Beyond victims and villains

Addressing sexual violence in the education sector

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Executive Summary

In the last 10 years, the issue of gender violence has moved steadily up the world's agenda. Sexual, physical and psychological violence causes as much of a burden of ill health and death among women aged 15 to 44 as cancer – and more than malaria and traffic accidents combined. But the fact that so many women are abused, mostly by men they know, is still something that most people don't want to think about – and which legislation and policy are only slowly addressing.

Sexual violence and harassment in schools, universities and higher education institutes, is even further from people's minds. Educational institutions are supposed to be places of growth and learning for students. As such, they are regarded as "safe". But this is not always the case. Recent research studies worldwide reveal that sexual violence in the education sector is an unaddressed problem.[*] It ranges from groping female students in the cafeteria queue, to rape. Often it involves peers, but teachers and other staff are also perpetrators. Male and female students are both affected, but there is a significant gender gap, with girls and young women experiencing much higher levels of violence, reflecting broader gender inequalities in society.

Sexual violence and harassment violates women's and girls' human rights and damages their physical and psychological health. It undermines the pursuit of internationally agreed public health goals to enable adolescents to deal in a positive way with their sexuality, and to reduce unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections including HIV infection. For girls and young women, it severely limits their ability to achieve their educational potential. For society, therefore, it undercuts the transformatory power of education. Female education has been shown not only to contribute to improved family health but to be a major driver of social and economic development.

Increasingly, universities are drawing on the lessons of sexual violence research and activism and the experience of sexual harassment policies in the workplace to develop guidelines for students and staff. Addressing and preventing sexual violence in the secondary and primary educational sectors is complex, due to

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* This report uses 'sexual violence' as an umbrella term which covers a range of behaviours from verbal sexual harassment, through physical sexual harassment, sexual assault, abuse and rape.

the age range of students and the professional responsibilities – and power – held by teachers. A wide range of strategies is required, from effective legislation and clear policy guidelines to age-appropriate educational initiatives incorporated in life skills, sexuality, HIV/AIDS education and the broader curricula. For younger students, issues need to be addressed in a way that is in keeping with their cognitive and emotional development. Concepts such as equality and rights can be raised within the context of promoting respectful, loving relationships, or within conflict-resolution and anti-bullying strategies.

If a school or university tolerates any form of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, coercion or violence, this is a powerful lesson which will travel with young men and women into the home and workplace.

Addressing sexual violence in the education sector lies at the intersection of human rights, public health and education agendas. Educational institutions are respected by the community. They are places where students learn values, as well as the information and skills they need to pass exams. As such, they can help break the cycle of violence. They need to address it vigorously where it happens, and ensure that curricular and extra-curricular opportunities equip young people to navigate their sexual lives without violence. In this way, they will set standards of conduct that will continue into the wider world.

Giacomo Pirozzi / Panos Pictures

Girls learning French in Cameroon – female education is a major driver of social and economic development

1 The global context: the gender violence and human-rights movements

Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) believes that at least one woman in five has been physically or sexually abused by a man at some time in her life. Women are more at risk from those they know – husbands, fathers, neighbours or colleagues – than they are from strangers.[1] Over the last decade, the efforts of the women's health movement, the human-rights lobby and researchers who have documented the extent of violence against women has led to widespread recognition that gender violence is a worldwide problem.[2,3,4]

Defining Violence

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993, 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 private life.[5]

Globally, gender violence includes sexual harassment, sexual coercion, assault and rape as well as battering, trafficking, forced prostitution, dowry related violence, female genital mutilation, sex selective abortion and female infanticide.

Sexual violence is defined by WHO as:

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments, or advances, or acts to traffic a person's sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.[6]

Examples of sexual violence that specifically affect adolescents include dating and courtship violence (for example, date rape); economically-coerced sex (including schoolgirls in poor countries having to take up with "sugar daddies" to afford school fees); sexual harassment and abuse in homes, schools, the workplace and communities; rape and gang rape.

Child sexual abuse is defined by WHO as:

The involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the

Violence in institutions, particularly educational institutions, has tended to fall outside the spotlight, with most studies focusing on domestic or intimate partner violence committed by a current or former husband or boyfriend.

Some surveys of intimate partner violence cover only battering; others include sexual, psychological and economic violence – for example, forced sex in marriage, prohibiting a woman from seeing her family and friends, using threats or intimidation or preventing a woman from working.

In 48 surveys on intimate partner violence around the world, which asked direct questions such as: "Has a current or former partner ever hit you with his fist or with something else that could hurt you?", 10–69 per cent of women reported being hit or physically assaulted by a current or former husband or boyfriend and 3–52 per cent reported such violence in the year preceding the study.[8] Coercive sex in intimate partnerships is more common if women are also physically assaulted. Studies in Mexico and the US estimate that 40–52 per cent of women experiencing physical violence from an intimate partner have also been sexually abused by that partner.[9]

Preliminary findings from a WHO study of women's health and domestic violence against women in seven countries: "suggest that younger women are at greatest risk of physical and sexual violence from intimate partners", says Charlotte Watts from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.[10]

Intimate partner violence can also affect men, but there is a significant gender gap between women and men in terms of quantity of violence and severity of injury, with women much more heavily affected. The dynamics of violence between men and women also differ with studies reporting men seeking to exert dominance, power or control over women or circumscribe them to particular gender roles whereas many women who physically abuse husbands have often been abused themselves.[11]

Common experiences, diverse contexts

Studies of gender violence are often not comparable across communities or countries. Even between local communities in a relatively small geographical district, there can be considerable variation in the reporting of levels of violence. Study findings also reflect the different realities faced by women in different contexts – for example, whether they are married or how old they are.

Differences in definitions of violence and methodologies used by researchers have a significant impact on levels of violence reported. In the WHO multi-country study, women who were able to give information anonymously were almost twice as likely to report having experienced sexual abuse before the age of 15 as women who were interviewed face-to-face.[12] When women have more than one opportunity to do so, they are more likely to disclose violence.

Violence is nearly always under-reported by women because they believe it is "normal"; they fear that making it public will cause them harm or shame; or they are not ready to talk about it, so levels of violence reported are often minimum levels of actual violence.

Often violence does not come to light until it is specifically and sensitively looked for. Several studies of between 1,000 and 12,000 women found that many had told no-one about violence they experienced before they were interviewed. In Canada, 22 per cent of women had remained silent before being questioned in research, in Chile, 30 per cent, in Nicaragua 37 per cent, in the United Kingdom 38 per cent, in Egypt 47 per cent and in Bangladesh 68 per cent.[13]

Sometimes women internalise society's norms about, and acceptance of, violence. A study in Nicaragua in 1999 found that 25 per cent of rural and 15 per cent of urban women believed a husband was justified in beating his wife for neglecting the children or the house. Twenty three per cent of rural and 11 per cent of urban women agreed that "a husband is justified in beating his wife if she goes out without his permission."[14] In Egypt, between 40 and 81 per cent of women felt beatings were justified for reasons including neglecting the house or children, refusing sex, answering back or disobedience.[15]

In no sense can these attitudes be dismissed as old-fashioned. On the contrary, there is evidence that suggests these attitudes may be more common among younger people. Recent research in the UK found that 50 per cent of boys and 33 per cent of girls thought that it was OK to hit a woman or to force her to have sex in certain circumstances. Thirty-six per cent of boys believed they might personally hit a woman or force her to have sex.[16] In France, alarmed at a growing culture of gang rape of young women by young men in city suburbs, ministers have vowed to end sexual violence in schools.[17] Among almost 1,000 men in Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu in India, reported use of sexual violence

(for example forcing sex or having sex with an unwilling wife) in the 12 months preceding the research was highest – at 67 per cent – among men under 25. It declined to 43 per cent among men 36–50 and to 11 per cent among men over 50.[18]

The costs of gender violence

"Due to the shocking experiences I underwent, I was not able to participate in any social activities in the university... I was afraid to join any student organisations... I associated with a few selected students."

Female undergraduate, Sri Lanka

The costs of gender violence to women themselves, their communities and the state is enormous. According to the World Bank, it causes as much ill health and death in women aged 15–44 as cancer, and more than malaria and traffic accidents combined.[19] According to researcher Lori Heise and colleagues, evidence is fast accumulating "that physical and sexual abuse lie behind some of the most intractable reproductive health issues of our times – unwanted pregnancies, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and complications of pregnancy". Abuse is further linked to high risk sexual behaviour (for example, sex with many partners, prostitution) and a wide range of other health problems.[20] A commentary in the medical journal *The Lancet* asks: "Why does violence against women, a massive cause of morbidity and mortality, remain overlooked by governments?"[21]

The economic costs of violence against women, including healthcare costs, are also high. Canada's national survey on violence against women revealed that 45 per cent of wife-assault incidents resulted in injuries, and of the injured women, 40 per cent subsequently visited a doctor or nurse.[22] Economic costs also include lost earnings and reduced productivity.[23] In Managua, Nicaragua, women who reported abuse earned 46 per cent less than women who did not, after taking into account other factors that could affect earnings. When violence occurs in educational institutions, the cost must also be measured in lost educational opportunities.

Sexual violence against adolescents

Historically, studies of gender violence have focused on wife assault but it has become clear that young unmarried women are also exposed to high levels of violence. Increasing evidence is available of the extent to which young women's first sexual experience is unwanted or forced. There is also evidence that when young women have sex at an early age, it is more likely to be coerced.[24]

In New Zealand, a study of 458 women aged between 21 and 22 found that a quarter of those who had first intercourse before the age of 13 reported that it was forced.[25] In a study of 1,193 students aged 13 to 17 years in Geneva, Switzerland, 20 per cent of girls and three per cent of boys reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual abuse involving physical contact.[26] In a study of nine countries in the Caribbean, 47.6 per cent of females aged 10–18 and 31.9 per cent of males of the same age reported that their first sexual intercourse was forced or "somewhat" forced.[27] While physical force is used in some sexual encounters, pressure that is not physically violent is more common. Research in rural Tanzania found that adolescents were coerced into sex under pressure from intermediaries or relatives, with the promise of marriage, or because of threats.[28,29]

Adolescence is a time of particular vulnerability to many forms of sexual violence, especially for young women as they begin to form intimate relationships and are also exposed to approaches from older men. Sexual abuse affects children of all ages, but tends to increase after the onset of puberty.[30] Where children and young people are sexually abused, most perpetrators are male, whatever the sex of the victim. Studies of child sexual abuse from 20 countries, including 10 national representative surveys, showed rates of childhood sexual abuse of 7–36 per cent for girls and 3–29 per cent for boys, with most studies reporting rates 1.5 to 3 times higher against girls.[31] As with other studies on gender violence, differences in study methodology and context shape the findings. For example, high rates such as the 29 per cent reported for South African boys are due to the broad definitions used. In this case two-thirds of the abuse boys experienced involved no physical contact.

Causes of gender violence

There are no clearly identifiable risk groups for gender violence but a number of key factors seem to increase it. Many researchers and activists have used an "ecological" model of gender violence to describe the different levels – from individual to societal – which influence violence and inequity within relationships (see diagram on next page). This reflects current research on women's empowerment, which also stresses the need to act at multiple levels to remove barriers to women's advancement.[32] Thus violence is seen as a problem not just inherent in individual relationships but rooted in structural factors.

The ecological model of gender violence

Societal · Community · Relationship · Individual
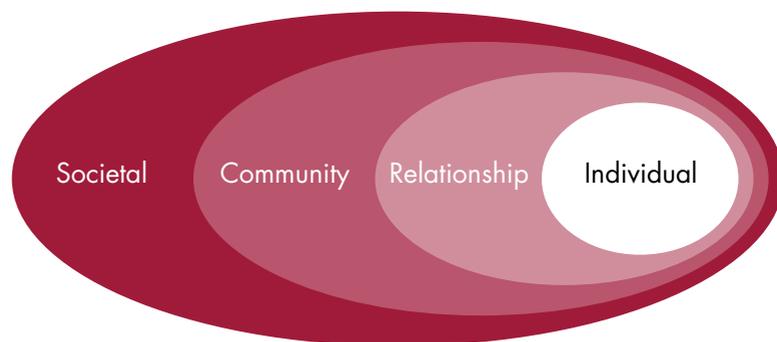
Source: Heise et al, 1999 and WHO 2002

Violence against women increases during war or conflict, and when a community has historically sustained high levels of violence or oppression, as in El Salvador or South Africa.

Structural factors, such as laws governing marital rape, shape society's attitudes to violence and women's options for dealing with it. In most countries, a man is not committing a crime if he rapes his wife. In Pakistan, researchers who interviewed men and women in Karachi documented beliefs that sexual space, boundaries and certain rights – such as the right to refuse sex – are foregone in certain circumstances – such as marriage. Both men and women believe they have a duty to respond to their partners' sexual needs.[33] However these beliefs can lead to the justification of abuse. In Mexico in 1997, the country's Supreme Court held that a husband's rape of his wife was not really rape but just an "undue exercise of a right" – because marriage was legally based on the notion of permanent right of access to conjugal relations, a decision that was later overturned thanks to an international campaign.[34] The British House of Lords only recognised forced sex within marriage as rape in 1991. In the US, marital rape was finally included in the criminal statutes of all 50 states in 1993.[35] The impact of family or personal laws on relationship dynamics between men and women is profound. According to UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy, family law is the litmus for a society with regard to the relationship between legal norms and the status of women.[36]

Even when laws do not so blatantly discriminate against women, an imbalance in power can be firmly entrenched in social norms. A South African study suggests that high levels of violence against

women recently reported in some studies may be partly fuelled by male backlash against the progress women have made.[37] Researchers have referred to this as "neopatriarchy" a new attempt to exert male authority, in this case through a culture of sexual violence.

Studies in a number of countries have shown that poverty is linked to male intimate partner violence against women.[38] This is not always the case. One study in South Africa found that women in the poorest households – where the family was supported by someone other than the woman or her partner – experienced the fewest conflicts about household finance and the least violence.[39]

Inequality of income or empowerment in a relationship may be more relevant than absolute levels of poverty. Where women are economically dependent or have little room for decision-making in the home sphere, violence appears to be more likely; similarly, where society sanctions male dominance and restricts women's rights.[40,41]

In every society, individual influences, such as having witnessed violence within the home as a child, or heavy alcohol consumption as an adult, also increase the risk of violence.

Anthropologists have documented some societies where gender violence is very rare and is culturally stigmatised. Wife-beating is commonly taboo among hunting and gathering societies where gender relations and roles tend to be more egalitarian and women's contribution to the community is recognised and highly valued. Some societies in parts of Papua New Guinea (a country where high levels of violence have been recorded in other communities),[42] the Pacific Ocean Islands and Africa are all recorded as having a low tolerance for aggressive behaviour by anyone – including against women.

Traditionally, although women in many societies may not have had much formal power to determine the shape of domestic or intimate relationships, they were often able to exercise informal power within their communities. Women have used family ties, traditional external sanctions by the village or community, and informal organising, to define their partnership roles in their own interests, find forms of recourse if mistreated and exert moral pressure on men to respect them.[43] As external and family ties have weakened (and continue to weaken) as a result of political and economic change, this form of accountability is loosened. Formal structural change and new forms of community organising become ever more important.

Attendance at school is usually seen as protective because of its empowering effects. However, evidence is also accumulating that

educational institutions – the engine of women's empowerment – too often permit sexual violence against students to go unchallenged, directly damaging students, mainly girls and young women, and teaching many boys and girls that violence is acceptable.

Human rights: an international response to gender violence

In 1993 rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation in educational institutions were named as a violation of women's and girls' human rights in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The year was a turning point in terms of placing violence against women at the centre of the international policy agenda.

In 1991, women's groups around the world launched an annual campaign of 16 days of activism against gender violence as part of the Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights. Each year, the 16 days extend from November 25, named by women's groups as the International Day Against Violence Against Women, to December 10, International Human Rights Day. The campaign symbolically links these two important dates and encompasses World AIDS Day on December 1 and on December 6, the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre which took place in 1989 when a man gunned down 14 women engineering students reportedly for "being feminists". Activism by women's groups led to the campaign targeted at the UN World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 under the banner "Women's Rights are Human Rights". It focused on gender violence as a violation of women's human rights.

The conference led to the creation of a new human rights instrument, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and a policy mandate asserting that human rights law must protect women from violence both in the public sphere and in the privacy of their own homes. It was a major breakthrough. Hitherto, human rights law had been more concerned with the "public" arena of state-perpetrated violence, directed largely at men and had neglected the so-called "private" sphere of home, family and community where women were more likely to be affected by violence.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women can be used to help interpret most of the primary international human rights treaties, which governments are legally bound to implement once they have ratified or acceded to

them. Many, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, have general provisions that can offer protection against gender violence and are relevant to violence experienced in the education sector.

Sexual violence in educational institutions also falls within the remit of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (the Women's Convention) of 1979, the most extensive international treaty dealing with the rights of women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Children's Convention) of 1989.

The Children's Convention applies to everyone below the age of 18 (or younger if the age of majority is attained earlier in a particular country). It requires governments to: "Take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical and mental violence... including sexual abuse". It states that: "the education of the child shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of... equality of the sexes".

In 1994, the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the Inter American Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Violence against Women (the Belem do Para Convention). This treaty has the same impact on national law in the region as UN treaties. It specifically addresses sexual violence and harassment in educational institutions and sets out actions governments must take to eliminate violence against women.

All treaties have independent supervisory bodies that monitor implementation, encourage compliance and offer guidance. For example, in 1992, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which monitors implementation of the Women's Convention, adopted General Recommendation No19 which states that sexual harassment is a form of discrimination on the basis of sex and a form of violence against women.

Over the last decade, gender violence has also become a significant focus of attention at UN conferences dealing with social development. The international consensus documents which emerge from each conference help to develop new international standards, assist in the implementation of human rights law at national levels and set benchmarks for policy makers. Though not legally binding upon states, the action

programmes of key conferences in the 1990s have provided a useful and practical tool to develop policy.

The Programme of Action of the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, a 20-year policy agenda that is shaping reproductive and sexual health programmes and policies around the world, and that of the 1995 UN World Conference on Women, state that enjoying reproductive health implies that people are able to "have a safe and satisfying sex life" and are able to make decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive life "free from discrimination, coercion and violence". They call for full attention to be given to: "the promotion of mutually respectful and equitable gender relations and particularly to meeting the educational and service needs of adolescents to enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality".

In February 1996, a group of international experts convened by WHO agreed that the recent advances in human rights discourse would provide a useful framework for WHO's activities. The same year WHO declared gender violence a public health priority. The World Health Assembly subsequently adopted two resolutions committing WHO to address the dramatic worldwide increase in violence against people of all ages, especially women and children, and agreeing an action plan for the prevention of violence against women and children.

WHO's 2002 *World report on violence and health*, the first of its kind, aims to raise awareness of the problems of violence globally. Its fundamental premise is that violence is both predictable and preventable and that public health research shows that much can be done to minimise violence.

In parallel with these developments, successive international education initiatives have set targets to eliminate the gap in male and female access to education. The current international goal, set at the World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000 and the Millennium Summit in 2000 is to: "eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015".

2 Sexual harassment

"Sometimes I would look at the teacher and think 'help' but I was afraid to say anything because maybe it wasn't as bad as I thought it was."
15-year-old schoolgirl in the US[44]

At national level, a range of legal frameworks exist to address the more severe forms of sexually violent or coercive behaviour against students. Such behaviour may be prosecuted under a range of legislation dealing with indecent assault, child abuse and rape. Some countries have introduced legislation to criminalise sexual activity between educators and students over the age of consent and in their care.

A sexual harassment framework has also been used in many educational settings internationally, particularly with older students, to highlight and respond to the ways in which a persistent atmosphere of sexualised inequality damages students' well-being and life chances. This, and sometimes more serious sexual crime, is encompassed in definitions of sexual harassment.

What is sexual harassment?

The concept of sexual harassment in the workplace can be traced to the development of civil-rights legislation in the US in the 1970s.[45] Workplace policies are now the norm in many countries, and compulsory in some. International guidelines have been established by bodies such as the European Commission, which in 1991 adopted the influential and widely cited "Recommendation on the Protection of the Dignity of Women and Men at Work". This defines sexual harassment as: "Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature... affecting the dignity of men and women at work. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct". The associated Code of Practice for employers emphasises staff education and clear policies and procedures that uphold all parties' rights and guarantee confidentiality. A person subject to harassment is advised to keep notes detailing incidents, to make it clear to the other person that they would like the behaviour stopped, and if necessary to raise the issue with a designated staff member.

In South Africa, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination, Act 4, 2000, defines harassment as being: "unwanted conduct which is persistent or serious and demeans,

humiliates or creates a hostile or intimidating environment or is calculated to induce submission... and which is related to sex, gender or sexual orientation".

Two features common to all definitions are:
1 The behaviour is unwanted
2 The behaviour hampers an individual's advancement or well-being

This may occur in two ways: the first is termed "quid pro quo" (something for something) harassment. For example, a woman who refuses the advances of a superior and as a result is denied opportunities for promotion, or is dismissed or forced to resign.

The second category is the creation of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working atmosphere. The effects of harassment can be severe. The American Psychiatric Association, for example, recognises it as a "severe stressor" in its Statistical and Diagnostic Manual of Mental Disorders.

What sexual harassment is not

Fundamental to definitions of sexual harassment in the workplace is the concept that the behaviour is unwanted and the perpetrator must understand this to be the case.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has further clarified what it means for behaviour to be unwanted, stating that: "Sexual attention becomes sexual harassment if it is persisted in once it has been made clear that it is regarded by the recipient to be offensive", while adding the caveat that: "One incident of harassment may constitute sexual harassment if sufficiently serious".[46]

The Australian Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act of 1991 uses the yardstick of whether: "a reasonable person would have anticipated a possibility that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated by the conduct".

Thus, behaviour which is sexual in nature and is clearly welcomed or reciprocated – such as flirting between peers – is not sexual harassment. Equally, asking a woman for a date is not sexual harassment, unless the request is made persistently once it has been made clear that it is not wanted.

Lessons for the education sector

The terminology of sexual harassment is increasingly being adopted by the tertiary education sector where staff and students are in the same age bracket as the adult workforce. In India, universities have organised through a "National Consultation on Sexual Harassment on University Campuses".

Sometimes the terminology of sexual harassment and violence are used together, as by the Southern African Network of Tertiary Educational Institutions Challenging Sexual Harassment and Violence. Agreed definitions can provide a formal framework within which to develop preventive measures and ensure accountability.

The student who is offered grades contingent upon sex, or the young woman who says: "The financial aid officer made it clear that I could get the money I needed if I slept with him", are examples of what, in the workplace, would be called quid pro quo sexual harassment.

When students describe repeated sexual comments in tutorials, they are illustrating what would be accepted in the workplace as creating a hostile environment.

In Kenya, says Fatuma Chege, lecturer in the Department of Education at Kenyatta University: "We have no vocabulary for sexual harassment in our local languages", but "The Gender Interest Group (GIG)... is creating awareness, especially among girls, that they need not suffer humiliation and that it is all right to put their foot down and say 'No!'"[47] Research has shown that the consequences of sexually harassing behaviour are the same for women, whether or not they name the experiences as such.[48]

At primary and secondary levels, the sexual harassment framework has also been employed, both to address staff-student and student-student behaviour, especially with older students.

In the US, researcher Nan Stein defines sexual harassment in schools and universities as: "unwanted and unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that interferes with the right to receive an equal educational opportunity".[49]

Some researchers and practitioners feel uncomfortable using the term sexual harassment when referring to behaviour by younger students, preferring to use terms such as "gender bullying" or "gender-based bullying".

Despite the different approaches, it is widely acknowledged that sexually violent and harassing behaviour by both students and staff, does take place in schools as well as universities.[50] According to WHO "For many young women, the most common place where sexual coercion and harassment are experienced is in school".[51]

3 The extent of sexual violence in educational settings

"He [my teacher] said: 'I would like you to be my special girl, think about it'"
junior secondary student, Zimbabwe[52]

Much research on sexual violence in the education sector has taken place in the US and other Western countries and has focused on sexual harassment in the school system and universities. A large body of education research and legal precedent exists.

In developing countries, sexual harassment has been addressed by several universities. The battle against HIV/AIDS has also opened a window on the sexual violence experienced in schools. It has been voiced as a concern by young women in a number of education programmes aiming to reduce the spread of HIV, but is often expressed in more diverse language than that of sexual violence and harassment.

In the US, a 1993 survey by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of over 1,600 randomly selected boys and girls in grades 8 to 11 (age 13–17) found girls and boys were heavily affected by sexual harassment which was defined in terms including: "unwanted or unwelcomed... sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks"; other unwanted experiences including being "touched, grabbed or pinched... in a sexual way"; having "clothing pulled at in a sexual way... [or]... off or down"; and being "forced to kiss... [or]... do something sexual, other than kissing".

Eighty-six per cent of girls reported sexual harassment at school (76 per cent verbal or gestures and 65 per cent physical) and 66 per cent reported that it happened "often" or "occasionally". Seventy-five per cent of boys reported experiencing harassment (56 per cent verbal or gestures and 42 per cent physical) "at least once".[53] Girls were more likely to be harassed by other boys and teachers and boys by girls and other boys. Girls experienced more serious harassment and were nearly five times as likely to be afraid at school following harassment. Of girls who harassed boys, 98 per cent had been harassed themselves. A follow up survey of over 2,000 students in 2001 found overall figures of 83 per cent for girls and 79 per cent for boys reporting harassment.[54]

At tertiary level, of female graduate students polled by the American Psychological Association, 12.7 per cent reported having been sexually harassed, 21 per cent avoided classes for fear of being sexually harassed, 11 per cent had tried to report an incident of sexual harassment, and three per cent had dropped a course because of sexual harassment.[55]

In the UK, much research on sexual violence in schools has fallen under the rubric of "sexual bullying". Research in four mixed-sex comprehensive schools with children aged 10 to 11 and 14 to 15 found that behaviours such as boys calling girls sexualised names like "prossie" [prostitute], flicking their bra straps, looking up their skirts and grabbing or fondling were routinely mentioned by girls as ways in which the boys would try to upset them. Boys were regularly called "gay" and "sconner" (meaning a youth with no pubic hair) by girls and other boys.

These behaviours were widely ignored by schools as being part of teenage culture, but for the students, "sexualised interpersonal conflict... was high on their list of concerns about school life".[56] Another study in secondary schools found that young people of different sexual orientation (gay or lesbian) experienced serious victimisation, almost half of them reporting it from teachers.[57] In the workplace, with young people just one year older, all of these behaviours would be viewed very differently.

In developing countries, a focus on sexual harassment in the education sector has usually been initiated by universities. A 1997 survey of nearly 200 female college and university students in Mumbai, India, found 39 per cent complained of harassment, including verbal comments, lewd songs, and harassment through phone calls and staring at women's breasts, particularly in canteens and at the entrance gate. "By and large, women did not enter the canteen as it was considered threatening," said researchers. Groups of young men hanging around near the ladies' toilets were also seen as threatening and prevented women from using them. Faculty staff were also a source of harassment including physical touching, continuous staring, ridiculing female students, introducing sexual innuendo or discomfiting content into teaching and offering marks for sex.[58]

From "eve-teasing" to rape: students organise in Delhi

The gang rape in 2002 of a medical student from Maulana Azad Medical College in Delhi and of a Law Faculty student from Delhi University drew attention to the risk students face on campuses which are easily accessible to the public.

At Delhi University, the Coalition for a Safe University has demanded that university authorities provide adequate street lighting on campus and adopt a policy against sexual harassment.[59] Students of both sexes boycotted their exams, protesting over perceived administrative indifference to their safety.[60]

Campaigning on sexual harassment – teacher-student harassment, peer harassment and street harassment on campus roads – had already been going on for several years. In 1996, an investigation by the Gender Study Group at Delhi University found that 91.7 per cent of more than 100 women hostellers interviewed reported facing sexual harassment on campus roads on an everyday basis, usually from non-members of the university.

13.5 per cent of women students experienced harassment from male students, primarily in libraries and canteens, and 4.8 per cent from university staff – usually in the form of unwanted touch or comments from professors that were too personal, with sexual undertones or referring to student's sexual attributes.[61]

Sexual harassment was understood by students to include "physical harassment... rape and molestation" as well as "verbal harassment" also called "eve-teasing". Eve-teasing is the common term for a specific type of sexual harassment first officially defined by the government of New Delhi in 1984 as: *When a man by words either spoken or by signs and/or by visible representation or by gesture does any act in public space, or signs, recites or utters any indecent words or song or ballad in any public place to the annoyance of any women.*[62]

As in many studies on sexual harassment, acts that men perceived as inoffensive offend women. Women students at Delhi regarded eve-teasing as a "milder form of sexual harassment but a violation all the same" that "degrades a woman without affecting her physically", whereas male students regarded it as "light in nature", "flattering" and "fun". The researchers reported that eve-teasing "is so common and everyday an experience that it can be got used to and screened off with a cultivated sense of indifference – a raising of the threshold of tolerance". "Small sly comments slip out of mind but certain vulgar remarks are quite bugging. The fact that nothing can be done is all the more depressing." "I feel angry and humiliated. Often I get worked up just trying to figure out why the hell are men such imbeciles! Why the hell do we have to take all this shit? Why can't I do something more?"

Forty-nine per cent felt that although these incidents affected them adversely, they did not affect their overall personal or academic development substantially. Until the harassment was intolerable, it was ignored, but silence did not imply indifference or assent. Forty-five per cent of women said that sexual harassment on campus affected their personal or academic development in some way such as avoiding library facilities, not joining various institutions and avoiding particular courses, including computer classes.

Some women felt fearful and unable to predict when sexually threatening behaviour would turn into physical violence. Others said that: "Handling these situations day after day has made me much bolder. During the first few months I used to be very disturbed and unable to do any useful work but now I have learned to take it in my stride".

In Sri Lanka, students at the University of Peradeniya, where women comprise about 45 per cent of the student population, were interviewed after graduation for a UNICEF study on gender violence in 1997.[63] Despite women in Sri Lanka having much greater access to education than other countries in the region, and the country faring particularly well on indicators of women's status, women reported repeated and demeaning humiliation or "ragging" of women students that took a sexual form. Sriyani [a false name] reported being made a prisoner by a group of male senior students who interrogated her about having a boyfriend in the village – "Tell the truth, you devil. You cannot escape by telling us lies. Tell us whether you had a boyfriend in the village... You bitch, look at our faces and tell the truth." They went on to graphically and crudely suggest sex acts which they said she should perform with her boyfriend. After two and a half hours Sriyani was taken back to her hall, made to kneel down on the way and to worship two halls of residence for male students. On other occasions they harassed her about menstruation, forced her to draw genitalia and threatened to hit her. Some of her colleagues described similar experiences and their "deep sense of disappointment about university life." "Physically we were not abused during the ragging. However, we were subjected to deep humiliation and derogation for being women." Male activists working to overcome ragging at the university cited many obstacles including: "threats, false accusations, flouting of regulations, lack of staff training, lack of effective sanctions and an attitude that ragging is not serious".

Of nearly 500 female Chinese college students in Hong Kong, about one in four experienced various forms of sexual harassment and one per cent was coerced into sexual activities during their college years by either teachers or peers.[64]

At Jimma University in Ethiopia, violence, harassment and lack of security were cited as the most common problems women students faced. Lack of facilities and assertiveness, workload and academic performance were mentioned less often.[65]

At the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, a secret group of members of the university called PUNCH, believed to be male, periodically claimed to research the sexual history of a female student and print it out on a big poster conspicuously placed with the insignia of the group, a red skull. Often a picture of the face of the student was juxtaposed with a nude picture scanned out of a pornographic magazine. In February 1990 a student committed suicide, in part, it is believed, because of the harassment of the group. In 1997, another student raped on campus who also committed suicide, had reportedly feared how the group might handle her ordeal.[66]

Chris Stowers / Panos Pictures

A university library, Taipei – libraries can be no-go areas for young women after dark

Schools

More recently in developing countries, sexual violence has also been researched in schools. The impetus has come from drives to promote gender equity in education as well as growing concern about the ways in which gender violence, including sexual violence, severely damage adolescent health, and can increase risk of HIV infection.

For this reason most research in developing country schools has been carried out in Africa. In Zimbabwe, girls in forms 1–3 in four schools (age range 13–17, over half were 14–15) were asked to write about a problem they had at school and indicate whether they wished to be interviewed. Of 73 girls interviewed in depth, 47 per cent reported unsolicited physical contact from boys in school such as "grabbing or pinching their breasts or buttocks, pulling them, twisting their arm, blocking their way, and in a few cases beating or hitting them". Fourteen of the girls reported being propositioned by a teacher for sex.[67]

A study by Human Rights Watch in South Africa in eight schools in three provinces interviewed girls, teachers and school administrators, as well as parents, specialists (such as lawyers, social workers and education officials). It reported that schoolgirls faced sexual harassment and violence from peers and teachers.[68]

In 1998, the South Africa Demographic and Health Survey assessed the frequency of rape in a nationally representative study of over 11,000 women and found that 153 –1.6 per cent – had been raped before the age of 15. Of these, 33 per cent named their schoolteacher as the rapist.[69]

As in US studies, African surveys show boys are also affected by harassment and violence, particularly among younger age groups. Twenty-eight per cent of 13- to 16-year-old boys surveyed in 12 rural schools in Botswana reported being touched without their consent. Forty per cent of girls of the same age reported having been touched in a sexual manner without their consent, and the same percentage reported being talked to about sex in a manner which made them feel uncomfortable. Two per cent of students reported being asked for sex by a teacher.[70]

Young people's attitudes towards sexual violence

Studies all over the world have found that social norms about acceptable sexual behaviour for men and women have lent support to the idea that men should actively seek sex and women should not want it. The social scripting of sexual relationships can lead to acceptance of some degree of force on the part of men and requires women to be passive rather than assertive. It also hides the reality of women wishing to initiate sexual relations and seek sexual pleasure. According to Aruna Gnanadason of the World Council of Churches, "The secrecy surrounding any issues related to human

sexuality, especially female sexuality, has been at the heart of much of the abuse and violence against women".[71]

A US study, which interviewed 904 sexually active young women between 14 and 26, attending family planning in Texas, suggested that a lack of sexual assertiveness was putting them at risk of unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, sexual coercion, violence and other negative sexual experiences. Many did not believe they had the right to communicate about, or control, aspects of their sexual behaviour. Nearly one in five believed they had no right to stop foreplay at any time, including at the point of intercourse, or to tell their partner that they wanted to make love differently or that he was being too rough. Neither did they feel they had the right to make their own decisions about contraception regardless of their partner's wishes or to ask their partner if he had been examined for sexually transmitted diseases.[72]

Watching harassment can also be an unpleasant experience for the silent majority of boys who do not wish to behave in this way. A US boy describing boys sexually taunting girls at his school said: "Some of the boys that I considered my friends even began to do it. It felt awful to watch, but if I said anything it would not stop them and would only hurt me."[73]

Abuse, aggression and ambivalence

In schools, girls may be unsure how to judge behaviour by either teachers or boys. The Zimbabwean study of girls in forms 1–3 found that girls' attitudes towards sexual advances from male teachers was ambivalent. They understood that a male relative propositioning them was wrong but were far less certain about a teacher. They regarded attempts by male teachers to touch and fondle them as clearly wrong and their use of insulting or sexually explicit language as forms of abuse. However they were less certain about a teacher's attempt to form what they might perceive as a "serious relationship", in part because they believed it might lead to marriage.

There was also more tolerance of aggressive sexual advances from boys. According to the researchers: "there was an indication that girls only disapproved of boys' behaviour in so far as they themselves were not interested in them. If a girl was attracted to a boy, she would not necessarily see his aggressive behaviour as abusive, rather as 'normal' for the boy and flattering for herself".

Younger boys interviewed in the same study confirmed girls' reports of the harassing behaviour of older boys, reporting that they witnessed older boys pestering girls, and threatening them if they refused their advances. Older boys, particularly from Form 4, would enter Form 1 classrooms during break to make advances or "propose" to new girls in Form 1 and would also accost them around school. Abusive behaviour was sometimes targeted at girls who turned down these advances. Some Form 1 girls reported feeling too frightened to leave their classrooms at lunch break. Observing the behaviour of the older boys and teachers socialises younger boys to believe that pestering and harassing girls is accepted and even expected masculine behaviour.

Older boys were quick to express their contempt for girls, explaining that, as one boy said: "boys want sex, girls want money". If they had given girls gifts or money, they believed the girl should acquiesce to a sexual relationship.

Among the students interviewed, 26 per cent of girls said they regularly went hungry. Underlying poverty in many countries means that girls in particular often do not have enough money for school books, uniforms, bus fares, or money to spend on food snacks and drinks sold at school, or luxuries. Boys had more opportunities to earn money through casual labour at weekends, which was not considered socially acceptable for girls nor was it feasible because of their domestic workload. For girls, one option was accepting gifts and money from other pupils, teachers, or older men from outside the school in exchange for sex, although the initial offer of gifts could come without sexual expectations. The school tuck shop, say the researchers, became a site where some young girls could unwittingly be drawn into friendships with boys who would later pressure them for sex.

Boys objected to harassment of girls when it was carried out by teachers, who were seen as competitors for the girls with an unfair advantage over male students because of their status and power. Male students were also resentful about the perceived unfair advantages of girls in relationships with teachers, who they believed were favoured with higher grades or extra attention in class.[74]

Staff attitudes: reflections of personal experience

Educators' perceptions of, and reactions to, sexual violence vary considerably. Often there is a reluctance to admit it is a problem. Where educators are aware of the problem and are unhappy about

it, the numbers that actively object and respond are considerably smaller. Just like many students, teachers often feel powerless to tackle the issue, especially when it is being ignored or even perpetrated by their colleagues. Although aware that there is a problem, even teachers who would like to address it often do nothing. The Human Rights Watch report states that: "Sometimes school officials appear to have failed to respond adequately because they did not know what to do; other times they just ignored the problem; still other times they appear to have been afraid to assist. In many instances, schools actively discouraged victims of school-based gender violence from alerting anyone outside the school or accessing the justice system".[75] A recently retired head teacher said: "Schools find sexual abuse embarrassing and oftentimes will attempt to sweep it under the carpet. The survivor is left to swim or sink, there are no support systems designed to assist. The victim runs a risk of not being believed, of being ostracised or ridiculed".[76]

Some teachers ignore the violence and harassment towards girls by male pupils and regard it as "normal male" behaviour. In Kenya, this attitude caused an outcry after a notorious incident on July 14 1991, where 19 girls were killed and 71 reported being raped at St Kizito school. The headmaster reportedly commented that "In the past the boys would scare the girls out of their dormitories and in the process they would get hold of them and drag them to the bush where they would 'do their thing' and the matter would end there with the students going back to their respective dormitories".[77]

A Zimbabwean study in co-educational secondary schools found that: "Teachers often collude with male pupils in the verbal harassment of girls in the classroom, directly or by omission".[78] Teachers sometimes feel that girls should be more assertive and stand up for themselves.[79] Like many parents and even students, they adhere to the idea that girls "bring it on themselves" and are to blame for violence and harassment.

When sexual aggression is ignored, it becomes normalised and part of the institutional culture. A US study found that: "In schools, harassment often happens while many people watch... When sexual harassment occurs in public and is not condemned, it becomes, with time, part of the social norm".[80]

One 14-year-old US schoolgirl said: "I was in class and the teacher was looking right at me when this guy grabbed my butt. The teacher saw it happen. I slapped the guy and told him not to do that. My teacher didn't say anything and looked away and went on with the lesson like nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

It really confused me because I knew guys weren't supposed to do that, but the teacher didn't do anything. I felt like the teacher betrayed me and thought I was making a big deal out of nothing. But most of all, I felt really bad about myself because it made me feel slutty and cheap. Now... I think of it as just one of those things I have to put up with". Another 12-year-old said: "there were two or three boys touching me, and trust me they were big boys. And I'd tell them to stop but they wouldn't! ... all of them... backed me into a corner and started touching me all over... I told the principal, and him and the boys had a little talk. And after the talk was up, the boys came out laughing 'cause they got no punishment."

This highlights a key barrier to change in the education sector – the personal experiences and attitudes of staff themselves. A pilot curriculum development programme on gender violence for primary schools in South Africa began by exploring with teachers their own experience of gender violence. Before training, no teacher said that sexual harassment of teachers was a problem at his or her school. However, 12 per cent of female teachers later said they had experienced such harassment from a colleague and almost half reported some form of violence from intimate partners – 47 per cent of female teachers reported experiencing physical abuse at the hands of an intimate partner, 31 per cent sexual abuse and 69 per cent psychological abuse. Twenty-five per cent of male teachers admitted they had been physically abusive, 12 per cent sexually abusive and 33 per cent psychologically abusive to an intimate partner.[81]

It is important to recognise teachers' own experiences and attitudes in order to enable them to address these issues in their working environment. Teachers are men and women first, and are likely to share many community beliefs and attitudes and often experience similar levels of violence as the wider community. Addressing these issues in training which stimulates self reflection, as well as reflection on the school or university environment, will make training activities more effective. The same lesson is also being learned in other sectors. Research with nurses found that it is important to address their own experience in order to be effective in training them to deal with gender-based violence.[82] Some health sector initiatives to tackle gender violence include requiring practitioners to take part in broader gender awareness training, before learning how to deal with gender violence experienced by clients or patients.

4 The significance of sexual violence in educational settings

"I think schools need to pay more attention to what's going on around them because girls like me are just dying inside because no one will believe us"
14-year-old US schoolgirl[83]

Being subject to sexual violence or harassment is extremely threatening to a student's physical safety and psychological welfare, both immediately and in the longer term. Psychological effects include loss of self-esteem, depression, fear for personal safety, anger and an increased risk of suicide.

Underachievement at school and university

As a result of sexual violence, harassment and coercion, a student may avoid class or school, not want to talk in class, have difficulty concentrating, lose trust in school officials, become isolated, have a lower academic attainment or drop out of education.

The impact is worse for an individual when, as is often the case, no action is taken and a person has to meet his or her harasser on a regular basis at their school or institution.

One girl in a school in South Africa who was assaulted by two male classmates explains: "I felt like leaving this school, I cried. I feel horrible because before all this happened they were my friends. I was thinking: 'How am I going to face these guys? We attend class together. How am I going to be myself like before? How am I going to be the same again?' I asked advice from my mother. She said I must try to calm myself down. I had to write my exams. So I just calmed myself down and tried to forgive them. I passed my exams, but it was hard. I still feel bad but I just take it out of my mind. I would leave this school if I could."[84]

As well as directly undermining girls' and young women's own feelings about, and ability to benefit from, education, sexual harassment and violence in schools may influence parents to keep their girls out of school.[85]

Institutional demoralisation and underperformance

There is increasing evidence of the impact of sexual harassment on academic results. The Southern African Network of Tertiary Educational Institutions Challenging Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence argues that the behaviour by male students and teachers distorts female educational choices, restricts their movement and opportunities to contribute to university life and affects institutional performance.

"Tolerance of sexual harassment fosters an environment which is corrupt and underlined by patronage. It does not encourage accountability and transparency. This can be damning for any institution," says the newsletter of the Forum for African Women Educationalists.[86]

Where violence and harassment are not addressed they become entrenched in the institutional culture. Even where action is taken it can be inadequate, for example if a teacher who has a sexual relationship with a student is simply transferred, the problem is merely passed on for someone else to deal with rather than being addressed.

Consequences for young people's sexual and reproductive health

Gender inequalities in sexual relationships are a significant determinant of unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections which can cause cervical cancer and infertility. Sexual violence is known to be linked to higher rates of unintended pregnancy and abortion. In interviews with over 500 South African teenage women from similar backgrounds, those who were pregnant reported a history of more violence or fear of violence in their sexual relationships. 31.9 per cent of the 191 who were pregnant said they were "forced" or raped in their first sexual relationship (the use of the word "force" was distinguished by the young women from rape). Of the 353 non-pregnant teens, a much lower proportion, 18.1 per cent reported force or rape. Pregnant teenagers were significantly less likely to cite love as the main motivation for sex, more likely to identify fear and more likely to report being beaten.[87] A US study found girls with a history of dating violence were half as likely to use condoms as those with non abusive partners.[88]

HIV – following the path of least resistance

In many regions of the world – sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, South and South East Asia, the Middle East and the Caribbean – HIV infection rates are higher for young women than young men.[89] This reflects the greater biological susceptibility of young women to HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections

which can in turn further increase the risk of HIV infection. Poverty and gender expectations, such as young women having older partners, also play a part.[90] Coercion and violence further increase risk. The table below shows the gender gap in prevalence rates of HIV infection among 15 to 24-year-olds globally, and in each region where more young women than men are infected.

HIV Prevalence rate (%) in young people (age 15–24)

| | Low Estimate | | High Estimate | |
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Sub-Saharan Africa	6.41	3.13	11.39	5.56
Caribbean	1.78	1.42	3.17	2.43
S & SE Asia	0.36	0.22	0.64	0.38
N Africa & Middle East	0.23	0.08	0.41	0.15
Global	1.00	0.59	1.78	1.05

Source: UNAIDS, 2002, Report on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic

There is considerable variation within regions. In sub-Saharan Africa the low estimates for female and male infection rates in the 15 to 24-year-old age range vary from 0.19 per cent and 0.05 per cent in Madagascar to 31.59 per cent and 12.18 per cent in Swaziland.[91]

Among 15 to 19-year-olds the differences between male and female infection rates are even more marked than among 15 to 24-year-olds. In some countries, data from antenatal surveillance and population surveys show very high levels of HIV infection in teenage women. Large-scale surveys in some districts of Kenya and Zambia found that HIV prevalence among sexually active 15 to 19-year-olds was six times higher for women than for men, three times higher among 20 to 24-year-olds, and equal to that of men among 25 to 49-year-olds.[92]

"Development of strategies that prevent the early build-up of HIV infection in young women is a key public-health priority," say researchers in Zimbabwe.[93] "The very high prevalence of HIV infection among young women calls for urgent intervention," say the team working in Kenya and Zambia. "These data demonstrate the need to focus our attention on young African women and the factors underpinning their predicament," say South African researchers.[94]

A relationship that has been violent is one where HIV preventive behaviours are less likely. In Brazil, focus group discussions with adolescent, young and older adult men in low income and middle class neighbourhoods found that just over a fifth of men who said they had been violent had used a condom in their last sexual relationship with a stable partner, compared with just over a third of non-violent men.[95] In Uganda, of over 4,000 women surveyed in 1998–99, those who believed it was "very likely" that their partner was at risk of acquiring HIV had experienced almost three times as much physical violence and sexual coercion as women in low risk partnerships.[96] Data from Gujarat, India reveals that women who experience violence in their marriages are less likely to seek treatment for sexually transmitted infections – a co-factor for HIV infection. Women in marriages with better communication described more control over sex.[97] Research in Tanzania found that younger HIV-positive women aged 18–29 years were 10 times more likely to report a history of partner violence than HIV-negative women the same age. Women who reported that their partners maintained concurrent sexual relationships were five times more likely to have experienced physical violence than women who reported that their partners had never had other relationships.[98]

Pressure or coercion may also be linked to a substantial age gap between partners. Research in the US suggests that where unmarried adolescent women have sexual partners who are at least two years older, their relationship dynamics do not favour protective behaviour. Teen women with older partners are more susceptible to pressure and are more likely to report having unprotected sex.[99]

Coercive sex itself is more likely to lead to trauma or abrasions which can facilitate the transmission of HIV.[100]

Researchers conclude that: "Within HIV prevention it is critical that interventions openly discuss and challenge violence against women, and work with the Violence against Women Movement to challenge the gender inequalities and social expectations that fuel both HIV and violence against women".[101]

When sexual harassment or violence is ignored in an educational setting, or where young people are not taught how to recognize and avoid this kind of behaviour in their relationships, they are at greater risk of sexual and reproductive ill health and HIV infection.

Boys and young men – modelling masculinities

Research with boys and young men suggests that they have different ways of expressing their masculinity and attitudes to women in different contexts – they "do" masculinity differently depending on who they are with. Young men and boys in

particular are often constrained in making their own choices or expressing positive views about women when they are in all-male groups.

A study in the UK which interviewed London boys individually and in groups found that in the individual context they could explain how hard it felt to have to suppress their more caring views. In a group situation, they expressed more hostile views that contradicted their real feelings. An individual interview allowed them to speak affectionately and positively about girls, and to be critical about bullying and fighting, a stance they did not risk in the group situation because of fear of ridicule from other boys. Mixed-sex interviews facilitated more open discussion for the boys than boys-only interviews.[102]

However, in studies on sex education programmes in the UK both young men and women have also expressed discomfort with

RESPECT YOURSELF

RESPECT OTHERS

RESPECT DIFFERENCE

Poster from schools education campaign in Scotland by Zero Tolerance Trust

mixed-group sessions. Similar findings have been reported in many countries, leading researchers to suggest that education initiatives use some single sex sessions and some mixed sex, and find ways to move beyond the stereotypes that surface in all male-groups.

Dialogue between the sexes

Schools and universities can help to create situations for more open dialogue between the sexes. In situations where there is more communication between women and men, a macho reputation – which can predispose to gender violence – may be deemed less impressive and gender violence is less likely.

Studies in the Netherlands and the UK suggest that adults' sexual lifestyle and sexual interactions are influenced by the kinds of norms experienced in childhood and adolescence. They reported that "sexually restless" adults had learned to use one-sided and rigid sexual scripts, and were: "much less open for contact and communication and were thereby less competent in [healthy] sexual interaction".[103]

Researchers examined the sexual biographies of a particular group of men and women – those who were more sexually active than average – looking for competence in interacting with members of the opposite sex and preventative behaviour.

The differences between the UK and Dutch young people when they first had sexual intercourse were striking. Dutch young men were much more likely (78 per cent) to think about pregnancy than those in the UK (57 per cent) – and more likely to talk about it with their partners (40 per cent compared to15 per cent).

There were also major differences in the reasons people gave for why they had their first intercourse. Forty-five per cent of UK men reported peer or social pressure as a reason for first sexual intercourse, compared with just 14 per cent of men in the Netherlands. Love and commitment was cited by only 14 per cent of UK men compared with 56 per cent of men in the Netherlands.

The researchers suggested that since initial sex in the Netherlands was more likely to occur within an emotional relationship, it was highly likely that there was greater respect for the other's wishes. They added that [in the UK group]: "social reputations appear to play a large part in determining the timing and nature of early sexual experiences, rather than particular feelings for one specific person. If the 'audience' for sexual conduct is not contained within the actual partnership, then respect for the other's wishes and feelings is less likely to be present".

The findings may relate to the different teenage pregnancy rates in the two countries. Within Europe, the UK has very high rates of unplanned teenage pregnancy and Holland very low rates.

Other studies have also shown the importance of enhancing communication between the sexes for promoting reproductive and sexual health, for example in the use of contraceptives and for sexual satisfaction.[104]

Relationships in later life

A school environment conducive to, or accepting of, sexual harassment may have far-reaching consequences for gender relations between men and women in later life. Researchers in the US,[105] Canada[106] and Africa[107] have argued that school sexual violence may be linked with violence against women in later life. Several studies have also shown how sexual coercion in childhood or adolescence is strongly linked to low self esteem, including feelings of vulnerability, unworthiness, shame, lack of trust and high-risk sexual and drug-using behaviour in later years. Women who are physically and sexually victimised while young are at risk of later revictimisation.[108] When boys are victimised this can be linked to later becoming an abuser.[109]

"Schools may be training grounds for the insidious cycle of domestic violence. Girls are taught that they are on their own, that the adults and others around them will not help or believe them; in essence they are trained to accept the battery and assault... Boys on the other hand receive permission, even training, to become batterers because many of their assaults on girls are not interrupted or condemned by adults in the school environment," says US researcher Nancy Stein.[110] Intervening in schools and universities can lay a more solid foundation for equitable adult relations in the workplace and the home.

5 Beyond victims and villains: new models

Schools and educational institutions have many opportunities for developing strategies to promote equitable gender norms, reduce violence – including sexual violence –and promote healthy behaviours. Gender norms relating to sexual violence can be addressed at different levels of the education system, through:

- use of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities
- links with external resource people and organisations
- institutional policies and support strategies
- staff development and initial teacher training
- government directives and national legislation affecting the education sector.

The decision about what entry point to use in a particular setting will depend on local need and context and must be locally determined. The level at which an intervention is targeted will depend on local realities – both the extent of violence or harassment and the resources available to support schools, teachers and pupils. Each level is synergistic, and a comprehensive plan to address sexual violence in the education sector will include them all.

Ethical considerations

Any efforts to address questions of sexual violence present serious ethical and safety considerations. Knowing and understanding the local situation is a starting point, but this is likely to uncover hidden hurts, suffering and risks. For example, when Delhi University undertook its 1996 survey on sexual harassment: "A few of our respondents broke down and a couple talked for the first time about their experiences of child abuse." The welfare and safety of individuals who may be coping with violence must be protected.[111,112]

Training for those who are the first point of contact for such young people, and the availability of high-quality referral systems are extremely important. It is not only the needs of students who report experiencing sexual violence that must be taken into account. Children who commit violence may have already experienced abuse or may have particular needs themselves. Teachers, researchers and other members of the community may also require support.

WHO ethical and safety recommendations for domestic violence research

Recognising that there are risks when issues of violence are aired, the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women developed guidelines for researchers. The principles are also relevant to practitioners in the education sector.

- The safety of respondents and the research team is paramount, and should infuse all project decisions.
- Prevalence studies need to be methodologically sound and to build on current research experience about how to minimise the under-reporting of abuse.
- Protecting confidentiality is essential to ensure both women's safety and data quality.
- All research team members should be carefully selected and receive specialised training and ongoing support.
- The study design must include a number of actions aimed at reducing any possible distress caused to the participants by the research.
- Fieldworkers should be trained to refer women requesting assistance to available local services and sources of support. Where few resources exist, it may be necessary for the study to create short-term support mechanisms.
- Researchers and donors have an ethical obligation to ensure that their findings are properly interpreted and used to develop policy and intervention development.
- Violence questions should be incorporated into surveys designed for other purposes only when ethical and methodological requirements can be met.[113]

Guidelines also exist for education sector staff coming into contact with students who have experienced abuse, detailing their obligations under child protection and welfare frameworks. In some countries, schools are also protected by systems which maintain a central record of all adults who are considered a risk to children so that they cannot obtain employment working with children.

The full range of strategies that exist to respond to sexual violence and harassment in the education sector is beyond the scope of this report. Below are some examples of interventions that have been developed at different levels.

Government directives and national laws

The political environment has a considerable impact on the success of efforts to raise and successfully address the problem of sexual violence and harassment in schools and universities. The willingness of political parties to tackle the issue at a national level by introducing legislation and new policies will have considerable influence over how seriously individual institutions take the issue. Where new policies and legislation are developed, they need to be publicised, promoted and enforced.

Governments in some countries have addressed the issue at national level. For example, in South Africa the Equity Task Force was set up in 1996 by South Africa's education department. New laws have been introduced to protect school students.

Department of Education Guidelines on HIV/AIDS, South Africa 2000

- Educators must not have sexual relations with learners. It is against the law, even if the learner consents. Such action transgresses the code of conduct for educators, who are in a position of trust.
- Strict disciplinary action will be taken against any educator who has sex with a learner.
- Sex that is demanded by an educator without consent is rape, which is a serious crime, and the educator will be charged. If an educator has sex with a girl or boy who is under 16 years, he or she will be charged with statutory rape and may face a penalty of life imprisonment.
- If you are aware of a colleague who is having sexual relations with a learner you must report them to the principal or higher educational authorities, and if the boy or girl is under 16, to the police. If you do not do so, you may be charged with being an accessory to rape.[114]

In the UK, the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 introduced a new offence – "abuse of position of trust" – which applies to teachers and workers in other settings such as a residential home or hospital. The legislation makes it an offence for any such person aged 18 or over to have sexual intercourse – or any form of sexual activity – with a person aged 16–17 or under in their care (the age of consent for sexual intercourse is 16 in the UK). The legislation covers coercive acts which could also be prosecuted under the

existing Sexual Offences Act and extends to consensual acts which are thereby outlawed in secondary education.[115]

In some other countries existing national legislation on sexual harassment is increasingly being applied to cases of sexual harassment in educational institutions. In the US, there have been numerous major lawsuits in which educational institutions as well as individuals have been taken to court over allegations of sexual harassment. In 1999 a Supreme Court case[116] ruled that schools can be held liable for damages for failing to stop a student from sexually harassing another student under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act 1972. Title IX is the lens through which Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination, is applied to the education sector. It promotes non-discrimination in education and has in the past been used to guarantee girls the same rights to sports facilities as boys. In 1981, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the US Department of Education which enforces it, specified that educational institutions must put in place policies and procedures to deal with sexual harassment.

In Australia, anti-discrimination and harassment legislation has recently included specific "vicarious liability", allocating responsibility to educational managers for ensuring a harassment-free environment, including "sex-based harassment". It has resulted in widespread reforms to the management of discrimination and harassment in educational institutions. This ensures that the prevention of harassment within institutions is not left to individual managers' or principals' interpretations of what constitutes harassing behaviour.

The micro-political climate within individual states or institutions will also have a huge influence over the success of efforts to combat sex-based harassment. In Australia, a study by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs found that the proportion of students reporting sex-based harassment at their school was significantly lower in states that had given continuous and careful attention to the issue.[117]

Working with staff

Most initiatives on violence and sexual violence in recent years recognise the need to support teachers and educators first, before hoping that they can implement effective interventions in their schools and classrooms. In South Africa, the School of Public Health at the University of the Western Cape is developing a model "gender and conflict" component for the school curriculum. It focuses on both young women and young men but first responds to the needs of staff. Analysis of the pilot programme suggested that to have a lasting effect, training needs to be given on a school-wide basis.

Supporting schools to address gender violence

Research in 2000[118] in South Africa evaluated the impact of two training interventions on teachers' knowledge and attitudes regarding gender-based violence and their confidence in addressing the issue in a grade five (students 9–10 plus) primary school classroom setting.

In one intervention a "whole school" training model was adopted in which everyone from the principal to the secretaries and cleaning staff were exposed to the workshop. In the second "train the trainers" model, two teachers from selected schools were invited to the workshop and expected to transfer the training to their peers.

In both models, the training workshops led to significant changes in teachers' perceptions about the role of schools in addressing gender-based violence and their own attitudes about gender-based violence.

- Before training, only 30 per cent of teachers felt that schools could play a meaningful role in addressing gender-based violence compared with 70 per cent after training.
- Before training, one in four teachers believed that women provoked their partners into beating them (for example, by disobeying them). This figure dropped to one in 20 after training.
- Before training, 21 per cent of teachers felt they were sufficiently familiar with the current laws and legislation relating to child abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment and domestic violence. This rose to 47 per cent after training.
- South Africa's Sexual Offences Bill recognises the reality of rape within marriage, as did 85 per cent of teachers before training and 100 per cent after training.
- Before training, 26 per cent of teachers felt they would know what to do to address incidents of gender-based violence in their school whereas 74 per cent felt confident to do so after training.

After training, teachers also felt much more confident to teach about gender-based violence. The "whole school" model was seen to have been more effective than the "train the trainers" model,

leading to commitment from school management and the school as a whole. When just two teachers were trained, they found it difficult to transfer the content of their training to other teachers – requesting that teachers allocate a time to receive training from their colleagues appeared extremely difficult.

Policy statements

Clear policy statements are crucial. These must not only spell out that sexual violence and harassment are unacceptable and will not be tolerated within an institution, but should also include an explanation of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour, procedures for dealing with it – including sanctions – and should assure confidentiality and protection of the rights of all parties. Professional codes of conduct may need to be updated.

In many universities such policies are now in place. For example, the University of Cape Town in South Africa has a specific policy which defines sexual harassment and outlines both informal and formal procedures for dealing with it.

It is important that institutional policies can be understood not only by staff members but also by students of differing ages, and are thus worded in an age-appropriate way. One way of facilitating this is to involve students in the formulation of the policy. In the US, projects in junior high school have used classroom discussion to talk about sexual harassment and students have worked in groups to formulate their own recommendations for what should be included in the school policy. The activity provided a way to introduce students to the issue and help them think about how other students might be affected by sexual harassment and violence. A similar approach is favoured by the Forum for African Women Educationalists, employing theatre workshops and role play, songs and classroom activities to address students' concerns and devise ways forward.

Institutional support strategies

Crucial to the effectiveness of policies at both school and university level is back-up – an accessible network of people available to provide support to victims of sexual violence and to whom it can be reported in confidence.

The Tanzanian female guardian programme in primary schools is a school-based initiative involving parents and communities which aims to reduce the exploitation of school girls from sexual

Betty Press / Panos Pictures

Students in Florida, US – schools need to support students in discussing and dealing with sexual harassment and violence

harassment, forced sexual relationships and rape. It also aims to reduce schoolgirl pregnancy and prevent the blame and expulsion of young girls who become pregnant. It has trained 185 guardians or *mlezi*, one per primary school, in the study areas at a cost of $7.13 dollars per *mlezi* per year. *Mlezi* are teachers chosen by their colleagues and trained to give advice in cases of sexual violence or harassment and other matters related to sexual and reproductive health. Boys can approach them too but the focus is on girls. The programme started during an AIDS-prevention programme, when female students identified sexual coercion as a problem.

An evaluation of the programme has shown that it has clearly increased the rate at which schoolgirls seek advice or help. In the first eight months to one year after the *mlezi* were established, 61 per cent of girls consulted them, 59 per cent about harassment by a boy and nine per cent about harassment by a teacher. Whereas in schools without a *mlezi* not a single girl said she would report sexual harassment by a teacher, not even to a female member of staff, in schools with *mlezi*, 52 per cent of girls said that they would consult a *mlezi* about harassment by a teacher. The evaluation also showed that girls would consult the teacher about sexual harassment by a boy, or another man, and for information on STDs/HIV or pregnancy prevention.[119]

External resources can also be used to provide support, including women's groups, legal and human-rights organisations, victim support units and specially trained police. For example, in

Zimbabwe, the Musasa Project, which deals with domestic violence, has also worked in schools.[120] Similar women's groups exist in many countries. In Zambia, the Legal Resources Foundation, a non-profit making organisation, provides materials to schools to inform students about human rights and the law. Although initially they did not specifically address sexual violence, the initiative has led to several young women coming forward to seek help.[121] It is particularly useful for students to know how their rights are protected in national law and the international human-rights treaties their governments have ratified.

The curriculum and innovative teaching methods

Research in educational institutions is clear that in order to combat sexual violence and harassment effectively, the subject must be introduced and discussed with students through the curriculum, and be supported by other measures. Even if violence is not a major concern at a particular school, students will benefit from discussions of non-violent norms.

"Hope and impetus for change come from school-wide efforts to normalise the conversation about sexual harassment and other forms of gendered violence. This may best be achieved by inserting age-appropriate and sequential materials into class discussions and school curricula," says a US researcher.[122]

Sexual violence and harassment may be introduced as a stand-alone topic, or can be introduced into existing curricula for life skills, sexuality, HIV/AIDS, relationships or family life education. It can also be introduced into the broader curriculum, through challenging the sexism implicit in many traditional curricula subjects, as well as by examining cases of sexual harassment in texts studied in literature, and other subjects.[123]

Curriculum modules and resources on gender violence have also been developed, as have broader ones on violence prevention and conflict resolution. A wider focus on violence may provide an additional avenue to engage young men in talking about how machismo norms lead to male-on-male violence as well as distorting intimate relationships. Drawing the net broadly can increase young men's empathy and make the issues directly relevant to more students. However, there is a danger that in a broader violence curriculum the more taboo subject of sexual violence and its gender dimensions can disappear or fail to be addressed effectively. Similarly, there is evidence that some interventions aimed at reducing domestic violence have been successful in reducing physical battery but not other forms of violence.[124]

Life skills and sexuality education

Life skills, sexuality, and relationships education, can provide an excellent forum for introducing issues relating to sexual violence.[125] Approaches can be used that develop a supportive environment in which to discuss relationships and gender roles, and build communication skills such as the ability to assert thoughts, ideas, feelings and beliefs.[126] Life skills education includes communication in interpersonal relationships; decision-making and problem-solving; developing self-awareness, self-esteem and empathy; creative and critical thinking as well as coping with stress.[127] Promoting egalitarian, mutually respectful and caring relationships should be an integral part of the curriculum.

Comprehensive sexuality education programmes cover basic elements of sexual health including: "A sexual life free from disease, injury, violence, disability, unnecessary pain, or risk of death; ...free from fear, shame, guilt, and false beliefs about sexuality; the capacity to enjoy and control one's own sexuality and reproduction. Ensuring sexual health requires respect for each individual's right to bodily integrity – the right to control one's own body; support for all the emotional and social dimensions of sexuality that enhance well-being and personal relationships; equal balance of power in sexual relations; access to safe, good quality and affordable sexual and reproductive health information and services."[128]

Broad-based sexuality education requires specialised expertise and addresses sexuality as a natural, positive and healthy part of human life, as well as addressing undesirable aspects, such as sexual violence or sexually transmitted infections. It examines the biological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual context of human sexuality and practises and develops skills such as assertiveness. Often the method of teaching used involves developing empathy, and the ability to think independently and to analyse, an approach expounded in the work of several well-known educators and thinkers, such as Paulo Freire.[129]

Dealing with sensitive issues in the classroom requires not only curriculum development but new styles of teaching. Traditional methods of rote learning and memorisation discourage students from asking questions or challenging the status quo. Newer teaching methods, for example as promoted by the South African 'Curriculum 2005' programme emphasise learner participation, activity-based education, flexibility and critical thinking.[130]

Much experience has been amassed about the benefits of life skills and sexuality education in schools. Several studies show that

they can make sexual relationships safer and more equitable and do not lead to an increase in levels of sexual activity.[131,132]

An evaluation of sexuality education in Nigeria and Cameroon states that: "Adolescent girls can make important changes in their self-perception, in their intimate relationships, in the ways in which they handle discrimination, and in the course their lives take. With support, the majority of girls can clearly recognise and articulate the gender-based discrimination they face in daily life and its effects on their lives. Sexuality education should include developing skills for dealing with situations in which the power of others is illegitimately used against them. If sexuality education programmes are to make a real difference in sexual health, they must address these issues."[133]

However a study of 21 sexuality education curricula in the US found none that addressed the full range of coercion topics and none that included sexual harassment.[134]

Peer group work

Peer education is now a widely adopted and often successful approach that can be used as a complement to specialised curriculum work. Its participatory methodology provides a space for groups of people to undertake critical analysis of the causes of particular problems and to generate their own solutions.[135]

However, just as with curriculum approaches, many peer-education programmes do not prompt critical analysis of prevailing gender norms, still less issues of sexual violence. Some research has suggested that where sexuality education and HIV prevention programmes do not address discriminatory gender norms, they may have the effect of entrenching them further. This was the conclusion of one South African study which evaluated an HIV peer-education prevention programme.[136]

Pitfalls in peer education

The education programme took place in an area close to Johannesburg, where eight per cent of 15-year-old girls were HIV-positive, compared with 0.2 per cent of boys the same age. At age 20, 47 per cent of females and 11 per cent of males were HIV-positive. The researchers described how: "young people's sexual encounters were negotiated within a context where dominant social norms of masculinity portrayed young men as conquering heroes and macho risk-takers in the sexual arena, and where the social construction of femininity predisposed

women to use the responses of passivity or fruitless resistance in the face of male advances. Within such a context, sex often took place under conditions of... emotional pressure, [or] physical coercion of young women."

This study found that peer education, instead of challenging gender norms that were harmful to health, mirrored them. Female peer educators felt bullied if they challenged their male colleagues. A young woman resigned from her peer-educator team because the "guys were treating the girls so badly". Discussions were dominated by older male students, and although during the research the investigators tried to create opportunities for young women to talk, "this occurred infrequently". Joking discussions among the boys entrenched peer norms about the desirability of frequent sex soon after meeting a partner and a focus on male pleasure.

The researchers argued that to be effective, peer-education content needs to include explicit and focused materials promoting discussion of how gender relations affect sexual health and a conscious focus on social factors that impede behaviour change.

A similar evaluation of a community-based peer-education programme in Ghana found that males in the peer group taunted girls to say sexual words and harassed them to come home with them to see how to use a condom for real.[137]

Anti-bullying strategies

Anti-bullying strategies are an approach that has risen in popularity, particularly in the West and especially for use with younger students, before discriminatory gender norms becoming entrenched. Some explicitly adopt a non-stigmatising approach, such as the "no blame" model which recognises that young people's behaviour is sometimes an unconscious reflection of prevailing social norms. Most models emphasise promoting communication between those that bully, those that are bullied and the peer group, and they vary in the emphasis they lay on sanctions.[138]

An anti-bullying approach used amongst grade five (age 10–11) children in the US that encompassed issues of sexual harassment made a significant difference to the lives and education of girls and boys. The development of a teaching unit called "Bullyproof" enabled children to gain: "A conceptual framework and a common

vocabulary that allowed them to find their own links between teasing and bullying and eventually sexual harassment".

The activities made children think about the distinctions between teasing and bullying, and focus on the boundaries between appropriate behaviour and inappropriate hurtful behaviour. Following these sessions one girl commented: "I do see a difference in the way the boys in the class are treating the girls now... they have mostly stopped teasing us and chasing us down the hallways while we are coming back from recess... The boys have mostly stopped insulting all of the girls and trying to 'dis' [insult] us. I think that the girls have mostly stopped teasing and bullying all of the shrimpy or short boys." Said another, "I see a big difference in myself since we started discussing bullying, teasing and sexual harassment."[139]

According to US researcher Nancy Stein: "If educators and advocates pose and present the problem as "bullying" to young children rather than labelling it immediately as "sexual harassment", we can engage children and universalise the problem as one that boys as well as girls can understand and accept as problematic. Hopefully such an approach can go a long way towards developing compassion and empathy in the students. Moreover, we can simultaneously avoid demonising all little boys as potential harassers by initially presenting these hurtful and offensive behaviours as bullying."

Dealing with sensitive issues in the classroom requires not only curriculum development, but new styles of teaching. Large class sizes and the need to focus on exams are other factors which inhibit curriculum development.[140]

Working with NGOs and development organisations

Non-governmental organisations have developed many innovative strategies for working with students – to provide support, inform students of their rights, and offer educational initiatives that cannot be provided by schools. A group of male film-makers in South Asia developed a series of videos for schools to promote discussion on what it means to be masculine and how being male does not necessarily mean being violent. In Bangladesh, a UNICEF project collected profiles of men active in campaigns against violence against women and girls, to orient discussions with youth.[141] In Brazil, the Guy to Guy project has developed an award-winning play based in schools to help young men change attitudes and behaviours and develop healthy relationships with women.[142]

Girls Get Power

In Nigeria, the Girls' Power Initiative (GPI) is based on the recognition that adolescent girls carry an unnecessary burden of risk and gender-based violence and at the same time have restricted opportunities to develop their talents. GPI promotes comprehensive sexuality education by training teachers through advocacy. It also teaches economic skills such as financial planning. Comprehensive sexuality education is much more than sex education and is described as having five overlapping aspects: human development, emotions and relationships, sexual health, sexual behaviour and sexual violence.

GPI is aimed primarily at girls aged 10–18 with some programmes also for boys, parents, teachers, health care providers and policy-makers which aim to increase communication between them and girls on issues affecting the girl child. GPI believes: "there truly cannot be empowerment where there is no knowledge and control over that which is basically ours: our bodies".[143] A young Nigerian woman who participated in GPI weekly meetings said: "GPI weekly meetings... opened my eyes really wide. I began to take note and notice that girls were... being denied enjoyment of fundamental human rights all because of sex. I realised that women are being raped, cheated upon, pushed to the background, sexually harassed and battered by their so-called husbands and yet nobody says anything, nobody seems to notice because it has to do with females/women. Seeing all [this]... I took a step of courage, made up my mind and decided to be part of the struggle to let the world know that [women's] rights are human rights."[144]

As a complement to the Girls' Power Initiative, the Centre for Research, Information and Documentation (CENTRID) in Nigeria runs a programme for young men called "Conscientising Nigerian Male Adolescents". It works with young men to explore their own experiences of injustices so they can begin to understand the experiences of other oppressed groups, and helps them develop critical thinking about their own lives and about the condition of their society. "Helping boys to understand the concept of consent is especially important... What does "consent" mean in particular contexts? How does a boy know if he has consent? What should he do if he is not sure? Why is consent important? Can consent be withdrawn?"

In Bolivia, workshops dealing with violence and gender discrimination inside and outside schools have been carried out in 100 schools by UNICEF with the Vice-Ministry of Gender and Generational Affairs.[145]

In Venezuela, the Venezuelan Association for Alternative Sex Education (AVESA) trained high school students by advocating dialogue and critical reflection to raise their self-awareness. It fostered a critical understanding of the social realities that interfere with students' ability to experience their sexuality in a "full, responsible, pleasurable and just manner". Training was structured in weekly four-hour sessions over a period of five months and led to a peer-education programme, AVESA Youth, and the production of media materials. A young woman member of AVESA Youth said: "I think I have been very responsible in my sexual relationships, that's the important thing. I think I have respected the body, privacy and sexuality of the other person. And to fully experience my sexuality, I have demanded that my body be respected in the same way."[146]

In Sri Lanka, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, has been facilitating seminars for schoolchildren and universities to promote the concepts of equality and shared responsibility, placing emphasis on highlighting violence against women as a violation of human rights.[147]

In Uganda the *Straight Talk* magazine distributed in schools has focused on sexual violence, as does the South African radio education series *Soul City.*

In Zimbabwe, the Auntie Stella project uses a series of 33 letters, each written in the style of a missive to a newspaper agony aunt, to raise discussion topics in class. Each letter is accompanied by a reply from "Auntie Stella" for students, and back-up material for teachers. Letter topics were identified through participatory reflection and action studies with adolescents, which revealed the weight of different pressures felt by both boys and girls, many of which meant that pleasure was identified as a small factor in sexual behaviour.

Questions raised in the letters to "Auntie" include several on sexual violence and coercion including: "I pay for lunches and bus fares – surely my girlfriend should have sex with me?"; "We made our girlfriend pregnant to punish her – now I'm worried", "I'm scared of rape – what can I do?", "Should I have sex to pay for my school fees?", "What can I do when my teacher wants to have sex with me?" and "Is it possible to kiss and hug but not have sex?".[148]

In the US, a project which enlisted male student athletes as mentors for violence prevention, aimed to highlight the role of bystanders in reducing incidents of male students' violence against female students. Instead of addressing the athletes as potential perpetrators, it chose them as popular members of the community who had credibility with younger boys and could act as role models for non-violence. The students worked out ways in which they could intervene safely and effectively if they witnessed harassment or violence at school, rather than remaining part of the silent majority who feel uncomfortable but do nothing.[149]

Working at community level

Sexual violence in the education sector can also be raised within the wider community. "Stepping Stones" is a training programme in gender, HIV, communication and relationship skills, which specifically addresses issues of sexual violence and is used with communities, from older children to elders, in all regions of the world.

Community evaluations of the programme have found positive effects on condom use and dialogue within marriage – leading to fewer arguments and less domestic violence.[150] The package is currently recommended by UNAIDS as an example of best practice for community mobilisation. In South Africa the content has been adapted to allow more time for reflecting on gender violence. A new evaluation tool, the "Sexual Relationship Power Scale", found that Stepping Stones was effective in increasing women's power in their relationships.[151]

The primary aim of Stepping Stones is to help communities determine their own solutions to problems in sexual life, including sexual violence, and crucially, to ensure that all sections of the community are equally represented in the process. In a typical community setting, four peer groups of older and younger men and women would each share ideas, experiences and feelings about issues like the links between sexual violence and HIV separately before the groups came together for discussion and to hear each group's suggested solutions. During role play, drawing and drama activities, men have to act at times as women, or as young people and vice-versa. Each participant can empathise with the situation of others as well as rehearsing more constructive ways of relating to others. The "fission-fusion-fission-fusion" model of separate peer groups, followed by whole community activity and back to separate groups over many weeks, ensures privacy for each group and that

equal weight is given to all parties' views. Women are heard by men and vice-versa and young and old by each other.[152,153]

A "special request" process allows views to be translated into achievable action. For example, in Uganda, a young women's group presented a special request to their community – to challenge the abuse by older men which meant they could not walk to and from school without fear. One schoolgirl on her own would find it almost impossible to raise the issue but the group request had a dramatic effect in eliminating such abuse.[154]

Stepping Stones was initially developed for working with communities and is now being drawn upon as part of the curriculum for trainee teachers at a Kampala teacher training college, and with schools in Tanzania and university students in Ghana.

In Ethiopia, the Primary Education Assistance Project (PEAP) encourages the discussion of gender-based violence in schools and surrounding communities, and the involvement of the local community in supporting gender equitable practices. An evaluation suggests ownership and responsibility for school affairs is fostered in the community.

Wherever possible, the involvement of the wider community can lead to a much more effective intervention.

Complementary policies and practices

A range of other policies and practices will enhance the success of those implemented to address sexual violence. These include policies on schoolgirl pregnancies, which are changing in many countries. Many countries now have policies allowing readmission of girls who have had a baby but often this does not happen and there is still considerable disparity between the way in which young women and young men are treated regarding pregnancy. While policies or practices place the sole responsibility for pregnancy prevention on the girl and deny responsibility on the part of the boy, other policies aimed at promoting male responsibility, such as those addressing sexual violence, will be undermined.

Interviews carried out by the non-governmental organisation African Rights among school girls in Kenya revealed that 49 per cent thought that expulsion was too harsh for the boy as: "He had no problem... [the] girl was not forced and so should be the sole loser".[155] It is vital to address the way in which the responsibilities of the boy are regarded, to revise discriminatory policies and promote shared responsibility for contraception among sexually active youth.

The use of corporal punishment in schools also has an impact on other kinds of violence. Some reports link the use of corporal punishment to violent behaviour among pupils.[156] In many countries its use has been officially banned, but it is still widely used. It is difficult when a school condones some sorts of violence to work on preventing others. Alternative approaches to discipline can be promoted as by the instruction manual for teachers developed by the South African National Department of Education.[157]

Institutional practices, such as holding evening school classes for students prior to exams, put them at risk as they may have to travel home in the dark. Likewise, norms allowing female students to provide domestic assistance and meals for male teachers perpetuate different roles for boys and girls and open opportunities for abuse. Environmental factors, such as the availability of toilet facilities for girls and boys also reduce risk.

Female-friendly schools and universities also use teaching materials which do not promote stereotypes and seek to open up science, maths and technical subjects to girls either in mixed facilities or by establishing new ones such as the Kiriri Women's University of Science and Technology (KWUST), Kenya.[158] And increasing the proportion of the student and teaching body that is female will itself help to reduce discrimination and harassment.

Working in educational institutions to prevent sexual violence – now and in the future – requires effort on many levels, from the national to the local, from ratifying international human-rights treaties to timetabling lessons, from addressing discriminatory attitudes about male and female behaviour, to raising the esteem of individual girls and boys and improving relationships between the sexes.

This work is crucial; it is fundamental to ensuring that young people's, particularly young women's, basic rights are respected in the very institutions that are there to nurture them; it is an essential part of supporting young people to be able to develop positive and healthy sexual relationships. And it will contribute to a future where intimate relationships are no longer distorted by violence and inequality, a world beyond victims and villains, where no-one has to walk in fear, at home, at work, or at school.

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