carried out in such places as classrooms, corridors, teachers' homes, dormitories, lavatories and in woods or bushes near the school. School lavatories have been identified as high-risk areas in a number of countries in the region[9]. Areas girls commonly fear are the perimeter of school premises, lavatories, empty classrooms and dormitories. That is where they are most likely to be exposed to harassment and abuse by male pupils and teachers[10].

A major concern is the risk of violence on the way to and from school, because it can occur on the road or at bus or taxi stops.

The risk of this violence may be one reason for parents' reluctance to send their daughters to school[11]. The journey is likely to be particularly risky in conflict and post-conflict situations, in areas where the military has checkpoints[12].

Available research distinguishes between two types of perpetrators: male pupils and teachers, the latter often in the form of transactional sexual abuse. According to available data, pupil-on-pupil violence is more frequent, yet teachers are also very often identified as perpetrators. All the research done in the region confirms that sexual abuse against girls is mainly committed by men, either teachers or other school staff, other men in the community (young men, soldiers on duty at check-points, bus drivers, shopkeepers, "sugar daddies"), or male pupils.

Male pupils may take advantage of their position of superiority to commit abuse on younger or weaker girls. One study in Cameroon reported that 30% of the sexual violence suffered by girls was committed by male pupils[13]. In the Central African Republic, teachers are alleged to be the main perpetrators of sexual abuse against primary school girls. School staff, bus and taxi drivers and members of the community present near the school or along the children's routes may also commit violence.

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9. Human Rights Watch 2001; 2004b. Devtech, 2004c.
10. Burton, 2005.
11. Woldehanna, 2008.
12. Save the Children Alliance, 2005.
13. *Les abus sexuels en milieu scolaire au Cameroun : résultats d'une recherche-action à Yaoundé*, D. Mbassa Menick. *Médecine tropicale*, 2002; n° 62-1, p. 58-62.

IMPACT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON GIRLS' SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

→ The consequences and impact of gender-based violence on girls' school enrolment and attendance, although hard to quantify, are considerable. Note that this impact comes on top of the pre-existing discrimination that hampers girls' access to primary and secondary school, related to the status of girls and gender stereotypes, security issues, child labour and forced marriage.

In health terms, the rapes committed against girls lead to major psychological trauma and unwanted pregnancies, which seriously compromise the girls' learning, educational success and continuance at school. The girls also run the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS. In educational terms, the fear of going to school, the punishments given to girls who refuse a teacher's advances (low grades), stress affecting the quality of their schoolwork, examination failures and dropping-out are proven consequences[14]. Teenage pregnancies also contribute largely to excluding girls from school mid-way through their education.

The victims of abuse suffer multiple adverse consequences on their performance at school: they lose interest in their education, have difficulty concentrating, stop participating in class and develop eating disorders as well as a propensity to depression and even suicide. To steer clear of an environment that is neither safe nor learning-friendly, girls avoid walking alone on the school premises or campus or going to libraries and computer labs in the evening. They cut lessons and may even drop out completely[15].

Many girls miss school for a while or drop out for fear that their aggressors will continue to abuse them. Some research indicates that the fear of sexual violence at school is one of the main causes of girls' educational under-performance and dropping-out[16]. The result is also poorer school enrolment, particularly at the secondary level. Those girls who stay in the school system often have concentration and learning difficulties.

Teachers' violence against pupils has direct consequences on the school environment and the behaviour of male pupils towards female ones, because it maintains the preconception that educational success depends on sexual favours.

Gender-based violence is thus a major obstacle to girls' and young women's access to education and their ability to benefit from it. It is a powerful factor in discouraging parents from sending their daughters to school, encouraging girls to avoid school and lowering their educational achievements.

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14. *Les violences de genre en milieu scolaire en Afrique subsaharienne*, Thymée N'Dour, études DGCID, 2006.
15. Abrahams, 2003; Hallam, 1994; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Leach and Machakanja, 2000; and Leach et al., 2003.
16. Dunne et al., 2005.

MEASURING SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

1. Girls' poor school attendance

➔ Universal access to education is guaranteed by Article 26 of the 1949 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory"[17]. Similarly, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified in 1989, reiterates the importance of equality of opportunity in access to education in its Article 28. However, the education systems of the French-speaking countries of sub-Saharan Africa display sharp, persistent gender disparities in access to education. As in other developing regions such as South Asia, these inequalities disadvantage girls and lead to their poor school attendance. Girls' reduced access to formal education in sub-Saharan Africa is reflected in their low enrolment rates in primary and secondary schools.

According to the 2010 Education for All (EFA) global report[18], the percentage of girls among enrolled primary pupils in 2007 was less than 45% in Benin (44%), Chad (41%), Côte d'Ivoire (44%), Mali (44%), Niger (41%) and the Central African Republic (CAR) (42%). Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Guinea, Madagascar and Togo fell between 45% and 19%[19]. Only Senegal (50%) and Rwanda (51%) achieved parity for this age group. Note, however, that all those countries reported improvements in their gender parity index (GPI)[20] between 1999 and 2007[21].

For secondary schools, the report notes that girls' enrolment declines significantly from primary to secondary level in many countries in the region (at least where the information is available)[22]. The percentage of girls among the total of enrolled secondary pupils in 2007 was below 40% in Benin (35%), Chad (31%), DRC (35%), Guinea (35%), Mali (39%), Niger (38%) and Togo (35%). Burkina Faso (42%), Burundi (42%), Cameroon (44%) and Senegal (43%) also report a significant fall in girls' enrolment after the end of primary school. Only Madagascar (49%) and Rwanda (48%) come close to parity. Here too, GPI figures for all these countries except Cameroon and Rwanda show improvements in girls' secondary school enrolment between 1999 and 2007[23].

These quantitative data show the extent of girls' low school enrolment. Poverty, remoteness, gender and violence in schools are the main explanatory factors. We next examine how school-related gender-based violence is assessed.

2. School-related gender-based violence is hard to measure

➔ The relative scarcity of information about the extent and severity of the problem is a major challenge. There is no general system in the region for monitoring acts of violence occurring inside or near schools. School-related gender-based violence is largely "invisible".

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17. United Nations Organisation, 1948, Article 26.
18. *Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010*, Unesco, p. 364.
19. No information available for the Republic of Congo and Gabon.
20. Ratio of a given female indicator to the corresponding male indicator (or the reverse).
    A GPI of 1 indicates parity between the genders; a higher or lower GPI indicates a disparity in favour of one of them.
21. *Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010*, Unesco, p. 436.
22. No information available for Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, CAR and DRC.
23. *Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010*, Unesco, p. 437.

What we have is a small number of evaluation studies, a lack of a data collection system, inadequate mechanisms for identification and treatment, and a heavy burden of fear, shame and embarrassment preventing girls and their parents from reporting acts of violence.

As a result of the relative silence that has shrouded the problem in the region until recently, there has been only limited investment in collecting quantitative data on this issue. The violence is known but concealed by the various stakeholders in the educational community, starting with the pupils themselves who are afraid of being blamed or withdrawn from school. Testimony recording is very uneven in Africa. Geographically, the overwhelming majority of studies come from English-speaking Africa. According to currently available resources, the phenomenon goes virtually unmeasured in countries like Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, Gabon, Madagascar and Rwanda. Data are insufficient for CAR, DRC, Mali, Niger and Togo. Admittedly, studies are available or underway for Burkina Faso, Mali, Cameroon, Guinea and Senegal. A wide variety of quantitative indicators related to school-related gender-based violence is also worth noting. Such lack of standardisation reflects how complex it is to expose the phenomenon, with a great variety of realities on the ground. A major reason for this is the variety in the forms of violence examined by existing studies, their one-off nature, their sources, their target respondents (girls and/or boys and/or teachers in primary or secondary schools, higher education, etc.) and the sampling used, the highly sensitive nature of the information requested and the lack of a single regional reference definition of such violence.

3. Evaluating the phenomenon

→ An evaluation of the phenomenon of school-related gender-based violence can be established on the basis of available resources for the following countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Niger, Senegal and Togo. According to known resources, four types of data are currently available: perception of a violent environment by pupils and school staff, identification of the perpetrators, identification of the victims and regulatory and social arrangements to reduce violence.

In **Benin**, according to the study cited by Wible in 2004 reporting the observations of a participatory learning workshop among pupils (girls aged 11-19) and parents, 53% of pupils in primary and secondary school stated that they had witnessed or suffered groping, pressure or jokes with a sexual connotation. Secondary-level pupils said that most girls accepted sexual propositions for fear of low grades and reprisals, or for money. Forty-three per cent of secondary school pupils and 80% of primary school pupils said they knew girls who had dropped out of school because of sexist violence. A field study on gender-based violence in Benin schools carried out by the Academy for Educational Development NGO revealed that 80% of girls surveyed knew girls who had been approached by a teacher for sexual favours. Seventy-seven per cent believe that teachers at their schools have sexual relations with pupils. The girls emphasise the transactional nature of these relations: they identify the promise of high grades (90%), fear of low grades (80%) and money changing hands (65%) as the three main reasons behind these relations. According to this study, gender-based violence occurs in administrative offices (33%), classrooms (20%), teachers' homes (20%) and on the way to or from school (8%).

In **Burkina Faso**, the 2009 study of school-related gender-based violence carried out by the ARC consultancy[24] revealed that violence can be found throughout the school system, both in primary and secondary schools, public and private, rural and urban. Inconsiderate behaviour, disinterest towards pupils and abuses of power become an ordeal, especially for girls, and amount to moral and psychological violence as reported by the pupils.

Sexual violence is also frequent, despite the young age of the boys and girls in primary schools (7-15). Respondents cited many cases of sexual abuse against girls from *cours élémentaire* to *cours moyen* (UK years 3-6, US 2nd-5th grade), which were not prosecuted – a stain on the entire community. That scourge has been expanding,

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24. At the request of the special education department of the Burkinabè ministry for secondary and higher education and scientific research, in partnership with the National Population Council and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

especially in periurban and rural areas where female pupils have no moral support or standing (family or institutional support to seek justice). The teachers are often covered by their colleagues, their superiors and even the decentralised administrative and technical departments and "stick together to protect the honour of the region, the local area or the teaching profession". It is still therefore quite difficult to assess the extent of the phenomenon accurately, due to the lack of statistical breakdowns or of a systematic inventory of cases addressed and resolved, sorted by type and gender. Available data indicate that 12.8% of secondary school pupil respondents state there have been attempts at rape against their fellow female pupils. Teachers approach girls according to 44.9% of respondents, or text them (37.1% of respondents). According to 23.6%, male teachers do sexually seduce girls. Among primary school girls, 73.3% state that there is physical violence in their school, 84.3% verbal violence, and 65.4% psychological violence. Some 47.7% of primary school staff say such violence exists, as do 50.5% of secondary school staff.

The practice of "sexually transmitted grades" is unacceptable and illegal and must be eliminated from schools, because affected girls pay a high price for the rest of their lives as adolescents, women and mothers. Unfortunately, those acts are still insufficiently reported and even less punished, even though all pupil and adult respondents in focus groups recognise the existence of this practice. Yet its continued expansion has negative consequences, especially on girls, but also on boys as well as family and social relations within their communities.

Cases of secondary school girls with unwanted pregnancies by teachers are commonplace, even though we can provide no reliable data, precisely because society considers such behaviour to be unmentionable. In most cases, the situation is quickly settled "privately" by the parents and adults concerned in order to silence the victim as far as possible.

The 2008 study of sexual harassment of girls at school in Burkina Faso at the initiative of ADEP and Oxfam-Québec indicates that 13% of pupils surveyed say that they have been the victims of sexual harassment. Forty per cent are aware of cases of sexual harassment at their schools. The perpetrators of sexual harassment are reported to be mainly male teachers, according to 81.7% of the pupils. Male pupils are mentioned by 41.7% of respondents and administrative staff by 30.5%. The girls' aspiration to better marks is mentioned by 29.4% as a factor in sexual harassment, and 21.6% attribute it to parental poverty.

In **Cameroon**, according to the study cited by Dr Mbassa Menick in his article "Sexual abuse at school in Cameroon: results of a survey-action program in Yaoundé", 72.5% of under-16 victims of sexual abuse are girls. Their age at the time of the abuse ranges from 4 to 15 (average 11.6 years). Groping is the most frequent form of sexual abuse (54.6%), followed by rape (38.7%). Of the 274 perpetrators identified, 86.5% are men. In nearly 15% of cases, the sexual abuse occurred in the school environment (campus, gymnasium, boarding house, classroom, lavatories, etc.) and 30% of it is committed by fellow pupils. Teachers represent 7.9% of non-family aggressors and teaching coaches 7.3%.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, according to the findings of the 2009 survey of school-related gender-based violence in seven schools in Abidjan district, 2.2% of pupil respondents had been raped at least once, of whom 15.8% at secondary school and 10.5% at primary school. According to 70% of respondents, the perpetrators are mostly unknown pupils. A total of 13.3% had been approached by teachers, and 3.3% by a headmaster; 14.2% had been groped, of whom 35.5% at school/in class, 33.3% by a pupil, and 6.9% by a teacher; 10.6% of the pupil respondents had been sexually exposed to, of whom 18.6% at school, 2.3% by a teacher and 1.2% by a member of the administrative staff; 18.9% said they had received sexual remarks or comments, of whom 39.3% at school/in class; 86% considered that they had the right to say no to a teacher or pupil who wants to grope them. Pupils' opinions are divided on the question of harassment among pupils: 47% state that it is not acceptable to harass fellow pupils, while 40.8% think it is. Among the teachers and administrative staff surveyed, 23% knew of a teacher or member of the administrative staff at their school who had made advances to or had sexual relations with a girl pupil.

In **Niger**, the 2004 study of sexual violence against girls in secondary schools and higher education (in Niamey), initiated by the United

Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), reported that 87.5% of girls (pupils and students) questioned confirmed the presence of sexual violence in the secondary schools and higher education establishments of the city of Niamey. Some 81.1% of boys (pupils and students) shared that opinion; 50.4% of secondary school girls stated that they had personally been victims of sexual harassment or rape, and 45.5% had witnessed sexual violence. The secondary school girls identified the perpetrators as being, in order: male pupils (57.1% of respondents), teachers (18.9%), public officials (7.9%) and male school administrative staff (7.2%). Secondary school boys confirmed this order as they saw the perpetrators as being male pupils (59.6% of respondents), teachers (23.6%), public officials (6.1%) and male school administrative staff (4.9%). A 2008 study by Plan's West Africa Regional Office reported that 47.7% of pupils had witnessed teachers expressing love for fellow pupils, and 88% of teachers confirmed the existence of sexual acts between pupils and teachers at their school.

In the **Central African Republic**, according to the 2008 study *La violence en milieu scolaire centrafricain* (Violence at school in the CAR) by the ministry of education and UNICEF, 42.2% of boys enrolled in secondary schools in Bangui confirmed that they had committed violent sexual acts within or near their school.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the study cited in the 2009 UNICEF report on violence against children reported that 46% of female pupils surveyed confirmed that they had been victims of sexual harassment, abuse and violence from their teachers or other school staff. In addition, the global network Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict[25] published a report[26] in April 2006 showing that the conflict and its current aftermath had severely affected the education sector and children's right to education. The context of violence increased the children's vulnerability on the way to and from school, particularly for girls, who were the victims of sexual violence. The number of rapes and victim statements indicated that rape had become an actual weapon of war during the conflict and was continuing in the post-conflict period[27].

In **Senegal**, the study of violence against girls at school, initiated by the ministry of education and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as part of the implementation of a strategy to integrate gender into general mid- and secondary-level education, shows that psychological violence is a recurring phenomenon: 62.5% of girls stated that they had suffered insults and 44.5% humiliation. Sexual harassment affected 37.2% of those girls and rape 13.8%. They said that the perpetrators of sexual harassment were teachers (42% of respondents), other pupils (20%), "migrants" (15%) and shopkeepers (9%). In the case of rape they mostly cited teachers (37%) and pupils (28%) as perpetrators. Forty per cent of girl respondents said they had suffered physical violence (bullying and corporal punishment); 41.1% of male pupils said they had been guilty of groping, and around 10% of rape. More than 35% of male teachers said they had been guilty of sexual harassment, and around 18% of male pupils. According to the boys, sexual harassment is perpetrated by teachers (39% of respondents), pupils (15%), "migrants" (18%) and shopkeepers (7%). Both girls and boys consider, therefore, that the perpetrators of violence are mainly people in the school setting.

In **Togo**, the brochure *Suffering to Succeed? Violence and Abuse in Schools in Togo* (Plan, 2006), summarising the conclusions of a Plan research programme based on five studies initiated by Plan Togo in 2005 and 2006, revealed that 4.1% of girls said they had suffered sexual violence at school; 88% of them described having received corporal punishment and 52% reported threatening behaviour or psychological violence at school.

A real prevalence of school-related gender-based violence is therefore observed in the French-speaking countries of sub-Saharan Africa, whether sexual, physical or psychological. Yet an array of international and regional legal instruments designed to protect children against violence at school have been ratified by their governments.

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25. A partnership of NGOs engaged in combating violence and the violation of children's rights in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.
26. *Struggling to Survive: Children in Armed Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, Watchlist, April 2006.
27. *Les violences de genre en milieu scolaire en Afrique subsaharienne*, Thymée N'Dour, études DGCID, 2006.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS, MAJOR PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

→ Many African countries have a dual legal system. A framework of customary laws often exists alongside a modern legal framework, particularly at community level, making it harder to change behaviour by legal reform. However, a large number of international and regional legal instruments address questions of equality between genders, the right to education for all and violence against children at school.

1. International and regional legal instruments

→ Among international legal instruments we may note: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, Article 1 (1960); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Article 10 (1979); the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 19 and 28 (1989); the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Chapter IV, B (1995); the Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel, V, VII, VIII, IX (1997); the Dakar Framework for Action (2000); the Millennium Declaration (2000).

In 1948, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognised the right to education** and proclaimed that elementary education should be free and compulsory, and that access to higher education should be open to all according to merit.

In 1960, the **Convention against Discrimination in Education** adopted by UNESCO supported the need to combat all forms of discrimination, including those based on gender, in order to preserve equality of treatment in education: "For the purposes of this Convention, the term 'discrimination' includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education[28]".

The 1979 **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** committed the governments that had signed and ratified it to ensure men and women equal rights in education, eliminate gender stereotypes and encourage mixed classes (Article 10).

The 1989 **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, which was adopted by a record number of governments, reasserted the educational vision of the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, based on dignity and emancipation, and stressed the need to protect children against sexual violence. The Convention specified: "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention[29]". It reiterated that governments should take measures to encourage regular school attendance and reduce dropping-out rates, and ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity. Article 19 requires governments to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or

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28. Article 1.
29. Article 28, 2.

exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child, including teachers.

In March 1990, the first **World Conference on Education for All** was held in **Jomtien**, Thailand. One issue to emerge was girls' education. The conference's Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action set the objective of universal access to primary education[30]. In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, reviving the issue of gender-based violence, especially against women. The text uses the term "violence against women" to include sexual violence in schools.

The 1995 **Beijing Platform for Action** also emphasised the need to combat sexual violence, with a key role for teachers. It revived the question of education and training for women (strategic objective 2) and girls (strategic objective 12).

The 1997 **Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel** mentions several times the moral and ethical dimensions of the profession of teaching. The topic of sexual violence, particularly against women, occurs frequently. The text urges governments to implement policies to eliminate all forms of violence, particularly sexual violence by teachers against students, and transactional sex between teachers and students.

International meetings, such as the **Dakar World Education Forum** and the 2000 United Nations General Assembly session on the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs), have reasserted the importance of girls' education and gone further by setting gender equality in education as a goal.

The Education for All goals (Dakar Framework) include:
- goal 2: "Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality";
- goal 5: "Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005,

and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality".

Millennium Development Goals:
- goal 2: "Achieve universal primary education" including target 3: "Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling";
- goal 3: "Promote gender equality and empower women" including target 4: "Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015".

Among regional legal instruments, we may cite the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Maputo Protocol.

The **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child** was adopted at the Organisation of African Unity's 26th conference of heads of state and government in July 1990 and entered into force on 29 November 1999. Its Article 11 reasserts children's right to education and the signatory states' obligation to take appropriate measures "to ensure that a child who is subjected to schools or parental discipline shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the child and in conformity with the present Charter". It also stipulates that they are "to ensure that children who become pregnant before completing their education shall have an opportunity to continue with their education". Article 16 focuses on the child's right to protection and requires governments "to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse".

The **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa**, better known as the Maputo Protocol, was adopted by the African Union in 2003. Its Article 12 reasserts signatory governments' obligation to take appropriate measures to "eliminate all stereotypes in textbooks, syllabuses and the media, that perpetuate such discrimination" and "protect women, especially the girl-child

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30. *Les violences de genre en milieu scolaire en Afrique subsaharienne*, Thymée N'Dour, études DGCID, 2006.

from all forms of abuse, including sexual harassment in schools and other educational institutions and provide for sanctions against the perpetrators of such practices".

The binding clauses in international conventions are only rarely repeated in national legislation and education ministry regulations. No detailed study has been carried out in West and Central Africa to monitor the transposition of international commitments and constitutional stipulations. Even though these countries have ratified the international human rights instruments that protect children's rights, national rules and laws are rarely sufficient to ensure that those rights are enforced.

2. Adoption of legislation protecting children

→ National legal provisions on violence against children in the school environment are often contained in various general provisions against violence, such as constitutional provisions (national constitution), laws (concerning children or education) and the criminal code. Some of these instruments address sexual abuse, others discrimination, and others corporal punishment. School-related violence against children is rarely specifically and systematically addressed in national legal instruments.

Despite the lack of resources for a comprehensive account of this issue in all target countries, it is worth pointing out that countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Rwanda have legislation for the protection of children that includes sexual violence at school. But despite the existence of these legal instruments, discrimination against girls in education remains common practice.

National political responses hardly ever match the extent of the problem. In addition to laws and regulations, political will, which may involve adopting policies or launching research into the phenomenon and national awareness campaigns, is often inadequate. There are many initiatives and programmes at the international, regional and national levels, run by international organisations, international development cooperation agencies and NGOs with the help of national partners (see Appendix).

3. Conditions for combating gender-based violence at school

→ The obstacles to effective prevention, repression and action programmes are both cultural and institutional. Silence, the legal environment, deficient enforcement of legislation, the inadequacy of intervention systems and the ways of recruiting and training teachers are major reasons for the persistence of violence.

Silence is widespread in schools and in their neighbouring communities. The victims often do not report the violence they suffer for fear of reprisals and because they think that their parents or guardians will not believe them. They may also keep silent because of shame or fear of the embarrassment caused by public knowledge of the incident. Setting up a space for dialogue for victims within the school or school-related environment (parents' association, for example) would make it possible to listen to those pupils.

The recognition of school-related gender-based violence and its criminalisation require the adoption of specific legislation, which may be included within wider laws on violence against women or at school, or be the subject of a specific law, as in Burkina Faso, which is currently working to pass a law on sexual harassment at school.

The studies available do not make it possible to produce a comprehensive overview of existing laws in the targeted French-speaking countries of sub-Saharan Africa. However, it is indisputable that the inconsistent or inadequate enforcement of existing laws can be a serious obstacle to developing an effective response to this phenomenon. If the victims are not convinced that the perpetrators of violence will be punished, they have no incentive to report violations and even avoid doing so because of shame, embarrassment and potential reprisals.

The lack of disciplinary sanctions and the absence of respect for codes of professional conduct by teaching staff lead to similar consequences. These codes of conduct must be more explicit about gender-based violence and strictly enforced if pupils and students are to regain confidence that violence will be sanctioned.

Within schools, reporting and victim support systems that are complicated, unclear or difficult to access may also discourage victims from seeking support. The creation of an action process involves access to information for pupils and students. The victims may feel intimidated by inadequate procedures.

Systemic obstacles within the education system have also been identified. The reason is that governments' hurried efforts to increase access to education for all have in some cases led to a quantitative approach to education, encouraging school building and the massive recruitment of teachers, sometimes at the expense of teacher training.

Long training courses and the recruitment of sufficiently qualified teachers (secondary leaving certificate) are preconditions for respectful teaching. Creating conditions conducive to recruiting women, especially in rural areas, would also be a way of reducing violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➜ Combating school-related gender-based violence as a factor in girls' poor school attendance is one of the greatest challenges that Africa must meet if the continent is to enrol all its children in school by 2015. There is an urgent need to make violence visible and condemn it to offer girls real opportunities for success, whether socially, economically or politically, and to contribute to making school an institution that promotes values of equality and non-violence.

To elicit significant change in the behaviour of perpetrators and victims of school-related gender-based violence, a first step is to emphasise three main dimensions: the problem of the invisibility of school-related gender-based violence, the problem of the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of violence, and the establishment of measures to prevent and treat school-related gender-based violence.

Education ministers and national policymakers are therefore recommended to:
- make combating school-related gender-based violence a priority for development frameworks;
- explicitly integrate combating school-related violence into the responsibilities of the ministry of education, together with the ministry of health and those institutions in charge of child protection, including the police and the judiciary;
- **develop participatory data collection systems** (with parents, civil society and all education stakeholders) and integrate the question of gender-based violence as a factor of poor school attendance into national data collection systems by calling on experts in gender questions and violence;
- establish indicators to monitor progress and support reliable data collection, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, by holding national surveys targeted at school-related violence;

- capitalise on the experience of existing monitoring units concerned with school-related gender-based violence;
- work with the media to share relevant information on the issue widely, raise the general public's awareness of the existence and gravity of the facts and their consequences, and develop communication strategies involving opinion leaders and traditional communicators;
- **harmonise national legislation with the existing regional and international texts and instruments** concerning legal marriage age, majority and duration of compulsory schooling;
- **make acts of gender-based violence committed by teachers or other adults working in the education sector punishable by law (as summary or indictable criminal offences)** and by disciplinary sanctions, with aggravating circumstances, up to and including the loss of professional qualification and civil servant status;
- draft bills that systematically include proposed implementation decrees, so as to reduce the time taken to adopt laws, and make them accessible to all by translating laws into national languages and disseminating them and by promoting practical literacy and reducing the distance between judicial structures and citizens;
- **ensure the effective enforcement of laws and disciplinary provisions;**
- **support the establishment of prevention, protection, reporting and support mechanisms in schools that guarantee confidentiality and are suitable for children;**
- encourage a multisectoral approach in government action by raising the awareness of the need to combat impunity among security

forces and school staff, so that all those responsible for abuse are identified and tried under the laws in force in each country;

- include combating school-related gender-based violence in the campaigns against HIV/AIDS;
- **promote the creation of a space or framework within and outside schools** to enable children to be independent and **teach them to say no to violence** (at school, in the family, in society);
- encourage the use of internal regulations addressing school-related violence within schools and higher education establishments, drafted with the participation of all stakeholders including children (especially girls);
- **strengthen existing mechanisms to combat school-related violence** (such as the *Conseil national pour la prévention de la violence à l'école* in Burkina Faso), which must have real clout and explicitly address the topic of gender-based violence;
- **devote a significant part of the national budget to education** and ensure that it complies with international commitments (at least 20% of national budget excluding debt service and common expenditure, or 9% of GDP), of which at least 0.5% is to be specifically earmarked for combating school-related gender-based violence;
- **review the content of school curricula and textbooks** in order to raise children's awareness, break taboos about violence and strengthen a culture of equality, and design teaching and awareness-raising material based on the findings of national studies;
- have the educational community review, revise and disseminate texts that cover the topic of violence (internal regulations, codes of conduct, teachers' professional codes);
- **review the design, spatial arrangements and siting of school infrastructure** (build schools with closed, separate latrines, distant but protected) to reassure pupils and preserve their physical integrity;
- **ensure psychosocial support (medical, legal and judicial) for the victims of violence** by:
  - establishing local school medical services. These should include a specialised victim support unit, free of charge and confidential,

- building the capacities and skills of law enforcement officials (police, *gendarmes*, prosecutors),
- developing robust partnerships with stakeholders from civil society around schools.

Governments should make specific, time-bound commitments on all these points, to be monitored by regular reports. **Each government should also appoint an entity within the education ministry responsible for coordinating and monitoring the measures taken,** for example by running a steering committee with representatives of other ministries and partners concerned.

Technical and financial partners are recommended to:

- **ensure that the priority of combating school-related gender-based violence is properly addressed** in line with the principles of the Paris Declaration, by pooling and allocating significant resources;
- **provide financial support to governments** and make expertise available to help them and civil society devise relevant progress indicators and implement reliable data collection systems, making wide use of national experts on gender issues and violence to run such data collection systems;
- **strengthen civil society organisations' (CSO) networks and platforms,** help them to play their monitoring and warning role more effectively and develop their capacity to collect, compile and analyse data;
- encourage the funding of advocacy projects by NGOs or CSOs working on questions of violence and child protection to support and encourage "zero tolerance" for violence at school;
- support the establishment of a national hotline.

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa is requested to:

- support the creation of a specific working group on school-related violence so as to make combating it a common objective;
- **provide technical support to the various governments** to carry out multicountry studies and set up a database on the issue, while adopting data collection methodologies

that enable a comparative analysis of how the situation is developing in Africa;

- **compile the actions and studies of CSOs** so that practical decisions can be made about school-related gender-based violence;

- **compile and disseminate best practices** in combating school-related gender-based violence as tried by some of its members and encourage the others to take inspiration from them in developing their own effective actions.

Civil society is recommended to:

- **fully play its role of keeping watch and holding national policymakers accountable** so that they enforce laws and regulations by targeting the perpetrators of child abuse and the men and women who tolerate it;

- **support communities in demanding the enforcement of laws and regulations;**

- **continue to press for the empowerment of girls and boys,** parents and other community stakeholders, by strengthening or creating adequate frameworks to give them the skills to express themselves, defend themselves and act as responsible citizens.

APPENDIX CASE STUDY

1. Gender-based violence at school: the experience of Plan International and its partners' "Learn Without Fear" campaign

➜ Because children have the right to learn in a safe environment and this right is not respected, Plan launched its "Learn Without Fear" campaign in October 2008. The campaign runs in 44 countries.

Our vision: a world where children can go to school in safety and receive quality teaching without fear or threats of violence.

The campaign targets the three main forms of violence in school: corporal punishment, bullying and sexual violence[31] [32]. Gender-based violence is found in all three forms.

In two years, the campaign contributed to reducing school violence at various levels.

Plan works with **a wide range of stakeholders** – children, teachers, parents and community members, police, lawyers, health professionals and other public officials responsible for child protection – not to mention its **many partners** (research institutes, media, national and international NGOs[33],

child helplines, UNICEF, etc.) to put the issue on the agenda and make people aware of the consequences of violence and the need to put an end to it.

- Forty-five studies have been carried out to understand the phenomenon more clearly, measure it and make it visible (child surveys, teacher surveys, opinion polls, study of the cost of school violence in terms of economic and social development). These studies have revealed, for example that:
  – in **Ecuador**, 39% of girl victims of sexual violence had a teacher as perpetrator;
  – in **Zambia**, one-third of pupils aged 13-15 had been sexually assaulted.
- More than 12,000 law enforcement officials have received the campaign's messages; these people play a key role in **combating impunity and ending violence**.
- **More than 18,000 schools** have taken part in the campaign in one way or another (some teachers have adopted codes of conduct which they have signed in front of pupils).
- **Around 20,000 teachers** have been trained in positive disciplinary techniques.
- A total of **100,000 people have been educated about children's rights**, including the right to an education and a life without violence.
- **Some 600,000 children have taken part in campaign actions** in television and radio programmes, peer-to-peer education and drama.

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31. Any type of sexual activity forced on children, particularly by people who are responsible for them or who have some power or control over these children, and whom the children should be able to trust.
32. Consequences of sexual violence: STDs including HIV, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, lower school results, dropping-out; in the longer term, sexual health and mental problems, domestic violence.
33. Save the Children Sweden, ActionAid, etc.

- The campaign messages have **reached 94 million people** via radio and television programmes and plays.

2. Advocacy to change legislation

→ **Some 390 million children are protected by legislation,** either new or adapted, targeted by Plan's action:

- 370 million are protected by new legislation against corporal punishment;
- for example in the Philippine, Plan's advocacy led to the adoption in January 2010 of a law against corporal punishment that has benefited 21 million children;
- in some countries, children are proactive in this advocacy: in Liberia, representatives of the Children's Parliament met various members of the government to lobby for the adoption of a law protecting them against violence in schools (Children's Act); that law was then passed;
- 20 million children are protected by legislation criminalising sexual violence;
- 6 million children are protected by legislation against bullying;
- at the time of this report, Plan was working in 27 countries to revise or draft laws protecting children against violence at school.

3. Teachers are key partners in eliminating violence against children at school

→ Action is being taken in Vietnam to train teachers in positive discipline.

Studies have shown that teachers trained in alternative discipline methods are more favourable to the abolition of corporal punishment than teachers who have not been trained.

Since "Learn Without Fear" was launched, more than 4,300 teachers in Vietnam have been trained in matters of school violence (more than 19,000 throughout the world). In June 2010, Plan Vietnam was invited by the **Hanoi College of Education to train 500 future teachers** in positive discipline methods. Plan staff explained

the concept of **positive discipline** to the students and what it means when managing a whole class. **Positive discipline methods encourage teachers to use non-violent methods and to address pupils on equal terms** while enabling them to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

The students took an active part in the session and asked Plan's consultants many questions, citing situations they had been faced with during their teaching practice. In a question-and-answer session, the students learned how to manage a class without using violence. "The term 'positive discipline' is fairly new for most of us," said one student. "This training course is therefore very useful, and I shall try to apply everything I learnt today in my classroom and my family."

This was the second time that Plan had been contacted by the College and their session is now part of the curriculum. "This is a very useful experience for the students; it prepares them for their future careers as teachers or education ministry officials," said Vu Ngoc Phuong, College Vice-Rector.

4. Young people and the media are also key partners in eliminating violence against children at school

→ In India, projects are being run for radio programmes and participatory theatre.

In one year, more than 200,000 children took part in many activities in India. The children created an anthem for the campaign and materials such as posters and storybooks. Children are the main actors in the Voices of Young Hearts radio programme broadcast nationally. It is presented by children and gives them the opportunity to express their concerns about matters that affect their daily lives, such as corporal punishment and gender-based discrimination. After the first episode was broadcast, listener feedback was very positive, and complaints of corporal punishment were texted in. Government representatives will take part in future programmes, which will help to promote "Learn Without Fear"

in India. Plan India will also continue to use **participatory theatre to generate dialogue and discussions on the issue of school violence** and the results will be presented to the authorities. **In 2010, the "Learn Without Fear" school contact programme covered 150 schools in three States (Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Delhi), reaching some 150,000 students and teachers.**

5. Role of helplines in combating school-related violence

→ Plan and the Child Helpline network work together in 25 countries. The two organisations have recently published a report showing that violence and abuse, including at school, is one of the main reasons for calls to the helplines.

Analysis of data collected in Egypt, Paraguay, Sweden and Zimbabwe shows that helplines are in a unique position to help identify violence and abuse at school. Specially trained counsellors can offer immediate support and direct callers to the relevant protection and health services where appropriate. Those helplines are usually the first point of contact for young people looking for a child protection service, and are accessible gateways to a form of help and support.

Child Helplines are free of charge and enable children to ask for real-time help from someone they can trust and talk to, in complete safety, about taboo topics, because confidentiality is guaranteed. In 2010 alone, the Child Helpline network received more than 14 million calls, or more precisely contacts, because they may be letters, text messages, chats or telephone calls. We know that these figures are just the tip of the iceberg and many cases of violence are shrouded in silence.

It is therefore important to publicise the existence of those helplines among schoolchildren. They are not, of course, a sufficient response on their own for child protection, but can be a major link in a national system.

In addition to the service they provide, those lines collect valuable data about the forms of violence that occurs and are a useful source of information for public policies on education and child protection.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ADEP	*Association d'appui et d'éveil Pugsada* (*Pugsada* (young girl) support and awakening association)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIEFFA	*Centre international pour l'éducation des filles et des femmes en Afrique* (International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa)
CSO	Civil society organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EFA	Education for All
GDP	Gross domestic product
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GPI	Gender parity index
MDG	Millennium development goal
MST	*Moyenne* or *Maladie sexuellement transmissible* (Sexually transmitted grade; or disease – STD)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ONEF	*Organisation nationale pour l'enfant, la femme et la famille* (National Organisation for Children, Women and Families)
ORGENS	*Observatoire des relations de genre au Sénégal* (Observatory of Gender Relations in Senegal)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

This report on school-related gender-based violence and its impact on girls' school attendance in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa is the result of a year's collective investigation by non-governmental organisations from the South and North, United Nations agencies and education ministries with a twofold objective:
- to make the phenomenon of school-related gender-based violence visible and analyse its causes;
- to make recommendations to policymakers and development cooperation stakeholders for including gender-based violence in their education policies.

The report compiles existing data from the region and contains actionable recommendations made at a workshop held in Dakar on 17-18 May 2011. These ideas for action aim at raising awareness, treating and supporting victims, and punishing perpetrators. They focus on the role of teachers and other education professionals. Their aim is to raise girls' school attendance rates to meet the Education for All goals and the Millennium Development Goals.

Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The missions of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs are:
- to summarize information on the changing global economy and put it into perspective, prepare decisions on the French government's foreign policy;
- to draft France's foreign policy;
- to coordinate France's international relations;
- to protect French interests abroad and assist French nationals outside France.

The creation of the Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships (DGM) in April 2009, as part of the reform of the ministry, enables diplomacy to anticipate, identify and respond to the challenges of globalisation more effectively.

Confronted with global issues that have a direct impact on the lives of our citizens and multiple actors, the ministry intends to emphasise the need to tackle global issues, in the firm belief that every major economic, cultural and societal issue calls for collective action with a more outward focus, anticipation, interministerial coordination, responsiveness, interdisciplinarity and a resolutely European approach.

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