



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON GIRLS' EDUCATION AND WELLBEING IN INDO-PACIFIC

THEMATIC REVIEW: GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND EDUCATION



The Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on girls' education and wellbeing in Indo-Pacific. Thematic Review: Gender Based Violence and Education is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and implemented by Kore Global. The views expressed in this publication are the author's alone and are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
Purpose of the study	4
2. GBV types and prevalence	5
3. The links between GBV and girls' education.....	8
4. The impact of the pandemic on GBV	9
5. Development partners efforts to address GBV	12
6. Implications.....	14
Bibliography	16
Appendix 1: Key Informants consulted	19

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kore Global is a women-led consulting firm specializing in gender equality and social inclusion (GESI). Kore Global's mission is to help strengthen the sector by providing our clients with the GESI-focused research, strategy, design, and measurement support they need to drive transformative change in the lives of the diverse groups they work with and serve. Key contributors to this research include Rachel Booth (Researcher and Lead Author), Sally Neville (Research Lead), Emily Boost (Gender and Education Specialist), and Rebecca Calder (Team Lead).

The authors would like to thank all the contributors for giving their time, energy, thoughtful reflections and insights to help us surface key findings and craft contextually-grounded policy recommendations for addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on girls' education and wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION



Even before the COVID-19 pandemic levels of violence against children in the Indo-Pacific region were incredibly high.

In Cambodia, for example, even before the pandemic more than half of boys and girls under the age of 18 have experienced physical violence, with most of these children experiencing multiple incidents.

Approximately one in 20 children (six percent of girls and five percent of boys) aged between 13 to 17 had experienced sexual abuse, with most of these children experiencing such abuse multiple times. Perpetrators of sexual violence are often well known to the children, including neighbours, friends, family members and others (UNICEF Cambodia, 2014).

School closures and economic strains caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have had a profound impact on girls' and boys' exposure to violence (UN Women, 2021). Stress and tensions created by isolation and lockdowns have exposed children, particularly girls, to significant increases in violence at home, in and around school and in online spaces. UN Women project that in the aftermath of the crisis if unemployment, financial strains, and insecurity persist, so too will this escalation of violence (UN Women, 2021).

Education actors and development practitioners are still attempting to accurately capture the impact of the pandemic on violence and the knock-on impact it has had on learning (UNESCO, 2022a). Data on the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) being perpetrated against children is still emerging but is often obscured when statistics combine violence against women and violence against girls together. Although these statistics provide an indication of the scale of violence generally, they often don't give data on girls specifically (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2021; UN Women, 2021). Data on violence against boys, including sexual violence, is often lacking.

Education disruptions have highlighted the role schools can play in maintaining structures that can promote wellbeing and protection. School closures and lockdowns have contributed to survivors of violence being unable to report incidents or seek appropriate support, thus allowing perpetrators to act with impunity. Studies from Malala Fund have identified the potential role education plays in shielding girls from violence, but also estimate that globally, following the COVID-19 crisis, approximately 20 million more secondary aged girls could be out of school (Fry & Lei, 2020). Similarly, UNICEF estimates in 2020 for East Asia and the Pacific were that 1.2 million more girls were likely to drop out because of the pandemic (UNICEF, 2020). The threat of, and direct experience of, violence that girls may have experienced during the pandemic plays a significant role in whether girls are likely to re-engage with school.

However, schools are not always safe spaces and often reflect broader attitudes to violence in the areas where they are located. Studies on School Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV) indicate that education spaces can also present risks to girls in terms of sexual, physical, and psychological violence in and on the way to school. Practitioners working in this space warn that attitudes to violence will not have changed since the pandemic and may have gotten worse (Global Working Group to End SRGBV, 2020).

As education systems in the Indo-Pacific region attempt to recover from pandemic-related disruption there is an opportunity to strengthen holistic efforts to eliminate SRGBV (SRGBV Global working group, 2020; UNESCO and UNICEF, 2021). UNESCO and UNICEF have called on countries in the region to step up efforts to improve reporting on SDG target 4a,¹ which highlights the need for education facilities that are safe and non-violent (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2021). Prevention efforts aim to tackle the root causes of violence by addressing attitudes and norms in schools and beyond, and promoting equality (Fraser, 2020; SRGBV Global working group, 2020; UNESCO, 2022b).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This case study has been commissioned by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). It builds on earlier rapid evidence reviews (RERs) which drew on evidence from 2020 and 2021 to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on girls' education and wellbeing in the Indo-Pacific. This thematic case study also includes more recently published reports, as well as the perspectives of a selection of GBV experts through a small number of key informant interviews (KIIs). The explicit focus on girls is not to overlook boys affected by GBV, but to be able to focus on girls who are more likely to experience GBV because of systematic and culturally embedded gender norms that discriminate against women and girls. The evidence presented in this thematic case study is intended to inform current and long-term public policy responses to GBV prevention and response through education sector programming.

¹ Target SDG4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability, and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

GBV TYPES & PREVALENCE

2



GBV refers to harmful acts directed at an individual or group of individuals based on their gender.

It is violence that is rooted in gender inequality, abuse of unequal power and harmful norms.

The vast majority of GBV is perpetrated by adult men against women and girls but it can be perpetrated by anyone of any gender against those of any gender. It can also be used to describe targeted violence against people who do not conform to expected gender norms or identities such as those from LGBTQI+ communities. GBV includes – but is not limited to – physical, sexual, mental, and economic forms of harm and can take place in any area of life, including in the home and within personal and intimate relationships, in the workplace and among colleagues, neighbours or friends and in public and online spaces. GBV may be perpetrated as a one-off act or can form a pattern of repeated behaviour over a period of time (UN Women, 2021).

A landmark survey of 10,000 men in the Asia Pacific region in 2013 captured powerful evidence on male perpetrators of rape indicating that half of those who had perpetrated rape had done so when they were under 20, including 12 percent of male perpetrators having committed their first rape when they were under 15 years old (UNDP et al., 2013). These findings have been the catalyst for ensuring that violence prevention work is started early in schools.

A recent United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) study that drew together global data on intimate partner violence (IPV) from before the pandemic, found that out of the ten countries with the highest prevalence rates, five were in the Indo-Pacific region. For example, 48 percent of women and girls in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and 44 percent in Vanuatu had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months (UNFPA, 2021b). When disaggregated by age the data gathered from Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, and PNG show that girls aged 15-19 were the age group experiencing the highest rates of IPV (UNFPA, 2021b).

SRGBV is a subset of GBV which occurs in, around or on the way to and from the school environment.

As illustrated in Figure 1 below – and as with GBV more broadly – SRGBV can take a range of forms, including physical, psychological, and sexual violence. SRGBV can be perpetrated by teachers and other members of staff, education officials and students, as well as visitors to schools and community members. There has been increasing recognition of SRGBV as an issue that is directly linked to children’s learning and wellbeing. Globally progress has been made in understanding the nature and prevalence of SRGBV, with many countries signing up to global and regional commitments to eradicate it (End Violence Against Children, 2021).

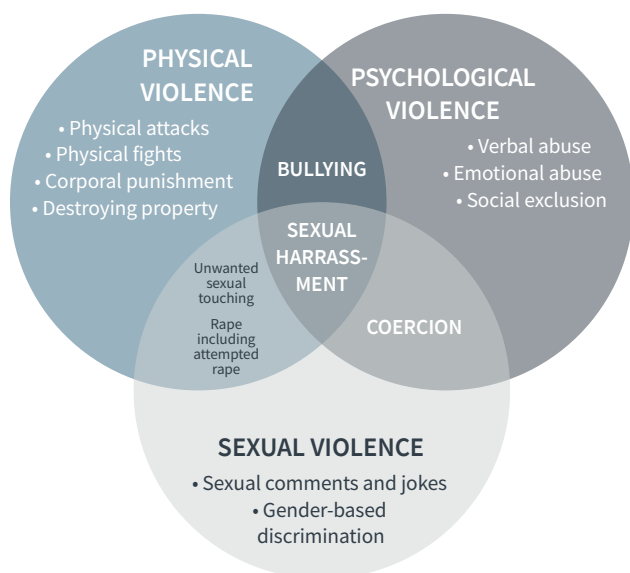


Figure 1: School Related Gender Based Violence takes many forms - and is usually rooted in harmful gender norms and inequality (UNGEI, 2019)²

Within the Indo-Pacific region however, there is a significant data gap on the prevalence and nature of SRGBV, with very few population-wide surveys indicating how it is affecting children’s learning and wellbeing. Much work remains to be done to engage with coordinated prevention and response efforts by governments, education practitioners and families (KII Input). There are notable gaps in evidence on violence against children in the Indo-Pacific region as highlighted by the INSPIRE coalition to end violence against children. In a recent brief, UNICEF Innocenti called for a radical improvement on the quality and use of data on violence against children in the region (Subrahmanian et al., 2022). Table 1 below presents some examples of evidence found through this review that highlight the different dimensions of SRGBV in the region:

TABLE 1: TYPE OF VIOLENCE

	COUNTRY/ REGION	EVIDENCE FOUND
Physical	Timor-Leste	A survey of 164 secondary schools found that 81 percent of students reported having experienced physical violence from either teachers or other students, and only 48 percent said they knew where they could get help. ³
Psychological	Thailand	Research across five provinces found that the most common phrase used by teachers when referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) students was ‘bukhon biang ben thang phet’ or ‘sexual deviants’. ⁴
Sexual	Asia Pacific	A survey of 1,655 teachers found that a third did not consider teachers offering students money, goods, or favours in exchange for sex as a form of sexual violence. Teachers were also less likely than those in other regions to agree that it is their responsibility to ensure that students feel safe from all forms of violence in their classroom. ⁵

² This framework is not an exhaustive illustration of types of SRGBV. This may also include technologically facilitated GBV which included activities such as defamation, hate speech, doxing, trolling, stalking and exploitation.

³ Survey of 164 secondary school students (UNESCO & UNGEI, 2014)

⁴ Survey with students, teachers, and administrators in 30 secondary schools in 5 provinces (Plan International 2014, quoted in UNESCO & UNGEI, 2014).

⁵ UNESCO online Teacher survey- 1655 responses from 33 countries in Asia Pacific (UNESCO, 2022b)

Why is GBV, including SRGBV, likely to be even more widespread than statistics suggest?

It is widely acknowledged in the literature that the prevalence of GBV, including SRGBV, is difficult to measure, largely because of widespread underreporting (UNFPA & WEI, 2021, Siddiqui et al., 2021). This is often due to stigma and social norms that prevent people from acknowledging and talking about the violence they may be experiencing or witnessing. In many countries in Indo-Pacific, culture, hierarchy, and ageism combine to make young people particularly reluctant to report violence or harassment (KII input). Within education systems, power relations between men and women, children and adults including teachers, and the fear of reprisals can make reporting SRGBV very high risk for children (UNESCO & UNGEI, 2014). Research indicates that the most vulnerable children often have the least support and access to reporting channels, and if they do manage to report, are less likely to be listened to and believed, (INEE, 2021; Maclin et al., 2021). The true prevalence of violence is also obscured by social and gender norms that make it hard for children to recognise what types of behaviours and actions constitute violence, and what should be reported (UNESCO & UN Women 2016). Data on GBV may also be missing as it requires specialist skills, so it cannot simply be added to existing data collection tools without necessary planning and resources.

THE LINKS BETWEEN GBV AND GIRLS' EDUCATION

3



Boys and girls experience of violence varies, with girls more likely to be exposed to sexual violence, verbal and emotional abuse, whereas boys are more likely to experience physical violence (Ginestra, 2020; Wodon et al., 2021).

In line with this, within the school context, girls are more likely to experience sexual harassment on the way to and from – and in – school and boys more likely to experience more frequent and violent corporal punishment (Ginestra, 2020). Violence has a profound impact on children's wellbeing and capacity to learn, leading to lasting physical, mental and emotional harm (UNESCO and UN Women, 2016; Wodon et al., 2021).

Girls directly experiencing, witnessing and fearing violence has been shown to have a significant impact on their mental health, hindering their learning (UN Women & Dan Church Aid, 2020). A global Plan International (2021) report summarised some of the potential impacts of violence on girls' education in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, during the pandemic noted, "the experience of online and offline violence can contribute to low self-esteem and depression, anxiety and fear of harm, making it more difficult to join classes, concentrate while learning and may drive adolescent girls to drop out of education completely" (Plan International, 2021b). In school environments where violence is common, studies in PNG have found that girls may be reluctant to participate actively in class and are reluctant to seek academic achievement for fear of attracting unwanted attention from teachers (UNESCO & UNGEI, 2014).

Researchers estimate that violence in and around schools may be a contributory factor in one to five percent of school dropouts. If one percent of children drop out of education before completing secondary school this results in a lifetime loss in earnings that equates to two percent GDP in East Asia and the Pacific, equivalent to a loss of USD 206 billion (Fang et al., 2015 quoted in Wodon et al., 2021). Whilst this methodology uses assumptions to create these figures, even with modest estimates it illustrates the significant impact violence in and around schools has on economic development progress.

Researchers have highlighted the complex two-way relationship between girls' education and experiences of violence (INEE, 2021; UNFPA, 2021b). Violence has been found to negatively impact on girls' health and wellbeing, increase engagement in risky behaviours, and increase the likelihood of having children before the age of 18 years old. Each of these factors goes on to impact on girls' educational engagement and learning and subsequent life choices (Wodon et al., 2021). At the same time, low levels of girls' education attainment have also been linked to experiencing higher rates of IPV (UNFPA, 2021b). The positive role education can play in reducing violence has also been highlighted in studies, as it is seen to equip girls and boys with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to build more gender equitable societies and reducing GBV in wider society (INEE, 2021).

THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON GBV



The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of the factors that either underpin or trigger violence against girls, including SRGBV.

Research conducted by UN Women revealed an intensification of violence against women and girls since the start of the pandemic, which has been named the ‘shadow pandemic’ (UN Women, 2021). Research conducted by UN Women revealed an intensification of violence against women and girls since the start of the pandemic, which has been named the ‘shadow pandemic’ (UN Women, 2021).

Evidence points to a link between loss of income and increased stress during the pandemic with increased levels of violence, especially in the home. Global and regional evidence from UNESCO suggests that concerns related to loss of livelihoods during the pandemic have been a key cause of tension and violence within the household (Billah, 2021). In Indonesia, survey data showed that nearly one third (31 percent) of respondents reported that incidents of violence “stemmed from an inability to make ends meet,” while 23 percent cited unemployment as playing a role (Sastiono et al., 2020). With the impact of the pandemic likely to continue to affect economies over the longer term, these stresses are likely to endure for some time, continuing to exacerbate rates of violence.

INCREASE IN RATES OF GBV AND CHILD ABUSE

Studies conducted early in the pandemic recorded a steep increase in violence and suggest GBV was a widespread concern. Evidence from an Oxfam gender assessment in the Philippines found that GBV was among the most frequently reported concerns during the pandemic: 40 percent of all respondents reported fears of violence perpetrated against women and children (Kindipan-Dulawan & Cruz, 2020).

Data from a UN Women report on the ‘shadow pandemic’ indicated that 81 percent of women in Bangladesh reported that physical or verbal abuse had increased during the pandemic in the area where they lived (UN Women, 2021). Although this data indicates rapid increases, it often does not differentiate between ages of women or girls, so the true impact on girls specifically is missed.

Evidence points to an increase in violent behaviours by parents during the pandemic. Global orders for people to stay at home to curb the spread of COVID-19 potentially locked many women and girls down with their abusers. In the Pacific (PNG and Solomon Islands), over a quarter of parents (29 percent) reported an increase in ‘negative or violent parenting practices’, such as reduced patience and calmness, or increase in aggression, shouting, or use of physical punishment (Ritz et al., 2020). According to a World Vision survey of 752 households in 2021 across the Pacific region (PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; and Timor Leste), 80 percent of parents or caregivers had used either psychological aggression or physical punishment against children in the month before the survey (World Vision Australia, 2021). Again, this data on children’s experiences of violence misses the gendered dimension, obscuring girls’ experiences within wider household violence.

Economic stresses can push girls into engaging in risky coping strategies, exposing them to sexual exploitation. Evidence from previous health crises has highlighted how economic insecurity has provided opportunities for perpetrators to exploit adolescent girls’ need for basic resources. The COVID-19 pandemic posed risks to girls if family members fell ill, or died, further exposing them to perpetrators who target families facing economic hardship to sell children or expose them to commercial sexual exploitation (UNICEF & IRC, 2020). Although evidence on this type of exploitation during pandemic is still quite sparse, a teachers’ survey in PNG raised concerns about a perceived increase in school aged girls engaging in sex work, particularly in urban areas (Costa, 2022).

Several publications also noted a heightened risk of cyber violence and harassment against girls and young women, particularly because of increased online activity during home learning (Billah, 2021; UN Women, 2020; UNFPA et al., 2021; UNFPA, 2021c). In Southeast Asia and globally, parents’ have noted concerns of cyber-security for girls, including risks of sexual exploitation or online harassment (Billah, 2021; UNFPA, 2021c). When many young people were turning to online devices to access educational resources, research conducted by Plan International indicated that 57 percent of girls aged 15-19 who were surveyed in Asia-Pacific reported experiences of harassment, with 49 percent of girls in the region reporting that they were suffering mental and emotional stress as a result (Plan International, 2021a). A distinctive feature of this kind of abuse is the impunity with which perpetrators feel they can act as they can remain anonymous and are unlikely to face any penalties or social consequences.

Analysis from big data studies that looked at online searches and public posts in eight countries in Asia⁶ found a significant increase in help seeking⁷ searches related to violence at the start of COVID-19 pandemic (UNFPA et al., 2021). Help seeking searches were noted in most countries included in the study, capturing how victims of violence or those close to the victims were actively seeking out what could be done and what help was accessible if they were facing abuse from partners or other perpetrators. Some very significant increases in the volume of these searches are captured in Table 2 below. It should be noted that the behaviours captured in this study were only from people who were able to access online devices and felt safe to search for these terms so are likely to represent only a proportion of people experiencing violence at this time.

TABLE 2*

COUNTRY	PRE-COVID-19: AVERAGE SEARCH VOLUME FOR HELP-SEEKING WORDS	SINCE COVID-19: AVERAGE SEARCH VOLUME FOR HELP-SEEKING WORDS	RATE OF CHANGE
Malaysia	1642	2793	70%
Nepal	360	530	47%
Thailand	1272	1640	29%

* Average search volume for help-seeking keywords pre-COVID-19, since COVID-19, and rate of change (data from (UNFPA et al., 2021).

⁶ Countries included in the study were Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore.

⁷ Examples of help-seeking keywords include “domestic violence hotline”, “sexual assault lawyer,” or “sexual abuse counselling”.

LACK OF ACCESS TO REPORTING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Several countries have noted compromised accountability mechanisms during the pandemic, which has reduced the likelihood that perpetrators of violence are held to account. In PNG reporting difficulties were identified because of the police force's attention being redirected towards the COVID-19 response (Boroko family violence unit, no date, in United Nations in Papua New Guinea and UNDP, 2020; CARE 2020c). This is perhaps reflected in data from the Solomon Islands and Fiji, where despite hotline data suggesting an increase in GBV cases, service providers and police recorded a reduction in incidents being reported (CARE, 2020; Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) et al., 2020).

Evidence also highlights reduced access to support services for survivors of GBV during the pandemic, in some cases because these services have been deemed 'non-essential'. Findings from the PNG GBV sub-cluster on the State of Emergency showed a 31 percent decrease in access to violence-related services, compared to the same reporting period preceding the State of Emergency (PNG GBV sub-cluster and UNFPA, 2020, in UN Women, 2020c). Early in the pandemic, Family Support Centres in PNG were initially declared to be non-essential services and were scaled back as a result (CARE, 2020c). This finding was echoed in relation to people with disabilities in a global report drawing on evidence from Cambodia ([UNFPA & WEI, 2021](#)).

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS EFFORTS TO ADDRESS GBV

5



With schools reopening around the globe, the focus is on taking the opportunity of this education reset to ensure that they are opening as safe spaces for girls and boys (Global Education Cluster & Save the Children, 2020; Malala Fund et al., 2020).

Based on evidence presented earlier on the young age when male perpetrators of violence may start committing serious sexual assault, many ministries and practitioners see the school context as the prime entry point to teach young people more equitable attitudes from an early stage, influence communities and improve systems (UNESCO and UN Women, 2016). There is still limited evidence available about how development partners have systematically responded to the increase in GBV during the pandemic. Case studies below are initiatives championed by global gender equality actors in partnership with national governments. These programmes were launched pre-pandemic. Evidence is likely to be shared in due course about how these were adapted during the pandemic.

Two curriculum-based programmes that recognise the urgent role that education can play in violence prevention are the ‘Connect With Respect’ and the ‘Gender Equity Movement in Schools’ (GEMS) programmes which were both piloted in countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific (both of these are explained in further detail below). Another

key initiative is ‘The Whole School Approach,’ which was developed by the Global SRGBV coalition and has seen good results in Sub Saharan Africa. This provides a comprehensive prevention and response model that incorporates a broader ambition to address violence as part of education programming and includes guiding strategies to address laws and policies, safer school environments, response mechanisms, partnerships between key ministries and robust evidence gathering (UNESCO and UN Women, 2016).

- **The Connect With Respect (CWR) programme** led by UNESCO and UN Women⁸, has been piloted in many different countries with notable examples in Vietnam, Thailand and Timor-Leste. CWR is a curriculum tool to support teachers’ understanding of GBV and materials to increase the knowledge, attitude and skills of students aged 11-14 years to promote gender equality, awareness of GBV and respectful relationships. The programme has seven topic areas with three to five activities for each, usually delivered within a year. Following a successful pilot of the CWR programme between 2018 to 2020 in five provinces in Vietnam, it is now planned to be rolled out country-wide (UN Viet Nam, 2021). Results from a five-country analysis of CWR, which included Thailand and Timor-Leste, found that the programme contributed to positive results in attitudes towards gender equality, help seeking behaviours for self and others, intention to provide positive witness responses, and experiences of being treated with respect by classmates of the opposite sex (Cahill et al., 2022). Lessons from the evaluation

⁸ In collaboration with the East Asia and Pacific UNGEI SRGBV working group, including Plan International, UNICEF and UNESCO.

indicated that, whilst the curriculum delivery varied among schools, more comprehensive delivery of the programme was associated with better outcomes. Teachers were found to endorse CWR, but emphasised the need for accompanying training, policy support and leadership within schools to help maximise effectiveness (Cahill et al., 2022).

- **Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS)**

programme is an International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) flagship programme that challenges gendered power relations and encourages critical thinking and interaction to prevent GBV. GEMS is being implemented across five states in India, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Vietnam. GEMS works through departments of education, working with teachers as allies to lead the delivery of programme activities. This programme is delivered over a longer period than CWR, with 24 classroom sessions aimed at 12–14-year-olds delivered over two years. There is a focus on positive masculinities within the curriculum, working specifically with boys and men to redefine masculinities and negate all forms of violence. The GEMS model also includes school-based campaigns and community outreach. Positive shifts in attitudes to gender and violence in Vietnam have been noted following programme delivery, with a greater change being registered in girls than boys. Significant change was also noted in relation to bystander intervention, with girls and boys being more likely to intervene in cases of school-based violence perpetrated against others. Impacts included a decline in support for corporal punishment, improved communication between peers and a decline in peer-to-peer violence (ICRW, 2019). The programme evaluation indicated the length of the programme intervention was significant with better results being found in schools that had delivered more of the sessions over the full two years rather than a reduced number of sessions delivered in just one year (Achyut et al., 2017).

IMPLICATIONS

6



The economic and social strains that have contributed to an increase in GBV during the pandemic are likely to persist for years to come.

However, a chronic lack of data continues to obscure an understanding of the true nature and prevalence of GBV across the Indo-Pacific region. Governments can play a key role in filling this data gap, working with skilled research partners who can safely and ethically gather data on GBV without risking further harm.

The violence girls are experiencing in various areas of their lives – including at home, on the way to and from school, and in school – are having a range of direct and indirect impacts on their educational outcomes. With schools reopening and services resuming it is vital that this new phase of development is structured in a way that is tuned into the latest thinking on how to prevent violence from happening in the first place and responding to it in a safe and appropriate way when it does.

Comprehensive approaches to addressing SRGBV are most effective and include making holistic efforts in a range of areas, including strengthening, and implementing laws and policies, creating safe schools, shifting attitudes and norms, empowering women and girls, investing in teaching and curriculum materials, setting up and maintaining reporting mechanisms and establishing robust monitoring systems (UNESCO and UN Women, 2016). A key factor within prevention efforts is to address the root cause of GBV, which stems from gender inequality and norms which reinforce gendered power imbalances and normalise male violence.

Beyond these comprehensive approaches and targeted programmes which are focused on violence prevention, efforts can also be made to integrate attention to SRGBV within mainstream education programmes. As a basic minimum, education programmes can make a valuable contribution to help address the root causes of GBV through efforts to promote gender equality and girls' empowerment and to challenge harmful gendered norms. Below are some examples of efforts which can be integrated into education programmes at both system and school levels.

SYSTEMS LEVEL:

- Strengthening and/or establishing policies at national and district level that commit to gender equality and through education and protect children from violence.
- Incorporating modules on SRGBV within existing teacher training courses to increase awareness among teaching staff about what constitutes violence and the role they can play to help prevent and respond to it.
- Developing curricular and teaching materials which promote gender equality, challenge harmful stereotypes, and help students understand the causes and consequences of SRGBV.
- Promoting collaboration between key stakeholders from government ministries, police, legal systems, service providers and civil society organisations to strengthen connections between education and child protection systems, support services and legal frameworks that hold perpetrators to account.

SCHOOL LEVEL:

- Strengthening and/or establishing school policies that commit to gender equality and the protection of children, including codes of conduct for students, school staff and visitors.
- Providing accessible, child-friendly, and confidential reporting mechanisms within schools so that students, staff, and visitors can report incidents and concerns.
- Ensuring governing bodies and school management create cultures that show SRGBV is not acceptable and is taken seriously, including through modelling positive behaviours.
- Equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge to teach students about SRGBV, use positive discipline techniques and know how to appropriately respond to violence when it occurs.
- Establishing safe spaces that allow girls and boys to discuss issues around gender equality, respectful relationships, and the prevention of violence.
- Providing information on SRGBV – and space for discussion – in engagement with families and wider communities, including men and boys, to raise awareness.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achyut, P., Bhatla, N., Kumar, U., Verma, H., Bhattacharya, S., Singh, G., & Verma, R. (2017). *Changing Course: Implementation and Evaluation of the Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) program in specific sites – Vietnam, India and Bangladesh*. International Center for Research on Women. <https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/GEMS-Evaluation-Report-18-06-2018-UPDATED.pdf>
- Billah, M. (2021). *When schools shut: Gendered impacts of COVID-19 school closures*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379270>
- Cahill, H., Dadvand, B., Suryani, A., & Farrelly, A. (2022). *Analysis of experience and outcomes of Connect with Respect violence prevention programme*. UNESCO. <https://www.ungei.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Connect%20with%20Respect%20Research%20Report.pdf>
- CARE. (2020). *Solomon Islands: Gender, Disability and Inclusion Analysis for COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold (June 2020 – updated November 2020) – Solomon Islands*. https://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Solomon-Islands-Gender-Disability-Inclusion-Analysis-COVID-19_Report_FINAL-January-2021.pdf
- CARE. (2020c). *PNG Rapid Gender Analysis COVID-19: November 2020*. CARE International. https://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/CPNG-Covid-19-RGA-report_FINAL-November-2020.pdf
- Costa, A. (2022). *The Gendered Impacts of Covid-19 school closures in Papua New Guinea*. Commissioned by Department of Education PNG.
- End Violence Against Children. (2021). *Prohibiting all corporal punishment of children laying the foundations for nonviolent childhoods*. End Violence Against Children and End Corporal Punishment. <https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/Prohibiting%20all%20corporal%20punishment%20of%20children%20laying%20the%20foundations%20for%20nonviolent%20childhoods.pdf>
- Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), Australian Aid, & WE RISE Coalition. (2020). *Fijian Women's Economic Status During COVID-19—Telling her story*. https://www.fwr.org.fj/images/COVID19/Fijian_Womens_Economic_Status_Book.pdf
- Fraser, D. E. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Violence against Women and Girls. *VAWG Helpdesk Research Report, 284*. <https://www.sddirect.org.uk/media/1881/vawg-helpdesk-284-covid-19-and-vawg.pdf>
- Fry, L., & Lei, P. (2020). *Girls' Education and Covid-19: What past shocks can teach us about mitigating the impact of pandemics*. Malala Fund. <https://healtheducationresources.unesco.org/library/documents/girls-education-and-covid-19-what-past-shocks-can-teach-us-about-mitigating>
- Ginestra, C. (2020). *School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV): A human rights violation and a threat to inclusive and equitable quality education for all* (Background Paper Prepared for the GEM Gender). UNESCO and GEMR. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374509/PDF/374509eng.pdf.multi>
- Global Education Cluster & Save the Children. (2020). *Safe Back to School: A practitioner's guide*. Global Education Cluster and Child Protection Cluster. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/gec_checklist_8.7.20_digital.pdf/
- ICRW. (2019). *Gender Equity Movement in Schools- An overview*. <https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Gender-Equality-Movement-in-Schools-Training-Manual.pdf>
- INEE. (2021). *Mind the Gap: The State of Girls' Education in Crisis and Conflict*. Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. <https://inee.org/resources/mind-gap-state-girls-education-crisis-and-conflict>
- Kindipan-Dulawan, J., & Cruz, M. G. (2020). *VOICES FROM THE COMPOUNDED CRISIS: Oxfam COVID-19 Rapid Gender Assessment Regional Highlights in the Philippines* (p. 35). Oxfam. https://oi-files-cng-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/philippines.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/LONG%20RGA%20Regional%20Highlights%20-%2004%20Dec%202020.pdf
- Maclin, B., Weber, J., Bourassa, A., & Murphy, M. (2021). *Finding the Path Forward: Identifying research gaps on gender-based violence among conflict-affected refugees in the Global South*. (p. 48). The Global Women's Institute at George Washington University. https://buildgbvevidence.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs4121/f/downloads/GWI_GapAnalysisReport_2021.pdf

- Malala Fund, Plan International, UNESCO, UNGEI, & UNICEF. (2020). *Building back equal: Girls back to school guide*. UNESCO. <https://www.unicef.org/media/75471/file/Building-back-equal-Girls-back-to-school-guide-2020.pdf>
- Plan International. (2021a). *Free to be Online: Girls' and Young Women's experiences of online harrasment*. Plan International. <https://plan-international.org/uploads/2022/02/sotwgr2020-commsreport-en-2.pdf>
- Plan International. (2021b). *Smart, Successful, Strong: The case for investing in adolescent girls' education in aid and COVID-19 response and recovery*. <https://www.plan.org.au/publications/smart-successful-strong/>
- Ritz, D., O'Hare, G., & Burgess, M. (2020). *The Hidden Impact of Covid-19 on Child Protection and Wellbeing. A Global Research Series*. Save the Children International. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/18174/pdf/the-hidden-impact-of-covid-19-on-child-protection-and-wellbeing.pdf>
- Sastiono, P., Viemilawati, I. J., Artha, R. P., Sahadewo, G., & Irhamni, M. (2020). Understanding Gender-based Violence and Unpaid Care Work During Covid-19 in Indonesia. *The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)*. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/project/understanding-gender-based-violence-and-unpaid-care-work-during-covid-19-indonesia>
- SRGBV Global working group. (2020). Strengthening efforts to prevent and respond to SRGBV as schools reopen [Policy Brief]. UNGEI. <https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Policy%20brief%20-%20SRGBV%20%20and%20school%20reopening%20Final.pdf>
- Subrahmanian, R., Siddiqi, M., Petrowski, N., & Cappa, C. (2022). Making It Count: *Strengthening data and evidence to prevent and respond to violence against children in East Asia and the Pacific*. UNICEF Innocenti Research. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/Making_It_Count.pdf
- UN Viet Nam. (2021, November). *JOURNEYS OF CHANGE – Connect with Respect: Preventing gender-based violence in schools*. <https://vietnam.un.org/en/159266-journeys-change-connect-respect-preventing-gender-based-violence-schools>
- UN Women. (2020). *Standing Up to the Challenge: Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Asia and the Pacific*. United Nations Women. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/02/standing-up-to-the-challenge-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-asia-and-the-pacific>
- UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, & UN Volunteers. (2013). *Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? The UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific*. Partners for Prevention. <https://partners4prevention.org/about-prevention/research/men-and-violence-study>
- UNESCO. (2022a). *Evidence on the gendered impacts of extended school closures: A systematic review*. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380935>
- UNESCO. (2022b). *Teachers at the Centre: The role and needs of Asia-Pacific teachers in addressing violence and school-related gender-based violence* [Thematic Brief]. UNESCO Bangkok office. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381689>
- UNESCO & UNGEI. (2014). *School Related Gender Based Violence in the Asia-Pacific Region*. UNESCO. <https://www.ungei.org/publication/school-related-gender-based-violence-asia-pacific-region>
- UNESCO and UN Women. (2016). *Global Guidance on Addressing School-Related Gender Based Violence*. UNESCO Press. <https://www.unicef.org/media/66506/file/Global-Guidance-SRGBV.pdf>
- UNESCO and UNICEF. (2021). *5-year progress review of SDG 4 – Education 2030 in Asia-Pacific—UNESCO Digital Library*. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379173>
- UNFPA. (2021a). *Comprehensive Sexuality Education as a strategy for gender-Based violence prevention*. UNFPA Asia and Pacific Regional Office. https://png.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/211129_unfpa_cse_report_v3_1.pdf
- UNFPA. (2021b). *Prevalence Rates, Trends and Disparities in Intimate Partner Violence: Power of Data in the IPV Geospatial dashboard*. UNFPA. https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/ipvdataanalysisreport_final.pdf
- UNFPA. (2021c). *Technology-facilitated Gender-based Violence: Making All Spaces Safe*. UNFPA. <https://www.unfpa.org/publications/technology-facilitated-gender-based-violence-making-all-spaces-safe>
- UNFPA, UN Women, & Quilt.AI. (2021). *COVID-19 and Violence against Women: The evidence behind the talk*. <https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/publications/covid-19-and-violence-against-women-evidence-behind-talk>
- UNGEI. (2019). *Ending school related gender-based violence: Applying a whole school approach* (Brief 1). United Nations. <https://www.ungei.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Ending-school-related-gender-based-violence-Brief-1-Applying-a-whole-school-approach-eng-2019.pdf>
- UNICEF. (2020). *Issue Brief: COVID-19 and Girls' Education in East Asia and Pacific* (UNICEF Education Covid-19 Response). UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/eap/reports/unicef-education-covid-19-response>

- UNICEF Cambodia. (2014). *Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey 2013*. UNICEF Cambodia. https://www.togetherforgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2013_Cambodia_Findings-from-a-Violence-Against-Children-Survey.pdf
- UNICEF & IRC. (2020). *COVID-19—GBV Risks to Adolescent Girls and Interventions to Protect and Empower them*. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/media/68706/file/COVID-19-GBV-risks-to-adolescent-girls-and-interventions-to-protect-them-2020.pdf>
- Un Women. (2021). *Measuring the Shadow Pandemic: Violence against women during Covid-19*. United Nations. <https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/Measuring-shadow-pandemic.pdf>
- Wodon, Q., Fèvre, C., Malé, C., Nayihouba, A., & Nguyen, H. (2021). *Ending Violence in Schools: An Investment Case*. World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/35969>
- World Vision Australia. (2021). *Pacific Aftershocks. Unmasking the impact of COVID-19 on lives and livelihoods in the Pacific and Timor-Leste*. <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/pacific-aftershocks-report.pdf>

APPENDIX 1: KEY INFORMANTS CONSULTED

1

Melissa Alvarado – Ending Violence Against Women Programme Manager – UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Jenelle Babb – Regional Advisor, Education for health and wellbeing. UNESCO

Kristin Diemer – Associate Professor- University of Melbourne

Sujata Tuladhar – GBV Technical Advisor, UNFPA



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade